"IDEALISTIC THOUGHT IN THE VEDAS AND THE UPAŅIṢADS"

In the construction of a building, the foundation stone is of great importance. This is true of every construction. In the build-up of Indian Philosophy, the early thought of the Vedas and Upaniṣads is considered as the foundation stone. The Rgveda is the oldest sound literary record of Indian thought, which reflects the continuous endeavour of the intellect to solve the mystery of the world that is before us.

The mundane world with all its alluring complexities was an enchanting topic for the Vedic seers. They were all aware of Nature in its various aspects, which they believed to have their presiding deities and so dedicated hymns to them.

Gradually, they became curious about the creator of this fascinating world of appearance. In the course of their sincere inquiry about the creator, various trends like Henotheism, Pantheism, Monotheism and Monism emerged.

A student of the Rgveda can easily see how the simple naturalistic hymns replete with poetry, developed
into the highest type of Monistic thought. Of course, though the monistic ideas are not found in a full-fledged form, one can clearly see that the Vedic seers were conscious enough about a single, sentient principle as the Ultimate Reality, from which everything emerges. Hence it can be said that a belief in a spiritual Reality is found, and this can lead ahead in the direction of Idealism in its different shades.

The Philosophical Hymns of the Rgveda:

The philosophical hymns of the Rgveda represent the early Indian thought. Some of the hymns of the first and the tenth Mandalas are replete with philosophical views. When the seer was not content with polytheism, he turned gradually towards Monotheism. He felt that over and above these numerous seemingly great deities, there should be one Ultimate Reality, or these deities should be but different aspects or powers of that one all powerful God.

In the Asya vāmiya sūkta, it is stated that the different gods are manifestations of one Ultimate Reality.
"To what is one, sages give many titles."¹ This suggests that the Vedic seer was conscious about a Non-dual Ultimate Reality. Though we cannot state with certainty whether this concept was strictly Monistic, there is certainly the germ of Monism in it. It is further evident that the Vedic seer has realised that the Ultimate Reality is of the nature of existence-cum-consciousness.

We find the idea of Non-dual Reality emphasized in the Puruṣa-sūkta also. Its seer has put forth this concept through a fine metaphor: "The puruṣa was thousand-headed, thousand eyed and thousand footed, having covered the earth on all sides, he stood beyond it to the length of ten āṅgulas"...."Puruṣa himself is all this, that has been and that will be, and he is the ruler of immortality".... "Thus far extended is his greatness and greater than this is the puruṣa himself, a quarter of him is all the creatures, three quarters of him are the immortals in the

¹ Rgveda I. 164-46.
This clearly indicates the inability of human intellect to describe fully the omnipresent character of the Ultimate Reality, the Supreme Lord. That is to say, this shows that the Vedic seer is conscious enough about the characteristics of the Ultimate Reality, which can not be described by human intellect.

Another hymn, viz. the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta also contains Monotheistic ideas. In this Sūkta, Hiranyagarbha is considered to be the Non-dual Reality. It is stated, "Hiranyagarbha existed in the beginning, as soon as he was born, he became the sole lord of the created world. He supported the earth and also this heaven. What god shall serve with an oblation?"  

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1. ब्रह्मचारिण्य पुरुषः ब्रह्मचारिण्य पुरुषः ।
   स मृते विभ्रमित कुल्यात्वात्यतिष्ठुत ध्रुवम् ॥ १ ॥
   पुरुषः वेदः सर्वं वृद्धि तत्र मयैः ॥ २ (a/b)
   खलुवाच्च महामाते ज्यायायः पुरुषः ।
   पादीश्च विस्तर्वो मृगति त्रिपदश्चादिवः दिवी ॥ ३ ॥

- Rgveda X-90.


2. विर्भुव्याहः संभव्यति पृथ्वय जगत्: पतिः बालीः ।
   वं देवार्थ वृद्धिः कथा न देवाय दुष्किर्य विशेष ॥ २ ॥

- Rgveda X. 121.1

Velankar’s Translation, P.294.
Besides, hymns like the Skāmbha sūkta of the Atharvaveda put forth monistic views. Here the Skāmbha, that is to say, the supporter supreme self is declared as pervading the whole universe. It is depicted as the only thing comprising everything in itself.¹ So, recognising one spiritual Reality, the vedic thought was gradually progressing ahead on the path of Idealism.

