CHAPTER VIII: THE UPA НиSHADS

The age old Indian Philosophy is the Philosophy of the Upanishads. It is the cream of the Indian mind and the finest flower and the ripest fruit of Indian spirituality. They are so deep and all embracing that all other orthodox Indian systems rest on them.

According to the Upanishads, behind all the phenomenal nature, there is the Supreme Soul of the universe, the Highest Self, the Paramatman - The Absolute, which has the parallel to the Idealism of Plato, or to the Infinite Being of Spinoza or to Hegel's Rationality of the universe.

Behind the veil of the body and the senses, behind our reason and all psychological manifestation, beyond the ego with all its accidents and limitations, there is another Atman or Self. This Self can only be discovered by a severe moral and intellectual discipline, such as is practised by the sannyasin or meditant ascetic or yogi, a person having his senses and passions under complete control; and those who wish to know not themselves but their Self, have to penetrate behind the mind and the personality before they can find "the Self of Selves, the Old man, the Looker on". The highest knowledge possible to man begins to dawn when the Self within finds and knows its true Self in the Highest Self, the individual self being a mere transitory reflection of the
Eternal Self, and the highest aim of all thought and study is through this knowledge, to return to the Highest Self and regain identity with it. "The jar is broken, and the other that was in it is one with the one and undivided other from the jar once seemed to sever it". "Here to know is to be, to know the Atman is to be the Atman and the reward of this highest knowledge after death is freedom from new birth or immortality".

According to the Upanishads there are two forms of Brahman. Para and Apara, the Transcendent and the Immanent. Where there is no contradiction between the two. From the end of the world the Transcendent is viewed as the Immanent "Spirit-in-itself is Transcendent, Spirit is immanent in reference to the order of expression" - Hindu Mysticism, Sircar M.N. p. 49).

The Transcendent alone is Truth, the Dynamic Divine is the Transcendent presented in the aspect of relation. The Transcendent is called Para; the Supreme or the Higher, and the Immanent "Apara" or the not Supreme - or the lower. The immanent is 'Apara' in the sense that it is the view of Reality through a medium or relation and hence not direct or intimate, while the transcendent is the view of Reality in and through itself, and hence 'Para' but we must view Reality through the relation first, and then to pass beyond all relations Brahman is the Absolute. In fact, the Absolute is the existence of all existences, the truth of all truths, the
Reality of all realities (there is no plurality here. Those who are engrossed in plurality go on revolving in the cycle of birth and death. Fear proceeds from diversity. Unity is fearlessness - Isha Up. 7., Taitt. Up. 2.7.1). "Just as rivers, leaving their names and forms, merge in the ocean. So a wise man arising above name and form, becomes one with the Absolute - Mund. Up. 3.2.8". The Absolute is not limited by anything. It is free from the limitations of past, present and future. It is described as eternal, without beginning or end. It is of the Absolute, everything is Brahman. Nothing can be there other than Brahman.

The Brahman is the essence of all. All the gods and all the powers hitherto recognised are subordinate to Him. The gods Agni and Vâyu are unable respectively to burn or to blow away so much as a piece of straw without the power given to them by Brahman - Kena. Up. 14–23). The Upanishads make it perfectly clear that nothing does or can exist outside of Brahman. Within the all-comprehensive Self or Brahman, everything will be found to exist; therefore, it is said "Just as, my dear by one nugget of gold all there is made of gold is known, the modification being only a name, arising from speech, while the truth is that all is gold" - Ghhand. Up. V 14–6). Existence apart from Brahman is difficult to conceive according to the Upanishads. Brahman as the cause of the universe is all pervading. Therefore, "All
"this is Brahman" - Chhāṇḍ. Up. III 14.1). It is pointed out that Brahman is the shining one in the East, West, South and North, as the endless or the Infinite in the earth, air, sky, and ocean, as the luminous in the fire, sun, moon, and lightning and as possessing a support in breath, eye, ear and mind. This discourse also ends by adding that above all Brahman is to be known as the conscious Principle in oneself - Chhāṇḍ. Up. IV 4.15).

The Ātman is Transcendent awareness 'Who am I? asks the saint-seer. Looking within, veil after veil of conceptions and states of consciousness disappear. Mind remains: not your mind or my mind, but mind-only, empty of all thought forms, transparent, universal; an order of life-energy (prāṇa) which is, as it were, non-finite, self-shining 'space' (ākāśa; ročana divāh, ethereal space). This is an order of being or existence which fecundated by Transcendence, holds the archetypal 'forms' and 'forces' of all this is. Of these forms, MAN-form is the chief for us humans. But these forms, MAN-form is the ALL-form and not exclusively the counterpart of the earthly human being.

