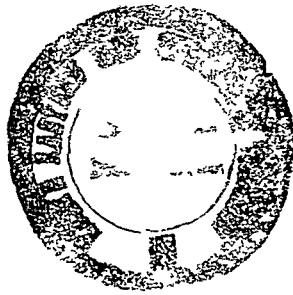


**An Enquiry into the Problem of
God and Absolute
with Special Reference to Sāṃkara And Rashdall**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE Ph. D. DEGREE OF
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**



**Bondona Puzari
1994**

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It is to certify

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(a) That the thesis entitled 'An Enquiry into the Problem of God and Absolute with Special Reference to Śaṅkara and Rashdall' being submitted by Mrs. Bondona Puzari, M.A., for the Ph.D. Degree of Gauhati University, was prepared under my guidance;

(b) That it conforms to the Ph.D regulations of Gauhati University and

(c) That the Thesis, as a whole or any part thereof, was not submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree.

S. Sarma
(Sibnath Sarma) *28.10.94*
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" And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things ".

William Wordsworth (Line)

PREFACE

The Problem of God and Absolute is one of the fundamental problems of philosophy. We undertook to inquire into it as comprehensively as possible within, of course, the limits of a Ph.D. Dissertation. An attempt has been made in this work to present almost all the important aspects of the problem with an eye to their historical setting and comprehensiveness.

God is the highest principle of the theological interpretation of the universe and the Absolute is the ultimate Reality from the metaphysical standpoint. God is personal and the Absolute is above personality. Whereas there can be so many types of concepts of God as found in various religions, as also there is a variety in the concept of the Absolute in so many philosophies -- there is a basic unanimity among theologians that God is a personal being responding to our prayers and similar unanimity exists among absolutists that the Absolute is an impersonal Reality. But there cannot be many truths. Both God and the Absolute cannot be claimed to be equally real and

ultimate at the same time. Then, whose claim -- the claim of the theologians or that of the philosophers should be acceptable. This has given rise to the notorious problem of God and Absolute. Though this problem is of high philosophical significance, pin-pointed works on this are rare. Indirectly all works on God or on the Absolute come around discussing this problem, this receives only an auxiliary status and not the principal one. In our opinion -- a good work on this problem is long over due. And we want to fulfil this long awaited need to whatever extent we can.

There are eight chapters in the project of which six are core-chapters. In the First Chapter we describe the problem thoroughly; what God is, what the Absolute is, why the problem of the relation between the two arises. In the Second Chapter we discuss the problem, as found in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads show us the germs of the problem in the form of the characterised and the uncharacterised ultimate reality. The transcendent conception of God held in the Rg Veda is here transformed into an immanent One. The infinite is not beyond the finite but in the finite.

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. According to the Upaniṣad, 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 Īśvara to emphasise the personal aspect to necessary for religious devotion. Yet the two are one. In the Third Chapter we lay emphasis on Plotinus' views on the problem. In his conception of God, Plotinus to the extreme point, thought of the infinity and supermundaneity of God. God is the absolute one. From the one proceeds the first great derived reality, Nous, the Divine mind which is also the world of forms or Ideas and so the totality of true being in the Platonic sense. The Absolute as the one is the first cause, as the good it is the final cause of all, that is, Plotinus is quite explicit in asserting the causality of the Absolute. Plotinus makes distinction between the Absolute and the Knowable God. He deals with the Absolute One as an exclusive unity to which we rise by negation of all finitude and difference and which from this

point of view is opposed to everything else, while yet it has to be conceived as the source from which everything else flows. He was the last great exponent of Greek dualism. In the Fourth Chapter we show how this problem is dealt with by the Mediaeval philosophers. The important theme of Mediaeval thought is the relation of theology to philosophy and that different thinkers adopted different attitudes in regard to this question. The great work of the Mediaeval philosophers was to realize the idea of a philosophy which while it was in harmony with Christian theology and led up to it, was nevertheless independent of it in being based entirely on human reason. In the Fifth Chapter, we discuss the views of some modern philosophers namely, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo, Bradley and Spinoza. In the Sixth Chapter, we discuss the views of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara's interpretation is paradigmical in nature and all solutions of this problem, including modern ones, come near his solution. Śaṅkara never claimed to have given an altogether new view, but he always insisted that

he was expounding the truly Vedāntic view which was already embodied in the Upaniṣads. In the Seventh Chapter we discuss the views of Rushdall regarding this problem. According to him, the Absolute cannot be identified with God, so long as God is thought of as a self conscious Being. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousness, not as isolated and unrelated beings, but as intimately related to Him and to one another and as forming with Him a system or unity. In Chapter Eight we have brought together all the conclusions of our study and we have suggested a possible solution to the problem.

And now to acknowledging my indebtedness to my teachers, libraries, friends and well-wishers. In the preparation of my thesis I have been greatly indebted to many reputed authors, eastern and western, to whose works I have referred at proper places. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the guide of my research work Dr. Sibnath Sarma, Reader, Department of Philosophy, Gauhati University, who took great interest in my study and encouraged me at every step of my work. Due to his constant inspiration it

has become possible for me to complete my thesis in the midst of many difficulties. I acknowledge my gratefulness to Dr.(Mrs) Nilima Sarma, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Gauhati University, who took lively interest in my work and encouraged me. I also acknowledge my gratefulness to Dr. D.K. Chakravarty, the former Head of the Department of Philosophy, Gauhati University, for his encouragement and the permission he gave me to use the departmental library. I am thankful to the library staff of (a) K.K. Handique Library, Gauhati University, (b) National Library, Calcutta, (c) District Library, Jorhat and (d) Tinsukia College Library, Tinsukia, for their constant help. I am especially grateful to my parents, Sjt. Dharmeswar Puzari and Sjt. Binapani Puzari, who gave me constant inspiration from the beginning of my research work and to my husband, Mr. Prodip Kr. Sarma, who helped me from all sides in the fulfilment of my desire.

Finally my **thanks** are due to Sri Basistha Barman who has typed out this thesis.

Bondona Puzari
Bondona Puzari

C O N T E N T S

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| PREFACE ... | 1 |
| CHAPTER - I INTRODUCTION | |
| 1.1 Introductory ... | 1 |
| 1.2 What is the Absolute ... | 3 |
| 1.3 What is God ... | 7 |
| 1.4 The Upaniṣadic and the Greek Tradition ... | 11 |
| 1.5 Under the Scrutiny of Astute Metaphysician ... | 13 |
| 1.6 In the religion ... | 16 |
| 1.7 The philosophical Problem ... | 22 |
| References and Notes ... | 27 |
| CHAPTER - II GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE IN THE UPANISADS | |
| 2.1 Introduction ... | 30 |
| 2.2 General Philosophical Views of the Upaniṣad ... | 34 |
| 2.3 The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad ... | 46 |
| 2.4 Chāndogyopaniṣad ... | 63 |
| 2.5 The Taittirīya Upaniṣad ... | 73 |

| | | <u>Page</u> |
|-----|----------------------|-------------|
| 2.6 | The Kathopanisad | 81 |
| 2.7 | Conclusion | 89 |
| | References and Notes | 97 |

CHAPTER - III

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS AND
THE PROBLEM

| | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|-----|
| 3.1 | Introductory | 100 |
| 3.2 | Different philosophers' views | 104 |
| 3.2.1 | Thales | 105 |
| 3.2.2 | Anaximander | 106 |
| 3.2.3 | Anaximenes | 108 |
| 3.2.4 | Pythagoras and his School | 109 |
| 3.2.5 | Parmenides | 110 |
| 3.2.6 | Zeno | 113 |
| 3.2.7 | Heraclitus | 115 |
| 3.2.8 | Xenophanes | 118 |
| 3.2.9 | Plato | 119 |
| 3.2.10 | Aristotle | 122 |
| 3.2.11 | Plotinus | 125 |
| 3.3 | Conclusion | 142 |
| | References and Notes | 146 |

CHAPTER -IV

THE MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHERS
AND THE PROBLEM

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----|-----|
| 4.1 | Introduction | ... | 147 |
| 4.2 | St. Augustine | ... | 151 |
| 4.3 | St. Thomas Aquinas | ... | 158 |
| 4.4 | St. Anselm | ... | 168 |
| 4.5 | Observations | ... | 173 |
| | References and Notes | ... | 178 |

CHAPTER - V

THE PROBLEM AND SOME MODERN
PHILOSOPHERS

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 5.1 | Introduction | ... | 179 |
| 5.2 | Some Modern Philosophers | ... | 179 |
| 5.2.1 | Spinoza | ... | 179 |
| 5.2.2 | F.H. Bradley | ... | 191 |
| 5.2.3 | Sri Aurobindo | ... | 201 |
| 5.2.4 | Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan | ... | 213 |
| 5.2.5 | Conclusion | ... | 227 |
| | References and Notes | ... | 233 |

Page

CHAPTER - VI

ŚĀṆKARA AND THE PROBLEM

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 6.1 | Introduction | ... | 236 |
| 6.2 | Nature of Brahman | ... | 242 |
| 6.3 | Nature of God | ... | 256 |
| 6.4 | The relation between Brahman and God | ... | 265 |
| 6.5 | Śāṅkara and Bradley | ... | 268 |
| 6.6 | Śāṅkara and Spinoza | ... | 272 |
| 6.7 | Śāṅkara and Rādhakrishnan | ... | 277 |
| 6.8 | Conclusion | ... | 282 |
| | References and Notes | ... | 285 |

CHAPTER - VII

HASTINGS RASHDALL AND THE PROBLEM

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----|-----|
| 7.1 | Introduction | ... | 287 |
| 7.2 | God and the Absolute in Rashdall's Philosophy | ... | 288 |
| 7.3 | Śāṅkara and Rashdall | ... | 326 |
| 7.4 | Conclusion | ... | 330 |
| | References and Notes | ... | 332 |

CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUSION

| | | | |
|--------|---------------------|-----|-----|
| 8.1 | ... | ... | 334 |
| to | | | to |
| 8.11.6 | ... | ... | 349 |
| | SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY | ... | 351 |



CHAPTER - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.1 Introductory :

The problem of the relation between God and the Absolute is the subject-matter of our inquiry. It is an important problem, since, the Absolute is the ultimate reality from the philosophical point of view and God is the ultimate reality from the religious point of view, a question arises whether we identify the God of religion with the Absolute of metaphysics or we maintain a distinction between them. The idea of the Absolute is generally associated with a transcendent being divested of all concrete content and beyond all categorical determinations principally spatial, temporal and causal. Such a transcendent being is an abstract universal, unchanging and unchangeable, not an object of thought or discursive reason, but one of unique experience or intuition. It is

either an indeterminate unity which discourages all plurality and differentiations or harbours, we know not why, contents within itself not as they empirically are, but only as transformed and transmuted in the whole of experience. "We may, in fact, conveniently define the Absolute as that structure of the world system which any and every internally consistent purpose must recognise as the condition of its own fulfilment. To deny the existence of an Absolute thus defined, is in principle to reduce the world and life to a mere chaos."¹

Again the Absolute may be conceived as a concrete individuality, which is at the same time a concrete universal encouraging reality of all that is experienced, of matter, life and spirit in their relations and inter relations. It allows no gap among these different elements, each of which is directed towards the realisation of values that are embodied in the Absolute. Matter, Life and Spirit are thus no appearances, but are different levels of self-expression in the life of the Absolute. Another feature which distinguishes this conception of the Absolute is that on it the individual selves instead of being appearances have been given a scope for approximation to the unity and totality of absolute values. In this approximation lies the progressive personality of the individual self which grows out of an antagonism between the self and the world setting

up his rights and duties. The antagonism between the self of man and his not-self pursues him, and he is in the struggle so long as the ideals or values he will be striving after will be held out to him as so many external goals. This happens so long as he regards himself as a self centred moral person. The inward realisation of the presence of the ideal by man within himself may be said to constitute the true significance of Divine Immanence of the sphere of religion. In religion therefore the horizon of human ideals is so widened as to merge into the wider sphere of the objective values and perfection which are embodied in the being of God. In religion antagonism between the individual self and the Absolute reaches the vanishing point though such a state does not mean annihilation but rather enrichment of the individual self in the Absolute. Religion thus conceived leaves a very thin line of distinction between God and the Absolute. But on the whole, the standard concept of the Absolute in metaphysics and the concept of God in popular theisms are or appear very different indeed and pose a serious philosophical problem.

1.2 What is the Absolute ?

The Absolute is an entity, an existent, something that is, in the very fullest and highest sense permitted by Ontology. An Absolute is the sort of entity which not only occupies a prime ontic category, but also occupies it

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necessarily and unconditionally. Other prime category entities could be dislodged from ontic rank, and leave gaps in their places, but an Absolute is immune from such a possibility, whatever was the case. An Absolute is plainly such as to admit of no alternatives. If there is an Absolute of that essential sort, then it is meaningless to suppose that there might instead have been an Absolute of some other somewhat different nature or essence. When we make inquiry with our imperfect insight into modality, we find that there are alternative Absolutes, but with our perfect insight into modality all such alternativity would vanish. The Absolute may be articulated into a number of members, each of which requires and so includes all the others. It may even be articulated into members belonging to different logical types, none of which has any absolute ontic preference over the others. From the standpoint of Absolute theory, contingencies of existence or relation which the Absolute neither determines nor explains, are in a sense rival Absolutes alongside of itself. And, if we are venturing on Absolute it seems better to have Absolutes which guide and shed light rather than Absolutes which allow us to expect practically anything. An Absolute must be taken as containing within itself the source of the absoluteness -- claiming realm of values, it must be such as to embody all such values and to explain their detailed content. And if the Absoluteness and the claim of values can be shown to rest on a confusion, then there are and can be no Absolutes.

The Absolute which is self-existent of prime category, without alternative as closely knit as may be in respect of its essential features. An Absolute is intrinsically capable of displaying itself in alternative contingencies, whether of existence, characterization or relation. In fact, the Absolute is capable of displaying itself in all such contingencies external to itself and embodying in the highest conceivable perfection of all the values that are intrinsic and mandatory. These requirements are all purely formal; they express what it is to be an Absolute, but they do not tell us how such requirements are to be met and how they are to be incorporated in the Absolute. Our procedure in putting our Absolute to work in the field of philosophical difficulties continues, a long philosophical tradition. God, or a personally pictured conscious Absolute has always been an incredibly hard-worked notion in philosophy. "The Absolute contains all finite existence and contains it as a perfectly harmonious system. And therefore all finite aspiration must somehow be realised in the structure of the Absolute whole, though not necessarily in the way in which we, as being of limited knowledge and goodness, actually wish it to be realised. The Absolute whole is thus, as nothing else can be, the concrete individual reality in which our ideals have actual existence."²

For us many accounts of an Absolute seem at first entertainable. But we must be guided by the pragmatic refusal to accept as an Absolute not only anything that has alternatives -- this is an analytic consequence of Absoluteness, but also anything which has disconnectedly co-existent Absolutes alongside itself. There can, we are compelled to suppose, only be a single maximally unified Absolute. An Absolute necessarily involves a synthesis of all values. The Absolute is like some entity which is postulated in scientific theory, and we accept it because it allows us to predict empirical details which would otherwise have been anything but predictable. The finished example of the Absolute we find in the philosophies of Śūnyavāda and Advaita Vedānta in the east and in the philosophies of Spinoza and Bradley in the west. Apart from the differences in details, their conceptions are essentially the same. Hence the mark of an Absolute as conceived as Brahman, Śūnyam, Substance or the Reality is that it is beyond all forms and qualities, it is beyond conceptions. It is truly a transcendent existent. It is a category by itself. As reflected in human nature -- it is such that its denial is logically self-contradictory. Hence it is the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute. The world may or may not be, the Absolute is.

1.3 What is God ?

The belief in God is as old as man's relation to the world. In his transactions with the world he often finds himself so placed that his wishes, desires and activities, his coming into being and passing out of it, his good fortunes and ill fortunes, his health and disease, are often beyond his control. Happenings in nature like the wind and rains, floods and famines and seasons of the year, also appear to him puzzling and mysterious. They create in him the conviction that he is too small and helpless. He thus comes to believe in a power or powers, which, seem to control the destiny not only of his own but also of the world at large. "The idea of God is associated with exaltedness, sublimity, ineffable majesty, holiness (in the original Hebrew sense of 'apartness'), transcendence, superhuman power -- what theologians have called God's 'Metaphysical' as distinguished from His 'ethical' attributes."³ It is not within our province to detail all the stages and circumstances in the evolution of man's consciousness of God, but only to trace the main conditions and forces that determine its origin. These conditions and forces that have been classified under the two main heads, viz., -- Anthropological and Psychical. By Anthropological conditions we mean those which arise out of man's relations to his external environment, material-objects, plant-kingdom, animals and his fellow beings. By a psychical conditions of God-consciousness, we mean those mental functions of man, such as

his impulses, his motives, his instincts, his thoughts and his higher experience that rise from his spiritual nature and make up his inner psychical life. Again, according to Tillich, in the notion of God two elements can be distinguished : the element of ultimacy or the Being of God which is not a symbol, and the other element of consciousness which is borrowed from our profane experience and is symbolically applied. Yahweh or Christ or Ram or Krishna have both the elements : the ultimate concern and a concrete image of what concerns a believer ultimately. "God as the ultimate in man's ultimate concern is more certain than any other certainty, even that of oneself. God as a symbolized in a divine figure is a matter of daring faith, of courage and risk."⁴

There are theistic proofs in religion which try to prove the existence of God. Firstly the cosmological Argument for the divine existence is based on the contingency of the cosmos or the world as we know it, and tries to prove that God must exist as the Infinite First cause of the finite world, because nothing finite can explain its origin. For if we take any other finite cause to be the origin of that finite then it will lead us to suppose another finite and so on ad infinitum. So to avoid infinite regress we must fall back upon an infinite cause. Hence God must be the Infinite First cause of the cosmos. Secondly the Teleological Argument or Physico-theological argument as Kant calls it, tries to prove God as the intelligent

and purposive cause of the Universe on the analogy of a designing artificer producing a work of art. Just as adaptation of parts of a machine and the end or purpose for which it is produced argue the existence of an intelligent mechanist, even so the adaptation of parts and department of the Universe to one another and its harmonious process prove that the maker of this Universe must be an intelligent being. Thirdly, the Ontological argument is another instrument at the hands of the rationalist for establishing our belief in the existence of God. But we see that in the cartesian form the Ontological argument first assumes the existence in our mind of an idea of a perfect being and then passes from such idea to the existence and has become chargeable by Kant with dogmatic assumption both as to the necessary existence of the idea in our mind and as to objective existence of God of which it is the idea.

Hegel's version of the Ontological argument does not stick to the process of the finite mind from its idea of God to the existence of God as Descartes did, but makes the argument to yield to us, by dialectic necessity, the existence of God as the logical postulate of all our ideas and of the existence of all things. Thus instead of proving the existence of God as the conclusion from the premise of our idea of God, it really inverts the order and proves the existence in our mind of our idea of God as also his existence as conclusion from God or Thought or Idea as a

necessary assumption. But empirical philosophy of Hume which makes Knowledge to consist wholly of sense - feelings, cannot justify man's belief in God's existence. According to him, God certainly does not come within the purview of sense experience, because He cannot be sensed as other objects are. "If we admit that all the arguments for the existence of God are invalid, this does not, of course prove that God does not exist. The fact that there is no evidence of the existence of a mountain thirty thousand feet high on the back of the Moon does not prove that one does not exist. In the same way there might be such a being as God, even though there is no evidence of the fact available to us. It is impossible to prove the non-existence of God. You can only say that there is no evidence of his existence."⁵ Kant better than any other philosopher has also shown that pure reason fails to comprehend God. He, therefore, must be believed in as a moral governor adjusting reward and punishments to the human agents in future life according to their deserts.

Again, the arguments do not aim at scientifically proving any actual being; they aim at expressing formally the unshakable conviction of the religious believers in God's existence. "The religious believer finds himself unshakably convinced of the divine existence; his vision of the Universe engages his imagination so powerfully that he can not envisage the non-existence of God as a genuine

possibility."⁶ Hence we can come to the conclusion that at the root of the very consciousness that there is a Supreme Being which not only evolves the world but turns the individual self towards the attainment of his fuller being, there is that internal urge under which the human mind feels that it has to rise above the ordinary levels of experience and reason to the realm of faith in which God as the Supreme objective truth reveals Himself.

1.4 The Upaniṣadic and the Greek Tradition :

It has grown into a custom in Indian philosophical circles to hold the view that the Upaniṣads to all intents and purposes are monistic in their import, advocating the doctrine of an Impersonal Indeterminate (Nirguṇa) Brahman, indescribable and undefinable in terms of the logical categories unapproachable by the sense organs, intellect and mind. But a close and first hand study of the Upaniṣads themselves shows that both monistic and theistic currents are available in them. Theism became the characteristic doctrine of the later Upaniṣads. In the earlier Upaniṣads it is found interwoven with monism but in the later ones, it is received a well defined character. Thus we have here all the necessary ingredients of both absolutism theism. Brahman, the world and Jīva are distinguished from one another in terms of the controller and the controlled and Brahman becomes personal God possessed of infinite perfect-ions, entering into social intercourse with man.

In Greek philosophy Thales thinks that the world is full of Gods. For Anaximander the primitive infinite matter is the divine essence and living divine spirit, the former of the Universe. It is infinite, eternal and imperishable. Anaximenes like his predecessor, declares the primitive matter air, to be divine. Pythagoreans exalted Deity above the opposition of principles and derived the principles from Deity, Parmenides, the Eleatic, philosopher, speaks of being as One and only Being. We can call it God. It is identical with thought and there is nothing outside being. According to Heraclitus, the Deity is the law of Universe and is not separate from the primitive fire, the essence of all things. All things are subordinate to Deity. It is Xenophanes who for the first time preached monotheistic doctrine in Greece.

According to Xenophanes, God rules over Gods and men for the Deity is the highest and the highest cannot be but one. This God is uncreated nor is the subject to change. Again for Empedocles, Gods are spoken in many different ways. He mentions the Gods who are formed out of the combination of primitive substances. He occasionally gives to the six primitive absolute, eternal, essences, the predicate divine. He also calls Deity as invisible, unapproachable and as ruling the whole world. Anaxagoras assumes an incorporeal, thinking essence which has moved and ordered matter.

Socrates believes in One God, who is all wise and all good ruler of the Universe. God's existence is proved .

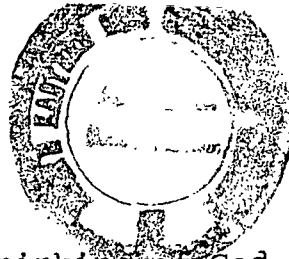
by the providential order of nature and the universality of belief in God and His revelations in dreams, signs and oracles, According to Plato, God did not create every thing but only that what is good. The ideas are constituents of His essence. Ultimately there is only God or the good to whom the ideas are adjectival. Plato's God did not create the world, but rearranged pre-existing material. Among the forms, Plato accords a special place to One of the forms, the Form of the Good. It is the source of other forms. There is a world soul and this seems to be the soul of the creative God. God in this goodness desired that everything should be as much as possible like Himself. For Aristotle, God is a living being, God is actuality and actuality of thought is life. God is one. He is eternally existing as pure thought, as happiness, complete self-fulfilment and without any unrealized purposes. God is the centre towards which all things strive. He is the unifying, principle of the Universe. Again, God of Plotinus is absolute and refers to no number. He is the source of all numbers. The One stands Supreme spirit comes next and then comes soul. The One is called God at times and at time the Good. It is transcendental and has no attribute. His God is in everything but still is above anything.

1.5 Under the scrutiny of astute metaphysicians :

According to Prof. Radhakrishnan, God with whom the worshipper stands in personal relation is the very

Absolute in the world context and is not mere appearance of the Absolute. As creator, God is personal while Absolute is impersonal. God can only be a creative personality acting on an environment which though dependent on God is not God. While Absolute is the transcendent divine, God is the cosmic divine. God is the spirit above time and is attempting for timeless values on the plane of time when the non-being is reduced fully to being, the dualism between God and the given environment ceases. The distinction between the creator and the created vanishes, God lapses into the Absolute, F.H. Bradley speaks of the Absolute as Knowable by finite beings. It is a harmonious system which is immanent in the world. For Bradley Absolute is not God. God has no meaning outside the religious consciousness and that is practical, for Absolute is related to nothing. If reality has only one sense, God is not real. Nothing except the whole Universe is real. If a degree can be held in reality, God is more real than individuals like ourselves. God's personality is valid though not necessary for every religion. For Spinoza God is absolutely infinite substance with thought and extension and other infinite attributes. His idea of God is pantheistic, God and the world are one but He is also more than that. Spinoza's God has neither personality nor consciousness intelligence, will and feeling. He is not affected by any emotion of pleasure and pain. God is the in-dwelling and not transient cause of everything. All the ideas in the

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15

Universe added together constitute the thinking of God. God and nature mean the same substance but He is more than everything. Dr. Rashdall thinks as an idealist that cause is interpreted as activity and this activity in individual causes our individual will and that what is not caused by divine will. Again Idealism means matter cannot exist apart from mind and as Universe is prior to man, the Universe needs must exist in some mind other than ours. This is God's mind. Dr. Rashdall also proves the moral theory by saying that it is not subjective but objective and Absolute. As the majority of us is of opinion that selflessness is better than selfishness and such other ethical ideas, we need must believe in an objective ground of morality. God as an Absolute mind is the only possible postulate of the Absolute Morality. For explaining any superficial or relative morality one need not refer to the Absolute Mind, but one cannot consistently explain an absolute morality without postulating God as its logical presupposition. "A moral ideal can exist nowhere and nohow but in a mind, an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a mind from which all Reality is derived. Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regarded as the revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God."⁷

But absolute morality does not belong to any individual mind or to material things. So it needs must rest on an Universal mind or God. God cannot be identified with

the Absolute, since God is thought of as a self-conscious Being. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousness not as isolated and unrelated being but as intimately related and unrelated beings but as intimately related to Him and to one another and as forming with Him a system or unity. According to Śaṅkara in an absolute view -- point there is no place for God. But He is accepted in the world of relations, so creation is real too. Brahman is the ultimate truth. It is one, The world has no reality apart from Brahman and all others are mere appearances. It is Brahman that is real and true behind, the appearances of this microcosm and macrocosm. The same absolute Brahman is called Īśvara who is the creator, governor and destroyer of the Universe. In this point of view He is the qualified Brahman. Īśvara, according to Śaṅkara is the first cause of the phenomenal world, from the practical point of view. For Śaṅkara, God is the Omniscient, all powerful, eternal, all pervading cause of the world. He is the material as also the efficient cause of the world. He creates without any implement and does so with an aim which is not selfish. Brahman conditioned by Māyā becomes Īśvara. He is consciousness reflected on Avidyā or nescience.

1.6 In the religion :

God is basically a religious concept. It is the ultimate reality from the religious standpoints. Great

religions of the world have felt the force, which is shown in history by the way in which they have inevitably tended to credit their various 'Gods' with creatorship of the Universe. The God of the Hebrew Religion, as at first presented to us in its earlier records, is represented as limited in power by the existence of other divine beings, and temporarily changeable and mutable. But in the later Old Testament writings, the New Testament, and the subsequent constructions of ecclesiastical theology, we see the gradual development from these Hebrew beginnings of an idea of a God who is 'all in all' and limited neither by the existence of other divine beings with opposite aims and interests nor by the inherent resistance of "matter" to His purposes.

The Zoroastrian religion, in which the limitation of the power of the good being Ahura Mazda by the existence of a co-ordinate bad thing, Angro Mainyus, was originally a fundamental tenet, is said to have become among the modern Parsis a pure Monotheism.

"It should be noted that this inevitable tendency of Religion itself to identify its object with ultimate Reality, conceived in its timeless perfection as a complete and infinite individual whole leads to the difficult metaphysical 'problem of evil'. For if God is the same thing as the Absolute, it would appear that evil itself must be,

like everything else, a manifestation of this nature. And if so, can we say that God is strictly speaking "good" or is, the complete realisation of our ideals? It is this difficulty about evil, more than anything else, which has led many philosophers in both ancient and modern times to distinguish between the Absolute and God, and to regard God as simply one, though the highest and most perfect, among the finite individuals contained in the Absolute."⁸ So Plato suggested in the second book of the Republic that God is not the cause of all that happens to us, but only of the good things that befall us. However, Plato is here consciously adopting his expression to current theological doctrine of which he did not fully approve. A modern defence of the same conception of a finite God, is found in Dr. Rashdall's essay in Personal Idealism. Other reasons which have often led to the same view, such as the desire to think of God as a mutable being like ourselves, capable of being influenced in this attitude toward us by our attitude towards Him, seem to rest too much upon idiosyncrasies of private feeling to be of serious philosophical weight.

The problem of evil and a finite God is a burning issue in the philosophy of religion. The doctrine of the finitude of God does not appear in any way to remove the difficulty about evil. For, evil must now appear in the universe in a double form. On the one hand, it admittedly is taken to exist outside God, as a hostile factor limiting

this power of shaping the world to His purpose. But again, as we have seen, every finite individual, fall short of complete internal harmony of structure and thus contains an element of defect and evil within itself. Thus, evil must be inherent in the nature of a finite God, as well as in that of the existence supposed to be outside Him. In fact, we have one more illustration of the principle that all limitation involves self limitation from within. It is only by forgetting this fundamental truth that we can conceive the possibility of a being who is perfectly good and yet is less than the Absolute.

Now from the religious standpoint, a question arises, can we worship the Absolute? This is a question which needs some careful examination before we can venture on a positive answer. "We cannot worship the Absolute whom no one hath seen or can see, who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto. The formless (nirākāram) Absolute is conceived as formed (ākaravat) for the purpose of worship. Worship of God is not a deliberate alliance with falsehood, since God is the form in which alone the Absolute can be pictured by the finite mind. The highest reality appears to the individual who has not felt its oneness with his own nature as possessing a number of perfections. The conception of a personal God is the fusion of the highest logical truth with the deepest religious conviction. This personal God is an object of genuine worship and reverence and not a non-ethical

deity indifferent to man's needs and fears."⁹ The problem is not strictly psychological. Experience shows that individual man can derive religious support from belief in the most varied and most defective conceptions of the nature of Deity. The Absolute contains all finite existence and contains it as a perfectly harmonious system. "And therefore all finite aspiration must somehow be realised in the structure of the Absolute whole, though not necessarily in the way in which we, as beings of limited knowledge and goodness, actually wish to be realised. The Absolute whole is thus, as nothing else can be, the concrete individual reality in which our ideals have actual existence. As all our ideals themselves are but so many expressions of our place in the system and our relation to the rest of it, so the system itself is their concrete harmonious embodiment."¹⁰

Now we may say whether the Absolute or whole is known in Metaphysics to be "good". The answer depends upon the precise meaning we attach to the statement. In the sense that it is the really existing embodiment of the ideals which we are trying amid our ignorance and confusion to realise, we must say "yes". But if we use the word "good" in a narrower sense, to mean "ethically good" we can hardly say without qualification that the whole is good. For "ethical goodness" belongs essentially to the time-order and means the process of the gradual assertion of the ideal against apparent evil. To be morally good is to have an ideal

that is not realised in the events of the time - order as they come to us in our finite experience and to mould those events into confirmity with the ideal. The moral life is from first to last a struggle and whether the struggle is absent it is misleading to speak of morality. Hence the Absolute qua Absolute has to be beyond good and bad in the human sense.

The Absolute is the conceptual Absolute and this highest conceptual is 'God' or Īśvara, the determinate real, the object of pious meditation and of the highest form of devotion, para-bhakti, while Brahman is the eternal object of pure indeterminate knowledge. The general tendency among human beings is to feel the necessity for a Supreme Ruler who would dispense justice and apportion, the fruits of their thoughts and actions. The feeling demands a merciful and loving God who will respond to its expressions and liberate it from sorrow. God is a magnified Man, the cosmic person who has all knowledge and all power. He is the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the Universe, who in His unexcellible majesty lords over the earth and the heaven, who fashions the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, who extends for beyond the limitless space. Again, "In the higher religions, too, God is regarded as the Ultimate source not only of values but of power, not only of right but of might, and the relation of God to man is thought of not only as that of son to Father, but as that of creature to the Uncreated."¹¹

God is unlimited in every sense. He is the Supreme Puruṣa, the Father of the entire creation. He is the Virāt, the Universal King, the absolute unifying form in which all beings are strung together like beads in a thread; He is Hiranyagarbha, the inner animating, like principle of everything. He excludes none, all are within His Super-human body. He is Īśvara, the Universal consciousness that sustains all manifestation. There is none beside Him. Īśvara is the manifested Form of Reality. He is the Saguna - Brahman, the Absolute endowed with all glorious attributes. This qualified Reality, though the highest open to any of us, is not the highest in itself. But, as long as the Real in itself is of no practical utility in our processes of thought, life and action, it is immaterial, so far as life is concerned, whether the highest Reality is qualified or not. As long as we live within the boundaries of the rational intellect, the Highest in itself cannot be taken as a part of life's considerations, and we are bound to be satisfied with what is highest from our own standpoint.

1.7 The philosophical problem :

The Absolute is the all -- comprehensive identical world - ground, all - consistent experience, the ultimate explanation of the World experience in space and time. The particulars of experience depend, as instances, upon their

universal laws from the scientific point of view, and, in wider philosophical reference there is one Universal principle upon which all particulars, actual and possible depend. The intellectual necessity of explaining and understanding the significance of the world - process leads to the conception of the Absolute Experience of the Idealistic philosophy. When we consider the Absolute or this ultimate Reality from the point of view of emotion, when we adore the Highest as the home of our values and try to establish a personal relationship with the infinite, the Absolute of philosophical reason turns out to be the God of religion. Thus Absolute or God is the same ultimate reality looked at from different points of view. But this identity of the God of religion and the Absolute of philosophy is not admitted by all. The Absolutists like Bradley and Śaṅkara believe that the Absolute of philosophy is the highest Reality and God is only a phenomenal manifestation of the Absolute to the religious consciousness. God, therefore, is not the highest reality but is real only from the lower or finite point of view. The God of religion is necessarily a personal being but personality cannot be the highest category of existence. The attribute of personality of a human type cannot be ascribed to the Absolute. Reality, as personality involves self-consciousness and therefore the duality of self and not-self, whereby the personal self, will be limited by the not-self. Absolute Experience being all comprehensive cannot

be a person; for personality is true only with reference to the non-human, impersonal nature.

To Bradley, Absolute is neither personal nor impersonal but is a supra-personal, all inclusive experience. The personal God of religion is only the appearance of the Absolute Experience which is one. Śāṅkara being an abstract monist believes in the reality of the one and in the unreality of the differences. Consciousness is the only self-certified reality and this is an abstract principle of consciousness as such and not a personal being having consciousness as his quality. Absolute is bare consciousness which is unitary. Religious experience assumes the difference of the worshipper and the worshipped and is thus illusory from the highest point of view. God is real from our point of view but not from the point of view of One Absolute Reality (Brahman) which is the highest. The Absolutists in regarding God as a reality of lower category make religion impossible for nothing short of the Absolute reality can be worshipped as God. Further the Absolute experience of Bradley or the Universal consciousness of Śāṅkara is an abstract experience which seems to be impossible. An experience which is not the experience of any person is inconceivable. Hence Rāmānuja believes that the Absolute consciousness implies an Absolute personality of God. The Abstract One of the Absolutists rejecting all the differences and plurality makes the world of man and nature an illusion.

Abstract One, at the expense of the many, cannot be the highest reality. Reality must be a concrete unity, an identity-in-difference or a system. Such systematic experience which is the highest reality, may be regarded as an experience of personal type and the duality of the self-and not-self, necessary for personality, may be regarded as holding between two different aspects of the same reality.

Thus the Absolute of philosophy does not necessarily cancel the world of plurality. The particular things of experience are finite and relative to each other. They depend upon one another as parts of an all comprehensive system. This system is Absolute and not relative to any other thing which is outside of it because it is all inclusive. But the true Absolute must include the relative and the true infinite must include the finite and go beyond it. This concrete point of view is consistent with theism and seems to be the right point of view. If the Absolute is not a total blank, if it be an identical experience systematically organising diversified finite experiences as its materials, then the Absolute can be regarded as the Supreme Person or the God of religion. Absolute and God are, therefore, the same reality from the intellectual and emotional point of view respectively. "The supreme in its absolute self-existence is Brahman, the Absolute and as the Lord and creator containing all and controlling is Īśvara, the God."¹²

In current philosophy, the word Absolute is frequently used to signify ultimate Reality, the reality which is all-embracing, harmonious and complete. Those who adopt this view commonly try to show that, if we loyally follow the pathway to reality, we inevitably reach the Absolute as the goal of our journey. Experience at its different levels, we are told, is beset by contradictions. We pass from one form of experience to another, only to find that no form can be thought out consistently. Each phase of experience is therefore condemned as an appearance, or at least shown to come short of reality, when we apply the principle of non-contradiction and we are forced to go further in the quest for Reality which is perfect, satisfying and internally harmonious. The principle of non-contradiction is thus made to give the steps of the proof which carries us triumphantly forward to the Absolute. Under the solvent of this all-powerful principle even the identity of individual yields, and they are merged in the one identity which persists and maintains itself, the concret whole. The Absolute what we are immediately concerned to point out is, that the Absolute so conceived ought not to be identified with God, for all reality does not fall within the Divine Being. God is not the whole, but all things depend on God. If, we use the term Absolute, we should be careful to point out that we do not do so after the manner of a pantheistic idealism where it coincides with the idea of God. In other words, the Universe

as a system is the Absolute, and God is not identical with the Universe. Hence the conceptual line of demarcation is drawn already. The Absolute is Absolute and God is God. And yet there cannot be two ultimate realities, from the point of view of. There are strong points in favour of the Absolute or also God. To accept or to reject any will need excepted philosophical daring. Yet, as we have shown in this chapter, which is only a kind of mapping of the issues involved or showing the parameters of our problem, there are philosophers and religious thinkers advocating one or both the realities. In the next chapter we shall take up the problem as it is in the Upaniṣadic philosophy.

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Contemporary literature ?

CHAPTER- II

GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE IN THE UPANISADS

2.1 Introduction :

The Upanisads are the first recorded attempt of the early Aryans at systematic philosophising. These ancient documents constitute the earliest written presentation of their effort to construe the world of experience as a rational whole. Furthermore, they have continued to be the generally accepted authoritative statements with which every subsequent orthodox philosophic formulation has had to show itself in accord. Even the materialistic Cārvākas, who denied the Vedas, a future life and almost every sacred doctrine of the orthodox, Brahmans, avowed respect for these Upanisads. That interesting later epitome of the Vedānta, the Vedānta-sāra shows how these Cārvākas and the adherents of the Buddhistic theory and also of the ritualistic Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and of the logical Nyaya appealed to the Upanisads in support of their varying theories.¹ Even the dualistic Sāṃkhya philosophers claimed to find scriptural authority in the Upanisads.

The word 'Upaniṣad' is derived from Upa (near), ni (down) and sad (to sit), i.e., sitting down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret doctrines. In the quietude of forest hermitage the Upaniṣad thinkers pondered on the problems of the deepest concern and communicated their knowledge to their pupils near them.² The Upaniṣads contain the account of the mystic significance of the syllable Aum, explanations of mystic words like tajjalan which are intelligible only to the initiated and sacred texts and esoteric doctrines. Upaniṣad became a name for mystery, a secret, rahasyam communicated only to the tested few. "The Upaniṣads give in some detail the path of the inner ascent, the inward journey by which the individual souls get at the Ultimate Reality."³

Sankara derives the word Upaniṣad as a substantive from the root sad, "to loosen", "to reach", or "to destroy". With Upa and ni as prefixes and vip as termination. If this derivation is accepted Upaniṣad means brahma - knowledge by which ignorance is loosened or destroyed. The treatise that deal with brahma knowledge are called the Upaniṣads and so pass for the Vedānta.⁴ The different

derivations together make out that the Upaniṣads give us both spiritual vision and philosophical argument.

The word Upaniṣad occurs with three distinct meanings, as (1) secret word, (2) secret text, (3) secret import.

(1) Certain mysterious words, expressions and formulas which are only intelligible to the initiated are described as Upaniṣad. These contain either a secret rule for action and behaviours as the na yācēt of Kaush 2.1.2. or secret information on the nature of Brahman when the latter is described as satyasya satyam or tadvonam (the final goal of aspiration), there is added "thou hast been taught the upaniṣad." Of a similar nature are secret words like tajjalān, "in him (all beings) are born, perish and breathe" or neti neti. And when the worship of Brahman under such formulas is enjoined, it is not implied that Upaniṣad signifies "worship"; but only means that meditation in Brahman. (2) The extent text themselves as well as the older texts underlying them are called Upaniṣads. Accordingly, in the Taittirīyaka school especially a section often ends with the words -- iti Upaniṣad. (3) very frequently it is not a word or a text, but the secret allegorical meaning

of some ritual conception or practice which is described as Upaniṣad; e.g., in chānd. 1.1.10. — "for that which is executed with knowledge, with faith, with the Upaniṣad. (Knowledge of the secret meaning of Udgītha as Om), that is more effective."

