

KNOWLEDGE, REALITY & THE HIGHEST GOOD
(A Reappraisal of the major Themes of the Upanisads)

Abstract

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KNOWLEDGE REALITY AND THE HIGHEST GOOD

(A Reappraisal of the major Themes of the Upanisads)

The Upanisads are indisputably, the earliest philosophical classics of the world. They embody the quintessence of the Vedic wisdom and are the fountain head of subsequent philosophical speculations in India. The Upanisads are otherwise termed as the Vedānta because they form the concluding portion of the Vedas and more significantly mark the consummation of the Vedic thinking.

Philosophers like Sankara, Rāmānuja, Mādhva, Nimbārka, and Vallabha have interpreted the Upanisadic themes in the light of their respective metaphysical convictions. In the contemporary period, the Upanisads have engaged the attention of philosophers and indologists, both eastern and western. Scholars like Max Muller, Deussen, Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Dasgupta have also written commentaries on the Upanisads. It is noteworthy that the studies of the classical commentators are of the nature of interpretations. That is to say, they have sought to expound the Upanisadic doctrines in the light of their respective philosophical viewpoints; whereas the works of the contemporary scholars are, by and large, expository in nature. But there has hardly been any significant enterprise to present an exhaustive and coherent account of the ontology, epistemology and axiology

of the Upanisads in the light of the objections or criticisms of the positivists and the analytical philosophers of today.

This dissertation is but an humble attempt in this direction. The focal concern of the work has been two fold i.e. (a), to present an exhaustive, coherent and integrated exposition of the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the Upanisads, (b), to offer justification and defense of the Upanisadic views against the actual and anticipated onslaughts of its critics. The chapterwise break-up is as follows: (a), Introduction, (b), The Unspeakable, (c), Unity in Diversity, (d), Knowledge, (e), The Highest Good, and (f), Conclusion.

The introduction is an attempt to determine the place of the Upanisads in the corpus of the Vedic literature. To this end, it contains an outline of the basic themes of the different Vedas, R̥k, yajur, Sāma and Atharva and the different components of them namely, Saṁhitās, Brāhmanas, Āranyakas, and the Upanisads. From the point of view of theme, the Upanisads are out and out philosophical and mark a noticeable departure from the pluralistic undertone of the Saṁhitās and the ritualistic obsessions of the Brāhmanas. However, the Upanisads can also be seen as a growth from and within the tradition continuing and perfecting the

monistic inklings in the Saṁhitās and Brāhmanas. The criticism relating to the claim that the Upanisads are impersonal and are of the nature of revelations has also been answered. Moreover, the controversies as to the origin of the Upanisads; some attributing it's authorship to the Kṣatriyas and other disputing the claim, have been discussed. The view that the Upanisads have been amenable to the Non-Aryan influence and incorporate cultural synthesis has also been given due attention.

The chapter, "The Unspeakable", seeks to give an exposition of the nature of the ultimate Reality. Brahman is construed to be the primal world ground, the substratum, the reality underlying creation, preservation and destruction. The selfsame reality, as the essence of the macrocosm and the microcosm has been conceived as Brahman and Ātman respectively. As the controlling logos it is the arbiter of the macrocosmic and microcosmic phenomena. As the essence, it eludes all attempts at particularisation in terms of categories and concepts. Temporal categories do not apply to it. Time becomes meaningful only against the world of multiplicity and change. Brahman being the begetter of the manifold and the invariable substratum of all mutations is rightly said to be the author of time and therefore, remains beyond the ambit of time. Spatial categories also fall short of Brahman. The spatial concepts describe an object of finite dimension.

Brahman, by virtue of its infinity is conceived as the smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. To describe it through spatial notion is to finitise the infinite. Similarly, the causal categories are also seen as inappropriate. Causality presupposes contingency. A thing amenable to causal explanation is ontologically dependent on its causal antecedents. It has a beginning and an end i.e., it is meaningful to speak of its prior and posterior non-existence in time. Brahman, being beginningless (Anādi) and endless (Ananta) is the eternal (Sāsvata). The causal descriptions are not only irrelevant but positively misleading. As the essence, it pervades the totality. It is immanent as well as transcendent. As the immanent principle it inhabits in every structure. So everything is real as far as it is the expression of the essence. As essence it resists all descriptions and excludes everything. As the macrocosm, it includes everything and all descriptions seem to be appropriate of it. There has been four distinct ways of conceiving the Absolute. (a), 'Neti Neti' - is a logical caution against affirmative or exclusive predication, (b), The negative predications point to the inadequacy of linguistic description and the transcendence of Brahman, (c), Contradictory predications are interpreted as the only positive description

of the reality, which, in its macrocosmic stance accommodates all possible predications, therefore, contradictory predications, (d), Silence; making a case for transcendence of the verbal modes of apprehension.

The chapter 'Unity in Diversity' seeks to spell out the relation between Brahman and the world. The Absolute has been described variously, as 'sat' and 'asat'. It is 'asat' in the sense that as the potentiality; the particularities remain latent in it as the mere possibilities. Brahman and the world are denotative of the unmanifest and the manifest state of the same reality. Though causal to the world, Brahman is not extrinsic to it. The world is not a negation of Brahman but a continuation of it. The Upanisads do not advocate creation de novo. Brahman does not create the world out of nothing but evolves itself into the world by the act of self-limitation or self expansion. As 'sat' (being) it is construed to be eternal, and inconsequential and is different from the finite and contingent existents. Though one, it appears as many because of the material exterior that clothes it. Everything macrocosmic and microcosmic are but the modificatory appearance of the selfsame essence. As the underlying consciousness it is the real agent of all actions and cognitions. It is not the empirical consciousness that accompanies the acts of consciousness but the universal consciousness

that operates in and through different individuals and outlives different states of consciousness. The Upanisads do not play down the differences but by conceiving everything as a manifestation of the cosmic restore dignity to the finites. Nothing is valued for its own sake; but for the fact that it is an expression of Brahman. Brahman is the unity running in and through all the diversities in respect of their origin, existence and dissolution. It is the supreme matrix, the sustaining principle and the ultimate absorbent of everything. The Upanisads do not advocate a linear view of creation. The creation is not only cyclical but is eternally going on. This is certified by the cosmic sounds a, u, m (Om) which are but the acoustic manifestations of the cosmic act of creation, preservation and destruction respectively.

The chapter, 'Knowledge', is an attempt to reconstruct the epistemology of the Upanisads. There has been an explicit distinction between the higher knowledge (Parā) and the lower knowledge (Aparā). Aparā is denotative of the empirical knowledge which is pronounced as mere names. They are deemed inadequate as they do not enable one to attain the highest good. This goes to indicate that the Upanisads do not advocate a disinterested passion for knowledge. Knowledge is to be pursued for the highest good but not for the sake of

knowledge. Knowledge of the self is said to be the 'Parā' as by obtaining it one obtains the highest good. In the Upanisads, the Self is construed to be both the subject and the object of knowledge. They dwell at length to highlight the unknowability of the Self by the empirical modes of knowing. The Self being the very subject, the very presupposition in all acts of knowing; cannot be made the object of knowledge. Knowledge presupposes the exclusiveness of the knower and the known. Brahman is infinite and all pervasive. So how can the infinite be externalised as the object of knowledge of the finite? Brahman being all inclusive, the knower also constitutes an integral part of it. Hence, there lurks the oddity of the part knowing the whole. But the Upanisadic thinkers, instead of ending up with agnostic note; hold out the plausibility of an alternative mode of knowing, whereby, one knows the self by becoming it. Since the Brahman is not other than the Self within, the knowledge of it, amounts to self knowledge. The self knowledge is the highest knowledge because by knowing the self one knows everything; that is to say, by knowing the essence one knows everything; that is to say, by knowing the essence one knows the modifications and conversely an adequate understanding of the modifications necessarily calls for the knowledge of the essence. It is significant that the

certitude of empirical knowledge calls for sensory competence and the effective interaction between the subject and the object. But in respect of Highest knowledge what is insisted upon is the moral competence of the knower. The Self can be known only by one whose passions have been stilled and mind has been composed and concentrated. Hence it is to be imparted only to the worthy, wedded to a life of penance and austerity, displaying a deep yearning for the knowledge of the ultimate. Meditation on 'Om', cultivation of the yogic practices have also been highlighted in some texts. The role of a teacher (Acārya or Guru) is also considered indispensable. The Upanisads also insist on the moral competence of the teacher. It is enjoined that only he who is established in perfection i.e. the knower of Brahman, can impart instructions about the Self.

The chapter 'The Highest Good' is devoted to unearth and expound the ethical views of the Upanisads. It is significant that they equate the highest knowledge with the highest good. The distinction between 'Preya' (Pleasurable), and 'Sreya' (Preferable) point to a novel dimension of human pursuits. In other ethical theories the norms and values are at the core existence - promoting and are humanistic. But the Upanisads construe the physical existence as a passing phase in the recurrence of birth and death which are but the

preparatory phases to reach the Brahmahood, the summum bonum. An action or pursuit is said to be good and enviable if it conduces to the ultimate end. The highest state has been described as Āptakāma, Akāma and Ātmakāma signifying that it being attained, all desires are fulfilled (Āptakāma) and this being so there is no desire (Akāma) and the only persisting desire is the desire for the self (Ātmakāma). The Upanisads do not plead for inaction or passivism. What they decry is not the phenomenal good but an exclusive obsession or indulgence with them. Action is not incompatible with the highest good. What binds is not the 'action' but the desire behind. Action binds when performed in ignorance but it liberates when performed with the right ideation. Because of ignorance and infatuation one entertains oneself to be the real doer and waits upon to appropriate the consequences of the actions to oneself. Thus he remains bound to the action-reaction nexus i.e., to the karmic bondage. Under the sway of ignorance, he takes the world of names and forms to be real and is goaded by the considerations of mine and thine. This makes him love and hate, happy and sorrowful. On the contrary, for the knower of Brahman everything is verily the cosmic. For him everyone is a kindred, not only the human beings but also the animals, plants and even the inanimate creations. He lives spontaneously in active communion with the rest of the creation. He becomes the very

paradigm of ideals or perfections. They are called the real Brāhmins who become the very reference points in all acts of moral valuations. Hence they are indeed, beyond the dualities of good and evil. Man is free to act but is not free to choose the consequences of the action. But the real freedom (Svarāj) is obtained only when one is established in the supreme perfection, whereof, one glories in one's native state of truth, consciousness and bliss (Saccidānanda).

The 'Conclusion' sums up the findings of the dissertation. Each paragraph or section contains an explicit account of the problems, followed by the attempted solutions or answers. They are as follows:

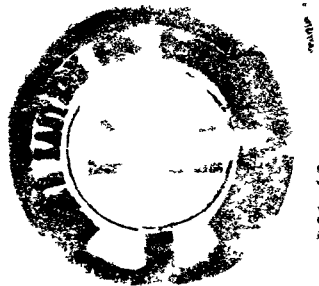
(a), The monistic or absolutistic strain of the upanisadic doctrines bear an unmistakable influence of the non-Aryan thinking. (b), The upanisadic metaphysics is unique of its kind. Unlike other sister metaphysical systems which are rational and speculative, the upanisadic metaphysic is a-rational and a-speculative. Brahman and Ātman are not of the nature of logical postulation but existentially real. (c), We have tried to disagree from the classical commentators like Sankara, Rāmānuja, Mādhva, Vallabha and Nimbārka, whose interpretations are known as Visistādvaita, Dvaita, Suddhādvaita and Dvaitādvaita respectively. Instead, the

Advaitadvaitādvaita-vāda (the contemporary interpretation by Shri Ananda Murtii) is thought to be the most befitting and plausible interpretation of the upanisadic metaphysics. (d), Four distinct approaches have been outlined in respect of the attempts to delineate the nature of Brahman. In this context, objections of the Analysts have been spelt out and answered. This section expounds the logic of contradictory predications and defends silence as a significant mode of communication. (e), The upanisadic epistemology introduces us to a novel dimension of knowledge whereof, knowing consist in becoming. (f), The uniqueness of the highest knowledge consist in the fact that by knowing That (Brahman) one knows everything. The possible objections to this claim have been met. (g), The uniqueness of knowledge also consists in showing that knowledge is not value-neutral. Ethical competence is insisted upon as the necessary prerequisite for the knowledge of the ultimate and the highest good is said to ensue on attainment of the highest knowledge. (h), The upanisadic axiology does not cognise the existence-values as the ultimate. Attainment of Brahmahood is construed to be summum bonum. Hence anything conducive to this end is deemed as a value. Thus, sacrifice and renunciation have been advocated as the real enjoyment. (i), The axiology is rooted squarely in ontology and epistemology. (j), The

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Certified that the subject matter of this Thesis is the record of work done by Mr. Aditya Kumar Mohanty, that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the thesis had not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other university.

In habit and character Mr. Aditya Kumar Mohanty is a fit and proper person for the degree of Ph.D.

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TRANSLITERATION

Vowels	- a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, e, ai, o, au
anusvāra	- ṁ
visarga	- ḥ
<u>Consonants</u>	
gutturals	- k, kh, g, gh, ṅ
palatals	- c, ch, j, jh, jñ
cerebrals	- ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ
dentals	- t, th, d, dh, n
labials	- p, ph, b, bh, m
semi vowels	- y, r, l, v
sibilants	- s, ś, ṣ
aspirate	- h

ABBREVIATIONS

Upanisad	- U.
Isa	- Isa.
Kena	- Kenai
Kaṭha	- Katha.
Aitareya	- Ait.
Taittiriya	- Taitt.
Muṇḍaka	- Muṇḍ.
Māṇḍukya	- Maṇḍ.
Praśna	- Praśna
Svetāsvatara	- Svetā.
Kausitāki	- Kaus.
Maitri	- Mait.
Chāndogya	- Cha.
Brhadāranyaka	- Br.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The Upanisads embody the quintessence of the Vedic wisdom and are the fountain head of the subsequent philosophical speculations in India. The Upanisads are otherwise termed as "Vedānta" because they form the concluding portion of the Vedas and more significantly because they mark the consummation of the Vedic thinking. Philosophy is born into a soil or tradition. So any faithful appreciation of the texts calls for an understanding of its "before" and "after" making it imperative to trace their place in the whole corpus of the Vedic literature against the backdrop of the socio-cultural milieu.

As the root 'Vid' signifies knowledge, the term 'Veda' in its most generic sense is denotative of the whole body of Vedic literature including the four main books, namely, the Rg-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda and the six distinct disciplines that grew having drawn their authority and sustenance from the Vedas. They are the six Vedāngas, namely, Sikṣā (the science of pronunciation), Chandas (metre), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Nirukta (explanation of Vedic words), Jyotisa (astronomy) and Kalpa (books of sacred ordinance), containing the directives for the application of Mantras and Brāhmanas at the time of sacrifice) Grihya Sutras (rules pertaining to the domestic do's and don'ts), Samaya Charika Sutras (rules relating to the

conventional conduct). The six Vedāngas together with the systems of philosophy (Darsanas) and the Dharma Sutras (such as the ordinances of Manu) and the Purānas are taken as 'Smṛti'. whereas the Veds are viewed as 'Śṛuti.' Interpretation of 'Veda' as 'Śṛuti' (anything that is heard) is suggestive of the fact that they (the Vedas) were meant to be remembered having been heard and were handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. It was primarily so because the art of writing was not known to them and also because they were supposed to be so sublime and esoteric, to be imparted only to the select few in privacy. As the tradition records, even subsequently after the writing was in practice, the orthodox teachers appeared to be opposed to the idea of putting them down, obviously because they were considered to be too sacred to deserve codification. The only rationale behind this might be that the Acāryas were haunted by the fear of their being misused, misinterpreted, or watered down by the unworthy. But the fact remains that their characteristic disapproval of a written tradition also led to the non-availability of the tradition in its entirety because of the fallibility of memory.

Though the tradition places the number of the Vedas at four, i.e., the Ṛg, the Yajur, the Sāma and the Atharva, the more orthodox scholars restrict them to three, (Veda Trayi) excluding the Atharva Veda as an unwarranted accretion or a

later extrapolation. The later view seems to be plausible on the strength of the fact that the Aharva Veda, from the points of view of theme, language and style marks a significant departure from the other Vedas. Each Veda in its turn is said to have four distinguishable components, namely - the Samhitā, the Brāhmana, the Āranyaka and Upanisad. The Samhitā refers to the books containing the hymns, invocations, litanies addressed to the various personified deities of nature. The Brāhmanas, on the other hand, are the liturgical texts that contain the details as to the performance of the ceremonies and the sacrifices. In the Brāhmanas, the mantras or the hymns of the Samhitā are detached from their native context and are employed as part of the rites and rituals to serve certain specific ends in the ceremony. The importance and efficacy of the meticulous observances are brought home by arguments, narrations and popular legends. The Āranyakas appear as appendage to the Brāhmanas in which one finds a tangible shift from the obsession with formalism (so characteristic of the Brāhmanas) in favour of more liberal and symbolic interpretation of them. One notices in the Āranyakas a persistent attempt for the progressive emancipation of the Vedic thinking from the ritualistic ado and ostentations. This finds its consummation in the speculation of the Upanisads which are said to have grown out of them. The coinage of the term 'Āranyaka' has the obvious suggestion that they were supposed to have been taught not in the village, i.e.

amidst the din and bustle of ordinary human habitation, but in the seclusion and quietude of the forests. Yaska and others trace three different phases in the development of the Vedic literature, namely, the Samhitā, the Brāhmana and the Sutra. Brāhmana includes within its purview Viddhi (rules for liturgical institutes), Arthavāda (the symbolic interpretation of rules), Vedānta (the Upanisads). By all reckoning, the Upanisads exhibit the height and complete fruition of the Vedic speculation.

The Vedas in their most specific sense (as it is in currency in common parlance or in philosophical circles) refer only to the Samhitā which are but a collection of "mantras." In the R̥g Veda i.e. in the R̥g Samhita, one comes across the spontaneous outpourings, the poetic exuberance of the ancient man at the grandeur and vastness of the reality around. It consists of invocations or hymns (Suktas) each addressed to a particular deity and its authorship attributed to a particular seer (R̥si). Though Agni and Indra appear as the focal point of most of the eulogies their various manifestations in form of Surya, Mitra, Savitru, Pusan, Aditya, Parjanya, etc., and other Gods such as Varuna, Rudra, Asvinis, Maruts, Ushā also command absorbing attention of the seers. Lack of continuity and symmetry among different suktas render it evident that it was composed over an expanse

of time by different individuals. One also notices the same hymn being addressed to different Gods. This points to the close interaction and to the synthetic growth of the literature. The Vedic seer seems to summon all his poetic genius to extol in exquisitely worded hyperboles, the power, vastness, munificence and even beauty of the Gods. Apart from the elaborate panegyrics, the hymns also contain description of offerings and prayers. The offerings are mainly the clarified butter and the fermented juice of the Soma plant. The Gods are supplicated to bestow their blessings in exchange of the choicest offerings. The prayers ask for wealth, food, progeny, victory over rivals and protection against evil. All these have the necessary suggestion that the composition of the Rg. Veda presupposes an established system of worship and rituals.

Apart from the good many number of verses which reappear in the Yajur Veda it contains the Yajus or the liturgical formulas in rhythmic prose. The hymns of the Rg Veda which were primarily devotional in their undertone become secondary in being subservient to the observance of the rites and the rituals. The Yajur contains the details regarding the institutional mode of worship and rites. The right performance was believed to ensure the cherished dividends and any deviation from the set procedures was thought to entail

contrary results. So the Yajur presupposes the priority of the Ṛg and bears witness to the popularity and rampant practice of ostentitious formalism.

The Sāma Veda has hardly any thematic peculiarity of its own except that it employs, mostly, the hymns of the Ṛg Veda; broken and rearranged; meant to be recited on different occasions of the sacrificial observances. It is predominantly the Veda of music. Certain references in the Brāhminical law books indicate that the Sāma was subsequently held in low esteem compared to the Ṛg and the Yajur. The chanting of the Sāma hymns was said to be as jarring and repulsive as that of the sound of the asses and howling of the wolves. It was enjoined that the recital of the Ṛg and the Yajur ought to stop at the recital of the Sāma.

In the Atharva Veda one finds a distinct echo of animistic faith and popular cults such as charms and exorcisms. The hymns and formulas are employed for the purposes of producing hypnotic charms to win over in love, marriage, familial relations and for conjuring sorceries against enemies and rivals. The nature, objects and the creatures are thought to be animated by spirits. The Gods are thought to be pliable to the magical rites and incantations. The older name of the Veda is Atharva angirasa named after two mythical seers. The former (Atharva) is associated with the

holy charms and the later (Angirasa) with the black art or witchcrafts. Atharva testifies to the unmistakable influence of Avidyā Tantra (the degenerate form of the Tantric Cult) and therefore, is a positive evidence to the cross-cultural assimilation of the Aryan and the native culture of the Aborigines.

It is hardly paying to enter into the controversies among Indologists and Culture Historians about the date of the Vedas and the Upanisads. It is indisputably evident that the composition and systematisation of the Vedas were complete much before the rise of Buddhism. Barring certain later Upanisads, all the major Upanisads like Aitareya, Taittirīya, Kausitāki, Chāndogya, Kena, Brhad Āranyaka, Isa and Katha are pre-Buddhistic. The relevant references in Buddhist literatures indicate doctrinal priority of the Upanisads. As the epigraphical findings establish the rock edicts or Buddhist inscriptions to be the earliest literary records; in determining the age of the Vedas and the Upanisads; one has got to fall back on rational conjectures on the strength of the internal evidence such as style, language, myths and allusions. As per one estimate, the Mantra period ranges from 1200 to 800 B.C.; the Brāhmanas (including Āranyaka and Upanisads) from 800 to 600 B.C. and the Sutra period from 600 to 200 B.C. whereas some fix the Mantra period from

1200 to 2000 B.C. and still some, in an air to accord greater antiquity to the Vedas fix the date at 4000 B.C. These debates apart; what is significant and worth considering is the rise of the Vedic Schools or the Sākhās. It is, by far, an established proposition that a considerable stretch of time must have elapsed between the composition of the Mantras and the Brāhmana text which presupposes the former. Each Veda (in its narrow sense of Samhitā) was taught in different Sākhās. As a result, the original Mantras in their employment in the liturgical textbooks (Brāhmanas) and their interpretation in the form of the Āranyaka (forest books) and in the Upanisads (the philosophical treatises) were influenced by the local peculiarities of the Sākhās and the subjective interpretation of the individual acāryas (teachers of the Sākhās). This explains as to why for each Veda there are different Brāhmanas, and several Āranyakas and Upanisads; sometimes showing the divergences in detail, at places thematic incongruity and discontinuity. The division of the Vedas into Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva are said to correspond to the four priestly offices at the sacrificial altar, the Hotṛ, Adharyu, Udgātā, Brahmā respectively whose respective functions were to invoke mantras, carrying out the details of the ceremony, chanting of the hymns with appropriate melody and overall supervision of the sacrifice respectively. Moreover, the

division of each Veda into Samhitā, Brāhmana, Āranyakas and Upanisads are said to correspond to four Āshramas, Brahmacharya (celibate), Grhastha (householder), Vānaprastha (the forest dweller or the recluse) and the Sanyāsa (the monk) respectively. This shows that the classification of the Veda into four distinct treatises and the division of each Veda into four distinguishable components were determined by consideration of priestly offices and suitability of their being imparted at different stages (according to Varnāsrāma Dharma) in the Sākhās. This explains how the common theme or subject matter must have suffered changes in the hands of the Sākhās and eventually, crystallised into fixed texts in accordance with exigencies of social needs.

As the integral part of the Vedas; the Upanisads belong to the tradition of Śruti. As to the authorship of these texts there exists the view that they are impersonal (Apuruseya) and eternal (Sāsvata). They suggest that the Vedas and the Upanisads are not creations of man but divinely revealed to the Vedic seers, who were but mere instruments in passing on the truths to posterity as such. "Ṛsayah Mantra Drastārah". The truths so revealed are claimed to be eternal for they are immune from changes in time, place and person. Though the view, prima facie, sounds absurd, a little reflexion would bring home the underlying suggestion of the claim. This goes

with the recognition of the fact that unlike the relative truths (pertaining to the gamut of finite existence and processes) the truths about the infinite or the ultimate substratum of the reality transcend the relativities of time and space. Truth, in its absolute sense, is tenseless. Knowledge of it amounts to living in conformity with it or discovering it in its pristine purity. It is neither created nor recreated by the individual. The knowledge of it calls for an intuitive or wholistic mode of apprehension (Bodhi). It is only in giving up i.e. by sublimation of the intellectual or the discursive mode of comprehension (Budhi) that the reality can be grasped. It is only in an exalted state of existence that the transcendental or the highest truths dawned upon one in spite of oneself. This might have led the ancient seers to see reasons for preferring to remain unnamed. Thus the scriptures are deemed as impersonal having been revealed to them in moments of elevation and ecstasy. They are verily, 'the eternal' because they underly and are presupposed by all the relativities.

Though, denotationally, 'Upanisads' refer to the whole body of philosophical literature growing out and are posterior to the Āranyakas, the term itself has admitted of various interpretations. Etymologically, 'Upanisad' is a compound consisting of "Upa" (near), "Ni" (down) "Sad" (to sit), signifying

a closed sitting and as per the rule of semantic transference, came to stand for the body of knowledge imparted to the group of disciples in a conclave. It is very much in keeping with the tradition that the Upanisadic teachings were to be imparted only to the able and the aspiring few. The Upanisadic literature amply corroborates the disciples being subject to rigorous test and penance before being finally considered fit for receiving instruction. Not only the recipient but also the giver of such knowledge e.g., the Acāryas, are also to have the necessary merit and expertise. That is why both the Guru and the disciple of such knowledge were considered to be rare.

"... wondrous is he who can teach (Him) and skilful is he who finds (Him) and wonderful is he who knows, even when instructed by the wise."

The Chāndogya Upanisad enjoins that the doctrine of Brahman may be imparted by a father to his elder son or a trusted disciple, but to no one whatsoever even if the latter should promise him the whole earth surrounded with water and surcharged with treasure. This takes us to another connotation of the term "Upanisad" where it signifies "Secret" (Rahasyam). The recurrence of the terms like 'Om' (Aum) 'Tajjalāṅ' are words with esoteric import. Katha qualifies the knowledge

1."Ascaryo vaktā kusalo sya labdhā, ascaryo jnātā kusalānusistah" (Katha 1.2.7).

of the "Supreme" as "Parama Guhyam"¹ in Chāndogya such knowledge is described as "Guhyādesa"² in Svetāsvetara the highest knowledge is said to be "Veda guhyopanisatsu gudham"³. Thus the Upanisads expatiating on the knowledge of the Absolute came to obtain the above connotation. Samkar and other native scholars trace the meaning of the term to the root "sad" which means "to loosen" and which together with the prefixes "upa" and "ni" are interpreted to connote a body of knowledge that loosens or rends asunder the knot of ignorance leading to Immortality. Under this interpretation, Upanisads come to mean the higher knowledge (Parā Vidyā) as distinguished from the empirical knowledge (Aparā Vidyā) which binds the individual to the cycle of birth and rebirth. Oldenberg takes the term to mean "worship or reverence" (upāsana) having traced its derivation from the root "sad" and prefix "upa" and obviously by ignoring the prefix "ni." The above interpretations apart; what seems to be characteristic of the Upanisads is their distinctive theme. The post-Buddhistic Upanisadas and even the Upanisads of a much later period have come to be classified along with the older ones not because of the above considerations which led to the interpretation of the term either in the sense of a 'private communication' 'esoteric teaching' or 'reverence' but because of the fact that

1. Katha 1.3.7.
 2. C.U. 3.5.7.
 3. Sveta 5.6.

they represent a thematic continuity in furthering the speculations about the ultimate queries about Ātman, Brahman, the World and their inter-relationship.

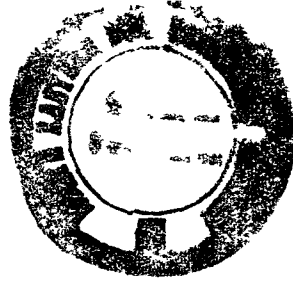
Besides their thematic peculiarity the Upanisads typify a noticeable revolt against the senseless and insipid formalism of the Brāhmanas. The thinkers appear to be too very radical and scathing in their disparaging polemics and sarcasm of the empty, barren ritualism of the Brahmanas.

"But those who by sacrificial offerings, charity and austerity conquer the worlds, they pass into the smoke (of the cremation fire), from the smoke into the night..."¹

"But those, who in the village practise (a life of) sacrifices, (and perform) works of public utility and almsgiving they pass into the smoke, from smoke to night..."²

"...Now those, verily, who worship, thinking "sacrifice and pious acts are our work, they win only the human world. They certainly return again..."³

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1. "Atha ye yajnaena dānena tapasā lokān jayanti te dhūman abhisambhavanti, dhūmād rātrim..." (B.U. 6.2.16).
 2. "Atha ya ime grāma istāpūrte dattam ity upāsate, te dhūmam abhisambhavanti, dhūmād rātrim..." (C.U. 5.10.3)
 3. "... tad ye ha vai tad istā pūrte krtam ity upāsate, te cāndramasam eva lokam abhijayan te, ta eva punar āvartante..." (Prasna 1.9)



The Upanisads seem to be unequivocal in their explicit denunciation of the senseless formalism. In Chāndogya one finds, even the dogs emulating the priests in chanting hymns. This is in other words the caustic satire on the priesthood and ostentitious formalism.

"(They sang), 'Aum, Let us eat, Aum, Let us drink, Aum, may the god Varuna, Prajāpati and Savitr bring food here. O Lord of food, bring food here, yea, bring it here. Aum.'"¹

Thus it can rightly be said to be an ideological revolt from within. Apart from exhibiting the inadequacy of the Vedic knowledge,

"...I know the Rg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, Atharvan ās the fourth (Veda) and the ancient lore as the fifth, the Veda of the Vedas (i.e. the grammar)..."

