

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISADS

BY

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

WITH A FOREWORD BY
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY
EDMOND HOLMES
AUTHOR OF "THE CREED OF BUDDHA," ETC.

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INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BY

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SOME PRESS OPINIONS

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PREFATORY NOTE

I AM much obliged to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Mr. Edmond Holmes for their kindness in writing the Foreword and the Introduction to this reprint of the section on the Upaniṣads from my *Indian Philosophy*.

The different, though not opposed, estimates brought together in this book will, I trust, help the reader to appreciate the meaning and value of the teaching of these ancient scriptures of India.

S. R.

CALCUTTA,
March 1924.

FOREWORD

NOT being a scholar or a student of philosophy, I do not feel justified in writing a critical appreciation of a book dealing with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. What I venture to do is to express my satisfaction at the fact that my friend, Professor Radhakrishnan, has undertaken to explain the *spirit* of the Upaniṣads to English readers.

It is not enough that one should know the meaning of the words and the grammar of the Sanskrit texts in order to realise the deeper significance of the utterances that have come to us across centuries of vast changes, both of the inner as well as the external conditions of life. Once the language in which these were written was living, and therefore the words contained in them had their full context in the life of the people of that period, who spoke them. Divested of that vital atmosphere, a large part of the language of these great texts offers to us merely its philological structure and not life's subtle gesture which can express through suggestion all that is ineffable.

Suggestion can neither have fixed rules of grammar nor the rigid definition of the lexicon so easily available to the scholar. Suggestion has its unanalysable code which finds its depth of explanation in the living hearts of the people who use it. Code words philologically treated appear childish, and one must know that all those experiences which are not realised through the path of reason, but immediately through an inner vision, must use some kind of code word for their expression. All poetry is full of such words, and therefore poems of one language can never be properly translated into other languages, nay, not even re-spoken in the same language.

For an illustration let me refer to that stanza of Keats'

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“Ode to a Nightingale,” which ends with the following lines :—

The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

All these words have their synonyms in our Bengali language. But if through their help I try to understand these lines or express the idea contained in them, the result would be contemptible. Should I suffer from a sense of race superiority in our own people, and have a low opinion of English literature, I could do nothing better to support my case than literally to translate or to paraphrase in our own tongue all the best poems written in English.

Unfortunately, the Upaniṣads have met with such treatment in some parts of the West, and the result is typified disastrously in a book like Gough's *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*. My experience of philosophical writings being extremely meagre, I may be wrong when I say that this is the only philosophical discussion about the Upaniṣads in English, but, at any rate, the lack of sympathy and respect displayed in it for these some of the most sacred words that have ever issued from the human mind, is amazing.

Though many of the symbolical expressions used in the Upaniṣads can hardly be understood to-day, or are sure to be wrongly interpreted, yet the messages contained in these, like some eternal source of light, still illumine and vitalise the religious mind of India. They are not associated with any particular religion, but they have the breadth of a universal soil that can supply with living sap all religions which have any spiritual ideal hidden at their core, or apparent in their fruit and foliage. Religions, which have their different standpoints, each claim them for their own support.

This has been possible because the Upaniṣads are based not upon theological reasoning, but on experience of spiritual life. And life is not dogmatic ; in it opposing forces are reconciled—ideas of non-dualism and dualism, the infinite and the finite, do not exclude each other. Moreover, the Upaniṣads do not represent the spiritual experience of any one great

individual, but of a great age of enlightenment which has a complex and collective manifestation, like that of the starry world. Different creeds may find their sustenance from them, but can never set sectarian boundaries round them; generations of men in our country, no mere students of philosophy, but seekers of life's fulfilment, may make living use of the texts, but can never exhaust them of their freshness of meaning.

For such men the Upaniṣad-ideas are not wholly abstract, like those belonging to the region of pure logic. They are concrete, like all truths realised through life. The idea of Brahma when judged from the view-point of intellect is an abstraction, but it is concretely real for those who have the direct vision to see it. Therefore the consciousness of the reality of Brahma has boldly been described to be as real as the consciousness of an *amlaka* fruit held in one's palm. And the Upaniṣad says :—

Yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha
Ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bībheti kadācana.

From Him come back baffled both words and mind. But he who realises the joy of Brahma is free from fear.

Cannot the same thing be said about light itself to men who may by some mischance live all through their life in an underground world cut off from the sun's rays? They must know that words can never describe to them what light is, and mind, through its reasoning faculty, can never even understand how one must have a direct vision to realise it intimately and be glad and free from fear.

We often hear the complaint that the Brahma of the Upaniṣads is described to us mostly as a bundle of negations. Are we not driven to take the same course ourselves when a blind man asks for a description of light? Have we not to say in such a case that light has neither sound, nor taste, nor form, nor weight, nor resistance, nor can it be known through any process of analysis? Of course it can be seen; but what is the use of saying this to one who has no eyes? He may take that statement on trust without understanding in the least what it means, or may altogether disbelieve it, even suspecting in us some abnormality.

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Does the truth of the fact that a blind man has missed the perfect development of what should be normal about his eyesight depend for its proof upon the fact that a larger number of men are not blind? The very first creature which suddenly groped into the possession of its eyesight had the right to assert that light was a reality. In the human world there may be very few who have their spiritual eyes open, but, in spite of the numerical preponderance of those who cannot see, their want of vision must not be cited as an evidence of the negation of light.

In the Upaniṣads we find the note of certainty about the spiritual meaning of existence. In the very paradoxical nature of the assertion that we can never know Brahma, but can realise Him, there lies the strength of conviction that comes from personal experience. They aver that through our joy we know the reality that is infinite, for the test by which reality is apprehended is joy. Therefore in the Upaniṣads *Satyam* and *Anandam* are one. Does not this idea harmonise with our everyday experience?

The self of mine that limits my truth within myself confines me to a narrow idea of my own personality. When through some great experience I transcend this boundary I find joy. The negative fact of the vanishing of the fences of self has nothing in itself that is delightful. But my joy proves that the disappearance of self brings me into touch with a great positive truth whose nature is infinitude. My love makes me understand that I gain a great truth when I realise myself in others, and therefore I am glad. This has been thus expressed in the Īsopaniṣad :

Yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmany evānupaśyati
Sarvabhūteṣu cātmānam tato na vijugupsate.

He who sees all creatures in himself, and himself in all creatures, no longer remains concealed.

His Truth is revealed in him when it comprehends Truth in others. And we know that in such a case we are ready for the utmost self-sacrifice through abundance of love.

It has been said by some that the element of personality has altogether been ignored in the Brahma of the Upaniṣads,

and thus our own personality, according to them, finds no response in the Infinite Truth. But then, what is the meaning of the exclamation: "Vedāhametam puruṣam mahāntam. *I have known him who is the Supreme Person.* Did not the sage who pronounced it at the same time proclaim that we are all *Amṛtasya Putrāḥ*, the sons of the Immortal?

Elsewhere it has been declared: *Tam vedyam puruṣam veda yathā ma vo mṛtyuḥ parivyathāḥ. Know him, the Person who only is to be known, so that death may not grieve thee.* The meaning is obvious. We are afraid of death, because we are afraid of the absolute cessation of our personality. Therefore, if we realise the Person as the ultimate reality which we know in everything that we know, we find our own personality in the bosom of the eternal.

There are numerous verses in the Upaniṣads which speak of immortality. I quote one of these:—

Eṣa devo viśvakarmā mahātmā
Sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ
Hṛdā maṇiṣā manasābhikṣpto
Ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti.

This is the God who is the world-worker, the supreme soul, who always dwells in the heart of all men, those who know him through their mind, and the heart that is full of the certainty of knowledge, become immortal.

To realise with the heart and mind the divine being who dwells within us is to be assured of everlasting life. It is *mahātma*, the great reality of the inner being, which is *viśva-karmā*, the world-worker, whose manifestation is in the outer work occupying all time and space.

Our own personality also consists of an inner truth which expresses itself in outer movements. When we realise, not merely through our intellect, but through our heart strong with the strength of its wisdom, that Mahātmā, the Infinite Person, dwells in the Person which is in me, we cross over the region of death. Death only concerns our limited self; when the Person in us is realised in the Supreme Person, then the limits of our self lose for us their finality.

The question necessarily arises, what is the significance

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of this self of ours? Is it nothing but an absolute bondage for us?

If in our language the sentences were merely for expressing grammatical rules, then the using of such a language would be a slavery to fruitless pedantry. But, because language has for its ultimate object the expression of ideas, our mind gains its freedom through it, and the bondage of grammar itself is a help towards this freedom.

If this world were ruled only by some law of forces, then it would certainly have hurt our mind at every step and there would be nothing that could give us joy for its own sake. But the Upaniṣad says that from Ānandam, from an inner spirit of Bliss, have come out all things, and by it they are maintained. Therefore, in spite of contradictions, we have our joy in life, we have experiences that carry their final value for us.

It has been said that the Infinite Reality finds its revelation in *ānanda-rūpam amṛtam*, in the deathless form of joy. The supreme end of our personality also is to express itself in its creations. But works done through the compulsion of necessity, or some passion that blinds us and drags us on with its impetus, are fetters for our soul; they do not express the wealth of the infinite in us, but merely our want or our weakness.

Our soul has its *ānandam*, its consciousness of the infinite, which is blissful. This seeks its expression in limits which, when they assume the harmony of forms and the balance of movements, constantly indicate the limitless. Such expression is freedom, freedom from the barrier of obscurity. Such a medium of limits we have in our self which is our medium of expression. It is for us to develop this into *ānanda-rūpam amṛtam*, an embodiment of deathless joy, and only then the infinite in us can no longer remain obscured.

This self of ours can also be moulded to give expression to the personality of a business man, or a fighting man, or a working man, but in these it does not reveal our supreme reality, and therefore we remain shut up in a prison of our own construction. Self finds its *ānanda-rūpam*, which is its freedom in revelation, when it reveals a truth that transcends self, like a lamp revealing light which goes far

beyond its material limits, proclaiming its kinship with the sun. When our self is illuminated with the light of love, then the negative aspect of its separateness with others loses its finality, and then our relationship with others is no longer that of competition and conflict, but of sympathy and co-operation.

I feel strongly that this, for us, is the teaching of the Upaniṣads, and that this teaching is very much needed in the present age for those who boast of the freedom enjoyed by their nations, using that freedom for building up a dark world of spiritual blindness, where the passions of greed and hatred are allowed to roam unchecked, having for their allies deceitful diplomacy and a wide-spread propaganda of falsehood, where the soul remains caged and the self batters upon the decaying flesh of its victims.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR RADHAKRISHNAN'S work on *Indian Philosophy*, the first volume of which has recently appeared, meets a want which has long been felt. The Western mind finds a difficulty in placing itself at what I may call the dominant standpoint of Indian thought, a difficulty which is the outcome of centuries of divergent tradition, and which therefore opposes a formidable obstacle to whatever attempt may be made by Western scholarship and criticism to interpret the speculative philosophy of India. If we of the West are to enter with some measure of sympathy and understanding into the ideas which dominate, and have long dominated, the Indian mind, India herself must expound them to us. Our interpreter must be an Indian critic who combines the acuteness and originality of the thinker with the learning and caution of the scholar, and who has also made such a study of Western thought and Western letters as will enable him to meet his readers on common ground. If, in addition to these qualifications, he can speak to us in a Western language, he will be the ideal exponent of that mysterious philosophy which is known to most of us more by hearsay than by actual acquaintance, and which, so far as we have any knowledge of it, alternately fascinates and repels us.

All these requirements are answered by Professor Radhakrishnan. A clear and deep thinker, an acute critic and an erudite scholar, he is admirably qualified for the task which he has set himself of expounding to a "lay" audience the main movements of Indian thought. His knowledge of Western thought and letters makes it easy for him to get into touch with a Western audience; and for the latter purpose he has the further qualification, which he shares with other cultured Hindus, of being a master of the English language and an accomplished writer of English prose.

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But the first volume of *Indian Philosophy* contains nearly 700 closely printed pages, and costs a guinea ; and it is not every one, even of those who are interested in Indian thought, who can afford to devote so much time to serious study, while the price, though relatively most reasonable, is beyond the means of many readers. That being so, it is good to know that Professor Radhakrishnan and his publisher have decided to bring out the section on *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* as a separate volume and at a modest price.

For what is quintessential in Indian philosophy is its spiritual idealism ; and the quintessence of its spiritual idealism is in the Upaniṣads. The thinkers of India in all ages have turned to the Upaniṣads as to the fountain head of India's speculative thought. "They are the foundations," says Professor Radhakrishnan, "on which most of the later philosophies and religions of India rest. . . . Later systems of philosophy display an almost pathetic anxiety to accommodate their doctrines to the views of the Upaniṣads, even if they cannot father them all on them. Every revival of idealism in India has traced its ancestry to the teaching of the Upaniṣads." "There is no important form of Hindu thought," says an English exponent of Indian philosophy, "heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upaniṣads."¹ It is to the Upaniṣads, then, that the Western student must turn for illumination, who wishes to form a true idea of the general trend of Indian thought, but has neither time nor inclination to make a close study of its various systems. And if he is to find the clue to the teaching of the Upaniṣads he cannot do better than study it under the guidance of Professor Radhakrishnan.

It is true that treatises on that philosophy have been written by Western scholars. But the Western mind, as has been already suggested, is as a rule debarred by the prejudices in which it has been cradled from entering with sympathetic insight into ideas which belong to another world and another age. Not only does it tend to survey those ideas, and the problems in which they centre, from standpoints which are distinctively Western, but it some-

¹ Bloomfield : *The Religion of the Veda*.

times goes so far as to assume that the Western is the only standpoint which is compatible with mental sanity. Can we wonder, then, that when it criticises the speculative thought of Ancient India, its adverse judgment is apt to resolve itself into fundamental misunderstanding, and even its sympathy is sometimes misplaced?

In Gough's *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* we have a contemptuously hostile criticism of the ideas which dominate that philosophy, based on obstinate misunderstanding of the Indian point of view,—misunderstanding so complete that our author makes nonsense of what he criticises before he has begun to study it. In Deussen's work on the same subject—a work of close thought and profound learning which deservedly commands respect—we have a singular combination of enthusiastic appreciation with complete misunderstanding on at least one vital point. Speaking of the central conception of the Upaniṣads, that of the ideal identity of God and the soul, Gough says, "this empty intellectual conception, void of spirituality, is the highest form that the Indian mind is capable of." Comment on this *jugement saugrenu* is needless. Speaking of the same conception, Deussen says, "it will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond the Upaniṣads, their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind . . . one thing we may assert with confidence—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken, and from it no deviation can take place." This is high praise. But when our author goes on to argue that the universe is pure illusion, and claims that this is the fundamental view of the Upaniṣads, he shows, as Professor Radhakrishnan has fully demonstrated, that he has not grasped the true inwardness of the conception which he honours so highly.

With these examples of the aberration of Western criticism before us, we shall perhaps think it desirable to turn for instruction and guidance to the exposition of the Upaniṣads which Professor Radhakrishnan, an *Indian* thinker, scholar and critic, has given us. If we do so, we shall not be disappointed. As the inheritor of a great philosophical

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tradition, into which he was born rather than indoctrinated, Professor Radhakrishnan has an advantage over the Western student of Indian philosophy, which no weight of learning and no degree of metaphysical acumen can counterbalance, and of which he has made full use. His study of the Upaniṣads—if a Western reader may presume to say so—is worthy of its theme.

The Upaniṣads are the highest and purest expression of the speculative thought of India. They embody the meditations on great matters of a succession of seers who lived between 1000 and 300 B.C. In them, says Professor J. S. Mackenzie, “we have the earliest attempt at a constructive theory of the cosmos, and certainly one of the most interesting and remarkable.”

What do the Upaniṣads teach us? Its authors did not all think alike; but, taking their meditations as a whole, we may say that they are dominated by one paramount conception, that of the ideal oneness of the soul of man with the soul of the universe. The Sanscrit word for the soul of man is Ātman, for the soul of the universe Brahman. “God’s dwelling place,” says Professor Radhakrishnan in his exposition of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, “is the heart of man. The inner immortal self and the great cosmic power are one and the same. Brahman is the Ātman, and the Ātman is the Brahman. The one supreme power through which all things have been brought into being is one with the inmost self in each man’s heart.” What is real in each of us is his self or soul. What is real in the universe is its self or soul, in virtue of which its All is One, and the name for which in our language is God. And the individual soul is one, potentially and ideally, with the divine or universal soul. In the words of one of the Upaniṣads: “He who is the Brahman in man and who is that in the sun, these are one.”

The significance of this conception is more than metaphysical. There is a practical side to it which its exponents are apt to ignore. The unity of the all-pervading life, in and through its own essential spirituality—the unity of the trinity of God and Nature and Man—is, from man’s point of view, an ideal to be realised rather than an accomplished

fact. If this is so, if oneness with the real, the universal, the divine self, is the ideal end of man's being, it stands to reason that self-realisation, the finding of the real self, is the highest task which man can set himself. In the Upaniṣads themselves the ethical implications of their central conception were not fully worked out. To do so, to elaborate the general idea of self-realisation into a comprehensive scheme of life, was the work of the great teacher whom we call Buddha.

This statement may seem to savour of paradox. In the West the idea is still prevalent that Buddha broke away completely from the spiritual idealism of the Upaniṣads, that he denied God, denied the soul, and held out to his followers the prospect of annihilation as the final reward of a righteous life. This singular misconception, which is not entirely confined to the West, is due to Buddha's agnostic silence having been mistaken for comprehensive denial. It is time that this mistake was corrected. It is only by affiliating the ethics of Buddhism to the metaphysics of the Upaniṣads that we can pass behind the silence of Buddha and get into touch with the philosophical ideas which ruled his mind, ideas which were not the less real or effective because he deliberately held them in reserve. This has long been my own conviction ; and I am now confirmed in it by finding that it is shared by Professor Radhakrishna, who sets forth the relation of Buddhism to the philosophy of the Upaniṣads in the following words : " The only metaphysics that can justify Buddha's ethical discipline is the metaphysics underlying the Upaniṣads. . . . Buddhism helped to democratise the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, which was till then confined to a select few. The process demanded that the deep philosophical truths which cannot be made clear to the masses of men should for practical purposes be ignored. It was Buddha's mission to accept the idealism of the Upaniṣads at its best and make it available for the daily needs of mankind. Historical Buddhism means the spread of the Upaniṣad doctrines among the people. It thus helped to create a heritage which is living to the present day."

Given that oneness with his own real self, which is also

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the soul of Nature and the spirit of God, is the ideal end of man's being, the question arises : How is that end to be achieved ? In India, the land of psychological experiments, many ways to it were tried and are still being tried. There was the way of *Gnani*, or intense mental concentration. There was the way of *Bhakti*, or passionate love and devotion. There was the way of *Yogi*, or severe and systematic self-discipline. These ways and the like of these might be available for exceptionally gifted persons. They were not available, as Buddha saw clearly, for the rank and file of mankind. It was for the rank and file of mankind, it was for the plain average man, that Buddha devised his scheme of conduct. He saw that in one's everyday life, among one's fellow men, there were ample opportunities for the higher desires to assert themselves as higher, and for the lower desires to be placed under due control. There were ample opportunities, in other words, for the path of self-mastery and self-transcendence, the path of emancipation from the false self and of affirmation of the true self, to be followed from day to day, from year to year, and even—for Buddha, like the seers of the Upaniṣads, took the reality of re-birth for granted—from life to life. He who walked in that path had set his face towards the goal of his own perfection, and, in doing so, had, unknown to himself, accepted the philosophy of the Upaniṣads as the ruling principle of his life.

If this interpretation of the life-work of Buddha is correct, if it was his mission to make the dominant idea of the Upaniṣads available for the daily needs of ordinary men, it is impossible to assign limits to the influence which that philosophy has had and is capable of having in human affairs in general and in the moral life of man in particular. The metaphysics of the Upaniṣads, when translated into the ethics of self-realisation, provided and still provides for a spiritual need which has been felt in divers ages and which was never more urgent than it is to-day. For it is to-day, when supernatural religion is losing its hold on us, that the secret desire of the heart for the support and guidance which the religion of nature can alone afford, is making itself felt as it has never been felt before. And if

the religion of nature is permanently to satisfy our deeper needs, it must take the form of devotion to the natural end of man's being, the end which the seers of the Upaniṣads discerned and set before us, the end of oneness with that divine or universal self which is at once the soul of all things and the true being of each individual man. In other words, it is as the gospel of spiritual evolution that the religion of nature must make its appeal to our semi-pagan world. It was the gospel of spiritual evolution which Buddha, true to the spirit of the Upaniṣads, preached 2,500 years ago ;¹ and it is for a re-presentation of the same gospel, in the spirit of the same philosophy, that the world is waiting now.

¹ It was the gospel of spiritual evolution which Christ preached in a later age, to a different audience and through the medium of other forms of thought. Such at least is my earnest conviction. Of the two pivotal sayings, "I and my Father are one," and "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," the former falls into line with the spiritual idealism of the Upaniṣads, the latter into line with the ethical idealism of Buddha. The notation, as might be expected, is different ; but the idea and the ideal are the same.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.G.	. . .	Bhagavadgītā.
E.R.E.	. . .	Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.
J.A.O.S.	. . .	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J.R.A.S.	. . .	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
P.	Pañcāstikāyasamayāsāra.
R.B.	. . .	Rāmānuja's Bhāṣya on the Vedānta Sūtras.
S.B.	. . .	Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on the Vedānta Sūtras.
S.B.E.	. . .	Sacred Books of the East.
Up.	. . .	Upaniṣads.
V.S.	. . .	Vedānta Sūtras.

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GOUGH : The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads.
BARUA : Pre-Buddhistic Philosophy.
MAHADEVA SASTRI : The Taittirīya Upaniṣad.
RANADE : The Psychology of the Upaniṣads (Indian Philosophical Review), 1918-1919
HUME : The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads.

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UPANISADS**

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANIŠADS

Introduction—The fluid and indefinite character of the teaching of the Upaniṣads—Western students of the Upaniṣads—Date—Early Upaniṣads—The great thinkers of the age—The hymns of the Ṛg-Veda and the doctrine of the Upaniṣads compared—Emphasis on the monistic side of the hymns—The shifting of the centre from the object to the subject—The pessimism of the Upaniṣads—The pessimistic implications of the conception of saṁsāra—Protest against the externalism of the Vedic religion—Subordination of the Vedic knowledge—The central problems of the Upaniṣads—Ultimate reality—The nature of Ātman distinguished from body, dream consciousness and empirical self—The different modes of consciousness, waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep and ecstasy—The influence of the Upaniṣad analysis of self on subsequent thought—The approach to reality from the object side—Matter, life, consciousness, intelligence and ānanda—Śaṁkara and Rāmānuja on the status of ānanda—Brahman and Ātman—Tat tvam asi—The positive character of Brahman—Intellect and intuition—Brahman and the world—Creation—The doctrine of māyā—Deussen's view examined—Degrees of reality—Are the Upaniṣads pantheistic?—The finite self—The ethics of the Upaniṣads—The nature of the ideal—The metaphysical warrant for an ethical theory—Moral life—Its general features—Asceticism—Intellectualism—Jñāna, Karma and Upāsana—Morality and religion—Beyond good and evil—The religion of the Upaniṣads—Different forms—The highest state of freedom—The ambiguous accounts of it in the Upaniṣads—Evil—Suffering—Karma—Its value—The problem of freedom—Future life and immortality—Psychology of the Upaniṣads—Non-Vedāntic tendencies in the Upaniṣads—Sāṁkhya—Yoga—Nyāya—General estimate of the thought of the Upaniṣads—Transition to the epic period.

I

THE UPANIŠADS

THE Upaniṣads¹ form the concluding portions of the Veda, and are therefore called the Veda-anta, or the end

¹ The word Upaniṣad comes from *upa*, near, *śad*, to sit. It means "sitting near" the teacher to receive instruction. It gradually came to

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of the Veda, a denomination which suggests that they contain the essence of the Vedic teaching. They are the foundations on which most of the later philosophies and religions of India rest. "There is no important form of Hindu thought, heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upaniṣads."¹ Later systems of philosophy display an almost pathetic anxiety to accommodate their doctrines to the views of the Upaniṣads, even if they cannot father them all on them. Every revival of idealism in India has traced its ancestry to the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Their poetry and lofty idealism have not as yet lost their power to move the minds and sway the hearts of men. They contain the earliest records of Indian speculation. The hymns and the liturgical books of the Veda are concerned more with the religion and practice than with the thought of the Aryans. We find in the Upaniṣads an advance on the Saṁhita mythology, Brāhmaṇa hair-splitting, and even Āraṇyaka theology, though all these stages are to be met with. The authors of the Upaniṣads transform the past they handle, and the changes they effect in the Vedic religion indicate the boldness of the heart that beats only for freedom. The aim of the Upaniṣads is not so much to reach philosophical truth as to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit. Tentative solutions of metaphysical questions are put forth in the form of dialogues and disputations, though the Upaniṣads are essentially the outpourings or poetic deliverances of philosophically tempered minds in the face of the facts of life. They express the restlessness and striving of the human mind to grasp the true nature of reality. Not being systematic philosophy, or the production of a single author, or even of the same age, they contain much that is incon-

mean what we receive from the teacher, a sort of secret doctrine or *rahasyam*. Sometimes it is made to mean what enables us to destroy error, and approach truth. Śaṅkara, in his introduction to the Taṭtirīya Upaniṣad, says: "Knowledge of Brahman is called Upaniṣad because in the case of those who devote themselves to it, the bonds of conception, birth, decay, etc., become *unloosed*, or because it *destroys* them altogether, or because it leads the pupil very near to Brahman, or because therein the highest God is seated." See Pandit, March, 1872, p. 254.

¹ Bloomfield: *The Religion of the Veda*, p. 51.

sistent and unscientific; but if that were all, we cannot justify the study of the Upaniṣads. They set forth fundamental conceptions which are sound and satisfactory, and these constitute the means by which their own innocent errors, which through exclusive emphasis have been exaggerated into fallacious philosophies, can be corrected. Notwithstanding the variety of authorship and the period of time covered by the composition of these half-poetical and half-philosophical treatises, there is a unity of purpose, a vivid sense of spiritual reality in them all, which become clear and distinct as we descend the stream of time. They reveal to us the wealth of the reflective religious mind of the times. In the domain of intuitive philosophy their achievement is a considerable one. Nothing that went before them for compass and power, for suggestiveness and satisfaction, can stand comparison with them. Their philosophy and religion have satisfied some of the greatest thinkers and intensely spiritual souls. We do not agree with Gough's estimate that "there is little that is spiritual in all this," or that "this empty intellectual conception, void of spirituality, is the highest form that the Indian mind is capable of." Professor J. S. Mackenzie, with truer insight, says that "the earliest attempt at a constructive theory of the cosmos, and certainly one of the most interesting and remarkable, is that which is set forth in the Upaniṣads."¹

II

THE TEACHING OF THE UPANIṢADS

It is not easy to decide what the Upaniṣads teach. Modern students of the Upaniṣads read them in the light of this or that preconceived theory. Men are so little accustomed to trust their own judgment that they take refuge in authority and tradition. Though these are safe enough guides for conduct and life, truth requires insight and judgment as well. A large mass of opinion inclines to-day to the view of Śaṅkara, who in his commentaries

¹ E.R.E., vol. viii., p. 597; see also Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 2.

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on the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavadgītā and the Vedānta Sūtras, has elaborated a highly subtle system of non-dualistic metaphysics. Another is equally vehement that Śaṅkara has not said the last word on the subject, and that a philosophy of love and devotion is the logical outcome of the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Different commentators, starting with particular beliefs, force their views into the Upaniṣads and strain their language so as to make it consistent with their own special doctrines. When disputes arise, all schools turn to the Upaniṣads. Thanks to the obscurity as well as the richness, the mystic haze as well as the suggestive quality of the Upaniṣads, the interpreters have been able to use them in the interests of their own religion and philosophy. The upaniṣads had no set theory of philosophy or dogmatic scheme of theology to propound. They hint at the truth in life, but not as yet in science or philosophy. So numerous are their suggestions of truth, so various are their guesses at God, that almost anybody may seek in them what he wants and find what he seeks, and every school of dogmatics may congratulate itself on finding its own doctrine in the sayings of the Upaniṣads. In the history of thought it has often happened that a philosophy has been victimised by a traditional interpretation that became established at an early date, and has thereafter prevented critics and commentators from placing it in its proper perspective. The system of the Upaniṣads has not escaped this fate. The Western interpreters have followed this or that commentator. Gough follows Śaṅkara's interpretation. In his Preface to the *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* he writes: "The greatest expositor of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads is Śaṅkara or Śaṅkarācārya. The teaching of Śaṅkara himself is the natural and the legitimate interpretation of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads." Max Müller adopts the same standpoint. "We must remember that the orthodox view of the Vedānta is not what we should call evolution, but illusion. Evolution of the Brahman or pariṇāma is heterodox, illusion or vivarta is orthodox Vedānta. . . . To put it metaphorically, the world according to the orthodox Vedāntin does not proceed from Brahman

as a tree from a germ, but as a mirage from the rays of the sun." : Deussen accepts the same view. We shall try to ascertain the meaning which the authors of the Upaniṣads intended, and not what later commentators attributed to them. The latter give us an approximately close idea of how the Upaniṣads were interpreted in later times, but not necessarily a true insight into the philosophic synthesis which the ancient seekers had. But the problem is, do the thoughts of the Upaniṣads hang together? Could all of them be traced to certain commonly acknowledged principles about the general make-up of the world? We are not so bold as to answer this question in the affirmative. These writings contain too many hidden ideas, too many possible meanings, too rich a mine of fancies and conjectures, that we can easily understand how different systems can draw their inspiration from the same source. The Upaniṣads do not contain any philosophic synthesis as such, of the type of the system of Aristotle or of Kant or of Śaṅkara. They have the consistency of intuition rather than of logic, and there are certain fundamental ideas which, so to say, form the first sketch of a philosophic system. Out of these ideas a coherent and consistent doctrine might be developed. It is, however, difficult to be confident that one's working up of elements which knew neither method nor arrangement is the correct one, on account of the obscurity of many passages. Yet with the higher ideals of philosophic exposition in view, we shall consider the Upaniṣad ideas of the universe and of man's place in it.

III

NUMBER AND DATE OF THE UPANIṢADS

The Upaniṣads are generally accounted to be 108 in number, of which about ten are the chief, on which Śaṅkara has commented. These are the oldest and the most authoritative. We cannot assign any exact date to them. The earliest of them are certainly pre-Buddhistic, a few of them are after Buddha. It is likely that they were composed between the completion of the Vedic hymns and the rise of Buddhism (that is the sixth century B.C.) The accepted dates

¹ S.B.E., vol. xv., p. xxvii.

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for the early Upaniṣads are 1000 B.C. to 300 B.C. Some of the later Upaniṣads on which Śaṅkara has commented are post-Buddhistic, and belong to about 400 or 300 B.C. The oldest Upaniṣads are those in prose. These are non-sectarian. The Aitareya, the Kauṣītaki, the Taittirīya, the Chāndogya, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, and parts of the Kena are the early ones, while verses 1-13 of the Kena, and iv. 8-21 of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka form the transition to the metrical Upaniṣads, and may be put down as later additions. The Kathopaniṣad is later still. We find in it elements of the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga systems.¹ It also quotes freely from the other Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā.² The Māṇḍūkya is the latest of the pre-sectarian Upaniṣads. The Atharva-Veda Upaniṣads are also of later growth. Maitrāyaṇī upaniṣad has elements in it of both the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga systems. The Śvetāśvatara was composed at the period when the several philosophical theories were fermenting. It shows in many passages an acquaintance with the technical terms of the orthodox systems and mentions many of their prominent doctrines. It seems to be interested in presenting a theistic syncretism of the Vedānta, the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga. The Brahma Sūtras do not refer to it. There is more of pure speculation present in the early prose Upaniṣads, while in the later ones there is more of religious worship and devotion.³ In presenting

¹ See ii. 18-19; ii. 6. 10 and 11.

² See i. 2. 5; and Muṇḍaka, ii. 8; i 2-7, and Gītā, ii. 29; ii. 18-19, and ii. 19-20 and ii. 23, and Muṇḍaka, iii. 2-3, Gītā, i. 53. Some scholars are inclined to the view that the Katha upaniṣad is older than the Muṇḍaka and the Gītā.

