

The Principal *Upaniṣads*

INTRODUCTION ONLY

Edited with Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes by S. Radhakrishnan

Preface

Human nature is not altogether unchanging but it does remain sufficiently constant to justify the study of ancient classics. The problems of human life and destiny have not been superseded by the striking achievements of science and technology. The solutions offered, though conditioned in their modes of expression by their time and environment, have not been seriously affected by the march of scientific knowledge and criticism. The responsibility laid on man as a rational being, to integrate himself, to relate the present to the past and the future, to live in time as well as in eternity, has become acute and urgent. The *Upaniṣads*, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought. They disclose the working of the primal impulses of the human soul, which rise above the differences of race and of geographical position. At the core of all historical religions, there are fundamental types of spiritual experience though they are expressed with different degrees of clarity. The *Upaniṣads* illustrate and illuminate these primary experiences.

'These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands; they are not original with me. If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing or next to nothing', said Walt Whitman. The *Upaniṣads* deal with questions, which arise when men begin to reflect seriously and attempt answers to them, which are not very different, except in their approach and emphasis from what we are now inclined to accept. This does not mean that the message of *Upaniṣads* which is as true today as ever, commits us to the different hypotheses about the structure of the world and the physiology of man. We must make a distinction between the message of the *Upaniṣads* and their mythology. The latter is liable to correction by advances in science. Even this mythology becomes intelligible if we place ourselves as far as possible at the viewpoint of those who conceived it. Those parts of the *Upaniṣads*, which seem to us today to be trivial, tedious and almost unmeaning, should have had value and significance at the time they were composed.

Anyone who reads the *Upaniṣads* in the original Sanskrit will be caught up and carried away by the elevation, the poetry, the compelling fascination of the many utterances, through which they lay bare the secret and sacred relations of the human soul and the Ultimate Reality. When we read them, we cannot help being impressed by the exceptional ability, earnestness and ripeness of mind of those who wrestled with these ultimate questions. These souls who tackled these problems remain still and will remain for all time in essential harmony with the highest ideals of civilization.

The *Upaniṣads* are the foundations on which the beliefs of millions of human beings, who were not much inferior to ourselves, are based. Nothing is more sacred to man than his own history. At least as memorials of the past, the *Upaniṣads* are worth our attention.

A proper knowledge of the texts is an indispensable aid to the understanding of the *Upaniṣads*. There are parts of the *Upaniṣads*, which repel us by their repetitiveness and irrelevance to our needs, philosophical and religious. But, if we are to understand their ideas, we must know the atmosphere in which they worked. We must not judge ancient writings from our standards. We need not condemn our fathers for having been what they were or ourselves for being somewhat different from them. It is our task to relate them to their environment, to bridge distances of time and space and separate the transitory from the permanent.

There is a danger in giving only carefully chosen extracts. We are likely to give what is easy to read and omit what is difficult, or give what is agreeable to our views and omit what is disagreeable. It is wise to study the *Upaniṣads* as a whole, their striking insights as well as their commonplace assumptions. Only such a study will be historically valuable. I have therefore given in full the classical *Upaniṣads*, those commented on or mentioned by Śaṅkara. The other *Upaniṣads* are of a later date and are sectarian in character. They represent the popular gods, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, as manifestations of the Supreme Reality. They are not parts of the original *Veda*, are of much later origin and are not therefore as authoritative as the classical *Upaniṣads*. If they are all to be included, it would be difficult to find a Publisher for so immense a work. I have therefore selected a few other *Upaniṣads*, some of those to which references are made by the great teachers, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja.

In the matter of translation and interpretation, I owe a heavy debt, directly and indirectly, not only to the classical commentators but also to the modern writers who have worked on the subject. I have profited by their tireless labours. The careful reader will find, I hope, that a small advance in a few places at least has been made in this translation towards a better understanding of the texts.

Passages in verse are not translated into rhyme as the padding and inversion necessary for observing a metrical pattern take away a great deal from the dignity and conciseness of the original.

It is not easy to render Sanskrit religious and philosophical classics into English for each language has its own characteristic genius. Language conveys thought as well as feeling. It falls short of its full power and purpose, if it fails to communicate the emotion as fully as it conveys the idea. Words convey ideas but they do not always express moods. In the *Upaniṣads* we find harmonies of speech which excite the emotions and stir the soul. I am afraid that it has not been possible for me to produce in the English translation the richness of melody, the warmth of spirit, the power of enchantment that appeals to the ear, heart and mind. I have tried to be faithful to the originals, sometimes even at the cost of elegance. I have given the texts with all their nobility of sound and the feeling of the numinous.

For the classical *Upaniṣads* the text followed is that commented on by Śaṅkara. A multitude of variant readings of the texts exist, some of them to be found in the famous commentaries, others in more out of the way versions. The chief variant readings are mentioned in the notes. As my interest is philosophical rather than linguistic, I have not discussed them. In the translation, words, which are omitted or understood in Sanskrit or are essential to complete the grammatical structure are inserted in brackets.

We cannot bring to the study of the *Upaniṣads* virgin minds, which are untouched by the views of the many generations of scholars who have gone before us. Their influence may work either directly or indirectly. To be aware of this limitation, to estimate it correctly is of great importance in the study of ancient texts. The classical commentators represent in their works the great oral traditions of interpretation, which have been current in their time. Centuries of careful thought lie behind the exegetical traditions as they finally took shape. It would be futile to neglect the work of the commentators, as there are words and passages in the *Upaniṣads* of which we could make little sense without the help of the commentators.

We do not have in the *Upaniṣads* a single well-articulated system of thought. We find in them a number of different strands, which could be woven together in a single whole by sympathetic interpretation. Such an account involves the expression of opinions, which can always be questioned. Impartiality does not consist in a refusal to form opinions or in a futile attempt to conceal them. It consists in rethinking the thoughts of the past, in understanding their environment, and in relating them to the intellectual and spiritual needs of our own time. While we should avoid the attempt to read into the terms of the past the meanings of the present, we cannot overlook the fact that certain problems are the same in all ages. We must keep in mind the Buddhist saying: 'Whatever is not adapted to such and such persons as are to be taught cannot be called a teaching'. We must remain sensitive to the prevailing currents of thought and be prepared, as far as we are able, to translate the universal truth into terms intelligible to our audience, without distorting their meaning. It would scarcely be possible to exaggerate the difficulty of such a task, but it has to be undertaken. If we are able to make the seeming abstractions of the *Upaniṣads* flame anew with their ancient colour and depth, if we can make them pulsate with their old meaning, they will not appear to be altogether irrelevant to our needs, intellectual and spiritual. The notes are framed in this spirit.

The *Upaniṣads*, which base their affirmations on spiritual experience are invaluable for us, as the traditional props of faith, the infallible scripture, miracle and prophecy are no longer available. The irreligion of our times is largely the product of the supremacy of religious technique over spiritual life. The study of the *Upaniṣads* may help to restore to fundamental things of religion that reality without which they seem to be meaningless.

Besides, at a time when moral aggression is compelling people to capitulate to queer ways of life, when vast experiments in social structure and political organisation are being made at enormous cost of life and suffering, when we stand perplexed and confused before the future with no clear light to guide our way, the power of the human soul is the only refuge. If we resolve to be governed by it, our civilisation may enter upon its most glorious epoch. There are many 'dissatisfied children of the spirit of the west', to use Romain Rolland's phrase, who are oppressed that the universality of her great thoughts has been defamed for ends of violent action, that they are trapped in a blind alley and are savagely crushing each other out of existence. When an old binding culture is being broken, when ethical standards are dissolving, when we are being aroused out of apathy or awakened out of unconsciousness, when there is in the air general ferment, inward stirring, cultural crisis, then a high tide of spiritual agitation sweeps over peoples and we sense in the horizon something novel, something unprecedented, the beginnings of a spiritual renaissance. We are living in a world of freer cultural intercourse and wider world sympathies. No one can ignore his neighbour who is also groping in this world of sense for the

world unseen. The task set to our generation is to reconcile the varying ideals of the converging cultural patterns and help them to sustain and support rather than combat and destroy one another. By this process, they are transformed from within and the forms that separate them will lose their exclusivist meaning and signify only that unity with their own origins and inspirations.

The study of the sacred books of religions other than one's own is essential for speeding up this process. Students of Christian religion and theology, especially those who wish to make Indian Christian thought not merely 'geographically' but 'organically' Indian, should understand their great heritage, which is contained in the *Upaniṣads*.

For us Indians, a study of the *Upaniṣads* is essential, if we are to preserve our national being and character. To discover the main lines of our traditional life, we must turn to our classics, the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Dhamma-pada*. They have done more to colour our minds than we generally acknowledge. They not only thought many of our thoughts but coined hundreds of the words that we use in daily life. There is much in our past that is degrading and deficient but there is also much that is life-giving and elevating. If the past is to serve as an inspiration for the future, we have to study it with discrimination and sympathy. Again, the highest achievements of the human mind and spirit are not limited to the past. The gates of the future are wide open. While the fundamental motives, the governing ideas which constitute the essential spirit of our culture are a part of our very being, they should receive changing expression according to the needs and conditions of our time.

There is no more inspiring task for the student of Indian thought than to set forth some phases of its spiritual wisdom and bring them to bear on our own life. Let us, in the words of Socrates, 'turn over together the treasures that wise men have left us, glad if in so doing we make friends with one another.'

The two essays written for the *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* (1924), which is a reprint of chapter IV from my *Indian Philosophy*, Volume I, by Rabindranath Tagore and Edmond Holmes, are to be found in the Appendices A and B respectively.

I am greatly indebted to my distinguished and generous friends Professors Suniti Kumar Chatterji, and Siddesvar Bhattacharya for their great kindness in reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions.

S.R.
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Contents

Preface	5
Scheme of Transliteration	13

List of Abbreviations	14
Introduction	15
1. General Influence	17
2. The term Upaniṣad	19
3. Number, date and Authorship	20
4. The Upaniṣads as Vedānta	24
5. Relation to the Vedas: Ṛg Veda	27
6. The Yajur, the Sāma and Atharva Vedas	44
7. The Brāhmaṇas	46
8. The Āraṇyakas	47
9. The Upaniṣads	48
10. Ultimate Reality: Brahman	52
11. Ultimate Reality: Ātman	73
12. Brahman as Ātman	77
13. The Status of the World and the Doctrine of Māyā & Avidyā	78
14. The Individual Self	90
15. Knowledge and Ignorance	95
16. Ethics	104
17. Karma and Rebirth	113
18. Life Eternal	117
19. Religion	131
 TEXT, TRANSLATION AND NOTES	
1. Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad	147
2. Chāndogya Upaniṣad	335
3. Āitareya Upaniṣad	513
4. Taittirīya Upaniṣad	525
5. Īsa Upaniṣad	565
6. Kena Upaniṣad	579
7. Kaṭha Upaniṣad	593
8. Praśna Upaniṣad	649
9. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad	669
10. Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad	693
11. Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad	707
12. Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad	751

13. Maitrī Upaniṣad	793
14. Sabāla Upaniṣad	861
15. Jābāla Upaniṣad	893
16. Paingala Upaniṣad	901
17. Kaivalya Upaniṣad	
925	
18. Vajrasūcikā Upaniṣad	
933	
APPENDICES	
A) Rabindranath Tagore on the Upaniṣads	939
B) Edmond Holmes on the Upaniṣads	945
Selected Bibliography	951
General Index	953

General Influence Page 17

The *Upaniṣads* represent a great chapter in the history of the human spirit and have dominated Indian philosophy, religion and life for three thousand years. Every subsequent religious movement has had to show itself to be in accord with their philosophical statements. Even doubting and denying spirits found in them anticipations of their hesitations, misgivings and negations. They have survived many changes, religious and secular, and helped many generations of men to formulate their views on the chief problems of life and existence.

Their thought by itself and through Buddhism influenced even in ancient times the cultural life of other nations far beyond the boundaries of India, Greater India, Tibet, China, Japan and Korea and in the South, in Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula and far away in the islands of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. In the West, the tracks of Indian thought may be traced far into Central Asia, where, buried in the sands of the desert, were found **Indian texts**¹.

The *Upaniṣads* have shown an unparalleled variety of appeal during these long centuries and have been admired by different people, for different reasons, at different periods. They are said

Indian texts¹: 'For the historian, who pursues the history of human thought, the *Upaniṣads* have a yet far greater significance. From the mystical doctrines of the *Upaniṣads*, one current of thought may be traced to the mysticism of the Persian Sufism, to the mystic, theosophical logos doctrine of the Neo-Platonics and the Alexandrian Christian mystics, Eckhart and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the nineteenth century, Schopenhauer.' Winternitz: *A History of Indian Literature*. E. T. Vol I (1927), p. 266. See *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. Second Edition (1940), Chapters IV, V, VI, VII. It is said that Schopenhauer had the Latin text of the *Upaniṣads* on his table and 'was in the habit, before going to bed, of performing his devotions from its pages.' Bloomfield: *Religion of the Veda* (1908), p. 55. 'From every sentence {of the *Upaniṣads*}, deep original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world ... there is no study ... so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upaniṣads*. They are products of the highest wisdom. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people.' Schopenhauer.

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to provide us with a complete chart of the unseen Reality, to give us the most immediate, intimate and convincing light on the secret of human existence, to formulate, in Deussen's words, 'philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world,' or to tackle every fundamental **problem of philosophy**¹.

problem of philosophy¹. = Cp. W. B. Yeats: 'Nothing that has disturbed the schools to controversy escaped their notice.' Preface to the *Ten Principal Upaniṣads* (1937), p. II.

All this may be so or may not be so. But of one thing there is no dispute, that those earnest spirits have known the fevers and ardours of religious seeking; they have expressed that pensive mood of the thinking mind which finds no repose except in the Absolute, no rest except in the Divine. The ideal which haunted the thinkers of the *Upaniṣads*, the ideal of man's ultimate beatitude, the perfection of knowledge, the vision of the Real in which the religious hunger of the mystic for divine vision and the philosopher's ceaseless quest for truth are both satisfied is still our ideal. A. N. Whitehead speaks to us of the real which stands behind and beyond and within the passing flux of this world, 'something which is real and yet waiting to be realised, something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts, something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal and the hopeless **quest**².' A metaphysical curiosity for a theoretical explanation of the world as much as a passionate longing for liberation is to be found in the *Upaniṣads*. Their ideas do not only enlighten our minds but stretch our souls.

quest².¹ *Science and the Modern World*, (1933), p. 238.

If the ideas of the *Upaniṣads* help us to rise above the glamour of the fleshy life, it is because their authors, pure of soul, ever striving towards the divine, reveal to us their pictures of the splendours of the unseen. The *Upaniṣads* are respected not because they are a part of *śruti* or revealed literature and so hold a reserved position but because they have inspired generations of Indians with vision and strength by their inexhaustible significance and spiritual power. Indian thought

The Term '*Upaniṣad* ' page 19

has constantly turned to these scriptures for fresh illumination and spiritual recovery or recommencement, and not in vain. The fire still burns bright on their altars. Their light is for the seeing eye and their **message is for the seeker after truth**¹.

The word '*Upaniṣad*' is derived from *upa* (near), *ni* (down) and *sad* (to sit), i.e., sitting down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret doctrine. In the quietude of forest hermitages the *Upaniṣad* thinkers pondered on the problems of the deepest concern and

communicated their knowledge to fit pupils near them. The seers adopt a certain reticence in communicating the truth. They wish to be satisfied that their pupils are **spiritually and not carnally minded**².

To respond to spiritual teaching, we require the spiritual disposition.

The *Upaniṣad*s contain accounts of the mystic significance of the syllable *aum*, explanations of mystic words like *tajjalān*, which are intelligible only to the initiated, and secret texts and esoteric doctrines. *Upaniṣad* became a name for a mystery, a secret, *rahasyam*, communicated only to the **tested few**³.

truth¹. In an article on *Christian Vedāntism*, Mr. R. Gordon Milburn writes, 'Christianity in India needs the *Vedānta*. We missionaries have not realised this with half the clearness that we should. We cannot move freely and joyfully in our own religion; because we have not sufficient terms and modes of expression wherewith to express the more immanent aspects of Christianity. A very useful step would be the recognition of certain books or passages in the literature of the *Vedānta* as constituting what might be called an Ethnic Old Testament. The permission of ecclesiastical authorities could then be asked for reading passages found in such a canon of Ethnic Old Testament at divine service along with passages from the New Testament as alternatives to the Old Testament lessons.' *Indian Interpreter*. 1913.

carnally minded² = Cp. Plato: 'To find the Father and Maker of this universe is a hard task; and when you have found him, it is impossible to speak of him before all people.' *Timaeus*.

tested few³ = *guhyā ādeśāḥ - Chāndogya Upaniṣad* III. 52; *paramaṁ guhyam - Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I. 3. 17; *vedānte paramaṁ guhyam - Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad* VI. 22; *vedaguhyam, vedaguhyopaniṣatsu gūḍham - Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad* V. 6;

guhyalamam - Maitrī Upaniṣad VI. 29; *abhayaṁ vai Brahmā bhavati ya evaṁ veda, iti rahasyam - Nṛsimhottaratāpanī Upaniṣad* VIII;

dharma rahasy upaniṣat syāt - Amarakośa;

Upaniṣad am rahasyam yac cintyam - Śaṅkara on Kena Upaniṣad IV. 7. The injunction of secrecy about the mysteries reserved for the initiated is found among the Orphics and the Pythagoreans.

Page 20

When the question of man's final destiny was raised, *yājñavalkya* took his pupil aside and whispered to him the truth. (*bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* III. 2. 13.) According to the *chāndogya Upaniṣad*, the doctrine of *Brahman* may be imparted by a father to his elder son or to a trusted pupil, but not to another, whoever he may be, even if the latter should give him the whole earth surrounded by the waters and filled with treasures. (III. 11. 5; *bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* III. 2. 13.) In many cases, it is said that the teacher communicates the secret knowledge only after repeated entreaty and severe testing.

Śaṅkara derives the word *Upaniṣad* as a substantive from the root *sad*, 'to loosen', 'to reach' or 'to destroy' with *upa* and *ni* as prefixes and *kvip* as termination. (Introduction to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. In his commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, he says, *upaniṣannaṁ vā asyām parama śreya iti*.) If this derivation is accepted, *Upaniṣad* means *brahma*-knowledge by which

ignorance is loosened or destroyed. The treatises that deal with *brahma*-knowledge are called the *Upaniṣads* and so pass for the *Vedānta*. The different derivations together make out that the *Upaniṣads* give us both spiritual vision and philosophical argument. (Oldenbe Rgsuggests that the real sense of *Upaniṣad* is worship or reverence, which the word *upāsana* signifies. *upāsana* brings about oneness with the object worshipped. See Keith: *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upaniṣad s* (1925), p. 492.) There is a core of certainty which is essentially incommunicable except by a way of life. It is by a strictly personal effort that one can reach the truth.

III. Number, Date and Authorship (on pages 20-21.)

The *Upaniṣads* form a literature, which has been growing from early times. Their number exceeds two hundred, though the Indian tradition puts it at **one hundred and eight**. (See the *muktikā Upaniṣad* , where it is said that salvation may be attained by a study of the hundred and eight *Upaniṣad s*. I. 30-39) Prince Muhammad Dara Shikoh's collection translated into Persian (1656-1657) and then into Latin by Anquetil Duperron (1801 and 1802) under the title *Oupnekhat*, contained about fifty. Colebrooke's collection contained fifty-two, and this was based on Nārāyaṇa's list (c. A.D. 1400). **The principal *Upaniṣad s* are said to be ten.** Śaṅkara commented on eleven, *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Prasna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhad-Araṇyaka* and *Svetāśvatara*. He also refers to the *Kauṣītakī*, *Jābāla*, *Mahānārāyaṇa* and *Paiṅgala Upaniṣad s* in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra* . These together with the *Maitrāyaṇīya* or *Maitrī Upaniṣad* constitute the principal *Upaniṣad s*. Rāmānuja uses all these *Upaniṣad s* as also the *subāla* and the *Cūlika*. He mentions also the *garbha*, the *Jābāla* and the *Mahā Upaniṣad s*. vidyāraṇya includes *Nṛsimhottara-tāpanī Upaniṣad* among the twelve he explained in his *sarvopaniṣad-arthānubhūti-prakāśa*. The other *Upaniṣad s* which have come down are more religious than philosophical. They belong more to the *purāṇa* and the *tantra* than to the *veda*. They glorify *vedānta* or *yoga* or *sanyāsa* or extol **the worship of Śiva, Śakti or Viṣṇu.**²

²(There is, however, considerable argument about the older and more original *Upaniṣad s*. Max Müller translated the eleven *Upaniṣad s* quoted by Śaṅkara together with *Maitrāyaṇīya*. Deussen, though he translated no less than sixty, considers that fourteen of them are original and have a connection with Vedic schools. Hume translated the twelve which Max Müller selected and added to them the *māṇḍūkya*. Keith in his *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣad s* includes the *mahānārāyaṇa*. His list of fourteen is the same as that of Deussen.

English translations of the *Upaniṣad s* have appeared in the following order: Ram Mohan Roy (1832), Roer (1853), (*Bibliotheca Indica*) Max Müller (1879-1884) *Sacred Books of the East*, Mead and Chattopadhyaya (1896, London Theosophical Society), Sitaram Sastri and Ganganath Jha (1898-1901), (G. A. Natesan, Madras), Sitanath Tattvabhusan (1900), S. C. Vasu (1911), R. Hume (1921). E. B. Cowell, Hirianna, Dvivedi, Mahadeva Sastri and Sri Aurobindo have published translations of a few *Upaniṣad s*.

Śaṅkara's commentaries on the principal *Upaniṣad s* are available in English translations also. His interpretations are from the standpoint of *advaita* or non-dualism. Raṅgarāmānuja has adopted the point of view of Rāmānuja in his commentaries on the *Upaniṣad s*. Madhva's commentaries are from the standpoint of dualism. Extracts from his commentaries are found in the edition of the *Upaniṣad s* published by the Pāṇini Office, Allahabad.)

Modern criticism is generally agreed that the ancient prose *Upaniṣad s*, *Aitareya*, *Kauṣītakī*, *Chāndogya*, *Kena*, *Taittirīya* and *Bṛhad-Araṇyaka*, together with *Īśa* and *Kāṭha* belong to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. They are all pre-Buddhistic. They represent the *vedānta* in its pure original form and are the earliest philosophical compositions of the world. These *Upaniṣad s* belong to what Karl Jaspers calls the Axial Era of the world, 800 to 300 B.C., when man for the first time simultaneously and independently in Greece, China and India questioned the traditional pattern of life.

As almost all the early literature of India was anonymous, we do not know the names of the authors of the *Upaniṣad s*. Some of the chief doctrines of the *Upaniṣad s* are associated with the names of renowned sages as *Aruṇi*, *Yājñavalkya*, *Bālāki*, *Śvetaketu*, *sāṅḍilya*. They were, perhaps, the early exponents of the doctrines attributed to them. The teachings were developed in *pariṣads* or spiritual retreats where teachers and pupils discussed and defined the different views. Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

As a part of the *Veda*, the *Upaniṣad s* belong to *Śruti* or revealed literature. They are immemorial, *sanātana*, timeless. Their truths are said to be breathed out by God or visioned by the seers. They are the utterances of the sages who speak out of the fullness of their illumined experience. They are not reached by ordinary perception, inference or reflection¹ but seen by the seers, even as we see and not infer the wealth and riot of colour in the summer sky. The seers have the same sense of assurance and possession of their spiritual vision as we have of our physical perception. The sages are men of 'direct' vision, in the words of *yāska*, *sākṣāt-kṛta-dharmāṇah*, and the records of their experiences are the facts to be considered by any philosophy of religion. The truth revealed to the seers are not mere reports of introspection which are purely subjective. The inspired sages proclaim that the knowledge they communicate is not what they discover for themselves. It is revealed to

¹They are relevant in matters which cannot be reached by perception and inference. *aprāpte sāstram arthavat. mīmāṃsā sūtra* I. 1. 5.

Page 23

It is revealed to them without their effort. (*puruṣa-prayatnam vinā prakāṣībhūta. Śaṅkara.*) Though the knowledge is an experience of the seer, it is an experience of an independent reality, which impinges on his consciousness. There is the impact of the real on the spirit of the experiencer. It is therefore said to be a direct disclosure from the 'wholly other', a revelation of the Divine. Symbolically, the *Upaniṣad s* describe revelation as the breath of God blowing on us. 'Of that great being, this is the breath, which is the *Ṛg Veda*.' (*bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II. 1. 10; *muṇḍka Upaniṣad* II. 1. 6; *Ṛg Veda* X. 90. 9.) The divine energy is compared to the breath which quickens. It is a seed, which fertilises or a flame which kindles the human spirit to its finest issues. It is interesting to know that the *bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* tells us that not only the Vedas but history, sciences and other studies are also 'breathed forth by the great God.'³ (II. 4. 10. The *naiyayikas* maintain that the Vedas were composed by God, while the *mīmāṃsakas* hold that they were not composed at all either by man or by God, but have existed from all eternity in the form of sounds. It is perhaps a way of saying that the timeless truths of eternity exist from everlasting to everlasting. Aristotle regards the fundamental truths of religion as eternal and indestructible.)

The Vedas were composed by the seers when they were in a state of inspiration. He who inspires them is God.⁴ (With reference to the prophets, Athenagoras says: 'While entranced and deprived of their natural powers of reason by the influence of the Divine Spirit, they uttered that which was wrought in them, the spirit using them as its instrument as a flute-player might blow a flute.' *Apol. IX.*

Cp. 'Howbeit, when he the spirit of truth is come he shall guide you unto all the truth; for he shall not speak for himself, but whatsoever things he shall hear, these shall he speak.' John XVI. 13.)

Truth is impersonal, *apauruṣya* and eternal, *nitya*. Inspiration is a joint activity, of which man's contemplation and God's revelation are two sides. The *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* says that the sage *Śvetāsvatara* saw the truth owing to his power of contemplation, *tapah-prabhāva*, and the grace of God, *deva-prasāda*. (VI. 21.) The dual significance of revelation, its subjective and objective character, is suggested here.

The *Upaniṣad* s are vehicles more of spiritual illumination than of systematic reflection. They reveal to us a world of rich and varied spiritual experience rather than a world of abstract

The *Upaniṣad* s as the *Vedānta* (Page 24)

philosophical categories. Their truths are verified not only by logical reason but by personal experience. Their aim is practical rather than speculative. Knowledge is a means to freedom. Philosophy, *brahma-vidyā*, is the pursuit of wisdom by a way of life.

The *Vedānta* meant originally the *Upaniṣad* s, though the word is now used for the system of philosophy based on the *Upaniṣad* s. Literally, *Vedānta* means the end of the Veda, *vedasya antaḥ*, the conclusion as well as the goal of the Vedas. The *Upaniṣad* s are the concluding portions of the Vedas. Chronologically they come at the end of the Vedic period. As the *Upaniṣad* s contain abstruse and difficult discussions of ultimate philosophical problems, they were taught to the pupils at about the end of their course. When we have Vedic recitations as religious exercises, the end of these recitals is generally from the *Upaniṣad* s. The chief reason why the *Upaniṣads* are called the end of the Veda is that they represent the central aim and meaning of the teaching of the Veda¹. The content of the *Upaniṣad* s is *Vedānta vijñānam*, the wisdom of the *Vedānta*.²

The *Saṁhitās* and the *Brahmaṇas*, which are the hymns and the liturgical books, represent the *karma-kāṇḍa* or the ritual portion, while the *Upaniṣad* s represent the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* or the knowledge portion. The learning of the hymns and the performance of the rites are a preparation of true enlightenment.³

■The *Upaniṣads* describe to us the life of spirit, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. But our apprehensions of the life of spirit, the symbols by which we express it, change with time.

Veda¹ *tileṣu tailavad vede Vedāntaḥ su-pratiṣṭhitaḥ. muktikā Upaniṣad . I. 9. Again, vedā brahmātma- viṣayā. bhāgavata. XI. 21. 35. ātmaikatva-vidyā-pratipattaye sarve-Vedāntā ārabhyante. SB Introduction. vedānto nāma upaniṣat pramāṇam. Vedānta-sāra.*

wisdom of the Vedānta.² *MU. III. 2. 6. SU (svetāsvatara Upaniṣads) peaks of the highest mystery in the Vedānta. vedānte paramam guhyam VI. 22.*

true enlightenment.³ Much of the material in the *CU* and *BU Upaniṣad* belongs properly to the *Brāhmaṇas*.

All systems of orthodox Indian thought accept **the authoritativeness of the Vedas¹**, but give themselves freedom in their interpretation.

This variety of interpretation is made possible by the fact that the *Upaniṣad*s are not the thoughts of a single philosopher or a school of philosophers who follow a single tradition. They are the teachings of thinkers who were interested in different aspects of the philosophical problem, and therefore offer solutions of problems, which vary in their interest and emphasis. There is thus a certain amount of fluidity in their thought, which has been utilized for the development of different philosophical systems. Out of the wealth of suggestions and speculations contained in them, different thinkers choose elements for the construction of their own systems, not infrequently even through a straining of the texts. Though the *Upaniṣad*s do not work out a logically coherent system of metaphysics, they give us a few fundamental doctrines, which stand out as the essential teaching of the early *Upaniṣad*s. These are recapitulated in the *Brahma sūtra*.

■The *Brahma Sūtra* is an aphoristic summary of the teaching of the *Upaniṣad*s, and the great teachers of the *Vedānta* develop their distinctive views through their commentaries on this work. By interpreting the *sūtras*, which are laconic in form and hardly intelligible without interpretation, the teachers justify their views to the reasoning intelligence.

■Different commentators attempt to find in the *Upaniṣad*s and the *Brahma Sūtra* a single coherent doctrine, a system of thought, which is free from contradictions. *Bharṭṛprapañca*, who is anterior to *Śaṅkara*, maintains that **the selves and the physical universe are real**, though not altogether different from *Brahman*. They are both identical with and different from *Brahman*, **the three together constituting a unity in diversity**. Ultimate Reality evolves into the universal creation *śṛṣṭi* and the universe retreats into it **at the time of dissolution, Pralaya.²**

the authoritativeness of the Vedas¹ = Even the Buddhists and the Jainas accept the teaching of the *Upaniṣad*s, though they interpret it in their own ways. See Introduction to *Dhamma-pada* and *Viśeṣāvaśyaka bhāṣya*, *Yaśovijaya Jaina Granthamālā*. No. 35.

pralaya². (= See *Indian Antiquary* (1924), pp. 77-86)

PAGE 26.

■The *advaita* of *Śaṅkara* insists on the transcendent nature of non-dual *Brahman* and the duality of the world including *Īśvara* who presides over it. Reality is *Brahman* or *Ātman*. No prediction is possible of *Brahman* as prediction involves duality and ***Brahman* is free from all duality. The world of duality is empirical or phenomenal.** The saving truth, which redeems the individual from the stream of births and deaths, is the recognition of his own identity with the Supreme. 'That thou art' is the fundamental fact of all **existence¹**.

The multiplicity of the universe, the unending stream of life, is real, but only as a phenomenon.

■*Rāmānuja* qualifies the non-dual philosophy so as to make the personal God supreme. While *Brahman*, souls and the world are all different and eternal, they are at the same **time inseparable²**. Inseparability is not identity. *Brahman* is related to the two others as soul to body. They are sustained by Him and subject to His control. *Rāmānuja* says that while God exists for Himself, matter and souls exist for His sake and subserve His purposes. The three together form an organic whole. *Brahman* is the inspiring principle of the souls and the world. The souls are different from, but not independent of, God. They are said to be one only in the sense that they all belong to the same class. The ideal is the enjoyment of freedom and bliss in the world of *Nārāyaṇa*, and the means to it is either *prapatti* or *bhakti*. The individual souls, even when they are freed through the influence of their devotion and the grace of God, retain their separate

individuality. For him and Madhva, God, the author of all grace, saves those who give to Him the worship of love and faith.

■For Madhva there are five eternal distinctions between (1) God and the individual soul, (2) God and matter, (3) soul and matter, (4) one soul and another, (5) one particle of matter and another. The supreme being endowed with all auspicious qualities is called *Viṣṇu*, and *Lakṣmī* is His power dependent on Him. *Mokṣa* is release from rebirth and residence in the abode of *Nārāyaṇa*. Human souls are innumerable, and each of them is separate and eternal. The divine souls are destined for salvation. Those who are neither very good nor very bad existence¹ = CU = *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI. 8. 7; BU= *brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I. 4. 10.

time inseparable² = *a-pṛthak-siddha*.

Page 27

are subject to *sarṁsāra*, and the bad go to hell. Right knowledge of God and devotion to Him are the means to salvation. Without divine grace, there can be no salvation.¹

Baladeva adopts the view of *acintya-bhedābheda*. Difference and non-difference are positive facts of experience and yet cannot be reconciled. It is an incomprehensible synthesis of opposites. *Rāmānuja*, *Bhāskara*, *Nimbārka* and *Baladeva* believe that there is change in Brahman, but not of Brahman.²

there can be no salvation.¹ = *mokṣas ca Viṣṇu-prasādena vinā na labhyate. Viṣṇu-tattva-nirṇaya*.

Brahman.² = See *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, pp. 751-765; *Bhagavad-gītā*, pp. 15-20.)

Page 27.

Chapter V Introduction. Relation to the Vedas: *Ṛg Veda*

Even the most inspired writers are the products of their environment. They gave voice to the deepest thoughts of their own epoch. A complete abandonment of the existing modes of thought is psychologically impossible. The writers of the *Ṛg Veda* speak of the ancient makers of the path.¹ When there is an awakening of the mind, the old symbols are interpreted in a new way.

■In pursuance of the characteristic genius of the Indian mind, not to shake the beliefs of the common men, but to lead them on by stages to the understanding of the deeper philosophical meaning behind their beliefs, the *Upaniṣad* s develop the Vedic ideas and symbols and give to them, where necessary, new meanings which relieve them of their formalistic character. Texts from the Vedas are often quoted in support of the teachings of the *Upaniṣad* s.

■The thought of the *Upaniṣad* s marks an advance on the ritualistic doctrines of the *Brāhmaṇas*, which are themselves different in spirit from the hymns of the *Ṛg Veda*. A good deal of time should have elapsed for this long development. The mass of the *Ṛg Veda* must also have taken time to produce,

makers of the path¹ = *idam nama ṛṣibhyaḥ pūrvajebhyaḥ pūrvabhyaḥ pathi-kṛdbhyaḥ. X. 14. 15.)*

Page 28

especially when we remember that what has survived is probably a small part compared to **what has been lost**.¹

■ Whatever may be the truth about the racial affinities of the Indian and the European peoples, there is no doubt that Indo-European languages derive from a common source and illustrate a relationship of mind. **In its vocabulary and inflexions Sanskrit**² presents a striking similarity to Greek and Latin. Sir William Jones explained it by tracing them all to a common source. 'The Sanskrit language,' he said in 1786, in an address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 'whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologist could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from **some common source** which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family.'

