CHAPTER II
THE UPAŅIŚADS

We now take up the study of the Upaniṣads which stand by themselves although tradition associates them closely with the Brāhmaṇas (p. 30). Primarily they represent a spirit different from and even hostile to ritual and embody a theory of the universe quite distinct from the one that underlies the sacrificial teaching of the Brāhmaṇas. All the earlier Upaniṣads in some form or other indicate this antagonism while in a few it becomes quite explicit.¹ Thus in the Mundaka Upaniṣad² we have one of the clearest onslaughts against the sacrificial ceremonial, in the course of which it is stated that whosoever hopes for real good to accrue from these rites is a fool and is sure to be overtaken again and again by death and decrepitude. This opposition more often appears indirectly in the substitution of an allegorical for a literal interpretation of the rites.³ An illustration will show how this is done: The āsva-medha is a well-known sacrifice whose celebration signifies lordship of the world. It is to be performed by a Kshattriya and the chief animal to be sacrificed in it is a horse. The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad⁴ gives a subjective turn to this sacrifice, and transforms it into a meditative act in which the contemplative is to offer up the whole universe in place of the horse and by thus renouncing everything attain to true autonomy—a result analogous to the overlordship associated with the performance of the regular āsva-medha. The antagonism between the two teachings gradually disappears or at least is considerably softened, indicating

¹ See PU. pp. 61–2, 396; Macdonell: India’s Past, p. 46.
² I. ii. 7.
³ Such interpretations are common in the Āranyakas or ‘forest-books,’ which in the several Vedas serve as a connecting link between the Brāhmaṇas proper and the Upaniṣads. The Āranyakas were so called because their teaching was to be imparted in the seclusion of the forest (aranya). See PU. pp. 2–3.
that as the Upaniṣadic doctrine more and more triumphed, an attempt was made to reconcile them. The reconciliation is clearly traceable in the later Upaniṣads. The Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad for example alludes approvingly to Agni and Soma, the chief sacrificial deities, and commends a return to the old ritualistic worship.¹

The divergence between the two views as embodied in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads respectively is now explained by some scholars as due to the divergence in ideals between the Brahmins and the Kshattriyas—the priests and princes of ancient India. There is indeed some ground for such a view, because the Upaniṣads ascribe more than one of their characteristic doctrines to royal personages and represent Brahmins as seeking instruction of them in respect of those doctrines. But it does not afford, as some modern scholars themselves recognize, sufficient warrant for connecting this difference in ideals with a social distinction. The prominence given to the Kshattriyas in the Upaniṣads may after all mean nothing more than that kings were patrons of Brahmins and that the doctrines, though originating among the latter, were first welcomed by the former rather than by the ritual-ridden section of the Brahmins themselves.² It also implies that Brahma-knowledge (Brahma-vidyā) was not confined to the priests as the knowledge of the sacrifice, for the most part, was. But we need not further consider this question for, being a purely historical one, it does not directly concern us.

The word 'upaniṣad' has been variously explained by old Indian commentators, but their explanations cannot be regarded as historically or philologically accurate, for what the commentators have done is merely to read into the word the meaning which, as the result of long use, it had come to possess by their time. Moreover, the same commentator often derives the word in alternative ways showing thereby that he was speaking not of a certainty, but only of what he considered a mere possibility.³ While thus the commentators

¹ ii. 6 and 7. See PU. pp. 64-5.
² See PU. p. 396; Rel.V. pp. 220 ff.
³ Cf. Sarfikara on Kaṭha Up. Introduction.
give us no help, we fortunately find the word used in the Upaniṣads themselves, and there it generally appears as synonymous with rahasya or secret. That should accordingly have been its original meaning. Etymologically the word is equivalent to ‘sitting (sad) near by (upa) devotedly (ni),’ and in course of time it came to signify the secret instruction imparted at such private sittings. That the teaching of these works was regarded as a mystery and that much care and anxiety were bestowed upon keeping it from the unworthy lest it should be misunderstood or misapplied, come out clearly in several Upaniṣads. According to the Praśna Upaniṣad, for example, six pupils go to a great teacher seeking instruction of him in respect of the highest reality; but he asks them to live with him for a year before instructing them, obviously with the purpose of watching them and satisfying himself of their fitness to be taught by him. Again, when Naciketas, according to the Katha Upaniṣad, desires to know whether or not the soul survives after death, Yama does not reply until he has tested the sincerity and strength of mind of the young inquirer. The reluctance to impart the highest truth to every one without discrimination, we may observe in passing, was not peculiar to India, but was common to all ancient peoples. Heraclitus in early Greece, for example, is reported to have stated, ‘If men care for gold, they must dig for it; otherwise they must be content with straw.’

The origin of Upaniṣadic literature as it has been handed down to us is somewhat hard to trace. Hindu tradition places it on the same footing as the other species of Vedic literature—the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas—regarding them all alike as śruti or ‘revelation,’ i.e. as works not ascribable to human authors. In the absence of any help from this source, we are left to mere conjecture. In the Upaniṣads we now and then come across short and pithy statements which bear the impress of set formulas, and the literary material in which they are found imbedded seems merely to amplify and illustrate the truth enshrined in them. Further, these sayings are not infrequently styled there as ‘upaniṣad.’ From this
it has been concluded, with much probability, that the term was in the beginning applied only to these formulas which contain in a nutshell some important truth of Upaniṣadic philosophy.\footnote{PU. p. 20.} As an example of them we may instance \textit{Tat tvam asi}, 'That thou art,'\footnote{Ch. Up. VI. viii. 7.} which teaches the ultimate identity of the individual and the cosmic souls. It was these philosophic formulas alone that were once communicated by teacher to pupil, the communication being preceded or followed by expository discourses. The discourses, it is surmised, assumed in course of time a definite shape though not committed to writing yet, giving rise to the Upaniṣads as we now have them. To judge from the way in which these texts have grown, they contain not the thoughts of a single teacher, but of a series of teachers, and thus represent a growth in which new ideas have mingled with the old. Such a view explains the heterogeneity sometimes seen in the teaching of even one and the same Upaniṣad. At a later time, when all the ancient lore of the Hindus was brought together and arranged, the Upaniṣads in this form were appended to the Brāhmaṇas. The significance of such close association of the Upaniṣads with the Brāhmaṇas is that when this grouping was effected the two were regarded as equally old—so old that neither of them could be referred to any specific authors. Standing thus at the end of the Veda, the Upaniṣads came to be known as 'Vedānta' or 'end of the Veda'—much as the Metaphysics of Aristotle owed its designation to its being placed after Physics in his writings. A word which at first only indicated the position of the Upaniṣads in the collection developed later the significance of the aim or fulfilment of Vedic teaching, it being permissible to use \textit{anta} in Sanskrit, like its equivalent 'end' in English, in both these senses.