"But, venerable Sir, I am only like one knowing the words and not the knower of the Self... To him (Nārada) he (Sanat Kumar) then said, 'Verily whatever you have, here learnt is only a name'"²

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1. "aum, adāma, aum pibāma, aum devo varunah prajapatih saritānnam ihāharat. anna-pate annam ihāhara āhara, aum iti" (C.U. 1.12.5).
 2. "...Rg vedam, adhyemi, yajur vedam, Sāmavedam, atharvanam caturtham, itihāsa-purānam pāncamam, vedānām vedam..."
"Soham, bhagavah, mantra-vid evāsminātmavit... tam hovāca yad vai kiñ caitad adhagīsthāh, nāmaivaitat."
(C.U. 7.1.2-3).

The Upanisads appear to be reformative in spirit in so far as the sacrifices are given new meaning suiting to their universal teachings.

"Verily, a person is a sacrifice. His (first) twenty four years are the morning libation, for the Gāyatrī (metre) has twentyfour syllables and the morning libation is offered with a gāyatrī hymn. With this (part of the sacrifice) the Vasus are connected. Verily, the Vital breaths are the Vasus, for they cause everything here to endure."¹

"When one hungers and thirsts and abstains from pleasures these constitute the initiatory rites."

"And when one eats and drinks and enjoys pleasures, then he joins in the Upasada ceremonies."

"And when one laughs and eats and indulges in sexual intercourse, then he joins in the chant and recitation."

"And austerity, almsgiving, uprightness, non-violence, truthfulness, these are the gifts for the priests."²

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1. "Puruso vāva yajnāh, tasya yāni catur-vimsati varsāni, tat prātah savanam, catur vimsaty-aksarā gāyatrī, gāyatrām prātah savanam, tad asya vasavo nvāyattah, prānā vāva vasavah, etc. hīdam sarvam vāsayanti." (C.U.3.16.1)
 2. "sa yad asisiṣati yat pipāsati, yan na ramate, tā asya dikṣāh."
 "atha yad aśnāti, yat pibati, yad ramate, tad upasadair eti."
 "atha yadd hasati yaj jakṣati, yan maithunaṁ carati, stutaśastrair eva tad eti."
 "atha yat tapo dānam ārjavam ahiṁsā satya-vacanam iti, tā asya dakṣināh." (Ch. U. 3.17.1-4)

The above mentioned incompatibility in the essential import of the Brahmanas and the Upanisads lends credence to the views of Garbe and others that the Upanisads must have been the creation of the warrior class and not of the Brāhmins (as the orthodox views assume) as the latter were given to rites and rituals. In the Chāndogya one finds Uddālaka Aruni doubting his competence to discourse about the Ātman; to the five learned Brāhmanas; repairs with them to the King Asvapati Kaikeya who imparts them the proper instruction having first shown the flaws in their knowledge. Nārada is also seen as having been instructed by Sanat Kumar who is a Ksatriya. In B.U. one encounters King Ajātsatru imparting the knowledge of Ātman to Gārgya Bālāki, having exposed the latter's ignorance and observing that it was unbecoming of a Brahman to be solicitous of the instruction from a Ksatriya. This together with many other references seem to suggest that the Ksatriyas were the expositors of the Brahman knowledge. Keith shows the argument to be too tenuous for acceptance on the ground that it was only the warrior class who were supposed to be the chief benefactors of the sacrifices or (Yajnas) as it was they who patronised the Priests for performing their obligatory duties. It is also observed that the names of the Ksatriyas found in the Upanisads far from denoting historical figures may be the popular names and characters chosen conveniently in course of the dialogue to eluci-

date the teachings, For example, Yājñavalkya reappears both in Brāhmanas and the Upanisads. It is needless to read history from a treatise which is out and out of speculative interest. It is further argued that if the Upanisads were exclusively treated as representing an ideology quite in conflict with the interests of the Brāhmanas who were, evidently, the preserver of the tradition it could have hardly survived the ravages of time. Prof. Deussen suggests that the Upanisadic teachings, though initiated by the Brāhmana circle, gained wide acceptance among the warrior class but was continually nourished in the Sākhās. It may here be indicated that the Upanisads are not as non-partisan as they are deemed to be for the ritualistic vestiges are well discernible from the texts of the older Upanisads, especially in Chāndogya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka.

Again in attempting to account for the genesis and flowering of the Upanisadic doctrines some scholars have been tempted to read the influence of the aboriginal or the Non-Aryan culture in them. The Indologists' endeavour to substantiate the thesis by an appeal to the allusions to places and cities in the South (as found in Kausitaki Upanisad in the movements of Gārgya Bālāki) and the mountains of the South (such as Vindhya) which led them risk the conjecture that the Aryan civilisation extended far into the South. The scriptural

references to "Rudra," and "Siva" are taken as a point of corroboration because "Siva" was the presiding deity and the focal point of Tantra; the culture of the indigenous inhabitants. It may here be observed that the inference of the Non-Aryan influence, on the strength of the relevant allusions to cities, mountains of the South would be illegitimate for it is quite probable that the expositor in a given Upanisad might have been in know of the places and has employed them as the ancillary descriptive devices to expound the doctrines. But the references to "Rudra" or "Siva" seems to be a positive pointer to the cultural interaction between the Aryāns and the Non-Aryāns. The archeological excavations in Mahenjodaro and Harappa have brought to lime light a civilization highly developed and more ancient than the Aryān civilization. The seals and coins bearing the impression of "Pasupati" (Siva) has the obvious suggestion of the culture being Tantra-based. The Tantra ideology is essentially monistic, and in its unalloyed form (Vidyā Tantra) rests on internal contemplation and is non-ritualistic. As the tradition goes "Siva" happened to be the propounder of Tantra which, subsequently, in the hands of the inefficient, degenerated into the cult of magic, sorcery or black art (Avidyā Tantra) the influence of which can easily be read off from the Artharva Veda. The radical shift from a predominantly pluralistic thinking and ritualistic ostentations to monistic speculation with characteristic

stress on asceticism, can with all fitness of explanations be ascribed to the doctrinal influence of Tantra on the Vedic thinking. Again, the recurrence of the terms like "Dasyus" "Asuras" the destroyers of sacrifice, makes one pause and reflect as to who could possibly be the "Dasyus." Certain stanzas in the R̥g Veda indicate that the "Dasyus" were black complexioned and the invocation to Indra (the War God) to extirpate the destroyers of sacrifice, point to the cultural incompatibility and the consequent animosity between the Aryans and the aborigins.

"Indra, who is invoked by many, attended by the moving (Maruts), having attacked the Dasyus and the Simyus, slew them with his thunder bolt: the thunderer then divided the fields with his white complexioned friends..."¹

The long drawn conflict (which was essentially ideological manifesting from time to time in physical encounters) had its distinct echo even in the Puranas. Hence, it is quite plausible to presume that the conflict between the Aryāns and the Non-Aryāns which has so distinct a ring throughout the Vedic literature had resulted in the doctrinal synthesis. However, the controversies pertaining to the genesis of the Upanisadic thought might not be quite relevant in adjudging the philosophical merit of the treatises.

1. "Dasyun simyun ca puruhutaḥ evaiḥ hatuā pṛthivyāṃ sarvā
ni barhit sanat kṣetraṃ sakhībhiḥ svitnaibhiḥ sanat..."
(R.V. 1.7.18)

The Upanisads are the treatises containing in succinct aphoristic form the most profound of the philosophical inklings. Some of its suggestions are far reaching and consequential in relation to the subsequent developments. A faithful study and an adequate understanding of the texts might prove to be rewarding in throwing illumination on some of the seminal ideas which not only foreshadowed some of the modern doctrines but also opened up unexplored dimensions in various areas of philosophical investigations. The Upanisads; being the creation of different authors produced over a considerable span of time; do at present an apparently unitary system of thought. But it is needless to say that the anomalies and differences are apparent and marginal and underlie an unmistakable unity. The Upanisads are rich in ontological, epistemological and ethical discussions which of course lie scattered and at places, inchoate. So, an attempt to unearth the ontology, epistemology and ethics of the Upanisads and determine their relevance in relation to the contemporary developments becomes an academic exigency.

The philosophical quest in the Upanisads is characterised by their typical obsession with ultimate questions - what is the cause? (Kim Kāranam), whence are we born? (Kutah kena), on what are we established? (Kva ca sampratisthāh). Philosophy begins in wonder, or in theoretic curiosity of

man. One can clearly visualise the kindred spirits like Thales, Anaxaminder, Democritus and Pythagorous worrying about the origin of the world which subsequently pave the way for modern philosophy and science. In the Upanisadic tradition such questions pertaining to the ultimate mysteries of the reality is classed as "Pariprasna" in contra-distinction to the ordinary or empirical questions (Prasna). But the questions that the Upanisadic thinkers address themselves to, in spite of their structural affinity with the western parallels are actuated by motivations, essentially distinct from the latter. The latter is extroversal and the former introversal in spirit. The western thinkers have arrived at alternative postulations about the ultimate stuff which interestingly, belong to or partake of the nature of 'matter' whereas the ultimate reality in the Upanisads has been construed, uniformly, as the non-material, infinite, consciousness; Brahman. The emergence of the manifoldness of creation is traced to the unitary world ground which is of the nature of truth (Sat) consciousness (Cit) and bliss (ānandam). Brahman is conceived as both immanent and transcendent. It constitutes not only the logus of the macrocosm but also the nucleus and essence of the finite structures. The absolute is conceived as the pan-consciousness. The metaphysical world view enshrined in the Upanisads has been variously described as panentheism, acosmism, panpsychism. Sankara, Rāmānuja, Mādhava, Nimbarka,

Ballava, and quite recently Ānanda Murtii have tried to reconstruct the alternative metaphysical systems known respectively as Advaita, Visistādvaita, Dvaita, Dvaitādvaita, Suddhādvaita and Advaitādvaitādvaita. The relative cogency and appropriateness of the alternative interpretations of the Upanisadic metaphysics shall be attempted in the chapters to follow. It is worth noting that in the wake of the analytical movement in philosophy some Indian scholars have been keen on interpreting the Upanisadic reflexions as a critique of language and concepts. But their extreme enthusiasm to interpret the Upanisads anew by appealing to the discussions on "Vāk" have led them to ignore a good deal of other suggestions which remain unexplained explicitly because of their failure to give a consistent interpretation of the texts in their entirety and implicitly because they are positively incompatible with their native apriori suppositions. Even if philosophy is taken as a mere interpretation or a pure hermeneutics of a text independent or irrespective of context, it is also essential that the interpretation of the totality should be given with due regard for internal coherence. In this sense, of course, there can be as many interpretations as there are perspectives from which one could look at a given text. But philosophy is not born in to a vaccum. It has its roots in the ethos of the time from which it draws its sustenance and vigour. So proper understanding of the text at

times calls for a peep into the context. The truncated interpretation of the so called analysts not only ignores the context but does positive injustice to it.

Many of the occidental scholars have tried to see the development of the Vedic thought through an evolutionary model. According to them the cosmological speculations of the Vedic seers were essentially polytheistic as there are copious references to the nature Gods which in course of time matured into henotheism (the term coined by Max Muller) as each of the Gods of the pantheon is accorded the status of supreme importance deserving all the superlative appellations and eventually culminated in the monotheism and eventually in the monism of the Upanisads. Such an evolutionary model betrays the ignorance on the part of the adherents of this view that even though the Vedic thinking was predominantly polytheistic there were definite monistic strains in the "Mantras."

"The one being, the wise call by many names as
Agni, Yama and Matarisvan."¹

"The one being, the sages contemplate in many ways."²

Truth is not the prerogative of a people or race nor is it the outcome of a developmental process. It reveals itself to

1. "EKam sad vipra bahudha vadanti
Agnim, Yamam, Matarisvan ahuh" (R.V. 1.164-46)
2. "EKam santam bahudha kalpayanti"(R.V. 10.11.4)

the worthy and the great irrespective of time and clime. Hence it is no strange that the Vedic seers in movements of inspiration saw the 'Truth' of the unity beneath the diversities. Since the "Mantras" were composed by a number of authors over a period of time it is but expected to find the existence of polytheistic, monotheistic and monistic thinking in the same text. This model seems to bear the echo and bias of Comte's view that human knowledge has to pass through the stages of magic or theology (fictitious), the metaphysics (abstract), before maturing into science. Such a view is not only historically untrue but discloses the definite evolutionary bias.

Knowledge, in the European tradition, means, necessarily, the knowledge of the empirical, its validity being amenable to observation or experiment. Knowledge is pursued for its own sake. This is precisely what is characteristic of the European philosophy (the analytical school) which has for its goal conceptual clarity and for its means the hair splitting ratiocination. Thus, the investigations in the West is pursued as a means of promoting physical welfare and psychic embellishment. But the root motivation behind philosophising in India is to pursue knowledge for immortality or spiritual sublimation. Knowledge is for immortality. To the former, knowledge is power whereas for the latter knowledge is freedom or liberation from affliction and bondage. In the Upanisads

one finds a categorial distinction of knowledge into "Parā" (the Higher) and "Aparā" (the Lower). The latter signifies knowledge relating to the empirical whereas the former stands for the knowledge of Absolute (Brahma Vidyā). Brahman is that by knowing which everything is known. It is construed as the protasis of all knowledge and the subject of all cognitions. Brahman being all pervading, the knowledge of it calls for a mode of knowing fundamentally different from the empirical ways which presuppose the exclusiveness of the knower and the known. To know Brahman is to apprehend the totality of which the knower also is an integral part. Hence knowing Brahman tantamounts to knowing all and therefore knowing the self. Hence, they exhibit the inadequacy of the categorial mode of knowing (which consists in knowing by and through the attributes or predicates which are but finite in their import) and plead for a kind of knowledge where knowing consists in becoming. To know Brahman is to become Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati). The viability of the epistemic claims and their ontological presuppositions will constitute the main thrust of the chapter entitled "knowledge."

It is often observed that Indian philosophy is other worldly or world negating. In the earnest preoccupation with the transcendental and the characteristic stress on ascetism or renunciation, they were, it is said; disposed to consider

the worldly pursuits as of little significance and sometimes positively detrimental to liberation; the summum bonum of human existence. This charge is evidently motivated and betrays the gross ignorance and prejudice of the thinkers. The Vedas abound in illustrations where the individual prays for long life (Pasyema saradah satam, Jivema saradah satam, Vasema saradah satam), large progeny, bumper harvest, cattle, cows, victory over the enemies and immunity from the evil forces. The invocations are eloquent testimonies of man's love for nature and himself. Though the Upanisads dwell at length on the themes of Brahman, Ātman and immortality no where does one come across the denunciation of "Karma." Rather they urge the individual to enjoy the life through renunciation (Tena tyaktena bhunjithah). They do not obviously preach renunciation of action but renunciation in action. The individual is asked to shun the ways of indulgence (Preya) and invest himself in the pursuit of the highest good (Sreya). In other words, they bring home the secret of living where the individual treats all things and beings as the manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. Live and let live becomes the motto of the individual life. "Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, Sarve santu niramayāh, Sarve bhadrani pasyantū, Ma kaseit dukhao bhāg bhavet" becomes his daily prayer. Universal fraternity "Vasudeva kutumbakam" becomes the motto of the collective body.

A large number of studies have been made on different aspects of the Upanisadas by scholars, occidental and oriental. But the studies, mostly, are either expository or descriptive of the Upanisadic themes. The present dissertation aims at offering justification to what is known as the Upanisadic metaphysics in general. In short, it can be construed as a defence of metaphysics. Though Strawson in the contemporary period has made attempt to defend metaphysics (particularly descriptive metaphysics) he seems not to have made a very clear cut distinction between descriptive metaphysics and linguistics or conceptual analysis. For Strawson both linguistic analysis and descriptive metaphysics meet at certain points. On the other hand, the present study seeks to undertake the task of defending the Upanisadic metaphysics against the general backdrop of linguistic philosophy. The task is two fold: (i) To present a critique of linguistic philosophy in the course of exhibiting the structure of Upanisadic thought (Polemical). (ii) To defend and justify the Upanisadic metaphysics in general (Justificatory). As far as we know no systematic study has been done in this respect.

CHAPTER - II

THE UNSPEAKABLE

To construe rationality as the sine-qua-non of the human species is an Aristotelian legacy and a native prejudice of man about himself. A close look into the behavioural pattern of the non-human's discloses sure signs of intelligent manipulations, though in a very dim and confused fashion, coercing one to look for something truly unique or distinctive of man. But one can, tentatively, define man as a predominantly rational being signifying that, far from being instinctively conditioned, he is capable of control, manipulation of his impulses and circumstances around. This is what precisely secured to him the advantage and superiority over his co-primates. But to conceive man as a physico-psychic organism does hardly reveal the total gamut of human personality. The rational acumen of man sometimes finds a sublimated expression in form of self-transcendence which is characteristically human. In other words, it is the prerogative of man and man alone to be able to transcend the first order awareness wherein, the subject continues to know the object without having been aware that he as the subject is knowing the object. The self transcendent awareness may be understood as a second order consciousness having for its object the very act of knowing. An animal perceives and understands but it is man who can withdraw himself and subject the very act or fact or the concepts of 'perception' and 'understanding' as the object

of his knowledge. To put it differently it is peculiar of man to ask questions about himself and the reality of which he is an integral part as a dispassionate knower. This has led him to address himself to ultimate questions about himself and the reality. Such questions as -

"What is the cause? Is it Brahman? Whence are we born? By what do we live? And on what are we established?"¹

are termed as 'Pariprasna' as distinguished from 'Prasna' e.g. the empirical question about the finites. In philosophical jargon, Pariprasna may be translated as the transcendental or the metaphysical questions and Prasna as factual ones. In fact, such ultimate questions have been raised and answered to their satisfaction by thinkers both western and eastern from time to time. The pre-Socratic philosophers like Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heracleitus shall go down as the pioneers to have raised the questions about the 'primordial substance or the stuff from which the world has evolved. But much before them we find in the Upanisadic tradition a sustained endeavour by the seers and sages at a cogent and explicit articulation of the ultimate quest. But there is a remarkable difference in respect of the mode of speculation and the answers arrived at. The ontology of

1. "Kim kāraṇam brahma, kutaḥ sma jātā, jivāma kena, kva ca sampratiṣṭhāḥ..." (Svetā U. 1.1).

the Greeks and for that matter the subsequent European Philosophers is by far rational or speculative whereas the Upanisadic ontology is a-speculative or a-rational in so far as it awaits justifications from beyond the sense and reason.

It is worth pointing here that the analytical philosophers of the west would question the very sanity of metaphysical pursuits and pronounce the speculative ontology as the logical product of illicit operations with the concepts and hence, dub them as disguised non-sense (a non-sense that can be made explicit by pointing to the way it originates) and label the transcendental ontology of the upanisads as patent non-sense by indicating that proponents, thereof, have paid scant regard for the norms of sense or intelligibility. The positivists, on the other hand, would contest the claims of the proponents in showing that they are neither analytic (expressing obviously no formal truth) nor synthetic (as they do not conform to the criterion of verifiability) but non-sensical. However, the merit of the objections in respect of the Upanisadic ontology shall be attempted in the relevant sections of the concluding chapter.

The Upanisads trace the gamut of reality, with its manifold particulars to Brahman. The 'Reality' in its totality, in respect of creation, sustenance and dissolution is, they maintain, intelligible only with reference to Brahman.

"...Brahman is verily that from which these beings are born, that by which, when born they live and that into which on departing they enter."¹

The recurrence of the term Brahman is noticeable in course of the development of the Upanisadic literatures. In the Rg-Veda Brahman is used in the sense of a sacred hymn or incantation symbolizing the manifestation of the highest knowledge. As Brahman signified mantra or the holy utterance invested with power or potency of its own, it gradually came to be equated with mysterious power or potency. In the Brāhmanas, Brahman came to connote 'ritual.' Since the rituals were associated with control and manipulation of the universe instrumental to certain cherished ends it came to be understood as the basic and controlling spirit of the universe. In the Upanisads Brahman, obviously, is used to denote the ultimate reality and the essence, the nucleus of everything actual and possible. As the ultimate substratum of the macrocosm, the supreme progenitor of all existents, the controller of the cosmic phenomena, the immanent and transcendent principle of the universe it is termed as Brahman. But as the Logos, the essence of the particulars, the invariable agent, the eternal witness and as the immortal essence it is viewed as Ātman.

1. "...yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yen jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanti, abhisamvisanti..., tad brahmeti"
(Taitt 3.1.1)

Brahman literally means that which is Great (Bṛh̥tvād Brahman). This paraphrasing lays emphasis on the macrocosmic dimension of the reality, Brahman. Etymologically, it is derivable from the root "Brh" which means 'To grow,' 'to swell' or 'burst forth.' In these senses, Brahman can be viewed as the unmanifested potentiality evolving itself into the world of names and forms. Sankara derives 'Brahman' from the root "Brhati" (Atisayena) which means 'to exceed.' This interpretation highlights Brahman as the transcendent principle signifying eternity from the point of view of the world of space, time and causality and absolute purity from the stand point of morality.

Brahman is unmistakably construed as most primeval and anterior to the creation as such -

"Brahman indeed was this in the beginning..."¹

This together with the proposition that,

"Verily in the beginning this (world) was Brahman, one only..."²

"In the beginning this world was Brahman..."³

1. "brahma vā idam agra āsīt..." (Br. 1.4.10).

2. "brahma vā idam agra āsīt, ekam eva..." (Br. 1.4.11).

3. "brahma ha vā idam agra āsīt..." (Maitri. U- 6.17).

suggest that Brahma is not only the primal world ground but in its undifferentiated pristine state contains the world of multiplicities as one of its infinite possibilities. The same notion is expressed by the cryptic formula 'Tajjalān' meaning that from which all things originate and into which they are dissolved and in which they live. The above accounts describe Brahman as the supreme matrix (the Creator), the sustaining principle (Preserver) and the ultimate absorbent of all change and progress (Destroyer), of everything actual and possible. The analogy comparing Brahman to the spider that spreads the web from within and finally withdraws it into its own is highly illustrative.

The stand-point of the Upanisads in respect of the ontological status of Brahman in relation to the world appears to be ambivalent. One finds parallel observations relating to Brahman as both 'Asat' and 'Sat' translated respectively as 'Non-being' and 'Being.'

"There was nothing, whatsoever, in the beginning..."¹

The prima facie oddity of the position that there was nothing in the beginning, thereby implying that the reality or the existence came out of it amounting to creation ex-nihilo seems to be greatly reduced when the above is read with the statements that

1. "Naiveha kimcanāgra āsīt..." (Br - 1-2-1).

"Non-existent, verily, was this (world) in the beginning, therefrom, verily, was existence produced..."¹

"...in the beginning this (world) was non-existent. It became existent, It grew..."²

The above three propositions together go to suggest the existence of Brahman anterior to the world and that the latter owes its existence or reality to the former. The world of particularities is said to be 'Sat' (Being) and Brahman as 'Asat' (Non-Being) obviously because the latter in its expressed form was non-existent in the Brahman. Hence Brahman as the unmanifested and undifferentiated state, can be said to be Asat (Non-Being) in relation to the Sat (Being or the existent world).

"At that time this (universe) was undifferentiated it became differentiated by name and form..."³

Moreover, the rationale behind treating the world as Sat might be that Sat or Being has the necessary suggestion of it being manifest or existent. The idea of 'existence' or 'proneness to specificity' is built into the concept 'Sat,' as it were. Since Brahman, in the pre-creative stance, is of

-
1. "asad vā idam agra āsīt, tato vai sad ajāyata..." (Taitt - 2.7.1).
 2. "...asad evedam agra āsīt, tat sad āsīt, tat samabhavat..." (Ch. 3.19.1)
 3. "taddhedam tarhy avyākṛtam āsīt, tan nāma-rupābhyām eva vyākriyata..." (Br 1-4-7).

the nature of the undifferentiated infinite consciousness, Nirguna, it defies all attempts at understanding it through existential categories. Hence it is as good as Non-Being or 'Asat' from the point of view of common discourse.

Quite in keeping with the above, one comes across several passages describing Brahman as Impersonal or a-personal.

"...He is radiant, bodiless, invulnerable, devoid of sinews,..."¹

"There is no action and no organ of his to be found, there is not seen his equal or his better. His high power is revealed to be various, indeed. The working of his intelligence and strength is inherent (in him)."²

"... it is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long... unattached, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without voice, without mind, without radiance, without breath, without mouth, without measure... it consumes nothing nor is consumed by any."³

-
1. "...sa chukram, akāyam, avraṇam, asnāvīram..." (Isa - 8).
 2. "na tasya kāryaṃ karaṇaṃ ca vidyate, na tat samaś cāpy adhikaś ca dṛśyate.
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvīkījnānā-
bala - kriyā ca." (Svetā. U-6.8).
 3. "...asthūlam, anaṇu, ahrasvam, adīrgham,
... asaṅgam, arasam, agandham, acakṣuṣkam, aśrotam, avāk,
amanaḥ, atejaskam, aprānam, amukham, amātram, ...
na tad aśnāti kiṃ cana, na tad asnāti kaścana."
(Br. 3.8.8).

The passages have the unmistakable suggestion that Brahman is not to be conceived as the Being, personal. Personality smacks of finitude and lends itself to specification in terms of the 'person-categories.' All such categories are limiting and finite in import. Hence delineation of Brahman by them cannot be made without sacrificing "infinity" that constitutes the essence of Brahman.

"...Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinity..."¹

The negative descriptions that Brahman is without this and without that... ought to be understood as a caution against anthropomorphism.

That Brahman is not to be conceived after the image of a person is further corroborated in conceiving it as 'immortal.' To be a person is to be subject to the inexorable process of birth, growth, decay and extinction. On the contrary, with regard to Brahman it is said,

"This is that great unborn self who is undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless Brahman..."²

-
1. "...satyaṁ jñānam anantam brahma..." (Taitt. 2-1-1).
 2. "sa vā eṣa mahān ajātmā, ajaro, amaro 'mr̥to' bhayo brahma..." (Br. 4.4.25).

Brahman being immortal is not subject to the plight of the mortals

"...It is that which transcends hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death..."¹

observes Yājñavalkya.

'Sat' (Being) in the sense of a finite existent must necessarily have the spatio-temporal dimension. Brahman being non-finite eludes description through the spatio-temporal categories. It is worth noting that the legitimate application of the temporal categories like 'now,' 'then,' 'earlier,' 'later,' 'always,' 'never' and the statements relating to 'past, present and future' presuppose change and succession of events. In other words, the meaningful employment of these concepts can be made only against the back drop of the multiplicities subject to mutation or change. Conversely, one could not know what the distinction of past, present and future would mean and how to apply the temporal terms in a context where there is no duality, far less a multiplicity and where there is no change.

Brahman being the undifferentiated unicity is said to be,

"...without an earlier and without a later..."²

-
1. "...Yo, śanāyā-pipāse śokam mohaṃ jarām mṛtyum atyeti..." (Br. 3.5.1)
 2. "...tad etad brahmāpūrvam, anaparam..." (Br. 2.5.19)

Since 'time' comes to acquire meaning along with the existence of particularities in the process of change, Brahman, as the creator of the world of particulars can be said to be

"...the author of time..."¹

"... as the Lord of the past and future..."²

Brahman is

"That in front of which the ear revolves with its days..."³

As the begetter of time he remains beyond time i.e.

"...beyond the three kinds of time (past, present and future)..."⁴

"He is the beginning... who has many forms, the origin of all being..."⁵

As he is anterior to time

"He is without beginning, without end, in the midst of chaos, the creator of all, of manifold form..."⁶

-
1. "...Kāla-kāro..." (Svetā 6.16)
 2. "... Iśānam bhūta-bhavyasya..." (Katha 2.1.5)
 3. "Yasmād arvāk samvatsaraḥ ahobhiḥ parivartate..." (Br. 4.4.16)
 4. "...paras trikālād..." (Svetā 6.5)
 5. "ādis sa ... taṁ viśva rūpam, bhava-bhutam..." (Svetā 5.13)
 6. "anādy anantaṁ kalilasya madhye viśvasya srastāram aneka-rūpam..." (Svetā 5.13)

The expression that 'he was in the beginning' should not be misconstrued to imply that Brahman was the first to exist in the temporal series. Here 'beginning' Ādi or 'Agram' has to be understood as a limiting concept, meaning something beyond time but imparting meaning to the concept 'time'. So, to try to describe Brahman in terms of the temporal concepts is to understand the creator, as if, it is created, the timeless as the temporal, the Absolute as one among the units. He is 'Anādi' i.e. it exists before creation, 'Ananta' i.e. it continues to exist even after the dissolution of the world of names and forms and therefore is 'Sēsvata' (Eternal).

Similarly the spatial categories can be seen to be inadequate in determining the nature of the Brahman. The categories like 'above,' 'below,' 'middle,' 'between,' 'greater than,' 'lesser than' etc. can be made meaningful only in the context of the manifold or finites. In other words, if there is something which is one and all inclusive or where, the so-called finites or particulars cease to have their autonomy or identity, one would not know, how to compare and relate things simply because there are no two things to be related and compared. This, renders it logically impossible to make out as to what, the categories of space would mean in respect of them. This discloses the possible oddity of predicating the spatial categories to Brahman in whom,

"... there is no diversity..."¹

Brahman is

"...without an inside, without an outside..."²

On account of its infinity it is conceived as

"Smaller than the small and greater than the great."³

The spatial concepts qualify an object of finite dimension. Brahman, in its microcosmic dimension is more minute than the minutest and is the essence of all particular manifestations and as macrocosmic, is all inclusive and there can be nothing greater than it. As the essence it includes nothing and as macrocosmic it includes everything.

"That which is above the sky, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between the two, sky and earth... across space is that woven like warp and woof."⁴

-
1. "...naiha nānāsti kim cana..." (Br. 4.4.19)
 2. "...anantaram, abāhyam..." (Br. 2.5.19)
 3. "aṅor aṅīyān mahato mahīyān..." (Katha 1.2.20)
 4. "... yad ūrdhvam, divaḥ, yad avāk pṛthivyaḥ, yad antarā dyāvāpṛthivī ime, ... ākāsa eva tad otaṁ ca protaṁ ceti,..." (Br. 3.8.7)

"Of him the eastern direction is the eastern breath, the southern direction is the southern breath... all the quarters are all the breaths."1

"...This is myself within the heart greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than these worlds."2

It is variously described as the omnipresent (Sarva gatam),³ (Sarva gatas),⁴ (Sarvatah),⁵ (Sarvagam Sarvatah).⁶ To endeavour to describe it through spatial terms is to make infinite appear as finite.