The Nāsadīya Sūkta can be helpful to us in the direction of Monistic Idealism. In this sūkta, the seer's inability to explain the creation is conspicuous. Since time immemorial, the quest of the human mind to solve the riddle of creation is going on. It is a thirst, which is never slaked. This hymn represents the over-awed human mind, which is not able to arrive at a concrete conclusion. It is rightly stated by A.B.Keith. "It is the hymn of creation, and exhibits not merely the putting of the question of the nature of the universe, but an effort to enter into detail, followed by confession of doubt as to the value of the result achieved."² A very deep inquiry

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1. See Atharvaveda X 7,8.
of the human mind to find out the beginning of the universe is expressed in the very first Rc of the Násadīya Sūkta, "There was neither non-existent, nor existent then..." Here, the seer's embarrassment is easily seen, as he cannot find out appropriate words to describe the state of this universe in the beginning. But in the second Rc, the word 'Tad Ekaṁ' shows that the vedic seer was fully aware about the Non-dual sentient Ultimate Reality. Then the third Rc states, "In the beginning, darkness was concealed by darkness." Here, the seer seems to be struggling to find some expression to describe the initial state, when there was nothing distinct. It was all a mass. As there was merely darkness in the beginning, it was difficult to differentiate. Of course, it was not the darkness, that we experience. It was something else. Hence it is stated, "darkness was

1. नासद्या सुक्ते र्ग्वेदम्।

--- Rgveda X-129-1 (ab)

2. वानीदावत्सक्ष्य स्वस्वस्ती तद्भवयुक्तायाः वस्माद्वधान्यायाम पुरोऽसि कृतं चूक्ति ॥

--- Rgveda X 129-2 (cd)

3. तं वानीदावत्सक्ष्य गुह्यमणिः ॥

--- Rgveda X 129-3 (ab)

Velankar's Translation p.300.
concealed by darkness." Further, as the forth Rg states, "It was desire, which was the first seed of the mind, that took possession of that in the beginning."\(^1\) As Sāyāna states, "In the beginning of this manifold world, at first, desire (kāma) arose in the mind of God."\(^2\) Thus, 'desire' is considered to be responsible for this complex network of this world. Of course, desire for something is the very root cause of the mental effort which prompts physical activity for the creation or the attainment of the desired entity. But those, who believe that nothing exists except the sentient entity, can interpret this statement to mean that we imagine the external objects or the world of appearance as we desire them. The last Rg confesses the inability to arrive at a definite answer to the problem of creation. "That God who is the supervisor of this in the highest heaven, indeed knows; or may be, even he does not know from whom this varied

1. कामाकृति समकालिकचि कस्मि रैः प्रवचन यदालोदः।
   - Rgveda X-129-4.

2. Sāyāna on Rgveda X 129-4.
creation arose, and whether he created it or not.  

Thus, this hymn indicates that the mystery of the world creation cannot be solved. No one is able to arrive at a specific answer. One can only satisfy oneself with different types of guesses. On the one hand, this hymn could be interpreted to mean that the world is beginningless (anādi), and there was no first creation. On the other hand, it could also be interpreted to mean that there has never been any creation at all! Those, who propounded later the philosophy of the unreality of the world, point this out as one of the vedic sources, which could support their line of thought, though this does not seem to be what the vedic seer really meant.

We may say, the Nāsadiya Sukta, which is a landmark in the history of Indian Philosophy, can guide us towards Idealism. Though, there is no definite view expressed about this world of appearance. We can interpret it in a way, which could support Idealism. Holders

1. तत्र विद्वानां आधुन मयादेव तयादेव अनुतरते।
   विद्वान्वितम् परमेश्वरं वा महाभूतं वा विद्य । ॥ ७ ॥

   - Rigveda X 129-7.

   Velankar's Translation, P.302.
of the unreality of the world appearance could interpret it to mean that there is no creation at all. But it is hazardous to make such a bold statement as coming from a seer of the vedic times! Nevertheless, we can take this idea, rather an expression as a germ of the later development of Idealism. We can only say that the expressions employed in this Sūkta, and the sense of mystery displayed helped considerably in the development of Idealistic thought.

(ii)

The Upaniṣads, presenting the acme of vedic thought have been illuminating Indian culture since time immemorial. According to Deussen, "The Upaniṣads teach that this universe is not the ātman, the proper 'self' of things, but a mere māyā, a deception an illusion."¹ While Dr. Radhakrishnan holds "There is hardly any suggestion in the Upaniṣads that the entire universe of change is a baseless fabric of fancy, a mere pheno-

mental show or a world of shadows... Whatever it be, the germ of monistic Idealism planted in the Rigveda, later sprouted forth in the Upaniṣads. That the Ultimate Reality is sentient is the fundamental belief of the Upaniṣads; and hence the Upaniṣadic thought can safely be said to be of the type of Idealism.