The oldest Indo-European literary monument is the **Rg Veda**.³ The word 'Veda,' from *vid*, to know, means knowledge...

¹**what has been lost**² = 'We have no right to suppose that we have even a hundredth part of the religious and popular poetry that existed during the Vedic age.' Max Müller: *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (1899), p. 41.
²**sam̐skṛta** : perfectly constructed speech.

³**Rg Veda** = 'The *Veda* has a two-fold interest: it belongs to the history of the world and to the history of India. In the history of the world, the *Veda* fills a gap, which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to times of which we have no records anywhere, and gives us the very words of a generation of men, of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race and as long as we collect in libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contains the records of the Aryan branch of mankind will belong for ever to the *Rg Veda*.' Max Müller: *Ancient History of Sanskrit Literature* (1859), p. 63. **The Rg Veda, according to Ragozin 'is, without the shadow of a doubt, the oldest book of the Aryan family of nations.'** *Vedic India* (1895), p. 114.

Winternitz observes: 'If we wish to learn to understand the beginnings of our own culture, if we wish to understand the oldest Indo-European culture, we must go to India, where the oldest literature of an Indo-European people is preserved. For, whatever view we may adopt on the problem of an antiquity of Indian literature, we can safely say that the oldest monument of the literature of the Indians is at the same time the oldest monument of the Indo-European literature which we possess.' *A History of Indian Literature*, E.T. Vol. I (1927), p. 6. See also Bloomfield: *The Religion of the Veda* (1908), p. 17. He says that the *Rg Veda* is not only 'the most ancient literary monument of India' but also 'the most ancient literary document of the Indo-European peoples.' 'This literature is earlier than that of either Greece or Israel, and reveals a high level of civilisation among those who found in it the expression of their worship.' according to Dr. Nicol Macnicol. See his *Hindu Scriptures* (1938), p. XIV.

Page 29

■ *par excellence*, sacred wisdom. Science is the knowledge of secondary causes, of the created details; wisdom is the knowledge of primary causes, of the Uncreated Principle. The *Veda* is not a single literary work like the *Bhagavad-gītā* or a collection of a number of books compiled at some particular time as the *Tri-piṭaka* of the Buddhists or the Bible of the Christians, but a whole literature which arose in the course of centuries and was handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. When no books were available, memory was strong and tradition exact. To impress on the people the need for preserving this literature, the *Veda* was declared to be sacred knowledge or divine revelation. Its sanctity arose spontaneously owing to its age and the nature and value of its contents. It has since become the standard of thought and feeling for Indians.

■ The name *Veda* signifying wisdom suggests a genuine spirit of inquiry. The road by which the Vedic sages travelled was the road of those who seek to inquire and understand. The questions they investigate are of a philosophical character. 'Who, verily, knows and who can here declare it, **where it was born and whence comes this creation?**¹ The gods are later than this world's production. Who knows, then, whence it first came into being?' According to *Sāyaṇa*, *Veda* is the book which describes the transcendent means for the fulfilment of well-being and the **avoidance of evils.**²

■ There are four *Vedas*: the ***Rg Veda***, which is mainly composed...

¹(X. 129)

²**avoidance of evils** = *iṣṭa-prāpty-anīṣṭa-parihārayoralaukikam upāyam yo grantho vedayati sa vedaḥ.*

Page 30

of songs of **praise**; the ***Yajur Veda***, which deals with sacrificial **formulas**; the ***Sāma Veda*** which refers to **melodies**; and the ***Atharva Veda***, which has a large number of **magic formulas**. Each contains **four sections** consisting of: (i) ***Samhitā*** or collection of hymns, prayers, benedictions, sacrificial formulas and litanies; (ii) ***Brāhmaṇas*** or prose treatises discussing the significance of sacrificial rites and ceremonies; (iii) ***Araṇyakas*** or forest texts, which are partly included in the *Brāhmaṇas* and partly reckoned as independent; and (iv) ***Upaniṣads***.

■ *Veda* denotes the whole literature made up of the two portions called ***Mantra and Brāhmaṇa***.¹

Mantra and Brāhmaṇa. = *mantra-brāhmaṇayor veda nāmadheyam. Apastamba in yajna-paribhāṣa.*

Mantra is derived by Yāska from manana, thinking.² (*Nirukta VII. 3. 6.*) It is that by which the contemplation of God is attempted. *Brāhmaṇa* deals with the elaboration of worship into ritual. Parts of *Brāhmaṇas* are called *Araṇyakas*. Those who continue their studies without marrying are called *araṇas* or *araṇamānas*. They lived in hermitages or forests. The forests where *araṇas* (ascetics) live are *araṇyas*. Their speculations were contained in *Āraṇyakas*.

■ *Yāska* refers to different interpretations of the *Vedas* by the ritualists (*yājñikas*), the etymologists (*nairuktas*) and mythologists (*aitihāsikas*). The *Brhad-devatā* which comes after *yāska's nirukta* also refers to various schools of thought in regard to Vedic interpretations. It mentions *ātma-vāḍins* or those who relate the *Vedas* to the psychological processes.

■ **The *Rg Veda*, which comprises 1,017 hymns divided into ten books,** represents the earliest phase in the evolution of religious consciousness where we have not so much the commandments of priests as the outpourings of poetic minds who were struck by the immensity of the universe and the inexhaustible mystery of life. The reactions of simple yet unsophisticated minds to the wonder of existence are portrayed in these joyous hymns, which attribute divinity to the striking aspects of nature. We have **worship of devas,**³ deities like *Sūrya* (sun),

³**worship of devas** = The *devas* are according to *Amara*, the immortals, *amarāḥ*, free from old age, *nirjarāḥ*, the ever-shining ones, *devāḥ*, heavenly beings, *tridaśāḥ*, the knowing ones, *vibudhāḥ*, and gods or deities, *surāḥ*.

Page 31

Soma (moon), *Agni* (fire), *Dyaus* (sky), ***Prthivi* (earth)**¹,

¹***Prthivi* (earth)** = In Greek mythology Zeus as sky-father is in essential relation to earth mother. See A. B. Cook:

Maruts (storm winds), *Vāyu* (wind), *Ap* (water), *Uṣas* (dawn).

Even deities whose names are no longer so transparent were originally related to natural phenomena such as *Indra*, *Varuṇa*, *Mitra*, *Aditi*, *Viṣṇu*, *Pūṣan*, the two *Asvins*, *Rudra* and *Parjanya*. Qualities which emphasise particular important aspects of natural phenomena attained sometimes to the rank of independent deities.²

²independent deities = The ancient Greeks advanced the natural elements into gods by deifying their attributes. Apollo shone in the sun. Boreas howled in the mountain blasts. Zeus threatened in the lightning and struck in the thunderbolt.

Savitṛ, the inspirer or life-giver, *Vivasvat*, the shining, were at first attributes and names of the Sun but later became independent Sun-gods. Some of the deities worshipped by the different tribes were admitted into the Vedic pantheon. *Pūṣan*, originally the Sun-god of a small shepherd tribe, becomes the protector of travellers, the god who knows all the paths. Some deities have their basis in abstract qualities such as *śraddhā*, faith, *manyu*, anger.³

³as *śraddhā*, faith, *manyu*, anger = These occur in the latest hymns of the tenth book of the *Ṛg Veda*.

We also come across *Ṛbhus* or elves, *Apsaras* or nymphs, *Gandharvas* or forest or field spirits.

The Vedic Indians were not phallus worshippers. *śiśna-devāḥ* (*Ṛg Veda* VII. 21. 5; X. 99. 3) does not mean phallus-worshippers. Yāska says that it refers to non-celibates: *śiśna-devāḥ a-brahmacaryāḥ*, IV. 9. *Sāyaṇa* adopts this view: *śiśnena divyanti kṛṣṇanti, iti śiśna-devāḥ, a-brahmacaryāḥ ity arthaḥ*. Though it is a *bahuvrīhi* compound meaning those whose deity is phallus, the word '*deva*' is to be taken in its secondary sense, *lakṣyārtha*. It means those who are addicted to sex life. The plural number also suggests that it is not a deity that is meant.

Cp. the later Sanskrit. *śiśnodara-parāyaṇāḥ*. 'Addicted to the gratification of sex and stomach.'

Asuras who become the enemies of the gods in the later Vedic works retain in the *Ṛg Veda* the old meaning of 'possessors of wonderful power' or 'God', which the corresponding word *ahura* has in the *avesta*.⁵

⁵the *avesta*. = The Persians call their country Iran, which is the *airiya* of the *avesta* and signifies the land of the Aryans. Even to-day after centuries of Islam, the influences of Aryan thought are not altogether effaced. The Muslims of Persia tend to emphasise passages of the *Qurān* which are capable of a mystic interpretation. Professor E. G. Browne writes: 'When in the seventh century the warlike followers of the Arabian prophet swept across Iran, overwhelming in their tumultuous onslaught an ancient dynasty and a venerable religion, a change, apparently almost unparalleled in history, was in the course of a few years brought over the land. Where for centuries the ancient hymns of the *avesta* had been chanted and the sacred fire had burned, the cry of the Mu'ezzin summoning the faithful to prayer rang out from minarets reared on the ruins of the temples of *ahura mazda*. The priests of Zoroaster fell by the sword; the ancient books perished in the flames; and soon none were left to represent a once mighty faith but a handful of exiles flying towards the shores of India and a despised and persecuted remnant in solitary Yezd and remote Kirman.... Yet, after all, the change was but skin deep and soon a host of heterodox sects born on Persian soil - Shi'ites, Sufis, Ismailis and philosophers arose to vindicate the claim of Aryan thought to be free and to transform the religion forced on the nation by Arab steel into something which, though still wearing a semblance of Islam, had a significance widely different from that which one may fairly suppose was intended by the Arabian prophet.' *A Year amongst the Persians* (1927), p. 134.)

Page 32

■ *Varuṇa*, a god common both to the Indians and the Iranians, regulates the course of the sun and the sequence of the seasons. He keeps the world in order and is the embodiment of truth and order, which

are binding on mankind. He protects moral laws and punishes the sinful. The Vedic Indians approach Varuṇa in trembling and fear and in humble reverence and ask for forgiveness of sins.

Varuṇa = Varuṇa becomes *ahura mazda* (Ormuzd), the supreme God and Creator of the world. In one of those conversations with Zoroaster which embody the revelation that was made to him, it is recorded, *ahura* says, 'I maintain that sky there above, shining and seen afar and encompassing the earth all round. It looks like a palace that stands built of a heavenly substance firmly established with ends that lie afar, shining, in its body of ruby over the three worlds; it is like a garment inlaid with stars made of a heavenly substance that *mazda* puts on.' *Yasht* XIII. Like *Varuṇa*, who is the lord of *rta*, *ahura* is the lord of *aša*. As *Varuṇa* is closely allied with *mitra*, so is *ahura* with *mithra*, the sun-god. *Avesta* knows *verethragna* who is *vṛtrahan*, the slayer of *vṛtra*. *Dyaus*, *Apāmnapāt* (*apām napāt*), *Gandharva* (*Gandarewa*), *kṛśānu* (*Keresāni*), *Vāyu* (*Vayu*), *Yama*, son of *Vivasvant* (*Yima*, son of *Vivahvant*) as well as *Yajña* (*Yasna*), *Hotṛ* (*Zaotar*), *Atharva* priest (*Āthravan*). These point to the common religion of the undivided Indo-Aryans and Iranians.

In the later *avesta*, the supreme God is the sole creator but his attributes of the good spirit, righteousness, power, piety, health and immortality become personified as 'the Immortal Holy Ones.'

Page 32-33

Indra, who is a king among the gods, occupying the position of Zeus in the Greek Olympus, is invoked by those who are fighting and struggling. Agni is the mediator between men and gods. The hymns speak of him as a dear friend, the master of the house, *grha-pati*. He bears the sacrificial offerings to the gods and brings the gods down to the sacrifice. He is the wise one, the chief priest, *purohita*. Mitra is the god of light. When the Persians first emerge into history, Mitra is the god of light who drives away darkness. He is the defender of truth and justice, the protector of righteousness, the mediator between *ahura mazda* and man.

the mediator between *ahura mazda* and man. = Mithraism is older than Christianity by centuries. The two faiths were in acute rivalry until the end of the third century A.D. The form of the Christian Eucharist is very like that of the followers of *mithra*.

■Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni are the three eyes of the great illuminator Sun.

Sun = *citram devānam ud agād anīkam cakṣur mitrasya Varuṇasyāgneḥ |*

āprā dyāvā prthivī antarikṣam Sūrya ātmā jagatas tasthuṣas ca || Ṛg Veda I. 151. 1)

Aditi is said to be space and air, mother, father and son. She is all comprehending.

She is all comprehending =

aditir dyaus aditir antarikṣam,

aditir mātā, sa pitā, sa putraḥ |

visve-devā aditiḥ panca-jaṇā

aditir jātam, aditir janitvam || Ṛg Veda I. 89.10.

For Anaximander, the boundless and undifferentiated substance, which fills the universe and is the matrix in which our world is formed, is *theos*.

Deities presiding over groups of natural phenomena became identified. The various Sun-gods, *Sūrya*, *Savitṛ*, *Mitra* and *Viṣṇu* tended to be looked upon as one. Agni (Fire) is regarded as one deity with three forms, the sun or celestial fire, lightning or atmospheric fire and the earthly fire manifest in the altar and in the homes of men.

■ Again when worship is accorded to any of the Vedic deities, we tend to make that deity, the supreme one, of whom all others are forms or manifestations. He is given all the attributes of a monotheistic deity. As several deities are exalted to this first place, we get what has been called henotheism, as distinct from monotheism. There is, of course, a difference between a psychological monotheism where one god fills the entire life of the worshipper and a metaphysical monotheism. Synthesising processes, classification of gods, simplification of the ideas of divine attributes and powers prepare for a metaphysical unity, the one principle informing all the deities.

the one principle informing all the deities = *mahad devānām asuratvam ekam - Ṛg Veda III. 55. 11* - 'One fire burns in many ways: one sun illumines the universe; one divine dispels all darkness. He alone has revealed himself in all these forms.'

*eka evāgnir bahudhā samiddha
ekaḥ sūryo visvam anu prabhūtaḥ |
ekaivoṣaḥ sarvam idaṁ vibhāty
ekam vaidam vi babhūva sarvam || Ṛg Veda VIII. 58. 2.*

Agni, kindled in many places, is but one;

One the all-pervading Sun;

One the Dawn, spreading her light over the earth.

All that exists is one, whence is produced the whole world.

Ṛg Veda VIII. 58. 2.

See also X. 81. 3.)

Page 34.

The supreme is one who pervades the whole universe. He is gods and men. = *yo naḥ pitā janitā yo vidhātā dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni visvā | yo devānām nāmadhā eka eva tam samprasnam bhuvanā yanty anyā. - Ṛg Veda X. 82. 3.*

The Vedic Indians were sufficiently logical to realise that the attributes of creation and rulership of the world could be granted only to one being. We have such a being in Prajā-pati, the lord of creatures,

Viśva-karman, the world-maker. Thus the logic of religious faith asserts itself in favour of monotheism. This tendency is supported by the conception of *rta* or order. The universe is an ordered whole; it is not disorderliness (*akosmia*). See Plato: *Gorgias* 507. E. If the endless variety of the world suggests numerous deities, the unity of the world suggests a unitary conception of the Deity.

■ If philosophy takes its rise in wonder, if the impulse to it is in scepticism, we find the beginnings of doubt in the *R̥g Veda*. It is said of Indra: 'Of whom they ask, where is he ? Of him indeed they also say, he is not.' (II. 12.) In another remarkable hymn, the priests are invited to offer a song of praise to Indra, 'a true one, if in truth he is, for many say, "There is no Indra, who has ever seen him ? To whom are we to direct the song of praise ?" (VIII. 100. 3 ff.) When reflection reduced the deities who were once so full of vigour to shadows, we pray for faith: 'O Faith, endow us with belief.' (X. 151. 5.) Cosmological thought wonders whether speech and air were not to be regarded as the ultimate essence of all things. (**Germ of the world, the deities' vital spirit, This god moves ever as his will inclines him. His voice is heard, his shape ever viewless: Let us adore this air with our oblation. X. 168. 4.**) In another hymn Prajā-pati is praised as the creator and preserver of the world and as the one god, but the refrain occurs in verse after verse 'What god shall we honour by means of sacrifice ? ' (*kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema ? X.121.*) Certainty is the source of inertia in thought, while doubt makes for progress.

Page 35

■ The most remarkable account of a superpersonal monism is to be found in the hymn of Creation. (X. 129.) It seeks to explain the universe as evolving out of One. But the One is no longer a god like Indra or Varuṇa, Prajā-pati or Viśva-karman. The hymn declares that all these gods are of late or of secondary origin. They know nothing of the beginning of things. The first principle, that one, *tad ekam*, is uncharacterisable. It is without qualities or attributes, even negative ones. To apply to it any description is to limit and bind that which is **limitless and boundless. (See *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III.9.26.)** 'That one breathed breathless. There was nothing else.' It is not a dead abstraction but indescribable perfection of being. Before creation all this was darkness shrouded in darkness, **an impenetrable void or abyss of waters**, until through the power of **tapas**, or the fervour of austerity, the One evolved into determinate self-conscious being.

an impenetrable void or abyss of waters = Cp. *Genesis* I.2, where the Spirit of God is said to move on the face of the waters, and the Purāṇic description of *Viṣṇu* as resting on the Serpent Infinite in the milky ocean. Homer's *Iliad* speaks of Oceanos as 'the source of all things' including even the gods. 14, 246, 302. Many others, North American Indians, Aztecs, etc. have such a belief.

According to Aristotle, Thales considered that all things were made of water. The Greeks had a myth of Father-Ocean as the origin of all things. Cp. *Nṛsimha-pūrva-tāpanī Upaniṣad* I.1.

***Apo vā idam āsan salilam eva, sa prajā-patir ekaḥ puṣkara-parṇe samabhavat, tasyāntar manasi kāmaḥ samavartata idam sṛjeyam iti.* 'All this remained as water along (without any form). Only Prajā-pati came to be in the lotus leaf. In his mind arose the desire, "let me create this (the world of names and forms)."** Two explanations are offered for the presence of identical symbols used in an identical manner in different parts of the world. W. J. Perry and his friends argue that these myths and symbols were derived originally from Egyptian culture, which once spread over the world, leaving behind these vestiges when it receded. This theory does not bear close examination and is not widely held. The other explanation is that human beings are very much the same the world over, their minds are similarly constituted and their experience in life under primitive conditions does not differ from one part of the world to another and it is not unnatural that identical ideas regarding the origin and nature of the world arise independently.)

tapas = tapas literally means heat, creative heat by which the brood hen produces life from the egg.

He becomes a creator by self-limitation. Nothing outside himself can limit him. He only can limit himself. He does not depend on anything other than himself for his manifestation. This power of actualisation is

given the name of *māyā* in later *Vedānta*, for the manifestation does not disturb the unity and integrity of the One. The One becomes manifested by its own intrinsic power, by its *tapas*. The not-self is not independent of the self. It is the *avyakta* or the unmanifested. While it is dependent on the Supreme Self, it appears as external to the individual ego and is the source of its ignorance. The waters represent the unformed non-being in which the divine lay concealed in darkness. We have now the absolute in itself, the power of self-limitation, the emergence of the determinate self and the not-self, the waters, darkness, *parā-prakṛti*. The abyss is the not-self, the mere potentiality, the bare abstraction, the receptacle of all developments. The self-conscious being gives it existence by impressing his forms or Ideas on it. The unmanifested, the indeterminate receives determinations from the self-conscious Lord. **It is not absolute nothing, for there is never a state in which it is not in some sense.**

which it is not in some sense = See Paingala Upaniṣad I. 3. In the Puraṇas, this idea is variously developed. Brahmā Purāṇa makes out that God first created the waters which are called *nāra* and released his seed into them; therefore he is called *Nārāyaṇa*. The seed grew into a golden egg from which Brahmā was born of his own accord and so is called *svayambhū*. Brahmā divided the egg into two halves, heaven and earth. I. I. 38ff.

The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa says that Brahmā, known as *Nārāyaṇa*, rested on the surface of the waters. Vidyaṛaṇya on *mahāNārāyaṇa Upaniṣad III. 16* says *nara-sarīrāṇām upādāna-rūpāṇy annādi-panca-bhūtāni nara-sabdenocyante, teṣu bhūteṣu yā āpo mukhyāḥtā ayanam ādhāro yasya viṣṇoḥ so'yaṁ Nārāyaṇaḥ samudra-jala-sāyī.*

**Cp. *āpo nārāiti prokta āpo vai nara-sūnavah
ayanam tasya tāḥ proktās tena Nārāyaṇas smrtaḥ* //**

The Viṣṇu-dharmottara says that Viṣṇu created the waters and the creation of the egg and Brahmā took place afterwards.

The whole world is formed by the union of being and not-being and the Supreme Lord has facing him this indetermination, **this aspiration to existence.**

this aspiration to existence = Speaking of Boehme's mystic philosophy which influenced William Law, Stephen Hobhouse writes that he believes 'in the *Ungrund*, the fathomless abyss of freedom or indifference, which is at the root, so to speak, of God and of all existences ... the idea of the mighty but blind face of Desire that arises out of this abyss and by means of imagination shapes itself into a purposeful will which is the heart of the Divine personality.' *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law* (1948), p. 307.

Page 37.

Rg Veda describes not-being (*asat*) as lying 'with outstretched feet' **like a woman in the throes of childbirth. (I. 10. 72.)** As the first product of the divine mind, the mind's first fruit, came forth *kāma*, desire, the cosmic will, which is the primal source of all existence. **In this *kāma*, 'the wise searching in their hearts, have by contemplation (*manīṣā*), discovered the connection between existent and the non-existent.'**

= *kāma* becomes defined later as *icchā*, desire and *kriyā*, action. It is the creative urge. Cp. with *kāma*, the Orphic god, Eros, also called Phanes, who is the principle of generation by whom the world is created.

The world is created by the personal self-conscious God who acts by his intelligence and will.

■ This is how the Vedic seers understood in some measure how they and the whole creation arose. The writer of the hymn has the humility to admit that all this is a surmise, for it is not possible for us to be sure of things, which lie so far **beyond human knowledge.**

beyond human knowledge = See also I. 16. 4. 32, where the writer says that he who made all this does not probably know its real nature.

'He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven,
He, verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.' X. 129. 7 - English translation by Max Muller.

The hymn suggests the distinction between the Absolute Reality and Personal God, *Brahman* and *Īśvara*, the Absolute beyond being and knowledge, the super-personal, super-essential godhead in its utter transcendence of all created beings and its categories and the Real manifested to man in terms of the highest categories of human experience. Personal Being is treated as a development or manifestation of the Absolute.

In another hymn, (I. 10. 121) the first existent being is called Prajā-pati, facing the chaos of waters. He impregnates the waters and becomes manifest in them in the form of **a golden egg or germ, from which the whole universe develops.**

a golden egg or germ, from which the whole universe develops. = *hiranya-garbha*, literally gold-germ, source of golden light, the world-soul from which all powers and existences of this world are derived. It comes later to mean Brahmā, the creator of the world. In the Orphic Cosmogony we have similar ideas. Professor F. M. Cornford writes, 'In the beginning there was a primal undifferentiated unity, called by the Orphics "Night." Within this unity the world egg was generated, or according to some accounts, fashioned by Ageless Time (Chronos). **The egg divided into two halves, Heaven and Earth. Mythically Heaven and Earth are Father and Mother of all life.** In physical terms the upper half of the egg forms the dome of the sky, the lower contains the moisture or slime from which the dry land (Earth) arose. Between earth and heaven appeared a winged spirit of light and life, known by many names, as Phanes, Eros, Metis, Ericapaeus, etc. The function of this spirit, in which sex was as yet undifferentiated, was to generate life either by the immediate projection of seed from itself, or by uniting the sundered parents, Heaven and Earth in marriage. The offspring were successive pairs of supreme gods; Oceanus and Tethys, Chronos and Rhea, Zeus and Hera.' *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. IV (1926), p. 536. Anaximander develops a scheme similar to the Orphic cosmology: (1) There is a primal undifferentiated unity. (2) A separation of opposites in pairs to form the world order. (3) A reunion of these sundered opposites to generate life. This formula is stated by Euripides (*Melanippe, Fragment 484*): 'The tale is not mine; I had it from my mother; that Heaven and Earth were once one form, and when they had been sundered from one another, they gave birth to all things and brought them up into the light.'

Page 38.

He is called the one life or soul of the gods (*devānām asuḥ*).

It is quite possible that the sāmkhya system was a development from the ideas suggested in this hymn. Primitive matter (waters) is said to be existent independently and *puruṣa* first comes into determinate consciousness in intelligence (*mahat* or *buddhi*), which is a product of matter (*avyakta*).

Hiranya-garbha is the first born determinate existent while *Brahman-Īśvara*, **Absolute-God is in the realm of the transcendent.**

Absolute-God is in the realm of the transcendent.

ko dadarśa prathamam jāyamānam asthanvantam yad anasthā bibharti |

bhūmyā asursṛgātmā kva svit ko vidvaṁsam upāgāt praṣṭum etat || Rg Veda I. 164. 4.

This distinction which becomes established in the *Upaniṣad s* has its parallels in other historical developments. Cp. the three Bodies of the Buddha, *DharmakAya* or the Absolute Reality, *SambhogakAya*, the personal God or the Logos and *NirmANakAya* or the historical embodiment of the Logos in a material body born into the world at a given moment of time. See *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan Vol. I, pp. 597-9. The Sufis regard Al Haqq as the Absolute Reality, the abyss of godhead, Allah as the personal Lord, and Muhammad the prophet as the historical embodiment.

The world is said to be a projection, emission or externalisation of the ideal being of God, of the eternal order, which is eternally present in the divine wisdom.

■The *Puruṣa Sūkta* (*Ṛg Veda X. 90.*) repeats in concrete form the ideal of a primeval being existing before any determinate existence and evolving himself in the empirical universe. The being is conceived as a cosmic person with a thousand heads, eyes and feet, who filled the whole universe and extended beyond it, by the length of ten fingers, (*sa bhūmim visvato vrhivā aty atiṣṭhad dasāngulam.*) the universe being constituted by a fourth of his nature. (*pādo'sya visvā bhūāni tripād asyāmṛtam divi.*) The world form is not a complete expression or manifestation of the divine Reality. It is only a fragment of the divine that is manifested in the cosmic process. **The World-soul is a partial expression of the Supreme Lord.**

Page 39

■Creation is interpreted in the Vedas as development rather than the bringing into being something not hitherto existent. The first principle is manifested in the whole world. *Puruṣa* by his sacrifice becomes the whole world. This view prepares for the development of the doctrine, which is emphasised in the *Upaniṣad s* that the spirit in man is one with the spirit, which is the *prius* of the world.

■Within this world we have the one positive principle of being and yet have varying degrees of existence marked by varying degrees of penetration or participation of nonentity by divine being. God as *Hiraṇya-garbha* is nothing of the already made. He is not an ineffective God who sums up in himself all that is given.

■*Ṛg Veda* used two different concepts, generation and birth, and something artificially produced to account for creation. Heaven and earth are the parents of the gods; or the Creator of the world is a smith or a carpenter.

Again 'In the beginning was the golden germ
From his birth he was sole lord of creation.
He made firm the earth and this bright sky; ' ***Ṛg Veda X. 121. 1.***

In this hymn Prajā-pati, the lord of offspring, assumes the name of *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the golden germ, and in the *Atharva Veda* and later literature *Hiraṇya-garbha* himself becomes a supreme deity. (In the *Atharva Veda* he appears as the embryo which is produced in the waters at the beginning of creation. IV. 2. 8.) The *Ṛg Veda* is familiar with the four-fold distinction of (i) the Absolute, the One, beyond all dualities and distinctions, (ii) the self-conscious Subject confronting the object, (iii) the World-soul, and (iv) the world. (This list finds a parallel, as we shall see, in the hierarchy of being given in the *mANDUkya Upaniṣad* with its four grades of consciousness, the waking or the perceptual, the dreaming or the imaginative, the self in deep sleep or the conceptual, the *turīya* or the transcendent, spiritual consciousness which is not so much a grade of consciousness as the total consciousness.)

Plato in the *Timaeus* teaches that the Supreme Deity, the Demi-urge, creates a universal World-Soul, through which the universe becomes an organism. The World-Soul bears the image of the Ideas, and the world-body is fashioned in the same pattern. If the whole world has not been ordered as God would have desired, it is due to the necessity

which seems to reside in an intractable material, which was in 'disorderly motion' before the Creator imposed form on it.)

The monistic emphasis led the Vedic thinkers to look upon the Vedic deities as different names of the One Universal Godhead, each representing some essential power of the diving being. 'They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni. He is the heavenly bird Garutmat. **To what is one, the poets give many a name. They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśva.'**

I.164. 46. *Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti. Ṛg Veda X. 114. 4.* See *Bhagavad-gīta X. 41.* Zeus is the supreme ruler of gods and men; other gods exist to do his bidding.

Cp. Cicero. 'God being present everywhere in Nature, can be regarded in the field as Ceres; or on the sea as Neptune; and elsewhere in a variety of forms in all of which He may be worshipped.' *De Nature Deorum.*

For Plutarch and Maximus of Tyre, the different gods worshipped in the third century Roman Empire were symbolic representations of a Supreme God who is unknowable in his inmost nature.

'God himself, the father and fashioner of all ... is unnameable by any lawgiver, unutterable by any voice, not to be seen by any eye. ... But if a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of God by the art of Phidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by fire, I have no anger for their divergence; only let them know, let them love, let them remember.'

In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, it is said that Prajā-pati assumed certain forms of fish (*Matsya*), tortoise (*Kūrma*) and boar (*Varāha*) for the attainment of certain ends. When the doctrine of *avatāras*, incarnations, becomes established, these three become the incarnations of *Viṣṇu*.)

The real that lies behind the tide of temporal change is one, though we speak of it in many ways. **Agni, Yama, etc., are symbols. They are not gods in themselves. They express different qualities of the object worshipped.** The Vedic seers were not conscious of any iconoclastic mission. They did not feel called upon to denounce the worship of the various deities as disastrous error or mortal sin. They led the worshippers of the many deities to the worship of the one and only God by a process of reinterpretation and reconciliation.

Page 41

■ The reaction of the local cults on the Vedic faith is one of the many causes of variety of the Vedic pantheon. People in an early stage of culture are so entirely steeped in the awe and reverence, which have descended to them that they cannot easily or heartily adopt a new pattern of worship. **Even when militant religions fell the tall trees of the forest, the ancient beliefs remain as an undergrowth. The catholic spirit of Hinduism which we find in the *Ṛg Veda* has always been ready to give shelter to foreign beliefs and assimilate them in its own fashion. While preferring their own, the Vedic Indians had the strength to comprehend other peoples' ways.**

There is no suggestion in the *Ṛg Veda* of the illusory character of the empirical world. We find varied accounts of creation. The Supreme is compared to a carpenter or a smith who fashions or smelts the world into being. Sometimes he is said to beget all beings. He pervades all things as air or ether (*Akāśa*) pervades the universe. He animates the world as the life-breath (*prāṇa*) animates the human body, a comparison which has been developed with remarkable ingenuity by *Rāmānuja*.

■ *Ṛg Veda* raises the question of the nature of the human self, *ko nu ātmā*. (I. 164. 4.) It is the controller of the body, the unborn part, *ajo bhāgaḥ*, (X. 16. 4.) which survives death. It is distinguished from the *jīva* or the individual soul. (I. 113. 161; I. 164. 30.) The famous verse of the two birds dwelling in one body, which is taken up by the *Upaniṣad*s, (See *Munḍaka Upaniṣad* III. 1. 1; *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad* IV. 6.) distinguishes the individual soul which enjoys the fruits of actions from the spirit

which is merely a passive spectator. (I. 164. 17. *atra laukika-pakṣa-dvaya-drhṣṭāntena jīva-paramātmānau stūyete. Sāyaṇa.*) This distinction between the individual soul and the supreme self is relevant to the cosmic process and is not applicable to the supreme supra-cosmic transcendence. Those who think that the distinction is to be found in the Supreme Transcendence do not know their own origin, *pitarāṃ na veda.*

*yasmin vṛkṣe madhvadaḥ suparṇā
nivisante suvate cādhi visve
tasyed Ahuḥ pippalāṃ khādv agre
tan nonnasad yaḥ pitarāṃ na veda. - Ṛg Veda I. 164. 22.)*

The individual souls belong to the world of *Hiraṇya-garbha.*

Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

Page 42.

'Let this mortal clay (self) be the immortal god.' (*Ṛg Veda VIII. 19. 25.*) 'Vouchsafe, O Indra, that we may be you.' (*tve indrāpy abhūma viprā dhiyaṃ vanema ṛtayā saparṃtah. Ṛg Veda II. 11. 12.*) One can become a *devata*, a deity, by one's own deeds. (*brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV. 3. 32; see also IV. 1. 2. devo bhūtvā devān āpyeti; see also Taittirīya Upaniṣad II. 8.*) The aim of the *Ṛg Veda* is to become like gods. The individual soul can become the Universal Spirit.

The way to spiritual attainment is through worship (The solitary reference to a temple is in *Ṛg Veda X. 107. 10. where the word deva-māna, building of a god, occurs.*) and moral life. Vestiges of Yoga discipline are found in a late passage (*Ṛg Veda X. 136. See also Āitareya Brāhmaṇa VII. 13.*) which describes the *kesins* or the long-haired ascetics with their yogic powers that enabled them to move at will in space. Of a *muni*, it is said that his mortal body men see but he himself fares on the path of the fairy spirits. His hair is long and his soiled garments are of yellow hue. *vāmadeva* when he felt the unity of all created things with his own self exclaimed: 'I am Manu, I am sUrya.' (*aham manur abhavaM sūryas cāham. Ṛg Veda IV. 26. 1.*) So also King Trasadasyu said that he was Indra and the great Varuṇa. (*aham rājā varuṇo. Ṛg Veda IV. 42. 2.*) The cardinal virtues are emphasised: 'O Mitra and Varuṇa, by your pathway of truth may we cross.' (*ṛtasya pathā vām ... tarema. VII. 65. 3.*) Mere memorising of the hymns is of no avail if we do not know the Supreme which sustains all.

*ṛco akṣare parame vyoman yasmin
devā adhi visve niṣeduḥ
yas tam na veda kiṃ kariṣyati
ya it tad vidus ta ime samāsate. - Ṛg Veda X. 164. 39. See Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad IV. 8.)*

Page 42-43

■ Primitive societies are highly complicated structures, balanced social organisations with their systems of belief and codes of behaviour. The fundamental needs of society are the moral and the spiritual, the military and the economic. In Indo-European society these three functions are assigned to three different groups, the men of learning and virtue, the men of courage and fight, and the men who provide the economic needs, (Luther felt that the three classes were ordained by God, the teaching class, the class of defenders and the working class.) the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Kṣatriya* and the *vaiṣya*. Below them were the *Shūdras* devoted to service. These distinctions are found in the *Ṛg Veda*, though they are not crystallised into castes. Ancient Iranian society was constituted in a similar pattern.