³ Deussen arranges the Upaniṣads in the following order:—

1. Ancient prose Upaniṣads: Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Kauṣītaki, Kena (partly in prose).
2. Verse Upaniṣads; Iśā, Katha, Muṇḍaka and Śvetāśvatara.
3. Later prose: Praśna and Maitrāyaṇī.

All these, excepting the Maitrāyaṇī, are called the classical Upaniṣads.

About the Maitrāyaṇī, Professor Macdonell writes: "Its many quotations from the other Upaniṣads, the occurrence of several later words, the developed Sāṅkhya doctrine presupposed by it, distinct references to the anti-Vedic heretical schools, all combine to render the late character of this work undoubted. It is, in fact, a summing up of the old upaniṣadic doctrines with an admixture of ideas derived from the Sāṅkhya system and from Buddhism" (*Sanskrit Literature*, p. 230).

Ṛṣabhottaratāpanīya is one of the twelve Upaniṣads explained by Vidyāraṇya in his "Sarvopaniṣadārthānubhūtiprakāśa."

the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, we shall take our stand mainly on the pre-Buddhistic ones, and strengthen our views as derived from them by those of the post-Buddhistic ones. The main Upaniṣads for our purposes are the Chāndogya and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the Taittirīya and the Aitareya, the Kauṣītaki and the Kena; the Īśā and the Māṇḍūkya come next

IV

THE THINKERS OF THE UPANIŞADS

Unfortunately, we know very little of the lives of the great thinkers whose reflections are embodied in the Upaniṣads. So careless were they of personal fame and so anxious for the spread of truth, that they fathered their views on the honoured deities and heroes of the Vedic period. Prajāpati and Indra, Nārada and Sanatkumāra figure as dialecticians. When the history of the great thinkers of the Upaniṣad period with their distinctive contributions comes to be written, the following names, if we leave aside the mythical ones, will stand out : Mahidāsa Aitareya, Raikva, Śaṅḍilya, Satyakāma Jābāla, Jaivali, Uddālaka, Śvetaketu, Bhāradvāja, Gārgyāyana, Pratar-dana, Bālāki, Ajātaśatru, Varuṇa, Yājñavalkya, Gārgī and Maitreyī.¹

THE HYMNS OF THE ṚG-VEDA AND THE UPANIŞADS

In view of the distinctive character of their contents, the Upaniṣads are regarded as a class of literature independent of the Vedic hymns and the Brāhmaṇas. The simple faith in gods of the hymns was, as we saw, displaced by the mechanical sacerdotalism of the Brāhmaṇas. The Upaniṣads feel that the faith that ends in a church is not enough. They attempt to moralise the religion of the

¹ The interested reader will find a lucid account of these thinkers and their views in the excellent work of my friend and colleague, Dr. Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*.

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Vedas without disturbing its form. The advance of the Upaniṣads on the Vedas consists in an increased emphasis on the monistic suggestions of the Vedic hymns, a shifting of the centre from the outer to the inner world, a protest against the externalism of the Vedic practices and an indifference to the sacredness of the Veda.

Amid all the confused ferment of Vedic devotions a certain principle of unity and comprehension was asserting itself. In some hymns the conception of a single central power was actually formulated. The Upaniṣads carry out this tendency. They recognise only one spirit—almighty, infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, self-existent, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He is the light, lord and life of the universe, one without a second, and the sole object of worship and adoration. The half-gods of the Veda die and the true God arrives. "How many gods are there really, O Yajñavalkya?" "One," he said.¹ "Now answer us a further question: Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, Kāla (time), which is breath (Prāṇa), Anna (food), Brahmā, Rudra, Viṣṇu. Thus do some meditate on him, some on another. Say which of these is the best for us?" And he said to them: "These are but the chief manifestations of the highest, the immortal, the incorporeal Brahman. . . . Brahman, indeed, is all this, and a man may meditate on, worship or discard also those which are its manifestations."² The visible infinite (objective) and the invisible infinite (subjective) are taken up into the spiritual whole.

The polytheistic conceptions were too deeply rooted in the Indian consciousness to be easily overthrown. The many gods were subordinated to the One. Without Brahman, Agni cannot burn a blade of grass, Vāyu cannot blow a whip of straw. "For fear of him, fire burns, for fear of him the sun shines, and for fear of him the winds, the clouds and death perform their office."³ Sometimes the many gods are made parts of one whole. The five householders led by Uddālaka approach king Aśvapati, who

¹ Brh. Up., ix. 1.

² Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad, iv. 5-6; see also Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 1; Taittirīya, i. 5; Brh., i. 4. 6; see also i. 4. 7; i. 4. 10.

³ Tait. Up.

asked each of them, Whom do you meditate on as the Self? The first answered heaven; the second, the sun; the third, air; the fourth, ether; the fifth, water; and the king replies that each of them worshipped only a part of the truth. Heaven is the head, the sun the eye, the air the breath, the ether the trunk, the water the bladder, and the earth the feet of the central reality, which is pictured as the world-soul. Compromise between the philosophic faith of the few and the fancied superstition of the crowds is the only possible reconciliation; we cannot abolish the old forms, for that would be to ignore the fundamental nature of humanity, as well as the patent differences, in the moral and intellectual states of believers who were not capable of acquiring at once the highest wisdom. Another factor also determined the attitude of the Upaniṣads. Their aim was not science or philosophy, but right living. They wished to liberate the spirit from the trammels of the flesh, that it might enjoy communion with God. Intellectual discipline was subsidiary to holiness of life. Besides, there was the feeling of reverence for the past. The Vedic seers were the ancients of blessed memory, whose doctrines it was impious to attack. In this way the Upaniṣads sought to square a growing idealistic philosophy with the dogmas of a settled theology.

The sources of man's spiritual insight are two-fold: objective and subjective—the wonders of the world without and the stress of the human soul. In the Vedas the vast order and movement of nature engages attention. Their gods represent cosmic forces. In the Upaniṣads we return to explore the depths of the inner world. "The self-existent pierced the openings of the senses so that they turn outwards; therefore man looks outward, not inward into himself; some wise man, however, with his eyes closed and wishing for immortality, saw the self behind."¹ From the outward physical fact, attention shifts to the inner immortal self situated at the back of the mind, as it were. We need not look to the sky for the bright light; the glorious fire is within the soul. The soul of man is the keyhole to the landscape of the whole universe, the Ākāśa within

¹ Kātha Up., iv, 1.

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the heart, the limpid lake which mirrors the truth. The altered outlook brought about a consequential change. Not the so-called gods, but the true living God, the Ātman has to be worshipped. God's dwelling-place is the heart of man. "Brahmaṇaḥ kośo'si,"¹ Thou art the sheath of Brahman. "Whosoever worships another deity, in such a manner as he is another, another 'I am,' does not know."² The inner immortal self and the great cosmic power are one and the same. Brahman is the Ātman and the Ātman is the Brahman. The one supreme power through which all things have been brought into being is one with the inmost self in each man's heart.³ The Upaniṣads do not uphold the theory of grace in the same spirit as the Vedas do. We do not have appeals to the Vedic gods, who were the sources of material prosperity for increase of happiness, but only prayers for deliverance from sorrow.

The emphasis on sorrow is sometimes interpreted as indicating an extravagant pessimism on the part of the Indian ṛṣis. It is not so. The religion of the Vedas certainly was more joyous, but it was a lower form of religion, where thought never penetrated beneath the husk of things. It was a religion expressing the delight of man at being in a world full of pleasures. The gods were feared and also trusted. Life on earth was simple and sweet innocence. The spiritual longing of the soul rebukes light-hearted joyousness and provokes reflection on the purpose of man's existence. Discontent with the actual is the necessary precondition of every moral change and spiritual rebirth. The pessimism of the Upaniṣads is the condition of all philosophy. Discontent prevails to enable man to effect

¹ Tait. Up.

² Brh. Up., i. 4. 10.

³ See Chāndogya, iii 14. Cf Augustine: "I asked the earth for God, and it answered me, 'I am not He'; I asked the sea and the depths and the creeping things, and they answered, 'We are not the God, seek thou above us.' I asked the breezy gales, and the airy universe, and all its denizens replied, 'Anaximenes is mistaken, I am not God'; I asked the heaven, sun, moon, stars, 'Neither are we,' say they, 'the God whom thou seekest'; and I asked unto all things which stand about the gateways of my flesh (the senses), 'Ye have told me of my God, that ye are not He; tell me something of Him,' and they cried with a loud voice, 'He made us.'" The search goes on until the inward self is questioned, when the answer is: "Thy God is unto thee, even the life of thy life" (*Confessions*, x. chap. 6).

an escape from it. If there is no way of escape, if no deliverance is sought after, then dissatisfaction is mischievous. The pessimism of the Upaniṣads has not developed to such an extent as to suppress all endeavour and generate inertia. There was enough faith in life to support all genuine search for truth. In the words of Barth: "The Upaniṣads are much more instinct with the spirit of speculative daring than the sense of suffering and weariness."¹ "Within the limits of the Upaniṣads there are indeed few explicit references to the misery of the life caught in the ceaseless cycle of death and birth. And its authors are saved from pessimism by the joy they feel at the message of redemption they proclaim."² The formulation of the theory of saṃsāra or rebirth is no proof that the Upaniṣads are pessimistic. Life on earth is the means of self-perfection. We have to undergo the discipline of saṃsāra in our efforts towards the higher joy and the complete possession of spiritual truth. That which gives zest to life is the supreme motive of the joy of self-conquest. Saṃsāra is only a succession of spiritual opportunities. Life is a stage in spiritual perfection, a step in the passage to the infinite. It is the time for preparing the soul for eternity. Life is no empty dream and the world no delirium of spirit. In the later versions of rebirth in Indian thought we miss this ennobling ideal, and birth becomes the result of an error of the soul and saṃsāra a dragging chain.

At the stage of life represented by the Brāhmaṇas, the simple religion of the Vedic hymns was one of sacrifices. Men's relations with the gods were mechanical, a question of give and take, profit and loss. The revival of spirituality was the need of the age immersed in formalism. In the Upaniṣads we find a return to the fresh springs of spiritual life. They declare that the soul will not obtain salvation by the performance of sacrifices. It can be obtained only by the truly religious life, based on an insight into the heart of the universe. Perfection is inward and spiritual, not outward and mechanical. We cannot make a man clean by washing his shirt. A consciousness of the identity

¹ *Religions of India*, p. 84.

² *Cave: Redemption, Hindu and Christian*, p. 64.

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of one's own soul with the great All-soul is the essence of a truly spiritual life. The uselessness of ritual, the futility of sacrifices as means to salvation are brought out. God is to be honoured by spiritual worship and not external ceremony. We cannot save ourselves by praising God. We cannot impress Him by sacrifices. The authors of the Upaniṣads had a sufficient sense of the historic to know that their protest would become ineffective if it should demand a revolution in things. They therefore ask only for a change in the spirit. They reinterpret sacrifices and allegorise them. In some passages¹ we are asked to meditate on the horse-sacrifice.² This meditative effort helps us to realise the meaning of the sacrifice, and it is said to be quite as valuable as making a sacrifice. By giving detailed descriptions of the kind of plank, the nature of the wood, etc., they show that they are not indifferent to the sacrificial religion. While adhering to the forms they try to refine them. They say that all sacrifices are for the sake of realising the self of man. Life itself is a sacrifice. "The true sacrifice is man; his first twenty-four years are his morning libation . . . in hunger, in thirst, in abstinence from pleasure standeth his consecration. . . . In his eating and drinking and in his pleasures he keeps a holy festival, and in his laughter and feasting and marrying he sings hymns of praise. Self-discipline, generosity, straightforwardness, ahimsā,³ and truth in speech, these are his payments, and the bath of purification when the sacrifice is over is death."⁴ We are told how the divine nature every day sacrifices itself; by its sacrifice do we live. Sacrifice is made to mean not feasting but renunciation. Make every action, every feeling and every thought an offering to God. Let your life be one sacrament or yajña. Sometimes we are told that the sacrifices are

¹ Brh. Up., i. 1, 2.

² Aśvamedha.

³ Innocence.

⁴ Chān. Up., iii. Cf. Isaiah lviii. 6-7: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" See Plato: *Euthyphron*, 14. E; *Laws*, 906, D. Jowett's Edition.

necessary as preparations for the higher path. Nobody can tread the higher road without fulfilling the requirements of the lower. Sacrifices are necessary for the unenlightened, though they alone will not do. They give us admission to the world of the fathers, which after a temporary sojourn in the moon leads back to a new earthly existence. Ceremonialism is contrasted with spiritual worship.¹ There are occasions when the sacrificial and priestly religion strikes them as superficial, and then they give vent to all their irony. They describe a procession of dogs to march like a procession of the priests, each holding the tail of the other in front and saying, "Om! Let us eat. Om, let us drink . . . etc."² Thus the rigid ritual of the Brāhmaṇas, which gave little comfort to the weak heart of man, was held in check in the Upaniṣads.

The attitude of the Upaniṣads is not favourable to the sacredness of the Vedas. Like the rationalistic thinkers of a later day, they adopt a double attitude towards Vedic authority. They consider the Veda to be of supernatural origin, as when they say, "Just as when a fire is laid with damp wood, clouds of smoke spread all around, so in truth from this great being, has been breathed forth the Ṛg-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sāma-Veda, the hymns of the Atharvas and the Aṅgirasas, the narratives, the histories, the sciences, the mystical problems, the poems, the proverbs, and the expositions—all these have been breathed forth from Him."³ It is also recognised that the Vedic knowledge is much inferior to the true divine insight,⁴ and will not liberate us. Nārada said: "I know the Ṛg-Veda, Sir, the Yajur, the Sāma-Veda, with all these I know only the Mantras and the sacred books, I do not know the Self."⁵ The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad says: "Two kinds of knowledge must be known, the higher and the lower. The lower knowledge is that which the Ṛg, Sāma, Atharva Veda, Ceremonial, Grammar give . . . but the higher knowledge is that by which the indestructible Brahman is apprehended."⁶

¹ See also Chān. Up., i. 1, 10.

² Ibid., i. 12, 4. 5.

³ Bṛh. Up., ii. 4. 10.

⁴ See Chāndogya, v. 3. 10. Bṛh., 3. 5. 1; iv. 4. 21; vi. 2. 1. Kauṣṭaki, i.; Tait., ii. 4; Kaṭha, ii. 23.

⁵ Chān. Up., vii. 2.

⁶ Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 4. 5.

VI

THE PROBLEMS DISCUSSED IN THE UPANIṢADS

The central theme of the Upaniṣads is the problem of philosophy. It is the search for what is true. Dissatisfaction with things and second causes suggests the questions, which we read at the beginning of the Śvetāśvatara: "Whence are we born, where do we live, and whither do we go? O, ye who know Brahman, tell us at whose command we abide here whether in pain or in pleasure. Should time or nature, or necessity or chance, or the elements be considered to be the cause, or he who is called Puruṣa, the man that is the Supreme spirit?" In the Kena Upaniṣad the pupil asks, "At whose wish does the mind sent forth proceed on its errand? At whose command does the first breath go forth, at whose wish do we utter this speech? What god directs the eye or the ear?"¹ The thinkers did not take experience to be an inexplicable datum, as common sense does. They wondered whether the report of the senses could be taken as final. Are the mental faculties by which we acquire experience self-existent, or are they themselves effects of something mightier still, which lies behind them? How can we consider physical objects, effects and products as they are, to be quite as real as their causes? There must be something ultimate at the back of it all, a self-existent, in which alone the mind can rest. Knowledge, mind, the senses and their objects are all finite and conditioned. In the field of morals we find that we cannot get true happiness from the finite. The pleasures of the world are transient, being cut off by old age and death. Only the infinite gives durable happiness. In religion we cry for eternal life. All these force upon us the conviction of a timeless being, a spiritual reality, the object of philosophical quest, the fulfilment of our desires, and the goal of religion. The seers of the Upaniṣads try to lead us to this central reality which is infinite existence (sat), absolute truth (cit), and pure delight (ānanda). The prayer of

every human heart is "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality." ¹

We shall deal with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads under the two heads of metaphysics and ethics. We shall present their views of ultimate reality, the nature of the world, and the problem of creation under metaphysics, and their analysis of the individual, his destiny, his ideal, the relation of karma to freedom, the highest conception of mukti or release, and the doctrine of rebirth under ethics.

VII

THE NATURE OF REALITY

In solving the question of the nature of ultimate reality, the Upaniṣad thinkers seek to supplement the objective vision of the Vedic seers by a subjective one. The highest conception reached in the Vedic hymns was that of the one reality (Ekam Sat), which realises itself in all the variety of existence. This conclusion is strengthened in the Upaniṣads, where the problem is sometimes approached by way of a philosophical analysis of the nature of the self which they call the Ātman. The etymology of this word is obscure. In the R̥g-Veda x. 16. 3 it means breath or the vital essence. Gradually it acquired the meaning of soul or self. The theory of the true self or Ātman is not set out with any clearness or fullness of detail, nor are isolated statements connected into a coherent system. In a dialogue between the teacher Prajāpati and the pupil Indra, narrated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad,² we find a progressive development in the definition of self through the four stages of (1) the bodily self, (2) the empirical self, (3) the transcendental self, and (4) the absolute self. The question discussed is not so much psychological as metaphysical. What is the nature of the self of man, his central being? Prajāpati opens the discussion by giving certain

¹ *Asato mā sad gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mṛtyor mā amṛtaḥ-gamaya.* Brh. Up., i. 3. 27.

² viii. 3-12.

general characteristics which the true self should possess. "The self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine, *that* it is which we must try to understand."¹ It is the subject which persists throughout the changes, the common factor in the states of waking, dream, sleep, death, rebirth and final deliverance.² It is the simple truth that nothing can destroy. Death does not touch it nor vice dissolve it. Permanence, continuity, unity, eternal activity are its characteristics. It is a world self-complete. There is nothing outside of it to set against it. Modern criticism will object to the whole procedure as a case of *petitio principii*. By the characteristics of self-containedness and self-completeness being assumed, the solution is taken for granted. But as we shall see, this line of procedure has its own meaning. Prajāpati makes it clear that the self of man consists in the truly subjective, which can never become an object. It is the person that sees, not the object seen.³ It is not the bundle of qualities called the "me," but the I which remains beyond and behind inspecting all these qualities. It is the subject in the truest sense, and it can never become the object. Much of the content of the self as ordinarily used can become an object. The argument assumes that whatever becomes an object belongs to the not-self. We must strip away everything of our actual self alien to or different from the self. The first answer given is that the body which is born, grows up and decays and dies, is the true self. The self, according to Prajāpati, is indeed he who is seen when you look into another's eye or a pail of water or a mirror. It is suggested that we observe a picture even to the very hairs and nails. To indicate that it is not the self, Prajāpati asks Indra to adorn himself, put on the best clothes and look again into the water and the mirror, and he sees his likeness well adorned with best clothes and clean. A doubt occurs to Indra. "As this self in the shadow or the water is well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, well cleaned when the body

¹ viii. 7. 1.² See Bṛh. Up., iv. 4. 3.³ viii. 7. 3.

is well cleaned, that self will also be blind if the body is blind, lame if the body is lame, crippled if the body is crippled, and perish, in fact, as soon as the body perishes. I see no good in this." ¹ Indra approaches his teacher Prajāpati, and after another long interval is told that "he who moves about happy in dreams is the self." The true self is not the body which is exposed to all suffering and imperfections, which is a material phenomenon. The body is only an instrument used by consciousness, while consciousness is not the product of the body. And now Indra is told that the dreaming subject is the self, but he feels another difficulty. "Though it is true that that self is not rendered faulty by faults of body, nor struck when it is struck, nor lamed when it is lamed, yet it is as if they struck him in dreams, as if they chased him. He becomes even conscious as it were of pain and sheds tears, therefore I see no good in this." ² Prajāpati took the dream states instead of other mental experiences, because dreams being more independent of body are crucial in their nature. The self is supposed to roam untrammelled in dreams. In them the mind is said to float free of the accidents of body. This view equates the self with the ever-growing and changing mental experiences. This is the empirical self, and Indra rightly recognises that this empirical self is subject to the accidents of experience. It cannot be the subject, for every moment it is changing. Though it is independent of body, dream states do not seem to be self-existent, which the true self or Ātman must be. The ego dependent on the limitations of time and birth cannot be said to be eternal. The self tethered to a local and temporal environment is a creature of time. It is the wanderer in the world of saṃsāra. It constructs for itself an imperfect world out of imperfect data. It is not indestructible, nor has it boundless freedom. We seem to require a subject as the ground and sustainer of all experience, a vaster reality of which the dream states as well as waking experience are only imperfect revelations. A mere flux of states cannot be sustained by itself. The empirical self is not eternal in its own right. Indra again approaches Prajāpati, explains

¹ viii. 9. 1.

² viii. 10. 2. 3.

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to him his position, and after a long time is taught. "When a man being asleep, reposing and at perfect rest, sees no dreams, that is the self."* Prajāpati understands Indra's difficulty. The self could not be reduced to a series of states, for that would be to explain away the reality of a permanent ego, and make Ātman subject to the vicissitudes of our chance experiences. Indra has to be taught that the objects of experience require a permanent subject by which they could be experienced. Prajāpati intended to bring out how, while a grin required a cat, everywhere except in Alice's wonderland, a cat need not always have a grin. The object depends upon the subject, but not the subject on the object in the same sense. Without the self there can be no knowledge, no art, no morality. Objects out of relation to a self are non-existent. From the subject are all objects and the subject itself is not a thing among other things. To enable Indra to realise that the self is the subject of all experiences, Prajāpati employs the method of abstraction which has its own disadvantages. Our life is ordinarily busy with things. The world is too much with us. Our self is lost in feelings, desires and imaginations, and does not know what it really is. Leading the life of mere objectivity, absorbed in the things of nature, ever busy with the active pursuits of the world, we do not want to waste a moment's thought on the first principle of all things—the self of man. Knowledge is taken for granted. To reflect on it, to understand its implications, means mental strain. In the history of European thought the question of the possibility of knowledge is a late one, but when it was put, it was realised that knowledge was impossible without what Kant called the transcendental unity of apperception, what Plotinus referred to as the "accompaniment" by the soul of its own mental activities. The most elementary presentation requires the reality of self. In the most apparently passive perceptions we realise the activity of the self. All changes, all experiences, assume a central self. The changes themselves are recognised as changes within a whole, which we are trying to actualise. Prajāpati wishes to bring out the necessity

of this self by urging that the self continuously exists, even when the waking or the dreaming experience is suspended. In sleep, deep and dreamless, we have no felt objects of experience, but we cannot on that account say there is no self. Prajāpati assumes that Indra will admit the reality of a self in sleep, for the continuity of consciousness, despite the temporal gaps, cannot otherwise be accounted for. Devadatta, after good sleep, continues to be Devadatta, since his experiences unite themselves to the system which existed at the time when he went to sleep. They link themselves to his thoughts and do not fly to any other's. This continuity of experience requires us to admit a permanent self underlying all contents of consciousness. That which exists in sleep without any objects to contemplate is the self. The mirror is not shattered simply because nothing is seen in it. Prajāpati tries to bring out the absolute supremacy of the subject over the object, the truth of Yajñavalkya's statement that even when all objects are extinguished, the subject persists in its own light. "When the sun has set, when the moon has set, and when the fire is put out, the self alone is his light."¹ But Indra was too much of a psychologist for Prajāpati. He felt that this self, freed from all bodily experience, from the shapeless mass of dreams, etc., this objectless self, is a barren fiction. If the self is not what it knows, feels and reacts upon, if it is divorced from it and thus emptied of its content, what remains? "Nothing," said Indra. "To be free from everything is to be nothing."² Gautama, the Buddha, takes up the analogy of a tree and asks what is that tree which is supposed to remain, after we tear away its leaves, hew down its branches, strip off its bark, etc.? Peel off layer after layer of an onion, and what remains? Nothing. Bradley points out: "The ego that pretends to be anything either before or beyond its concrete psychical filling is a gross fiction and a mere monster, and for no purpose admissible."³ On this view in dreamless sleep there is no self at all. Locke declares that every drowsy

¹ Brh. Up., iv. 3. 6.

² Bradley: *Ethical Studies*, p. 52.

³ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 89.

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nod explodes the self theory. "In sleep and trances the mind *exists not*—there is no time, no succession of ideas. To say the mind exists without thinking is a contradiction, nonsense, nothing."¹ Indra seems to have been an empiricist ages before Locke and Berkeley. "If the soul in a perfectly dreamless sleep thinks, feels, and wills nothing, is the soul then at all, and if it is, how is it?" asks Lotze. "How often has the answer been given, that if this could happen, the soul would have no being. Why have we not the courage to say that as often as this happens the soul is not?"² Indra has the courage to declare it.³ "It is indeed destroyed." This has an important lesson which is again and again forgotten in Indian thought. To deny the life without is to destroy the god within. Those who think that we reach the highest point attainable, in pure subjectivity must turn to the dialogue of Indra and Prajāpati. The condition freed from the limits imposed by the organism, from time and space, from the existence of objects, is simple annihilation, according to Indra. This contentless ego, this abstract *cogito* of Descartes, this formal unity of Kant, this objectless subject supposed to stand behind, unrelated to all empirical consciousness, is an impossibility. Philosophical reflection as well as psychological analysis leads to this result. But Prajāpati was trying to emphasise the identity of the self which is unaffected by the changes of experience. He was anxious to point out that while the self was not exclusive of conscious states, it was not the conscious states. Dr. McTaggart puts the whole point thus: "What does the self include? Everything of which it is conscious. What does it exclude? Equally-Everything of which it is conscious. What can it say is not inside it? Nothing. What can it say is not outside it? A single abstraction. And any attempt to remove the paradox destroys the self. For the two sides are inevitably connected. If we try to make it a distinct individual by separating it from all other things, it loses all content, of which it can be conscious, and so loses the very individuality

¹ Berkeley's *Works*, vol. i. p. 34.

² *Metaphysics*, Eng. Translation, vol. ii., p. 317.

³ *Vināśam eva upaṭti.*

which we started by trying to preserve. If, on the other hand, we try to save its content, by emphasising the inclusion at the expense of the exclusion, then the consciousness vanishes; and since the self has no contents, but the objects of which it is conscious, the contents vanish also." ¹ Indra shows the risks in conceiving the self as a transcendental one. The self must be shown to be the true life of the whole, and not a mere abstraction. Hence the next step, when Indra explains to Prajāpati his difficulty in the words, "in truth that dreamless sleeping subject does not know himself that he is, nor does he know anything that exists. He is gone to utter annihilation, I see no good in this." ² Prajāpati points out how it is an identity, running in and through differences. The whole world is the one process of the self-realisation of the absolute thought. "Maghavan! ³ This body is mortal and all is subject to death. It is the abode of the self, which is immortal and without body. He is the person of the eye, the eye itself is the instrument of seeing. He who knows, let me smell this, he is the self, the nose is the instrument of smelling, etc." ⁴ The self is shown to be not an abstract formal principle, but an active universal consciousness, existing, to adopt Hegel's phraseology, both in itself and for itself. It is simple self-sameness as well as varied distinctions. It is both subject and object. The objects we know in experience are based on it. The true infinite self is not the self which is simply not finite. It is none of the limited things, but yet the basis of all of them. It is the universal self, which is immanent as well as transcendent. The whole universe lives and breathes in it. "The moon and the sun are its eyes, the four quarters of the sky its ears, the wind its breath." ⁵ It is the blazing light that burns in

¹ *Hegelian Cosmology*, sec. 27.

² viii. 11. 1.

³ Another name for Indra.

⁴ viii. 12. Cf. Plato, who distinguishes in the *Timæus*, two souls, one immortal and the other mortal. The mortal soul consists of passions and affections. It is the empirical ego which identifies itself with the perishing world of change and death. The immortal soul is the intelligent principle common to man and the world, the divine spark enclosed in human personality (*Timæus* and *Phædo*). We have also the same distinction in Aristotle's *intellectus agens* as opposed to perishing mind and memory.

⁵ *Muṇḍaka*, i. 1; *Chāṇ.*, iii. 13. 7.

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the deeps of personality, the universal ākāśa from which all creatures proceed,¹ the vital principle of creation,² the subject in which the entire world moves trembling.³ There is nothing outside it. It contains all consciousness of objects implicitly. There is nothing in the universe which is not involved in the infinite self in us. This self which embraces all is the sole reality containing within itself all the facts of nature and all the histories of experience. Our small selves are included in it and transcended by it. This is the subject which is more than the flux of presentations, which are only imperfect revelations of it. All our states of consciousness revolve round this central light. Abolish it, they vanish. Without a subject there will be no flux, no order of sensations in space or sequences in time. It renders possible memory and introspection, knowledge and morality. The Upaniṣads contend that this subject is the universal ground which is in all individuals. It is hidden in all things and pervades all creation. "There is no second outside it, no other distinct term."⁴ "As breathing he is named breath, as speaking speech, as seeing eye, as hearing ear, as understanding mind, all these are but names for his operations."⁵ It is only the self thus understood that can be looked upon as the permanent subject persisting in waking and dreaming, death and sleep, bondage and liberation. It is present throughout, surveying all the worlds. It is the universal subject and yet the universal object. It sees and yet sees not. As the Upaniṣad has it, "When then he sees not, yet is he seeing, although he sees not; since for the seer there is no interruption of seeing because he is imperishable; but there is no second beside him, no other distinct from him, for him to see."⁶ The self is the whole. "I indeed am this whole universe."⁷

This universal self by its very nature cannot be perceived. As Śaṅkara puts it, "The witness self illumines consciousness, but never itself is in consciousness." It is not a datum of experience, not an object, though all objects

¹ Chān., i. 91.

² Kātha, vi. 1.

³ Bṛh., i. 4. 7; Kauṣītaki, iii.

⁷ Aham eva idam sarvo'smi.

² Chān., i. 11. 5.

⁴ Bṛh., iv. 3. 23; Chān., viii. 1. 3.

⁶ Bṛh., iv. 3. 23.

are for it. It is not a thought, but all thoughts are for it. It is not a thing seen, but is the principle of all seeing. As Kant would say, the condition of the empirically known is not the known itself. "What I must presuppose in order to know an object," says Kant, "I cannot know as an object." The subject of all experience cannot itself be an experience. If it is experience, the question arises, by whom is it known? Knowledge always works dually. This self, therefore, is indefinable. Like all ultimate principles, it has only to be accepted. It is the explanation of all else, though it itself remains unexplained. The old difficulty of Comte that the subject cannot turn round and catch itself is not altogether imaginary. "The soul which is not this or that, nor aught else, is intangible, for it cannot be laid hold of."¹ The Upaniṣads refuse to identify the self with the body, or the series of mental states or the presentation continuum or the stream of consciousness. The self cannot be a relation which requires a ground of relations, nor a connexion of contents, which is unintelligible without an agent who connects. We are obliged to accept the reality of a universal consciousness which ever accompanies the contents of consciousness and persists even when there are no contents. This fundamental identity, which is the presupposition of both self and not-self, is called the Ātman. None can doubt its reality.²

The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad gives us an analysis of consciousness leading to the same conclusion. We shall start with a free rendering of what it says on this point.³ The soul has three conditions which are all included in a fourth. They are waking, dreaming, sleeping, and what is called turiya. The first condition is that of wakefulness, where the self is conscious of the common world of external objects. It enjoys the gross things. Here the dependence on the body is predominant. The second condition is that of dreaming, where the self enjoys subtle things,⁴ fashions for itself a new world of forms with the materials of its waking experience. The spirit is said to roam freely unfettered by

¹ Bṛh., iii. 7. 3; iv. 4. 22.

² Na hi kaścit sandigdhe ahaṁ vā nāhaṁ veti. Bhāmati.

³ i. 2. 7.

⁴ See Bṛh., iv. 3. 9. 14.