The number of Upaniṣads that have come down to us is very large—over two hundred being reckoned, but all are not equally old. The great majority of them in fact belong to comparatively recent times and hardly more than a dozen are of the period we are now considering. Even among these classical Upaniṣads, chronological differences are trace-
able; but generally speaking they all exhibit a family likeness both in their thoughts and in the language in which those thoughts are clothed. Hence all of them may be referred to practically the same stage in the evolution of Indian thought. We shall take into account here only the older or canonical Upaniṣads. Their date cannot be exactly determined, but they may all be regarded as pre-Buddhistic. They represent the earliest efforts of man at giving a philosophic explanation of the world, and are as such invaluable in the history of human thought. They are the admitted basis of at least one of the most important systems of Indian philosophy, viz. the Vedānta, 'which controls at the present time nearly all the higher thought of Brahminical India.' Their importance is much more than historical, for their unique spiritual power and the elements of universal appeal which they contain may exercise a considerable influence on the re-construction of thought and realignment of life in the future.

A word may now be added as regards the manner of these works. They are generally in the form of dialogues, especially the larger ones among them. Their method is more poetic than philosophic. They have been described as philosophical poems and indicate truths generally through metaphor and allegory. The language, although never bereft of the charm peculiar to the Upaniṣads, is sometimes symbolic. The style is highly elliptical and shows that the works were intended to be expounded orally by one that could readily supply whatever was lacking in their presentation of the subject. These peculiarities render the interpretation of many passages not a little difficult and account for the varied explanations given of them in the past as well as in the present. But the indefiniteness is only in regard to details, the general tenor of the teaching being quite unmistakable. Among the works comprising Vedic literature, the Upaniṣads were the first to attract the attention of foreigners. Several of these works were translated into Persian in Moghul times and were thence rendered into Latin about the beginning of the last century. It was through this Latin translation that they came to be known for the first time in Europe; and it
was through it that Schopenhauer, for instance, learnt to admire them.¹ In recent times, numerous translations of them, direct from the Sanskrit, have appeared in Western languages. The subject-matter of Upaniṣadic teaching also has repeatedly engaged the attention of foreign scholars; and, among the many works published, should be mentioned Deussen's masterly work on the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, particularly for the wealth of information it contains and for the care and thoroughness of its analysis.

I

The first point that has to be considered is whether all the Upaniṣads—even the genuine ones—teach the same doctrine or not. Indian commentators have all along held the view that they do²; and it is inconceivable that they should have thought otherwise, for they believed that these works were revealed in the literal sense of that word. The agreement of the commentators, however, does not extend beyond the general recognition of the unity of Upaniṣadic teaching. As to what the exact nature of that teaching is, they differ widely from one another. This diversity of opinion should be a long-standing one, for we have references to it even in the earliest extant work systematizing the teaching of the Upaniṣads, viz. the Vedānta-sūtra of Bādarāyana.³ Such wide divergence in interpretation naturally suggests a doubt that, in spite of the traditional insistence to the contrary, the Upaniṣads do not embody a single doctrine; and the doubt is confirmed by an independent study of these ancient works. A modern student, not committed beforehand to follow any particular school of Vedāntic thought, will be forced to think that there are not two or three discordant views in the Upaniṣads, but several. Nor is there anything surprising in this, for the

¹ 'Schopenhauer used to have the Oupnekhat lie open upon his table, and was in the habit, before going to bed, of performing his devotions from its pages'—Rel.V. p. 55.
² Cf. VS. I. i. 4.
³ See e.g. VS. I. ii. 28–31.
problem dealt with in them lends itself to such a variety of solutions and these works were moulded into their present form in a more or less casual way. All the doctrines presented in them do not, however, stand out equally prominent. Some are merely flashes of thought, others are only slightly developed and still others are but survivals from the older period. The most prominent and the best developed teaching may, if we overlook for the moment minor details, be described as monistic and idealistic. Statements like 'There is no variety here,' 'All this is Brahman,' which insist on the unity of everything that exists, are neither few nor far between in the Upaniṣads. This monistic view may be described as idealistic for, according to an equally striking number of Upaniṣadic sayings, there is nothing in the universe which, if it is not itself mental, does not presuppose mind. 'Not there the sun shines, nor the moon or the stars, not these lightnings either. Where then could this fire be? Everything shines only after the shining spirit; through its light all this shines.'

Before giving an account of this doctrine we should explain the Upaniṣadic terms for the ultimate reality. These terms are two—'Brahman' and 'atman,' which have been described as 'the two pillars on which rests nearly the whole edifice of Indian philosophy.' Their origin is somewhat obscure. The word 'Brahman' seems at first to have meant 'prayer,' being derived from a root (brh) meaning 'to grow' or 'to burst forth.' Brahman as prayer is what manifests itself in audible speech. From this should have been derived later the philosophic significance which it bears in the Upaniṣads, viz. the primary cause of the universe—what bursts forth spontaneously in the form of nature as a whole and not as mere speech only. The explanation of the other word is more uncertain. In all probability 'atman' originally meant 'breath' and then came to be applied to whatever constitutes the essential part of anything, more particularly

1 Katha Up. II. ii. 15.
2 This derivation is what Max Müller gives, following Indian commentators. See SS. pp. 52-5. Others have seen in it other meanings such as 'magical spell.' See article on 'Brahman' in ERE.
of man, i.e. his self or soul. Thus each of these terms has its own independent significance: the distinctive meaning of 'Brahman' is the ultimate source of the outer world while that of 'atman' is the inner self of man. What is remarkable about these terms is that, though entirely different in their original connotation and though occasionally bearing it still in Upaniṣadic passages, they come to be prevailingly used as synonymous—each signifying alike the eternal source of the universe including nature as well as man. The development of the same significance by these two distinct terms means that the Indian, in the course of his speculation, identified the outer reality with the inner; and by such a happy identification at last reached the goal of his long quest after unity—a goal which left all mythology far behind and was truly philosophical.

It is necessary to dwell at some length on how this identification was brought about and what its full significance is. We have stated that the word ātman developed in course of time the meaning of soul or self. That was the result of a search for the central essence of the individual as distinguished from the physical frame with which he is associated. The method here was subjective and the result was arrived at through introspection. In place of the body, breath, etc., which may easily be mistaken for the individual, we find here a deeper principle, which is psychical, finally regarded as the essence of man. Now there was from the time of the later Mantras and Brāhmaṇas the habit of seeking for a correspondence between the individual and the world and trying to discover for every important feature of the one, an appropriate counterpart in the other. It represented an effort to express the world in terms of the individual. Such an attempt at rising from the known particular to a knowledge of the unknown universal is clearly seen in the Puruṣa-sūkta for example, where parts of the universe are described as parts of Puruṣa or a giant man (p. 45). It is equally clear from one of the funeral hymns which, addressing the departed, says: 'Let thine eye go to the sun; thy breath, to the wind, etc.' And we have it again

1 SS. pp. 70-2.
2 RV. X. 16.
when prāṇa, which as vital breath stands for an important aspect of the individual, is universalized and, as cosmic Prāṇa, is represented as the life of the world (p. 41). This notion of parallelism between the individual and the world runs throughout the literature of the later Vedic period and is found in the Upaniṣads as well.¹ The practice of viewing the whole world as a cosmic individual naturally had its influence on the conception of ātman and transformed what was but a psychical principle into a world-principle. Ātman, which as the soul or self is the inmost truth of man, became as the cosmic soul or self the inmost truth of the world. When the universe came once to be conceived in this manner, its self became the only self, the other selves being regarded as in some way identical with it.

