



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**THE UPANISHADS
AN ANTHOLOGY**

D. S. Sarma

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

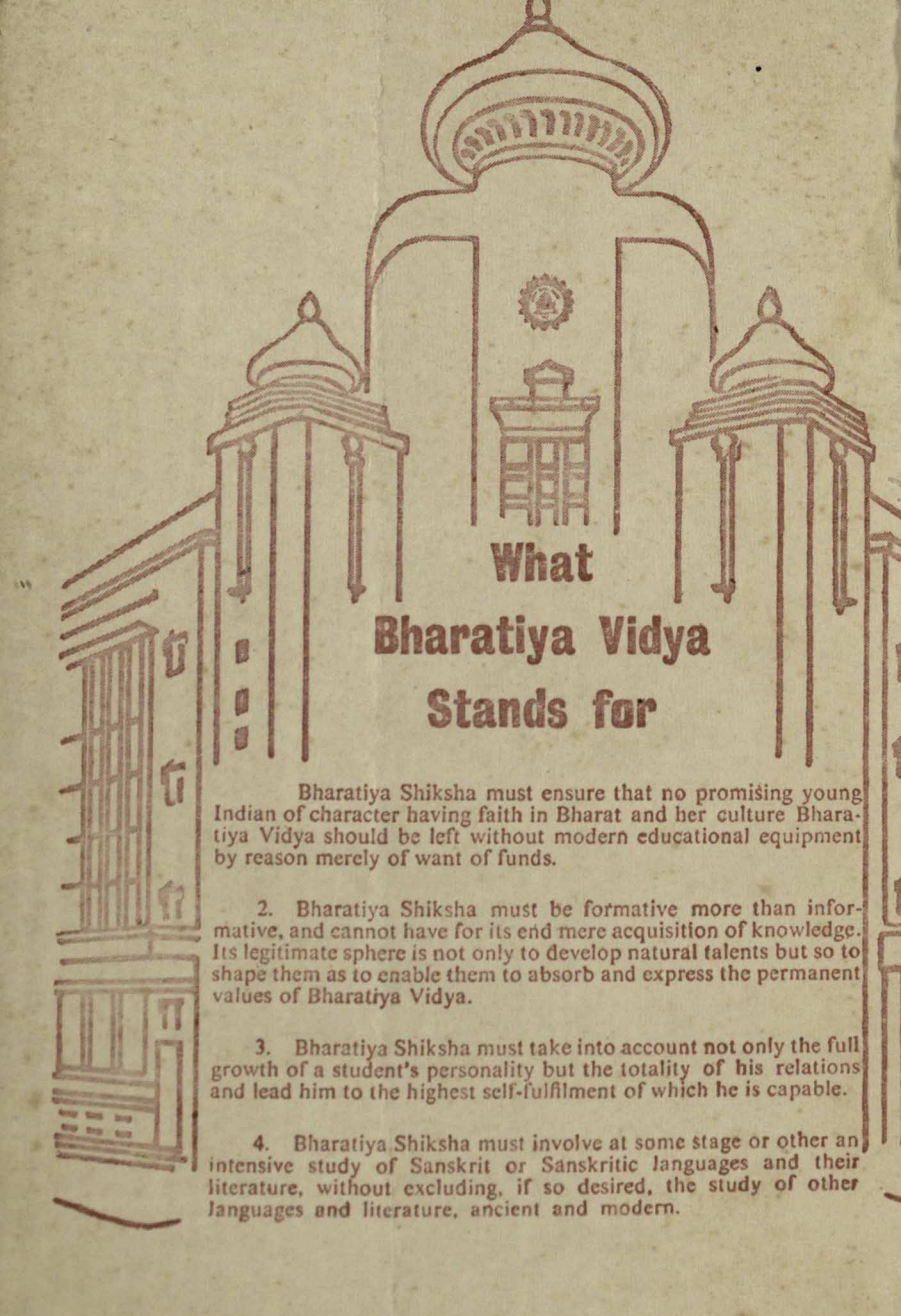
R. R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

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**What
Bharatiya Vidya
Stands for**

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—
 - (i) respect for the teacher,
 - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
 - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.





आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, 1-89-i

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By

D. S. SARMA

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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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AN ANTHOLOGY

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D. S. SARMA



1961

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulses of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages : Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit :

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities ; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral

Order ; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari, the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata* : "What is not in it, is nowhere". After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul ; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic ; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women, and of some who were divine ; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on

human problems that is hard to rival ; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of Bhavan's activity successful.

K. M. MUNSHI

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FOREWORD

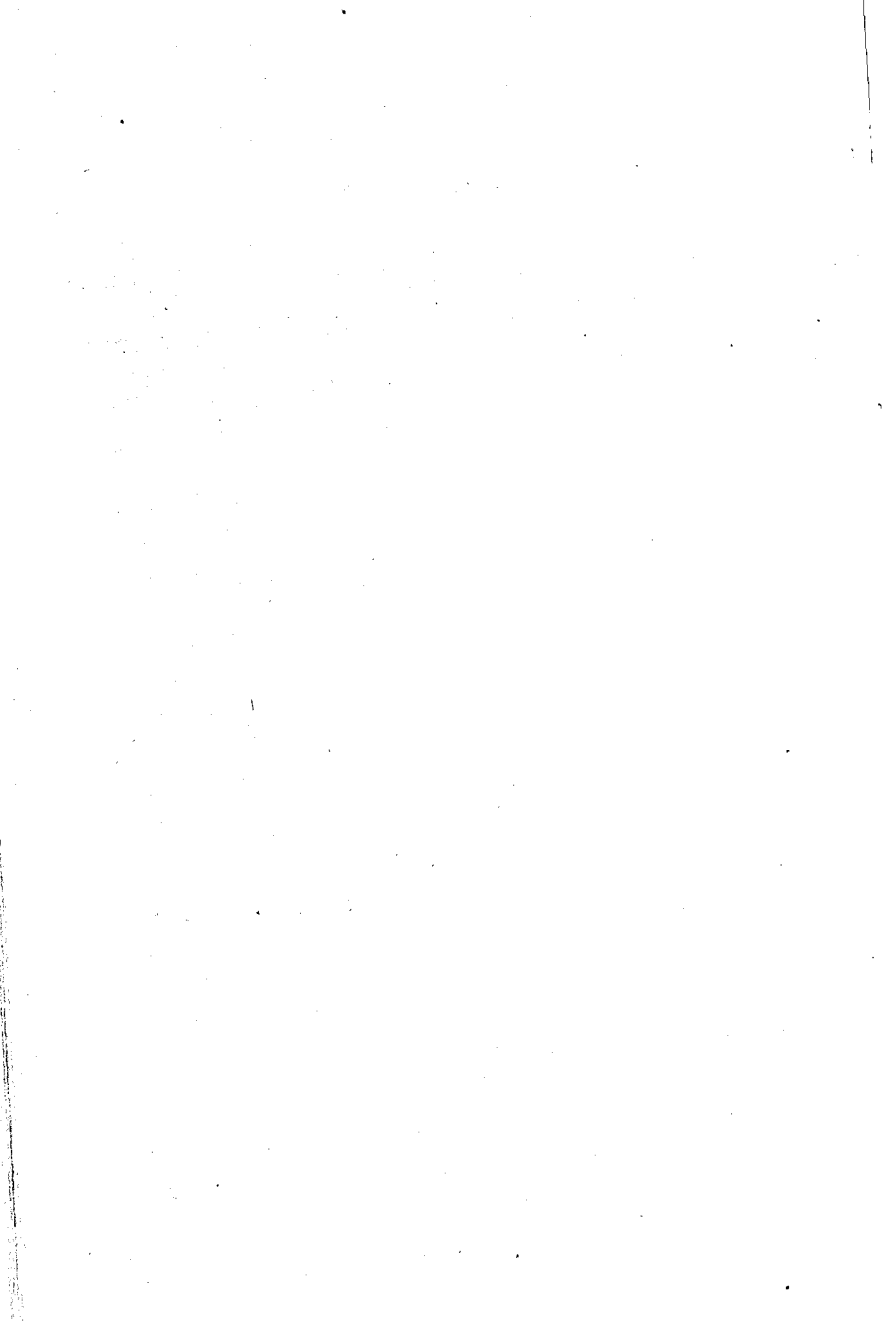
Professor D. S. Sarma has spent over 50 years reading and writing about Indian thought. He has lived in close companionship with nearly fifty centuries of Indian history. He has discerned what is vital and valid in India's spirit which has helped her to survive many cruel vicissitudes and many diseases and disasters.

While we may quarrel with the outward forms, mechanical rites and social superstitions which have acquired the sanctity of religion and which have hampered the growth of the spirit of religion, the fundamental principles of religion, viz., a deepening awareness of the Divine and compassion for humanity, are never superseded. They may take different forms determined by the pressure of circumstances, the rush of events or the temperaments of the leading personalities, but these forms are susceptible of change. We now have to readjust the social forms so that they may accord with the true spirit of religion.

In his many writings which bear the imprint of his penetration, insight and judgment, Professor Sarma shows us the way to the future development of religion. He suggests a reconciliation between ancient wisdom and the needs of modern society. If mankind is to be redeemed we require to be spiritually armed.

In this, his latest book, Professor Sarma weaves the several ideas of the Upanishads into an intelligible pattern of spiritual power.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN



PREFACE

This book was planned by me about twenty-five years ago as a parallel to my Student's edition of the Gita (1930), with an Introduction, text and translation and notes. I actually wrote down some of the Selections in the year 1936. But various things came in the way of my continuing the work — other duties, bereavements, illness, etc. At one time I even gave up the idea. However, a friend had all along been urging me to take up the work again and finish it before it was too late. So at long last I have carried out my old plan, though not half as satisfactorily as I once wished to do. But this was the best I could do under the circumstances.

While preparing my Ms. for the Press, I came across the following passage in *The Scriptures of Mankind* (New York, 1952) by C. S. Braden :

"One who has heard of the vast importance of the Upanishads and had read scattered excerpts of rare beauty and insight is likely to feel a sense of shock as he sits down to read through the whole collection of the twelve or thirteen Principal Upanishads. Some of it is crude, childish But if the reader persists he will come upon passages of deep insight, beauty of expression and profound understanding of the great problems of religion and human thought. One's first excursion into these basic philosophic texts would best be through some modern expurgated edition or anthology which has carefully weeded out the crudities, the repetitiousness and the contradictions that so much abound in the original."

To produce such an anthology was exactly my aim in these Selections. I have tried to preserve here most, if not all, of "the passages of deep insight, beauty of expression and profound understanding" to which Mr. Braden refers and to omit all that is likely to puzzle and vex the modern reader. At the same time I have also tried, as far as possible, to make my collection fairly representative of all aspects of the Upanishadic thought. I have followed the traditional order of the Upanishads, and in my notes I have relied mostly on Sankara's commentaries.

This book is intended only for the general reader and not for the professed student of our religion and philosophy. That is indeed my excuse not only for making a selection of the sacred passages but also for abridging them, wherever necessary, to avoid needless repetitions of uninteresting details. However, I shall feel very happy if this anthology provides an incentive to a detailed study of the Upanishadic philosophy under the guidance of a qualified Pandit and with the help of the commentaries, both ancient and modern.

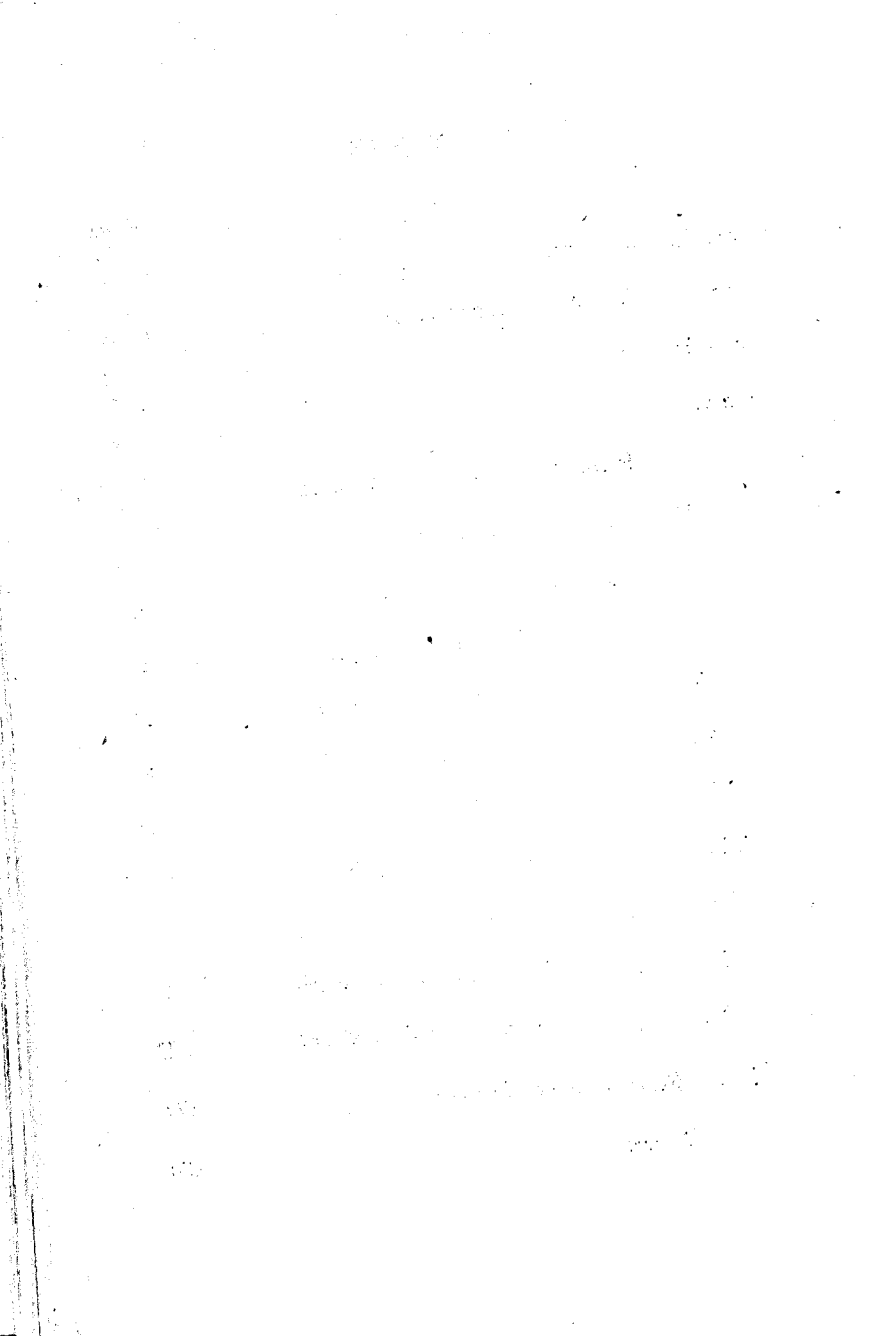
I am deeply grateful to the Vice-President of India for writing the Foreword and to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for their readily consenting to publish the book in their well-known series.