Page 43

■ Even the gods are classified into the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Kṣatriya* and the *Vaiṣya* according to the benefits which they provide, moral, military or economic. Our prayers are for righteousness, victory and abundance. *Sūrya*, *Savitṛ* are gods who confer spiritual benefits. *Indra* is a war god and *Aśvins* give us

health and food. In Roman mythology Jupiter provides spiritual benefits, Mars is the god of war and Quirinus is the god of plenty.

■ *Pitaras* or fathers or ancestral spirits receive divine worship. The king of the ancestral spirits who rules in the kingdom of the deceased is *Yama*, a god who belongs to the Indo-Iranian period. He is identical with *Yima* of the *Avesta*, who is the first human being, the primeval ancestor of the human race. As the first one to depart from this world and enter the realm of the dead, he became its king. The kingdom of the dead is in heaven, and the dying man is comforted by the belief that after death he will abide with King *Yama* in the highest heaven. The world of heaven is the place of refuge of the departed. (*Rg Veda* IV. 53. 2; X. 12. 1.) In the funeral hymn, (*Rg Veda* X. 14.) the departing soul is asked to 'go forth along the ancient pathway by which our ancestors have departed.' The Vedic Heaven is described in glowing terms 'where inexhaustible radiance dwells, where dwells the King *Vaivasvata*.' (*Rg Veda* IX. 113.)

Page 43-44

■ There is no reference to rebirth in the *Rg Veda*, though its elements are found. The passage of the soul from the body, its dwelling in other forms of existence, its return to human form, the determination of future existence by the principle of Karma are all mentioned. *Mitra* is born again. (*mitro jāyate punaḥ*. X. 85. 19.) The Dawn (*uṣas*) is born again and again. (*punaḥ punar jāyamānā*. I. 92. 10.) 'I seek neither release nor return.' (*na asyāḥ vasmi vimucaṁ na āvrhtaṁ punaḥ*. V. 46. 1.) 'The immortal self will be reborn in a new body due to its meritorious deeds.' (*jīvo mṛtasya carati svabhābhir, amartyo martyenā sa yoniḥ*. I. 164. 30; see also I. 164. 38.) Sometimes the departed spirit is asked to go to the plants and 'stay there with bodies.' (*Rg Veda* X. 16. 3.) There is retribution for good and evil deeds in a life after death. Good men go to heaven (I. 154. 5.) and others to the world presided over by *Yama*. (X. 14. 2.) Their work (*dharma*) decided their future. (X. 16. 3.)

■ In the *Rg Veda* we find the first adventures of the human mind made by those who sought to discover the meaning of existence and man's place in life, 'the first word spoken by the Aryan man.' (Max Muller. For further information on the *Rg Veda*, see *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan, Vol. I, Ch. II.)

Page 44 (book)

VI. The *Yajur*, the *Sāma* and the *Atharva Vedas*

■ Sacred knowledge is *trayī vidyā*. It is three-fold, being the knowledge of the *Rg*, the *Yajur* and the *Sāma Vedas*. The two latter use hymns of the *Rg* and the *Atharva Vedas* and arrange them for purposes of ritual. The aim of the *Yajur Veda* is the correct performance of the sacrifice to which is attributed the whole control of the universe. Deities are of less importance than the mechanism of sacrifice. In the *Atharva Veda* the position of the deities is still less important. A certain aversion to the recognition of the *Atharva Veda* as a part of the sacred canon is to be noticed. Even the old Buddhist texts speak of learned *Brāhmaṇas* versed in the three *Vedas*. (*Sutta Nipāta*. 1019.)

Page 45

■ Though we meet in the *Atharva Veda* many of the gods of the *Rg Veda*, their characters are not so distinct. The sun becomes *rohita*, the ruddy one. A few gods are exalted to the position of *Prajā-pati*, *Dhatṛ* (Establisher), *Vidhātṛ* (arranger), *Parameṣṭhin* (he that is in the highest). In a notable passage the Supreme in the form of *Varuṇa* is described as the universal, omnipresent witness. (*dvau saṁnisidhya yau mantrayete rājā tad veda Varuṇaḥ tṛtīyaḥ*.) There are references to *kāla* or time as the first cause of all existence, *kāma* or desire as the force behind the evolution of the universe, *skambha* or support who is conceived as the principle on which everything rests. Theories tracing the world to water or to air as the most subtle of the physical elements are to be met with.

■The religion of the *Atharva Veda* reflects the popular belief in numberless spirits and ghosts credited with functions connected in various ways with the processes of nature and the life of man. (*Atharva Veda*. XIX. 53.) We see in it strong evidence of the vitality of the pre-Vedic animist religion and its fusion with Vedic beliefs. All objects and creatures are either spirits or are animated by spirits. While the gods of the *Ṛg Veda* are mostly friendly ones we find in the *Atharva Veda* dark and demoniacal powers which bring disease and misfortune to mankind. We have to win them by flattering petitions and magical rites. We come across spells and incantations for gaining worldly ends. The Vedic seer was loth to let the oldest elements disappear without trace. Traces of the influence of the *Atharva Veda* are to be found in the *Upaniṣad* s. There are spells for the healing of diseases, *bhaiṣajyāni*, for life and healing *Ayuṣyāni sūktāni*. These were the beginnings of the medical science. (In *bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* VI. 4. we read of devices for securing the love of a woman or for the destruction of the lover of a wife. See also *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* .)

■The liberated soul is described as 'free from desire, wise, immortal, self-born ... not deficient in any respect ... wise, unageing, young.' (*Atharva Veda* X. 8. 44.)

VII. The *Brāhmaṇas* (book page 46)

■The elements of the ritualistic cult found in the Vedas are developed in the *Brāhmaṇas* into an elaborate system of ceremonies. While in the *Ṛg Veda* the sacrifices are a means for the propitiation of the gods, in the *Brāhmaṇas* they become ends in themselves. Even the gods are said to owe their position to sacrifices. There are many stories of the conflict between *devas* and *asuras* for the world power and of the way in which gods won through the power of the sacrifice. (*Kaṭha Saṁhitā* XXII. 9; *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* V. 3. 3; *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* XVIII. 1. 2.)

■It is not the mechanical performance of a sacrificial rite that brings about the desired result, but the knowledge of its real meaning. Many of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts are devoted to the exposition of the mystic significance of the various elements of the ritual. By means of the sacrifices we 'set in motion' the cosmic forces dealt with and get from them the desired results. The priests who knew the details of the aim, meaning and performance of the sacrifice came into great prominence. Gods became negligible intermediaries. If we perform a rite with knowledge, the expected benefit will result. Soon the actual performance of the rite becomes unnecessary. Ritualistic religion becomes subordinate to knowledge. (See Franklin Edgerton: 'The *Upaniṣad* s : What do they seek and Why ?' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, June, 1929.)

■The *Brāhmaṇas* are convinced that life on earth is, on the whole, a good thing. The ideal for man is to live the full term of his life on earth. As he must die, the sacrifice helps him to get to the world of heaven.

■ While the Vedic poets hoped for a life in heaven after death, there was uneasiness about the interference of death in a future life. The fear of re-death, *punar-mṛtyu* becomes prominent in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Along with the fear of re-death arose the belief of the imperishability of the self or the *ātman*, the essential part of man's being. Death is not the end but only causes new existences, which may not be better than the present one. Under the influence of popular animism, which sees souls similar to the human in all parts of nature, future life was brought down to earth. According to the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, a man has three births, the first, which he gets from his parents, the second through sacrificial ceremonies, and the third, which he obtains after death and cremation. (*trīṅ ha vai puruṣo jāyate, etan nu eva mātus ca adhi pitus ca agre jāyate; atha yaṁ yajnaḥ upanamati sa yad yajate, tad dvitīyaṁ jāyate; atha yatra mriyate yatra nam agnāv abhyādadhāti sa yat tatas sambhavati, tat tṛtīyaṁ jāyate*. XI. 2. 1. 1. See *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan Vol. I, Ch. III.)

VII. The *Āraṇyakas* Book page 47

■The *Āraṇyakas* do not give us rules for the performance of sacrifices and explanations of ceremonies, but provide us with the mystic teaching of the sacrificial religion. As a matter of fact, some of the oldest *Upaniṣad* s are included in the *Āraṇyaka* texts, (*Āitareya Upaniṣad* is included in the *Āitareya Āraṇyaka* which is tacked on to *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa: Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* and *Upaniṣad* belong to the *Brāhmaṇas* of the same names. *brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is found at the end of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of which the first section is an *Āraṇyaka* belongs to a *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāma Veda*. *Kena Upaniṣad* (*Talavakāra Upaniṣad*) belongs to the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*. *Īśa Upaniṣad* belongs to the *White Yajur Veda*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* and *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad* to the *Black Yajur Veda*, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* and *Praśna* belong to the *Atharva Veda*. *Maitrī*, though attributed to a school of *Black Yajur Veda*, is perhaps post-Buddhistic, judged by its language, style and contents.) which are meant for the study of those who are engaged in the vow of forest life, *vānaprasthas*. (*Aruṇeya Upaniṣad* . 2.) As those who retire to the forests are not like the householders bound to the ritual, the *Āraṇyakas* deal with the meaning and interpretation of the sacrificial ceremonies. It is possible that certain sacred rites were performed in the seclusion of the forests where teachers and pupils meditated on the significance of these rites. The distinction of *Brāhmaṇa* and *Āraṇyaka* is not an absolute one.

VIII. The *Upaniṣad* s book page 48

■The *Āraṇyakas* (*Āitareya Āraṇyaka* (III. 1. 1.) begins with the title '*The Upaniṣad of the Saṁhitā*', *athātas Saṁhitā yā upaniṣat*: see also *Sāmkhyāyana Āraṇyaka* VII. 2.) shade off imperceptibly into the *Upaniṣad* s even as the *Brāhmaṇas* shade off into the *Āraṇyakas*. While the student (*brahmacārin*) reads the hymns, the house-holder (*grhastha*) attends to the *Brāhmaṇas* which speak of the daily duties and sacrificial ceremonies, the hermit, the man of the forest (*vanaprastha*), discusses the *Āraṇyakas*, the monk who has renounced worldly attachment (*saṁnyāsin*), studies the *Upaniṣad* s, which specialise in philosophical speculations.

■The great teachers of the past did not claim any credit for themselves, but maintained that they only transmitted the wisdom of the ancients. (Cp. Confucius: 'I am not born endowed with knowledge. I am a man who loves the ancients and has made every effort to acquire their learning.' *Lun yu* VII. 19.) The philosophical tendencies implicit in the Vedic hymns are developed in the *Upaniṣad* s.

■Hymns to gods and goddesses are replaced by a search for the reality underlying the flux of things. 'What is that which, being known, everything else becomes known?' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* I.1.3; see also *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II. 8.) *Kena Upaniṣad* gives the story of the discomfiture of the gods who found out the truth that it is the power of *Brahman* which sustains the gods of fire, air, etc. (See also *brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III. 9. 1-10.) While the poets of the *Veda* speak to us of the many into which the radiance of the Supreme has split, the philosophers of the *Upaniṣad* s speak to us of the One Reality behind and beyond the flux of the world. The Vedic deities are the messengers of the One Light which has burst forth into the universal creation. They serve to mediate between pure thought and the intelligence of the dwellers in the world of sense.

Page 49

■When we pass from the Vedic hymns to the *Upaniṣad* s we find that the interest shifts from the objective to the subjective, from the brooding on the wonder of the outside world to the meditation on the significance of the self. The human self contains the clue to the interpretation of nature. The Real at the heart of the universe is reflected in the infinite depths of the soul. The *Upaniṣad* s give in some detail the

path of the inner ascent, the inward journey by which the individual souls get at the Ultimate Reality. Truth is within us. The different Vedic gods are envisaged subjectively. 'Making the Man (*Puruṣa*) their mortal house the gods indwelt him.' (*Atharva Veda XI. 8. 18.*) 'All these gods are in me.' (*Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa I. 14. 2.*) 'He is, indeed, initiated, whose gods within him are initiated, mind by Mind, voice by Voice.' (*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa VII. 4.*) The operation of the gods becomes an epiphany: 'This Brahma, verily, shines when one sees with the eye and likewise dies when one does not see.' (*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad II. 12 and 13.*) The deities seem to be not different from Plato's Ideas or Eternal Reasons.

■ In the *Upaniṣad* s we find a criticism of the empty and barren ritualistic religion. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad I. 2. 1, 7-11; brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad III. 9. 6, 21; Chāndogya Upaniṣad I. 10-12, IV. 1-3.*) Sacrifices were relegated to an inferior position. They do not lead to final liberation; they take one to the world of the Fathers from which one has to return to earth again in due course. (*brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad I. 5. 16, VI. 2. 16; Chāndogya Upaniṣad V. 10. 3; Prasna I. 9; Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad I. 2. 10.*) When all things are God's there is no point in offering to him anything, except one's will, one's self. The sacrifices are interpreted ethically. The three periods of life supersede the three *soma* offerings. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad III. 16.*) Sacrifices become self-denying acts like *puraṣa-medha* and *sarva-medha* which enjoin abandonment of all possessions and renunciation of the world. For example, the *brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* opens with an account of the horse sacrifice (*asva-medha*) and interprets it as a meditative act in which the individual offers up the whole universe in place of the horse, and by the renunciation of the world attains spiritual autonomy in place of earthly sovereignty. (*Devī bhāgavata* says that the Supreme took the form of the Buddha in order to put a stop to wrong sacrifices and prevent injury to animals.)

*duṣṭa-yajna-vighātāya pasu-himsā nivṛttaye
bauddha-rūpam dadhau yo'sau tasmai devāya te namaḥ.*

Animal sacrifices are found in the Vedas (inserted) by the twice-born who are given to pleasures and relishing tastes. Non-injury is, verily, the highest truth.

*dvijair bhoga-ratair vede darsitaṁ himsanam pasoh
jihvā-svāda-paraiḥ kāmam ahimsaiva parā matā.*

In every *homa* the expression *svāha* is used which implies the renunciation of the ego, *svatva-hanana*. (*Yāska* explains it thus: *su āhā iti vā, svā vāg āheti vā, svam prāheti vā, svāhutaṁ havir juhoti iti vā. Nirukta VIII. 21.*)

There is great stress on the distinction between the ignorant, narrow, selfish way which leads to transitory satisfactions and the way which leads to eternal life. *Yajna* is Karma, work.

(Cp. *bhagavad-gītā* III. 9. 10. *Manu* says: 'Learning is *brahma-yajna*, service of elders is *pitṛ-yajna*, honouring great and learned people is *deva-yajna*, performing religious acts and charity is *bhūta-yajna* and entertaining guests is *nara-yajna*.'

*adhyāpanam brahma-yajnaḥ pitṛ-yajnas tu tarpaṇam
homo daivo balir bhauto nṛ-yajno atithi-pūjanam.*)

It is work done for the improvement of the soul and the good of the world, *Atmonnataye jagaddhitāya. Sāṁkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa* of the *R̥g Veda* says that the self is the sacrifice and the human soul is the sacrificer, *puruṣo vai yajnaḥ, Atmā yajamānaḥ*. The observance of the Vedic ritual prepares the mind for final release, if it is in the right spirit.

(*Laugākṣi Bhāskara* points out at the end of the *artha-saṁgraha*: *so'yaṁ dharmāḥ yad uddisya vihitaḥ tad-uddesena kriyamānaḥ tad-hetuḥ, Īśvararāpaṇa-buddhyā kriyamānaḥ tu niḥsreyasa-hetuḥ.*)

Page 50-51

■ Prayer and sacrifice are means to philosophy and spiritual life. While true sacrifice is the abandonment of one's ego, prayer is the exploration of reality by entering the beyond that is within, by ascension of

consciousness. It is not theoretical learning. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VII. 1. 2. 3.) We must see the eternal, the celestial, the still. If it is unknowable and incomprehensible, it is yet realisable by self-discipline and integral insight. We can seize the truth not by logical thinking, but by the energy of our whole inner being. Prayer starts with faith, with complete trust in the Being to whom appeal is made, with the feeling of a profound need, and a simple faith that God can grant us benefits and is well disposed towards us. When we attain the blinding experience of the spiritual light, we feel compelled to proclaim a new law for the world.

Page 51.

■The *Upaniṣad* seers are not bound by the rules of caste, but extend the law of spiritual universalism to the utmost bounds of human existence. The story of *Satyakāma Jābāla*, who, though unable to give his father's name, was yet initiated into spiritual life, shows that the *Upaniṣad* writers appeal from the rigid ordinances of custom to those divine and spiritual laws which are not of today or of yesterday, but live for ever and of their origin knoweth no man. The words *tat tvam asi* are so familiar that they slide off our minds without full comprehension.

The goal is not a heavenly state of bliss or rebirth in a better world, but freedom from the objective, cosmic law of karma and identity with the Supreme Consciousness and Freedom. The Vedic paradise, *svarga*, becomes a stage in the individual's growth.

(The *svarga* offered as a reward for ceremonial conformity is only a stage in the onward growth of the human soul, *sattva-guṇodaya*. *Bhāgavata* XI. 19. 42.

Nirāmbopaniṣad defines *svarga* as *sat-saṁsarga*. Heaven and Hell are both in the cosmic process: *atraiva narakas svargaḥ*. *Bhāgavata* III. 30. 29.)

■The *Upaniṣad* s generally mention the *Vedas* with respect and their study is enjoined as an important duty. (*brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* IV. 4. 22; I. 9.) Certain verses from the *Vedas* such as the *gāyatrī* form the subject of meditations (*brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* VI. 3. 6.) and sometimes verses from the *Vedas* are quoted in support of the teaching of the *Upaniṣad* s. (*brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* I. 3. 10.) While the *Upaniṣad* s use the *Vedas*, their teaching is dependent on the personal experience and testimony of teachers like *Yājñavalkya*, *Sāṅḍilya*. The authority of the *Vedas* is, to no small extent, due to the inclusion of the *Upaniṣad* s in them.

PAGE 51-52

■It is often stated that Vedic knowledge by itself will not do. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI. 1 ff.) *Svetaketu* admits that he has studied all the *Vedas* but is lacking in the knowledge 'whereby what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, what has not been understood becomes understood.' *Nārada* tells *sanatkumāra* that he has not the knowledge of the Self though he has covered the entire range of knowledge, from the *Vedas* to snake-charming. (VII. 1 ff.)

X. ULTIMATE REALITY- BRAHMAN Page 52

■To the pioneers of the *Upaniṣad* s, the problem to be solved presented itself in the form, what is the world rooted in? What is that by reaching which we grasp the many objects perceived in the world around us? They assume, as many philosophers do, that the world of multiplicity is, in fact, reducible to one single, primary reality which reveals itself to our senses in different forms. This reality is hidden from senses but is discernible to the reason. The *Upaniṣad* s raise the question, what is that reality which remains identical and persists through change?

The word used in the *Upaniṣad* s to indicate the supreme reality is *Brahman*. It is derived from the root *br̥* 'to grow, to burst forth'. The derivation suggests gushing forth, bubbling over, ceaseless growth, *brhattvam*. *Saṅkara* derives the word '*Brahman*' from the root *brhati* to exceed, *atiśayana* and

means by it eternity, purity. For Madhva, *Brahman* is the person *in* whom the qualities dwell in fullness, *brhanto hy asmin guṇaḥ*. The real is not a pale abstraction, but is quickeningly alive, of powerful vitality. In the *ṚgVeda*, *Brahman* is used in the sense of 'sacred knowledge or utterance, a hymn or incantation, 'the concrete expression of spiritual wisdom. Sometimes *Vac* is personified as the One.* *Viśva-karman*, the All-Maker is said to be the lord of the holy utterance 3 *Brahman* is *mantra* or prayer. Gradually it acquired the meaning of power or potency of prayer, It has a mysterious power and contains within itself the essence of the thing denoted Bṛhaspati, Brāhmaṇas-pati are interpreted as the lord of prayer.

1 VII I fi

2. KV X 125, Atharva Veda TV 30

3. X. 81. 7, X. 71.

Introduction

53

■ In the Brāhmaṇas, *Brahman* denotes the ritual and so is regarded as omnipotent. He who knows *Brahman* knows and controls the universe. *Brahma* becomes the primal principle and guiding spirit of the universe 'There is nothing more ancient or brighter than this *Brahman*. 1

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa X.3.5.11.

■ In later thought, *brahman* meant wisdom or Veda As divine origin was ascribed to the Veda or *Brahman*, the two words were used with the same meaning. *Brahman* or sacred knowledge came to be called the first created thing, *Brahmā pratha-majam* and even to be treated as the creative principle, the cause of all existence.

The word suggests a fundamental kinship between the aspiring spirit of man and the spirit of the universe which it seeks to attain. The wish to know the Real implies that we know it to some extent. If we do not know anything about it, we cannot even say that it is and that we wish to know it If we know the Real, it is because the Real knows itself in us. The desire for God, the feeling that we are in a state of exile, implies the reality of God in us. All spiritual progress is the growth of half-knowledge into clear illumination. Religious experience is the evidence for the Divine. In our inspired moments we have the feeling that there is a greater reality within us, though we cannot tell what it is. From the movements that stir in us and the utterances that issue from us, we perceive the power, not ourselves, that moves us. Religious experience is by no means subjective God cannot be known or experienced except through his own act If we have a knowledge of *Brahman*, it is due to the *working of Brahman in us*². Prayer is the witness to the

spurt of the transcendent divine immanent in the spirit of man. The thinkers of the Upaniṣads based the reality of *Brahman* on the fact of spiritual experience, ranging from simple prayer to illuminated experience The distinctions which they make TK^{the nature of the} Supreme Reality are not merely logical.

They are facts of spiritual experience

*working of Brahman in us*² = cp St Anseim, 'I cannot seek Thee except Thou teach me, nor find Thee except Thou reveal Thyself, Rūmi "Was it not I who summoned Thee to a long service; was

it not I who made Thee busy with my name? Thy calling "Allah" was my "Here am I".'

5 The Principal Upaniṣads

4

■ The thinkers of the Upaniṣads attempt to establish the reality of God from an analysis of the facts of nature and the facts of inner life.

'Who knows and who can declare what pathway leads to the gods'

Seen are their lowest dwelling-places only,

■ What pathway leads to the highest, **most secret regions**"¹

The Upaniṣads assume that it is a distorted habit of mind which identifies 'the highest, most secret regions' with the 'lowest dwelling-places.' The Real is not the actual. The Upaniṣads ask, "What is the *tajjalān* from which all things spring, into which they are resolved and in which they live and **have their being**"²

The *Brhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* maintains that the ultimate reality is *being*, *san-mātram hi Brahma*. Since nothing is without reason there must be a reason why something exists rather than nothing. There is something, there is not nothing. The world is not self-caused, self-dependent, self-maintaining. All philosophical investigation presupposes **the reality of being, *asti-tva-niṣṭha***³. The theologian accepts the first principle of being as an absolute one, the philosopher comes to it by a process of mediation. By logically demonstrating the impossibility of not-being in and by itself, he asserts the necessity of being. Being denotes pure affirmation to the exclusion of every possible negation. It expresses simultaneously God's consciousness of himself and his own absolute self-absorbed being. We cannot live a rational life without assuming the reality of being. Not-being is sometimes said to be **the first principle**.⁴ * It is not absolute non-being but only relative non-being, as compared with later concrete existence

1. RV III 54

2. CU III 14 .1 . see also TU III 1, SU I. 1

3 Cp 'Then God said to Moses "I am that I Am" ' Exodus III 14. There is a familiar distinction between *nāstika* and *āstika* The *nāstika* thinks that nothing exists except what we see, feel, touch and measure The *āstika* is one who holds with RV X 31. 8 *naitāvad enā paro anyad asti*. there is not merely this but there is also a transcendent other

4.T. U II 7.CU III 19 1-3

Introduction

55

Even as the *nyagrodha* tree is made of the subtle essence which we do not perceive, so is this world made of **the infinite *Brahman***.¹ It is at the command of that Imperishable that the sun and the moon stand bound in their places. It is at the command of that Imperishable that the heaven and the earth stand each in its own place. It is at the command of that Imperishable that the very moments, the hours, the days, the nights, the half-months, the months, the seasons and the years have their appointed function in the scheme of things. It is at the command of that Imperishable that some rivers flow to the east from the snow-clad mountains **while others flow to the west**.² When Balaki defines *Brahman* as the person in the sun (*āditye putuṣah*) and successively as the person in the moon, in lightning, in ether, in wind, in fire, in the waters, also as the person in the mind, in the shadow, in echo and in the body, King Ajatasatru asks, 'Is that all?' When Balaki confesses that he can go no farther, the king says, 'He who is the maker of all these persons, he, verily, should be known ' *Brahman* is *satyasya satyam*, **the Reality of the real, the source of all existing things**.³

In some cosmological speculations the mysterious principle of reality is equated with certain naturalistic elements. **Water is said to be the source of all things whatsoever**.⁴ From it came *satya*, the concrete existent. Others like Rāikva look upon air as the final absorbent of all things whatsoever, **including fire and water**.⁵ The *Hatha Upaniṣad* tells us that **fire, having entered the universe, assumes all forms**.⁶ The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, however, makes out that fire is the first to evolve from the Prīmaeval Being and from fire came water and from water the earth. At the time of dissolution, **the earth is dissolved in water, and water in fire and fire in the Prīmaeval Being**.⁷ *Ākāśa*, ether, space, is sometimes viewed as the first principle

In regard to the development of the universe, the Upaniṣads

1 CU VI 12. For the usage of the world as a tree, see RV I 164 20; VII 40.5; VII. 43.1.

2. B.U. III.8.9 Augustine in his *Confessions* expresses the thought

that the things of the world declare through their visible appearance the fact that they are created XI.4.

3. BU II.1 4. BUV.5.1. 5. CU. IV.3. 1-2. 6. II.5.7. VI.8.4

The Principal Upaniṣads page 56

look upon the earliest state of the material world as one of extension in space, of which the characteristic feature is vibration represented to us by the phenomenon of sound From *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, air

arises. Vibration by itself cannot create forms unless it meets with obstruction. The interaction of vibrations is possible in air which is the next modification. To sustain the different forces, a third modification arises, **tejas, of which light and heat are the manifestations**. We still do not have stable forms and so the denser medium of water is produced. A further state of cohesion is found in earth. The development of the world is a process of steady grossening of the subtle ākāśa or space. All physical objects, even the most subtle, are built up by the combination of these live elements. Our sense experience depends on them. By the action of vibration comes the sense of sound, by the action of things in a world of vibrations the sense of touch, by the action of light the sense of sight, by the action of water the sense of taste, by the action of earth the sense of smell.

In the **Taittirīya Upaniṣad**¹ the pupil approaches the father and asks him to explain to him the nature of Brahman. He is given the formal definition and is asked to supply the content by his own reflection. **That from which these beings are born, that in which when born they live, and that into which they enter at their death is Brahman.** What is the reality which conforms to this account? The son is impressed by material phenomena and fixes on matter (**anna**) as the basic principle. He is not satisfied, for matter cannot account for the forms of life. He looks upon life (prāṇa) as the basis of the world. Life belongs to a different order from matter. Life, again, cannot be the ultimate principle, for conscious phenomena are not commensurate with living forms. There is something more in consciousness than in life. So he is led to, believe that consciousness (**manas**) is the ultimate principle. But consciousness has different grades. **The instinctive consciousness of animals is quite different from the intellectual consciousness of human beings** So the son affirms that intellectual consciousness (**vijñāna**) is Brahman Man alone, among nature's children

Introduction

57

has the capacity to change himself by his own effort and transcend his limitations Even this is incomplete because it is subject to discords and dualities. Man's intellect aims at the attainment of truth but succeeds only in making guesses about it; there must be a power in man which sees the truth unveiled. A deeper principle of consciousness must emerge if the fundamental intention of nature, which has led to the development of matter, life, mind, and intellectual consciousness, is to be accomplished. The son finally arrives at **the truth that spiritual freedom or delight (ānanda), the ecstasy of fulfilled existence is the ultimate principle.** Here the search ends, not simply because the pupil's doubts are satisfied but because the pupil's doubts are stilled by the vision of Self-evident Reality. He apprehends the Supreme Unity that lies behind all the lower forms. The Upaniṣad suggests that he leaves behind the discursive reason and contemplates the One and is **lost in ecstasy.**¹ It concludes with the affirmation that **absolute Reality is satyam, truth, Jñānam, consciousness, anantam, infinity.**

There are some who affirm that *ānanda* is the nearest approximation to Absolute Reality, but is not itself the Absolute Reality. For it is a logical representation. The experience gives us peace, but unless we are established in it we have not received the highest.

In this account, the Upaniṣad assumes that the naturalistic theory of evolution cannot be accepted. The world is not to be viewed as an automatic development without any intelligent course or intelligible aim. Matter, life, mind, intelligence are different forms of existence with their specific characteristics.

¹ Cp Jalal-uddin Rūmī

'I died a mineral and became a plant,
I died a plant and rose an animal,
I died an animal and I was man
Why should I fear' When was I less by dying?

Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar
 With the blessed angels, but even from angelhood
 I must pass on All except God perishes
 When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
 I shall become that which no mind ever conceived.
 O, let me not exist' for Non-existence proclaims,
 "To him we shall return "'

58

The Principal Upaniṣads

and modes of action, each acting on the other but not derived from each other. The evolution of life in the context of matter is produced not by the material principle but by the working of a new life-principle, which uses the conditions of matter for the production of life. Life is not the mechanical resultant of the antecedent co-ordination of material forces, but *it* is what is now called an emergent. We cannot, by a complete knowledge of the previous conditions, anticipate the subsequent result. There is an element of the incalculable. Life emerges when the material conditions are available, which permit life to organise itself in matter. In this sense, we may say that matter aspires for life, but life is not produced by lifeless particles. So also life may be said to be aspiring for or be instinct with mind, which is ready to emerge when conditions enable it to organise itself in living matter. Mind cannot be produced from things without mind. When the necessary mental conditions are prepared, intelligence qualifies the mental living creature. Nature is working according to this fundamental intention, which is being accomplished because it is essentially the instrument of the Supreme Being.

The world is not the result of meaningless chance. There is a purpose working itself out through the ages. It is a view which modern science confirms. By interpreting the fragmentary relics of far remote times, science tells us how this earth in which we live was gradually adapted to be a place where life could develop, how life came and developed through uncounted centuries until animal consciousness arose and this again gradually developed, until apparently, man with self-conscious reason appeared on the scene. The long record of the development of the human race and the great gifts of spiritual men like the Buddha, Socrates, Jesus make out that man has to be transcended by God-man.

It cannot be argued that, when material particles are organised in a specific way, life arises. The principle of organisation is not matter. The explanation of a thing is to be sought in what is above it in the scale of existence and value and not below it. Matter cannot raise itself. It moves to a higher level by the help of the higher itself. It cannot undergo inner development without being acted upon by something above it. The lower is the material for the higher. Life is the matter for mind and form for physical material- so also intellect is form for the mind and matter for the spirit. The eternal is the origin of the actual and its **nīśus** to improvement. To think of it as utterly transcendent or as a future possibility is to miss its incidence in the actual. We cannot miss the primordially of the Supreme, 'Verily, in the beginning this world was *Brahman*.' There is the perpetual activity of the Supreme in the world. **Nīśus** = an effort or striving toward a particular goal or attainment; impulse.

The Upaniṣad affirms that *Brahman* on which all else depends, to which all existences aspire, *Brahman* which is sufficient to itself, aspiring to no other, without any need, is the source of all other beings, the intellectual principle, the perceiving mind, life and body. It is the principle which unifies the world of the physicist, the biologist, the psychologist, the logician, the moralist and the artist. The hierarchy of all things and beings from soulless matter to the deity is the cosmos. Plato's world-architect, Aristotle's world-mover belong to the cosmos. **If there is ordered development, progressive evolution, it is because there is the divine principle at work in the universe.**

Cosmic process is one of universal and unceasing change and is patterned on a duality which is perpetually in conflict, the perfect order of heaven and the chaos of the dark waters. Life creates opposites, as it creates sexes, in order to reconcile them. 'In the beginning the woman (*Ūrvaśī*) went about in the flood **seeking a master**'¹. Indra, for example, divided the world into earth and sky. He 'produced his father and

mother from his own body.' This conflict runs through the whole empirical world, and will end when the aim of the universe is accomplished. Creation moves upward towards the divine. When the union between the controlling spirit and the manifesting matter is completed, the purpose of the world, the end of the evolutionary process, the revelation of spirit on earth is accomplished. The earth is the foothold of God, the mother of all creatures whose father is heaven³

¹ BU I 4 lo-ii. MartrI VI 17.

² *icchanti salile patim Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa I 50*

3 The Chinese believe that Chien (Heaven) is the father and Khun (Earth) is the mother of all terrestrial existence Zeus as Sky-father is in essential relation to Earth-mother The two are correlative See A B Cook: *Zeus* (1914), Vol I, p 779

Zoroaster reaches the conception of a single spiritual God, Ormuzd or Ahura Mazda, in whom the principle of good is personified, while the evil principle is embodied in Ahriman, or Aṅgra Mainyu, who limits the omnipotence of Ahura Mazda. The whole creation is a combat between the two. The two principles strive eternally in life, and in this struggle men take part. Man is responsible for his actions, good or bad. If he struggles against evil, confesses God and cares for the purity of his body and soul, then after four periods of three thousand years each in the world's history a time shall arrive for the final victory of good over evil, of Ormuzd over Ahriman. The general resurrection of the dead and the last judgment will take place then, assuring him of his place among the saved and the righteous.

The Jews adopted the two principles of good and evil and they were taken over by Christianity. When Blake speaks of the marriage of Heaven and Hell, Heaven represents the one clear light over all and Hell the dark world of passion and the senses. Divided, both are equally barren, but from their union springs joy 'Oh that man would seek immortal moments! Oh that men could converse with God' was Blake's cry.

60

The Principal Upaniṣads

The conflict is not final The duality is not a sterile dualism. Heaven and earth, God and matter have the same origin.

As regards the primordial God *Hiraṇya-garbha*, a circular process is found. The primal being spontaneously produces the primeval water, from this comes the primordial God as the first born of the divine Order, the golden germ of the world 'who was the first seed resting on the navel of the unborn *Hiraṇya-garbha* who is the World-soul expresses his spirit through the environment He manifests the forms contained within himself. The world is fixed in him as are the spokes in the hub of a wheel. He is the thread, *sūtrātman*, on which all beings and all worlds are strung like the beads of a necklace. He is the first-born, *prathama-ja* He is also called *Brahmā* and these *Brahmās are created from world to world.*²

In the *RgVeda*,³ *Hiraṇya-garbha* is the golden germ which enters into creation after the first action of the creator In the *Sāṃkhya*, *prakṛti* is treated as unconscious and develops on account of the influence of the multitude of individual subjects, and the first product of development is *mahat*, the great one, or *buddhi*, the intellect. It is the development of cosmic intelligence or *Hiraṇya-garbha*.