Though this process secures the unity of the self, it does not take us as far as the unity of all Being. For the self in the case of the individual is distinguishable from the not-self such as the body; and the world-self similarly has to be distinguished from its physical embodiment, viz. the material universe. Now there was all along another movement of thought just complementary to the one we have so far sketched. It traced the visible universe to a single source named Brahman. The method there was objective, for it proceeded by analysing the outer world and not by looking inward as in the line of speculation of which ātman was the goal. In accordance with the general spirit of Indian speculation, several conceptions were evolved here also²—each more satisfying than the previous one to account for the universe, and Brahman was the last of the series of solutions. At some stage in the evolution of thought, this primal source of the universe, viz. Brahman, was identified with its inmost essence, viz. ātman. Thus two independent currents of thought—one resulting from the desire to understand the true nature of man and the other, that of the objective world—became blended and the blending led at once to the discovery of the unity for which there had been such a prolonged search. The physical world, which according to the ātman doctrine is only the not-self, now becomes

¹ See e.g. Aitareya Up. i. ² Cf. Taittiriya Up. iii.
reducible to the self. The fusing of two such outwardly different but inwardly similar conceptions into one is the chief point of Upaniṣadic teaching and is expressed in the 'great-sayings' (mahāvākyā) like 'That thou art,' 'I am Brahman' or by the equation Brahman = ātman. The individual as well as the world is the manifestation of the same Reality and both are therefore at bottom one. There is, in other words, no break between nature and man or between either of them and God.

Such a synthesis, besides showing that Reality is one, carries with it an important implication. The conception of Brahman, being objective, can at best stand only for a hypothetical something—carrying no certainty necessarily with it. It is also likely for that very reason to be taken as non-spiritual in its nature. The conception of ātman on the other hand has neither of these defects; but in the sense in which we commonly understand it, it is finite and cannot represent the whole of Reality. Even as the cosmic self, it is set over against the physical world and is therefore limited by it. When, however, the two conceptions of Brahman and ātman are combined, then by a process of dialectic a third is reached which is without the flaws of either taken by itself. Like ātman it is spiritual and at the same time it is infinite unlike it. It is also indubitable, since it is conceived as fundamentally one with our own immediate self. So long as we look upon the ultimate as something not ourselves—as mere Brahman—it remains more or less an assumption and a dogma; but the moment we recognize it as one with our own self, it becomes transformed into a positive certainty, we being under an intuitive obligation to admit the reality of our own existence, however much we may be in the dark in regard to its precise nature. It is this higher reality that is described for instance as satyam jñānam anantam,¹ where satyam points to its immediate certainty, jñānam to its spiritual nature and anantam to its all-inclusive or infinite character. That is the Upaniṣadic Absolute—neither Brahman nor ātman in one sense, but both in another. It manifests itself better in the human self—though not fully

¹ Cf. Taittirīya Up. ii. 1.
The enunciation of this doctrine marked the most important advance in the whole history of India's thought. It introduced almost a revolution in the point of view from which speculation had proceeded till then. The following illustration may perhaps be of use in comprehending the nature of this change. Let us suppose that some people know Venus as only appearing in the East, and others know it as appearing only in the West—each set of people regarding the planet they observe as distinct from what the others do. If then the discovery is made by some one that the two are but the same and that the Eastern star is the Western star, the resulting transformation in the view of Venus would correspond to the change in the present case. The true conception of unity was reached in India only at this stage.

All this is very beautifully brought out in a celebrated section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. It is in the form of a dialogue between a father and his son. The name of the father is Uddālaka and that of his son, Śvetaketu. Śvetaketu has been to a guru and has just returned home after completing his education in the conventional sense. The father, who notices a lack of humility in Śvetaketu, fears that he might not after all have learnt from his teacher the true meaning of life. Inquiry only confirms him in this view; and he himself therefore undertakes to instruct his son. The teaching that is imparted, as is clear from these preliminaries, should be of the highest value. Uddālaka begins by postulating an ultimate entity which is to be regarded as mental or spiritual because it is stated to have thought.

1 See Aitareya Āranyaka, II. iii. 2.

2 Even this synthesis is not quite unknown to literature anterior to the Upaniṣads (See AV. X. viii. 44); but it appears there only faintly and may therefore be justifiably described as Upaniṣadic. Compare in this connection the remark of Deussen (System of the Vedānta, p. 18) that ‘the sparks of philosophic light appearing in the Rigveda shine out brighter and brighter until at last in the Upaniṣads they burst out in that bright flame which is able to light and warm us to-day.’
(aikṣata) and which he terms Sat or Being. He then proceeds to describe how the whole universe is a manifestation of it. 'In the beginning Sat alone was, without a second. It thought "May I be many."' Its diversification—first into the three elements, viz. tejas or 'fire,' ap or 'water' and prthivī or 'earth' and then into others until organic bodies, including those of human beings, have emerged—is afterwards explained. What is made out by this is that the spiritual entity postulated in the beginning is all-comprehensive and that whatever is, has sprung from it. Then 'suddenly and with dramatic swiftness' the original Sat is identified with the self of Śvetaketu: Tat tvam asi, Śvetaketo. The purpose of the identification is obviously to bring home to the mind of Śvetaketu the undoubted reality of the postulated source of the universe. However splendid the account of Sat and its transformations which Uddālaka gives at first, it is objective and therefore lacks a most essential feature, viz. certitude. It is merely to be taken for granted. Uddālaka puts it forward as a hypothesis and, though convincing to Uddālaka himself because he has realized the truth, it can be nothing more than a probability for Śvetaketu. But this probable source of the universe becomes a positive certainty to him the moment he realizes that it is identical with his own self, which he knows to be real even without being taught. This teaching of course does not leave Śvetaketu's view of his own self unchanged, for it is not his individual self that he can regard as the source of the world, but rather the universal self that is immanent in it. It is true that the world has emerged from the one and that that one is Śvetaketu's self; yet it is not his private self that can explain the universe, but his self only in so far as it is one with Sat or the universal self. 'I live; yet not I, but God liveth in me.'