It is also significant that Brahman has been viewed as non-causal. The existence of all finites is necessarily contingent. That is why it always makes sense to ask about a finite as to how or why it exists rather than being non-existent and it is always sensible to talk of the prior non-existence (Prāgbhāva) i.e. the non-existence of something before it comes into being and the posterior non-existence (Pradhvamsābhāva) i.e. non-existence of a thing after its

1. "tasya prāci dik prācaḥ prānaḥ, dakṣiṇā dig dakṣiṇe prānāḥ,....sarvā diśaḥ, sarve prānāḥ..." (Br. 4.2.4)

2. "...eṣa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye jyāyān pṛthivyāḥ, jyāyān antarikṣāj jāyān divaḥ, jyāyān ebhyo lokebhyāḥ."
(Ch. 3.14.3)

3. "...sarva-gataḥ..." (Mund 1.1.6)

4. "...sarva-gatas..." (Svetā 3.11)

5. "... sarvataḥ..." (Mund 3.2.5).

6. "...sarvagaḥ sarvataḥ..." (Mund 3.2.5).

destruction. All explanations of origination out of its prior non-existence, growth, decay and final extinction are made intelligible in terms of causal explanations. In fact; the cause of a thing constitutes its explanation. Change is the only unchangeable law of reality. There are no causes and effects as such. 'Causality' is a conceptual artifice to understand and relate the uniform succession of events or phenomena. Had there been no change, the law of causality would have had hardly any sense without their being any objective correlate. Brahman is viewed as

"...unborn, great and constant."¹

It is unborn (Aja) and immortal (Amṛtam), constant or unchanging (Dhṛvāḥ). So it hardly makes sense to understand it in terms of causal explanations. Though,

"He is the beginning, the source of the causes which unite..."²

Brahman itself

"...is the self caused...the cause of worldly existence, and of liberation, of continuance and of bondage."³

1. "...aja ātmā mahān dhruvāḥ" (Br. 4.4.20)

2. "ādis sa samyoga-nimitta hetuḥ..." (Svetā 6.5)

3. "...ātma-yonir...saṁsāra-mokṣa - sthitibandha-hetuḥ."
(Svetā 6.16)

In other words, Brahman, as the pre-condition of all mutations remains beyond change and therefore beyond the reach of the causal nexus. Being self-caused or self-existent it is self-explanatory and having caused everything, is all-explanatory. To insist on causal explanations in respect of Brahman betrays the assumption that Brahman is contingent and **is to involve oneself in the illicit assimilation of categories.**

Along with the description of Brahman as 'Asat' one encounters the antithetical descriptions of Brahman as 'Sat.'

"In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone, one only without a second..."¹

Uddālaka while fortifying his views draws the attention of Svetaketu to the apparent oddity in accepting 'Asat' as prior to 'Sat,' the former giving birth to latter.

"But how, indeed, my dear, could it be thus? said he, how could being be produced from non-being? On the contrary, my dear, in the beginning this was being alone, one only, without a second."²

But the objections of Uddālaka seem not to be pertinent for, the advocates of the former view do not obviously take 'Asat'

1. "sad eva, saumya, idam agra āsid ekam evādītiyam..."
(Ch. 6.2.1)

2. "Kutas tu khalu, saumya, evaṁ syāt, iti hovāca, katham, asataḥ saḥ jāyete, sat to eva, saumya, idam agra āsid ekam evādvitīyam." (Ch. 6.2.2).

as absolutely non-existent or non-entity and 'Sat' as bare factuality. Rather, Brahman as 'Asat,' is viewed as the undifferentiated unity where the world of multiplicity is contained as a mere potentiality. Seen in this light, Brahman can, befittingly, be viewed as the unexpressed reality and the reality as the Brahman, manifest.

Nonetheless, by conceiving Brahman as 'Sat' the Upanisadic thinkers focus their search light on an ulterior mode of viewing Brahman in relation to the reality. Brahman as Sat or Being is to be contra-distinguished from the 'being' in the sense of a finite particular. The translation of 'Sat' as 'Being' seems to be little strained and sweeping for it overshadows the suggestions of the term if it were translated as 'the Real.' Brahman as 'Sat' or 'Real' has the unmistakable suggestion of its being an immutable abiding substratum where the world of particularities make their appearance, live and meet final dissolution. They are, as it were, the varied waves that rise, thrive and finally merge in the bosom of the ocean. Brahman is verily the 'Sat,' it is the only Real against the unstable and evanescent which though have a semblance of being real are really appearances.

If 'Sat' is to be translated as 'being' Brahman can be viewed as the Being-essential and the Being-macrocosmic. In the former sense, Brahman constitutes the essence of all

existence. It is not one of the existents but their essence, the immanent principle of all that could exist, Uddālaka illustrates it by asking Svetaketu to bring a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree who, having broken it into extreme fine seeds is asked to break it further. On being asked as to what does he see further Svetaketu replies that he finds there to be nothing at all. To this Uddālaka replies

"...My dear, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, verily, my dear, from that very essence this great nyagrodha tree exists..."¹

"That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for its self. That is the self. That art thou, Svetaketu..."²

This is explicitly stated in Taittiriya as

"...Brahman is verily the essence of existence..."³

As the essence Brahman is the

"...truth of the truth..."⁴

-
1. "...saumya, etam aṇimānam na nibhālayase, etasya vai, saumya, eṣoṇimna evam mahān nyagrodhas tisthati..." (Ch. 6.12.2)
 2. "sa ya eṣoṇimā aītaḍ ātmyam idaṃ sarvaṃ, tat satyam, sa ātmā, tat tvam asi, svetaketo..." (Ch. 6.13.3)
 3. "...raso vai saḥ ..." (Taitt 2.7.1)
 4. "...satyasya satyam iti..." (Maitri. 6.32)

or the real of the so called reals. As the essence it is also understood as the self of all psychic and cosmological phenomena. Yājñavalkya in his retort to Bālāki, observes -

"...I meditate on Him as the self of speech, the self of fire, the self of light..."¹

"...the self of truth, the self of lightning..."²

In the above, 'truth' is used in the sense of a relative or contingent existents and Brahman, as the self of these truths is to be understood as truth of the truths (Satyasya Satyam). The parable of the Nyagrodha fruit has also the suggestion that the essence is not to be mistaken to be the particularities that embody it. Hence any attempt to understand the reality through finite predication is bound to miss the very nature of reality. Brahman, therefore, remains beyond the ambit of the attributive knowledge.

As the quintessence, it is non-ephemeral and immanent in all and everything. Brahman is said to be omnipresent in the sense that it lies quiescent in everything animate and inanimate, mobile and immobile, microcosmic and macrocosmic.

-
1. "...vāca ātmāgnēr ātmā jyotiṣa ātmeti vā aham etam upāsa iti..." (Kaus - 4.17)
 2. "...satyasyātmā, vidyata ātmā..." (Kaus - 4.18)

"The God who is in fire, who is in water, who has entered into the whole world, who is in plants, who is in trees..."¹

It is the nucleus of everything. As the logus of the manifested macrocosm it is 'Hiranyagarbha.' As the logus of the finite it is Ātman or the Self.

"...Brahman the supreme, the great hidden in all creatures according to their bodies, the one who envelops the universe..."²

The selfsame reality as the unmanifested (Avyakta) is known as Brahman, as the agent of creation (Sṛosti), preservation (sthiti) and destruction (pralaya) is the Isvara, as the logos of the world, the Hiranyagarbha and as the self of the particulars is the Ātman. The identity of Brahman and Ātman recurs throughout the Upanisadic literatures.

"...That is the Brahman, that is the Ātman..."³

"...He who is here in the person and he who is yonder in the Sun - He is one..."⁴

-
1. "Yo devo'gnau yo'psu yo viovam bhavanam āvivesa, ya oṣadhīṣu yo vanaspatiṣu..." (Svetā - 2.17)
 2. "...brahma param bṛhantam yathā - nikāyaṁ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaṁ viṣvasy aikam pariveṣṭitāram..." (Svetā 3.7)
 3. "...tad brahma, sa ātmā..." (Taitt 1.5.1)
 4. "...sa yaś cāyam puruse, yaś cāsāvāditye sa ekah..." (Taitt - 2.8.1).

"...this is the self of mine within the heart,
this is Brahman..."¹

"...This Ātman is the Brahman, the all perceiving..."²

Usastha Cākrāyana asks Yājñavalkya to be enlightened about Brahman which is immediately present and directly perceived and who is the self in all things. To this Yājñavalkya replies that

"...This is yourself that is within all things..."³

Thus Ātman can be seen as nothing but Brahman expressed through the unit structures and conversely Brahman can be seen as the Ātman without the limiting adjuncts. Ātman is the essence and the enlivening principle of the finite. It is the immortal within the mortal frame. Unlike the body that is subject to the law of flux and the phenomena of birth, growth, decay and death, the Ātman remains untouched by ravages of time and untainted by evil to which the mortals fall a prey to.

-
1. "...esa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye etad brahma..."(Ch - 3.14.4)
 2. "...ayam ātmā brahma sarvānubhūḥ..."(Br. 2.5.19)
 3. "...eṣa ta ātmā sarvāntaraḥ..." (Br. 3.4.1)

"...It does not age with old age, it is not killed by the killing (of the body)... It is the self free from sin, free from old age, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger, free from thirst..."¹

The identity of Brahman and Ātman is tacitly assumed and one finds Brahman and 'Ātman' used, indifferently, as synonymous expression denoting the ultimate reality so that what is said of one is deemed as true of the other.

The immanence of Ātman in all the finite structures must not make one conceive the relationship between the self and the body on the model of the container and the contained. If Ātman were something particular it would make sense to say that it inhabits in a particular part of the body. On the contrary, Ātman being the essence is thought as immanent and all permeating.

"...Just as a razor might be hidden in a razor-case or as fire in the fireplace, even so this self of intelligence has entered this bodily self up to the hairs and nails..."²

-
1. "...nāśya jarayaitaj jīryati, na vadhenāśya hanyate... eṣa ātmāpahata pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur visoko vijighatso' pipāsaḥ..." (Ch.- 8.1.5)
 2. "...tad yathā kṣuraḥ kṣura dhāne'vopahito visvambharo vā visvambharakulāya evam evaisa prajñātmedaḥ sarīram ātmānam anupraviṣṭa ālomabhya ānakhebhyaḥ..." (Kaus - 4.20)

Ātman pervades the whole being of the individual, Brahman is construed as pervading the whole reality. Yājñavalkya dwells on the immanence and the all pervasiveness of the Supreme by the analogy of salt and water:

"As a lump of salt thrown in water becomes dissolved in water and there would not be any of it to seize forth as it were, but wherever one may take it is salty indeed, so, verily, this great being, infinite, limitless, consists of nothing but knowledge. Arising from out of these elements one vanishes away into them."¹

As all pervasive;

"That indeed is below, it is above, it is behind, it is in front, it is to the south, it is to the north, it is indeed all this (world)..."²

and since Ātman is equated with Brahman the same description is given about the self.

"the self is indeed below, the self is above, the self is behind, the self in front, the self is to the south, the self is to the north, the self is indeed all this (world)..."³

-
1. "sa yathā saindhava-khilya udake prāsta udakam evānuvīlīyeta, na hāsya udgrahaṇāyeva syāt, yato yatas tu ādadīta lavaṇam eva, evaṃ vā ara idam mahad bhūtam anantam apāraṃ vijnāna-ghana eva, etebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ amutthāya, tāny evānuvinasyati..." (Br. - 2.4.12)
 2. "sa evādhastāt, sa upariṣṭāt, sa pascāt, sa purastāt, sa dakṣiṇataḥ, sa uttarataḥ, sa evedaṃ sarvam iti..." (Ch - 7.25.1)
 3. "...ātmaivādhastāt, ātmopariṣṭāt, ātmā pascāt, ātmā purastāt, ātmā dakṣiṇataḥ, ātmottarataḥ, ātmaivedaṃ sarvam iti..." (Ch. 7.25.2)

Thus goes the celebrated maxim

"All this is Brahman..."¹

Again as the indwelling spirit of the finite it is identified distributively with the cosmic phenomena

"That indeed in Agni, that is Āditya, that is Vayu, that is Moon..."²

The all pervasiveness of Brahman is figuratively brought out by likening it to cosmic person

"That one God, who has an eye on every side, a face on every side, an arm on every side, a foot on every side, creating heaven and earth forges them together by his arms and his wings."³

"He who is in the faces, heads and necks of all, who dwells in the cave (of the heart) of all beings, who is all pervading, He is the Lord and therefore the omnipresent Siva."⁴

1. "sarvam khalu idaṁ brahma..." (Ch. - 3.14.1)

2. "saivāgni saivāditya saivāyūḥ saivasomaḥ..."

3. "viśvatas cakṣur uta viśvato mukho viśvato bahur uta viśvataspat.

sam bāhubhyāṁ dhamati sampatatrair dyāvā-bhūmī janayan deva ekaḥ." (Svetā - 3.3)

4. "sarvānana - siro-grīvaḥ sarva-bhūta - guhāsayaḥ sarva vyāpī sa bhagavān tasmāt sarva-gatas sivaḥ." (Svetā - 3.11)

Brahman as the macrocosmic being is variously described as possessor of qualities (Guni) and the Lord of qualities.¹ This discloses the realistic strain of the upanisadic metaphysics. The view that every particle of the universe is impregnated with the cosmic spirit has the ethical suggestion that nothing is ignoble and unholy, everything is noble and sacred. Everything animate and inanimate is pervaded by Brahman.² Everything animate or inanimate is related to the rest by the divine bond of love and fellowship. We shall endeavour to show how the Upanisadic ontology contains justification and paves the way for a holistic or neo-humanistic ethics.

The view that Brahman is everywhere does not tantamount to pantheism. Though, Brahman, as the conscious principle is immanent and all pervading, it is not this reality alone. The 'infinity' of Brahman is not exhausted by the phenomenal universe. The reality in and around us, though vast (Visāla) is finite (Sasima), whereas Brahman (Anantam) has the potentiality for infinite forms of expressions of which the manifest universe is one. So, to say that the relation between Brahman and the world is one of identity is to go for an illicit equation of infinite with the finite. Hence, it is befittingly observed that Brahman is both immanent and transcendent. It

1. "...gūṇeṣṭaḥ..." (Svetā. - 6.16)

2. "Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiṁ ca jagatyāṁ jagat..."
(Īśa - 1).

is in the world; encompasses it and yet transcends its confines. To restrict Brahman to the world is to limit the limitless.

"...He surrounds the earth on all sides and stands ten fingers' breadth beyond."1

"...the one stands like a tree established in heaven, by Him, the Person, is this whole universe filled."2

"Higher and other than the forms of the world-tree and time is he from whom this world revolves..."3

Yama points to the hierarchy of realities to bring home the ultimacy of supreme Purusa.

"Beyond the senses is the mind; above the mind is its essence (intelligence), beyond the intelligence is the great self, beyond the great (self) is the unmanifest."4

"Beyond the unmanifest is the person, all pervading and without any marks whatsoever..."5

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1. "...sa bhūmiṁ visvato vṛtvā aty atiṣṭhad dasāṅgulam." (Svetā. 3.14)
 2. "...vṛkṣa iva stabdho divi tiṣṭhaty ekas tene'dam pūrnam puruṣeṇa sarvam." (Svetā 3.9)
 3. "sa vṛkṣa kālākṛtibhiḥ paro'nyo yasmāt prapancaḥ parivartateyam..." (Svetā - 6.6)
 4. "indriyebhyaḥ param mano manasas satlvaṁ uttamam, sattvād adhi mahān ātmā, mahato' vyaktam uttamam." (Katha - 2.3.7)
 5. "avyaktāt tu paraḥ puruso vyāpakolīṅga eva ca..." (Katha - 2.3.8).

In Brhadāranyaka and in Kausitāki Bālāki works out, respectively, twelve and sixteen progressive definitions of reality where Brahman is alternatively identified as the person (Purusa) in the cosmical phenomena like the Sun (Surya), the Moon (Candra), Lightning (Vidyut), Thunder (Stanayitnu), Quarters (Dik) and as the physical elements like ether (Ākāsa), air (Vāyu), fire (Agni), water (Āpah), as person in the shadow (Chāyā), in the sound (Sabda), in the echo (Prastisutka) and the person in the organs like the right eye and the left eye and each time Ajātsatru seeks to prove the inadequacy of the definitions by showing the place of secondary importance the respective persons (Purusas) occupy. When Bālāki feels handicapped from going further Ajātsatru undertakes to elucidate the nature of the self by (practical demonstration) arousing a person from the deep sleep and thereby, pointing out the 'Self' to be the ultimate unitary state from which all physical, psychic and supramundane manifestations spring forth.

"As a spider moves along the thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Self come forth all breaths, all worlds, all divinities, all beings. Its secret meaning is the truth of truth..."¹

1. "sa yathorṇanābhis tantunocaret, yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphulingā vyuccaranti, evam evāsmād ātmanah sarve prāṇah, sarve lokah, sarve devah, sarvani bhūtāni vyuccaranti, tasyopanisat, satyasya satyam..."(Br. 2.1.20)

King Janaka before being enlightened about Brahman from Yājñavalkya recounts the conventional definitions of Brahman as speech (Vāk), breath (Prāna), eye (Caksus), ear (Stotra), mind (Manas) and heart (Hṛdayam) which are shown to be inadequate to comprehend the all encompassing reality.

"...the self is not this, not this. He is incomprehensible for he is never comprehended..."¹

The celebrated phrase "Neti" "Neti" not only brings out the inadequacy and therefore incompetence of the categorial knowledge but also point to the oddity of exclusive predication in respect of Brahman. The ultimate reality being all embracing a putative predicate is sure to fall short of it. The essence defies all predicative specifications. Therefore Brahman transcends categories or predications, whatsoever.

The transcendence of Brahman is also further brought home in viewing it as the supreme progenitor.

"He is the maker of all..."²

"...who is called incorporeal, who makes existence and non-existence, the auspicious, the maker of creation and its parts..."³

"He who is the source and origin of the Gods..."⁴

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1. "...sa eṣa neti nety ātmā agr̥hyaḥ na hi gr̥hyate..." (Br. - 4.2.4)
 2. "sa visva-kṛd..." (Svetā - 6.16)
 3. "...anīḍākhyam, bhāvābhāvā karaṁ sivam. Kalā-sarga-karaṁ..." (Svetā - 5.14)
 4. "Yo devānām prabhavas codbhavas ca..." (Svetā - 4.12)

The genesis of the reality from out of Brahman, frequently illustrated by the creation or procreation analogies must not be misinterpreted so as to conceive 'Brahman' as the creator in the human sense of the term. The analogies are only illustrative of the suggestion than Brahman, as the creator, is the unconditioned absolute which being there, the world emerges. In other words, the world of particulars in respect of their origin get meaning only with reference to Brahman which contains them as one of the infinite possibilities.

Brahman is not only the creator but the controller as well. As the cosmic logos, it presides over the forces of nature, determines and regulates their respective functions.

"Verily, at the command of that Imperishable, O Gargi, the sun and the moon stand in their respective positions...heaven and earth stand in their respective positions...moments, hours, days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, years stand in their respective positions... some rivers flow to the east from the white (snowy) mountains..."¹

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1. "etasya vā akṣarasya praśāsane, gārgi, sūryācandra -
masau vidhṛtau tiṣṭhataḥ... dyāvāpṛthivyau vidhṛte
tiṣṭhataḥ... nīmeṣā, ahorātrāṇy, ardhamaśā, māśā,
ṛtavaḥ, saṁvatsara iti, vidhṛtās tiṣṭhanti..... prācyo
nyā nadiḥ syandante svetebhyaḥ parvatebhyaḥ...."
(Br. 3.8.9)

It is as if;

"From fear of Him does the wind blow, from fear of Him does the Sun rise, from fear of Him do Agni and Indra (act) and death, the fifth doth run..."¹

The above observations tend to suggest that Brahman is the supreme arbiter of the course of nature. The fact of uninformaties and symmetry in the phenomenal universe is made meaningful only with reference to the intelligent-logos. To take an empirical example, the uniqueness of a thing is determined by its characteristic essence. The essence pervades the object and determines the specificity of it. For example, the saline property of the salt makes it unique of its kind. Similarly, the reality owes its uniqueness to Brahman, the Logos. The design, discernible in the manifest universe is nothing but the characteristic expression of Brahman. The observed uniformity and order in the cosmos partakes of the essence of which they are the necessary and the particularised manifestations. The course of origination and the final destination of all realities, (the way of the world) necessarily follow from the very nature of its essence. It is precisely this that probably led the Upanisadic thinkers to conceive Brahman, figuratively, as the virtual controller and protector of the creation.

1. "bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate, bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ, bhīṣāsmād agnis cendras' ca, mṛtyur dhāvati pancama iti..." (Taitt 2.8.1).

"...the guardian of the world is He who rules this world for ever..."¹

"That God, who, after spreading out one net after another in various ways draws it together in that field, the Lord, having again created the lords, the great self, exercises his lordship over all."²

Ātman is Brahman. Hence similar descriptions have also been given in respect of Ātman.

"...He is the protector of the world, he is the sovereign of the world, he is the lord of all. He is my self, this one should know, he is my self, this one should know."³

Brahman is transcendent in so far as it is thought of as the self-determining principle, as the self-subsistent entity.

"...in which are centred all the worlds and those that dwell in them, that is the imperishable Brahman..."⁴

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1. "...bhuvanasyāśya goptā, ya īse asya jagato..."
(Svetā. 6.17)
 2. "ekaikaṃ jālam bahudhā vikurvan, asmin kṣetre
saṃharaty eṣa devaḥ,
bhūyaḥ sṛṣṭvā patayas tathes'tas sarvādhipatyaṃ kurute
mahātmā." (Svetā 5.3)
 3. "...eṣa lokapāla eṣa lokādhipatiḥ, eṣa lokesaḥ, sa ma
ātmeti vidyāt, sa ma ātmeti vidyāt..." (Kaus 3.8)
 4. "...yasmin lokā nihitā lokinas ca, tad etad akṣaram
brahma..." (Mund 2.2)

"The source of all, who develops his own nature, who brings to maturity whatever can be ripened, who distributes all qualities, He the one, rules over this whole world."¹

"Whence the sun rises and where it goes to rest, in it are all Gods founded and no one ever goes beyond that. This, verily, is that."²

"That in which the five groups of five and space are established, that alone I regard as the self..."³

The above passages tend to show Brahman as ontologically primitive and self-sufficient. Brahman is one and only one of its kind. Hence all metaphors, analogies, hyperboles, comparisons of ordinary language which get their significance in the empiricalities distort the nature of the supreme unless they are taken as mere illustrative approximations or interpreted with necessary qualifications.

The above considerations also lend justification for treating Brahman as being beyond good and evil. In other words, Brahman is said to transcend all moral valuations. It is observed that,

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1. "yak ca svabhāvam pacati visvayoniḥ, pācyāms ca sarvān pariṇāmayed yaḥ.
sarvam etad visvam adhiṣṭhaty eko guṇān ca sarvān viniyojayed yaḥ." (Svetā 5.5)
 2. "yatas codeti suryo astam yatra ca gacchati taṁ devās sarve'pitās tadu nātyeti kas cana: etad vaitat."
(Katha 2-1.9)
 3. "yasmin panca panca-janāḥ ākaśaś ca pratiṣṭhitaḥ tam eva manya ātmānam..." (Br. 4.4.17)

"From him also the gods are born in manifold ways, the celestials, men, cattle, birds... austerity, faith, truth, justice and the laws,"¹

The moral valuations are made with reference to certain norms in a particular framework or content which may be expedient for certain purposes. One, therefore, comes across diversity of moral standards in human contexts. What is more significant is the fact of hierarchy of norms or values. The higher the values, the more general, the more basic and more encompassing they become. So, one can meaningfully ask about the most basic value or set of values that impart significance to the rest. It is also worth noting that the core norms or basic values get their significance and justification from the respective metaphysical world view. So it is but natural that alternative metaphysical systems have given rise to their respective value frameworks. In the Upanishadic context, Brahman being the nucleus, the essence, the immanent, all pervading and transcendent entity entails a definite ethical viewpoint where even sacrifice, renunciation becomes the paradigms of virtue and enjoyment.

1. "tasmāc ca devā bahudhā samprasūtāḥ sādhyā manuṣyāḥ
pasavo vayāmsi,
...tapaś ca śraddhā satyam - brahmacaryam vidhiś ca."
(Mund 2.1.7)

"(Know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belongs to others."¹

An action can be counted as good or moral if and only if it conduces the good of the whole which, in fact, is instrumental for the good of the individual. The good of the individual consists in living in harmony with others. The conflict or incompatibility between the individual good and the collective good is, theoretically, precluded by the Upanishadic world view which rests on the basic vision of the manifest diversities as the veritable expressions of Brahman. So, eventually, all the moral discourse or acts of morality or valuations get their meaning from Brahman. In this sense, Brahman can befittingly be said to have given birth to morality along with the world of particularities. Brahman remains beyond the reach of moral valuation.

"...He does not become great by good action nor small by evil action, it is one, indeed, also causes him whom he wishes to lead from these worlds to perform good actions. It is one, also, causes him whom he wishes to lead downward, to perform bad action."²

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1. "īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiṁ ca jagatyāṁ jagat tena tyaktena bhujīthā, mā ṛḍhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam." (Isa - 1)
 2. "...na sādhanā karmanā bhūyān bhavati no evāsādhunā kanīyān, eṣa hy eva sādhu karma kārayati tam yam ebhyo lokebhya unnīṣata eṣa u evāsādhu karma kārayati tam yam adho ninīṣate..." (Kaus - 3.8)

The above accounts enunciating Brahman as immanent, all pervasive and transcendent have the semblance of a logical oddity. Prima facie, one finds difficulty in understanding how, something posited as the inner essence of a particular, can, at the same time pervade or be co-extensive with the totality and in what sense one could cogently speak of something as being coeval with the whole and transcend it at the same time. This objection rests on the patent difficulty of reconciling the immanence of Brahman with His transcendence. The objection can be answered, firstly, by showing that it rests on the assumption of Brahman being a particular and finite which obviously, is not the case. There are several passages in the Upanishads celebrating Brahma as infinite.

"...Brahma is infinity..."¹

It is the

"...undecaying, ancient (primeval) self of all, present in everything on account of infinity."²

It is only the 'infinite' that can be defined as greater than the greatest and subtler than the subtlest.

1. "... satyam jñānam anantam brahma..." (Taitt - 2.1.1)

2. "...ajaram purāṇam sarvātmanāṁ sarva-gatam vibhutvāt..." (Svetā - 3.21)

"Than whom there is naught else higher, than whom there is naught smaller, naught greater..."¹

"This is my self within the heart, smaller than a grain of rice, than a barely corn, than a mustard seed, than a grain of millet or than the kernel of a grain of a millet. This is myself within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than these worlds."²

"Smaller than the small, greater than the great,³ the self is set in the heart of every creature."³

The above descriptions appear as incongruous when seen as qualificatory of finites but are quite significant in respect of the 'Infinite.' The 'Infinite', definitionally, is something which does not have a determinate dimension.

It can be viewed both from microcosmic and macrocosmic perspectives. The 'Infinite' is, obviously, something which does not have a finite correlate. Negatively speaking, it is something that is not finite. Hence the only appropriate mode of understanding it from the macrocosmic perspective is to say

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1. "yasmāt param nāparam asti kincit yasmān nāñīyo na jyāyo' sti kincit..." (Svetā - 3.9)
 2. "eṣa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye' nīyān vṛiher vā, yavād vā, sarṣapād vā, śyāmākād vā, śyāmāka-taṇḍutad vā, eṣa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye jyāyān pṛthivyāḥ, jyāyān antarikṣāj jāyān divaḥ, jyāyān ebhyo lokebhyāḥ." (Ch. 3.14.3)
 3. "anor añīyān mahato mahiyān, ātmāsyā jantor nihito guhāyām..." (Katha - 1.2.20)

that it is greater than the greatest possible and microcosmically, as more minute than the minutest possible. The 'Infinite' being something non-spatial, the descriptions in terms of spatial differentiations are simply inadequate or rather irrelevant. If one insists on understanding it through spatial determinations it would be as follows:

"Verily, in the beginning this world was Brahman the infinite one, infinite in the east, infinite in the South, infinite in the West, infinite in the North and above and below, infinite in every direction. For him, indeed, East and the other directions exist not nor across, nor below, nor above. Incomprehensible is that supreme self, unlimited, unborn, not to be reasoned about, not to be thought of (unthinkable)..."¹

The infinite excludes duality or differentiation. It is finite, which is excludent of other finites. There can be no sense in speaking of plurality of 'Infinities.' Plurality presupposes a distinction among the multitudes and that again presupposes an objective criterion for mutual differentiation. Hence, it is nonsensical to speak of infinities. Brahman, as the infinite, refers to a state of absolute unicity where the distinction

1. "brahma ha vā idam agra āsīt, ekonantaḥ, prāg ananto dakṣiṇato'nantaḥ, pratīcy ananta udīcy ananta ūrdhvañ cāvān ca sarvatonantaḥ; na hy āsya pracyādi-disaḥ kalpante 'lhā tiryagvān cordhvañ vā, anūhya eṣa paramātmā parimito yo tarkyo cintya..." (Maitri 6-17)

between 'I' and 'thou,' 'this' and 'that' do not hold good. As all the ordinary modes of cognition presuppose the exclusiveness of the observer and the observed with regard to Brahma. It is said,

"Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the infinite. But where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the small (the finite)."¹

As the essence it excludes everything and therefore resists all attempts at predication or particularisation. As transcendent it includes everything and hence eludes the reach of finite or exclusive predications. Human understanding is necessarily through concepts or categories. So, if understanding is, at all, insisted upon Brahman in its all pervasive and transcendental aspect, shall be found to accommodate all possible predications. Even contradictory predications shall be found to be appropriate of it.