Modern studies in the Upaniṣads have lent additional support to the view, we have taken, respecting the nature of their teachings. Radhakrishnan, for instance, does not accept the interpretations of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy on abstract lines. He discredits Deussen's monistic interpretation of Upaniṣads. The language and the drift of Radhakrishnan's view in regard to the Upaniṣads reveal that they teach that (1) Brahman is not an abstract unity but an organic whole, the simple identity differentiating Himself in this inseparable diverse manifestations in Man and Nature, (2) The world is real though its reality is not the same as that of Brahman. In other words, it has an existence, distinct from Brahman though just because, in point of fact, it is inseparable from Brahman, it must be supposed to be unreal in the sense that its reality is derived from Him. (3) Brahman is both determinate and

indeterminate in the sense that while the negative terminology⁵ aims at establishing Brahman's freedom from imperfection, the positive attributes emphasize His perfection. He goes the length of asserting that the impersonality of the Absolute is not its whole significance, that impersonality and personality are not arbitrary constructions or fictions of the mind. Radhakrishnan has repudiated Śaṅkara's cosmic interpretations of the Upaniṣads. He disallows the Upaniṣadic nāma-rūpa as interpreted by Śaṅkara to mean nothing more than name and form and, therefore, indicates that the world is unreal.⁷ He explicitly heralds the proposition that their philosophy is not so much monism as advaitism.⁸ Although Radhakrishnan would sometimes admit that Īśvara is only a symbol⁹ of the Absolute and that he has less of reality than the Absolute Being,¹⁰ yet he affirms in his writings in many places that such distinction between the Absolute and god are only logical and not chronological.¹¹ "We call it Absolute to indicate our sense of the inadequacy of all terms and definitions. We call it God to show that it is the basis of all that exists and the goal of all. Personality is a symbol and

if we ignore its symbolic character it is likely to shut us from truth."¹² At last we can say "The Upaniṣads did not draw any hard and fast line of distinction between the simple of intuition supposed by Śāṅkara and the concrete whole of Rāmānuja."¹³

2.2 General Philosophical views of the Upaniṣads :

The Upaniṣads occupy a unique place in the development of Indian thought. It has been customary among commentators of Upaniṣadic philosophy to regard the variegated philosophical texts as constituting one systematic whole. As we shall see in the course of the chapter, the Upaniṣads supply us with various principles of thought and may thus be called the Berecynthis of all the latter systems of Indian philosophy.¹⁴ Just like a mountain which form its various sides gives birth to rivers which run in different directions similarly the Upaniṣads constitute that lofty eminence of philosophy which, as they progress onwards towards the sea of life, gather strength by the inflow of innumerable tributaries of speculation which intermittently join these rivulets, so as to make a huge expanse of waters, at the place where they meet the ocean of life, It is thus

we see in the Upaniṣads roots of Buddhistic as well as Jaina philosophy, of Sāṃkhya as well as yoga, of Mīmāṃsā as well as Śaivism, of the theistic mystic philosophy of Bhagavad-gītā, of the Dvaita, the Viśiṣṭādvaita as well as the Advaita systems. "There is no important form of Hindu thought heterodox Buddhism included which is not rooted in the Upaniṣads."¹⁵

The philosophers of the Upaniṣads speak to us of the one Reality behind and beyond the flux of the world. The Vedic deities are the messengers of the one Light which has burst forth into the universal creation. When we pass from the Vedic hymns to the Upaniṣads we find that the interest shifts from the objective to the subjective, from the brooding on the wonder of the outside world to the meditation on the significance of the self. The Real, at the heart of the universe is reflected in the infinite depths of the soul. The Upaniṣads give in some detail the path of the inner ascent, the inward journey by which the individual souls get at the ultimate Reality. In the Upaniṣads we find a criticism of the empty and barren ritualistic religion. Sacrifices were relegated to the interior position. They do not lead to final liberation. When all things are God's

there is no point in offering to him anything, except one's will, one's self.

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 an escape from it. The pessimism of the Upaniṣads has not developed to such an extent as to suppress all endeavour and generate inertia. In the words of Barth' : "The Upaniṣads are much more instinct with the spirit of speculative daring than the sense of suffering and weariness."¹⁶ Again in the words of Cave : "Within the limits of the Upaniṣads, there are indeed few explicit references to the misery of the light 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."¹⁷

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. 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 under Ethics we present their views with regard to the 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.

In solving the question of the nature of ultimate reality, the Upaniṣadic 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 way of a philosophical analysis of the nature of the self which they call the Ātman. The word 'ātman' is derived from 'to breathe'. It is the breath of life.¹⁸ Gradually its meaning is extended to cover life, soul, self or essential being of the individual. Śaṅkara derives atman from the root which means "to obtain", 'to eat' or enjoy or pervade all."¹⁹ Ātman is the principle of man's life, the soul that pervades his being, his breath, Prāṇa, his intellect, Prajñā and transcends them. 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. All our states of consciousness revolve round this central light. Without a subject there will be no flux, no order of sensations in space or sequences in time. It is hidden in all things and pervades all creation. The Upanisads refuse to identify the self with the body or the series of mental states or the stream of consciousness. The self cannot be a relation which requires a ground of relations nor a connection 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. "There is no second outside it, no other distinct term"²⁰ "As breathing he is named breath, as speaking speech, as seeing eyes, as hearing ear, as understanding mind, all these are but names for his operation."²¹

In the early Upaniṣads, ātman is the principle of the Individual consciousness and Brahman the super personal ground of the cosmos. When we define the ultimate reality from the objective side, it is called Brahman. But the distinction diminishes and the two are identified. God is not merely the transcendent numinous other, but is also the Universal spirit, which is the basis of human personality and its ever-renewing vitalising power. Brahman, the first principle of the Universe, is known through ātman, the inner self of man. In the Śatpātha Brāhman²² and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad,²³ it is said : "Verify, this whole world is Brahman" and also "This soul of mine within the heart, this is Brahman."

The transcendent conception of God held in the Ṛgveda is here transformed into an immanent one. The infinite is not beyond the finite but in the finite. God is both the wholly other, transcendent and utterly beyond the world and man and yet he enters into man and lives in him and becomes the inmost content of his very existence.²⁴ When we identify the Ātman with the self-conscious individual, Brahman is viewed as the self-conscious Īśvara with a force opposed to

him. The conception of Īśvara is the highest object of the religious consciousness. When the Ātman is identified with the mental and vital self of man (manas and prāṇa) Brahman is reduced to the Hīraṇyagarbha or the cosmic soul, which comes between the Īśvara and the soul of man. The Hīraṇyagarbha 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 R̥gveda in the Upaniṣads. The world in which we live, has its own mind and this mind is Hīraṇyagarbha. This conception of the world-soul appears in the Upaniṣads under various names and forms. It is called Kārya Brahmā or the effect God, the Brahma of Nature Naturāta as distinguished from the Kāraṇa Brahmā or the causal God of Īśvara or the Natura naturans. The effect God is the totality of created existences of which all finite objects are parts.

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. "The syllable 'Aum' generally employed to represent the nature of Brāhman, brings out its concrete character. It is the

symbol of the supreme spirit, the 'emblem of the most high.' '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, Śiva in later literature. 'A' is Brahmā the creator, 'U' is Viṣṇu the preserver and 'M' is Śiva the destroyer."²⁵

It is not only 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. According to the Upaniṣads the world is the creation of God, the active Lord. The finite is the self-limitation of the infinite. No finite can exist in and by itself. It exists by the infinite. The dependence of the world on God is explained in different ways "In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Brahman is defined as tajjalan all that (tat), which gives rise to (ja), absorbs (li) and sustain (an) the world."²⁶ The Bṛihadāranya Upaniṣad argues that Satyam consists of three syllables, sa, ti, yam, the first and the last being real and the second unreal, madhyato anṛtam."²⁷

According to the Upaniṣads the creation is the expression. It is not a making of something out of nothing. It is

the self-projection of the supreme. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad describes God as māyin, the wonder-working powerful Being, who creates the world by His powers. Māyā is the power of Īśvara from which the world arise. While the world is treated as an appearance in regard to Pure Being, which is indivisible and immutable, it is the creation of Īśvara, who has the power of manifestation. In Brh. 1.2.14. it is found that 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. 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 Yin is the female.

Deussen holds that the idealistic monism of Yājñaval-
kya is the main teaching of the Upaniṣads and the other
doctrines of theism and cosmogonism are derivation from it,
caused by the inability of man to remain on the heights of
Pure Speculative thought. 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, 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 in his own belief that the essence of every true religion is the repudiation of the reality of the world.

The naive mind of the natural man is likely to consider the forces of nature as ultimate realities; but a deeper speculation and a greater insight into events show that the phenomenal forces cannot be taken to be the ultimate realities. A passage of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad declares that behind the cosmos there must be an existence which must be

regarded as responsible for its origin, sustenance and absorption : "that from which all these beings, come into existence that is by which they live, that into which they are finally absorbed, know that to be the eternal variety, the Absolute."²⁸

When once an eternal Unity behind the cosmos has been postulated, the Upaniṣadic philosophers have no hesitation in making it the front and source of all power whatsoever. They consider it to be the source of infinite power which is only partially exhibited in the various phenomena of Nature. Accordingly, all creatures are Brahman, "This (consciousness, i.e. the Ātman) is Brāhman, this is all the Gods; it is the five elements, earth, wind, ether, water, lights, it is the tiny living creatures and whatever is similar to them; it is the seed of one and another kind; it is that which is born of an egg or the mother's womb, of sweat or from a shoot; it is horses, cattle, men, elephants -- all that lives, all that walks or flies, all that is motionless." (Ait. 3.3.).²⁹

There are passages in the Upaniṣads which make out that the world is an appearance, Vācārambhaṇam vikāro

nāmadheyam while the Reality is Pure Being. There are others which grant reality to the world though they maintain that it has no reality apart from Brahman. Śāṅkara tells us that the former is the true teaching of the Upaniṣads while the latter view is put forward only tentatively as a first step in the teaching to be later withdrawn. The reality conceded to the world is not ultimate. It is only empirical.

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. According to the Taittirīya the several elements of the cosmos are found in the nature of the individual. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (vi. II 3 and 4) fire, water and earth are said to constitute the jīvātman or the individual soul, together with the principle of the infinite.

The insistence on the unity of the supreme self as the constitutive reality of the world and of the individual souls does not negate the empirical reality of the latter.

The plurality of individual soul is admitted by the Upani-
sads. The individual do not resolve themselves in the Uni-
versal Absolute so long as the world of manifestation is
functioning.

The individual, is, in a sense created by God after
His own image and in His own likeness, but He has his crea-
tural form. The individual ego is subject to avidyā or
ignorance when it believes itself to be separate and
different from all other egos. When the individual shakes
off this avidyā he becomes free from all selfishness,
possess all and enjoys all. Man is not perfect as He is,
that there is something higher than the actual self which
has to attain to secure peace of mind.

2.3 The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad :

The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad contains six chapters,
of which the second, the third and the fourth are of great
philosophical consequence, the others containing philoso-
phical matters interspersed with much Miscellaneous reflect-
ion. In the first chapter, we have a good description of
the cosmic person considered as a sacrificial horse, then
we pass to the theory of Death as the "archī" of all things;

and then we have a parable in proof of the supremacy of Prāna which is followed by a number of creationist myths put together at random. In the second chapter we have the famous conversation between Gārgya, the proud Brāhmin, and Ajātasātru the quiescent Kshatriya king. It is in this chapter, we are introduced for the first time to the great sage Yāyñavalkya, who is making a partition of his estate between his wives. The sage Yāyñavalkya to whom we are introduced in chapter two becomes the prominent figure in chapters three and four and just as in chapter two we see him discussing with his wife Maitreyī, similarly in chapter three. We see him discoursing with a number of philosophers in the court of king Janaka and in chapter four with king Janaka himself. The king Janaka figures largely in the third and fourth chapters of this Upanisad, in the third chapter being only a spectator of the great controversy in his court and in the fourth taking the liberty to learn personally from Yāyñavalkya himself. It is this king, who is also introduced for a while in the fifth chapter of this Upanisad, which many other things, besides, such as a number of miscellenous reflections on ethical, cosmological and eschatological matters; while

the sixth and the final chapter of the Upaniṣad contains the celebrated parable of the senses and we are introduced to the philosopher Pravāhaṇa Jaivali.

The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad maintains that the ultimate Reality is being, Sanmātram ni brahma. Since nothing is without reason there must be a why something exists. The world is not self-caused, self-dependent, self-maintaining. All philosophical investigation presupposes the reality of being. The theologian accepts the first principle of being as an Absolute one; the philosopher comes to it by a process of meditation. We cannot have a rational life without assuming the reality of being.

In the Brhadāraṇyaka it is said that the Brahman has two forms; that which is visible and that which is invisible and we know that it is said in the Taittirīya that Brahman is both consciousness and that which has no consciousness. So the view that it is the Brahman that constitutes the entire reality finds its expression in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad consists in the emphasis that it gives to the fact that the self is the dearest of all dear things. Thus it says that the innermost self is dearer than the son, dearer

than riches, dearer than everything else and it is only by regarding the self as the dearest that one can attain the true bliss. The same idea is repeated in the well-known dialogue between Maitreyī and Yāyñavalkya, where Maitreyī said to her husband that she did not want anything by which she could not be immortal, and Yāyñavalkya in an eloquent speech explains to her that everything is true to us because the self is true to us and that it is this self that has to be meditated upon and realised; that by the realisation of this self everything else becomes known. Just as a lump of salt when thrown in water loses itself in it and it cannot be separated out of it, and in whatsoever part the water is tested it appears as saline, so is this infinite universal consciousness and all the diverse forms and names that arise out of the Universe around us are ultimately merged and lost in it. None of their specifications, individualities or separate existences can be further differentiated in this ultimate Reality. It is only in the reign of duality that there is the perceiver and the perceived, the hearer and that which is heard, the thinker and the object of thought, the knower and the known. The ultimate reality

being the self of all, who is there to smell anything, who is there to perceive anything, who is there to hear anything, who is there to know anything, who is there to think anything, how can the ultimate perceiver which is the essence of all be perceived by anything else? This self is further described in another passage where it is identified with the experience of dreamless sleep as beyond all desires of sins and of fear; it is a blissful experience through which one forgets all else that one knows, and it is the essence in which all the relations of father, mother, gods, ascetics, sinners and worldly man cease, which is beyond sin and virtue, wherein the heart transcends the realm of all sorrows. No one can perceive this self, for there is no perceiver when it is perceived, because the pure perceiving illumination of this supreme essence never ceases to shed its eternal light. All the senses of the man ceases to operate here, but yet the underlying consciousness of all knowledge remains just the same. It is only by the realization of this reality that we exist, and it is through its ignorance that we die. It is the great self of man, the Brahman and he who knows Brahman becomes Brahman, Yājñavalkya says to his wife, Maitreyī in this Upaniṣad that

not only this world, but all the worlds proceed from the Self or Brahman. In answer to Uddālala Āruni also, Yājñavalkya says that the Self is the puller or ruler of the sky, the heaven, the sun, the stars and the Gods.

The question arises what are the sources from which the knowledge of Brahman is to be derived? In Brh. it is said -- just as when a fire is laid with damp wood, clouds of smoke spread all around, so in truth from this great Being have been breathed forth the Rgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda, the (hymns) of the Atharvans and the Angirases, the narratives, the histories, the sciences, the mystical doctrines (Upaniṣads), the poems, the proverbs, the parables and expositions -- all these have been breathed forth from him. The general view that lies at the basis of the Upaniṣads is that Brahman, i.e. the ātman is an object of knowledge. The Ātman, in truth should be seen, heard, comprehended and reflected upon. The experimental knowledge which reveals to us a world of plurality where in reality only Brahman exists. In Brh. the world of names, forms and works is defined as amṛtam satyena channam, "the immortal (Brahman) veiled by the (empirical) reality. The word

Satyam (reality) is used precisely as Sat with a twofold meaning, while it denotes Brahman in the section chānd 6 -- tat satyam, sa ātmā, tat tvam asi and is found with this meaning in Brh. 5.4., in the same Upaniṣad Brh. 2.1.20 satyam is on the contrary the reality of experience and Brahman is contrasted with it as satyasa satyam, that which alone in this reality is truly real. Satyam denotes the real in an empirical sense -- "It is the immortal veiled by the reality (amṛtam satyena channam), the Prāṇa, that is to say, is the immortal name and form are the reality by these that Prāṇa is veiled."³⁰ Since the opposites of satya (true) is usually anṛta (untrue), it is perhaps conceivable that the formula in another recension took the form amṛtam satyena channam. This would explain the curious play upon the word satyam which is carried out in this Upaniṣad -- "This satyam consists of three syllables. The first syllable is sa, the second ti, the third yam. The first and the last syllables are the truth (satyam), in the middle is the untruth (anṛtam); this untruth is enclosed on both sides by the truth (anṛtam ubhayataḥ satyena Parigrāhitam), by this means it becomes an actual being."³¹

In this Upaniṣad Vidagdha Sākalya attempts to define Brahman as forming the climax of all that the word atman denotes (sarvasya ātmanah parāyaṇam). After having eight times in succession propounded a one-sided view that represents the earth, love, forms, ether etc. as its basis, he is corrected by Yājñavalkya who points out to him that, that which he explains as the climax of all the word ātman denotes (Sarvasya ātmanah parāyaṇam yaṁ āttha) is on the contrary, only a subordinate Puruṣa that rules in the bodily forms, in love the sun, sound etc. All the view put forward by Yājñavalkya in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad centres in the conviction that Brahman, the ātman is the knowing subject within us. In Brh. 3.4. he is invited by Ushasta to explain, "the immanent, not transcendent Brahman that as soul is within all." For answer he refers to the soul, which by inspiration and expiration, by the intermediate and the upbreathing manifests itself in experience as the vital principle. To the objection that, not to give an explanation of it, he rejoins -- "Thou canst not see the seer of seeing, thou canst not hear the hearer of hearing, thou canst not comprehend the comprehender of comprehension,

thou canst not know the knower of knowledge, he is thy soul, that is within all." And to confirm the ascertain that the knowing subject here characterised by him constitutes not only the essence of the soul, but in and with that the essence of Godhead, he adds, "whatever is distinct from that is liable to suffering." He concludes his description of the all mighty being who sustains and pervades space and with it the entire Universe, by saying that this imperishable one sees but is not seen, hears but is not heard, comprehends but is not comprehended, knows but is not known. Besides Him there is none that sees, besides Him there is none that hears, beside Him there is none that comprehends, beside Him there is none that knows. In truth, in this imperishable one the space inwoven and interwoven.

There is a passage in the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, where in his conversation with his wife Maitreyī, Yājñavalkya said that all this Brāhmaṇa-hood, all this Kshatriya-hood, all these worlds, all these Gods, all these beings, in fact, everything that exists is Ātman. Just as when a drum is being beaten, one is not able to grasp the external sound, but by grasping the drum or the beater of the

drum, the sound becomes grasped; just as when a conch-shell is being blown one is not able to grasp the external sound, but by grasping the conch-shell or the blower of the conch-shell, the sound becomes grasped; that just as when a lute is being played, one is not able to grasp the external sound, but by grasping the lute or the player of the lute, the sound becomes grasped. Similarly in the case of the knowledge of the external world, if one is not able to grasp the external world as it is in itself, by grasping the mind or by grasping the Ātman, the external world becomes grasped. This latter statement, is only implied in the above passage and not explicitly stated, but it cannot be said that the Ātman is here compared to the lute player or the drum-beater or the conch-blower, while the mind by means of which the Ātman perceives compared to the lute or the drum or the conch, while the external world is compared to the sounds that issue from these instruments. This is verily an idealistic monism in which the active part is attributed to the Ātman, while the mind serves as the instrument for its activity. In another passage of the same Upaniṣad, Yājñavalkya tells Maitreyī that the Ātman is the only knower and that he could

not be known by anyone except himself. "It is only when there seems to be a duality that one smells the other, that one sees the other, that one hears the other, that one speaks about the other, that one imagines about the other, that one thinks about the other; but where the Ātman alone is, what and whereby may one smell, what and whereby may one perceive, what and whereby may one imagine, what and whereby may one think? He who knows all this, by what may anybody know Him? He is the external knower, by what may be known?"³²

Such a doctrine takes Yājñavalkya perilously near the position of an Absolute solipsism from which he tries to extricate himself in his conversation with King Janaka in a latter chapter of the same Upaniṣad when he tells us that, "when it is said that such a one does not see, the real truth is that he sees and yet does not see; for never is the vision of the seer destroyed, for that is indestructible, but there is nothing besides him and outside him, which may be said to be seen by him. When it is said that such a one does not smell or taste or speak or hear or imagine or touch or know, he does all these things and yet does not do them, for never are the olfaction, the taste, the speech, the

audition, the imagination, the touch or the knowledge of him destroyed, for they are indestructible; there is, however, nothing outside him and different from him which he may smell or taste, or speak or hear, or imagine, or touch or think."³³ In this way, Yājñavalkya extricates himself from the absolutely solipstic position in which his Absolute monism has landed him. The outcome of these passages is, that for the absolutist there is nothing different from or outside the Ātman, that knowledge of any part of him is the knowledge of the whole that all causation is ultimately due to him, that everything beside him is an appearance, that he is the only external knower and that is only when he becomes entangled in the phenomenal acts of perception and knowledge that he may be said to perceive and know and yet the truth is that he does not perceive and know.

According to Yājñavalkya, in the stage of oneness, when duality has ceased to exist, when the individual Brahman are found to be one and the same thing, no question of knowing arises, because the knower and that which is to be known have coalesced. In the stage, the different between 'thou' and 'that' has disappeared, the one alone remains,

Human knowledge ordinarily consists of a knower and a thing to be known, the subject and the object. In that stage of knowledge, when the subject and the object are found to have coalesced, that is to say when everything is found to be in the one and the one in everything, the distinction between the knower and that which is known does not arise, for it is found not to exist. Of this ultimate stage, we can certainly form some idea, and it is not therefore altogether incapable of comprehension. One element of truth in Yājñavalkya's discourse is that so long as a person is in the stage of duality, he cannot fully realise the stage of oneness, though he can form some idea of it, just as Yājñavalkya had done. The other element of truth in it is that the stage of duality, which precedes the stage of oneness, is also real, for it is out of the one that many had sprung. As every one of us is a potential Brahman, it is only a question of time when we will have perfect knowledge like Brahman, or become knowledge itself, when 'thou' will become 'that'.

Even though metaphysical philosophy may require such a rigoristic conception of the Absolute, for the purpose

of religion and for the explanation of the phenomenal existence of the world, a God is necessary. There is a passage in the Brhadāranyaka which tells us that God is the Antaryāmin of the universe; He lives inside and govern the universe from within. The doctrine of the Antaryāmin, which is advanced in that Upaniṣad in the conversation between Uddālaka Āruṇi and Yājñavalkya, constitute the fundamental position of the philosophy of Rāmaṇuja when he calls God the soul of Nature. Uddālaka Āruṇi asked Yājñavalkya two questions -- (1) what is the thread by which this world and the other world and all other things are held together? and (2) who is the Controller of the Thread of this world and the other world and all the things therein? Yājñavalkya answered the first question by saying that Air might be regarded as the Thread and all other things therein are held together. The second question he answered by saying that He alone might be regarded as the inner Controller "who dwells in the earth and within the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who from within controls the earth. He is thy soul, the inner Controller, the immortal. He who dwells in the waters and within the waters, whom the

waters do not know, whose body the waters are, who from within controls the waters, He is thy soul, the inner Controller, the immortal. "Thus Yājñavalkya went on to tell Uddālaka Āruni that the inner Controller is the who is immanent likewise, "in fire, in the intermundia, in air, in the heavens, in the sun, in the quarters, in the Moon, in the stars, in space, in darkness, in light, in all beings, in prāna, in all things and within all things, whom these things do not know, whose body these things are, who controls all these things from within. He is thy soul, the inner Controller, the immortal. He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the understood understander; other than Him, there is no seer, other than Him there is no hearer other than Him there is no thinker, other than Him there is no understander; He is thy soul, the inner Controller, the immortal. Everything beside His is nought."³⁴

Thus Yājñavalkya declares the immanence within and the inner control of the Universe by the all-pervading God. We are told in the Brhadāranyaka by the help of a simile, how is God, the soul of souls, "Just as the spokes of a wheel are held together in the navel and felly of a wheel, similarly in this supreme soul are centred all these beings,

all Gods, all worlds, all the individuals souls -- the Supreme Soul is the King of them all."³⁵ In another passage, the same Upaniṣad tells us, by a change of metaphor, that, "Just as little sparks may come out of fire, even so from the Supreme Soul all prāṇas, all worlds, all gods, all beings come out. This is to be mystically expressed by saying the Supreme Soul is the varity, of verities; the Prāṇas as well as other things mentioned along with them, are verities, of whom the Universal soul is the supreme verity."³⁶ In these passages we are told now god may be regarded as the soul of souls, and we are also unmistakably told that the supreme soul is the Real of the Reals, the varity of verities; the individual souls and the world being themselves varities. Both the moving and the stationare are the forms of God; this is the soul of organic as well as inorganic nature. He fills the souls as he fills the Universe, and controls them both as their inner governor.

The Upaniṣadic philosophers went by the theological approach to the conception of reality. They began by inquiring how many Gods must be supposed to exist in the Universe. They could not rest content until they arrived at idea of

one God, who was the ruler of the whole universe. Ultimately, they identified the god with the inner self in man. In the controversy which took place between Vidagdha Śākalya and the sage Yājñavalkya as reported in the Brhadāranyaka, we are told that the former asked Yājñavalkya how many god must be regarded as existing in the world, to which the first answer of Yājñavalkya was, "three and three hundred", Yājñavalkya closely following upon this by saying that there were "three and three thousand". Not satisfied with the answer, Śākalya asked again how many Gods there were, Yājñavalkya replied there were thirty-three Gods. Śākalya was again dissatisfied and asked again, Yājñavalkya replied there were six Gods. In answer to further inquiries from Śākalya, Yājñavalkya went on to say that there were three Gods and then two Gods, and even one and a half God and finally that there was only one God without a second. Yājñavalkya was merely testing the insight of Śākalya as to whether he would rest satisfied with the different answers that he first gave, and when Śākalya did not seem satisfied he finally said that there was only one God. By mutual consent, Śākalya and Yājñavalkya came to the conclusion that He alone is the God of

the Universe, "whose body the earth is, whose sight is fire, whose mind is light and who is the final resort of all human souls."³⁷

2.4 Chāndogyaopaniṣad :

The Chāndogya is another philosophically significant Upaniṣad. Particularly chapter six, seven and eight are very important. The first and the second chapters are merely a Brahmanism redivivus. The third chapter of this Upaniṣad contains the famous description of the Sun as a great beehive hanging in space. It also contains a description of the Gāyātrī Brāhmaṇa-wise, the bon motes of Śāṅḍilya, a description of the world as huge-chest, the all-too disconnected instruction of Āṅgīrasa to Kṛiṣṇa who was the son of Devakī and finally a piece of heliolatory, with the myth of the emergence of the Sun out of a huge egg. The fourth chapter contains the philosophy of Raikva, the story of Satyakāma Jābāla and his mother, and the story of Upakosala; who in his turn obtains philosophical wisdom from his teacher Satyakāma Jābāla. The fifth chapter contains the eschatological teaching of Jaivali; it also contains the famous

synthesis of thought effected by Aśvapati Kaikeya out of the six cosmological doctrines advanced by the six philosophers who had gone to learn wisdom from him. The sixth chapter is evidently the best of all the chapters of the Chāndogya, we have here the philosophy of Āruni who establishes an absolute equation between individual and Universal spirit, for whom, in other words, there is no difference between the two at all. Āruni is the outstanding personality of the Chāndogya, as Yājñavalkya is of the Bṛhadāraṇaka. The seventh chapter of the Chāndogya contains the famous discourse between Nārada and Sanat̄kumāra. And finally the eighth chapter of this Upaniṣad contains some very excellent hints for the practical realisation of the Ātman as well as the famous myth of Indra and Virochana.

The general view that lies at the basis of the Upaniṣads is that Brahman, i.e., the Ātman is an object of knowledge. And the aim of all the Upaniṣad texts is to communicate this knowledge of Brahman. It comes to be realised that this knowledge of Brahman was essentially of a different nature from that which we call "knowledge" in ordinary life. For it would be possible like Nārada in Chāndogya 7.1.2

to be familiar with all conceivable branches of knowledge and empirical science and yet to find oneself in a condition of ignorance as regards the Brahman. This thought, originally purely negative, become in course of time more and more positive in its character. It was negative in so far, as no empirical knowledge led to a knowledge of Brahman, and it was positive in so far as the consciousness was aroused that the knowledge of empirical reality was an actual hindrance to the knowledge of Brahman. The empirical knowledge which reveals to us a world of plurality where in reality only Brahman exists and a body where in reality there is only the soul, must be a mistaken knowledge, a delusion, a māyā. It is same which Parmenides and Plato took when they affirmed that the knowledge of the world of sense was mere deception, which Kant took when he showed that the entire reality of experience is only apparition and not reality, ("thing in itself"). It is of the greatest interest to follow up the earliest foreshadowings of this thought in India and to trace how the term avidyā passed from the negative idea of ignorance to the positive idea of a false knowledge. Again Chānd 6.1.3 teaches that the "transformation" of the ātman into the manifold world of phenomena

is merely vācārambhanam "a matter of words" or nāmadheyam "a mere name" and that "in reality" there exists only the one Being, i.e., the Ātman. It is only of him therefore that a real knowledge is possible.

The Chāndogyapaniṣad connects the philosophy of Not-being with the myth of Universal Egg. We are told in this Upaniṣad that, "What existed in the beginning was Not-Being. It then converted itself into Being. It grew and became a vast egg. It lay in that position for the period of a year, and then it broke open. Its two parts were, one of gold and the other of silver. The Silvery part became the earth and the golden part became the heaven. The thick membrane of the egg became the mountains; the thin membrane became the clouds; the arteries of the egg became the rivers of the world; the fluid in its interior became the ocean; while what came out of the egg was the sun; when the sun was born, shouts of hurrah arose."³⁸ This Upaniṣad says that everything that we find around is Brahman, everything is produced out of it and everything returns back to this Brahman, and this Brahman is the self which is the subtlest of the subtle, dwelling in the inside of the heart, and it is that which is

bigger than the world, bigger than the sky and bigger than the entire universe, which is the source of all our deeds, desires sensations and experiences. Referring to this subtle spiritual essence Āruṇi says to his son Śvetaketu, "It is this subtle essence, which is identical with the universe, the ultimate reality, and thou art that essence, Oh Śvetaketu." Taking the example of a big tree, Āruṇi says that if anyone, strikes it with a weapon and cuts down a branch it will dry up; if a second branch is cut that also dries up; when any part of it is dissociated from life it dies but the life itself never, dies; it is the subtle essence and it alone is ultimately real and this is the self and that are thou, oh Śvetaketu. Taking a seed of a fine banyan tree, Āruṇi asks his son to split it up into parts and also ask him "what do you find in it?" Then he spoke to him. "Though you do not find anything in this fine seed yet it is out of this subtle essence that the big banyan tree grows. Believe, therefore, that the entire universe and the ultimate reality is nothing but the subtle essence which is the highest self. "Throwing a lump of salt, in the water he asks his son, Śvetaketu, to see him again in the morning, and when he comes

in the morning he asks him to "get the salt that you threw in this water last night out of it, "and Śvetaketu said that he did now know how to do it. Āruni told him "Just as you cannot perceive the salt with your eyes, yet you can perceive it by tasting the water, so the ultimate reality also exists just the same though, it cannot be perceived by the senses. And this ultimate reality, the fine essence, is thus the entire universe, and that again is nothing but the highest self." So here we find the old teaching strongly emphasised that the ultimate reality is the subtle spiritual essence of man.

A passage from the Chāndogyapaniṣad tells us directly that Being alone existed at the beginning of things. It takes to task those who suppose that the Primeval Existant must be regarded as Not-Being, and that Being must be regarded as having been produced therefrom. "How could it possibly be so," asks the Upaniṣad, "how could Being come out of not. Being, existence from non-existence ? It is necessary for us to suppose that at the beginning verily all this was Being and it was alone and without a second. This Primeval Being reflected let me be many, let me produce; having be thought thus to itself, it produced fire,

Fire thought, let me many, let me produce and it produced water. Water thought, let me be many, let me produce, and it produced the Earth (food or matter)."³⁹ "The Primeval Being then thought, verily I am now these three deities. Let me enter into them by myself and unfold both Name and Form. Let me make each of them three fold and three fold."⁴⁰

"It this comes about that what we call the red-colour in a flame belongs really to fire. Its white colour is that of water and its black colour belongs to the earth. Thus does vanish the flame-ness of a flame. The Flame is indeed only a word, a modification and a name, while what really exists is the three colours, what we call the red colour in the sun, is really, the colour of fire, its white colour is the colour of the water, its black colour is the colour of the earth. Thus verily vanishes the sun-ness of the sun. The Sun is only a word, a modification and a name. What really exists is the three colours. Thus likewise does depart the moon-ness of the moon and the lightning-ness of the lightning. What really exists is the three colours only."⁴¹

It is interesting to note in these passages, in the first place that the Primeval existent is regarded a Being and is described as Being one without a second. In the second

place, we see how from this primeval Being is produced the three-fold Prakṛti, which we might call, "tejobannātmika" Prakṛti, that is consisting of fire, water and earth.

Thirdly, it must be noted that the Chāndogyapaniṣad teaches us definitely the doctrine of "trivṛtīKarana" which is the Upaniṣadic prototype of the "Panchikaraṇa" of later Vedānta.

Just as in the Vedāntic theory of "Panchikaraṇa", out of the five original elements, fire, air, water, earth and space, half of each element was regarded as being kept intact; while the other half was regarded as being divided into four equal different parts, four such parts from the different elements one after another going to make up a half, which in combination with the half of the original element made up one transformed evolute of the original element. Similarly, in the case of the Upaniṣadic trivṛtī Karana, each of the three original elements, namely fire, water and earth is to be regarded as being divided into two equal portions, one half being kept intact, while the other half is divided into two equal portions, the two quarters of the two other elements in combination with the one-half of the original element making up a transformed

evolutes of the original element. In the spirit of an extreme nomination, the Chāndogyapaniṣad tries to reduce all later products to mere semblance or appearance, while it keeps the door open for the real existence of the three elements, all of them having been born from the Primeval Being.

In the Chāndogyapaniṣad we are told that the gods and demons were, once upon a time, both anxious to learn the nature of final reality and they therefore went in pursuit of it to Prajāpati. Prajāpati had maintained that, "that entity, which is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and grief, free from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing and imagines nothing, must be regarded as the ultimate self." The Gods and demons were anxious to know what the self was. So the Gods sent Indra and the demons Virochana as their emissaries to learn the final truth from Prajāpati. Prajāpati took certain tests of the candidates for knowledge and found only Indra as suitable for this. He then instructed Indra about the highest knowledge. Prajāpati said, "Verily, O Indra, this body is subject to death, but it is at the same time the vesture of an immortal soul. It

is only when the soul is engaged in the body, that it is cognisant of pleasure and pain. There is neither pleasure nor pain for the soul once relieved of its body. Just as the wind and the cloud, the lightning and the thunder are without body and arise from heavening space and appear in their own form, so does this serene being, namely, the self, arise from this mortal body, reach the highest light, and then appear in his own form. This serene Being, who appears in his own form is the highest person." There is here an indication of the true nature of ultimate Reality as being of the nature of self-consciousness. According to the Chāndogyapaniṣad, the final reality is reached in that theoretic, ecstatic, self spectacular state in which the self is conscious of nothing but itself. The philosopher of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad arrives at the conception of self-consciousness as constituting the ultimate Reality. They regard God as identical with this Pure self-consciousness. Self-consciousness to them is the eternal variety. God to them is not God unless he is identical with Pure self-consciousness. Existence is not existence if it does not mean self-consciousness. Reality is not reality if it

does not express throughout its structure the marks of Pure self-consciousness. We do not find any difference between God and the Absolute in this Upaniṣad. God is the theological conception and the Absolute is the philosophical conception. God is identical with the Pure self-consciousness, the ultimate Reality. This Upaniṣad declares, "Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma"; "All this indeed, is Brahman." Ultimately, there can be no illusion, unreality, Māyā, error or any objective concept or knowable principle but only consciousness. Absolute Nothing else than consciousness can ever be. This is the truth. Since even degrees in Reality would mean objectivity and duality therein, they would reduce it to a phenomenal appearance. Reality as it is in itself, can only be the Absolute free from all diving elements, including the so-called degrees. The Absolute is ever Itself, never an object, never a subject and so eternally indivisible.

2.5 The Taittirīya Upaniṣad :

The Taittirīya is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter occurs the famous physiological description of the "nipple-like" gland which hangs downwards in the brain and which is regarded as the seat of Immortal Being.

In this chapter likewise occur two famous ethical descriptions, as well as the mystical utterances of Trisanku. The second chapter is a collection of miscellaneous points containing among other things, the first mention of the so-called "Doctrine of sheaths" as well as a description of the Beatific calculus. The third chapter takes up the question of the sheaths from the second chapter and exhibits these as a ladder of metaphysical existence and ends with that famous mystical monologue in which subject and object and the subject-object relation are all described as being ultimately one.

There are certain passages in the Upaniṣads which teach that Not-being was the primary existent. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad tells us that, "at the beginning of all things what existed was Not-Being. From it was born being. Being shaped itself of its own accord. It is thus that it is called well made or self-made."⁴³ Commentators on this passage, who do not want a privative conception like Not-Being to be the "archī" of all things, rightly understand this passage to signify that at the very beginning of things it was "as if" nothing existed and not that not-Being was verily the first concrete existent and that it was from such a semblance of non-existence that Being was created. The author of Taittirīya tells

us that, "at the time of creation, God entered everything that he created and after having entered, became both the ^{the} This and/That, the Defined and the Undefined, the supported and supportless, knowledge and not-knowledge, Reality and Unreality — yea, he became the Reality; it is for this reason that all this is verily called the Real."⁴⁴ This passage declares the immanence of God in all things whatsoever, even in contradictories, and tells us that what thus comes to exist is the real.

There is a passage in the Chāndogyapaniṣad where three ātmans are distinguished, the corporeal, individual and supreme, but in a paragraph of the Taittiriya which occupies a more advanced and developed position assumes five ātmans (or Purushas) by further division of the intermediate individual atman into the principles of life, of will and of knowledge. Thus are constituted the ātmans, annamāyā, prāṇamāyā, manomāyā, vijñānamāyā and ānandamāyā which are manifested alike in mankind and in nature as a whole. The first four of these, like sheathes or husks (termed later Kośas) surround the fifth as the true kernel. Stripping off these sheaths one by one and gradually penetrating deeper

we finally reach the inmost essential being of a man and of nature. (1) The annamāyā ātman, "the self dependent on food", is the incarnation of the atman in the human body and in material nature, the bodily organs are its constituent parts, (2) Within this is contained the Prānamāyā ātman, "the self dependent on the vital breath", the ātman as the principle of natural life, Its constituent parts are the vital breaths in man (inhalation, interhalation, exhalation), but also in a cosmical sense, the whole of space is its body, the earth its foundation. By stripping off this ātman also as a sheath we reach, (3) the monomāyā ātman, "the ātman dependent on manas" (volition), whose constituent parts are stated to be the four vedas with the Brahmanas (adesa). According to this definition we are to understand by it the principle of the will (manas) embodied both in men or in Gods, i.e., of purpose directed to selfish ends, (4) Deeper self is found in the Vijñānamāyā ātman, "the self-dependent on knowledge," which as the accompanying verse declares, offers knowledge in place of sacrifice and works, while recognising and worshipping the deity as a separate and independent being. This position also we

must abandon like a sheath, in order finally to penetrate, (5) to the ānandamāyā ātman "the self-dependent on bliss," as the innermost Kernel of man and of nature as a whole. This ātman, dependent on bliss, is no longer an object of knowledge. It is in contrast with the reality of experience, which lies beyond on the other side, unutterable, unfathomable and unconsciousness, a not reality. In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad, a distinctive mark of Brahman is given: "That, in truth, out of which there beings arise, by which they when they have arisen live, into which they at death again enter, that seek to know, that is Brahman." In this passage the reference is solely to the descent of individual beings into Brahman, not to that of the Universe.