New Delhi,
15-12-1960

D. S. SARMA

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TO
MAITREYI, SANDILYA AND GARGI



OF

THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



INTRODUCTION

I

The Upanishads have been rightly termed the Himalayas of the soul. They represent the heights to which the spirit of man soared in this country in its contemplation of the Divine Spirit. They contain the experience of the seers and saints of India who lived about three thousand years ago. It cannot be stressed too often that the Upanishads are the revelations vouchsafed not to a single prophet but to the seers of a whole age, which is one of the most brilliant in the annals of mankind. They are inspired utterances, the results not of a logical but of a poetic approach to Reality. Accordingly we do not have a single uniform system of thought emerging out of their teachings. On the contrary, as the history of Hinduism shows, we have here several levels of thought and experience which gave rise in course of time to several schools of philosophy and several streams of religious tradition. At the same time it is obvious that not all the truths taught here are equally prominent. Some are only half-way houses on the path leading to the Absolute.

It is well known that the Upanishads constitute the last phase of the Vedic revelation. The Mantras constitute the first phase, the Brahmanas the second, the Aranyakas the third, and the Upanishads the fourth and the last. Thus the Upanishads come at the end of the Veda and hence the teachings they embody are known as the Vedanta. But there is no hard and fast line between one phase and another. Nor is there any inner contradiction

between them. There is only change of emphasis. If the Brahmanas develop the ritualistic elements in the Mantras, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads develop the mystical elements in them. It is a mistake to suppose that the Upanishads in any manner intend to break away from the earlier phases of the Veda. Such a thing is unknown to the Hindu religious tradition. Therein lies perhaps the secret of its strength. The very fact that the Upanishadic teachers often quote verses from the Vedic hymns in support of their teachings shows that no new departure was contemplated by them. Also, occasionally we have in the longer Upanishads, as in the Brahmanas, discussions on such details of the sacrifices as the number of offerings to be made, the duties to be discharged by the various officiating priests, the hymns to be sung and the gods to be invoked. At this distance of time we may not be interested in these discussions and may even regard them as a hindrance to our appreciation of the poetry and the philosophy of the Upanishads, but they were of tremendous importance to the men of that age. For it was believed at the time that any error in the performance of a sacrifice or any misunderstanding of the import of a mantra might result in the falling off of the priest's head. In fact it is only when we are able to make due allowance for the mass of local and temporary beliefs of the age and look through them at the universal and eternal truths taught by the Upanishadic seers that we are in a position to appreciate the originality and the courage of those teachers. They were apparently engaged in the mighty task of transforming a rather low type of sacrificial religion prevalent at the time into a great mystical religion true for all time, without in any explicit manner break-

ing away from the traditions of the past. - And they succeeded in this to such an extent that their teaching, with its later developments and off-shoots, spread not only over the whole sub-continent of India but also over many of the islands and countries of the Far East. Indeed it became the basis of one of the greatest religious traditions that the world has ever known.

II

The worth of any religious tradition depends upon the quality of its teaching about God and His creation, and man and his salvation. On all these four fundamental topics the Upanishads in their best moments show a great advance from the earlier Vedic thought and also contain hints of far-reaching developments.

But far more important than the advance in thought or even the future developments is the direct vision of the seers and also the strength of conviction with which they speak about it. To use the figure employed by Sri Ramakrishna, the Upanishadic seers are like those who speak about the holy city of Benares after seeing it and living in it and not like the people who eloquently discourse on it after seeing only a map of it. To them God was not a mere traditional symbol or a vague hypothesis, but a living and burning experience. They see Him everywhere—in the wide expanse of the universe, in the phenomena of Nature around them and in the secret chambers of men's hearts. They exclaim :—

“The Infinite is below ; He is above ; He is behind ; He is in front ; He is to the south ; He is to the north ; He is indeed all this.”

“Through fear of Him fire burns ; through fear of Him the sun blazes ; through fear of Him Indra, Vayu, and also Yama, as the fifth, speed on their way.”

“From Him come all the seas and the mountains ; from Him flow the rivers of every kind ; from Him come all the herbs and their juices —.”

“Verily, it is by the command of that Imperishable, O Gargi, that the sun and the moon stand apart. It is by the command of that Imperishable, O Gargi, that heaven and earth stand apart. It is by the command of that Imperishable that what are called moments, hours, days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, years — all stand apart.”

“Radiant and near, indeed stirring in the heart itself, is that great Being. In it is centred everything —everything that moves and breathes and winks.”

III

Already in the hymns of the Rig Veda we notice here and there a shift of emphasis from the multitudinous gods to the one Infinite, as in the famous oft-quoted passage—*Ekam Sat, vipra bahudha vadanti*. (“Reality is one, the wise speak of it in different ways.”) This becomes more pronounced in the Upanishads and is very well illustrated by the story of the discomfiture of the gods in the Kenopanishad. We are told that Brahman won a victory for the gods, but the gods thought that it was due to their own strength, and when He appeared before them they did not know Him. They sent up the god of fire and the god of wind to find out who He was. When these approached and announced themselves He set a straw

before them and asked them to show their strength against it. The god of fire went against it with all his strength, but could not burn it. The god of wind went against it with all his strength, but could not move it from its place. Then Indra, the king of the gods, came up to enquire who the unknown Spirit was. But the spirit now disappeared and in His place Uma, the beautiful daughter of Himavat, representing heavenly wisdom, appeared on the scene and told him that the Spirit was indeed Brahman in whose victory the gods had been exulting. Indra, the king of the gods, is again significantly represented in the Chandogya Upanishad as going to Prajapati as a humble pupil for acquiring knowledge of Brahman. And the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says, "When they say 'sacrifice to this god or sacrifice to that god' — each god is His manifestation, for He is all the gods." Thus in the Upanishads the gods fade away and their place is taken by the one infinite Brahman or Atman.

This infinite Brahman is regarded as both transcendent and immanent. He has not only created the world but also entered into it and lives in the hearts of all creatures as their *antaryamin*. In an eloquent passage in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yajnavalkya says :

"He who dwells in the earth and is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who controls the earth from within—he is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal.

"He who dwells in all beings, and is within all beings, whom the beings do not know, whose body all beings are, who controls all beings from within—he is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal."

God is significantly compared in the Upanishads

to a spider which weaves its web out of its own body and lies at the centre of it. There are, however, many fanciful accounts given here of the origin of creation, and some forced analogies and even false etymologies are pressed into service. Some of these are no doubt intentionally allegorical or figurative. But the rest are obviously the results of the primitive scientific thought of the time. We may ask ourselves whether after three thousand years of scientific knowledge we are now in any better position to describe the origin of the universe. Man can only theorise about it. And he has done so in all ages. But the truth is still far away. Probably it will ever remain so.

IV

Though the theories of creation found in the Upanishads are only fanciful or at best only figurative, the well-known story of the enlightenment of Bhrigu, son of Varuna, given in the Taittiriya Upanishad shows a profound insight into the process of spiritual evolution on earth. This story bears any amount of repetition.

Bhrigu approached his father Varuna and requested him to teach him Brahman—the ultimate Reality. The father gave him a general formula “that Brahman is that from which these beings are born, that by which when born they live, and that into which they enter on passing away” and asked him to go and discover Brahman for himself. Bhrigu went and meditated and came to the conclusion that *annam* or matter was Brahman, for it is from matter that all beings are born, it is by food, which is matter, that they live and it is into matter that they pass when they

die. So he came back to his father and told him his conclusion. But the father asked him to go and meditate again. The son went again and meditated and found that *prana* or life, which was a higher reality than matter, was Brahman. The father asked him to go and meditate again. The son obeyed, went again and meditated. This time he discovered that *manas* or consciousness was a higher reality than life. In this way Bhrigu was led on step by step from matter (*annam*) to life (*prana*), from life to consciousness (*manas*), from consciousness to intellect (*vijnana*), and from intellect to bliss (*ananda*). He thus discovered at last that Brahman was perfect bliss. And that was the end of his enquiry.

Now, to put Bhrigu's discoveries in concrete terms, he saw five orders of beings in an ascending scale in this world, viz., (1) material objects, (2) living plants, (3) conscious animals, (4) intelligent men and (5) God in bliss. At one end of the scale there are lifeless objects which consist entirely of matter and in which the spirit is entirely dormant. At the other end of the scale there is God who is a perfect spirit and in whom matter is entirely dormant. Between these two extremes lie plants, animals and men in an ascending scale of spirit and a descending scale of matter. In stones and other lifeless objects the spirit goes to sleep, as it were, in plants and trees it wakes and manifests itself as life, in beasts and birds it goes a step further and manifests itself as mind or consciousness, in men it goes up still further and manifests itself as intellect or reason, and in God it is back again in perfection or bliss. As the spirit progresses in this manner step by step, matter shrinks away in a corresponding manner and consequently there is at every

step an increase in the power of spirit over matter. Man is thus a dual being with a body and a soul. He is partly matter, partly spirit. He is half animal, half god. The more he has of spiritual qualities like goodness, mercy and love the nearer he is to the kingdom of God. And the more he has of the brutal qualities of lust, cruelty and greed the nearer he is to the animal kingdom. A saint is therefore nearer God than a sinner. The former is nearer to the goal of life than the latter.

Thus the world is a vast amphitheatre in which there is a colossal struggle going on between spirit and matter giving rise to various orders of beings ranging from the lifeless stone to the supreme spirit. The struggle is unconscious and involuntary up to the level of man. But after that it is conscious and voluntary. For man is a free agent. He has the freedom to make himself or mar himself. He can think good thoughts and do good deeds and thus rise in the scale and become a god, or think bad thoughts and do bad deeds and sink in the scale and become a brute. This is what may be called the law of spiritual progression underlying the history of the world. Dr. Radhakrishnan, from whom this exposition is adopted, says :—

“The history of the world has been a process of the return of the Absolute into itself in the fulness of its self-consciousness. The evolutionary process of the world would be unintelligible without the immanent spiritual teleology, involving a continual ascent from God’s minute beginnings to ever higher forms of existence and at last to man and superman. There is an underlying spiritual reality which is the source of evolution and our consciousness is one ex-

pression thereof. The dissociation of the Absolute into two—the Self and the other—constitutes the beginning of creation, and the work of the world is only an attempt to get back to the original wholeness through growth. The universe is just that way through which the abstract unity becomes a concrete totality. The world process is the becoming of the whole.”

It may also be pointed out that the law of spiritual progression indicated in the Taittiriya Upanishad is further illustrated in the Hindu theories of four castes (varnas), four stages of life (asramas), four ends of life (purusharthas) and the Hindu conceptions of the four phases of individual soul (Jivatman) viz., Vaisvanara, Taijasa, Prajna and Atman and the four phases of the Supreme Spirit, viz., Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Isvara and Brahman. In fact, this law may be said to be the master-key* to all Hindu thought and civilisation.

V

More important, however, than the law of spiritual progression, which runs like a golden thread through the entire web of God's creation, is the Upanishadic conception of God himself. Commenting on a verse in the Mandukya Upanishad, Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks that it is the first time in the history of thought that the distinction between the Absolute and God—between Brahman and Isvara—is elaborated. Isvara is God in relation to the universe and viewed through human spectacles, whereas Brahman

* See the first essay in *The Hindu Standpoint* by the present writer.

is God as He is in Himself viewed independently. In later Vedantic literature the two are often spoken of as Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman. That is, the same Brahman is viewed from two different standpoints—the relative standpoint and the independent standpoint. The more daring among the Upanishadic seers were not satisfied with merely heaping all the highest qualities known to human imagination and clothing God with them and thinking that they had given an adequate description of God. For, after all, these qualities even at their highest are pitifully human conceptions. They may be good so far as they go. But they do not go far enough to bring out the immensity and the ineffability of the ultimate Reality. We should therefore give up our human standpoint altogether in the last resort and say 'Not this, not this' in trying to reach the Absolute. Otherwise, we cannot remove from the latter the last taint of anthropomorphism. The best way of indicating Brahman, as some sages say, is by silence. But this does not mean that the Absolute is a mere blank any more than the apparent "sleep" of a spinning-top going round at full speed means absence of motion. Human understanding like the human eye can operate only within certain limits and under certain conditions. When the speed of a spinning-top goes beyond a certain limit the eye cannot see the revolutions that are being made. But that does not mean that the top has come to a standstill. Similarly, when the very excess of content in the Absolute makes us unable to understand it we cannot say that it is a mere negation. If the Absolute were a mere blank how could the universe arise out of it as the Upanishads say it does? Mundakopanisad, for instance, says :—"That which

cannot be seen or grasped, which has neither origin nor properties, which has neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet, which is eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent and extremely subtle—that is the Imperishable which the sages regard as the origin of all beings.” Also if the Absolute were a mere blank, how could we ever account for the ecstasies of the great mystics of all ages and countries who have passed beyond the idiom of their own native religions? Accordingly Sankara says in his commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad that it is only to dull intellects that Brahman, the pure Being, the one without a second, which is free from all limitations and qualities appears to be a blank (Sunya). Our concept of God even at its best is only a feeble representation of a Reality which overflows it on every side. Therefore all that the expression Nirguna Brahman used in Vedanta means is that there are no mere analogues of human qualities in Brahman. In fact, whenever we think of the Absolute as having a quality of our conception we really impose a limitation on it and conceive it in human terms and do not know it as it really is. The Kenopanishad puts the pith of the matter in terse paradoxical language. It says:—“He who does not conceive it—to him it is known. He who conceives it—he does not really know. It is not really understood by those who understand it. It is really understood by those who do not understand it.”