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the bonds of the body. The third is the condition of sound sleep, where we have neither dreams nor desires. It is called *suṣṭpti*. The soul is said to become temporarily one with Brahman and enjoy bliss. In deep sleep we are lifted above all desires and freed from the vexations of spirit. The oppositions are, so to say, lost in this pure-objectless-knowing subject condition.¹ Śaṅkara observes that the phenomena of duality caused by the action of the mind are present in the other two conditions, but absent here. In several passages we are told that we taste the nature of absolute bliss in dreamless sleep, where a man is cut off from the distracting world. The soul is divine in origin, though clogged with the flesh. In sleep it is said to be released from the shackles of the body and to gain back its own nature. We read in an Aristotelian fragment, "whenever the soul is alone and by itself in sleep, it recovers by its proper nature."² The natural divinity of the soul reasserts itself when freed from the tyranny of the flesh. "He giveth his beloved truth in sleep." The analogy of eternal dreamless sleep is used to bring out how all outer activities are then suppressed. But there was the likelihood of its being confused with sheer unconsciousness. So the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* points out that the highest is not this dreamless sleep, but another, a fourth state of the soul, a pure intuitional consciousness, where there is no knowledge of objects internal or external. In deep sleep the spirit dwells in a region far above the changeful life of sense in absolute union with Brahman. The *turiya* condition brings out the positive aspect of the negative emphasised in the condition of deep sleep. "The fourth is not that which is conscious of the subjective, nor that which is conscious of the objective, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is an all-sentient mass, nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen, transcendent, inapprehensible, uninferrable, unthinkable, indescribable, the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the completion of the world, the ever peaceful, all blissful, the one unit, this indeed is the *Ātman*."³

¹ See *Bṛh.*, ii. 1; *Kauṣītaki*, iv.; *Chāṅ.*, vi. 8. 1; *Praśna.*, iv. 4; iv. 3. 7.

² Fragment 2.

³ i. 7.

It is symbolised by the Aumkara, with its parts of A-U-M, the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping states. It is not an exclusive self, but the common ground of all, their basis of identity.¹ In deep sleep we may be said to reach an eternal unity in which all distinctions vanish and the entire universe is obliterated. But since this cannot be considered the highest state, a higher positive is suggested. To the empirical individual, if the not-self goes, his individuality also vanishes. So there is a suspicion that the abolition of the objects would reduce the self into a thin abstraction, but in the highest universal self the reality of all objects is included. Objects of the world are known and loved by us only in so far as they enter our self, which comprehends in itself all objects of the universe and has nothing outside. It is the unchanged and persistent identity which continues in the midst of all change. The moods pass and vary but the self remains the same. It has no beginning, no end, though the objects of which it is conscious have a beginning and an end. "Never has the cessation of consciousness been experienced, or witnessed directly ; or if it has been, then the witness, the experiencer, himself still remains behind as the continued embodiment of that same consciousness."² It is the foundation of all existence, the one witness to and the only possible support of all we know, though the nature of the dependence of the objects of knowledge on the subject so insistently repeated is not very clear. The three conditions of the self, waking, dreaming, sleeping, together with that which comprehends them all, are called respectively the Vaiśvānara, the Taijasa, the Prājña and the Turīya states.³

From this analysis of the three states of dreaming, waking and sleeping, it follows that all of them are unreal, though not non-existent. "What is naught at the beginning and naught at the end must surely be naught in the middle."⁴ Judged by it, waking experience is not real. If it is said

¹ Triṣu dhāmasu yat tulyam sāmānyam—Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, i. 22.

² See *Devī Bhāgavata*, iii. 32. 15-16.

³ The Buddhist discrimination of the four planes of kāma, rūpa, arūpa and lokottara, answers to this division.

⁴ Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, i. 6.

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that the dream states are unreal since they do not cohere with the rest of our experience, may it not be urged that the waking experience does not cohere with dreams? Dreams may be coherent within themselves, even as waking experience is within its own bounds. The worlds seem to be real only in relation to the particular moods of the self. It is not right to apply the standard of waking experience to the dream world and condemn it. Dreaming and waking experiences are both unreal though in different degrees. The condition of dreamless sleep is one in which we have no distinct cognitions of anything internal or external. It is a distinctionless mass under the pall of darkness, comparable to Hegel's night, in which all cows are black. We have here the negative condition of the highest state, freedom from sorrow. But Ātman is not this absence of unhappiness. It is positive bliss. It is neither waking nor dreaming nor sleep, but the fourth witnessing to as well as transcending the three. The negative descriptions given indicate that we as finite cannot know the positive nature of it. The fourth is realised, not so much by negating the three as by transcending them all. It is impossible for us finite beings to define the character of the ideal reality, though the Upaniṣads are quite emphatic that it is not a blank. Yet to refute false ideas of the highest and to point the truth that it is no abstraction, they indulge in inadequate concepts. Strictly speaking we cannot say anything of it. Yet for purposes of discussion, we are obliged to use intellectual concepts with their limited validity.

The problem of the self is one of the most important discussed in the Upaniṣads. It occurs again as the Adhyātma Vidyā in the Bhagavadgītā and the Vedānta Sūtras. The analysis of the nature of self is the legacy of the Upaniṣads bequeathed to the subsequent systems of thought. It has given rise to many misconceptions. Contradictory doctrines of the nature of self are held by Buddha and Śaṅkara, Kapila and Paṭanjali, who all trace their views to the Upaniṣads. It was not the intention of the Upaniṣads to make of the deeper self an abstract nothingness. It is the fullest reality, the completest consciousness, and not a mere negative calm, untroubled by any unrest and unpolluted

by any blot or blemish. The logic of thought has in it a negative movement, where it rises by the repudiation of the finite, but this is only a stage in the onward march. By the negative process the self has to recognise that its essence is not in its finitude or self-sufficiency. By the positive method it finds its true self in the life and being of all. All things exist within this true self. Some Buddhists make of the self mere emptiness, and on this assumption rightly dismiss it as an abstraction of the metaphysician. We cannot find this self in any corner of the field of consciousness. Not finding it there, we rush to the conclusion that it is nothing. The Sāṃkhya takes it to be a simple and pure, though passive, spirit, which in spite of its apparent simplicity has some character and uniqueness, and so we get the doctrine of the boundless plurality of souls. Some Vedāntins adopt the view that the true self or Brahman is pure, calm, peaceful and untroubled, and hold that there is only one self. By throwing the emphasis on the passive side they run the risk of reducing it to mere emptiness. There are Buddhistic sects which reduce the self to mere intelligence, which can somehow think without any contents.

VIII

BRAHMAN

We may now proceed to define the ultimate reality from the objective side, when it is called Brahman¹. In the

¹ The question how Brahman came to denote the supreme reality of the Upaniṣads has been answered in different ways by different scholars. Haug holds that Brahman means prayer, being derived from the root Brh, to swell or to grow. It is that which swells or grows. Sacred prayers cause the growth, and then it came to mean the force of nature, and later the supreme reality. According to Roth, Brahman is first the force of will directed to the gods, then it came to mean a sacred formula, and then the Absolute. Oldenberg thinks that in the Vedic times, when the world was peopled with many gods and mysterious forces capable of producing happiness and misery, the most powerful man was the medicine man, who wielded the magic spell and produced whatever effect was desired. Then Brahman meant a magic spell. During the time of the Brāhmanas it referred to the sacred hymns used in the sacrifices. Perhaps some of these hymns were used as spells for producing magical effects. The word was slowly transferred to the central energy which produces the world. Deussen

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R̥g-Veda we have seen that the monistic idea was arrived at. The Upaniṣads undertake the task of a more logical definition of the Eternal Spirit ever acting and ever resting. In another place we have traced the progress from the lower imperfect conceptions to the more adequate ones as formulated in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad.¹ In chapter iii the son approaches the father with the request to teach him the nature of reality from which all things flow and to which all return. The son is given the general features of Brahman, and is asked to discover the content which satisfies these requirements. "That from which these beings are born, that in which when born they live, and that into which they enter at their death, that is Brahman."² Things of the world are ever changing their forms, and they cannot be considered to be real in an ultimate sense. Is there anything unalterably fixed underlying the universe of changing things, nāmarūpa, name and form, as the Upaniṣads call them? The son considers matter to be the ultimate reality. It is the most prominent aspect of the outer world. This view is held by the lokāyatās, or the materialists. The son soon discovers that matter cannot account for the life phenomena. Vegetable growth requires a different explanation. He hits upon prāṇa or life as the ultimate principle.³ Matter does not hold the secret of life, though life cannot exist without matter. There is something in life which enables it to absorb and transmute the inorganic elements. This something is the vital principle which in man helps to change the vegetable product into blood, bone and muscle. It is the principle which pervades the universe and binds human beings with the rest of creation.⁴ The son is sure that life belongs to a different order from matter though prāṇa is the essence of the body.⁵

holds that Brahman is prayer, which elevates the soul, when we perceive the truth, and the truth came to be denoted by the word. Max Müller traces it to "word," as is evident from the name Bṛhaspati or Vācaspati, lord of speech. That which utters is Brahman (S.S., pp. 52, 70). We need not trouble ourselves about the etymology of the word. To us, it is clear, Brahman means reality, which grows, breathes or swells.

¹ See *Reign of Religion*, chap. xiii.

² *ibid.* i.

³ Prāṇa means breath. See R.V., i. 66. 1; *ibid.* 53. 21; x. 59. 6.

⁴ See *Prasna*, ii.

⁵ Bṛh., i. 3. 90. See *Chāṇ.*, vi. 2. 4.

Again he is dissatisfied with the solution of *prāṇa* as the ultimate reality, for conscious phenomena which we come across in the animal world are not explicable by the principle of life. *Manas*, or perceptual consciousness, is a product distinct from life and matter. It seems to be the crown of the vital process. So the son believes that *manas* is Brahman. Even this will not suffice, for there are intellectual facts which mere perceptual consciousness does not take into account. *Vijñāna* or intelligence is Brahman.¹ Some schools of Buddhism adopt this view. The son realises that even intellectual self-consciousness is incomplete, being subject to discord and imperfection. It is the aim of the Upaniṣads to point out that elements of duality and externality persist at the intellectual level, however much we may try to overcome them. In knowledge and morality we have the subject-object relation. There must be something higher than mere intellect, where existence is no longer formulated in terms of knowledge. The unity of existence requires that we must transcend the intellectual level. Thought, as ordinarily understood, deals with objects viewed as beyond or other than the process of thinking. It reaches outwards to a somewhat other than and contrasted with itself. Reality is different from thought, and can be reached in the *turiya* state of highest immediacy, which transcends thought and its distinctions, where the individual coincides with the central reality. *Ānanda* or delight is the highest fruition, where the knower, the known and the knowledge become one. Here the philosophical quest terminates, the suggestion being that there is nothing higher than *ānanda*. This *ānanda* is active enjoyment or unimpeded exercise of capacity. It is not sinking into nothingness, but the perfection of being.² "The discerning see by their superior knowledge the *Ātman* which shines all bliss and immortality."³ Strictly speaking, we cannot give any account of the highest reality of *ānanda*. Even the question whether it is abstract or concrete is illogical. Intellectual necessities require us to give some description. It is truer to consider it concrete than abstract.

¹ See *Ait.*, iii. 3; *Tait.*, iii. 5.

² See *Muṇḍaka Up.*

³ *Muṇḍaka*, ii. 8.

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Each higher principle is more concrete and inclusive than the lower one, and therefore ānanda, which is Brahman, is the most inclusive of all. From it all things flow. By it all things are sustained, and into it all things are dissolved. The different parts, the mineral world, the plant life, the animal kingdom, and the human society, are not related to the highest in any abstract or mechanical way. They are one in and through that which is universal about them. All parts in the universe share in the light of this universal spirit and possess specific features on account of the special functions which they have to perform. The parts are not self-subsistent factors, but are dependent aspects of the one. "Sir, on what does the infinite rest? On its own greatness or not even on greatness." Everything else hangs on it and it hangs on nothing. The organic and living nature of the relation of the parts to the whole is brought out in many passages. "As all spokes are contained in the axle, and in the felly of a wheel, thus also, all beings and all gods, all worlds and all organs, also are contained in that self."¹ "There is that ancient tree whose roots grow upward and whose branches go downward. That is the bright, Brahman, the immortal, all worlds are contained in it and no one goes beyond it."²

We have defined reality as ānanda, and thus contradicted the statement frequently made that the ultimate is indefinable. Constructive attempts at obtaining a comprehensive reality generally end in a concrete whole. If, however, we try to reconcile the defined reality with the undefined one, which also the Upaniṣads support, then we shall have to say that ānanda in the present context is not the ultimate reality, but only the highest conceivable by the thought of man. It is not the absolute or the eternal being which ever exists in its own essentiality. To the logical mind, the whole is real, and within it falls the diversity of the world. The concrete ānanda is the prāmāṇika sattā, or the real revealed to thought, and answers to the highest Brahman accepted by Rāmānuja. The pure Brahman free from all the predicates is the nirupādhika

¹ Bṛh., ii. 5. 15.

² Kāṭha, ii. 6. 1. See also Tait., i. 10; B.G., xv. 1.

satta, or the Nirguṇa Brahman accepted by Śaṅkara. The former is an organised whole ; the latter is an indefinable real. Yet even according to Śaṅkara it is the latter that shows itself as the former. The one of intuition appears as the whole of knowledge.¹

This difference of view has resulted in a good deal of discussion about the interpretation of ānanda in the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara squarely says that ānandamaya, by its suffix maya, indicates that it is only a phenomenal effect. Unless it were different from Ātman, there can be no talk of reasoning about it. If it were pure Brahman, it will be inappropriate to give it form and attribute to it head, limbs, as the Taittiriya Upaniṣad does. If ānanda were Brahman there would be no separate mention of Brahman as the supporting tail of ānanda.² So Śaṅkara concludes, "Ānandamaya Ātman is an effect, and not the unconditioned Ātman." Rāmānuja, on the other hand, argues that this ānanda is Brahman. The suffix of maya indicates only fullness or prācūrya. Though with regard to matter, life, etc., it is clearly stated that there is some other inside, anyo 'ntara Ātmā, no such inner reality is asserted for ānanda. Ascribing limbs, etc., is nothing more than kalpana or imagination. Puccham Brahma need not be taken as implying any difference between ānanda and Brahman. The two may be related as whole and part,³ which is sometimes the significance of the accusative usage. Immediately after the reference to ānandamaya, it is said in the Upaniṣad "sokāmayata," "he desired," and this masculine gender can only refer to ānandamaya, and not to puccham Brahma,

¹ The Upaniṣads are definite about the fact that the supreme is indefinable, though they give intellectual accounts of it which are not absolutely true. If any logical description be true at all, it is Rāmānuja's way of putting it. Śaṅkara, in the true spirit of the Upaniṣads, contends that there is a higher than the logical highest, which is Rāmānuja's. In discussing the philosophy of Śaṅkara, we shall see how he establishes the inadequacy of the highest categories to the reality intended by them. He contends that we cannot say whether the absolute is finite or infinite, or both or neither. It is the same with all relations like whole and part, substance and quality, cause and effect. A rational demonstration of the limits of thought such as the one we have in Śaṅkara is rendered possible only by the intervening of the great Buddhist tradition between the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara.

² Brahma puccham pratiṣṭhā.

³ Samudāyasamudāyibhāva.

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which is neuter. Other forms of bliss, like *priya*, *moda*, are included within the whole of *ānanda*, and the disciple reaches his final resting-place when he gets to *ānanda*. We have many cases in the same Upaniṣad where the word *ānanda* is used as a synonym for final reality.

It is obvious that the whole controversy is due to the doubt whether *ānanda* is to be looked upon as the logical highest or the ultimate being. The Upaniṣads did not draw any hard and fast line of distinction between the simple one of intuition supported by Śaṅkara and the concrete whole of Rāmānuja. If we separate the two, it will become impossible for us to admit any distinction or value in the world of concrete existence. The Upaniṣads imply that the *Īśvara* is practically one with Brahman. Very strict usage and meticulous philosophic accuracy require us to say that there is the slightest conceivable diminution from the absolute when we come to the self-conscious, I am I.¹ This quasinought is quite enough for Śaṅkara to precipitate pure being, the basal thought and fact of all, into the world of space, time and cause. The Upaniṣads by implication admit that the moment we think the pure being, we make nothing the principle of distinction and difference, equally basal. The self-conscious God, who later develops into the organised whole of existence, is the maximum of being and the minimum of non-being. He is least penetrated with objectivity and touched by externality. The One is revealed in the existences of the world, and that is why we are able to ascertain the degrees of reality possessed by the objects of the world by measuring the distance separating them from the One. Each lower degree consists in a diminution of the higher, though throughout the scale of existences from the highest to the lowest we have the revelation of Brahman as well as the common characters of space, time and cause. The lower things are far away from the simple being than the higher ones, so much so that the *ānandamaya* of the Upaniṣads, the concrete Brahman of Rāmānuja, the *Īśvara* of Śaṅkara, is the nearest to it. Nothing nearer can be thought. The supreme Brahman or *ānanda* at the level of *vijñāna* or

¹ Brh., i. 4, 10.

self-consciousness becomes the personal *Īśvara* with a voluntary limitation. God or self is the ground of unity, and matter or not-self becomes the principle of plurality.¹

IX

BRAHMAN AND ĀTMAN

The two, the objective and the subjective, the Brahman and the Ātman, the cosmic and the psychical principles, are looked upon as identical. Brahman is Ātman.² "He who is this Brahman in man, and who is that in the sun, those are one."³ The transcendent conception of God held in the *Ṛg-Veda* is here transformed into an immanent one. The infinite is not beyond the finite but in the finite. The subjective character of the Upaniṣad teaching is responsible for this change. The identity between the subject and the object was realised in India before Plato was born. Deussen speaks of it thus: "If we strip this thought of the various forms, figurative to the highest degree and not seldom extravagant, under which it appears in the Vedānta texts, and fix our attention upon it solely in its philosophical simplicity as the identity of God and the soul, the Brahman and the Ātman, it will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond the Upaniṣads, their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind. We are unable to look into the future, we do not know what revelations and discoveries are in store for the restlessly inquiring human spirit; but one thing we may assert with confidence—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken, and from it no deviation can possibly take place. If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle, which presents itself to the philosopher in the nature of things, all the more clearly the further our knowledge extends, the key can only be found where alone the secret of nature lies open

¹ See Tait., i. 5; S.B. and R.B. on V.S., i. 1. 6.

² Tait., i. 5.

³ ii. 8. See also iii. 10; Chān., iii. 13. 7; iii. 14. 2. 4; Bṛh., v. 5. 2; Muṇḍaka, ii. 1. 10.

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to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost self. It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upaniṣads, to their immortal honour, found it when they recognised our Ātman, our inmost individual being, as the Brahman, the inmost being of universal nature and of all her phenomena.”¹ This identity of subject and object is not a vague hypothesis, but the necessary implication of all relevant thinking, feeling and willing. The human self cannot think, conquer and love nature, were it unthinkable, unconquerable and unlovable. Nature is the object of a subject, quite rational and thoroughly intelligible, capable of control and worthy of love. It exists for man. The stars serve as lamps for his feet, and the darkness to lull him into slumber. Nature summons us to the spiritual reality of life and answers the needs of the soul. It is formed, vitalised and directed by the spirit. From the beginning of reflection this oneness of subject and object, the existence of one central reality, pervading and embracing all, has been the doctrine of the devout. Religious mysticism and deep piety witness to the truth of the great saying, “That art thou,” “Tat tvamasi.” We may not understand it, but that does not give us a sufficient right to deny it.

The different conceptions of Brahman correspond to the different ideas of the Ātman, and vice versa. The stages of waking, dreaming, sleeping, and the conception of ecstasy of the self, are clearly discriminated in the later Vedānta writings and answer to the different conceptions of Brahman. The highest Brahman which is ānanda is just Ātman, as realised in the fourth or the tūrīya state. There the object and the subject are one. The seer, the seeing eye and the object seen merge together in one whole. When we identify the Ātman with the self-conscious individual, Brahman is viewed as the self-conscious Īśvara with a force opposed to him. As the self-conscious individual will be a mere abstraction apart from some content or object from which he derives his being, even so the Īśvara requires an element opposing him. The conception of Īśvara is the highest object of the religious consciousness. When the Ātman is identified with the mental and vital

¹ *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, pp. 39-40.

self of man (manas and prāṇa), Brahman is reduced to the Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic soul, which comes between the Īśvara and the soul of man. This Hiranyagarbha is looked upon as related to the universe in the same way as the individual soul is related to its body. We see here the influence of the Ṛg-Veda. The world is supposed to have a consciousness and a will. Mind always goes with body, vaster orders of mind accompanying vaster orders of body. The world in which we live has its own mind, and this mind is Hiranyagarbha. This conception of world soul appears in the Upaniṣads under various names and forms. It is called Kārya Brahmā, or the effect God, the Brahmā of *Natura Naturata*, as distinguished from the Kāraṇa Brahmā or the Causal God of Īśvara, or the *natura naturans*. This effect God is the totality of created existences of which all finite objects are parts. The conscious totality of all effects is Brahmā or Hiranyagarbha. It is not radically different from the Brahman. Brahman is the simple, individual, absolutely self-identical, One, without a second. Once He is looked at as the creator or Īśvara, again as the Created or Hiranyagarbha. Even this Brahmā comes from the Brahman¹—“He is the source of Brahmā”; the entire objective universe is sustained by this knowing subject. While the individual subjects pass away, he lives contemplating the world. When we identify the Ātman with our body, Brahman becomes the Cosmos or the Virāṭ. Virāṭ is the all, the hypostatisation of the conception of the world as a whole. It is the totality of things, the sum of all existence. “This is he, the internal Ātman of all created things whose head is Agni, whose eyes are the sun and the moon, whose ears are the four directions, whose speech is the Vedas which have emanated from Him, whose breath is Vāyu, whose heart is all the universe, and from whose feet the earth proceeded.”² The body of the Virāṭ is made of the material objects in their aggregate. He is the manifested God whose senses are the directions, whose body is the five elements, and whose consciousness glows with the feeling “I am all.” Prior to the evolution of the Virāṭ must have occurred the evolution of the Sūtrāt-

¹ Muṇḍaka, iii. 13. 3.

² Muṇḍaka, ii. 1. 4.

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man, the cosmic intelligence or Hiraṇyagarbha, having for his vehicle the totality of subtle bodies. Virāṭ comes into being after Hiraṇyagarbha. In the form of Virāṭ, Hiraṇyagarbha becomes visible. Till the effect is evolved, this Sūtrātman is only pure consciousness.¹ He abides as a mere potentiality of intelligence and motion (Vijñāna and Kriyā) in the first cause. The Virāṭ is the universal self manifested in the gross physical matter of the world, Brahmā is the same manifested in the subtle matter of the universe. The Sūtrātman is Hiraṇyagarbha. The supreme self beyond cause and effect is the Brahman, but when it becomes self-conscious with a non-ego opposed to it we have the Īśvara.² The following table suggests the scheme :—

<i>Subject (Ātman).</i>	<i>Object (Brahman).</i>
1. The bodily self (Vaiśvānara).	1. Cosmos (Virāṭ).
2. The vital self (Taijasa).	2. The soul of the world (Hira- nyagarbha).
3. The intellectual self (Prājña).	3. Self-consciousness (Īśvara).
4. The intuitive self (Turiya).	4. Ānanda (Brahman).

If a logical account is permitted, then we may say that the Brahman of the Upaniṣads is no metaphysical abstraction, no indeterminate identity, no void of silence. It is the fullest and the most real being. It is a living dynamic spirit, the source and container of the infinitely varied forms of reality. The distinctions, instead of being dissolved away as illusory, are transfigured in the highest reality. The syllable "AUM," generally employed to represent the nature of Brahman, brings out its concrete character.³ It is the symbol of the supreme spirit, the "emblem of the most high."⁴ "Aum" is the symbol of concreteness as well as completeness. It stands for the three principal qualities of the supreme spirit personified as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. "A" is Brahmā the creator, "U" is Viṣṇu the preserver, and "M" is Śiva the destroyer.⁵

¹ Prājñānaghana.

² In the suṣupti condition we have the subject self with the object world suppressed, though not abolished.

³ Aum is only the sign of the Eternal spirit, the thing signified even as an idol signifies Viṣṇu "pratimeva Viṣṇoḥ" (Śaṅkara Comm., Tait., i. 6).

⁴ Manu., ii. 83; see also Tait., i. 7; Kāṭha, i. 2. 15-16.

⁵ See Chāṅ., i. 3. 6-7. Bṛh. Up., ii. 3. 1. and viii. 3. 4-5.

The Iṣā Upaniṣad asks us to worship Brahman both in its manifested and unmanifested conditions.¹ It is not an abstract monism that the Upaniṣads offer us. There is difference but also identity. Brahman is infinite not in the sense that it excludes the finite, but in the sense that it is the ground of all finites. It is eternal not in the sense that it is something back beyond all time, as though there were two states temporal and eternal, one of which superseded the other, but that it is the timeless reality of all things in time. The absolute is neither the infinite nor the finite, the self or its realisation, the one life or its varied expressions, but is the real including and transcending the self and its realisation, life and its expression. It is the spiritual spring which breaks, blossoms and differentiates itself into numberless finite centres. The word Brahman means growth, and is suggestive of life, motion and progress, and not death, stillness or stagnation. The ultimate reality is described as sat, cit and ānanda—existence, consciousness, and bliss. "Knowledge, power and action are of its nature." It is self-caused.² Taittirīya says Brahman is existence, consciousness and infinity. It is a positive reality, "Full is that, full is this."³ It is obvious that the ultimate reality is not thought, or force, or being exclusively, but the living unity of essence and existence, of the ideal and real, of knowledge, love and beauty. But as we have already said, it can only be described negatively by us, though it is not a negative indeterminate principle.

INTELLECT AND INTUITION

The ideal of intellect is to discover the unity which comprehends both the subject and the object. That there is such a unity is the working principle of logic and life. To find out its contents is the aim of philosophic endeavour. But the enterprise is doomed to disappointment on account of the inherent incapacity of intellect to grasp the whole.

¹ Ubhayam saha, both together.

² Svayam-bhū Iṣā, vii.

³ Brh., v. 1. 1. 1.

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Intellect, with its symbols and shibboleths, creeds and conventions, is not by itself adequate to the grasp of the real, "from which all speech with the mind turns away unable to reach it." ¹ "The eye does not go thither, nor speech nor mind. We do not know. We do not understand how any one can teach it." ² The ultimate reality cannot be made into an objective representation which the intellect can grasp. "How should he know him by whom he knows all this? How, O Beloved, should he know himself the knower." ³ Objective knowledge of the subject is impossible. It is "unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing." ⁴ Ātman is not non-existent, simply because it cannot be objectively represented. Though man's intellectual capacities are not adequate for its comprehension, still they will have no existence but for it. ⁵ "That which one cannot think with the mind, but that by which they say the mind is made to think, know that alone to be the Brahman." ⁶ Intellect works with the categories of space, time, cause and force, which involve us in deadlocks and antinomies. Either we must postulate a first cause, in which case causality ceases to be a universal maxim, or we have an endless regress. The puzzle cannot be solved by intellect, pure and simple. It must confess itself to be bankrupt when ultimate questions arise. "The gods are in Indra; Indra is in the Father God, the Father God is in Brahmā, but in what is Brahmā?" and Yājñavalkya answers: "Ask not too much." ⁷ Our intellectual categories can give descriptions of the empirical universe under the forms of space, time and cause, but the real is beyond these. While containing space, it is not spatial; while including time, it transcends time; while it has a causally bound system of nature within it, it is not subject to the law of cause. The self-existent Brahman is independent of time, space

¹ Taittirīya, ii. 4.

² Kena, ii. 3; Muṇḍaka, ii. 1; see Kāṭha, i. 3. 10.

³ Bṛh., ii. 4. 13; see also iii. 4. 2.

⁴ Bṛh., iii. 7. 23; see iii. 8. 11.

⁵ See Bṛh., iii. 8. 11; ii. 4, 14; iv. 5. 15.

⁶ Kena.

⁷ Bṛh., iii. 6. 1.

and cause. The space independence is brought out crudely in the Upaniṣads. Brahman is said to be omnipresent, all-pervading, infinitely great and infinitely small. "That which is above the heaven, O Gārgī, and that which is beneath the earth, that which men call the past, present and future, all that is woven within and throughout in space. But wherein then is space woven within and without? In truth, in this imperishable one, is space woven within and throughout, O Gārgī."¹ Brahman is described as being free from the limitations of time. It is viewed as an eternity without beginning and end, or as an instantaneous duration occupying no definite time interval. He is independent of past and future,² and lord of all,³ at whose feet time rolls along.⁴ In emphasising the independence of causal relations Brahman is represented to be an absolutely static being, free from all the laws of becoming of which the universal rule is causality. This way of establishing Brahman's independence of causal relations countenances the conception of Brahman as absolute self-existence and unchanging endurance, and leads to misconceptions. Causality is the rule of all changes in the world. But Brahman is free from subjection to causality. There is no change in Brahman though all change is based on it. There is no second outside it, no other distinct from it. We have to sink all plurality in Brahman. All proximity in space, succession in time, interdependence of relations rest on it. The comprehension of this profound philosophic synthesis cannot be obtained so long as we remain at the level of intellect. The Upaniṣads assert sometimes that thought gives us imperfect, partial pictures of reality, and at other times that it is organically incapable of reaching reality. It deals with relations and cannot grasp the relationless absolute. But there is nothing on earth existing in space or time which is not an appearance of the absolute. No knowledge is entirely false, though none is entirely true. The nearest approach to truth is the conception of an organised whole, though it is not completely true on account of the relational character which,

¹ Brh., iii. 8. 7; see also iv. 2. 4; Chān., iii. 14. 3, and viii. 24. 7.

² Katha, ii. 14.

³ Brh., iv. 4. 15.

⁴ iv. 4. 16. 17.

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however near to cancellation it may have come, is never absolutely abolished. It is the highest form of the absolute the mind of man can hit upon. Intellect, in the sense of mere understanding, working with the limited categories of time, space and cause, is inadequate. Reason also fails, though it takes us beyond understanding. It does not help us to attain reality, which is not merely an idea but a spirit. An idea of reason is an imperfect fragment of reality which is more than idea. The real is neither true nor false. Our judgments about the real may be true or false, since they imply the dualism between idea and reality. We have to pass beyond thought, beyond the clash of oppositions, beyond the antinomies that confront us when we work with the limited categories of abstract thinking, if we are to reach the real where man's existence and divine being coincide. It is when thought becomes perfected in intuition that we catch the vision of the real. The mystics the world over have emphasised this fact. Pascal dwells on the incomprehensibility of God, and Bossuet bids us not to be dismayed by the divergencies, but regard them all trustfully as the golden chains that meet beyond mortal sight at the throne of God.

According to the Upaniṣads there is a higher power which enables us to grasp this central spiritual reality. Spiritual things require to be spiritually discerned. The Yoga philosophy is a practical discipline pointing out the road to this realisation. Man has the faculty of divine insight or mystic intuition, by which he transcends the distinctions of intellect and solves the riddles of reason. The chosen spirits scale the highest peak of thought and intuit the reality. By this intuitive realisation "the unheard becomes heard, the unperceived becomes perceived, and the unknown becomes known."¹ The problems raised by intellect solve themselves the moment we transcend reasoning and start to live the religious life.² The Upaniṣads ask us therefore to lay aside our pride of intellect and self-consciousness, and approach facts with the fresh outlook of a child. "Let a Brāhmin renounce learning

¹ Chāndogya, vi. 13; see also Bṛh. ii. 4. 5.

² Muṇḍaka, iii. 1. 8.

and become as a child." 2 No man shall enter into the kingdom of God except he first become as a little child. The highest truths are to be felt by the simple and pure-minded, and not proved to the sophisticated intellect. "Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of tongue." 2 "Not by learning is the Ātman attained, not by genius and much knowledge of books." 3 It is attained by the mystics in their moments of illumination. It is direct knowledge or immediate insight. In the mystic experience the soul finds itself in the presence of the highest. It is lost in awareness, contemplation and enjoyment of the ultimate Reality. It does not know what it is when it reaches it. There is nothing higher than it. Other things are all in it. It then fears no evil, no untruth, but is completely blessed. This spiritual vision relieves us from all passion and suffering. The soul in its exaltation feels itself to be at one with what it sees. Plotinus says: "In the vision of God, that which sees is not reason, but something greater than and prior to reason, something presupposed by reason, as is the object of vision. He who then sees himself, when he sees, will see himself as a simple being, will be united to himself as such, will feel himself become such. We ought not even to say that he will see, but he will be that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one. He belongs to God and is one with Him, like two concentric circles; they are one when they coincide and two only when they are separated." 4 All the aspirations of the human mind, its intellectual demands, its emotional desires, and its volitional ideals are there realised. It is the supreme end of man's effort, the termination of personal life. "This is the supreme end of that, this is the supreme treasure of that, this is the supreme dwelling of that, this is the supreme joy of

2 Brh., iii. 5. 1. This translation is adopted by Deussen and Gough, though Max Müller translates thus: "Let a Brāhmin after he has done with learning wish to stand by real strength." This rests on the inferior reading of *balyena* in lieu of *bālyena*; "tasmād brāhmaṇaḥ pāṇḍityaḥ nirvidya bālyena tiṣṭhāset."