"It moves and it moves not, it is far and it is near, it is within all this and it is also outside all this."²

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1. "yatra nānyat pasyati nānyac chṛṇoti nānyad vijānati sa bhumā, atha yatrānyat pasyati anyac chṛṇoti anyad vijānāti tad alpam..." (Ch. 7.24.1).
 2. "tad ejati tan naijati tad dūre tad vad antike tad antarasya sarvasya tad u sarvasyāsyā bāhyataḥ." (Isa 5).

"(The spirit) is unmoving, one, swifter than the mind. The senses do not reach it as it is ever ahead of them. Though itself standing still it outstrips those who run; in it the all pervading air supports the activities of beings."1

"Sitting, he moves far, lying, he goes everywhere Who, save myself, is fit to know that god who rejoices and rejoices not?"2

The jarring contradictions might mislead one to think that the exponents of the doctrine in order to secure the uniqueness of Brahman have taken recourse to the poetic frenzy and consequently, landed themselves in contradictions with the supercilious disregard for the norms of intelligibility. Consequently, they, in lieu of saying something of ultimate significance, harvest nonsense. Such misgivings seem to spring from the assumption that laws of logic are the laws of intelligibility. One could violate them only at the cost of sense or intelligibility. But it is worth pointing here that the basic laws of logic operate in a framework that takes for granted the multiplicity and the relative constancy of the particulars. In other words, if one could think of a state of affair where, there is no duality or multiplicity or where, things having been subject to constant flux, cease to be what

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1. "anejad ekaṃ manaso javīyo nainad devā āpnuvan
pūrvamarṣat,
tad dhāvato' nyān-atyeti tiṣṭhat tasminn apo mātarisvā
dadhāti." (Isa 4)
 2. "āsīno dūraṃ vrajati, śayāno yāti sarvataḥ kastam
madāmadaṃ devam mad anyo jnātum arhati." (Katha 1.2.21)

they are; in every successive movement; one would not perhaps, make any sense of law of identity ('A is A') implying that a thing is identical with itself or is what it is; the law of excluded middle ('A' is either 'B' or 'Not B') or even law of contradictions, ('A' cannot be both 'B' and 'Not B') both implying multiplicity of particulars. The preceding accounts make it amply clear that Brahman denotes a stance of absolute unicity and is, obviously, neither one of the finites nor, even, the summation of them. This introduces one to the ontology of a different order. This being so, the ordinary language, the rules of intelligibility, deemed sacrosanct for understanding empirical phenomena, are found to be inadequate or positively misleading. Since use of concepts or categories is indispensable to and is the constitutive limitations of linguistic understanding, the language in its bid to describe Brahman is bound to issue out contradictions. The contradictions are negatively significant in pointing to the built-in limitations of language but contain a positive suggestion as to the nature of the ultimate. There are four distinct approaches with regard to the use of language in respect of the ultimate reality. Probably, realising the inefficacy of language Bādhva when questioned by Bāsklin about the supreme, resorts to silence. When pestered by the disciple again and again Bādhva retorts:

"I am teaching you indeed, but you do not understand. Silence, is that soul."¹

Secondly, 'Neti,' 'Neti' is a logical caution against affirmative or exclusive predications. So one is left with either negative descriptions which tell us what Brahma is not, implying positively the transcendence or infinity of Brahman.

"Brahman is 'that which is ungraspable, without family, without caste, without sight or hearing, without hands or feet...'"²

Turiya - which is equated with Brahmanhood, is also negatively described.

"(Turiya is) not that which cognises the internal (objects), not that which cognises the external (objects), not what cognises both of them, not a mass of cognition, not cognitive, not non-cognitive. (It is) unseen, incapable of being spoken of, ungraspable, without any distinctive marks, unthinkable, unnameable, the essence of the knowledge of the one self..."³

Lastly, one finds contradictions to be the only positive assertions approximating the nature of the 'Infinite.'

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1. Sankara bhasya (Brahma Sutra) - 3.2.17.
 2. "Yat tad adres'yam, agrāhyam, agotram, avarṇam, acakṣuḥśrotram tad apāṇi-pādam..." (Mund - 1.1.6)
 3. "nāntaḥ-prajnam, na bahis prajnam, nobhayataḥ-prajnam, na prajnāna-ghanam, naprajnam, nāprajnam, adr̥stam, avyavahāryam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapadesyam, ekātma-pratyaya-sāram..." (Mand - 7).

'Infinity' is a concept in mathematics. It is derivative, in so far as, it denotes something not finite, 'Infinity' is intelligible only against the finite numbers. But 'infinity' in the Upanisadic literatures has the positive import. It is not a concept but denotative of the nature of Brahman. Brahman as infinite, has to be known or realised in its native stance. It is to be comprehended as such. But when understood in relation to finites it is to be construed negatively as non-finite or indeterminate.

Nonetheless, there have been positive descriptions of Brahman as truth (Sat), consciousness (cit) and bliss (Ānandam). 'Sat' here is to be translated as a real. Brahman is Sat in the sense of being absolutely real or ultimately real. The reality of Brahman is to be understood in contradistinction to the relative reality of the empirical. According to Sankara, real is that which is non-sublatable (Abādhitam). Against this criterion even the dream experience is said to be real for it is relatively permanent. It is real as long as it lasts. But its unreality becomes a proven fact when sublated by waking experiences. By the same criterion the reality of the waking experience or the normal consciousness (Vyabahārika Sattā) is also pronounced to be relatively real. The empirical consciousness assumes the reality of the multiplicities which is sublated by the 'Brahman awareness,' whereof, the fragmentary consciousness of the divided reality gets transmuted in

the cognition of cosmic unity, Brahman is real (Sat) in the absolute sense of the term for it is not sublatale in principle. In other words, Brahmanhood is construed as a state of permanence. Thus, the notion of sublatability depends for its explanation on the notion of change. This has led some thinkers to define real as inconsequential (Aparināmi). Brahman is the ultimate truth for it does not suffer from consequences. It remains steady in and through the creation, preservation and dissolution. It is the creator, preserver and destroyer. It is the real of the real (Satyasya Satyam) in so far as the empirical world owes its reality (its relative permanence) to Brahman.

It is the pan-consciousness that transcends the limiting awareness of the individual whereas the knower discovers himself as the knower of the cognition of all (Antaryāmi) and cognitions of all times (Trikāladarsi). As the subject Ātman is not only the cognitive agent but the only agent.

"Verily, that Imperishable, O Gārgi, is unseen but is the seer, is unheard but is the hearer, unthought but is the thinker, unknown but is the knower. There is no other seer but this, there is no other hearer but this, there is no other thinker but this, there is no other knower but this. By this Imperishable, O Gārgi, is space woven like warp and woof."¹

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1. "tad vā etad akṣaram, gārgi, adṛṣṭam draṣṭṛ, aśrutam, śroṭṛ, amatam manṭṛ, avijnātam vijñāṭṛ, nānyad ato' sti draṣṭṛ, nānyad ato' sti śroṭṛ, nānyad ato' sti manṭṛ, nānyad ato' sti vijñāṭṛ, etasmin nu khalu aksare, gārgi, ākāśa otas' ca protas' ca." (Br. 3.8.11).

It is in this sense that Ātman is considered to be the essence of all the knowing organs, figuratively described as

"...life of life, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear and the mind of the mind, they have realised the ancient primordial Brahman."¹

"...it is that which is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech, indeed of the speech, the breath of the breath, the eye of the eye..."²

Being the very subject and the basic presupposition of all acts of knowledge they argue about the oddity of knowing the subject as the very object of knowledge. That, which is the very means of representation cannot be represented.

"That which is not seen by the eye but by which the eyes are seen, that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore."³

"That which is not thought by the mind but by which, they say, the mind is thought (thinks), that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore."⁴

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1. "...prāṇasya prāṇam uta cakṣuṣaś cakṣuḥ uta śrotrasya śrotram,
manaso ye mano viduḥ, te nicikyur brahma purāṇam agryam." (Br. 4.4.18)
 2. "śrotrasya śrotram manaso mano yad vāco ha vācam sa u prāṇasya prāṇaḥ cakṣuṣaś cakṣur..." (Kena - 1.2)
 3. "yac cakṣuṣā na paśyati yena cakṣūṃṣi paśyati tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedam yad idam upāsate. (Kena - 1.7)
 4. "yan manasā na manute yenāhur mano matam tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedam yad idam upāsate." (Kena - 1.6)

From this they argue the consequent unknowability of Brahman by the sensory acts of cognition.

"There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind, we know not, we understand not how one can teach this."¹

"He is not grasped by the eye nor even by speech nor by other sense organs..."²

"Whence words return along with the mind..."³

The consciousness has also been described as 'Purusa.' It literally means that which lies quiescent in everything. 'Cit' has been differently translated as 'intelligence' or 'consciousness.' Consciousness should not be understood as an attribute qualifying Brahman. It does not define Brahman but constitutes it. Brahman does not have consciousness, but is of the nature of consciousness (Caitanya Svarupa). As Ātman, it is the animating principle of the organism. It is of the form of pure intelligence, uncontaminated by the materiality or the cognitive appropriation of the sense organs. Having been non-spatial, it lacks an inside or outside.

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1. "na tatra cakṣur gacchati na vāg gacchati no manaḥ na vidmo na vijānīmo yathaitad anuśiṣyāt." (Kena - 1.3)
 2. "na cakṣuṣā gṛhyate nāpi vācā nānyair devaiḥ..." (Mund - 3.1.8)
 3. "yato vāco nivartante..." (Taitt - 2.4.1)

"...this self is without inside, without outside, altogether a mass of intelligence only."1

As the invariable subject of all cognitions it reveals the world and is self-revealing or self-illuminating. Therefore, it is figuratively described as the light of the light.

"In the highest golden sheath is Brahman without stain, without parts, Pure as it, the light of lights. That is what the knowers of self know."2

"When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out and speech has stopped, what light does a person here have? The self, indeed, is his light, said he, for with the self, indeed, as the light, one sits, moves about, does one's work and returns."3

"...Everything shines only after that shining light. His shining illumines all this world."4

Atman is the real subject of all cognitions. The sense organs are the mere gateways,

"That by which (one perceives) form, taste, smell, sounds and touches of love, by that alone one perceives. What is there that remains (unknown to it)? This, verily, is that."5

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1. "...ātmā, anantaro' bāhyaḥ, kṛtsnaḥ prajñāna-ghava eva..." (Br. 4.5.13)
 2. "hiraṇmaye pare ko'se virajaṁ brahma niṣkalam tac chubhraṁ jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ tad yad ātma-vido vidadḥ." (Mun. 2.2.10)
 3. "astam eta āditye, yājñavalkya, candramasy astam ite, śānte agnau, śāntāyāṁ vāci, kiṁ-jyotir evāyam purusa iti. ātmaivāsya jyotir bhavati, ātmanaivāyam jyotiṣāste, palyayate, karma kurute, vipalyeti iti." (Br. 4.3.6)
 4. "...tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvaṁ idaṁ vibhāti." (Katha. 2.2.1)
 5. "yena rūpaṁ rasaṁ gandhaṁ śabdān sparsāṁś ca maithunān, etenaiva vijānāti, kiṁ atra pariśiṣyate, etad vai tat." (Katha 2.1.3)

In the Kena one finds the description of self, as the subject in form of questions.

"By whom willed and directed does the mind light on its objects? By whom commanded does life the first, move? At whose will do (people) utter this speech? And what god is it that prompts the eye and the ear?"¹

The Ātman, as a conscious principle is not to be confused with the 'I' consciousness or the synthetic unit of apperception of Kant. The 'I' consciousness in Kant is a logical postulation to account for unity of all perceptions. The Ātman is not the empirical consciousness that accompanies all acts of cognitions but the universal consciousness which runs not only through, but lies latent in unit structures (Pure sete iti Purusah). As the logos it determines the course of evolution and explains uniformity, harmony in the creation. Reality is not a chaos but a cosmos. The materialistic ontology advocates matter or energy as the primordial world stuff. But energy being a blind force or a mere capacity without direction (a vector quantity in the jargon of science) cannot explain the fact of order or symmetry discernible in micro as well as macro-structures. Hence it is plausible to think of consciousness as the regulating principle (Sakti Sā Sivasya Sakti). This introduces one to the rational teleology of the

1. "keneṣitam patati preṣitam manaḥ kena prāṇaḥ prathamāḥ praiti yuktaḥ.
keneṣitām vācam imām, caksuh śrotraḥ ka u devo yunakti."
(Kena - 1.1)

Upanisadic world view. Ātman remains invariable in and through the changes in states of consciousness, namely, waking (Jagrata), dream (Svapna), deep sleep (Susupti) and the highest state of non-duality (Turiya) and is termed respectively, as 'Vaisvanara,' 'Taijasa,' 'Prajñā' and Ātman respectively.

Brahman is of the nature of Bliss (Ānanda Svarupa); Ānanda (Bliss) is to be distinguished from Sukham (Pleasure). Pleasure can be defined as a state of agreeable feeling accruing out of the interaction of the individual with the finite. Since it owes its origin to finite it is contingent and discontinuous. Whereas 'Bliss' (Ānanda) is connotative of a state of affective awareness where one gets one self established in an ecstatic experience which is total and infinitely continuous. The experience of 'Bliss' cannot be expressed by means of affective terms for it is unique of its kind having no sensory correlate. It can be known only by undergoing it. Several passages in the Upanisads appear to be vocal in describing Brahman as a state of ineffable bliss. Bhrgu in his quest for the highest knowledge undertakes austerity at the instance of his father Varuna and discovers progressively Brahman as matter (Annam), life (Prāṇah), mind (Manah), intelligence (Vijnānam) and ultimately as Bliss (Ānandam). His knowledge of Brahman as 'Bliss' marks the culmination of his self discovery or terminus of spiritual voyage.

"He knew that Brahman is bliss. For truly, beings here are born from bliss, when born, they live by bliss and into bliss, when departing, they enter."¹

The description of the highest state in Kausitāki runs as follows

"...This same breathing spirit is, truly, the intelligent self, bliss, ageless, immortal..."²

"...Verily, different from and within that which consists of understanding is the self consisting of bliss. By that this is filled..."³

In Brhadāranyaka, Yājñavalkya gives a qualitative account of 'Bliss' in terms of mundane pleasures (to be understood as figurative explanations pointing to the infinity of Bliss) and eventually observes,

"...This is the highest bliss. This is the world of Brahma..."⁴

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1. "ānando brahmeti vyajānāt, ānandādd hy eva khalu imāni bhūtāni jāyante, ānandena jātāni jīvanti, ānandaṁ prayanty abhisamvisanti..." (Taitt 3.6.1)
 2. "...sa eṣa prāna eva prajñātmanānando jaro' mṛtaḥ..." (Kausi 3.8)
 3. "...tasyaiṣa eva śārīra ātmā, yaḥ pūrvasya, tasmād vā etasmād vijñāna- mayāt anyo'ntara ātmā ānanda mayah tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ..." (Taitt U.2.5.1)
 4. "...athaiṣa eva parama ānandah, eṣa brahma - lokaḥ..." (Br. 4.3.33)

As already hinted, 'bliss' is ineffable for, it cannot be translated in terms of the experiences of the normal life. The basic difference between pleasure and bliss consists in the fact that the former is discontinuous or has a terminus whereas the latter is an infinite continuum. If one insists on defining it through the language of pleasure the only approximated attempt would be to define bliss as the pleasure infinite 'Sukham Anantam Ānandam.'¹ But in spite of the categorical difference between 'pleasure' and 'bliss' there seems to be underlying suggestion which enables one to understand bliss in terms of pleasure. Pleasure arises only when the object of affective experience is found to be agreeable to the interacting subject. In other words, pleasure denotes a state of harmony between the subject and the object. When the harmony is lost on account of changes either in the person or in the object or the conditions affecting the interaction, the pleasure accruing therefrom, ceases to be any more there. But Brahman being a state of all comprehensive totality there can be nothing actual and possible, disharmonious with it. When the unit consciousness is sublimated to the state of cosmic consciousness the knower becomes, verily, the cosmic and everything, whatsoever, is found to be in harmony with Him. Hence, the Bliss is infinite. It is verily the state of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, Saciddānanda. It is known only by becoming it, 'Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati.'

1. Ananda Sutram p-17

The objective of the chapter **althrough, has been to** plead and argue that ultimate reality, the Brahman, is unspeakable. It cannot be described in terms of language. In other words, it is beyond all predication. This position may seem unacceptable to the philosophers belonging to the brand of 'analytic philosophers' on the ground that it violates all rules of intelligibility and communication. But I have argued that the position of the analytic philosophers is not acceptable. In fact, **my** objective has been to give a defence of the Upanishadic ontology against the anticipated onslaught by the 'linguistic philosophers.'

CHAPTER - III

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The irrepressible urge and the persistent effort to interrogate and understand the reality (in and around) without taking its givenness for granted, defines the uniqueness of human consciousness. The prying queries of man about the 'why' and 'how' of the 'given' has, consequently, given rise to Philosophy, Science, and Theology. Though explanation and understanding of the (same) reality is their common object they remain distinct because of the very nature and scope of the questions that the philosopher, scientist and spiritualist address themselves to. The understanding of reality can be attempted at two different levels, i.e. the microcosmic and the macrocosmic. The former consists in explaining and understanding the particulars in terms of their causal antecedents. Thus, the piece-meal understanding of facts, by far, involves the method of sensory observation and experiment and is, conventionally, termed as scientific in the paradigmatic sense of the term. But it is somehow a tacit realisation that the Reality, far from presenting a mere juxtaposition of heterogeneous 'givens' discloses intelligible inter-relations, harmony and uniformity, making it amenable to explanations in terms of laws. Diversities are the bare facts in reality. Every particular is a unique particular in the sense that nothing is identical, in all respects, with anything else.

But what is still more fascinating is that the particulars, in spite of their uniqueness, also bear affinity among them. A given particular shares the generic properties with other particulars belonging to the same class and the classes share the properties defining the genus; of which they are the co-ordinate sub-classes. Thus there is a hierarchy of particulars or existence. On the other hand, one finds the laws to be of varying grades of generality, the more general laws subsuming the less general ones. This has led man to ascertain if there could be anything most general or most universal that explains everything. This makes him ask questions about the whole or the totality. What is the ultimate reality, the primordial substance, the causal matrix which being there the world has sprung forth? The question is obviously non-scientific for it neither addresses itself to the understanding of a particular nor can its answer be found by the methods of observation and experiment. So the questions about a particular is said to be empirical and scientific whereas the questions about the totality are acknowledged to be philosophical. But the analysts, the logical behaviourists and the positivists, in general, would perhaps, contest the very logical status of such questions about the totality. They would **argue** that causality has its legitimate application only in the context of succession of particulars in space and time and therefore, does not make any sense, when employed in respect of the

'totality' as such. In other words, the question; 'what is the cause of the Reality or world?'; in spite of its grammatical sanity, is logically odd. The oddity is further brought home by showing that a question is said to be sound or genuine if it has an actual or possible answer. The questions about the ultimate are unsound because there is no conceivable way of finding an answer to it or any way of determining the veracity of the suggested solutions or legislating the issues arising out of incompatible claims. They would restrict the function of philosophy (negatively) to the elimination of confusions arising out of the illicit operation with concepts and (positively) to the analysis or clarification of concepts of most general import, such as, cause-effect, matter-mind, self-God, 'truth,' justice, etc.

As a rejoinder to the above, it may be said here that the questions about the whole are not only significant but have definitive answers, as well. As to the former it may be argued that the questions about the ultimate are logically implied by the explanations of the finite. For example, in common or even scientific parlance, in seeking to account for the finites one arrives at the fundamental elements which, in varied combinations, appear as the composite existents. In recent years, the scientists have been at a consensus in postulating 'energy' to be the 'ultimate.' It perfectly makes

sense to, tentatively, posit 'energy' as the basic stuff and explain matter or material evolutes in terms of energy. Thus one finds that a progressive, wider and an adequate understanding of the particulars, logically, leads one to find if there could be anything basic to everything. Such queries raised by thinkers from time to time not only typify the natural urge of man to understand the totality but also are worth pursuing. On the other hand, the answers to such questions, though have been very many and at times mutually conflicting, the viability of the suggested answers can be determined both by their explanatory adequacy and the relevant verificational experience (the mode of verification being determined by the nature of the object under disputation).

This makes room for the transcendental ontology which may be of too broad types, namely, the rational or the speculative and the intuitive ontology. In the speculative ontology the ultimate reality is more a logical postulate than claimed as a matter of fact (an item in the experience). The ontology of Thales, Anaxaminder, Anaxamines, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibneiz, Hegel Bradley and all other metaphysicians are speculative in so far as the 'ultimate' in their respective systems is posited as a matter of logical necessity consequent upon the assumptions and the method of argumentation and is accorded an ontological status.

On the other hand, the ultimate in the intuitive ontology is rooted in the a-rational and holistic experience of the seers. But this is not to say that the intuitive ontology does not employ arguments to fortify its basic claims but to maintain that the authentication of its basic claim is made on the strength of the relevant experience for the same and the arguments, adduced thereof, are only corroborative of the basic vision. To put it otherwise, the basic difference between the intuitive and the rational ontology consists in the fact that in the former experience is focal and ratiocination is peripheral whereas in the latter it is the reverse. The Upanisadic ontology falls within the purview of the former. In fact, it is one and unique of its kind in the history of human thought.

It is noteworthy that the explanation of something can be made in terms of its origin, existence growth and destruction. 'Brahman' figures as the most basic and primordial entity in the Upanisadic account of reality. It is construed as the transcendental agent of creation, preservation and dissolution and that which persists in and through the recurring cycles of creation. It is beyond change but constitutes the explanation of changes pertaining to the phenomenal diversities in all its appearances and disappearances. It is the unity underlying all diversities.

In respect of origin, Brahman is posited as the first existent and the progenitor of the created manifold. This need not mistake one to think that Brahman as the existent is one among the existents or finites, with the difference that it is the first in the series nor need one think of the creator (Brahman) as external to the creation. The above two implications can be shown to be unfounded with reference to the account of creation found in the Upanisads. The statements:

"verily in the beginning this world was Brahman..."¹

read in conjunction with

"verily all this is Brahman..."²

"...the self (Ātman) is indeed all this world..."³

"The person (purusa) is truly this whole world, whatever has been and whatever will be..."⁴

imply that the reality prior to its manifestation and as the 'manifested' is equated with Brahman, Atman or Purusa (terms synonymously used to denote the ultimate reality). It is significant to note that though Brahman has been, variously,

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1. "brahma ha vā idam agra āsīt,..." (Maitri - 6.17)
 2. "sarvam khalu idaṁ brahma..." (Ch. 3.14.1)
 3. "...ātmaivedaṁ sarvam iti..." (Ch. 7.25.2)
 4. "puruṣa evedaṁ sarvam yad bhūtam yac ca bhavyam..." (Svetā 3.15)

portrayed as the creator, progenitor, the Upanisadic cosmogony does not advocate the doctrine of the "creation de Novo" as seen in other accounts of creation. All that one notices in and through the creation and the procreation metaphors is not the account of a creator (Brahman) creating an world over and above its entitative existence but of the One evolving itself into the manifested particulars. Seen in this perspective Brahman and the world are denotative of the self-same reality in its unexpressed (undifferentiated) and expressed (differentiated) state respectively.

"At that time this (universe) was undifferentiated. It became differentiated by name and form..."¹

In this sense, the world can, appropriately, be said to be the manifestation not the creation of the Supreme. The creation stories are mere analogies to illustrate the evolution of unity into diversity. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka relates that the self, in order to put an end to its pristine monotony became desirous of a second. That very wish is followed by the primeval-self evolving into duality.

1. "taddhedam tarhy avyākṛtam āsit, tan nāma-rūpābhyām eva vyākriyata..." (Br. - 1.4.7).

"He, verily had no delight... He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in close embrace. He caused that self to fall into two parts. From that arose husband and wife... He became united with her. From that human beings are produced."1

Then the story goes that the female principle hides herself in the cow, mare, she-ass, she-goat, ewe and the male principle becomes the corresponding male counterparts in order to be united with her. As a result, the creation of other organic and inorganic realities follow.

"He knew, I indeed am this creation for I produced all this. Therefore, he became the creation..."2

In the Taittiriya, the creation of the manifold is, also, traced to the will of the cosmic self.

"...He (the supreme soul) desired. Let me become many, let me be born. He performed austerity. Having performed austerity he created all this whatever is here..."3

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1. "sa vai naiva reme... sa dvitīyam aicchat, sa haitāvān āsa yathā strī-pumāṃsau sampariṣvaktau, sa imam evātmānaṁ dvedhāpātajat, tataḥ patiś ca patnī cābhavatām... tāṁ samabhavat, tato manuṣyā ajāyanta." (Br. 1.4.3)
 2. "so'vet, ahaṁ vāva sṛṣṭir asmi, ahaṁ hīdam sarvam asṛkṣīti, tataḥ sṛṣṭir abhavat..." (Br. 1.4.5)
 3. "...so' kāmayata, bahu syām prajāyeyeti, sa tapo' tapyata, so tapas taptvā, idaṁ sarvam aṣṛjata..." (Taitt 2.6.1).

and to forestall the possible deistic implications, it adds,

"...Having created it, into it, indeed, he entered. Having entered it he became both the actual and the beyond, the defined and the undefined, both the founded and the unfounded, the intelligent and the unintelligent, the true and the untrue..."¹

Moreover, one finds in the text a complete account of all the fundamental elements ether (Vyoma), air (Vāyu), fire (Teja), water (Āpa), earth (Kṣiti), the herbs (Osadhayah), food (Annam) and the person the empirical (Puruṣaḥ) springing forth from the self in order of the ontological subtlety.

"...from this self, verily, ether arose, from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water the earth, from the earth the herbs, from herbs food, from food the person..."²

The creation, thus, is from one to many, undifferentiated to the differentiated, the subtle to the gross and from the state of formless impersonality to that of names and forms.

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1. "...tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviṣat, tad anupraviṣya. sac ca tyac ca abhvat, niruktaṁ cāniruktaṁ ca, nilayanaṁ canilayanaṁ ca, vijñānaṁ cāvijñanaṁ ca, satyaṁ cānṛtaṁ ca..." (Taitt - 2.6.1)
 2. "...tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśas sambhutaḥ, ākāśād vāyuh, vāyor agniḥ, agner āpaḥ, adbhyaḥ pṛthivi, pṛthivyā ośadhayaḥ ośadhibhyo annam, annāt puruṣaḥ..." (Taitt 2.1.1)

"Divine and formless is the person. He is without and within, unborn, without breath and without mind, pure and higher than the highest immutable."¹

"From him are born life, mind, all the sense organs, ether, air, light, water and earth..."²

As the mere potentiality, Brahman (the Purusa) is featureless and therefore, is not to be treated as one in the series of finites, but merits a different ontological category. It is described as being, even, beyond the unmanifest.

"Beyond the senses is the mind, above the mind is its essence (intelligence), beyond the intelligence is the greatself (Hiranyagarbha or the world Soul), beyond the greatself is the unmanifest."³

"Beyond the unmanifest is the person, all pervading and without any mark whatever..."⁴

"...beyond the spirit there is nothing..."⁵

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1. "divyo hy amūrtaḥ puruṣaḥ sa bāhyābhyantaro hy ajaḥ aprāṇo hy amanāḥ śubhro akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ."
(Mund - 2.1.2)
 2. "etasmā jāyate prāṇo manaḥ sarvendriyāni ca, khaṁ vāyur jyotir āphaḥ pṛthivī..." (Mund 2.1.3)
 3. "indriyebhyaḥ param mano manasas sattvam uttamam, sattvād adhi mahān ātmā, mahato vyaktam uttamam."
(Katha 2.3.7)
 4. "avyaktāt tu paraḥ puruṣo vyāpako' linga eva ca..."
(Katha 2.3.8)
 5. "...puruṣān na paraṁ kincit..." (Katha 1.3.11)
-

The above observations go to suggest that Brahman, as the cosmic logos and the transcendental world ground is beyond even the unmanifest. In other words, it is above all dualities whatsoever. It is beyond unmanifest (Avyakta) for the notion of 'unmanifest,' having been meaningful only against the 'manifest', remains tied down to the domain of duality. This has also led some to conceive, Brahman as 'Asat' or 'Non being.' The Bṛhadāraṇyaka equates the state of indeterminate potentiality with that of non-being describing it (figuratively) as if it were covered by hunger and death which having acquired a self brings forth water, earth and fire or in other words, the physical elements that constitute the pluralities.

"There was nothing whatsoever here in the beginning. By death, indeed, was this covered or by hunger, for hunger is death. He created the mind, thinking 'let me have a self.' Then he moved about contemplating. From him, thus contemplating water was produced..."¹

"...that which was the froth of the water became solidified; that became the earth. On it he rested. From him thus rested and heated (from the practice of austerity), his essence of brightness came forth (as) Fire."²

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1. "naiveha kiṁcanāgra āsīt. mṛtyunaivedam āvṛtam āsit, aśanāyayā, aśanāyā hi mṛtyuḥ, tan mano kuruta, ātmanvī syām iti, so' rcann acarat, tasyārcata. āpo' jāyanta..." (Br. 1.2.1)
 2. "...tad yad apāṁ śara āsīt, tat samahanyata, sa pṛthivy abhavad, tasyām aśrāmyat. tasya śrāhtasya taptasya tejo raso niravartatāgniḥ." (Br. 1.2.2)

Interestingly in the Chāndogya, one finds an account of the primeval 'Asat' turning itself into 'Sat' or existence manifesting itself into an egg the different parts of which is later metamorphosed distributively into various cosmical elements.