In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad the pupil approaches the father and asks him to explain to him the nature of Brahman. He is given the formal definition and is asked to supply the content by his own reflection. "That from which these beings are born, that in which when born they live and that into which they enter at their death is Brahman". What is the reality which conforms to this account? The son is impressed by material phenomena and fixes on matter (anna) as

the basic principle. He is not satisfied, for matter cannot account for the forms of life. He looks upon life (Prāṇa) as the basis of the world. Life cannot be the ultimate principle, for conscious phenomena are not commensurate with living forms. There is something more in consciousness than in life. So he is led to believe that consciousness (manas) is the ultimate principle. But consciousness has different grades. The instinctive consciousness of animal is different from the intellectual consciousness of human beings. So the son affirms that intellectual consciousness (vijñāna) is Brahman. Man alone among nature's children has the capacity to change himself by his own effect and transcend his limitations. Even this is incomplete because it is subject to discords and dualities. A deeper principle of consciousness must emerge if the fundamental intention of nature, which has led to the development of matter, life, mind and intellectual consciousness is to be accomplished. The son finally arrives at the truth that spiritual freedom or delight (ānanda), the ecstasy of fulfilled existence is the ultimate principle. The Upaniṣad suggests that he leaves behind the discursive reason and contemplates the one and

is lost in ecstasy. It concludes with the affirmation that Absolute Reality is satyam (truth), jñānam (consciousness), anantam (infinity).

The conception of tri-suparṇa is developed in the fourth section of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. The Absolute is conceived as a nest from out of which three birds have emerged, viz., Virāj, Hiraṇya-garbha and Īśvara. The Absolute conceived as it is in itself independent of any creation, is called Brahman. When it is thought of as having manifested itself, as the universe, it is called Virāj; when it is thought of as the spirit moving everywhere in the universe, it is called Hiraṇya-garbha; when it is thought of as a personal god, creating, protecting and destroying the Universe, it is called Īśvara.

The text of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad conceives of Brahman in the masculine gender and attributes to Him the desire to be born into the many. It further teaches us that He performed austerity following which he created all this, whatever there is and indeed even entered into it. The entrance of the supreme into the things of the world surely brings home to our minds God's immanence and His inner rulership

which Rāmānuja advocates. The ultimate has desires and He creates. The fact of His being conceived in masculine gender even supports His personal character. The character of Brahman as well as described here is understandable only on the supposition that He was thought by the author of those passage to be the personal Universal will.

The Upaniṣadic philosophers generally regard God as identical with this Pure self-consciousness. The philosopher of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad gives us certain characteristics of this final reality which enable us to regard his argument as almost an ontological characterisation of reality. "The Absolute" he says, "is Existence, consciousness and infinity." Existence to that philosopher means consciousness. God to this is not God, unless he is identical with self-consciousness. Reality is not reality if it does not express throughout its structure the marks of Pure self-consciousness. There is not any distinction between Absolute and God in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. God is only a form of the Absolute.

2.6 The Kathopanīṣad :

The Kathopanīṣad is more or less a metaphysical work. The katha has its natural termination at the end of the first Adhyāya, as may be seen from the repetition of words at the end of the Adhyāya, as well as the "Phalśruti" which is also given at the same place. The second Adhyāya thus seems to be tacked on to the original reduction of the Upanīṣad and even though this latter Adhyāya seems to furnish a sequel to the Nāchiketas -- Death story as may be seen from the last verse of that Adhyāya, as well as from the repetition of words even here, still, as may be seen by reference to Kathopanīṣad II, 5.6., Yama seems at this place just to be supplying an answer to the query of Nāchiketas in 1.1.29. which suggests that all the intervening position is a later addition. Two of the most prominent features of the Katha are the description of the "chariot of the body" and the death and dream approaches to the problem of reality. The whole of the Katha is sucharged with lofty ideas about the Immortality of the souls as well as suggestions for the practical attainment of Ātman. In one passage, the Katha brings out a distinction regarding the realisation of Ātman

in the various worlds. While we are dwelling in the body on earth, we can visualise the Ātman only as in a mirror that is contrariwise, left being to the right and right being to the left. In the world of the father, we visualise the Ātman as in a dream, the image leaving a psychical impression, indeed, but unreal. In the world of the Gandhavas, we are told, we see Him as one sees a pebble under water, the image being true but refracted. It is only in the Brahman-world, we are told, that we can distinguish the Ātman from the non-Ātman as light from shade, that is we can see the Ātman as in broad day-light. This is a valuable contribution which the Kathopaniṣad makes to Upaniṣadic thought.

In a passage of the Katha Upaniṣad, we find that the soul is no longer conceived as of the size of a mere grain of rice or barley as described in the Brihadāraṇyaka, but as thought to be of the size of a thumb — an idea which plays a very important part in the Upaniṣads, "The soul who is the lord of all things that have been and that are to be, and is therefore over-awed by none of them, is of the measure of a thumb and dwells in the midpart of the body (that is in the heart)."⁴⁵

In the Kathopaniṣad we have the description of, "The eternal Aśvattha tree with its root upwards and branches downwards, which is the Pure immortal Brahman, in which all these worlds are situated and beyond which there is nothing else."⁴⁶ In this passage we are told that the Aśvattha tree is the Brahman itself and that it is imperishable. On the other hand, the Bhāgavadgītā at the opening of its 15th chapter, tells us that, "the Aśvattha tree has its roots upward and branches downwards. Its leaves are the Vedas. It sends out its branches both downwards and upwards, which are nourished by the guṇas. The sensual objects are its foliage. Yet again, its infinite roots spread downwards in the form of action in the human world. It is not possible to have a glimpse of that tree here in this fashion. It has neither end, nor beginning, nor any stationariness whatsoever, After having cut off this Aśvattha tree, which has very strong roots, we should then seek after that celestial abode from which there is no return, and reach the Primeval person, from whom all existence has sprung of old."⁴⁷ There is an agreement between the Upaniṣad and the Bhāgavadgītā so far as the Aśvattha tree is regarded, as having its root

upward and its branches downwards. But, while the Upaniṣad teaches that the Aśvattha tree is real, and identical with Brahman and therefore, impossible of being cut off, the Bhāgavadgītā teaches that the Aśvattha tree must be regarded as unreal, and as identical with existence, and therefore that it is necessary to cut off this tree of existence by the potent weapon of non-attachment.

In the Katha Upaniṣad in the development of principles, the great self stands after the undeveloped and the Primeval spirit, Hiraṇyagarbha, the world soul is the first product of the principle of non-being influenced by the Eternal spirit, Īśvara. Hiraṇyagarbha is the great self, mahān-ātmā, which arises from the undiscriminated, the avyakta, which corresponds to the primitive material or waters of the Brāhmaṇas or the Prakṛti of the Sāṃkhya. We have the supreme self, the Absolute the supreme self as the eternal subject observing the eternal object, waters or Prakṛti and the great self which is the first product of this interaction of the eternal subject and the Principle of objectivity. The supreme Lord Īśvara, who eternally produces, outlasts the drama of the Universe.

The Kathopanishad tells us that the form of God does not fall within the Ken of our vision "Never has any man been able to visualised God by means of sight, nor is it possible for one to realise Him either by the heart or by the imagination or by the mind. It is only those who know this sublime truth that become immortal."⁴⁸ Later writers have translated the above passage in a different way. They tell us that even though it may not be possible for us to "visualise" the form of God, still it "may be possible for us to realise Him by means of the heart, or by the imagination or by the mind." There is another verse in the Kathopanishad which makes it quite clear that it is "not possible to realise God either by word of mouth, or by the mind or by the eye. It is only those who know that God is, to them alone, and to none else, is God revealed."⁴⁹

We are here told that it is not possible at all to realise God by means of the mind, that one can realise God. It is also noteworthy, from the later verse from the Kathopanishad that the nature of God realisation is like that of a "fact". The value of a fact can never be disturbed by any probings into its pros and cons, by logical manipulation

about its nature, or by any imaginative or highly strung intellectual solutions. It thus becomes clear that neither sense nor thought enables us to realise God. But a further question arises, if God can be realised at all, as man got any Faculty by means of which he can so realise Him ? To that question, another verse from the Kathopanishad supplies an answer." "The Ātman who is hidden in all beings is not potent to the eye of all. It is only the subtle seers who can look with the one-pointed and piercing faculty of Intuition (Buddhi) that are able to realise God."⁵⁰ "He is not easy to be known when told by an inferior person, though (He may be) expounded about manifoldly; unless declared by another (who is supremely wise), there is no way (of attaining Him); for He is inconceivably subtler than what is very subtle, and unarguable."⁵¹ Even the proud Indra and the great Nārada became humble before their teachers. This speaks of the majestic transcendentness of the Absolute, not knowable through easy means. How innocent and simple was that Satyakāma who said to his teacher, when asked about his parentage, "Sirs, I do not know this, of what family I am; I asked my mother. She told me in reply: "I begot you in my youth, when I was much busy in service,

and I, being such do not know this, of what family you are." Then the teacher inferred that Satyakāma must be a Brahman, telling him that "a Non-Brahmana will not be able to speak thus (the truth), and accepted him as disciple." Nārada bows down and says, "O Lord, I am in sorrows; may the Lord take me across sorrow." "Not by reasoning is this knowledge to be attained; instructed about by another, it is easy to be known."⁵² These make it clear that self-knowledge cannot be attained by an individual striving for himself in his ignorance independently without a teacher. None can reach it by his own personal effort, without a proper guide; very mysterious and subtle is it.

It is not merely that all the power in the world is ultimately due to Brahman; the very resplendence and illumination that we meet with in the world are also to be regarded as manifestation of the great unmanifest luminosity of the Absolute. "Does the sun shine by his own power ? Asks the Kathopanishad "Do the moon and the stars shine by their own native light ? Does the lightning flash forth in its native resplendence - ? --- Not to speak of the Paltry earthly fire, which obviously owes its resplendence

to something else ?" Shall we say that all these so-called resplendent things are resplendent in their own native light, or must we assert that they desire their power of illumination from a primal eternal verity which lies at the back of them at all and whose illumination makes possible the illumination of the so-called luminous objects of nature?"

"Before Him the sun does not shine, before Him the moon and the stars do not shine, before Him the lightening does not shine; far less this earthly fire. It is only the Absolute shines first, that all these objects shine afterwards. It is by His luminosity that they become luminous."⁵³ In this Upaniṣad we are asked to suppress speech and mind, merge the latter in the knowledge self, that in the great self, that in the tranquil self, the Absolute. The highest stage is attained when the five senses, mind and intellect are at rest.

Brahman is not described in the early Upaniṣads in sufficiently personal terms, but the later ones like the Kāṭhapaniṣad and the Śvetāśvātara look upon the supreme as personal God who bestows grace. Devotion to the personal God is recommended as a means for attaining spiritual

enlightenment. There is not any distinction between the Absolute and God in the Kāṭha Upaniṣad, since it teaches that God is the personal aspect of the Absolute.

2.7 Conclusion :

The Upaniṣads, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought. They disclose the working of the primal impulses of the human soul which rise above the differences of race and of geographical position. At the core of all historical religions there are fundamental types of spiritual experience though they are expressed with different degrees of clarity. The Upaniṣads illustrate and illuminate these primary experience.

The Upaniṣads undoubtedly have great historical and comparative value, but they are also of great present-day importance. No one can thoroughly understand the workings and conclusions of the mind of an educated Hindu of today who does not know something of the fountain from which his ancestors for centuries past have drunk, and from which he too has been deriving his intellectual life. The imagery under which his philosophy is conceived, the phraseology in which it is couched, and analogies by which it is

supported are largely the same in the discussion of today as are found in the Upaniṣads and in Śāṅkara's commentaries on them and on the Sūtras. Although some elements are evidently of local interest and of past value, it is evident that the monism of the Upaniṣads has exerted and will continue to exert an influence on the monism of the west, for it contains certain elements which penetrate deeply into the truths which every philosopher much reach a thoroughly grounded explanation of experience.

The Upaniṣads have shown an unparalleled variety of appeal during these long centuries and have been admired by different people for different reasons at different periods. They are said to provide us with a complete chart of the unseen Reality, to give us the most immediate, intimate and convincing light on the secret of human existence, to formulate, in Deussen's words, "Philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world." The ideal which haunted the thinkers of the Upaniṣads, the ideal of man's ultimate beauty, the perfection of knowledge, the vision of the real in which the religious hunger of the mystic for divine vision and the

philosopher's ceaseless quest for truth are both satisfied is still ideal. A metaphysical curiosity for a theoretical explanation of the world as much as a passionate longing for liberation is to be found in the Upaniṣads, Their ideas do not enlighten our minds but stretch out souls.

Taking the Upaniṣads as a whole we find that there are at least two different ways of looking at the infinite. One of the trends describes Brahman as a homogeneous non-composite consciousness that is, perfection without a second. It is negatively described as neti-neti and the finite has no place in it. It is described as unlike all that we know. The world of matter and souls are described as its appearance. There is no other Reality than Brahman. The relation between Brahman and other appearances is one-sided. The appearance is dependent on Brahman, but Brahman is in no way touched by the impurities of appearance. The Upaniṣadic seers trace all that exist to Brahman. They do not admit that the existence of the world of things or human experience is an inexplicable datum. Nor do they admit that the universe is self-complete. They examine in turn several phenomena as the proposed root-causes of the world, e.g., Time, Nature, Necessity, change, the Elements etc. and find

all of them unsatisfactory. So they posit the infinite spirit as the cosmic principle to account for the Universe. They examine the psychic principles and submit them to intense analysis. This is explained in the celebrated dialogues between Prajāpati on the one hand, Indra and Virochana on the other and between Briḡu and Varuṇi. The individual soul's essence is neither the body, nor a bundle of qualities, nor is it mere state of mind. It is of the essence as Brahman. The Upaniṣads, according to Śaṅkara, adopt the "synthetic" method and establish the identity of the individual soul with Brahman. The principle underlying the world as a whole and that which forms the essence of man are ultimately the same. This explicit identification is declared in the celebrated words of Uddālaka to his son a number of times. "All this is, is of the nature of the self. That is the truth that thou art."

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 non-existent. 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 objects of the world. Śāṅkara says -- That Ātman is in the hearts of all living creatures, from Brahman to a reed, The different grades of individuality are all broken lights of the one Absolute. 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. 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.

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

but its transfiguration. If the world were altogether unreal, we cannot progress from the unreal to the Real. If a passage from the empirical to the Real, the Real is to be found in the empirical also. The ignorance of the mind and the senses and the apparent futilities of human life are the materials for the self-expression of that Being, for Its unfolding, Brahman accepts world-existence, The ultimate Reality sustains the play of the world and dwells in it. That is why we are able to measure the distance of the things of the world from the Absolute and evaluate their grades of being. There is nothing in this world which is not lit up by God. The changelessness of the supreme does not mean that the Universe is a perfectly articulated mechanism in which everything is given from the beginning. The world is real as based on Brahman; it is unreal by itself.

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 dogma 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 Upaniṣadic religion is the feeling of reverence and love for the great spirit. 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 (Puroṣottama), 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. All things are of Him, in Him and unto Him. Though 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. 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 $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$ to emphasise the personal aspect so necessary for religious devotion. The relation between the two, the Absolute Brahman and the personal $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$, may be like that of the true Lord to the idol. Yet the two are one. The Absolute is both personal and impersonal. The individual looks upon God as something transcendent, and feels acutely the need of grace.

However, to come to this well-defined relation between the impersonal Absolute and the personal God, philosophy had to wait for several centuries. In the Upaniṣads, we find only the germs of the problem. The actual solution starts emerging as late as the time of Śaṅkara who squarely bases his philosophy on the Upaniṣads. Whatever the logical consistency of the Upaniṣads, their value as ~~to~~ ^{sources} of spiritual wisdom is assured in the history of human civilization.

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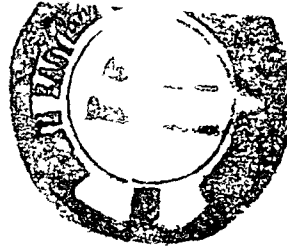
CHAPTER- III

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS AND THE PROBLEM

3.1 Introductory :

Greek philosophy is one of the finest products of human civilization. In terms of its antiquity, depth, width, and subtlety, it ranks second to none in the world. It is an important constituent of European intellectual life, the development of which cannot be understood apart from it. But from this purely historical point of view, the history of philosophy appears merely as a part of the history of civilization. From Greek philosophy, the whole of European philosophy has descended. For, the ideas which the Romans express in their philosophic literature were not original, but were taken over from the Greeks, clothed in the Latin language and passed onto the mediaeval and modern world. The systems built up by the Greek philosophers are not to be regarded merely as a preparation for modern philosophy. They have a value in themselves also, as an achievement in man's intellectual life. It was the Greeks who won for man freedom and independence of philosophic thought who proclaimed the autonomy of reason and gave it a two-fold

103/165.



101

application. Wisdom in the Greek sense included not only a theoretical explanation of the world but also a definite practical attitude to life. By the history of Greek philosophy we mean the intellectual movement which originated and developed in the Hellenic world.

The religious life of the Greeks is of peculiar importance for a study of the history of their philosophy. But the relation between religion and philosophy in the Greek world is complicated. The interplay between Greek religion and philosophy is complicated by the fact that Greek religion has two major aspects :

(1) In the first aspect, it is the anthropomorphic religion of the Gods of Olympus, made familiar by the Homeric Epics in which the Gods exhibit although on a most majestic scale, human passions and a concern for the affairs of men.

(2) The second aspect of Greek religion, which becomes prominent in the religious revival of the sixth century B.C. is associated with the so-called mystery cults. Greek religion in its anthropomorphic aspect undergoes a long and refining development from the earliest times until the

culmination of Greek Civilisation in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and this development is intricately related to that of philosophy. The religious spirit of a certain period is frequently expressed as much in its philosophy as in the utterance of cult or myth. Greek religion, because it lacked a highly organized and specialized form, often expressed its theology in art, poetry and philosophy.

Greek philosophy begins with an inquiry into the essence of the objective world. From external nature it gradually turns its eye inward, on man himself. The shifting of interest from nature to man leads to the study of the human mind and of human conduct, of logic, ethics, psychology, politics and poetics. What is the Highest Good and what is the end and aim of life -- these are the chief questions for ethics and philosophy. In the course of this investigation the study of metaphysics and of human knowledge becomes indispensable. Finally the problem of God and man's relation to him, the theological problem is pushed into the foreground and Greek philosophy ends as it began in religion.

The first great problem that of external nature was taken up in the pre-Sophistic period. The philosophers of the naturalistic period were concerned with two independent problems regarding external nature. The first was the problem of substance, what is the basic substance or substances, of which the natural objects are constituted and from which they originate and the second was the problem of change, i.e., what is the nature of the process by which the basic substance or substances, changes into the familiar objects of sense. Among the earliest nature the philosophers of the Milesian School -- Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes and among the Pythagoreans, the two problems are scarcely distinguishable. But the problem of change emerges in a radical form in Heraclitus and in the Eleatic school of which Parmenides is the chief exponent. Later in the naturalistic period, in the philosophies of Empedocles and Anaxagoras, the problem of substance and change both receive attention. The entire period is naturalistic in its almost exclusive concern with external nature. The second phase of the development of Greek philosophy, the period of Sophists and Socrates, turns away from ontological and cosmological speculations regarding the constitution and origin of the

external world and devotes its attention almost exclusively to the problem of man — to human knowledge and conduct. The systematic period of the two great philosophers of antiquity, Plato, Aristotle is characterized by a concern for all the problems of philosophy, the metaphysical problems concerning reality and the humanistic problems relating to man's knowledge, conduct and place in the world order. The theological movement which took its/ ^{rise} in Alexandria resulted from the ^{of} contact/Greek philosophy with oriental religions. In Neoplatonism, its most developed form, it seeks to explain the world as an emanation from a transcendent God who is both the source and the goal of all being. Among the Neo-Platonists we shall discuss the views of Plotinus.

3.2 Different philosophers' views :

The problem of God and the Absolute, as such, is not properly formulated by any Greek philosopher. They have their concepts of the ultimate reality, which, in keeping with the strength of their temperament, either fall on the side of God or on the side of the Absolute. Only in Plotinus we have a clear formulation of this problem. To come to any conclusion, however, we have to make a brief survey of the

prominent Greek philosophers.

3.2.1 Thales :

Thales was not only the first great Greek philosopher, he was the first great western philosopher. His importance lies in his having put the philosophical question clearly and in having answered it without reference to mythical beings. According to Thales, water is the primary substance. Thilly says that Thales may have been influenced by the myth of Oceans and Tethys.¹ This suggestion has some plausibility in view of the emergence of Greek philosophy from Greek mythology and religion. Water has the capacity of assuming solid, liquid and vaporous forms and thus seems to be in process of transformation before one's eyes; Water evaporates in the heat of the Sun and this is readily interpreted in Thales' view as the transformation of Water into fire; Water comes down again in the form of rain and is absorbed into the ground. This could be regarded as the transformation of Water into earth. Finally Water is necessary to life. Out of water everything comes. Thales does not tell us how, most likely because the transformation of one substance into another was accepted by him as a fact of

experience. This was not a problem for him at all. Apart from the fact that he assumed all things to be full of God, we do not know his religious views.²

3.2.2 Anaximander :

According to Anaximander, the essence or principle of things is not water as Thales supposes. He agrees with Thales that the ultimate principle of things is material, but he does not name it water, does not in fact believe that it is any particular kind of matter. It is rather a formless, indeterminate and absolutely featureless matter in general. The Boundless or Infinite of Anaximander is conceived as an eternal, imperishable substance out of which all things are made and to which all things return.³ By this he most likely meant a boundless space-filling, animate mass, the nature of which he did not define specifically, because he regarded all qualities as derived from it. Among a number of conflicting interpretations of Anaximander's Boundless enumerated by Burnet are⁴: (1) that the Boundless is a mixture from which things arise by separation -- an interpretation which rests on a somewhat questionable passage in Aristotle, which contrasts Anaxagoras' first principle with

the mixture of Empedocles and Anaximander, (2) that the Boundless is an indeterminate, indefinite and qualitatively undifferentiated matter -- an anticipation of Aristotle's "indeterminate potential matter", (3) that the Boundless is something intermediate between the observable elements, for example, between air and water or air and fire.

The first living beings arose out of the moist element according to Anaximander. His speculations on the origin of living creatures, like his cosmological speculations have an astonishingly modern flavour. According to Anaximander's doctrine of cyclical recurrence, innumerable worlds presumably succeed one another in time but are not co-existent. There is an eternal cyclical recurrence of the processes of separation from and return to the primordial substance. "The teaching of Anaximander exhibits a marked advance beyond the position of Thales. Thales had taught that the first principle of things is water. The formless matter of Anaximander is, philosophically, an advance on this, showing the operation of thought and abstraction."⁵

3.2.3 Anaximenes :

According to Anaximenes, the first principle of things or underlying substance is one and infinite, but it is not indeterminate; it is air, vapour or mist. One of the reasons for selecting air as the first principle is that it is dry and cold and thus intermediate between fire, the warm and dry element and water, the cold and moist element. Anaximenes like Anaximander held the theory of "innumerable worlds", and these worlds are, according to the traditional view, successive. But here again Prof. Burnet considers that the innumerable worlds may have been co-existent as well as successive. Anaximenes considered the earth to be a flat disc floating upon air. The teaching Anaximenes seems at first sight to be a falling off from the position of Anaximander, because he goes back to the position of Thales in favour of a determinate matter as first principle. But in one respect at least there is here an advance upon Anaximander. The latter had been vague as to how formless matter differentiates itself into the world of objects. Anaximenes names the definite processes of rarefaction and condensation.

3.2.4 Pythagoras and his school :

When we consider the philosophical teaching of Pythagoreans, the first thing that we have to understand is that we cannot speak of the philosophy of Pythagoras, but only of the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. For it is not known what share Pythagoras had in this philosophy or what share was contributed by his successors.

The Pythagoreans are impressed by the fact of form and relation in the world; they find measure, order, proportion, and uniform recurrence, which can be expressed in numbers. Without number, there can be no such relations and uniformities, no order, no law; hence number must be lie at the basis of everything. Numbers must be true realities, the grounds of things and everything else an expression of numbers. For the Pythagoreans numbers are the principles of things not as being the stuff or substance of things in the Milesian sense but rather as constituting their formal or relational structure. Things are the copies or imitations of numbers. The later distinction between number and form which is central to the Platonic and Aristotelian systems of metaphysics, was foreshadowed by the Pythagorean distinction between numbers and things. In their delight over

the discovery that there is numerical relation, for example, between the length of the string and the pitch of the tone, they called number, which is only a symbol or expression of the relation, the cause of the relation and placed number behind phenomena as their basal principle and ground. At last we can come to the conclusion that according to the Pythagoreans the first principle of things is number. Number is the world ground, the stuff out of which the universe is made.⁶

3.2.5 Parmenides :

Parmenides was greatly influenced by the Pythagoreans. He invented formal logic by applying their mathematical method of proof to the philosophical problem of the natures of being and not being. Presenting his argument in the form of an epic poem, he used logic to show that being is unchanging and uncreated. This conclusion denied the possibility of any appearance of variety or change. His philosophy is comprised in a philosophic didactic poem which is divided into two parts. The first part expounds his own philosophy and is called "the way of truth." The second part describes the false opinion current in his day and is called "the way of

opinion."

According to Parmenides, the world, as we know it, is a world of change and mutation. All things arise and pass away. Nothing is permanent. One moment it is, another moment it is not. Hence, Parmenides tried to find out the eternal amid the shifting, the abiding and everlasting amid the change and mutation of things. There arises in this way the antithesis between Being and not-Being. The absolutely real is Being. Not-being is the unreal. This not-being he identifies with becoming, with the world of shifting and changing things the world which is known to us by the senses. The world of sense, according to Parmenides is unreal, illusory, a mere appearance. Only Being is true. As Thales designated water as the one reality, as the Pythagoreans named number, so far Parmenides the sole reality is Being, wholly unmixed with not-being. He described the character of Being in a series of negatives. There is no change in it, it is absolutely unbecome and imperishable. It has neither beginning nor end, neither arising nor passing away. If Being began it must have arisen either from Being or from not-being. But for Being to arise out of Being, that is not a beginning, and for Being to arise out of not-being is impossible,

since there is then no reason why it should arise later rather than sooner. Again Being cannot come out of not-being, nor something out of nothing. Ex nihilo nihil fit. This is the fundamental thought of Parmenides.

There emerges for the first time in Parmenides' philosophy a distinction between Sense and Reason. According to Parmenides the world of falsity and appearance, of becoming, of not-being is the world which is presented to us by the senses. True and Veritable Being is known to us only by reason, by thought. The senses therefore are, for Parmenides, the source of all illusion. Truth lies only in reason. This is very important, because this, that truth lies in reason and not in the world of sense, is the fundamental position of idealism. "It was not till the time of Plato that the idealistic aspect of the Parmenidean doctrine was developed. It was the genius of Plato which seized upon the germs of idealism in Parmenides and developed them. Plato was deeply influenced by Parmenides. His main doctrine was that the reality of the world is to be found in thought, in concepts, in what is called "the idea." And he identified the idea with the Being of Parmenides."⁷

3.2.6 Zeno :

The last important thinker of the Eleatic school is Zeno, like Parmenides, was a man of Elea. Zeno did not add anything positive to the teachings of Parmenides. He supports Parmenides in the doctrine of Being. In attempting to support the Parmenidean doctrine from a new point of view he developed certain ideas about the ultimate character of space and time which have been of the utmost importance in philosophy. Parmenides had taught that the world of sense is illusory and false. True Being is absolutely one; there is in it no plurality. Moreover, Being is absolutely static and unchangeable. There is in it, according to Parmenides, no motion. Multiplicity and motion are the two characteristics of the false world of sense. Therefore, Zeno directed his arguments against multiplicity and motion and attempted indirectly to support the conclusions of Parmenides by showing that multiplicity and motion are impossible. Zeno attempted to force multiplicity and motion to refute themselves by showing that, if we assume them as real, contradictory propositions follow from that assumption. Two propositions which contradict each other can not both be true. Therefore the assumptions from which both follow, namely,

multiplicity and motion, cannot be real things.

Zeno advanced four famous proofs in order to prove the impossibility of motion. Of these arguments, the first demonstrates the impossibility of moving from a position to a goal because of the necessity of passing through the infinite number of points between the starting point and the goal. The second proof, the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, demonstrates the impossibility of passing a moving goal; Achilles, despite his greater speed cannot reach the tortoise for, while Achilles is moving from his initial starting point to the tortoise's initial starting point, the tortoise has moved a certain distance beyond and the same holds for all subsequent intervals. The third argument, the paradox of the moving arrow demonstrates that the arrow apparently moving to its target is at any given instant in a definite position in space -- i.e., it is at rest or has zero motion, but no summation of zeros can yield motion. Zeno also advances a fourth argument, which appeals to the relativity of observed motions. The variable and conflicting testimony of the senses, depending upon whether a moving object is observed from a position at rest or in motion

at various speeds, undermines the very possibility of motion as such. □

The Eleatic position is that though the world of sense, of which multiplicity and motion are essential features, may exist, yet that outward world is not the true Being. Zeno does not deny the existence of the world. What he denies is the truth of existence. The Eleatic principle would correspond to a religion in which we said that "God is" but beyond the fact that He "is", He has absolutely no character. But this is a wholly barren and meagre conception of the Deity. This conception of God is the conception of an absolutely empty being.

3.2.7 Heraclitus :

The philosophical principle of Heraclitus is the direct antithesis of Eleaticism. The Eleatics had taught that only Being is and Becoming is not at all. All change, all becoming is mere illusion. For Heraclitus, on the contrary, only Becoming is, and Being, permanence, identity, these are nothing but illusion.

The fundamental thought in the teaching of Heraclitus is that the universe is in a state of ceaseless change. To signalize the notion of incessant activity, Heraclitus chooses as his first principle the most mobile substance he knows, something that never seems to come to rest, the ever living fire sometimes called by him, Vapor or breath -- which is regarded by him as the vital principle in the organism and the essence of the soul. The fire of Heraclitus is not the abiding substratum of his predecessors; It is that which is constantly being transformed into other things. The primal unity itself is in constant motion and change; its creation is destruction, its destruction, creation when it passes into something else, e.g., from fire into water, the fire is lost in a new form of existence. There are no persistent qualities and hence nothing remains permanent by virtue of its qualities. Everything both is and is not, the universal process is a transition from one condition to its opposite alone makes the world possible. The oppositions and contradictions are united and harmony is the result. Indeed, there could be no such order without movement or change with its inherent oppositions and contradictions. Ultimately the oppositions will all be reconciled

in the universal principle, the world will return to the original state of fire, which is also reason and the process will begin anew. "In his religious opinions Heraclitus was sceptical. But he does not, like Xenophanes direct his attacks against the central ideas of religion, and the doctrine of the Gods. He attacks mostly the outward observances and forms in which the religious spirit manifests itself."⁸

The Eleatics described all things under two concepts, Being and not-being. Being has, for them, all truth, all reality. Not being is wholly false and illusory. But for Heraclitus both Being and not-being are equally real. The one is as true as the other. Both are true, for both are identical. With the Eleatics he distinguishes between sense and reason, and places truth in rational cognition. The illusion of permanence he ascribes to the senses. It is by reason that we rise to the knowledge of the law of becoming. In the comprehension of this law lies the duty of man and the only road to happiness.

3.2.8 Xenophanes :

The reputed founder of the Eleatic school was Xenophanes. Xenophanes is the originator of the quarrel between philosophy and religion. He attacked the popular religious notions of the Greeks with a view to founding a purer and nobler conception of Deity. Popular Greek religion consisted of a belief in a number of Gods who were conceived very much as in the form of human being. Xenophanes attacks this conception of God as possessing human form.

Xenophanes is a speculative theologian than a philosopher. He attacks the prevailing polytheism with his anthropomorphism, and proclaims the unity and unchangeableness of God. God is one, unlike mortals in body or in mind, without foil he governs all things by the thought of his mind. God is eternal, without beginning and without end. He is unlimited in a sense that there is nothing beside him, but limited in the sense that he is a sphere, a perfect form and not a formless infinite.

Xenophanes is a pantheist, conceiving God as the eternal principle of universe, as the one and all in which everything is God, in other words, is the world. He is God,

in other words he is not a pure spirit, but the whole of animatic nature. Xenophanes identifies God with the world. In Xenophanes' pantheistic identification of God and the world, the emphasis is on the world, not on God. "The thought of Xenophanes is therefore more properly described as pantheism rather than monotheism. God is unchangeable, immutable, undivided, unmoved, passionless, undisturbed. Xenophanes appears thus rather as a religious reformer than as a philosopher."⁹ Xenophanes never resolved the incompatibility between the unmoved and the sensible world of constant change, and this supposition in his Pantheism was a challenge to his successors. Nevertheless, in as much as he was the first to enunciate the proposition, "All is one", he takes his place in philosophy.

3.2.9 Plato :

Plato was the first person in the history of the world to produce a great all-embracing system of philosophy, which has its ramification in all department of thought and reality. In doing this, Plato laid all previous thought under contribution. He gathered all that was best in the Pythagoreans, the Eleatic, Heraclitus and Socrates. But it is not

to be imagined, that Plato was-- mere eclectic or a plagiarist, who took the best thoughts of others, on the contrary, he was an original thinker. He takes them as the germ of a new development. In his hand, all previous thoughts become transfigured under the light of a new and original principle. The central and governing principle of his philosophy the theory of Ideas.

The ideas are for him not mere things of thought, but realities. The ideas form a world which exists of itself, is eternal and unchanging and can only be comprehended by thought. In this pure and independent existence they have their abode in a "Super Celestial" place, where the soul in its pre-existence has perceived them. For Plato, the ideas or forms are not mere thought in the minds of men or even in the mind of God, the divine thought is itself directed towards them. He conceives them as existing in and for themselves as having the character of substantiality. They are substances, real or substantial forms, the original, eternal transcendent archetypes of things, existing prior to things and apart from them and thus uninfluenced by the changes to which they are subject. The particular objects which we

perceive are imperfect copies or reflections of the eternal patterns. The ideas or archetypes, though numberless, are not disorganized and chaotic; they constitute a well-ordered world or rational cosmos. The ideas are arranged in logical order, and subsumed under the highest idea, the idea of the Good, which is the source of all the rest. This idea is supreme, beyond it there is no other. The universe is conceived by Plato as a logical system of ideas, an organic unity, governed by a universal purpose, the idea of the Good and it is, therefore, a rational significant whole. Plato's ethics is based on a religion. This consists of a philosophic monotheism, which identifies God with the idea of the Good, belief in providence with the conviction that the world is work of reason and a copy of the world of ideas and sees its worship of God in virtue and knowledge. The Good is for Plato something absolute and in this sense he answers Protagoras dictum, that man is the measure of all things, with his own, "God is for us the measure of all things." It is the highest mission of a man's life to strive with all his strength to become similar to the perfection that is God. In his last works Plato attacks

atheism in its various forms and puts forward a complete theodicy.

Plato investigated the relations of the One and the many, Being and not-being, quite in the abstract. Whether the Absolute is One or many, Being or not-being, can be decided independently of any particular theory of the nature of the Absolute, and therefore independently of Plato's own theory, which was that the Absolute consists of Ideas. "The Absolute must therefore be neither an abstract One, nor an abstract many. It must be a many in One. According to Plato God is identical with the Ideas of the Good. But in that case God is not a personal God at all; since the Idea is not a person. The word God is merely a figurative term for the Idea."¹⁰ God is for religion, according to Plato, what the Idea is for philosophy.

2.2.10 Aristotle :

Aristotle was not only a philosopher in the modern restricted sense of that term. He was a man of universal learning. There is no branch of knowledge which did not receive his attention, and upon which he was not the greatest expert of his time, except perhaps mathematics. Aristotle

was the greatest of all Platonists, since his system is still founded upon the Idea and is an attempt to found an idealism free from the defects of Plato's system. It is in fact a development of Platonism.

Plato regarded only the ideas, the universal which forms the content of our concept as the original and real. The ideas therefore, he believed to exist for themselves alone and independent of the particular things. This theory was rejected by Aristotle. His most telling points are that the general is nothing substantial, that properties cannot be outside of things of which they are the properties, that the ideas lack a moving force, without which they cannot be the causes of phenomena. Aristotle for his part can only be applied to something which is neither predicted of something else nor an accidental property of something else. This is only true of the particular thing. All universal concepts, on the other hand, express merely particular qualities of substances and generic ideas merely denote the common nature of particular substances. They can indeed be called unreal and derived substances, but they may not be regarded as something existing outside the things themselves.

According to Aristotle, as the world process is a continual elevation of matter into higher and higher forms, there results the conception that the universe exhibits a continuous scale of being. That is higher in the scale in which form predominates, that lower in which matter outweighs form. At the bottom of the scale will be absolutely formless matter, at the top, absolutely matterless form. That which comes at the top of the scale, absolute form, is called by Aristotle, ^{God.} God is pure form unadulterated by matter; since the first cause is unmoved, it must be form without matter, pure form, for where there is matter, there is motion and change. God thus constitutes the one exception to the principle that matter and form are inseparable. God is complete actuality, i.e., he is the end or goal toward which all things are striving. He is substance par excellence, indeed, in a significant sense of the word he may be said to be the only substance. Finally, God is thought-thinking-thought. Thought alone of all human activities is ascribable to God. It is the highest function of man, the one trait of man which is truly divine.

Aristotle rejects personally the popular religion on account of its anthropomorphic ideas of the nature of the Gods. To him God is the mind that thinks of itself is the origin of all things and moves the world. When he endeavours to give a philosophical proof of the necessity of the existence of God as the first mover, he turns his attention to religious experience. Not only does the cosmos demand a final cause, but the soul too is aware intuitively of the existence of God. Aristotle gives all the greater emphasis to the unity and intellectuality of God and opposes the Platonic dualism with the monarchy of the self thinking mind.

3:2.11 Plotinus :

The philosophy of Plotinus is an account of an ordered structure of living reality, which proceeds eternally from its transcendent. First principle, the One or Good and descends in an unbroken succession of stages from the Divine intellect and the forms therein through soul with its various levels of experience and activity to the last and lowest realities. "The system of Plotinus like that of Philo, proceeds from the idea of God and concludes with the demand

for union with God. Between these two poles lies all that was taught on the emergence of derived being from God and on the other hand its return to God."¹¹

Plotinus insists repeatedly that the transcendent first principle which he recognizes the One or Good is beyond the reach of human thought or language. "The names which he normally employs for the first principle, the One and the Good, to hen and to agathon, are both neuter in Greek. But even in passages where these neuter terms are used, Plotinus frequently passes over, in a way which he apparently found quite natural, from neuter to masculine pronouns and adjectives."¹² According to Plotinus, the Good is 'beyond being', that he cannot properly be even said to exist -- surely the extreme of negation. What Plotinus is saying is that the unity of the Good is so absolute, He is so completely one, single and simple that no predicates at all can be applied to Him, not even that of existence; and that as the source of being to all things, He is not a thing Himself. Again, Plotinus insists that the One does not think, because thought for him always implies a certain duality, a distinction of thought and object of thought and it is this

that he is concerned to exclude in speaking of the One and to relegate to the second level of reality, that of Nous. When he calls the One 'formless', he does so because He is Infinite, without limits and because precisely as One, He is the principle of form, of number, measure, order and limit. "The One is not a God 'outside' the world (an idea very fashionable in the early centuries of our era, as in many later periods). Nor is He remote from us, but intimately present in the centre of our souls; or rather we are in Him, for Plotinus prefers to speak of the lower as in the higher rather than the other way round; body is in soul and soul in Nous and Nous in the One."¹³

In his conception of the idea of God, Plotinus to the extreme point thought of the infinity and supermundanity of God. The primary being is without limit, form or definition, it is the unlimited or the infinite. All activity is directed towards something else, but the first must be a self-contained unity. In order to think or to will or to be active, we need something as an object of this activity; but God requires nothing besides himself. He does not stand in need of himself either and cannot distinguish himself from himself.

Hence we may ascribe to him no self consciousness. No definite quality can be ascribed to God. "God is indeed the source to which we must trace all being and the force to which we must trace all effects but of its nature we can know nothing except that it is completely different from all that is finite and known to us. God is the absolute One."¹⁴ From the One proceeds the first great derived reality, Nous, the divine mind which is also the world of forms or ideas, and so the totality of true being in the Platonic sense. Its procession from the One is necessary and eternal, as in their turn are the procession of soul from Nous and the forming and ordering of the material universe by soul. According to Plotinus the reason for the procession of all things from the One is simply that everything which is perfect produces something else.