This MAN-form has no shape nor size nor continuity, for it is a birth-less deathless, potentiality unconstrained by space-time, cause-effect, or by change. This non-finite, immeasurable ALL-form, uni-form, fecundates 'dim' or coloured space, rajas, a firmament or 'ground', and
becomes the multi-forms, the universe as apprehended by our bodily senses and brain.

Now we are in the sphere of energy-exchanges (to use a modern scientific term) and we measure distance and time and acceleration, and we name it matter, or energy-mass, insanimate and animate. All separate forms in the world derive from ALL-form. Each of us, a man form, is related to MAN-form.

Are there three orders - Transcendence, mind-only, and the natural world?

There is but One Total Reality. Each one of us is aware of only a fraction of it at any moment. The name we give to this Total Reality as fragmentarily apprehended by our usual waking consciousness, is 'the objective world' or 'the natural order'. In subtler, quieter states, we apprehend inner depths of mind to which we are not usually awake. When such awakening reaches a peak point, we give the name Mind-Only, or Pure Mind (Mind regarded as the Ultimate Reality) to this same total Reality. When all separative self-consciousness has completely dissolved, and the One Reality is unobstructed by the fragmentary 'me', we name it transcendence (or, the One, the Godhead, the Absolute, the Infinite etc). What we are in fact doing when we give these names is to indicate our own different modes of awareness of the One and only Order. They may be three modes, or more, or less. It is convenient, how-
ever, for the purpose of communication, to talk in terms of, say, three orders. We constantly cognize multiplicity and differences. We are aware of the unity only rarely. This is due to our constitution, for even to continue to exist from day to day demands constant discrimination between all that supports life and all that destroys it. The differences make the relativity within the Total Reality; the One-Wholeness is its absoluteness. 

For the Holy Ones of the Upanishads, Brahman or Atman, realized Transcendent, is 'THAT, from which speech and mind return not having attained'. (Taitt.2.4., Sandilya 2., Tejobindu 1.20; 3.8, 38, Maitreya 1.9.) This chapter is indebted to P.D. Mehta 'The Heart of Religion'.
The word *Upanishads* literally means "secret teaching" (rahasya) or the teaching which was jealously guarded from the unworthy and was imparted, in private, only to pupils of tried character. It has since come to be applied also to the treatises which embody such teaching. The classical *Upanishads* represent the flower of Vedic thought.

Broadly speaking, the teaching of the *Upanishads* marks a reaction against that of the *Brāhmaṇas* which inculcate an elaborate system of ritual. In more than one place, they decry the value of sacrifices, e.g. Brh. Up. I. IV. 10. "It is not pleasing to the gods that man should know the Ultimate Truth, for that, by revealing to him their true place in the universe which is by no means supreme, will result in their losing the sacrificial offerings they would otherwise receive from him". The gods, according to this view, are much like men; and their worship or sacrifice to them bring no lasting result, as devotion to philosphic truth does. But it has to be added that, within the Vedic period itself, this spirit of antagonism to ritual is modified and ceremonial life comes to be recognised as necessary, either directly or indirectly, for attaining the true and final goal of life. - Brh. Up. 4. 4. 22.

The *Upanishads* thus came finally to represent the teaching of the *Veda* in its entirety, and not of its final portions only. It is the characteristic feature of all
advance in Indian culture that when a new stage of pro-
gress is reached, the old is not discarded but is, sooner
or later, incorporated in it.