"...in the beginning this (world) was non-existent. It became existent. It grew. It turned into an egg... It burst open. Then came out of the egg-shell two parts, one of silver, the other of gold."¹

"That which was of silver is this earth, that which was of gold is the sky. What was the outer membrane is the mountains, that which was the inner membrane is the mist with the clouds. What were the veins were the rivers. What was the fluid within is the ocean."²

"And what was born from it was the yonder Sun..."³

Curiously enough, the myth of the universal egg is not peculiar to the Upanisads but has parallels in Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian and Greek mythologies. However, the egg is not to be interpreted literally. It is symbolic of the infinite

1. "...asad evedam agra āsīt, tat sad āsīt, tat samabhavat, tad āṇḍam niravartata... tan nirabhidyata, te āṇḍakapāle rajataṃ ca suvarṇaṃ cābhavatām." (Ch. 3.19.1)

2. "tad yad rajataṃ seyaṃ pṛthivī, yat suvarṇam sāv dyauḥ, yaj jarāyu te parvatāḥ, yad ulbaṃ sa megho nīhāraḥ, yā dhamanayas tā nadyaḥ, yad vāsteyam udakaṃ sa samudraḥ." (Ch. 3.19.2)

3. "atha yat tad ajāyata so' sāv ādityaḥ..." (Ch. 3.19.3)

potentiality evolving into actualities by the act of self expansion. All the above accounts go to substantiate the thesis that Brahman which is of the nature of consciousness (Cit) or intelligence (Prajnā) evolves itself into the world by the act of self-limitation or self-expansion. The emanation of diversity is attributed to the will on the part of the one and non-dual Brahman. Since Brahman is impersonal and is of the nature of intelligence or consciousness it is quite intelligible to maintain that Brahman in the unqualified state, was possessed of the desire to create i.e. to qualify Brahman by self-knowledge. The mind being the later evolute, to comprehend the precise relationship between the creator and the created falls beyond the ambit of human understanding. So to say that the creation is the play of divine mind (Līlā) is to say that it does not fall within the purview of rational explanation and that perhaps is the only intelligible explanation thereof. The act of self limitation can be understood as; 'the pure consciousness' undergoing the process of crudification so as to develop into the world of names and forms. Again, the act of self expansion can be understood in terms of the 'One' transmuting itself into many, the unity into diversity.

Brahman is the cause of the world in a very qualified sense of the term. As the seed is to the tree with its flowers

fruits and foliage, the latter being the actualised forms of the potential latent in the seed, the Brahman as the infinite and unmanifested potentiality stands in relation to the creation, with the significant difference that Brahman being eternally existent is described as unborn or self-caused. Brahman is the explanation of everything actual and possible. It is ontologically and therefore logically most primitive or basic. Therefore the causal questions about Brahman are semantically odd whereas they are quite meaningful in respect of the finite.

If the above accounts are accepted as representing the Upanisadic cosmogony as a whole, then the passages enunciating the ultimacy of the physical elements like Water, Air, ether, appear incongruous.

With regard to water:-

"In the beginning the universe was just water. That water produced the real (Satyam). Brahman is the real. Brahman produced Prajāpati and Prajāpati produced the Gods..."¹

With regard to Air:-

"Air verily is the absorbent, for when fire goes out it goes into the air, when the sun sets it goes into the air and when the moon sets it goes into the air."²

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1. "āpa evedam agra āsuḥ, tā āpaḥ satyam aṣṛjanta, satyam brahma, brahma prajāpatim, prajāpatir devān..." (Br. 5.5.1)
 2. "vāyur vāva samvargaḥ, yadā vā agnir udvāyati, vāyum evāpyeti, yadā sūryo' stam eti vāyum evāpyeti, yadā candro' stam eti vāyum evāpyeti." (Ch. 4.3.1)

With regard to Ether (Akasa)

"...All these beings are produced from space.
The return back into space for space is
greater than this. Space is the final goal."¹

The passages advocating alternately, the primordially of the physical elements do not purport to contradict or undermine the thesis of the primacy of the Being or the Brahman. The relative claims highlighting one or the other element as basic is to be understood in the framework of the emergence of the composite existents from the basic constituents but one can still persist to question about the very origin of the elements and expect a plausible explanation. The attempts at such postulations disclose the height of speculative thinking of the ancient thinkers which has its prototypes in the pre-Socratic thinking and other sister cosmogonies. These views are not to be deemed as scientific in the absence of the accredited methods of empirical substantiation but are pre-scientific, in so far as, they have paved the way for the exact investigations of science.

As with regard to the physical emergents the elements are taken to be basic, the vital breath (the Prāṇa) is basic in relation to the organismic activities of the individual and is equated with Brahman.

1. "...sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāny ākāśād eva samutpadyante, ākāśam pratyastam yanty ākāśo hy evaibhyo jyāyān, ākāśaḥ parāyanam." (Ch. 1.9.1).

"... verily, indeed, all beings here enter (into life) with breath (Prāna) and depart (from life) with breath..."¹

"...Prāna, indeed, is the absorbent, for when a man sleeps his speech, eye, ear and mind are all absorbed into Prāna."²

The celebrated controversy among the sense organs and the Prāna about their respective claims of supremacy or lordship over the rest, before Prajāpati as the arbiter; brings out the superiority or primacy of vital breath. It is the animating principle behind all sensory acts and is indispensable for all cognitions. Hence, the sense organs for all practical purposes are identified with the vital breath.

"...Revered Sir, remain, you are the best of us, do not depart."³

observe the sense organs.

"Verily they do not call them speeches or eyes or ears or minds. They, call them breaths (Prāna) for all these are breath."⁴

-
1. "...sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhisamviśanti, prāṇam abhyujjihate..." (Ch. 1.11.5).
 2. "...prāṇo vāva samvargaḥ, sa yadā svapiti prāṇam eva vāg apyeti, prāṇam cakṣuḥ, prāṇam srotram, prāṇam manaḥ, prāṇo hy evaitān sarvān samvṛṅkte iti." (Ch. 4.3.3).
 3. "...bhagavam edhi, tuam naḥ śreṣṭho'si, motkramīr iti." (Ch. 5.1.12).
 4. "na vai vāco na cakṣuṃṣi na śrotrāṇi na manāmsity ācakṣate, prāṇā ity evācakṣate, prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavati." (Ch. 5.1.15).

The same theme is repeated in the Kausitāki where Prāṇa is equated with Brahman and portrayed figuratively as a person with mind as

"...the messenger, the eye the protector, the ear the announcer, speech the house-keeper..."¹

This stresses the fact of the sense organs are functionally subservient and posterior to Prāṇa (the life principle).

The fundamental elements, and the Prāṇa are the post creational expression of the Supreme. The pure consciousness does not get lost in the act of creating itself into the world but remains concealed in the unit creations as their very essence.

"Non-existent, verily was this (world) in the beginning. There from verily existence was produced. That made itself a soul... that verily is the essence of existence..."²

Prior to the creation, Brahman is as good as non-existent but lends itself to specification and is identified as the essence only in relation to the particulars.

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1. "...manodūtam, cakṣur gopṭṛ, śrotram saṁśrāvayitṛ, vak pariveṣṭrī..." (Kaus 2.1)
 2. "asad vā idam agra āsīt, tato vai sad ajāyata, tad ātmānam svayam akuruta... raso vai saḥ..." (Taitt 2.7.1)

As the essence, it permeates the finite but is never to be identified with any particular feature or aspect of the finite. As the 'logos,' immanent, it determines the manifestation of the finite. So the finite is nothing but a functional manifestation of its essence.

"...He (the self) entered in here even to the tips of the nail as a razor is (hidden) in the razor case, fire in the fire source. Him they see not for (as seen) he is incomplete, when breathing he is called the vital force, when speaking the voice, when seeing the eye, when hearing the ear, when thinking the mind. These are merely the names of his acts..."¹

Since all the existents partake of this same essence all explanations of the diversities have to be in terms of the underlying essence. Being the transcendental condition of all cognitions and acts; all sensory and motor organs along with the mind get their functional significance only with reference to the transcendental subject.

Brahman, the infinite, though pervades the macrocosm and the microcosm as their very essence, its infinity is never exhausted by the world which is but a finite expression of it. There is a sense in which the world can be said

1. "... sa eṣa iha praviṣṭa ānakhāgrebhyaḥ yathā, kṣurāḥ kṣuradhāne' vahitaḥ syāt, viśvam - bharo va vā viśvam-bhara-kulāye, taṁ na paśyanti, a kṛtsno hi saḥ, prāṇann eva prāṇo nāma bhavati, vadan vāk, paśyaṁs' cākṣuḥ, śṛṇvan śrotam, manvāno manaḥ, tāny asyaitāni karma - nāmāny eva..." (Br. 1.4.7)

to be infinite for the act of creation, existence and dissolution is eternally going on. The creation therefore is open ended, though seen in relation to a given framework of space, time and individuality, it appears finite. Even so, the infinity of Brahman is not spent up by the infinite expression of it,

"That is whole (infinite); This is whole. The whole comes out of the whole. Taking the whole from the whole the whole itself remains..."¹

The evolution of reality from the substantive consciousness is brought out by the analogy of the sparks emanating from the source of fire

"...as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Self come forth all breaths, all worlds, all divinities, all beings..."²

That which is one non-dual, the unalloyed or the pure consciousness appears as material, many and tainted by virtue of inhabiting in the object.

1. "pūrṇam adaḥ, pūrṇam idam, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate."
(Isa-Invocation).

2. "...yathāgneḥ kṣudrā viṣphulingā vyuccaranti, evam evāsmād ātmanah sarve prāṇāḥ, sarve lokāḥ, sarve devāḥ, sarvāni bhūtāni vyuccaranti..." (Br. 2.1.20).

"As fire which is one, entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object (it burns), so also the one self within all self becomes varied according to whatever it enters..."¹

"As air which is one entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object it enters, so also the self..."²

Though the self of one is non-different from the self of others the manifest difference is only on account of the material exterior that clothes it. Hence to take the differences to be genuine is to miss the essence or rather to mistake the accidental for the essence.

To put it differently, the phenomenal differences are but the varied modifications of the primordial substance. But quite distinctively, Brahman, though causal to all modifications is not extrinsic to them. Rather they are the self-willed distortions of the reality itself. The appearances or modifications follow from the very nature or essence of the Absolute. Hence all understanding of the reality is possible

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1. "agnir yathaiko bhuvanam praviṣṭo rūpaṁ rūpaṁ
prati-rūpo babhūva,
ekas tathā sarva - bhūtāntar - ātmā rūpaṁ rupam
pratirūpo bahis' ca." (Katha 2.2.9).
 2. "vāyur yathaiko bhuvanam praviṣṭo rupam rupam
pratirūpo babhūva,
ekas tathā sarva-bhūtāntar-ātmā..." (Katha 2.2.10)

only in terms of the essence of which they are the necessary and determinate manifestations.

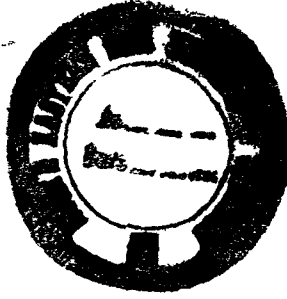
"As when a conch is blown one is not able to grasp its external sounds but by grasping the conch or the blower of the conch the sound is grasped."¹

The same rationale is harped upon in the analogy of drum and the lute. The passages simply bring home the epistemic truth that, that which is ontologically more basic or primitive must also be epistemologically prior. Conversely, the knowledge of the essence also tantamounts to the knowledge of its modificatory manifestations, the nature and range of the manifestations being determined by the former. This is brought out by the analogy of clay and gold as the substance, by knowing which one knows all the products, they, being, merely the names or modifications of the former.

"Just as my dear by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is just clay."²

"Just as... by one nugget of gold..."³

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1. "sa yathā śaṅkhasya dharmāyamānasya na bāhyān śabdār śaknuyād grahaṇāya, śaṅkhasya tu grahaenaṅ śaṅkhadhmasya vā śabdo gr̥hitaḥ." (Br. 2.4.8).
 2. "yathā, saumya, ekena mṛt-piṇḍena sarvaṁ mṛṇmayam̐ vijnātaṁ syāt, vācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāma-dheyam, mṛttikety eva satyam." (Ch. 6.1.4).
 3. "yathā... ekena loha-maṇinā..." (Ch. 6.1.5).



One has become many, the unity is metamorphosed, as it were, into diversity. Hence to know one is to know all and vice versa.

Quite in keeping with the above, there are passages dilating on the appearance of the so called reals, and seemingly, playing down the diversities.

"... in it there is no diversity. He goes from death to death who sees in it as it were, the diversity."1

"Which is the self?... He remaining the same wanders along these two worlds, seeming to think, seeming to move about..."2

This has led very many commentators to pronounce all appearances as illusory against Brahman—construed as the sole reality—thus offering an a-cosmic interpretation of the Upanisadic metaphysics. But this view seems to miss and distort the very import of the Upanisads. There is hardly any observation in the text, suggesting the creation (Sṛsti) to be the negation of Brahman. Reality is rather conceived as a continuation or prolongation of the undifferentiated state of unicity into the world of differentiated multiplicities.

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1. "...neha nānāsti kin cana, mṛtyos sa mṛtyuṃ gacchati ya iha nāneva paśyati." (Katha 2.1.11).
 2. "Katama ātmeti... sa samānaḥ sann ubhau lokāu anusancarati..." (Br. 4.3.7).

As the essence it persists in and through all creations:
 Everything atomic or cosmic, animate or inanimate, mobile or immobile partakes of the very essence which is the Self, the Brahman. Thus, while describing Brahman as the macro-cosmic personality, different elemental and heavenly realities and even the basic acoustic manifestations (the vedas) have been construed as constituting different parts of His body.

"Fire is His head, His eyes are the sun and the moon, the region of space are His ears, His speech the revealed Veda, air is His life and His heart the world. Out of His feet the earth (is born), indeed, He is the self of all beings."¹

This being so, Brahman is thought as the omnipresent and is identified as anything macrocosmic and micro-cosmic.

"He is the swan (Sun) in the sky, the pervader in the space, the guest in the sacrifice. He dwells in man, in gods, in the right and in the sky. He is (all that is) born of water, sprung from earth, born of right, born of mountain. He is the true and great."²

"Whatever is here, that (is) there whatever is there, that too is here..."³

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1. "agnir nūrdhā, cakṣuṣī candra-sūrya u, diśaḥ śrotre, vāg vivṛtāś ca vedāḥ, vāyuh praṇo hṛdayaṁ viśvam, asya padbhyāṁ pṛthivī hy eṣa sarva-bhūtāntarātmā." (Mund 2.1.4).
 2. "haṁsaś śuciṣat, vasur antarikṣasat hotā vedisat, atithir duroṇasat, nr̥ṣat, varasat, ṛtasat, vyomasat, abjā, gojā, ṛtajā, adriajā, ṛtam bṛhat." (Katha 2.2.2).
 3. "yad eveha tad amutra, yad amutra tad anvīha..." (Katha 2.1.10).

"Brahman, verily is this immortal. In front is Brahman, behind is Brahman, to the right and the left. It spreads forth below and above. Brahman indeed is this universe. It is the greatest."1

"...He who is in the fire and He who is here in the heart and He who is yonder in the sun - He is one..."2

"As above so below," the celebrated theme in the theosophical literatures owes its legacy to the Upanisads. Every unit or the particular is a prototype of the great. This is well made out in the Aitreya Upanisad where fire, air, sun, quarters, the herbs, death and water are seen as issuing forth from the mouth, nostrils, eyes, ears, skin, heart, navel and the generating organ of the world person through the intermediary creations i.e. speech, breath, sight, hearing, hair, mind, downbreath and semen, respectively which subsequently, are absorbed into the respective substratum in the individual.

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1. "brahmaivedam amṛtam purastād brahma, paścād brahma, dakṣinataś cottareṇa adhaścordhvaṃ ca prasṛtam brahmaivedaṃ viśvam idaṃ variṣṭham." (Mund 2.2.12).
 2. "...yaścaīṣo' gnau yas' cāyaṃ hṛdaye yas' cāsāu āditye sa eṣa ekā ity..." (Maitrī 6.17)

"Fire, becoming speech, entered the mouth. Air becoming breath, entered the nostrils. The sun, becoming sight, entered the eyes. The quarters of space, becoming hearing, entered the ears. Plants and trees, becoming hairs, entered the skin. The moon, becoming the mind, entered the heart. Death, becoming the outbreath, entered the naval, water becoming semen entered the generative organ."¹

It not only shows that the individual is built in the likeness of the cosmic but nurtures the thesis that the finite is potentially infinite. The cosmic with the material adjuncts is the individual and the individual without the fetters of the materiality is verily the cosmic (Pāsovaddha bhavet Jiva, Pāsomukto bhavet Siva).

The abiding unity beneath all diversities is illustrated by comparing Brahman to a thread (Sutram) which persists in and through the particularities. Though non-ephemeral, it is the substratum of everything ephemeral. It is the very being of all beings. In fact, the explanation of everything palpable, involves reference to the Being, which is the common ground or abode of all.

"...This Ātman is the world of all beings..."²

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1. "agnir vāg bhūtvā mukham prāviśad, vāyuḥ praṇo bhūtvā nāsike prāviśad, ādityas cakṣur bhūtvākṣiṇi prāviśad, diśaḥ śrotraṃ bhūtvā karṇau prāviśann, ośadhi vanaspatayo lomāni bhūtvā tvacam praviśaṃś candramā mano bhūtvā hrdayam prāviśan, mṛtyur apāno bhūtvā nābhim prāviśad, āpo reto bhūtvā śiśnam prāviśan." (Aite 1.3.4).
 2. "...atho ayam vā ātmā sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ lokāḥ..." (Br. 1.4.16).

To put it otherwise, the substratum being the unitary basis of the particularities, the finite is defined in terms of it and in the language of logic it means that the particular is explained in terms of the universal or the attributes, in terms of the substance.

By constituting the being of everything it is rightly said to be the controlling logos of all existents.

"...that inner controller from within who controls the world and the next and all things... he who knows that thread and that inner controller, indeed, knows Brahman..."¹

"The one, controller (of all), the inner self of all things, who makes his one form manifold, to the wise who perceive him as abiding in the soul, to them is the eternal bliss - to no others."²

Brahman is the real doer, the transcendental agent of all acts whatsoever. In the preceding chapters, it was seen how with the bidding of Brahman the sun, moon, air (figuratively for fear of him) perform their enjoined functions. This is to say that the function of the finite is determined by its very essence.

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1. "...tam antaryāmiṇam, ya imaṃ ca lokam paraṃ ca lokam sarvāṇi ca bhūtāni yo' ntarō yamayatīti... sūtram vidyāt, taṃ cāntaryāmiṇamiti, sa brahma-vit..."(Br.3.7.1)
 2. "eko vaśī sarva-bhūtāntar - ātmā ekam bījam bahudhā yaḥ karoti,
tam ātmastham ye'nupaśyanti dhīrās teṣāṃ śukhaṃ śāsvataṃ netareṣāṃ." (Katha 2.2.12).

As the unit consciousness it remains constant and unaffected in and through different states of consciousness of the unit mind described variously as waking (Jāgrat), dreaming (Svapna), deep sleep (Susupti), and the non-dual state (Turiya). Therefore, all empirical cognitions are quite befittingly, appropriated to the transcendental unitary consciousness. It is the unity beneath all the empirical acts of cognition.

With regard to the macrocosm, Brahman is both the agent and witness of creation, preservation and dissolution. It exists before creation and outlives it. It is eternal having no beginning and no end, though, itself is the beginning and end of all things. He is like the spider, as it were, that brings forth the network from within and again withdraws it into His within.

"...this is the source of all; this is the beginning and the end of beings."¹

"As a spider sends forth and draws in (its thread)...so from the imperishable arises here the universe."²

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1. "...eṣa yoniḥ sarvasya prabhavāpyayan hi bhūtānām." (Mand 6).
 2. "yothorṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca... tathākṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam." (Mund 1.1.7).

Creation, preservation and dissolution are qualificatory of Brahman, in different states. Brahman is unmanifest both in the pre-creation and post-creation state. The creation is nothing but the self-willed expression of one as the manifold. The observed evolution in the creation is essentially from a state of non-duality (Advaita) to that of non-duality through the creational phase of duality (Dvaita). As, of late, expounded by Shrii Ānanda Murtii the metaphysical standpoint of the Upanisads can, appropriately be termed as "Advaitādvaitādvaita vāda."¹

The Upanisads should not be interpreted as enunciating a linear view of creation. Creation and dissolution do not refer to the singular events at the beginning and end of the world process. It is rather that, they advocate the recurrence of the cycle of creation. Again, one should also be on the guard not to interpret creation, existence and dissolution as three distinct phases; one succeeding the other and therefore, finally taking dissolution to be the end of everything to be followed by a new act of creation. In fact, the act or fact of creation, preservation and dissolution is simultaneous and is going on from eternity to eternity. The doctrine of "Pranava" or "Aum," though not explicitly articulated in the Upanisads, is illustrative of this. Every act, whatsoever, has to have its acoustic manifestation.

1. Namāmi Kṛishnasundaram

A (अ), U (उ), M (म), are respectively, the acoustic root of the act of creation, preservation and destruction. Because of the divine act of eternal creation, preservation and dissolution, the sound of 'AUM' (ॐ) is eternally going on. When properly attuned, the spiritual aspirant continues to hear the cosmic sound which is verily described as the determinate Absolute, (Saguna Brahman) or the (Kāraṇa Brahman).

The problem of unity and diversity is studied and discussed in many disciplines including social sciences. Even in philosophy this problem is discussed from various stand points. The problem of universal and particular, and that of type and token are very much related to the problem of unity and diversity. However, in the Upanishadas, the problem of unity and diversity has been discussed both from metaphysical and epistemological stand points. The ideas of one and many, unity and diversity are conceptually connected. Logically speaking, intelligibility and understanding are not possible without the concepts of unity and diversity, one and many. The Upanishadas have brought out in detail the logical potency of the idea of unity and diversity.

CHAPTER - IV

KNOWLEDGE

Human consciousness is self-reflective. It has goaded man not only to probe into the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of things but also led him to know about 'knowledge' itself. The theoretic curiosity about the knowledge of reality and about 'knowledge', as such, (it's nature, origin, extent and types) constitutes the body of metaphysics and epistemology respectively. Locke highlights the logical priority of epistemology in relation to metaphysics in showing that, discussions about 'knowledge' facilitate and regulate **any** cognitive enterprise, whatsoever. But metaphysics is construed to be more basic. We shall notice later that the theories of knowledge, epistemological controversies, largely, rest on the metaphysical assumptions of the respective proponents.

The term 'knowledge', in common parlance, is used in very many ways. It is used in the sense of opinion (I know Mr X to be good), acquaintance (I know Mr. X), knowing how (I know playing on the piano); knowing that (I know the differential calculus) and to denote the absolutely veridical claims, such as, one finds in mathematics ($2 + 2 = 4$) and scientific knowledge (material bodies gravitate or H_2O make water).

But a philosophical analysis of the term 'knowledge' makes one look for a defining characteristic which,

obviously, distinguishes it from 'opinion,' 'belief,' a lucky conjecture' or unfounded claims. 'Knowledge' in the paradigmatic sense of the term is different from opinion, for an opinion-statement such as 'I know Mr. X to be good' is expressive of my evaluation of Mr. X to be good on the strength of certain specifiable considerations. This being so, I can, without the pain of inconsistency, say Mr. X to be bad from the point of view of other considerations. The opinion may vary with reference to time, place, and person. They are but the evaluative statements in disguise whereas a knowledge claim is out and out cognitive with its accredited claim to be true irrespective of time, place, and person. So, to uphold that I know 'P' entails the further claim that I know 'P' to be true and puts one under obligation to vouch for its truth. Conversely, the claim I know 'P' logically prevents one from saying, in the same vein, that it may not be true. Similarly, a belief-claim does not pass off as a knowledge claim for the simple reason that the claim 'I believe 'P' to be the case' and that 'it may not be that the 'P' is the case' are not incongruous. A belief statement is quite consistent with its being subject to revision or sublation. On the other hand, something may be true and one may believe it to be true but in the absence of the substantive evidence one may not be entitled to claim that one know it to be true. Hence believing 'P' to be true; though a necessary component of the knowledge claim; is not

the sufficient condition. This is made much of by the contemporary analysts who observe that knowing does not consist in being in a special state of mind. Though a feeling of certitude is a necessary psychological accompaniment of all knowledge claims it is not decisive in validating the knowledge claim. For example, if 'P' is true, it is so by virtue of certain objective considerations i.e. irrespective of the feelings of doubt or certainty that might incidentally arise in the knower in relation to it. This brings one to the core meaning of the term 'knowledge' in suggesting that all knowledge claims are nothing but truth claims and all truth claims are, in other words, claims to objectivity. So every knowledge claim implies a tacit claim on the part of the claimant to adduce justificatory reasons for the claim in terms of publicly authenticating criteria. In other words, to say I know 'P' is not only to feel sanguine that it is the case but also to vindicate that it is so in terms of the relevant corroborative evidences or verificational procedures, thereby, letting and coercing others to certify that 'P' is the case. To put it differently, to make a knowledge claim is nothing but to demonstrate its inter-subjectivity i.e. objectivity. It is significant to observe here that 'objectivity' is very often, misconstrued as person-neutrality implying that a cognition is objective if and only if it is descriptive of the brute matters of fact i.e. what is the

case independent of the observer. To this we may point out that objectivity in the above sense is a logical impossibility. Knowledge is the end product of the epistemic process. Knowledge accrues when the sense contents generated by the interaction of the subject with the object, is interpreted in terms of categories or concepts and subsequently synthesised into judgements. Kant appears to be more radical in maintaining that even the very intake of bare sense data is not passive. They bear the unmistakable marks of ordering and synthesis, in so far as the chaotic medley of bare stimuli lend themselves to be in space and time in the very apperceptive act of sensibility. All knowledge (internal or external) involve the cognitive appropriation of the sense content which consists in interpreting the stimuli according to the categories of thought. So the knower being a necessary participant in the epistemic process it does not make sense to speak of knowledge that is knower-neutral. This does not again suggest that all knowledge is subjective. Though, objectivity in the sense of person-neutrality is a myth one, can meaningfully look for objectivity in the sense of inter-personality. All humans, in spite of individual differences, exhibit a pattern in respect of their cognitive apparatus and the modes of cognition. This provides a ground for the inter-subjective consensus about a given claim. For example, a rainbow would look multi-coloured from a reasonable distance to

anyone, whosoever, unless, otherwise, one has defective vision. That 'the rainbow is multi-coloured' is objectively or inter-subjectively true, because anyone from a vantage point, (other factors being normal), can have the perception of the 'Rainbow' being multi-coloured.

A close look into the history of epistemology in Western philosophy discloses three distinct perspectives in knowledge. The empiricists posit sense experience as 'the ultimate,' explaining the genesis of knowledge in terms of the laws of association, comparison etc, of the discrete sense contents or the impressions. This is the 'Ant's perspective.' On the other hand, the rationalists plead for the ultimacy of reason. Reason is the arbiter in all cases of knowledge. Knowledge according to the rationalists like Leibniz is not acquired from without but is an unfoldment from within. It is the result of spinning out, as it were; the potentiality into their actual manifestations. This is the 'spider's' perspective. Kant realising the inadequacies and the mutual complementarities of the two points of views, seeks to synthesise them in his critical philosophy which figuratively can be termed as the "Bee's perspective." Knowing according to him begins with the apperceptive act of the sensibility and is completed in the synthetic activity of understanding and advances due to the ideals of reason. But Kant betrays

his leaning to the empiricists by restricting all knowledge, worth the name, to the domain of the sensuous or the phenomenal. Knowledge for him is the knowledge of the spatio-temporal i.e. the scientific. Having drawn a limit to the operation of the faculties of understanding, Kant is led to show that any attempt to have the knowledge about the noumenal lands one in inevitable nonsense in terms of the antinomies or contradictions. The rationalists, on the other hand, secure the significance of the transempirical realities and indirectly the knowledge of them. But it is significant to note that every rationalist thinker has a metaphysics of his own, each being the logical out growth of certain apriori assumptions. The so-called 'Absolutes' in the rationalistic systems are of the nature of the logical constructions significant in their native framework.

It is worth noting that knowledge in the accepted sense of the term is parasitic on experience. The models offered for the understanding of knowledge or the knowing phenomena are tacitly committed to the empiricistic dogma that all knowledge have their genesis in sensation, intellection or both. Contrary to this, one comes across a rich philosophical tradition that not only anticipates the myopic inadequacies of such views but argues out and vindicates the possibility of an alternative epistemology.

In the Upanisads, one is introduced to two distinct levels of knowledge namely, the Parā (Higher) and the Aparā (the lower).

"Of these the lower is the Rg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, the Atharva Veda, Phonetics, Ritual Grammar, Etymology, Metrics and Astrology. And the higher is that by which the Undecaying is apprehended."¹

However, the term Aparā does not have any pejorative import. It signifies the body of empirical sciences. Though the pursuits of empirical knowledge have their pragmatic value in meeting the mundan exigencies, they are deemed to be inadequate in securing man the 'highest good.' The empirical knowledge is hypothetical, relative and is subject to progressive revision in the light of richer and wider experience. Empirical truths are provisional in so far as a knowledge claim being made it cannot be said to be true irrespective of space, time and frame of reference. The history of empirical sciences reveals the progressive formulation of theories, the less adequate ones giving way to the more adequate ones. The more adequate a theory, the larger is the frame of reference, the more explanatory and more predictive it is.

1. "tatrāparā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāmavedo' tharva-vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣam - iti. atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate. (Mund 1.1.5).

No knowledge is perspective-neutral. One can have alternative descriptions of a given from alternative perspectives. For example, "matter is solid" and 'matter is a bottle of energy' are two distinct descriptions of the same 'given' from the stand point of commonsense and science. Similarly, the 'Moon is round and refulgent' and the 'Moon is dry and rugged' are two valid descriptions of the same reality. Both are true from their respective spatial perspectives and neither may be true in an alien framework, for example, in a religious framework of an orthodox Hindu where the Moon is but the object of worship and adoration.