Even personality, as the term is generally understood, is a limitation when applied to Godhead. That is why the Upanishads often refer to Brahman by the neuter pronoun ‘Tat’. By personality we generally mean a person standing over against other persons. The word presupposes the existence of some other beings differentiated from the person referred to.

Therefore it can be applied only to one who stands in some relation to others outside himself, but not to one who contains all within himself. Such a term may be applied to our conception of Isvara who stands to us in the relation of creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. But it cannot be applied to Brahman the Absolute, who is the All, the One without a second. It cannot be applied to That in which there is neither time nor space, neither cause nor effect, neither life nor death. It is in Yajnavalkya's discourses in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that we have the most eloquent passages on the Absolute. He says :—

“For when there is duality, as it were, then one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one understands another. But when everything has become the Self then by what and whom should one smell, by what and whom should one see, by what and whom should one hear, by what and to whom should one speak, by what and of whom should one think, and by what and whom should one understand? By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower?”

“He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower. There is no other seer but he, there is no other hearer but he, there is no other thinker but he, there is no other knower but he. He is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal. Everything else is of evil.”

“The knowers of Brahman, O Gargi, call That the Imperishable. It is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long, neither glowing red nor adhesive ;

it is without a shadow and without darkness, without air and without space, without attachment, taste or smell, without eyes, without ears, without voice, without mind, without vigour, without breath, without a mouth, without a measure and without an inside or an outside. It consumes nothing and no one consumes it."

"'Not this, not this' — there is nothing higher than this teaching that He is not this."

Taking its stand on such passages as these, the school of Advaita Vedanta draws a distinction between the impersonal Brahman and the personal Isvara, between Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman. The former is a philosophical truth, the latter is a religious conception. The former is for contemplation, the latter is for worship. But it cannot be repeated too often that the one is not essentially different from the other any more than the sun seen by the naked eye is different from the sun seen through a smoked glass. The negative conception of God as Brahman is indeed the consummation and fulfilment of the positive conception of God as Isvara. It is not the result of ignorance, but of profound insight and utter humility.

VI

We have so far considered the Upanishadic teaching on God and His creation. But the most profound, and one may even say, the most startling part of the teaching of the Upanishads is that which concerns man and his destiny. We have already seen that in the scale of spiritual progression man is a dual being, partly animal and partly god, moving in

two worlds, the world of Nature and the world of spirit. This, of course, is a fact admitted by all religions. Only some religions stress the animal part and say that man is a born sinner bearing in his nature the taint of what they call "original sin" and so incapable of saving himself without the external help of a Redeemer. Others stress the spiritual part and say that man is created in the image of God, that he bears at the centre of his being the divine spark which is capable of subduing to its own purposes all the vestures, physical and psychological, in which it is wrapped and of finally becoming one with the supreme spirit. The religion of the Upanishads belongs emphatically to the latter group. It admits that the Atman, or the Spirit in man, is covered with five layers of non-Atman, namely, those of annam (matter), pranam (life), manas (mind), vijnanam (intellect) and anandam (spiritual bliss)—in fact, the very degrees of reality which, as we have seen, Bhṛigu discovered in Nature in his search for Brahman. But when man's ignorance is removed and he realises the unity of all things in God he is able to overcome all these limitations and make himself free. The Taittiriya Upanishad says :—

"He who is here in man and He who is yonder in the sun—He is one. He who knows this, when he has departed from this world, proceeds to the self which consists of food, proceeds thence to the self which consists of life, proceeds thence to the self which consists of mind, proceeds thence to the self which consists of understanding, proceeds thence to the self which consists of bliss and goes up and down the worlds eating the food he desires and assuming the form he likes."

VII

Again, it is remarkable that the Upanishads take into account not only the waking consciousness of man but also his dream consciousness and his sleep consciousness and what they call *turiya* or the fourth state of consciousness. We have first the waking consciousness which is filled with impressions derived directly from the objects presented to the senses. Here the subject is entirely dependent on the object. Then there is the dream consciousness in which the senses are quiescent and so the impressions are derived not directly from the objects but from the images of objects stored in the memory. Here the subject is only indirectly dependent on the object. Then there is the state of dreamless sleep in which not only the senses but also the mind is quiescent. Here there are no impressions either from objects or images of objects, and there is a temporary cessation of normal consciousness. And yet on waking one has the experience of having slept soundly. We have here therefore the pure subject, but, as the state of dreamless sleep is for all practical purposes a state of unconsciousness, we have here only the negative aspect of the pure subject. Also the subject is not entirely free from the object. The principle of objectivity is still there in a dormant condition, for at any moment the sleeper may have a dream or come back to waking consciousness. And, finally, there is what is called the *turiya* or the fourth state of consciousness in which the subject is permanently free from the principle of objectivity and in which one has the positive experience of the liberated spirit. It is a state which is not within the experience of ordinary men but which is

testified to by all the great mystics of the world. The Mandukya Upanishad describes it thus in a famous passage :—

“That which does not cognise either internal objects or external objects—that which is not a mass of cognition, which is neither cognitive nor non-cognitive—that which cannot be seen, which cannot be described, which cannot be grasped, which has no distinctive marks, which cannot be thought of, which cannot be designated—that of which the essence is the knowledge of the oneness of the Self—that in which the world ceases to exist—the peaceful, the benign, the non-dual—such, they think, is the fourth state. That is the Atman. That is to be realised.”

VIII

But what is the way to this transcendental consciousness, this Atman which, the Upanishads are never tired of saying, brings us eternal happiness? All creatures seek happiness. But the happiness which most of them seek and find is of the lowest quality and of the shortest duration, it is of the kind that soon brings its own reaction. When Nachiketas is tempted by Yama in the Kathopanishad with the gift of the pleasures of the world he rightly exclaims: “Transient are these, O Yama, they wear out the vigour of the senses of man. Even the whole of life is short. So keep thou thy horses, keep thou thy dance and song.”

Of little more worth, according to the Upanishads, are the pleasures of Paradise which are said to be the rewards of rituals and sacrifices. They have a strict time limit imposed on them. And when the

allotted period of enjoyment is over the soul has to return to the world of mortals. The Mundaka Upanishad says :

“These ritualists never know the truth on account of their attachments, and therefore when the fruit of their works is exhausted they sink down and are miserable. Considering sacrifices and good works as most important these deluded men know no higher good and having enjoyed on the heights of heaven the reward of their good works they enter again this world or even a lower one.”

Accordingly Nachiketas in the story referred to above was not satisfied, though he was taught a sacrifice which would secure for him a superior kind of heaven. He is represented in the Upanishad as a ripe soul full of faith, discrimination and zeal and fit to receive the highest kind of teaching — namely that the happiness which so many blindly seek on earth or in a fabled heaven is in the soul itself. Even on earth we have gleams of a true heaven in the acquisition of knowledge, in the contemplation of beauty, in the throbbing experience of love, in self-sacrifice, in adventure and heroism and even in the faithful discharge of the duties of everyday life. In all these experiences we have precious possessions of the soul, which suffer no diminution when we share them with others but actually increase in value. Thus our true happiness consists in expanding our souls in every direction and reaching out, in brotherly union with other souls, to that universal spirit who is the perfection of knowledge, beauty and love and in whom we live and move and have our being, though, being congenitally blind, we do not know it. This is the way of expansion which is called *Pravritti-marga* in our religious litera-

ture. But there is another way or rather the later stage of the same way and that is called *Nivritti marga*. For, after years of experience we find that after all in the acquisition of knowledge, in the worship of beauty and in the thrilling experience of love we are only knowing the different phases of our own self. Yajnavalkya in his conversation with his wife Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says :—

“It is not for the love of wife that the wife is dear, but for the love of the Self is the wife dear. It is not for the love of husband that the husband is dear, but for the love of the Self is the husband dear.”

Thus the external objects seem to serve only as the means and the occasions for drawing out the inner powers of the soul. Law and order, love and beauty are inherent in our own souls and we impose them on the world and not the world on us. We are therefore justified in saying that all knowledge is only reminiscence, all love is only convalescence and all salvation is only realisation. We may even go a step further and say that love is more real than the beloved, friendship more real than the friend and law more real than the phenomena. Such a perception should induce us to withdraw from the world and explore our souls more directly. Thus we come to tread the other path, the path of concentration, the so-called *Nivritti marga*, which is a turning of the searchlight inwards. Many ignorant critics call this quietism and condemn it. But it is the very corner-stone of the Upanishadic teaching. We have as often to retreat into ourselves as to go out of ourselves. Our souls need concentration as well as expansion. To control our bodies, to regulate our desires and above all to acquire a mental poise and be masters of ourselves is as important as

to love Nature or admire beauty or do social service. If life is to be "a vale of soul-making" we must pay as much attention to the internal world as to the external world. Indeed it is found by all spiritual adepts that it is only in the speechless prayer of internal recollection, in the blessedness of internal solitude, that the barriers of individual consciousness are removed and the transcendental consciousness fills and overflows the soul making it feel in its supreme bliss that it is one with the universal and eternal Spirit. It is this goal that the Upanishads have in view. Being meant for the spiritual adept living in the solitude of the forest these scriptures emphasize the internal way, the later stage of concentration and not the earlier stage of expansion. Our Dharma Sastras, in their chapters on the duties of the householder and citizen, emphasize the external way. So do our epics and Puranas mostly in their stories and legends. And to the Bhagavad Gita belongs the unique honour of reconciling the two paths and giving us a complete chart of spiritual life saying, "He who sees that the way of renunciation and the way of works are one—he sees indeed."

IX

Some theologies regard individuality as an inalienable possession of the soul and assume that it persists even after salvation, as though salvation were worth the name if it meant the continuance of individual limitations. Even in the experience of ordinary human love at its best the soul feels that its individuality is lost and that it is one with the beloved whom it loves and adores. What applies to human love

applies a hundredfold to what is known as the mystic experience or samadhi. In all genuine mystic experience, of which the Upanishads at their best are the most adequate expression, the limitations of mind, understanding and self-consciousness that constitute individuality fade away and disappear, the veil of separateness is rent asunder and the mystic has a vision of the unity of all things in God. The Mundaka Upanishad puts it thus :—

“As the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, so does a wise man freed from name and form go into the Divine Spirit greater than the great”.

Fragments of such an experience we come across in the lives of all founders of religions, mystic poets and great artists and devotees of God. Dr. Radhakrishnan says :—

“The consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God is the conviction fundamental to all spiritual wisdom. It is not merely a matter of inference. In the spiritual experience itself the barriers between the self and the universal spirit drop away. We belong to the real and the real is reflected in us. The great text, *Tat tvam asi* (That art thou) is a simple statement of an experienced fact. ‘I and my Father are one’ is Jesus’ way of expressing the same profound truth.”

No wonder, therefore, that the teaching of the Upanishads on the nature of man and his destiny culminates in such startling sentences as, “This self is Brahman”, “I am Brahman”, “Thou art That”—which appear to some people, especially non-Hindus, as extravagant and incredible, if not blasphemous. But the Upanishadic seers do not mean by these utterances any such absurd statement as that man, as he is,

even if he happens to be a great saint, is equivalent to God. All that they mean is that the inmost self of man, when all the limitations of body, mind and intellect are removed, is the same as the self of the universe. They mean that there is only one ultimate Reality which, when objectively considered, is called Brahman and, when subjectively considered, is called Atman. Obviously it is not by observing what man is in everyday life that the great seers came to this conclusion. Nor is it by any chain of reasoning. Nor were they obeying here any blind authority. It is through their own mystic experience in which, shedding their own individuality, they saw the unity of all beings in one vast ocean of changeless, eternal, universal, absolute, homogeneous, perfect spirit that they arrived at this burning truth. Is it not obvious that some such experience has been at the back of utterances like the following ?

“I am indeed below ; I am above ; I am behind ; I am before. I am to the south ; I am to the north ; I am indeed all this.”

“He is my Self within the heart, smaller than a grain of millet or even the kernel of a grain of millet —He is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. He contains all works, all desires, all odours and all tastes. He pervades the whole world, silent and unmoved. He is my Self within my heart. And this is Brahman.”

It is thus through their own personal testimony that the Upanishadic seers assure us that man is potentially divine, that he can overcome the world and break his bonds, and that his salvation consists in his knowing himself. They are indeed so filled with the

vision that they contemptuously brush aside all the joys of the earth and heaven and exclaim in a hundred different tones that this ineffable experience to which they give different names at different times—as Prana, Jyotis, Akasa, Brahman, Atman, Ananda—or simply Sah, Tat, Sat or Aum—is the end and aim of human existence. They are convinced that without this experience, in which the multiplicity of the world vanishes from sight and the unity of all things in the supreme spirit comes into view, man must remain man and be subject to frustration, pain and sorrow and “go from death to death”. In other words, they urge that man should take the next step in his spiritual evolution and develop a new consciousness which will be as high above his present consciousness as the latter is itself above the consciousness of the lower animals. That is surely the meaning of their frequent references to immortality (amritatvam) which man will attain by knowing God. In all such passages immortality does not mean dwelling in a heaven for ever and ever, but gaining divine consciousness even here on earth, and knowing God does not mean mere intellectual knowledge, but spiritual realisation in which knowing and being are one.

X

It is probably this high ideal which the Upanishadic seers conceived as the ultimate destiny of man that made them work out and formulate for the first time the Law of Karma and Samsara which now forms such a unique feature not only of Hinduism but also of Buddhism and Jainism. For obviously the transformation of average human consciousness

into divine consciousness is a long and laborious process which cannot ordinarily be completed within the span of a single lifetime. The Kathopanishad admits that he who can find Brahman even when he is taught by an expert is a rare wonder. Hence the necessity for postulating a series of lives for the individual so that the experience of one life may be carried over and continued through the succeeding lives till the goal is reached. Accordingly the Upanishad says that a mortal ripens like corn and like corn he is born again. And Yajnavalkya says in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad :—

“As a caterpillar, having come to the end of a blade of grass and having made an approach to another, draws itself together towards it, even so does this self, having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance and having made an approach towards another, draw itself together towards it. And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold, turns it into another shape, a newer and more beautiful one, even so does this self, having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, make for itself another shape, a newer and more beautiful one, whether it be like that of the Pitris, or of the Gandharvas or of the gods or of Prajapati or Brahma, or of other beings.”