At first, we shall try to examine the Idealistic thought of the Upaniṣads according to which 'the Self' viz. Brahman is the Ultimate spiritual Reality and then we shall try to concentrate on the type of Idealism, which asserts that this world of appearance is unreal, merely a fiction, or a projection of the mind and having no reality of its own. It can be said with confidence that this latter type of Idealism was not prevalent during the Upaniṣadic period, though some Upaniṣads, which are considered as minor and later, present scattered traces of the thought that the world of appearance is an imaginary construct.

There are more than one hundred Upaniṣads, but

only a few of them are considered as the principal ones, those on which Śaṅkara commented. As Dasgupta states in the *History of Indian Philosophy*, "The earliest and most important are probably those that have been commented upon by Śaṅkara, namely Brhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Īsā, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka and Māṇḍūkya."¹ Besides these, three more upāṇiṣads, viz. Kaṭaṅgiṭaka, Śvetāsvatara and Maitrāyaṇī are found added to the list of principal upāṇiṣads. The Maitrāyaṇī upāṇiṣad is regarded as the latest one among these upāṇiṣads. Mostly, the major upāṇiṣads are considered pre-Buddhistic. As Deussen, Max Müller, Winternitz are not unanimous about the chronological order of the upāṇiṣads,² we do not mention here their chronological order.


Idealistic Views Expressed In the Upanisads:

In the Upanisads, we find two types of concepts regarding this phenomenal world. Some passages emphasize creation in very clear terms. On the other hand we do find passages which deny plurality and difference, and regard the Ultimate principle viz. Brahman as the only reality. This Ultimate sentient Reality is said to be devoid of characteristics such as colour, taste, size, etc.

Now, most of the Acaryas have interpreted this latter class of passages to mean that the phenomenal

1. तद्भवम् सत्यमात्मात्म: वाकाशं ब्रम्वूति:।
   व हमः लोकान्यूजः ।
   - Ait. Up. II.
   व प्राणवः प्राणाछ्विकों र्वे कायोम्यंटराप: प्रस्तुतिनिद्राय:
   मौलिन्यसाब्रह्मविजय्य तपो मन्त्र: कच्च लोका लोके च नाम च।। 4 ।।

2. महाभाष्यम् नेह नामास्तिक सन्दिच ।
   मुल्योऽ व मूल्यं गच्छति य हस नानेव पश्यति।। 22 ।।
   - Katha Up. II.1.11
   कथे खण्ड्य हृदय ।
   वाचार्यत्वां किरौ नामक्यं वर्धिस्तिह चतर्यस। -Chā. Up. VI.1.4
   वेद हृद्येक्षण वाबबगिेवाच्यविवस्तिह ।
   - Chā. Up. VI.2.1

3. बश्यदस्म्यप्रस्तंबमय्य तथावर्ग: निर्म्यमन्यख्य यतः।। ।।
   - Katha. Up. I.3.15(ab)
world cannot exist apart from Brahman, the Ultimate Reality of the nature of sentiency. Brahman is devoid of the characteristics found in the mundane world. The world has emerged from Brahman, and it is to Brahman, that the world owes its existence. So it is unwise to consider the world as absolutely non-existent. But on the other hand, there have been Ācāryas like Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara, who interpreted these passages to mean that the one Ultimate Reality alone exists. It is neither a knower nor a doer. It is one without a second, eternally and absolutely unchanging; it alone is real, and nothing else exists. So naturally, the reality of the world is denied.

Now, we shall consider those passages, which can be interpreted to have the meaning that apart from the Ultimate Reality, this world of appearance is unreal. Of course, we cannot make the bold statement that the Upaniṣads declare that this world of appearance is a fiction. But they certainly have expressions and ideas which could be interpreted as leading to full-fledged Idealism. They contain glimmerings of Idealism, which shone forth brightly afterwards. Hence such passages
can be interpreted as containing the germ of Idealism.

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, (VI-1), we find the view, which emphasizes that everything except the Supreme spirit is a modification, a verbal creation, but a name. This has been interpreted to mean that this phenomenal world, which contains duality, is a verbal creation; and hence it must be considered to be unreal! The Supreme self is the sole Reality.