When we come to consider in detail this doctrine of idealistic monism, we find it appear in two forms between which there is rather an important difference. In some passages the Absolute is presented as cosmic or all-comprehensive in its nature (saprapaṇa); in some others again, as acosmic or all-exclusive (niṣpraṇa). There are many passages and even whole sections in the Upaniṣads treating
of either. To illustrate their character, we shall refer here to one of each type:

(1) Cosmic Ideal.—One of the best-known descriptions of this ideal is found in a section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad designated Śāṇḍilya-vidyā. After defining Brahman cryptically as tajjalān—as that (tat) which gives rise (ja) to the world, reabsorbs (li) it and supports (an) it—the section proceeds to describe it as 'comprehending all activities, all desires, all odours, all tastes, reaching all, and so self-complete as ever to be speechless and calm.' Then follows its identification with the individual self: ‘This is my self within the heart, smaller than rice, or barley corn, or mustard seed or grain of millet or the kernel of a grain of millet; this is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the mid-region, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. This is Brahman. May I become it when I depart hence.’

(2) Acosmic Ideal.—For this we shall select a passage from another Upaniṣad: Here a learned lady, Gārgī by name, asks Yājñavalkya, the greatest thinker of the age and probably the first idealist of the world, to tell her what the basis of the universe is. Yājñavalkya, tracing it to its penultimate source, answers that it is space (ākāśa). Further asked to explain what constitutes the basis of space itself, Yājñavalkya mentions a principle which he describes only in a negative way, implying thereby that the ultimate reality is beyond the grasp of human experience. The negative description given is as follows: ‘This is the imperishable, O Gārgī, which wise people adore—not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, not red, not adhesive, without shadow, without darkness; without air, without space; unattached, without taste, without smell, without sight, without ears, without speech, without mind, without light, without breath, without mouth, without form, and without either inside or outside. Not that does anything eat; nor that does eat anything.’ Lest the description should be taken to mean 'pure nothing,' Yājñavalkya adds immediately after it that whatever is, owes its being to this tran-
scedental reality, suggesting that if the Ultimate was a sheer blank or non-entity, it could not have given rise to the world of appearance.

It is not difficult to discover the basis for this two-fold teaching in pre-Upaniṣadīc tradition. The first or saprapañca ideal resembles the doctrine underlying the 'Song of Creation' (p. 42). Only the First Principle here, unlike Tad Ekam there, is not conceived objectively, but as Brahman—ātman in the sense explained at the beginning of this section. As regards the second or niṣprapañca ideal, we have already drawn attention (p. 41) to the prevalence of the pantheistic tendency in the later Mantras and the Brahmaṇas and described it as somewhat inconsistent, since it aims at unity and yet clings to the double notion of God and nature. To arrive at true unity, one only of these two should be retained. If it is the notion of nature that is retained, there will be no God apart from the world. This outcome of the pantheistic tendency, viz. viewing the unity of the world as itself the Absolute, does not figure very much in the Upaniṣads, probably because it tends towards naturalism, which, though not wholly unfamiliar to them, is widely removed from their prevailing spirit.¹ If, on the other hand, it is the notion of God that is selected for retention in preference to that of nature, the world of common experience with all its variety will cease to exist apart from God. That is precisely the acosmic conception; only the theistic term is here replaced by the philosophic one of Brahman.

The determination of the relative position and importance of these two conceptions is one of the most difficult problems connected with the Upaniṣads and has occupied the attention of thinkers for a very long time. According to Śaṁkara, this problem is discussed by Bādārayaṇa in the Vedānta-sūtra²; and it is not improbable that at one stage it engaged the attention of the Upaniṣadic sages themselves.³ The two views as they appear here have been explained by Śaṁkara as really the same, and the apparent distinction between them as due to a difference in the standpoint from which

¹ We have an example of this in Ch. Up. V. xi–xviii. See p. 45, ante. ¹ III. ii. 11 ff.
² See e.g. Pratna Up. i. 1; v. 2.
the Absolute is looked at—cosmic from the empirical standpoint, but acosmic from the transcendental. This view is supported by the juxtaposition sometimes of the two conceptions in one and the same passage, as for example in the *Mundaka Upanishad* where we have ‘What is invisible, intangible, colourless, nameless, eyeless and earless, devoid of hands and of feet—that is what is coeval with time and space, is all-pervading, subtle and changeless, which the wise know to be the source of beings.’ The saprapaṇika conception must in that case be understood negatively as signifying that the world is not outside Brahman and the nisprapaṇika conception positively as signifying that Brahman is more than the world. There is no world apart from Brahman, but it is not therefore unreal for it has its basis in Brahman. Brahman again is not nothing for it furnishes the explanation of the world, though it is not identical with it or exhausted in it. The former view would emphasize the immanence of Brahman and the latter, its transcendence, the Upaniṣadic view being that it is both immanent and transcendent. Or probably we have here two different views as the result of a difference in interpreting the result of the synthesis of the conceptions of Brahman and ātman alluded to above. The Upaniṣadic Absolute which represents this result is not, as we have seen, something objective; nor is it the subject as such, though neither is unrelated to it. Such an Absolute may be understood as being both. That would be saprapaṇika Brahman. In this view, the manifold things of experience have a real place in the Absolute. They actually emerge from it and are re-absorbed into it. It is Brahma-parināma-vāda or the doctrine which maintains that Brahman evolves into the world. Or the Absolute may be regarded as the mere ground of both the subject and the object, in which case we would have the nisprapaṇika ideal. The things of common experience are then to be regarded as only phenomena, Brahman being the noumenon. That would be Brahma-vivarta-vāda or the doctrine which maintains that

1 I. i. 6.

2 ‘Brahma-parināma-vāda’ and ‘Brahma-vivarta-vāda’ are later Vedāntic terms. See Ch. XIII.
Brahman does not change into, but merely appears as, the world. Whatever the truth may be, the distinction has given rise to a good deal of controversy. We shall have to consider this question when treating of the Vedānta system. Meanwhile we shall proceed on the basis that, though idealistic monism is the prevalent teaching of the Upaniṣads, that doctrine is presented in them in two somewhat distinct forms.

The second of these forms necessarily involves the notion of Māyā, it being understood as the principle which shows the niṣprapañca Brahman as saprapañca. It is not, therefore, right to maintain, as some have tried to do, that the doctrine of Māyā is unknown to the Upaniṣads. It is already there, but naturally it does not yet exhibit all the various features which, as the result of later elaboration and development, are associated with it in Śaṅkara’s Advaita. The word ‘Māyā’ again, it is true, occurs only rarely in the earlier Upaniṣads; but it is found in literature still older though its meaning there may not always be clearly determinable, and also in the Upaniṣads which are not very late. Even in the earliest Upaniṣads where we do not find ‘Māyā,’ we have its equivalent ‘avidyā.’ There are also statements in them like the following: ‘Where there is duality as it were (iva) one sees another’ which, as recognized by scholars like Deussen, clearly point to the existence in the Upaniṣads of the idea that the world is an appearance.