1. RV X 82, TV 58 5

2. 'God once created *Brahmā Hiraṇya-garbha* and delivered the Vedas to him ' S B I 4 1.

3 X 121 1

gence or *Hiraṇya-garbha* On the subjective side, buddhi is the first element of the *liṅga* or the subtle body. It is the essence of the individual spirit Buddhi serves as the basis for the development of the principle of individuation, *ahamkāra*, from which are derived, on the one hand, mind and the ten sense organs, five of perception and five of action and, on the other hand, the subtle elements from which arise in their turn the gross elements. *Sattva* is buddhi, the innermost of the three circles, the outer being *rajas* and *tamas* which are identified with *ahamkāra* and *manas*, which are the emanations of *rajas* and *tamas* *The Sattva or the buddhi is the bija, the seed of the living individual*, since it contains the seeds of karma which develop at each birth into a sense-organism The *sattva* or *liṅga* is called the ego, the *jiva*. As the *buddhi* is the *sūtrātman* of the individual, so is *Hiraṇya-garbha* the *sūtrātman*, the thread-controller of the world.

In the Katha Upaniṣad,¹ in the development of principles the great self stands after the undeveloped

and the primeval spirit Hiranya-garbha, the World-soul is the first product of the principle of non-being influenced by the Eternal Spirit, *Īśvara*. The *puruṣa of the Sāṃkhya* is the Eternal Spirit made many Hiranya-garbha is the great self, mahan ātmā, which arises from the undiscriminated, the avyakta, which corresponds to the primitive material or waters of the Brāhmaṇas, or the prakṛt of the Sāṃkhya. We

have the Supreme Self, the Absolute, the Supreme Self as the eternal subject observing the eternal object, waters or prakṛt and the great self which is the first product of this interaction of the eternal subject and the principle of objectivity. The Supreme Lord, *Īśvara*, who eternally produces, outlasts the drama of the universe. Saṃkara begins his commentary on the Bhagavad-gita with the verse: 'Nārāyaṇa is beyond the unmanifest. The golden egg is produced from the unmanifest. The earth with its seven islands and all other worlds are in the egg.' The names and forms of the manifested world are latent in the egg as the future tree is in the seed.

Hiranya-garbha answers to the Logos, the Word of Western

1.III 10. ii, VI. 7.8, see also K U.I. 7

61

62

The Principal Upamśads

Thought. For Plato, the Logos was the archetypal idea. For the Stoics it is the principle of reason which quickens and informs matter. Philo speaks of the *Divine Logos as the 'first born son'* *archetypal man* *2* *'image of God/3* *'through whom the world was created'* *4* Logos, the Reason, 'the Word was in the beginning and the Word became flesh.' The Greek term, Logos, means both Reason and Word. The latter indicates an act of divine will. Word is the active expression of character. The difference between the conception of Divine Intelligence or Reason and the Word of God is that the latter represents the will of the Supreme. *Vac is Brahman* *5* *Vac*, word, wisdom, is treated in the *Ṛg Veda* as the all-knowing. The *first-born of Rta is Vac* *6* *yāvad Brahmā tiṣṭhati tāvati vak.* *7* The Logos is conceived as personal like *Hiranya-garbha* 'The Light was the light of men.' *'The Logos became flesh'* *8*

The Supreme is generally conceived as light, *jyotiṣām jyotiḥ*, the light of lights. Light is the principle of communication. *Hiranya-garbha* is organically bound up with the world Himself, a creature, the first-born of creation, *he shares the fate of all creation in the end.* *9* But *Īśvara is prior to the World-soul.* *10* The principle of process applies to God. While he is the expression of the non-temporal he is also the temporal *Īśvara*, the eternal Being functions in the temporal *Hiranya-garbha*. Rāmānuja who looks upon *Īśvara as the supreme transcendent Reality above all world events treats Brahmā as the demi-urge*

¹ 1.414. 2.411 3. I 6 4. II 225 5. R v 1 3 21

6. *Atharva Veda* II I 4 See *Nama-Rūpa and Dharma-Rūpa* by Maryla Falk (1943), Ch I

7 R V X 114 8

8. John I 4, 5 See B F Westcott *The Gospel According to St John* (1886), p XVH

⁹ 'When all things are subjected to him then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone' I Cor XV 28

¹⁰ Cp 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or even the earth and the world were made thou art God from everlasting and world without end' See Hebrews I 10-13

Religio Medici 'Before Abraham was, I am, is the saying of Christ, yet is it true in some sense, if I say it of myself, for I was not only before myself but Adam, that is, in the idea of God, and the decree of that synod held from all eternity. And in this sense, I say, the world was before the creation, and at the end, before it had a beginning' Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

of creation who forms the lower world in the name and bidding of God. Why is the universe what it is, rather than something else? Why is there this something, rather than another? This is traced to the divine will. This world and its controlling spirit are the expressions of the Supreme Lord. While the World-soul and the world are organically related and are interdependent, there is no such relationship between the Supreme Lord and the world, for that would be to subject the infinite to the finite. The relationship is an 'accident' to use Whitehead's expression. This word 'accident' implies two different considerations, (1) that Divine Creativity is not bound up with this world in such a way that the changes which occur in the world affect the integrity of the Divine, and (2) that the world is an accidental expression of the Divine principle. Creativity is not bound to express itself in this particular form. If the choice were necessary it would not be free. Creation is the free expression of the Divine mind, iccha-mātram. The world is the manifestation of Hiraṇya-garba and the creation of Īśvara. The world is the free self-determination of God. The power of self-determination, self-expression, belongs to God. It is not by itself. It belongs to the Absolute, which is the abode of all possibilities, and by its creative power one of these possibilities is freely chosen for accomplishment. The power of manifestation is not alien to being. It does not enter it from outside. It is in being, inherent in it. It may be active or inactive. We thus get the conception of an Absolute-God, Brahman-Īśvara, where the first term indicates infinite being and possibility, and the second suggests creative freedom.¹ Why should the Absolute Brahman perfect, infinite, needing nothing, desiring nothing, move out into the world? It is not compelled to do so. It may have this potentiality but it is not bound or compelled by it. It is free to move or not to move, to throw itself into forms or remain formless. If it still indulges its power of creativity, it is because of its free choice.

creative freedom.1 = In the Taoist Tao Tē Ching, Tao, literally 'Way,' stands for the Absolute, the divine ground and Tē for 'power,' for the unfolding of the divine possibilities. Cp also tathata or suchness and ālaya-vijñāna the all-conserving or receptacle consciousness.

Introduction

In *Īśvara* we have the two elements of wisdom and power, *Śiva* and *Śakti*. By the latter the Supreme who is unmeasured and immeasurable becomes measured and defined. Immutable being becomes infinite fecundity. Pure being, which is the free basis and support of cosmic existence, is not the whole of our experience. Between the Absolute and the World-soul is the Creative Consciousness. It is *prajñānaghana* or truth-consciousness. If *sat* denotes the primordial being in its undifferentiated unity, *satya* is the same being immanent in its differentiations. If the Absolute is pure unity without any extension or variation, God is the creative power by which worlds spring into existence. The Absolute has moved out of its primal poise and become knowledge-will. It is the all-determining principle. It is the Absolute in action as Lord and Creator. While the Absolute is spaceless and timeless potentiality, God is the vast self-awareness comprehending, **apprehending every possibility.**¹

Brahman is not merely a featureless Absolute. It is all this world. *Vayu* or air is said to be manifest *Brahman*, *pratyakṣam Brahma*. The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* makes out that *Brahman* is **beast, bird and insect, the tottering old man, boy and girl.** *Brahman* sustains the cosmos and is the self of each individual. Supra-cosmic transcendence and cosmic universality are both real phases of the one Supreme. In the former aspect the Spirit is in no way dependent on the cosmic manifold, in the latter the Spirit functions as the principle of the cosmic manifold. The supra-cosmic silence and the cosmic integration are both real. The two, ***nirguna* and *saguna* Brahman,** Absolute and God, are not different. Jayatirtha contends that Saṅkara is wrong in holding that *Brahman* is of two kinds—***Brahmano dvairūpyasya aprāmāṅkatvāt 2*** It is the same *Brahman* who is described in different ways

apprehending every possibility.¹ = Eckhart says 'God and Godhead are as different as heaven from earth. God becomes and unbecomes. 'All in Godhead is one, and of this naught can be said. God works, but Godhead works not. There is no work for it to do and no working in it. Never did it contemplate anything of work. God and Godhead differ after the manner of working and not working. When I come into the Ground, into the depths, into the flow and fount of Godhead, none will ask me whence I have come or whither I go. None will have missed me, God passes away' *Sermon* LVT Evans' E T

Brahmano dvairūpyasya aprāmāṅkatvāt 2 = *Nyāya-sudhā*, p 124

Inboduclion

65

The personality of God is not to be conceived on the human lines. He is not to be thought of as a greatly magnified person. We should not attribute to the Divine human qualities as we know them.' We have **(1) the Absolute, (2) God as Creative power, (3) God immanent in this world.** These are not to be regarded as separate entities. They are arranged in this order because there is a logical priority. The Absolute must be there with all its possibilities before the Divine Creativity can choose one. The divine choice must be there before there can be the Divine immanent in this world. This is a logical succession and not a temporal one. The world-spirit must be there before there can be the world. We thus get the **four poises or statuses of reality,**¹ (1) the Absolute, *Brahman*, (2) the Creative Spirit, *Īśvara*, (3) the World-Spirit, *Hnanya-garbha*, and (4) the World. This is the way in which the Hindu thinkers interpret the integral nature of the Supreme Reality. *Mandūkya Upamṣad* says that *Brahman* is *catus-pat*, four-footed, and its four principles are ***Brahman, Īśvara, Hiranya-garbha* and *Viraj 2***

¹ Aquinas says 'Things said alike of God and of other beings are not said either in quite the same sense or in a totally different sense but in an analogous sense' *Summa Contra Gentiles* XXXIV God is not good or loving in the human sense 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord' Romans XI 34 God is personal, but, as Karl Barthsays, 'personal in an *incomprehensible* way in so far as the conception of His personality surpasses all our views of personality This is so, 311st because He and He alone is a true, real and genuine person Were we to overlook this and try to conceive God in our own strength according to our conception of personality, we should make an idol out of God' *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God* (1938), pp 31ft

¹ In Plotinus we have a similar scheme (i) **The One alone**, the simple, the unconditioned God beyond being of Basilides, the godhead of Eckhart which can only be indicated by negative terms. We cannot even affirm existence of it, though it is not non-existent. It cannot be thought of as either subject or object of experience, as in it subject

and object are identical. It is pure impersonal experience or perhaps the ground of all experience, it is pure consciousness, ineffable supra-existence. It is not the first cause, not the creator god. It is cause only in the sense that it is everywhere, and without it nothing could be. (ii) **The Nous** The Intelligible world which Plotinus calls One--Many, the world of platonic forms or archetypes. Not mere Ideas or things ought by the Divine Thinker, not mere passive archetypical pictures. They are active powers within the Divine mind. It is personal God. Unity cannot be separated from diversity. The most perfect form of expressive act is thought or intellection, *viññāna*, Divine Intellect, First thinker and thought, the personal Lord, Universal Intelligence, The unknowable Absolute is mediated to us through the Divine Intelligence. This Intellectual principle of Plotinus is the *Īśvara* of the Upaniṣads. This universal intelligence makes possible the multiple universe. For Plotinus this principle is the totality of divine thoughts or Ideas in Plato's sense. These Ideas or Thoughts are real beings, powers. They are the originals, archetypes, intellectual forms of all that exists in the lower spheres. All the phases of existence down to the lowest ultimate of material being or the lowest forms of being in the visible universe are ideally present in this realm of divine thoughts. This divine intellectual principle has both being and non-being. It has, for Plotinus, two acts, the upward contemplation of the One and generation towards the lower. (iii) **One and Many**. The soul of the All is the third, which fashions the material universe on the model of divine thoughts, the Ideas laid up within the Divine Mind. It is the eternal cause of the cosmos, the creator and therefore the vital principle of the world God is envisaged as something apart from the world, its creator or artificer Human ideas of God are centred round him. Plotinus does not make the sensible world a direct emanation from the Intelligible World. It is the product or the creation of the World-soul, the third person of the Neo-Platonic trinity, herself an emanation from the intelligible World, the *Nous*. Our souls are parts or emanations of the World-soul. The three hypostases form collectively, for Plotinus, the one transcendent being. The All-Soul is the expression of the energy of the Divine, even as the Intellectual principle is the expression of the thought or vision of the godhead. (IV) **The many alone**. It is the world-body, the world of matter without form. It is the possibility of manifested form.

66

The Principal Upaniṣads

The conception of *tri-suparṇa* is developed in the fourth section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* The **Absolute is conceived as a nest from out of which three birds have emerged, viz. *Virāj*, *Hiraṇya-garbha* and *Īśvara*. The Absolute conceived as it is in itself, independent of any creation, is called *Brahman*. When it is thought of as having manifested itself as the universe, it is called *Virāj*; when it is thought of as the spirit moving everywhere in the universe, it is called *Hiraṇya-garbka*, when it is thought of as a personal God creatmg, protecting and destroying the universe, it is called *Īśvara* *Īśvara* becomes *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* when his three functions are taken separately.¹ The real is not a sum of these. It is an ineffable unity in which these conceptual distinctions are made These are fourfold to our mental view, separable only in appearance. If we identify the real with any one definable state of being, however pure and perfect, we violate the unity and divide the indivisible. The different standpomts are consistent with each other, complementary to each other and necessary in their...**

1. See also *Pamgala U*

Introduction

67

totality for an integral view of life and the world. If we are able to hold them together, the conflicting views which are emphasised exclusively by certain schools of Indian Vcdanta become reconciled.

Absolute being is not an existing quality *to* be found in the things It is not an object of thought or the result of production. It forms an absolute contrast to, and is fundamentally different from, things that are, as is in its way nothingness. It can be expressed only negatively or analogically. It is that from which our speech turns back along with the mind, **being unable to comprehend its fullness.**¹ It is that which the tongue of man cannot truly express nor human intelligence conceive. Saṃkara in his commentary on the ***Brahmā Sūtra***² refers to an Upaniṣad text which is not to be found in any of the extant Upaniṣads Bahva, asked by Baskah to expound the nature of *Brahman*, kept silent. He prayed, 'Teach me, sir' The teacher was silent, and when addressed a second and a third time he said ' I am teaching but you do not follow. **The self is silence.**³

We can only describe the Absolute in negative terms. In the words of Plotinus, 'We say what he is not, We cannot say what he is.' The Absolute is beyond the sphere of predication. It is the *sūnyatā* of the Buddhists. It is 'not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, not glowing, not shadowy, not dark, not attached, flavourless, smell-less, eye-less, ear-less, speech-less, mind-less, breath-less, mouth-less, not internal, not external, consuming nothing and consumed by nothing'⁴. It cannot be

¹ T U. II 4, see also *Kena* I 3, II, 3, *Hatha* I 27.

¹ S B III 2 17

3 *upaśānto'yam ātmā* Cp the *Mādhyamika* view—

paramarthatas tu āryāṇām tuṣṇī m-bhāva eva

'Then only will you see it, when you cannot speak of it; for the knowledge of it is deep silence and the suppression of all the senses.' Hermes Trismegistus, *Lib X* 5

4 See BU II 8 8, see also II 3 6, III. 9 26, IV 2 4, IV 4 22; *t**> 5 I 5< Ma 7. The Buddha, according to *Amara*, is an *advaya-vādin*

There was something formless yet complete,
That existed before heaven and earth,
Without sound, without substance,
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,
All-pervading, unailing.

68

The Principal Upaniṣads

truly designated. Any description makes It into something. It is nothing among things. It is non-dual, *advaita*. It denies duality. This does not mean, however, that the Absolute is non-being. It means only that the Absolute is all-inclusive and nothing exists outside it.

Negative characters should not mislead us into thinking that *Brahman* is a nonentity. While it is non-empirical, it is also

One may think of it as the mother
of all things under heaven.
Its true name we do not know;
Tao is the by-name we give it

Tao Tē'Ching 25 A Waley's E T

The Way and its Power (1934)

Plato says that the unfathomable ground of the universe, the absolute, is 'beyond essence and truth.' Plotinus describes the utter transcendence of the One thus. 'Since the Nature or Hypostasis of The One is the engenderer of the All, it can itself be none of the things in the All, that is. It is not a thing, It does not possess quality or quantity. It is not an Intellectual Principle, not a soul, It is not in motion and not at rest, not in space, not in time. It is essentially of a unique form or rather of no-form, since it is prior to form, as it is prior to movement and to rest, all these categories hold only in the realm of existence and constitute the multiplicity characteristic of that lower realm' *Enneads* VI 9 3 'This wonder, this One, to which in verity no name may be given' *ibid* VI 9 5

'Our way then takes us beyond knowing, there may be no wandering from unity, knowing and knowable must all be left aside. Every object of thought, even the highest, we must pass by, for all that is good is later than this... No doubt we should not speak of seeing, but we cannot help talking in dualities, seen and seer, instead of boldly, the achievement of Unity. In this seeing, we neither hold an object nor trace distinction, there is no two. The man is changed, no longer himself nor self belonging, he is merged with the supreme, sunken into it, one with it. Only in separation is there duality. That is why the vision baffles telling. We cannot detach the supreme to state it, if we have seen something thus detached, we have failed of the supreme' *Enneads* VI 9 4 and 10

Pseudo-Dionysius, whose utterances were once accepted as almost apostolic authority, observes 'For it is more fitting to praise God by taking away than by ascription. Here we take away all things from Him, going up from particulars to universals, that we may know openly the unknowable which is hidden in and under all things that may be known. And we beheld that darkness beyond being, concealed under all natural light.'

Chuang Tzu's vision of the boundless world has this 'You cannot explain the sea to a frog in a well the creature of a narrow sphere. You cannot explain ice to a grasshopper the creature of a season. You cannot explain Tao to a pedant— This view is too limited.' Waley

Introduction

inclusive of the whole empirical world. The Absolute is described as full both of light and not-light, of desire and not desire, of anger and not-anger, of law and not-law, having verily filled all, both the near and the far off, the this and the that.¹ Negative and positive characterisations are given to affirm the positivity of being

To say that the nature of *Brahman* cannot be defined does not mean that it has no essential nature of its own. We cannot define it by its accidental features, for they do not belong to its essence. There is nothing outside it. As no inquiry into its nature can be instituted without some description, its *svarūpa* or essential nature is said to be *sat* or being, *at* or consciousness and *ānanda* or bliss.² These are different phrases for the same being. Self-being, self-consciousness and self-delight are one. It is absolute being in which there is no nothingness. It is absolute consciousness in which there is no non-consciousness. It is absolute bliss in which there is no suffering or negation of bliss. All suffering is due to a second, an obstacle, all delight

Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China (1939), pp 55-6 H A Giles. *Chuattg-Tzu, Mystic Moralist and Social Reformer* (1926) Ch XVIII

Anandagiri begins his commentary on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* with this verse

*dharmā dharmādyasaṃsr̥ṣṭāṃ kārya-kāraṇa-varjitaṃ
kāḷādibhir avicchinnam Brahma yat tan namāmy aham*

Paul speaks of a vision which was not to be told and had heard words not to be repeated II Corinthians 12 ff Cp Hymn of Gregory of Nyasa, 'O Thou entirely beyond all being ' "O Lord, My God, the Helper of them that seek Thee, I behold Thee in the entrance of Paradise, and I know not what I see, for I see naught visible. This alone I know, that I know not what I see, and never can know. And I know not how to name Thee, because I know not what Thou art, and did anyone say unto me that Thou wert called by this name or that, by the very fact that he named it I should know that it was not Thy name. For the wall beyond which I see Thee is the end of all manner of signification in names ' Nicholas of Cusa *The Vision of God*. E T Salter's E T (1928) Ch XIII 'No monad or triad can express the all-transcending hiddenness of the all-transcending super-essentially super-existing super-deity.' 'God, because of his excellence, may rightly be called Nothing,' says Scotus Engena.

¹ BU IV 4 5 *Ua* 4, 5 *Kaṭha* 1 2 20-21, 1 3 15, II 6 17 M.U. ¹ J 6.1 7 SU V 8-10

² They are not so much qualities of *Brahman* as the very nature of Brahman. Commenting on the passage *Brahman* is truth, wisdom and infinity, *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*, Saṃkara writes

Satyāni hi trīṇi viśeṣaṇārthāni padāni viśeṣyasya Brāhmaṇaḥ

70

The Principal Upaniṣads

arises from the realisation of something withheld, by the overcoming of obstacles, by the surpassing of the limit. It is this delight that overflows into creation. The self-expression of the Absolute, the creation of numberless universes is also traced to *Brahman*. All things that exist are what they are, because of the nature of *Brahman* as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. All things are forms of one immutable being, variable expressions of the invariable reality. To describe *Brahman* as the cause of the world is to give its *taṭastha* or accidental feature.¹ The defining characteristics are in both cases due to our logical needs.² When the Absolute is regarded as the basis and explanation of the world, he is conceived as the lord of all, the knower of all, the inner controller of all.³ God has moved out everywhere *sa paryagāt*. The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* speaks of the one God, beside whom there is no second, who creates all the worlds and rules with His powers, and at the end of time rolls them up again.⁴ He lives in all things⁵ and yet transcends them. The Universal Self is like the sun who is the eye of the whole universe and is untouched by the defects of our vision.⁶ He is said to fill the whole world and yet remain beyond its confines 'Venly motionless like a lone tree does the God stand in the heaven, and yet by Him is this whole world filled.'⁷

The distraction between *Brahman* in itself and *Brahman* in the universe, the transcendent beyond manifestation and the transcendent in manifestation, the indeterminate and the determinate, *nirguṇo guṇī* is not exclusive.⁸ The two are like two sides of one reality. The Real is at the same time being realized. In the metrical Upaniṣads, as in the *Bhagavad-gita*, the personal is said to be superior to the superpersonal.

¹ *tatasthatvam ca laksya-svarupa-bahir-bhūtatvam Siddhanta-Iesa-sam-graha* (Kumbhakonam ed), p 53

2They are said to be *kalpita* or constructed, as the non-dual *Brahman* is said to possess these qualities on account of its association with *antahkarana*. They are manifestations through an imperfect medium and therefore limited revelations of *Brahman*.

3 MaU 6 4 III 2 3, VI 1-12 5 B U I 4 7 S U I I 1 7

6 *Hatha* II 5 n 7 S U III 9

⁸ Cp Eckhart 'The Godhead gave all things up to God The Godhead is poor, naked and empty as though it were not, it has not, wills not, wants not, works not, gets not It is God who has the treasure and the bride in him, the Godhead is as void as though it were not'

Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj Thursday, September 19, 2013

Introduction

71

sonal is said to be superior to the **superpersonal**.¹ *puruṣān na param kiñcit*, there is nothing beyond the person. It is doubtful whether the author of the *Brahma Sūtra* accepted the distinction of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* in regard to *Brahman*. Even the **nirguṇa Brahman** is not without determinations. The *Sūtrakāra* makes a distinction between the super-personal (*puruṣa-vidha*) and the personal (*Puruṣa-vidha*), i.e. between *Brahman* and *Īśvara*. The latter is not a human fancy or a concession to the weak in mind. **The nirākāra (formless), and the sākāra (with form), are different aspects of the same Reality.** The seeker can choose either in his spiritual practices In III. 3 we find that the author maintains that the **akṣara** texts which describe *Brahman* negatively as 'not this, not this' are **not useful for meditation**.² He holds that *Brahman* is unaffected by the different states, of waking, dream, sleep. The view that *Brahman* undergoes changes is refuted on the ground that they relate to the effects due to the self-concealment of *Brahman*. Bādarāyaṇa denies reality to a second principle.

Hiraṇya-garbha, the World-soul is the divine creator, the supreme lord *Īśvara* at work in this universe. A definite possibility of the Absolute is being realised in this world. In the Upaniṣads the distinction between *Īśvara* and *Hiraṇya-garbha*, between God and the World-soul is not sharply drawn. If the World-soul is ungrounded in *Īśvara*, if he is exclusively temporal, then we cannot be certain of the end of the cosmic process. When the Upaniṣads assert that the individual ego is rooted with the universal self or Ātman, it would be preposterous to imagine that the **World-soul is unrelated to Īśvara or Brahman**.³

¹ *Katka* I 3 11 M U II 1 1-2.

² *ādhyānāya prayojanābhāvāt*. III 3 14, see also III 3 33

³ valentinus whose activity may be assigned to A D 130-150, teaches a similar view The primordial essence is the Deep (*Bythos*). With it dwelt a thought called also Grace (for it was not conditioned) and Silence (for it made no sign of its existence) Professor Burkitt writes *somehow the immeasurable Deep made its own thought fecund and so Mind (nous) came into being, although it was called unique, it had a correlative side to it called Truth, Nous mind is an intelligent understanding the inevitable counterpart of which is Truth; for, if there be nothing true to understand, there can be no intelligent understanding.* *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol XII (1939), p 470

Eckert refers to the World-soul and not to the Supreme God in the *passage*, where he asserts that **God becomes and disbecomes**.

72

The Principal Upaniṣad s

Hiraṇya-garbha who has in him the whole development in germ acts on the waters. As we have seen, the image of waters is an ancient one by which human thought attempts to explain the development of the universe. The waters are initially at rest and so free from waves or forms. The first movement, the first disturbance, creates forms and is the seed of the universe. The play of the two is the life of the universe. When the development is complete, when what is in germ is manifest, we have the world-consummation. *Hiraṇya-garbha* creates the world according to the eternal Veda, which has within itself eternally the primary types of all classes of things, even as the God of the mediaeval scholastics creates according to the eternal archetype of Ideas which He as the eternal Word eternally possesses. **Brahman is**

the unity of all that is named.¹ *Hiraṇya-garbha* or *Brahmā* is the World-soul² and is subject to changes of the world. He is *kārya Brahmā* or effect *Brahman* as distinct from *Īśvara*, who is *kāraṇa Brahmā* or causal *Brahman*. *Hiraṇya-garbha* arises at every world-beginning and is dissolved at every world-ending. *Īśvara* is not subject to these changes. For both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, *Hiraṇya-garbha* has the place of a subordinate and created demi-urge. *Īśvara* is the eternal God who is not drawn into but directs the play of the worlds that rise and perish and is Himself existing transcendentally from all eternity. The Vedic deities are subordinate to *Īśvara* and hold a similar position to Him in the formation and control of the world that the angelic powers and directors maintain in the heavenly hierarchy of scholasticism and of Dante

We have thus the four sides of one whole (i) the transcendental universal being anterior to any concrete reality, (ii) the causal principle of all differentiation, (iii) the innermost essence of the world, and (IV) the manifest world. They are co-existent and not alternating poises where we have either a quiescent *Brahman* or a creative Lord. These are simultaneous sides of the one Reality.

> BU I 5 17

¹ For Ātmanas the World-soul, see *Atharva Veda* X. 8 44

Introduction

73

XI

ULTIMATE REALITY ĀTMAN

The word 'ātman' is derived from *an* 'to breathe.' It is the breath of life.¹ Gradually its meaning is extended to cover life, soul, self or essential being of the individual. Śaṅkara derives ātman from the root which means 'to obtain' 'to eat or enjoy or pervade all.'² Ātman is the principle of man's life, the soul that pervades his being, his breath, *prāṇa*, his intellect, *prajñā*, and transcends them. Ātman is what remains when everything that is not the self is eliminated. The *RgVeda* speaks of the unborn part, *ajo bhāgaḥ*.³ There is an unborn and so immortal element in man,⁴ which is not to be confused with body, life, mind and intellect. These are not the self but its forms, its external expressions. Our true self is a pure existence, self-aware, unconditioned by the forms of mind and intellect. When we cast the self free from all outward events, there arises from the inward depths an experience, secret and wonderful, strange and great. It is the miracle of self-knowledge, *ātma-jñāna*.⁵ Just as, in relation to the universe, the real is *Brahman*, while name and form are only a play of manifestation, so also the individual egos are the varied expressions of the One Universal Self. As *Brahman* is the eternal quiet underneath the drive and activity

* *ātma te vātaḥ* R.V. VII 87. 2.

^s *āpnoter atter atater vā* § on A.U. I. I.

Cp also *yac cāpnoti yad ādatte yac cātti viśayān iha yac cāsya santato bhāvas tasmād ātmeti kīrtyate.*

³ X 16 4

⁴ Śāyana says *ajah janana-rahitaḥ, śarīrendriyabhāgavyatiriktaḥ, Antara-puruṣa-lahśaṇo-yo'bhāgo'sti*. Eckhart quotes -with approval an unnamed heathen philosopher as saying 'Discard all this and that and here and there and be thyself -what thou art in thine inner not-being', which he adds is *mens*.

s *Annāpūmā* U. asks us to inquire into the nature of our inward being.

Who am I? How came this world? What is it?

How came death and birth? Thus inquire

Within yourself; great will be the benefit

(you will derive from such inquiry).

*KO'ham, kalham idam, kim vā, Kaṭha m maraṇa-janmanī
vicārayāntare vettham mahat tat phalam eṣyasi.*

I. 40

Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

74

The Principal Upaniṣads

of the universe, so Ātman is the foundational reality underlying the conscious powers of the individual, the inward ground of the human soul. There is an ultimate depth to our life below the plane of thinking and striving. 'The Ātman is the super-reality of the *jīva*, the individual ego.

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* gives us a story, where gods and demons both anxious to learn **the true nature of the Self** approach Prajā-pati who maintains that the ultimate self is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and grief, free from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing and imagines nothing. It is the persisting spirit, that which remains constant in all the vicissitudes of waking, dream and sleep, death, rebirth and deliverance. The whole account assumes that there is consciousness even in the apparently unconscious states, when we sleep, when we are drugged or stunned. The gods sent Indra and the demons Virocana as their representatives to learn the truth. The first suggestion is that the self is the image that we see in the eye, in water or in a mirror. The conception of the self as the physical body is inadequate. To indicate that what we see in another's eye, a pail of water or a mirror is not the true self, Prajā-pati asked them to put on their best clothes and look again. Indra saw the difficulty and said to Prajā-pati that as this self (the shadow in the water) is well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, well cleaned when the body is well cleaned, so that self will also be blind if the body is blind, lame if the body is lame, crippled if the body is crippled, and will perish in fact as soon as the body perishes. Such a view cannot be accepted. If the self is not the body, may it be the dreaming self? The second suggestion is that the true self is 'he who moves about happy in dreams.' Again a difficulty was felt. Indra says that, though it is true that this dreaming self is not affected by the changes of the body, yet in dreams we feel that we are struck or chased, we experience pain and shed tears. We rage in dreams, storm with indignation, do things perverted, mean and malicious. Indra feels that the self is not the same as dream-consciousness. The self is not the composite of mental states, however independent they may be of the accidents of the body. Dream states are not self-existent. Indra again approaches

Introduction

75

Prajā-pati who gives him another suggestion that the self is the consciousness in deep sleep. Indra feels that, in that state, there is consciousness neither of the self nor of the objective world. Indra feels that he does not know himself nor does he know anything that exists. He is gone to utter annihilation. But the self exists even in deep sleep. Even when the object is not present, the subject is there. The final reality is the active universal consciousness, which is not to be confused with either the bodily, or the dreaming consciousness or the consciousness in deep sleep. In the state of deep, dreamless sleep, the self wrapped round by the intellect has no consciousness of objects, but is not unconscious. The true self is the absolute self, which is not an abstract metaphysical category but the authentic spiritual self. The "other forms belong to objectified being. Self is life, not an object. It is an experience, in which the self is the knowing subject and is at the same time the known object. **Self is open only to self. The life of the self is not set over against knowledge of it as an objective thing. Self is not the objective reality, nor something purely subjective. The subject-object relationship has meaning only in the world of objects, in the sphere of discursive knowledge. The Self is the light of lights, and through it alone is there any light in the universe. It is perpetual, abiding light. It is that which neither lives nor dies, which has neither movement nor change and which endures when all else passes away. It is that which sees and not the object seen. Whatever is an object belongs to the not-self. The self is the constant witness-consciousness. 1**

The four states stand on the subjective side for the four kinds of soul, *Vaiśvānara*, the experiencer of gross things, *Taijasa*, experiencer of the subtle, *Prājñā*, the experiencer of the "nmanifested objectivity, and the *Turiya*, the Supreme Self, in *Mandukya Upaniṣad*, by an analysis of the four modes of

consciousness, waking, dream, deep sleep and illumined consciousness, makes out that the last is the basis of the other three.

1 Through all months, years, seasons and *kalpas*, through all (divisions of time) past and future the consciousness remains one and self-luminous It neither rises nor sets.

*māsābda-yuga-kalpeṣu gatāgamyēśv anekathā
nodeti nāstam ety ekā saṁvid eṣā svayam-prabā.
Pañca-daśi I.7.*

76 The Principal Upaniṣads

On the objective side we have the cosmos, *Virāj*, the World-soul *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the Supreme God, *Īśvara*, and the Absolute, *Brahman*.¹ By looking upon *Īśvara* as *prajña*, it is suggested that the supreme intelligence who dwells in the sleeping state holds all things in an unmanifested condition. The divine wisdom sees all things, not as human reason does in parts and relations, but in the original reason of their existence, their primal truth and reality. It is what the Stoics call *spermatikos* or the seed *Logos* which is manifested in conscious beings as a number of seed *logoi*.

In treatises on Yoga, the potential all-consciousness of the state of sleep is represented in the form of a radiant serpent called *Kuṇḍalinī* or *Vāg-devī*. We come across this representation in earlier treatises also. In the *R̥g Veda*, *Vāc* is said to be the serpent queen, *sarpa-rājñī*.² The process of Yoga consists in rousing the radiant serpent and lifting it up from the lowest sphere to the heart, where in union with *prāṇa* or life-breath its universal nature is realised and from it to the top of the skull. It goes out through an opening called *Brahma-randhra* to which corresponds in the cosmic organism the opening formed by the sun on the top of the vault of the sky.