There are great, almost insurmountable, difficul-
ties in deciding what exactly is the teaching of the Upa-
nishads in certain important respects. This accountS for
the emergence in later times of diverse schools of Veda-
anta, all of which claim to propound the UpanishadSc teac-
ching. It is clear, however, that the prevailing view in
them is monistic and absolustic that is to say, they
teach that the Ultimate Reality is one and only one. Its
unseen, but pervasive, presence is thus set forth in one
of the Upanishads. "It is Brahman that is below and is
above, that is to the west and to the east, that is to
the south and to the north. Brahman, indeed, is this
whole universe". Chha. Up.7.25.2., Mundaka Up.2.2.2.)
The teaching is also idealistic in the sense that this
single reality is conceived of as spiritual in its nature,
and that every thing else is explained as existing in
and through it. Referring to all things and to all liv-
ing beings, another Upanishad says, "All this is based
upon spirit; spirit is the foundation of the universe,
spirit is Brahman".- Aitareya Up.3.3.). This is not to
say that either pluralism or the belief that the ultimate
entities are many, and realism or the belief that matter
is as real as spirit or mind, are unknown to the Upani-
shads, taken as a whole. It only means that they are
not conspicuous in them. They appear there like distant
echoes of the teaching of the earlier portions of the
Veda which, speaking in the main, is neither monistic
What is the exact character of the doctrine of unity which is the predominant teaching of the Upanishads? It is necessary to call attention to certain details of the earlier Vedic teaching before attempting to answer this question. According to the monistic view of the Veda i.e. R.V.10.129, it traces the world not to a creator but to a single primordial cause which unfolds itself as the universe in all its diversity. It appears as the Infinite (aditi) in one place, and as time (kāla) in another. The above mentioned remarkably profound hymn (i.e. R.V. 10.129) marks the climax of speculative thought; it designated as "That One" (Tat Ekam). It will be seen that the monism is the result of trying to account for the whole universe - nature, men and gods - regarded from the outside or objectively.

Further the aim of the monistic doctrine of the Upanishads is the discovery, not of a cosmic principle - the source of the world as a whole, but of the psychic principle - the inner essence of man. The culmination of this inquiry is represented by ātman or the self which is sometimes described negatively by denying that it is breath, the senses, etc., which are not-self (anātman), and sometimes as the true subject which knows but can never be known - "the unseen seer, the unheard hearer and the unthought thinker". The idea, in either case,
is that it is unknowable in the ordinary sense of the term. One Upanishad brings out this uniqueness of the self by stating paradoxically that it is known only to those that do not know it, meaning that, though intuitively realizable, it cannot be made the object of thought.

Thus Brahman means the eternal principle as realized in the world as a whole; and Atman, the inmost essence of one's own self. These two conceptions - Brahman and Atman - are of great importance and occur not only independently in the literature of this period, but are sometimes correlated with each other; and their parallelism is pointed out by representing the self of the world as related to the physical universe in the same manner in which the individual self is related to its body. It is represented by the well-known 'That thought' (Tat tvam asi) and "I am Brahman" (Aham Brahmasmi). They mean that the principle underlying the world as a whole, and that which forms the essence of man, are ultimately the same. Here ended the long Indian quest for the pervasive cause of all things - the search, as the Upanishads express it, for "that by knowing which all will be known".

It is necessary to point out the full significance of this identification. Brahman, as the ultimate cosmic principle or the source of the whole universe, is all-comprehensive. But such a principle need not be spiritual
in its nature, and may well be a material or physical entity. Further, an objective conception like the above is little more than a hypothesis to account for the origin of the universe; and there is nothing compelling us to regard it as actually existing, there being no logical absurdity in denying it. Some thinkers already seem to have done so in the Upanishadic period and maintained that "in the beginning this world was just non-being" - Ch. Up. VI. 2, 1-2.) The establishment of the spiritual character of this principle and the removal of the uncertainty about its existence are both accomplished by its identification with ātman or the self. For our own self is known to us to be spiritual and there is an intuitive obligation to recognize it, in some sense, as indubitable. If we start from the idea of self, instead of that of Brahman, we meet with a similar difficulty, for, while the self points to what is spiritual and is an incontrovertible certainty, it is, as known to us, necessarily limited in its nature. Whatever view we may take of its nature, it is determined on one side by the world of nature, and on the other by the other selves. It is this deficiency of finiteness that is made good by its identification with Brahman or the comprehensive first cause of the universe. The outcome of the identification therefore is that the Ultimate Reality, which may indifferentely be termed either Brahman or ātman, is spiritual
and that it accounts for not only all the selves but also the whole of the physical universe. That is the meaning of monism or the doctrine of unity as taught in the Upanishads.