3 Brh., iv. 4. 21.

4 Kāṭha, ii. 23.

4 Inge: Plotinus, vol. ii., p. 140.

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that.”¹ It is on a level with perceptual experience, but, unlike the latter, it is not objective and verifiable by others. It cannot, like inferential knowledge, be communicated to others. It is impossible to give a formal exposition of it. The mystic insight is inarticulate. As to a man born blind we cannot explain the beauty of a rainbow or the glory of a sunset, even so to the non-mystic the vision of the mystic cannot be described. “God put it into my head, and I cannot put it into yours,” is the last word of the mystic experience. Simply because it is incommunicable, it does not become less valid than other forms of knowledge. We can describe this experience only by metaphors. For the light blinds us and makes us dumb. We cannot render a full report of the ineffable. Bāhva, when asked by king Vāṣkali to explain the nature of Brahman, kept silent, and when the king repeated his request, the sage broke out into the answer: “I tell it to you, but you do not understand it, Śānto 'yam ātmā: 'this Ātman is peaceful, quiet.” To any suggested definitions of intellect we can only answer, it is not this, it is not this.² The negative definitions point out how the positive attributes known to us are inadequate to the highest. “There is no measure of him whose glory verily is great.”³ Contradictory predicates are attached to Brahman to indicate that we are obliged to use negative conceptions so long as we employ the dialectics of intellect, though positive features are revealed when Brahman is intuited. “It is subtler than the subtle, greater than the great.”⁴ “It moves, it does not move; it is far and it is near; it is within all this and without all this.”⁵ These seemingly inconsistent accounts are not the sign of any confusion of thought.

The absolute is implied in all experience, for every object of the world is based on the absolute, though none of them expresses it completely. So those who imagine they do not

¹ Yeśāsya paramā gatiḥ, yeśāsya paramā sampat, yeśo'sya paramo lokah, yeśo'sya paramā ānandah. (Bṛh., iv. 3. 32).

² See Bṛh., iii. 9. 26; iv. 2. 4.; iv. 4. 22.; iv. 5. 15; ii. 3. 6; Kātha, iii. 15; Praśna, iv. 10; Chāndogya, vii. 24. 1; Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 7; ii. 1. 2; iii. 1. 7-8.

³ Yajur-Veda.

⁴ Śvetāśvatara, iii. 20; Kena, i. 3.

⁵ Iśā, v.

know the absolute, do know it, though imperfectly; and those who think they know the absolute really do not know it completely. It is a state of half-knowledge and half-ignorance. The Kena Upaniṣad says: "It is unknown to those who know and known to those who do not know."¹ The Upaniṣads do not maintain that intellect is a useless guide. The account of reality given by it is not false. It fails only when it attempts to grasp the reality in its fullness. Everywhere else it succeeds. What the intellect investigates is not the unreal, though it is not the absolutely real. The antinomies of cause and effect, substance and attribute, good and evil, truth and error, subject and object, are due to the tendency of man to separate terms which are related. Fichte's puzzle of self and not-self, Kant's antinomies, Hume's opposition of facts and laws, Bradley's contradictions, can all be got over, if we recognise that the opposing factors are mutually complementary elements based on one identity. Intellect need not be negated, but has only to be supplemented. A philosophy based on intuition is not necessarily opposed to reason and understanding. Intuition can throw light on the dark places which intellect is not able to penetrate. The results of mystic intuition require to be subjected to logical analysis. And it is only by this process of mutual correction and supplementation that each can live a sober life. The results of intellect will be dull and empty, unfinished and fragmentary, without the help of intuition, while intuitional insights will be blind and dumb, dark and strange, without intellectual confirmation. The ideal of intellect is realised in the intuitive experience, for in the supreme are all contraries reconciled. Only by the comradeship of scientific knowledge and intuitive experience can we grow into true insight. Mere reasoning will not help us to it.² If we content ourselves with the verdict of intellect, then we shall have to look upon the plurality and independence of individuals as the final word of philosophy. Competition and struggle will be the end of the universe. Abstract intellect will lead us to false philosophy and bad morals. Brahman is concealed by such knowledge.³ The unreflecting attitude is perhaps

¹ ii. 3.

² Kaṭha, ii. 9.

³ Medhayā pihitaḥ. Tait. Up.

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better than this kind of intellectualism. "All who worship what is not knowledge enter into blind darkness; those who delight in knowledge enter, as it were, into greater darkness." : An intellectual knowledge of diversity without the intuitive realisation is worse than the blind ignorance of faith, bad as it is. The contradictions of life and logic have to be reconciled in the spirit of Emerson's *Brahmā*.

They reckon ill who leave me out ;
When me they fly I am the wings ;
I am the doubter and the doubt.

The one eternal spirit expresses, embraces, unifies and enjoys the varied wealth of the world with all its passions and paradoxes, loyalties and devotions, truths and contradictions. Weak souls, unaware of this all-embracing reality, grow weary of the fight, intellectual, æsthetic and moral. But they have to draw courage from the fact that the joy of harmony has to be derived from the struggle of discordant elements. The seeming contradictions belong to the life of spirit. The one spirit shows its being in all the oppositions of life and thought, the puzzles of Hume, the problems of Kant, the conflicts of empiricism and the dogmas of speculation.

By insisting on intuition more than on thought, on *ānanda* more than on *vijñāna*, the Upaniṣads seem to support the non-dualism referred to in the Introduction. So long as we skim on the surface of reality with the notions of thought, we do not get at the deeper spirit. In *ānanda* man is most and deepest in reality. In the unexplored depths of individual experience, the inner *ānandamaya*, lies the stuff of reality. Intellectual systems disdain to descend into the rich mine of life. Whatever is reduced to *vijñāna* has become unreal, though it tends to become universal and objective. What is not conceptualised or categorised is the truly subjective. The organised whole of *vijñāna* gives a logical impress to identity. The intuition shows up the fact of identity. In trying to know the identity we superficialise it by breaking it into differences and try to get them back to the identity by constructing a system.

: *Bṛh.*, iv. 4-10 ; see *Iśā*, ix.

But the fact once broken into the relations can never through mere logic have its oneness restored. As we have more than once observed, the first touch of logic is responsible for the transformation of the One into a system.

XI

CREATION

It is clear from our account of the nature of Brahman that the Upaniṣads are dissatisfied with the materialist and vitalist theories of evolution. Matter cannot develop life or consciousness unless it had the potentialities of them in its nature. No amount of shocks from the external environment can extort life out of mere matter. Ānanda cannot be the end of evolution unless it was also the beginning of it. The end is present throughout, though in a suppressed form. The individual things of the world possess the features of their ultimate source and end. "Whatever there is belonging to the son belongs to the father; whatever there is belonging to the father belongs to the son."¹ Everything in the world, not merely the human individual, is in essence the ultimate reality itself. Development means the manifestation of the potentialities of things by the removal of the obstructing energies. From the scientific point of view, we notice the different degrees of development in the things of the world. The philosopher is interested in the common ground of unity. The multiplicity of the world is based on the one spirit. "Who indeed could live, who breathe, should not this ānanda be in ākāśa?"² The sun rises punctually, the stars run in their courses, and all things stand in their order and faint not in their watches because of the eternal spirit which slumbers not nor sleeps. "All shine after Him who shines. By His radiance is all this illumined."³ Ānanda is the beginning and the end of the world, the cause as well as the effect, the root as well as the shoot of the universe.⁴ The efficient and the

¹ Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii. 1. 8. 1.

² Tait., ii.

³ Muṇḍaka, ii. 2. 10.

⁴ Mūla and tūla. Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii. 1. 8. 1.

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final causes are one. The matter with which the process of evolution starts is not an independent entity. It has hidden in it the highest ānanda. The course of development is a transition from the potential to the actual. Matter has more potential in it than life. In the graduated scale of the types of existence, the later is the more evolved or the formed, and the earlier is the more potential or the unformed. To use the words of Aristotle, the earlier is the matter and the later is the form. Matter is the passive principle which requires to be energised or informed. We have in the logical accounts a god overlooking matter, stirring it up into motion. This god is prajñāna, or the eternally active self-conscious reason.¹ He is responsible for the whole realm of change. The Upaniṣads fight shy of the conception of an omnipotent mechanic fashioning pre-existing matter into the universe. If God excludes matter, even though the latter is reduced to a mere potentiality, we cannot escape dualism, since God would remain opposed to matter. Such a dualism is the characteristic feature of the system of Aristotle with its distinction of the first mover and the first matter. For the Upaniṣads, both form and matter, the ever active consciousness and the passive non-consciousness, are aspects of a single reality. Matter itself is a god.² Its first forms of fire, water, and earth are looked upon as divine, since they are all informed by the one spirit. The Sāṃkhya dualism is repugnant to the Upaniṣads. The transcendent reality is the ground or explanation of the struggle between spirit and matter.³ The whole world is conceived as possessing an identity of purpose as well as a common substratum of change. The Upaniṣads bring out in several fanciful and mythological accounts of creation the great truth of the oneness of the world. Brahman is the sole and the whole explanation of the world, its material and efficient cause. The entities of the world are knots in the rope of development, which begins with matter and ends in ānanda.

“That created itself by itself.”⁴ “He creates the world

¹ Aitareya Aranyaka, i. 3. 3. 6.

² Chān., vi. 8. 4-6.

³ Praśna, i. 3.

⁴ Tait. Up. See also Bṛh., ii. 1. 20; Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 7; ii. 1. 1.

and then enters it.”¹ A personal god, Prajāpati, tired of solitude, draws forth from himself everything that exists, or produces the world after having divided himself into two, one half male and the other half female.² Sometimes the personal or created being is represented as himself proceeding from a material substratum. On other occasions the primary substance of things is represented as manifesting itself in the created existence.³ The Ātman pervades things as the salt which has dissolved in water pervades the water ; from the Ātman things spring as the sparks fly out from the fire, as threads from the spider, or sound from the flute.⁴ The theory of emanation where the bringing of a product into existence does not affect the source of the product is also suggested. The light coming from the sun leaves the sun unchanged. This seems to be the justification for the later theory that the individual is a mere ābhāsa or appearance of Brahman. The metaphors of the spinning of the web by the spider, the bearing of the child by the mother, the production of notes from musical instruments, attempt to bring out the intimate relationship between the cause and the effect. It is the *tādātmya* or oneness between Brahman and the world that is conveyed in all this wealth of symbol and image. The external world is not something separate, existing side by side with the Ātman. The ultimate ground of being, Brahman, and the empirical state of being, the world are not different. The world of plurality can be reduced without residuum into the everlasting one, Brahman. The Upaniṣads are decisive about the principle that Brahman is the sole source of life in all that lives, the single thread binding the whole plurality into a single unity. When the problem of the co-existence of the plurality and unity is taken up, the Upaniṣads speak in the language of similes and symbols, but do not give any definite answer. We

¹ Bṛh., iv. 7.

² Bṛh., i. 2. 14. We have something similar to this in the Chinese doctrine of Yang and Yin. The primeval chaos is said to have been broken up by the antagonism of these two principles of expansion and contraction. The Yang is the male force in all creatures and the Yin is the female. Compare also the view of Empedocles.

³ Chān., iii. 39.

⁴ Chān., vii. 21. 2 ; vi. 2. 1 ; Bṛh., iv. 5 ; Muṇḍaka, ii.

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cannot in the absence of knowledge of Brahman dogmatise about the relation of the empirical world to Brahman. The two cannot be unrelated, for all that is, is one, and yet we do not know how precisely they are one. The former aspect is brought out in the argument that Brahman is the material as well as the efficient cause of the world ; the latter when it is said that we do not know anything of it at all. It is *māyā*, or mysterious, or *anirvacaniya* (inexplicable), as Śaṅkara puts it. We cannot ask how the relationless Brahman is related to the world. The presumption is that the world of relations does not in any way affect the nature of Brahman. The destruction of the world of experience does not in the least take away from the being of Brahman. Brahman can exist and does exist apart from the world of relations. The world is not an essential factor in the existence of Brahman. A reciprocal dependence of the world on Brahman and vice versa would be to reduce Brahman to the level of the world and subject it to the categories of time and purpose. The incapacity to define the relation of the absolute to the world is not to be construed as a repudiation of the world as a screen imagined by the finite man, which hides the absolute. For it is declared that the world of space, time and cause has its reality in Brahman. The absolute is so far present in this world of relations as to enable us to measure the distance of the things of the world from the absolute and evaluate their grades of reality. Brahman is in the world, though not as the world. The Upaniṣads do not face the question directly. The only way to reconcile the several accounts is by taking our stand on the absolute self-sufficiency of Brahman. The perfection of Brahman implies that all the worlds, states and aspects, and all the manifestations, past, present and future, are realised in it in such wise that they are nothing without it, though it is independent of all other existence. If without conforming to the strict philosophical position, that we do not know the precise relation between the Brahman and the world, we proceed to characterise it, it is truer to say that the world is the self-limitation of the supreme than that it is a creation of it. For the creation of the world by God would imply

that God was alone once upon a time, and at a certain point in His history He created the world. It is not right to look upon God as cause antecedent in time to the world as effect. It is better to make the world the expression of God. As a matter of fact, in many passages the Upaniṣads declare that the world is only a development of the absolute spirit. Nature is a system of spontaneity or self-evolving autonomy, since it is the energising of the absolute. In this development, the first stage is represented by the rise of the two factors of a self-conscious God and the passive potentiality of matter. The ultimate fact is the self-sufficiency of Brahman, and we cannot say how the world is related to it. If we insist on some explanation, the most satisfactory one is to make the absolute a unity with a difference or a concrete dynamic spirit. We then reach the self and the not-self, which interact and develop the whole universe.¹ Self-expression becomes the essence of the absolute. Activity is the law of life. Force is

¹ An attempt is made by Babu Bhagavan Das, in his translation of a work called Praṇavavāda, attributed to Gārgyāyana, to interpret a great saying of the Upaniṣads, *aham etat na*, "I not this," into a highly philosophical doctrine. Aham or self is the self-conscious Īvara. Etat is nature or not-self. The relation between the two is signified by *na*, a negation. "The self is not the not-self" In the syllable AUM, "A" represents the self, "U" the not-self, and "M" the negation of the two, but all these three are rolled into the "AUM," the Praṇava. The world is interpreted to be a negative reflection of the Aham. It is affirmed by the self for its own realisation. Etat is the unreal shadow, while Aham is the reality. The interpretation is ingenious; but we have to remember that what is denied is not the Etat (not-self) as the reflexion of Aham (self) but only the Etat (not-self) as cut off from Aham (self). The many as separate and apart from the One is denied. Brahman the reality causes, if such a term is legitimate, all difference. In Indian thought this symbol AUM stands for many things. Every kind of trinity is represented by AUM. Being, non-being and becoming; birth, life and death; Prakṛti, Jīvātman and Paramātman; Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; past, present and future; Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. The conception of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva emphasises the different aspects of the one Supreme, which contains the three conditions. God by a free act of His will creates, or more philosophically posits, an eternal universe. This positing God is Brahmā. He views it, contemplates it, sustains it, enjoys it as being distinct from himself. This God is Viṣṇu. He receives it back into his own unity as an indissoluble element of his being, then he is Śiva. Those who imagine that the three states are exclusive, postulate three personal agencies embodying the three different functions.

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inherent in existence. Māyā, in the sense of energy, is potentially eternal in being.

There is hardly any suggestion in the Upaniṣads that the entire universe of change is a baseless fabric of fancy, a mere phenomenal show or a world of shadows. The artistic and poet souls of the Upaniṣads lived always in the world of nature and never cared to fly out of it. The Upaniṣads do not teach that life is a nightmare and the world a barren nothing. Rather is it pulsing and throbbing with the rhythm of the world harmony. The world is God's revelation of Himself. His joy assumes all these forms.¹ But there is a popular view which identifies the Upaniṣad doctrine with an abstract monism, which reduces the rich life of this world into an empty dream. If we start with the facts of everyday experience and try to account for them, we are reduced to the two factors of a self-conscious Īsvara and indeterminate matter. Intellectually we are convinced of the oneness of these two. Our difficulty is the reconciliation between the two: subject and object on the one hand, and the Brahman explicitly asserted by the Upaniṣads on the other. The real is one, yet we have the two. It is from this duality that the difference of the world arises. We are confronted with a blank wall. If philosophy is bold and sincere, it must say that the relation cannot be explained. The one somehow becomes two. This seems to be the most logical view in the circumstances: "The immanence of the absolute in finite centres and of finite centres in the absolute, I have always set down as inexplicable . . . to comprehend it is beyond us and even beyond all intelligence."² The inexplicability of the relation between the two is assumed by the Upaniṣads, and the later Vedānta gives to it the name of māyā.

The difficulty of giving a satisfactory explanation is traced to the imperfection of the human mind, which employs inadequate categories of space, time and cause, which are

¹ Ānandarūpam amṛtam yad vibhāti.

² Bradley: *Mind*, No. 74, p. 154. Cf. Green: "The old question, why God made the world, has never been answered, nor will be. We know not why the world should be; we only know that there it is." *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Sec. 100.

self-contradictory. The aspects of the world known to them are fragmentary and are not genuinely real. They are appearances somehow in and of, but not for reality. Everything we come across in our finite experience breaks down somewhere or other and becomes contradictory. While all finite experiences are limited and incomplete, they are so in different degrees, and it is not right to put them all on a general level or give to them all equal reality or, more accurately, equal unreality. The doctrine of māyā gives abstract expression to this general feature of all experience of the finite that it falls short of the absolute.

While intellectual modesty born of the consciousness of human imperfection compelled the thinkers of the Upaniṣads to rest in negative statements of the supreme reality, the false imitators of the Upaniṣad ideal, with an extreme of arrogant audacity, declare that Brahman is an absolutely homogeneous impersonal intelligence—a most dogmatic declaration alien to the true spirit of the Upaniṣads. Such a positive characterisation of the nature of Brahman is illogical—for even Śaṅkara says that the real is non-dual, advaita, and nothing positive.

There are passages, according to Thibaut, “whose decided tendency it is to represent Brahman as transcending all qualities, as one undifferentiated mass of impersonal intelligence.”¹ “And as the fact of the appearance of the manifold world cannot be denied, the only way open to thoroughly consistent speculation was to deny at any rate its reality, and to call it a mere illusion due to an unreal principle, with which Brahman is indeed associated, but which is unable to break the unity of Brahman’s nature just on account of its own unreality.”² Māyā, according to Thibaut, reconciles the appearance of diversity with the reality of the One, but unfortunately the conception of an abstract intelligence is a meaningless notion, which is disallowed by the anti-dogmatist attitude of the Upaniṣad theory. The Upaniṣads do not support an abstract conception of the ultimate reality. Their philosophy is not so much a monism as an advaitism (not twoness). The distinction of subject and object is not absolute, though

¹ Introduction to V.S., p. cxxlii.

² Ibid., cxxv.

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it is real in the world. We cannot split the world into two halves of subject and object, for Brahman underlies both. While it denies duality, it does not affirm that all things could be dissolved into one except in a figurative sense.¹

Other friendly interpreters of the Upaniṣads also contend that the Upaniṣads support the doctrine of māyā in the sense of the illusoriness of the world. Let us inquire into the value of their contention. Deussen, who has done much to popularise Vedāntic lore in Europe, points out that four different theories of creation occur in the Upaniṣads. They are—(1) that matter exists from eternity independently of God, which He fashions, but does not create; (2) that God creates the universe out of nothing,

¹ We find that the passages which employ the illustration of clay (copper, etc) to explain the oneness of Brahman and the world, use the words "vācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikety eva satyam." Its meaning seems to be that all are modifications of the one substance, marked by different names. Śamkara interprets this to mean that "the modification (vikāra) originates and exists merely in speech; in reality there is no such thing as effect. It is merely a name, and therefore unreal." It is vyāvahārikam or empirical, but it does not follow that it is mithyā or falsehood. It has also to be noted that the statement is made by Uddālaka, who held a theory of matter which admitted only changes of form. The material, according to him, is one continuous whole, in which qualitatively distinct particles of matter are mixed together. The passage says that the development is noticed by the giving of a different name. Name and form are used in the Upaniṣads to indicate individuality. See Bṛh., i, 4. 7. Development of the one into the many is the rise of name and form out of the primary principle. There is no suggestion that the modifications denoted by name and form are unreal. They have, of course, no reality apart from Brahman. Nāmarūpa is not what the English words name and form indicate. They correspond to the form and matter of Aristotle. The two together constitute the individuals of the world. In Buddhism rūpa stands for the gross body and nāma for the subtle mind. In the Upaniṣads the development of name and form means the individualisation of the One. The individualisation is the principle of creation, the central feature of the cosmic process. Things and persons are ultimately only modes of the existence of God. They are not real on their own account. Only Brahman is so real. Their separateness is superficial. Salvation in the Upaniṣads is the cessation of the sense of separateness of nāmarūpa. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad says: "He who has attained the highest wisdom unites with the universal spirit, delivered from nāmarūpa as the flowing streams enter into rest in the sea, leaving nāmarūpa behind." Again, the cause is more real than the effect. God is the cause of all persons and things. As gold is the essence of gold ornaments, Brahman is the reality of the world, its sattāsāmānya or common substratum;

and the latter is independent of God, although it is His creation; (3) that God creates the universe by transforming Himself into it; (4) that God alone is real, and there is no creation at all. The last, according to him, is the fundamental view of the Upaniṣads. The world in space and time is an appearance, an illusion, a shadow of God. To know God we must reject the world of appearance. What inclines Deussen to this view is his own belief that the essence of every true religion is the repudiation of the reality of the world. Having come to that conclusion on independent grounds, he is anxious to find support for his doctrine in the philosophic systems of ancient India, the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara, ancient Greece, Parmenides and Plato, and modern Germany, Kant and Schopenhauer. In his eagerness to find support for his position he is not very careful about the facts. He admits that the prevailing doctrine of the Upaniṣads is the pantheistic one, while the "fundamental" doctrine is the illusion hypothesis. That the pantheistic view is the "prevailing" one, Deussen is obliged to concede by the mere pressure of facts. That the illusion view is the "fundamental" one is his own reading of the facts. Between the two, the fact of pantheism and the reading of illusionism, a compromise has to be effected. Deussen achieves it by holding that it is a concession to clamour and the empirical demands of the unregenerate man. "For the fundamental thought, that is held fast at least as a principle at all stages, even at the lowest, which maintains the independent existence of matter, is the conviction of the sole reality of the Ātman; only that side by side with and in spite of this conviction, more or less far reaching concessions were made to the empirical consciousness of the reality of the universe, that could never be entirely cast off." The first argument urged in support of the "illusion" hypothesis is that the Upaniṣads assert the sole reality of Brahman. It follows that the world is unreal. We agree that Ātman is the sole reality. If we know it, all else is known. That there is no plurality, no change outside it, is admissible. But that there is no change at all and no plurality at all, either in or out, such an un-

! *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, pp. 161-2.

qualified proposition is hard to understand. "Nature," says Deussen, "which presents the appearance of plurality and change is a mere illusion."¹ In the same strain Mr. Fraser argues: "This doctrine of the illusion of all appearances of reality follows naturally and logically from the repeated teachings in the Upaniṣads regarding the non-duality of the self or Ātman or Brahman as the sole reality of the universe."² In these arguments the infinite is taken in a false sense. It is equated with the not-finite; the eternal is made the not-temporal. When the eternal becomes a timeless abstraction, the life of the world in time becomes unreal. The opposition between the world in space and time and the world absolute and eternal is ultimate. But the Upaniṣads nowhere say that the infinite excludes the finite. Wherever they assert that Brahman is the sole reality they are careful enough to add that the world is rooted in Brahman, and as such has a share of reality. "The finite is in the infinite. This Ātman is the entire universe."³ It is *prāṇa*. It is speech. It is mind. It is everything in the universe. God is present in the vile dust and the small mote.⁴ The affirmation of the real involves the affirmation of all that is based on it. From the doctrine of the sole reality of Brahman follows the relative reality of what is included in or based on it.

Deussen urges that "the passages which declare that with the knowledge of the Ātman all is known, 'deny' the universe of plurality." We do not admit this contention. If the Ātman is the universal self embracing within it all thinking things and the objects of all thought, if there is nothing outside it, then it follows that if it is known all else is known. The true knowledge which leads us to liberation helps us to realise the one indwelling spirit. There is no suggestion that the Ātman and the world exclude each other; in that case what Indra said to Prajāpati would be true, and Ātman which excludes everything definite and distinct, would be

¹ P. 237.

² *Indian Thought*, p. 68.

³ *Chāndogya*, ii. 4. 26.

⁴ *Muṇḍaka*, ii. 2. 11; *Kātha*, ii. 5. 2; *Tait*, iii. 1; *Chān.*, iii. 14. 1. ii. 14. 2-4; vi. 9. 1; *Bṛh.*, ii. 4. 6; iv. 5. 7; ii. 5. 2; v. 3. 1; i. 4. 16; iii. 5. 15; iii. 7. 15; iv. 4. 23.

the barest abstraction. If we ignore differences, we reduce the absolute to a non-entity. We do not improve the case of the absolute by repudiating the relative. The eternal need not give away the temporal as null and void. Loyalty to the highest experience of man, religious and moral, philosophic and æsthetic, requires us to recognise the reality of the temporal as rooted in the eternal, of the finite as subsisting in the infinite, of man as born from God. To deny the contingent and the individual is to falsify the necessary and the universal. The many passages which declare the world to be rooted in Brahman are explained away by Deussen as a concession to empirical consciousness. The Upaniṣads would not have seriously put forth doctrines about the relativity of the world if it was their view that the world was a mere illusion. An unworkable interpretation is adopted by Deussen, and arbitrary arguments are employed to support what is fundamentally unsound. Deussen himself, in attempting to give the credit for the "illusion" hypothesis to the great German philosopher Kant, admits that the hypothesis was not really, or perhaps explicitly, held by the Upaniṣad thinkers. For he writes: "There is still always a broad distinction between the one Brahman and the multiplicity of his appearances, nor were ancient thinkers, or indeed any thinkers before Kant, able to rise to the conception that the entire unfolding in space and time was a merely subjective phenomenon."¹ Deussen correctly suggests that the Upaniṣads could not have held the view of the subjectivity of the world. The different theories of creation are enunciated just to point out that there is essential dependence between Brahman

¹ P. 103. Deussen seems to interpret Kant in the light of the Upaniṣads and the Upaniṣads in the light of Kant, with the result that he has practically misconstrued both. Kant is anxious that his idealism should not be confused with Berkeleyan subjectivism quite as much as Śaṅkara is anxious that his idealism should not be identified with Buddhistic subjectivism. Perhaps with Schopenhauer Deussen thinks that Kant's refutation of idealism is a stupid after-thought and a great blunder. It is doubtful whether students of Kant would agree with Deussen's view. "The well-known argument of Kant also, which bases immortality on the realisation of the moral law implanted in us, a result only attainable by an infinite process of approximation, tells not for immortality in the usual sense, but for transmigration" (p. 314).

and the world. There are passages, we admit, which declare that the variegated universe is due to the development of name and form from out of the one absolute. These indicate only that the fundamental essence of all things is the one reality, and if we are lost in the name and form world, we run the risk of missing the deep-lying essence which gives rise to all the variety. This name and form-world hides, so to say, the immortal essence.¹ We have to pierce behind the veil which surrounds all mortal things. The objects in space and time conceal the essence of things. The passing semblance of life is in no wise its immortal truth. The real being is above these things. He manifests himself through the world. The manifestation is at the same time a concealment. The more complete is the manifestation, the more is the reality concealed. God hides Himself and manifests Himself by drawing a veil over His face. The hidden meaning of things is opposed to the testimony of the senses. The world, while it manifests His glory, conceals His pure absolute nature. The truth, the unique substance, the absolute void of phenomena and rid of limitations, is covered by the multiplicity and plurality of the created universe. The objects of the world, including the finite selves, imagine that they are separate and self-existent, and seem to be engaged in the work of self-maintenance. They forget that they all spring from an identical source, from which they derive sustenance. This belief is due to māyā or delusion. "Each little leaf on a tree may very naturally have sufficient consciousness to believe that it is an entirely separate being, maintaining itself in the sunlight and the air, withering away and dying when the winter comes on—and there is an end of it. It probably does not realise that all the time it is being supported by

¹ Bṛh., i. 6. 3. Amṛtam satyena channam. The ambiguity of the word "sat" is responsible for much of the confusion of the Upaniṣad view of reality. Sat in one sense means all that exists. The world of change and growth is "sat" in this sense. Sat also stands for the reality that persists in the midst of all change, the immortal or the amṛtam. The Taittirīya calls the former sat and the latter tyat. Since tyat is opposed to the existent sat, it is sometimes called asat or anṛtam (Tait., ii. 6). Usually, the permanent reality or Brahman is called sat and the world of change asat (Chān., vi. 2. 1; iii. 19. 1).

the sap which flows from the trunk of the tree, and that in its turn it is feeding the tree too—that its self is the self of the whole tree. If the leaf could really understand itself, it would see that its self was deeply, intimately connected, practically one with the life of the whole tree.”¹ Below the separate wave crests of consciousness there is the unfathomed common depth of life, from which all spirits draw the springs of their being. If we look upon the objects as separate and self-existent, we erect a screen which shuts us from the truth. The falsely imagined self-subsistence of finite objects clouds the glow of heaven. When we penetrate beneath the second causes to the essence of all things, the veils fall apart and we see that the principle underlying them is the same as that which dwells in us. It is this need to go behind second causes to realise the truth of the oneness of things that is brought out in the dialogue between the father and the son in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (vi. 10 ff.).

“Fetch me from thence a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree.” “Here is one, Sir.” “Break it.” “It is broken, Sir.” “What do you see there?” “These seeds, almost infinitesimal.” “Break one of them.” “It is broken, Sir.” “What do you see there?” “Not anything, Sir.”

The father said: “My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive there, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists. Believe it, my son, That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the self, and thou, O Śvetaketu, art it.”

The father points out to the son some typical objects of nature in succession and exhorts him to realise the philosophical truth of the unity of life and the continuity of man's life with that of the universe. We cannot easily conceive this one reality which is concealed by the many objects. We are too worldly, too experienced, too serious about ourselves for that realisation. We live on the surface, cling to forms, worship appearance.

Deussen ignores the central truth of the Upaniṣad philosophy when he holds that according to it “the whole universe, all children, possessions and wisdom,” must “vanish

¹ Edward Carpenter: *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 301.

into the nothingness, which they really are." ¹ On this hypothesis it is necessary to explain away all those passages which declare Brahman, the sustainer of the universe, to be one with the psychical principle of the individual self, on the principle of accommodation. "The same spirit of accommodation lies at the basis of the form assumed by the doctrine of Brahman as a psychical principle." ² "The Upaniṣads find a peculiar pleasure in identifying the Ātman as the infinitely small within us with the Ātman as the infinitely great outside us." ³ When we are in trouble, we have no more to bring in God, but only make concession to weak human nature.

"Metaphysical knowledge impugns the existence of any reality outside of the Ātman, that is the consciousness. The empirical view, on the contrary, teaches that a manifold universe exists externally. From a combination of these antagonistic propositions originated the doctrine that the universe is real, and yet the Ātman remains the sole reality, for the Ātman is the universe." ⁴ It is not easy to understand how the two propositions are antagonistic and the conclusion an irreconcilable compromise. When it is said that there is no reality outside Ātman, it is meant that the Ātman is the universal spirit or consciousness, including all else. When it is said that "a manifold universe exists external to us," the "us" refers to the empirical individuals who are limited by mind and body, possessing local habitations and temporal settings. Surely to such beings the world is real, being set over against them. The Ātman we are in search of is not the object of knowledge but the basis of all knowledge. It is the presupposition of material and spiritual worlds alike. The thinking beings or jīvas, the psychological selves, are part of the world of nature. In that world they externally act on other beings and are acted on by them. But logically Ātman is the condition of there being a world of related objects at all. All existence is existence for self. The world is beyond us as psychological selves. It is there within the universal self. The conclusion states, the universe is real to us, for we are not yet perfect selves. Ātman is the sole reality, and it includes

¹ P. 168.