For Plotinus the One is the source from which the differentiation of unity and plurality proceeds, it is the transcendence of separability rather than the negation of plurality. The One is always perfect and therefore produces everlastingly; and Its product is less than Itself. Nothing can come from It except that which is next greatest after

It. Nous is next to It in greatness and second to It, for Nous sees It and needs It alone, but It has no need of Nous. That which derives from something greater than Nous is Nous Itself, which is greater than all things, because other things come after It. So soul is a logos and a kind of activity of Nous, as Nous is of the One. In so far as God is the primary force, It must produce all things. It is in Its nature exalted above everything and stand in need of nothing, It can neither communicate Itself substantially to another nor make the creation of the other Its aim. Production cannot be regarded as a division of the divine being nor as an act of will. The emergence of the derivative from the primary being takes place by a natural necessity, which does not however signify any compulsion for the primary being or any change in it. The first production of the Being is Nous, Thought, which is at the same time the highest Being, just as the predecessors of Plotinus had characterised the really existent, the Ideas, as the thoughts of God, while Plato himself had ascribed reason and thought to the existent. Plotinus arrived at his 'First' in passing beyond all being and thought. In the downward scale thought occupied the nearest position to the First. The thought of the First is not discursive, but timeless, contemplative thought

that is complete in every instant. In so far as the Nous is the highest being, it possess the five categories of the "intelligible" which Plotinus borrowed from Plato's Sophists -- being, motion, immobility, identity and difference.

The Absolute as the One is the first cause, as the Good It is the final cause of all, that is, Plotinus is quite explicit in asserting the causality of the Absolute. But it must be remembered that the spiritual and phenomenal worlds are coeternal with the One, so that causality means little more than the assertion of a hierarchy in Reality, leading upto an all embracing Absolute in which everything is contained and which in the world of becoming is the primary source and final consummation of every process. Plotinus was well aware that it is not easy to show how plurality can emanate from unity, Being from the super-essential. The solution offered by Plotinus is that of creation. The Absolute does not cease to be the Absolute by creating a world wholly dependent on itself, nor does spirit loss anything by creating the soul world. Plotinus insists upon the complete independence of the One. According to him, the Good is the principle on which all depends, to which all

aspires, from which all proceeds and which all needs. In itself It is in need of nothing, sufficient in Itself, wanting nothing, the measure and the term of all things, giving out of itself spirit and reality. The necessity which causes the real world to proceed from the first principle is akin to the necessity for self-expression on the part of an artist, it is, according to Plotinus, not a vital necessity of growth or self-preservation.

In his presentation of the One, Plotinus mixes up the two points of view, mystical and metaphysical. On the one hand, he speaks of the One as so transcendent that it is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It cannot be represented even in terms of the highest categories, such as Truth, Beauty and Goodness, Being and Consciousness. It cannot be grasped even through intellectual contemplation. It is realisable in mystical ecstasy only, through communion with and absorption in it. On the other hand, he presents the One as the source and goal of everything, from whom all oppositions and diversities emanate and as infinite energy, from which everything emanates. All the objects of experience can be looked at as unity from one point of view and as multiplicity from another. In Indian philosophy

Vedānta also speak of the ultimate principle, the Brahman, as beyond the reach of senses, speech, mind and intellect from the point of view of the final mystic experience, but as the cause of creation from that of the metaphysics.

The ultimate metaphysic principle of Plotinus, on the basis of which he explains the entire field of experience, including both material and spiritual, is not a rational principle. It is beyond the reach of discursive reason, For it is absolutely simple, it is to be reached by a kind of spiritual intuition. Reality, as opposed to appearance, according to Plotinus, consists in Nous, Noeta and Noesis; or we may say, for lack of better expressions in English, Spiritual world and Spiritual perception. Plotinus while thus analysing the first manifestation of the One, maintains that it is only our habit of dealing with sensible phenomena that makes us prone to separate spirit, spiritual world and spiritual perception from one another. They constitute unity in multiplicity. If we attempt an intellectual analysis of Reality, we split it up into subject, object and means of knowledge as we are in the habit of doing at the empirical level. We divide it into spirit, spiritual world and spiritual perception, though it is not so divided.

In the conception of the first direct emanation from the One, Plotinus was considerably influenced by Plato's conception of the world of ideas. He, however, differs from Plato in one important respect that is, the conception of individuality. According to Plato, the individuality both subjective and objective, is not ideal and therefore, not real. But for Plotinus individuality is real and independent of the material condition. There are individual spirits in the real world, of which the individual souls are the images. "The object of experience of Nous is the spiritual world, which is made up of ideas, forms, archetypes of everything that can possibly figure as object in empirical experience. It is more than Platonic world of ideas in as much as it contains not only universal ideas but the contains not only universal ideas but the particular or individual also."¹⁵ According to Plotinus there is hierarchy of values and existence, it is necessary that reality shall be actualised not only in every manner but also in every degree. The highest grade in the hierarchy of existence is the spirit and the lowest is the matter. Similarly the highest grade in the hierarchy of values is the beautiful and the lowest is the ugly.

God is the source of all existence, all oppositions and differences, of mind and body, form and matter, but is himself devoid of all plurality and diversity, and absolutely one. He is the One who in His infinity contains everything; He is the first causeless cause from which everything is produced, from which everything emanates, for plurality always presupposes unity, unity is prior to all being and beyond all being. Although the world proceeds from God, He does not create it, for creation implies consciousness and will, i.e., limitation. The universe is an emanation from God and inevitable overflow of his infinite power or actuality. Plotinus employs several metaphors to suggest the meaning of emanation. God is a spring from which the stream flows without exhausting its infinite source or God is the Sun from which the light radiates without loss to the Sun.

The principle stages may be distinguished in the process of emanation : (1) Pure thought or Mind, (2) Soul and (3) Matter. In the first stage, God's being divides into thought and ideas, that is, God thinks thoughts, He contemplates the pure ideal cosmos. Thought and its ideas, subject and object are one at this stage, not separate in time or

space; in the divine mind the thinker and his thoughts are one and the same. His thought is not discursive, passing from idea to idea, from premise to conclusion, but infinitive, static, as it were, contemplating the system of ideas as a whole and all at once. For each particular object in the sense world, there is an idea in the mind of God. The world of pure thought is spaceless and timeless; it is a perfect eternal and harmonious intelligible world which provides the model of the phenomenal world. The soul, the second stage of the divine emanation proceeds from pure thought. It is supersensuous and intelligible; it is active and has ideas; it possesses the power of thought, though, being discursive, in less complete form than pure thought, it is self-conscious, though transcending perception and memory. There are two phases of the soul, in the first it is turned in the direction of pure thought; in the second, it is turned in the direction of the world of sense. The first phase, Plotinus calls the world-soul and the second phase he calls nature. The soul cannot realize its desire to exercise its power, to act and to form unless it has something to act on; thus it produces matter -- the third and lowest level of emanation. Matter as such, has neither form, quality, power nor

unity, it is absolute importance and privation, the principle of evil. Plotinus conceives the emotion of the world from the world soul as a necessary consequence of its nature. The emanation of the world soul from pure thought, the creation of matter, the differentiation of matter into bodies, constitute one continuous process which abstract thought can analyse into phases, but which are one eternal and indivisible act.

Plotinus makes distinction between the Absolute and the Knowable God. He deals with the Absolute one as an exclusive unity to which we rise by negation of all finitude and difference, and which, from this point of view, is opposed to everything else, while yet it has to be conceived as the source from which everything else flows. According to Plotinus God, the supreme unity as lifted above even the contemplative activity of pure intelligence and at the same time he explains how the Absolute being, whose activity, so far as it is active, has no object but, itself, should yet be the centre from which all being and thought are related. As the last great exponent of Greek dualism, he finds himself unable to think of any outgoing or transeunt

activity of God, because in his view such activity would involve want and imperfection in God. He is ready to repeat Plato's words that the divine being can have no envy in him, which should prevent the good that is in himself from flowing out to his creatures; but it is impossible for Plotinus to admit that God is occupied with them or with anything but Himself. Hence for want of the conception of God as a self-revealing spirit, Plotinus is obliged to fall back upon the unexplained necessity, that the highest being should produce an image or imperfect copy of itself, which again in its turn gives rise to a still less perfect image until at last we reach the lowest and most unreal of all existences.

The relation of the higher to the lower is represented as one of form to matter. From this point of view the first external product of the One is said to be an ideal matter in the shape of a potential intelligence; and this, by turning to the One, that is its source, becomes developed into an active and actual intelligence. According to Plotinus, the One being perfect, so that It seeks and needs nothing, yet through Its very perfection overflows and Its superabundance produces another than Itself, but that which

is produced turns itself towards the One and being fulfilled by it and contemplating it, it becomes intelligence. Thus, while its permanent relation to the One gives it being, its contemplation of the One gives it intelligence. The intelligence, as one with the intelligible world, forms the first stage in the hierarchy of "degrees of reality" which surround the divine unity. In the second place, the pure intelligence with the intelligible world which is its object, is declared to be too perfect not to produce another like itself, though inferior to it, namely the world soul. The world soul is the lowest stages of the ideal or spiritual world and it is distinguished from the intelligence in so far as in it the difference of one idea from another is more definitely actualised Plotinus makes a change in the earlier dualism of Greece, for while maintaining the division of form and matter, he refers the matter as well as the form to the One or what is the same thing, to same kind of being that springs from the One.

Plotinus begins with the absolute one, proceeds from it to the pure intelligence, and ends with the animamundi which, as the lowest grade of the intelligible world has to discharge the function of connecting it with the pheno-

menal world in time and space. Now it appears that the five-fold hierarchy of Plotinus with the unknowable Absolute at the top and the unknowable matter at the bottom of it -- the one above and the other below knowledge -- is the necessary consequence of the failure of Greek idealism to recognise that, in rising above the opposition of the pure intelligence and the consciousness of the world in space and time, what we are really speaking is not some ultimate obstruction in which all difference disappears but rather a principle of unity which transcends and explains that difference, such a principle is represented in the philosophy of Plotinus, as in that of Plato by the world -- soul. We may gather the peculiarities of the system of Plotinus under three heads : first, it develops to its extremest form the Greek dualism of form and matter, of the ideal and the sensible, of the pure and permanent unity of intelligence and the divided and changing world of sense. Secondly, it thereby reduces the mediation between the two by the anima mundi into an external and therefore accidental connexion; and lastly, in consequence of the inadequacy of this mediation, it is obliged to seek its highest principles not in that soul, but in a transcendent Absolute which has no connexion with anything but itself, although

as the highest principle, it must be conceived to be the first and the final cause of all things.

Now a question arises whether this Absolute can be the object of worship, or of contemplation, without at once descending into the sphere of Nous, Plotinus as well aware that *Omnisdeterminatio est negatio*, but one cannot worship the a privative. According to Plotinus, the God of practical religion is the universal soul, the God of devout and thankful contemplation, the great spirit, the God of our most inspired moments, the Absolute. Again, "The Absolute does not cease to be the Absolute by creating a world wholly dependent on itself nor does spirit lose anything by creating the soul world. To say that the Absolute must be God plus the world seems to me like saying that the real Shakespeare is the poet plus the folio edition of his work. As to the motive and manner of creation, it is obvious that we cannot be expected to know much, "How God creates the world we can never understand," says Prof. Ward; and many other philosophers have urged that we cannot expect to know. But if, with Heraclitus, we assume that the 'road up' and the 'road down' must be the same and if we can show,

as Plotinus has shown, that there is nowhere any salto mortale in the ascent of the soul to God, it seems reasonable to infer that there are no unbridged chasms in the creation of the various orders of being by the Absolute, though we cannot understand the first stages, because we are not God."¹⁶ To reach the unity we must transcend even self-consciousness and become nothing in order that we may find all things in God. For, in this case also, Plotinus will not allow that we can attain to the higher, if we carry anything of the lower with us and our intelligence must expire in the love with which it grasp its object.

According to Plotinus, when the soul becomes intelligence, it possess and think the intelligible; but when it has intuition of God it abandons everything else. While Plotinus speaks of the soul divesting itself of all that divides it from God; even of thought, he does not hold that in doing so it is going out of itself to something strange or foreign; for God, in his view, is not far from any one of us, but on the contrary, we truly come to ourselves in Him. God, according to Plotinus, is external to nothing and to no one, but is present even with those who do not know Him; though they escape out of Him or rather

out of themselves and therefore, are not able to see Him from whom they have exiféd themselves. "As in Dante's vision, the whole universe was gathered round a central point in God, who yet at the same time was conceived as an infinite circumference embracing all things, so in the 'worshipper's heart God contains and yet transcends everything and the double aspect of God as the one in whom all is lost and yet the one in whom all is found, seems to be expressible only by asserting the failure of all expression."¹⁷ Plotinus holds that the Absolute one does not go beyond Itself and that Its activity, so far as we can ascribe to It activity is directed only to Itself. The inexplicable law that the higher form of being always produces a lower form, though without any action directed to the lower, is used by Plotinus at once to account for the existence of the lower and yet to save the higher from any responsibility for it. Hence we have a descending scale of degrees of Reality each of which produces ~~the~~ imperfect image of itself in that which follows it, till ultimately we are carried beyond the intelligible world into the region of matter, in which defect turns into physical and moral evil. According to Plotinus, the highest unity is that which manifests itself

in the greatest differences and antagonisms and overcome them; but in his view of the sensible world he practically gives it up. Yet it really contains the solution of many of his difficulties. For it carries with it the consequence that the Absolute must be conceived, not as excluding but as including all differences and opposition. If we adopt this principle, we must regard the Absolute not as an abstract unity, but as a unity in which all difference is embraced.

3.3 Conclusion

"It is essential to the understanding not only of Plato but of Greek philosophy generally, to realise the place held by 'the Good'."¹⁸ Three ideas are here inseparable : (1) the Good is the supreme object of all desire and aspiration, (2) The Good is the condition of knowledge; it is that which makes the world intelligible, (3) The God is the creative and sustaining cause of the world. Our Good is that for which we would give up everything else. Man is always a creature of means and ends; he is a rational being who lives for something. This explains the connection between reason and the Good: It has been

said that Plotinus alters Plato's doctrine of the Good, in as much as for Plato the Good is within the circle of the ideas, while for Plotinus It is above them. In the Republic Plato says that we must look at all other forms in the light of the Form of the Good, which is the starting point of knowledge. The Good is beyond knowledge and being, or at least beyond our knowledge of being. Beauty and Truth are the Good under certain forms. The question has often been raised whether in Plato the Form (or Idea) of the Good is the same as God. This identification is not possible, because for Plato God is a soul, not a form. The Form of the Good is rather the pattern which the creator copies in making the world. It is undoubtedly true that Plotinus exalts 'the Good' to a more inaccessible attitude than Plato has done. It is not for us only, but for the highest intelligence, that the Good is 'beyond being'. But if the Good is the Absolute, the question at once arises whether we can rightly use such a name for it as 'the Good'. Plotinus insists that the Absolute cannot be 'the Beautiful'; but Beauty or the source of the beautiful.

"Platonic philosophy is an ontology of intellectual, moral and aesthetic value. It is concerned with bringing

out the essential nature of three values, universally recognised by humanity, true, good and beautiful. They are the constituents of reality. They are the attributes under which the Reality is known to humanity. They are the highest forms, in which Reality can be apprehended by spirit."¹⁹

The Good, for Plotinus is Unity, as the goal of desire. He says that this desire is Universal. The Good is the fulfilment of the natural desire for self-completion and self-transcendence, which every finite centre of consciousness feels. This unity which is the Good of all finite life is also the source of all individual being. All things begin and end in the Good spirit flows over into soul, unconsciously. Soul returns to spirit, consciously, and spirit is rooted in the One.

Good in relation to finite experience, is the perfection, to which each grade in the hierarchy aspires and having attained which it passes into the next stage above. True life and true spirit are identical and both come from the Good. The ideas, the spiritual world and its contents -- are Good but not in the Good. We cannot stop at the world of spirit, as if the first principle was to be found there. The soul does not aspire to spirit alone. Spirit is not our

supreme end, and all does not aspire to spirit, while aspires to the Good, beings which do not possess Nous, do not all seek to possess it, while those which do possess it are not content to stop there. Nous is sought as the result of reasoning, but the Good is desired before argument. According to Plotinus, the fullest life is the fullest love; and the love comes from the celestial light which streams forth from the Absolute One, the Absolute Good, that supreme principle, which made life and made spirit, the source and beginning, which gave spirit to all spiritual things and life to all living things. But we may ask, what is there in the idea of absolute perfection, to kindle this passionate love and adoration in the soul? The best answer to this question we have found in Plotinus' conception of One. For it is unquestionable genuine experience of his own — this ecstatic love of the Absolute. Moreover, the great number of mystics, Christian and Muslims corroborate all that the great Neo-Platonist describes to us. The 'spirit in love' is the culmination of personal religion; and the object of this adoration is not the limited half human God of popular religion, but the ineffable mysterious power to whom we shrink from ascribing any human attributes whatever.

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CHAPTER- IV

THE MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHERS AND THE PROBLEM

4.1 Introduction :

There was a time when mediaeval philosophy was considered as unworthy of serious study because it was then taken for granted that philosophy of the middle ages was so subservient to theology that it was practically indistinguishable therefrom. In other words it was taken for granted that European philosophy contained two main periods; the ancient period, which to all intents and purposes meant the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and the modern period, when the speculative reason once more began to enjoy freedom after the dark night of the middle ages. In the ancient period and the modern period philosophy may be considered a free man, whereas in the mediaeval period it was a slave.

If the speculative thought did not die out altogether in this distressful period it was largely because Augustine continued to be read by a few. Augustine produced hardly any purely philosophical works but Neo-platonism permeated his whole outlook. Although his philosophy is intermingled

with his theology, all the elements of a philosophical system are there. The mediaeval thinkers were go farther than he did and to develop philosophical systems which, while fully co-ordinatêd with Christian theology, were constructions of pure reason logically independent of theology. It is an interesting example, since Hegel's dialectical idea of the history of philosophy obviously demanded that mediaeval philosophy should be portrayed as making an essential contribution to the development of philosophic thought, while Hegel personally was no more vulgar antagonist of mediaeval philosophy. According to Hegel, mediaeval philosophy performed one useful function, that of expressing in philosophic terms the 'absolute content' of Christianity but he insists that it is only formalistic repetition of the content of faith, in which God is represented as something 'external', for Hegel faith is the mode of religious consciousness and is definitely inferior to the philosophic or speculative stand point, the standpoint of pure reason, it is clear that in his eyes Mediaeval philosophy can be philosophy only in name. Accordingly he declares that Scholastic philosophy is really theology. By this Hegel does not mean that God is not the

object of philosophy as well as of theology. According to Hegel mediaeval philosophy considered the same object as is considered by philosophy proper but that is treated that object according to the categories of theology, instead of substituting for the external connections of theology, the systematic, scientific, rational and necessary categories and connections of philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy was thus philosophy according to content but theology according to form and in Hegel's eyes the history of mediaeval philosophy is a monotonous one.

The important theme of mediaeval thought is the relation of theology to philosophy and that different thinkers adopted different attitudes in regard to this question. Starting with the endeavour to understand the data of revelation, early mediaevals in accordance with the maxim *Credo*, but intelligam applied rational dialectic to the mysteries of faith in an attempt to understand them. In this way they laid the foundation of Scholastic theology, since the application of reason to theological data, in the sense of the data of revelation, is and remains theology; it does not become philosophy. On the other hand, theology gave an impulse to mediaeval philosophy. The Fathers had already

employed philosophical terms in discussing the meaning of christian dogma, and such terms had naturally occurred in the definitions of the early councils about the Trinity and the Incarnation. Augustine had more profoundly elaborated that speculative part of theology which consists in the application of philosophical notions to the exact interpretation of the data of revelation. The great work of the mediaeval philosophers was to realize the idea of a philosophy which while it was in harmony with Christian theology and led up to it, was nevertheless independent of it in being based entirely on human reason. The Mediaevals were not content only to interpret theology in philosophic terms; they wanted to know how much reason left to itself could prove. On the authority of divine revelation they accepted Christianity by which they meant the full catholic faith, the religion of the Trinity and the Incarnation, of grace and sin and redemption, of a single visible Church and the communion of saints. But they wanted to do full justice to the achievements of human reason, typified in the later middle ages by the system of Aristotle. They sought to delimit the spheres of faith and of reason holding at the same time to a faith in harmony with faith.

Out of many philosophers of the middle ages, we shall discuss the views of God of the three philosophers namely, St. Augustine, St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas.

4.2 St. Augustine :

St. Augustine was the greatest constructive thinkers and the most influential teacher of the early christian church. In his system the most important theological and philosophical problems of his age are discussed and a Christian World-view is developed which represents the culmination of patristic thought and becomes the guide of Christian philosophy for centuries to come. Augustine achieved a philosophy, which although not thoroughly systematic, touches on all the basic philosophical problems. At the heart of his philosophy is the doctrine of the Trinity, which in his monumental work. On the Trinity, he treats as the inexhaustible principle, accepted on faith, which sheds intelligibly on the whole of reality.

The mingling of theological and philosophical themes may appear odd and unmethodical to us but one must remember that Augustine, in common with other Fathers and early Christian writers, made no clear distinction. He knew quite

well that rational arguments can be adduced for God's existence, but it was not so much the mere intellectual assent to God's existence that interested him as the real assent, the positive adhesion of the will to God, and he knew that in the concrete, such an adhesion to God requires divine grace. Augustine did not play two parts, the part of the theologian and the part of the philosopher who considers the 'natural man'; he thought rather of man as he is in the concrete fallen and redeemed mankind, man who is able indeed to attain truth but who is constantly solicited by God's grace and who requires grace in order to appropriate the truth that saves. Reason has its part to play in bringing a man to faith, and once a man has the faith, reason has its part to play in penetrating the data of faith; but it is the total relation of the soul to God which primarily interests Augustine.

Dominant concept in Augustine's theology is the Neoplatonic conception of the absoluteness and majesty of God and the insignificance of His creatures, considered apart from Him. God is an eternal transcendent being, all powerful, all-good, all-wise; absolute unity, absolute intelligence and absolute will, that is absolute spirit.

He is absolutely free, but his decisions are as unchangeable as his nature, he is absolutely holy and cannot will evil. In him willing and doing are one; what he wills is done without the help of any intermediate being or Logos. In his intelligence are all ideas or forms of things, which means that he proceeded rationally in creating the world and that everything owes its form to him.

The central and favourite proof of God's existence given by St. Augustine is that from thought, i.e., a proof from within. The starting point of this proof is the mind's apprehension of necessary and changeless Truths. This Truth is superior to the mind, in as much as the mind has to bow before it and accept it; the mind did not constitute it; nor can it amend it; the mind recognises that this Truth transcends it and rules its thought rather than the other way round. The eternal truths must be founded on being, reflecting the ground of all truths. Truth itself, reflecting the necessity and immutability of God. This refers to all essential standard. This argument to God as the ground of eternal and necessary truth was not only accepted by the 'Augustinian School', but reappears in the thought of several eminent Philosophers, like Leibnitz.

"Like all genuine mystics, St. Augustine stresses the imperfect nature of this experience of God. It can never be anything but a momentary rapture, which passes like a flash of lightning, and this vision, he clearly sees, cannot be confused with a direct apprehension of the very being of God. This is beyond our poor earthly life, beyond this time in which human history is wrought out in anguish; only in the peace of the heavenly City will the soul of man rest for eternity in blissful contemplation of God."¹ St. Augustine does indeed prove the existence of God from the external corporeal world; but his words on the subject are rather of the nature of hints or reminders or summary statements than developed proofs in the academic sense. He was not so much concerned to prove to the atheist that God exists as to show how all creation proclaims the God whom the soul can experience in itself, the living God. It was the dynamic attitude of the soul towards God which interested him, not the construction of dialectical arguments with a purely theoretical conclusion. St. Augustine tries to show that creation cannot give the soul the perfect happiness it seeks, but points upwards to the living God who must be sought within. "When he asserts in the De Civitate Dei that 'the very order,

disposition, beauty, change and motion of the world and of all visible things silently proclaim that it could only have been made by God, the ineffably and invisibly great and the ineffably and invisibly beautiful', he is rather reminding Christians of a fact than attempting to give a systematic proof of God's existence."²

According to Augustine, God created the world out of nothing; it is not a necessary evolution of His own being, as the Pantheistic Neoplatonists hold, for this transcends the nature of His creatures. His creation is a continuous creation (Creatio Continua), for unless it were sustained by God the world would dissolve. It is absolutely and continuously, dependent on Him. We cannot say that the World was created in time or in space, for before God created the World, there was neither time nor space; in creating, He created time and space. He Himself is timeless and without space.

Augustine insists that the world of creatures reflects and manifests God, even if it does so in a very inadequate manner. Creatures tend indeed to not being, but as long as they are, they possess some form and this is a

reflection of the Form which can neither decline nor pass away. Thus the order and unity of Nature proclaims the unity of the creator, just as the goodness of creatures, their positive reality, reveals the goodness of God and the order and stability of the universe manifest the wisdom of God. God, as the self existent, eternal and immutable Being, is infinite, and as infinite, incomprehensible. God is his own perfection, his wisdom and knowledge, His goodness and power, are His own essence, which is without accidents. God, therefore transcends space in virtue of his spirituality and infinity and simplicity, as He transcends time in virtue of His eternity. From all eternity God knew all things which he was to make; He does not know them because He has made them, but rather the other way round; God first knew the things of creation though they come into being only in time. The species of created things have their ideas in God, and God from all eternity saw in Himself, as possible reflections of Himself, the things which he could create and would create.

The grand discovery is that the solution of the famous problem of the Supreme good, Summum Bonum, is none other than God. If God is our happiness, it is because He

is God, the being who is eternal, unchangeable, perfect, infinite. The moment when man discovers what God is, then in some degree he forgets himself, he gives himself up entirely and loses himself in adoration of this infinity. In analysing his life, the life of a man, St. Augustine discovers and makes us discover, in the very depth of his being, the absence of God in sin, the need and capacity for God in disquiet of soul, the coming of God in salvation and the now recognized presence of God in the life of grace.

Predestination is the eternal resolve of God to confer eternal life on this man or that by the infallible means of grace. Predestination implies God's foreknowledge of man's choice, but Augustine thinks that such foreknowledge is in no way prejudicial to man's freedom. Augustine is unwilling to limit divine freedom in the slightest degree; God can do as He pleases with man and He has settled from all eternity what is going to happen to every individual. According to Augustine man in the person of Adam, has had his chance, he abused the privilege. God knew he would abuse it; but since man was under no compulsion to do wrong, no individual has a right to complain if he is not among the elect. Nevertheless, if a man truly loves God,

if he has the good will, he will be redeemed.

After experiencing all the implications of ancient Skepticism, Augustine gave a classical answer to the problem of the two Absolutes. "They coincide in the nature of truth. Veritas is presupposed in every philosophical argument; and Verites in God. You cannot deny truth as such because you could do it only in the name of truth, thus establishing truth. And if you establish truth you affirm God. 'Where I have found the truth, there I have found my God, the truth itself,' Augustine says. The question of two ultimate is solved in such a way that the religious ultimate is presupposed in every philosophical question, including the question of God. God is the presupposition of the question of God. This is he ontological solution of the problem of the philosophy of religion,"³

4.3 St. Thomas Aquinas :

The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas is essentially realist and concrete. He adopts the Aristotelian statement that first philosophy or metaphysic studies being as being; but it is perfectly clear that the task he sets himself is the explanation of existent being so far as this is attainable by the human mind. In other words he does not presuppose

a notion from which reality is to be deduced; but he starts from the existent world and inquires what its being is, how it exists, what is the condition of its existence. Moreover, his thought concentrates on the supreme existence, on the being which does not merely possess existence, but is its own existence.. His thought remains ever in contact with the concrete, the existent, both with that which has existence as something derived, something received and with that which does not receive existence but is existent. St. Thomas insisted on the fact that God is subsistent existence, that this essence is not primarily goodness or thought but existence, he was but rendering explicit the implications of the Jewish and Christian view of the world's relation to God. One of the chief characteristics of St. Thomas's philosophy is its 'objectivity' rather than its 'subjectivity'. The immediate object of the human intellect is the essence of the material thing, and St. Thomas builds up his philosophy by reflection on sense experience, In the proofs which he gives of God's existence, the process of argument is always from the sensible world to God.

The relation between God and all other realities is described by St. Thomas in the Aristotelian terms of final

causality. St. Thomas explains this relation by means of both immanent and transcendent elements. Among all the causes, he says, that of finality is the chief and primary cause because it denotes both the goal of any entity and the reason for the initiation of that entity. God is both the reason for which everything comes to be and the goal towards which everything is ultimately drawn.

Various references in the works of St. Thomas show that there were views about God, current at his time, which have quite a modern ring. One was to the effect that God was within us and so can be immediately apprehended without the need of argument. This, which has a perpetual appeal and many different guises, can be called the argument from experience. God, according to Thomas, is first in order of existence and causality, but he is not first for us in order of discovery. He is by his nature first in intelligibility, but it does not follow that He is the most easily understood by us. Faithful to his theory of knowledge, St. Thomas holds that we start with sensible reality, and that it is only from finite existent being thus revealed that we can argue to the existence of God.

The metaphysics of St. Thomas centre in his analysis of existence. He reluctantly puts on one side the ontological argument of St. Anselm. That argument is to this effect, that the notion is formed in the mind by whoever hears the name "God", of one than whom nothing greater can be thought. Such a being cannot be a notion merely, for what is in the mind and in reality is greater than that which is in the mind only; but nothing is greater than God, therefore God can not be merely a notion, but must really exist. St. Thomas rejected the ontological argument, by which St. Anselm sought to infer the existence from the nature of God.

According to Aquinas, since the primary object of the human intellect is the being of sensible things, we have naturally no direct knowledge of God nor is there any short cut to his existence by a purely conceptual argument, such as that of Anselm. The existence of God must be the object of a demonstration whose force depends in part upon the existence of the things of experience. The foundations of this demonstration are laid in the five ways. The first of the five proofs of Gods existence given by St. Thomas is that from motion, which is found in Aristotle and was utilised by Maimonides and St. Albert. "The first way is

described in the Summa Theological as especially obvious (manifestior). This epithet should probably be interpreted in the light of the much lengthier formulation of the proof in the Summa contra gentiles, where Aquinas employs all the resources of Aristotelian physics to conclude as Aristotle had done, to the existence of the first unmoved mover.⁴

"The second proof, which is suggested by the second book of Aristotle's Metaphysics and which was used by Avicenna, Alan of Lille and St. Albert, also starts from the sensible world, but this time from the order or series of efficient causes."⁵ We observe instances of the relation of cause and effect and we find that the cause is itself the effect of another cause. This series cannot be infinite, for if nothing could cause without being caused, there would be nothing to set the causal series going. Hence we must conclude to the existence of an uncaused cause.

The third proof proceeds from the notions of necessity and contingency. In this proof, Aquinas reproduces the suggestion of Maimonides that, if everything were capable of non-existence, there would actually be a time at which nothing existed, and in that case nothing could ever come to exist.

Whatever may be thought of this, it is clear that the ultimate source of the coming-to-be of the contingent must be sought in the necessarily existent. If there were no necessary being, nothing at all would exist.

The fourth proof is suggested by some observations in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and is found substantially in St. Augustine and St. Anselm, "The fourth way is taken from the different grades we find in things. For we find in things that which is more and that which is less good, true, noble etc. But more and less are predicated of different things, in so far as in different degrees they approach that which is most; as a thing is warmer when it is more like that which is most warm. Hence something exists that is the truest, best, noblest and consequently also the greatest being."⁶

The fifth proof is taken from the subjection of things to guidance. We see that many things possessing no knowledge, namely physical objects, act towards a goal, which follows from the fact that they are always active in the same way in order to attain that which is best. From this it follows that they attain their goal not by accident but purposively.

But that which has no knowledge tends towards a goal only through guidance by a being. Hence an intelligent being exists by whom all things of nature are directed towards their goal, and this we call God.

Thomas Aquinas, "in setting forth his celebrated 'Five ways' of demonstrating the existence of God did not mean by demonstration what people now-a-days often suppose he meant. He never called them proofs. True, he taught that the existence of God could be 'known by natural reason'; but he presupposed a certain intellectual climate, a God centred way of thinking, within which he felt prepared to exhibit or demonstrate the existence of God."⁷

God is the end of all things, so as to precede all in being. There is an end which, though it holds the first place in causing in so far as it is in the intension, is nevertheless last in execution. There is an end which, just as it precedes in causing, so also does it precede in being. Thus that which one intends to acquire by one's motion or action is said to be one's end. Accordingly, God is the end of things as something to be obtained by each thing in its own way. Again, God is at once the last end of things and the

first agent. Now the end effected by the agent's action cannot be the first agent but, rather is it the agent's effect. God, therefore, cannot be the end of things as though He were something effected, but only as something already existing and to be acquired. The effect must tend to the end in the same way as the agent acts for the end. God, who is the first agent of all things, does not act as though He gained something by His action but as bestowing something thereby. Since He is not in potentiality so that He can acquire something, but solely in perfect actuality, whereby He is able to bestow. Things therefore, are not ordered to God as to an end to which something will be added; they are ordered to Him to obtain God Himself. All creatures are images of the first agent, namely God, since the agent produces its like. The perfection of an image consists in representing the original by a likeness to it, for this is why an image is made. Therefore, all things exist for the purpose of acquiring a likeness to God, as for their last end.

St. Thomas certainly belief that it is theoretically possible for the philosopher to work out a true metaphysical

system without recourse to revelation. Such a system would be necessarily imperfect, inadequate and incomplete, because the metaphysician is primarily concerned with the Truth itself, with God who is the principle of all truth and he is unable by purely human rational investigation to discover all that knowledge of Truth itself, of God, which is necessary for man if he is to attain his final end. The Truth that God is one is not vitiated by the very fact that nothing is said or known of the Trinity of person; the further truth completes the first, but the first truth is not false, even taken by itself. If the philosopher states that God is one and simply says nothing about the Trinity, because the idea of the Trinity has never entered his head; or if he knows of the doctrine of the Trinity and does not himself believe it, but simply contents himself with saying that God is one or even if he express the view that the Trinity, which he understands wrongly, is incompatible with the divine unity; it still remains true that the statement the God is one in Nature is a correct statement. Of course, if the philosopher states positively that God is one person, he is stating what is false; but if he simply says that God is one and that God is personal, without going on to state

God is one person then his statement is true.

According to St. Thomas, since there can be only one infinite being, there can be only one God, and since all pure perfections are contained in God, God must be the supreme intelligence and will. God, therefore, is supremely personal, and this is the real God of religion. The perfection of the infinite being must inconceivably transcend our finite conceptions, but we have a genuine philosophical knowledge of God. As far as it does we know that he is infinite being, and that we can rightly attribute to him in its supreme degree and without any admixture of limitation, all that we find of perfection in the created world. As we have an analogical knowledge of being so we have an analogical knowledge of God. With this insight St. Thomas corrects the relatively agnostic attitude of Maimonides, who tends to reduce us to mere negations when we come to speak of God. In fact, "Anselm^m says, in effect, that the existence of God is self evident. Everyone really believes in God though not everyone admit it even to himself. Everyone believes in God, thinks Anselm, because it is impossible to do otherwise."⁸

4.4 St. Anselm :

The thought of St. Anselm is rightly said to belong to the Augustinian tradition. He opposes the nominalistic heresies of Roscelin in a system of thought based on Platonic and Aristotelian principles. He seeks to prove by reason what has to be accepted on authority. In his attempt to rationalize the faith, he includes in his theology not only such general propositions as the assertion of the existence of God, but the entire church doctrine of salvation, the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption of man. St. Anselm would scarcely earn a place in the history of philosophy, through his theological speculation and developments, except as the application of philosophical categories to revealed dogmas, necessarily involves some treatment and development of those philosophical categories. St. Anselm deserves a place in the history of philosophy by contributing to the development of that branch of philosophy which is known as natural theology. Whether his arguments for the existence of God are considered valid or invalid, the fact that he elaborated these arguments systematically is of importance and gives his work a title to serious consideration by the historian of philosophy.

In the Monologium, St. Anselm develops the proof of God's existence from the degrees of perfection which are found in creatures. In the first chapter he applies the argument to goodness, and in the second chapter to 'greatness', meaning, as he tells us, not quantitative greatness, but a quality like wisdom. Such qualities are found in varying degrees in the objects of experience, so that the argument proceeds from the empirical observation of degrees of, for example, goodness, and is therefore an a posteriori argument. But judgement about different degrees of perfection implies a reference to a standard of perfection, while the fact that things participate objectively in goodness in different degrees shows that the standard is itself objective. This type of argument is Platonic in character. "It does not proceed from the idea of absolute goodness to the existence of absolute goodness but from observed degrees of goodness to the existence of absolute goodness and from degrees of wisdom to the existence of absolute wisdom, the absolute goodness and wisdom being then identified as God."⁹

In the third chapter of the Monologium, St. Anselm applies the same sort of argument to being, whatsoever exists, exists either through something or through nothing.

St. Anselm goes on to introduce a Platonic element when he argues that if there is a plurality of existent things which have being of themselves, i.e., are self-dependent and uncaused, there is a form of being-of itself in which all participate. Again when several beings possess the same form, there must be a unitary being, external to them which is that form. Therefore, there can be one self-existent or ultimate being and this must be the best and highest and greatest of all that is.

In the Monologium St. Anselm proceeds to give reasons for the Trinity of persons in one Nature without giving any clear indication that he is conscious of leaving the province of one science to enter that of another. St. Anselm gives a posteriori arguments for God's existence which are of a much more systematic character than those of St. Augustine and he also deals carefully with the divine attributes, God's immutability, eternity etc.

In the Proslogium, St. Anselm develops the so-called ontological argument which proceeds from the idea of God to God as a reality. According to him, this proof starts from the idea of God as that than which no greater can be conceived, i.e., as absolutely perfect; that is what is .

meant by God. If such a being had only ideal reality, existed only in our subjective idea, we could still conceive a greater being, namely a being which did not exist simply in our idea but in objective reality. It follows that the idea of God as absolute perfection is necessarily the idea of an existent being and St. Anselm argues that in this case no one can at the same time have the idea of God and yet deny His existence. If a man thought of God as, for instance, a superman, he would be quite right to deny God's existence in that sense but he would not really be denying the objectivity of that idea of God. If, a man had right idea of God, conceived the meaning of the term 'God', he could indeed deny His existence with his lips, but if he realises what the denial involves and yet asserts the denial, he is guilty of a plain contradiction. The absolutely Perfect Being is a Being, the essence of which is to exist or which necessarily involves existence, since otherwise a more Perfect Being could be conceived; it is the Necessary Being and a Necessary Being which did not exist would be a contradiction in terms. St. Anselm wanted his argument to be a demonstration of all that we believe concerning the divine nature, and since the argument

concerns the absolutely Perfect Being, the attributes of God are contained implicitly in the conclusion of the argument.

Again we have only to ask ourselves what is implied by the idea of a Being than which no greater can be thought, in order to see that God must be omnipotent, omniscient, supremely just and so on. The argument given by St. Anselm in the *Proslogium* was attacked by the monk Gaunilo in his '*Liber Pro Insipiente adversus Anselmi in Proslogio ratiocinationem*', wherein, he observed that the idea we have of a thing is no guarantee of its extramental existence and that St. Anselm was guilty of an illicit transition from the logical to the real order. The being of God in the mind, he declares, is the same as the being of any other thing in the mind, that is, so far as it is thought.

"The case of God, Anselm argued, is a special one. In all other cases, such as the island, it is just as possible to conceive of non-existence as of existence. In the case of God, thinks Anselm, this is not so; it is not possible to conceive of God's non-existence. For in this case we are not thinking of an island or a horse or a school

that is the greatest and most perfect of its kind; we are thinking of whatever it is that is the greatest and most perfect of all kinds of being."¹⁰ In the thirteenth century this argument was employed by St. Bonaventure, with a less logical and more Psychological emphasis, while it was rejected by St. Thomas. Duns Scotus used it as an incidental aid. Descartes adopted and adapted it, Leibnitz defended it in a careful and ingenious manner, Kant attacked it.

4.5 Observations :

Because of the preponderance of religion (theology) over metaphysics (philosophy) in the middle ages, we do not see the growth of absolutism. As any philosopher seldom rose to the heights of metaphysical daring, there was no conception of an impersonal absolute. God was considered personal all through. Mediaeval period is marked for its distinct religious milieu where philosophy was almost a handmaid to religion.

During the middle ages, the words authority, obedience and subordination form important terms in the vocabulary of life. In politics, religion, morals, education, philosophy, science, literature and art—in every sphere of human activity

-- the influence of organized christianity is supreme. As the representative of God on earth and the source of revealed truth, the church becomes the guardian of education, the censor of morals, the court of last resort in intellectual and spiritual affairs. Since the church receives the truth directly from God, what need is there of searching for it; what need of philosophy except as the handmaiden of theology -- these questions arise in the minds. The individual is subordinates to the church in his religious beliefs and practices, the church stands between him and his God.