In whichever of these two forms they may present Brahman, the Upaniṣads distinguish from it the common things constituting the universe as known to us by pointing out that they are merely nāma and rūpa. By rūpa is here meant the specific form or nature of a thing; and by nāma, the name or word that serves as its sign. By the two terms together we have to understand, in the case of any object, its particularity or determinate character; and the emergence of the world from Brahman is conceived as the differentiation of names and forms. Whether we regard these particular things as actual modes or as only appear-

1 See Śvetāśvatara Up. iv. 10.  
3 Br. Up. IV. v. 15.  
4 PU. pp. 228 ff. See also Macdonell: India’s Past, p. 47.
ances of Brahman, they are not real apart from it, which according to the monism of the Upaniṣads is the sole reality. It is not easy to discover the necessity for nāma in this characterization, as rūpa by itself seems sufficient for particularization. It probably has reference to a belief, current at the time, in the existence of a speech-world answering to the world of things and to the need there generally is for names as much as for things in practical life.¹ Sometimes the description of empirical objects is made more complete by introducing a third term, karma or 'movement,'² and thus explicitly referring to the dynamic factor, an important aspect of the world of experience.

As regards the details of the things derived from Brahman which are characterized by nāma and rūpa, there is to be made at the outset a distinction between the inorganic and the organic. While the latter are the abode of transmigrating souls or jīvas, the former are not. They serve only as 'the stage erected by Brahman on which the souls have to play their part.' In the inorganic realm, the Upaniṣads recognize five fundamental elements (bhūtas) termed prthivi (earth), ap (water), tejas (fire), vāyu (air) and ākāsa (ether). All the five were not known from the beginning. 'Water' seems to have been the sole element thought of at first (p. 44). The next stage of advance is marked by the recognition of three elements, earth, water and fire, as in the Chaṇḍogya Upaniṣad, which are stated to emerge from Brahman in the reverse order. They correspond roughly to the solid, fluid and gaseous phases of the material universe. The last stage in the evolution of this thought, which was final and was accepted by practically all the later philosophers of India, was reached when the number of the so-called elements was raised to five by the addition of air and ether.³ It is clear that in this its last form the classification is connected with the five-fold character of the sensory organs, whose distinctive objects, viz. odour, flavour, colour, temperature and sound, are respectively the distinctive features of earth,

¹ Cf. BP. p. 101, where its association is referred to a primitive period when the name was treated as 'a possession and part of the individual.' ² Br. Up. I. vi. i 3 Taittiriya Up. II. i.
water, fire, air and ether. But these elements, it should be remembered, are subtle or rudimentary (sūkṣma-bhūta). Out of these are made the gross ones (sthūla-bhūta), each of which contains an admixture of the other four, but gets its name as a compound from the element predominating in it.¹ The gross elements are what we find in nature; and strictly it is they that are to be understood by the terms prthivi, ap, etc., the corresponding subtle elements being known as prthvī-mātra, āpo-mātra, etc.² The organic bodies are divided into three classes ‘born from the egg’ (aṇḍa-ja), ‘born from the germ’ (jīva-ja) and ‘bursting through the soil’ (udbhijja).³ To these is afterwards added⁴ a fourth variety ‘born from sweat’ (śveda-ja), thus making four classes altogether. When organic bodies disintegrate, they are reduced to the form of the five gross elements out of which other similar bodies may be built up. Their dissolution into their constituent subtle elements does not take place until the whole universe breaks up. Regarding the time when such breaking up takes place, there is some vagueness. As in the earlier literature (p. 44), the theory of kalpa or the eternal recurrence of creation and dissolution is not explicit in the Upaniṣads. We have not, however, to wait long for its appearance. The Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad, which, though one of the classical Upaniṣads, is among the latest of them and is so rich in suggestions helpful in tracing the history of early Indian thought, points to it in more than one place. Thus the Highest is there stated to have ‘got angry at the end of time and retracted all the worlds’ and to repeat that act many a time.⁵ The theory is closely connected with the doctrine of karma to which we shall refer in a subsequent section.

¹ Strictly the mode of deriving the gross from the subtle elements (tri-vṛtkaraṇa) is explained in the Upaniṣads only with reference to three elements (see Ch. Up. VI. ii. 3–4). The Vedānta extended it to the five elements (pañci-karaṇa). See VS. II. iv. 22.
² Praśna Up. iv. 8.
³ Ch. Up. VI. iii. 1.
⁴ Aitareya Up. v. 3.
⁵ iii. 2; v. 3.
II

When the word ‘psychology’ is used in Indian philosophy, it should be understood in its original sense as the science or doctrine of the soul (‘psyche’), for its teaching, except in one or two cases, is based upon the supposition that the soul exists. This study in India never branched off from philosophy and every system has therefore its own psychology. The various psychologies have, of course, a common body of doctrine; but each has its own special features as well, which are adapted to the particular school of thought to which it is affiliated. To the Upaniṣadic seers the existence of the soul is a necessary presupposition of all experience. It is the basis of all proof and itself therefore stands in need of none. ‘By which, one knows all this—whereby could one know that? Lo, by what means could the knower be known’?

Although for this reason the Upaniṣads do not attempt to adduce any direct proof of the existence of the soul, they contain various suggestions touching the point. For example, the soul or jiva is often described as puruṣa, which is explained as puri-ṣaya or ‘what lies in the citadel of the body.’ It means that the existence of the physical body, with its diverse but co-operating parts, implies the existence of something whose end it serves. That something, apart from which the mechanism of the body would be meaningless, is the soul. Another suggestion, which is based upon the karma theory, is sometimes found. In the narrow span of a single life, we cannot possibly reap the fruits of all that we do. Nor can we, so long as we confine our attention to this life alone, fully account for all the good or evil that may come to us. A single birth being thus inadequate to render intelligible all the observed facts of life, we must, if the common belief in moral requital be well founded, admit a transmigrating soul to whose actions in past lives we must look for an explanation of whatever is inexplicable in its present condition and in whose continuance after death we must find redress of any seeming injustice in this life.

2 Kaṭha Up. II. ii. 1, 3 and 5.
3 Kaṭha Up. II. ii. 7.
The relation of the soul to the ultimate reality or of the jīva to Brahman is somewhat differently conceived in the two views of the Absolute found in the Upaniṣads. According to the cosmic view it is an actual, though only a provisional, transformation of Brahman and is as such both identical with and different from it. According to the acosmic view, it is Brahman itself appearing as the jīva and therefore not at all different from it. Whether the jīva is an actual transformation or not, its jīva-hood consists in the forgetting of its essential identity with Brahman. Though ordinarily believing that it is finite and therefore distinct from the Absolute, the soul sometimes—whenever, for any reason, desire is absent—rises above such belief and ceases to be conscious of its individuality. Such self-transcendence suggests, according to the Upaniṣads, that the jīva is not in reality the limited entity it generally takes itself to be. The question is dealt with in what is known as ‘the doctrine of koṇas’ in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. The unique experience characterizing this self-transcendent state is represented there as higher than the experience of the conscious (manomaya) and the self-conscious (vijñānamaya) levels of life, because the conflicts and confusions typical of them are overcome in it; and it is described as ānandamaya to indicate that its essential mark is peace. Yet it is not identifiable with mokṣa, for it is only a passing phase and those who rise to it quickly fall away from it. The peace and self-forgetfulness that distinguish it show that the attitude induced by the contemplation of Art is its best illustration. It stands midway between common experience and mokṣa, where the soul’s true nature is fully revealed; and if it points in one direction to the empirical self

1 ii. 1–5.
2 The corresponding adjuncts constitute three of the five koṇas or ‘sheaths’ regarded as enfolding the soul. The remaining two are termed annamaya and prāṇamaya—the first, which is the outermost of the kosas, being the body or material covering of the jīva and standing for the physical side of individual existence; the second, representing its vital or organic side.
3 Cf. Brahma puccham pratiṣṭhā.
4 Compare in this connection the use of the term rasa, ‘aesthetic pleasure,’ for Brahman: Raso vai saḥ (Taittirīya Up. ii. 7).
with its many struggles and imperfections, it does so equally definitely in the other to its oneness with Brahman, which is beyond all strife and contradiction.