¹ Cp William Law 'Though God is everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. The natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him, nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth of thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity. I had almost said the infinity of thy soul, for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it rest but the infinity of God' Quoted in *Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley (1944), P. ² Again, 'My Me is God, nor do I recognise any other Me except my God Himself' St Catherine of Genoa (*ibid*, p 11)

Eckhart 'To gauge the soul we must gauge it -with God, for the Ground of God and the Ground of the soul are one and the same' (*ibid*, p 12) Again 'The highest part of the soul stands above time and knows nothing of time' 'There is a principle in the soul altogether spiritual. I used to call it a spiritual light or a spark But now I say that it is free of all names, void of all forms It is one and simple, as God is one and simple'

> 1 X 189, X 125 3 *Atharva Veda* IV 1

Introduction

77

XII BRAHMAN AS ĀTMAN

In the early prose Upaniṣads, Ātman is the principle of the individual consciousness and *Brahman* the superpersonal ground of the cosmos. Soon the distinction diminishes and the two are identified. God is not merely the transcendent numinous other, but is also the universal spirit which is the basis of human personality and its ever-renewing vitalising power *Brahman*, the first principle of the universe, is known through Ātman, the inner self of man. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇā*¹ and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*² it is said 'Verily this whole world is *Brahman*,' and also 'This soul of mine within the heart, this is *Brahman*' 'That person who is seen in the eye, He is Ātman, that is *Brahman*'³ God is both the wholly other, transcendent and utterly beyond the world and man, and yet he enters into man and lives in him and becomes the inmost content of his very existence⁴

Nārāyaṇa is the God in man who lives in constant association with *nara*, the human being. He is the immortal dwelling in the mortals⁵ The human individual is more than the universe He lives independently

in his own inexpressible infinity as well as in the cosmic harmonies. We can be one with all cosmic existence by entering into the cosmic consciousness. We become superior

' X 6. 3

2. III i₄ i

³BU I. 4. 10 Cp Keith 'It is impossible to deny that the Ātman -Brahman doctrine has a long previous history in the Brāhmaṇas and is a development of the idea of unity of the *R̥gVeda* 'The Religion and philosophy of the Veda and the Upaniṣads, p 494 Heraclitus says I searched myself.' The Logos is to be sought within, for man's nature is a microcosm and represents the nature of the whole.

VP Plotinus 'One that seeks to penetrate the nature of the Divine nature must see deeply into the nature of his own soul, into the Divinest point of himself. He must first make abstraction of the body, then of the lower soul which built up that body, then of all the faculties of sense, of all desires and emotions and every such triviality, of all that leans towards the mortal. What is left after this abstraction is the part which we describe as the image of the Divine Mind, an emanation preserving some of that divine light. Enneads V.3.9.

4. C.U. IV.15. Also ātmaivadevatāḥ sarvāḥ sarvaṃ jy ātmany avathitam.

5. R.V. IV.2.1 RV

78 The Principal Upaniṣads

to all cosmic existence by entering into the world-transcending consciousness. Answering to the four grades of consciousness, waking, dream, deep sleep, spiritual consciousness, we have the four states of the individual, *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle), *kāraṇa* (causal) and the pure self. As *Īśvara* is the cause of the world, so the causal self is the source of the development of the subtle and the gross bodies.¹

XIII

THE STATUS OF THE WORLD MĀYĀ AND AVIDYA

The ecstasy of divine union, the bliss of realisation tempts one to disregard the world with its imperfections and look upon it as a troubled and unhappy dream. The actual fabric of the world, with its loves and hates, with its wars and battles, with its jealousies and competitions as well as its unasked helpfulness, sustained intellectual effort, intense moral struggle seems to be no more than an unsubstantive dream, a phantasmagoria dancing on the fabric of pure being. Throughout the course of human history, men have taken refuge from the world of stresses, vexations and indignities in the apprehension of a spirit beyond. The prayer to 'lead us from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality' assumes the distinction between reality, light and immortality and unreality, darkness and death. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* warns us not to find reality and certainty in the unrealities and uncertainties of this world.² The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* tells us that a covering of untruth hides from us the ultimate truth even as the surface of the earth hides from us the golden treasure hidden under it.³ The truth is covered by untruth, *anṛta*. The *Brhad-āraṇyaka* and the *Īśa Upaniṣads* speak to us of the veiling of truth by a disc of gold and invoke the grace

'The first *tattva* is the root of manifestation, called *mahat* or the great principle. In *ahaṃkāra* we find individual consciousness which proceeds from the intellectual principle by an individualising determination. Sometimes, *citta* is said to be the first product of *prakṛti*, with its triple character of *buddhi* or discrimination, *ahaṃkāra* or self-sense and *manas* or mind.

2. II 4 .2

3 VIII 3. 1-3

Introduction

79

of God for removing the veil and letting us see the truth.¹ According to the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, we can achieve the cessation of the great world-illusion, *viśva-māyā-nivṛttiḥ* by the worship of God.³ If this aspect of spiritual experience were all, the world we live in, that of ignorance, darkness and death would be quite different from the world of underlying reality, the world of truth, light and life. The distinction would become one of utter opposition between God and the world. The latter would be reduced to an evil dream from which we must wake up as soon as possible.³

Indifference to the world is not, however, the main feature of spiritual consciousness *Brahman*, the completely transcendent, the pure silence has another side. *Brahman* is apprehended in two ways. Śaṅkara says, *dvirūpaṁ hi brahmā-vagamyate, nāma-rūpa-vikāra-bhedopādhi-viśiṣṭam, tad viparītaṁ sarvopādhi-varjitaṁ*. Both the Absolute and the Personal God are real; only the former is the logical prius of the latter. The soul when it rises to full attention knows itself to be related to the single universal consciousness, but when it turns outward it sees the objective universe as a manifestation of this single consciousness. The withdrawal from the world is not the conclusive end of the spiritual quest. There is a return to the world accompanied by a persistent refusal to take the world as it confronts us as final. The world has to be redeemed and it can be redeemed because it has its source in God and final refuge in God.

There are many passages where the **world of duality is suggested to be only seeming.**⁴ The existence of duality is not admitted to be absolutely real. In the passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* regarding the modifications of the three fundamental constituents of being, fire, water and food, it is said that just as all **that is made of clay, copper or iron is only a modification,**⁵ a verbal expression, a simple name, the reality being clay, copper or iron, even so all things can be reduced to three

1. 2. 15.

³ CP *Ātma-bodha* 7

*tāvat satyaṁ jagad bhātim śuktikā-rajatam yathā
yāvan na jñāyate Brahma sarvādhiṣṭhānam advayam*

4, where there is duality as it were (iva) B U II 4 14, see also Iv.3.31

8o

The Principal Upaniṣads

primary forms of reality. It is suggested that all things are reducible to reality, being mere modifications. All this is to be understood as meaning that the Absolute stands above becoming and passing away which it transcends.

In the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, the Absolute is compared to a spark, which, made to revolve, creates apparently a fiery circle, an idea expanded by Gauḍapāda in his *Kārikā* on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. This may suggest that the world is a mere appearance. Even here the intention may well be to contrast the reality of the Absolute with empirical reality without making the latter an illusion.

The assertion that with the **knowledge of the Self all is known**¹ does not exclude the reality of what is derived from the Self. When the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* asserts that the universe is founded in consciousness and guided by it, it assumes the reality of the universe and not merely its apparent existence. To seek the one is not to deny the many. The world of name and form has its roots in *Brahman*, though it does not constitute the nature of *Brahman*.² The world is neither one with *Brahman* nor wholly other than *Brahman*. The world of fact cannot be apart from the world of being. From one being no other being is born. **It exists only in another form, samsthānān-tareṇa** ³

Māyā, in this view states the fact that *Brahman* without losing his integrity is the basis of the world. Though devoid of all specifications, ***Brahman* is the root cause of the universe.**⁴ 'If a thing cannot subsist apart from something else, the latter is the essence of that thing' **The cause is logically prior to the effect.**⁵ Questions of temporal beginning and growth are subordinate to this relation of ground and consequent. The world does not carry its own meaning. To regard it as final and ultimate is an act of ignorance. So long as the erroneous view

¹ B U II 4 5. 7, 9 C U VI i 2 M U I. 1. 3

² *ato nāma-rūperuma sarvāsvasthe Brāhmaṇaivātmavatīl, na Brahma tad ātmakam* Śaṅkara on TU II 6.

³ Śaṅkara on C U 6. 2. 2

⁴ Śaṅkara on Kaṭha U 3. 12

⁵ Sarva-viśeṣa-rohito' pi jagato mūlam Śaṅkara on KU II. 3. 12

⁶ Ś on B U II 4 7. On BU I 2 1

Introduction

81

of the independence of the world does not disappear, our highest good will not be realized.

The world is the creation of God, the active Lord. **The finite is the self-limitation of the infinite.** No finite can exist in and by itself. It exists by the infinite. If we seek the dynamic aspect we are inclined to repudiate the experience of pure consciousness. It is not a question of either pure consciousness or dynamic consciousness. These are the different statuses of the one Reality. They are present simultaneously in the universal awareness

The dependence of the world on God is explained in different ways. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, **Brahman is defined as *tajjalān* as that (*tat*) which gives rise to (*ja*), absorbs (*lī*) and sustains (*an*) the world.**¹ The *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* argues that *satyam* consists of three syllables, *sa*, *ti*, *yam*, the first and the last being real and the second unreal, ***madhyato anṛtam*.** The fleeting is enclosed on both sides by **an eternity which is real.**² The world comes from *Brahman* and returns to *Brahman*. **Whatever exists owes its being to *Brahman***³ The different metaphors are used to indicate how the universe rises from its central root, how the emanation takes place while the ***Brahman* remains ever-complete, undiminished.**⁴ 'As a spider sends forth and draws in (its thread), as herbs grow on the earth, as the hair (grows) on the head and the body of a living person, so **from the Imperishable arises here the universe**'⁵ Again, 'As from a

1 III.14

2 V.1.1.1. Bede tells of the Anglo-Saxon Council summoned to decide on the question of the acceptance of the Christian faith in 627. One of the dukes compared the life of man on earth with the flight of a sparrow from a banquet hall in winter, 'a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad, the sparrow, I say, flying in at from one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm, but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before or what is to follow we are utterly ignorant.' Bede the venerable, *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (1916), pp 91 ff See BG. III.28.

3. See TU.III; BU III.8.

4.CP. Plutinus: imagine a spring which has no commencement, giving itself to all the rivers, never exhausted by what they take, ever tranquility its full self.' III.8.9 *Enneads* 5. M U 1.1.7

x/

82

The Principal Upaniṣads

blazing fire sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands even so, many kinds of beings issue forth from **the Immutable and they return thither too.**¹ The many are parts of *Brahman* even as waves are parts of the sea. All the possibilities of the world are affirmed in the first being, God. The whole universe before its manifestation was there. The antecedent of the manifested universe is the non-manifested universe, i.e God. God does not create the world but becomes it. Creation is expression. It is not a making of something out of nothing. It is not making so much as becoming. It is the self-projection of the Supreme. Everything exists **in the secret abode of the Supreme.**² The primary reality contains within itself the source of its own motion and change.

The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* mentions the different views of creation held at the tune of its composition, that it is due to time, to nature, to necessity, to chance, to the elements, to the Person or the combination of these. **It repudiates all these views and traces the world to the power of the Supreme.**³

The *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* describes God as *māyin*, the wonder-working powerful Being, who creates the world by His

1. II.1.1

² In the *ṚgVeda* there are suggestions that the Imperishable is the basis of the world and that a personal Lord *Brāhmaṇas-pati* (X 72 2), *Viśva-karman* (literally the All-maker), *Puruṣa* (X 90), *Hiraṇya-garbha* (X. 121. 1) produces the world. The Upaniṣads refer to the early cosmological speculations, but these are not their real interest.

³ Gauḍapāda mentions different theories of creation. Some look upon creation as the manifestation of the superhuman power of God, *vibhūti*; others look upon it as of the same nature as dream and illusion, *svapna-māyā-svarūpā*; others trace it to the will of God *icchā-mātram prabhoh sṛṣṭiḥ*. Still others look upon *kāla* or time as the source, some look upon creation as intended for the enjoyment of God (*bhoga*), still others attribute it to mere sport (*krīḍā*), but Gauḍapāda's own view is that creation is the expression of the nature of the Supreme, 'for what desire is possible for Him whose desire is always fulfilled?' *Devasyaiṣa svabhāvo'yam āpta-kāmasya kā sṛḥā Kārikā* I.6.9

The world is the revelation of God's nature. To the question, why does perfect being instead of remaining eternally concentrated in itself suffer the accident of manifesting this world, the answer is that manifesting is of the very nature of God. We need not seek a cause or a motive or a purpose for that which is, in its nature, eternally self-existent and free. The sole object of the dance of *Siva* is the dance itself.

Introduction

83

powers.¹ Here **māyā** is used in the sense in which the *Rg Veda* employs it, the divine art or power by which the divinity makes a likeness of the eternal prototypes or ideas inherent in his nature. Indra is declared to have **assumed many shapes by his māyā.**¹ Māyā is the power of *Īśvara* from which the world arises. He has made this world, 'formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into him a living soul.' All the works of the world are wrought by Him. Every existence contained in time is ontologically present in creative eternity. The Supreme is both transcendent and immanent. It is the one, breathing breathless, *tad ekam, anīd avātām*. It is the **manifest and the unmanifest, vyaktāvyaktāḥ**, the silent and the articulate, *śabdāśabdāḥ*. **It is the real and the unreal, sad-asat,**³ While the world is treated as an appearance in regard to pure being, which is indivisible and immutable, it is the creation of *Īśvara* who has the power of manifestation. Māyā, is that which measures out, moulds forms in the formless. God has control

ā1. III.10 This power or *Śakti* is contained in the Supreme as oil in oilseeds.

*śivecchayā parā śaktiḥ śiva-tattvaikatām gatā
tataḥ parisphuraty ādav sarge latlām tilād iva.*

The power is *śakti* or Māyā. We speak in inadequate ways when we speak of *Śakti* as Māyā. Nārada tells Rāma in the *Devī Bhāgavata*, that this power is eternal, primeval, and everlasting:

Śṛṇu rama sadā nīlyā śaktir ādyā sanātānī

Nothing is able to stir without its aid:

Tasyāḥ śaktim vinā ko'pi spanditum na kṣamo bhavet.

When we distinguish the creation, preservation and dissolution in the form of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, their power is also this *Sakti*:

viśṇoḥ pālana- śaktis śaktis sū

kartaḥ- śaktiḥ pītur mama

rudrasya nāśa- śaktis sū

tvanya- śaktiḥ parā śiva.

The energy of everyone is a part of the divine *śakti*. The Supreme with its power created the creator *Brahmā*, *pūrvam saṁsṛjya brahmādān*.

in regard to Rama and Sita, Sita becomes *Sakti*. In the *Sita U.* she is said to be *mūla prakṛti*.

Sītā bhagavatī jñeyā mūla-prakṛti-saṁjñitā.

In Devī U Durga's name is accounted for. 'Beyond whom there is none she is called Durgā. Because she saves from crisis therefore she is called Durgā.'

Yasyāḥ paratarām nāstī, saiṣā durgā prakīrtitā

Durgāt saṁtrāyate yasmād devī durgeti kathyate.

2. Vi.47.18; see BU II.5.19 3. R.V.X. 5.7. MU II.2.1. praśna II.5.6

84

The Principal Upaniṣads

of *māyā*, he is not subject to it. **If God were subject to māyā. he would not be infinite supreme existence.** Any being compelled to manifest itself is not free. *Īśvara* has in him the power of manifestation, non-manifestation and other-manifestation, *kartum, a-kartum, anyathā-kartum*. *Brahman* is logically prior to *Īśvara* who has the power of manifestation, and takes him over into His transcendental being when He is not manifesting His nature.

This dual nature of the Supreme provides the basis for the reality of personality in God and man, and so for authentic religious experience This world, far from being unreal, is intimately connected with the Divine Reality. This complex evolving universe is a progressive manifestation of the powers of the Supreme Spirit from matter to spiritual freedom, from *anna* to *ānanda* The purpose of the cosmic evolution is to reveal the spirit underlying it. **God lives, feels and suffers in every one of us, and in course of time His attributes, knowledge, beauty and love will be revealed in each of us.**

When the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says that **the Supreme Lord experiences the results of deeds,**¹ it suggests that we are the images and likenesses of God, and when we experience the results of our deeds, He does also.

There is an intimate connection between God and the world of souls.²

Deussen holds that the idealistic monism of Yājñavalkya is the main teaching of the Upaniṣads and the other doctrines of theism, and cosmogonism are deviations from it caused by the inability of man to remain

on the heights of pure speculative thought. The view which regards the universe as actually real, the Ātman as the universe which we know, and the theistic developments are said to be departures from the exalted idealism of Yājñavalkya. It is not necessary to look upon *the* theism emphasised in the *Kaṭha* and the *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣads*

1. I 3.1

² Cp Angelus Silesius 'I know that without me God cannot live an instant'
Eckhart 'God needs me as much as I need him.'

Lady Julian 'We are God's bliss, for in us He enjoyeth without end ' When Pascal states that Jesus Christ will be in agony till the end of the world, he means that there is a side to God, the temporal, where he suffers in every innocent man who is persecuted and tortured.

Introduction

85

as a declension from the pure monistic idealism. It is in the direct line of development of Upaniṣad thought.

The Absolute is not a metaphysical abstraction or a void of silence. It is the absolute of this relative world of manifestation. What is subject to change and growth in the world of becoming reaches its fulfilment in the world of the Absolute. The Beyond is not an annulling or a cancellation of the world of becoming, but its transfiguration. The Absolute is the life of this life, the truth of this truth.

If the world were altogether unreal, we cannot progress from the unreal to the Real. If a passage is possible from the empirical to the Real, the Real is to be found in the empirical also. The ignorance of the mind and the senses and the apparent futilities of human life are the material for the self-expression of that Being, for its unfolding. *Brahman* accepts world existence. The Ultimate Reality sustains the play of the world and dwells in it. If that is why we are able to measure the distance of the things of the world from the Absolute and evaluate their grades of being.¹ There is nothing in this world which is not lit up by God. Even the material objects which lack the intelligence to discover the nature of the divine ground of their being are the emanations of the creative energy of God and they are able to reveal to the discerning eye the divine within their material frames. What is not possible for inanimate and non-rational beings is open to the rational human being. He can attain to a knowledge of the divine ground of his being. He is not coerced into it, but has to attain it by the exercise of his choice. The inchangeableness of the Supreme does not mean that the universe is a perfectly articulated mechanism in which every thing is given from the beginning. The world is real as based on *Brahman*; it is unreal by itself.

Cosmic existence partakes of the character of the real and the

1. CP St. Bernard: 'God who, His simple substance, is all everywhere equally, nevertheless, in efficacy, is in rational creatures in another way than in irrational, and in good rational creatures in another way than in the bad. He is in irrational creatures in such a way as not to be comprehended by them; by all rational ones, however, he can be comprehended through knowledge, but only by the good is he to be comprehended also through love.'

86

The Principal Upaniṣads

Unreal. It is aspiring to become completely real.¹ The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* rejects the view that the world was originally *a-sat* or non-being, and from it all existence was produced.² It affirms 'In the beginning this world was just being, one only without a second.'³

The Supreme is described as a *kavi*, a poet, an artist, a maker or creator, not a mere mutator. Even as art reveals man's wealth of life, so does the world reveal the immensity of God's life. The *Brahma Sūtra* refers to the creation of the world as an act of *Līlā*, play, the joy of the poet, eternally young.

If immutability is the criterion of reality, then the world of manifestation has no claim to reality. Change is the pervading feature of the world. Changing things imply non-existence at the beginning and non-existence at the end.⁴ They are not constantly present. Mortality is imprinted on all beings who are subject to birth, decay, dissolution and death. This very planet will decline and dissolve. While change is the mark of the relative world, this changing world reaches its fulfilment in the Absolute. What is incomplete in the relative world of becoming is completed in the absolute world of being.

Māyā is also used for *prakṛti*, the objective principle which the personal God uses for creation. All nature, even in the lowest, is in ceaseless movement, aspiring to the next higher stage, of which it is itself an image

or lower manifestation, *prakṛti*, not-self, matter all but cast out from the sphere of being, is tending feebly to get back to the self, receives form and is thus linked up with Absolute Being. Even matter is Brahman.⁵ *prakṛti* by itself is more a demand of thought than a fact of existence. Even the lowest existence has received the impress of the Creative Self. It is not utter non-existence Abso-

1. Cp. *Vākya-sudhā*

asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpaṃ nāma cety aṃśa-pañcakam

ādyam trayam brahma-rūpaṃ jagad- rūpaṃ ato dvayam.

2 VI 21

3 VI 2 2 *sad-āspadaṃ sarvaṃ sarvatra S*

4 *ādāv ante ca yan nāsti vartamāne 'pi tat tathā.* Gauḍapāda *Kārikā* II. 6

Milarepa, the Tibetan mystic says 'All worldly pursuits end in dispersion, buildings in destruction, meetings in separation, births in death'

5 *annam brahmeti vyajānāt* T U. III

Introduction

87

lute non-being is non-existent. It is impossible in a world which flows freely from the bounty of being *prakṛti* is called non-being. It is not strictly correct. This description indicates its distance from being. It is the ultimate possibility on the side of descent from the Divine, almost non-being, but not utter non-being.

While *prakṛti* is said to be the *māyā* of God, its forms seem to us individual souls to be external to us. It is the source of our ignorance of its real nature.

While the world is created by the power of *māyā* of *Īśvara*, the individual soul is bound down by *māyā* in the sense of *avidyā* or ignorance. The manifestation of Primordial Being is also a concealment of His original nature. The self-luminous moves about clothed in the splendours of the cosmic light which are not His real nature. We must tear the cosmic veil and get behind the golden brightness which *Savitṛ* has diffused. The Upaniṣad says 'Two birds, inseparable friends cling to the same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit, the other looks on without eating. On the same tree man sits, grieving, immersed, bewildered by his own impotence (*an-īśa*). But when he sees the other lord (*Īśa*), contented and knows his glory, then his grief passes away'.¹ We mistake the multiplicity for ultimate reality. If we overlook the unity, we are lost in ignorance.

When we get to the concept of *prakṛti* we are in the realm of *Hiraṇya-garbha*. The similes employed by the Upaniṣads, salt and water, fire and sparks, spider and thread, flute and sound assume the existence of an element different from being. Into the original stillness of *prakṛti*, *Hiraṇya-garbha* or *Brahmā* sends sound, *nāda-Brahma*. By his ecstatic dance the world evolves. This is the meaning of the symbol of *Natarāja* (*Nataraja*). His dance is not an illusion. It is a timeless fact of the Divine Reality. The forms are manifestations of the Real, not arbitrary inventions out of nothing. Form, *rūpa*, is the revelation of the formless *a-rūpa*. *Nāma*, name, is not the word by which we describe the object, out it is the power or the character of reality which the form of a thing embodies. The Infinite is nameless for it includes all names. The emphasis right through is on the dependence of

1. S.U. IV 6 and 7.

88

The Principal Upaniṣads

the world on *Brahman*. The relative rests in the Absolute. There can be no echo without a noise. The world is not self-explanatory, it is not the cause of itself. It is an effect. The *Īśa Upaniṣad* indicates that the basic reality is the One, and the derivative and dependent reality is the many.¹ When the *Kena Upaniṣad* says that *Brahman* is the mind of mind, the life of life, it does not assert the unreality of mind and life, but affirms the inferiority, the incompleteness of our present existence. All that we find in the world is an imperfect representation, a divided expression of what is eternally in the Absolute Being.

The world depends on *Brahman*, and not *Brahman* on the world. 'God is the dwelling-place of the universe, but the universe is not the dwelling-place of God' is a well-known Rabbinic dictum. The world of experience with its three states of waking, dream and deep sleep is based on the subject-object relation. This duality is the principle of all manifestation. The objects are perceived in both dream and waking and

the distinction of seer and seen is present in both. The world of manifestation is dependent on the Absolute. The Absolute Spirit which transcends the distinction between the subject and **the object is logically prior to the manifested world.**² The world is a process of becoming, it is not being.

The Upaniṣads make it clear that the waking state and the dream state are quite distinct. The objects of the dream state are illusory, not so those of waking experience. 'There are no chariots in that state (of dreaming), no horses, no roads. **He himself creates chariots, horses, roads.**'³ Imaginary objects exist only during the time we imagine them, *kalpana-kāla*, but factual objects exist not only when we perceive them but also **when we do not perceive them, *bāhyās ca dvaya-kālāḥ.***⁴ The spatio-temporal order is a fact, not a state of mind or a phase of consciousness

Avidyā is mentioned in the Upaniṣads as the source of delusion. The *Kaṭhā Upaniṣad* speaks of people living in ignorance and thinking themselves wise, who move about wandering in search of reality, like blind men following the

¹ 4 and 5 ² See Gauḍapāda *Kārikā* on *Mā U II 4* and *5*
3 B U IV 3 9 and 10. 4. Saṅkara on *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*. II 14

Introduction

89

blind If they had lodged themselves in ***vidyā***, wisdom, instead of ***avidyā***, ignorance, **they would easily have seen the truth.**¹ The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* distinguishes between *vidyā* or knowledge which is power and ***avidyā* or ignorance which is impotence.**² While *māyā* is more cosmic in significance, ***avidyā*** is more subjective. We are subject to *avidyā* when we look upon the multiplicity of objects and egos as final and fundamental. Such a view falsifies the truth. It is the illusion of ignorance. The world of multiplicity is out there, and has its place, but if we look upon it **as a self-existing cosmos, we are making an error.**³ While the world process reveals certain possibilities of the Real, it also conceals the full nature of the Real ***avidyā*** breeds selfishness and becomes a knot in the heart which we should untie before we can get possession of the **Self in the recesses of our heart** ⁴ The *Praśna Upaniṣad* tells us that we cannot reach the world of *Brahman* unless we have shaken off the crookedness in us, the **falsehood (*anṛtam*)** in us, the illusion (*māyā*) **in us** ⁵

The world has the tendency to delude us into thinking that it is all, that it is self-dependent, and the delusive character of the world is also designated *māyā*. In the sense of *avidyā*. When we are asked to overcome *māyā*, it is an injunction to avoid worldliness. Let us not put our trust in the things of this world. *Māyā*, is concerned not with the existence of the world but with its meaning, not with the factuality of the world but with the way in which we look upon it.

There are passages in the Upaniṣads which make out that the world is an appearance, *vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam*, while Reality is pure being. There are others which grant reality to the world, though they maintain that it has no reality apart from *Brahman*. Saṅkara tells us that the former is the true teaching of the Upaniṣads, while the latter view is put forward only tentatively as a first step in the teaching to be later

¹ *Kaṭh* 1.2.4.5

Māyā is viewed as the power that makes for delusion.

*māś ca mohārtha-vacanaḥ yāś ca prāpaṇa-vacakaḥ
tām prāpayati yā nityam, sā māyā parikīrtita.*

Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa XXVII.

4. MUs II.1.10 5. I.16

90

The Principal Upaniṣads

Withdrawn. The reality conceded to the world is not ultimate. It is only empirical.

If we keep in mind the fourfold character of the Supreme, we shall avoid confusion in regard to the status of the world. If we concentrate attention on *Brahman*, the Absolute, we feel that the world is not independent of *Brahman* but rests in *Brahman*. The relationship between the two cannot be logically

articulated. If we turn to the personal *Īśvara*, we know that the world is the creation of *Brahman* and not its organic expression. The power of creation is called *māyā*. If we turn to the world process which is a perpetual becoming, it is a mixture of being and non-being, *sat* and *asat*, the divine principle and *prakṛti Hiranya-garbha* and his world are both subject to time, and should be distinguished from the eternal. But the temporal becoming is by no means false.

As to why the Supreme has this fourfold character, why it is what it is, we can only accept it as the given reality. It is the ultimate irrationality in the sense that no logical derivation of the given is possible. It is apprehended by us in spiritual consciousness, and accounts for the nature of experience in all its aspects. It is the only philosophical explanation that is possible or necessary.

XIV

THE INDIVIDUAL SELF

Jīva is literally, 'that which breathes,' from *jīv* 'to breathe.' It referred originally to the biological aspect of man's nature which goes on throughout life, in waking, dream and sleep. It is called *Puruṣa* in the sense of *puri-śaya* or 'that which dwells in the citadel of the heart.' This means that the biological serves the ends of another, the soul or psyche. It is this soul which reaps the fruits of deeds and survives the death of the physical body. It is the *bhoktr*, the enjoyer, *kartr*, the doer. It is the *vijñāna-maya a ātmā*. The *Jīva* consists of a material body, the

1. See *Praśna IV 9 Kaṭha I. 3. 4*

Introduction

91

principle of breath (*prāṇa*), regulating the unconscious activities of the individual, and the principle of conscious activities (*manas*) which uses the five sensory organs (*indriyas*) of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste and the five organs of action, viz speech, hands, feet, excretory and generative organs. All these are organised by *vijñāna* or *buddhi*. The basis of the individuality of the ego is *vijñāna* or intelligence which draws round itself mind, life and body.¹ The ego belongs to the relative world, is a stream of experience, a fluent mass of life, a centre round which our experiences of sense and mind gather. At the back of this whole structure is the Universal Consciousness, *Ātman*, which is our true being.

The human individual is a complex of five elements, *anna*, *prāṇa*, *manas*, *vijñāna* and *ānanda*. The Highest Spirit which is the ground of all being, with which man's whole being should get united at the end of his journey, does not contribute to his self-sense. Life and matter are organised into the gross physical body, *sthūla-śarīra*, mind and life into the subtle body, *sūkṣma-śarīra*, intelligence into the causal body, *kāraṇa-śarīra* and *Ātman*, the Universal Self is the supreme being sustaining the others. The ego is the manifestation of the Universal Self using memory and moral being which are changing formations. *Puruṣa* is sometimes used for the *Ātman* which is higher than *Buddhi*. *Buddhi* belongs to the objective hierarchy of being *Puruṣa* is the subjective light of consciousness that is reflected in all beings.

The natural sciences, physics and chemistry, anatomy and physiology, psychology and sociology treat man as an object of inquiry. They show that man is a link in the chain of living beings, one among many. He has a body and a mind which belong to him, but his self is not derived from any of these, though it is at the root of them all. All empirical causalities and

1. CP He who knows more and more clearly the self obtains fuller being. In plants and trees sap only is seen, in animals consciousness. The self itself is more and more clear in man for he is most endowed with intelligence. He knows tomorrow, he knows the world and what is not the world. By mortal, he desires the immortal, being thus endowed. As for animals, 'hunger and thirst comprise their knowledge. But this man is the sea, he is above all the world. Whatever he reaches he desires to go beyond it. *Aitareya Āranyaka II.1.3*

92

The Principal Upaniṣads

biological processes of development apply to his outer being, but not to his self. The physical, the biological, the psychological and the logical aspects are aspects of his nature, his *kośas*, as the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* calls them. There are great possibilities of empirical investigation, but man is more than what he knows about himself

The ego is a unity of body, life, mind and intelligence. It is not a mere flux, as some early Buddhists and Hindus thought. Intelligence which is the unifying principle gives us the ego-consciousness. Memory is one factor which helps to preserve the continuity of the ego which is also influenced by a number of factors which are not present to our memory and are hardly grasped by our surface consciousness. The subconscious plays a great part in it. The nature of the ego depends on the principle of organisation and the experience to be organized. As we have an enormous variety of experiences with which we can identify ourselves, an infinite number of objects which we can pursue, fame, career, possessions or power, we have an infinite number of individuals marked out by their past and present experiences, their education and environment. **What we are depends on what we have been.** The ego is a changing formation on the background of the Eternal Being, the centre round which our mental and vital activities are organized. **The ego is perpetually changing, moving up and down, up towards union with the divine godhead or down to the fiendish extremes of selfishness, stupidity and sensuality.** The self-transcending capacity of the *Jīva* is the proof that it is not the limited entity it takes itself to be.

The hierarchies of existence and value correspond. The order of phenomena which has the lowest degree of reality in the existential scale has the lowest degree of value in the ethical or spiritual scale. The human individual is higher than the animal, plant or mineral.

What is the relation of the Universal Self to the individual selves? Different views are held on the matter. Saṅkara believes that the Universal Self is identical with the individual self. The individual self is eternally one with and also different from the Universal Self, says Rāmānuja. **The individual self is**

Introduction

93

eternally different from the Universal Self according to Madhva.¹ When the soul is said to be **an *amśa* or fragment of the Divine mind**, it is to indicate that it is subsequent to the Divine mind, as a recipient of the Divine idea. The souls therefore serve as matter for the Divine Forms. This is the truth indicated in the Sāṅkhya theory of the multiplicity of selves. Though the self is one in all, in the manifested world, there is an *amśa*, fragment, part or ray of the self which presides over the movements of our personal lives through the ages. This persistent divine form is the real individuality which governs the mutations of our being. This is not the limited ego, but the Infinite Spirit reflecting itself in our personal experience. We are not a mere flux of body, life and mind thrown on the screen of a Pure Spirit which does not affect us in any way. Behind this flux there is the stable power of our being through which the Infinite Spirit manifests itself. The Divine has many modes of manifestation, and at many levels, and the fulfilment of the purposes of these modes constitutes the supreme scope of the eternal kingdom. In the world of manifestation the ground of created being is God's idea of it, which, because it is divine, is more real than the creature itself. The soul, therefore, represents an idea of the divine mind, and the different souls are the members of the Supreme. The soul draws its idea of perfection from the Divine Creator who has given it existence. The soul's substantial existence derives from the Divine mind, and its perfection consists in the vision of the Divine mind, in its effectuating the divine pattern for it in its consciousness and character.

There does not seem to be any suggestion that the individual egos are unreal. They all exist only through the Self and have no reality apart from It. The insistence on the unity of the Supreme Self as the constitutive reality of the world and of the individual souls does not negate the empirical reality of the

1. *Commenting on the sutra, amśo nānā-vyapadeśād anyathā cāpi* (the individual spirit is a part of the Lord inasmuch, as it is not taught that they are different and also the contrary), Saṅkara indicates that 'the individual and the Lord are related as sparks to fire, *Jīva īśvarasyāmśo bhavitum arhati, yathāgner visphuliṅgāḥ*, in which the heat is the same (notwithstanding that the sparks are distinguishable from fire)' and concludes that 'from these two doctrines of difference and non-difference the meaning of participation, *amśatva*, follows.' S.B II. 3. 43

The Principal Upaniṣads

Latter. The plurality of individual souls is admitted by the Upaniṣads. The individuals do not resolve themselves in the Universal Absolute so long as the world of manifestation is functioning. The released individuals know themselves as the Self and not as the psycho-physical vehicles which are animated by the Self and so are incarnations of the Self. These vehicles are causally determined and are subject to change. The individual is, in a sense, created by God after His own image and in His own likeness, but he has his creaturely form. We do not know our own possibilities. **The individual ego is subject to avidyā or ignorance when it believes itself to be separate and different from all other egos.** The result of this separatist ego-sense, *ahamkāra*, is failure to enter into harmony and unity with the universe. This failure expresses itself in physical suffering and mental discord. Selfish desire is the badge of subjection or bondage. When the individual shakes off this *avidya*, he becomes free from all selfishness, **possesses all and enjoys all.**¹

The unity of the Self does not make the distinctions of the individual souls irrelevant. There is no mixing up of the fruits of action, as **the different individual selves are kept distinct by their association with *Buddhi*.**² Our lives become meaningful in so far as they partake of the divine logos. The logos is seen in close connection with the logical or rational element in us. The Divine Reason is immanent in our reason. The ego's possession of intelligence gives it the capacity for moral choice. It may either turn to the Indwelling Spirit or pursue the separate interests of the ego. It may open itself to the Self or shut itself away from It. One leads to light and life, the other to darkness and death. We have the seeds of both in us. We may live a life controlled by flesh and blood and earth-born intellect or we may lay ourselves open to God and let Him work in us. **As we choose the one or the other, we are led to death or immortality.**³ When

¹ CP Boethius 'In other living creatures, ignorance of self is nature; in man it is vice'

² *buddhi-bhedena bhokṣi-bhedāt. Śaṅkara SB II 3. 49.*

³ Cp MB

amṛtam caiva mṛtyuś ca dvayaṁ dehe pratiṣṭhitam

mṛtyur āpadyate mohāt, satyenāpadyate amṛtam

'In each human body the two principles of immortality and death are established. By the pursuit of delusion we reach death; by the pursuit of truth we attain immortality.'