The Augustinian philosophy of history considers the temporal and historical process in the context of the eternal nature and purpose of God and seeks a vindication of the ways^d of God in dealing with men. Augustine realized that a philosophical interpretation of history must be based on an adequate conception of time. "Eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition while in eternity there is no change."¹¹ Change and time are thus inseparably joined and the supposition that the world was created in a pre-existent time is patently absurd : "the world was made, not in time,

but simultaneously with time."¹² God by an eternal act created both the world and time and in the original creative act God envisaged under the form of eternity the entire succession of temporal and historical events which was denied to unfold in time. The cause of creation is the goodness of God, and consequently all created things which emerge in time contribute to the goodness of the created universe, "no nature of all is evil, and this is a name for nothing but the want of good."¹³ The essential features of the Augustinian Philosophy of history are -- (1) The conviction that the entire historical process is a purposive or teleological whole, the parts of which, down to the most minute detail, contribute to the goodness and perfection of the whole; and (2) The belief that the historical process moves in a direction which was predestined and foreordained by God in such a way as to bring about the ultimate redemption of some men and the destruction of others.

St. Anselms bases his celebrated proofs for the existence of God on the Platonic conception that Universals have an existence independent of particular objects. In his

Monologium he employs the cosmological argument, which had been advanced by St. Augustine. In his Proslogium, he offers another proof, which is based on Platonic realism; it is the so-called Ontological with which his name has become linked in the history of thought. This proof consists in deducing the existence of God from the concept of God, in showing that the very idea of God implies his existence. The idea of a being having existence is the idea of a more perfect being than the idea of one having no existence. Hence, God as the most perfect being, must exist. In this way Anselm seeks to prove that the perfection of God implies his existence. This conclusion does not necessarily follow from Anselm's premises. His reasoning proves no more than that when we think of a being as existant, we are thinking of a being that is more perfect than a non-existant being. The notion of an existant being is the notion of a being that has more qualities than a being conceived as not existant. He does not prove that God exists, but merely that the idea of an existant God connotes more than the mere subjective idea of God. Of course, the idea of God includes the idea of existence; but it does not necessarily follow from the notion of a perfect being, a notion which carries

with it the idea of existence, that such a being actually exists. The ontological argument seems cogent to anyone, who accept the realistic presupposition that universals have an extra-mental reality; the realistic theory of universals is thus an implicit premises of the ontological argument for God's existence.

St. Thomas Aquinas does not advocate the intellectualist position in its most extreme form; indeed, in his insistence on the importance of faith and love he has more in common with Augustine than it has generally recognized. St. Thomas felt that it is better to love an object of the greater magnitude than to know it imperfectly. He sees love of God as our highest function and considers faith, which is a gift of grace, to be the mode of apprehension corresponding to this love. In faith and in the love of God, the will is the faculty which is most involved. However, we have to close this chapter with a rather negative conclusion. We shall repeat that religion being the dominant factor in even the intellectual pursuits in the west (one might even venture to say, that was the case the world over) -- metaphysics; free and lofty, could not throw up concepts like the Absolute. As a result of this, we do not

see the problem of God and the Absolute as far as the mediaeval western philosophy is concerned.

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CHAPTER- V

THE PROBLEM AND SOME MODERN PHILOSOPHERS

5.1 Introduction :

The problem of the relation between God and the Absolute is a vital problem in the philosophy of the East and the West. There are many philosophers who have discussed the problem. In this chapter we shall make a study of the views of some modern philosophers on this problem.

5.2 Some modern philosophers :

The problem of God and the Absolute has attracted many modern philosophers also. Idealists and absolutist philosophers had to take recourse to the distinction between the metaphysical and religious ultimates. In this chapter our thrust will be on those philosophers who have well-defined views on this problem. Hence, naturally, we shall start with Spinoza, the prince among early modern western absolutists. Then we shall pass on to Bradley in the west and Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan in the East.

5.2.1 Spinoza :

The doctrinal contribution of Spinoza to philosophy may be summarised in one word, that is, the concept of the

Absolute. Spinoza may be said to have made this concept complete and consistent. All other doctrines may be regarded as the logical derivation of this. God, the supreme reality was recognised to be the Absolute, but its logical implications were not noticed fully.

The problem which exercised Spinoza's mind most was the problem of purifying the concept of God. His study of great masters of religious thought had impressed upon him that on account of the ingress of sentimentalism, many inconsistencies had crept into the concept of God, with the result that all other problems of philosophy also were wrongly approached. Out of the many definitions of God, Spinoza selects one which seems to satisfy all the conditions of the definition of an uncreated thing. The essence of a thing is that from which all its properties can be deduced. The three special characteristics of a thing uncreated are, (i) that the thing must not need explanation by anything outside itself, i.e., should exclude the idea of a cause, (ii) that the definition should leave no room for doubt as to whether the thing exists or not, (iii) that the definition must not contain

abstractions. Keeping all these in view the only correct definition of substance is "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself." Two objections against Spinoza's procedure may be anticipated. It may be said that Spinoza's definition is not correct. But the correctness of it may be demonstrated by showing that it contains, all that is implicit in the notion of God as absolute being.

As self-evident being, substance is by its very nature, prior to modes both epistemically and ontologically. Modes are known or conceived through God or substance which is self-conceived. Modes are not self-existent but dependent on God who alone is self-existent. As self-conceived, i.e., absolutely unrelated, substance must be one and universal. The unity of substance may be proved dialectically. If there were many substances, they must be either absolutely alike or absolutely different or partly alike and partly different. If they are absolutely alike, they cannot be distinguished one from the other, because distinction implies that they are not absolutely alike. If the substances are absolutely different, then in what sense are they all substances? To be designated by the same name substance, they must have at least some common

features and if they do have, then they are not absolutely different. If, however, the substances are said to be partly alike and partly different, then both the above criticisms apply. To the extent, they are different, they cannot all be substances and to the extent they are alike they cannot be different or many. Hence the unity of substance must be admitted.

Since all determination is negation, substance cannot be finite or determinate. It must be absolutely infinite and indeterminate,¹ capable of being infinitely determined, i.e., it has infinite attributes² since there is nothing else beside substance, all determinations will be subjective and false. Since substance is absolutely infinite nothing can be outside it.³ Substance is the sole and universal reality.⁴ The appearance of plurality, does not mean that substance is divided,⁵ for if the parts retain the nature of substance, then there will be many substances, and if they do not, substance would cease to be.⁶

Substance transcends appearance. Even though substance is indivisible, infinite, things in infinite modes follow from it, because God being the sole reality. He is the sole

cause, i.e., the cause of everything. Substance is immanent. Being the sole cause God is also the free cause.⁷ He acts merely according to His own laws, and is compelled by nothing. God is the immanent and not the transeunt cause of things, because there is nothing outside him. He is not only the efficient, effecting cause of the existence of things, but also of their essence.⁸ All that is possible is actual,⁹ because there is nothing to prevent God from creating.

From the above discussion, it is seen that Spinoza's description of the properties of substance generally agrees with the traditional conception of God. This is why he does not hesitate to call his substance God. The only change he introduces is regarding the causality of God. The traditional conception of creation is 'demiurgic', teleological and volitional. These conceptions appeal more to our religious sentiment than to reason. Spinoza was of the opinion that in the philosophic pursuit of truth, religious sentiment should be kept at a distance.

Substance as indeterminate Being cannot be said to be self-differentiating or dynamic because that would mean

that it has in it the seeds of difference and this would evidently militate against the conception of substance as pure Being. self-determination implies negation also, and substance is free from all kinds of negation. Spinoza's substance is conceived as the negation of all difference, and hence it is not possible to retrace our steps from substance to the world. Spinoza to be aware of this difficulty, and this is why he introduces the doctrine of Attributes which makes the abstract unity of substance a concrete unity capable of self-differentiation. Since substance is absolutely indeterminate, the attributes can not be found in it. For the same reason the attributes can not be of the same status as the substance. Again, since there is nothing determinate in substance it can lend itself to infinite determination. It is only determinateness that resists further determination. The indeterminate cannot resist determination, in fact it lends itself freely to be determined in infinite ways. Thus, we have an infinite number of determinations or attributes. The attributes are only the different ways of determining or conceiving the self-conceived or the inconceivable. Such attributes must be infinite though only relatively so, infinite because it is supposed to express the essence

of infinite substance, and relatively infinite because only substance is absolute infinite. Again each attribute must be exclusive of the real since each is independently conceived to express the essence of substance. Each is equally infinite, the attributes may be regarded as parallel. The main problem regarding the Attributes is whether they are products of the Intellect or something independent of the intellect. The concept of substance as indeterminate pure Being requires that the attributes must be regarded only as ascriptions. The attributes may best be understood as the upādhis of substance. An upādhi does not add anything to substance, it only limits it or determines it in a particular way. Upādhis are ascribed to Brahman or substance in order to explain its relation to the world.

The Absolute as such is not dynamic or creative and that in order to be dynamic or creative it has to be associated with its Attributes; that is to say that Attributes make substance creative. There is no other purpose of introducing the attributes except that of bringing in a principle of differentiation or dynamic entity. To explain Vyāvahara one has to admit change and difference. If substance could

not be creative or self-differentiating even in conjunction with its upādhis, the attributes the very purpose of introducing them would be defeated. Brahman assumes Māyā as it is wanted to create. On the one hand the Attributes obscure the indeterminateness of substance, that is, they make it appear as determinate and on the other, they give rise to modes. The attributes have thus both the powers (Śaktis), namely, the power of obscuring (Āvarana Śakti) and the power of projecting (Viksepa Śakti). If the attributes had merely the obscuring power and were not creative, there would be no phenomenon. Hence both the aspects of the attributes, that is their relative determinateness and their dynamic nature have to be recognised if the absoluteness of substance is to be kept intact.

The attributes of substance make it determinate and dynamic but it still remains infinite. The question is how do finite things proceed from God? Spinoza says that, that which is finite and has a conditioned existence, cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God. The finite things therefore do not proceed directly from God but indirectly through some intermediaries. These intermediaries are called infinite modes and their purpose

is to explain individuation. This infinite modes are of two kinds : the immediate infinite modes and the mediate infinite modes. When Spinoza was asked to give examples, he pointed out that infinite understanding and motion and rest, are the immediate infinite modes of Thought and Extension respectively. The mediate infinite mode is the face of the whole universe, which although it varies in infinite modes, yet remains always the same. It is true that there must be an identity between cause and effect according to Spinoza but this does not mean that only the infinite can proceed from the infinite. This is true only of the absolute which is the immediate cause of only the infinite modes. As regards the relative infinite or the immediate mode, it can be said to give rise to finite modes because it is already a mode.

To sum up what has been said — (i) substance and Attributes, the two moments in Spinoza's conception of God, involve the fusion of absolute unity and complete variety of characters. Spinoza merely states the togetherness of the Attributes in God as a fact; and again he merely states as a fact that God comprehends in unbroken unity, infinite variety of ultimate characters, (ii) And

Spinoza's conception of Attributes, or again of substance, renders the intelligible coherence of the two moments of his complete conception of God impossible. There is an inner contradiction in his conception of God as at once excluding all determination and comprehending an infinite diversity of ultimate characters.

A mode is, according to Spinoza, the modification of substance, or that which exists in and is conceived through something other than itself. Thus a mode is absolutely dependent both in its essence as well as existence. The modes are the modifications of substance and not something over and above substance. A mode is empirically conditioned by other finite modes and transcendently conditioned by the Infinite. Infinite number of modes follow from God and they follow necessarily. This does not mean that God is compelled in any manner, but He creates freely though necessarily. Further, "God is the efficient cause not only of the existence of things but also of their essence."¹⁰ God is the cause of modes not only in so far as they simply exist but also in so far as they are conditioned for operating in a particular manner.

According to Spinoza, God as the Absolute must be both epistemologically and ontologically independent; this is to say that God is self-conceived and self-existent. No other entity or existence can be posited without at the same time tampering with His absoluteness. God must be admitted to be the universal reality. Being universal, God must also be absolutely indeterminate and infinite because there is nothing which can set limit to or make Him determinate. All determination is negation. And since the finite or the conditioned necessarily presupposes the infinite or the unconditioned, the Absolute must also be regarded as the cause or ground of phenomena. The Absolute is not a hypothetical concept but the necessary existence or the necessary implicate of the universe. This is not to say that the Absolute is understood in relation to the finite, it only means that the Absolute must be understood as the negation of the finite. Since the conditioned is not self-supporting and must be rejected, the affirmation of the unconditioned is necessary. God is therefore absolutely infinite and indeterminate, unique and universal, self-evident and necessary being.

The world of phenomena must be regarded as an appearance and not as real. Since the real is changeless, all

change has to be understood as illusory or subjective. Both Thought and Extension, the modes of which make the world of appearance should be regarded as subjective or as intellectual ascriptions to the Absolute. These attributes to the extent they personate the Absolute, appear as infinite and real. The Absolutely infinite is only a negation or dissolution of the relatively infinite, i.e., the attributes. The Spinoza on the one hand, pulls down Thought and Extension from the status of substance to that of attributes, and on the other, he denies any difference of status between the two attributes. Thought is not superior to Extension. Though he speaks of the world as belonging to imagination and opinion, he does not elaborate the theory behind it, as is done in the Vedānta.

In his, treatment of the problem of creation, Spinoza realises that it is not logical to proceed immediately from the Absolutely indeterminate to the utterly determinate and hence he recognises different gradual stages of determination such as Immediate infinite modes, mediate infinite modes and finite modes. It is necessary to show, this process of creation, if it is to be held, that the world is nothing but a determination of the

indeterminate that is immanent in it. The Absolute is immanent in the world as the ground of it and transcendent to it as indeterminate. In this connection a Vedāntin might like to know the distinction between the Absolute, as such and the Absolute as modified by Attributes. The Vedāntins makes this distinction by bringing in the concept of saguna Brahman or Īsvara and tries to harmonise religion and philosophy; but Spinoza seems to have altogether dispensed with the idea of a personal God, perhaps because of his contention that religion and philosophy are Absolutely distinct.

5.2.2 F.H. Bradley :

The vision which generates Bradley's philosophy is the vision of Reality as a harmonious undivided whole of experience in which all aspects of infinite experience are included, but are not parted and related. It is generally akin to the root concept of spirit on which the Hegelian outlook has been seen to be based, with two important points of difference. Firstly, Bradley's 'experience' is a whole, which is not simply reason or thought, but also feeling and willing, all of

which remain merged in one undifferentiated Absolute. Secondly, this Absolute is not conceived by him in a relational form; though it contains all thoughts and things, they are not split up into different elements. "Fully to realize the existence of the Absolute is for finite beings impossible"; but a limited idea of the Absolute, "seems fully attainable by the finite intellect."¹¹ In "mere feeling or immediate presentation, we have the experience of a whole. The whole contains diversity, and on the other hand, is not parted by relation." Such an experience, "serves to suggest to us the general idea of a total experience, where will and thought and feeling may all once more be one."¹²

According to Bradley, everything is experience and experience is a whole. Experience of every psychical centre involves intellect will and feeling and there is an antagonism and outwardness amongst these aspect of experience. The result of this antagonism and outwardness amongst these aspect of experience is that things and events, their attributes and relations as cognized by the intellect and objects of volitions and emotions that occupy psychical centres, appear as independent entities.

Reality, however, being always the whole of experience, according to Bradley, these partial aspects fall short of reality as such and are therefore appearances. For Bradley, the immediate experience is felt unity, not yet parted by any relation and distinction.

Bradley holds that the God of religion is an appearance and in the Absolute, God and religion are equally lost. Religion naturally implies a relation between man and God. But a relation always is self-contradictory. It implies always two terms which are finite and which claim independence. On the other hand, a relation is unmeaning, unless both itself and the related are the adjective of a whole. And to find a solution of this indiscrepancy would be to pass entirely beyond the relational point of view. Man is on the one hand a finite subject, merely standing in relation with God. And yet, on the other hand, apart from God man is merely an abstraction. God again is a finite object, standing above and apart from man, and is something independent of all relation to his will and intelligence. Hence God taken as thinking and feeling being has a private personality. But sundered from those relations which qualify him, God is inconsistent emptiness

and qualified by his relation to another, he is distracted finitude. God is therefore, taken as transcending this external relation. He wills and knows himself, and he finds his reality and self-consciousness, in union with man. Religion is a process with inseparable factors, each appearing on either side. It is the unity of man and God, which in various stages and forms, wills and knows itself throughout. We may say that in religion God tends always to pass beyond himself. He is necessarily led to end in the Absolute, which for religion is not God.

The essence of religion, according to Bradley lies in having communion with God, who is the embodiment of all values. In religious experience one becomes one with God and so in that moment of union, we seem to attain to divine perfection. Hence, what we vainly seek in morality appears to be attained in religious communion. In that moment of union we feel as perfect as God is. But do we attain to perfect unity ? Here once again the old dilemma crops up. If the union with God is not complete the finite self does not become the Absolute reality; and, if the union is complete, then the possibility of devotion also

disappears, since the individuality of the worshipper is lost in the reality of God. So even in religious experience, either we do not attain perfection or else we go beyond religion into a stage of supra-religion. Religious relationship requires that God should understand, will and love the worshipper. In other words, God is supposed to have personality. But any personality remains sundered internally by diverse demands of feeling, will and cognition. So God having personality becomes a finite being. Besides God's personality will repel the impact of other finite personalities of worshippers, with the result that the total union with God and the religious experience remain incomplete, inconsistent and so ultimately they are appearances and not the ^{Absolute.} "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole. And the effort of religion is to put an end to, and break down, this relation -- a relation which, nonetheless, it essentially presupposes. Hence short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him."¹³

God for Bradley has no meaning outside of the religious consciousness, and that essentially is practical. The Absolute for him cannot be God, because in the end the Absolute is related to nothing, and there cannot be a practical relation between it and the finite will. When we begin to worship the absolute or the universe, and make it the object of religion, we in that moment have transformed it.

Bradley did not lack religious conviction, but he did not share religious belief called popular Christianity.¹⁴ The highest reality is the Absolute for Bradley and the Absolute means that which in the end is related to nothing.¹⁵ But in religion the worshipper is related to God. So the Absolute cannot be the God of religion. Nor can God be the highest reality, for God has will and personality and these marks of imperfection and finitude for Bradley. Therefore, God cannot be the highest reality.

"The highest Reality so far as I see, must be superpersonal. At the same time to many minds practical religion seems to call for the belief in God as a separate individual. And, where truly that belief is so required, I can accept it as justified and true, but only if it is supplemented by other beliefs which really contradict it. And these other beliefs, I must add are more vital for religion. A God who

has made this strange and glorious Nature outside of which he remains is an idea at best one-sided.¹⁶ The reality of God means his own actual presence within individual souls, and apart from this presence, both he and we are no more than abstractions. Hence in genuine religion we have a 'Pantheism', which is not less there because it expresses itself by what in fact is an inconsistent Polytheism. And we can break with this only by an individualism which reduces God to one finite person among others, a person whose influence remains utterly external. If, in short, for religion we need a personal God, we must accept also a creed which is not consistent.

Bradley is an advocate of different degrees of reality. But in the conception of Reality in relation to "appearance" as given by Bradley, there is an apparent difficulty in making out the possibility of degrees in such conception. To Bradley appearance as appearance, is an unreality but at the same time he is never tired of warning us that an appearance is the appearance of Reality or that Reality appears in appearances. But the appearances can not remain isolated from and opposed to one another, because they contain in them, from their

very nature of being appearances of reality the implication of their coherence. Our knowledge of appearances implies in the first instance isolation between one appearance and another, but this isolation or contradiction is at once transcended by any judgement in the unity which all knowledge implies between its subject and predicate. From this it appears that appearances have an implication of unity or coherence in the act of our knowing them. But our knowledge could not have achieved this unity or coherence amongst appearances unless they were imbedded in the bosom of Reality. Our knowledge being a progressive discovery of wider and wider coherence among appearances, and therefore of higher and higher truths. The Absolute or highest truth will mean complete conference among all the aspects or appearances of Reality. From this it follows that corresponding to the different degrees of truth represented by more or less limited systems of coherence in the aspects or appearances of Reality, there will be different degrees of Reality as well. If reality is a coherent system and if appearances stand transmuted and transfigured in reality, (C) then any system of appearances as more or less, giving rise to what may be called different degrees of reality. We see that here is the sense in which Bradley concede to degrees of reality.

In the Absolutism of Bradley there is a sharp contrast between God and the Absolute and, therefore, between religion and philosophy and between practical and ultimate truth. To him, the Absolute is related to nothing because all relation implies limitation and therefore, imperfection. In religion the finite wills of men stand in practical relation to God as in worship and prayer. Therefore religion, likes to regard its object of God imperfect by the very relation of the finite and the infinite wills which it involves. Hence, the God of religion is a lower category as it involves want of the comprehensiveness of the whole of experience which is Truth. As Bradley puts it, "For, if God is perfect, we saw that religion must contain inconsistency and it was by seeking consistency that we were driven to a limited God."¹⁷ Bradley here raises the familiar question of personality and discusses its applicability to the God of religion. Personal idealists make much of God's personality and the theists regard it as one of the attributes of God. But Bradley takes a different meaning of personality from what the personal idealists and theistic writers attach to it. Personal idealists emphasise antithesis and not union between finite

wills and the will of God. But Bradley thinks that our religious consciousness involves both antithesis and union between the human will and the divine. So he is not categorical in his assertion as to whether the God of religion must be a person. All that he says is that in this double relation between the divine and the human will, one may apply personality to God. But he adds that there is a far more essential truth in religious consciousness in the fact that we feel the presence of God's will in ours, and all of us in our religious communion feel a feeling of satisfaction in common, which should be denied us. In fact, to Bradley the God of religion is a finite reality and therefore different from the Absolute Reality which is the universe.

Regarding the relation between God and the Absolute, Bradley says : "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole. And the effort of religion is to put an end to and break down, this relation -- a relation, which, none the less, it essentially presupposes. Hence, short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal he is lost

and religion with him. It is this difficulty which appears in the problem, of the religious self-consciousness. God must certainly be conscious of himself in religion, but such self-consciousness is most imperfect. For if the external relation between God and man were entirely absorbed, the separation of subject and object would, as such, have gone with it. But if again the self, which is conscious, still contains in its essence a relation between two unreduced terms, where is the unity of its selfness? In short, God as the highest expression of realized good, shows the contradiction which we found to be inherent in that principle. The falling apart of idea and existence is at once essential to goodness and negated by Reality. And the process, which moves within Reality, is not Reality itself. We may say that God is not God, until he has become all in all, and that a God which is all in all, is not the God of religion. God is but an aspect and that must mean but an appearance, of the Absolute."¹⁸

5.2.3 Sri Aurobindo :

The metaphysical outlook of Aurobindo is basically that of the Vedānta. He translated, annotated, reinterpreted and expounded many of the creative and non-technical sources

of Indian philosophy -- the Vedas, the Upanisads, the Bhāgavadgītā and the latter epics. He tried to grapple thus with all the basic problems of Indian Culture, unravel the mysteries and symbolisms and explore an integral point of view which would harmonize the divergent trend of Indian thought and synthesize them also with the valuable elements of western thought. Both Indian and western thought have met in Sri Aurobindo. S.K. Mitra writes, "This meeting is not mere handshaking, but that there is a real synthesis of these two types of thought in him. There is even something more, a fulfilment of what each of them aims at but has not been able to realise."¹⁹ "The west aims at a fuller realisation of the evolutionary and cosmic character of its thought. But it is hampered by its intellectualism and its existential outlook what it requires is the acceptance of a spiritual standpoint, leading to the abandonment of its existential outlook and a modification of its extreme intellectualism. Similarly, Indian thought is spiritual but individualistic and static. It must break its narrow walls of individualism and acquire a dynamic and cosmic character. There lies its fulfilment, . Sri Aurobindo fulfils this function by dealing with three main problems of

his philosophy : the problem of Evolution, the problem of Yoga and the problem of the nature of Reality.

Aurobindo's philosophy of the Life Divine is known as "Realistic Advaita"²⁰ as con-trasted with Illusionistic Advaita of Śāṅkara. Of course, Sri Aurobindo, whose philosophy is in true with Upaniṣadic thinking, believes in Sachidānanda - Bliss - Existence - Consciousness - as the ultimate truth. But the real import of the term Realistic Advaita is that, according to him, this creation is the manifestation of that One Reality and, therefore, the manifested world and all that has become is as real as Brahman. "An Omnipresent reality is the Brahman, not an Omnipresent cause of persistent illusions."²¹

According to Aurobindo, the Vedāntic formula, 'One without a second' must be interpreted in the light of the other truth "All this is Brahman." The criterion of reality is that, 'Truth has to be sought in larger and complete affirmation.' For him reality has two aspects. Non-Being and Being, silence and word, the static and the Dynamic; the former is the basis and support of the latter. There is one Truth, One Reality, the Being and the many are His becomings. This Truth behind all dualities, all contradictions, all variations, seen in the various levels of consciousness is Brahman the Omnipresent Reality.

Sri Aurobindo held that things and beings of this universe are real. But in the event of the individual

being real, the question has to be settled if — (i) the individual is a separate unit, or (ii) he is an aspect of the whole Brahman, or (iii) he is identical with the whole. The first alternative cannot be accepted by Sri Aurobindo as it is repugnant to his monistic philosophy. There is one truth, one Reality and the many are his becomings. The truth that "Brahman is the one Reality" has to be read in the light of the other truth that "All this is Brahman." So the idea that the individual is a separate unit is quite foreign to the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. It may appear that Sri Aurobindo is inclined towards the second alternative, i.e., the individual seems to have been accorded the status of being an aspect of the whole, the Sachidānanda. When Aurobindo talks of Involution and Evolution in the gradual steps of matter, life and consciousness etc. are the different aspects of the same Brahman who is unfolding Himself in this universe. But as a matter of fact Aurobindo's notion of evolution is just the reverse of the Absolutist notion of the unfolding of the Absolute. Aurobindo holds that evolution is a process through which the involved Divine Being gradually emerges out of His apparent opposites, first in matter, then in life and mind, and He would finally stand fully manifested as the spirit which will be the consummation of the evolutionary movement. At last we can say that Sri Aurobindo favours the third alternative, i.e., the individual is identical with the whole or with Brahman. But here also his position is not without its uniqueness. While declaring the

eualtion of the Individual with Brahman, he is also conscious of the integralism of the former. The history of evolution, according to him, indicates that the preceding elements has been taken up, transfigured and made the basis of the next dominant principle. Aurobindo thinks that the individual will find his true self, i.e. Divinity in the evolutionary process, which will take him up and transform the physical - vital - mental being into its higher reciprocals.

Aurobindo says that Reality is integral, the one that becomes manifest in the individual and the cosmos, that transcends and holds them. The main tenet of Aurobindo's philosophy of the Life Divine is, "Brahman, Īśvara is all this by His Yoga - māyā." Reality has three fundamental aspects, Ātman, Puruṣa and Īśvara with its consciousness force. Reality is Saguṇa in as much as it is capable of manifesting qualities, and nirguṇa as it is not limited by any sum of qualities. Akṣara or silence or Kṣara or movements are complementaries and transcendent, but also capable of gradual creative self expression by self-limitation and self-determination. "It is perfectly understandable that the Absolute is and must be indeterminate in the sense that it cannot be limited by any determinations, or any sum of possible determinations, but not in the sense that it is incapable of self-determination."²² The Absolute cannot be defined with any quality, property and power, not because they do not

belong to it, but because it cannot be fully conceived and expressed by these. It is immanent as well as transcendent. The Absolute is described by the Advaitins negatively by denying all determinations. Aurobindo thinks that such negation in another way limits the Absolute by denying it even the freedom of self-expression and self-determination.

Sri Aurobindo not only emphasises that all Reality is consciousness, but he goes further and says that the measures of Reality of anything is determined by the nature of consciousness that is revealed in it. The higher the position of anything in the scale of Reality, the deeper and more unified is the consciousness that is revealed in it. His conclusion, therefore, is just the reverse of that of Plotinus. The Absolute, far from being characterised by the total absence of consciousness, is, the Highest consciousness. And the individual, if he is to attain union with the Absolute must possess the broadest, deepest and most unified consciousness. Unconsciousness is the characteristic of matter in its grossest form, Sri Aurobindo's conception of Divine Descent has an outward similarity with Plotinus' theory of Emanations. Like Plotinus, he also looks upon creation as the emergence from God of a hierarchically graded world, the emergents being of all grades of Reality. But the whole conception of creation and the relation of the created world to God are totally different in his philosophy from what they are in the system of Plotinus. In calling creation a descent of God,

Sri Aurobindo wants to emphasise its double significance. First, that the created world, even in its lowest levels, exhibits on its face the stamp of its Divine origin. Secondly, that it is a descent for the sake of ascent, so that the lowest order of existence has the promise and potency of reaching the Divine status. "God, according to him, does not descend directly into the human consciousness or mind. A link is necessary between Absolute, the super-consciousness, and Mind or ordinary consciousness. To this link or intermediate Reality Aurobindo gives the name of supermind. It is only through the instrumentality of the supermind that Mind can rise to the Absolute and the Absolute can descend to Mind."²³

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution is the direct outcome of his integral world-view. In the *Life Divine* he enunciates four main theories with their corresponding mental attitude and ideals in accordance with four different conceptions of the truth of existence "These we may call the supracosmic, the cosmic and terrestrial, the supra-terrestrial or other worldly, and the integral or synthetic or composite. In this last category would fall Sri Aurobindo's view of our existence here as a Becoming with the Divine Being for its origin and its object, a progressive manifestation, a spiritual evolution with the supracosmic for its source and support, the other worldly for a condition and connection link and the cosmic and terrestrial

for its field, and with human mind and life for its nodus and turning-point of release towards a higher and highest perfection. Our regard then must be on the first three to see where they depart from the integralising view of life and how far the truths they stand on fit into its structure"²⁴

In the supra-cosmic view of things the supreme Reality is alone entirely real. In the extreme forms of its world-vision, human existence has no real meaning; it is a mistake of the soul or a delirium of the will to live, an error or ignorance which somehow over-casts the Absolute Reality. The cosmic-terrestrial view considers cosmic existence alone as real. Its view is confined, ordinarily, to life in the material universe. God, if God exists, is an eternal Becoming; or if God does not exist, then Nature is a perennial Becoming. Earth is the field or it is one of the temporary fields, man is the highest possible form or only one of the temporary forms of the Becoming. The supra-terrestrial view admits the reality of the material cosmos and it accepts the temporary duration of earth and human life. It perceives behind the mortality of the bodily life, of man the immortality of the soul within him. But, finally there must open in us, as our mental life deepens and subtler knowledge develops, the perception that the terrestrial and the supra-terrestrial are not the only terms of being; there is something which is supra-cosmic and the highest remote origin of our existence. In this integration the supra-cosmic Reality stands as the supreme truth of being; to realise it is the highest reach of our ~~cons-~~

consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a fourfold principle of Divine Being creative of the Universe namely, Existence, consciousness force, Bless and supermind. These are all veiled behind the cosmos. But they express themselves characteristically through their respective subordinate terms. For example, the supermind is acting through its distorted reflection, the mind; consciousness Force is expressing itself in this world through its subordinate term, life; similarly matter is the subordinate term for the Divine All-Existence. Thus the three Divine principle -- Supermind, Conscious-Force and Existence are working through their subordinate terms, matters, life and mind. According to Aurobindo, at the subliminal level there is our Inner being composed of the mental Puruṣa, the Vital Puruṣa and the Physical Puruṣa. Again, behind this Inner being there is the Psychic being or the inmost being. This is called Inmost as it supports all the other beings, mental, vital and physical, and is also the basis of this superficial formation. Sri Aurobindo has explained the nature of this psychic being elaborately in his "Lights On Yoga". He has divided the central being of man into two layers. The upper, which he calls jīvātman, is a spark of divinity, a position of the Divine self (Para Mātman); it is the transcendent principle which is above the

manifestation in individual life and presides over it. The lower, which is the Psychic being, is the immanent principle, the deputy of jīvātman, which stands behind the manifestation in individual life and supports it. Aurobindo calls this Psychic being Ānandamaya Puruṣa and says : "It is the concealed witness and control, the hidden guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine."²⁵ It is this Psychic being which takes delight in all the varied experiences of the surface mind and enables us to persist through the surface mind. It has its distorted reflection in the Desire soul which is bound up within the walls of egoistic ignorance and consequently fails to see the rasa behind all the experiences of life and is unable to have any touch with the Divine cosmic Delight. The Psychic being responds to the rasa in all experiences alike and takes equal delight in all things and happenings. There is no question of pleasure or pain, as all the things and happenings are equally delightful. This status of the Psychic being is equivalent to that of the

'Sthitaprajna' described in the Gītā.

Now we can say that our real self is the Psychic being or the Caitanya Puruṣa as Aurobindo calls it. It is, as the Upaniṣads describe it, the Puruṣa seated within the heart, no bigger than the thumb : "Anguṣṭha matrah Puruṣa sada jananam hardaya sannivistah" Aurobindo refers to this Caitanya Puruṣa as the Īsvara of Gītā seated in the human heart. This innermost inhabitant of our heart strives to develop our mind, life and body and to express itself. It will lead man from ignorance to knowledge. Sri Aurobindo says that unless and until the Psychic Being comes to the fore front to take control of our entire surface - formation, the ultimate aim of life, our ascent into the spiritual existence, is not possible.

Sri Aurobindo does not identify Reality either with Being or Becoming, but looks upon both of these as poises of Reality. The Absolute is beyond the two, it is eternal and infinite, and, therefore, is in its essence indeterminate and indefinable and inconceivable by the finite Mind. It is not described either by negations - neti, neti, or by affirmatives - iti, yet this supreme Reality

manifests itself to our consciousness in the Universe by real and fundamental truths of His being, which transcend the Universe and are the foundation upon which the universe rests. These truths present themselves to our intellectual knowledge as the fundamental aspects in which we see and experience the Infinite Reality. This supreme Reality or Brahman, as it manifests itself to our consciousness, is an eternal and Absolute self-existence, self-awareness and self-power and self-delight of being. It is Sachidānanda. Its self-existence appears in three forms: Self conscious Being or Spirit, and God or the Divine Being or, to use the more expressive terms of Indian Philosophy, it manifests itself as Ātman, Puruṣa and Īśvara. Similarly its self-awareness or force of consciousness, consciousness - Force, appears in three forms : Māyā, Prakṛti and Śakti. Māyā is the force of the Absolute consciousness, conceptually creative of all things. Prakṛti is Nature or force as dynamically executive, working out all things under the supervision of the Supreme Spirit. Śakti is the conscious power of the Divine Being which is both conceptually creative and dynamically executive. These three aspects and these three powers, according to Aurobindo embrace

the whole of existence and all nature and, if viewed as a whole, reconcile all apparent contradictions, all apparent disparateness and incompatibility between the supra-cosmic transcendence, the cosmic universality and the separateness of our individual existence. Brahman is Omnipresent in all relativities; it is the Absolute governing, pervading, constituting all relativities.

5.2.4 Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan :

Dr. Radhakrishnan is one of the greatest of modern thinkers. He who is perhaps the most important living exponent of Upaniṣadic idealism in the world today, has also been purveying the wisdom of the west to his Eastern readers. They find him conversant with the Eastern as well as Western philosophy and competent enough to gather the best harvest of both the traditions. But it is not to be imagined, on this account, that he is a mere a Plagiarist, for he has accepted their teachings because they promised a new development and has constructed a new edifice of thought on their foundation." His idealism though bearing the marks of Vedāntic, Platonic and Hegalian influence, is distinguished from all of these by some of its peculiar stresses and especially by its appeal to the modern mind

torn asunder by conflicting ideals."²⁶

According to Radhakrishnan, the Universe is a spiritual unity. The real is an Absolute who is pure, passionless, perfect, changeless and eternal. The cosmic process of change and evolution, the world we know, is not the Absolute but an aspect of it only. It is related to the Absolute in a very peculiar way. It is a realization or actualization of one of an infinite number of possibilities, in which the Absolute might have chosen to realize itself.

The Absolute is free, it is also infinite, therefore it has an infinite number of possibilities to choose from, which are all determined by its nature. Hence, "while the possible is determined by the nature of the Absolute, the actual is selected from out of the total amount of the possible by the free activity of the Absolute, without any determination whatsoever. It could have created a world different in every detail from that which is actual. If one drama is enacted and other possible ones postponed, it is due to the freedom of the Absolute."²⁷ The world as we know it, is not a mere appearance in the sense in which the Absolute alone is reality, it is a reality, in which

the possibility, which is the Absolute actualized itself, still may, "the creation of the world" being "an incident in the never ending activity of the Absolute."²⁸

Philosophy has to find out an all comprehensive and universal concept which itself requires no explanation while it explains everything else. The attempt of materialise to grasp Reality is like that of Bhrigu²⁹ who equates this reality sometimes with Annam (food or matter) and sometimes with life or Prāna. Matter or life can explain only a part of our experience "The ultimate reality is res complete, which is complete in itself, determined by itself and capable of being explained entirely from itself."³⁰ Thus, according to him, Brahman is the ultimate Reality, from which everything is born, in which everything lives and into which everything enters at the end. Unlike Hegelianism, the fundamental concept of Radhakrishnan's philosophy is Spirit. But unlike many Hegelians and Indian idealists who conceive the spirit as substance, Radhakrishnan takes it to be life. "Spirit is life not thing" he says, "energy not immobility, something real in itself and by itself, and cannot be compared to any substance subjective or objective."³¹ Brahman or the Absolute is

the total spiritual reality manifest and unmanifest, actual and potential realized and unrealized. The universe is but the temporal manifestation of the Absolute. As a matter of fact, the self, God and Absolute — all are names of the one universal spirit in its different aspects. The self is the manifestation of the (s)pirit in the human centre through the body and mind of man. God is the spirit as manifest in the world at large, whereas the Absolute is the total spiritual reality.

So far as the world is concerned God is organic with it. It is impossible to detach God from the world. The Hindu theologian Rāmānuja regards the relation of God to the world as one of the soul to body. He brings out the organic and complete dependence of the world on God. God is the sustainer of the body as well as its inner guide. Life eternal which carries us beyond the limits of temporal growth may take us to the Absolute, but God is essentially bound up with life in time.

According to Radhakrishnan, there are four poises of Reality, the Absolute Brahman, the creative spirit, Īsvara, the spirit Hiranyagarbha and the world the virāt

svarūpa. This order is only a logical succession and not a temporal one. They are the four sides of one whole. The transcendental universal Being anterior to any concrete reality, the causal principle of all differentiation, the inner most essence of the world and fourthly the manifest world. They are co-existent and are not alternating poises. When the supreme Reality is viewed in relation to the cosmos we call it God. God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view and the Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God. Brahman is the transpersonal ground and Īsvara is the personal God, the former is the object of nirvikalpa-samādhī and the latter is the object of Savikalpa-Samādhī.

To Radhakrishnan, God is the timeless spirit, attempting to realise timeless values on the plane of time. The ideal of the cosmic process which at the same time in its goal and explanation is real in one sense though wanting to be realised in another. The ideal is the greatest fact in one way and a remote possibility is another. The values which the cosmic process is attempting to achieve are only a few of the possibilities contained in the Absolute. God is the definitisation of the Absolute in reference to the values of the world. There are aspects in religious

experience, such as the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness, which require the conception of a being whose nature is not exhausted by the cosmic process, which possesses an awefulness of reality which our world faintly, shadows. This side of religious experience demands the conception of the supreme as self-existence, infinity, freedom, absolute light and absolute beauty. On the other hand, there are features of our religious experience which require us to look upon God as self-determining principle manifested in a temporal development, with wisdom, love and goodness as his attributes. From this point of view God is a personal being with whom we can enter into personal relationship. Practical religion presupposes a God who looks into our hearts, knows our tribulations and help us in our need. The reality of prayer and sacrifice is affirmed by the religious life of mankind. It assumes the reality of a concrete being who influences our life. The permanent reality beyond the transient world of struggle and discord is also here and in everything. In religious experience itself there is no conflict. The supreme satisfies both sets of needs.

The most striking features of Radhakrishnan's metaphysics is that his Absolute is not only pure existence, pure consciousness, pure Bliss, an indeterminate, formless and impersonal being, but also God, the mūrta, the personal creator. The Absolute is full of infinite possibilities, and the world is the actualisation of one of them. According to Radhakrishnan, "that the abstract possibility, and the concrete realisation are both contained in the one reality, which is Absolute - God. The two aspects represent the absolute silence of the spirit and its boundless movement. The silence is the basis of the movement, the condition of power. The distinction is only logical. The silence of the spirit and its energising are complementary and inseparable. The infinite is both amūrta, formless, and mūrta, formed. The co-existence of the two is the very nature of universal being. It is not a mere juxtaposition of the opposites. The divine is formless and nameless and yet capable of manifesting all forms and names. Here we find Radhakrishnan in putting forward a solution of the apparently conflicting views of the supreme as eternally complete and of the supreme as self-determining principle manifesting in the temporal process. "While the Absolute

is the transcendent divine, God is the cosmic divine. While the Absolute is the total reality, God is the Absolute from the cosmic end, the consciousness that informs and sustains the world. The possibilities or the ideal forms are the mind of the Absolute or thoughts of the Absolute. One of the infinite possibilities is being translated into the world of space and time."³²

According to Radhakrishnan, the theory of avatāra is an eloquent expression of the law of the spiritual world. As the saviour of man, God manifests Himself, wherever the forces of evil threaten to destroy human values. An avatāra is a descent of God into man, and an ascent of man into God occurs in the case of a liberated soul. The Gītā also describes the eternal avatara, the God in man, the Divine consciousness always present in the human being. The two views reflect the transcendent and immanent aspect of the Divine.