² P. 171.

³ P. 237.

⁴ P. 405.

the universe also. Any other position would be illogical. As empirical selves we are opposed by the world, limited by the objects. As our life, which is first opposed to matter, gradually absorbs and remoulds into itself the mechanical side of things, even so the subject has to transfigure the object. Then what was at the start external and objective becomes only a condition of the subject's activity. This process goes on steadily till the subject completely dominates the object and becomes all in all. Then there would be no obstacle outside the subject, but till then the goal is not reached. The annulling of the opposition is the sign of spirit's growth. The conclusion that the world is a mere appearance would follow if the individual subject, this particular link in the chain of evolution, bound by space and time, be looked upon as the absolute reality. If we, as we are, were Brahman, if we were the sole reality, then the world opposed to us would be a mere magic show. But the self asserted to be the sole reality is the perfect self, which we have yet to become. To that perfect self, which includes all that is within and without us, there is nothing opposed. It is a confusion between the finite self of man, with all its discord and contradiction, and the ultimate self of Brahman, that suggests to Deussen an imaginary antagonism which he tries to overcome by an artificial device.

There are some passages which say that we ought not to see plurality (nānā) in Brahman.¹ These passages try to indicate the oneness of the world. The emphasis is on the one infinite and not the many finites. In our waking life we imagine the opposition between the subject and the object to be real. Sober reflection tells us that the opposition is not ultimate. Duality of subject and object is not the ultimate truth. When it is said that duality is not all, that duality is not final, it does not mean that there is no duality at all, that there is no distinction or variety. It is this false view of one school of Buddhism that Śaṅkara protests against. So long as we imagine the world to be due to something else than the absolute we are lost. It is the existence of a factor separate from

¹ See Bṛh., iv. 4. 19.

Ātman that the Upaniṣads protest against. Arguing from the similes of salt and water, fire and sparks, spider and threads, flute and sound, employed by the Upaniṣads to represent the relation of Brahman to the world, Oldenberg says: "We can detect behind these similitudes by which men strove to bring the living power of the Ātman in the universe near to their understanding, a conviction, though at the same time but a half-conscious conviction, of the existence of an element in things separate from the Ātman. The Ātman, says the Indian, pervades the universe, as the salt the water in which it has dissolved, but we may easily go on to add, as a complement to this, that although no drop of the salt water is without salt, the water continues, notwithstanding, to be something separately constituted from the salt. And thus we may infer the Ātman is to the Indian certainly the sole actuality, light diffusing, the only significant reality in things, but there is a remainder left in things which he is not." It is against such a view that the repudiations of dualism are intended. The Upaniṣads make it clear that they do not mean to make the world of creation stand separate from the Ātman. They seem to be clamourously insisting on the adequacy of the Ātman to all experience. Unlike abstract idealism, the Upaniṣad doctrine is distinguished by its resolute devotedness to fact. Its highest principle or God is the eternal spirit,¹ which transcends and includes the objective world² and the subjective man.³ In the highest state there is only one Brahman. "We see nothing else, hear nothing else, know nothing else."⁴ In the supreme illumination of the soul⁵ we feel the oneness of subject and object, the relativity of the world, the non-ultimate nature of the oppositions. "There is neither day nor night remaining any more, no existence, no non-existence—only God alone."⁶ St. Paul says: "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Similarly Ruysbroeck: "The fourth mode is a state of emptiness made one with God in bare love and in divine

¹ Adhidaivam.

² Adhyātman. See Tait., i. 7.

³ Ātmabuddhiprakāśa.

⁴ Adhibhūtam.

⁵ Chān., vii. 23.

⁶ Śvetāśvatara, iv. 18.

light. . . . So that a man forgetteth himself and knoweth neither himself nor God, nor any creature, nor aught else but love alone." It is this integral oneness of intuitive experience that is indicated by all those passages which ask us to see no distinction in the highest.

We admit that according to the Upaniṣads, plurality, succession in time, co-existence in space, relations of cause and effect, oppositions of subject and object, are not the highest reality. But this is not saying that they are unreal. The Upaniṣads support the doctrine of māyā only in the sense that there is an underlying reality containing all elements from the personal God to the telegraph post. Śaṅkara says: "That Ātman is in the hearts of all living creatures, from Brahmā to a post." The different grades of individuality are all broken lights of the one absolute. Māyā represents at the conceptual level the self-distinction residing in the very heart of reality, propelling it to develop itself. The particular things are and are not. They have an intermediate existence. Measured by the perfection of the absolute, the unlimited fullness of the one reality, the world of plurality, with all its pain and disruption, is less real. Compared with the ideal of the supreme one, it is wanting in reality. Even if we look upon the persons and things of the world as shadows of a substance, still, so long as the substance is real, the shadows also have reality. Though the things of the world are imperfect representations of the real, they are not illusory semblances of it. The oppositions and conflicts which are in the foreground are relative modes of the absolute unity, which is in the background. Duality and manyness are not the reality.¹

The unreflecting consciousness hastily assumes that the finite world is absolutely real. This is not so. The forms and energies of the world are not final and ultimate. They themselves need explanation. They are not self-originated or self-maintained. There is something behind and beyond them. We must sink the universe in God, the finite in the infinite, the real of uncritical perception in the Brahman of intuition. There is no suggestion in the Upaniṣads

¹ That is why the word "iva" is used in some of the Upaniṣads. See Brh., ii. 4. 14; iv. 3. 7; iv. 4. 19.

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that the objects which lie around us on every side in infinite space, to which by virtue of our bodily frames we all belong, are only apparitions.

There has been much criticism of the theory of the Upaniṣads under the false impression that it supports the illusory nature of the world. It is contended that progress is unreal because progress is change, and change is unreal since time in which change occurs is unreal. But the whole charge is due to a misconception. It is true that the absolute is not in time, while time is in the absolute. Within the absolute we have real growth, creative evolution. The temporal process is an actual process, for reality manifests itself in and through and by means of the temporal changes. If we seek the real in some eternal and timeless void, we do not find it. All that the Upaniṣads urge is that the process of time finds its basis and significance in an absolute which is essentially timeless. For real progress this conception of the absolute is necessary. Without this all-comprehending absolute we cannot be certain that the flux of the universe is an evolution, that change is progress, and that the end of the world is the triumph of the good. The absolute guarantees that the process of the world is not chaotic but ordered; that the development is not haphazard or the result of chance variations. Reality is not a series of disconnected states. Were it so, were there not an absolute, we should be landed in an endless process, which would have no plan or purpose underlying it. The unity of the absolute functions throughout the process of the evolution of the world. We are not impotently struggling to realise something which is not yet and can never be. In a sense the real is expressed at every moment of its history. Being and becoming, that which is and that which is to be, are identical. With such a view, the teaching of the Upaniṣads is in essential harmony. They do not support the doctrine of the world illusion. Hopkins says: "Is there anything in the early Upaniṣads to show that the authors believed in the objective world being an illusion? Nothing at all."¹

¹ J.A.O.S., xxii., p. 385. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar holds that "the opinion expressed by some eminent scholars that the burden of the Upaniṣad

XII

DEGREES OF REALITY

So far as the absolute is concerned, there are no degrees at all. The conception of degrees has meaning only for the finite intelligence which distinguishes things. It has no ultimate value. When the manyness of the world is taken over into the one, the conception of degrees is transcended. In the metaphysical reality of the Upaniṣads we have no scale of reals. Yet it has significance in the world of experience. All progress in the world involves it. Any demand for advance and alteration in existence presupposes it. The approximation to the character of the real in the relative world of things is the test of the more or less of reality. We know enough of the ultimate to make use of it in this world. This view of the Upaniṣads is defended by Śaṅkara. In reply to the dilemma, Is Brahman known or is it not known?, if known, we need not inquire into its nature; if not known, it will not be worth our while to inquire, Śaṅkara says that reality as self is indubitably known. It posits itself in such sayings as "I question," or "I doubt." That something is real is a self-evident truth, and it is its nature that we have to understand. This reality which we realise serves as the criterion to distinguish degrees in existence. The theory of the world illusion is inconsistent with the conception of degrees of reality. The Upaniṣads give us a hierarchy of different grades of reality down from the all-embracing absolute, which is the primary source as well as the final consummation of the world process. The different kinds of being are higher and lower manifestations of the one absolute spirit. For nothing on earth stands alone, however relatively complete and self-subsisting it may appear. Every finite object holds within itself distinctions which point beyond. While the absolute is in all finite things and permeates them, the things differ

teaching is the illusive character of the world and the reality of one soul only is manifestly wrong, and I may even say is indicative of an uncritical judgment" (*Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 2, f.n.).

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in the degree of their permeability, in the fullness of the reflections they give forth.

Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light. . . .

There is a richer revelation of reality in organised life than in brute matter, more in human society than in organised life. The rank of the categories as higher and lower is determined by the adequacy of their expression of reality. Life is a higher category than matter. Self-conscious thought is more concrete than mere consciousness. "He who knows the gradual development of the self in him obtains himself more development. There are herbs and trees and all that is animal, and he knows the self gradually developing in them. For in herbs and trees sap only is seen, but citta or consciousness in animated being. Among animated beings, again, the self develops gradually, for in some sap is seen (as well as consciousness), but in others consciousness is not seen, and in man, again, the self develops gradually, for he is most endowed with knowledge. He says what he has known, he sees what he has known. He knows what is to happen to-morrow, he knows the visible and the invisible worlds. By means of the mortal he desires the immortal—thus is he endowed. With regard to other animals, hunger and thirst are a kind of understanding. But they do not say what they have known, nor do they see what they have known. They do not know what is to happen to-morrow, nor the visible and the invisible worlds. They go so far and no farther."¹ We see that though the same reality is seen "in the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod," still it is seen more fully in living beings than in dead matter, in developing man than in the satisfied beast, in the spiritual life than in the intellectual.² In this process

¹ Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii. 3. 1-5.

² The Aitareya Upaniṣad alludes to the fourfold classification of jīvas into those born of uterus, jarāyuja, like men and the higher animals; those born of egg, aṇḍaja, like crows and ducks; those born of moisture, svedaaja, like worms and insects; and those born of earth, udbhijja, like plants (iii. 3). The classification proceeds on the mode of appearance of the different beings on earth. See also Manu, i. 43-46. Aristotle speaks of vegetable, animal and human souls. Leibniz classifies living beings into plants, animals and men.

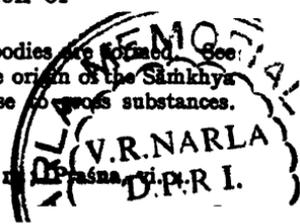
of self-realisation or self-fulfilment the lowest is the earth. The Upaniṣad thinkers have advanced on the Vedic conception of a single element-water. Sometimes three elements of fire, water and earth are admitted.¹ The five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth, are distinguished. "From that self (Brahman) sprang forth ether (ākāśa); from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth. From earth herbs, from herbs food, from food seed, from seed man. Man thus consists of the essence of food."² In discussing the physical basis of life the author gives an account of the evolution of matter. The higher possesses the properties of the lower. Ether comes first, with the single property of sound. It is that through which we hear. From ether we proceed to air, which has the property of ether, and in addition that of tangibility. It is that through which we hear and see. From air comes fire. It is that by which we hear, feel and see. From fire we get to water. We can taste it also. From water comes earth, that by which we hear, feel, see, taste and smell. Though the science presupposed might appear to be fanciful at the present day, still there was a principle involved in the account. It is in the Upaniṣads that we have for the first time the doctrine of the five elements. The distinction of the elemental essence or the tanmātra and the gross embodiment or substance is suggested.³ The Chāndogya Upaniṣad sometimes suggests that the things of the world are qualitatively distinct from one another, and may be divided into infinite parts. Uddālaka propounds the theory that matter is infinitely divisible and qualitatively distinct. There is no such thing as the transformation of things into one another. When we get butter from churning curds, curds do not get transformed into butter, but the particles of butter are already in the curds, and the process of churning enables them to rise upwards.⁴ The position of

¹ By the combination of these three, all other bodies are formed. See: Chāndogya Up., vi. 2-3-4. Possibly this view is the origin of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of tanmātras or subtle essences, giving rise to gross substances. See also Praśna Up., iv. 8.

² Tait., ii. 1.

³ See Praśna, iv. 8; Aitareya, ii. 3; Kātha, ii. 1; Praśna, vi. 1.

⁴ Chān., vi. 6. 1.



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that different kinds of matter interpenetrate each other, is similar to this : " If then an empirical fact, such as the assimilation of nutriment, appears to show us the conversion (say) of corn into flesh and bone, we must interpret this as meaning that the corn contains in itself, in such minute quantities as to be imperceptible, just that into which it is transformed. It veritably consists of particles of flesh and blood, and marrow and bone." ¹ The atomic theory of Kaṇāda is also suggested in the view that the particles only combine and separate. Matter is represented as a chaotic mass, like the juices of various trees blended together in honey.² It is not impossible to see in this the germs of the Sāṅkhya theory. The development of matter is accounted for by either the entry of the jīvātman into matter or the animation of matter by spirit in varying degrees. Sometimes the principle of motion is located within matter itself. Prāṇa or life, though it arises out of matter, is not fully explicable by matter. Similarly, consciousness, though it arises from life, is not intelligible on the hypothesis of prāṇa or vitalism. When we get to man we have self-conscious thought. Man is higher than stones and stars, beasts and birds, since he can enter into the fellowship of reason and will, affection and conscience, yet he is not the highest, since he feels the pain of contradiction.

Before we pass from this section let us consider whether the Upaniṣad doctrine is rightly regarded as pantheistic. Pantheism is the view which identifies God with the sum of things and denies transcendence. If the nature of the absolute is exhausted completely by the course of the world, if the two become one, then we have pantheism. In the Upaniṣads we come across passages which declare that the nature of reality is not exhausted by the world process. The existence of the world does not take away from the perfection of the absolute. In a beautiful image it is said : "That is full and this is full. From that full rises this full. Taking away this full from that, what remains is yet full." Even God in transforming Himself into

¹ Adamson : *The Development of Greek Philosophy*, p. 50.

² Chān., vi. 9. 1-2.

the world has forfeited nothing of His nature. As early as the Ṛg-Veda it is said that all beings are only a fourth of the Puruṣa, while the three other fourths remain immortal in the shining regions.¹ According to the Bṛhad āraṇyaka (v. 14), one foot of Brahman consists of the three worlds, the second of the triple knowledge of the Veda, the third of the three vital breaths, while the fourth, exalted above the dust of earth, shines as the sun.² The Upaniṣads declare that the universe is in God. But they never hold that the universe is God. God is greater than the universe, which is His work. He is as much and more beyond this, as the human personality is beyond the body, which is the instrument of its life here. They refuse to imprison God in the world. From this it does not follow that God is the external Creator existing separate from the world. God expresses Himself in the world, and the world is the expression of His life. God in the infinite fullness of His being transcends His actual manifestations in the universe of finite, physical and psychical entities which He has called into existence. God is transcendent as well as immanent. The Upaniṣads are not pantheistic in the bad sense of the term. Things are not thrown together into a heap called God, without unity, purpose or distinction of values. The philosophy of the Upaniṣads revolts against the deistic conception of God. It does not say that God is outside the world, and now and again makes His presence felt by supernatural revelation or miraculous interference. It is pantheism, if it is pantheism to say that God is the fundamental reality of our lives, and we cannot live without Him. Everything on earth is finite and infinite, perfect and imperfect. Everything seeks a good beyond itself, tries to rid itself of its finiteness and become perfect. The finite seeks self-transcendence. This clearly establishes that the Infinite Spirit is working in the finite. The real is the basis of the unreal. If the doctrine of the indwelling of the divine is enough justification for condemning a system as pantheism, the philosophy of the Upaniṣads is a pantheism. But pantheism in this sense is an essential feature of all true religion.

¹ x. 90. 3. See also Chāndogya Up., iii. 12. 6.

² iv. 3. 32.

XIV

THE INDIVIDUAL SELF

The Upaniṣads make out that of finite objects the individual self has the highest reality. It comes nearest to the nature of the absolute, though it is not the absolute itself. There are passages where the finite self is looked upon as a reflection of the universe. The whole world is the process of the finite striving to become infinite, and this tension is found in the individual self. According to the Taittirīya the several elements of the cosmos are found in the nature of the individual. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (vi. 11. 3 and 4) fire, water and earth are said to constitute the jīvātman or the individual soul, together with the principle of the infinite.¹

Man is the meeting-point of the various stages of reality. Prāṇa corresponds to Vāyu, the breath of the body to the wind of the world, manas to ākāśa, the mind of man to the ether of the universe, the gross body to the physical elements. The human soul has affinities with every grade of existence from top to bottom. There is in it the divine element which we call the beatific consciousness, the ānanda state, by which at rare moments it enters into immediate relations with the absolute. The finite self or the embodied soul is the Ātman coupled with the senses and mind.²

The different elements are in unstable harmony. " Two

¹ Since God collected and resumed in man
The firmaments, the strata and the lights,
Fish, fowl, and beast and insect—
Of various life caught back upon His arm all their trains,
Reorganised and constituted man,
The microcosm, the adding up of works.

BROWNING.

See also Aitareya, iii. 3; Śvetāśvatara, ii. 12. 6; Praśna, vi. 12. The individual subject is the world in miniature, and the world is the individual writ large. Plato in his *Timæus* institutes an analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, the universe and man. The soul of the world is said to be compounded by God Himself out of the changeless and the changeful and inserted in the midst of the universe (34. B). The universe, according to him, is a magnified man. See Tait., i. 3, and Ānandagiri's commentary on it.

² Chān., viii. 12. 3.

birds, akin and friends, cling to the self-same tree. One of them eats the sweet berry, but the other gazes upon him without eating. In the same tree—the world tree—man dwells along with God. With troubles overwhelmed, he faints and grieves at his own helplessness. But when he sees the other, the Lord in whom he delights—ah, what glory is his, his troubles pass away.”¹ The natural and the divine have not as yet attained a stable harmony. The being of the individual is a continual becoming, a striving after that which it is not. The infinite in man summons the individual to bring about a unity out of the multiplicity with which he is confronted. This tension between the finite and the infinite which is present throughout the world-process comes to a head in the human consciousness. In every aspect of his life, intellectual, emotional and moral, this struggle is felt. He can gain admission into the kingdom of God, where the eternal verities of absolute love and absolute freedom dwell only by sinking his individuality and transforming the whole of the finiteness into infiniteness, humanity into divinity. But as finite and human, he cannot reach the fruition or attain the final achievement. The being in which the struggle is witnessed points beyond itself, and so man has to be surpassed. The finite self is not a self-subsisting reality. Be he so, then God becomes only another independent individual, limited by the finite self. The reality of the self is the infinite; the unreality which is to be got rid of is the finite. The finite individual loses whatever reality he possesses if the indwelling spirit is removed. It is the presence of the infinite that confers dignity on the self of man. The individual self derives its being and draws its sustenance from the universal life. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, the self is perfect.² There is a psychological side on which the selves repel each other and exclude one another. From this apparent fact of exclusiveness we should not infer real isolation of selves. The exclusiveness is the appearance of distinction. It ought to be referred to the identity, otherwise it becomes a mere abstraction of our minds. The hypothesis of ex-

¹ *Mundaka*, iii. 1. 2. See R.V., i. 164. 20.

² See Śaṅkara; Introduction to V.S.

clusive selves leaves no room for the ideals of truth, goodness and love. These presuppose that man is not perfect as he is, that there is something higher than the actual self which he has to attain to secure peace of mind. "And the independent reality of the individual, when we examine it, is in truth mere illusion. Apart from the community, what are separate men? It is the common mind within him which gives reality to the human being, and taken by himself, whatever else he is, he is not human. . . . If this is true of the social consciousness in its various forms, it is true certainly no less of that common mind which is more than social. The finite minds that in and for religion form one spiritual whole have indeed in the end no visible embodiment, and yet, except as members in an invisible community, they are nothing real. For religion, in short, if the one indwelling spirit is removed, there are no spirits left." ¹

Though the individual soul fighting with the lower nature is the highest in the world, it is not the highest realisable. The striving discordant soul of man should attain to the freedom of spirit, the delight of harmony and the joy of the absolute. Only when the God in him realises itself, only when the ideal reaches its fruition is the destiny of man fulfilled. The struggles, the contradictions and the paradoxes of life are the signs of imperfect evolution, while the harmony, the delight and the peace, mark the perfection of the process of evolution. The individual is the battlefield in which the fight occurs. The battle must be over and the pain of contradiction transcended for the ideal to be realised. The tendency to God which begins in completed man will become then a perfect fruition. Man is higher than all other aspects of the universe, and his destiny is realised when he becomes one with the infinite. Nature has life concealed in it, and when life develops, nature's destiny is fulfilled. Life has consciousness concealed in it, and when it liberates consciousness, its end is reached. The destiny of consciousness is fulfilled when intellect becomes manifest. But the truth of the intellect is reached when it is absorbed in the higher

¹ Bradley : *Truth and Reality*, p. 435.

intuition, which is neither thought nor will nor feeling, but yet the goal of thought, the end of will and the perfection of feeling. When the finite self attains the supreme, the godhead from which it descended, the end of spiritual life is reached. "When to a man who understands, the self has become all things, what sorrow, what trouble, can there be to him, who has once beheld that unity?"

XV

THE ETHICS OF THE UPANIṢADS

In estimating the value of the ethics of the Upaniṣads we have to consider the logical implications of the ideal set forth, and develop the suggestions made in the texts. From our previous discussion, it is obvious that the Upaniṣads have for their ideal the becoming one with God. The world is not for itself. It issues from God, and must therefore seek its rest in God. Throughout the process of the world we witness this infinitisation of the finite. Like the rest of the world, man, feeling the pressure of the infinite in him, reaches out his hands to clasp the highest. "All birds go towards the tree intended for their abode, so all this goes to the supreme self."¹ "May I enter Thee, such as Thou art, O Lord; may Thou, O Lord, enter me. . . . May I become well cleansed, O Lord."² "Thou art my resting-place."³ The realisation of the oneness with God is the ideal of man. The difference between human consciousness and all else is that while all seek the infinite, man alone has an idea of the end. After ages of development man has become conscious of the great scheme of the universe. He alone feels the summons of the infinite, and consciously grows towards the heavenly stature awaiting him. The absolute is the deliberate goal of the finite self.

That it is the highest perfection, the most desirable ideal, is brought out in many ways. It is a state "far above hunger and thirst, above sorrow and confusion, above old age and death." "As the sun, the eye of the universe,

¹ Praśna, iv. 7.

² Tait., i. 4.

³ Tait., i. 4; see Bṛh., iv. 3. 32.

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remains far off and unaffected by all sickness that meets the eye, so also the One, the Ātman, who dwells in all creatures, dwells afar and untouched by the sorrows of the world." To live in the world of plurality, staking all on the small self, subject to disease and suffering, is indeed a misfortune. The undoing of the causes which lead to finite existence is the proper aim of man. A return from the plurality into the One is the ideal goal, the most ultimate value. It gives satisfaction to the whole being of man. It is, according to the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, "Prāṇārāmam mana-ānandam, śāntisamṛddham amṛtam," "the delight of life and mind, the fullness of peace and eternity." Lower goals which we crave after may satisfy the vital organism or the mental desires, but this includes them and transcends them. We have different kinds of pleasures answering to the different levels of our existence, the vital pleasure, the sensuous, the mental and the intellectual, but the highest is ānanda.

Whatever ethics we have in the Upaniṣads is subsidiary to this goal. Duty is a means to the end of the highest perfection. Nothing can be satisfying short of this highest condition. Morality is valuable only as leading to it. It is the expression of the spiritual impulse to perfection implanted in the heart of man, the instinct of the individual soul. It is obedience to the Eternal Reality which constrains our conscious self. This is the meaning of the expression that duty is "the stern daughter of the voice of God." The perfect ideal of our life is found only in the Eternal Reality. The law of morality is an invitation to become perfect, "even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Before we take up the discussion of the ethical life, we may consider the objections urged generally against the possibility of ethics in the philosophical system of the Upaniṣads. If all is one, it is asked, how can we have moral relations? If the absolute is perfection, where is there any need for the effort to realise what is already accomplished? But monism does not mean an obliteration of the distinction of good and evil. The sense of otherness and multiplicity essential to ethical life is allowed for by the Upaniṣads. They point out that there is no meaning in asking us to

love our neighbour or achieve the unity of the world in love, if exclusiveness and difference are fundamental in the lives of men. If men were really external to each other, as the Leibnizean monads, without the corrective of the pre-established harmony, then the ethical ideal is impossible of realisation. If we are called upon to love our neighbour, it is because all are one in reality. My neighbour and myself are one in our inmost self, if the superficial and ephemeral distinctions are transcended. The true self, absolutely and eternally valid, is beyond the fluctuating particulars of time and space and all that finds its place in them. It is no mere empty phrase to be told to transcend our exclusiveness. Mokṣa literally means release, release from the bondage to the sensuous and the individual, the narrow and the finite. It is the result of self-enlargement and freedom. To live in perfect goodness is to realise one's life in all. This ideal for which the moral nature of man cries can be attained only if the finite self transcends its narrow individuality and identifies itself with the whole. The path of deliverance is the path of soul growth. The reality in which we are to abide by transcending our individuality is the highest, and that is the reality asserted by the Upaniṣads.

It is urged that there is no room for any ethical endeavour on the hypothesis that man is divine in nature. Simply because it is said that God is in man, it does not follow that with it there is an end of all endeavour. God is not in man in such an obvious fashion that he can possess Him absentmindedly and without effort or struggle. God is present as a potentia or a possibility. It is man's duty to lay hold of Him by force and action. If he does not do it, he fails in his duty as man. The God in man is a task as well as a fact, a problem as well as a possession. Man in his ignorance identifies himself with the external wrappings, the physical and mental envelopments. Desire for the absolute conflicts with his finitude or his limitation. "Though the individual is lit with the divine spark, he is not wholly divine. His divinity is not an actuality, but a part of God aspiring to be the whole. As he is, he is dust and deity, God and brute crossed. It is the task of the

moral life to eliminate the non-divine element, not by destroying it, but by suffusing it with the divine spirit.”¹ Man is a contradiction between the finite heritage of nature and the infinite ideals of spirit, and by a gradual submission of the chaotic principles of nature to the divine spirit he has to work up to his destiny. It is his aim to break the shell of his own little being and blend in love and perfect union with the divine principle. The problem of morality has a significance for man whose life is a struggle or a warfare between the finite and the infinite, the demoniac and the divine elements. Man is born for the struggle, and does not find his self until he feels the opposition.

From the references in the Upaniṣads to the different ways of attaining the highest, Rāthītara's truth, Paurusiṣṭi's austerity and Maudgalya's learning,² it is clear that the thinkers of the period reflected a good deal on the problems of ethics. Without attempting to elaborate the views of the different thinkers, we may describe certain general propositions accepted by them all.

The ideal of ethics is self-realisation. Moral conduct is self-realised conduct, if by the self we mean not the empirical self, with all its weakness and vulgarity, selfishness and smallness, but the deeper nature of man, free from all fetters of selfish individuality. The lusts and passions of the animal self, the desires and ambitions of egoism, restrict the vital energies to the plane of the lower self and contract the life of the soul, and they are to be held in check. For the growth of the soul, or the realisation of the highest, the obstacles and influences must be subdued. The moral life is one of understanding and reason, and not of mere sense and instinct. “ Know the self or Ātman as the Lord who sits in the chariot called the body, buddhi or intelligence is the charioteer, mind is the reins, the senses are the horses, and the objects are the roads. The self, the senses and the mind combined, the intelligent call the enjoyer. But he who has no understanding, but is weak in mind, his senses run riot like the vicious horses of a charioteer. He who has understanding, and is strong-

¹ *International Journal of Ethics*, 1914, p. 169.

² Tait., i. 9.

minded, his senses are well controlled, like the good horses of a charioteer. He who is without understanding, who is thoughtless and impure, never reaches the immortal, immaterial state, but enters into the round of birth. But he who has understanding, and he who is thoughtful and pure, reaches the state from which there is no return.”¹ The drive of desire has to be checked. When desire seizes the helm the soul suffers shipwreck, since it is not the law of man’s being. If we do not recognise the ideal prescribed by reason, and do not accept a higher moral law, our life will be one of animal existence, without end or aim, where we are randomly busy, loving and hating, caressing and killing without purpose or reason. The presence of reason reminds us of something higher than mere nature, and requires us to transform our natural existence into a human one, with meaning and purpose. If, in spite of indications to the contrary, we make pleasure the end of our pursuits, our life is one of moral evil, unworthy of man. “Man is not in the least elevated above mere animalism by the possession of reason, if his reason is only employed in the same fashion as that in which animals use their instincts.”² Only the wicked make gods of the things of the world and worship them. “Now Virocana, satisfied in his thought, went to the asuras and preached to them the doctrine that the bodily self alone is to be worshipped, that it alone is to be served, and he who worships body and serves it gains both worlds—this and the next. Therefore they call even now a man who does not give alms here, who has not faith, and offers no sacrifices, an asura, for this is the doctrine of the asuras.”³ Our life, when thus guided, will be at the mercy of vain hopes and fears. “The rational life will be marked by unity and consistency. The different parts of human life will be in order and make manifest the one supreme ideal. If, instead of reason, our senses guide us, our life will be a mirror of passing passions and temporary inclinations. He who leads such a life will have to be written down, like Dogberry, an ass. His life, which

¹ Kātha Upaniṣad.

² Kānt: *Critique of Pure Reason*.

³ Chāndogya, viii. 8. 4-5.

will be a series of disconnected and scattered episodes, will have no purpose to take, no work to carry out, no end to realise. In a rational life, every course of action, before it is adopted, is brought before the bar of reason, and its capacity to serve the highest end is tested, and if found suitable adopted by the individual.”¹

A life of reason is a life of unselfish devotion to the world. Reason tells us that the individual has no interests of his own apart from the whole, of which he is a part. He will be delivered from the bondage to fortune and caprice only if he gives up his ideas of separate sensuous existence. He is a good man who in his life subordinates personal to social ends, and he is a bad man who does the opposite. The soul in committing a selfish deed imposes fetters on itself, which can be broken only by the reassertion of the life universal. This way of sympathy is open to all and leads to the expansion of the soul. If we want to escape from sin, we must escape from selfishness. We must put down the vain conceits and foolish lies about the supremacy of the small self. Each of us conceives himself to be an exclusive unit, an ego sharply marked off from whatever lies outside his physical body and mental history. From this egoism springs all that is morally bad. We should realise in our life and conduct that all things are in God and of God. The man who knows this truth will long to lose his life, will hate all selfish goods and sell all that he has, would wish even to be despised and rejected of the world, if so he can come into accord with the universal life of God. In one sense the Upaniṣad morality is individualistic, for its aim is self-realisation; but “individualistic” ceases here to have any exclusive meaning. To realise oneself is to identify oneself with a good that is not his alone. Moral life is a God-centred life, a life of passionate love and enthusiasm for humanity, of seeking the infinite through the finite, and not a mere selfish adventure for small ends.²

Finite objects cannot give us the satisfaction for which our soul hungers. As in the field of intellect we miss the ultimate reality in the objects of the empirical world, even

¹ *International Journal of Ethics*, 1914, pp. 171-2.