Nārada, the embodiment of erudition having mastered all branches of empirical sciences, realises the inadequacy of them and approaches Sanat Kumar with his proverbial humility, to be enlightened about the Self which could only secure one the 'highest good.'

"Venerable Sir, I know the Ṛg Veda, Atharvan as the fourth (Veda), the Epic, the ancient lore as the fifth, the Veda of the Vedas i.e. the Grammar, propitiation of fathers, science of numbers (mathematics), science of portents, science of time (chronology), Logic, Ethics..... weapon, astronomy, serpents and fine arts."¹

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2. "ṛgvedam, bhagavaḥ, adhyemi, yajurvedaṁ sāmavedam, atharvaṇaṁ caturtham, itihāsa purāṇaṁ pancamam, vedānāṁ vedam, pitryam, rāsim, daivaṁ, nidhiṁ, vākovākyaṁ, ekāyanam kṣatra-vidyāṁ, nakṣatra-vidyāṁ, sarpa-devajana-vidyāṁ..." (Ch. 7.1.2).

"But venerable Sir, I am , only, like one knowing the words and not the knower of Self. It has been heard by me from those like you, that he who knows the Self crosses over sorrow. Such a sorrowing one am I...To him then he said, Verily, whatever you have here learnt is only a name."¹

The empirical knowledge are pronounced as mere names in two different senses. Firstly, they are not self-explanatory as they pertain to the modificatory appearances of the essence. This is figuratively brought out by the analogy of the sounds of the drum in relation to the drum and the beater of the drum.

"As when the drum is beaten, one is not able to grasp the external sounds. But by grasping the drum or the beater of the drum the sound is grasped."²

An adequate understanding of the modifications remains a logical impossibility without the knowledge of the essence of which they are the necessary manifestations. Secondly, they do not help one overcome the sorrows and sufferings and get the cherished state of infinity or bliss. As evident from

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1. "so'ham, bhagavaḥ, mantra-vid evāsmiṇā'tma-vit, śrutam hy eva me bhagavad-dṛṣebhyaḥ, tarati śokam ātmā-vid iti, so' ham. ...taṁ hovāca yad vai kin caitad adhyagīṣṭhaḥ, nāmaivaitat." (Ch. 7.1.3).
 2. "sa yathā dundubher hanyamānasya na bāhyān śabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya, dundubhes' tu grahaṇena dundubhy-āghātasya vā śabdo gṛhītaḥ." (Br. 2.4.7).

above, the Upanisads do not advocate a disinterested curiosity for knowledge, i.e. knowledge for the sake of knowledge but knowledge for obtaining the 'highest good.' The knowledge of the Self is termed as Parā for it is only by obtaining it alone, that the highest good ensues. The highest knowledge (Parā Vidyā) is equated with the 'highest good.' This goes to show that the Upanishadic epistemology is grounded in their metaphysics and has the further suggestion that knowledge is not value neutral.

Several passages in the Upanisads appear to be vocal in reiterating the unknowability of the self.

"whence words return along with the mind, not attaining it..."¹

"There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind; we know not, we understand not, how one can teach this."²

"Other, indeed, is it than the known and also it is above the unknown..."³

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1. "yato vāco nivartante, aprāpya manasā saha..."
(Taitt. 2.4.1).
 2. "na tatra cakṣur gacchati na vāg gacchati no manaḥ na vidmo na vijānīmo yathaitad anuśiṣyāt." (Kena. 1.3).
 3. anyad eva tad viditād atho aviditād adhi..."
(Kena 1.4).

The highest reality is, in other words, beyond the known and the knowable. It is unknowable from the point of view of the empirical modes of knowing. They, not only rest content in making assertions about the unknowability of the absolute, but are explicit in adducing grounds to substantiate them. The grounds are out and out logical.

Firstly, they remind us of the logical oddity involved in seeking to know the subject as the very object of knowledge. The Self being, the invariable subject in all acts of cognition is presupposed in all acts of knowing. As it is the transcendental ground or the logical pre-condition of all knowledge there remains the obvious oddity of knowing it as the very object of knowledge.

"...He knows whatever is to be known; of him there is none who knows. They call him the Primeval, the Supreme Person."¹

"...By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower?"²

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1. "...so vetti vedyam na ca tasyāsti vettā, tam āhur agryam puruṣam mahāntam." (Svetā. 3.19)
 2. "...tat kena kaṁ vijānīyāt? yenedam sarvaṁ vijānāti, taṁ kena vijānīyāt, vijnātāram are kena vijānīyād iti." (Br. 2.4.14).

"...You cannot see this seer of seeing, hear the hearer of hearing, think the thinker of thinking and understand the understander of understanding. He is your Self which is in all things..."¹

"That which is not expressed through speech but by which speech is expressed..."

"That which not thought by the mind, but by which, they say, mind is thought (thinks)..."

"That which is not seen by the eye but by which the eyes are seen..."

"That which is not heard by the ear but by which the ears hear that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore."²

There are also passages affirming the self^{to be} not only the unperceivable subject, but also the only subject of all cognitions whatsoever.

"...He is never seen but is the seer, he is never heard but is the hearer. He is never perceived but is the perceiver. He is never thought, but is the thinker. There is no other seer but he, there is no other hearer but he, there is no other perceiver but he, there is no other thinker but he. He is your Self..."³

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1. "...na dr̥ṣṭer draṣṭāram paśyeh, na śruter śrotāram śr̥ṇuyāḥ, na mater mantāram manvīthāḥ, na vijñāter vijñātāram vijñānīyāḥ, esa ta ātmā sarvāntarah..."
(Br. 3.4.2).
 2. "yad vācā nabhyuditam yena vāg abhyudyate..."
"yan manasā na manute yenāhur mano matam..."
"yac cakṣuṣā na paśyati yena cakṣūṃṣi paśyati..."
"yac cchrotreṇa na śruṇoti yena śrotram idaṃ srutam tad eva brahma tvam viddhi nedam yad idaṃ upāsate."
(Kena - 1 - 5, 6, 7, 8).
 3. "...adr̥ṣṭo draṣṭa, aśrutah śrotā, amato mantā, avijñāto vijñātā. nānyo'to'sti draṣṭa, nānyo'to'sti śrota, nānyo'to'sti mantā, nānyo'to'sti vijñātā, eṣa to ātmā..."
(Br. 3.7.23).

The Brahman, the logos of the macrocosm having verily evolved itself into the world of diversity constitutes the very essence of every particular, i.e. as the Ātman. The Ātman or the self is nothing but the self-same infinite consciousness working from and within the material exterior. The Self is potentially infinite even though it resides in the finite. As the transcendental ground, it is the subject of all Cognitions, agent of all actions. Thus, it is not to be misconstrued as either the empirical consciousness or the logical 'I.' It is non-empirical as it is the eternal witness and outlives the different states of consciousness. It is the eternal seer and even outlives the body which is but its temporary habitat.

"That by which one perceives both dream states and waking states..."¹

"Verily, when there (in the state of deep sleep), he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, for there is no cessation of seeing of a seer, because of the imperishability (of the seer)..."²

All knowledge (empirical) presupposes the duality of the knower (Jnātā) and the known (Jneya) and the mutual exclusiveness of the two. Knowledge is the outcome of an

1. "svapnāntaṃ jāgaritāntaṃ cobhau yenanupasyanti..."
(Katha 2.1.4).

2. "yad vai tan na paśyati, paśyan vai tan na paśyati, na hi draṣṭur draṣṭer viparilopo vidyate, avināśitvāt..."
(Br. 4.3.23).

effective interaction of the subject with the object. The self being all pervasive, undifferentiated infinite consciousness, it is both the subject and the object. Everything, verily is the Self. Hence, the so-called distinction between the subject and the object does not make any sense in respect of the Self which is but a state of absolute unicity. So it is observed.

"For where there is duality as it were, there one smells another, sees another, hears another, speaks to another, thinks of another, understands another. Where, verily, everything has become the Self, then by what and whom should one smell, then by what and whom should one see, then by what and on whom one should think and should one understand?..."¹

The Self being all encompassing, the knower himself constitutes an integral part of it. There arises the oddity of having it as the 'other', i.e. as extrinsic to the knower, for it amounts to having 'infinite' as the object of finite.

1. "yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati, tad itara itaram jighrati, tad itara itaram paśyati, tad itara itaram śrṇoti, tad itara itaram abhivadati, tad itara itaram abhivadati, tad itara itaram manute, tad itara itaram vijānāti. yatra tuasya sarvam ātmaivābhūt, tat kena kaṁ jighret, tat kena kaṁ paśyet, tat kena kaṁ śrṇuyāt, tat kena kaṁ abhivadet, tat kena kaṁ manvīta, tat kena kaṁ vijānīyāt?..." (Br. 2.4.14).

Empirical knowledge is essentially judgemental. A judgement involves the interpretation of the cognitive content by the concepts or categories of thought and therefore, is governed by the principles of intelligibility i.e. the laws of logic. But a concept is finite in its semantic import or has a determinate sense. So all cases of predicative or attributive knowledge invest the object (of description) with finite limitations. This is precisely what led the Upanishadic thinkers to be vocal about the native limitations of the judgemental or the conceptual modes of knowing to comprehend the Self. The endeavour to describe the finite is to finitise the infinite and exposes the patent absurdity of describing the indescribable and is, obviously, self-defeating an exercise.

The peculiarity of the view consists in considering Brahman to be both the subject and the object of knowledge. It is not one among the knowables but is the **ultimate object** of knowledge.

"Speech is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the speaker... the deed is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the doer... Mind is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the thinker..."¹

1. "na vācam vijijnāsīta vaktāram vidyāt... na karma vijijnāsīta kartāram vidyāt... na mano vijijnāsīta mantāram vidyāt..." (Kaus 3.8).

Self, the transcendental subject of all knowledge is the only object of all knowledge for by knowing that everything is known.

"He who knows that, knows all..."¹

"...Verily, by the seeing of, by the hearing of, by the thinking of, by the understanding of the Self, all this is known."²

'Knowledge' (empirical) is self-limiting in so far as knowledge about a finite does not entitle one to know anything other than itself. For example, one's knowledge about the fruit 'mango' does not necessarily involve reference to other fruits. But since anything whatsoever is construed as the expression of the self-same logos, Brahman, the knowledge of It amounts to the knowledge of everything.

"Just as, My dear by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is just clay."³

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1. "yas tad veda sa veda sarvaṁ..." (Ch. 2.21.4).
 2. "...ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijnānenedaṁ sarvaṁ viditam." (Br. 2.4.5).
 3. "yatha, saumya, ekena mṛt-piṇḍena sarvaṁ mṛṇmayam vijnātaṁ syāt, vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāma-dheyam, mṛttikety eva satyam." (Ch. 6.1.4).

This view does not, obviously, aim at playing down the reality of form or formal differences but dwells upon the logical primacy of a substance in suggesting that the knowledge of substance or essence amounts to the knowledge of its varied manifestations. Conversely, the adequate understanding of the finites or modifications involve necessary reference to the essence of which they are modifications. This, in other words, points to the basic inkling that, that which is ontologically primitive is, also, logically so.

So, instead of ending up in agnostic skepticism the Upanisadic thinkers make out the case for a mode of knowing whereby, the finite can be said to be knowing (unique of its kind) the 'Infinite.' As already seen, the 'Infinite' by definition, cannot be externalised as a datum of perception, and therefore, cannot be had as the object of knowledge. Moreover, the finite, being a part of the Infinite, there is the oddity of the 'part' knowing the 'whole.' Hence the finite can, sensibly, be said to know the Infinite if and only if it can, in some sense, become the 'Infinite.' The Upanisads introduce one to the novel dimension of epistemology where knowing, consists in becoming. In the empirical acts of knowing the subject and the object of knowledge have their exclusive identity or autonomy and the three components of knowledge namely 'the knower,' 'the known' and 'the knowledge' as such, are distinguishable. But the finite in the

attempt to comprehend the Infinite undergoes the process of progressive transmutation (shading off its characteristic limitations, imbibing steadily the nature of the infinite and eventually) loses its finitude and becomes verily the Infinite. The self in the finite is not other than the Infinite but it bears the semblance of finiteness because of the crudifying or limiting influence of the material vehicle, in which it is couched. The finite's inability to know its potential infinitude and its non-difference from the 'self' in others is explained in terms of the ignorance (Avidyā) of the microcosm and attributed to the self willed desire (Māyā) of the cosmic logos, Brahman to become many. The ordinary (empirical) acts of knowing and doing foster the ignorance in the finite by generating the false sense of knowership and doership. The finite remains under the illusion that he, as the empirical subject or agent is, in fact, the knower and doer of everything and is virtually, different from other cofinites. So, the empirical knowledge is not only inadequate but is positively misleading in so far as they nourish the illusion, in preventing the finite from knowing its native Infinity. The highest knowledge (Parāvidyā), on the other hand, enables the finite to realise its pristine state of 'Truth, Infinite and Bliss' by becoming it. It is the state of the supreme cognitive awareness where the finite consciousness has metamorphosed itself into the cosmic conscious-

ness, the individual self realising itself to be the transcendental Self, the Ātman realising itself as, verily, the Brahman. As the Self is nothing other than the Brahman, the knowledge of the latter by the former amounts to self knowledge. The highest knowledge is described as the state, whereof, the self glories in the knowledge of its own nature. It is the stance of ultimate unicity where the knower, the known and the knowledge have merged their identity in the wholistic cosmic awareness; where the knower of the Self (Brahma) has become verily the Self (Brahman).

"He, verily who knows the Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman himself."¹

"As pure water poured forth into pure becomes the very same so the self, O' Gautama of the seer who has understanding becomes (one with the Supreme)."²

It is worthwhile to determine if self-knowledge can at all be reckoned as the 'knowledge' with its accredited claims to objectivity. As observed earlier, the notion of 'objectivity' makes sense only in the sense of 'inter-subjectivity.' A cognition is said to be objective or inter-subjective

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1. "sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati..." (Mund. 3.2.9).
 2. "yathodakam śuddhe śuddham āsiktaṁ tādṛg eva bhavati, evaṁ muner vijānata ātmā bhavati gautama." (Katha 2.1.15).

if and only if (other condition being normal) the same can, in principle, constitute the object of knowledge of any one whatsoever. So, the claim for objectivity goes along with the tacit claim to vouchsafe the conditions of the very possibility of making the claim. In other words, to claim that 'I know P' is also to enumerate conditions, which being obtained, anyone other than myself can make an identical claim. Adjudged against this criterion, self-knowledge (Parā Vidyā) can, with all considerations of intelligibility be treated as genuine knowledge claim. The Upanisads not only, explicitly, articulate the ways to enlightenment but there have appeared, from time to time, the elevated personalities certifying the eternal veracity of the Upanisadic truths by their very conduct and living. To dispute this is to dispute facts and to take recourse to self-willed hypocrisy.

The possibility of empirical knowledge presupposes the sensory competence and their validity is determined by appeal to the rules of intelligibility. The highest knowledge being non-empirical or trans-empirical no such physiological or logical criteria are insisted upon. Instead, they reiterate the importance of moral competence of the aspirant of Brahman knowledge. The passages below dwell upon the ethical pre-requisites such as continence, comp~~ps~~sure, purity of mind and heart, for the knowledge of the suppeme.

"Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he, who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach this (Self) through right knowledge."¹

"This Self is attainable by truth, by austerity, by right knowledge, by the constant (practice) of chastity..."²

The life of indulgence and passions, in other words, the extroversal way of life is said to be incompatible with the highest knowledge.

"...if a man, though well enlightened, is afflicted with passion and darkness, if he is attached to son, wife and family, for such a one, no, never at all."³

The above passage does not, however, advocate the creed of renunciation. It does not disparage the worldly life but indulgent living in this world. "Be a man in the world, but do not belong to it," is the watch-word for living. One is urged to emulate the water on the lotus leaf in cultivating detachment in the midsts of mundane alignments. The existence

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1. "nāvīrato duṣcaritān nāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ nāśānta-mānaso vāpi prajñānenainam āpnuyāt." (Katha. 1.2.24).
 2. "satyena labhyas tapasā eṣa ātmā samyag-jñānena brahmacaryena nityam..." (Mund 3.1.5).
 3. "...rajastamobhyāṃ viddhasya susamiddhasya dehināḥ putra-dāra-kuṭumbheṣu saktasya na kadācana." (Maitri 6.28).

of sense-organs and the functions of the intellect are not incompatible with the apprehension of the highest. But left to themselves the passions tend to be unruly in their hectic run for material fulfilment and the intellect is prone to spatialize and finitize. So what is insisted upon is not the annihilation of senses and the intellect (For it is an impossibility) nor their suppression (for it may result in inevitable aberrations and therefore not desirable) but their sublimation by the right grooming of the passions to make their flow inward and the sublimation of the intellect so that instead of standing on the way they are harnessed in the realisation of the supreme.

"He is not grasped by the eye nor even by speech nor by other sense organs nor by austerity nor by work but when one's (intellectual) nature is purified by the light of the knowledge then alone by meditation sees Him who is without parts."¹

"The subtle self is to be known by though in which the sense of five different forms have centred. The whole of man's thought is pervaded by the senses. When it is purified the self shines forth."²

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1. "na cakṣuṣā gr̥hyate nāpi vācā nānyair devaiḥ tapasā
karmanā vā
jnāna-prasādena viśuddha-sattvas tatas tu tam paśyate
niṣkalam̐ dhyāyamānaḥ." (Mund 3.1.8).
 2. "eṣo'ṅgur ātmā cetasā veditavyo yasonin prānaḥ pancadhā
saṁviveśa,
prānaiś cittam̐ sarvam̐ otam prajānām, yasmin viśuddhe
vibhavaty eṣa ātmā." (Mund 3.1.9).

Thus, the highest knowledge is seen to presuppose an ethical living, an introvertive outlook. In other words, knowledge, in this sense, calls for participating in a form of life. That is why the Upanisadic doctrines, it is enjoined, were to be imparted only to the worthy and the select few in seclusion.

"Let no one declare the most secret doctrine to any one who is not a son, who is not a pupil, who is not of a tranquil (mind)..."¹

"...one should not tell this to one who is not a son or to one who is not a pupil."²

"This highest mystery in the Vedānta which has been declared in a former age should not be given to one whose passions are not subdued, nor again to one who is not a son or a pupil."³

Only a zealous son and a devout pupil are considered to be worthy of receiving the teachings for the obvious reasons that a proximate living with the teacher (Ācārya) is sure to instill the higher values in the seekers, preparing them for the highest wisdom.

1. "...etad guhyatamam nāputrāya nāśiṣyāya nāśāntāya kirtayed iti..." (Maitri 6.29).

2. "...tam etaṁ nāputrāya vānante 'vāsine va brūyāt." (Br. 6.3.12).

3. "vedānte paramaṁ guhyam purākalpe pracoditam nāpraśāntāya dātavyam nāputrāyāśiṣyāya vā punaḥ." (Svetā 6.22)

Unlike aparā, parā vidyā (the highest knowledge) is not acquired from without. It does not consist in mastering theoretical instructions imparted from without but is of the nature of self-discovery. The highest knowledge dawns upon one in spite of oneself if one has made oneself worthy of it.

The highest enlightenment can be construed as the consequence of sustained moral elevation on the part of the individual and is of the nature of self revelation from the point of view of cosmic self.

"...He is to be attained only by one whom the (Self) chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature."¹

The initiate into the order of highest knowledge has got to display deep yearning by undergoing austerity and penance. In the progressive voyage to the ultimate, the individual has got to be agile or sensitive enough to learn from everything around. In the Chāndogya, Satyakāma Jabālā is seen to have learnt from Bull, Fire, Swan and Diver-bird and Upakosala from three different fires (Gārhapatya, ahvāhāryapacana, āhavanīya). These allusions significantly suggest that the aspirant must learn to live in active communion with the things and beings around in order to realise the cosmic.

1. "...yamevaiṣa vṛṇute, tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tānuṃ svām." (Katha 1.2.23).

Meditation on 'OM' (AUM) is also extolled as the effective means of realising the latent infinity in one. The Māndukya equates the Self with 'OM.'

"This is the Self which is of the nature of syllable AUM..."¹

As observed earlier, the three letters 'A', 'U', 'M' in 'OM' are the acoustic roots of the act of 'creation', 'preservation' and 'destruction' respectively that are eternally going on. Hence the cosmic sound (Pranava) is the primordial and basic manifestation of the otherwise unmanifest. It represents the state of transition from the unmanifest to the manifest. Hence, it is rightly, described as the Kārana Brahman (the manifest Brahman). 'Om' is therefore, to be ideated upon as a means for getting oneself established in the unqualified state of 'Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.' This is figuratively brought out by the analogies of bow-arrow and the friction sticks.

"The syllable AUM is the bow, one's self, indeed is the arrow. Brahman is spoken as the target of that. It is to be hit without making a mistake. Thus, one becomes united with it as the arrow (becomes one with the target)."²

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1. "so'yam ātmādhyaṅsaram auṅkāro' dhimātram..." (Mand 1.8).
 2. "praṇavo dhanuḥ, śaro hy ātmā, brahma tal lakṣyam ucyate, apramattena veddhavyam, śaravat tanmayo bhavet."
(Mund. 2.2.4).

"By making one's body the lower friction stick and the meditation on the Pranava as the upper friction one and rubbing together these two sticks one may see God that is hidden, as it were."¹

The Svetāsvatara also mentions the Yogic ways of self-restraint and concentration as the means of obtaining the highest state.

"Holding the body steady with the three (upper parts, chest, neck and head) erect, causing the senses and the mind to enter into the heart, the wise man should cross by the boat of Brahman all the streams which cause fear."²

"Repressing his breathings here (in the body), let him who has controlled all movements, breathe through his nostrils, with diminished breath; let the wise man restrain his mind vigilantly as (he would) a chariot yoked with vicious horses."³

Over and above self-discipline, penance and cultivation of moral virtues; the role of a teacher (Guru or Ācārya) is deemed indispensable for obtaining self-knowledge. The

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1. "sva-deham araṇim kṛtva praṇavam co'ttarāraṇim dhyāna-nirmathanābhyāsāt devam paśyen nigūḍhavat." (Svetā 1.14).
 2. "trirunnataṁ sthāpya samaṁ śarīraṁ hṛdīndriyāṇi manasā saṁniveśya.
brahmoḍupena pratareta vidvān srotāmsi sarvāṇi bhayāvahāni." (Sveta 2.8).
 3. "prāṇān prapīḍyeha saṁyukta-ceṣṭah kṣiṇe prāṇe nāsikayo' cchavasīta
duṣṭāśva-yuktam iva vāham enaṁ vidvān mano dhārayetā pramattaḥ." (Svetā 2.9).

theoretical learning, as such is not adequate. Knowing the ultimate requires a radical transformation in body-mind-spirit which necessitates one to mould one's living accordingly. The verbal knowledge as such tells one the 'why' and 'what' about the self but not the 'how' of it. This of course is largely, learnt through sustained struggle. But the finite, because of its native limitations is likely to drift away from the cherished path. Hence, the role of a guide becomes a bounden necessity.

"Not by reasoning is this apprehension attainable, but dearest, taught by another, is it well understood..."¹

Satyakāma beseeching for the knowledge from Gautama says,

"For I have heard from persons like you, Revered Sir, that the knowledge which has been learnt from a teacher best helps one to attain his end..."²

The teacher is supposed to be the very embodiment of ideals and perfections that the disciple strives to imbibe. Apart from being a source of inspiration, the teacher guards the seeker against the pitfalls that a finite is heir to and bears

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1. "naisā tarkena matir āpaneyā, proktānyenaiva sujnānāya preṣṭha..." (Katha 1.2.9).
 2. "śrutam hy eva me bhagavad-dṛṣebhyaḥ, ācāryādd haiva vidyā viditā sādhiṣṭham prāpatīti..." (Ch- 4.9.3).

the sacred onus (Vrata) of leading his way to the ultimate. Hence it is laid down that only he who is established in perfection i.e. the knower of Brahman can pass off as a teacher.

"Taught by an inferior man He cannot be truly understood, as He is thought of many ways. Unless taught by one who knows Him as himself, there is no going thither for it is inconceivable, being subtler than the subtle."¹

"...for the sake of this knowledge let him only approach... a teacher who is learned in the scriptures and established in Brahman."²

Otherwise the teacher without the competence and necessary expertise is as good as a blind leading another blind, both groping about in wilderness.

"Abiding in the midst of ignorance, wise in their own esteem, thinking themselves to be learned, fools treading a tortuous path go about like blind men led by one who is himself blind."³

Knowing the Self consists in becoming It. So the very knowledge makes a difference to the knower. The personality

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1. "na narenāvareṇa proktā eṣa suvijneyo bahudhā cintyamānaḥ, ananya-prokte gatiḥ atra nāsty aṇīyān hy atarkyam anupramāṇāt." (Katha 1.2.8).
 2. "...tad vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet...śrotiyam brahma-niṣṭam." (Mun. 1.2.12).
 3. "avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ, svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam manyamānāḥ, dandramyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ, andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ." (Katha - 1.2.5).

undergoes a total metamorphosis, as it were. The inner transformations have the positive external manifestations with the corresponding change in the physical and moral being of the knower. From the very countenance of Satyakāma, Gautama could read off that he had already obtained the knowledge of the Brahman.

"Verily, my dear you shine like one knowing Brahman. Who has taught you?..."¹

That apart, the highest knowledge is also thought of as constituting the state of supreme fulfilment. Having established oneself in the cosmic, one discovers oneself in everything and everything in oneself. He becomes, verily, the cosmic, nay, the cosmos. Everything, indeed, constitutes an integral part of his consciousness or being. There being nothing beyond him and that being the state of Supreme harmony and perfection, there remains nothing else to be craved for. Hence there remains no evil, no suffering. He remains beyond all dualities and differentiations and consequently, all agonies arising therefrom.

"If a person knows the Self as 'I am this,' then wishing what for desire of what should he suffer in the body?"²

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1. "brahma-vid iva vai, saumya, bhāsi, ke nu tvānuśāseti?.." (Ch. 4.9.2).
 2. "ātmanam ced vijānīyād ayam asmīti pūruṣaḥ kim icchan, kasya kāmāya śarīram anusamjvaret." (Br. 4.4.12).

"The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds terminate..."¹

The knower, having been above the dualities is not actuated by the mundane motivations that the ignorant fall a prey to; remain beyond good and evil.

"...This eternal greatness of the knower of the Brahman is not increased by work nor diminished... He who knows it as such, having become calm, self-controlled withdrawn, patient and collected sees the Self in his ownself, sees all in the Self. Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil... Free from evil, free from taint, free from doubt he becomes a knower of Brahmā..."²

Quite remarkably the above observations betray an interesting paradox. The highest knowledge (Parā Vidyā) is on one account, construed as value-centric. This is so; in so far as by knowing Brahman one is said to be establishing oneself in the stance of supreme perfection, thereby, becoming the very embodiment of ethical virtues. He becomes the very paradigm of morality. On the other hand, the highest knowledge is also

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1. "bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi..." (Mun. 2.2.9).
 2. "...eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya na vardhate karmaṇā no kanīyān....iti tasmād evaṁ-vit, sānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā, ātmany evātmānam paśyati, sarvam ātmānam paśyati, nainam pāpmā tarati, sarvam pāpmānam tarati... vipāpo virajo vicikitso brāhmaṇo bhavati..." (Br. 4.4.23).

thought of as value neutral. In other words, the knower, having been above all dualities is thought of as transcending all moral valuations because the application of moral concepts like good and evil make sense, only, in the realm of dualities.

Thus, the upanisadic epistemology, not only rooted in its metaphysics but is also, seen to have been wedded to the 'Highest Good.'

CHAPTER - V

THE HIGHEST GOOD

Human existence is value-centric. Other things apart, what secures uniqueness to man, in relation to the other co-primates is his capacity to rate things as desirable or undesirable, good or bad. He does not take things or events at their face value, but persists to subject them to valuations. Valuing or weighing an event, or an action to be desirable or undesirable, good or bad, presupposes a standard, a norm or a goal, against which it is deemed to be so. This indicates that it is characteristically human, to have a sense of purpose, goal or direction. This introduces one to the anti-thesis between "is" and "ought," "facts" and "values." The former is connotative of all that are objective, impersonal, the knowledge of which, therefore would consist in passive conformity to them. One does not create or recreate facts but simply discovers them. Considering them to be good or bad, calls for a conscious deliberation on the part of the individual, as it involves the ascription or superimposition of value-predicates on the virgin facts by assessing them, against a norm or a paradigm. This tends to show that the distinction between the descriptive and normative judgements, is fundamental and absolute.

Such a dichotomy is not only necessitated by the practical exigencies of human existence, but is, also, pre-

supposed in all acts of human progress and motivation. Without there being a sense of purpose or goal; one would, eventually, be complacent with the existing state of affairs, and would not know, what and how to plan upon the circumstances. 'Progress' entails necessary gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. Similarly, in the domain of ethics there is a time honoured distinction, between what one actually desires and what is desirable.

The norms and standards appealed to, in act of valuation are relative and peculiar to the domain of their application. The norms employed to assess the merit of an economic system, political system, a work of art or the human conduct are fundamentally different from one another. The value or desirability of something depends on the extent to which it is in conformity with the paradigm against which it is judged. Contrarily, its non-conformity would imply a corresponding disvalue. Hence we have both the values and disvalues representing the positive and the negative side of the scale and degrees of value depending on the extent, to which the object of valuation approximates the paradigm, represented by the norm or the standard. In Aesthetics, one talks of 'beauty' and 'ugliness', in Ethics 'good' and 'evil', 'right' and 'wrong'; in Economics 'utility' and 'disutility' and in religious parlance the 'sacred' and the 'profane', as values and disvalues respectively.