God, though immanent is not identical with the world. Throughout the process there is an unrealized residuum in God, but it vanishes when we reach the end; when the reign is absolute, the kingdom comes. God, who is organic with it recedes into the background of the

Absolute. God is more the saviour and redeemer than creator and judge. As an essentially human phenomenon, religion insists on the 'otherness' of God. Without it, worship, love and repentance have no meaning. We seek union with God a union of will and fellowship. While the character of God as personal love meets certain religious needs there are others which are not fulfilled by it. In the highest spiritual experience we have the sense of rest and fulfillment, of eternity and completeness. These needs provoked from the beginning of human reflection, conceptions of the Absolute as pure and passionless being, which transcends the restless turmoil of the cosmic life. God, who is the creator, sustainer and judge of this world, is not totally unrelated to the Absolute. God is the Absolute from the human end, when we limit down the Absolute to its relation with the actual possibility, the Absolute appears as supreme wisdom, love and goodness. "The abiding 'I am', the changeless centre and the cause of all change is envisaged as the first term and the last in the sequence of nature."³³

According to Radhakrishnan, "the great problem of the philosophy of religion has been the reconciliation

of the character of the Absolute as in a sense eternally complete with the character of God as a self-determining principle manifested in a temporal development which includes nature and man."³⁴ He continues, "The identification of the Absolute life with the course of human history suggested by the Italian Idealists may be true of the supreme God of the world, but not of the Absolute, the lord of all world's."³⁵ Creation neither adds to nor takes away from the reality of the Absolute. "Evolution may be a part of our cosmic process, but the Absolute is not subject to it."³⁶ Radhakrishnan always tries to reconcile the different points of view of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, according to the former the universe is Brahma Vivarta (illusory appearance of Brahman), which according to the latter the universe is Brahman - Parīṇāma (self evolution of Brahman). The difference becomes one of perspective. While the Absolute is pure consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility, it appears to be God from the point of view of the one specific possibility which has become actualized. Radhakrishnan says that the world of pure being is not exhausted by the cosmic process which is only one of the ways in which the Absolute Reality,

which transcends the series, reveals itself. The Absolute is the foundation and prius of all actuality and possibility. This universe is for the Absolute only one possibility.

Now a question arises, if the idea of the Absolute is accepted, can the idea of God be dispensed with? Radhakrishnan's reply is that the personal God does answer to certain intense needs. "We cannot worship the Absolute whom no one hath seen or can see, who dwelleth in the light that no one can approach unto."³⁷ The finite man can picture the Absolute only in the form of God. "The highest reality appears to the individual, who has not felt its oneness with his own nature, as possessing a number of perfections, The conception of a personal God is the fusion of the highest logical truth with the deepest religious conviction. This personal God is an object of genuine worship and reverence, and not a non-ethical duty indifferent to man's needs and fears."³⁸ There are two aspects of reality and corresponding to these two aspects there are two directions from which reality may be viewed "The supra-personal and the personal representations of the real are the Absolute

and the relative ways of expressing the one reality."³⁹

Radhakrishnan says that a 'personal God' has meaning only for the practical religious consciousness and not for the highest insight. To the finite individual blinded by the veils, the Absolute seems to be determinate and exclusive of himself. If a personal God exclusive of the individual were the highest, then mystic experience would become unintelligible, and we should have to remain content with a finite God. On the other hand, the Absolute transcends not merely its finite but also its infinite expressions taken singly or in a finite number. In its range of expression the Absolute transcends all finite limits. The question of immanence and transcendence does not arise with reference to the Absolute. For immanence implies the existence of an other in which the Absolute represents the totality of being and there is nothing other than it. The Absolute is in this world in the sense that the world is only an actualisation of one possibility of the Absolute and yet there is much in the Absolute beyond this possibility which is in process of realisation. God is the Absolute with reference to the possibility of which He is the source and creator, Yet at any moment God transcends the cosmic process with its whole contents of space and time.

Radhakrishnan does not make distinction between God and the Absolute. For him, God and Absolute are

identical. "The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view."⁴⁰ "We call the supreme Absolute when we view it apart from the cosmos, God in relation to the cosmos."⁴¹ The Hindu never doubted the reality of the One supreme universal spirit, however much the descriptions of it may fall short of its nature. It is a sound religious agnosticism which bids us hold our peace regarding the nature of the supreme spirit. Silence is more significant than speech regarding the depths of the divine. When the seers of the Upaniṣads are asked to define the nature of God, they sat silent and when pressed to answer then exclaimed that the Absolute is silence.

Again Radhakrishnan admits "Hinduism affirms that some of the highest and richest manifestations which religion has produced require a personal God. There is a rational compulsion to postulate the personality of the divine while Hindu thought does justice to the personal aspect of the supreme, it does not allow us to forget the supra-personal conception of God, urge that there are highests and depths in the being of God which are beyond our comprehension."⁴² "The supra-personal and the personal representations of the real are the Absolute and the relative ways of expressing the one reality. When we emphasize the nature of reality in itself we get the Absolute Brahman, when we emphasize its relation to us we get personal God.

God and the Absolute are not mutually exclusive concepts, nor are they unrelated. God, "the creator, sustainer and judge of this world,"⁴³ does not denote a principle or force separate from the ultimate. Both are infinite and divine exalted over all that is finite and the limited. But the Absolute is at once the sum and the source of limitless possibilities. When one of the possibilities has become actualized, and then to this actualized possibility of itself, the Absolute stands in a special relation. It is the special relation in which it stands to the actually existing fact of the world, that the Absolute appears as God, a being guiding and loving, the world. According to Radhakrishnan, the idea of God is an interpretation of experience. It is not a direct revelation of an objectively real individual. Thus all religion is from its very nature symbolic. At last, we can come to the conclusion, that God and the Absolute are not two disparate entities, but that God is the way in which the Absolute appears to, and is known by us. God is thus "the Absolute from the human end."⁴⁴

Radhakrishnan boldly reinterpretes Śaṅkara. This has naturally roused the opposition of the orthodox and neo-orthodox scholars, who want a more rigorous account of Śaṅkara's view than is offered by Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan writes : "It is for Śaṅkara a mixture of truth and illusion. It partakes of the characteristics of

being and non-being (Sada-Sadātmaka). Although, therefore it has a lower form of reality than pure spirit, it is not non-existent. While Śaṅkara refuses to acquiesce in the seeming reality of the actual, he does not dismiss it as an unreal phantasmagoria. It is not determinable either as real or as unreal. (Sada-Sadbhyām anirvacaniyam).⁴⁵ Radhakrishnan recognizes the strict implication of the anirvacaniya theory, as the last sentence in the above quotation shows. But he has already prefigured the kind of transformation he means to give to it in the second sentence : "It partakes of the character of being and non-being." Then he goes on to explain the transformation. "Its truth is in being reality, truth (Sat); is untrue (an-ṛtam)."⁴⁶ In fine, Radhakrishnan accepts the position of Śaṅkaracharya on fundamental points, but does not follow him rigidly. He is drawn by the positive side of Śaṅkara and feels that he is basically right; but he also feels that the criticism of rival schools — and especially of Rāmānuja — is not entirely without force.

5.2.5 Conclusion :

Spinoza regards substance as one, infinite, self-caused and eternal reality from which all things follow necessarily. This is also the description of God in theology. For this reason Spinoza calls substance as God. As God or substance is an all inclusive whole, outside of which nothing can be, so nature conceived as a whole is identical with God. In Western theology God is taken to

to be the creator of the Universe. Spinoza denies this concept of God. According to him, God can create only out of some pre-existing matter. This would make matter co-eternal with God and ultimately would lead to dualism and not to monism. As there is nothing over and above God, so all is God and everything follows from God. For this reason God is said to be the indwelling and pervading principle of the Universe. God, according to Spinoza instead of being regarded as transcendent is really an immanent ground of all, that is God or Nature as a self-creating reality is known as *Natura Naturans*. We shall find that things of human experience have been called by Spinoza as modes. And modes are like the ever-vanishing waves that never are. In this phenomenal aspect, the world appeared to him unreal and God is fully real. God alone is all. We find Spinoza is trying to teach about God certain things which were never taught about Him. If Spinoza is teaching a religion, then this religion is not only anti-Jewish but also anti-theistic. This new teaching could be better understood, according to Spinoza, by equating God with nature (*Deus sive natura*).

Bradley establishes the reality of his Absolute purely and entirely on speculative grounds. It is an inference from the contingent and contradictory character of the world of appearances. It does not interpretate our actual experience where all that we have is appearance. It is only when all appearances are blended and fused together that we can get the Absolute, and as this all inclusive totality is

beyond the experience of man, it remains ever inaccessible to him and the details of its being are ever beyond the grasp of his intellect. Bradley can give us only a speculative certainty about his Absolute and his soft-repeated ascertain that we have a 'positive knowledge' of the Absolute can mean nothing beyond that. On the other hand, Bradley holds that the God of religion is an appearance and in the Absolute, God and religion are equally lost. God taken as thinking and feeling being has a private personality. But sundered from those relations which qualify him, God is inconsistent emptiness, and qualified by His relation to another He is distracted finitude. We may say that in religion God tends always to pass beyond Himself. He is necessarily led to end in the Absolute, which for religion is not God. The religious consciousness according to Bradley, seeks to worship God as the highest reality. The Absolute cannot be the object of worship, because it is neither a self-conscious spirit, nor a person; self-hood and personality are essentially marks of finitude. Personality like self-hood is a finite appearance of the Absolute; the Absolute has this appearance but also transcends it. The Absolute is not identical with the God of religion, God again is a finite object standing above and apart from man. "As an object of worship God must be distinct from the worshipper, hence He is not the all inclusive Reality; but only an aspect of it." "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you

separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole."⁴⁷
 Bradley concludes, "God is but an aspect, and that must mean but an appearance, of the Absolute."⁴⁸

Aurobindo regards the ultimate Reality as in its essence utterly transcendent. It cannot be described. The only thing that can be asserted about it is that it is above and beyond all that is thinkable. But, from the point of view of the human consciousness it can be said that Reality has a threefold character. It is not sheer unity; not is it duality, nor multiplicity. It is triune principle; it is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Hence, Aurobindo often refers to the Absolute as Sachidānanda. Aurobindo attaches great importance to the concept of the Supermind, which he describes that it is a power of conscious force expressive of Real being, born out of Real being, and partaking of its nature. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance. Its self-existence appears in three forms -- self-conscious being or spirit, and God or the Divine Being. Aurobindo is a Pure Monist, for him God is the descent form of the Absolute. Absolute is an original, unbroken unity, not a unity constructed by reason out of multiplicity; It an unmanifested unity, which can freely manifest itself, however in countless finite expressions of itself.

According to Radhakrishnan, the Absolute is the total spiritual reality, manifested and unmanifested, actual and potential, realized and unrealized. The cosmic process is the attempt to realize only a few of the infinite possibilities contained in the Absolute it is not necessary for the Absolute. As to why this world came into existence or any world at all, "we have to answer that it is an expression of the freedom of the Absolute. It is not necessary for the Absolute to express any of its possibilities. If this possibility is expressed, it is a free act of the Absolute."⁴⁹

On the other hand, God is the Absolute with reference to this possibility of which He is the source and creator.

God is the Absolute considered as the ground of this world.

"Even as the world is a definite manifestation of one specific possibility of the Absolute, God with whom the worshipper stands in personal relation is the very Absolute in the world context and is not a mere appearance of the Absolute".⁵⁰ As a creator God is personal while the

Absolute is impersonal. But the "life of a personal being is not possible except in relation to an environment. If God has no environment on which He acts, He cannot be person". "God can only be a creative personality acting

on an environment, which, though dependent on God, is not God."⁵¹ In other words, God can be conceived as a creator because of His attempting to actualize an unrealized possibility in the Absolute. Things that are experienced by us as being in this world are that part of the possibility of the Absolute which has been already actualized. The unrealized part of the possibility can be called non-being. God is trying to turn this non-being into being, actualize the unrealized potential. The non-being is, therefore, the environment by which God is faced and on which the creative effort of God is directed. Therefore, Radhakrishnan concludes that when the non-being is reduced fully to being, the dualism between God and the given environment ceases, the distinction between the creator and the created vanishes. "When the creator and the created coincide, God lapses into the Absolute."⁵²

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CHAPTER - VI

SANKARA AND THE PROBLEM

6.1 Introduction :

The Absolutism of Śaṅkara is the most reputed philosophical system of India. It is called the Advaita Vedānta. Śaṅkara gave a final shape to it. Vedānta literally means "the end of the Vedas". The word primarily stood for the Upaniṣads which might be regarded as the end of the Vedas in different senses. First, the Upaniṣads were the last literary products of the Vedic period. Secondly, in the order of scriptural studies the Upaniṣads come last, the Saṁhitās being studied first and the Brahmanas next. Thirdly, the Upaniṣads mark the culmination of the Vedic speculation, the highest development of the Vedic thought. Though Vedānta originally meant the Upaniṣads, it subsequently included all thoughts developed out of the Upaniṣads.¹

The monism of Śaṅkara is based on his interpretation of the Brahma-sūtra and the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara never claimed to have given an original philosophy of his own. He

says that he is merely expounding, the views embodied in the Upanisads. In upholding the Upanisadic view of truth and reality, he was aided by his profound reflections and self-analysis as well as by certain logical assumptions which are not commonly disputable. By a sort of transcendental reflection and an analysis of self-consciousness, he is able to bring home to us the notion of the pure subject, which is nothing but pure consciousness.

"Śaṅkara presents to us the true ideal of philosophy which is not so much knowledge as wisdom, not so much logical learning as spiritual freedom. For Śaṅkara, as for some of the greatest thinkers of the world, Plato and Plotinus, Spinoza and Hegel, philosophy is the austere vision of eternal truth, majestic in its freedom from the petty care's of man's petty life. Through the massive and at the same time subtle dialectic of Śaṅkara there shows forth a vivid emotional temperament which philosophy tends to become a mere game of logic. A master of the strictest logic, he is also master of a noble and animated poetry which belongs to another order. The rays of his genius have illumined the dark places of thought and soothed the sorrows of the most forlorn heart which his philosophy fortifies and consoles many, there are, of course, those to whom it seems to be a abyss of contradiction and darkness."²

Śaṅkara recognises that our whole empirical life, whether of knowledge or action, depends on our identification with our bodies. But he regards this identification as illusory and finds that this fundamental illusion underlies all our activities, theoretical or practical, religious or secular. This he has brought out very clearly in his masterly introduction to his commentary. The fundamental difficulty of the Advaitic theory is how to explain this false appearance. One has to call this appearance false, only in view of the faith that reality is utterly alone. But actually the world of difference and distinction does not immediately appear to be false, but comes to us as real. We do not normally understand how there can be an appearance of something which is not there, except in an illusion. So we are told that the world is an illusion. And the world illusion must be due to our ignorance of the underlying reality which is the self or Brahman. From the Advaitic point of view the whole world is illusory, but all our empirical knowledge, derived through the so-called valid means of knowledge such as perception, inference etc., has reference to the world and if the world is illusory, then all our empirical knowledge must be condemned as illusory too. If we lose our faith in our empirical knowledge, derived from perception and inference, from science and

history as well as our personal intercourse with other men, our practical life would become quite impossible.

According to Śāṅkara, we can realise the illusoriness the world only when we have realised our identity with Brahman and its sole reality. Till this realisation is taken place, we are allowed to retain our belief in empirical knowledge and carry on all the duties of our practical life. For most people, the identity of the self with the Absolute is a matter of religious faith and not a fact of direct personal realisation. Along with this faith, whether firm or feeble, they continue to believe, in the world and in the vicissitudes, of their worldly life. Believing in the world and its lack of self-subsistence, they have to believe in some world-ground to which the world owes its maintenance in existence as well as its changing fortunes. This is our God who is non-distinct from Brahman.

Like philosophy, religion generally offers a view of reality, which defines an ideal for our life and shows us a practical way in which we may try to realise the ideal. Advaitism has not founded a new religion in India; it merely sanctions the ancient religion of Hindu culture which is supposed to be ultimately based on the Vedānta. Hindu religion covers many different schools of religious thought and Advaitism represents one such school which generally agrees

with other as orthodox schools in their beliefs about God, next life etc. On the other hand, it may be supposed that Advaitism should be incompatible with any kind religion, since it does not believe in a real God, distinct from individual souls, whom they can love and worship. But it cannot be accepted. The non-distinction of God from the individual soul is a matter of mystical realisation. Until the realisation has taken place, we go on believing in the world and in God, whom we take to be the creator and sustainer of the world. We are advised to love and worship this God, out of whose grace mystical realisation may be made possible for us, which is to lead us to salvation, the ideal of Hindu religious life. We are even required to perform various duties; but these duties are not to be performed for their own sake or with a view to achieving a happy heavenly life after death. Advaitism points out that the life of heavenly bliss is not a worthy spiritual ideal as freedom or liberation is. Śaṅkara appears to have been a religious reformer. In his time religious people were generally engrossed in the performance of various religious rites enjoined in scriptures. Śaṅkara called them to a life of inner piety and enlightenment. He pointed out that the performance of mere actions, of whether sort, is not competent to bring us near our goal. It is through knowledge and knowledge alone that liberation can be achieved.

Of course, Śaṅkara did not brush aside all religious and moral duties as of no consequence at all. According to him they are very useful in purifying the mind and making it a fit medium for the dawn of divine knowledge; the knowledge of our essential identity with Brahman. Normally Advaitism believe in God and conceives him as all powerful and all-wise, and, above all, as possessing the great power of magical illusion (Māyā). So although God is conceived as the creator and sustainer as well as the ultimate destroyer of the world, an Advaitist does not profess to understand how God does all this. This is expressed by, saying that he does his work through his magical power, that is, that there is an element of inscrutability in God's ways which transcends human understanding. Advaitic religion is not so much a religion of external acts or emotional fervour as of contemplation and meditation and inner perception. It is supposed to follow the path of knowledge (Jñānamarga) rather than that of action (Karma) or devotion (bhakti) although these elements are not eschewed altogether. It has thus its appeal for people of certain special temperaments. If for Advaitism as religion, the world and its creator, God are sufficiently real for all practical purposes, they assume a dubious role for Advaitism as philosophy. Philosophically considered the world is found to be neither real, nor unreal and the concept of God is also

found to be doubtful validity. God, for Advaitism, is nothing but Brahman or the Absolute misconceived by human intelligence. As misconceived by us, it cannot of course be real. But what is misconceived is, however, the absolute reality.

Sāṅkara was a philosopher with an acute and critical mind. The main interest of Advaitism is, as we have seen, in the identity of the individual self with the Absolute. Advaitism has certainly made a valuable philosophical contribution in emphasising the unitary and spiritual character of ultimate reality in which we are all rooted - a contribution which would be appreciated even by those who are not strict Advaitists. Of course, it has to be admitted that he was not a pure philosopher in the modern sense - in the sense of a free rational thinker without any presuppositions and assumptions. He philosophised no doubt genuinely, but within the limitation of a religious traditions which he inherited and enormously strengthened by his own contributions.

6.2 Nature of Brahman :

The doctrine of Brahman plays the central role in the orthodox religions of India and it is the life-line of the Vedāntic thought. From the early days of the Vedic Karma-Kānda or the ceremonialism to the modern age of the

Vedāntic jñāna-Kānda or the knowledge, the philosophy (darsana), behind all religious and rational activities, is the realization of Brahman, the supreme above the phenomenal reality of this māyā. The knowledge of the unknown eternal behind the known temporal is the main goal of the triadic canon or the Prāsthantraya of the vedānta - the Upaniṣads, the Bhāgavadgītā and the Brahma Sūtra. The goal of eternity is most emphasized in the Brahma Sūtra. The Brahma sūtra which is said to be the summary of the Upaniṣads, endeavours to define and describe the meaning of eternal Brahman and His temporal māyā. This book begins with the sūtra or verse of Brahman knowledge : "athato brahmā jijñāsa, now therefore the desire to know Brahman".³ Thus the opening sūtra of the Brahma-Sūtra undoubtedly explains that the text is aiming at the knowledge of Brahman, the supreme Reality.

The introductory word 'atha' which is used in different senses in different contexts. The meaning intended is that of 'sequence' or following. It means that the desire for the knowledge of Brahman follows upon something else which one must have already accomplished in order to qualify oneself for this enquiry. In order to bring out the specific requirements for this enquiry, it is compared and contrasted with the enquiry about dharma or religious duty. Neither

dharma nor Brahman is an empirical object and we never come upon them in the course of our ordinary experience. We know about them only from the Vedas. So a study of the Vedas is presupposed by both the enquiries; the Vedic injunctions or declarations, from which we learn about Brahman and dharma, differ in their significance. But the Vedic declaration about Brahman gives us only knowledge about Brahman but no direction whatever for any action. Knowledge is never produced by an injunction.

Now a question arises, what are the preconditions of an enquiry about Brahman? We want to know what qualifications are needed by an aspirant after Brahman knowledge, so that his enquiry about Brahman may be fruitful. These qualifications are forefold. First comes discrimination between what is eternal and what is not eternal. One should realise that the self alone is eternal, while the world and all its objects are perishable and impermanent. Secondly, one must give up all desire for sensuous enjoyment, whether in this world or in the next. Thirdly, one must have self-control, control over the sense as well as the mind. Lastly, one must have a real desire for absolute freedom or liberation. Having acquired these qualifications one may very well enquire about Brahman and know it. But without these qualifications it is not possible to know Brahman. Therefore, the

first word 'atha' should be understood to mean that the enquiry about Brahman is to be made after one has acquired these qualifications.

By the word Brahman, as its etymology suggests, we understand an eternal being which is pure, conscious and free as well as omniscient and omnipotent. And as it constitutes the self of all, its existence is, of course, known because everybody is conscious of his own existence and nobody says 'I am not'. If the self is Brahman, and if in knowing the self we know Brahman, then no doubt Brahman in effect, turns out to be known already; but still we have to carry our enquiry further about it, because although we know the self in a general way, there is a good deal of misunderstanding and difference of opinion about its specific character.

Brahman, has been derived from the Sanskrit root 'brh' which means 'to grow' or 'to evolve'. Brahman, according to Śaṅkara, is the cause of the origination, subsistence and dissolution of the world which is extended in names and forms, which consists of many agent and enjoyers.

(1) This world must have been produced as the modification of something which is itself unproduced. Brahman is the source and if it is produced from something else, we will have anāvastha or regresses and infinitum.

(2) The world is so orderly that it could not have come forth from a non-intelligent source.

(3) The Brahman is the immediate consciousness (sāksin) which shines as the self and also through the objects of cognition which the self knows. Even when we deny it, we affirm it⁴. The answer of the question what is meant by Brahman, is found in the second sūtra. It says that it is that from which all this has arisen. By 'all this' what is meant here is the entire world we see around us, with its multifarious contents of different names and forms, including so many beings who are active agents and subject to different kinds of experience, both pleasurable and painful - the world in which events and actions take place at determinate time and place, from determinate causes and lead to definite results. How such a world is made and how it operates is really beyond the conception of any human being. Brahman is the all knowing and all-powerful cause of this world and it is Brahman again who maintains it in existence and into whom it will ultimately disappear.

Śaṅkara's Brahman has been approached via negative. We are told by Śaṅkara what it is not. It is, we are told, that which is not limited, not finite, eternal, unconditioned beyond time and space, beyond cause. Nothing positive can be said about it as that will either limit the unlimited and or be a mere tautology. Therefore, Brahman is existence

only as not non-existence, it is knowledge only as not non-knowledge; it is bliss only as not non-bliss. Brahman is thus beyond all predication, all description, by any known word in any known language; indescribable in language and inconceivable in thought, beyond reason, beyond relation and beyond the sense.

"Three positive properties are commonly invoked in alluding to Brahman. These are truth (sat or satya), consciousness (cit or caitanya), and bliss (ānanda)".⁵ The term sat, being occurs in the earliest Vedic texts. A theme there is whether the universe sprang from sat or asat, being or non-being and texts are found that argue for each side of the issue. Advaitins who naturally view sat as the origin, explains away texts appearing to favour the converse view as saying something else. The Brhadārnyaka Upaniṣad declares that the secret name (Upaniṣad) of the self is Satyasa Satya "truth of truth" and Śaṅkara in commenting on this and similar passages treat this as a pronouncement more or less parallel to "Not this, not this". The second positive property is cit or caitanya. Brahman is pure consciousness (cit) or awareness (jñāna) the witness (Sākṣin), which is not itself an object of thought. Brahman is self-luminous indeed. It is the sole source of consciousness. By its light everything else shines, that is, is known to

awareness. In itself It has no specific form; whatever appears to it as cognized is not intrinsic to it. Thus the consciousness that is Brahman is not a relational consciousness between knower and known. Although Brahman is self-luminous, it should not be inferred that It is the object of Its awareness. Brahman can never be the object of knowledge. The third property is bliss. Although the Upaniṣads frequently comment on this aspect of Brahman, Śaṅkara is peculiarly hesitant to attribute this property to it. Śaṅkara's reasons can be easily guessed. Bliss is pleasure and pleasure is a temporary state, the experiencing of which requires a body organs etc. So if Brahman is bliss it must be so in some sense that cannot be translated into empirical analogues. In Brhadāranya, Kōthopaniṣadbhasya III 9.28.7., for example, Śaṅkara remarks that though no doubt, Brahman is bliss, nevertheless that bliss is not cognized as an object by us. Our happiness has nothing to do with Brahman's bliss, he implies; the case is unlike that of consciousness, since we do experience pure consciousness (Brahman) in deep sleep, etc. whereas Śaṅkara seems to suggest that even the liberated self does not cognize or experience Brahman's bliss.

Brahman is the cause of the world and so He is omniscient. The third sūtra supplies the reason for our thinking that he is omniscient. It does so by saying

"because he is the source of all scripture", which is the repository of all extent knowledge. By the word "scripture" we understand the Vedas and other inspired writings from which all our knowledge is ultimately derived. We know, on scriptural authority, that the Vedas have come from God, without any special effort being made on his part for this purpose. It is common knowledge that an author always knows more than what is contained in his books and so it goes without saying that the great being which could produce so effortlessly, what is in fact the mine and source of all knowledge should itself be all knowing. This is one interpretation. But the sūtra can be interpreted in another way. According to the other interpretation, the sūtra says that scripture is the source of our knowledge of Brahman, i.e. on scriptural evidence we know, that Brahman is the ground of the world - of its origination, subsistence and dissolution.

According to Sāṅkara, we cannot argue that because Brahman is of the nature of accomplished fact, it can therefore be made an object of perception or any other mode of empirical knowledge. For Brahman, as one with our very self, can never be known empirically, except through scriptural evidence such as 'Thou art that' etc. Nor should we suppose that since we cannot do anything in regard to Brahman, which is beyond our acceptance or rejection, any

more instruction about it would serve no purpose and would be useless. Because such instruction, when properly given and taken, is calculated to lead to the realisation of our identity with Brahman which terminates all our sorrows and consummates the highest end of our being. When there is a statement about a deity, it may well be taken to imply an injunction for meditation upon it (deity). But we cannot in the same way take Brahman to be intended for meditation only and thus much merely an auxiliary to an injunction for meditation, Brahman being an absolute unity, has really no room for any action, which always requires some duality in the form of agent, act and means of action. When this absolute unity is once realised, there remains sense of duality, and consequently no sense of an other, whether supreme God or a subordinate deity, to be worshipped or meditated upon. When the sense of duality is utterly destroyed by the realisation of the absolute unity of Brahman, it cannot possibly arise again to make any sense of the position that Brahman is an adjunct to an injunction for meditation.

According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is absolutely non-dualistic "One, without a second, ekam evādvitīyam" (c.u. vi-2-1). This Absolute Brahman is our ultimate Reality. He is beyond cause and effect. The spatio-temporal

phenomena are contained in him. To say that Brahman is reality is to say that it is different from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the sensible.⁶ Brahman is what is assumed as foundational, though it is in no sense substance.⁷

This world of cause and effect is empirical reality (Vyāvahāric satya) of the ultimate Reality (Pāramārthīc Satya). Śaṅkara says that these empirical and transcendental experiences do not signify the theory of dualism. They are one and the same because ultimately they reach the same goal of eternity. "Vedānta (so called because it was first expounded in the Vedas, the earliest Indian Scriptures) is a non-dualistic philosophy. It teaches that Brahman (the ultimate Reality behind the phenomenal universe), is one without a second - Brahman is beyond all attributes. Brahman is not conscious; Brahman is consciousness. Brahman does not exist. Brahman is existence. Brahman is the Ātman (Eternal Nature) of every human being, creature and object".⁸

Śaṅkara says that the world, we find is due to our ignorance (ajñāna) or nescience (avidyā). Once the ignorance is removed with the help of right knowledge (jñāna) the duality is gone and the oneness of the supreme Reality is visible. As we see our physical face in the mirror after taking off our coloured spectacles and clearing the mirror,

so we will see the Universal self within our self after purifying our heart and uplifting our mind. This super-sensible experience of the supreme is called intuition or spiritual insight. The individual self is identified with the universal self. Once they are united, they become one. The supreme Reality is one with our deepest self. Brahman is Ātman. But "If the knowledge of the identity of the self and Brahman were understood in the way of combination, and the like, violence would be done thereby to the connection of the words whose object, in certain passages, it clearly is to intimate the fact of Brahman and the self being really identical; so, for instance, in the following passages "That art thou" (Kāth.Up. VI 8.7); 'I am Brahman' (Brh. Up. 1,4,10); "The self is Brahman" (Brh.Up.II 5,19)"⁹ Hence the knowledge of the unity of Brahman and the self cannot be of the nature of figurative combination and the like.

If we take the identity of the self and Brahman in a figurative or symbolic sense, then we shall have to give up the straight-forward sense of such clear scriptural statements as 'That art thou (tattavamasī)', 'I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmī)', 'This self is Brahman (ayam atma Brahma)', and subject them to some forced interpretation. We have therefore to take the self and Brahman as identical in a literal sense,

and the knowledge of Brahman, thus guaranteed, as objectively valid, like any other piece of valid knowledge, perceptual or inferential. It is objective in the sense that it is determined by the nature of the thing known and not dependent upon any subjective acts. We cannot, by any means, make Brahman and its knowledge an affair of the subjective mental acts. We cannot even suppose that Brahman is at least the object of an act of knowledge. If Brahman is not at all an object, whether of knowledge or worship how can it be maintained, as it has been done in Sūtra three, that we know Brahman from scriptural evidence? The answer is to be found in the fact that what the scripture intends to do is not to teach us Brahman, as this or that object, but merely to remove the illusion of distinction that has arisen between the self and Brahman on account of some primal ignorance. The real intention of the scripture is to make us aware of Brahman as utterly unobjective as being one with our inmost self which can never be objectified and thus to remove the distinction of knower, known and knowledge, due to sheer ignorance.

Even if we suppose, for argument's sake, that Brahman in some sense different from the self, we need not think that it is something to be attained. For Brahman being all-pervasive, is always with us and in us and is

not something to be reached through any action whatever. It is analogous to space which is all pervasive and is ever attained by all things which are contained in it. We cannot ever suppose that mokṣa results through a process of purification which involves some kind of action. Because no purification is possible in the case of Brahman. Brahman by its definition is conceived as absolutely perfect and eternally pure. It is therefore not at all possible to add any excellence to it or remove any defect from it, which is not there.

The knowledge of Brahman does not depend on the active energy of man, but is analogous to the knowledge of those things which are the objects of perception, inference and so on and thus depends on the object of knowledge only. "A mere intellectual understanding of reality is not enough. The end of all knowledge is spiritual realization, anubhavavāsanam eva vidya-phalam. Knowledge and renunciation lead to the experience of self, svānubhava or ātmānubhava. This is the aim of religion. These experiences are recorded in the Upaniṣads".¹⁰

The self is experienced as the Absolute Reality in the state of turīya. It is raised above the distinction of subject and object. In susupti or deep sleep, the empirical mind with all its modes is inactive. In savikalpa samādhi

the mind is concentrated on one object with which it becomes identified. In it we have the consciousness of determinate reality. The consciousness of duality is absent in this state and the self enjoys undifferentiated bliss. In both these states the seeds of knowledge and action, Vidyā and Karma, are present. In nir-vikalpa samādhi we have the intuition of reality transcending all determinations. This is the highest stage, the truth, Brahman. "Śaṅkara says that Brahman is known for Brahman is one's own self, ayam ātmā brahma. No one thinks that he does not exist. Each one cognizes the existence of himself sarvo by ātmāstitvam pratyeti na na aham asmi iti",¹¹

In fine we can say that for Śaṅkara ultimate reality is pure intelligence, citmātra, devoid of all forms. Brahman is devoid of qualities. Whatever qualities are conceivable can only be denied of it; eko brahma dvitīyo nāsti. The differences of knower, known and knowledge are imposed on it. When the reality is known these differences which hide the true nature of reality disappear. scriptures describe Brahman as reality, consciousness and infinity, satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma. These are not qualities which belong to Brahman but are one with Brahman. They constitute the very nature of Brahman.

6.3 Nature of God :

The Higher Brahman who is unrelated to anything else, without internal differentiation, a very abstract though perhaps not austere reality. It is the One without a second. But then whence all this world of distinction ? What does it have to do with Brahman, after all ? The answer is that the lower Brahman, God (Īśvara) is the cause of all the diversity. "Sāṅkara in his commentary brings together the cosmological and the teleological arguments. Every effect has a cause, we cannot trace the world with its order and design to 'non-sentient pradhāna, or atoms or non-being, or a being subject to rebirth, to its own nature or to a human creator. It cannot be traced to the world-soul or Hiranya grabha for he is subject to the changes of the world. The Universe has its roots in being, san-mūla has its basis in being, sad-āsraya, and is established in being, sat-Pratiṣṭha. This being transcends all distinctions of subject and object and yet when we speak of Brahman we have to use empirical forms, when viewed as the creator and governor of the Universe. Brahman is said to be the personal God Īśvara, Brahman and Īśvara are both valid forms of reality. Only Īśvara or God is the cause of the world."¹²

According to Śaṅkara God is the nondual spirit beyond all possible conceptualization in association with Māyā, the dynamic principle of becoming. Through the power of becoming, God becomes the source, the ground and the goal of the world. By a fraction of His power of becoming He manifests the world which is full of truth and error, good and evil, beauty and ugliness. God is the essence of values whose perception and cultivation at various levels may be said to constitute the spiritual evolution of the human mind. God may be approached as the abode of all conceivable forms of value. An Advaitic definition of value may be formulated thus ; That which being known, is sought to be realized in one's experience is end or value. The terminal end is always happiness, while the instrumental ends are objects or actions which bring about the final end. Happiness is chiefly of two kinds - (I) those forms of it which admit of degrees; (II) that which is unsurpassable, absolute. In the discussion of Advaitic Absolute, it is pointed out that nirguṇa Brahman is other than asat, acit and ānanda. This negative description serves to highlight the fact that the non dual Absolute is beyond all conceptualization. On the other hand, God or saguṇa Brahman is not beyond the sphere of conceptualization. In fact, to the pure human mind, God makes himself accessible as sat, cit

and ānanda. This is another way of saying that God in Advaita is saccidānanda.

To Śaṅkara, Īśvara, is the determinate Brahman (Saguna) "Śaṅkara takes up the so called proof for the existence of God, the epistemological, the cosmological and the physico-theological and shows their futility, as Kant did at a much later day".¹³ That events are interconnected in a system is the assumption of common sense and science, which is increasingly confirmed by experience, though never realized in its entirety. For there is much in the world which never directly enters into our experience. A complete apprehension of reality as a whole can justify the hypothesis as a whole that God is and He is the creator of all. Our human experience is incapable of apprehending the world in its entirety achieve a harmony of pure being with restless infinitude. The logical belief that all facts belong to a system and express the mind of God is only an idea. The cosmological argument which applies the concept of cause in the empirical world is not adequate and turns out altogether useless when we try to relate the world of experience to the ultimate reality which is said to manifest itself through it. We cannot admit within the world of phenomena an uncaused cause. The question of an absolute beginning of the

phenomenal series, Śamsāra, is a self contradictory one. We infer a finite creator from a finite world. The first cause must be a unity of the same order of being as the objects of experience, since the latter are brought into relation with it. If Īśwara is the cause of the world, he must be within the space-time frame-work. If such a being exists, no foreseeable extension of our knowledge could enable us to determine his nature and existence. Such a God, according to Śaṅkara, working through instruments analogous to the human ones, is neither infinite nor omnipotent. The moral argument which shows that the context of things is adapted to the soul of man and shows the workmanship of benevolent God is a part of God. God must feel the pain of the soul. But it is found that the sufferings of God are much greater than those of the individual souls and it is better for us to remain self enclosed individuals, with our limited sufferings and take upon ourselves the burden of the whole world. A perfect God does not require the world for his satisfaction. If it is said that the world is for his enjoyment, then God is no God but only a samsārin.

Now we can say that to set aside the logical proof, is not to deny the existence of Īśvara, Śaṅkara's point is that no purely rational argument, for the existence of God as a personal supreme being, is finally acceptable. The proofs only tell us that God is a possibility. The reality of God transcends our rational powers of conceiving as well as comprehending. "The reality of Īśvara in Śaṅkara's philosophy, is not a self-evident axiom, is not a logical truth, but an empirical postulate which is practically useful. Śruti is the basis for it".¹⁴ Regarding the creatorship of Īśvara, scripture is our only means of knowledge¹⁵. It declares that, "the cause from which (proceeds) the origin, substance and dissolution of the world, which is extended in names and forms, which includes many agents and enjoyers, which contains the fruit of works, specially determined according to space, time and cause, a world which is formed after an arrangement inconceivable even for the mind - this omniscient and omnipotent cause is Brahman (i.e. Īśvara)."¹⁶ Śaṅkara takes great pains to prove that the reality of Īśvara, when once it is ascertained from the scripture, can be reconciled with the demands of reason. "Reason and experience are two different approaches in man's quest for God. Both are responses of the human soul to God's self-disclosure,

through nature and history and spiritual experience. They reveal life's transcendental meaning. Reason reveals to us God as a matter of speculation, in experience it ceases to be an object of speculation but becomes a present reality. The method of natural sciences is not the only instrument by which it is possible to discover truth. Spiritual experience offers a valid proof for the existence of God".¹⁷

The immanent character of God is best expressed by saying that he is the real self of man. He is unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the Ununderstood understander. Other than God there is no seer, hearer, thinker, understander in man. God's immanence in man explains the latter's unconquerable yearning for perfection, his ceaseless search for truth. The Upanisadic aspirations, from the unreal lead us to the real, from darkness to light and from death to immortality spring from the divinely fertilized soil of human nature. Another implication of divine immanence in man is the certitude of eventual success in man's progress to perfection.

Brahman is that from which the origination, maintenance and destruction of the world proceeds and of course the Brahman, that is meant, is saguna Brahman. Advaitins are very concerned to insist that God is both the efficient

and the material cause of the world. At the beginning of the Brahma sūtras, God is the material and efficient cause of the world, the entire sphere of objective experience. The Advaitin affirms that the world-cause is identical with the Upanisadic spirit. God as the world-cause has to be characterized as sarvajñam sarvavasakti mahāmāyaṃ ca brahma (BSB 2.1.37), omniscient, omnipotent and endowed with māyā. The omniscient God is the material cause of the world just as earth or gold is the material cause of earthen wares or of gold ornaments. The world once produced is controlled and maintained in being by God, just as a magician controls and maintains the magical show put forth by him. God also terminates the show of the world put forth by him and gets it reabsorbed in his own being just as the bodies of different kinds of creatures at their death get disintegrated into the material substance out of which they were created. The very same God is the self of us all.

The Bhāgavadgītā says that God is seated in the heart of all beings and makes them move as though mechanically, through his magical power (18/61). Śaṅkara asserts the absolute identity of cause and effect in this very sūtra and thereby denies all causal modification. The phenomenal view of Brahman, however wrong from the theoretical and absolute point of view, is practically useful for the

purposes of devotional meditation which purifies the mind and thus prepares the ground for the dawn of the ultimate knowledge of truth. To use theological language, He is both the efficient and the material cause of the world; though different from His effects - being omnipotent and omniscient where those effects are not - He is yet within the world as inner controller (antaryāmin). If God were only the efficient cause then He would have to depend on some primeval matter which is an independent reality. Such an independent reality would detract from Īśvara's Omnipotence. Matter has resistance and Īśvara would not be free to fashion the world according to his own will and desire. His will, will be limited by the constitution of matter. The God of the Nyāya system is only the efficient cause of the world and śaṅkara criticises the view in his commentary on Vedānta Sūtra II. ii. 37-41. Since Īśvara is the material and efficient cause rolled up into one, He is both immanent and transcendent. He is in the world and also above it.