Introduction

95

we forget our true nature and lose ourselves in the things of the world, we have evil and suffering.

Alienation from our true nature is hell, and union with it is heaven. There is a perpetual strain in human life, an effort to reach from the arbitrary into an ideal state of existence. When we divinise our nature, our body, mind and spirit work flawlessly together and attain a rhythm which is rare in life.

Without the individual there is neither bondage nor liberation. The Eternal in His transcendent form as *Brahman* or cosmic being as *Īśvara* does not arrive at immortality. It is the individual who is subject to ignorance and who rises to self-knowledge. The self-expression of the Supreme through the individuals will continue until it is completed. The Divine possesses always its unity, and Its aim in the cosmic process is to possess it in an infinite experience through many conscious selves. So long as we are subject to ignorance, we stand away from God and are immersed in our limited egos. When we rise to self-knowledge, we are taken up into the Divine Being and become aware of the Infinite, Universal Consciousness in which we live.

Chapter XV

INTUITION AND INTELLECT. VIDYĀ (KNOWLEDGE) AND A VIDYĀ (IGNORANCE)

If *buddhi*, *vijñāna*, intelligence, has its being turned towards the Universal Self it develops intuition or true knowledge, Wisdom. But ordinarily, intelligence is engaged in discursive reasoning and reaches a knowledge which is, at best, imperfect, through the processes of doubt, logic and skilful demonstration. It reflects on the data supplied by *manas* or the sense-mind with its knowledge rooted in sensations and appetites. At the intellectual level we grope with an external vision of things, where objects are extrinsically opposed to one another. We are besieged by error and incapacity. Integral knowledge

possesses its object truly and securely. Nothing is external to it. Nothing is other than itself. Nothing is divided or in conflict within its

The Principal Upaniṣads page 96
96

all-comprehensive self-awareness. it is the means of knowledge and knowledge itself

Intuitive knowing is immediate as distinct from the discursive and mediate knowledge. It is more immediate than sensory intuition, for it overcomes the distinction between the knower and the known which subsists in sense-intuition. It is the perfect knowledge, while all other knowledge is incomplete and imperfect in so far as it does not bring about an identification between subject and object. All other knowledge is indirect and has only symbolic or representative value. The only generally effective knowledge is that which penetrates into the very nature of things. But in lower forms of knowledge this penetration of the subject into the object is limited and partial. Scientific understanding assumes that an object can be known only if it is broken up into its simpler constituents. If anything organic is handled in this manner, its significance is lost. By employing intuitive consciousness we know the object with less distortion and more actuality. We get close to perceiving the thing as it is.

Knowledge presupposes unity or oneness of thought and being, a unity that transcends the differentiation of subject and object. **Such knowledge is revealed in man's very existence.¹** It is unveiled rather than acquired. Knowledge is concealed in ignorance and when the latter is removed the former manifests itself. What we are, that we behold, and what we behold, that we are. Our thought, our life and our being are uplifted in simplicity and we are made one with truth. **Though we cannot understand or describe, we taste and we possess. We become new.²** When the beatific vision of Absolute Being has

¹ Eckhart says 'God in the fullness of His Godhead dwells eternally in His image (the soul itself)' Rudolf Otto *Mysticism East and West* (1932). P 12.

² Cp Plotinus 'And one that shall know this vision with what passion of love shall he not be seized, with what pang of desire, what longing to be molten into one with this, what wondering delight! If he that has never seen this Being must hunger for It as for all his welfare, he that has known must love and reverence It as the very Beauty; he will be flooded with awe and gladness stricken by a salutary terror, he loves with a veritable love, with sharp desire, all other loves than this he must despise, and disdain all that once seemed fair' *Enneads* E T MacKenna Vol I (1917), p 86

Introduction

97

once dawned on the dazzled beholder, the savour of the phenomenal is gone for it is seen to be steeped in the noumenal.

The report which the mind and the senses give, so long as they are unenlightened by the spirit in us, is a misleading report. Yet that report is the basis from which we have to proceed. What the world and the individual *seem to be* are a distortion of what they really are, and yet through that distortion we arrive at the reality. Even as the conclusions of common sense are corrected by those of scientific understanding, the conclusions of the latter require to be corrected by the light of the spirit in us. The abstractions of the intellect require to be converted into the actuality of spiritual experience and the concrete vision of the soul.

If the real is misconceived as an object of knowledge, it cannot be known. Empirical objects may be known by outer observation or inner introspection. But the self cannot divide itself into the knower and the known. **Logical reasoning is incapable of comprehending the living unity of God and man, the absolute and the relative. Logical incapacity is not evidence of actual impossibility. Reality unites what discursive reason is incapable of holding together. Every atom of life is a witness to the oneness and duality of God and the world. Being can never be objectified or externalised. It is co-inherent and co-existent in man. It is unknowable because we identify existence with objectivity.** This is true, to a limited extent, of purely

external things like tables and chairs. They are not to be reduced to sensations or concepts arising in the knowing mind. But spiritual reality is not revealed in the way in which objects of the natural world or principles of logic are apprehended. Yājñavalkya tells us that the self is its own light when the sun has set, when the moon has set, when the fire is put out, *ātmaivāsyā jyotir bhavati.1* It is our deepest being behind the vestures of body, life, mind and intellect. Objectivity is not the criterion of reality, but the criterion is reality itself revealed in our very being. We ask for a criterion of knowledge on the assumption of a duality between the knowing subject and the Known object. If the object appears alien and impenetrable,

1. IV. 3.2-6.

Page 98

then the question of knowing it becomes a problem. But no object can be set in opposition to the spirit and so the question of criterion does not arise. True knowledge is an integral creative activity of the spirit which does not know anything external at all. For it everything is its own life. Here there is identity, possession, absorption of the object at the deepest level. Truth in spiritual life is neither the reflection nor the expression of any other reality. It is reality itself. Those who know the truth become the truth *brahma-vid brahmaiva bhavati*. It is not a question of having an idea or a perception of the real. It is just the revelation of the real. It is the illumination of being and of life itself. It is *satyam, Jñānam*. Knowledge and being are the same thing, inseparable aspects of a single reality, being no longer even distinguishable in that sphere where all is without duality.

Where there is duality, there one sees another, hears another. We have objective knowledge.1 While *vijñāna* deals with the world of duality, *ānanda* implies the fundamental identity of subject and object, non-duality. Objectification is estrangement. The objective world is the 'fallen' world, disintegrated and enslaved, in which the subject is alienated from the object of knowledge. It is the world of disruption, disunion, alienation. In the 'fallen' condition, man's mind is never free from the compulsion exercised by objective realities. We struggle to overcome disunion, estrangement, to become superior to the objective world with its laws and determinations.

We cannot, however, become aware of the true life in its unity and multiplicity, in its absoluteness and relativity, if we do not free ourselves from the world of divided and isolated objects. In the objective world where estrangement and limitations prevail, there are impenetrable entities, but in the knowledge where we have fullness and boundlessness of life nothing is external, but all is known from within. Intellect moves from object to object. Unable to comprehend them all it retains their multiplicity. Intellectual knowledge is a scattered, broken movement of the one undivided infinite life which is all-possessing and ever satisfied. Intuitive knowing is un-

Introduction

99

imprisoned by the divisions of space, successions of time or sequences of cause and effect. Our intellectual picture is a shadow cast by the integral knowledge which possesses the object truly and securely.

Reality is a fact, and facts are apprehended by intuition, whether perceptual or non-perceptual. The divine primordial reality is not a fact of the empirical world, and yet as the central spiritual fact we must have a direct apprehension of it. Our logical knowledge can give us indirect approximation to it but not a direct grasp of it.1 The seers of the Upaniṣads not only have deep vision but are able to translate their visions into intelligible and persuasive speech. They can do so only through hints and images, suggestions and symbols, for they are not susceptible of adequate expression. Prepared by Krishnaraj

The Upaniṣads distinguish between *a-parā vidyā*, lower knowledge and *para vidyā* or higher wisdom. While the former gives us knowledge of the Vedas and the sciences, the latter helps us to gain the knowledge of the Imperishable.2 The first principle disguises itself.3 In the *Brad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad*, the self is seen as the reality of reality.4 The reality of the world is the empirical; the true reality is the Ātman, the self which the empirical reality conceals. A distinction is made between the knower of texts and the knower of the self in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*.5 Śvetaketu cannot understand the question of

1. CP. John Smith, Platonist. 'Jejune and barren speculations may unfold the Plicatures of Truth's garment but they cannot discover her lovely face.

William Law writes 'To find or know God in reality by any outward proofs or by anything but by God Himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your case either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you or by you, but by their own existence or manifestation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of these things beyond and without this self-evident sensibility of their birth within you, is only such knowledge of them as the blind man hath of the light that hath never entered into him.

2. MU I.1.4-5

Mere book knowledge is of no use.

- 3.

*Pustake likhitā vidyā yena sundari japyate
siddhir na jāyate tasya kalpa-koṭi-śatair api .. Sat-karma-dīpika*
3 RV X.81.I

4 I. 6. 3, II. 1 20, II 4. 7-9. 5 VII. I VII.1. 2-3.

100 The Principal Upaniṣads

rebirth, despite much Vedic learning. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* reduces the knowledge of the Vedas to an inferior position by assigning it to *mano-maya* (mind-made) self which has to be surmounted before final truth is attained.¹ The self is perceived, according to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, not by logical reason but by spiritual contemplation, *adhyātma-yoga*.² The real is not attained by force of intellect or by much learning but is revealed to the aspirant whose will is at rest in Him.³ We realise God by the clarity of illumination, *jñāna-prasādena*.⁴

The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* teaches that, while those who put their trust in the intellect cannot attain to a knowledge of *Brahman*, yet there is an apprehension of His being by those who are childlike.⁵ *Bālyā* includes humility, receptivity or teachableness and an earnest search. The writer asks us to give up the pride of learning, *pāṇḍitya*. A self-denial which includes our intellectual pride and power is demanded. Purity of intellect is different from congestion of it. To attain purity of vision, we require a childlike nature which we can get by tranquillising the senses, simplifying the heart and cleaning the mind.

It is through quietening the strivings of the will and the empirical intellect that the conditions are realised for the revelation of the Supreme in the individual soul. Therefore having become calm, subdued, quiet, patiently enduring and collected, one sees the Self just in the self.⁶

Even as we have an intellectual discipline for the theoretical understanding of the world, we have a moral and spiritual discipline for the direct apprehension of truth. Even as we cannot understand the art of swimming by talking about it and can learn it only by getting into the water and practising swimming, so also no amount of theoretical knowledge can serve as a substitute for the practice of the life of spirit. We can know God only by becoming godlike. To become godlike is to become aware of the light in us, by returning consciously to the divine centre within us, where we have always been without our knowing it. Detachment (*vairāgya*) is the essential

¹ II 3

² II 12

³ *Kaṭha* II 20 and 23

⁴ M U III 1 8

⁵ III 5 See also *Subāla* 1/13.

B U IV 4 23

Introduction

101

means for the attainment of wisdom (*jñāna*).¹ Only the pure in heart can see God.

We must cultivate a religious disposition. God is revealed only to those who believe that He is.² When in doubt, later tradition asks us to give the benefit of the doubt to the theist. For if there is no God, there is

no harm in believing in Him; **if there is, the atheist would suffer.**³ Faith, as trust in the universe, in its reliability, in its essential soundness and decency, is the starting-point of spiritual development.

Spiritual inclination is essential for the pursuit of spiritual life. In the *Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya offers to divide all his earthly possessions between his two wives, **Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī.** The latter asks whether the whole world filled with wealth can give her life eternal. Yājñavalkya says: 'No, your life will be just like that of people who have plenty of things, but there is no hope of life eternal through wealth.' Maitreyī spurns the riches of the world remarking, 'What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal?' Yājñavalkya recognises the spiritual fitness of his wife and teaches her the highest wisdom.

Ethical preparation is insisted on. If we do not abstain from wrong-doing, **if we are not composed in our minds, we cannot attain to spiritual wisdom.**⁴ Our moral being must be purged of all evil. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* tells us that we should cleanse our natures to reach the goal, since even a mirror can reflect an image properly only **if it is cleansed of its impurities.**⁵ We must renounce selfish desire, surrender material possessions, become bereft of egotism. **The path is 'sharp as the edge of a razor and hard to cross, difficult to tread.'**⁶

A teacher who has attained **the goal may help the aspiring soul.**⁷ Truth has not only to be demonstrated but also communicated. It is relatively easy to demonstrate a truth, but it can be communicated only by one who has thought, willed and

1. CP Viveka-cuḍāmaṇi 376, which compares detachment and knowledge to the two wings that are indispensable for the soul, if it should soar unrestricted to its eternal home of freedom and peace.

2. kaṭha II. 6 12 and 13

3. nāsti cet nāsti no hāniḥ, asti cet nāstiko hataḥ

4. kaṭha I.2.24. M.U.III.1.5 5. II.14-15. 6. kaṭha I.2.24.

7 C.U. IV. 9 .3 *Kaṭha* I. 2 8-9

102

The Principal Upaniṣads

felt the truth. Only a teacher can give it with its concrete quality. **He that has a teacher knows, ācāryavān puruṣo veda.**¹ Only he must be a proper teacher who embodies truth and tradition. **Only those who have the flame in them can stir the fire in others.**

The individual should develop the habit of introversion, of abstracting from the outside world and looking within himself. **By a process of abstraction we get behind knowing, feeling and willing to the essential Self, the God within. We must silence our speech, mind and will. We cannot hear the voice of the still spirit in us, so long as we are lost in vain talk, mental rambling and empty desires.** The mind must strip away its outer sheaths in complete detachment, return to its inward quiet and fix its attention on the essential Self which is the ground and reality of the whole universe. **The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* brings out the need for concentrated attention and undistracted effort**² An ordered, disciplined training of all our powers, a change of mind, heart and will is demanded.

Several forms of meditation are advised **Symbols** (*pratīka*) are used as **supports for meditation.** We are free to use the symbols which are most in conformity with our personal tendencies. Meditation on the ***praṇava*** is suggested in the *Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*

It is said that **the Self cannot be realised except by those whom the Self chooses.**³ Self-realisation is possible through the grace of the **Divine God-vision is the fruit of strenuous effort and Divine grace.**⁴ Only the Spirit in us can raise us to the spiritual status. The Real, which is the basis of this manifold world of things and minds, can be apprehended directly and immediately only by those who fulfil certain conditions and submit to the leadings of the spirit. We do not so much hold the idea of the Real as the idea holds us. We are possessed by it

Vidyā and *avidya* are two ways of apprehending Reality

■ CU VI 14 2 2. III 1 8 3 *Kaṭha* I 2 23 MU III 2 3

⁴ Cp St Bernard 'Grace is necessary to salvation, free will equally so, but grace in order to give salvation, free will in order to receive it. Therefore we should not attribute part of the good work to grace and part to free will, it is performed in its entirety by the common and inseparable action of both, entirely by grace, entirely by free will, but springing from the first in the second'

Introduction

103

Both are forms of relative knowledge and belong to the manifested universe. Knowledge formulated logically is not equivalent to a direct and immediate apprehension of the Real. Whatever words we use, whatever **concepts we employ, fall short of reality**¹ The *anubhava* is "beyond all manifestation and is complete in itself. *Vidyā* stresses the harmony and interconnections of elements which make up the world; *avidyā* the separateness, mutual independence and strife. *Vidyā* helps us to appreciate intellectually the intelligible ideas about the nature of the Divine ground and the nature of the direct experience of it in relation to other experiences. It indicates the means by which we can attain *Brahman*. Such a system of theological doctrine points out that there is nothing intrinsically self-contradictory about the postulate of religion, viz the divine reality, and that it is also empirically verifiable if only we are willing to submit to a discipline. The theological knowledge or *vidyā* is different from the experience or *anubhava* of it. The experience is recorded as a pure and direct intellectual intuition in *Śruti*. When we reflect on the experiences or their records and reduce them to a rational order we have *smṛti*. While the first is the domain of metaphysical principles, the second applies these principles to individual and social conduct. *Vidyā* is nearer the truth than *avidyā*.

But *Vidyā* is also understood *Jñāna* which is of the essential nature of the Divine Reality. It is then eternal wisdom which is not the knowledge possessed by any individual. It is the wisdom hidden beneath the sheaths of ignorance **It is one with the Supreme Self, which is self-evident and needs no proof, svataḥ-siddha, self-valid certainty.**

Though intuitive wisdom is different from knowledge of the senses or anything we can achieve by logical reflection, it is not to be confused with occultism, obscurantism, or extravagant emotion. It is not a magical insight or heavenly vision, or special revelation obtained through insight or or special. What we

1. When Al Ghazzālī centuries later, Thomas Aquinas refused to proceed with consideration of truths about God, when once they attained direct apprehension of the Divine Reality, they refer to this inadequacy of verbal or logical expressions.

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104

The Principal Upaniṣads

attain by vision, empirical or trans-empirical, belongs to the objective world. It is a distinction within the objective world, between the physical and the super-physical, between what we reach by the five senses and a sixth sense. Wisdom is pure reason, capacity for fundamental truth. It is the possession of the soul or it is the soul that penetrates into its own ground and depth and becomes essential being. It springs from it of necessity when it meditates on itself This wisdom is eternal, universal and necessary for Saṁkara. It cannot be destroyed though it may be obscured.

All the same, the tradition of thought has been strong in the Upaniṣads. We lead up to experience through intellectual knowledge. **For those who are incapable of integral insight, perception and inference are the only available means.**¹ Even men of experience do not contradict rational thought, though they go beyond it.

XVI ETHICS

The Upaniṣads insist on the importance of ethical life.² They repudiate the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the ego and emphasise the practice of moral virtues. Man is responsible for his acts. **Evil is the free act of the individual who uses his freedom for his own exaltation.** It is fundamentally the choice which affirms the finite, independent self, its lordship and acquisitiveness against the universal will. Evil is the result of our alienation from the Real. **If we do not break with evil, we cannot attain freedom.**³

1.CP vākya paḍīya. For those who cannot see, the reason -which is not in contradiction with the Vedas and the scriptures is the eye.'

Veda-śāstrāvirodhī yas

Tarkas-caḥsur a-paśyatām I.137

2.MU III.2.4. BU IV.4.23

2. Commenting on *kaṭha* I. 2. 2-3, Rāmānuja writes 'This verse teaches **that meditation which should become more perfect day by day, cannot be accomplished without the devotee having broken with all evil. RB IV.1. 13**

'The vedas do not purify the ethically unworthy.'

Introduction

105

Man is of the divine race, but he has in him the element 'of non-being, which exposes him to evil. As a spiritual being he can burst the revolving circle of nature and become a citizen of another world in unity with Absolute Being who is his creative source. Man is the mediator between God and nature and has to complete the work of creation by the incarnation of wisdom. He must illumine what is dark and strengthen what is weak in him. His entire being should labour to become one with the Divine. Our fallen nature, sunk in sin, is felt as contrary to the Real and yet as existent. The self feels itself to be in contradiction to all that is supremely real. There is the pain of discord between the existent and the Real. In moral life the self feels itself divided against itself. And yet the struggle itself is impossible unless we look upon the desire for the divine and the consciousness of rebellion as belonging to the same self. The felt contradiction is possible only through the reality which is above the discord. The antithesis between what we wish to be and what we are is implicitly their unity. **The divine consciousness and will must become our consciousness and will. This means that our actual self must cease to be a private self; we must give up our particular will, die to our ego by surrendering its whole nature, its consciousness and character to the Divine.**¹

The freedom of the human individual is assumed, though the limitations of karma are mentioned. **He fetters himself by himself, as a bird by its nest.**² The freedom of the individual increases to the extent to which he identifies himself with the **Absolute in him, the antar-yāmin.** If we leave the world after having known the true self, then our life in all worlds is the life of freedom.

Some theistic Upaniṣads say that the inner power, the Divine, caused the man whom He will lead on high from these worlds to do good works and He causes the man whom He will lead downwards to do evil works.³ In theism the stress is on Divine Providence. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the Self is the overseer of all actions, who apportions to each person his qualities, who executes justice, who restrains the evil, allots

1. anurāgād virāgaḥ

2 *Mait* III. z

3. *KU*.III.8

106

The Principal Upaniṣads

good fortune and brings to maturity the actions of the individual souls.¹

The general impression that the Upaniṣads require world-denial is not quite correct. They insist on a spirit of detachment, **vairāgya**, which is not indifference to the world. It is not abandonment of objects but non-attachment to them. We do not raise ourselves above the world by contempt for the world. It is the spirit of equanimity which is insisted on. **To be tranquil is to envy no man, to have no possessions that another can take from us, to fear none.** When the Hindu thinkers ask us to adopt *samnyāsa* or relinquishment of home and possessions, to accept the three great renunciations, consecrated in the three vows, evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience and chastity, they point to self-denial as the root of spiritual life

Spirit of renunciation does not mean neglect of social duties. **Samnyāsa** does not mean that we owe no duties to the world, we free ourselves only from ritualistic duties. **Rare fruits of spirit ripen on the soil of detachment.**² There is a popular verse which makes out that one should give up attachment, but if one is not capable of it, let him cultivate attachment, only it should be attachment to all.³

We should release ourselves from selfish likes and dislikes. **The Divine cannot use our mind and body so long as we wish to use them for our own ends.**⁴

Detachment is opposed to attachment, not to enjoyment.

¹ *VI* ii, 12, 4, *V* 5ff

2 When Ernest Renan described St Francis as 'the one perfect Christian' it was felt to be an exaggeration. Hardly anyone else in the Christian world comes so close to the ideal set forth in the Gospels. 'He that renounceth not everything that he hath, he cannot be my disciple' We feel that these demands are excessive and even fantastic. We excuse ourselves by saying that Jesus did not mean all that he is reported to have said or that his words were not of general application. We make compromises, while St Francis did not allow any compromises.

3 *tyaktavyo mama-kārah, tyaktum yadi śakyate nāsau
kartavyo mama-Kārah kiñtu sarvatra kartavyaḥ*

4 Cp St John of the Cross 'The soul that is attached to anything, however much good there may be in it, will not arrive at the liberty of divine union. For whether it be a strong wire rope or a slender and very delicate thread that holds the bird, it matters not, if it really holds it fast, for until the cord be broken the bird cannot fly. So the soul, held by the bonds of human affections, however slight they may be, cannot, while they last, make its way to God'

Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj, bhagavadgitausa.com

Introduction

107

Enjoy through renunciation is the advice of the *Īśa Upaniṣad*.¹ Good and evil do not depend on the acts one does or does not, but on the frame of mind one has. The good man is he who concurs with the divine purpose, and the bad man is he who resists it. If one's mind is good, one's acts will be good. Our attempt should be not be so much external conformity as inward cleansing. **From goodness of being good will and good works flow.**² When the soul is at peace, the greatest sorrows are borne lightly. Life becomes more natural and confiden. Changes in outer conditions do not disturb. We let our life flow of itself as the sea heaves or the flower blooms.

Work by itself does not give us liberation. It cleanses the mind, purifies the heart and produces the illumination which is the immediate condition of salvation. **Saṅkara argues that the knowledge of Brahman, as it relates to an existent being, cannot be contingent on what a person does or does not.**³

Contemplation is the way to cleanse one's mind and heart. It means rest, suspension of mental activity, withdrawal into the interior solitude in which the soul is absorbed in the fruitful silence of God. We cannot stop there; we must overflow with a love that communicates what it knows to others. Saints with abundant power and tireless energy work for the transfiguring of men and the changing of the course of secular history. **Different methods are suited for different temperaments, and they are all permitted.**⁴

¹Eckhart tells us 'It is permissible to take life's blessings with both hands, provided thou dost know thyself prepared in the opposite event to leave them just as gladly'

² CP. Eckart: Men should not think so much of what they ought to do, as they what they ought to be. Think not to lay the foundation of thy Holiness upon doing, but rather upon being. For works do not sanctify us but we should sanctify the works. Whoever is not great in his essential being will achieve nothing by works, whatever he may do' Rudolf Otto: *Mysticism: East and West*, P. 126.

³ A-puruṣa-tantratvād brahma-vijñānasya.

⁴ See BG V.5.Vasiṣṭha says

*a-sādhyāḥ kasyacid yogāḥ hasyacit jñāna-niścayaḥ
itham vicārya mārgau dvau jagāda paramēśvaraḥ*

To some Yoga is impossible; to others the ascertainment of truth. Viewint hus God has revealed two paths.

CP. St Thomas Aquinas: 'A thing may belong to the contemplative life in two ways essentially or as a predisposition. The moral virtues belong to the contemplative life as a predisposition. For the act of contemplation, in which the contemplative life essentially consists, is hindered both by the impetuosity of the passions and by the outward disturbances. Now the moral virtues curb the impetuosity of the passions and quell the disturbance of outward occupations. Hence moral virtues belong to the contemplative life as a predisposition.' St Thomas taught there were three vocations, that to the active life, that to the contemplative and a third to the combination of both and the last is superior to the other two. There are statements to the effect that the contemplative life in itself by its very nature is superior to the active life. *Vita contemplativa*, he remarks, *stimpliciter est melior quam activa* for the contemplative life directly and immediately occupies itself with the love of God than which there is no act more perfect or more meritorious. The contemplative life establishes man in the very heart of all spiritual fecundity. When St Thomas admits that the active life can be more perfect in certain circumstances, he qualifies it a great deal. (i) Action will only be more perfect than the joy and rest of contemplation, if it is undertaken as the result of an overflow of love for God in order to fulfill His will (ii) It is not to be continuous but only an answer to a temporary emergency. (iii) It is purely for God's glory, it does not dispense us from contemplation.

It is an added obligation and we but return as soon as we can to the fruitful silence of recollection that dispose our souls to the Divine Union.

108

The Principal Upaniṣads

The ethical virtues we are called upon to adopt are mentioned in several passages. Life is compared to a sacrifice where the fee shall be asceticism, liberality, integrity, non-injury to life and truthfulness¹. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* gives a list of students' duties. He should not be negligent of truth, virtue, welfare, prosperity, study and teaching. He should perform only those acts which are irreproachable. In case of doubt concerning any act of conduct, the student should follow the practice of those Brāhmaṇas who are competent to judge, apt, devoted, not harsh lovers of virtue. In one passage all the virtues are brought together under the three *da's* which are heard in the voice of the thunder, namely, *dama*, or self-restraint, *dāna* or self-sacrifice, and *dayā* or compassion. Prajā-pati conveys it to the three classes of his creation, gods (*deva*), men (*manuṣya*) and demons (*asura*).² Saṁkara makes out that gods have desires (*kāma*), men suffer from greed

<1. C U III.17

2 BU V.2

In the *Bhagavadgīta* (Srimad Bhagavatam) Lord says that anyone who does not care for the people who are in need of care and simply takes to the worship of God, his offer is wasted.

Yo mām sarveṣu bhūteṣu santam ātmānam īśvaram

Hitvārcām bhajate maudhyād, bhasmany eva juhōti saḥ.

SB 3.29.22 (Appended by Krishnaraj)

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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

*yo mām sarveṣu bhūteṣu
santam ātmānam īśvaram
hitvārcām bhajate maudhyād
bhasmany eva juhōti saḥ*

WORD FOR WORD:

yah — one who; *mām* — Me; *sarveṣu* — in all; *bhūteṣu* — living entities; *santam* — being present; *ātmānam* — the Paramātmā; *īśvaram* — the Supreme Lord; *hitvā* — disregarding; *arcām* — the Deity; *bhajate* — worships; *maudhyāt* — because of ignorance; *bhasmani* — into ashes; *eva* — only; *juhōti* — offers oblations; *saḥ* — he.

TRANSLATION:

One who worships the Deity of Godhead in the temples but does not know that the Supreme Lord, as Paramātmā, is situated in every living entity's heart, must be in ignorance and is compared to one who offers oblations into ashes.

109

Introduction

109

(*lobha*) and demons from anger (*krodha*). By the practice of the three injunctions we free ourselves from the sway of craving, greed and anger. When the Buddha asks us to put out in our hearts the monstrous fires of infatuation, greed and resentment, he is emphasising the three virtues enjoined by the Upaniṣads.

Dama is self-control. We should reduce our wants and be prepared to suffer in the interests of truth.¹ Austerity, chastity, solitude and silence are the ways to attain self-control.

Tapas is severe self-discipline undertaken for spiritual ends. It is exercised with reference to the natural desires of the body and the distractions of the outer world. It consists of exercises of an inward kind, prayers offered in the heart, self-analysis and outer acts like fasting, self-mortification, sexual abstinence or voluntary poverty. Strength is developed by a resisting force. The power gained by resisting one temptation helps us in overcoming the next. To evade discipline is to empty life of its significance. Nothing is more tranquil than to be unshaken by the troublous motions of the flesh.

Renunciation, *nyāsa*, is superior to *tapas* or austerity or asceticism. The latter is a means to the former. It is not to be made into an end in itself.² Ethical

¹ The wise man overcomes anger through mind-control, lust through the renunciation of desire. He can attain mastery over sleep by development of a quality of Sattva. Through steadfastness he should protect the organ of generation and the stomach "With (the help of) the eyes he should protect the hands and the feet. Through (the power of) mind he should protect the eyes and the ears and through conduct he should protect mind and speech. Through constant vigilance he should shed fear and through the service of the wise, he should overcome pride.'

*Krodhīm śamena jayati, kāmaṁ saṅkalpa-varjanāt
sattva-samsevanād dhīro nidrām ucchettum arhati.
dhrtyā śiśinodaram rakṣet, pāṇi-pādaṁca cakṣuṣā
cakṣuḥ śrotam ca manasā, mano vācam ca karmaṇā.*

a-pramādād bhayaṁ jahyād, dambham prājñopasevanāt (Brahma Purāṇa 235 40-42.

CP. Confucius: With only coarse rice as meal and only plain water as drink, and only my arm as a pillow, I still find joy in the midst of these conditions. Wealth and honor acquired contrary to righteousness are to me like passing cloud.³ Lun yu Pt.VIII.Ch.XV. See F.T. Cheng: *China moulded by Confucius* (147), P.92.

2. Do the frogs, fish and others who live from their birth to death in the waters of the Ganges, do they become yogis?'

*a-janma-maranāntam ca gaṅgādi-taṭinī iafint-sthitāh
maṇḍūka-malsya-pramukhāh yoginas te bhavanti kim?*

110

The Principal Upaniṣads

life includes moral uprightness though many minds feel only the need for mechanical ritual

Brahmacarya is not sex-destruction. There is no gulf between flesh and spirit, but only between the fallen and the transfigured flesh. Ancient Indian thinkers were of the opinion that the seed within man and woman is intended for the purpose of creating a body by which another soul may come into physical embodiment. When thus controlled, brahmacarya helps creative work of every description. When the seed is wasted in sex excesses, the body becomes weak and crippled, the face lined, the eyes dull, hearing impaired and the brain inactive. If brahmacarya is practised, the physical body remains youthful and beautiful, the brain keen and alert, the whole physical expression becomes the image and likeness of the Divine.

Mauna or silence is advised as leading the soul forward to contemplation.¹ By the discipline of silence we curb the excesses which flow from the tongue, heresy, backbiting, flattery. We cannot listen to the voice of God when our minds are dissipated, given to restless activity and are filled externally and internally with noise. Progress in silence is progress to the realisation of spirit. **When silence descends on the soul, its activities are joined to the silent creative power of God.**²

Dana enjoins gifts. It is negatively freedom from greed and positively assistance to those in need. There is no hope of immortality by wealth.³ Possessiveness is condemned. The

1. Cp Isaiah 'The tillage of righteousness is silence. 'In silence and in hope shall be your strength.'

2. 'While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course the Word leapt down from heaven '

3. B U II 4.2 Cp Jalāl-Uddin Rūmī

Once the noble Ibrahim, as he sat on his throne,
Heard a clamour and noise of cries on the roof.
Also heavy footsteps on the roof of his palace.
He said to himself, 'Whose heavy feet are these?'
He shouted from the window, 'Who goes there?'
The guards, filled with confusion, bowed their heads, saying,
'It is we going the rounds in search. '
He said, 'What seek ye?' 'They said 'Our camels. '
He said, 'whoever searched for camels on a housetop?'
They said, 'We follow thy example,
Who seekest union with God, while sitting on a throne. '

111 Introduction

Taittirīya Upaniṣad regulates the art of giving.¹ One should give with faith, one should not give without faith, one should give liberally, with modesty, with fear, with sympathy.

Dayā is karuṇā, compassion. We should try to be at peace with all, abhor all cruelty and ill-will.² Enmity means misunderstanding. A forgiving attitude frees the individual. We should grudge none, forgive all. So long as we remember an injustice, we have not forgiven either the person or the action. If only we know that there is more suffering than wickedness in the world, we would be kindly. It is by compassion, which shrinks from no sacrifice, that we can overcome the ravages of selfishness. We must be patient. **God himself is unimaginably patient.**³ **Tolerance, long suffering, patience are the fruits of spirit.**

The ethical individual is required to become like a child.⁴ The perfect man is a divine child, accepting the divine play, without fear or reserve, care or grief, in utter purity. A child is not entangled with things that seem important to grown-ups, whose occupations are mainly paltry and whose professions petrified. A child's wise incomprehension is linked with living and is more than defensiveness or disdain. We cannot return to childhood. We have to gain the state which is un-constructed by temporal purpose, but purposeful, a state in which fame and eternity coincide.

When it is said that the Upaniṣads adopt a spiritual view of life, it does not mean that they despise body, life and mind. The latter are the conditions or instruments for the life of spirit in man. They are not ends in themselves, but are means

1.1.11.2

2. Devi bhāgavata says: There is no virtue like compassion and no vice like the use of violence.

Dayā-samaṁ nāsti puṇyam, pāpaM hiṁsā-samaṁ na hi.

3. The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving the guilty transgression and sin-' Exodus XXXIV. 6. 7. 'The long suffering of the Lord is salvation.' 2 Peter III.15.