A norm is context specific as it is relative to the purposes or considerations at hand. In all acts of approval or disapproval there exists the tacit suggestion that the object of valuation is either conducive or non-conducive to certain other ends. Something is said to be good or desirable because it is instrumental to a particular end but the latter again may be seen to be subservient to some higher or more basic ends. An economic system may be considered to be good or desirable, because it reduces the exploitation, ensures economic equity, and the economic equity is instrumental in securing a harmony in the society, and the social harmony in turn, is indispensable for the smooth functioning of the Government, which, in turn, can ensure the peace and prosperity of the people. Similarly, in social sphere 'speaking the truth' is reckoned as a value, as it proves expedient in minimising the social discord, which is indispensable for the very existence and good of the individual in particular, and the society at large. All this have the suggestion as to the hierarchy of values making it quite pertinent to ask: "Is there, or can there be any basic value or set of fundamental values which underlie and impart meaning to all other secondary or relative values?" In other words, "Could there be a value which is an end, or a value in itself and also, serves as the protasis of all valuations?"

A close look into the nature of values in different domains; would convince one, that all the values are at the core; anthropocentric, i.e., they are existence (human) promoting. Man being the most evolved rational being has woven out a set of norms to secure, safeguard and promote his own good. Hence all values on analysis, turn out to be life affirming, and the ones that do not contribute, or are positively detrimental to existence and welfare, are pronounced as dis-values. The viability of an economic system, an administrative set up, a religious practice, a social law is determined by considering whether and to what extent they foster the cause of man. Consequently, all the values are "existence values" and are life-affirming or life-promoting.

The notion 'existence' is ambiguous. In common parlance, 'existence' means the empirical or phenomenal existence. So considering something to be good is to find as to how it contributes to the cause of physico-psychic well being. What is good or a value in a given context may be deemed to be a disvalue with the changed conditions. And as there are hierarchy of ends there shall also be degrees of 'good.' Though 'good' finds its significance in relation to its immediate end, all values or acts of valuation derive their significance with reference to the ultimate end (for all practical purposes) i.e. existence. So values can be said to be

objective and invariable in so far as it is determined by an appeal to one ultimate end! On the other hand; anything that is life denying or existence negating shall be a disvalue; In ethical domain, it would mean that an action or pursuit that tends to promote the phenomenal good of the individual or the collective body is a virtue;

Against the above, it is illuminating to turn to the Upanisads where one is introduced to a novel dimension, a wider perspective in which the notion of 'good' is dwelt upon. As evident from the preceding discussions, the phenomenal existence is seen as contingent, in so far as, it is not self-explanatory. The world of particularities, both in respect of their ultimate origin and consequence are understood in terms of Brahman.

"...That, verily, from which these beings are born, that, by which, when born they live, that into which, when departing they enter..."¹

So the finite existence is construed to be only a passing phenomenon in the recurrence of birth and death which the self undergoes in its attempt to regain its native purity and perfection. All movements and evolution terminate on the attainment of the Brahmahood. The struggles and aspirations

1. "...yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanty abhisamviśanti..." (Taitt 3.1.1).

of the individual come to an end; The physical existence is seen not as an end but as a span preparatory for the ultimate state; Hence the 'existence-values' considered to be the most basic in the empiricistic framework is considered as subordinate to the highest end. The distinction between the worldly good and the highest good is brought out in the celebrated distinction between the 'Preya' (pleasurable) and the 'Sreya' (preferable). Yama, the embodiment of wisdom, promises all the earthly allurements to Naciketā in lieu of the knowledge pertaining to the after life and the ultimate truth, which, the latter rejects, on the score that they are transient and unsubstantial. Naciketā represents the conscientious minds that discriminate between the good and the pleasant and opt for the good in preference to the pleasant.

"Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man, pondering over them, discriminates. The wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well being, prefers the pleasant."¹

In the Upanisads, the highest knowledge is equated with the highest good. Brahman or the Self is not only the highest object of knowledge but also the highest object to

1. "śreyaś ca preyaś ca manuṣyam etas tau samparitya vivinakti dhīraḥ.
śreya hi dhīro' bhīpreyaso vṛñite, preya mando yoga kṣemād vṛñite." (Katha 1.2.2).

be desired. This springs from the epistemic truth that knowing the self amounts to becoming it. The knower of the self becomes verily the self, the cosmic and by virtue of becoming so he becomes everything. In other words, there remains nothing extrinsic to him to be desired. Everything, being an integral part of the all encompassing existence, **all desires find their supreme fruition, thereof. Desiring** presupposes a dichotomy between the 'desirer' and the 'desired' and a state of prior imperfection, as the subject does not have the object of desire prior to its attainment or satisfaction. But the self being attained, one transcends all states of differentiation and there remains nothing else to be attained. The self, therefore, is to be sought for. On getting it i.e. becoming it, everything is obtained, i.e. the highest good ensues.

"...That verily is his form in which all desires are fulfilled, in which self is his desire, in which he is desireless free from any sorrow."¹

The pursuit of the earthly good is undermined as pre-occupation with them makes one prone to be oblivious of the Highest good. The ethical merit of an action or a pursuit is determined by ascertaining as to whether and to what

1. "...tad vā asyaitad āpta-kāman, ātma-kāman, a-kāman rūpaṁ śokāntaram." (Br. 4.3.21)

extent it conduces one to the attainment of the highest state; Maitreyī exhibits her reluctance to share the mundane estate of her husband on the score that even the whole earth filled with wealth might not secure one the cherished state of immortality:

"...What should I do with that by which I do not become immortal? Tell, me that, indeed, Venerable Sir, of what you know (of the way to immortality);"¹

The worldly good is given a place of secondary importance not only because the obsession with the ephemeral is not conducive to the realisation of the Absolute but also because the earthly possessions become redundant on attainment of the highest.

"...what shall we do with offspring (the sages said), we who have attained this Self,"²

The highest state is described as a state of no desire (Akāma) for all desires being fulfilled (Āptakāma) there remains nothing to be desired. So the only desire to be cherished is the desire for the self (Ātmakāma). As already observed, all occurrences, all actions - microcosmic

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1. "...yenāhaṁ nāṁṣṭa syām, kim ahaṁ tena kuryām, yad eva bhagavān veda tad eva me brūhīti." (Br. 2.4.3).
 2. "...kiṁ prajayā kariṣyāmaḥ, yeṣāṁ no' yam ātmāyam loka iti..." (Br. 4.4.22).

or macro-cosmic - are determined by the cosmic Logos. So, by becoming one with it, man comes to possess the sovereignty of will. One gets things by merely willing it; that is, the very willing on the part of the knower entails its satisfaction.

"Of whatever object he becomes desirous whatever desire he desires, out of his mere thought it arises. Possessed of it he is happy."¹

This is evidenced by the miraculous feats of the seers and mystics who are found to create things out of nothing and make things disappear into nothing. In other words, the realities shape themselves according to ones will which is but the cosmic will. The same truth is brought home when it is enjoined for the Brāhmins not to beg because to a knower of Brahman, things come unsolicited.

"...To this same breathing spirit as Brahmā... all beings bring offering even though he does not beg for it. For him who knows this, the doctrinal instruction is 'Do not beg.'"²

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1. "yam yam antam abhikāmo, yaṁ kāmāṁ kāmāyate, so' sya saṁkalpād eva samuttīṣṭhati, tena sampanno mahīyate." (Ch. 8.2.10).
 2. "...tasmai vā etasmai prāṇāya etāḥ.... sarvāṇi bhūtāny ayācamānāyaiva baliṁ haranti, ya evaṁ veda tasyopaniṣan na yāced iti..." (Kaus 2.1).

Since everything, whatsoever, follows from the very nature of the essence they are subservient to the way of the Logos. So the manifest reality is to mould itself according to the desires and interests of the knower who has merged his entitative existence in the cosmic Logos.

The suffering or bondage of man is his own making. It is the craving for the finite that binds man to the consequences of his action. Every action has got its inevitable aftermath which the performer of action has to undergo. Man is subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth for he is to exhaust the 'Sankāras' (the potential reactions of the actions already performed) by living them.

"...As is his desire so is his will, as is his will, so is the deed he does, whatever deed he does, that he attains."¹

The individual fails to escape from the inexorable cycle for, one desire leads to many. While reaping the fruits of the previous actions he performs actions which have their inevitable reactions, thus generating new Samskāras.

1. "...sa yathākāmo bhavati, tat kratur bhavati, yat kratur bhavati, tat karma kurute, yat karma kurute, tat abhisampadyate." (Br. 4.4.5).

"He who entertains desires, thinking of them, is born (again) here and there on account of his desires..."¹

But it is only when one realises Brahman that one is established in the state of desirelessness thereby bringing an end to the cycle.

"He knows that supreme abode of Brahman; wherein founded, the world shines brightly. The wise men, who, free from desires, worship the person, pass beyond the seed (of rebirth)."²

The individual runs after the objects and seeks to cling to them tenaciously for he, under the sway of infatuation, mistakes the phenomenal to be real. All conative and affective acts of the individual presuppose the dichotomy between the desirer and the objects of desire and the diversities of the objects of desire. But he who looks at the manifold as merely the varying manifestations of the singular Entity, Brahman or in other words, he who perceives the Self in and through everything - perceivable or desirable - does not come under the illusion of name and form. Whosoever sees

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1. "Kāmān yaḥ kāmayate manyamānaḥ sa kāmabhir jāyate tatra tatra...." (Mund. 3.2.2.).
 2. "sa vedaitat paramam brahma yatra viśvaṁ nihitam bhāti śubhram upāsate puruṣam ye hy akāmās te śukram etad ativartanti dhirah." (Mund. 3.2.1)

the manyness remains fettered to the Karmic cycle; whereas he who perceives the unity in diversity, by virtue of it, remains above duality; bondage and suffering!

"Whatever is here, that (is) there! Whatever is there, that, too, is here. Whoever perceives anything like manyness here goes from death to death."¹

The above observation might tend to suggest that the Upanisadic ethics advocates inaction or passivism and is incompatible with the realities of life. The continuance of physico-psychic existence renders it necessary and incumbent for man to desire and aspire. Moreover, any action whatsoever is preceded by a prior desire or motivation on the part of the individual. Act one must. All actions are backed by will and desire. But desire being the cause of bondage, man remains eternally condemned to the cycle of birth and re-birth without any hope of redemption. Thus, the much extolled state of Brahmanhood remains an ever receding an ideal and a veritable utopia. But to take the above suggestions for granted would be to miss the very spirit and message of the Upanisads. That they do not plead either non-action or inaction is evident from the following,

1. "yad eveha tad amutra, yad amutra tad anvaha, mṛtyos sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati." (Katha 2.1.10).

"One should wish to live a hundred years by constant performance of action. If you live thus as a man, there is no way other than this by which Karman (or deed) does not adhere to you."¹

which not only urges one to act but unequivocally, adds that it is only by performing action that one can hope to redeem oneself from the karmic bindings. Actions bind but bind, only when performed in ignorance. But actions with right knowledge liberate. What is incompatible with the highest good is not action, as such but actions prompted by ignorance. Detachment (Vairāgya) does not mean renunciation of action but renunciation in action. What binds is not the action but the ideation or desire behind. The individual, in his ignorance, thinks himself to be the 'doer' and that is precisely why he waits upon the consequences and appropriates it to himself. He feels elated or dejected depending on whether the consequences are agreeable or not. Moreover, in thinking the world of names and forms to be real, he entertains them as the object of his desire, with the implicit conviction that it would secure him abiding happiness. But with the dawning of right knowledge the individual begins to feel that the real doer is the transcendental Self. This makes him shake off the false sense of agency and he does consider him to be the mere instrument. All acts being, virtually, the act

1. "Kurvaṇṇ evedaḥ karmāṇi jijīviṣet śataṃ samāḥ evaṃ tvayi nānyatheto' sti na karma lipyate nare." (Isa - 2).

of the Self he ceases to have the sense of appropriation of action and the inevitable reaction, thereof. He neither enjoys nor suffers. For him everything, verily, is the manifestation of the Self. But such a state of enlightenment is earned rather than given. The individual has to cultivate and obtain it as the necessary consequence of a sustained struggle in overcoming the blinding ignorance. This is possible only in the context of living a life of action which not only affords the opportunity to cultivate detachment or renunciation but also serve as the touch-stone to ascertain, for oneself, the extent to which one has succeeded.

From the above, it is evident that both knowledge and action are indispensable to achieve the Highest. The one, given to life of activity without the right knowledge is sure to stray into the path of darkness and one who is lost in theoretic speculation with the total abandonment of action runs into greater darkness.

"Into blinding darkness enter those who worship ignorance and those who delight in knowledge enter into still greater darkness, as it were."¹

1. "andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti yo' vidyām upāsate tato bhūya iva te tamo' ya u vidyāyām rataḥ." (Isa. 9).

Here 'vidyā' stands for the theoretical knowledge about the ultimate truths without the accompanying realisation and 'avidyā' stands for the life of action bereft of the right knowledge. Darkness symbolizes the path leading one away from the cherished goal. There are some who lead the life of action but, ignorant as they are, find themselves in the fetters of Karma. Such ones can be made to see the truth so that the actions performed with appropriate ideation of the cosmic, instead of binding, liberate them from the Karmic cycle. But there are also those who pride in erudition or the verbal knowledge of the scriptures though their actual living represents a total contradiction of what they preach. Such individuals arrogate themselves to be the knowers of Brahman. They are still farther from the truth. In fact, the so called knowledge is not knowledge because knowing the self is tantamount to becoming it and becoming it entails the appropriate transformation in the individual psyche which amounts to living a distinctive life. One who simulates the knowledge of Brahman without the appropriate mode of living is a self styled pedant and cannot be made to tread the path of light unless he opts to see the truth. Hence what is insisted upon as the ideal path is the synthesis of action and knowledge.

"Knowledge and ignorance, he who knows the two together crosses death through ignorance and attains life eternal through knowledge,"¹

The highest good is not inconsistent with the phenomenal good. The former is not to be sought at the cost of the latter. Having been asked by Janaka as to whether Yājñavalkya wished for cattle or subtle questions, he retorts that he needed both.² In the Taittiriya one comes across the teacher exhorting the outgoing disciple to keep to truth, virtue and study and apart from discharging the obligation to the teacher he is urged to take to the life of the householder (Gārhastha) and perpetuate the progeny.

"...Speak the truth. Practise virtue. Let there be no neglect of your (daily) reading. Having brought to the teacher the wealth that is pleasing (to him), do not cut off the thread of offspring..."³

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1. "vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yas tad vedobhayam saha avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtam aśnute." (Isa. 11).
 2. "...kim artham acārīḥ, paśūn icchan, aṇvantāniti ubhayam eva, samrāḍ iti hovāca." (Br. 4.1.1.)
 3. "...satyaṁ vada, dharmam cara, svādhyāyān mā pramadaḥ, ācāryāya priyam dhanam āhṛtya prajātantum mā vyavacchetsiḥ..." (Taitt. 1.2.1).

The invocation in the Svetāsvatara,

"Rudra, hurt us not in my child or grandchild, hurt us not in my life, hurt us not in my cattle, hurt us not in my horses. Slay not our heroes in your wrath for we call on you always with oblations."¹

only, goes further to corroborate that the Upanisadic ethics is not life-negating. The negativistic observations like

"... in this foul-smelling, unsubstantial body, a conglomerate of bone, skin, muscle, marrow, flesh, semen, blood, mucus, tears, rheum, faeces, urine, wind, bile and phlegm, what is the good of the enjoyment of desires? In this body which is afflicted with desire, anger, covetousness, delusion, fear, despondency, envy, separation from what is desired, union with the undesired, hunger, thirst, old age, death, disease, sorrow and the like, what is good of the enjoyment of desires,"²

only point to the apparent strains of pessimism. All that such passages dwelling on the transitoriness or unsubstantiality tend to suggest is that the obsession with the finite as

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1. "mā nas toke tanaye mā na āyusi, mā no goṣu mā no aśveṣu rīriṣaḥ.
 2. "...asthi-carma-snāyu-majjā-māmsa-śukra-śoṣita śleṣnā-śru-dūṣikā-viṇ-mūtra-vāta-pitta-kapha-samghāte durgandhe niḥsāre' smin śarīre kiṁ kāmopabhogaiḥ? Kāma-krodha-moha-bhaya-viṣāderṣyeṣṭagviyogāniṣṭa-samprayoga-kṣut-pipāsā-jarā mṛtyu-roga-śokādyair abhigate asmin śarīre kiṁ kāmopabhogaiḥ?" (Maitri 1.3).

such cannot secure one the desired goal. Knowingly or unawares man craves for the infinite happiness. The yearning for the infinite happiness (Bliss) is innate. The desire for it is a constitutional necessity, the reason being that, man has its origin in Infinity which is of the nature of bliss and therefore has the innate urge to regain its pristine state. But due to ignorance (Avidyā) one seeks to obtain it from the finites. The individual under the sway of infatuation fails to perceive the patent absurdity of securing the infinite happiness from the finite. So, for the one, obsessed with the satiation of the baser passions by indulgence with the finite, the infinite remains ever unattainable an ideal.

"The infinite is happiness. There is no happiness in anything small (finite). Only the infinite is happiness. But one must desire to understand the infinite. "Venerable Sir, I desire to understand the infinite."¹

"...Verily, the infinite is the same as the immortal, the finite is the same as the mortal..."²

But the infinite must not be misconstrued as a negation of finite. Knowing the infinite consists in discovering

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1. "yo vai bhūmā tat sukham, nālpe sukham asti, bhūmaiva sukham, bhūmā tu eva vijijnāsītavya iti, bhūmānam, bhagavaḥ, vijināsa iti." (Ch. 7.23.1)
 2. "... yo vai bhūmā tad amṛtam, atha yad alpaṁ tan martyam..." (Ch. 7.24.1).

it everywhere and therefore in all finites. The infinite happiness is obtained by sublimation of the finite consciousness. In the state of Brahmahood what finite has to forego is not his being but the finiteness of the being. The knower of Brahman, instead of having repulsion or indifference to the externalities cannot but help loving everything because for him, everything else is but the varied forms in which the Self manifests itself. His love for the finite springs from the recognition that the finite is essentially the Infinite. He does not love the form but the essence. Everything is dear to him not for its own sake but for the fact that it is verily an expression of the cosmic.

"... Verily, not for the sake of the beings are the beings dear but the beings are dear for the sake of the Self. Verily, not for the sake of all is all dear but all is dear for the sake of the Self."¹

What the Upanisadic passages disparage is not the love for the finites but the obsession or indulgence with them. It urges upon to transfigure the worldly existence into the divine. The highest good consists in seeing divinity everywhere and accordingly, to live in consonance with the rest

1. "... na vā are bhūtānām kāmāya bhūtāni priyāṇi bhavanti, ātmanas tu kāmāya bhūtāni priyāṇi bhavanti, na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati..." (Br. 2.4.5).

of the creation. One is asked to be non-covetous and enjoy through sacrifice for everything verily is pervaded by Brahman.

"(Know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore find your enjoyment in renunciation, do not covet what belongs to others."¹

But in the empiricistic framework where 'existence' means the empirical existence, such values as 'self-suffering,' 'sacrifice,' 'non-possession' will be deemed as life-negating, therefore, as disvalues. The incongruity between the views stems from the basic difference in their metaphysical world views. For an empiricist, the physical existence is an end in itself whereas to the Upanisadic seers this life is but a preparatory transition for the higher mode of existence. So an action incompatible with the physicality may be deemed as a value if it otherwise conduces to the elevation of the inner being. Thus their ethics appears to have been rooted in their ontology.

The one, established in the supreme stance is very much a man in the world, but does not belong to it. He acts but is not tainted by the Karmic forces. He is, at were, like a drop of water on the lotus leaf.

1. "īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiṁ ca jagatyāṁ jagat,
tena tyaktena bhunjīthā, mā ḡṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam."
(Isa. 1).

"...as water does not cling to the lotus leaf,
so evil does not cling to one who knows it..."¹

For him, all beings are the very many expressions of the transcendental Self, all acts and happenings are the act of the divine. He discovers his Self or being in everyone. The sorrows and happiness of others become, verily, his. Thus move about the liberated beings in the world of finites.

"when, to one who knows, all beings have,
verily, become one with his own self then
what delusion and what sorrow can be to him
who has been the oneness?"²

He does not struggle to be virtuous but becomes, indeed, the paradigm of all virtues. He does not imbibe ideals but all ideals become embodied in him. Nay, he having been beyond the realm of dualities transcends the categories of good and evil.

"...being a knower, shaking off good and evil
and free from stain, he attains supreme equality
with the lord."³

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1. "...yathā puṣkarapalāśa āpo na lipyanta evamevamvidi pāpaṁ karma na śliṣyata iti..." (Ch. 4.14.3).
 2. "Yasminsarvāṇi bhūtānyātmaivābhūdviḥjānataḥ Tatra ko mohah kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ." (Isa. 7).
 3. "...tadā vidvānpunyapāpe vidhūya niranjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyamupeiti." (Mund. 3.1.3)

All moral valuation are intelligible only against the world of diversities. An action is said to be good or bad, against a paradigm and is said to be less good or more good to the extent to which it approximates the same. If there were no manyness one would not know what to or whom to posit as the standard and how and what to adjudge as good or bad.

As observed earlier, Brahman as the undifferentiated mass of consciousness is the point of origin and terminus of all dualities and therefore, is beyond them. It is precisely on this score that Brahman and the knowers of Brahman - who **has** become verily the Brahman - transcend all acts of moral valuations.

"...In the space within the heart lies the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler of all. He does not become greater by good works nor smaller by evil works..."¹

"the eternal greatness of the knower of Brahman is not increased by work nor diminished..."²

The actions of the 'realised' can neither be said to be good nor bad for the moral concepts get their meaning only

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1. "...prāṇeṣu ya eṣontarhṛdaya ākāśastamichete, sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeśānaḥ sarvasyādhipatiḥ, sa na sādhunā karmaṇā bhūyān, no evāsādhunā kaṇīyān..." (Br. 4.4.22)
 2. "Eṣa nityo mahimā brahmānasya na bardhate karmaṇā no kaṇīyān..." (Br. 4.4.23).

against his actions. Brahman, being the stance of supreme perfection the knower of Brahman also becomes the perfection incarnate and the highest point of reference in all acts of moral predications. They are the real 'Brahmins.'¹ They are supposed to be the reference individuals in matters of conduct and morality whom the seeker after truth is urged to emulate.

"...So, if there is in you any doubt regarding any deeds, any doubt regarding conduct, you should behave yourself in such matters, as the Brahmanas there (who are) competent to judge, devoted (to good deeds), not led by others, not harsh, lovers of virtue would behave in such cases..."²

There can be no denying the fact that the Upanisads put greater emphasis on the righteous mode of living. Theoretical disquisitions, verbal wranglings are said to be of little avail in the realisation of the transcendence which, is to be achieved by turning the mind inward. To realise it is to realise it within 'one' where it lies ensconced. Hence some passages tend to lay stress on introversion, simplicity withdrawal into the quietude of the self and even silence.

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1. "Brahmañ jñāti iti, Brāhmaṇaḥ"
 2. "...atha yadi te karmavicikitsā va vṛttavicikitsā vā syāt ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ samarsinaḥ, yuktā āyuktāḥ, alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ, yathā te tatra varteran, tathā tatra vartethāḥ..." (Taitt 1.11.4).

"...Let him not reflect on many words, for that is mere weariness of speech."¹

"...Knowing him, the wise man does not talk of anything else. Sporting in the self, delighting in the self, performing works, such a one is the greatest of the knowers of Brahman."²

In the ethical literature of the west, values are claimed to be relative. The moral worth of an action is norm specific. The standards of goodness have been differently conceived as pleasure (Hedonistic), utility (Pragmatic), happiness (Eudaemonistic) and moral excellence etc. An action is said to be good if it conforms to the respective standards. Consequently, something passing off as virtue in one framework may be considered as a positive disvalue in another. But the Upanisads do not subscribe to the relativistic conception of good. The ethical merit of an action is determined by appeal to the one ultimate standard, i.e. by considering whether or to what extent it promotes or contributes to the Highest Good. The Brahmahood, being the acme of perfection, the supreme fulfilment of all motivations and desires, the

1. "...nānudhyāyād bahūn śabdān, vāco viglāpanaṁ hi tat." (Br. 6.4.21).

2. "...vijānan vidvān bhavate nātivādī ātma-kṛīda ātma-ratiḥ kriyāvān eṣa brahma - vidāṁ variṣṭhaḥ." (Mund 3.1.5)

desideratum of all evolutionary process, anything that is in consonance with it is bound to bring good to the individual and the collective body. That, being the ultimate protasis of all morality; lends objectivity and absoluteness to the notion of the 'good.'

While dilating upon the practical morality, the thinkers acknowledge that the customary virtues have to be relative depending on the peculiarities of time, place and person. The Brhadāranyaka relates that Gods, men and demons having approached Prajāpati for instruction, the latter uttered the syllable 'Da' which is understood as 'Dāmyatā', 'Datta' and 'Dayadhvam' respectively by them.¹ The Gods are asked to cultivate restraint (Dāmyatā) so that they do not abuse their powers for meaner ends, men are to practise charity (datta) to curb their greed and the demons, who are prone to cruelty, are to practise compassion. This allusion is highly suggestive, as it shows how God, men, and demons representing different levels of elevation take to the virtues suiting to their native proclivities. Self-control, charity and compassion are not mutually incompatible. Each by itself and all, together, contribute to the good of the whole. In other words, they get their meaning only in relation to the Absolute good. The texts also enjoin in unambi-

1. Br. 5.2.1-3.

guous terms the respect for mother, father, the teacher and the guest as sterling virtues.

"Be one, to whom the mother is a god, the father is a god, the teacher is a god and the guest is a god. Whatever deeds are blameless, they are to be practised, not others. Whatever good practices there are among us, they are to be adopted by you, not others."¹

Thus anything that proves to be expedient for the individual and the social good and therefore indirectly for the highest good is deemed as a value whereas anything to the contrary are to be eschewed as disvalues.

"He who steals gold, he who drinks wine, he who dishonours the teacher's bed, he who kills a Brāhmana, these four do fall as also the fifth who consorts with them."²

It is interesting to note that the Upanisadic thought does not countenance the possibility of conflict, of the individual and collective interest. The good of the individual is the good of the collective body and vice versa. Everything is essentially the self. So the notion of the 'otherness' is

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1. "mātr̥ devo bhava, pitr̥ devo bhava, ācārya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava, yāny anavadyāni karmāṇi tāni sevitavyāni, no itarāṇi, yāny asmākaṁ sucaritāni tāni tvayopāsyāni, no itarāṇi." (Taitt 1.2.2.).
 2. "steno hiranyasya surām pibaṁs ca guros talpam āvasan brahma hā ca-ete patanti catvāraḥ pancamaś cācarams taiḥ." (Ch. 5.1.9).

a misnomer. The individual learns to merge his insular interest in the interest of the whole, nay he finds the fulfilment of his interest in that of the collective. Here the collectivity does not have only the 'humans' within its domain but is inclusive of everything mobile and immobile, animate and inanimate. The values are not necessarily humanistic but cosmic (neo-humanistic). The highest good of the individual therefore consist in living in accord with the rest of the cosmos.

Evil accrues when the 'individual,' attempts to violate the cosmic order. The Absolute is immanent in the cosmos in form of the moral order i.e. the Ṛta. It is the eternal inexorable law, that is, otherwise termed as the Truth. Any deviation or violation of it is bound to recoil and bring evil to the individual and the society. Truth ultimately prevails and he who is wedded to truth, is sure to be victorious.

"Truth alone conquers, not untruth. By truth is laid out the path leading to the gods by which the sages who have their desires fulfilled travel to where is that supreme abode of truth."¹

1. "Satyam eva jayate nāṅṛtam, sateyna panthā vitato deva - yānaḥ yenākramanty ṛṣayo hy āpta-kāmā yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānam." (Mund 3.1.6).

And he who is established in it secure, immunity from all evil. Rather one who intends evil to the truthful courts evil for oneself.

"Just as (a ball of earth) striking against a solid rock is destroyed, so will one be destroyed who wishes evil to one who knows this, as also one who injures him, for he is a solid rock."1

One is free to choose the ways of the pleasurable or preferable, good or evil, knowledge or the ignorance. But one is not free to choose the fruits of what one does. Good or bad, follow from the very nature of the action and is dispensed with by the very nature of the moral order which is nothing but the Brahman, immanent. Action is performed not for its sake but for the desired dividends. So an action, in the true sense of the term, is inclusive of its attendant consequences. But to the extent one is not free to choose the consequences (inevitably accruing from the action), one is constrained. The true freedom consists in having no constraint, no limitation whatsoever. The real freedom, therefore, is attained only to the extent one lives in conformity with the cosmic order. It is only when one realises the native infinity of one's own being and the consequent non-difference from the 'apparent other' that one glories and reigns in the infinite freedom, happiness, self-rule (Svarāj)

"...The self, indeed, is all this (world).
 Verily he who sees this, who thinks this,
 who understands this, he has pleasure in
 the self, he has delight in the self, he
 has union in the self, he has joy in the
 self, he is independent (self-ruler), he
 has unlimited freedom in all worlds..."¹

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1. "...sa vā eṣa evam paśyann evaṃ manvāna evaṃ vijānann
 ātma - ratir ātma - krīḍa ātma - mithuna ātmānandaḥ,
 sa svarāḍ bhavati, tasya sarveṣu lokeṣu kāma-cāro
 bhavati..." (Ch. 7.25.2).

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

Philosophy, is a unique academic **pursuit**. Neither its problems become stale nor the doctrines, obsolete. This is precisely the reason why the philosophical classics are always of contemporary interest. In the empirical sciences, there may not be any need on the part of a working scientist to go back to the classical sources (the past scientific doctrines) for, the past records of scientific achievement, quite appropriately, belong to the history of science rather than to the contemporary scientific enterprise. But the classics in philosophy are very much an integral part of a genuine philosophical exercise. The classics are the fountain head or the very bed rock of philosophic speculations. They lend vigour and provide nourishment to philosophical thinking. Hence to undertake the study of the classics is always, an academic exigency.

The Upanisads are indisputably, the earliest philosophical classics of the world. They embody the quintessence of the Vedic wisdom and are the source of subsequent philosophical speculations in India. The Upanisads are otherwise termed as the Vedānta because they form the concluding portion of the Vedas and more significantly mark the consummation of the Vedic thinking.