² *Iṣā Upaniṣad*, 1.

so the absolute good we seek for in morality is not to be found in finite satisfactions. "The infinite is bliss, there is no bliss in things finite."¹ Yājñavalkya, leaving for the forest, proposed to divide his property between his two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī. Maitreyī did not know what to do; sitting among her household possessions, rather sadly she was looking outwards towards the forest. That day she administered a rebuke to the petty man who pursues worthless aims in such breathless haste. Finite things produce the opposite of what we aim at through them. The spirit in us craves for true satisfaction, and nothing less than the infinite can give us that. We seek finite objects, we get them, but there is no satisfaction in them. We may conquer the whole world, and yet we sigh that there are no more worlds to conquer. "Whatever he reaches he wishes to go beyond. If he reaches the sky, he wishes to go beyond."² Most of us are on "the road that leads to wealth in which many men perish."³ By becoming slaves to things, by swathing ourselves in external possessions, we miss the true self. "No man can be made happy by wealth." "The hereafter never rises before the eyes of the careless youth, befooled by the delusion of wealth. 'This is the world,' he thinks; 'there is no other.' Thus he falls again and again into the power of death."⁴ "Wise men, knowing the nature of what is immortal, do not look for anything stable here among things unstable."⁵ Man is in anguish when he is separated from God, and nothing else than union with God can satisfy his heart's hunger.⁶ The unbounded aspirations of the soul for the ideally beautiful, the specklessly pure, are not answered by the objects limited in space, time and the shackles of sense. Many men there are who wish to realise the ideal of an absolutely worthy existence in love of another being. So long as that being is another human self, localised in space and time, the ideal is never attained. It is self-deception to seek the fullness of love and beauty in another

¹ ChĀn., vii. 1. 24.

² Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii. 3. 3. 1.

³ Kāṭha, ii. 2-3.

⁴ Kāṭha, i. 2. 6.

⁵ Kāṭha, ii. 4. 2.

⁶ "Miserable comforters are ye all, O that I knew where I might find Him" (Job).

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human being, man or woman. The perfect realisation can only be in the Eternal. Detachment from the world and its possessions is necessary for this. From the beginning there were people who sought deliverance from sorrow in retirement from the world. Many there were who left wife and child, goods and chattels, and went out as mendicants, seeking the salvation of the souls in poverty and purity of life. These groups of ascetics, who burst the bonds that bound them to a home life, prepared the way for the monasticism of the Buddhists. A life of holy renunciation has been recognised to be the chief path to deliverance.

It follows that the Upaniṣads insist on the inwardness of morality and attach great importance to the motive in conduct. Inner purity is more important than outer conformity. Not only do the Upaniṣads say "do not steal," "do not murder," but they also declare "do not covet," or "do not hate or yield to anger, malice and greed." The mind will have to be purified, for it is no use cutting the branches if one leaves the roots intact. Conduct is judged by its subjective worth or the degree of sacrifice involved.

The Upaniṣads require us to look upon the whole world as born of God as the self of man is. If insistence on this doctrine is interpreted as reducing all love finally to a well-directed egoism, the Upaniṣads admit that morality and love are forms of the highest self-realisation, but only object to the word "egoism" with all its associations. Yājñavalkya maintains that self-love lies at the foundation of all other kinds of love. Love of wealth and property, clan and country are special forms of self-love. The love of the finite has only instrumental value, while love of the eternal has intrinsic worth. "The son is dear for the sake of the eternal in him." Finite objects help us to realise the self. Only the love of the Eternal is supreme love, which is its own reward, for God is love.¹ To love God is bliss; not to love Him is misery. To love God is to possess knowledge and immortality; not to love Him is to be lost in doubt and delusion, sorrow and death.² In all true religion it is the same dominating motive that

¹ Kāmāyatana. Brh., iii. 9. 11

² Brh., iv. 4. 5.

we have. "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me love death." ¹ The sinners are the slayers of their souls, according to the Upaniṣads "ātmahano janāḥ."

The Upaniṣads ask us to renounce selfish endeavours, but not all interests. Detachment from self and attachment to God are what the Upaniṣads demand. The ideal sage has desires, though they are not selfish desires. "He who has no desires, who is beyond desires, whose desires are satisfied, whose desire is the soul, being even Brahman obtains Brahman." ² Kāma, which we are asked to renounce, is not desire as such, but only the animal desire, lust, the impulsive craving of the brute man. Freedom from kāma is enjoined, but this is not blank passivity. We are asked to free ourselves from the tyranny of lust and greed, from the fascination of outward things, from the fulfilment of instinctive cravings.³ Desire as such is not forbidden. It all depends upon the object. If a man's desire is the flesh, he becomes an adulterer; if things of beauty, an artist; if God, a saint. The desires for salvation and knowledge are highly commended. A distinction is drawn between true desires and false ones,⁴ and we are asked to share in the true ones. The filial piety and affection of a Naciketas, the intense love and devotion of a Sāvitrī are not faults. The Lord of all creation has kāma in the sense of desire. "He desired (akāmayata), let me become many." If the Lord has desires, why should not we? We do not find in the Upaniṣads any sweeping condemnation of affections. We are asked to root out pride, resentment, lust, etc., and not the tender feelings of love, compassion and sympathy. It is true that here and there the Upaniṣads speak of tapas as a means of spiritual realisation. But tapas only means the development of soul force, the freeing of the soul from slavery to body, severe thinking or energising of mind, "whose tapas consists of thought itself."⁵ Life is a great festival to which we are invited, that we might show

¹ Prov., viii. 36. See Iśā. Up.

² Bṛh., iv. 4. 6.

³ The true saint is described as śānta, śrānta, dānta, uparata, samāhita. These all imply the conquest of passion.

⁴ Chāndogya, vii. 1. 3.

⁵ Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 9.

tapas or self-renunciation, dāna or liberality, ārjavam or right dealing, ahimsā or non-injury to life, and satyavacanam or truthfulness.¹ It is the spirit of disinterestedness that is conveyed by tapas or tyāga. "Not by karma, not by offspring, not by wealth, but by renunciation can immortality be gained."² The Chāndogya Upaniṣad says "śraddhā tapaḥ."³ Faith is asceticism. To realise freedom from the bondage of outward things one need not go to the solitude of the forest and increase his privations and penances that so the last remnants of earthly dependence might be thrown away. "By renunciation thou shouldst enjoy," says the Iśā Upaniṣad. We can enjoy the world if we are not burdened by the bane of worldly possessions; we are princes in the world if we do not harbour any thought of covetousness. Our enjoyment of the world is in direct proportion to our poverty. A call to renunciation in the sense of killing out the sense of separateness and developing disinterested love is the essence of all true religion.⁴

There was a change in Indian thought after the Vedic period.⁵ Due to the asceticism of the Atharva-Veda, the mystic tendency increased. During the period of the hymns of the Ṛg-Veda there was a sort of selfish abandonment to pleasure. The spiritual instinct of the human soul asserted itself, and in the period of the Upaniṣads the protest against the tyranny of the senses was heard in clear tones. No more is the spirit to follow helpless and miserable the flesh that rages and riots. But this spirit of renunciation did not degenerate in the Upaniṣads into the insane asceticism of a later day, which revelled in the burning of bodies and such other practices. In the manner of Buddha, Bhāradvāja protests against both worldly life and asceticism.⁶ We may even say that this measureless and fanatical asceticism is not indicative of a true renunciation, but is only another form of selfishness. Attempts to

¹ Chān., iii. 16; Tait., i. 9.

² Nārāyaṇya, iv. 21.

³ v. 10.

⁴ "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die" (1 Cor. xv. 36).

⁵ See Rhys Davids: *Buddhism, Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 21-22.

⁶ See Muṇḍaka Up.

gain solitary salvation embodying the view that one's soul is more precious than all the world's souls put together are not the expression of any genuine modesty of spirit. The Upaniṣads require us to work but disinterestedly. The righteous man is not he who leaves the world and retires to a cloister, but he who lives in the world and loves the objects of the world, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the infinite they contain, the universal they conceal. To him God has unconditional value, and all objects possess derived values as vehicles of the whole or as the ways to God. Every common duty fulfilled, every individual sacrifice made, helps the realisation of the self. We may be fathers, for that is a way of transcending our narrow individuality and identifying ourselves with the larger purposes. Human love is a shadow of the divine love. We may love our wives for the sake of the joy that burns at the heart of things. "In truth, not for the husband's sake is the husband dear, but for the sake of the Ātman is the husband dear," says the Upaniṣad. The same is asserted with constant repetition of wife, sons, kingdoms, the Brāhmin and the warrior castes, world regions, gods, living creations and the universe. They are all here, not on their own account, but for the sake of the Eternal.¹ The objects of the world are represented not as lures to sin, but as pathways to the divine bliss. When once we have the right vision, we may have wealth, etc.² "Tato me śriyam āvaha." "After that bring me wealth." And Śaṅkara points out that wealth is an evil to the unregenerate, but not to the man of wisdom. Things of the world seemingly undivine are a perpetual challenge to the spiritual soul. He has to combat their independence and turn them into expressions of the divine. He does all work in this spirit of detachment. "To be detached is to be loosened from every tie which binds a soul to the earth, to be dependent on nothing sublunary, to lean on nothing temporal. It is to care nothing what other men choose to say or think of us or do; to go about our work as soldiers go to battle, without a care for the consequences, to account credit, honour, name, easy circumstances, com-

¹ Bṛh., ii. 4. 5.

² Tait., i. 4.

fort, human affection, just nothing at all when any religious obligation requires sacrifice of them."¹ The Upaniṣads demand a sort of physical preparation for the spiritual fight. Cleansing, fasting, continence, solitude, etc., as purificatory of the body, are enjoined. "May my body become fit, may my tongue become extremely sweet, may I hear much in my ears."² This is not to despise the body as a clog and an encumbrance to the human soul. Nor has this purifying of the body, freeing of the senses, development of the mind, anything in common with self-torture.³ Again, in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad⁴ we are told that the world of Brahman belongs to those who find it by brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the discipline a student has to undergo when studying under a guru. It is not an ascetic withdrawal from the world, for the same Upaniṣad in viii. 5 makes brahmacharya equivalent to the performing of sacrifices. It looks as if these were meant as a warning against the false interpretation of brahmacharya as aloofness from the world. The body is the servant of the soul and not its prison. There is no indication in the Upaniṣads that we must give up life, mind, consciousness, intelligence, etc. On the other hand, the doctrine of divine immanence leads to an opposite conclusion.

"The Indian sages, as the Upaniṣads speak of them," according to Gough, "seek for participation in divine life, not by pure feeling, high thought, and strenuous endeavour, not by unceasing effort to learn the true and do the right, but by the crushing out of every feeling and every thought, by vacuity, apathy, inertion and ecstasy."⁵ The aim of the Upaniṣads, according to Eucken, is "not so much a penetration and overcoming of the world as a separation and liberation from it; not an enhancement of life in order to maintain it even in face of the hardest resistance, but an abatement, a softening of all hardness, a dissolution, a fading away, a profound contemplation."⁶ The view

¹ Newman: *University Sketches*, p. 127.

² Tait., i. 4.

³ Gough makes a mistake by translating *tapas* into self-torture. In Tait. i. 4 the injunctions are to the effect that the body must be rendered fit for the habitation of God.

⁴ viii. 4. 3.]

⁵ *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, pp. 266-267.

⁶ *Main Currents*, p. 13.

here stated that the Upaniṣads demand a release from the conditions which constitute human life is a complete misconception. The Upaniṣads do not ask us to renounce life, do not taboo desires as such. The essence of ethical life is not the sublation of the will. The false asceticism which regards life as a dream and the world as an illusion, which has obsessed some thinkers in India as well as in Europe, is foreign to the prevailing tone of the Upaniṣads. A healthy joy in the life of the world pervades the atmosphere. To retire from the world is to despair of humanity and confess the discomfiture of God. "Only performing works one should desire to live a hundred years." There is no call to forsake the world, but only to give up the dream of its separate reality. We are asked to pierce behind the veil, realise the presence of God in the world of nature and society. We are to renounce the world in its immediacy, break with its outward appearance, but redeem it for God and make it express the divinity within us and within it. The Upaniṣad conception of the world is a direct challenge to the spiritual activity of man. A philosophy of resignation, an ascetic code of ethics, and a temper of languid world-weariness are an insult to the Creator of the universe, a sin against ourselves and the world which has a claim on us. The Upaniṣads believe in God, and so believe in the world as well.

The Upaniṣads do not content themselves with merely emphasising the spirit of true religion. They also give us a code of duties, without which the moral ideal will be an uncertain guide. All forms of conduct where passion is controlled and reason reigns supreme, where there is self-transcendence in the sense of freedom from the narrowness of selfish individuality, where we work because we are all co-operators in the divine scheme, are virtuous, and their opposites vicious. Restraint, liberality and mercy are virtues.² The principle that the left hand should not know what the right hand does is expressed in the following words: "Give with faith, give not without faith, give in plenty, give with bashfulness, give with fear, give with sympathy."³ In Chāndogya (iii. 17) meditation, charity

¹ Iśā Upaniṣad, ii.

² Brh., v. 2.

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right dealing, non-injury to life and truthfulness are laid down as right forms of conduct.¹ To shrink from torturing the brute creation, to be sorry for a hunted hare, may be, according to our modern notions, silly sentimentalism fit only for squeamish women. But in the Upaniṣads love of brute creation is considered to be a great virtue. Kindness and compassion for all that has life on earth is a general feature of Indian ethics. It is a crime to kill a deer for sport or worry a rat for amusement. To attain conquest over passions, a discipline is sometimes enjoined. The Indian thinkers believe in the dependence of mind on body, and so prescribe purity of food as necessary for the purity of mind.² Control over the passions must be spontaneous, and when that is not possible forcible restraint is sometimes adopted. A distinction is made between tapas, or forcible constraint of passions, and nyāsa, or spiritual renunciation. Tapas is for the vānaprastha who is in the lower stage, while nyāsa is for the sannyāsin. The yogic practices of concentration, contemplation, etc., are to be met with. "The wise should sink speech in the mind and the mind into buddhi."³ Meditation and concentration as means of cleansing the mind are also enjoined. The individual is asked to turn all his thoughts inward and think only of God, not with an eye to obtaining favours, but to becoming one with Him. But even this exaltation of contemplative life is not necessarily an escape from reality. It is only the means by which we can see the ultimate truth of things. "With sharp and subtle mind is He beheld."⁴ The four āśramas of the brahmacārin or student, gṛhastha or householder, vānaprastha or anchorite, and sannyāsi or wandering mendicant, are mentioned as representing the different steps by which man gradually purifies himself from all earthly taint and becomes fit for his spiritual home.

Retirement from the world is enjoined for every Aryan when once his duties to society are fulfilled. It comes at the end of a man's career. The ascetic wanderer, whose life is love and conduct righteousness, turns his eyes towards heaven and keeps himself free from the temptations of the

¹ See also i. 9. 12.

² Kāṭha, i. 3. 10.

³ Āhārasuddhau satvasuddhiḥ.

⁴ Ibid., iii. 12.

world. The simple but devout minds of India were haunted by dreams of imperishable beauty and echoes of unceasing music. They live so intimately with the ideal that they are persuaded of its reality. To us it may be a dream, yet it is a dream in which they live, and it is therefore more real than the reality they ignore. A severe training of body and soul is prescribed for the ascetic, who alone can live such an ideal life. His life must be governed by the strictest purity and poverty. He is required to wear the yellow garments, shave his head and beg for his food in the streets. These are the means to help the soul to humility. The soul can mount to everlasting bliss by means of carefully regulated prayers and fastings. What makes an ascetic great is his holiness and humility. It is not the capacity to do clever conjurer's tricks or dream hysteric dreams, but it is to remain pure from lust and resentment, passion and desire. This living martyrdom is ever so much more difficult than killing oneself. Death is easy. It is life that is taxing. A true ascetic is not one who gives up home and society to escape the social bonds; he is not one who becomes a sannyāsin because he suffers shipwreck in life. It is these latter that draw disgrace on the whole institution. The true sannyāsin is he who, with self-control and spiritual vision, suffers for mankind. The labour of life is laid upon us to purify us from egoism, and social institutions are devices to help the growth of the soul. So after the gṛhasthāśrama, or the stage of the householder, comes that of the recluse. The Upaniṣads declare that the knowers of Ātman relinquish all selfish interests and become mendicants. "Knowing Him, the Ātman, Brāhmins relinquish the desire for posterity, the desire for possessions, the desire for worldly prosperity, and go forth as mendicants."¹ In Ancient India, though the sannyāsin is poor and penni-

¹ According to Oldenberg, this is the earliest trace of Indian monasticism. "From these Brāhmins, who knowing the Ātman renounce all that is earthly, and become beggars, the historical development progresses in a regular line up to Buddha, who leaves kith and kin, and goods and chattels, to seek deliverance, wandering homeless in the yellow garb of monk. The appearance of the doctrine of the Eternal One and the origin of monastic life in India are simultaneous; they are the two issues of the same important occurrence" (Oldenberg: *Buddha*, p. 32).

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less, lives on daily charity, and has no power or authority of any kind, he is still held in such high esteem that the emperors of the world bow to him. Such is the reverence for holy life.

The āśramadharmā, one of the central features of the Hindu religion, attempts to fill the whole of life with the power of spirit. It insists that a life of rigorous chastity is the proper preparation for married life. To the thinkers of the Upaniṣads, marriage is a religious sacrament, a form of divine service.¹ The home is sacred, and no religious ceremony is complete without the wife taking part in it. After the individual realises to the full the warmth and glow of human love and family affection, through marriage and parenthood, he is called upon to free himself slowly from attachment to home and family in order that he might realise his dignity as a citizen of the universe. If Buddhism failed to secure a permanent hold on the mind of India, it was because it exalted the ideal of celibacy over that of marriage and allowed all to enter the highest order of sannyāsins, regardless of their previous preparation for it. The sannyāsins are a spiritual brotherhood without possessions, without caste and nationality, enjoined to preach in the spirit of joy the gospel of love and service. They are the ambassadors of God on earth, witnessing to the beauty of holiness, the power of humility, the joy of poverty and the freedom of service.

The rules of caste prescribe the duties to society. Man has to fulfil his duties whatever his lot may be. The functions depend on the capacities. Brāhminhood does not depend on birth, but on character. The following story reveals this truth :

Satyakāma, the son of Jabālā, addressed his mother and said : " I wish to become a brahmacārin, mother. Of what family am I ? "

She said to him : " I do not know, my child, of what family thou art. In my youth, when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. So I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabālā by name. Thou art Satyakāma. Say that thou art Satyakāma Jābāla."

He going to Gautama, the son of Haridrumat, said to him : " I wish to become a brahmacārin with thee, Sire. May I come to you ? "

¹ See Tait. Up., i.

He said to him : " Of what family art thou, my friend ? "

He replied : " I do not know, Sire, of what family I am. I asked my mother, and she answered : ' In my youth, when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jābālā by name, thou art Satyakāma.' I am therefore Satyakāma Jābāla, Sire."

He said to him : " No one but a true Brāhmin would thus speak out. Go and fetch fuel, I shall initiate thee. Thou hast not swerved from the truth."

The whole philosophy of the Upaniṣads tends towards the softening of the divisions and the undermining of class hatreds and antipathies. God is the inner soul of all alike. So all must be capable of responding to the truth and therefore possess a right to be taught the truth. Sanat-kumāra, the representative of the Kṣatriyas, instructs the Brāhmin Nārada about the ultimate mystery of things. Higher philosophy and religion were by no means confined to the Brāhmin class. We read of kings instructing the famous teachers of the time about the deep problems of spirit. Janaka and Ajātaśatru are Kṣatriya kings who held religious congresses where philosophical disputations were conducted. It was a period of keen intellectual life. Even ordinary people were interested in the problems of philosophy. Wise men are found wandering up and down the country eager to debate. The Brāhmin editors of the Upaniṣads had so sincere a regard for truth that they were ready to admit that Kṣatriyas took an important part in these investigations.² Women, though they were much sheltered so far as the struggle for life was concerned, had equal rights with men in the spiritual struggle for salvation. Maitreyī, Gārgī discuss the deep problems of spirit and enter into philosophic tournaments.³

It is true that the Upaniṣads lay stress on knowledge as the means to salvation. " Tarati śokam ātmavit," the knower of Ātman, crosses all sorrow. " Brahmaivid Brahmaiva bhavati," the knower of Brahman, becomes indeed Brahman. Because the Upaniṣads lay stress on jñāna, and look upon all morality as a preliminary to it, there are

¹ Chāndogya, iv. 4. 1. 4.

² See Kauṣītaki Up., i. 4. 2; Bṛh., iii. 7; Chān. v. 3. 7.

³ Bṛh., ii. 4.

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critics who contend that the Upaniṣads in their enthusiasm for jñāna relegate the will to a subordinate place. Deussen, after urging that morality has no meaning for the enlightened, says that it is not necessary even for the unenlightened. "Moral conduct cannot contribute directly but only indirectly to the attainment of the knowledge that brings emancipation. For this knowledge is not a becoming something which had no previous existence and might be brought about by appropriate means, but it is the perception of that which previously existed from all eternity."¹ But the Upaniṣads do not advocate knowledge in the narrow sense of the term as the sole means to salvation. "That self cannot be gained by the knowledge of the Veda or by understanding or by much learning."² Right living is also insisted on. Knowledge should be accompanied by virtue. If the candidate for theology does not possess moral and spiritual attainments, he is not admitted, whatever be his zeal and inquisitiveness.³ Jñāna, we must make it clear, is not mere intellectual ability. It is the soul-sense. The mind of the applicant must not be too restless or too much taken up with the world to fix itself on the Highest. His heart must be purified and warmed by devotion to God. We hear in the Upaniṣads of people who are required to go through a long course of moral and spiritual discipline before they are taken up as students by those ṛṣis, the specialists in the science of God. In the Praśna Upaniṣad, Pippalāda sends away six inquirers after God for another year of discipline. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Satyakāma Jābāla is sent to the wilds of the forests to tend the teacher's cattle, that thereby he might cultivate habits of solitary reflection and come into contact with nature. The jñāna which the Upaniṣads emphasise is the faith which becomes the living law of the soul's energy. As the tree bears fruit, knowledge must realise itself in work. When we have jñāna we are said to possess truth, make it our own and be transformed by it. This is not possible for "one who has not ceased from wicked conduct, who

¹ *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 362.

² *Muṇḍaka*, iii. 2. 3. See also iii. 1. 8.

³ See *Kātha*, i. 2. 24-25.

is not calm, who is not collected and in whose heart there is not peace." Rāmānuja therefore interprets knowledge to be dhyāna, meditation, or upāsana, worship. There does not seem to be any justification for the interpretation that excludes moral life from knowledge. It is true that the Upaniṣads urge that mere works will not do, unless these express the feeling of unity with the self. "Nay, even if one who does not know that self should perform here some great holy work, it will perish for him in the end. If the man worships the self only as his true spirit, his work does not perish. For whatever he desires, that he obtains from this self."¹ This passage insists that works must be performed with knowledge. Without faith in the transcendent mere works languish.² The real end of man cannot be reached by mere mechanical goodness. In all works, in offering sacrifices, in observing ritual, there is self-transcendence, but not necessarily identification with the infinite. All works must be done with the definite motive of promoting the interest of the real self. Without God our life has no aim, no existence and no support. The Upaniṣads condemn the rites and sacrifices performed with the sole idea of bringing about large returns of outward good either in this world or in the next. We should not do our duty with the motive of purchasing shares in the other world or opening a bank account with God. In protesting against such a mechanical conception of duty in the Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads lay stress on a necessary truth. But they lend no support to the view that works and knowledge are exclusive of each other, and that knowledge alone leads to salvation. The Upaniṣads insist on a life of spirit which combines both jñāna and karma.

Just as the ideal of the intellect cannot be realised so long as we remain at the intellectual level, but can be found when we transcend that level, and rise to intuition, even so the ideal of morality cannot be reached so long as we remain at the moral level, but can be reached when we rise to religion. At the moral level the two sides of our nature, the finite and the infinite, are in conflict. The finite breathes egoism or ahaṁkāra, and gives the individual a sense of

¹ Brh., i. 4. 15.

² See Brh., iii. 8. 10.

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his separateness from the universal. The infinite in him rushes forth to realise itself in the world. The self-fulfilment of spirit is opposed by the tendency to the disintegration of spirit. We attempt to hold the lower nature in check through the practice of morality, but until the lower is completely spiritualised the ideal is not attained. It is when we destroy the exclusiveness of our individuality and therewith the sense of separateness that we enter the joy of religion and realise the full freedom of the spirit.

The possibility of this religious realisation is the presupposition of all morality. Without it we cannot be sure that the aspirations of morality will be realised. In the face of disasters and dreads, death and disease, the conviction that in spite of the apparent discord and contradiction all things work together for good, cheers us. Morality requires the postulate of religion. God gives us the security that all is well with the world and man is bound to win. "When a man finds his peace and resting-place in that invisible, intangible, inexpressible, unfathomable, then has he attained to peace. If, however, a man admits therein an interval, a separation, then his unrest continues; it is, moreover, the unrest of one who imagines himself wise."¹ With this religious guarantee the pressure of circumstance or the persecution of man fails to disquiet us. No rivalry provokes us to anger or bitterness. Religion is the inspiration of morality. Without religion morality becomes an eternal striving, a perpetual progress, an endless aspiration towards something we do not have. In religion all this is turned into realisation, enjoyment and fruition. Then is the weakness of finite endowment overcome, and the finite self becomes endowed with a meaning and a mission. When once this consciousness is reached the continuance or the cessation of bodily existence becomes a matter of indifference.² Man is consumed with the fire of the love of God and the service of humanity. He does not care

¹ Brh., iv. 2. 4.

² "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psa. xxxvii. 35-37).

whether the path he has to traverse is smooth or rough. When a man realises the truth, evil turns away from him and is itself destroyed, just as a ball of earth hitting against a solid stone.¹

As the intuitional level goes beyond the categories of intellect, even so does the religious level pass beyond the distinctions of good and evil. He who reaches the highest is above all laws.² "Him does not afflict the thought, why have I not done what is good, why have I committed sin?"³ He fears nothing and does not trouble himself about his deeds and misdeeds in the past. "He the immortal is beyond both, beyond good and evil; what is done and what is left undone cause him no pain, his domain is affected by no action." This admits the possibility of blotting out the effects of a sinful life by a sincere change of heart. On this principle is based the Christian doctrine that no amount of sin is a bar to salvation, provided an act of sure repentance has been performed. When once the soul attains the real, "in whom to dwell is happiness imperishable," the human body is suffused with the splendour of divinity in which all that is mean and vile shrivels and dies. The question of morality has no significance. For it is no more the individual that *does* anything. His will is God's will and his life God's life. He has joined the whole, and thus become the whole. All action flows from the spring in God. There is no more the distinction between God and the individual. Dr. Bosanquet, in his excellent little book on *What Religion Is*, brings out this fundamental oneness of the highest condition. "In the purity of love and will with the supreme good, you are not only 'saved,' but you are 'free' and 'strong.' . . . You will not be helped by trying to divide up the unity and tell how much comes from 'you' and how much from 'God.' You have got to deepen yourself in it, or let it deepen itself in you, whatever phrase expresses the fact best to your mind."⁴

¹ Chāndogya, i. 2. 7.

² Kauṣṭaki, ii. 8; Bṛh., iv. 4. 22.

³ Tait., ii. 9.

⁴ Pp. 20-21. "As a drop of water is diffused in a jar of wine, taking its taste and colour, and as molten iron becomes like to fire and casts off its form, and as the air transfused with sunlight is transformed into that

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Unfortunately, this central truth of religious life is not sufficiently understood by even some good students of Indian thought. The latest critic of the Upaniṣads, Dr. Hume, observes: "There is a wide difference between the Upaniṣadic theory and the theory of the Greek sages, that the man who has knowledge should thereby become virtuous in character, or that the result of teaching should be a virtuous life. Here the possession of some metaphysical knowledge actually cancels all past sins and even permits the knower unblushingly to continue in 'what seems to be much evil' with perfect impunity, although such acts are heinous crimes and are disastrous in their effect for others who lack that kind of knowledge."¹ We have already said that the knowledge of the Upaniṣads is not metaphysical acumen or dialectical subtlety, but the realisation of the highest as the supreme power at the heart of the universe. This spiritual perception is possible only with a thorough transformation of human nature in its theoretical and practical aspects. What Dr. Hume calls "the possession of some metaphysical knowledge" is possible only for the pure in heart. They have perfect freedom. "In that highest state a thief is not a thief, a murderer not a murderer. He is not followed by good, nor followed by evil, for he then overcomes all the sorrows of the heart."² The free can do what they choose with perfect impunity, but this freedom is not "the madness of license."³ The mystic becomes a law unto himself and the lord of himself and of the world in which he lives. Laws and regulations are necessary for those men who do not naturally conform to the dictates of conscience. But for those who have risen above their selfish egos, morality becomes the very condition of their being, and law is fulfilled in love. There is no possibility of evil-doing in them. Pressure

same light, so that it seems not illumined but itself the light, thus in the saints every human affection must in ineffable mode be liquefied of itself and transfused into the Will of God. How could God be all, if in man anything of man remained? A certain substance will remain, but in another form, another glory, another power" (St. Bernard, quoted in *Mind*, 1913, p. 329).

¹ Introduction to *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 60.

² *Bh.*, iv.

³ Rabindranath Tagore: *Sadhana*, p. 18.

from without is converted into an inward acceptance. Till the spiritual life is won, the law of morality appears to be an external command which man has to obey with effort and pain. But when the light is obtained it becomes the internal life of the spirit, working itself out unconsciously and spontaneously. The saint's action is an absolute surrender to the spontaneity of spirit, and is not an unwilling obedience to externally imposed laws. We have the free outpouring of an unselfish spirit which does not calculate the rewards of action or the penalties of omission. The conventional standards, the external duties and the ethical rules become meaningless to him. The soul delights in that supreme blessedness, perceives the unity of all, and loves the world as we love our separate selves. "A perfectly good will would therefore be equally subject to objective laws (*viz.* laws of good), but could not be conceived as *obliged* thereby to act lawfully, because of itself from its subjective constitution it can only be determined by the conception of good. Therefore no *imperatives* hold for the Divine will or in general for a holy will; *ought* is here out of place, because volition is already of itself necessarily in unison with the law."¹ The moral laws are its expression, and therefore do not bind it. Such a supreme soul is the creator of values and *svarāṭ*,² a law to himself. In the scheme of the world we have three classes of beings: (1) Those who strive after self-assertion and gratification of appetites, the bad men who, if ever they practise virtue, do so for selfish reasons, such as hope of heaven or fear of hell; (2) men who know the law and try to conform to it with great effort and trouble, since their selves are subject to discord; and (3) the saviours of the world, who have overcome the conflict of life and attained peace. They know the purpose of life and live up to it unconsciously and automatically. The Upaniṣad asks us in cases of doubt and difficulty to conduct ourselves in the manner in which the knowers of Brahman devoted to duty would do.³ These great men go on doing their daily work, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light and the flower perfume, without

¹ Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 31 (Abbot's edition).

² *Svayam eva rājah.*

³ *Tait. i. 11.*

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even being aware of it. Every man can realise such a condition. The possibility of becoming one with God can be established only by the actuality of it. The fact of realisation is the only proof of the possibility of the identification of man with the all-powerful spirit. According to Christian thinkers, one such complete manifestation of God in man is in the personality of Jesus. The Upaniṣads declare that all men have in them the possibility of rising to their full divine stature, and can realise it if they strive for it.

Since morality has a meaning only in the imperfect world where man is struggling to realise his highest nature, it is sometimes said that in the metaphysical system of the Upaniṣads morality does not find a worthy place. Deussen observes that when "the knowledge of the Ātman has been gained, every action and therefore every moral action also has been deprived of meaning."¹ All through we have been indicating the basis of such complaints. Moral activity is not an end in itself. It is to be taken over into the perfect life. Only this has transcendental worth. The liberated in the fine phrase of the Talmud share with the Almighty in the work of creation. Here we have morality as obedience to a law displaced by the true idea of free service of an end, spontaneous devotion to the whole. In this state the individual being is absorbed in the Supreme. This alone has transcendental worth, but the moral struggle as preparing the way for it is not useless.

XVI

THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

Religion is essentially a matter of life and experience. The Upaniṣads prescribe three stages in the growth of the religious consciousness, viz. *sravaṇa*, which literally means listening, *manana* or reflection, and *nididhyāsana* or contemplative meditation.² The first stage points to the place

¹ *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 362.