4. For Heraclitus: The Kingdom is of the child.' 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' Jesus. For Mencius: 'A great man is one who has not lost the child's heart.' Nietzsche says: 'The child is innocence and oblivion, a new beginning, a play, a self-rolling wheel, a primal motion, an holy yea-saying. Thus Spake Zarathustra I. 2.

112 The Principal Upaniṣads

or opportunities for the expression of the Universal Spirit in us. Spirit and life are not to be separated.

The ritualistic practices are reinterpreted. They are to prepare the mind for spiritual realisation, to spur it on to pierce the veil of the finite and to seek deliverance in identification with the Supreme Reality. If rites are performed without the knowledge of their meaning, they are not only useless but dangerous.¹ The presumptuous performer may have his head cut off.² He who knows a particular rite and he who knows it not both perform a rite, but when performed with knowledge the act becomes more effective.³ Meditation on the meaning of the sacrifice sometimes took the place of the actual sacrifice. 'Suppose,' Janaka asks Yājñavalkya, 'you had no milk or rice or barley to perform the fire-sacrifice, *agnihotra*, with what would you sacrifice?' 'With the fruits of trees and whatever herbs there were' 'If there were none?' 'Then with water' 'If there were no water?' 'Then, indeed, there would be nothing here, yet, this would be offered, the truth in faith.'⁴ When the heart is fully persuaded, there is little sense of sacrifice. Sacrificial life becomes a natural manifestation of the new spirit. Self-conscious sacrifice, with its burden of self-righteousness and expectation of reward, is not of much use.⁵

The caste divisions are mentioned in some of the Upaniṣads.⁶ They did not, however, harden into a rigid social system. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* five learned Brāhmaṇas who approach Uddālaka Āruni for instruction in regard to Vaisvanārā Ātman are taken by him to King Aśvapati Kaikeya, who gives them instruction after first demonstrating the imperfections of their views. Ajātaśatru of Kāśi teaches Gargya Bālāki the nature of *Brahman*, after pointing out the defects of the twelve views

1 CU V 24. i 2 CU I 8, 1 IO-II 3 CU I i-10

4 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* XI 3 1

5 Yāhweh says (Amos V. 21) 'I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not dwell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.'

Again Yāhweh speaks (Hosea VI. 6) 'For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings'

6. B U I. 4. 15.

113 Introduction

which Gargya Bālāki sets forth. Ajātaśatru observes that it is not usual for a Brāhmaṇa to approach a Kṣatriya for instruction. The doctrine of rebirth is taught by Pravāhaṇa Jaivali to Āruni with the remark that the Brāhmaṇas had never before had this knowledge. Among the students of the Upaniṣads is Satyakāma, of unknown origin, whose mother Jābāla could not tell who his father was.²

The four *āśramas* or stages of life are recognised. While the usual rule is that one has to pass through successive stages of life, exceptions are permitted. *Jābāla Upaniṣad* asks us to renounce whenever we feel a call to it. Besides, **even in a householder's stage one can attain spiritual freedom.**³

XVII

KARMA AND REBIRTH

Until we negate the ego and get fixed in the Divine Ground we are bound to the endless procession of events called saṁsāra.⁴ The principle which governs this world of becoming is called Karma. There are moral and spiritual laws as well as physical

1. See also K.U.1. - where the teacher is the King Citra Gāṅgyāyani.

2. C.U.IV.4.

3. In the bhāgavata purana it is said that a house is no prison for one *who* has controlled his senses, delights in spirit and is eager for knowledge
jīteन्द्रियासु अमरतर बुधस्या

grhāśramaḥ kiṁ tu karoty avadyam

Abhinavagupta says that *śrutis* and *smṛtis* hold that he who has right knowledge attains salvation in all stages of life and quotes: "He that worships God has established himself in the knowledge of truth, attends devotedly to his quest, performs rights, offers gifts, he is liberated though a householder."

Tattva-jñānināṁ sarveṣu aāśrameṣu mukhtir iti smārteṣu śrutau ca yathoktam.

Śrāddham kṛtvā dadad dravyaṁ grhastho pi hi mucyate.

4. Cp Boethius: *Consolations of Philosophy*. "The temporal world seems to emulate in part that which it cannot fully obtain or express, tying itself to whatever presence there is this exiguous and fleeting moment, a presence which, since it carries some image of that abiding presence, gives to whatever may partake of it the quality of seeming to have time; and so it came to pass that, by going, it continued that life, whose plenitude it could not comprehend by staying."

114.

The Principal Upaniṣads

Laws. If we neglect the laws of health, we injure our health, if we neglect the laws of morality, we wreck our higher life. Any rational conception of the universe, any spiritual conception of God requires us to recognise the utter and unquestionable supremacy of law in shaping our conduct and character.

The law of Karma is not external to the individual. The judge is not without but within. **The law by which virtue brings its triumph and ill-doing its retribution is the unfolding of the law of our being.**¹ The world order is a reflection of the Divine Mind. The Vedic gods were regarded as the maintainers of the order, *ṛta* of the world. They were the guardians of *ṛta*. **God, for the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, is the ordainer of karma, karmādhyakṣaḥ, God is law as well as love.**² His love is through law. **The working of karma is wholly dispassionate, just, neither cruel nor merciful.** Though we cannot escape from the workings of this principle, there is hope, for if man is what he has made himself, he may make himself what he will. Even the soul in the lowest condition need not abandon all hope. If we miss the right path, we are not doomed to an eternity of suffering. There are other existences by which we can grow into the knowledge of the Infinite Spirit with the complete assurance that we will ultimately arrive there. If there is a fundamental difference between Christianity and Hinduism, it is said that it consists in this, that while the Hindu to whatever school he belongs believes in a succession of lives, **the Christian believes that 'it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment'**³

¹ Cp the words of a fine fragment of the lost *Melanippe* of Euripides.

Dream you that men's misdeeds fly up to Heaven
And then some hand inscribes the record of them
Upon God's tablets, and God, reading them,
Deals the world justice' Nay, the vault of Heaven
Could not find room to write the crimes of earth,
Nor God himself avail to punish them:
Justice is *here on earth*, had ye but eyes

² Cp St Paul 'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God' Romans XI. 22

³ John McKenzie *Two Religions* (1950), p 112 Some Western philosophers and early Christian theologians accept the principle of rebirth.

115

Introduction

Belief in rebirth has persisted, at any rate, from the time of the Upaniṣads. It is a natural development from the views of the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas and **receives articulate expression in the Upaniṣads.**¹ After mentioning the dispersal of the members of the human body at death the eye of man goes to the sun, the breath to the wind, speech to fire, the mind to the moon, the ear to the quarters of heaven, the body to the

earth, the soul to the ether, the hair to the plants and trees, the blood and seed to the waters. Yājñavalkya is asked as to what remains of the individual. He takes the questioner apart, discusses with him in secret about the nature of work. **In truth, a man becomes good by good works and evil by evil works.**² Our lives incarnate our characters.

The future of the soul is not finally determined by what it has felt, thought and done in this one earthly life. The soul has chances of acquiring merit and advancing to life eternal. Until the union with the timeless Reality is attained, there will be some form of life or other, which will give scope to the individual soul to acquire enlightenment and attain life eternal. Even as non-being is only an abstract lower limit of the existential order, absolute evil is also such a lower limit. Non-being, if it existed in itself diametrically opposed to being, would be completely destroyed. Such non-being is non-existent. Therefore as every existent thing has the form of the Divine, it has also the promise of good.

The Upaniṣads give us detailed descriptions of the manner in which a man dies and is born again.³ The transition is illustrated by certain examples. As a grass-hopper, when it has come to the end of a blade of grass, finds another place of support, and then draws itself towards it, similarly this self, after reaching the end of this body, finds another place of support and then draws himself towards it. As a goldsmith, after taking a piece of gold, gives it another, newer and more beautiful shape, similarly does this self, after having thrown off this body, and dispelled ignorance, take another, newer and more beautiful form, whether it be of the manes, or demigods or gods or of

1. See RV X.10.3. Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa I.5.3.4; X.3.3.8
2. BU III.2.13
3. See BU IV.3.37-38; IV.4.1-5 and 9.7. See Kaṭha I.1.5-6

116

The Principal Upaniṣads

Prajā-pati or Brahmā or of any other beings.¹ These passages bring out several aspects of the theory of rebirth. The soul finds out its future body before it leaves the present one. The soul is creative in the sense that it creates a body. At every change of body, the soul takes a newer form. The state of each existence of the **soul is conditioned and determined by its knowledge (vidyā), its conduct (karma)**² in the previous existence. From the *Brhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* it appears that **all the organs accompany the departing soul, which enters into the samjñāna and becomes possessed of knowledge and consciousness³, vijñāna. The results of learning and conduct cling to the soul.**⁴

The ignorant, the unenlightened go after death to sunless demoniac regions.⁵ **The good are said to go up to regions which are sorrowless, through the air, sun, and moon**⁶ **The Chāndogya Upaniṣad** speaks of two ways open to mortals, **the bright and the dark, the way of the gods⁷ and the way of the fathers.**⁸ Those who practise penance and faith enter the path of light, and they never return to the cycle of human existence. Those who are only ethical, performing works of public utility, travel by the path of smoke, dwell in the world of the fathers till the time comes for them to fall down, then they are born again according to their deserts⁹ The descriptions may be fictitious, but the principle of the ascent and the descent of the soul is what the Upaniṣads insist on. **Beautiful characters attain covetable births and ugly ones miserable births.**¹⁰ Heaven and hell belong to the world of time.

¹ B U IV. 4 3-5 'As a man puts on new clothes in this world, throwing away those which he formerly wore, even so the soul of man puts on new bodies which are in accordance with its acts in a former life' *Viṣṇu Smṛti* XX 50 See B G II 13, 22

² BU IV 4 2

³ IV 4 3

⁴ Cp with this the Buddhist view that the migrating soul consists of *vijñāna* and the other four *skandhas* of *vedanā*, feeling, *samjñā*, perception, *saṃskāra* or dispositions and *rūpa* or corporeal form

s *Īśa* 3. *Kaṭha I* 1.3 B U IV 4 11

⁶ BU V. 10 1

⁷ See RV X 19 1 B G VIII 24-26

⁸ C U IV 15 5-6 There are minor variations in the accounts of CU and BU. and K.U.1

⁹ CU V 10 1-6

» CU V 10 7 KU I 2.

117. Rebirth is the lot of man until he obtains true knowledge. By virtuous acts he furthers his evolution. The reward of goodness is to grow in goodness. The reward of growing in purity of heart is to gain a clearer vision of reality. Knowledge of Reality leads to salvation.

It is sometimes suggested that the soul before undergoing rebirth experiences reward or punishment for its deeds in appropriate places. The original Vedic belief of reward in heaven or punishment gets mixed up with the doctrine of rebirth.¹

The soul is said to be a very minute entity residing in the cavity of the heart and resembling in every respect, except size, the visible man.

XVIII LIFE ETERNAL

The fact that the individual consciousness has for its essential reality the Universal Self implies the possibility that every human being can rend the veil of separateness and gain recognition of his true nature and oneness with all beings. The Upaniṣads develop this character of life eternal.

In the *R̥g Veda*, what is aimed at is length of days on earth and life in the world of heaven in the company of gods. In the *Brāhmaṇas*, the performers of various rites are promised the reward of community of being, companionship and fellowship with the gods.² When the Absolute *Brahman* was recognised, we gods became intermediaries through whose influence the end of unity with the Absolute is obtained. When *Brāhman* and *Ātman* are identified, the highest goal is declared to be unity with the Self. Deliverance is different from existence in *svarga* or paradise. The latter is a part of the manifested world. The soul may live there for ages and yet return to earth, a heir to its deeds. Deliverance, on the other hand, is a state of permanent union with the Highest Self. Life in paradise is a prolongation

1. BU.IV.2. 2. CU.V.3-10.

Śaapatha Brāhmaṇa II. 6 4 8; XI. 4.4.1. 21, VI 1. 2.3.

118

The Principal Upaniṣads

of self-centred life, while life eternal is liberation from it. While the former is time extended, the latter is time transcended

Enlightenment does not mean a departure in space to a new abode. Arrival and departure have no meaning in the context of liberation. The passages where the soul is said to go by the veins to the rays of the sun and to the sun¹ or from the moon through the worlds of fire, wind, Varuṇa, Indra and Prajā-pati, to *Brahman*² speak of the soul on the pathway to perfection. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states that the soul of the emancipated, at death, goes out by the hundred and first vein through the crown of the head, fire, wind and sun to *Brahman*.³

He who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*.⁴ Perfection is a state of mind, not contingent on change of time or place. It is an experience of the present, not a prophecy of the future. Temporal distinctions do not apply to it, but if any temporal terms are to be used, they will be words like 'now,' 'presently,' 'When all

desires that dwell in the human heart are cast away, then a mortal becomes immortal and (even) here he attaineth to Brahman.⁵ Freedom is not a future state on whose coming we wait in expectation. It is life in the spirit, in God who is the foundation and power of life.⁶

» *Kaṭha* III II. 8

2 K.U. I. 2.

3 CU VIII 6 6 KU VI 16 .Maitrī VI.21. 4B.U. IV. 4 9 MU III 2.9

5 JfotfoVT. 14.

5 The Christian scriptures say that 'the Kingdom of God is among you.' It lives and moves secretly here and now as the hidden ground overcoming Satan and the world.

Cp *mokṣasya na hi vāso'sti gramāntaram eva vā*

Ajñāna hrdaya-granthi'-nāśo mokṣa iti smṛtaḥ ---Śiva gīta XIII.32

Freedom is not in a particular place nor has one to go to some other village in order to obtain it; the destruction of the knot of ignorance round our hearts is known as freedom.

M.B also tells us that the knower of *Brahman* has neither movement nor departure.

Sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtasya samyag bhūtāni paśyataḥ

devāpi mārgē muhyanty a-padasya padaiṣiṇaḥ

'He who has attained the state of the self of all beings, who has attained the perfect vision of all beings about the path of such a person the gods themselves are perplexed, seeking to discover the place of one who has no place at all.'

Kaiha VI. 14. Cp Kabir: O Friend, hope for Hun whilst you live, understand whilst you live, for in life deliverance abides.

If your bonds be not broken, whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death?

It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body;

If He is found now, He is found then;

If not, we do but go to dwell in the city of Death.

E T by Rabindranath Tagore

What then is our course, what the manner of our flight (to the Fatherland whence we have come?) asks Plotinus and answers. 'This is not journey for the feet; the feet bring us only from land to land; nor do you think of coach or ship to carry you away; all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see; you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birthright of all, which a few turn to use.' *Enneads* 16 8

Prepared by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

Introduction

119

Is mokṣa or liberation life with the Supreme Person whom we love and worship in this life? Is it personal immortality with absolute likeness to God in the world of Brahmā?² Is it an impersonal absorption in the Divine Transcendent?³ All these views are to be found in the Upaniṣads. There are four aspects of release distinguished as *sāmīpya* or intimacy with the divine, *sārūpya* or *sādharmya*, similarity of nature with the divine, reflecting his glory, *sālokya* or conscious coexistence with the divine in the same world and *sāyujya* or communion with the divine bordering on identity

There are certain general characteristics of the state of *mokṣa* or freedom. It is conceived as freedom from subjection to time.⁴ As birth and death are the symbols of time, life eternal or mokṣa is liberation from births and deaths. It is the fourth state of consciousness beyond the three worlds, what the *Bhagavad-gīta* calls *paramam Brahma* or *brahma-nirvāṇa*.⁵ It is freedom from subjection to the law of karma. The deeds, good or bad, of the released cease to have any effect on him.⁶ Even as a horse shakes its mane, the liberated soul shakes off his sin, even as the moon comes out entire after having suffered

1. CU III.20.2 2MU III.1.3; III.2. 6-8

2. *Praśna* VI.5. 4. *Atharva Veda* X.8.44

5 In Buddhist texts it is *nirvāṇa dhātu* beyond the three worlds. In *Atharva Veda* IV.14.3. the fourth sphere is *sva*, the light beyond the triad of *pṛthivī*, *antarikṣa* and *dyaus*. The *Brāhmaṇas* are concerned only with the sphere of the gods. On the matter of the fourth transcendent sphere they sometimes adopt an agnostic attitude.

anandhvā vai tad yad *Srahtmam imān lokān ati caaturtham asti vā na vā. ŚatapathaBrāhmaṇa* I.2.1 12; 4.21

6 BU IV 4 22

120

The Principal Upaniṣads

an eclipse from *Rāhu*, so does the liberated individual free himself from mortal bondage.¹ His works consume themselves like a reed stalk in the fire.² As water does not stop on the lotus leaf, works do not cling to him.³ Works have a meaning only for a self-centred individual. Liberation is the destruction of bondage, which is the product of ignorance.⁴ Ignorance is destroyed by knowledge and not by works.⁵ Freedom is not a created entity; it is the result of recognition.

Knowledge takes us to the place where desire is at rest, *a-kāma*, where all desires are fulfilled, *ātma-kāma*, where **the self is the only desire, *ātma-kāma*.**⁶ He who knows himself *to* be all can have no desire. When the Supreme is seen, the knots of the heart are cut asunder, the doubts of the intellect are dispelled and **the effects of our actions are destroyed**⁷ There can be no sorrow or pain or fear when there is no other. **The freed soul is like a blind man who has gained his sight, a sick man made whole.** He cannot have any doubt for he is full and abiding knowledge. **He attains the highest bliss for which a feeble analogy is married happiness. He can attain any world he may seek.**⁸

The law of Karma prevails in the world of *saṁsāra*, where our deeds lead us to higher or lower stations in the world of time. If we obtain knowledge of the eternal reality, *Brahman* or *Ātman*, deeds have no power over us. The state of life eternal is said *to* be beyond good and evil. **The knower of the self ceases to be stained by action.**⁹ **He goes beyond the ethical, though rooted in it,**¹⁰ *anyatra dharmāt, anyatrādharmāt*. The

1 C U. VIII 2 CU V 24. 3 3 C U I V 1 4 . 3

4 *bandhana-nāśa eva hi mokṣaḥ na kāryabhūtaḥ* Saṁkara on B U III. 3. I.

5 *moPso na Panna-saikyah acidyasiamayatvat* A on B U III 3 I

6 *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* X' 5. 4. 15 B U III 4 . 2 ; IV 4 . 12

7 M U II 2 8 8 M U III 1 10

9 *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* III. 12 9 8.

10 [Katha_II](#) 14; see also CU. VIII 4 1; MU III 1 3; KU I. 4

Cp The Buddha *Majjhima Nikāya* I. 135 'If you understand the parable of the raft, you must discard dharma, and Adharma.'

John III.9. 'Whoever is born of God, cannot sin'

Galatians V. 18. 'If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.'

Eckhart 'There neither vice nor virtue ever entered in' Dr W R

Inge, writing on Christian Mystics, pointed out that the illumination of

the mystic, has 'strictly speaking no moral side, for morality, in the ordinary sense, is left behind. As the anonymous French mystic who wrote *The Minor of Simple Souls* puts it "Virtues, I take leave of you. Henceforth I shall be more free and more at peace. Once I was your servant, now I am delivered from your thralldom" ... What he means is that in the higher stage morality has become autonomous and spontaneous... God's service has become perfect freedom.' *Church Family Newspaper* July 6, 1923

Introduction

121

path of virtue and vice is a means, not an end. **The end is beyond the law of injunction and prohibition of good and evil.**¹ Our activities, being inspired by the divine cannot be wrong'; **'Nous is never wrong,' says Aristotle.**² The life of a free spirit is not bound by any formulas. It breaks its bonds and finds its own way to a development of its own which could never have been charted in advance. The liberated spirit conforms spontaneously to the ethical rules. **To one who has knowledge of the self, non-hatred and other virtues come off naturally without any effort.**³ Every religion sets before us the goal of liberation, which has a sense of exaltation, a sense of freedom and victory over the world, over evil and death.

When we are delivered in life, our condition is that of the *jīvan-mukta*, who is freed from the bonds of **conditioned existence**⁴ His appearance continues without much outer change. His embodied state does not affect the being whom it clothes, as he has complete control over the bodily frame and knows its externality. Though tossed in the welter he retains his vision. **While *jīvan-mukta* is deliverance during life, *videha-mukti* is**

1. In *majjhima nikāya* (II. 22 ff) it is said that arrival (*paṭipanna*) involves a destruction without residue of good and bad conduct (*kusala* and *akusala sīla*). It is an eradication of all ethical values. In the parable of the raft (*majjhima* I.135, 260 and *Sutta Nipāta* 21) the distinction of right or wrong, the exercise of the discriminatory consciousness are of no more use than a boat would be to one who reached the shore. These values are for crossing over, not for possession, *nītharaṇatthāya*, *na gahaṇatthāya*. St Augustine points out that one should no longer use the law as means of arrival when one has arrived. *De Spir et Lit.* 16.

3 *De Anima*. III. 10. 433. A

³ *utpannātma-prabodhasya tv adveṣṭrtvādayo guṇāḥ. ayatnato bhavanty asya na tu sādhanā-rūpiṇaḥ*

Sureśvaracārya's *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* IV 69. *

4 As the slough of a snake might lie an ant-hill dead and cast away, even so does this body lie. Being verily bodiless, he becomes immortal, says the Upaniṣad.

122

The Principal Upaniṣads

deliverance after death, when out of bodily form. In either case the soul is freed from conditioned existence.

There is the suggestion about *krama-mukti* or gradual release. When the release is only partial and temporary, the individual soul descends again into the egoistic life and the higher consciousness is withdrawn from him. The memory of that experience, however, will work its way, until the impurities are removed.

The different emphases we find in the Upaniṣads, in regard to the state of freedom, can be understood if we bear in mind the integral or fourfold character of *Brahman*. In some passages oneness with *Brahman* is stressed, in others communion with the Supreme Person and in still others devotion to the Cosmic Spirit and participation in the work of the world. Union with God may take many forms. When the outer self is hushed, the deeper layers of consciousness are released into activity, the self may enter into the silence of the Absolute *Brahman* or into communion with the Eternal Person or be transported into the beatific embrace of the Cosmic Spirit. The soul may pass through various realms of spirit, bathing in their light and feeding on their bliss.

Yājñavalkya centres his attention on oneness with the Absolute *Brahman*, a state where there is no desire, there is no passion, not even any consciousness, *pretya samjñā nāsti*.¹ When honey is prepared by the collection of various juices, the latter cannot discriminate from which trees they were drawn, even so when the souls are merged in the Real, they cannot discriminate from which bodies they come.² The self rises above the distinction of subject and object which characterises all empirical consciousness. It is altogether time-transcending. This is impersonal immortality where the soul achieves absoluteness, unconditioned being.³ It is illumined consciousness

B U II 4 12, IV 5 13 * C U VI 6 10 B U IV 3 21

³ Cp *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, ascribed to Saṅkara. It also occurs in Gaudapada's *Kārikā*, on *Mā. U na nirodho na cotpattir na baddho na ca sādhaḥ na mumukṣur na vai mukta ity eṣā paramārthatā*.

There is no destruction, nor is there origination. There is no one bound nor is there one practising discipline. There is no seeker of freedom nor is there the freed. Such is the highest state.

When the mind returns to its natural abode there is neither the path nor anyone who traverses it' *citte lu vai parāvṛtite na yānaṁ no ca yāyinaḥ*

Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra. Sylvain Levi's ed., p 322

Nirvāṇa is defined as the absence of the distinction of knower and knowable, *grāhya-grāhaka-rahitatā*. Negative descriptions of *nirvāṇa* abound in *Mādhyamaka-Vṛtti aprahīnam asamprāptam anucchinam aśāśvatam*

aniruddham anutpannam etat nirvāṇm ucyate XXV

CP buddhatvam

na bhāvo nāpi cābhāvo buddhatvam tena kaihyate tasmād buddha-tathā-praśne avyākṛtamayo mataḥ.

Mahāyāna Sūtrālamkāra. See also 22 and 26.

na śuddhā naśuddhā buddhatā naikatā na bahutā

See also

yasmin sarvam idam protaṁ jagat sthāvara jaṅgamam tasminn eva layam yāti budbuddhāḥ sāgare yathā. 11.

All this universe movable and immovable is interwoven in him.

They all merge in him like bubbles in the sea *Cūlika U. 17*.

To be refunded into Brahman as an earthen vessel is refunded into its own causal substance, clay, means nothing else but complete annihilation." RB I. 3.21.

Introduction

123

and not oblivion of consciousness. It is not a void of immobile peace where all is lost and everything is extinct. This is only one aspect of deliverance.

There is also the account where the self becomes one with the Supreme Person. He who knows 'I am *Brahman*, 'becomes the universe. **Even the gods cannot prevent him from becoming the universe for he is its soul.¹** Man has potential universality which he actualises in the state of liberation. We are one with the indeterminate pure silence in essence and with the personal Lord in the liberty of cosmic manifestation. Out of the peace and poise of *Brahman* arises the free activity of the liberated individual. Essential unity with God is unity with one another through God. In the sense of heightened awareness we do not forget the world, which seems strangely of one piece. We are lifted out of provincialism into perspective, as **we become aware of something vaster, profounder, more ultimate than the world.²**

1. BU I 4 10

2. CP. Plotinus. We see all things, not in process of becoming, but in being and see themselves in the other. Each being contains in itself the whole world. Therefore, All is everywhere. Each is there. All and All is each. Man as he now is, has ceased to be the All. But when he ceases to be an individual, he raises himself again and penetrates the whole world.

Referring to the desire of Eckhart to be the one, undivided, eternal, imperishable Godhead which is wholly being, wholly spirit, wholly joy, Rudolf Otto observes, 'this differs fundamentally and essentially from the simpler Christian conception of salvation to which it must always seem an extravagance, a Titanic pride and a transgression of the impossible limitations of the creature, a Faustian urge as we call it to-day' *Mysticism: East and West*, p 181

124

The Principal Upaniṣads

Rule over oneself, *svārājya*, becomes rule over the world, *sāmrājya*. Salvation is *sarvātma-bhāva*.¹

When the mind assumes the form of the Supreme through the power of meditation we have *samprajñāta-samādhi*, when the individual is aware that his consciousness has assumed the nature of *Brahman*.² But when all consciousness of external objects in the waking state due to the functioning of the senses, of internal objects in the dream state due to the functioning of mind, or of the unmanifested in the state of dreamless sleep is absent, we have ***a-samprajñāta-samādhi***³ **While in the former our awareness is of God, in the latter it is of the Absolute.**

There are passages⁴ which suggest that the released self retains its own form freed from the imperfections of the empirical ego and untouched by worldly pleasure and pain.⁵ Yet other passages affirm the presence of such qualities. **They cannot therefore be incompatible with pure intelligence. Such is the view of *Bādarāyaṇa*⁶ **The liberated self's desires are fulfilled by its mere will.⁷** The self is spoken of as sinless and one with the highest Person. **Non-separation** or *avibhaga* from *Brahman* is**

¹ 'This (universe) is myself who am all this, identity with all is his highest state, the self's own natural, supreme state. '

aham evedam sarvo'smīti manyate so yaḥ sarvātma-bhāvaḥ, so'syātmanah paramalokaḥ, parama ātma-bhāvaḥ svābhāvikaḥ SB on BU IV 3 20

sarvaikatvam evāśya rūpam IV 3 21 *yat svarūpam pūrṇatvam paramātma-bhāvam* V 1 1,

2. *brakmākāra-mano-vṛtti-pravāko'haṃkṛtiṃ vinā
samprajñāta-samādhis syād dhyānābhyāsa-prakarṣataḥ
Muktikā U II 53*

*3prabhā-śūnyam manaḥ- śūnyam buddhi- śūnyam cid-ātmakam.
atad-vyāvṛtti-rūpo'sau samādhir muni-bhāvitaḥ. ibid* II 54

4 CU III 14 1. see also VII 1.5 VII 2 2, VII 3 1

5 Though endowed with divine qualities Auḍulomi contends that the nature of the liberated self is pure intelligence and it cannot have the qualities which are dependent on limiting adjuncts. B S IV 4 6,

upādhi-sambandhād hīnatvāt teṣam na caitanyavat svarūpatva-sambhavaḥ
SB IV 4-6 6 B S I V 4 7 7 BS TV 4 8. CU.VIII 2 1

Introduction

125

Non-separation or *avibhaga* from *Brahman* is suggested in many passages.¹ **Non-separation is not absolute identity. The liberated self has no other overlord, *anyādhipatiḥ*.² There are passages where the self is said to possess adjuncts, which make for individuality and others where these are denied.**

Bādarāyaṇa reconciles the two views by affirming that the assumption or non-assumption of individual form is entirely a matter of option for the released soul.³ It can, if it so chooses, enter into many bodies created by its own will even as the flame of a lamp can convert itself into several flames.⁴ In the *Aitareya āraṇyaka* it is said that Vāmadeva ascended from this world and attained immortality in yonder world of heaven.⁵ The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* gives us an account of the world of Brahmā with the Aparājita palace, the tree Ilya, the Sālajya city and the sea Ara. The passages of the Upaniṣads which make out that the reward of enlightenment is heaven in one form or another have in mind co-residence with *Brahmā* or *Hiraṇya-garbha*.⁶ The *Brahma Sūtra* discusses the question whether those who go by the path of the gods reach the world of *Hiraṇya-garbha* *Brahmā* or become one with *Īśvara*. Badari holds that they reach the world of *Hiraṇya-garbha*, for only to his world is going possible. Saṁkara says, "The created Brahma has a specific locality and so can be the goal of a journey but not the Supreme Brahman who is present everywhere and is the inner self of the travelling individual selves."⁷ When we reach *brahma-loka*, we continue to function there until the end of the process, when along with Brahma, we enter the Supreme Brahman.⁸ Saṁkara thinks that all this refers to gradual

¹ BS 4.4 SB. IV 4-6 2. BS IV 4-9.

3BS IV.4-12 *yadā saśarīratṣm saṁkalpayati tadā saśarīro bhavati*

Yadā tu a-śarīrataṁ tadā aśarīraḥ iti bhāvaḥ SB IV 4.12

4B.S. IV.4.15. *Yathā pradīpaḥ ekaḥ aneka-pradīpa-bhāvam āpadyate*

Vikṛa-śakti-yogāt, evam ekaḥ api san muktātmā aiśvarya-yogāt aneka-bhāvam āpadya sarvāṇi saṁkalpa-ṣṛṣṭāni

śarīrāṇi āviśati. S B IV 4 15

5.II.5 6 See BU IV.3.15. CU VIII 12 3

7. *kārya-Brahmanaḥ eva gantavyatvam upapadyate pradeśavatvāt na tu*

parasminbrahmaṇi tasya sarva-gatatvāt Gantṛṇām pratyagātmatvāc ca.

SB IV.3.7.

8 See Praśna V 5 Cp also.

*Brahmana saha te sarve samprāpte praisaṅcare,
parasyānte kṛtāmānaḥ praviśānti parampadam.*

When the dissolution of the world takes place the selves with their natures fulfilled enter the highest plane along with Brahmā.

126

The Principal Upaniṣads

release, *krama-mukti*.¹ Jaimini holds that the liberated souls enter the highest Brahman.² Bādarāyaṇa is of the view that those who meditate on symbols go to the world of the symbols and not to the world of Brahma.

Even as we have the fourfold nature of the Supreme, the liberated individual has different aspects of utter peace, pure energy, devotion to the Cosmic Spirit and participation in the world. He looks at the world and is lost in it, as it is a perpetual striving to raise itself above itself.³

When we refer to Absolute Brahman, we emphasise the illumined quiescence, the non-objective consciousness in which there is a total extinction of sorrow and evil, the pure bliss infinitely surpassing all human joys, far exceeding the power of man to conceive. This very insight makes the self one with the Supreme and all existences. Only we are no more bound to them in a false relation. In our transfigured consciousness where our egoistic individuality is absent, we are not divided from others but feel one with them. Our real self is no more the individual, mental being, but is one with the Self behind the mental forms of all other selves. Our body, life, and mind are no more binding, but become the transparent vehicle of our divine consciousness. When that end is reached we are a true becoming of the Divine, a free movement of the Universal Spirit. Our body, life and mind, we feel, are one with the cosmic body, life and mind.⁴ Our spirit fills the whole world. By knowing the eternal we understand the true nature of God, the world and the individual.

Spiritual wisdom (*vidyā*) does not abolish the world, but removes our ignorance (*avidyā*) of it. When we rise to our true being, the selfish ego falls away from us and the true integral

¹ S B IV 3 11.

² B S IV 3 12-14

³ Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love

4 Cp Traherne 'You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars, and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are everyone sole heirs as well as you...'

Introduction

127

self takes possession of us. We continue to live and act in the world, though with a different outlook. The world also continues, though it is no more alien to us. To live permanently in this new consciousness is to live in eternity.

Possessing the immortality of non-birth, the redeemed self still assumes, by free volition an individual form in the manifested world. Birth is a becoming of the Supreme in the cosmic being. This becoming is not inconsistent with Being. It becomes a means and not an obstacle to the enjoyment of life eternal. To be released from the chain of birth and death is not to flee from the world of becoming. Bondage does not consist in the assumption of birth or individuality, but in the persistence of the ignorant sense of the separate, selfish ego. It is not the embodiment that creates the bondage but the frame of mind. To the free spirit life has no terrors. He wishes to conquer life for God. He uses the world as the mould and condition for the manifestation of his spiritual freedom. **He may assume birth for the purpose of helping the world.**¹ There will be individualisation without an ego-sense. The play of the individual consciousness can take many forms, assume many aspects and poises. Allthrough, however, he lives in the truth of the cosmic play with no delusion, released from ego, in full control of the manifested

The individual soul is eternal. It endures throughout the cosmic process. It commences at birth as the inheritor of the previous person and survives physical death in an altered form. For the self that has realised perfection the body ceases to be a burden. He lives in the flesh but not after the flesh.

The individual is an aspect of the Transcendent in the diverse and when liberated from all limitations, he acts with his centre in the Supreme. The inner peace is manifested in the joyous freedom of outer activity.

He will be at work in the world though he cannot wish to do any evil.² **He can do any action for he does it disinterestedly.**³ **The desires of those whose thoughts are fixed on the Supreme do not bind.**⁴ The freed soul

1 lokānugraha evaiko hetus te janma-karmaṇoḥ. Kālidāsa: Raghu-vamśa X.31.

'God so loved the world that he gave . ' John: III.16.

2 BU.IV.4.23.

3 Īśa.2.