The word 'jiva' is derived from the root jīv, which means "to continue breathing." The name gives prominence to one of the two aspects of life's activity, viz. the biological or unconscious such as breathing, which goes on even when the mind is quiescent as in deep sleep. The Upaniṣads use two other terms for the soul, viz. bhoktā, 'experient' and kartā, 'agent,' which together emphasize the other, viz. the psychological or conscious aspect of the activity. The principle of unconscious activity is termed prāṇa; and that of conscious activity, manas. Every soul is conditioned by these two principles throughout its empirical existence. To these comparatively permanent adjuncts of it should be added the material body, which alone is replaced at every birth. These three together—the body, prāṇa and manas, form a sort of 'empirical home' for the soul. The conscious side of the soul's activity is carried on by manas with the aid of the ten indriyas—five of knowledge, viz. cakṣus, śrotra, tvak, ghrāṇa and rasanā, which are respectively the organs of sight, hearing, touch, smell and flavour; and five of action—vāk, pāṇi, pāda, pāyu and upastha, which are respectively the organs of speech, holding, moving, excretion and generation. Various faculties of manas like vijñāna and aham-kāra are mentioned; but the Upaniṣads, at the same time, are careful to emphasize its unity. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, after giving a list of several such faculties, avers 'All these are manas only.' As the central organ of consciousness, it is one, however widely its functions may differ. It controls both the sensory and motor organs. It co-ordinates the impressions received from outside through the former and also resolves, when necessary, upon acting with the aid of one or other of the five organs of action. The relation of

1 Cf. Praśna Up. iv. 9; Katha Up. I. iii. 4.
2 If we reckon manas as three-fold with its conscious, self-conscious and self-transcendent phases, we have here the five 'sheaths' of the doctrine of kośas. See Note 2 on the previous page.
3 I. v. 3.
manas to these two sets of organs has been compared\(^1\) to the relation of brain to the sensory and motor nerves.

The theory of cognition according to the Upaniṣads is not easy to find out. Yet there are a few hints which we may put together here: The usual Upaniṣadic expression for the things of experience, we know, is nāma-rūpa, which signifies that whatever is thought of or spoken about is the particular. The mind and the organs of sense function only within the realm of names and forms. That is, empirical knowledge is inevitably of the finite. But this does not mean that Brahman, the infinite, is unknowable. The very purpose of the Upaniṣads is to make it known. So Brahman also is knowable; only its knowledge is of a higher type than empirical knowledge. The *Mundaka Upaniṣad*\(^2\) classifies all knowledge into two—the higher (parā vidyā) and the lower (aparā vidyā), which are respectively the knowledge of Brahman and of empirical things. The higher knowledge may not enlighten us about the details concerning particular things, but it gives us an insight into the principle of their being, as the knowledge of a lump of clay for example may be said to do in regard to everything made of clay.\(^3\) In this sense it may be described as complete knowledge, and, as such, different from the lower knowledge, which even at its best is fragmentary. But there is no conflict between them. That is, however, only according to the cosmic conception of Brahman. There is another view equally prominent in the Upaniṣads, which harmonises with the acosmic conception. Brahman, according to it, transcends the very conditions of knowledge and consequently cannot be known. ‘Speech and thought recoil from it, failing to find it.’\(^4\) The Upaniṣads bring out this unknowability of Brahman in itself in various ways. The *Īṣa Upaniṣad*, for example, does so by predicating contradictory features of Brahman: ‘It moves; it moves not. It is far; it is near. It is within all this and also without all this.’\(^5\) But the best instance of it seems to have been found in an Upaniṣad, no longer extant, to which Śaṅkara refers in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*.\(^6\)

\(^1\) PU. p. 263.  
\(^2\) I. i. 4-5.  
\(^3\) Cf. Ch. Up. VI. i. 3-4.  
\(^4\) Taittiriya Up. ii. 4.  
\(^5\) Mantra 5.  
\(^6\) III. ii. 17. 
Bādhva, asked by Bāśkali to expound the nature of Brahman, did so, it is stated, by keeping silent. He prayed: ‘Teach me, Sir.’ The other was silent, and, when addressed a second and a third time, he replied: ‘I am teaching, but you do not follow. The self is silence: Upaśāntoyam ātmā.’ This view denies the name of vidyā to empirical knowledge, which, from the ultimate standpoint, is not knowledge at all, but only a sort of ignorance or avidyā. It may be asked whether such a view, by denying the possibility of knowing Brahman, does not make the teaching agnostic. The answer is that though we cannot know Brahman, we can be it. ‘He who “knows” Brahman will be Brahman.’ It is to the means leading to such a consummation that the name vidyā is confined here. Even before this result is reached we may realize that Brahman is though not what it is, for Brahman being fundamentally the same as our self, its existence, as already pointed out, is an immediate certainty. We cannot think of the Absolute, but all the same we are always in immediate contact with it in our own selves. Indeed we can never miss it.

We have so far had in view only the waking state. The Upaniṣads take a wider view of life and study the self under three other heads, viz. dream, dreamless sleep and what is termed the turiya state. Of these, dreaming like waking falls under psychology proper, for in it the mind functions; but the other two are supra-mental and are considered with a view to discover the real nature of the soul. It is noteworthy that at so early a period Indian thinkers should have thought of studying phenomena under varying conditions, which by eliminating or introducing one or more factors aid the discovery of their true character. Out of these four states only two seem to have been known at first, viz. waking and dream. Later, not only is a distinction made between dream and dreamless sleep, but a fourth or the turiya state is added whose very name implies a precedent stage when only three states were recognized. We shall now briefly characterize these three states:

(i) Dreams.—The references to dreams in the Upaniṣads

1 Mṛḍaka Up. III. ii. 9.

2 PU. p. 298.
are frequent, implying that they attracted a good deal of attention at the time. The dream-state is intermediate between waking and deep sleep. Its physical condition is that the organs of sense should become wholly quiescent; and the senses then are stated to unite with the manas. The essential difference therefore between waking and dreams is that while the manas in the former receives from outside impressions which it builds up into ideas, in the latter it fashions a world of forms unaided and by itself. For this purpose it uses the material of waking hours—generally visual and auditory. Although the stuff of which dreams are made is thus revived impressions, the experience of a dream is quite unlike reminiscence. It is felt as real for the time being—as real as perceptual experience, for as everybody knows the things dreamt of are apprehended as present and not as belonging to the past. For this reason, dreams have been described as ‘perception without sensation.’