In the sixth Prapāṭhaka of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Uddālaka instructs his son Śvetaketu about the Supreme Reality. He presents analogies of clay, gold, iron and their modifications as follows: "Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay, all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech, while the truth is that it is just clay."¹ This signifies that clay is the only reality, and its transformations such as pot, jar, etc. are unreal, apart from their

¹. क्या हो गैरन मृत्युपन्तन सब पूर्णपर्य ्विज्ञाति
स्वाभाविक यम्य विकारं नामकार्ये मृत्युन्मत्येव सत्यम् ॥ ४ ॥


Radhakrishnan-(ed) The Principal Upaniṣads,
English Translation, PP.446-447 (1953).
George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
cause viz. clay. Various shapes viz. pot, jar etc. are nothing but clay only. Clay is the very essence, without which no pot, jar etc. exist. Clay always remains the same in its various transformations. Whether one calls a thing pot or jar, it is really clay. The same is the case with the world of appearance, and its very essence, viz. the non-dual sentient Ultimate Reality. This phenomenal world is a modification, a verbal construct or a name, which does not exist independently without its very essence. It is the Ultimate Reality, which appears as the manifold world. So it can be said that this phenomenal world, a verbal modification is unreal independently of its very essence. The final cause alone is ultimately real.

In the third chapter namely, Advaita Prakaraṇa of the Gauḍapādakārikā, Gauḍapāda has mentioned these analogies of clay, iron etc., which could be interpreted to mean that there is no difference between the cause

1. फलोपेतिबसु लिङ्गायेः दृष्टियां चौकितान्यम् \\
उपायः श्रौङ्गकाराय नातिनियतः कथम् \\
- G.K. III 15.
and effect, and hence both are real. This interpretation can be taken as supporting what was later styled as Praṇāmaṇavāda—the one cause modifying itself in the form of various effects, and this would not allow us to say that the phenomenal world is unreal, an appearance only. But, Gauḍapāda himself holds that the illustrations of clay, iron, etc. are meant to be stepping stones leading to the ultimate truth viz. the world is unreal and that they should not be taken at their face value.

All that could be said is that apart from the final cause, the phenomenal world has no reality. What is meant is that this manifold world does not exist independently of the Ultimate Reality, viz. Brahman; just as the various transformations of clay do not exist independently of clay. Perhaps this is what the upanisadic thinker wanted to say; but the expression employed is such as could support the belief of the unreality of the world, which is regarded as a fiction created by speech. We may consider it as a step ahead in the direction of Idealism.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad occupies a remarkable place in the history of early Indian thought. Its seer
yājñavalkya is thought to be a great Idealist. According to Deussen, Yājñavalkya's Idealism is the very kernel of the Upaniṣads. Yājñavalkya has gifted the greatest truth to human race, which is a land mark in the history of Indian Idealism. He says: "Verily, not for the sake of all is all dear but all is dear for the sake of the self."

This could indicate that each and every human being perceives the external world according to his own liking, according to his own satisfaction. It is rightly said that the thing is not good or bad by itself. Its perceiver makes the thing good or bad. Spinoza has stated:

1. "The teaching of Yājñavalkya is a daring, uncompromising, essentric idealism...."
   - Deussen Paul, the Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, Ch.XVII, P.399 (1972), Oriental Publishers.

2. Radhakrishnan (ed) - Principal Upaniṣads, Ch.XIII, P.84 (1953), George Allen & Unwin.

Also See :
Hiriyanna M. Outline of Indian Philosophy, Ch.II, P.60 (Fourth Impression, 1958).
George Allen & Unwin.

3. न वा वर्ते स्वेच्छय कामाय स्वै निर्य जत्यात् जस्मु कामाय स्वै निर्य जति ॥ - Br. Up. II 4-5.
"We desire nothing because it is good. We call it good, because we desire it."¹ This could mean that we like things not because the things are inherently dear, but we like them for our own pleasure, we love ourselves, and love other things only for our sake. Goodness or badness does not reside in the thing, but depends on the mood of its perceiver. Both the primary qualities such as figure, solidity, motion, as well as the secondary qualities such as colour, sound, taste, smell, sound etc. remain in the mind of its perceiver.² The same thing is viewed differently by different persons. In the exhibition of photographs, each person likes photographs according to his taste. A book of philosophy gives pleasure to a philosopher, on the other hand that very book is trash for an uneducated person. Cruelty is avoided by a good person, while it gives pleasure as well as satisfaction to a cruel person. Thus goodness or badness is determined by our attitude and state of mind towards