Īśvara is all comprehensive and contains within himself all that exists, potentially in pralaya and actually in creation. There does not seem to be much point in Deussen's observation, that śaṅkara did not carefully distinguish Brahman, the undifferentiated, from phenomenal

world on the one hand and Īśvara on the other "This undifferentiated Brahman, as we may briefly call it, has, however, two characters : first the forms of the phenomenal world, as which Brahman, conditioned by Upādhis, appears; then the imperfect figurative ideas, which we form of the Godhead, in order to bring it nearer to our understanding and our worship (Upâsanâ). It is strange that between these two contraries of the undifferentiated Brahman, however wide apart they naturally are, Çaṅkara draws no sharp distinction".¹⁸

At last a question arises in our mind why should God create. He has no unsatisfied desires, no selfish interest providing Him with motivation to act. The answer is that God creates out of play (līlā). The meaning is that God responds in an appropriate manner to the karmic potencies without any personal interest of His own in the outcome; He cannot help expressing Himself in creative activity. The concept of Īśvara is therefore vital to the Advaita Vedānta not so much as intellectual creation symbolising a subjective idealism - it is vital because the existence of Īśvara arises out of the world of human experience. Īśvara does not need to have his reality shown in logical demonstration but justifies his existence by his indispensability to carry a spiritual experience to its fulfilment.

6.4 The relation between Brahman and God :

Śaṅkara never claimed to have given an altogether new view, but he always insisted that he was expounding the truly Vedāntic view which was already embodied in the Upaniṣads. It is true that there are other commentators of the Upaniṣads who do not follow Śaṅkara's interpretations and it may be supposed that Śaṅkara formulated a new theory of reality and tried to substantiate it with suitable quotations from the Upaniṣads and then tried to interpret the principal Upaniṣads in the light of his theory. The credit which goes to Śaṅkara is that his interpretation of the Upaniṣads can accommodate the theistic and dualistic views of other interpreters, while their interpretation cannot provide for the non-dualistic view of Śaṅkara. It cannot be denied that there are traces of both non-dualistic absolutism and dualistic theism in the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara provides for the reconciliation of dualistic theism with non-dualistic absolutism by giving us a two fold conception of the absolute, both as devoid of attributes and as endowed with attribute. He does not place these two conceptions on a par with one another. Śaṅkara clearly distinguishes a higher from a lower Brahman in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya and elsewhere. The higher Brahman, Brahman viewed from the aspect of knowledge (Vidyā), is free from all adjuncts, all name and form. It is nirguna Brahman and it is knowledge of this Brahman that constitutes liberation.

According to Sāṅkara saguna Brahman or God, is the lower Brahman; it is Brahman viewed from the aspect of ignorance (avidyā).

So long as we believe in our embodied existence and life in the world, we cannot rise to the true conception of reality, so we misconceive the Absolute as God who has created the world, of which our bodies form part, with which we are identified. As long as we believe in the world in which we live and move and have our being, and which is not self-caused, we cannot help believing in some supreme being, who has brought the world into existence and sustains it in perfect order. This supreme being is God, the absolute for our common understanding.

It is God, who creates the world-appearance, according to Sāṅkara. In explaining creation Advaita combines Psychology epistemology and metaphysic. The nature of the Advaitin's problem is evident, he has to explain how diversity can even apparently arise from undifferentiated unity. The question of the relation between God and Brahman arises, when we try to explain the world. Sāṅkara regards that the entire visible world, with which both science and history are concerned, and which provides the theatre for all our activities, and which we believe to be there from the beginning of time and running to an indefinite future as altogether illusory, because it comes in conflict with the scriptural description that reality is absolutely non-dual

and tolerates no other. There is no doubt that the world comes to us as an other, as something different from us. We have therefore to regard it as mere appearance by which we mean that it is some thing which we cannot deny but which at the same time cannot really be there.

The fundamental difficulty of the Advaitic theory is how to explain this false appearance. To say that the infinite Brahman is the cause of the finite world and creates it, is to admit that the infinite is subject to the limitation of time. The relation of cause and effect cannot be applied to the relation of Brahman and the world. We cannot say that Brahman is the cause and the world is the effect, for this would be to distinguish Brahman from the world and make it into a thing related to another thing. The relation between Brahman and Īśvara is a special application of the general problem of the relation between Brahman and the world. According to śaṅkara the world though it hangs on Brahman, does not affect Brahman by distinguishing that kind of causality where the cause without undergoing any change produces the effect, as Vivartopādāna from parināmapādāna, where the cause is itself transformed in producing the effect.

The universe is not due to any addition to Brahman from some other source of reality, for nothing can be added to that which is already perfect. It is therefore due to non-being. The process of the world is due to gradual deprivation of reality. *Māyā* is used as the name of the dividing force, the finitising principle, that which measures out the immeasurable and creates form in the formless. "There are names and forms conceived in nescience which constitute the essence of *Īśvara* and which are incapable of determination either as true or false. These names and forms are the seeds of this world of flux. They are called *Prakṛti* or the power of *Māyā* of the omniscient Lord".¹⁹ The moment we try to link up *Māyā* with Brahman, the latter becomes transformed into *Īśvara*. *Māyā* denotes the *śakti*, or the energy of *Īśvara*.

6.5 Śaṅkara and Bradley:

An interesting common feature between the absolute philosophies of Śaṅkara and Bradley is the distinction that they draw between the ultimate reality of the Absolute and the derivative reality of God, the objective of religious worship and devotion. Śaṅkara distinguishes between the pure Absolute devoid of all limiting adjuncts (*Upādhis*) and revealed by *ātma-jñāna* and the Absolute conditioned by

the Upādhis. In the experience of the Absolute in the former aspect, there is no room for the distinction between the 'worshipper' and 'the worshipped', all distinctions having been equally abolished. To experience the Absolute in the later aspect is to experience It as God, the God of religion, the object of devotion and worship. The former is the object of transcendental Knowledge and the latter is the object of relative experience. For a correct appraisal of Śaṅkara's position with regard to the problem of God and the Absolute, it is of primordial importance to grasp clearly his theory of the two fold nature of Brahman. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman has a two-fold nature, the one as conditioned by the limiting adjuncts of names and forms and the other as shorn of all limiting adjuncts we found that the text of Śruti speak of the two forms of Brahman, the one object of Vidyā and the other the object of Avidyā. In the event of Brahman, being conditioned by avidyā, all practical activity involving the distinction between the devotee and the object of devotion is possible. On the other hand Bradley holds that the God of religion is an appearance and in the Absolute, God and religion are equally lost.

According to Bradley, religion naturally implies a relation between man and god. God is a finite object, standing above and apart from man and is something

independent of all relation to his will and intelligence. Hence God taken as thinking and feeling being has a private personality. But sundered from those relations which qualify him, God is inconsistent emptiness, and qualified by his relation to another, he is distracted finitude. God is therefore, taken as transcending this external relation. He wills and Knows himself, and he finds his reality and self-consciousness, in Union with man. He is necessarily led to end in the Absolute, which for religion is not God. According to Bradley, if we identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If we separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole. And the effort of religion is to put an end to and break down this relation — a relation, which, none the less, it essentially presupposes. The religious consciousness, according to Bradley, seeks to worship God as the highest reality, the 'all in all' and yet the very possibility of religion and the religious attitude depends on taking God, the object of worship, as a finite object, set over against man the worshipper. The God be identified with the Absolute, it ceases to be the God of religious consciousness. The religious consciousness is an oscillation between two irreconcilable positions and God is a self contradictory appearance.

In so far as both Śaṅkara and Bradley distinguish God from the Absolute, there seems to be an agreement between them on the problem of God and the Absolute. But the agreement is facile. Śaṅkara's distinction of Īśvara or Saguna Brahman from the Absolute or Nirguṇa Brahman stand in sharp contrast to Bradley's distinction of God from the Absolute in two important respects. In the first place, for Bradley, God is an appearance within the Absolute, a finite element within the whole; for Śaṅkara, Īśvara is Brahman in its conditioned or sopādhika aspect. Śaṅkara's Brahman has a two-fold nature the unconditioned and the conditioned. Secondly, while Bradley dismisses God a self contradictory appearance and as but an appearance among appearances, Śaṅkara's God has a unique cosmic significance as the Supreme Ruler and Controller of the universe. Conditioned though He is by Upādhis, as all other beings are, His are the Upādhis of a super-eminent order. For Śaṅkara the Absolute of philosophy and God of religion are not two numerically and ontologically different entities. Śaṅkara identifies the God of religion who by His grace grants salvation to the individual souls with the highest reality of the Ātman.

Both Bradley and Śaṅkara agree in holding that the phenomena of the world as we experience them can only be

appearances and not reality, both further agree in holding that since we do experience them, they cannot be mere non-entities. But while for Bradley, the appearances in the form in which we experience them are the entities of which the Absolute is composed, for Śaṅkara, the world appearance is the Entity, the only entity that there is, viz. Brahman as it appears to our relational consciousness. Śaṅkara therefore says that the world of appearance is neither absolutely real (sat) nor absolutely unreal (asat). The appearances are not absolutely real in the sense that in their seeming multiplicity and separateness, they are independent realities; they are not absolutely unreal in the sense that they are perceptions of Reality, and not of vacuity or nothingness. Bradley says that the Reality is a unity qualified by diversity. It is not a homogeneous or undifferentiated unity. In Vedāntic terminology Bradley's view would be called Sāprapañcabrahmavāda.

6.6 Śaṅkara and Spinoza :

Spinoza did not initiate a new tradition, as Śaṅkara did, but his philosophy has continued to exercise considerable influence on modern thought. Philosophers have been attracted to his by the depth as well as the boldness of his thought. Some of his conclusions were too radical and

challenging to be accepted without modification or criticism. The most revolutionary change that Spinoza introduces was not in the conception of God, but in the conception of God's causality. This is true in the case of Śaṅkara also. Both reject the transeunt causality of God (Brahman) and affirm Immanence. At the same time, they would not countenance, even in a small measure the modification of God into things of the world, His finitisation into phenomena, His transcendence is equally vital. These two seemingly irreconcilable requirements are implied in the concept of Free Appearance (Vivartavāda) in the Vedānta. The world of phenomena freely emerges from the Universal ground of Substance (Brahman) and does not in any way modify it. The modes indicate God (Brahman) without constituting an integral part of Him. Spinoza hold in agreement with Vedāntism that - philosophy presupposes a peculiar kind of spiritual consciousness and hence while philosophy is for the few religion is for the common man and neither is meant for the sceptic or the athiest. In Vedāntic terms, philosophy requires an adhikāri; like Vedāntism, Spinozism also is addressed only to the initiated and not to all and sundry. Hence instead of a clearing initial difficulties Spinoza goes straight to the central problem, namely, the conception of God. Like Śaṅkara, Spinoza also would say that

even though God is Known to us, still it is necessary to Know Him in a special way and to remove the confusions or the variety of views that have gathered round the conception. Philosophy does not impart but only improves our knowledge of God. In the 'Short Treatise', spinoza argues that God is not known through concepts or symbols.

The western thinkers uncritically take for granted the reality of appearances and then try to find a place for it in the bosom of the Absolute. But the Advaitins point out that if the world of plurality cannot be consistently harmonised with the concept of the Absolute, it should be relegated to illusion. The theory of vivartavada which is intended to explain change and multiplicity really means that there is no creation and no dissolution; the perception of change is illusory. Thus in a real sense the concept of the Absolute is both the end and the beginning of all Philosophy. Now a question arises, what is the place of cosmology in an Absolutism? It is not possible to get an explicit answer to this question in Spinoza's writings, but the Vedānta does give an answer. The reason why it becomes necessary to indulge in cosmological speculations, inspite of the fact that creation is illusory, is that it is indispensable to show the dependence of the conditioned on the Unconditioned. Otherwise, the mere affirmation of

the Absolute as the negation of the conditioned may mean only exclusion, as it is in the case of any two objects such as the air and the earth. Though the air and the earth exclude each other, one does not militate against the existence of the other; both can exist side by side and independently of each other. If this were the kind of negation obtaining between the Absolute and appearance, then both would become real and the knowledge of the Absolute would not mean the realisation of the falsity of the appearance and the spiritual ideal would become impossible. In fact the absolute itself would no longer remain absolute but only relative. Hence it is necessary to show the dependence of the phenomena on the Absolute. The dependence of the Universes on Brahman serves only the purpose of showing that the Universe is unreal or just an appearance or Vivarta. The significance of cosmology in Absolutism is thus to establish the non-duality of reality by indicating the dependence of the empirical world.

The Vedāntic solution of the Problem of One and many may be considered as suggesting a way of reconciling, the apparent inconsistencies in Spinoza. The Vedāntic position is that Brahman causes the world, not as Brahman or the Absolute but as Īśvara, i.e. Brahman as modified by an Upādhi. The Upādhi of Īśvara is Māyā and it is by

an Upādhi. The Upādhi of Īsvara is Māyā and it is by virtue of this that He is creative and self-differentiating principle but there is this difference. The Vedantins hold that the ultimate reality must be understood as pure Unity, and it is only at a lower stage that difference should be introduced. Spinoza in so far as he refrains from introducing difference in the Absolute is in fundamental agreement with the Vedānta. It is true that he does not explicitly give us any theory like the Māyāvāda for the explanation of multiplicity as Vedānta does, still there is in Spinozism a strong hint to lead us in the direction of Māyāvāda. His conception of Attributes along with his view that all determination is negation gives us the necessary hint. The essence of Māyāvāda is that change and multiplicity are illusory and subjective, they are only super-imposed on unchanging Brahman. For Spinoza, the world is a manifestation of Thought and Extension and these are attributes and not effects of substance, attributes which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance. The attributes as super-imposed on substance are only subjective and hence illusory. Considering all this it may be said that the doctrine of attributes corresponds closely to the doctrine of Māyā.

6.7 Sāṅkara and Rādhakrishnan :

Advaita of Sāṅkara is the basis of the religious thought which Rādhakrishnan expounds and defends. But the Advaita which Rādhakrishnan expounds and defends is not altogether identical with that of Sāṅkara. In order to assess the achievements of Rādhakrishnan one is required to have a clear mind as regards the principal contentions of Sāṅkara and Rāmānuja and of the extent to which the Western idealistic thinkers have exercised influence on him. Rādhakrishnan is himself conscious of his reconstruction of idealistic thought and of his fresh interpretation of the Advaita Vedānta of Sāṅkara. He has himself made a categorical affirmation that his Advaita is not the Advaita of Sāṅkara nor his idealism that of Bradley. For example, having realized well the disqualification of Sāṅkara's and Bradley's understanding of the relation between the Absolute and the world and convinced of the plausibility and coherence of his own doctrine which is an original adaptation of the view of the Upaniṣads, Rādhakrishnan emphatically observes that the way in which the relation between the Absolute and God is here indicated is not the same as that either of Sāṅkara or of Bradley though it has apparent similarities to their doctrines. Philosophy and religion in India have never been cut off from each other

but have been rather reciprocally helpful, there is no dualism of any sort whatsoever. The problem of the Absolute of philosophy and God of religion, the logic of religion and religion as such has never presented a problem or paradox to the Indian mind. The problem of ultimate reality can be looked at from two alternative points of view of philosophy and religion. The Upaniṣads show the dualism of Absolute and God and therefore of philosophy and religion has no sanction in the Upaniṣadic literature. This is a distinction which was introduced later into Vedānta by Śaṅkara. No one can, in any way, attenuate the difference between philosophy and religion in the Vedānta of Śaṅkara for he has unequivocally and clearly declared on many occasions in his writings that one who worships God instead of contemplating and reflecting upon the Absolute cannot attain to salvation. Śaṅkara cannot deny the basic foundation of experience, for this is no clear an implication in life and consciousness that none can deny it unless the divided consciousness be passed over.

Reality is one and the same, although our points of view of looking at it may be many sided. According to Radhakrishnan, the Absolute of philosophy and God of religion are distinctions of value and they who contemplate on the abstract impersonal Absolute are spiritually more

advanced than those who worship God. In his "Hindu view of Life" Radhakrishnan says that the worshippers of the Absolute are the highest in rank, second to them are the worshippers of the personal God. It would be helpful in this connection to give an account of the manner in which Radhakrishnan progressively attenuates the difference between the Absolute and God which is the most marked or prominent feature of the Advaita of Śaṅkara. This dualism of Absolute and God is not the characteristic feature of the doctrine of the Deity adumbrated in the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara had to enunciate a principle of the ultimate reality compatible with the Buddhist scheme of an impersonal universe. In the Advaita of Śaṅkara the emphasis is more on the Absolute, in the attenuated Advaitism of Radhakrishnan there is more stress on the concrete character of God. For Śaṅkara, Īśvara or God is a phenomenal appearance of the Absolute. Radhakrishnan even though subscribing partially to this contention of Śaṅkara, maintains that this is nothing but the return of the Absolute to its own state of self-composure, Radhakrishnan expressly denies that God can be a mere appearance of the Absolute. To Radhakrishnan, the difference between God and Absolute is logical and not chronological. Radhakrishnan says that the difference between the Absolute and God does not mean that there is a

particular point at which the Absolute moves out. The stages are only logical but not chronologically successive.

Radhakrishnan's remarkable advance on Śaṅkara's dualistic conception of Brahman and Īśvara can be a matter of unquestionable value to those who are familiar with the contrast drawn by Advaita Vedānta between the object of philosophic contemplation and religious devotion, worship and surrender. The dualism of Absolute and God, is the outstanding feature of Śaṅkara's philosophy. The Upaniṣads according to Radhakrishnan, lay equal emphasis on these two conceptions of Brahman and since intellect and intuition are for him not opposed there cannot be any fundamental opposition between the intuitional Brahman and the intellectual Brahman. The Upaniṣads speak with a double voice in describing the nature of ultimate reality. They sometimes make it the Absolute, which cannot be characterised by the phenomenal categories, at other times they identify it with the supreme Person whom we are to adore and worship. As the result of this, we have two views about the nature of the world. In some passages, the world is regarded as an accident of Brahman (the Absolute) and in others as Organic to God. These two tendencies running through the Upaniṣads. One which regards the Absolute as Pure Being and makes the world an accidental appearance (Vivarta) of it,

and the other which looks upon the Absolute as a concrete person of whom the world is the necessary expression. The former view is nearer Śaṅkara's and the latter nearer Rāmānuja's. Whereas Śaṅkara would discount the latter conception, Radhakrishnan says, it presents an important and complementary truth regarding the nature of the Absolute. He says that the apparent opposition between them can be overcome by adopting duality of standpoints. Radhakrishnan says that the only intelligible reconciliation between two such apparently discordant notes seems to be through the device of a duality of standpoints. When we rise above the intellectual level and intuit the nature of reality, we see that there is nothing but the Absolute, and the world is only the Absolute and the problem of the relation between the two does not arise since the Absolute and world are not two distinct entities which require to be related. The Absolute is looked upon as a personal God by whose power of self expression or māyā the world is sustained. The Absolute as Pure - being (Śaṅkara) and the Absolute as a person (Rāmānuja) are the intuitional and the intellectual representations of the one Supreme fact. As these two lines of thought cross and recross in the Upaniṣads; Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja were able to support their views from them. Śaṅkara adopts this device of a duality of standpoints in attempting to harmonise the different texts of the Upaniṣads.

6.8 Conclusion:

Whatever be the particular status of $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$ or Saguna Brahman in the system of Vedānta and whatever the relation in which it stands to the Absolute or Brahman, it is certain that they are not two aspects of one and the same being. In the system of Śaṅkara-Vedānta a reality that has two sides or aspect or is the union of contradictories fails ipso facto to pass for the highest reality. Bradley is in agreement with Śaṅkara on the point that to think the Absolute, is to bring it down to the level of the relatives and the finites. Śaṅkara's Absolute is the Nirguna Brahman which is absolutely transcendent and undifferentiated - transcending the compass of all philosophy and all discursive thought.

Brahman is one which has no second, nothing outside it. In order to explain the fullness of multiform existence Śaṅkara makes it phenomenally determinate. Brahman, $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$ or Jiva stand to each other as reality and appearance. Personal God or $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$ is the cause of the world, the home of contingent existences. Truth or Brahman is one, but for the ordinary intellect which can perceive only through the categories of space, time and causality, the spaceless, timeless, causeless appears as determinate Brahman. From the Vyāvahārika standpoint $\bar{I}\acute{s}vara$ or the personal God acts

as a subject to the world of objects. It is the self conscious subject that wills. Īśvara is not the transcendental or the Eternal subject which is indeterminate but is the determinate Brahman which is a necessity of our empirical emotional or devotional self.

Śaṅkara appeals to our faith in God as the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the Universe. He is the immanent principle, the upholder of morality and justice. God is to be regarded as internal or immanent truth. The existence of nature cannot be explained without regarding him as immanent. God is omniscient, Omnipotent, and all pervading. Scriptures state that Īśvara is the cause of the world. Rather, it is Brahman in association with Māyā, that is the creator, preserver and ruler of the world. Īśvara is superior to the world, to the objects and things of the world. Śaṅkara maintains that Īśvara associated with Prakṛti or Māyā is the efficient and the material cause of the world, though in later Vedānta differences arise by regarding God either as the efficient or the material cause. As creator of the Universe Īśvara can be conceived as Hiraṇyagarbha and Virāt. He is Hiraṇyagarbha as comprising subtle bodies, subtle elements and Jīvas (the subtle form of the universe). He is known as Virāt when he becomes the cause of the concrete universe

(Universe is fully manifested). Thus Brahman, Īśvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virāt are all one and the same reality; but it is reality viewed from transedental and temporal standpoint or as conceived in its ś tataṣtha and svarūpa lakṣaṇa. Self or Brahman is non-dual, but in relation to the world it appears as Īśvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virāt.

The world is, according to Śaṅkara, an appearance and Brahman as the cause of the multiform existence is Īśvara. Brahman, the Absolute creates Īśvara or God out of his Māyā and that Īśvara is the cause of the spatio-temporal world. This is Brahman's recreation or līlā.

At last, we can say that it is from the phenomenal point of view that Śaṅkara postulates the reality of Īśvara and in a way saves his doctrine from the charge of abstract unity or indentity. In the interest of religion, scripture and practical life he maintained the existence of a concrete Universal which from the logical standpoint is riddled with contradictions and enigmas śaṅkara's obstruse logic therefore does not call it the highest reality. Brahman alone is the highest reality and it is the truth of intuition which is beyond description, definition or logical explanation. The truth of intuition cannot be concretized,

reduced into the barren categories of intellect where one and many, identity and difference, permanence and impermanence are struggling to exist together but in vain. At the same time an empirical phenomenal status to these saves these from being written off as nothing.

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CHAPTER - VII

HASTINGS RASHDALL AND THE PROBLEM

7.1 Introduction :

The main aim of our inquiry is to make a study of Rashdall and Śāṅkarāchāryya regarding the relation between God and the Absolute. We have made a study of Śāṅkara in the previous chapter. In this chapter we shall study Rashdall.

Rashdall's writings are always in close contact with the thoughts and religion of the modern world. Rashdall's philosophical interest was not confined to the Middle Ages. He had read the authors commonly studied for the great school, Plato and Aristotle, Hume and Kant and Bishop Butler. He had been profoundly influenced by the lectures of T.H. Green and by Henry Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics. Each of the special sciences deals with some particular aspect of Reality taken in abstraction. In moral philosophy, in so far as we are considering the nature of the moral consciousness apart from other aspects of Being, we are still in a sense abstract. We are dealing with a departmental science; but the discussion cannot practically proceed for without touching upon the most ultimate of all questions. We are dealing with such a large and

fundamental aspect of ultimate Reality that it is practically impossible to deal with it thoroughly without taking a very important steps towards the determination of our attitude to Reality as a whole. It is impossible that our views on the ultimate problems of Ethics should not be influenced by our attitude towards Reality as a whole, or that our view of Reality as a whole should not be influenced by our attitude towards morality. It does not form any doubt about the importance to Ethics of certain metaphysical ideas. The treatment of our subject was not preceded by an exhaustive enquiry into the nature of knowledge and Reality; but rather because it would have been extremely difficult to draw the line between the specially ethical side of metaphysics and the whole of that science.

7.2 God and the Absolute in Rashdall's Philosophy:

"The positive conviction which dominated Rashdall's thought on philosophical and theological questions was that of the absolute, unqualified reality of individual persons, minds or spirits. He did not, indeed with the late Professor Howison of the late Dr. McTaggart - both thinkers with whom he felt himself to be a considerable extent in sympathy - regard all such individual spirits as alike eternal. On

the contrary, all of them but God were in his view, originally created and are preserved in being from moment to moment by God; but, if anything be entitled to be called by the name of 'substance' it is they."¹ Rashdall's philosophical opinions had been formed at a time when the influence of the idealistic movement, of which Green was the principal exponent was at its height in Oxford.

Rashdall's theology was characterized throughout by the same conviction that nothing is so unquestionably real in and for itself as a personal consciousness. The necessity of "assuming the existence of a mind, in which and for which everything that is not mind has its being."² was to him the grand argument for the existence of God; and such a mind he found himself unable to conceive except as personal in the sense as that in which our minds are personal, however immeasurably superior to ours in the range of its activity. Rashdall professed himself, to be entirely a stranger to any 'experience' which could be fairly described as an 'immediate' consciousness of the Divine Being; nor, did he consider that any such 'immediate' consciousness was a necessary condition of the practice of worship and prayer. It follows from his view of God as a person by the side of other persons (although their creator and preserver) that Rashdall could not admit the propriety of identifying God with 'the Absolute'.

According to Rashdall, belief in God is the postulate of morality. We may be able to give some meaning to morality without the postulate of God, but not its true meaning. If the existence of God is not a postulate of all morality, it is a postulate of a sound morality; for it is essential to that belief which vaguely and implicitly underlies all moral beliefs and which forms the very heart of morality in its highest, more developed, more explicit forms. That belief in God involves something more than the belief that there is a universal mind for which and in which the moral ideal exists. There can be no meaning in the idea of morality for a Being who is mere Thought and not will. If human morality is a revelation, however imperfect, of the ultimate nature of Reality, it must represent, not merely an ideal existing in and for the mind which is the ultimate source or ground of Reality, but also the nature of the end towards which that Reality is moving.

Though our idea of God cannot be built upon the basis of the moral consciousness taken by itself, the moral consciousness does contribute one most important element to that idea. That the universe has its ultimate ground in a spirit who must be thought of as will, reason and feeling, is a view which a rational ethics presupposes, but which it cannot by itself be held to establish. It is established,

according to Rashdall by metaphysical considerations. A sound system of ethics presupposes certain metaphysical beliefs. These are, (1) we saw that certain beliefs about the self may be described as postulates of ethics in the first degree - that is to say, in the sense that no real meaning whatever can be given to mortality without assuming the truth of those beliefs, though they may not be explicit in every individual consciousness, (2) The belief in God was found to be essential to the logical justification of that idea of objective validity which is implicit in the moral consciousness, at least in the higher stages of its development. The idea of God may, no doubt, in particular persons of strong moral convictions not only not be explicit, but may lie^g formally denied. The tendency of its denial is and must be in the long run to weaken or destroy belief in objective morality and so the influence of all higher morality in the world, (3) The idea of a future life seemed an equally essential implication of morality for those who find it impossible to reconcile the facts of life with such a conception of God and of the world which is essential for the rational interpretation of the moral consciousness.

To many individuals these truths, presented in an abstract metaphysical form, have been no more apparent than any other metaphysical truths which are really implicit in

the thought of ordinary persons. Nevertheless, the history of practical ethics tends to support the belief that there is a real connexion between certain principles of action and certain metaphysical varieties. The way in which metaphysical truths have been held by and have impressed the great mass of men is in the form of, what we call religion. Religious belief might possess an important and beneficial moral influence without being in any sense speculatively necessary to a complete and self-consistent ethical creed.

There are some to whom the view which has been taken of the relation between religion and morality will seem to concede too little to religion and too much to morality and the sphere of religion are wholly distinct, the sphere of religion being the higher of the two. The sphere of morality is that of human action. Morality cannot reasonably be attributed to God. It implies the coexistence of evil and good. It implies that some things happen which ought not to happen; whereas from the religious point of view nothing can happen but that which God wills, and what God will is what ought to happen. The good and the bad alike contribute to the fulfilment of the divine will. It is merely owing to the limitations of human nature that we present some things to ourselves as bad and others as good.

It may be objected that we have no right to oppose the goodness of God to his power, as though they were distinct qualities controlling and limiting one another and to pronounce the one unlimited and the other limited. Rashdall says that every distinction of elements or of aspects in the divine nature based upon the analogy of human experience must necessarily be an inadequate representation of the ultimate nature of Reality. We can distinguish between thought, feeling and willing in men; and we cannot think of the Divine Mind at all without supposing that in that mind, there is thinking, feeling and willing or something analogous to each of them. And yet it is impossible that thought and feeling can be related in God as they are related in us - that in God the object of thought should be as it is in us, something not actually experienced, something merely representative of a reality without being that reality. God's thought consists in making abstractions which necessarily leave out so much of the actual fact, in inferences which imply that something has become known which was previously unknown. Again, that feeling should be in God exactly what it is in beings whose experience is limited and conditioned by a material organism. And without these distinctions of thought and feeling we cannot attach any significance to the idea of mind and could mean nothing when we say that God is mind or spirit. All human thinking implies

abstraction - that is to say, the separation in thought of aspects of Reality which in actual fact are not apart but together. When we oppose God's goodness to his power, we are using exactly the same kind of abstraction which we use in distinguishing between feeling and thought and will in God. The idea of 'infinite' or 'unlimited' power is a meaningless conception. It implies an Ultimate Reality - a will which has no definite characteristics or properties at all. And such a concept implies a contradiction to what we mean when we say that God is perfectly good.

Rashdall says that the moral Law has a real existence, that there is such a thing as an absolute morality, that there is something absolutely true or false in ethical judgements, whether we or any number of human beings at any given time actually think so or not. Such a belief is distinctly implied in what we mean by morality. The idea of such an unconditional, objectively valid, moral law or ideal undoubtedly exists as a psychological fact. The question before us is whether it is capable of theoretical justification. We must then face the question where such an ideal exists, and what manner of existence we are to attribute to it. Certainly it is to be found, wholly and completely, in no individual human consciousness. Men actually think differently about moral questions, and

there is no empirical reason for supposing, that they will ever do otherwise. As regards matters of fact or physical law, we have no difficulty in satisfying ourselves that there is an objective reality. For the man who supposes that objective reality resides in the things themselves, our ideas about them are objectively true or false so far as they correspond or fail to correspond with this real and independent archetype. Though he might be puzzled to give a metaphysical account of the nature of this 'correspondence' between experience and a Reality whose being is something other than to be experienced. In the physical region of the existence of divergent ideas does not throw doubt upon the existence of a reality independent of our ideas. But in the case of moral ideals it is otherwise. On materialistic or naturalistic assumptions the moral ideal can hardly be regarded as a real thing. Nor could it will be regarded as a property of any real thing; it can be no more than an aspiration, a product of the imagination, which may be useful to stimulate effort in directions in which we happen to want to move, but which cannot compel respect when we feel no desire to act in conformity with it. An absolute moral law or moral ideal cannot exist in material things. And it does not (we have seen) exist in the mind of this or that individual. Only if we believe

in the existence of Mind for which the true moral ideal is already in some sense real, a mind which is the source of whatever is true in our own moral judgements, then we rationally think of the moral ideal which is no less real than the world itself. Only we can believe in an absolute standard of right or wrong, which is as independent of this or that man's actual ideas or actual desires as the facts of material nature. The belief in God, though not (like the belief in a real and an active self) a postulate of there being any such things as morality at all. "A moral ideal can exist nowhere and nohow but in a mind; an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a Mind From which all Reality is derived. Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regarded as the revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God".³ In fact, objective morality implies the belief in God.

"For many minds there is something edifying and consoling in the idea that the human mind is literally a part of the divine - When a man confines his attention to saints and heroes, that may possibly be the case; and no doubt the suggestion that he is himself a part of the Divine mind may be welcome enough to the natural vanity of very ordinary characters. But the attractiveness of this idea

must surely disappear if it is duly remembered that, according to the theory, the saint cannot be regarded as a part of God in any other sense or degree than caesar Borgia or the biggest historical scoundrel that has not yet been whitewashed by some episcopal or other historian is a part of God. For, be it be remembered when we think of the relation between man and God as the relation of part to whole, we have no right to introduce differences of degree when the human mind is thought of as a revelation, or emanation, or reproduction of God, we may reasonably introduce such differences. We may regard the human mind as reproducing or revealing God's nature more truly and fully than an animal, the educated European more adequately than the savage, the men of high ideals more than the men of lower ones, the man that lives upto his ideals more than the man who falls short of them".⁴ But if it is a question of whole and part, we have no right to such distinctions. We might no doubt talk about a smaller and a larger part. And after all, if the question is merely one of magnitude, the very good are probably in a minority, and have therefore less right to be taken as representing or revealing the true nature of God than the bad and the mediocre. To regard every soul as equally part of God puts an end to the possibility of regarding god as a moral being. Of course, there are not wanting at the present

moment philosophers who are prepared to follow out the logic of their own Pantheism. They recognise that every soul is equally a part of God, and therefore has as much right as any other to be taken as revealing the character of the Absolute or whole of which they are parts or "appearances". If so, good and evil must be from the point of the whole equally essential to the perfection or good of the whole. The idea that the good ought to be and the bad ought not to be suppressed must be put down to a mere error or prejudice due to the limitations of human thought. It is not therefore without ground that conservative theologians insist upon the tendency of a pantheising theology to lower our practical estimate of sin and moral evil. After all, it needs no every elaborate demonstration to show that if all souls are equally part of God, God can not be an object of moral reverence.

According to Rashdall, the aversion which religious minds often feel for the notion that belief in God is really due to an inference springs from the desire to feel that we may in prayer and religious communion come into immediate contact with God. The warmth of friendship or family affection was surely never dimmed by the admission that after all, one's knowledge of one's nearest relation or one's best friend involves an inference. So, it may be with the soul's

approach to God; the conviction that prayer puts us into a real relation to God may be none the less well grounded because the belief in God, like the belief in a friend, involves inference. There is nothing in the theory that valid knowledge of God is inferential which need prevent us thinking of religious knowledge, emotion - religious experience, if we please in any of its forms or aspects - as being due to inspiration or revelation. When we have once reached our knowledge of God, then we must regard all sorts of true knowledge - and in an especial sense, all religious knowledge and spiritual insight - as implanted in the human mind by God, as due (In the language of Green) to a partial communication to us of the knowledge which is already perfect in the Divine mind. A valid inference may be regarded as no less coming from God than an immediate intuition, though doubtless in the Divine mind, we cannot suppose that there is that distinction between immediate apprehension and knowledge reached by way of inference or reflection which the partial character of our knowledge imposes upon ourselves.

Rashdall says that by many the formulae "God is all" and the like are used without the least intension of suggesting that our actual thoughts, feelings and volitions are a part of what God thinks, feels and wills. By the 'ego'

which is part of God, they do not mean actual moments of conscious experience, but the real thing which is the source or ground or cause of those successive moments of consciousness. Yet, such a view may be maintained in a form which annihilates the individual self implies in our consciousness, and there with the possibility of real self-determination, responsibility, morality. The existence of the permanent individual self is indeed as much an immediate datum of consciousness as the existence of its successive conscious states. If all that is meant is that the individual self is not an "independent soul", i.e. that it has the ground alike of its beginning and of its continued existence from moment to moment in an existence larger than itself, then this assertion is unobjectionable. We may, therefore, if we please talk of a unity of substance underlying the difference between God and man, and between one individual and another; or of a single mind as the ground or cause of all that is. We may reasonably, infer that the consciousness which God communicates to His creatures is like His own, in proportion to the degree of their capacity. Even a mind that is merely conscious of pleasure and pain must have something in it like the consciousness of God. And in the higher achievements of the human mind we may reasonably discern a gradual revelation of the world as God thinks it,

since all knowledge is from the idealistic point of view a kind of revelation.

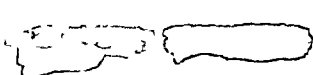
The idea of the Divine Immanence would be harmless enough if it meant merely to assert that there is certain communication of the Divine knowledge to the human mind, and the consequent possibility in moral and religious experience of a real communion between God and men. Human mind may well enough be spoken of in Green's language as "reproductions" of the universal self-consciousness and in the language of an older philosophy as "emanations" or "sparks" of the Divine mind. But there is nothing in all this to justify its part of God. The reproduction of a statue is not identical with its model; the emanation is not identical with that from which it was an emanation; the spark when once it has become a spark is no longer part of the parent fire. When once it is admitted that the actual human consciousness is not the same as God's or part of it, we cannot justify the statement "God is all". A divine mind is not in the strict philosophical language the Infinite, if there is something which is not. For the theist nothing has an independent self-sufficient existence apart from God; in that sense, we may if we like speak of God as the Infinite. But the world is one without which we could get on just as well. If we refuse to call God

the Infinite, we shall inevitably be asked whether He is finite; and if we say that He is, we shall be supposed to believe in some eternally co-existent entity spatially outside Him, and resisting His activities.

Let us ask whether we can properly speak of God as immanent in the material universe. The assertion that "god is immanent" is usually taken as equivalent to the assertion, "God is all" or "God is everything"- carrying with it the implication, "Nothing exists but what is God". But this is not the obvious meaning of the words when we say that one thing is or abides in another, we imply that there is a distinction between the two. Popular thought regards the soul as immanent in the body, but it does not regard soul and body as identical. If we are to understand the idea of Divine, immanence as implying that God dwells in matter as the mind dwells in the body, the metaphysician must protest that mind cannot occupy space. No doubt there is a sense in which we may say that mind is, where it acts; and in that sense there is no harm in saying that the mind is in the body, and that God is in the world, pervading every part of it by this continuous activity. So far the "immanence" doctrine expresses a most important truth. But that is not what is meant by the term as employed by philosophers or philosophic theologians. They mean definitely

to say not so much that God is inside the world as that the world is inside God. If we accept the ordinary dualism of the common-sense theist and believe that matter is a real thing which might have a being of its own quite independently of its presence to any mind, then to say that, "God is all" would mean, "God is a name which we give to a collection or aggregate consisting of two different things, "Spirit and matter". The only objection to such a mode of expression is that we want another word to denote the universal spirit by which the material world was created and sustained. It would therefore be more convenient and natural to reserve the word for the creative and sustaining spirit, and to call the aggregate (matter plus spirit) "The Universe".

The idea that every human being is a part of God, is one idea which is very widely diffused among the professed philosophers. And when clothed in the language of poetry or edification it is one which finds a ready acceptance with a certain class of minds not spatially conversant with technical metaphysics. If God be first defined as "the ultimate Reality", or the Absolute, as "the Infinite", it is easy to show that the individual minds, if they are real at all must be parts of the ultimate Reality, the Absolute or the Infinite. And there are of



course, philosophers who is maintaining that we are parts of God mean simply that God is a name for the sum of individual minds. But Rashdall approaching the subject from the point of view of those who are not satisfied by such a conception of God, who believe that God is a conscious spirit who wills, thinks, feels, or at least has a consciousness which can only be understood by us as something analogous to the experiences which we all thinking, willing and feeling in ourselves. From this point of view the question is whether any meaning can be attached to the assertion that the Divine mind includes a number of different consciousness. The contention that such an inclusion is unmeaning and unthinkable.

"To me, it appears quite clear - clearer than almost any other truth in the whole universe of knowledge - that every moment of consciousness is in its own nature absolutely unique. My thoughts, feelings, emotions, are for ever mine and not another's; or rather (to avoid all difficult questions about the nature of personality) I would say, they are for ever themselves and not anything else. Another person may feel or think what I feel or think; but then there are two thoughts or feeling not one. Even my own knowledge of them, after they are gone, is not the same feeling and thought which I once experienced".⁵

By a two-fold argument Rashdall proves the existence of God as the unity of self-consciousness. The first argument is that the world, that we know, exists in our experience and we cannot say that the world, that we know, exhausts all possible worlds. For long before we were born and long after we shall be dead, there must have been and will be other worlds which far transcends the world of our knowledge. To unify all these worlds, the present world of ours and the larger world of which our world is a fraction, there must be a consciousness inclusive of but indefinitely larger than, any of our finite and that consciousness is God. Secondly, our moral consciousness certifies to the existence of an absolute moral ideal contrasted with our ideals which are relative, and the absolute moral ideal presupposes for its existence a supremely moral self who is god. From these metaphysical and moral grounds we conclude that god as the unity of consciousness unifying individual consciousness, must exist. But this does not prove that God is identical with the Absolute, for the Absolute though including God and all other consciousness, but a community of selves. Hence the Absolute may include God and finite spirits, but yet need not be itself a unity of self-consciousness.