(2) Dreamless sleep.—In this state, described as suṣupti, the manas as well as the senses is quiescent and there is consequently a cessation of normal or empirical consciousness. There is no longer any contrasting of one object with another or even of the subject with the object, and the embodied self is then said to attain a temporary union with the Absolute. As however suṣupti is not identified with the state of release, this statement has to be understood negatively—as only signifying that the consciousness of individuality is absent at the time though the individual himself continues to be, as shown by the sense of personal identity connecting the states before and after sleep. It is not a state of consciousness in the ordinary sense; but it is not a state of blank or absolute unconscioussness either, for some sort of awareness is associated with it. It is not, however, the ‘objectless knowing subject’ that endures in it, as it is sometimes stated; for along with the object, the subject also as such disappears then. It is rather a state of non-reflective awareness, if we may so term it. This state is above all desire and is therefore described as one of unalloyed bliss. ‘Sleep makes us all pashas.’ In a dream-state

1 See e.g. PU. p. 306.
the interests of the waking state may be absent, but it can by no means be called disinterested. It has its own pains and pleasures and lacks that complete calm which characterizes deep sleep. The perfect peace or happiness of sleep we even recollect after waking, for then our feeling is not merely that we have slept but that we have slept soundly.

(3) Turiya state.—This is a state which, as its improvised name suggests, is not within the experience of ordinary man. It may therefore be regarded as lying outside the strict limits of any empirical investigation. It is brought about voluntarily by the elimination of discursive thought, and resembles dreamless sleep in all respects but one. There is in it the same withdrawal of normal consciousness, the same absence of desires and the manifestation of almost the same bliss. But while the self fully reveals itself in the fourth state, the experience of dreamless sleep is extremely dim. The turiya is a mystic state to be testified to only by the person that is gifted with yogic power. But the truth he vouches for is not wholly beyond us. For we have on the one hand the negative evidence of susupti and on the other the positive one of the anandamaya phase of experience, which together enable us to get a 'conjectural insight' into the nature of the knower's experience. The attainment of this state is regarded as the culmination of spiritual training.

III

The diversity of views noticed in connection with the theoretical teaching of the Upaniṣads has its reflex in their practical teaching—both in regard to the ideal to be achieved and the means of achieving it. To take the latter as an example: We find one Upaniṣad mentioning three such different means for the attainment of immunity—devotion to truth, penance and Vedic study—and ascribing them to three specific teachers. There is sometimes also an attempt made to reconcile two opposing views current at the time, each of which was probably pursued independently. The Isa Upaniṣad, whose main feature seems to be this spirit of

1 Taittiriya Up. i. 9.
synthesis, tries to harmonize two such views in regard to attaining salvation. In the first of its eighteen verses it inculcates renunciation, but in the next verse qualifies it by adding that incessant exertion also is necessary. The Upaniṣad means thereby that one should not renounce activity and withdraw from the world, but give up only all thought of reaping any personal benefit from it—thus anticipating the well-known teaching of the Bhagavadgītā. We cannot consider all this diversity of views here, but shall refer only to the more prevalent among them.

The basis of Upaniṣadic ethics is to be found in the conception of evil, not as offending against the will of the gods or swerving from sacrificial rectitude as in the earlier period, but as the result of a metaphysical error which sees variety alone where there is also the unity of Brahman.¹ Empirical thought, failing to grasp the ultimate reality, distorts it or cuts it up into parts and presents them as distinct from one another. Evil is due on the practical side to this mistaken view of Reality as finiteness is on the theoretical side. It is thus contingent and has no place in the Absolute rightly understood. This misleading presentation of Reality is seen in the case not only of the objective world, but also of the self. It is because each of us regards himself as distinct from others that he strives to guard or aggrandize himself. ‘When unity is realized and every being becomes our very self—how can there be any delusion or sorrow then?’² In other words, all evil is traceable to aham-kāra, the affirmation of the finite self, and the consequent tendency to live not in harmony with the rest of the world, but in opposition or at best in indifference to it. The impulse behind this aham-kāra is not in itself bad and does not need to be wholly suppressed. The instinct to live or to strive to be,

¹ According to the acosmic ideal, no doubt, both the unity and diversity are equally unreal. Yet even in that view evil disappears the moment unity is realized. In other words, there is no difference between the two teachings so far as the problem of ethics is concerned. Evil originates, according to both alike, in the consciousness that diversity alone is true and it is overcome by the knowledge that unity underlies it, whatever explanation may eventually be given of that unity-in-diversity itself.

² Isā Up. 7.
which is what aham-kāra signifies, is a common feature of all animate existence and is only a manifestation of the desire for self-realization. But, being really a desire to transcend finite being, it will remain unsatisfied until it is rationalized through a knowledge of the ultimate truth and the wider self is averred in place of the narrower one. That is the meaning of Aham Brahma asmi,¹ which represents the realization of Brahman in one's own self as the highest ideal of life.

There are two well-defined descriptions of the ideal in the Upaniṣads. What is sought after in the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas is the continuance after death of individual existence in some exalted form (p. 46). This ideal of reaching life's goal after death survives in the Upaniṣads; and Brahman-realization is represented as taking place after dissociation from the physical body, as for instance in the passage quoted in a previous section to illustrate the cosmic ideal.² This eschatological ideal, however, appears here very much modified for, in accordance with the prevalent view of the Upaniṣads, what is to be reached is represented not as other than but as identical with what reaches it. ‘This is Brahman. May I become it when I depart hence.’ The significance of such a view is that mokṣa is a state of eternal bliss (ānanda), for it transcends duality which is the source of all strife.³ Along with this is found another ideal⁴ which regards mokṣa as a condition, not to be attained after death, but to be realized here and now, if one so wills. A person that has reached this state continues to see variety, but he is not deluded by it because he has realized in his own experience the unity of all. We have already drawn attention (p. 19) to the significance of this ideal in the history of Indian thought. What is most noteworthy about it is its recognition of the adequacy of the present life to perfect oneself. Unlike the

¹ Br. Up. I. iv. 10.
² Deussen regards this as the mokṣa doctrine appearing in an empirical form and therefore as derived from the other. See PU. pp. 358–9.
⁴ These two views were described later as krama-mukti and jīvan mukti respectively.
former, it signifies that mokṣa or release does not consist in a becoming something. It only means the discovery of what has always been a fact, and is compared to the discovery of a treasure which was all along lying hidden under the floor of one’s house, but which one had so far failed to find, though passing to and from over it constantly. It is the view that accords with the acosmic conception of Brahman with its implication of the phenomenality of the universe.