We have only the rudiments of this famous doctrine in the pre-Upanishadic literature. In the Vedic hymns, along with the indications of a belief in the immortality of the soul, we have the significant conception of Rita, which originally meant cosmic order but which later came to mean also moral order. And the gods were extolled as the guardians of both kinds of order. Varuna especially was praised as the god of righteousness who punished men for their evil

deeds and rewarded them for their good ones. In the Brahmanas we have the next step in the belief that all men are born after death in another world where they are recompensed according to their deeds in this world. And one of the punishments meted out to the sinful is repeated deaths, which implies also repeated births. Then we come to the Upanishads where for the first time the doctrine appears in its fully developed form, though the later ages added some details to it. In the Upanishads it is no longer a question of rewards and punishments meted out by an external judge, nor is the venue of the operation of the law confined to the other world. In the new teaching man becomes the architect of his own spiritual fortunes, no longer subject to chance or the will of a capricious God. His character becomes his destiny, the moral law being wrought into his own nature and operating in this world as in the other world, making him go up and down in the scale of creation, from the lowest forms of life to the highest, according to his own thoughts and deeds through a series of lives. And freedom from this cycle of births and deaths comes to him only when his individual consciousness gives place to divine consciousness. The Brihadara-nyaka Upanishad says :—

“According as a man acts, according as a man conducts himself, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action and sinful by sinful action. Some say that a man is made of desires only (and not of acts). But as is his desire so is his will, as his will so is the deed he does, and whatever deed he does, that he will reap—so much for the man who desires. But as to the man

who does not desire, who is without desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose desire is the Self only—his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere. Being Brahman, he goes to Brahman.”

The Chandogya Upanishad describes two paths for the departed soul—the path of the gods for those who in the forest meditate with faith and austerity and the path of the Pitris for those who living in a village offer sacrifices and perform works of public utility and give alms. For the former class there is no rebirth. They are gradually led to Brahman. For the latter class there is rebirth. The Upanishad goes on to say :—

“Those whose conduct here has been good will quickly attain a good birth—the birth of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain an evil birth—the birth of a dog or a hog or an outcaste. But on neither of these two ways are those small creatures which are continuously revolving, those of whom it may be said, ‘Be born and die.’ This is a third state.”

It will be seen that the teaching here is still bound up with the eschatological and sociological ideas of the time—with the so-called path of the gods and the path of Pitris and the system of castes and outcastes. But, in spite of these, its universal application is obvious. In fact, it may be said that next to the distinction drawn between Brahman the impersonal Absolute and Isvara the personal God, and the ultimate identity discovered between Paramatman the universal Self and Jivatman the individual self, this comprehensive law of Karma embracing all creation is the greatest contribution made by the Upanishads

to the religious thought of mankind.

Further, it may also be pointed out that the Upanishads not only formulate the Law of Karma but also anticipate the doctrine of Karma-yoga, which is elaborated in the Bhagavad Gita and which may be looked upon as the solvent of the Law of Karma. According to this doctrine all works done in a spirit of renunciation and sacrifice with no desire for their fruit lead not to rebirth but to moksha which is freedom from births and deaths. The Avatar of the Gita says :—

“Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest away and whatsoever of austerities thou dost practise—do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering unto Me. Thus shalt thou be free from the bonds of works which bear good or evil fruits. With thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation thou shalt become free and come to Me.”

This teaching is anticipated in the Isa-Upanishad which says :—

“All this, whatsoever moves in this world, is pervaded by God. Through such renunciation you may enjoy. Do not covet; for whose indeed is wealth? Always performing works here one should wish to live a hundred years. If you live thus as a man, works will not cling to you—there is no other way.”

XI

With regard to the practical steps to be taken for reaching the goal of life, we must say that they are not as elaborately dealt with in the Upanishads as the goal itself. This is not surprising. For these

scriptures were originally meant to be the secret teachings imparted to those who had discharged their duties in life and acquired the necessary moral fitness and who, hankering after light, approached the great seers who in those days lived in their forest abodes. Accordingly they are concerned only with the last stages of man's spiritual journey. They naturally presuppose all the early stages of acquisition of knowledge, cultivation of virtues, development of character and the discharging of the duties of the householder and citizen. Nevertheless there are hints and suggestions throughout the Upanishadic literature with regard to the essential pre-requisites of spiritual illumination. For instance, certain moral qualities are recommended for cultivation on the part of those who seek illumination. The Kenopanishad says that penance, self-control and works form the support of the secret teaching relating to Brahman. In the Chandogya Upanishad the teacher Ghora Angirasa, while comparing the various periods of a man's life with the various parts of a sacrifice, lays down that austerities, alms-giving, uprightness, non-violence and truthfulness correspond to the gifts one makes to the priests. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, according to the teaching of Prajapati, one should practise the virtues indicated by the syllables da-da-da, that is, self-control, charity and compassion. But in the final analysis the stress is always upon renunciation and right knowledge (vairagya and jnana).

Further it is pointed out that sacrifices, rites and ceremonies are not enough. The Mundaka Upanishad compares them to leaky boats quite inadequate for the purpose of crossing over. Even good works, necessary as they are for one's moral development, are not

enough for one's liberation. And as for learning, intellectual attainments and the knowledge of scriptures, the Upanishads often give us the stern warning that these might result only in vanity, pride, arrogance and self-satisfaction without bringing any true enlightenment. It is not the knowledge of scriptures but the realisation of the Self that brings liberation to the spirit of man. There is a story in the Chandogya Upanishad in which Narada approaches Sanatkumara and says that he knows all the scriptures and all the sciences and arts of his time, but has no knowledge of the Self. The pointed statement put into his mouth viz *Mantravideva asmi na atmavit* (I know only the mantras but not the Self) should always ring in the ears of all students and scholars of religion so that they may not lose the true perspective in their quest for knowledge.

The Hindu religious tradition, however, does not belittle the place of the intellect in spiritual development. It never encourages blind faith. Taking its clue from the words of Yajnavalkya in his discourse to his wife Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Vedanta system recognises three stages in the path of self-realisation—*Sravana*, *Manana* and *Nididhyasana*. *Sravana* stands for the study of the scriptures under a qualified Guru. *Manana* means constant reflection upon what has been learnt so that intellectual conviction may be produced in the mind. And, lastly, *Nididhyasana* implies meditation which helps to bring about a direct realisation of the unity of all things in God. Thus intellectual effort is an indispensable element in the process. But it is only a half-way house. If one stops there and is satisfied with mere intellectual knowledge one misses one's aim and is apt to be-

come a prey to pride and arrogance. Hence the warning so often repeated in the Upanishads that the Self cannot be gained by mere reading of the scriptures, nor by mere logical acumen. Knowledge should lead to experience, intellectual convictions should result in direct perception. That is why meditation is insisted on in the last stage of the spiritual journey. The Upanishads themselves prescribe certain exercises in meditation as preliminary steps. These are called Upasanas in which some objects or symbols are chosen and meditated on as being identical with the Self. To this class belong meditations on the five elements and meditations on Prana and on the mystic syllable Aum. These Upasanas are calculated to prepare the aspirant for the final stage of identifying himself with Brahman the Absolute.

But more helpful than all these rather technical aids and suggestions is the indirect guidance afforded by the beautiful stories of enlightenment found in some of the Upanishads—those of Nachiketas in Katha, of Bhrigu in Taittiriya and of Satyakama, Upakosala, Svetaketu and several others in Chandogya. In all these cases it will be found that enlightenment comes to the seeker either through his own earnest enquiry or his deep meditation under the guidance of a well-known and competent Master who has himself seen the light.

The story of Satyakama's illumination is specially interesting. Though of obscure and probably of illegitimate parentage, he was accepted as a pupil by the sage Gautama Haridrumata on the ground that he had spoken the truth about it. The sage, having initiated him, gave him four hundred lean and weak cows and asked him to take them to the forest and

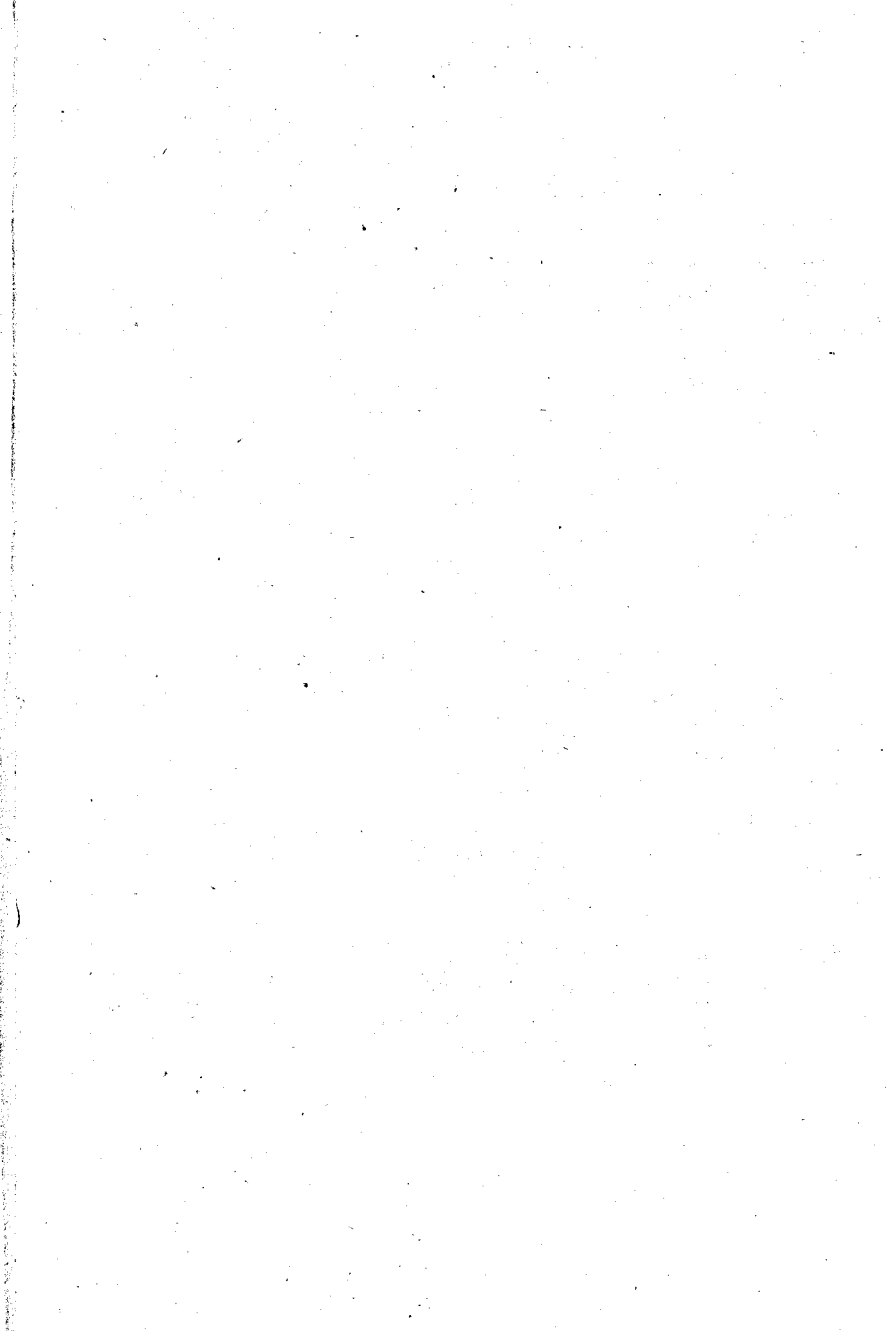
tend them. Satyakama took them to the forest and lived there for a number of years till they grew to a thousand. Then he started to return home to his master with the herd. On his way home, we are told, the truth about Brahman was revealed to him in four stages, first by the bull of the herd, then by his camp fire, then by a swan and then by a diver-bird. At last he reached the house of the master. Gautama looked at him and said, "My boy, you are shining like one who has known Brahman. Who has taught you?" Satyakama replied, "Others than men," and requested the sage to teach him, as he had heard that the knowledge imparted by one's own teacher was the best. The Upanishad concludes the story by saying that Gautama taught Satyakama the very same thing he had already learnt in the forest. This story is very significant, as it is a very good illustration of what is now called Nature mysticism in Western mystical literature. If we remove its symbolism, it means that Satyakama, living alone in the forest grazing his master's cows for a number of years, pondered deeply on all that he saw around him and slowly the truth dawned upon him by degrees. At first he felt the presence of God vaguely in the East and the West, in the North and the South. Then he saw Him in the earth and the sea, in the sky and the firmament. Then he saw Him in the sun and the moon, in the fire and the lightning. And finally he saw Him in the sight and the hearing, in the breath and the mind of man. At first he realised Him as the Resplendent, then as the Endless, then as the Luminous and finally as the Abiding. Above all, he saw and felt the mystic unity of the spirit behind Nature and the spirit of

man. That is what those "others than men" had taught him and the same was confirmed by his Guru.

It may be remarked that this aspect of the Upanishadic teaching, bearing on what is now called Nature mysticism, as well as many other aspects, is either lost sight of or is reduced to a cold hardened doctrine in most of our later scriptures, without the warm enthusiasm and the profound mystic insight of the original seers. No wonder, therefore, that the Upanishads, together with the Gita which contains their essence, still remain the fountain head of all streams of religious and philosophic thought in our country.

XII

Thus, (it may be said in conclusion) on all the four fundamental questions which are of vital importance to any religious tradition—namely, those of God and His creation, and of man and his salvation—the teaching of the Upanishadic seers is unique and unsurpassed. Their affirmations regarding (1) the eternal and impersonal Absolute of pure Being, together with its temporal phase of an omnipotent and beneficent Ruler of the universe, (2) their discovery of the law of spiritual progression implicit in all creation and of its possible application to all spheres of life, (3) their insight into man's inner being and (4) their view of his progress in the world through life and death and of his glorious ultimate destiny in an ineffable Reality beyond the illusions of time and space—these at least should be of perennial interest and help to all humanity in its weary march from age to age till the far-off goal is reached.



ईशावास्योपनिषत्

From The Isavasya-Upanishad :

१. ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

1. All this, whatsoever moves in this moving world, is pervaded by God. Through such renunciation you may enjoy. Do not covet ; for whose, indeed, is wealth ?

२. कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।

एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

2. Always performing works here, one should wish to live a hundred years. If you live thus as a man, works will not cling to you—there is no other way.

३. असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसा वृताः ।

तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥

3. There are the worlds of Asuras enveloped in blinding darkness, and to them go after death those who have destroyed their self.

४. अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनहेवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत् ।

तद्भाषतोऽन्यानृत्येति तिष्ठत्तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥

4. The Self is unmoving, indivisible ; it is swifter than thought. The senses never reach it, as it is ever ahead of them. Though standing still, it outstrips those who run. And in it does the moving spirit support the activities of man.

केनोपनिषत्

From The Kena-Upanishad :

I (Up. 1.)

१. केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

1. Impelled and directed by whom does the mind light on its objects? Commanded by whom does the first life-breath move forward? Prompted by whom do men utter this speech? And what god directs the eye and the ear?

२. श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

2. It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the breath of the breath and the eye of the eye. Hence the wise, giving up these and departing from this world, become immortal.

३. न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति नो मनः ।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ॥

3. The eye does not go there, speech does not go, nor the mind. We do not know, we do not understand how we can instruct one about it.

४. अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्वाचचक्षिरे ॥

4. It is indeed other than the known, and also above the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancients who explained it to us.

कठोपनिषत्

From The Katha-Upanishad :

I (Up. I. 1.)

१. ओं उशन्ह वै वाजश्रवसः सर्ववेदसं ददौ ।
तस्य ह नचिकेता नाम पुत्र आस ॥

1. Desiring the fruits of a sacrifice, Vajasravasa, it is said, gave away all his wealth. He had a son, Nachiketasa by name.

२. त * ह कुमार * सन्तं दक्षिणासु नीयमानासु
श्रद्धाविवेश सोऽमन्यत ॥

2. As the gifts were being distributed, faith entered into Nachiketasa, though he was a boy, and he thought :—

३. पीतोदका जग्धतृणा दुग्धदोहा निरिन्द्रियाः ।
अनन्दा नाम ते लोकास्तान्स गच्छति ता ददत् ॥

3. These cows that have drunk their last water, eaten their last grass, yielded their last milk and worn out their organs—miserable, surely, are the worlds to which he will go who gives away such things.

४. स होवाच पितरं तात कस्मै मां दास्यसीति ।
द्वितीयं तृतीयं त * होवाच मृत्यवे त्वा ददामीति ॥

He said to his father, "To whom, O Sire, will you give *me*?"—a second time, a third time ; and he replied, "To Death will I give you."

CHAPTER IV

प्रश्नोपनिषत्

From The Prasna-Upanishad :

I (Up. 1, 2.)

१. ओं सुकेशा च भारद्वाजः शैब्यश्च सत्यकामः सौर्यायणी च गार्ग्यः कौसल्यश्चाश्वलायनो भार्गवो वैदर्भिः कबन्धी कात्यायनस्ते हैते ब्रह्मपरा ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः परं ब्रह्मान्वेषमाणा एष ह वै तत्सर्वं वक्ष्यतीति ते ह समित्पाणयो भगवन्तं पिप्पलादमुपसन्नाः ॥

1. Sukesha (son of Bharadvaja), Satyakama (son of Sibi), Gargya (grandson of Surya), Kausalya (son of Asvala), Bhargava (of Vidarbha), and Kabandhi (son of Katya)—all these, intent on Brahman, devoted to Brahman, and seeking the highest Brahman, approached the revered Pippalada with sacrificial fuel in their hands, thinking that he would explain all that to them.

२. तान्ह स ऋषिरुवाच भूय एव तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संवत्सरं संवत्स्यथ यथाकामं प्रश्नान्पृच्छथ यदि विज्ञास्यामः सर्वं ह वो वक्ष्याम इति ॥

2. The Seer said to them, "Live with me another year with austerity, chastity and faith. Then ask questions as you please. If we know, we will tell you all."

३. अथ कबन्धी कात्यायन उपेत्य पप्रच्छ । भगवन्कुतो ह वा इमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति ॥

3. After that time, Kabandhi, son of Katya, approached him and asked, "Venerable Sir, whence are all these creatures born?"

CHAPTER V

मुण्डकोपनिषत्

From the Mundaka-Upanishad:

I (Up. I. 1)

१. शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ ।
कस्मिन् भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥

1. Saunaka, a great householder, approached Angiras with due respect and said, "Sir, what is that which, being known, everything else will be known?"

२. तस्मै स होवाच । द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद्ब्रह्मविदो
वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ॥

2. To him he replied, "There are two kinds of knowledge to be known, as declared by those who know Brahman—the higher and the lower.

३. तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो
व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा यया तद-
क्षरमधिगम्यते ।

3. "Of these the lower is that of the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharva-Veda, and of phonetics, rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody and astrology. And the higher is that by which the Imperishable is apprehended.

४. यत्तद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्णमचक्षुःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् ।
नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद्भूतयोर्नि परिपश्यन्ति
धीराः ॥

4. "That which cannot be seen or grasped, which has neither origin nor properties, which has neither

CHAPTER VI

माण्डूक्योपनिषत्

From the Mandukya-Upanishad :

१. हरिः ओं ॥ ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं
भवद्भविष्यदिति सर्वमोङ्कारः एव । यच्चान्यत्रिकालातीतं
तदप्योङ्कार एव ॥

1. Aum—this syllable is this whole world. Its explanation is :—

The past, the present and the future—all this is only the syllable Aum. And whatever else there is that transcends the threefold time—that too is only the syllable Aum.

२. सर्वं ह्येतद्ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् ॥

2. Everything here is verily Brahman. This self is Brahman. This same self has four quarters.

३. जागरितस्थानो बहिःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूल-
भुग्वैश्वानरः प्रथमः पादः ॥

3. The first quarter is Vaisvanara, whose sphere is the waking state, who cognises external objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who enjoys gross material objects.

४. स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविदित्त-
भुक्तैजसो द्वितीयः पादः ॥

4. The second quarter is Taijasa, whose sphere is the dream state, who cognises internal objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who enjoys objects which are subtle.

CHAPTER VII

तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत्

From the Taittiriya-Upanishad:

I (Up. I. 4)

१. यश्छन्दसामृषभो विश्वरूपः । छन्दोभ्योऽमृतात्सम्बभूव ।
स मेन्द्रो मेधया स्पृणोतु । अमृतस्य देव धारणो भूयासम् ।
शरीरं मे विचर्षणम् । जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा । कर्णाभ्यां भूरि
विश्रुवम् । ब्रह्मणः कोशोसि मेधया पिहितः । श्रुतं मे गोपाय ॥

1. May He who is pre-eminent among the Vedic hymns, who assumes all forms and who has sprung into being from the immortal Vedas—may that Lord (Aum) strengthen me with wisdom! May I, O God, become the possessor of immortality!

May my body be vigorous, my tongue exceedingly sweet! May my ears hear much! Thou art the shrine of Brahman covered with wisdom. Guard for me what I have learnt!

२. आवहन्ती वितन्वाना कुर्वाणा चीरमात्मनः । वासांसि मम गावश्च
अन्नपाने च सर्वदा । ततो मे श्रियमावह । लोमशां पशुभिः
सह स्वाहा । आमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । विमायन्तु
ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । प्रमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । दमायन्तु
ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । शमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ॥

2. Bring then unto me that prosperity which always brings, increases and preserves long for me clothes and cattle, food and drink—prosperity in wool along with the cattle. Svaha!

May students of sacred knowledge flock to me!

CHAPTER VIII

ऐतरेयोपनिषत्

From the Aitareya-Upanishad

१. ओं ॥ आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत् । नान्यत्किञ्चन
मिषत् । स ईक्षत लोकांस्तु सृजो इति ॥ स इमाँल्लोकान-
सृजत ॥

I

1. In the beginning all this was Atman—one only. There was nothing else active. He bethought himself, "Let me now create the worlds." He created these worlds.

२. स ईक्षतेमे नु लोका लोकपालान्स्तु सृजा इति । सोऽद्भ्य एव
पुरुषं समुद्भृत्यामूर्च्छयत् ॥

2. He bethought himself, "Here then are the worlds. Let me now create the guardians of the worlds." From the waters themselves he drew forth the person and gave him a shape.

३. स ईक्षतेमे नु लोकाश्च लोकपालाश्चान्नमेभ्यः सृजा इति ।

3. He bethought himself, "Here are the worlds and the guardians of the worlds. Let me create food for them."

४. सोऽपोऽभ्यतपत्ताभ्योऽमितप्ताभ्यो मूर्तिरजायत । या वै सा
मूर्तिरजायतान्नं वै तत् ॥

4. He brooded upon the waters and from the waters so brooded on a form was produced. The form that was produced — that was indeed food.

CHAPTER IX

छान्दोग्योपनिषत्

From the Chandogya-Upanishad

I (Up. I. 1.)

१. ओमित्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथमुपासीत । ओमिति हृद्गायति तस्योप-
व्याख्यानम् ॥

1. One should meditate on the syllable Aum, called the Udgita, for the Udgita (a portion of the Sama Veda) is sung beginning with Aum. Of this syllable the explanation is :—

२. एषां भूतानां पृथिवी रसः पृथिव्या आपो रसः अपामोषधयो
रस ओषधीनां पुरुषो रसः पुरुषस्य वाग्रसो वाच ऋग्रस ऋचः
साम रसः साम्न उद्गीथो रसः ॥

2. The essence of things here is the earth ; the essence of the earth is water ; the essence of water is plants ; the essence of plants is man ; the essence of man is speech ; the essence of speech is the Rig Veda ; the essence of the Rig Veda is the Sama Veda ; and the essence of the Sama Veda is the Udgita.

३. स एष रसानां रसतमः परमः परार्थोऽष्टमो यदुद्गीथः ।

3. It is the best of all essences—the highest, the supreme, the eighth—namely the Udgita.

४. तेनेयं त्रयी विद्या वर्तते । ओमित्याश्रावयत्योमिति शंसत्यो-
मित्युद्गायत्येतस्यैवाक्षरस्यापचित्यै महिम्ना स्तेन ॥

4. By this does the threefold knowledge proceed ; saying Aum one recites, saying Aum one orders, and

CHAPTER X

बृहदारण्यकोपनिषत्

From the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad :

I (Up. I. 1.)

१ ओं ॥ उषा वा अश्वस्य मेध्यस्य शिरः । सूर्यश्चक्षुर्वातः
प्राणो व्यात्तमग्निर्वैश्वानरः संवत्सर आत्माश्वस्य मेध्यस्य
घ्नौः पृष्ठमन्तरिक्षमुदरं पृथिवी पाजस्यं दिशः पार्श्वे
अवान्तरदिशः पर्शव ऋतवो अङ्गानि मासाश्चार्धमासाश्च
पर्वाण्यहोरात्राणि प्रतिष्ठा नक्षत्राण्यस्थीनि नभो मांसानि ।
ऊवध्यं सिकताः सिन्धवो गुदा यकृच्च क्लोमानश्च पर्वता
ओषधयश्च वनस्पतयश्च लोमान्युद्यन्पूर्वार्धो निम्लो-
चञ्जघनार्धो यद्विजृम्भते तद्विद्योतते यद्विधूनुते तत्स्तनयति
यन्मेहति तद्वर्षति वागेवास्य वाक् ॥

1. Verily, the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse, the sun is its eye, the wind is its breath; the Vaisvanara fire is the open mouth, and the year the body of the sacrificial horse. The sky is its back, the firmament its belly, the earth its hoof, the quarters its sides, the intermediate quarters its ribs, the seasons its limbs, the months and half-months its joints, days and nights its feet, the stars its bones, the clouds its flesh. The sands are its half-digested food, the rivers are its blood-vessels, the mountains its liver and the lungs, the herbs and trees its hair. The rising sun is its forepart, the setting sun its hindpart. Lightning is its yawning, thunder is its shaking, rain is its making water, and speech is its neighing.

CHAPTER XI

श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत्

From the Svetasvatara Upanishad

I (Up. I)

१. ओं ब्रह्मवादिनो वदन्ति ॥ किं कारणं ब्रह्म कुतः स्म जाता
जीवाम केन क्व च संप्रतिष्ठाः । अधिष्ठिताः केन सुखेत-
रेषु वर्तामहे ब्रह्मविदोऽव्यवस्थाम् ॥

1. Those who discourse on Brahman say: What is the cause? Is it Brahman? Whence are we born? By what do we live? Where is our final rest? O ye who know Brahman, tell us, at whose command do we abide in pleasure or pain?

२. कालः स्वभावो नियतिर्यदृच्छा भूतानि योनिः पुरुष इति
चिन्त्यम् । संयोग एषां नत्वात्मभावादात्माप्यनीशः
सुखदुःखहेतोः ॥

2. Time, one's own nature, necessity, chance, the elements, the female womb, the male energy—should these be considered as the cause? It cannot be their combination either, because of the existence of the soul. But the soul also is powerless in respect of the cause of pleasure and pain.

३. ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन्देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणैर्नि-
गूढाम् । यः कारणानि निखिलानि तानि कालात्मयुक्तान्य-
धितिष्ठत्येकः ॥

3. Those who were devoted to meditation and concentration saw the power of God Himself, hidden in

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS PASSAGES

1

असतो मा सद्गमय ॥ तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ॥
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ॥

Lead me from the unreal to the Real ! Lead me
from darkness to Light ! Lead me from death to
Immortality !

(Brihad. Up.)

2

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ओं ऋतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ऋतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥
अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥

May my breath enter into the immortal breath !
And then may my body end in ashes ! O Mind, remem-
ber, remember thy deeds ! O Mind, remember,
remember thy deeds !

O Agni, O God who knowest all things, lead us
to prosperity along the auspicious path. Take away
from us all crooked evil, and we shall offer many pra-
yers to thee.

(Isa-Up.)

3

य एको वर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद्दर्शनानेकान्निहितार्थो
दधाति । विचैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः स नो बुद्ध्या
संयुनक्तु ॥ तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्तद्वायुस्तदु चन्द्रमाः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म तदापस्तत्प्रजापतिः ॥

NOTES

From the Isa-Upanishad

1. *Through such renunciation*—namely, that everything belongs to God.

For whose is wealth?—This is an alternative interpretation suggested by Sankara. The text is usually interpreted as 'Do not covet another man's wealth'. But this gives a rather weak ending to a mantra which begins so magnificently.