The spiritual and unitary character of this absolute reality is very well expressed by the classical phrase \textit{Saccidananda}. As a single term defining its nature, it is met with only in the later Upanishads; but its three elements - sat, cit and \textit{ananda} - are predicated of Brahman, singly and in pairs, even in the earliest of them. \textit{Sat}, which means "being", points to the positive character of Brahman distinguishing it from all non-being. But positive entities, to judge from our experience, may be spiritual or not. The next epithet \textit{cit}, which means "sentience", shows that it is spiritual. The last epithet \textit{ananda}, which stands for "peace" indicates its unitary and all-embracing character, in as much as variety is the source of all trouble and restlessness. "Dvityāt vai bhayam bhavati, i.e. Fear arises from the other" - \textit{Br. Up. I, IV, 2.}, as a famous Upanishadic saying has it. Thus the three epithets together signify that Brahman is the sole spiritual reality or the Absolute, which comprehends not only all being (\textit{sāt}) but also all thought (\textit{cit}) so that whatever partakes of the character of either must eventually be traced to it. In other words, it is the
source of the whole universe, while it itself is self-existent and self-revealing, there being no other entity from which it could be derived or by which it might be made known.

Another of the chief difficulties in understanding the Upanishads arises in determining the exact relation of this unitary principle to the world and to the individual selves. There are several passages which teach that the world is but an appearance, and that it has not actual place in the Ultimate Reality. There are other passages, not less numerous, which grant reality to the world though, at the same time, they maintain that it is never apart from Brahman or the Absolute. Saṅkara examines both these positions in his several commentaries, and concludes that the former is the true teaching of the Upanishads. The latter view, according to him, is put forward in them only tentatively. That is, it marks only the first step in the teaching; and the Upanishads finally retract this view, affirming in its place the other, Viz. that Brahman and nothing besides it is truly real. Thus the reality conceded to the world in such passages is not meant to be taken as Ultimate. The concession is merely for adjusting the final teaching to common or empirical ways of thinking, which assume diversity to be quite real. It represents but the "lower" truth (aparā vidyā) which serves as a stepping stone to the comprehension
of the "higher" (parā-vidyā) - a distinction which is sometimes explicitly endorsed in the Upanishads. e.g. Prosna Up.V,2: "Verily, O Satyakāma, that which is the syllable Om is both the higher and the lower Brahman".

As regards the individual self, Saṅkara takes it to be Brahman itself appearing as finite because of its adjuncts like the body which, as parts of the physical universe, are not real in the true sense of the term.

As Brahman, the Ultimate Reality is one; but as souls and the world, it is many. The whole universe on this view, actually emerges from Brahman and therefore necessarily partakes of its character of reality. The richness of its content indicates that Brahman, its source, is complex; only the complexity is sometimes manifest, and at other times latent. The former is the period of creation (srsti); and the latter is that of dissolution (pralaya) which, according to immemorial Indian belief, succeed each other endlessly. At the end of each cycle, the variety returns to Brahman, but re-emerges from it at the beginning of the next cycle. The distinction made here between a latent and a manifest stage of the universe implies the dynamic character of Ultimate Reality, and the view is accordingly described as "the doctrine of self-evolving Brahman" (Brahma-parināma-vāda). This view also, like the previous one, is monistic since it admits no reality outside
Brahman. It may also be described as idealistic for, though it may not explain the world as an appearance, it denies ultimate meaning or value to it, except when viewed as an element in Brahman, the absolute spirit.

In whichever of these two ways we conceive of Brahman, it is the source from which the universe, in all its organic and inorganic aspects, comes into being. In the first place, it gives rise to the five "elements" (bhūta), as they are called, space (ākāsa), air (vāyu), fire (agni), water (ap) and earth (prthvi). Each of these elements has its own distinctive quality. Space is characterized by sound (sabda), air by touch (sparsha), fire by colour (rūpe), water by taste (rasa) and earth by odour (gandha). This classification, which has been accepted by nearly all the later Indian philosophers, it is obvious, corresponds to the fivefold scheme of the organs of sense - those of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, and should have been suggested by it. From these elements are derived, on the other hand, the whole of the inorganic world consisting of things like hills and rivers and, on the other, the organic bodies of plants, animals and men, all of which house souls which are ultimately Brahman itself or, in any case, not quite different from it.

What is the bearing of such a view of Ultimate Reality on our everyday life? The most striking feature of the latter is the conviction which it involves,
that diversity is real and ultimate. The presupposition of most, if not all, of the activities of life is that one man is different from another. The very efforts made through social and political organizations to unify men imply that they regard themselves as distinct. If man is distinct from man, his distinction from his physical environment is even clearer. It is not merely man that is distinct from matter; matter itself, whether it serves as an adjunct of the self like the physical body and the organs of sense or as its environment, seems to be diverse in its character, each object having its own individuality or, as the Upanishads express it, its own name (नाम) and its own form (रूप). It is obvious that, if monism is the truth, no part of this diversity can be ultimate. That is the significance of the teaching of the Upanishads, so far as our common beliefs are concerned.