² *Bṛh. Up.*, ii. 4. 5 ; iv. 5. 6. Udayana in his *Kusumāñjali*, i. 3, refers to them under the names of *āgama* or scripture, *anumāna* or inference, and *dhyāna* or meditation.

of tradition in religious life. For the initiation of faith in the living God, some kind of traditional revelation is necessary. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." The bulk of men rest with tradition and symbol. Religion, according to the Upaniṣads, is not, however, to be confused with traditionalism. By strenuous intellectual effort, we should try to understand the essential meaning of or the truth contained in the tradition. The need for rational thought is brought out in the second stage. The mere assumption of the first stage becomes now a logical conclusion. The understanding of truth, however, is not the attainment of reality. To the highest religious consciousness, the real is not something inferred, but given. This experience of reality, this consciousness of the infinite, requires the development of a mode of apprehension distinct from that of mere reason. Nididhyāšana, or contemplative meditation, helps us to transform the logical idea into a spiritual perception, or darśana, which is another name for the effective realisation of truth already admitted. It is to stand alone, and like Whitman, after a logical study of astronomy, "to gaze in perfect silence at the stars." It is to hold before the mind's eye the object we seek to know. Meditation is not advised as a means to trance and catalepsy, which are most emphatically denounced, but only as a help for the mind to rest on the object. By suppressing all fluctuations of thought and the distractions of desire, we allow the mind to settle on the object, penetrate it and become one with it. The worship of God, the practice of goodness and the pursuit of truth are aids to the building up of the life of truth in the soul. While the speculative mind contemplates the being of God, the emotional nature in its passionate devotion for God loses itself in Him. The object is no more outside us as in ordinary experience. There is an intense realisation, which pulses through the whole being, a becoming one with God as it were. The worshipper grows akin to that which he worships. The object becomes not only the content of but the consciousness itself of the contemplator. The transformation of mind is in a sense the transformation of existence itself. The Upaniṣads speak to us of the intuition of minor deities as well as the

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ecstatic intuition of Brahman. So long as the objects intuited have limitations or traces of individuality, the ultimate goal is not reached. We must intuit Brahman to become Brahman.

It is clear that the religion of the Upaniṣads insists on a transformation of the whole nature of man. It is not a mere formal cult or an ethical discipline or a dogmatic creed. It is untrue to say that the Upaniṣads do not care for the non-intellectual sides of human nature. They provide room for an emotional as well as a speculative religion. The Upaniṣads are aware of the contradictions which ordinary religious consciousness is apt to exhibit. If God is perfect goodness, then morality is already realised, for everything that is must be the expression of a perfect will. If God is the Creator of the world, then He must bring something into existence which limits His nature. Either the world created is distinct from God the Creator, in which case He is limited by His creation, or the two are identical, a possibility which is repugnant to all religion and morality. In religion we have the will of man set over against the will of God. If the two are one, then there is no morality, for there is no independent reality of the human will. If the two are different, then God becomes limited and finite, and a finite God cannot inspire confidence in us. Again, if we attribute to God a free will, then He can overrule karma, and caprice will become the central fact; if on the other hand He is subject to laws and treats us according to our karma, then His freedom is restricted. These contradictions may lead us to think that the highest conception of God we can possibly have is not the highest reality. Religion may lag behind and have to be content with a finite God, however contradictory such a conception may be. This may be justified on the ground that it is not its main business to discover the highest truth, and that philosophically we may have to admit that all conceptions of God, however lofty they may be, are only relative.¹ While this may be the implication of the Upaniṣad theory, it becomes an explicit doctrine only when the intuitive vision of the

¹ See *Kena*, i. 5. 8.

Upaniṣads is converted into a scientific system of thought. The Upaniṣads, indeed, recognise higher and lower forms of religion.

We have to remember that the highest religion of the Upaniṣads, which insists on meditation and morality and worship of God in spirit and in truth, is not encumbered by such traditional dogmas and miracles as still hang upon the skirts of other religions. Its central principle that there is one supreme reality that manifests itself in the universe is not asserted as a dogma. It is the ultimate truth at which it is possible for human understanding to arrive. The progress of science and philosophy does not conflict with it but only confirms it. The Upaniṣad religion is the feeling of reverence and love for the great spirit. Such meditation is spiritualised bhakti. It recognises also that the distinction between subject and object melts away in the heart of religious fervour. The oneness and wholeness of the world is the supreme fact of the Upaniṣad religion. This may not satisfy the ordinary religious consciousness. Man as finite self is incapable of grasping the absolute reality. He makes an object of it set over against himself. The Absolute becomes a personal God. Though it is not the final truth, ordinary religious consciousness requires it. God is the friend and helper, the father and creator, the governor of the universe. He is said to be the supreme person (Puruṣottama), but He does not rule the world from without. In that case there would be no organic connection between Him and the world. He is the inner guide or the antaryāmi. Though a person, he is said to be above all, in all, and through all. All things are of Him, in Him and unto Him. But as Jacobi would put it, an understood God is no God at all. To imagine God is what we think is nothing less than blasphemy. Though the God of religion is a limited expression of the absolute, it is not a mere imaginative presentation. In the development of the absolute into the universe conceived by the finite mind, the first existent being is the God or the universal soul possessing self-consciousness. He is the absolute personified. The Upaniṣads do not care to identify Him with the ideal tendency of things opposing and struggling through the

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non-ideal ; in that case He would be reduced to the level of the finite. According to the Upaniṣads, the Absolute and God are one ; we call it the supreme Brahman to emphasise its transcendence of the finite, its unknowability, its all-comprehensiveness ; we call it Íśvara to emphasise the personal aspect so necessary for religious devotion. The relation between the two, the absolute Brahman and the personal Íśvara, is said to be like that of the true Lord to the idol.¹ Yet the two are one. The absolute is both personal and impersonal.² Meditation on the supreme becomes the passionate devotion to the Lord of the universe. The individual looks upon God as something transcendent, and feels acutely the need of grace. Devaprasāda, or grace of God, is the condition of the deliverance of man from bondage. " This Ātman cannot be attained through study or intelligence or much learning—whom he wishes to attain by him it can be attained. To him the Ātman reveals its true nature." ³ Sometimes the religious passion grows so fervent that the devotee exclaims : " It is He who inspires to do good works the man whom He will lead on high, and it is He who inspires to do evil works the man whom He will lead downwards." ⁴ The oneness of God and man is realised only after a good deal of discipline and exercise. When the ideal of religion is reached, the personal conception is transcended. The higher we go in religious experience, the more we perceive the identity between the object of worship and the worshipper, till at last the two become one. Then there is no worship in the traditional sense of the term. The absolute is felt as a boundless spirit pervading the whole universe and flooding the soul of man. Our limits fall away and the defects incident to man's imperfection dissolve. The end of religion is the transcendence of religion. Ideal religion overcomes the duality with which it starts. Religious worship starts with fear, passes through reverence, love and communion with the eternal, and culminates in the ecstatic life, where God and the soul

¹ Śaṅkara's Commentary on Tait., i. 6. " Śalagrama iva viṣṇoḥ."

² Mūrtāmūrtam. Śaṅkara's Commentary on Tait., i. 6.

³ Muṇḍaka, iii. 2. 3 ; Kāṭha, ii. 23.

⁴ Kauṣṭaki, iii. 8.

melt into each other. Religious worship has to be accepted until the perfect condition is reached.

Imperfect forms of worship are admitted as preparatory to the perfect. The Upaniṣads are led into inconsistent notions when they try to do too much justice to the conflicting creeds which prevailed among the peoples of the time. Some believed in magic; some tried to subdue the powers of nature by concentration and other ascetic practices; some were lost in a futile formalism; some worshipped the Vedic gods; some tried to effect an escape from this world of change by means of spiritual insight. The Upaniṣad thinkers, conscious of the weakness of human understanding which has to limit the God present in all things, at all times, and in all places to some special place, time and thing, recognise that if lower forms of worship are dismissed, there is the risk of banishing God altogether out of life. Some worship is better than none, and so it is said that we become whatever form we worship. "Let him worship the Brahman as support, and he becomes supported. Let him worship Brahman as greatness, and he becomes great. Let him worship Brahman as mind, he becomes endowed with mind. And let him worship Brahman as Brahman, and he will become possessed of Brahman."¹ God reveals Himself in different ways to different men. This is not to be confused with the doctrine of incarnations, which is unknown to the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads consider the highest form of religion to be spiritual meditation on the absolute; next in rank is the passionate devotion to the one immanent Lord; lowest of all is the worship of the Vedic devas and other deities.

It is frequently urged that the Upaniṣads do not admit of any religious worship. Dr. Urquhart writes: "However clearly the attitude of true worship may seem to be indicated, there is a constant refrain sometimes even in the same verse to the effect that the self who is to be worshipped is the self of the worshipper, and that consequently there is no such distinction between the two (God and man), as is demanded by the fully theistic relation."² The Upaniṣads

¹ Tait., iii. 10; see also Chān., i. 3. 12; Bṛh., i. 2. 13.

² *The Upaniṣads and Life*, p. 60.

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are emphatic about the oneness of God and man. The relative difference we recognise between the two is taken over in a higher unity. "If a man worships another divinity with the idea that he and the God are different, he does not know." ¹ The unity of spirit is the first principle of the Upaniṣad doctrine. Divine immanence is its central fact. If that is inconsistent with religious worship, it means only that theism has no place for true religion, since a true theism must accept divine immanence. All true religion declares that finite things are not self-sustained, are not self-evolved, but that God is over all, through all, in all, the ground of existence, the source of life and the goal of desire. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me." ² "Am I a God, at hand, saith the Lord and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord; Do not I fill Heaven and earth?" "In God, we live and move and have our being," ³ and "He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." ⁴ All true religion recognises the immanence of God and is highly mystic.

XVII

MOKṢA OR RELEASE

Is the highest state of religious realisation, the atonement with the supreme godhead, a mere vanishing into nothingness? The Upaniṣad view is that there is in the highest condition a disintegration of individuality, a giving up of selfish isolation, but it is not a mere nothing or death. "As the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all." ⁵ The Upaniṣads do not recognise the ultimate reality of the

¹ Bṛh., i. 4. 10.

² St. Paul.

³ Muṇḍaka, iii. 2. 8. See also Praśna, vi. 5.

⁴ Psalm cxxxix.

⁵ St. John.

narrow individual self. Those who pray for personal immortality take their stand on the ultimateness of the individual, and urge its maintenance beyond the world. The real in finite life, what is best in the individual's nature, is the infinite, and that persists beyond the limits of physical existence. Nothing of value is lost. Whatever spiritual values we seek after on earth and find imperfectly, we possess in the highest condition absolutely. As human beings we reach our ideals imperfectly, in flashes and moments of insight. In the highest condition we attain to them perfectly, completely and absolutely. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad points out how the bliss we have in the world is only a shadow of the divine bliss, a feeble apology for it.¹ After all our troubles in the sea of life we do not reach a desert shore where we are obliged to die of hunger. The liberated condition must be looked upon as the fullest expression of the self. The ascent to God will be a lapse into the void or the abyss, if the ultimate Brahman is itself looked upon as an abstraction. Then the goal of man is annihilation. The Upaniṣads dispute such a conclusion. The highest is a state of rapture and ecstasy, a condition of ānanda, where the creature as creature is abolished, but becomes one with the Creator, or more accurately realises his oneness with Him. We cannot describe this perfection adequately. We use symbols. The nature of eternal life is a condition of ānanda or freedom, a state of joyous expansion of the soul, where heaven and earth are felt to flow together.

Its nature cannot be characterised except through image and metaphor. We have some states in this life which may be taken as illustrations of eternal or timeless existence. Baron Von Hügel speaks to us of trance conditions which "appear to the experiencing soul, in proportion to their concentration, as timeless, i.e. as non-successive, simultaneous, hence as *eternal*. . . . The eternity of the soul is not here a conclusion drawn from the apparent God-likeness in other respects, of the soul when in this condition, but the eternity, on the contrary, is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement

¹ See ii. 8; Kauṣṭaki, i. 3. 5; Brh., iv. 3. 33.

to the soul for holding itself to be divine. The soul's immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, whilst its eternity, in the sense indicated, is or seems to be directly experienced in such "this-life" states. Hence the belief in immortality is here derivative, that in eternity is primary."¹ In the enjoyment of a melody, the contemplation of a work of art, in grasping an argument as a whole, we have the mystical condition, the sight of God, the experience of eternity.² The temporal happenings become eternal when viewed in relation to the absolute, and thus assigned their true worth.

Since from our human point of view it is not possible to describe the fullness of the absolute reality, the Upaniṣads do not describe precisely the condition of ultimate freedom. There are two conflicting accounts running throughout: that it is a state of likeness to God, and that it is a state of oneness with God.

There are passages where the individual is said to become one with the highest. "The praṇava is the bow, the Ātman is the arrow, and the Brahman is said to be its mark. It should be hit by one who is self-collected, and that which hits becomes like the arrow, one with the

¹ *Eternal Life*, p. 27.

² St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, says: "Suppose all the tumult of the flesh in us were hushed for ever, and all sensible images of earth and sea and air were put to silence; suppose the heavens were still and even the soul spoke no words to itself, but passed beyond all thought of itself; suppose all dreams and revelations of imagination were hushed with every word and sign and everything that belongs to this transitory world; suppose they were all silenced—though, if they speak to one who hears, what they say is, 'We made not ourselves, but He made us who abides for ever'—yet suppose they only uttered this and then were silent, when they had turned the ears of the hearer to Him who made them, leaving Him to speak alone, not through them but through Himself, so that we could hear His words, not through any tongue of flesh nor by the voice of an angel, nor in thunder, nor in any likeness that hides what it reveals; suppose then that the God whom through such manifestations we have learnt to love were to be revealed to us directly without any such mediation—just as, but now, we reached out of ourselves and touched by a flash of insight the eternal wisdom that abides above all; suppose, lastly, that this vision of God were to be prolonged for ever, and all other inferior modes of vision were to be taken away, so that this alone should ravish and absorb the beholder and entrance him in mystic joy, and our very life for ever like the moment of clear insight and inspiration to which we rose—is not this just what is meant by the words 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'?"

mark, that is Brahman." 1 The Ātman becomes one with Brahman. 2 Here absolute identity between the soul and Brahman is asserted. Again, "All these become one in the highest imperishable Brahman." 3 "He becomes merged in the supreme undecaying Ātman." 4 "He becomes omniscient and becomes all." 5 "He enters into all." 6 The redeemed soul enters into all things and becomes all things in spirit. "Having attained him, the seers content with their knowledge, their purpose accomplished, free from all desire, and with full composure, having attained the all-pervading Ātman on all sides, ever concentrating their minds, enter into everything." 7 They who see the whole universe held firm in the one all-enfolding presence cannot have any sorrow or torment. "Having without doubt well ascertained the significance of the knowledge of the Vedānta, the seekers, their minds purified by dint of renunciation attain the worlds of that Brahman, and when their body falls, their Ātman being one with the highest immortal Brahman, are absolved all round." 8 The liberated soul feels his oneness with God so intensely that he calls himself the creator of the world. "I am the food, I am the food-eater. I am the subject, I am the object, I am the two together. I am the firstborn, the destroyer of the world also. I am the sunlike light I am the centre of the world, of immortal gods." 9 These passages seem to imply that there is no sense of individuality, and therefore no possibility of action in the highest state. It seems to be a survival without consciousness, where body is dissolved and mind extinguished and all is lost in a boundless darkness. If we please, we may call it the sleep without dreams, or the peace without understanding. When Yājñavalkya explains it to Maitreyī in the words: "As a lump of salt which is thrown into the water dissolves and cannot be gathered up again, but wherever water is drawn, it is salty, so truly is it with this great being, the endless, the unlimited,

Muṇḍaka, ii. 2. 2. See also Kāṭha, ii. 15.

Śaravat tanmayo bhavet.

Muṇḍaka, iii. 2. 7. Sarva ekībhavanti.

iv. 10. Sa sarvajñaḥ sarvo bhavati.

i. vii. Sarvam evāviśanti.

Muṇḍaka, iii. 2. 5.

8 iii. 2. 6.

• Praśna, iv. 9.

9 Tait., iii.

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the fullness of knowledge, from these beings it came into view and with them it vanishes. There is no consciousness after death," Maitreyī observes: "This speech of thine, that there is no consciousness after death perplexes me." Yājñavalkya replies: "I tell thee nothing perplexing, it is quite comprehensible. Where there is a duality of existences, one can see the other, one can smell the other, one can speak to the other, one can hear the other, one can think of the other, one can apprehend the other. But where everything has turned into his Ātman, by whom and whom shall he see, by whom and whom shall he smell, by whom and to whom shall he speak, by whom and whom shall he hear, think and apprehend? By whom shall he apprehend him through whom he apprehends this universe? Through whom shall he apprehend him the apprehender?" From this it is clear that in some way hard for our intellect to grasp the soul attains liberation devoid of any activity, perception, thought or consciousness, which are all symptomatic of a dualistic vision. These activities rest on the opposition of subject and object, and are possible only in the world of relativity. In the absolute world, all plurality is said to disappear with the resulting activities of perception and action. It is then the everlasting, unchangeable itself, in whose perfection all movement is stilled, all colours pale and all sounds pass away. This is the negative side of freedom, which is all that is open to finite intelligence. There is also the positive side. Simply because we as finite cannot describe the fullness of the absolute state, it does not become a negative blank. Negatively, the soul seems to lose all distinction and become something which is neither this nor that, but some vague indeterminate somewhat. Those careless beings who make a show of sleeping through it all may really be very active. When the positive aspect is emphasised, the liberated soul is looked upon as a perfected individual with a status of absolute equality with the supreme soul.¹ The passages which declare that the liberated soul traverses the worlds, obtaining all its wishes, indicate that the freed soul has yet an active existence. "Traversing these worlds, having the food he likes, taking the form he

¹ Paramah̥ sāmyam upaiti. Muṇḍaka, iii. 1. 3.

likes, he sits singing songs." ¹ And yet he has the feeling that he is one with God. According to the Chāndogya, immortality is lifting oneself up to the region of the deity.² Muṇḍaka holds it to be the companionship with God.³ Absolute likeness with God is also suggested.⁴ To make room for such individual action it is said that the individual becomes like God. Whatever differences there might be about the exact nature of the highest condition, one thing is clear, that it is a state of activity, full of freedom and perfection. Strictly speaking, we cannot describe that state, but if a description is wanted, it is best to consider it to be a state of divine life. The self is not annihilated any more than the ray of the sun is lost in the sun, the wave of the sea in the ocean, the notes of music in the one harmony. The song of the individual is not lost in the music of the world march. It is the same for ever and yet not the same. It is said that the liberated soul becomes one with all and lives a life in unity with God. The positive description seems to suggest a sense of individuality which helps him to act in this world, though this individuality is not based on any self-feeling. This individualisation of life seems to be necessary for the fulfilment of the joy of the one supreme. Even though for purposes of self-expression there is this possession of a centre of individuality, we are told that the soul is conscious of its glory and the greatness of immortality. It feels that God is at work in the cosmic drama, where the divine consciousness plays and acts. The liberated individual also plays in the same drama with full possession of the truth. There is nothing which does not bend to his purposes. "He maketh the winds His angels, and the flaming fires His ministers." The philosophical reconciliation of the varying descriptions had to wait till a later day. It is possible to eliminate the sense of egoism even in this life, and he who achieves perfection in this life is called a jīvanmukta. His joy of immortality realises itself in the freedom of movement.

The vagueness of the Upaniṣad doctrines led to the development of different theories from the same texts. Some Buddhists interpret the Upaniṣad idea to be an entire loss,

¹ Tait., iii. 10. 8.

² ii. 22.

³ iii. 2. 6.

⁴ iii. 1. 3.

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some Vedāntins as the self-immersion of the individual soul in the supreme. Others hold that it is an eternal existence absorbed in the thought, love and enjoyment of the supreme, and not an annihilation. The cry of the devotee poet, "I want to eat sugar, and do not want to become sugar," expresses this view. The religious philosophers of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism adopt this standpoint. But almost all Indian thinkers are agreed that mokṣa is release from birth and death. Union with God is another name for becoming eternal. When "eternity" is translated into the terms of the phenomenal world, it becomes birthlessness and deathlessness.

XVIII

EVIL AND SUFFERING

The problem of evil is a stumbling-block to all monistic systems. The metaphysical problem of the rise of the finite has already been dealt with. We are now concerned with the question of moral evil. In the Vedic hymns, virtue is conformity with the Vedic precepts and vice non-conformity. In the Upaniṣads knowledge of life eternal is virtue and ignorance vice. Conduct expressive of this false vision and consequent isolation of self is evil conduct. All objects of the world, according to the Upaniṣads, are to be sought after as gateways to God. If we look upon them as solid and secluded, and regard ourselves as separate units, then we sin morally. Error is the denial by the ego of the supremacy of the whole, or its own assertion of self-sufficiency. Evil is the denial in conduct by the ego of the supremacy of the whole. Sin is the product of the shallow insight, breeding selfish egoism, that hugs its own narrowness and shrinks from all sacrifice. The Upaniṣads do not say that evil is illusion or that evil is permanent. In either case it will be the duty of man to bow submissively to it. Evil is unreal in the sense that it is bound to be transmuted into good. It is real to the extent that it requires effort to transform its nature.

Sin is making self higher than God, while holiness is

displacing self-consciousness by God-consciousness. Man can never cling to evil for all time. It is in a state of unstable equilibrium, being opposed to the nature of things. Morality, according to the Upaniṣads, expresses the true nature of things. Only the good can ultimately prevail. "The true prevails, not the untrue." ¹ Evil is something negative, self-contradictory, a principle of death; good, positive and real, a principle of life. That evil cannot be all satisfying is plain from the pathetic unrest of the present day world, with all its wealth and luxury and control over mechanism.

There are many passages which emphasise the difficulty of attaining Brahman. "He of whom many are not even able to hear, whom many, even when they hear of Him, do not comprehend; wonderful is a man when found who is able to teach Him the self, wonderful is he who comprehends Him." ² The path that leads to salvation is like "the sharp edge of a razor, difficult to cross and hard to tread." ³ The realisation of spirit is not a smooth development or uninterrupted advance. The progress to perfection is through pain and suffering. The hard flints must come into violent conflict before they can produce the sparks of fire. The chick has to undergo the pain of separation from the shell before it can reach the intangible light and air. Moral conduct seems to go against the grain of things. The good and the pleasant are not always conjoined. "The good is one thing, the pleasant another. These two have different objects and chain a man. It is well with him who chooses the good. He who chooses the pleasant misses his end." ⁴ Pleasure seems to lie in the satisfaction of the natural impulse, and the good requires the taming of the forces of nature. Man in the moral scheme seems to be seeking the true self which he has somehow missed. But until the true self is realised, the moral law assumes the form of an external compulsion. The good does not seem to be the pleasant. Morality implies a wrestling with the lower tendency, the pursuit of which appears pleasant. When man struggles to free himself from his natural

¹ Muṇḍaka, iii. 1. 6.

² Ibid., i. 3. 14.

³ Kāṭha, i. 2. 7; B.G., ii. 29.

⁴ Ibid., i. 2. 1. 2.

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entanglements, life becomes intense with strife. Suffering is the condition of progress. Struggle is the law of existence and sacrifice the principle of evolution. The more the struggle and sacrifice, the greater are the joy and the freedom. All progress has this destructive side. Every gain in spirit involves a loss in nature. But the loss is not a real loss. Were it real and absolute, then the loss would be a dead loss and we could not afford it. Suffering is the ransom the son of man has to pay if he would attain his crown. It reveals to us the incomplete nature of the self and the world. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," says the Psalmist: for suffering is the messenger of God revealing to us the imperfection of the world, the episodic nature of earthly life. The discipline of suffering has also its use in the education of the spirit. Resistance drives the soul to put forth its whole strength, and thus compels it to grow. The darker the sky the brighter will the stars shine. Suffering cannot be abolished so long as spiritual life has to be lived under human conditions. Until the whole being is made an offering to God, the process of gradual rise through suffering cannot cease. "Man verily is the sacrifice," says the Upaniṣad.¹ Life is a perpetual dying till we are face to face with God. Life is a place of torment, where the human spirit writhes to possess the eternal. Veil after veil is to be withdrawn. The illusions of life are to be torn away and our cherished dreams dispersed before the life divine can be reached.

XIX

KARMA

The law of karma is the counter-part in the moral world of the physical law of uniformity. It is the law of the conservation of moral energy. The vision of law and order is revealed in the Rta of the R̥g-Veda. According to the principle of karma there is nothing uncertain or capricious in the moral world.² We reap what we sow. The good

¹ Chān., iii. 16. 1.

² Carlyle puts this principle thus: "Fool! thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is buried?"

seed brings a harvest of good, the evil of evil. Every little action has its effect on character. Man knows that some of the tendencies to action which now exist in him are the result of conscious or intelligent choice on his part. Conscious actions tend to become unconscious habits, and not unnaturally the unconscious tendencies we find in ourselves were regarded as the result of past conscious actions. We cannot arrest the process of moral evolution any more than we can stay the sweep of the tides or the course of the stars. The attempt to overleap the law of karma is as futile as the attempt to leap over one's shadow. It is the psychological principle that our life carries within it a record that time cannot blur or death erase. To remedy the defects of the old Vedic idea, that redemption from sin could be had by sacrifices to gods, great emphasis is laid on the law of karma. It proclaims the awful doom, the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Not through sacrifices, but through good deeds does a man become good. "A man becomes good by good deeds and bad by bad deeds." ¹ Again, "Man is a creature of will. According as he believes in this world, so will he be when he is departed." ² So we are asked to will the good and do the good. "Whatever world he covets by his mind, and whatever objects he wishes, for the man of pure mind, he gains those worlds and those objects; therefore let him who longs for bhūti, manifested power, worship him who knows the Ātman." ³ The requital of action makes saṃsāra with birth and death, beginningless and endless. The karma theory embraces in its sweep men and gods, animals and plants.

Since the sense of individual responsibility is emphasised, there are critics who think that the karma doctrine is inconsistent with social service. It is said that there is no emphasis on the bearing of one another's burdens. As a matter of fact, the Upaniṣads hold that we can be free from karma only by social service. So long as we perform

Nothing dies, nothing can die. The idlest word thou speakest is a seed cast into time, which brings forth fruit to all eternity." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7).

¹ Bṛh., iii. 2. 13.

² Chān., iii. 14. 1. See also Bṛh., iv. 4. 5.

³ Chān., iii. 1. 10.

selfish work we are subject to the law of bondage. When we perform disinterested work we reach freedom. "While thus you live there is no way by which karma clings to you." ¹ What binds us to the chain of birth and death is not action as such but selfish action. In an age when the individual was ever ready to shirk responsibility for what he did by throwing the burden on providence or stars or some other being than his own self, the doctrine of karma urged that a man "fetters himself by himself, like a bird by its nest." ² What looms over us is no dark fate but our own past. We are not the victims of a driving doom. Suffering is the wages of sin. There is no question that such an idea is a great incentive to good conduct. It only says that there are some limiting conditions of human action. We did not make ourselves. When we come up against the impossible, we realise that we cannot do anything we please. Karma rightly understood does not discourage moral effort, does not fetter the mind or chain the will. It only says that every act is the inevitable outcome of the preceding conditions. There is a tendency of the cause to pass into the effect. If the spirit, which is on a higher plane than nature, does not assert its freedom, past conduct and present environment will account completely for the actions of man. Man is not a mere product of nature. He is mightier than his karma. If the law is all, then there is no real freedom possible. Man's life is not the working of merely mechanical relations. There are different levels—the mechanical, the vital, the sentient, the intellectual and the spiritual—these currents cross and recross and inter-penetrate each other. The law of karma, which rules the lower nature of man, has nothing to do with the spiritual in him. The infinite in man helps him to transcend the limitations of the finite. The essence of spirit is freedom. By its exercise man can check and control his natural impulses. That is why his life is something more than a succession of mechanically determined states. His acts to be free must not be expressive of the mere force of habit or shock of circumstance, but of the freedom of the inner soul. The spiritual nature is the basis

¹ *Iṣa*, ii.

² *Maitrīyaṅi Up.*, iii. 2.

of his initiative and endeavour. The mechanical part is under constraint. Were man merely the sum of natural conditions, he would be completely subject to the law of karma. But there is a soul in him which is the master. Nothing external can compel it. We are sure that the material forces of the world must bend to the spiritual rule, and so can the law of karma be subjected to the freedom of spirit. Man can have the highest freedom only when he becomes one with God. "He who departs from this world, without having known the soul or those true desires, his part in all worlds is a life of constraint. But he who departs from this world after having known the soul and those true desires, his part in all worlds is a life of freedom." ¹ Becoming one with God is the attainment of the highest freedom. The more we live in the presence of God, the more we assert the rights of spirit, the more free we are; the more we lose our grip on the whole to which we belong, the more selfish we are, the more is our bondage to karma. Man oscillates between nature and spirit, and so is subject to both freedom and necessity.

Karma has a cosmic as well as a psychological aspect. Every deed must produce its natural effect in the world; at the same time it leaves an impression on or forms a tendency in the mind of man. It is this tendency or *saṁskāra* or *vāśana* that inclines us to repeat the deed we have once done. So all deeds have their fruits in the world and effects on the mind. So far as the former are concerned, we cannot escape them, however much we may try. But in regard to mental tendencies we can control them. Our future conduct holds all possibilities. By self-discipline we can strengthen the good impulses and weaken the bad ones.

The actions of men are capable of prediction and pre-calculation. If rational, they will show certain properties: we shall detect in them an inward coherence, an unselfish purpose, and so on. But from that we cannot assume that the acts are determined in any mechanical sense. Every living soul is potentially free. His acts are not a mere unwinding of the thread from a reel. Man possesses freedom as the focus of spiritual life. God has not granted

¹ Chāṅ., viii. 1. 6.

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him freedom from outside. He possesses freedom because he is rooted in God. The more he realises his true divine nature, the more free is he.

It is sometimes argued that the law of karma is inconsistent with theism.¹ Karma is a blind unconscious principle governing the whole universe. It is not subject to the control even of God. We do not require a judge to administer a mechanical law. The principle of karma is not inconsistent with the reality of the absolute Brahman. The moral law of karma is the expression of the nature of the absolute. Anthropomorphically we can say a divine power controls the process. Ṛta is the law in the Vedas. Varuṇa is the lord of Ṛta. Karma refers to the unchanging action of the gods.² It is an expression of the nature of reality. It renders impossible any arbitrary interference with moral evolution. The same conclusion is arrived at by modern theories of scientific law and habit, which are irreconcilable with capricious interference. If miracles are necessary to prove God, then science has killed God for all time. Divine interference is regulated by laws. God does not act by private volitions, as Malebranche would say. Only the karma theory can give us a just conception of the spiritual universe. It brings out the living rational nature of the whole. It is the mechanism by which spirit works. The freedom of the spiritual world is expressed in the world of nature by the iron law of mechanical necessity.³ Freedom and karma are the two aspects of the same reality. If God is immanent in the cosmos, then His spirit resides in the machine. The divine expresses itself in law, but law is not God. The

¹ See MacNicol: *Indian Theism*, p. 225. ² Devānāṃ dhruvāṇi vratāni.

³ We need not oppose the law of karma to the will of God as conceived in the Upaniṣads. The two are not exclusive of each other. Should there be many gods as in the Vedic theory, the gods themselves will be subject to karma. "The Gods cannot save even a man whom they love when the dread fate of death lays hold upon him. Zeus himself laments that it is 'fate' that his son Sarpedon, dearest to him of all men, must die at the hands of Patroclus. He 'does not venture to undo what fate decrees.' It is impossible even for a God to avoid the fate that is ordained. 'What is ordained,' says Athena in Euripides, using Anaximander's word, 'is master of the Gods and thee.'" Cornford: *From Religion to Philosophy*, pp. 12, 13.

Greek fate, the Stoic reason, and the Chinese Tao, are different names for the primary necessity of law.

There is no doctrine that is so valuable in life and conduct as the karma theory. Whatever happens to us in this life we have to submit in meek resignation, for it is the result of our past doings. Yet the future is in our power, and we can work with hope and confidence. Karma inspires hope for the future and resignation to the past. It makes men feel that the things of the world, its fortunes and failures, do not touch the dignity of the soul. Virtue alone is good, not rank or riches, not race or nationality. Nothing but goodness is good.