2. The Gita doctrine of Karma Yoga is anticipated here.

9. The words *avidya* and *vidya* in this and the following two mantras are interpreted by Sankara to mean *karma* and *upasana* respectively—that is, performance of rites and the knowledge of the deities worshipped.

11. According to Sankara, again, death here means activity and knowledge prompted by Nature, and immortality means union with the deities worshipped. He thinks that in these mantras *vidya* cannot mean *jnana* or the highest knowledge, because *jnana* cannot be said to lead to 'greater darkness'. Nor can *amrita* mean *moksha*, which *jnana* alone can give. It can only mean union with the deities worshipped which will gradually lead one to the desired end. However, in modern terms, the teaching here may be said to mean that both knowledge and good works are required for one's salvation.

12-14. According to Sankara the unmanifest (*asambhuti*) in these three mantras means the unmanifest Nature (*Prakriti*), and the manifest (*sambhuti*) means the manifest Brahman called *Hiranyagarbha*. In No. 14 he takes *sambhuti* to mean *asambhuti* or unmanifest Nature and *vinasa* to mean *sambhuti* or *Hiranyagarbha*. Those who worship the unmanifest Nature get absorbed in it, and those who worship *Hiranyagarbha* obtain supernatural powers like *anima* etc. In modern terms the teaching here may be said to mean that we have to pay attention to both the eternal and the temporal.

From the Kenopanishad

II. 1.—The Absolute is not an object of knowledge, whether we conceive it in human terms or divine terms. That is why when a man says he *knows* it, it is certain he does not really know it. The same idea is expressed paradoxically in the following mantras.

The Absolute is not an external object to be known but the eternal subject within us to be realised.

II. 4—When Brahman is known as the witness of all states of consciousness it is correctly known. Such a knowledge acquired by the Atman alone and not by any other means brings strength and that strength can overcome death. Here vidya means jnana, and amrita means moksha.

III. 12—Uma here is the personification of Vidya—the highest knowledge. She is traditionally represented as the daughter of the Himalayas, the abode of great Rishis as well as of Siva, the omniscient Lord.

IV. 12—The illustrations given in these two mantras viz., the flash of lightning, the winking of the eye, and the speed of thought indicate the quick appearance and disappearance of the perception of Brahman—the sudden glimpse of the Reality and its sudden withdrawal.

IV. 13—The formula *tadvanam* which is mentioned here as the designation of Brahman means "That which is to be meditated upon as the Self of all beings".

From the Kathopanishad

I. 1.—Vajasravasa is represented in the Upanishad as a ritualist who performs a sacrifice with a desire for its fruit in the next world. And Nachiketas, his son, is represented as a higher type of character. He does not care for the pleasures either of this world or the next. He thirsts for the highest kind of knowledge which brings liberation from all desires.

4.—As the gifts made by his father are very unsatisfactory Nachiketas wants to sacrifice himself and make his father's ritual perfect. Yama is often called *mrityu* in this Upanishad. But he is not simply death personified. He is the god of death who, if he pleases, can give long life and wealth to a man.

5. Three classes of pupils are mentioned here (1) those who know the teacher's intentions and carry them out, (2) those who carry out only the express commands of the teacher and (3) those who don't carry out even the express commands of the teacher. Nachiketas thinks that he belongs either to the first or second class and not to the third.

6. With these words Nachiketas urges his father not to go back on his word, though it was uttered in anger. Neither the ancestors of Vajasravasa nor other righteous men will ever do such a thing.

25. 'How could a mortal, after approaching you, become poor or short-lived?'—is the comment of Sankara.

II. 8.—'By a different man' means by one who is other than an inferior man, i.e., by a superior man who knows the truth. Sankara's interpretation is 'by one who is not different from the Brahman he teaches', that is, by one who feels his oneness with Brahman.

9. 'You have obtained it now'—he is going to obtain it in a few moments by Yama's granting of the third boon.

III. 7.—*Through the tranquillity of his mind and senses*—Some interpret the phrase used here to mean 'through the grace of the creator'.

10. Sankara interprets the latter half of this mantra thus :—"It can be obtained by the self of him who seeks it exclusively. To him the Self reveals its nature".

12. *He to whom—condiment*—This means that in God all social distinctions disappear and even death is swallowed up.

20. *The essences*—these are the so-called *tanmatras* or subtle elements out of which, according to the Sankhya system, the senses are evolved. *the great soul*—this is Mahat or Mahan Atma, the cosmic soul or Hiranyagarbha.

21. *the unmanifest*—the Primal or undifferentiated Nature, also called Avyakrita.

the spirit—Purusha here is best translated as the all-pervading spirit.

IV. 3.—The Self is ever present in all experience. What is there that is not an object of knowledge for the Self?

This is verily That—that which Nachiketas asked for, that which is beyond right and wrong, beyond cause and effect etc. (III-1).

7. *here*—in the conditioned existence here below.

there—in the unconditioned Brahman.

That which exists here is not different from the highest Brahman. *from death to death*—through Samsara.

9.—*of the size of the thumb*—The cavity of the heart in which the self is supposed to reside is said to have the size of the thumb.

11. *runs after them*—becomes worldly and plunges more deeply into the error of seeing only multiplicity here.

11 & 12. In these two mantras we have a comparison between a man who persists in seeing only the separateness of things and a man who realises the essential unity of all things.

So does—becomes one with Brahman.

V. 1—*The city of eleven gates*—The body in which the soul resides is described as a city of nine or eleven gates. The nine gates are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower apertures. By adding the navel and the aperture on the top of the head through which the soul is said to escape at the hour of death we get eleven gates.

4. *What is left over?* Nothing. The body decays. The decay is due not merely to the loss of breath but to something higher on which the breath depends.

6—7. Here we have a direct answer to the original question of Nachiketas in the reference to the Law of Karma.

VI-1—3. In these three mantras we have an eloquent expression of the immanence of God and the essential unity of all things in Him.

4—5. And here we have an indication of the result of one's realising that unity.

fulfills the desires of many—distributes the rewards of Karma.

6. *"That is it"*—Those who are able to realise Brahman say "that is it"—as something directly perceived.

7. *there*—in respect of Brahman. The Supreme, who is the source of all light, cannot be known by any earthly light. The sun cannot lighten Him. He lightens the sun.

This beautiful verse is repeated in Mundaka and Svetasvatara Upanishads.

VII-1 The Asvattha tree is the symbol of all creation. Its root is above in Brahman and its branches are below in the world. The figure is repeated and elaborated in the Bhagavad Gita XV. 1-2.

7. *Yoga comes and goes*—The state of Yoga in which all the senses and the mind are to be quiescent is very unstable at first. Therefore one should practise it with great care.

VIII-2 One perceives God at first, through faith, as He is to us, that is with attributes. And then He reveals Himself to us as He really is—that is without any attributes that we can think of. Faith in the existence of Brahman leads one to spiritual experience in which one perceives His true nature.

3. *even here*—That is, one need not wait till death.

4. Thus far is the teaching—what follows is probably a later addition.

From the Prasnopanishad.

I. 6—*Space is such a power etc.*—The five elements including *akasa* are mentioned first as the powers, and then the resulting senses and the mind.

9. Here begins a magnificent hymn on Life (*Prana*).

11. Note the change in the pronoun from the third person to the second person.

15. *ever pure*—*Vratya* is the unpurified one. As *Prana* is the first born there was none to purify it. The meaning here therefore, according to Sankara, is that it is ever pure.

II. 4—*The other vital breaths*—the reference here is to the five aspects of *Prana*, viz., *Prana*, *Apana*, *Vyana*, *Udana* and *Samana*.

II. 5—*seven fires*—the activities of the two eyes, ears and nostrils and the mouth.

III. 6—We have here an enumeration of the five cosmic elements and their subtle forms, according to the Sankhya system, and also the organs of perception, the organs of action, the mind, intellect, the ego-sense and light and life and their objects.

IV. 5—*The world of Brahma*—The world of *Hiranyagarbha* who is the internal self of all beings in *Samsara*. He who meditates on the three elements of *Aum* sees the supreme *Purusha* beyond the world of *Hiranyagarbha* and becomes liberated (*mukto bhavati*).

V. 4—*He created life (Prana)*—Sankara interprets *prana* as *Hiranyagarbha*, the world-soul.

From the Mundaka-Upanishad

I. 4—Note that the indescribable Absolute is also said to be the source of all beings. So it cannot be a mere negation or a blank.

5.—The famous illustration of the spider and its web is meant to convey that Brahman is the sole cause of the universe, requiring nothing else to be used by him in the process.

II. 4—*the eighteen sacrificial forms*—the reference is to the eighteen persons present at a sacrifice—the sixteen officiating priests and the sacrificer and his wife.

III. 6—*The worlds where etc.*—the reference here is to the worlds which are the fruits of *Karma*.

8. Sankara takes *Pranas* here to mean sense-organs. The seven flames are their activities, the sevenfold fuel represents their sevenfold

objects and the sevenfold oblations are their sevenfold perception of the objects, the seven *lokas* are the seats of the senses.

resting in the cave of the heart—during sleep.

fixed—by the Creator.

seven and seven—in every living being.

IV. 6—*Where the arteries meet*—That is, the cave of the heart.

10. *of golden hue*—being full of light.

V. 1—*Two birds*—Jiva and Iswara; the tree is the body.

6. *Truth alone succeeds*—Note that the motto of the Republic of India is taken from this mantra.

VI. 7—See note on Prasnopnishad III—6.

VI. 10—*the vow of the head*—the Atharvana rite of carrying fire on the head.

From the Mandukyopnishad

1. *Whatever else*—i.e., the unmanifested Absolute which is beyond time.

3. *seven limbs*—Quoting from the Chandogya Upanishad Sankara says that of that Vaisvanara Self the effulgent sky is the head, the sun is the eye, the air is the vital breath, space is the waist, water is the bladder and the earth the feet and Ahavaniya fire the mouth.

nineteen mouths—These are the five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the five vital breaths, the mind, the understanding, the ego-sense and thought. They are called mouths because they are the instruments by which the Vaisvanara self-experiences objects.

7. See Introduction. In his comment on this mantra Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "Here we get a reality which is beyond the distinction of subject and object, and yet it is above and not below this distinction. It is super-theism and not atheism or anti-theism. We cannot use here terms like all-knowing, all-powerful. Brahman cannot be treated as having objects of knowledge or powers. It is pure being. In many passages the Upanishads make out that Brahman is pure being beyond all word and thought."

From the Taittiriya Upanishad

I—1. This is a Teacher's Prayer.

3. *thousand branches*—all the gods invoked in the Vedic hymns are only His manifestations.

II. 1. This is the farewell address given by a teacher to his student who has finished his course of training.

4. *who are not harsh lovers of virtue*—Note this refinement in ethics. Virtue should be combined with gentleness, love and sympathy.

III. 2. *He does not distress himself with the thought*—Such thoughts distress the ordinary man in his last moments. But the man who has realised the bliss of Brahman and the unity of all things in Him has transcended even ethical dualism.

IV.—See Introduction.

V.—The Upanishad ends with the song of joy of a liberated soul.

I am food. I am the eater of food. I am the composer—The Absolute is both the object and the subject and also the power of bringing the two into relation with each other.

The first-born of the world order—Hiranyagarbha. The liberated soul feels its oneness with all the phases of the Absolute—Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Isvara and Brahman.

Whoso gives me away. I eat as food—He who gives me as food to those who want food suffers no loss. But he who eats his food without giving it to those who ask for it—him I eat as food.

From the Aitareya Upanishad

I. 1. *all this*—the universe.

There was nothing else active—there was nothing else like the *pradhana* of the Sankhyas or the atoms of the followers of the school of Kanada. There was no entity other than the Atman.

He created the world—As there was nothing else but Atman, the implication is that He created the worlds of himself—as water produces foam, or as a magician walks on air, says Sankara.

2. *From the waters*—from the five elements of which the most important is water.

5-11. Here the various parts of man have their own various functions and their appropriate objects in the external world.

12. *If speaking is done—then who am I?* All these organs and their functions exist for the soul, just as the walls and pillars in a palace exist for the king who is different from them. *who am I?*—Am I not the ruler, the enjoyer of all these? Without me how can this live?

13. *He entered by that way*—The Spirit entered through the head, as life entered through the foot. The cleft in the head, through which also the spirit of the liberated man escapes, is the place of bliss, of the highest spiritual consciousness.

three abodes—the right eye, the inner mind and the cave of the heart.

three states of sleep—the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping states. The waking state also is considered a state of sleep, for it is a state of ignorance for the ordinary man of the world.

14. *being born*—having entered the body and become a jiva. *talked only of created objects*—Being a creature now he is concerned only with the world of creatures.

Then did he see—When his soul is roused by a Guru he sees and realises Brahman.

From the Chandogya Upanishad

1-8. *the eighth*—Counting from the earth etc., mentioned above.

4. *the threefold knowledge*—the three Vedas—Rik, Sama and Yajur and the rites mentioned in them.

with Aum etc.—as in the Soma sacrifice.

11-1. *the gods and the demons*—the gods here represent those functions of the senses which are illuminated by scriptures and which lead to virtue, and the demons represent those functions of the senses which lead to sensuality and vice. The aim of this story is to exalt the meditation on *Mukhya Prana*, the chief vital breath. This Prana is pure, it has no evil side, while speech, sight, hearing etc., have an evil side as well as a good side.

III—9. *Space*—Akasa (space) here stands for the supreme Self.

The question discussed here is, what is the ultimate ground of the world? The theories that the ultimate ground is sound, breath, food, water, heaven, earth are discarded as inadequate.

IV. This story is meant to teach that in performing sacrifices one should know what one is doing. One should have a knowledge of the meaning of the mantras, and of the deities invoked etc.

V. *Gayatri is all this*—As Brahman by itself is incomprehensible it is explained here by means of this symbol—the Gayatri metre. This metre is chosen because it is the most important of all the metres. Cf. Gita X-35.

V. 5.—This metre has four feet, each foot having four syllables. It is sixfold in the shape of speech, creatures, earth, body, heart and the vital breaths mentioned above.

V. 6—*Purusba*—Brahman as He is Himself and not His manifestation symbolised by Gayatri.

V. 7.—The Brahman symbolised by Gayatri is now identified with Akasa or space with its three phases—that which is outside man, that which is inside and that which is within the heart.