If we are to speak of the Absolute at all, we must according to Rashdall, understand by it God and created spirits taken together. That these last should be in God and God in them in any but a figurative sense. And hence he had no sympathy whatever with mysticism, and looked upon any approach to it as a threat to truly ethical religion - and his own religion was before all things ethical - just because mysticism seemed to imply the possibility of transcending the distinction between the personal consciousness of God and the personal consciousness of men, and thus to be danger of including with the former the evil which was often unquestionably present in the latter.

It might perhaps have been expected that, with this bias, he would have insisted on the freedom of the human will from determination by the divine; for the belief in such determination has served to express for minds of a certain cast that passion for self-identification with the one Ultimate Reality, which underlines also the aspiration of the mystics properly so called. But Rashdall had, by the time that he finished his Theory of Good and Evil, become definitely a determinist. It must be borne in mind that he was only enabled to reconcile this determination with his denial that the evil present in human wills and actions had its source in God by his refused to regard God

as in the strict sense of the word omnipotent. The will of God was wholly good; and all other beings with wills owed their existence to His will; but there were, "eternal necessities which are part of His own eternal nature"⁶ which rendered it impossible for Him to accomplish all the good which would be in the abstract desirable. This is not the place either to defend or to criticize this view; but it would not be fair to leave it without pointing out that, in holding it, Rashdall would have strenuously denied two other views with either of which it might easily be confounded. On the one hand, he would not have allowed that there was any independent and not wholly tractable material which the creator found ready to His hand fashioned to His purposes as best He might, for, as we have seen, nothing could, in Rashdall's judgement, be intelligibly said to exist which was not either a conscious mind or an object of consciousness. On the other hand, the thought which underlies the famous hymn *O felix culpa quae talem et tantum meruit habere Redemptorem* was utterly repugnant to him. The actual world is presumably the best world possible, the 'necessities' being what they are, but it is not the best that God or even we ourselves could and do desire. "I could wish" says Rashdall in so many words, "the universe were better than it is; and, if, God be the God who is revealed to us by our moral consciousness, He wishes that too".⁷

When we pass from the question of the existence of God to the specially Christian doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement Rashdall has dealt with these fully in his published work and has made his position abundantly clear. Rashdall was conscious that in holding, that he was far from merely employing traditional language in some vague sense, regardless of what it meant to those who had formulated it, that he had given the most exact attention to the classical statements of the catholic dogma, and was convinced that allowances being made for the different philosophical terminology of the age in which it had taken shape. He was in far closer agreement with it than many who, being content to use current phrases without further enquiry. He enjoyed the repute of orthodoxy while in fact their conceptions were really by no means in accord with those classical statements in some important respects. For, if they had cared to be at the pain of thinking out what was in their minds - and it was the hardihood of St. Thomas and other great medieval schoolmen in doing this that drew Rashdall so much to them. They would have found that they were envisaging the man Jesus as existing, before He was conceived in the womb of His mother; and that, ignoring St. Augustine's remark that the word 'person' was used in the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity not to

express what we mean by it on other occasions. Rashdall was perfectly ready to show that his conception of christ's divinity was completely orthodox, judged by the most exacting standard of orthodoxy. He was well aware that the person of Christ occupied as a matter of fact in his own religious thought and practice, a relatively larger place than in that of some who were never charged with denying His divinity, because although the God He worshipped was according to him, at bottom rather the platonic Idea of the Good or the Hegelian Absolute than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were for that very reason less explicit than himself in stating what precisely was their conception of that divinity, and were content to fall back upon acquiescence in traditional language without committing themselves to any detailed examination of it. For himself, it was God as revealed in Christ whose worship and service was the absorbing interest of his life. Although he was quite without any leaning toward the extravagant and according to catholic standards, heterodox christocentricism of Ritschlians like Herrmann who would deny that, to christians at any rate, God is revealed at all through any other channel than the historical Jesus and the church which he founded, He never wavered in his recognition of the uniqueness and supremacy of the ethical standard set by our Lord's teaching and example.

All thoughts of Rashdall is of course illustrated in his christology. It made him welcome the idea that God's crowning manifestation of Himself to men should be found in a personal character and life. On the other hand it made him unwilling to lay any such stress on the word 'person' as used of the three 'persons' of the Trinity as is done by those who would see in this use of it the suggestion that the eternal life of God is essentially social; for this seemed to involve either a recognition of three Gods or an inclusion of one consciousness within another, such as he on all occasions consistently maintained to be inconceivable and unintelligible. We must note also that this same 'personalism' carried with it a constant emphasis on the doctrine of individual immortality as essential to any religion which would "justify the ways of God to men". Here too Rashdall was conscious of being more nearly at one with the tradition of christian teaching than were many preachers and theologians whose silence or ambiguous language respecting a future life reflects a wide spread failure of belief in, and even of desire for; such a prolongation of individual conscious existence beyond the grave as in an earlier generation formed perhaps the most conspicuous features of the popular religious erected in christian countries.

Rashdall insists that all the experiences or objects of the divine thought must be conceived of as willed, no less than thought and therefore are not to be distinguished from God's own being in the way in which the involuntary and often painful experiences of ourselves have to be distinguished from the self which knows them. To think of the world (with some idealists) as though it were an eternal complement to God - a sort of siamese twin to which He is eternally and inseparably annexed but which is something other than the content of his will, is to forget our Idealism and still more to forget our 'Monism'. The Dualism is no less Dualism because we are told that the subject is as necessary to the object as the object to the subject. If the object be thought of as something which exists quite independently of being willed by the mind which is compelled to know it but which may yet be constrained to pronounce it very bad. Rashdall says, "when God ceases to be thought of as active power, He soon comes to be regarded as merely an abstraction; if He is still spoken of as "thought", that is merely an abstract way of representing all the true thought of all the individual thinkers in the universe as if they were all held together in a system by an actual consciousness. However adherent this tendency would have been to the essentially religious mind of such a man as

Green, that is the natural development of a philosophy which really banishes the idea of activity not merely from its idea of God but in truth from its conception of the universe as a whole".⁸

But some will insist, not merely that God must have a world to know, but that neither God nor the world, nor the two taken together, can be regarded as the Absolute being. God + His thoughts, subject + object does not satisfy our demand for unity. The Absolute must be both subject and object. It must be that which it knows. It must transcend the distinction between subject and object. It must be both at once nor a third thing that is neither. To this Rashdall answers : "If all that is meant is that what God knows (putting aside for the present other spirits and their experiences) must be in a sense part of Himself, within His own being, I admit that that is so (If what He thinks is also what He wills) but I should contend that such an admission does not get rid of the distinction between subject and object nor is it inconsistent with personality. If what is meant is that there is a kind of third being unlike the only two kinds of being which we have any reason to believe in - neither thinker nor thought, neither subject nor object, neither that which exists for self nor that which exists for other I answer that the supposition

is wholly gratuitous; and that it is, indeed, one to which no real meaning can be attached. It is open to all the objections which have been so copiously hurled at the Kantian 'Noumena', at the Spencirian 'Unknowable', at the crude 'matter' of the 'Naive Realist'. We do not really solve difficulties by chucking contradictions into the Absolute and saying 'Be ye reconciled there, for we are quite sure ye cannot be reconciled here' Mr. Bradley's Philosophy of the Absolute, however brilliant his genius, however invaluable the stimulus which he has given to metaphysical thought in the attempt to construct it, is (I venture to suggest), an attempt to fuse two wholly contradictory and irreconcilable lines of thought - the idealistic and the spinozistic. The idea that thought (thinker) can be an attribute or edjectives of something which is neither thought nor thinker, is wholly inadmissible to one who sees, as clearly as does Mr. Bradley that nothing exists but experience."⁹

It is objected that we have no right to attribute the idea of will to God. Of course, there is much in our experience of volition which belongs to our limitations - sometimes even to our animal organisms. There is sometimes a disposition to find the essence of will in the sense of effort - a mere matter of muscular sensation. But that is

not the essence of will. Our volition is the only experience which enables us to give concrete embodiment to the purely a priority conception of casualty, which includes both final cause and efficient cause. We know why a thing happened, when we know (1) that it realised an end which reason pronounces to have value, and (2) what was the force or, we will say, the real being which turned that end from a mere idea into an actuality, i.e. the actual experience of some soul. Doubtless, Rashdall's definition involves a circle : for causality or activity is an ultimate category which cannot be defined. If Idealism, be true, this force or active reality must be some kind of conscious being : such an active consciousness as we are aware of in ourselves will supply us with at least something more than a merely symbolical expression for the union of force or power or activity with a consciously apprehended end. Even apart from this argument from causality, the mere fact that mind, as know it, is always will as well as thought, would be a sufficient ground for inferring by analogy that, if God is the supreme source of being or mind. He too must be no less than Thought.

The idealistic argument leads up to a view of the universe which finds all reality in souls and their experiences. It remains to ask what is the relation between

these souls or spirits, To account for the world as a mere object of knowledge we have found it necessary to regard one of these spirits, God, as omniscient and eternal, and therefore as sui generis, incomparably superior to human intelligence with their partial and limited knowledge and still more limited capacities of action. We have found it necessary to regard him as causative, as causing those experiences of the other souls of which their own wills are not the cause and as co-operating in some sense with whatever causality is exercised by human wills. In the second place, our souls in all their experiences are dependent upon modifications of a bodily organism which from our point of view must be regarded as due to the thought and will of God. The dependence upon God of the bodily organism carries with it the dependence upon Him also of the spirits to which such bodies are organic. To suppose, the souls independent of God could involve, according to Rashdall, either the monstrous idea of a purely causal coincidence between the retreating brow and the limited intelligence or a no less appalling and arbitrary scheme of pre-established harmony. And thirdly, the whole contrast between the know limits of human knowledge and the inferred omniscience of God prepares us by analogy for a corresponding contrast between an eternal or unoriginated mind and minds which are originated and

dependent. The mind whose knowledge is partial and progressive may well have a beginning. Experience gives us no evidence for pre-existence and we are not justified in going beyond experience except in so far as is necessary to explain experience.

"If the 'reality' be taken to mean self sufficing reality, a being underived from and independent of all other beings, we may admit that such reality cannot be ascribed to the finite self, and can only be ascribed to the whole - to the whole kingdom of selves taken in their relation to one another and to God, who is one of the selves and the source of them. We do not get to any fuller or deeper reality by supposing an existence in which God or the Absolute no longer distinguishes himself from the selves, or the selves from God. Without any such unintelligible confusion there will remain a very real sense in which the being of the originated souls may be regarded as derived from, and even if you like, therefore, in the sense of forming objects of the divine thought, included in the Divine Being. But if we use such language, we must make it plain that the knowledge of the finite self by God does not exhaust its being as is the case with the mere object. It is the knowledge of them that is in God. God must know the self, as

a self which has a consciousness, an experience, a will which is its own - that is, as a being which is not identical with the knowledge that He has of it".¹⁰

In short, all the conclusions which are applicable to each particular self in his relation to another seems to be equally applicable to the relation between God and any other spirit. Undoubtedly, God may, must have an infinitely deeper and complete knowledge of every one of us than any one of us has of another. Each of us is but imperfectly personal. God alone (as Lotze maintained) fully realises the ideal of personality; and that higher personality, that complete knowledge of self must carry with it much more knowledge of other selves than to us is attaining his knowledge of other selves by the clumsy processes of inference or analogy by which we so imperfectly enter into the consciousness of others. It is doubtless that pleasure, pain, colour, sound, volition must be in God something different from what they are to us. And yet even for God such a knowledge of other selves must be in some way dependent upon a likeness (i.e. partial identity of content) between his experience of ours. God must be thought of as feeling, pleasure and pain also, or something like pain, as loving persons and hating evil, as willing the good and so on. God's thought can as little be exactly what our thought is as

our joys and sorrows can be exactly what his are. Yet imperfect knowledge is still knowledge, or we should have to confess that we know nothing at all. And it is arbitrary, out of the three distinguishable but inseparable and mutually dependent aspects or activities of self-conscious being as known to us - will, thought, feeling, to select one, namely thought and to call that God.*

Now a question arises, how can one self know another self not merely as it is for other but as it is for itself? It might be enough to plead that the difficulty is not made by the theory of a Universal consciousness which includes all particular self and the Universal self, it would not explain how one particular self knows another particular self. Rashdall says, "It seems to me as ultimate part of our experience that from self-knowledge we do by inference infer the existence of other selves which are for themselves as well as for us; and philosophy has nothing to do but to record and systematize the way we actually think".¹¹ Again "If I cannot distinguish between my feeling and my knowledge that I feel, naturally I cannot know that another feels; and when we have abstracted from my total consciousness the feeling element, the knowledge element taken by itself can be very plausibly identified with the mere abstract content of knowledge, which is no doubt precisely the same

for any number of selves who think the something, and therefore the same for God and for the other minds whom God knows but is not. It may be plausibly identified with it, but it is not really the same thing. For there will still remain the difference between the content of my knowledge and the actual knowing consciousness. The knowledge taken apart from the feeling and the willing is no doubt an abstraction; it is only an aspect of the single Ego that feels, wills and knows".¹²

According to Rashdall, everything that is real is finite. God is certainly limited by all other beings in the Universe, that is to say, by other selves, in so far as He is not those selves. He is not limited by anything which does not ultimately proceed from his own Nature or will or power. That power is doubtless limited, and in the frank recognition of this limitation of Power lies the only solution of the problem of Evil which does not either destroy the godness of God or destroy moral distinctions altogether. He is limited by his own eternal, if we like 'necessary' nature - a nature which wills eternally the best which that nature has in it to create. The limitation is therefore, what Theologians has often called a 'self-limitation; provided only that this limitation must not be regarded as an arbitrary self-limitation, but as arising from the presence

of that idea of the best that is eternally present to a will whose potentialities are limited, that idea of the best which to platonising Fathers and Schoolmen became the second person of the Holy Trinity. The truth of the world is then neither monism in the pantheising sense of the word, nor pluralism; the world is neither a single Being, but a One mind who gives rise to many. We may of course describe the whole collection of these beings as one Reality, but after all the Reality, whether eternally or only at one particular stage of its development, is a community of persons.

"The indisposition to admit that souls, have an existence which is not merged in that of God, seems to arise largely from the fact that philosophers have imposed upon, themselves and others by the trick of simply assuming (without proof) an identity, between God and the philosophical 'Absolute' and then arguing that if any of the attributes ascribed by theology or religion or commonsense to God are inconsistent with what is implied in the conception of 'the Absolute, no such being as the God of Religion can exist. Personality is undoubtedly inconsistent with the idea of the Absolute or Infinite Being, and therefore it is assumed that God is not personal".¹³

The arguments of Idealism, according to Rashdall, go to prove that over and above our souls there exists such a Being as Theologians, when they have unintelligently aped the language of philosophies not their own have commonly understood by God. The Absolute, therefore, if we must have a phrase which might well be dispensed with, consists of God and the souls, including, of course, all that God and other souls know or experience. The Absolute is not a simple aggregate formed of these spirits, as each of them is if taken apart from the rest, but a society in which each must be taken with all its relations to the rest - as being what it is for other. This leaves quite open the question what is the nature of those relations. It will be quite as true that "the Absolute is a society" in our view as it is in the view of the pluralists who make souls coeternal with God, or as in the view of McTaggart, who makes Reality consist of coeternal souls without God. Only in our view God at a certain point of time caused the souls to exist; or by an eternal act, causes that at a certain time they shall appear in the time - series. The Absolute, we may say, becomes a society; or if we like to think of everything that is to be as having an existence already in some sense in the Absolute, we may say that the Absolute eternally is a God who persists throughout time

together with selves who are eternally present to the mind of God. But who begin to have their real being, in accordance with his will, at particular moments of time.

"If it be urged that the existence of conditions limiting the possibilities of the divine will is inconsistent with the idea of a God who is infinite. I answer that neither religion nor morality, nor again, reasonable philosophy has any interest in maintaining the infiniteness of God in the sense in which a certain tradition of the schools is accustomed to assert it. The limitation must not be conceived of as a limitation imposed by the existence of some other 'being' - some other spirit or a 'matter' with definite properties and an intractable nature of its own. The suggestion that a limits necessarily springs from without is due to that ever present source of metaphysical error, the abuse of spatial metaphor. The limitation must be conceived of as part of the ultimate nature of things. All that really exists must have some limits to its existence".¹⁴

And the ultimate nature of things means, for the Idealist, the nature of God. All that we are concerned with from the ethical point of view is that God should be regarded as willing a universe that is the best that seems possible to a Mind to whom all the possibilities of things are known, and who wills the existence of all that is actual because

he knows it to be best. "A god so conceived is not the traditional Infinite or Absolute of philosophy. The Absolute is the being which alone truly is and of which all other beings may be treated as attributes or predicates; our consciousness cannot intelligibly be treated as the mere attribute or predicate of another consciousness. The Infinite is that Being besides which and beyond which no being exists : our consciousness cannot intelligibly be treated as included in or a part of a divine consciousness, though undoubtedly there is a totality of Being in which both are comprehended".¹⁵

The notion that God includes in Himself all the individual selves of the Universe seems to have arisen chiefly from a forgetfulness of the essential difference between our knowledge of a thing and our knowledge of other selves. A thing is simply what it is for the mind that knows it; it exists for other, nor for itself, what it is for the experience of a mind is therefore its total being. The essential characteristics of a conscious self is that it exists not for others only, but for itself. Its true being is not merely what it is for another mind that knows it, but what it is for itself. Uniqueness belongs to the very essence of consciousness. The 'content' of the consciousness may be common to many minds; but this is only

because a 'content' consists of abstract Universal qualities taken apart from the being whose experience they describe. The content is 'common' to many minds just because in speaking of it we have made abstraction of the uniqueness which belonged to the experience when it was living, present, conscious experience, not yet reduced to abstract universals by the analytic work of thought. Two minds may experience as we say, the same sensation, because, in calling the sensation the same, we have made abstraction of the fact that two people have experienced it. Thoughts as abstract contents are common to many minds; thinking as a psychological phenomenon is always peculiar to one mind. But the Reality of the world is not abstract content, but living experience.

"The Absolute cannot be identified with God, so long as God is thought of as a self-conscious Being. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousness, not as isolated and unrelated beings, but as intimately related (in whatever way) to Him and to another and as forming with Him a system or unity. And, in so far as God is not any of these spirits (when once they have come into being), however, they may be ultimately related to Him, He is not, in the most obvious sense of the word, infinite. We may, if we like, call God infinite in the sense that there is

no other Being but what proceeds ultimately from His will and has its source or ground in Him; and this seems to be all that is meant by many of those who are attached to the term; but the term infinite would seem more properly to belong to that Absolute which includes God and other spirits".¹⁶

It may even be doubted whether it is well to apply the term infinite to anything but space and time (which are not real beings) and whether it is possible to apply it to anything that has real being without being more or less misled in our interpretation of the term by the analogy of space and time. There must be a definite amount of Being in the world. According to Rashdall, metaphysical and ethical consideration alike requires us to recognize a real distinction between God and the lesser spirits who derive their being from him, yet remain in intimate relation to and dependence upon Him, and with Him make up totality of real beings in the world. "If we must use a word which might will be dispensed with, God and the spirits are the Absolute - not God alone. Together they form a unity, but that unity is not the unity of self-consciousness; nor can it, without serious danger of misunderstanding, be thought of as even analogous to that personal unity which is characteristic of consciousness in the highest form in which we know it".¹⁷

7.3 Śaṅkara and Rashdall :

According to Rashdall, belief in God is the postulate of morality. We may be able to give some meaning to morality without the postulate of God, but not its true meaning. If the existence of God is not a postulate of all morality, it is a postulate of a sound morality; for it is essential to that belief which vaguely and implicitly underlies all moral beliefs and which forms the very heart of morality in its highest, more developed, more explicit forms. That belief in God involves something more than the belief that there is a Universal mind for which and in which the moral ideal exists. There can be no meaning in the ideal of morality for a Being who is mere thought and not will. If human morality is a revelation of the ultimate nature of Reality it must represent not merely an ideal existing in and for the mind which is the ultimate source or ground of Reality, but also the nature of the end towards which that Reality is moving. The belief in God was found to be essential to the logical justification of that idea of objective validity which is implicit in the moral consciousness at least in the higher stages of its development. On the other hand, to Śaṅkara Īśvara is the determinate Brahman. Śaṅkara takes up the so called proof for the

existence of God, the epistemological, the cosmological and the physicotheological and shows their futility. The events are interconnected in a system is the assumption of common sense and science, which is increasingly confirmed by experience though never realized in its entirety. For there is much in the world which never directly enters into our experience. A complete apprehension of reality as a whole can justify the hypothesis as a whole that God is and he is the creator of all. Our human experience is incapable of apprehending the world in its entirety achieve a harmony of pure being which restless infinitude. The logical belief that all facts belong to a system and express the mind of God is only an idea. Śaṅkara in his commentary brings together the cosmological and the teleological arguments. Every effect has a cause. We cannot trace the world with its order and design to non-sentient pradhāna or atoms or a being subject to rebirth to its own nature. The Universe has its roots in being, has its basis in being and is established in being. This being according to Śaṅkara transcends all distinctions of subject and object and yet when we speak of Brahman we have to use empirical forms, when viewed as the creator and governor of the Universe Brahman is said to be the personal God.

In Rashdall's View We found that the Absolute cannot be identified with God. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousness not as isolated and Unrelated beings, but as intimately related to Him and to another and as forming with Him a system or unity. The philosophic 'Absolute' or 'Ultimate Reality' no doubt includes me; but the philosophic Absolute is not what the religious consciousness means by God. Mystics have no doubt aspired to a union with God in which personality or selfhood is lost. I will not attempt now to examine the reasonableness or the piety of such an aspiration. I will only point out that the very fact that it was to them an object of aspiration shows that they believed that at one time such an identity did not exist, and they have always very emphatically held that the way to it was steep and difficult and the goal was one which few can reach. Such experiences therefore supply no evidence in favour of the idea that every human and animal consciousness is a part of God. The idea seems at bottom to arise from that fertile source of philosophic error - the abuse of spatial metaphors!⁸ We may, if we like call God infinite in the sense that there is no other Being but what proceeds ultimately from this will and has its source or ground in Him and this seems to be all that is meant by many of those who are

attached to the term but the term infinite would seem more properly to belong to that Absolute which includes God and other spirits. According to Rashdall, metaphysical and ethical consideration alike requires us to recognize a real distinction between God and the lesser spirits who derive their being from Him, yet remain in intimate relation to and dependence upon Him and with Him make up totality of real beings in the world. If we must use a word which might well be dispensed with, God and the spirits are the Absolute - not God alone. Together they form a unity, but that unity is not the unity of self consciousness, nor can it, without serious danger of misunderstanding, be thought of as even analogous to that personal Unity which is characteristic of consciousness in the highest form in which we know it. For Śāṅkara, Brahman is one which has no second. Personal God is the cause of the world. Brahman is one, but for the ordinary intellect that can perceive only through the categories of space, time and causality, the spaceless, timeless, causeless appears as determinate Brahman. From the Vyāvahārika standpoint Īśvara or the personal God acts as a subject to the world of objects. Īśvara is not the transcendental or the Eternal subject which is indeterminate but is the determinate Brahman which is a necessity of our empirical, emotional or devotional self. Śāṅkara appeals

to our faith in God as the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the Universe. He is the immanent principle, the upholder of morality and justice. Śaṅkara maintains that Īśvara associated with māyā is the efficient and the material cause of the world. As creator of the Universe Īśvara can be conceived as Hiranyagarbha and Virāt. Thus Brahman, Īśvara, Hiranyagarbha and virāt are all one and the same reality but it is reality viewed from transcendental and temporal standpoint. Brahman or the Absolute is non - dual but in relation to the world it appears as Īśvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virāt.

7.4 Conclusion :

Rashdall's is a novel attempt in the western moralist tradition. It is very bold also, if we understand his religious background, Christianity does not allow a separation, even notionally, between God and the Absolute. In fact the whole exercise is so new that it places Rashdall a class apart from other philosophers.

The ultimate being is one, a single power, a single Being which is manifested in a plurality of consciousness. One consciousness which is omniscient and eternal and many consciousness which are of limited knowledge, which have a

beginning and some of which, it is possible to have an end. We may, if we like, regard all separate content of consciousness as the particulars. Rashdall is anxious to ascribe personality to God and since he thinks personality involves contrast between the self-hood of the person and the other selves, he has made a separation between the Absolute and God as a person. Rashdall is trenchant in his separatist conception of the relation between God and the Absolute. The ground of his separation between God and the Absolute is that, while God is to be regarded as a self-conscious unity of selves or spirits, the Absolute is the unity of God and the selves, but that unity is not the mere unity of self-conscious spirit resembling McTaggart's Absolute which is the impersonal unity of persons.

Besides this logical ground which makes Rashdall to distinguish between God and the Absolute, there is a religious demand which also compels man to make such distinction. There is that logical unassailability of the concept of the Absolute, there is the religious surrender to a personal God. Whereas the head demands an impersonal Absolute, heart demands a personal God, one responding to our prayers and worships.

It is wrong to assume that Rashdall degrades God to a human level. From the religious standpoint, He is still the supreme, though, out of an absolutist necessity, He is perforce to be supposed to be less real than the Absolute and limited in that sense.

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CHAPTER- VIII

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters we have made an enquiry into the problem of God and the Absolute as we get it in many religious and philosophical standpoints. We have covered the Indian and the Greek traditions as far as we could. We have made a close study of the absolutists like Plotinus, Spinoza, Bradley, Radhakrishnan as also Rashdall, apart from dwelling on many related issues pertinent to the problem. Now in this chapter we shall bring together our findings in the form of conclusions.

8.1 The Absolute is an existent entity which is admitted by ontology, The Absolute is taken as containing within itself all realm of values. With our imperfect insight into modality. We find that there are alternative Absolutes; but to our perfect insight into modality, there are not such alternatives. The Absolute is the ultimate reality from the philosophical standpoint. On the other hand, God is the ultimate reality from the religious standpoint. The belief in God is as old as man's relation to the world. God is experienced by the devotee. Without the concept of God,

religious experience cannot be explained. In religion, we stand in personal relation to some higher entity. There cannot be two ultimate realities, which one is the ultimate, this is the central issue involved in the problem of God and the Absolute.

8.2 There are two different ways of looking at the Infinite in the Upaniṣads. One of the ways describes Brahman as a homogeneous non-composite consciousness, i.e., perfection without a second. It is negatively described as *neti neti* (Via negativa). The Upaniṣadic seers trace all that exist to Brahman. There are several passages in the Upaniṣads that declare that Brahman transforms Itself into the world of things and It is also the material cause of the world. The Absolute in the Upaniṣads is not always a metaphysical abstraction. The seers do not appear to be assured of Its nature. They sometimes make It the Absolute which can not be characterised by the phenomenal categories, at other times they identify It with the supreme person whom we are to adore and worship. The seers of the Upaniṣads have not made a clear-cut distinction between God and the Absolute. No doubt, they have raised the problem,

regarding the reality as God and as the Absolute; but they have left the problem of the relation between these two unsolved.

8.3.1 Early Greek philosophers did not discuss the problem regarding the relation between God and the Absolute. The germ of this problem, appeared for the first time in Greek philosophy, in the philosophy of Plato. The central principle of his philosophy is the theory of Ideas. The Idea of Good is the highest reality or the Absolute. God fashions matter into the images of Ideas. There is no ground of explanation in the Ideas themselves, so Plato is compelled to introduce a creator, God.

8.3.2 Though Plato has raised the problem, there is no solution in Plato's philosophy. But in Plotinus' philosophy, there is a solution regarding this problem. The Good is the principle on which all depends to which all aspires and from which all proceeds. For Plato, the Absolute Being can be no abstract unity, but only a unity in multiplicity. Plotinus begins by ignoring this supremely important philosophical principle. God, he thinks, is absolutely One. He is the unity which lies beyond all multiplicity.

The sole predicates which Plotinus applies to Him are the One and the Good. The first emanation from the One is called the Nous. This Nous is thought, mind, reason. Plato regarded the Absolute itself as thought. But for Plotinus, thought is derivative. From the Nous, as second emanation, proceeds the world soul. Plotinus was the last great exponent of Greek dualism. He makes a change in the earlier dualism of Greece, for while maintaining the division of form and matter, he refers the matter as well as the form to the One. Plotinus says that the God of practical reason is the universal soul; the God of devout and thankful contemplation, the great spirit, the God of our most inspired moments, the Absolute.

Hence between Plato and Plotinus, Plotinus' grasp on the issue is stronger, more logical and metaphysically more acceptable. But yet in him also we do not get a clear solution as we get in, say, the philosophy of Sankara.

8.4 Mediaeval philosophers have not discussed anything about the relation between God and the Absolute. In their philosophies the concept of God or the Absolute did not play any role distinctly. There are only some vague ideas

about them. The whole mediaeval western philosophy serves only negatively in the understanding of the problem in the sense that the Church Fathers did not raise their thought to daring metaphysical heights. For them, the only reality was God. In the absence of the abstract concept of the Absolute, they were free from making any attempt at relating God to the Absolute. Mediaeval period, in fact, is the pinnacle of the religious dominance over not only philosophy but virtually over everything. Hence, in that period, the problem is almost non-existent.

8.5.1 For Spinoza, the ultimate reality is the substance which he identified with God. God as the Absolute must be both epistemologically and ontologically independent. God is self-conceived and self-existent. God must be admitted to be the universal Reality. Being universal, God must be absolutely indeterminate and infinite, because there is nothing which makes Him determinate. The Absolute is regarded by Spinoza, as the cause or ground of all phenomena. The Absolute is immanent in the world as the ground of it and transcendent to it as indeterminate. The Absolute must be understood not in relation to the finite but as

the negation of the finite. Spinoza, in his philosophy, has made the equation of substance or God and the world.

8.5.2 Spinoza in the west begins his philosophical thinking in the manner of the Upaniṣads. His idea of God has a striking resemblance to the Upaniṣadic conception of Brahman. In the Upaniṣads, Brahman is essentially self-existent being and hence must be apprehended through its essence and not by any other means. Spinoza also holds the same view, when he says that the substance can be conceived through itself. Spinoza was impressed by the idea of oneness between God and the world. It is so similar to the Upaniṣadic conception of Immanence. Immanence stands for the conception which signifies a total identification of existence with Reality which equates God and the world and as such leads to pantheism, Spinoza is the first great pantheist of the west. He is a perceptible improvement on Zeno, Parmenides or Plotinus.

8.6 Bradley says that the highest reality is supra-personal. This highest reality is the Absolute and the Absolute means that which is in the end related to nothing. In Bradley's philosophy, God of religion is an appearance and in the Absolute God and religion are equally lost. God taken as thinking and feeling being

has a private personality. But sundered from those relations which qualify him, God is inconsistent emptiness, In religion the worshipper is related to God. So the Absolute cannot be the God of religion, because It is neither a self-conscious spirit nor a person. The Absolute is not identical with the highest reality, for God has will and personality and these are marks of imperfection and finitude. The highest reality is the Absolute and the Absolute means that which in the end is related to God. When we begin to worship the Absolute, make it the object of religion, we in that moment have transformed it. Bradley's view regarding the relation between God and the Absolute is that if we identify the Absolute with God, this is not the God of religion and if we separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole. So it can be held that the metaphysical basis of the idea of God is the Absolute. It, so to say, appears as God.

8.7.1 Sri Aurobindo does not identify reality either with Being or becoming, but looks upon both of these as poises of reality. The Absolute is beyond the two. It is an eternal and infinite and therefore, is in its essence indeterminate and indefinable. Reality manifests itself to our consciousness in the Universe by real and fundamental truth of Its

Being which transcend the Universe and are the foundation upon which the Universe rests. There is One Truth, One Reality, the being and many are Its becomings. The Truth which is behind all dualities, all contradictions, all variations is Brahman, the omnipresent reality. The Absolute manifests Itself as Ātman, Purusa and Īśvara. Aurobindo is a pure monist, °for him God is the descent form of the Absolute. And the creation is a descent of God. God of Aurobindo is not like Śaṅkara's God. In Śaṅkara's philosophy, God is not real from the transcendental point of view. But in Aurobindo, God is as real as the Absolute, since It is only a stage in the hierarchical unfoldment of the Absolute.

8.7.2 Sri Aurobindo's conception of Divine Descent has an outward similarity with Plotinus' theory of Emanations. Like Plotinus, he also looks upon the process of creation as the emergence from God of a hierarchically graded world, the emergent being of all grades of reality. But the whole conception of creation and the relation of the created world to God are totally different in his philosophy from what they are in the system of Plotinus. The individual soul in Plotinus' system realises God both as the immanent

principle working within and also as the transcendent source which the individual can reach by a long progression. But for the rest of the universe God is only a transcendent principle, the ultimate source of all emanation. But in Aurobindo's philosophy, both these aspects of Divinity are kept in mind from the very beginning. Even in the lowest form of matter the Absolute is present as an indwelling principle. The impulse towards self-improvement, towards fuller and fuller self-expression comes from within. At the same time the progress is through a hierarchy of different grades of reality, the products of successive descents of the Absolute. It is not the individual alone who realises this double aspect of Divinity, but the whole universe shares this realisation.

8.8 The most striking feature of Radhakrishnan's metaphysics is the concept of the Absolute. The Absolute is not only pure existence, pure consciousness, pure bliss, an indeterminate formless and impersonal Being, but also God as the *mūrta*, the personal creator Radhakrishnan makes only a nominal distinction between God and the Absolute. The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God and God is the

Absolute from the cosmic point of view. The Absolute is the transcendent divine, God and the Absolute are not mutually exclusive concepts nor are they unrelated. The Absolute is the sum and the source of limitless possibilities. When one of these possibilities has become actualized then the Absolute stands in special relation to this actualized possibility. In this special relation the Absolute appears as God.

8.9 The monism of Śaṅkara is based on his interpretation of the Brahma Sūtra and the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara's view of the reality is the expansion of the view of truth embodied in the Upaniṣads. Brahman is the ultimate reality. In an Absolute view point, there is no place for God. From the practical point of view, Īśvara is the first cause of the world. But from the Absolute point of view, Brahman is the cause of the origination, subsistence and dissolution of the world (janmādḥyasya yataḥ). Śaṅkara brings the concept of God in order to explain the world. To say that the infinite Brahman is the cause of the finite world, is to admit that the Infinite is subject to the limitation of time.

The relation between Brahman and Īśvara is a special application of the general problem of the relation between Brahman and the world. Īśvara is Brahman in association with

Māyā. He is the creator, preserver and ruler of the world. since, Śaṅkara is a monist, for him Brahman is the only reality, though from the practical standpoint Isvara acts as a subject to the world of objects.

8.10 Rashdall says that the belief in God is the postulate of morality. The belief in God is essential to the logical justification of the idea of objective validity which is implicit in the moral consciousness. Objective morality implies the belief in God. The Absolute must include God and the created spirit (self) taken together. The Absolute is the being which alone truly is and of which all other beings may be treated as attributes or predicates. The Absolute cannot be identified with God. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousness not as isolated and unrelated beings but as intimately related. The ground of his separation between God and the Absolute is that God to be regarded as a self conscious unity of selves, the Absolute is the unity of God and the selves. According to Rashdall, apart from this logical ground, there is a religious demand which compels man to make such distinction. Though Rashdall makes the distinction between God and the Absolute, but his view regarding the

metaphysical status of God is not so clear or logical as we found in Śaṅkara and Spinoza.

8.11 In our comparison between Śaṅkara and other prominent absolutists, the findings are :

8.11.1 Śaṅkara's solution of the problem of one and many may be considered as suggesting a way of reconciling the apparent inconsistencies in Spinoza. The Vedāntists hold that the ultimate reality must be understood as pure unity, and it is only at a lower stage that difference should be understood. Spinoza insofar as he refrains from introducing difference in the Absolute is in fundamental agreement with Śaṅkara. Again although Spinoza does not explicitly give us any theory like Māyāvāda for the explanation of the world, yet his conception of attributes along with his view that all determination is negation (raminiscent of Upaniṣadic *neti neti*) can be regarded as the necessary hint of Māyāvāda. The concept of Māyā is introduced by Śaṅkara in order to explain the world. In the same way, Spinoza brings the attributes in the substance in order to explain the world. For Spinoza the world is a manifestation of

Thought and Extension, and these are attributes and not effects of substance; attributes which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of Substance. The attributes as superimposed on Substance are only subjective and hence illusory.

8.11.2 Śāṅkara's approach to the problem of the Absolute is fundamentally different from Bradley's. He does not simply build a precious speculative bridge between appearances and the Absolute. For Śāṅkara the philosophical pilgrim has not to journey from mere appearance to the Absolute, but to extricate the Absolute which is already there as his very self from the superimposition of the appearances upon it. But Bradley establishes the reality of his Absolute purely and entirely on speculative grounds. It is an inference from the contingent and contradictory character of the world of appearances. Śāṅkara's distinction of Īśvara from the Absolute stands in sharp contrast to Bradley's distinction of God from the Absolute. For Bradley, God is an appearance which exists within the Absolute. But for Śāṅkara, Īśvara is the Brahman in its conditional aspect. Bradley dismisses God as a self-contradictory appearance among appearances. But Śāṅkara's God

has a unique cosmic significance as the supreme ruler and controller of the world.

8.11.3 Regarding the nature of the Absolute or Brahman, Śaṅkara's view is different from that of Bradley. Bradley's Absolute is a unity of diversity, a system of elements and individuals, concrete and perfect. It is a complete, composite one, and not a simple one. The Absolute is rich and a concord, it is neither blank nor a discord. The Absolute is a harmony. The richness of the Absolute is in its appearances. The Absolute, therefore, is not other than its appearances. The Absolute is one, as a composite, harmonious, systematic one. Turning to Śaṅkara's Brahman, it cannot be called "Absolute" in a Bradleyan sense. For Śaṅkara's Brahman, has nothing similar to it (svajātīya-bheda-sūnya), has nothing different from it (vijātīya-bheda-sūnya), has no internal differences (svagata-bheda-sūnya). Thus the Brahman of Śaṅkara is not the rich Absolute of Bradley. It is not composite and not a harmony, not a whole, not a system, not an individual. Appearances do not constitute its contents nor lend richness to it. Śaṅkara's Brahman is not a unity, not a concord, not a discord.

8.11.4 In Bradley, the Absolute subsumes the appearances, but in Śaṅkara the Brahman conceals the appearances. For Bradley, Reality itself is nothing at all apart from appearances. To Śaṅkara, appearances, i.e., whatever is different from Reality, are nothing or unreal, because of their difference from the Reality. As he puts it -- *Brahma-bhinnam, sarvam mithyā, Brahma-bhinnatvāt*. Thus the appearances of Bradley and those of Śaṅkara are not appearances in the same sense of the term. For Śaṅkara, the appearances have no independent metaphysical status along side the Absolute or Brahman which is the only Reality. But Bradley invests the appearances both with independent and interdependent ontological status.

8.11.5 Radhakrishnan expounds and defends the religious thought of Śaṅkara. In the Advaita of Śaṅkara the emphasis is more on the Absolute, but in Radhakrishnan's philosophy there is more stress on the concrete character of God. For Śaṅkara, *Īsvara* or God is a phenomenal appearance of the Absolute which must ultimately pass into it. Radhakrishnan even though subscribing partially to this contention of Śaṅkara, maintains that this is nothing but the return of the Absolute to its own state of self-composure. Radhakrishnan

expressly denied that God can be a mere appearance of the Absolute. To Radhakrishnan, the difference between God and the Absolute is logical and not chronological or ontological.

8.11.6 In Rashadall's philosophy, God has a unique status. God is regarded as the postulate of morality; But God in Śaṅkara, has a determinate existence. Brahman conditioned by Māyā appears as God. God does not have a separate existence apart from Brahman. The Absolute of Rashadall cannot be identified with God. The Absolute is the highest reality. Though God is in the Absolute, it has an independent existence. But in Śaṅkara's philosophy they are the same reality viewed from the transcendental and the temporal standpoints.

Closing remark :

From the variety in the solutions of the problem of God and the Absolute one thing stands out, that is that all the solutions reflect the personal philosophical positions of the individual philosophers involved. As it is a conceptual problem, a philosophy by itself, it is hard to imagine unanimous solution to this. There is no way of solving it by calculations. But even among these solutions certain

theoretical valuation is feasible. For instance, if there is just one ultimate truth in the universe and that is the Absolute and if religious feelings are genuine (i.e. God is not an illusion) then we have to accept that both the Absolute and God are so related that ultimately the two are one. But such a solution, in which God will occupy a relatively secondary place, will not be acceptable to people with strong religious sentiments. Hence, this is the bottom line that one can reach. A solution that is acceptable to all is yet to emerge. But some solutions are definitely more impressive than others -- say for instance, the one given by Dr. Radhakrishnan.

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