The greatness of a classic lies in the fact that it lends itself to alternative interpretations. Philosophers like Sankara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and Vallabha have interpreted the Upanisadic themes in the light of their respective metaphysical convictions. In the contemporary period, the Upanisads have engaged the attention of philosophers and indologists, both eastern and western. Scholars like Max Muller, Deussen, Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Dasgupta have also written commentaries on the Upanisads. It is noteworthy that the studies of the classical commentators are of the nature of interpretations. That is to say, they have sought to expound the Upanisadic doctrines in the light of their respective philosophical viewpoints; whereas the works of the contemporary scholars are, by and large, expository in nature. The work of Shri Ananda Murtii, contained in his magnum opus 'Namāmi Kṛṣṇa Sundaram' is both expository and interpretative. But there has hardly been any significant enterprise to present an exhaustive and coherent account of the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the Upanisads in the light of the objections or criticisms of the positivists and the analytical philosophers in the contemporary period.

The present study is but an humble attempt in this direction. The focal concern of the work is two fold i.e.

(a), to present an exhaustive, coherent and integrated exposition of the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the Upanisads, (b), to offer justification and defense of the Upanisadic views against the actual and anticipated onslaughts of its critics.

It may appear orthodoxical and queer to offer a defense of metaphysics in the contemporary period, particularly, when some brands of empiricism rule the day masquerading as conceptual analysis or analytical philosophy. However, P.F. Strawson in recent times, makes a significant attempt to make a case for metaphysics. He draws a distinction between descriptive and revisionary metaphysics. Revisionary metaphysics presents alternative structures of human thought reflected in alternative metaphysical models; whereas descriptive metaphysics aims at laying bare the basic structure of human thought. In other words, one seeks to revise and the other seeks to describe. But it is worth pointing out here that the Strawsonian reflections have hardly any bearing on the metaphysics of the Upanisads as it falls beyond the ambit of the above Procrustean categorisation.

It is worth observing that the Upanisadic metaphysics is unique of its kind and remains distinct from the sister metaphysical systems of the west in some vital respects.

An analysis of the metaphysics of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel, Bradley and many others reveal that the 'Absolute' in their respective frameworks are of the nature of logical postulates. The 'Absolute', in other words, is a logical conclusion of certain basic assumptions and the method of ratiocination. Thus, the basic or the ultimate reality termed differently, as the 'God', the 'Absolute', the 'Substance', are more of the nature of concepts than of realities. Metaphysics, in this sense, is a logical picture of reality with due regard for consistency and coherence. The viability of a system, therefore, depends on the extent to which it is rigorous and contains an adequate or exhaustive vision of reality. On the contrary, the Upanisadic metaphysics is a-rational and a-speculative. Brahman and Ātman are not concepts. They are not the logical constructs, nor hypostatized as a matter of logical necessity consequent upon a particular mode of ratiocination. They are affirmed as existentially real and ontologically rooted. They are not the thought constructs but items of experience. The Upanisadic speculations draw their rigour and cogency from the basic and veridical visions or experiences of the reality rather than from the exclusive rational considerations. But this is not to say that rationality is alien to the spirit of Upanisadic thinking or that it is non-rational. In fact,

the Upanisads contain explicit irrefutable reasoning in support of some of their basic assertions. It is needless to say that in the Upanisadic mode of philosophising experience or vision is basic and focal and the arguments or ratiocination are corroborative and therefore, peripheral.

The Upanisadic thinker, in characteristic philosophical mode, addresses himself to ultimate questions. The questions such as 'what is the cause? (Kiṁ Kāraṇaṁ), whence are we born?(Kutaḥ sma jātā)By what do we live?(Jivāma kena) On what are we established?(Kva ca sampratishah)are significative of the basic human urge to interrogate and understand. Asking ultimate questions about the totality are but the paradigm instances of the characteristic human craving. Such questions have been raised and answered by thinkers from time to time.

Before adjudging the merit or viability of the Upanisadic answers it is worthwhile to pause and reflect on the analysts' objections. The analyst would perhaps dispute the very sanity of such endeavours in pointing out that the questions about the totality are not genuine questions. These questions, though grammatically sound, are semantically odd. They are pseudo questions. This being so, there can be no definite plausible answer to them. Hence any

attempt to look for answers to such questions are mere exercises in futility. It makes sense to ask as to what is the cause of a given 'this' or 'that'? Causal questions and causal explanations are meaningful only in the realm of the spatio-temporal diversities where something putative is explained in terms of its causal antecedents. But the philosopher in asking causal questions about the totality is employing the concept beyond the context of its legitimate application. In the words of Wittgenstein, to use an expression beyond its native context is to take language on a holiday, i.e., to harvest nonsense. The analysts, would also dispute the logical status of such questions in pointing out that a question is a genuine question if and only if it has a definite answer, actual or possible. In case of the transcendental questions, there have been answers that are not only very many but also, mutually conflicting. In the absence of any objective criterion, one does not know how to go about in settling the mutually incompatible truth claims. As a reply to the critics, it may here be observed that the questions about totality are not only sound but can have definite answers. The questions pertaining to the particularities are empirical; but the questions about the totality or the whole are non-empirical or philosophical. But what is of significance is that the questions about the totality are logically

presupposed in questions about the particularities. For example, progressive knowledge and about the understanding of the world in the sciences acquaint one with more and more fundamental substances. The compounds are explained in terms of its constituents and the constituents are, in turn, understood in terms of still simpler components. Now it perfectly makes sense to say that energy is the ultimate form of all matter or material existents. Though such observations are tentative and are subject to sublation in the light of more cogent and explanatory findings, the question "what is the most fundamental or basic substance constituting all composites?" is quite meaningful. An adequate understanding of a particular, involves necessary reference to the generic properties of which they are but different instantiations. Similarly, the less general laws are explained in terms of more general ones. When such questions are pushed to their logical extremes one finds oneself asking the most general questions that are speculative and philosophical. Philosophers, Scientists and the Mystics have arrived at different answers sometimes complementary, sometimes mutually conflicting. Even philosophers also are found to be disagreeing with one another. However, the relative merit of a philosophical thesis as to the ultimate can be determined against the criteria of their explanatory adequacy and the appropriate

verificational experience. So a transcendental ontology is presupposed in the understanding or comprehension of the finite.

In the Upanisads, Brahman is said to be the ultimate reality. The world of multiplicities, in respect of its origin (Sṛṣṭi), existence (Sthiti), dissolution (Laya) is made intelligible in terms of Brahman. As the basic and the eternal substratum of all acts of creation, preservation and destruction it outlives all change and manifestations. It is the primal world ground, the sustaining principle and the ultimate absorbent of reality. It is of the nature of Truth (Sat), Consciousness (Cit) and Bliss (Ānanda). It is the truth Absolute, for it does not suffer from any consequence, i.e. it is inconsequential (Apariṇāmi). In other words, all changes take place in it but it remains beyond change. 'Consciousness' is not an attribute of Brahman but is constitutive of it. In other words, Brahman does not have consciousness as one of its attributes but is of the nature of consciousness. To say that Brahman is bliss, is to offer an affective description of the state of Brahmanhood. It being the state of absolute harmony, all comprehensive, cognitive, conative and affective stance, to attain it is to be established in the infinite happiness, which is the summum bonum, which marks the fruition of all aspirations and strivings and which every finite knowingly or unawares craves for.

Brahman is construed to be the infinite consciousness which evolves itself into the world of particularities or finites by self-limitation. The world is nothing but the metamorphosed form of the supreme consciousness. There is nothing like matter as such. The so-called matter is but the crudified form of the consciousness. Brahman in its pristine state is denotative of the undifferentiated potentiality. It evolves itself into the world by act of self will. It is said that He was one and He desired to be many. Such a will, on the part of Brahman was followed by the creation of the multiplicities. Willing is a form of cognitive activity and can be true of a conscious entity. Since, Brahman is the nature of consciousness, it is quite intelligible to qualify it by self-knowledge and self-will. The desire or will on the part of Brahman to become many need not mistake one to treat it as a person. Brahman in its unmanifested state is without any attribute and therefore is impersonal. But in articulating as to how the Brahman evolves itself into the world one need to paraphrase one's explanation in terms of anthropomorphic metaphors. So the desire of Brahman has to be understood as follows: Brahman as the infinite potentiality contains the world as one of the infinite possibilities. The so called will or desire is nothing but the tendency of the potentiality to manifest into the actualities. If one

insists to question as to why at all it desired to be many or in other words, why at all there has been the transition from potentiality to actuality it does not evidently have any answer. In theistic interpretations the creation is attributed to the sport of the Supreme (Līlā). Līlā or the sport of the Supreme is distinguished from Kridā or play of a finite; the difference being that the dynamics of human play has an intelligible logic or explanation; whereas the ways of the Supreme fall beyond the ambit of mind and therefore are inscrutable. Though couched in mystical terms the above contains an implicit rationale. The demand for intelligibility and explanation is a demand of the mind or intellect. But mind being a post-creational emergent, a gross evolute; there remains the oddity of the finite mind to know the ways or the dynamics of the Infinite. The constitutive limitations of the finite prevents one from knowing the ways of the Infinite unless and until the finite transmutes and sublimates his finitude by becoming the Infinite.

There have been divergent views about the nature of the ultimate substance but they can broadly be brought under three distinct categories so far as they rest on three basic assumptions, i.e. some claim the ultimate to be of the nature of matter, some claim it to be of the nature of consciousness and some posit both matter and consciousness as ultimate,

co-eternal substances. Those who advocate the ultimacy of 'matter' construe 'consciousness' as a new resultant arising out of a particular combination or synthesis of the material constituents. As the redness is a necessary emergent of a particular combination of betel leaf, nut and lime, (though it is not the native property of any of the constituents); the consciousness, similarly, is an epi-phenomenon of matter. The scientists succeed in producing organic compounds by subjecting a sample atmosphere of hydrogen, water vapour, ammonia and methane to electric discharges and ultraviolet light. This has led them to hypothesize that some kind of prebiological synthesis of matter must have occurred prior to the creation of living beings. Let us agree with the advocates in assuming the primordality of matter. Now the pertinent question is 'How did matter come into existence?' Either it is to be thought as existing from eternity or it has come to exist from its prior non-existence. Now, to accept the former view i.e. the eternity of matter, is to say that there is no reason as to why 'matter' exists but simply that 'matter' exists. But this would be self-stultifying as it militates against one of the basic assumptions of science, i.e. the principle of sufficient reason, which means that for everything existent, there must be sufficient reason as to why at all it is and why it is as it is. If one concedes to the other alternative that

matter came out of its prior non-existence, one either subscribes to the creation de novo or violates the principle of ex-nihilo nihil-fit which are equally unacceptable. If one accounts for the existence of 'matter' in terms of something non-material, 'matter' remains no more primordial. This would be suicidal. Moreover, one could still question the basic contention of the materialists in asking as to 'How consciousness could emerge from matter if it were not already there?' All that the experiments or empirical experiences bring out is that a particular configuration, combination or synthesis of material elements are followed by certain specific resultants. Negatively, anything does not come out of anything. Redness comes out of betel leaf, nut and the lime; for these three have the potentiality to produce the colour 'red.' This goes to suggest that the effect is contained in the cause in form of potency or causal efficiency. If life could come out of matter it is because 'consciousness' is somehow embedded in matter, i.e., consciousness is not incompatible with matter but continuous with it. This exposes the inadequacy and oddity of the widely held view that 'matter' is unconscious and 'consciousness' is immaterial. The above observations also make explicit the untenability of the views advocating the ultimacy of both matter and consciousness.

Rāmānuja treats matter and soul as co-eternal with God or Brahman. Creation means the subtle matter becoming gross and the unembodied souls becoming embodied. This position of Rāmānuja seems, not to be in keeping with the Upanisadic observation that 'Verily in the beginning this world was Brahman' 'Verily all this is Brahman'. Rāmānuja qualifies Brahman with internal differences (Svagata Bheda) even in the state, preceding and succeeding creation. The differences, be they homogeneous, heterogeneous or internal, make sense only in respect of the manifest reality or determinate existence i.e., with regard to the world of name and form. But Brahman is denotative of a state of unmanifest potentiality or undifferentiated unity. Pure unity makes sense against the diversities of the creation. Madhva subscribes to rank dualism in construing matter and soul as not only co-eternal but extrinsic to Brahman or the God. God as the immanent controller is only the efficient cause of creation, not its material cause. Even in the state of liberation the individual souls are said to be retaining their distinct peculiarity and autonomy. Though, they become similar to God, do not become identical with it. This is an explicit departure from the basic themes of the Upanisads which not only equate the reality with Brahman but take Brahman as the beginning and end of it.

The Upanisads do not acknowledge the dichotomy between 'consciousness' and 'matter.' Brahman and the world are denotative of the unmanifest and the manifest states of the same reality. Though causal to the world; Brahman is not extrinsic to it. Brahman does not create the world out of the materials that are co-eternal with him nor is the world created out of nothing by the will of God. The Upanisads, in other words, neither advocate 'the creation de-novo' nor do they commit themselves to 'Deism.' The world is not a negation of Brahman but a continuation of it. The world is not different from Brahman but a manifestation of it. Brahman does not create the world out of nothing but evolves itself into the diversities by self-will. It has been construed as both 'Asat' (Non-Being) and 'Sat' (Being) in relation to the created manifold. As 'Asat' (Non-Being) it is the bare and unmanifest potentiality, in which the particularities lie latent as mere possibilities. As 'Sat' (Being) it is the underlying essence, the abiding substratum, eternal, and inconsequential. Thus, it remains distinct from the finite or contingent evolutes. Though one; it appears as many because of the gross exterior that clothes it. Everything macrocosmic and microcosmic are but the modificatory appearance of the essence. The self-same reality is conceived as Brahman and **Ātman**; as the essence of the macrocosm and

microcosm respectively. As the controlling logos it is the arbiter of the macrocosmic and microcosmic phenomena. The characteristic nature or activity of everything, animate and inanimate, mobile or immobile, is but a necessary manifestation of the essence. Therefore, all external or actional manifestations are attributed to the will of Brahman which inhabits as the essence in every structure. The uniformity and symmetry, discernible in the universe is rightly said to be the design of the supreme. As the underlying consciousness, it is the real agent of all actions and the real subject of all cognitions. It is not the 'I' consciousness or the empirical 'ego' that accompanies the cognitive, conative and affective acts of the individual, but the universal consciousness that operates in and beyond the individual and outlives different states of consciousness, i.e. waking (Jāgrata), dream (Svapna), susupti (Deep Sleep). Though instrumental to all acts and cognitions it remains immune to the bindings of action and knowledge.

The Upanisads do not play down the difference, in treating everything as a manifestation of the cosmic but by virtue of it, restore dignity to the finite. Nothing is valued for its own sake but for the fact that it is an expression of Brahman. Even love, and fellowship among humans is said to be an expression of love for the divinity in one

another. This is reflected in Yājñavalkya's teaching to Maitreyī. Love signifies the natural affinity among the created beings that partake of the same essence. Brahman is unity running in and through all diversities in respect of their origin, existence and dissolution.

The world, thus understood, is not an apparent transformation but real transformation of the unity into diversity. Brahman is real and the world is real but the latter is, relatively, so (Brahma satyaṁ, Jagadapi satyaṁ āpekṣikaṁ). The absolute non-dualism of Sankara tends to undermine the ontological status of the diversities by construing them as apparent or illusory. He seems to deny substantive existence to the manifest reality. The world does not appear as many but is, verily, the real expression of one as many. In subscribing to the unqualified monism he offers an explanation of reality only in its pre-creational and post-creational stance. It is inadequate, to the extent it fails to offer a plausible and adequate explanation of the created manifold in relation to the Unity.

The Upanisads do not advocate a linear view of creation. The creation did not have a beginning in time nor shall it come to an end at a point of time. Creation, existence and dissolution do not refer to the chronology of

events but they are simultaneously going on from eternity to eternity. There is an eternal cycle, as it were. This is certified by the cosmic sounds a, u, m (Om) (the spiritual seeker hears in the exalted state of consciousness) which are but the acoustic manifestation of the cosmic act of creation, preservation and destruction, respectively. Origination, existence and destruction can be deemed as temporal events in respect of the finite but when considered in respect of the 'creation' or 'the totality', as such, they signify the eternal cosmic process and therefore transcend time. They are the limiting concepts that render all the temporal concepts significant. The evolution signifies the extroversal transition from unity (Advaita) to diversity (Dvaita) followed by introversal transition or absorption of the diversity into unity (Advaita). So the movement is from unity to unity, in and through diversity. Shri Ananda Murtii's interpretation of the Upanisadic metaphysics as 'Advaitadvetādvaita' seems, therefore, to be the most plausible.

The Upanisads contain the delineation of Brahman both from its microcosmic and macrocosmic perspective. As microcosmic, it is the essence. As the essence, it eludes all attempts at particularisation in terms of categories and concepts. Temporal categories do not apply to it. Time becomes meaningful only against the world of multiplicity and

change. Brahman, being the begetter of the manifold and the invariable substratum of all mutations is rightly said to be the author of time and therefore, remains beyond the ambit of time. Spatial categories also fall short of Brahman. The spatial concepts describe an object of finite dimension. Brahman, by virtue of its infinity is conceived as smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. To describe it through spatial notion is to finitise the infinite. Similarly, the causal categories are also seen as inappropriate. Causality presupposes contingency. A thing amenable to causal explanation is ontologically dependent on its causal antecedents. It has a beginning and an end i.e., it is meaningful to speak of its prior and posterior non-existence in time.

Brahman, being beginningless (Anādi) and endless (Ananta) is the eternal (Sāsvata). The causal descriptions are, therefore, not only irrelevant but positively misleading.

As the essence, it is the real of the reals, truth of the truth (Satyasya satyam) and is not to be mistaken for the particularities. Hence it is beyond the reach of the attributive knowledge. The relation between this essence and the particular is not one of the 'contained' and the 'container.' As the essence, it permeates the whole being of the unit. As the indwelling principle, it is distributively

identified with all existents. In its macrocosmic manifestation, the expressed reality in its entirety is equated with Brahman. The world is Brahman but Brahman is not all that the world is. The world though vast, is finite. It is but a finite expression of Brahman, the Infinite. The infinitude of Brahman is not exhausted by a finite expression of it. So to equate Brahman with the world is to limit the limitless. The Upanisadic world view therefore is not pantheistic.

As the essence, it is immanent and all pervading; as infinite it is transcendent. It lies quiescent in every-structure. So everything is real as far as it is an expression of the essence. As essence, it resists all descriptions and as macrocosmic, all descriptions seem to be appropriate of it. In the Upanisads, one finds four distinct ways of conceiving the absolute (a) 'Neti Neti' is a logical caution against affirmative or exclusive predication. All predicates or categories have determinate semantic import. So predicative description makes the infinite and indeterminate; appear as the finite and the determinate. (b), the negative descriptions of the form "Brahman is without this without that..." point also to the inadequacy of linguistic categories, in respect of transcendence of Brahman. (c), the contradictory predications of the form "it moves and moves not... it is far and it is near..." can be taken as the only positive

description of the reality which in its macrocosmic stance, accommodates all possible predications; therefore, contradictory predications. (d), silence, points to the non-verbal mode of apprehension.

The Upanisadic epistemology is also unique of its kind. The conventional models in epistemology are, tacitly, committed to empiricism in so far as they posit sensation or intellection or both sensation and intellection as the principal modes of knowing; whereas the Upanisads become vocal about the inadequacy of the so-called modes in respect of the knowledge of the Absolute. They make an explicit distinction between 'Parā' (Higher Knowledge) and 'Aparā' (the Lower Knowledge); the latter denoting the body of empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge is pronounced as mere names and are deemed incomplete as they do not enable one to obtain the highest good. This goes to suggest that the Upanisads do not advocate a disinterested passion for knowledge. Knowledge is not to be pursued for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of the highest good. Knowledge of the Brahman is said to be 'Parā' because thereby, one obtains the highest good. The highest knowledge is equated with the highest good. Knowledge is not value-neutral. 'Knowledge' as an end in itself, is worth nothing unless it is conducive to the attainment of Brahmanhood. Paradoxically, Brahman is construed

to be both the (transcendental) subject and the (ultimate) object of knowledge. The Upanisads dwell at length to highlight the unknowability of the self by the empirical modes of knowing. The self being the very subject, the very protasis and presupposition in all acts of knowing, cannot be made the object of knowledge. How can that by which everything is known; be known? It points to the logical oddity of having the very means of representation as the object represented. Knowledge presupposes the exclusiveness of the knower and the known. Brahman being infinite and all pervasive, there remains the further oddity on the part of the finite to have the infinite as the externalised datum of knowledge. Brahman being all inclusive, the knower also constitutes an integral part of it. Hence there remains the patent oddity of the part to know the whole. But the Upanisadic thinkers, instead of ending up in agnostic note hold out the plausibility of an alternative mode of knowing, whereby, the finite knows the infinite by becoming it. In the empirical acts of knowing, the subject and object of knowledge have their respective identity and autonomy and the three components of knowledge namely, the knower (Jnātā), the known (Jneya), the knowledge (Jnāna) are distinguishable. Knowledge consists in dispassionate or unbiased apprehension of the known. But the finite in the attempt to comprehend the infinite undergoes a progressive inner transformation, losing, steadily, its native

finitude and eventually, becomes verily the infinite. The knower of Brahman becomes verily the Brahman. To know Brahman is to attain the Brahmanhood. The Upanisads, thus introduce us to a mode of cognition where the subject knows the object by becoming it. The Brahman knowledge signifies a state where the knower, known and the knowledge mingle into one in the wholistic cosmic awareness. Brahman is not other than the self within. Hence the knowledge of it, amounts to self-knowledge. Self knowledge is the highest knowledge because by knowing the essence one knows the modifications and conversely, an adequate understanding of the modifications necessarily calls for the knowledge of the essence. On the contrary, in empirical cognition knowledge is piece-meal and self-limiting. In other words, the knowledge of a given, as such, does not entitle one to know anything beyond it.

It is worthwhile to pause and reflect as to whether self-knowledge can at all pass off as a knowledge claim, per se. Knowledge, in the paradigmatic sense of the term, is different from belief and opinion in being objective. Objectivity is the sine-qua-non of 'knowledge.' All knowledge claims are the truth claims in disguise and all truth claims are claims for objectivity. So making a knowledge claim entails the tacit onus on the part of the claimant to vouchsafe its objectivity, i.e., to specify the conditions under

which the cognition can be made the object of intersubjective experience. The Upanisads appear to be explicit and exhaustive in delineating the conditions or the epistemic prerequisites for the highest knowledge. Further, the objectivity of the highest knowledge has been certified by the very mode of living and the intersubjective assent of the enlightened ones from time to time. To know Brahman is not the prerogative or monopoly of the privileged or the competent few. But is inevitably obtained on attainment of the highest state.

The certitude of empirical knowledge calls for sensory competence and presupposes an effective interaction between the knower and the known. But in respect of the highest knowledge what is insisted upon is the moral competence of the knower. The self can be known only by one whose passions have been stilled and mind collected and composed. Hence the injunction, that it is to be imparted only to the worthy few displaying an ardent yearning for the same, having been wedded to a life of penance and austerity. Meditation on 'Om', cultivation of the yogic practices, have also been highlighted as the potent ways of knowing the ultimate. To know the self is to realise one's native infinity. It is a kind of self discovery. To know is to participate in a mode of living or a form of life. The highest knowledge is to be imparted only to a son or a pupil. A proximate living with

the teacher is deemed salutary for the moral transformation of the seeker. The role of a teacher (Ācarya or Guru) is considered indispensable. The Upanisads also insist on the moral competence of the teacher. It is enjoined that only he who is established in perfection, i.e., the knower of Brahman can impart instruction about the self.

The Upanisadic ethics marks a significant departure from the conventional, axiological doctrines. It is characteristically human to have a sense of purpose or direction. All human actions or strivings are purposive and goal approximating. The ethical merit of an action is ascertained by determining whether and to what extent it contributes to the ends or purposes. In other words, the moral worth of an action is adjudged by an appeal to the norms or standards. The normative valuations involve reference to means and ends. There are hierarchy of means and ends. In the conventional literatures, means and ends are construed to be relative. That, which is an end in relation to its means, may be a means in relation to certain other ends. This makes one cogitate as to whether there could be a most basic or ultimate end. In fact, the ultimate end or the normative paradigm has been conceived differently as pleasure, utility, perfection or strict and non-compromising adherence to the duty appropriate to one's station and communion with God, by thinkers from time to time.

What is a 'value' with reference to a given norm may be a positive 'disvalue' with regard to another. For example, an action that yields utility may be reckoned as good by the pragmatist. But to a religious man, the same action may not be of any moral worth if **it is not, otherwise, conducive to communion with God.** This goes to suggest that all moral valuations are norm-specific and relative. Values can also be seen to be relative, even within a given paradigm. For example, with pleasure as the norm, what is good for one may not be so for another because an action that yields pleasure to one may also be a source of suffering to another. "One man's meat is another's poison" goes the saying. An intimate view of the normative axiologics reveals that all of them involve, in principle, the notion of relativity of 'good.' But this is self-stultifying a position. The function of value is to bind and integrate. It is an exigency of collective living. It aims at synthesising, harmonizing the varied and conflicting interests of the individual members. If the norms or values are construed to be relative then there shall be ideally, as many norms as there are individuals. Each will have his own paradigm. So, values, per se, have to be objective and absolute.

It is against this that Upanisadic ethics can be seen to be most viable from the point of view of theoretical

soundness and its applicability in the life situations. It is worth noticing that each ethical theory is rooted in a metaphysics. Conversely, each metaphysical world view gives rise to a respective ethical view. The Upanisads are not exception to it. In the Upanisads, attainment of Brahmanhood is the inevitable end and the summum bonum of all existence and endeavours. It is the terminous of evolutionary gamut and the state of perfection, harmony and bliss. This is not only the inevitable but also the most desirable state. The highest state has differently been described as Āptakāma, Akāma and Ātmakāma; signifying that; it being obtained, all desires are fulfilled (Āptakāma) and this being so, there is no desire (Akāma) and the only persisting desire is the desire for the self (Ātmakāma). An action or pursuit is said to be good or morally enviable if it is conducive to the attainment of ultimate end irrespective of any consideration whatsoever. This is the ultimate paradigm that determines, objectively the moral worth of an action.

The discussions pertaining to the hierarchy of means and ends, prima facie, tend to suggest that all values are, at the core, existence-values. In other words, the concepts 'good' or 'bad' ultimately hinge upon the notion of 'existence' and 'well being' of man. An action is said to be good if it promotes ultimately the cause of existence. The notion

'existence' is again nebulous. For an empiricist, existence may mean physical existence and well being may mean amelioration of the physical lot of man. Others may conceive existence as physico-psychic. But quite significantly the Upanisads draw our attention to the often unnoticed, often ignored facet of human existence. Man is not only a physico-psychic being but the body-mind-spirit complex. Suffering accrues when the well-being of the body and mind is attended to with total neglect of the spiritual well being. The real good and happiness ensues when the 'body' and 'mind' are harnessed to the spiritual upliftment. Man is essentially divine, potentially the Infinite. The real progress consists in effecting progressive transformation of the inner. The highest good is achieved when one attains the Brahmanhood, whereof, one realises oneself as the Infinite, the cosmic. The Yama-Naciketā episode in Katha and the Yājñavalkya - Maitreyī episode in Br. U, suggest that the mundane possessions or the worldly goods are worth nothing as they do not, as such, procure one the 'highest good.'

But the Upanisads do not disparage the world or the worldly good. They are not life-negating. What is decried is not the phenomenal good but an exclusive obsession or indulgence with them. The distinction between 'preya' (pleasurable) and the 'sreya' (preferable) are significant and consequential.

The Upanisads do not preach inaction, passivism, or escapism. Action is not incompatible with the highest good. What binds is not the 'action' but the desire behind. Action binds when performed in ignorance but liberates when performed with the right ideation. Because of ignorance and infatuation one entertains oneself to be the real doer and that prompts him to wait upon, in order to appropriate the consequences of the action to oneself. Thus, he remains bound to the action-reaction nexus i.e. the Karmic bondage. Under the sway of ignorance, he takes the world of names and forms to be real and remains blind to the futility of seeking to derive abiding happiness from things, ephemeral. He remains goaded by the consideration of mine and thine. This makes him love and hate, happy and sorrowful. On the contrary, for the knower of Brahman everything, verily, is the expression of supreme. By knowing Brahman he becomes, verily, the Brahman or the Cosmic. He discovers his being everywhere. Everything noble or ignoble (so-called) become very much an integral part of his being. For him, everything is sacred and everyone is a kindred, not only the humans but also the animals, plants and even the inanimate creations. He lives spontaneously in active communion with the rest of the creation. This is indicative of the fact that the values are not humanistic but neo-humanistic.* He becomes the very paradigm of ideals or perfections. Such

*A term coined by P.R. Sarkar.

individuals are the real Brāhmins, the reference points in all acts of moral valuations. They remain beyond the dualities. 'Good' and 'evil' derive their significance from their demeanour. Thus, the Upanisadic axiology is found to be broad based in its ontology and epistemology.

Unlike other ethical theories, the Upanisads do not countenance the possibility of conflict between the individual and the collective good. The good of one consist in being good and doing good to others. The highest good consists in living in absolute harmony with the rest. One who is established in the cosmic awareness lives in total concord with others. For him, there is no other; the real happiness consists in service and the real enjoyment, in sacrifice. One who lives in consonance with the cosmic order, secures immunity from all evils and any violation of it tends to recoil in form of evil. Thus a moral action is self rewarding and an immoral action proves to be self-ruining.

Man is free to choose the path of the pleasurable or the preferable, good or the evil but is not free to choose the consequences of the action. To that extent, man is constrained. An action, good or bad generates the appropriate consequences and the agent or the doer remains fettered to the action-reaction nexus. He moves in the realm of dualities.

But the real freedom (Svarāj) is obtained only when one is established in the state of supreme perfection, whereof, one glories in one's native state of truth, consciousness and bliss, — Saccidānanda.

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