4 Na mayy āveśita-dhiyām kāmāḥ kāmāya kalpate.

128

The Principal Upamśads

does not aim at the improvement of humanity, but his life itself is a service. His renunciation has become the natural consequence of his wisdom. **The Chāndogya Upaniṣad distinguishes desires that bind from the desires that liberate, and speaks of the Supreme Self as desiring and purposing truth.**¹

Sāṃkara argues that the co-existence of karma or work, involving, as it does, the distinction of doer and the thing done, with the knowledge of the identity of the individual self with the Supreme, **which negatives all such distinctions, is inconceivable.**² It is only self-centred action that becomes impossible. The liberated individual becomes active in God. God is born in us, i.e. becomes active in us, when all powers of the soul, which hitherto have been bound and imprisoned, become liberated and set free. **For we are his offspring.**³ God becomes the centre of the free man's life so that love is radiated and good works spring forth spontaneously. He is as unconscious of the power of his life as life itself, which springs, blossoms and puts forth its life's work in a free outpouring with no reflection on the why or the wherefore. He lives out of his own depths, and life wells up out of itself. In a sense, he is not the doer. He has become one with the Universal Self, possessed by the Transcendent, **he is udāsīna or unattached.** The Universal Self has taken sovereign possession of the individual soul. When the individual soul ascends into the silence it becomes' vast, tranquil, actionless. It observes the actions of *prakṛti* without taking part in them. There is no personal factor, and therefore there is no bondage.

Those who have attained life eternal live and wander about

¹ *satyah-dāmah, satya-amkalpaḥ* VIII 1.5.6 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God ' Richard of St Victor says 'The soul utterly puts off itself (i.e. its self-centred desires) and puts on divine love, and being conformed to that beauty which it has beheld, it utterly passes into that other glory '

¹ Introduction to *Kena*

³ 'I do nothing of myself' (John VIII. 18). 'Not what I will but what thou wilt' (Mark XIV. 36) Bcehme said 'Thou shalt do nothing but forsake thy own will, viz that which thou callest "I" or "thyself " By which means all thy evil properties will grow weak, faint and ready to die, and then thou wilt sink down again into that one thing, from which thou art originally sprung ' *Discourse between Two Souls*

Introduction

129

in the world, to all appearance, like ordinary mortals. They wear no special signs. Only their activities are centred in the highest being and are completely under their control, which is not so for those who live in the world of saṁsāra. They are tolerant, sympathetic and respectful to the unliberated who are struggling with, unsatisfied minds to diminish the evil and imperfection in the world. These are helped by the seers who accept the conventions with the idea of refining them. They live and suffer and rejoice and die as other mortals do, but they have no doubt in their minds, no fear in their hearts. For the liberated soul, saṁsāra and mokṣa or nirvana as the Buddhists call it, time and eternity, the phenomenal and the real, are one. Though the liberated soul lives in the world of becoming, he lives with his consciousness centred in the Divine ground of all being. As a matter of fact, his consciousness, because it is centred in God, is intensified, and so his life in the world is more vital. Holy calm, supreme self-mastery and righteous action characterise the lives of saints. **They become a light, a power of the Truth to which they have struggled and attained, and help the development of others.1** **They will be engaged in the work of the world.2** sustained by their rare vision, until the struggle with evil and imperfection is altogether overcome and the world is restored to spirit.

Whether after liberation one takes an active interest in the world or renounces it is a matter of temperament. Yājñavalkya chooses to retire to the forest, while Janaka rules a state, whatever they do, they help those like us who are lost in the world of sorrow and suffering. Though embodiment or disembodiment makes no difference to the liberated souls, as they are filled with compassion, they take up the burden of the world. According to *Viveka-cūḍamaṇī*, "Themselves having crossed over, they remain out of compassion for men and in

1Āryadeva in his *Citta-viśuddhi-prakaraṇa* says that the great souls who have won the fierce battle of life attempt to save others:

*mahā-sattvo mahō-pāyaḥ sthira-buddhir atantritaḥ
Jitvā dustara saṁgrāmaṁ tārīyed aparān api.*

2. Kabīr the true saint is one who requireth thee not to close the doors, to hold the breath, and to renounce the world... who teacheth thee to be still amidst all thine activities.

Introduction page

130

order to **help them also to make the crossing.1** Until all people are redeemed, the liberated work in the world assuming individual forms which are the vestures of spiritual life **Spirit and material existence, ānanda and anna**, are the highest and lowest rungs of a continuous series. There is a link between the two. Even as the eternal Divine is able to hold the whole universe within itself while remaining pure spirit, the soul that is one with the Eternal possesses the same poise, with reference to the individual setting. It is no more ignorantly immersed in the mutable creation. It exists consciously in its true being while using the psycho-physical apparatus, which it does not any more mistake for its true being. While the liberated

retain the consciousness of the transcending, self-existent, timeless, they identify their being with the Infinite God in whom all existences dwell.

Again and again, the Upaniṣads stress that we should see all existences in the Self and the Self in all existences. Even as the Supreme is all these existences, we also should acquire the right relation to the world. Perfect fulfilment of our individuality means the perfect fulfilment of our relations with the world and the other individuals. We are called upon to overcome not only our separate egoistic existence but also our life in a paradise of self-absorbed bliss. The perfected soul cannot look with indifference on the sufferings of the imperfect, for they are also his own self. He would work to lift them into freedom. It is not now a function of altruism but is the life divine, the integral way. He will work until all beings in the manifested world are fulfilled. The liberated individuals are released from their individuality at the close of creation.

Brahma-loka is the widest possible integration of cosmic experience, the farthest limit of manifested being. *Brahmā* is the soul that ensouls this great dwelling. He is the true life of every being. He endures during the whole period of the cosmos. Beyond it there is nothing in the manifested world. It is not

1 According to Vyāsa's *Yoga Bhāṣya* (1. 24), God is permanently associated with *śuddhāntah-karaṇa*. If God who is the eternally free can have an inner organ, the freed men can also have it.

Cp Chuang Tzu 'The sages of old first got Tao for themselves, then got it for others.'

Introduction

131

the eternal beyond the empirical. It is the farthest limit of manifestation. When the world receives its consummation, when it is delivered from time to eternity, then there is the flight of the alone to the Alone. The plan of God for the world, which was before creation is earned out, for **He is the beginning and the end of the world.**¹ The Cosmic Lord has his exteriorised existence and his interior life. When he turns outward the cosmos is evolved, when he turns his attention inward, the cosmos retreats into latency and the manifested world terminates. When the world is redeemed, the Supreme Lord becomes the Absolute One, alone, and knows nothing else.

In the *Brahma-loka*, the liberated individuals present to each other as one. They are manifold in the cosmic process. Their consciousness of the Supreme which is lodged in the *buddhi* is one and not divided among the bodily forms. This identical consciousness is associated with different bodies. This manifoldness does not take away from the unity of the divine being until the final return of the whole universe into the Absolute, until the purpose of God before the creation is carried out, the individuals, freed from bondage to matter, will retain their distinctiveness without being sundered by boundaries. **When the two poles of being are reconciled, when all individuals rise above the plane of quality, with its ego sense, struggling aspiration and imperfect love, the world lapses into the Absolute.**²

XIX

RELIGION

The Upaniṣads use the inherited forms of religious worship as means of the realisation of the Supreme. The Vedic *mantras* are addressed to various powers, symbolic of important aspects, of Supreme Reality. They teach the religion of *śraddhā*,

1. CP 'The cosmic Christ speaking through Jesus, 'I am the Alpha and the omega, the first and the last; for what was first comes at last and the last is the first.'

2. In another place I have said that the universe is not an illusion utterly devoid of reality but the working out of a possibility of the Divine which is infinite possibility. This world of ours is not the only possibility and other possibilities will unfold themselves when this is worked out. *An Idealist View of Life*, Fourth Impression, 1951, p. 343.

132 *The Principal Upaniṣads*

faith and *upāsana*, worship. The Brāhmaṇas deal with rites, and by their performance we are said to gain our ends. Both these methods are taken up by the Upaniṣads and reinterpreted.

While the Upaniṣads recognise that deliverance is the supreme end of life, they are aware that **many are not ready for the supreme sacrifice, the dying to their ego.** They need some preparation for it. They ask for emotional satisfactions, and for their sake devotional and ritualistic practices are tolerated. They are not useless, for they lead us on by the upward path by directing our minds and hearts to the reality of the Eternal Being and **gradually take us out of ourselves into the true religion of the spirit.**¹ Till the goal is reached, the law of Karma works, and we get the rewards for our worship and piety according to the intensity of our faith and devotion.

The different forms of *śraddhā* or faith, *upāsana* or worship, and practices of yoga are treated as means to the supreme end of **self-knowledge or *ātma-darśana*,** which is at once a union with the one transcendent Being beyond all the worlds and a union with all beings in the world.

Again and again the Upaniṣads speak of the **God who is hidden, *nihitam guhāyām*.** God is not easily comprehended. There is a certain element of reserve in God as distinct from His revelation. The reserve is there because man has to put forth effort to know the Divine. God does not wish to relieve us of our responsibility. As His purpose is the development of free human personalities, He does not disclose himself to us easily and openly. He remains shrouded in mystery, and **yields only when our total self yearns for God**²

¹ A second century Christian apologist said 'Among us you will find uneducated persons and artisans and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth, they do not rehearse speeches but exhibit good works, when struck they do not strike again, when robbed they do not go to law, they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves ' Quoted in *Cambridge Review* February 14, 1948, p 348

² 'O Rama, the Supreme is pleased with him who is ever endowed with non-violence, truthfulness, compassion and kindness to all creatures '

*Ahiṃsa saltya-vacanāṃ dayā bhūteṣv anugrahaḥ,
yasyaitāni sadā rāma, tasya tuṣyati keśavaḥ*

Viṣṇu-dharmottara I. 58

Introduction

133

Three stages are mentioned as preparatory to God-vision (*brahma-sākṣātkāra*), *śravaṇa* or hearing, *manana* or reflection, and *nididhyāsana* or contemplation. The first step is to learn what has been thought and said about the subject from teachers. **We should listen to them with *śraddhā* or faith.**¹ Faith is an act of will, a yearning of the heart rather than an intellectual disposition. **It is faith in the existence of the beyond, *āstikya-buddhi* as Saṅkara calls it.**² We should have faith in the integrity of the seers whose selflessness has enabled them to know the nature of Ultimate Reality by direct acquaintance. The propositions they have formulated from out of their personal experience give us knowledge by description, as we do not yet have direct vision of the truth. Yet the knowledge we acquire by hearsay or report is not unverifiable. The truth of the Vedic propositions can be verified by us, if we are prepared to fulfil the necessary conditions.

In the second stage of *manana* or reflection we attempt to form clear ideas by the logical processes of inference, analogy, etc. So long as faith is firm, the need for philosophy is not felt. With the decline of faith, the spirit of inquiry increases. Unquestioning belief in the inherent power of knowledge underlies the whole intellectual fabric of the Upaniṣads. The truth, of the Vedic propositions can, however, be inferred by us by logical processes. Hearing of the scriptures is not devoid of intellectual content. He who hears understands up to a point. But when he reflects on what he hears, he adds to faith a Knowledge which increases faith. **There is great insistence on the need for logical inquiry.**³ Without it faith will degenerate into credulity. Without the material supplied by faith, logical reason may become mere speculation. While the scriptures declare the truth by enunciation, philosophy establishes it by argument.

Saṅkara says, 'When the two, scripture and reasoning,

¹Guru-vedanta vākyeṣu viśvāṣaḥ

i%Z^m^tarVS,kyemnivasah

² Saṅkara on Kāṭha 1 1 2

Wisdom cannot be attained by any means other than inquiry.

Vasiṣṭha says: the word even of a child, if it is reasonable, should be accepted. *All else should be rejected* even if it be said by the Creator'

*yukti-yuktam upādeyaṁ vacanaṁ bālakād api
anyat tṛṇam iva tyājyam apy uktam padma-janmanā.*

134

The Principal Upaniṣads

demonstrate the unity of the **self it is seen clearly as a bael fruit in the palm of one's hand.**¹ There are many for whom the Supreme is not an immediately experienced fact, nor are they willing to accept its validity on the authority of the scriptures. For them logical arguments are necessary.

The distinction between **śruti, what is heard, and smṛti, what is remembered**, between direct experience and traditional interpretation, is based on the distinction between *śravaṇa* and *manana*. The deposit of experience is not the same as the conclusions of theology. The primary data are the Śruti they are experiential, the formulated conclusions are secondary interpretations. The one represents the evidence, the other records a doctrine. When there is a dispute between the two we get back to the evidence. It is always open to review the evidence afresh. The doctrinal statements are conditioned by the historical situations in which they are produced. We must be able to get behind the propositions to the events they describe, stand in the tension between the data and the interpretations, if we are to understand the significance of the doctrines. The defect of all scholasticism, Indian or European, is that it tends to regard itself as a cold, bloodless logic, which moves from one position to another with a remorseless rigor. Life is the master of thought and not thought of life.

Logical knowledge acquired by a study of the scriptures and reflection on their teaching is only indirect knowledge. It is not a direct grasp of reality. Thought must pass into realization. The ideas of the Upaniṣads should be imaginatively and inwardly apprehended. They should be allowed to sink deep and simmer before they are re-created in life. **Nididhyāsana is the process by which intellectual consciousness is transformed into a vital one. We give up the pride of learning and concentrate on the truth.**² Faith becomes

¹ āgamopapattī hyātmaikatva-prakāśanāya pravṛtte śaknutaḥ karatala-gata-bilvam iva darśayitum Saṁkara on B U III I. I.

2vihāya sarva-śāstrāṇi yat satyaṁ tad upāsyatām Uttara Gītā.

Even if we study the Vedic texts and all the scriptures we cannot know the truth of reality if we are the victims of intellectual pride.

*adhītya caturo vedān sarva-sāstrāṇy anekāśah
brahma-tattvaṁ na jānanti darpopahata-cetasaḥ.
Muktikā U II. 65*

Introduction

135

reality in us by **the steady concentration of mind on the real.**¹

Nididhyāsana or contemplation is different from *upāsana* or worship. Worship is an aid to contemplation, though it is not itself contemplation. In worship, there is the distinction between the worshipping self and the worshipped object, but in contemplation this distinction is held in suspense. There is a stillness, a calm, in which the soul lays itself open to the Divine Intellect, becomes like a calm sea without a ripple on its surface.

Meditation is not argument. It is just holding oneself steadily in front of the truth.² The whole energy of the mind is centered on the object to the exclusion of all else. We let the full flavour of the idea meditated on expand in the mind. **Even upāsana is defined as the continued flow of an identical current of thought.**³ It is also of **the nature of meditation.**⁴ We can practice meditation in any direction, place or time in which we can **concentrate our mind.**⁵ Here the process of abstraction, isolating the self from the objective, is employed. Concentration is the condition of prayer. More than condition it is itself prayer. In prayer we must dismiss all distracting ideas, disturbing influences and retire within oneself. We are asked to retire to a field or a forest where the world and its noise are out of sight and far away, where the sun and the sky,

the earth and the water all speak the same language, reminding the seeker that he is here to develop like the things that grow all around him.

In all the three stages, a teacher may be found useful Only

V. darvī pāka-rasaṁ yathā.

CP also Bunyan

Seest thou a man wise in his own eyes,
There is more hope of a fool than of him
Nididhyāsanamsad-ekārtha-vṛtti-pravāha.m

²In ancient Greek thought, theory meant not hypothesis but contemplation the act not of a speculator but of a spectator. It is not the result of investigation as that of the process of investigating, the beholding itself. Theory provides the necessary basis for effective realization. The Greek usage brings out that no realization can be attempted without an adequate theoretical preparation.

³. samāna-pratyaya-pravāha-karaṇam upāsanam SB IV.1.7

⁴. dhyana-rūpa SB IV.1.8

⁵. yatra diśi deśe kāle vā sādhakasya ekāgratā bhavati tatra eva upāsita. SB.IV.1.11

136

The Principal Upaniṣads

those who act in the right way are the *acaryas*¹ Saṁkara nanda distinguishes three kinds of disciples He who understands what is taught along with the proof, Avhen he hears only once, is the good pupil, he who understands it only after hearing many times and after giving himself and his teacher much trouble is the bad pupil He who understands what the teacher says but cannot control his own mind, he is the middling The last are to be led to firm conviction by various means ^a

The truth can be taught only up to a point. It has to be assimilated by personal effort, by self-discipline Yoga is a term that signifies the method of concentrations by which we attain to unity with the Eternal 4 The practice of yoga is mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* In the *Kaṭha* we are asked to suppress speech and mind, merge the latter in the knowledge self, that in the great self, that in the tranquil self, the Absolute The highest stage is attained when the five senses, mind and intellect are at rest 5 The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* gives detailed directions on

¹ *svayam acarate yas ta acaryas so'bhidhlyate* Cp Chaucer's poor parson of a town

This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf That first he wroghte, and afterwards he taughte The *Bhāgavata* says* "The seeker of the highest truth and supreme good should seek guidance from a teacher who has mastered the Vedic texts and realised the self.

iasmad gṛuram prapadyeta jijiasnā ireya vttamam sabde pare ca msnatam Brahmany ttpaiam Sirayam

XI 3 21

² *yah sakrd-ṭktam sopapatliham gṛnati sa uilamah, yas tit anekaia ucyanam BtmSnam gurum ca samklcsya grhnai sa mandah, yas in guruktam gṛnan sva-ciltain mroddhum a-iaktah sa madhyamah, sa hi gurwtoktasya vanyasya va 11-padese.na ctfia-dhaxryam vividhair vaidikair upayatr netavyah* On K U II 1

³ *jiianam yogatmakam viddht* Know that knowledge has yoga for its essence

⁴ *aihyam jtvĀtman or ahur yogam yoga-visaradah* *Devi Bhāgavata*

⁵ Cp with this the Confucian fasting of the heart 'May I ask,' said Yen Hm, 'in what consists the fasting of the heart'

'Cultivate unity,' replied Confucius 'You do .your hearing, not with your ears, but with your mind, not with your mind, but with your very soul But let the hearing stop with the ears Let the working of the mind stop with itself Then the soul will be a negative existence, passively response e to e-cternals In such a negative existence, only Tao can abide And that negab% e state is the fasting of the heart'

'Then,' said Yen Hui, 'the reason I could not get the use of this method is my own individuality If I could get the use of it, my individuality would have, gone. Is this what you mean by the negative state?' 'exactly so,'replied the Master.

Introduction

137

the practice of yoga¹ When the awakening takes place scripture ceases to be authoritative² *śruter apy abhāvah prabodhe.*³

In the Vedas we have vivid belief in powerful gods who are not mere abstractions. Adoration of personal gods, along with a sense of dependence on and trust in them, which is a marked tendency in the religion of the Veda, becomes prominent in the *Kaṭha* and the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣads* The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* makes

out that saving knowledge is not a matter of learning but is revealed to the fortunate man by the highest Reality itself. Even the doctrine of predestination is suggested.

Unfortunately different aspects have been exclusively emphasized so as to give rise to the impression that the Upaniṣads do not give us any single coherent view. It is suggested that in the Upaniṣads the true doctrine is that the Real, the thing-in-itself, is empty of content and all positive views are deviations from it caused by the inability of man to remain at the high level of abstract thought, postulated by the distinction between the thing-in-itself and the appearance and the natural tendency to apply empirical categories to the thing-in-itself. The absolutists and theistic views of the Upaniṣads are not exclusive of each other Saṅkara and Rāmānuja emphasize different aspects of the teaching of the Upaniṣads.

Upāsana or worship is the basis of the doctrine of *bhakti* or devotion. As *Brahman* is not described in the early Upaniṣads in sufficiently personal terms, the later ones like the *Kaṭha* and the *Svetāśvatara* look upon the Supreme as personal God who bestows grace.

Devotion to the personal God is recommended as a means for attaining spiritual enlightenment⁴

¹ II. See also Maitrī VI.18-27. Appaya Dikṣita in his *Yoga Darpana* asks us to concentrate on self-shining self between the two brows, listen to the text 'That art thou,' conceive oneself as absorbed in it and practise meditation

*pratyag ātmānam ālokyā bhruvor madhye svayam-prabham
śrutvā tat-tvam-asity aikyam matvāsmīti tad abhyaset* 92

²SB IV.1.3

³ Saṅkara on BU. VI. 1.

⁴ SU VI.21 and 23. Images, pilgrimages, ceremonies are all accessories to devotion.

The Bhāgavata asks us to love the Supreme with all our being, 'Lord may our speech be engaged in recounting your qualities our ears in hearing your stories, our hands in doing service for you, our mind in the remembrance of your feet, our head in bowing to this world which is your dwelling-place and our eyes in gazing at the saints who are your living images on earth.

*vāṇī guṇānukathane śravaṇau kathāyām
hastau ca karmasu manas tava pādāyor nah
smṛtyām śiras tava nivāsa-jagat-praṇāme
dṛṣṭih satām darśane' stu bhavat-tanūnām*

138 *The Principal Upaniṣads*

The Upaniṣads give us different modes of devotional exercises, by which are trained to fix our minds on single object. **Gradually we get prepared for the contemplation of the absolute truth.**¹

The prevalent theistic creeds were assimilated to the teaching of the Upaniṣads. The later sectarian Upaniṣads identify the Supreme with Viṣṇu, Śiva, or Śakti, which are regarded as the different phases of the one Reality. The Supreme is conceived as a person in relation to persons, and symbols taken from social life, lord, father, judge are employed. Sometimes dynamic symbols like the power of life, the spirit of truth, the glowing fire that penetrates and pervades are used.

Symbols belong to an order of reality different from that of the Reality which they symbolize. They are used to make the truth intelligible, to make the unhearable audible. They are meant to be used as tangible supports for contemplation. They help us to reach awareness of the symbolized reality. Some of these symbols employed by religions are common. Fire and light are usually adopted to signify the Ultimate Reality. It means that the minds of people are formed similarly and experiences of people do not differ much from one part of the world to another. Even conceptions about the origin and nature of the world often agree, though they arise quite independently. The images are all framed to mediate between the Supreme Absolute and the finite intelligence. The individual is free to select for worship any form of the Supreme. This freedom of choice *iṣṭa-devatārādhana* means that the different forms are all

X 10 38

¹ Rabi'a, a woman mystic of the 8th century says 'Oh my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine eternal beauty'

included in the Supreme. The acceptance of one form does not mean the rejection of others.

The Supreme is to be comprehended only by a supreme effort of consciousness. This knowledge cannot be expressed at the level of thought except through symbols. The symbols are not entirely subjective. The relativity of the symbols does not destroy either our capacity to discover the truth or our faith in the existence of objective reality. It is true that different objects appear differently from different points of view, but the validity of the different points of view need not be denied. Statements about reality are definitions of the relationship between those making them and the reality which they are describing. Symbols have a meaning, and this meaning is objective and shared. The bearers of the meaning may be psychological states, separate existences, not even identical in then: qualitative content, but meanings can be studied and understood.

The Upaniṣads do not speak to us of limited dogmas. The life of spirit is wider than any particular religious formulation. Religion deals with man's seeking for the eternal, the sources of truth and joy, and particular formulations are but approximations to the Unutterable. Our minds are not detached from the circumstances of time and place. Full truth can be known only by a mind of transcendent rationality. The conception and expression by men of the reality which is universal, can only be partial according to the diversities of race and character. As the Upaniṣads lay stress on spiritual experience and psychological discipline, they do not insist on any one set of dogmas, rites or codes. They are also aware that we may touch deferent aspects of the spiritual experience when we attempt to define it. **We may use any symbols and methods which help to bring about a change of consciousness, a new birth.**¹ * '

The one Supreme who dwells in us is conceived externally. 'The vulgar look for their gods in water, men of wider know-

¹Gandhi included from Guru Govind Singh's writings the following in his prayers

*īśvara allā tere nāma
mandira masdija tere dhāma
sabko san-mati de bhagavān*

O God, Īśvara and Allāh are Thy names; temples and mosques are Thy places of abode. Grant to all right understanding (of this).

140 *The Principal Upaniṣads*

ledge in celestial bodies, the ignorant in (images made of) wood or stone but **the wise see the Supreme in their own self**¹The yogins see the Supreme in the self, not in the images. **The images are conceived for the sake of contemplation by the ignorant**²The soul of man is the home of God. **God is in every one of us ready to help us though we generally ignore Him.**³ Whatever be the form we start with, **we grow to the worship of the one Universal Spirit immanent in all.**⁴ **The worship of the determinate form is recommended as a preparation for the apprehension of non-determined Reality.**⁵ *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra*

¹*apsu devā manuṣyānām, divi devā, manīṣṇām
Bālānām kāṣṭha-loṣṭhesu buddhesu ātmani devatā*

²*śivam ātmani paśyanti pratimāsu na yoginaḥ
ajñānam bhāvanārthāya pratimāḥ parikalpitāḥ
Darśanopaniṣad, see also Śiva-dharmottara*

The Bhāgavata says that 'fire is the god of the twiceborn, the (innermost) heart is the god of the -wise, the image of the ignorant, for the wise God is everywhere.

*agnirdevo dvijātīnām, hṛdi devo manīṣṇām
pratimāsv alpa-buddhīnām, jñāminām sarvato hariḥ*

³'Though really companion and co-dweller, man does not understand the friendship of Him who dwells within the same body'

*na yasya sakhyam puruso'vaiti sakhyuh
sakka vasan samvasatah pure'smin.*

Bhḡavata

Pingala, the public woman, got disgusted with her life and said, 'Casting aside this eternal lover who is near (in my own heart), is my beloved, gives me joy, gives me wealth, I foolishly seek another (from outside), who does not fulfil my desires, who gives me only sorrow, fear and blind infatuation and is petty'
*santam samipe ramanam rati-pradam vitta-pradam nityam imam vihaya
a-kamadam duhkha-bhayadhi-soka-maha-pradam tuccham aham bhaje'jna
Bhdgavata XI 8 31*

She resolved:

'He is the friend, most beloved Lord and one's own self to all embodied beings. I shall earn Him by offering myself to Him and play with Him as Goddess Laksmi does.
*suhrt presthatamo natha, atmd cayam Saririnam
tam vikriyatmanaivaham rame'nenā yatha rama
Bhdgavata XI 8 35*

⁴*yasmin sarvam, yatah sarvam, yah sarvam, sarvatas ca yah*

In [whom](#) is everything, from whom is everything, who is everything, who is everywhere.

⁵ Cp *Kalpataru* I. 1. 20

*nir-visesam param Brahma saksat kartum anisvarh
ye mandas te'nukampyante sa-visesa-nirupanaih*

Commenting on *Brahma Sutra* III 3 59, *Saṅkara* argues that each one is at liberty to choose the form of worship according to his liking and perform it. The direct union with the object of meditation is the result of each of these meditations.

Introduction

141

tells us that the true devotee becomes **a fulfilled being, immortal and content.**¹ Even the released perform **image worship by way of sport.**² There is a danger that the emotions of awe and reverence are likely to be treated as ends in themselves. **They prepare for spirituality.**³ **Devotion ultimately leads to the knowledge of one's essential nature.**⁴ **For Rāmānuja bhakti is a type of knowledge.**⁵

Spiritual training begins with the external, with word and gesture in order to produce the answering spiritual content, but **we should not stop at any stage short of life in God**⁶ There are those who regard the forms they worship as final, though the Upaniṣads make out that the Real has aspects of both

¹ *yal labdhva puman siddho bhavati, amrto bhavati, trpto bhavati*

² *mukta api lilaya vighradikam krtva bhajante.* Saṅkara

³ Gopikas become one with the Supreme by fixing their minds on Him, by singing His songs, by doing His deeds

Tan manaskah tad-alapah tad-vicestah tad-atmikah.

There is utter abandonment to God or *prapatti*. *patt-sutanvaya bhratr-bandhavan ati vilamghya te'nty acyutagatah*

The glory of meditation on the name of God is mentioned after the whole *Bhagavata* is related to Parikṣit.

*patitah skhalitah artah ksutvavavivaso bruvaṅ
haraye nama ity uccair mucyate sarva-patakat.*

⁴ *sva-sva rupanusandhanam bhaktir ity abhidhiyate: atma-tattvanusandhanam bhaktir ity apare jaguh.* In *Bhakti-martanda*, bhakti is defined as that form of love in which when the lovers are together they are afraid of being separated and when they are not together they have a painful longing for union.

*a-drste darsanotkantha, drste vislesa-bhiruta
nadrstena na drstena bhavata labhyate sukham.*

⁵ *dhruvanusmrti.*

*uttamo brahma-sad-bhavo, dhyana-bhavas iu madhyamah
stutir japo'dhamo bhavo, bahih-puja adhamadhamah Mahanirvana Tantra XIV 122.*

The highest form of worship is the realisation of the Supreme in all. The meditation of the Supreme is the middling state; prayers to and praises of Him with silent repetition of his name is the lowest and external worship is the lowest of all. Again:

bala-kridanavat sarvam rupa-namadi-halpanam. Ibid XIV.117.

All the imagined names and forms are as playthings for the children.

tranquil transcendence and cosmic universality. **The advocates of bhakti look upon the worship of the personal God as the highest bliss,** though those who regard the Absolute as super-personal declare that it is somewhat lower than the highest, that those who do not get beyond the stage of the worship of the Personal God, enter, on death, into a heavenly state of existence. This survival in the worlds of the blessed belongs to the process of time or saṁsāra. It is not emancipation from time or timeless union with reality.

Any form of worship, which falls short of complete self-naughting, will not take us to the unitive life. Faith, devotion, surrender are the means to it. **Each individual has to achieve insight by his own effort after long and persistent practice.¹** When the veil of intellectual knowledge, of avidyā, is swept aside, a flood of light breaks upon the awakened soul and a vision of the Universal Self is achieved. This self is present, real and concrete even as a physical object is present to the physical eye. The Supreme is not so much an immanent God as an experienced God, felt as an inward principle of power and new being in life. When we rise in contemplation, when there is the vision of the Supreme which is entirely beyond the power of the soul to prepare for or bring about, we feel that it is wholly the opera-

¹ Cp *Vedānta Desika*

O Lord, if Thou art gracious, if I am (always) by Thy side, if there is in me pure devotion to Thee, if I am in the company of those who are Thy servants, then this saṁsāra is itself salvation.

*tvam cet prasidasi lavasmi samipatas cet
tvayy ash bhaktir anagha kan-saila-natha
samsrjyate yadi ca dasajanas tvadiyah
saṁsāra esa bhagavan apavarga eva.*

² Cp St Paul 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure' Epistle to the Philippians II. 12-13

The seventeenth-century Platonist, Norris, writes 'The solitary and contemplative man sits as safe in his retirement as one of Homer's heroes in a cloud, and has this only trouble from the follies and extravagances of men, that he pities them I think it advisable for every man that has sense and thoughts enough to be his own companion (for certainly there is more required to qualify a man for his own company than for other men's), to be as frequent in his retirements as he can, and to communicate as little with the world as is consistent with the duty, of doing good, and the discharge of the common offices of humanity'

Introduction

143

tion of God working on the soul by extraordinary grace. In a sense all life is from God, all prayer is made by the help of God's grace, but the heights of contemplation which are scaled by few are attributed in a special degree to divine grace. After the vision the light may fade, darkness may afflict the soul, but the soul can never lose altogether what it has once seen. Our effort thereafter shall be to renew the experience, make it the constant centre of all our activities until the completely real is completely known.

There are references to visions and auditions which sometimes accompany the soul's ascent to God. They are really an embarrassment to the aspiring soul. They distract its attention and sometimes tempt it to remain on the wayside without pressing forward to the goal. These visions and auditions are not an essential part of the religious intuition. These are symbols on the natural and historical plane of the mysteries of spiritual life. All objects in the natural world are reflections of the happenings in the spiritual world. The events of the life of spirit are reflected symbolically in the world of space, time and matter.

The paradoxes of mystical language are resolved when they are taken over into vital consciousness. The mystery-filled figures of the Upaniṣads are abstractions to those who look upon them from outside. The Upaniṣads speak to us of different forms of genuine religious experience. Whether it is contemplation of the Absolute, or meditation on the Supreme Person or worship of the Cosmic Spirit, or absorption in the world of nature, they are all genuine forms, as they aim at the same ultimate conclusion of self-transcendence. Man must be surpassed. There are different regions in the realm of spirit in men the consciousness of man freed from the finitude of self and enlarged finds fulfilment. In other religions, too, we have these varieties of mystic experience. There are some who wish to establish contact with God regarded strictly as a person, and live a life in ever complete accord with the divine will and at long last will reach the most intimate union with God. There are others who wish to go beyond union to unity, a state of consciousness, which is above subject-object relationship. Naturally the Upaniṣads do

not adopt an attitude of dogmatism.¹ This attitude of acceptance of all forms of worship has been a persistent character of India's religious life.² The word of God is not bound by languages in which it is spoken.³ It is the one voice that is heard in all religions.

We are heirs of a richer heritage than most of us are aware of. The life of the people of spirit, from the beginning until now, has a great deal to offer us. If we cut ourselves away from the rich treasury of wisdom about man's aspirations on this earth which is available to us from our own past, or if we are satisfied

¹ St Paul's remarkable words that all nations 'seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from everyone of us' (Acts of the Apostles XVII 27) indicate the right attitude.

Eckhart 'He who seeks God under settled forms lays hold of the form, while missing the good concealed in it.'

² 'The Supreme is pleased with him who listens to all discourses on dharmas, who worships all gods, who is free from jealousy and has subdued anger.'

srnute sarva-dkarmams ca sarvan devan namasyati

anasuyur jita-krodhas tasya tusyati kesavah

Visnu-dharmottara I. 58

Cp the popular verse:

At heart a Sakta, outwardly a Saiva

and in gatherings a Vaisnavah.

antah saktobahih saivo, sabha-madhye ca vaisnavah.

As we use these symbols, we find that some are more adequate than others.

Uddhava said (*Pandava Gita* 17)

vasudevam -parityajya yo'nyam devam upasate

trsito jahnavi-tire kupam vanchati durbhagah.

That unfortunate one, who, rejecting Vasudeva, worships another god

is like a thirsty person searching for a well on the bank of the Ganges.

Bardosa writes of Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar empire 'The

King allows such freedom that any man may come and go and live

according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance and without

enquiring whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Hindu' *An Advanced*

History of India by R C Majumdar, H C Ray Chaudhuri and K. Datta

(1946), P 379

³ Cp Virgil's passionate outburst 'Blessed is he who has won to the heart of the universe, he is beyond good and evil. But that is too much for ordinary humanity to attain, it is a very good second best to know the gods of the country, to live the life of the country' *Georgics* II 490ff.

'If any bom in barbarous nations, do what lieth in him, God will reveal to him that which is necessary to salvation either by inspiration or by sending him a teacher' St. Thomas Aquinas 2 Sent Dist 28 q, 1, 24, ad 4.

145.

with our own inadequate tradition and fail to seek for ourselves the gifts of other traditions, we will gravely misconceive the spirit of religion. Loyalty to our particular tradition means not only concord with the past but also freedom from the past. The living past should serve as a great inspiration and support for the future. Tradition is not a rigid, hidebound framework, which cripples the life of spirit and requires us to revert to a period that is now past and beyond recall. It is not a memory of the past but a constant abiding of the living Spirit. It is a living stream of spiritual life.

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Diacritics were added to the text by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj.

End of Introduction to The Principal of Upaniṣads.