The diversity given in everyday experience may only be an appearance of Brahman and therefore false, as one school of interpreters of the Upanishads holds; but, even according to the other school, it is not the whole of truth, for unity also is equally real. And yet it appears to be the sole truth, owing to an inveterate habit of our mind which should be traced to our ignorance (avidyā) of the Ultimate Reality.

This is what is meant by मूया - the power or the
principle that conceals from us the true character of reality. The ignorance may be regarded as negative, that is, as merely a lack of knowledge of the unity underlying the diversity given in common experience; or it may be looked upon as positive in the sense that it gives rise to a misapprehension, making us see the manifold world where there is Brahman and only Brahman. In the former case, our common knowledge would be correct so far as it went, although it did not go far enough to comprehend the unity also; in the latter case, it would be almost completely erroneous. The goal of life as conceived in the Upanishads is, in either case, to overcome this congenital ignorance, by attaining full enlightenment or jñāna. The enlightened state is called release or mokṣa. It is attaining one's true selfhood in Brahman.

This enlightenment, however, does not mean only an intellectual apprehension of the view that all is one, but also an actual realization of that unity in our own experience. In other words, the aim of studying philosophy is not merely to gratify theoretical curiosity, however disinterested that curiosity maybe; it is also to live the right kind of life, consciously adjusting one's conduct to one's intellectual convictions. It is in this sense of devotion to worthier living and not in
the sense of dogma or superstition, that religion is
blended with philosophy in India.

Acquiring such enlightenment means a long course
of training. In the first place, the truth, as taught
in the Upanishads, needs to be learnt from a proper
preceptor (guru). This stage of the training is called
sravana or "formal study". But merely to accept the
teaching, although it may be quite true, would constitute
blind faith; and it does not become philosophy until its
rational support is sought out. The beliefs of others
are, no doubt, often of immense use to us, for we cannot
know everything for ourselves. Man's advance is mostly
due to his capacity for receiving and profiting by the
thought and experience of others. But the matter is
altogether different in the case of a subject like phil-
osophy, whose relation to life is so peculiarly intimate.
Others may teach us here the truths which they have re-
ached as well as the method by which they did so; but,
unless we successfully repeat that process and rediscover
those truths for ourselves, we cannot get that depth of
conviction which alone can be called "philosophy" in the
complete sense of the term. If these are facts which are
beyond the reach of reason and cannot there be
absolutely demonstrated, philosophy should at least point
to the likelihood of their being true. This is recognized
in the Upanishads, for they prescribe what is called
manana or "reflection" in addition to study (sravana) in the sense of learning the truth from a preceptor. It means that philosophy, though it may begin as faith, does not end there.

The training prescribed in the Upanishads does not stop here. It includes what is called dhyāna or "meditation", which means constant meditation dwelling upon the truth of which one has become intellectually convinced. A number of sections in the Upanishads are taken up with describing modes of exercises, or upāsanas as they are called, which prepare the disciple for contemplating the Ultimate Truth, by accustoming him to drag away his mind from all disturbing thoughts and fix it on one object only. The aim of the final contemplation is to enable him to grasp the unity of existence directly - as directly as he has grasped its diversity. Thus if reflection (manana) is for getting intellectual conviction, meditation (dhyāna) is for gaining direct experience. Without the acquisition of such immediate or intuitive experience, philosophy, even if it represents a logical certainty, will be of purely academic interest. Such theoretical knowledge may be mental accomplishment; but, being mediate, it cannot dispel the immediate conviction in the ultimacy of diversity and will not therefore become a permanent influence on life. The Upanishads base this part of their teachings on a fact
of experience viz. that a mediate knowledge of truth cannot overcome an immediate illusion - that seeing alone is believing.

But to be effective or even possible, the meditation requires not merely an intellectual conviction concerning the Ultimate Truth, but also detachment from selfish interests. This was the idea underlying the practice, of keeping the Upanishadic teaching as secret and imparting it only to true and tried pupils. "Give it to none that is not tranquil", for it was feared that an indiscriminate broadcasting of the truth that all is one might lead to its distortion and bring it into discredit.