VI. The identity of the object and the subject is again stressed and enforced by means of fanciful analogies.

VII. This is known as Sandilya-Vidya—one of the many forms of meditation recommended in the Upanishads. It asserts the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Brahman.

The formula *tajjalan* is explained as that from which the universe is born, into which it will return and in which it continues to live. Thus at all periods of time the universe remains one with Brahman.

VIII. Man's life is here compared to a sacrifice. The analogy is worked out in detail.

9. Note this important reference to Krishna, the son of Devaki and the pupil of Ghora Angirasa. It throws light on the historicity of Krishna.

IX & X. On the story of Satyakama Jabala and his illumination see Introduction, pp. 29-30.

Sankara says that this story is intended to show that faith (*sraddha*) and penance (*tapas*) are parts of the meditation on Brahman.

XI. Here is another story meant to show that faith and penance are the means to Brahma-vidya. It will be noticed that in this story the Fires teach Upakosala only one half of the truth—the spirit residing in the universe and its phenomena. The other half of the truth, viz. that the same spirit resides also in man, is given by the teacher by way of supplementing the teaching of the Fires.

5. The identification of Kham (space) and Kam (pleasure) denotes spiritual bliss, what is called *anandam* in the Taittiriya Upanishad.

6. After teaching him thus collectively, each of the Fires now proceeds to say what it symbolises by itself.

11. *The Person who is seen in the eye*—the Self which is called the eye of the eye in the Kenopanishad.

15. *leads them to Brahman*—Not Brahman the pure being, but the conditioned Brahman of Satyaloka. For with regard to the uncon-

ditioned Brahman there is no question of coming or going or leading. As the Mundaka Upanishad says, "He who knows the supreme Brahman becomes Brahman itself."

Only the path of the gods (*devayana*) is described here. Its counterpart, the path of the Pitris (*pitri-yana*) which leads one back to *samsara*, is not described. (See Extract XIV for a fuller account of the paths.)

XII. This section explains the significance and the healing power of the three *Vyahritis*—*bhuh*, *bhuvah* and *suvah*—in setting right any errors committed in the performance of sacrifices.

XIII. This story explains why the senses are often termed *Pranas*. *Prana* or life-breath underlies each of them. The senses are supposed to be only forms of life.

XIV—1. In this extract we have the famous *Panchagnividya* which is also found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (VI. 2). Five questions are raised and five answers are given in the course of the narrative. We have here a full statement of the two paths—the path of the gods (*deva-yana*) and the path of the Pitris (*Pitri-yana*).

8. The fifth question is taken up first—"Why is water in the fifth libation called *man*?" Water here means the liquid offerings. It is designated technically as 'faith'. It is successively offered in the 'fires' of heaven, rain-god, this world, man and woman in the increasingly grosser forms of faith, moon, rain, food and the vital fluid respectively and results at last in man.

18. Cf. *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*—"But those who do not know these two ways become insects, moths and whatever there is here that bites."

XV. The five householders in this narrative are like the blind men who feel and describe only parts of the elephant and imagine that the part which each of them perceives is the whole because they are unable to see the whole elephant at once. The *Kshatriya* prince *Asvapati* corrects their error. He accepts their conceptions of sky, sun, air, space, water and earth as partial representations of the universal Self and points out how the Self cannot be identified with any particular deity or natural object.

14. *you eat food*—you are happy and satisfied.

praadesa maatra—this expression is best interpreted as—"extending from earth to heaven."

abhimana—identical with himself.

XVI. 3. *instruction by which etc.*—Even if a man knows all the Vedas his object is not fulfilled unless he knows the Self. Compare what Narada says in XVIII—*mantravideva asmi naatmavit.*

5. *the difference being only a name*—only a nominal change.

8. *in the beginning*—before creation or manifestation.

this was Being alone—this universe was pure Being without any limitation and without a second.

10. *It thought*—literally, it saw. This shows that the Being was a conscious spirit and not lifeless matter.

It sent forth fire—In other Upanishads it was akasa (space) that comes first, then air and then fire. But, as Sankara says, the text here is not concerned with the order of creation. It is interested only in making out that all effects are derived from One Being.

XVII. 2. Though mind is a higher category than life it is rooted in life.

6. The order of evolution assumed here is as follows :—

Pure Being→fire→water→earth. In man we have a combination of these three elements. When he dies his speech merges in his mind, the mind merges in life and life merges in heat and heat or fire is taken back into the Being.

7. *tat tvam asi*—That thou art. This famous formula occurs here for the first time and is repeated nine times in this section. It emphasises the inherent divinity of the human soul. *Thou* refers not to the empirical soul but to the inward spirit—the spark of divinity within.

19-20. Sankara has an eloquent comment on this passage. He makes out that our real home is *Sat* or Pure Being. Our eyes here are blinded by our desires for worldly possessions and we cannot see our way to our destination. But when we suddenly meet a person who knows the Self and whose eyes are wide open and whose bonds are broken, and when he points to us the way, we are able to escape out of the *Samsara* and reach our true home:

23-24. Here we have a reference to the ordeal by fire. The guilty man is burnt and killed by grasping the heated axe, while the innocent man is not affected by touching it. Similarly, of the two men who die—one who is attached to the truth of Pure Being and one who is attached to the falsities of this world—it is the former that is liberated, while the latter returns to the cycle of births and deaths. Now that Self, attachment to which brings liberation, and non-attachment bondage, that Self which is the root of the universe

and in which all creatures live and move, that Self which is the subtle essence of everything—it is the True, it is thy Self and thou art That.

XVIII-1. *Teach me*—Teach me Brahman (or Atman). The formula is the same as that which Bhrigu utters when he approaches his father Varuna in the Taittiriya Upanishad and asks for instruction. As in that Upanishad Bhrigu is led on stage by stage from annam (matter) to anandam (perfect bliss) in the exposition of Brahman, so here also Narada is led on stage by stage from name (nama) to the Infinite (Bhuma). The steps are :

name (nama), speech (vac), mind (manas), will (sankalpa), thought (chittam), contemplation (dhyanam), understanding (vijnanam), strength (balam), food (annam), water (apah), heat (tejas), ether (akasa), memory (smarah), hope (asa), life (prana), truth (satyam), higher understanding (vijnanam), higher thought (mati), faith (sraddha), steadfastness (nishtha), activity (kirti), happiness (sukham), bhuma (the Infinite).

4. All the details mentioned above are omitted in the present extract.

6. *in its own greatness*—It is finite things that are established in others. The Infinite rests in its own greatness or simply in itself.

9. See the note on 1.

10. *he becomes three etc.*—Three, five, nine, eleven etc.—these numbers indicate the endless ramifications after creation.

When what one takes is purified—The text now proceeds to indicate the means by which the above-mentioned Vidya becomes fruitful. *Ahara* in the text is not merely food. It means all the experiences gained through the senses.

purified—freed from the taint of attachment or aversion.

Memory becomes firm—the memory of the Infinite becomes uninterrupted.

skanda—one who helps to leap out of darkness, (from *skand*, to leap).

XIX. 1. *this city of Brahman*—human body.

a small lotus—the heart.

Sankara says that, though Brahman is free from all limitations of space and time, as set forth in the previous chapters of the Upanishad, it is now taught under the limitations of space, those of the heart in the body, for the comprehension of the ordinary people with dull intellects.

5. *And as here on earth people obey orders etc.*—so also our future is entirely dependent on our desires.

11. *But these desires have a covering of what is false*—Though they lie in one's own Self, yet they have a covering of untruth, namely, longing for the external objects of sense. One should first seek the Self and then all desires are fulfilled.

XX—1. *that preserves these worlds*—from destruction.

do not reach—According to Sankara *Taratab* here does not mean 'cross' but 'reach'. It is therefore to be interpreted as 'cross over to'.

day and night do not reach that bank—Day and night are the marks of time. But time does not exist in the Absolute, nor any of the troubles of this world.

XX-14.—*the person that is seen in the eye*—What Prajapati means is the agent involved in the act of seeing. But his pupils mistake it for the image that is reflected in the eye. And so they ask whether it is the same as that reflected in water or a mirror.

6. Prajapati suggests this to make them see that the body whose appearance is changed by means of clothes and ornaments cannot be the changeless self.

13. Even though the dreaming self is not subject to the defects of the body, it is still subject to pleasure and pain.

15. Indra asks himself whether, in dreamless sleep in which there are no objects of which the Self is conscious, the Self itself is not reduced to nothing. A mere unconscious entity is not the Self he is in search of.

17. *there is nothing else besides this*—What I will explain to you is the highest Self.

19. *When he rises up from this body*—when he is freed from all the limitations of the body—the senses, mind and understanding.

20. *there is the seeing person etc.*—The Teacher comes back to the statement with which he started : "The person that is seen in the eye—that is the Self."

XXII-1. *From the dark I pass to the coloured*—that is, from the unmanifested to the manifested, from the transcendent to the immanent.

2. Akasa (space) is often taken as the symbol of the Infinite.

3. *I am the glory of the Brahmins*—because they meditate on the Self.

4. *May I never go etc.*—May I never again enter a womb and be born again!

XXIII. The great Upanishad ends with this beautiful little picture of the ideal man who reaches the goal of life.

except at specified holy places—this may refer to the places where sacrifices are offered or to the places where mendicants are allowed to trouble others for alms.

From the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

I-1. This is a meditation on the well-known *asvamedha* sacrifice. It is said that the meditation on a sacrifice is as good as the sacrifice itself. It brings about the same result as the actual rite. The presiding deity of *asvamedha* is Prajapati or Hiranyagarbha (the world-soul). Here the sacrificial horse itself is recommended to be looked upon as Hiranyagarbha. Just as in Purusha-sukta the world is represented as parts of the Primeval Being sacrificed by the gods, so here the phenomena of the universe are represented as parts of the sacrificial horse which is identified with Hiranyagarbha.

2. The sea stands for the Supreme Self which manifests itself successively as Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat.

II-1. *and is the innermost*—and therefore should be dearer than even one's own organs and limbs.

3. *what was it that Brahman knew?* The answer is given in the next mantra. It knew itself, as it alone existed in the beginning.

4. *Seeing this indeed*—Realising the identity of his self with Brahman.

I was Manu etc.—This is the result of realising that identity. He became all things.

that men should know this—that men should know the identity of the self with Brahman. The result would be that gods would lose all their worshippers.

III. The results of good works are temporary, while the knowledge of the Self leads to eternal bliss and the fulfilment of all desires.

IV-1. *People indeed rush etc.*—People rush to Janaka because he loves to hear about Brahman and he is also liberal. Ajatasatru feels that he too can be like Janaka.

2. *Please do not talk to me about him*—for I know all about the Brahman you are speaking of and also about his qualities. I meditate on these.

He who meditates on him thus etc.—because the results correspond to the particular attributes meditated upon.

3. *White-robed king Soma*—Soma is both the moon and the creeper whose juice is drunk at the sacrifices. Soma is also associated with the mind of man, as the sun is with the eye.

10. *But this does not suffice to know it*—Gargya has been speaking only about the conditioned Brahman. Ajatasatru wants to lead him on to the knowledge of the higher unconditioned Brahman.

11. *He called him—Soma*—As Soma stands for the mind, Ajatasatru calls him by that name to prove that the real self is not the body or the mind, but an entity beyond these.

13. *rests in space (akasa) in the heart*—Akasa symbolises the supreme Self.

16. *from this self come forth all organs, all worlds*—Thus while Gargya, though a Brahmin, has only an imperfect knowledge of Brahman as it manifests itself in sun and moon and the body and mind of man, Ajatasatru, though a Kshatriya, has the correct knowledge of Brahman as the unconditioned Supreme Spirit beyond the senses, mind and understanding of man, as well as beyond the sun, moon and lightning.

V-1. This dialogue between Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi is repeated in a later section in this Upanishad with only a few minor changes. That section begins thus :

“Now Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. Of these Maitreyi used to discuss Brahman, while Katyayani had an essentially feminine outlook. When Yajnavalkya wished to get ready for another mode of life, he said, ‘Maitreyi, my dear, I am going to renounce this life, let me make a settlement between you and Katyayani.’”

And it ends thus :—

“‘Thus you have this instruction given to you, O Maitreyi, such is life eternal’. Having said this Yajnavalkya went away (to the forest).”

V—6. *Verily, it is not for the sake of the husband etc.*—As Sankara says, this is an elaboration of the earlier text (II-1) that the Self is dearer than the son etc. But we may also take it as an indication that the love of husband, wife and sons may be made an instrument for the realisation of the Self.

16. *it is the Self that should be seen etc.*—The later Vedanta elaborates this into the three well-known steps in the path of realisation, viz., Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana.

17. *The Brahmin rejects*—The gist of this passage is that we have to view all things in the world not in their separateness but in their unity in the Self. It is only then that we understand them correctly. Otherwise they do not yield their true meaning, and we are, as it were, rejected by them.

18-20. The same idea is repeated in these three similes. But Sankara interprets these somewhat differently. He says:—

Just as a drum, a conch and a vina have distinct general and particular notes of their own which are included in sound in general, so during the continuance of the universe we may know all things to be unified in Brahman because the varieties of genus and species are not different from it.

21—*From Him indeed all these are breathed forth*—as easily as a man breathes.

22—*As of all waters ocean is the centre etc.*—So Self is the centre of all things.

23—*It emerges from these elements etc.*—the individual self comes into existence along with the elements which make up the body and vanishes along with them.

When it is gone etc.—When it is merged in the universal Self there is no *individual* consciousness.

24—*Here you have bewildered me etc.*—Maitreyi is bewildered because she does not understand that it is the *individual* consciousness that is lost. She thinks that the result of the merging is unconsciousness. So Yajnavalkya proceeds to explain how when everything is merged in the Self there can be no separate individual consciousness—as when a river empties itself into the ocean it has no separate existence, but its waters are not lost, they have become the waters of the ocean.

VI-1. *This earth is like honey to all beings*—Just as honey and the bees are mutually dependent—the bees making the honey and the honey supporting the bees—so also the earth and all the beings are mutually dependent. And as it is common experience, says Sankara, that those things which are mutually helpful spring from the same cause, belong to the same genus and dissolve into the same thing, this universe consisting of earth, fire, water etc. and men must also have the same source and the same end—Brahman.