². Berkeley's Point of View.
it. This may not challenge the reality of the basic thing, but certainly questions the validity of various characters esp. goodness, badness, pleasantness etc. in the same thing. This passage can also be interpreted as signifying that things are dear by virtue of the Ātman which is their very essence. We like things inasmuch as we like the Ātman our very essence. The upaniṣadic seer could have also meant this, in which case it could not be interpreted as subjective Idealism. Nevertheless the expression and even Śaṅkara’s commentary on it¹ would lead us a step ahead in the direction of subjective Idealism. It would be out of place to mention that there is a great resemblance between this expression of the Br. Up. and ideas expressed by the western philosopher-Berkeley, which we have already mentioned.

Now, in this very same upaniṣad, we get a passage which declares that this seeming duality does not appear when the ultimate truth is realised. In the second adhyāya,

1. तत्स्मात् लोकप्रियस्यन्ततात्माय गृहो नान्यात्…..
   तत्स्मातात्मायन्तरत्वाय ममादृश्यी बन्यत्र त्रीतिरात्मनैव प्रत्येकम् ।

Śaṅkara’s Com. on Br. Up. II 4-5. P. 760
Ten Principal Upaniṣads (1978) Motilal Banarasidas
while instructing Maitreyī about the Supreme Reality, Yājñavalkya says, "Where there is duality as it were, there one sees another, smells another, hears another, addresses another, knows another, but where everything else has become one's self, how should one see anybody?

This passage shows that when the Ultimate Reality is experienced, this world of appearance becomes as good as non-existent. The use of the word 'Iva' shows that duality does not exist as a matter of fact. Duality seems as if it exists. Such a state is experienced only during the state of self-realisation or of deep meditation. Nevertheless, this expression certainly favours the onward march towards Idealism; and it has been accordingly interpreted by later thinkers.

In the Kathopanisad, this very idea is expressed very clearly. It is stated, "Whoever perceives anything like manyness here, goes from death to death." This

1. यत्र रहि हृद्वेषतय भवति तद्वितृत्र हतं विग्रहति तद्वितृत्र हतं पश्यति।
   Br. Up. II 4-14.

2. कृयोः स मृत्युमाप्यौति य इह नानेव पश्यति।
   - Katha Up. II 10(cd)
suggests that non-dual sentiency alone is the Ultimate Reality. Nothing else exists apart from the Supreme Entity.

Besides, the Aitareya Upaniṣad puts forth an idealistic thought in the third adhyāya, where it is said, "Thid god Brahmā, and this God Indra,...these five great elements,...creatures born from the egg, from the womb, and from perspiration, sprouting plants, horses, cows, men, elephants and whatsoever breathes, whether moving or flying, and in addition, whatsoever is immovable; all this is led by Intellect, and is supported on Intellect. The world is led by Intellect. Intellect is the support. Intellect is the highest Reality." Here, the Intellect is considered as a cosmic power, from which the universe has emerged. According to Belvalkar and

1. रष क्षेत्र हंडे एष प्रशाणि तै सबे देवा द्वानि व वच महामुखानि पुष्पिको वायुराकाश कापो ज्योतिषीलक्षालीमानि व सुप्रभाविणीव बीजारितराणि चैतराणि चाण्डानि व जारुजानि व सवेद्यानि वाहिकानि वाङ्गाहावः पुरुषा हरितनि यत्रनेवेद प्राणि वंगम्य क्षत्रि च यत्र स्मार्ये सबै तथ्यात्मेत प्रजाने प्रवतिष्ठत प्रजानेती लौकः प्रजाप्रशिष्ठा प्रजानेऽयम् इत्यादि ॥ ॥ ॥

- Ait. Up. IV 3.
Ranade this passage is replete with Idealism,\(^1\) and provides a root for the Vijñānavāda.\(^2\)

The term 'Prajñā' perhaps signifies consciousness in an individual, and consciousness is Brahman. Nevertheless, idealistic thinkers could interpret such passages as propounding the unreality of the world which is but a projection of the Intellect. Such passage paves the way to idealistic thought, and the view that the phenomenal world is devoid of reality.

Thus, in the Upaniṣads, one is taken a step ahead in the direction of the progress of Idealism. Later Idealistic thinkers could interpret such passages as propounding the unreality of the world of appearance.