XX

FUTURE LIFE

In the Upaniṣads we find an advance on the Vedic and the Brāhmanical conceptions of future life, though there is not yet any consistent theory about it. It is the idea of rebirth that is the prominent one in the Upaniṣads. The earliest form of this idea occurs in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, where the notion of being born again after death and dying repeatedly is coupled with that of retribution. It is said that those who have right knowledge and perform their duties are born again after death for immortality, while those who do not have such knowledge and neglect their duties are reborn again and again, becoming the prey of death.¹ The Brāhmaṇa assumes births and deaths only in the next world. In the Upaniṣads the belief is transformed into the doctrine of rebirth in the world. We cannot say that the two have been reconciled. Sometimes we find them together. Good and evil actions experience a two-fold retribution, once in the other world and again by a renewed life on earth. It is said that the soul, after it has journeyed to heaven in radiant form on the burning of the corpse, returns thence immediately through the three regions to a new existence.² There are evidences that the belief in rebirth was only being matured in the

¹ Cf. The conception of punarṁṣtyu. Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, xxv. 1.

² Brh., vi. 2., 14.

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time of the Upaniṣads, since some passages of the Upaniṣads are not familiar with it.¹ The earliest passages incorporating the belief of rebirth are Chāndogya, v. 3. 10, and Bṛhadāraṇyaka, vi. 2.

That the highest kind of immortality is becoming one with Brahman is clearly enunciated in the Upaniṣads. When Gods were the supreme realities, freedom lay in union with them. Now Brahman is the first principle of things and the ultimate basis of the world. So life eternal is union with Brahman. When we fall short of our highest freedom, we are bound down in the sphere of time and are hurried from one state of being into another. The undelivered soul is subject to the law of birth and death, and has to work out its destiny by lives on earth. While true immortality is for the liberated, survival in time is for the bound. We hear the prayer, "May I never go to the white, toothless, devouring abode."² The kind of birth depends on the nature of the work done. It is called heaven when the individual lifts himself up to a higher life, and hell when he throws himself down into a lower one. This existence in saṁsāra is not the true existence of the soul. We have to bear the servitude of saṁsāra so long as the finite elements cling to us. With the finite we can never reach the absolute, however near we may come to it. Progress is a ceaseless growth or perpetual approximation. When the finite element is completely given up, then oneness with God is realised, and there is no return to saṁsāra.³ Saṁsāra is intended to discipline the spirit.

The world of nature reveals to us how all things on earth are impermanent and unreal. We find in it recurrent death and rebirth of all things. "Like corn decays the mortal, like corn is he born again."⁴ In destruction we find only the precursor of renewed existence. Death is only the gate of life. Though the law of karma is not yet committed to any precise equivalence between merit and experience, still it is asserted that the nature of the birth depends on the conduct of man. "Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth

¹ Bṛh., i. 5. 16.

² Chān., iv. 16. 6.

³ Chān. viii. 14. 1.

⁴ Kāṭha, i. 8.

of a Brāhmin, a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya. But those whose conduct is evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a hog, or dog, or a caṇḍāla.”¹

Between one life and another there is a persisting identity, though our consciousness may not testify to it. This is not a great weakness, since large portions of human life tend sometimes to be forgotten. The theory is concerned more with the conservation of values than with the continuance of consciousness. Since the Brahman which is the universal soul is not subject to bondage, that which persists from birth to birth is said to be what a man does or his karma. “Does the soul survive bodily death? Yājñavalkya, if after the death of the man his spirit goes into fire, his breath into wind, his eyes into the sun, his mind into the moon, his ear into the directions of space, his body into the earth, his self into the ether, the hair of his body into plants, the hair of his head into trees, the blood and semen into water—what then becomes of the man?” is the question put by Ārta bhāga to Yājñavalkya. They arrive at the conclusion, “verily one becomes good through good deeds, evil through evil deeds.”² The reality of life is character, not body or mind. It survives the disruption of death. The Upaniṣads hold that while karma changes, the universal self endures. If with some Buddhists we dismiss Brahman as useless, we shall have to say that only karma persists.

There is no mention of animals in the teaching of Yājñavalkya, which ends with the fourth book of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, though in some later passages of the same Upaniṣad,³ as well as in the Chāndogya, Kauṣītaki, etc., the migration into animal bodies is also mentioned. The idea may have been derived from the beliefs of the aboriginal tribes. In almost all regions of the world the untutored savage thought that human souls could pass into animal bodies. The Aryan invaders, in their commerce with the original inhabitants of India, came across the notion that animals and plants possessed souls, and human souls sometimes took their dwelling in them. The holiness of life in all things, the equality of origin in the flower, the

¹ Chān., v. 10. 7.

² Bṛh., iii. 2. 13.

³ vi. 3. 16.

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insect, the animal and the man were the fundamental ideas of the Upaniṣads, which betrayed them into an acceptance of this position. It has also great practical value. The tenderness shown to animals in the āśramas of the forests favoured the doctrine. Proud man was required to get rid of his snobbery and exclusiveness, and admit with the humility of a St. Francis that the black beetle was his brother. This is not strange when we think of the modern theories of evolution and their emphasis on the close affinity between men and animals.

No philosophy could discard its past. The Upaniṣad theory of future life had to reckon with the old Vedic doctrine of rewards and punishments in another world. The conservative spirit of man tried to combine the new idea of rebirth with the earlier eschatology, which spoke of the joyous world of the spirits of the dead where Yama presided and the joyless regions of darkness. This led to a complication of the Upaniṣad theory, which had to distinguish three ways after death. "For we have heard even the saying of a ṛṣi, 'I heard of two paths for men, one leading to the fathers, the other leading to the devas. On those paths all that lives, moves on, whatever there is between father Sky and mother Earth.'"¹ The Upaniṣads mention the two paths by which a departed soul proceeds to enjoy the fruits of its karma done in its lifetime on earth. One is called the devayāna or the arcimārga, the path of light, and the other pitṛyāna or the dhūmamārga, the path of darkness. The former leads to the plane of Brahmā or satyaloka, through the different spheres of Agni, etc. From this there is no return. Devayāna had a meaning so long as Brahmā was looked upon as an objective being, seated on a high throne in his own palace, to which the good went. But when the identity of self and Brahman is reached, the throne of Brahmā totters and devayāna becomes the pathway to the oneness with the highest. The pitṛyāna takes to candraloka or the region of the moon through the different spheres of smoke, night, etc. He who goes to the devayāna does not come back to this world, but he who goes to the pitṛyāna, after enjoying the fruits

¹ Bṛh., vi. 2. 2.

of his good acts, comes back to the earth. There are many differences in detail. According to the Kauṣītaki, all go to the moon after death, though from the moon a few go by the path of the fathers to Brahmā, while others return to the various forms of existence, ranging from man to worm, according to the quality of their work and degree of knowledge.¹ The devayāna and pitṛyāna correspond to the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness or ajñāna, which involves us in saṃsāra. A third path leading to the joyless regions enveloped in darkness is also mentioned.² "Those who make a gift of barren cows, which have drunk water and eaten hay and given their milk, themselves go to the joyless regions."³ This is the third road on which creatures which live and die, worms, insects, creeping things crawl.⁴ The freed man who realises his identity with Brahman need not go anywhere for his salvation.⁵ Even where he is, he enjoys Brahman. "His prāṇas do not go anywhere. Being Brahman he is merged in Brahman."⁶ Those who realise freedom do not go through any path, but those who have to reach it by an ascent go through the devayāna. Since a gradual ascent is described, it is said to be the path of kramamukti.

The mechanism of rebirth is explained in different ways. "Then his knowledge and his works and his previous experience take him by the hand. As a caterpillar which has wriggled to the top of a blade of grass draws itself over to a new blade, so does the man after he has put aside his body draw himself over to a new existence."⁷ Again: "As a goldsmith taking a piece of gold forms another shape with it, more new and agreeable, so throwing off this body and obtaining that state of knowledge, the soul forms a shape which is more new and agreeable, suited to the world." "As the sculptor takes the material from a statue and chisels therefrom another, newer, fairer form, so this soul also, after it has taken off the body and rid itself of ignorance,

¹ i. 2. 3.

² Brh., iv. 11.

³ Kāṭha, iii. 3.

⁴ Brh., vi. 2. 16. We meet with similar traditions in the Gnostic writings as well as in St. Paul. See Harrison: *Prolegomena to Greek Religion*; and Gardner: *The Religious Experiences of St. Paul*.

⁵ Kāṭha, 16. 14.

⁶ Brh., 4. 4. 6.

⁷ Brh., iv. 4. 3.

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creates for itself another, newer, fairer form, whether of the fathers, of the Gandharvas, or the gods, or Prajāpati, or Brahmā, or other beings.”¹ It is sometimes said that the soul at death gathers into itself the vital spirits and departs, taking them all to another body, exalted or not according to the deeds done in the body it has left.² This view is developed in the later doctrines into the conception of a liṅga śarīra, made familiar to western readers by theosophists as the astral body. This subtle body serves as the vehicle of mind and character, and is not disintegrated with the death of the physical body. It forms the basis of a new physical body which it moulds upon itself, effecting as it were a materialisation maintained throughout the next life. It is also said that the creatures emerge into individual life from the one true being and merge into it again.³

The thinkers of the Upaniṣads do not support the materialistic view that the soul is annihilated at death. They have a strong conviction of the continuity of life, and maintain that there is something which survives bodily death. The sexual act creates the conditions in which a new life appears, but it is, on no account, an adequate explanation of the new life itself. The birth of consciousness cannot be explained by the development of a cell. The theological hypothesis that God creates a new soul every time a child is born does not seem to be more satisfactory than the Upaniṣad theory that the individual jīva is manifesting itself in the germ and assuming the shape that it is obliged to take.

The theory of rebirth is quite as logical as any other hypothesis that is in the field, and is certainly more satisfactory than the theories of absolute annihilation or eternal retribution. It accounts for the apparent moral disorder and chaos of suffering. The unfair distribution of pain seems to contradict the rationality of the universe. As irregularities of the empirical world are a challenge to the logical faith, so moral disorder is a challenge to the belief in the goodness of the principle at work. If our faith is rational, there cannot be any intellectual or moral confusion.

¹ Bṛh., iv. 4. 4. See also Chān., v. 10. 2; Kauṣṭaki, i. 2; Bṛh. i. 5. 16.

² See Bṛh., iv. 1. 6; Praśna, i. 9. 16; iii. 10; Kauṣṭaki, iii. 3.

³ Chān., vi. 9. 2; vi. 10. 1. 2.

If moral chaos is ultimate, then moral paralysis would be the result. We have to reconcile the strangely chaotic appearances of the moral world with the faith in a good and great God. We should not be content with thinking that the world is organised in a haphazard manner. The hypothesis which traces the disorder and the suffering of the moral world to the freedom of man cannot account for the inequalities with which men are thrust into the world. These differences in the initial equipment contradict the idea of a divinely ordered universe. This hypothesis of rebirth gives us some explanation of the original difference. It makes us feel that the joy and suffering of the world are there for the progressive education of character. Punishment is not only vindictive but also remedial. We are punished for our sins, and are at the same time purified by punishment. It is good that we suffer.

The question of the origin of the hypothesis of rebirth we have answered by anticipation. We have seen how it arises naturally from the mass of thought by which the Upaniṣad thinkers were surrounded. The Vedas speak to us of the two ways of the gods and the fathers. The original inhabitants of India supply us with the idea of the migration of human souls into trees and animals. The need for recompense is urged in the Brāhmaṇas. With these ready to hand, the Upaniṣads had only to round them off into the doctrine of saṃsāra. We are not therefore obliged to seek for it any independent source. If in ancient Greece we find doctrines similar to it, they may have had independent origin and growth, though modern scholarship is against such a view. On this question we may quote two authorities on Indian and Greek thought. Macdonell observes that the "dependence of Pythagoras on Indian philosophy and science certainly seems to have a high degree of probability. The doctrine of metempsychosis in the case of Pythagoras appears without any connexion or explanatory background, and was regarded by the Greeks as of foreign origin. He could not have derived it from Egypt as it was not known to the ancient Egyptians." ¹ Gomperz writes: "There is a far closer agreement between Pythagorism and the Indian

¹ *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 422.

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doctrine, not merely in their general features, but even in certain details such as vegetarianism ; and it may be added that the formulæ which summarise the whole creed of the circle and the wheel of births are likewise the same in both. It is almost impossible for us to refer this identity to mere chance. . . . It is not too much to assume that the curious Greek who was the contemporary of Buddha, and it may have been of Zarathustra too, would have acquired a more or less exact knowledge of the religious speculations of the East, in that age of intellectual fermentation, through the medium of Persia." ¹ One thing is clear that the Indians did not borrow it from outside.

XXI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UPANIṢADS

Though there is no systematic psychological analysis in the Upaniṣads, we can gather from them the ideas which they adopted. In the Praśna Upaniṣad,² the ten indriyas, the five organs of action and the five senses of knowledge, the motor and the sensory apparatus are mentioned. These indriyas work under the control of manas, the central organ whose chief functions are perception and action. Without mind the senses are useless.³ That is why the mind is called the chief of the senses. Without mind or prajñā, speech does not make known anything. "My mind was absent," he says. "I did not perceive that world ; without prajñā the eye does not make known any form." ⁴ "I was absent in mind, I did not see ; I was absent in mind, I did not hear ; in this manner it is evident that a person sees with the mind, hears with the mind." ⁵ The mind was looked upon as material in nature.⁶ For sense perception, therefore, the Upaniṣads make out that what is necessary is neither the mere sense nor its mere functioning, but a self which perceives through the sense, a seeing eye.

¹ *Greek Thinkers*, vol. i., p. 127. For a different view, see Keith on *Pythagoras and Transmigration*, J.R.A.S., 1909.

² Brh., i. 5. 3.

³ Kauṣītaki.

⁴ iv. 2.

⁵ Brh., iii. 1. 23.

⁶ Professor Alexander reduces mind to a particular reality as material in structure as the electron of the physicist.

Perception is said to be due to the proximity of the senses to their objects.¹ One can do only one mental act at a time.² Buddhi or intelligence is higher than manas. The functions of buddhi are found in the Aitareya. "Sensation, perception, ideation, conception, understanding, insight, resolution, opinion, imagination, feeling, memory, volition, conation, the will to live, desire and self-control, all these are different names of intellection."³ This analysis cannot stand criticism, but is important, since it indicates that even so early as the period of the Upaniṣads there were psychological discussions. The highest of all is the soul which is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear. It controls buddhi, manas, the indriyas, the prāṇas, etc.⁴ It is known to be all-pervasive and absolute.⁵ There are passages where the soul is given physical properties and said to dwell in the cavity of the heart.⁶ It is also said to be of the size of a grain of barley or rice,⁷ of the measure of a span,⁸ or the thumb.⁹ If we remember that Aristotle in his *De Anima* located the soul in the heart and Galen in the brain, and Descartes imagined the seat of the soul to be the pineal gland, and Lotze the brain, it is not surprising that the psychologists of the Upaniṣads located it in the region of the heart.

The mind is wider than consciousness. That consciousness is only one aspect of mental life, a state of our spiritual world, and not that world itself, is a profound truth, which western thought is slowly coming to recognise. Since the time of Leibniz consciousness is admitted to be only an accident of mental representation, and not its necessary and essential attribute. His contention that "our inner world is richer, ampler and more concealed," was well known to the writers of the Upaniṣads.

¹ Compare the views of Empedocles and Democritus on the point.

² Kauṣṭaki, iii. 2.

³ iii. 2.

⁴ Brh., iv. 4. 5; i. 4. 17; v. 6, ii. 1. 17; iii. 7. 22; iv. 3. 7; iv. 5. 13.

⁵ Kāṭha, i. 2. 21; Muṇḍaka, i. 1. 6.

⁶ Brh., iv. 3. 17; v. 6; Chān., viii. 3. 3; v. i. 6; Kāṭha, ii. 20; iii. 1; iv. 6; vi. 18; and Śvetāśvatara, iii. 11. 20. Hṛdaya or hṛtṭpadma is a subtle centre of the spinal cord.

⁷ Brh., v. 6. 1; Chān., iii. 14. 3.

⁸ Chān., v. 18. 1.

⁹ Kāṭha, vi. 17; ii. 21; Śvet., iii. 13.

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The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad mentions the different conditions of the soul, waking, dreaming, sleep and the intuitive turiya. In the waking condition the manas and the sense organs are all active. In dream states the senses are said to be quiescent and lost in the manas, a proposition which modern psychology disputes. But according to the Upaniṣads, so long as our sense organs are active, we are only dozing, but not dreaming. We are in a half-waking condition. In authentic dream states the mind alone operates in a free and unfettered manner. The difference between the waking and the dream states consists in this, that in the waking condition the mind depends on the outward impressions, while in dreaming it creates its impressions and enjoys them. It may, of course, use the materials of the waking hours. Suṣupti, or deep sleep, is also a normal occurrence of man's life. In it the mind and the senses are both said to be inactive. There is a cessation of the empirical consciousness with its distinction of object and subject. It is said that in this state we have an objectless consciousness when the self attains to a temporary union with the absolute. Be that as it may, it is clear that it is not complete non-being or negation. It is difficult to concede that the self continues to exist in deep sleep, enjoying bliss though it is bereft of all experience. As a matter of fact, the Upaniṣads themselves account for the physiological and unconscious activities by the principle of life, "prāṇa," which is said to govern the processes of breathing, circulation, etc. Perhaps organic memory may be the explanation of the continuity of consciousness. Notwithstanding the absence of cognition, it is open to question whether the self in the condition of sleep experiences positive bliss. Turiya is the consciousness of unity, though not the empirical apprehension thereof. It is the mystic realisation of the oneness of all, which is the crown of spiritual life.

Before we take up the question of the non-Vedāntic tendencies of the Upaniṣads, it may be well to sum up the general metaphysical standpoint of the Upaniṣads. At the very start we said that there was considerable ambiguity in the position of the Upaniṣads, making it liable to different interpretations. It is difficult to decide whether

it is the Advaita (or non-dualism) of Śaṅkara, or the modified position of Rāmānuja that is the final teaching of the parent gospel. Tendencies which could be completed in either direction are to be met with. The Upaniṣads are not conscious of any contradiction between them. The advaitic (non-dual) Brahman reached by intuition and the concretely defined reality are not really distinct, since they are only two different ways of representing the same. They are the intuitional and the intellectual ways of apprehending the same reality. On the former view the world is an appearance of the absolute ; to the latter it is an expression of God. In neither case is the world to be dismissed as altogether unreal or illusory, since on such a view we cannot admit of any distinctions of value in the world of experience. Through the influence of Buddhism and its schools, the non-dual nature of reality and the phenomenal nature of the world came to be emphasised in the systems of Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara. As a matter of fact, such an advaitic philosophy seems to be only a revised version of the Mādhyamika metaphysics in Vedic terminology. The religious reconstruction of the epics and the Bhagavadgītā and the theistic emphasis in the Nyāya, led to the development of the Viśiṣṭādvaita, or modified monism of Rāmānuja. As a matter of fact, the non-dualists or Advaitins are called Pariśuddha Saugatas, or purified Buddhists, and the Viśiṣṭādvaitins Pariśuddha Naiyāyikas, or purified Nyāya followers.

XXII

ELEMENTS OF SĀMĀKHYA AND YOGA IN THE UPANIṢADS

There are germs of non-Vedāntic philosophies such as Sāṅkhya and Yoga in the Upaniṣads. The Sāṅkhya philosophy establishes a dualism between puruṣa and prakṛti, where prakṛti is the source of all existence and puruṣa the disinterested spectator of the evolution of prakṛti. It also holds to the plurality of puruṣas or knowing subjects.¹ The Upaniṣads do not support the

¹ The idea of an avyakta or prakṛti, the source of all differentiation, is distinctly suggested in the Upaniṣads. "Beyond the senses are the rudiments of its objects ; beyond these rudiments is the mind ; beyond the

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theory of a plurality of puruṣas, though a natural process of criticism and development of one side of the doctrine leads to it. We have seen how the monism of the Upaniṣads becomes a monotheism so far as the purposes of religion are concerned. A monotheism implies the separate existence of the individual soul over against the supreme soul. The result is a plurality of individual souls. But the Sāṅkhya theorists had the insight to perceive that the independence of the supreme and the individual souls is hard to maintain. One is subversive of the other. One of them, either the supreme or the individual souls, had to be cancelled. When the function of productivity was assigned to prakṛti, God became superfluous. The Upaniṣads protest against the transfer of creative functions to mere matter divorced from God. Their main tendency is to support the hypothesis of an absolute spirit on the background of which subject and object arise.¹

The beginnings of the Yoga system are to be found in the Upaniṣads. It is the conviction of the Upaniṣad writers that reality is not rightly perceived by our imperfect understandings. The mind of man is compared by them to a mirror in which reality is reflected. The extent to which we know reality depends on the state of our mind, whether it can respond to the full wealth of reality or not. Colours are not revealed to the blind nor music to the deaf, nor philosophic truth to the feeble-minded. The process of knowing is not so much a creation as a discovery, not

mind is Ātman known as mahat (great), beyond the mahat is avyakta, the unmanifested; beyond the avyakta is the puruṣa, beyond the puruṣa there is nothing." (Kaṭha, iii. 10. 11, see also vi 7. 8.) Beyond the indeterminate whence all creation issues there is only God. "By tapas Brahman increases in size and from it food is produced, from food life, mind, the elements, the worlds, karma, and with it its fruits." (Muṇḍaka, i. 1.) Food or annam in this passage is interpreted by Śāṅkara as the unmanifested (avyākṛtam). In the Praśna Upaniṣad, iv., we have an account of how all things are resolved into the imperishable in the order of the five elements with the corresponding mātras or subtle elements. See Praśna, iv. 8. In the Upaniṣads prakṛti is said to be derived from God. The word "Purīṣa" means the supreme Ātman. The Sāṅkhya theory of puruṣa as a passive witness may have been suggested by the famous passage about the two birds, "where the one feeds on the delicious fruit and the other, not tasting it, looks on." (Muṇḍaka, iii. 1. 1.)

¹ See Aitareya, i. 1. 2; Bṛh., i. 4. 3; Chān., vi. 2. 6; Tait., ii. 1.

so much a production as a revelation. It follows that the revelation will be imperfect or distorted, if there is any taint or imperfection clinging to the instrument. The selfish desires and passions get between the instrument of mind and the reality to be revealed. When the personality of the subject affects the nature of the instrument, the reflection becomes blurred. The ignorance of the observer clouds the object with his fancies. His prevailing prejudices are cast over the truth of things. Error is just the intrusion into the reality of the defects of the instrument. An impartial and impersonal attitude is necessary for the discovery of truth, and all that is merely personal impedes this process. We must be saved from the malformation and the miscarriage of our minds. The clamant energies of the mind must be bent to become the passive channels for the transmission of truth. The *Yoga* method gives directions how to refine the mind and improve the mirror, keep it clean by keeping out what is peculiar to the individual. It is only through this discipline that we can rise to that height of strenuous impersonality from which the gifted souls of the world see distant visions. This method is in consonance with the Upaniṣad theory of the self. Our ordinary consciousness turns its back on the eternal world and is lost in the perishing unreal world cast by the mind out of sense impressions. When we rise above the empirical self we get not a negation but an intensification of self. When the self is bound down to its empirical accidents, its activities are not fully exercised. When the limitations of empirical existence are transcended, the universal life is intensified, and we have an enrichment of self or enhancement of personality. Then it draws all experience into it. In the lower stages, when the self is identified with any definite centre generated by the accidents of time and space, the world of experience is not made its own. The adherence to a narrow circle of experience must be overcome before we can gather into ourselves the world of experience, whose centre as well as circumference is God and man. Then we rise to a condition in which, in the words of the Upaniṣads, "there is no difference between what is within and what is without." The *Yoga* method insists that the false

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outward outlook must be checked before the true inward ideal is given a chance of life and expression. We must cease to live in the world of shadows before we can lay hold of the eternal life.

The Yoga system requires us to go through a course of mental and spiritual discipline. The Upaniṣads also emphasise the practice of austere virtues before the end can be reached. In the Praśna Upaniṣad Pippalāda sends away six inquirers after God for another year of discipline with the command, "Go ye and spend another year in leading the life of celibacy (brahmacarya), in practising asceticism, in cherishing reverential faith (śraddhā)." The life of celibacy, where the student will have no family attachment to perturb his mind, would enable him to give whole-hearted attention to his work. The penances will give him mental quiet and remove the restlessness of mind which is such a great obstacle to knowledge. Śraddhā or faith is necessary for all work. The essence of Yoga philosophy, as of all mystic teaching, is the insistence on the possibility of coming into direct contact with the divine consciousness by raising the human to a plane above its normal level.

We must control the mind which binds us to outer things and makes slaves of us, to realise freedom. Being the victims of outer objects and circumstances, we do not reach satisfaction. "As rain water that has fallen on a mountain ridge runs down on all sides, thus does he who sees a difference between qualities run after them on all sides. As pure water poured into pure water remains the same, thus, O Gautama, is the self of a thinker who knows." † The mind of a man who does not know his own self goes hither and thither like the water pouring down the crags in every direction. But when his mind is purified, he becomes one with the great ocean of life which dwells behind all mortal forms. The outward mind, if allowed free scope, gets dispersed in the desert sands. The seeker must draw it inward, hold it still to obtain the treasure within. We have to force utterance into feeling, feeling into thought, and thought into universal consciousness; only then do

† Katha Up., ii. 15.

we become conscious of the deep peace of the eternal.¹ Only when "the five sources of knowledge are at rest along with the mind and the intellect is inactive" do we reach the highest.² "Having taken the bow furnished by the Upaniṣads, the great weapon, and fixed in it the arrow rendered pointed by constant meditation, and having drawn it with the mind, fixed on the Brahman, aim happy youth at that mark, the immortal Brahman."³ The Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad speaks of Pratardana as the founder of a new system of self-control or saṁyamana, which is known by the name of the Inner sacrifice.⁴ He insists that the individual should exercise perfect control over his passions and emotions. The Upaniṣads sometimes suggest that we can induce the trance condition by control of breath,⁵ though more often they speak to us of the method of concentration.⁶ Mystic words such as Aum, Tadvanam,⁷ Tajjalān,⁸ are the symbols on which we are asked to fix attention. The way to reach steadiness of mind is by concentration or fixing the thought for a time on one particular object by effacing all others. Only practice helps us to grow perfect in this art.

The only indication of the later Nyāya logic occurs in Muṇḍaka.⁹ "This Ātman cannot be attained by one devoid of strength, or by excitement, or by tapas, or by liṅga." Liṅga, as we shall see, is a technical term of Nyāya logic, the binding link, the middle term of inference.¹⁰ The empirical theory of knowledge, that the nature of reality is to be known by way of induction, is brought out in some passages. "By one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known . . . by one nugget of gold all that is made of gold is known."¹¹ Pratardana insists that knowledge is possible only through a subject-object relation.

¹ Kāṭha, ii. 13. Cf. "Thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself, and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights nor pain, nor any pleasure—when she has as little as possible to do with the body and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after being" Plato's *Phaedo*.

Kāṭha, ii. 12.

Antaram agnihotram, ii. 5.

Praśna, v. 1.

7 Kena, iv. 6.

iii. 2. 4. Deussen and Hume give to the text a different sense.

Liṅga—link. See also Chāṅ., vi. 8. 4.

3 Muṇḍaka, ii. 2. 2.

5 Bṛh., i. 5. 23.

8 Chāṅ., iii. 14. 1.

11 Chāṅ., vi. 1 4-6.

XXIII

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTICIPATIONS

The Upaniṣads determine the main issues of philosophical inquiry and mark out the lines of subsequent philosophical discussion. Apart from suggestions of other theories, we have seen that the Upaniṣads contain the elements of a genuine philosophical idealism, insisting on the relative reality of the world, the oneness and wholeness of spirit, and the need of an ethical and religious life. Though the philosophical synthesis presented in the Upaniṣads, with its fundamental idea of the unity of the consciousness of self, with the principle which binds all things, constitutes the strength of the Upaniṣad thought, its weakness lies in the fact that this synthesis is achieved not so much by explicit reason as by intuition. It does not offer a logical reconciliation of the different elements which it brings together, though it has a firm hold on the central idea of all true philosophy.

The beliefs of the Vedic religion weighed upon the Upaniṣad thinkers. Though they did not scruple to criticise them, they were still hampered by the legacy of the past. They tried to be champions of future progress as well as devotees of ancient greatness. This was obviously a hard task judged from the results. The Upaniṣad religion, while it preached a pure and spiritual doctrine, which had no specified forms of worship, which did not demand a priestly hierarchy, yet tolerated these things, nay, even recognised them. "The various karmas which seers found in the mantras are true, and were much practised in the Treta age; practise them always with true desires; it is your way to the attainment of the fruits of karma."¹ The Vedic gods had their own place in the sun. None asked the people to forsake the gods they were wont to worship. Ingenious explanations, suggestions and symbolism helped to interpret the old superstition in consistency with the

¹ Muṇḍaka, i. 2. 1.

new idealism. While the hour demanded fidelity to the spiritual ideal, we find in the Upaniṣads a good deal of temporising. They began as a movement towards the liberation of the individual from the shackles of external authority and excessive conventionalism. They ended in rivetting the old chains. Instead of establishing new values for life, they tended to propagate the traditional ones. To preach a spiritual democracy is a very different thing from establishing it. The Upaniṣads endeavoured laudably to combine a lofty mysticism with the ancestral faith. But the age never felt even a living option between the new spiritual ideal and the mythologies of the past. The lofty idealism of the Upaniṣads did not realise itself as a popular movement. It never influenced society as a whole. The sacrificial religion was still the dominating force; the Upaniṣads only added respectability to it. The old faith was inspired with a new vitality derived from the breath of a spirit from another sphere. If the idealism of the Upaniṣads had permeated the masses, there would have been a great remodelling of the racial character and a regeneration of social institutions. But neither of these things happened. The lower religion with much of superstition prevailed. The priesthood became powerful. The conservatism of the religious institutions and contempt for the masses lived side by side with a higher spirit adopted by a few votaries of the perfect life. It was an age of spiritual contradiction and chaos. The teaching of the Upaniṣads became so flexible as to embrace within it the most diverse forms of doctrine from a refined idealism to a crude idolatry. The result was that the higher religion was swamped by the lower.

Everywhere we had contradictory notions. In religion, there was Vedic polytheism and sacrifices tempered by Upaniṣad monism and spiritual life. In social matters, there was caste, the rigours of which were mitigated by the catholic spirit of universalism. In eschatology, there was the conception of rebirth mixed up with ideas of hell. But the true was overwhelmed by the false, and the chaos of the Brāhmanical religion, with all its conflicting theories, soon reached a climax in the post-Upaniṣad or the pre-

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Buddhist period. This period was one of spiritual dryness, where truth hardened into tradition, and morality stiffened into routine. Life became a series of observances. The mind of man moved within the iron circle of prescribed formulas and duties. The atmosphere was choked with ceremonialism. One could not wake up or rise from his bed, bathe or shave, wash his face, or eat a mouthful, without muttering some formula or observing some rite. It was an age when a petty and barren creed set too much store by mere trifles and hollow superstitions. An arid and heartless philosophy, backed by a dry and dogmatic religion, full of affectation and exaggeration, could not satisfy the thinking few for any time, or the masses for a long time. A period of disintegration followed when attempts were made to carry out the Upaniṣad revolt in a more systematic manner. The illogical combination of the Upaniṣad monism and the Vedic polytheism, the Upaniṣad spiritual life and the Vedic sacrificial routine, the Upaniṣad mokṣa and saṁsāra and the Vedic hell and heaven, the Upaniṣad universalism and the popular caste, could no longer live together. Reconstruction was the greatest need of the hour. A deeper and more spiritual religion which could come down to the common life of man was what the times were waiting for. Before a true synthesis could be obtained, the elements artificially combined required to be torn away from the connection into which they have been brought and set in abstract opposition to each other. The Buddhists, the Jainas, and the Cārvākas or materialists pointed to the artificial condition of the prevailing religion. The first two attempted a reconstruction, emphasising the ethical needs of the spirit. But their attempts were on revolutionary lines. While they tried to carry out the ethical universalism of the Upaniṣad teaching, they imagined that they completely broke off from the authority of the Brāhmanical caste, the sacrificial system and the prevailing religion. The Bhagavadgītā and the later Upaniṣads tried to reckon with the past and bring about a synthesis of the illogical elements in a more conservative spirit. It may be that these radical and

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conservative protests against the religion as it prevailed in the post-Upaniṣad period were formulated in different parts of the country, Buddhism and Jainism in the east and Bhagavadgītā in the west, the ancient stronghold of the Vedic religion. It is to this period of intellectual ferment, revolt and reconstruction that we now pass.



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