VII-5. *Such and such is a cow*:—Just as a man who, having proposed to point out a cow or a horse, merely describes certain characteristics of theirs, as “a cow is that which walks” or “a horse is that which runs”, so you have indicated the Self or Brahman

through certain characteristics such as breathing. To this Yajnavalkya replies, "You want me to describe Brahman as I would an object. It is impossible to do so as Brahman is not an object but the eternal subject."

Everything else is evil—everything else is perishable. This only is imperishable and changeless.

6. *should wish to rest upon its strength*—The word used in the text for "strength" is *balyena*. This is interpreted by some Western scholars to mean "as a child". They translate the passage into, "Therefore let a Brahmin, after he has done with learning, desire to live as a child"—i.e.,—in a state of innocence and simplicity without the pride of learning. But this exaltation of child-like innocence above learning and scholarship is more a Christian idea than a Hindu idea. Sankara says that as a result of his scholarship the aspirant gains strength to eradicate his desires and pass on to the next stage of meditation.

howsoever he conducts himself—This is said by way of tribute to the state of realisation of Brahman and does not refer to any reckless conduct.

everything else is of evil—everything except the realisation of Brahman is impermanent.

7. *in the worlds of Brahma*—Sankara says that the worlds given in this passage are arranged in the ascending order of subtlety, each being composed of the same five elements transformed so as to become fit abodes for the enjoyment of beings. Brahma here means Hiranyagarbha. Brahmaloaka is said to be the basis of the whole universe.

You are asking too much—You are asking too much about a divinity which cannot be reached through reasoning, but through scriptural revelation.

8. *I know it*—for the Gandharva explained it to us, says Uddalaka.

I know, O Gautama, that thread and that inner controller—The thread is Hiranyagarbha symbolised by Vayu, and the Inner Controller is Iswara, the personal phase of Brahman.

10. *Whose body the earth is*—The Inner Controller uses the earth, water, fire etc., as his instruments. Similarly, he uses the senses, mind and understanding of men as his instruments.

26. *He is the unseen seer etc.*—It is upon such passages as these that the Advaita philosophy is based.

32-33. The question and the answer given in 29 and 30 are repeated here to emphasise the truth already stated. After receiving the same answer Gargi asks him, "Across what then is space woven like warp and woof?"

34. *It is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long*—Sankara says that by these four negations of size all the characteristics of a substance (*dravya*) are denied. And by the remaining negations all kinds of attributes (*viseshana*) are denied. As that *Akshara* is one only without a second what is there that can be specified? and through what?

35. Though the Ultimate cannot be described, It exists. And now inferential evidence in favour of Its existence is adduced, viz., the prevalence of law and order in the universe.

39. *Nivid*—a group of verses recited in the hymn to the *Visve-devas*. It gives the number of gods.

41. *they are, verily, the three worlds*—Sankara explains that the earth and fire taken together make one god, the sky and air make another, and heaven and the sun make a third.

matter and vital force—because out of these two—*Annam* and *Pranam*—the rest develop.

therefore he is one and half—he is one, and the world that grows in him is half. But really *Yajnavalkya* here puns on the word, *adhyartha*, and passes on.

who is the one God? The answer is *Prana*, the vital force in its cosmic aspect of *Hiranyagarbha*, the world-soul, who is both one and many.

43-(5) *Do not say 'from the seed'*—because the seed is produced in a living man and not a dead man, whereas a tree springs up from the dead stump as well as from the seed.

43-(7) *Born already?* If you think he is ever born and no question about his birth is permissible, I say, 'No, he is born *again*', as a result of what he did or knew in the preceding life.

The Brahmins did not know that the root of the universe was *Brahman*. Thus they were defeated and *Yajnavalkya* took away the prize. Sankara thinks that the story ends here. And the *Upanishad* in its own form tells us about *Brahman* in the concluding words.

him who offers gifts—the sacrificer who performs rites and distributes gifts.

and of him who stands still and knows it—and of him who has renounced all works and stands secure in his knowledge.

VIII-2. *As one who had a mother etc.*—as one who was well instructed by his mother during childhood, by his father after that and by a teacher after his Upanayana.

Then it has only one foot—and so it is incomplete and will not produce any effect though meditated upon.

My father was of opinion—I am also of the same opinion and so cannot accept your gift till I have instructed you completely.

9. *You have reached the state of fearlessness*—You are free from the fear of birth and death.

10. *who make us know etc.*—by removing the veil of ignorance from our eyes.

IX-5. *speech*—it denotes sound which falls on the ear and reaches the mind.

6. *the self indeed is his light*—By the word self is meant that light which is different from one's body and organs and illumines them like the external lights such as the sun, but is itself not illumined by anything else.

7. *who consists of knowledge*—means 'who is identified with intellect.' The self is so called because of our inability to discriminate its association with intellect which is its limiting adjunct.

seeming to think etc.—because of its association with buddhi or understanding. Strictly speaking, thought and action do not belong to the Self. They belong to the limiting adjuncts.

forms of death—the body and the organs, on which actions and their results depend.

8. *he leaves the evils behind*—the body and the organs are meant by the 'evils'.

13. *As a large fish etc.*—Sankara points out that in this illustration we have to notice that the fish moves freely between the two banks without being overpowered by the intervening current of water. According to him, the point of the illustration is that the body and the organs which are forms of death and their stimulating causes, desire and work, are the attributes of the non-self and that the Self is distinct from them.

14—*he desires no desires and sees no dreams*—It has been shown that in the waking state the self appears as connected with attachments and forms of death and in the dream state it is perceived as connected with desire but free from forms of death. Now it is shown that in the state of profound sleep it is perfectly serene and unattached.

15—*Now, as a man embraced by his beloved wife*—This illustration goes to show that when perfect unity is achieved between the individual self and the Supreme Self the result is pure consciousness and one is not aware of anything else.

16—*In that state a father is no father etc.*—for it is a state beyond all empirical distinctions caused by ignorance (avidya) such as varna (caste) and asrama (state of life), good and evil etc.

17—*there is no cessation of seeing for the seer*—The seer can never lose his fundamental character of seeing (as fire cannot lose its fundamental character of burning so long as it is fire). Only there is no second, nothing else different from him, to see. The same point is emphasised in all the passages 17-25.

26—*An ocean is that one seer without any duality*—All the four words with which this passage begins are important. Salila—like water; eka—one; drashta—seer; advaita—without duality; like water—either extensive or transparent as water.

the world of Brahman—the world that is Brahman.

All other creatures live on a fragment of this very bliss—the next passage conveys to us an idea of this bliss as a whole through its parts.

27—Here, as in Taittiriya Upanishad, we have an ascending order of beings in bliss.

Who have won their world—by the performance of funeral rites.

the world of Prajapati—of Virat.

the world of Brahma—of Hiranyagarbha.

as well as of one who is versed in the Vedas etc.—Vedic erudition, sinlessness and absence of desire are the means of attaining to particular types of bliss.

28—From here the description of the transmigration of the self begins.

32—*The Self is indeed Brahman consisting of knowledge, mind etc.*—Sankara points out that all those things which are the limiting adjuncts of the Self and are styled its bonds and with which it identifies itself through ignorance are here gathered together and presented in a group.

37-39—Recapitulation of what has already been said.

X-1—The gods are supposed to be conscious of their weakness. Puffed up with their powers they tend to become unruly. Therefore they understand Prajapati as saying "Control yourselves".

2—Men are also supposed to be conscious of their weakness. Never satisfied with what they get they tend to become avaricious. So they understand Prajapati as saying "Give away".

3—The demons are similarly supposed to be conscious of their weakness—cruelty to others. So they understand Prajapati as saying "Be compassionate".

4—Da is the first syllable of the three words of instruction—Damyata, Datta, Dayadhvam. All men are exhorted to cultivate these three virtues, for, as Sankara suggests, there are no gods or demons other than men.

From the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

1. 1—The Svetasvatara Upanishad is evidently of a later date than the first ten Upanishads mentioned in the preceding pages. Here the atmosphere is no longer one of free enquiry but of systematisation and harmonisation. Moreover the emphasis is shifted from the impersonal Brahman to the personal Iswara. So it may be called a theistic Upanishad. Like the Bhagavad Gita it tries to harmonise the various schools of thought that were prevalent at the time of its composition.

2—*because of the existence of the soul*—The unconscious cannot be the cause of a conscious being.

But the soul also is powerless—The conscious human being cannot be the ultimate cause, for he is powerless and is subject to the Law of Karma.

3—*the power of God himself hidden etc.*—The power (sakti) of Iswara, also called *Maya* later on, is the cause of creation. Unlike Prakriti or Pradhana of the Sankhya system, which is an independent entity, the Sakti is dependent on Iswara. The three qualities are *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

from 'time' to the 'soul'—mentioned as causes in No. 2.

5. *In it there is the triad*—the triad consists of the world, the individual soul and Iswara.

7. *When one finds out etc.*—The world, the soul and the personal God are all contained in Brahman.

9. *the third state*—namely that of Iswara. By meditation a man becomes one with Iswara, the Lord of the universe, going by the path of the gods (Devayana). But by jnana one gains moksha without any intermediate stage.

11—*So it is in both cases*—in the case of the fire and of the Self. *by means of the Pranava*—by meditation on the syllable Aum as representing the Self.

11-5—*When the fivefold quality of Yoga is produced*—The Yogi concentrates his mind on the five elements—earth, water, light, air and ether (akasa) and realises that his body is a combination of these and that his self is separate from them and so should not be subject to disease, old age and death.

9—*He is the first born*—as Hiranyagarbha, the world soul, the beginning of creation.

III-1. *who spreads the net*—the net of Maya.

3. *by his arms and wings*—This seems to be merely a poetic expression for the various powers of the Creator.

9. *A person of the size of the thumb*—This is supposed to be the size of the cavity of the heart.

IV. 5. *world-soul*—Hiranyagarbha, the first born of creation. *ancient Wisdom*—that of the Vedas.

V-1—*Knowledge and ignorance*—Vidya and Avidya. The former is the Knowledge of the One, the latter the knowledge of many detached from the One.

is another—Brahman is distinct from either.

2—*the fiery Seer*—Hiranyagarbha or the world-soul.

3—*after spreading out one net after another*—after creating one group of beings after another, such as gods, men, beasts etc.

withdraws them again—this refers to the cycles of creation.

into their own ground—into the Primal Nature or Mulaprakriti.

his Chief—the progenitors of various races.

6. *Brahma*—Hiranyagarbha.

Which is bidden in the Upanishads—which is the object of the secret teaching of the Upanishads.

7. *But he who is endowed etc.*—the individual soul.

the three qualities—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

the three paths—Devayana (the path of the gods), Pitriyana (the path of the Pitris) and the path to the lowest births (See Chand. Up. Extract No. XIV.)

8—*the size of a thumb*—the size of the cavity of the heart in which the soul was supposed to lie.

VI-6—*the one controller of the inactive many*—The many include not only forms of matter but also all living creatures. According to one view it is God that directs the actions of all creatures. Hence the latter may be described as being inactive.

*the eternal*s—the individual souls.

through discrimination and discipline—the discrimination of Sankhya and the discipline of Yoga.

'9. *Svetasvatara*—the Rishi after whom the Upanishad is called. It is to be noticed that both individual effort and the grace of God are necessary for the acquisition of the highest knowledge.

Miscellaneous Passages

1. 'The unreal', 'darkness' and 'death' refer to existence in this world.

2. This is the prayer of a dying man.

thy deeds—because they will determine his future life.

3. *without any colour*—without variations.

That indeed is fire etc.—Notice the change into the neuter pronoun. To the Upanishadic seers God was both personal and impersonal, and all the Vedic gods, Agni, Vayu, etc.—were only the manifestations of the One. Moreover He was immanent in all creatures as well as transcendent.

4. This is the Santi-mantra or the initial invocation attached to the Kena Upanishad.

may they live in me—The truths have not only to be understood but also to be assimilated.

5. This is the Santi-mantra of the Kathopanishad.

both of us—the teacher and the student.

May our studies etc.—Here again the emphasis is not on mere intellectual apprehension but on actual realisation.

6. This is the Santi-mantra of the Prasna-Upanishad.

strong of limb—The prayer is not only for moral goodness but also for physical fitness.

Indra—the king of the gods.

Pushan—the sun.

Tarkshya—another name for Garuda, who is the Vahana of Vishnu and hence symbolises divine Grace.

Bribhaspati—the priest of the gods. He is known for his eloquence, as "the lord of speech." Thus Indra, Pushan, Tarkshya, and Brihaspati stand respectively for strength, illumination, grace and power of expression.

7. This is the Santi-mantra of the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Aryaman—The sun.

the speaker—the teacher.

8. *be thou manifest to me*—by removing my ignorance.

9. *That*—the invisible and transcendent Brahman.

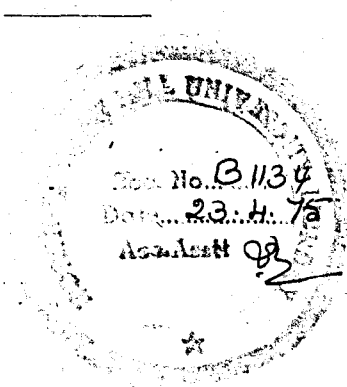
This—the visible universe in which Brahman is immanent.

When from the full etc—The emergence of the universe does not affect the integrity and the wholeness of Brahman.

10. *Brahma*—Hiranyagarbha, the world-soul, the first born of creation.

12. This is Trisanku's expression of his realisation of Brahman as a result of his knowledge of the Veda. Like another sage Vamadeva (in the Brihad-Upanishad) he identifies himself with Brahman and says these words.

the world-tree—the tree of samsara, whose moving spirit is the Supreme Brahman.







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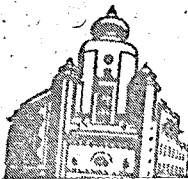
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Now in his seventy-eighth year, Professor D. S. Sarma, scholar and educationist, had his education in the Madras Christian College, from which he graduated in 1904. Subsequently he took his M.A. degree in English Language and Literature in 1909. Starting life in Government service at the Kumbakonam College, he went over to the Presidency College, Madras, in 1913, where he remained on the English staff for twenty-two years. After a short spell of service as the Principal of the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry, he retired from Government service in 1938. After retirement he served as the Principal and Professor of English in two private colleges in Madras — Pachaiyappa's College and Vivekananda College. He retired from the latter in 1949.

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