The ethical training, which detachment signifies, is generally taken for granted in the Upanishads, and is consequently not dwelt upon much in them. But where they refer to it, they definitely bring out its importance, as for example, in the beginning of the Katha Upanishad, where a youth who seeks to know from the God of Death whether the soul survives the body or not is tempted in several ways by the offer of wealth and power before the truth is made known to him. But it is not merely a spirit of self-abnegation that is presupposed by the Upanishadic teaching; equal emphasis is laid in it on what is described as social morality. Thus in another Upanishad, Prajapati, who is an ethical authority, as we know, enjoys the practice not only of self-denial but also of
generosity and compassion - Br.UP.V,2. Hence it is not right to hold, as some do, that the Upanishads do not care much for social morality and concern themselves solely with pointing out the way to individual perfection.

The Upanishads describe Brahman itself as without evil - a description whose implication is that he who desires to attain Brahma-hood should strive to free himself from all forms of evil. The culmination of this ethical training is symbolized in formal renunciation or samnyasa, which finds a prominent place in the Upanishads. It is the ascetic (nirrtti), as distinguished from the activistic (pravrtti) way of life taught in the Brähmanas.

To restate briefly the entire course of discipline: the necessary pre-condition for starting on the course of Vedantic life is detachment. In other words, no one that has not undergone a course of ethical training calculated to kill all egoistic impulses is qualified for a serious study of the Upanishads. When this preliminary qualification is acquired, there is a three-fold training which is mainly intellectual: 1) learning the Ultimate Truth with the assistance of a teacher (sravana), 2) reflection upon what has been so learnt with a view to convince oneself of the certainty or, at least, the
probability of it (manana) and 3) meditation which aims at deepening and intensifying that conviction until it effectively uproots all beliefs that are inconsistent with it (dhyāna).

The goal of life, as already indicated, is the attainment of release (mokṣa) from the empirical state of saṁsāra or the recurrent round of birth and death. It is becoming Brahman or, what comes to the same thing, the realization of one's own true nature. In accordance with the double view of the Ultimate Truth found in the Upanishads, this is conceived in two ways. It is a condition, according to some like Saṅkara, in which the self remains by itself - partless and peaceful; and, according to others like Bhartṛprapāṇa, it is a condition in which only the sense of diversity as ultimate disappears and an all-comprehensive reality is experienced as identical with oneself. In either case, it is a state of moral and intellectual perfection, transcending the distinctions we commonly make between the self and the not-self, and between good and evil. That this good is achievable in the present life seems to be the teaching of the Upanishads, taken as a whole. It is known as jīvamukti or "liberation while still alive". "When all desires lodged in the heart disappear", says the Katha Upanishad, "then man becomes immortal and
(even) here attains "brahman". Here, for instance, is a distinct mention of it. In the condition of jivan-mukti, the diversity of the world - even according to those who believe it to be false - does not cease to appear; but the belief in its ultimacy is once for all destroyed. This conception of release marks a great advance on the earlier Vedic belief that the final ideal of man can be attained only hereafter. Socrates is stated to have brought philosophy down from heaven to earth; the seers of the Upanishads, we may say, discovered that heaven itself is on the earth, could one but realize it. When in the end a person that has reached this stage is dissociated from his physical accompaniments, he becomes "brahman itself. That is final release (videha-mukti).

We have so far restricted our attention to persons, who succeed in killing every passion and acquire complete enlightenment in this life. But their number must necessarily be very small. Of the others, who form the large majority, the Upanishads may be said to make two broad divisions - those that pursue the right path of life, though they are not able to acquire full enlightenment in this life, and those that yield to natural impulses, because they lack self-control.

The former, the second best progress from one state of existence to a higher without returning to the
world of mortals, until at last they find release from the cycle of birth and death. This progressive realization (krama - mukti) of the ideal of life is what some Vedāntins consider to be the sole form of release taught in the Upanishads. It corresponds to the eschatological view of the goal of man. Only the result is conceived here as absolute liberation from the conditions of worldly existence, and not as a sublimated life of joy in the world of gods. The latter class of people, on the other hand, viz. the self-indulgent who fail to bridle their desires, are born again and again, their condition in any particular life being determined by "the nature of their deeds and the nature of their thoughts" in the past (Katha.Up. II, 2,7; Yatha-karma yatha-srutam). The belief in the Karma doctrine implied here forms a characteristic feature of Upanishadic teaching "good deeds lead to good; and evil deeds, to evil" - Punyena punyam lokam nayati, papena papam - Prasna Up. III 7).

References from "The essentials of Indian Philosophy" by M. HIRIYANNA, George Allen & Unwin, London 1956.