The practical teaching of the Upaniṣads is devised to bring about Brahma-realization in the above sense. It aims, as all such teaching should do, at the rectification of our thoughts and of our deeds. Broadly speaking, the course of discipline prescribed comprises two states:

1. **Cultivation of detachment (vairāgya).**—The prime object of Upaniṣadic discipline is the removal of aham-kāra, which is the basis of all evil; and vairāgya is the name given to that attitude towards the world which results from the successful eradication of the narrow selfish impulses for which it stands. Its accomplishment necessarily presupposes a long course of training through the three āśramas or disciplinary stages—those of the religious student (brahma-carya), the householder (gārhashthya) and the anchorite (vānaprastha)—so far as they were understood at the time. As the very word āśrama (‘toil’) means, they are stages of strife when selfishness is slowly but steadily rooted out. ‘The good is one thing, the pleasant, another; and he that wishes to live the life of the spirit must leave the sensual life far behind.’ This training leads to samnyāsa; but we should remember that the term does not yet bear in the Upaniṣads its present significance of a formal stage in the spiritual ascent of man. It there means only the transcending of the triple mode of āśrama life, and is regarded as a consequence of Brahma-knowledge rather than a means of attaining it. In the latter sense, samnyāsa appears comparatively late. The Upaniṣads, while fully recognizing the value of this preparatory training, do not ordinarily dwell at length upon it. They rather take it for granted and address themselves

1. Ch. Up. VIII. iii. 2.
to such as have already successfully undergone that training and have acquired vairāgya. That is the implication, for example, of the efforts made to keep the Upaniṣadic truth as a secret which we have already mentioned. The preliminary discipline, however, should not be viewed as wholly implicit in the Upaniṣads, for occasionally direct references to it in one or other of its various aspects are found, as for instance in a very short but most interesting section of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad. Here the inmates of the world are classified as gods (deva), men (manuṣya) and demons (asura), and are all described as the children of Prajā-pati. They approach their father seeking instruction from him as to how they should conduct themselves. The answer is brief, but it clearly indicates the necessity for grades in moral discipline according to the capacity and temperament of the persons in question. To the asuras, the commandment given is 'Have compassion on man' (dayadhvam); to the manuṣyas, 'Be generous' (datta); and to the devas, 'Learn self-control' (dāmyata). The first two of these prescribe regard for others as the chief principle of action. The third is unlike them and may appear to be purely individualistic; but, being addressed to the best, it should be taken to presuppose the training of the other two stages. The same Upaniṣad in another of its sections represents the gods as unwilling to allow man to withdraw from the sphere of social or relative morality, which is merely a rhetorical way of expressing that man ought not to break away from society (p. 21) until he has discharged his duty towards it and gained its goodwill, so to speak.

(2) Acquaintice of knowledge (jñāna).—Evil being due to a misconception of the nature of Reality, its removal can be

1 The failure to recognize this fact has been the source of some incorrect views regarding the place of morality in the Upaniṣadic scheme of life. Thus one of the common criticisms levelled against it is that it cares little or nothing for social morality and concerns itself solely with pointing out the way for individual perfection. Deussen e.g. has stated (PU. pp. 364–5) that among the ancient Indians 'the consciousness of human solidarity, of common needs and interests was but slightly developed.'

2 V. ii.

3 I. iv. 10. Cf. Śaṅkara's commentary.
only through right knowledge; and if the cultivation of detachment is also laid down as necessary, it is only to render the acquisition of such knowledge possible. Detachment is a pre-condition of right knowledge. ‘Having become calm, subdued, quiet, patiently enduring and collected, one should see the self in the self’ says the Brhadâranyaka Upanisad.  

The training of this second stage is threefold: śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. The first stands for the study of the Upanisads under a proper guru: ‘He that has a teacher knows.’ It defines the place of precept and tradition in the training. It also means that the influence of an ideal is never so great on us as when we are brought into personal contact with one who is a living embodiment of that ideal. Though necessary, śravaṇa is not enough; so it is supplemented by manana or continued reflection upon what has thus been learnt with a view to get an intellectual conviction regarding it. This training is to be further supplemented by nididhyāsana or meditation, which assists directly in the realization within oneself of the unity underlying the multiplicity of the universe. The necessity for this part of the training arises as follows: Our belief in the reality of diversity as such is the result of perception and is therefore immediate. So nothing but an equally immediate apprehension of unity can effectively remove it. If variety, in the reality of which we almost instinctively believe, is not to delude us, we must see the unity underlying it, not merely know it. Seeing is believing. That is why the Upanisads speak of darśana or ‘spiritual perception’ in respect of the ātman or Brahman. A mere reasoned conviction is not enough, though it is necessary to give us the mark, as it were, at which to shoot. A successful pursuit of this course of training will result in right knowledge, which, according to the eschatological view, will lead to mokṣa later, but which, according to the other, secures it at once.

Nididhyāsana in this sense is the highest form of medita-

1 Br. Up. IV. iv. 23.  
2 Id. II. iv. 5.  
3 Ācāryavān puruṣo veda: Ch. Up. VI. xiv. 2.  
4 Cf. Ātmā vā are draṣṭavyāḥ: Br. Up. II. iv. 5.  
5 Cf. Mundaka Up. II. ii. 2-4.
tion and is possible only after considerable practice in concentration of thought. Hence the Upaniṣads prescribe several meditative exercises of a preliminary character. They are usually called upāsanas, and the prominence given to them in the Upaniṣads is comparable to that given to rites in the Brāhmaṇas. We need notice only one or two points about them. In upāsanas, the thought may be directed wholly outwards and two selected objects, both external, may be mentally identified as in the meditation of the universe as a ‘horse’ alluded to above; or only one external object may be chosen and it may be thought of as identical with the contemplative’s own self. There is an important difference between the two forms of meditation. While the former affords exercise only in concentration, the latter gives scope, in addition, to the cultivation of sympathetic imagination—the power to place oneself in the position of another. It accordingly serves as a more direct aid to Brahma-realization, wherein also what is contemplated, viz. Brahman, is to be identified with the contemplative’s self. Again the objects of contemplation may be real objects or only symbols. Among real objects which the disciple is asked to think of as one with Brahman, we often find conceptions which were once taken for ultimate reality itself, but which in course of time, as philosophic thought progressed, were superseded by higher conceptions. Such for instance is the case with Prāṇa1 which marked an actual stage in the evolution of the conception of the Absolute. Among the symbols used for Brahman may be mentioned the famous Om, the mystic syllable, which finds a very important place in the Upaniṣads.2 Whatever form these meditations may take, they prepare the disciple for the final mode of contemplation as Aham Brahma asmi. When a person that has morally purified himself and has after formal study and reflection convinced himself intellectually of the truth of unity, succeeds through nididhyāsana in transforming what was heretofore known only mediately into an immediate certainty, he attains the spiritual goal.

It is, however, only a very few that can achieve this goal.

1 See e.g. Br. Up. I. iii. 
2 Cf. Pratna Up. v.