It would not be out of place to examine the concept of Māyā, as used in the Upaniṣads. Here, we would not like to enter into details as to when and where the word 'Māyā'

\begin{enumerate}
\item Belvalkar S.K. and Ranade R.D., History of Indian Philosophy, Ch.V, P.164 (1974), Oriental Reprint.
\item Ranade R.D.—A Constructive survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy, Ch.IV, P.181 (1926), Oriental Book Agency, Poona.
\end{enumerate}
is used for the first time. The word 'Māyā' is variously used. It is used in the sense of 'uncommon intellectual power' in the Br.Ups where it is stated, "Through Māyā, Indra assumed various forms." Generally, in early Indian thought, the word 'Māyā' is used in the sense of extraordinary power of God. It does not have the sense of illusion. Gradually, the word acquired the meaning of illusion, and the power to give rise to illusion.

The philosophical concept of Māyā is clearly found in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad. It is stated, "Māyin (God) creates all this universe, and the other (the individual self) is confined by Māyā". Here, the word Māyā is used in the sense of 'extraordinary power'. Furththeron it is

1. हन्द्रो मायापि: पुरुषस्य हस्ये ।
   Br. Up. II. 5. 19.

3. वस्मान-मायी सृजस्ति विश्वः सत्वस्यश्च वायया श्रेयरिहस्ये ।
   S'Ve. Up. IV 8(cd)

For details see - Shastri Prabhudatta - Doctrine of Māyā, (Luzac, 1911).
stated, "Know then that Prakṛti is māyā and the wielder of māyā is the great Lord. This whole world is pervaded by beings that are parts of Him."¹ According to A. B. Keith, the word māyā in this verse expresses the sense of illusion. He says, "The Śvetāṣvatara certainly does not mean that God is a real creator and that matter is his real creation; the sense of delusion or illusion is paramount."² It is difficult to agree with Keith though this would be a great leap in the direction of Idealism. Māyā can be taken here also in its original sense, the power of God which serves as the original matter out of which the phenomenal world is created and God is the wielder of this Māyā. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that

1. पार्षदः प्रकृति विषाण्मायिन्यं तु महेश्वरसः ।
   तत्स्यावयवसृष्टि व्याप्ति सवैपि वज्जु ॥ १० ॥

the individual soul is said to be confined by māyā, what is a power of the Lord serves to hamper and confine the individual soul.

Now, so far as the concept of creation is concerned, the Br. Up. IV. 3. 10 is interesting. It is stated, "There are no chariots, nor animals to be yoked to them, no roads but he creates (projects for himself) chariots, animals to be yoked to them and roads. There are no joys, no pleasures, no delights, but he creates joys, pleasures and delights. There are no tanks, no lotus pools, no rivers, but he creates tanks, lotus pools and rivers. He, indeed, is the agent (maker or creator)."¹

Thus, the Jīva is said to create or imagine the dream world when no such objects really exist.² Here a curiosity

¹ Sankarācārya is apt to regard the Jīva (individual soul) as the creator of the dream world. Of course, he bows to the traditional view and says that God can be regarded as the creator of even the dream inasmuch as he is the monitor of all.

Br. Su. Sāṅkara Bhāṣya, III. 2. 4.
may arise: As the jīva creates the dream world, similarly, could it not create the waking world also? But it is not possible to get its answer from the upaniṣads as such inquiries came later.

(iii)

Now we shall take up for consideration some minor upaniṣads, which have some passages, that seem to propel the unreality of the phenomenal world. It may be mentioned that this is not meant to suggest that these fall immediately in the line of the development of idealistic thought. They are much later, but are considered here only inasmuch as they are termed 'Upaniṣads' and so that their divergent trend is later upaniṣadic thought could be properly noticed.

**Idealistic Views expressed in some Minor Upaniṣads**

We have seen that the major upaniṣads emphasize the non-dual Ultimate Sentient Reality, and thus they can be said to be idealistic in the broad sense of the term. There are a few passages which can be interpreted as declaring the world as unreal and merely a fiction of the mind. There is no doubt that the upaniṣads deny the seeming diversity of this phenomenal world, apart from Brahman.
Besides these major Upaniṣads there are some minor Upaniṣads, which seem to contain scattered glimmerings of Idealism in the sense that the objective world is unreal.

It is difficult to say anything specifically about the date of these minor Upaniṣads. Jadunath Sinha says, "Hence the minor Upaniṣads cover a period of several centuries from the third century to the seventh century or later." Perhaps, for this reason they seem to be influenced by Buddhistic thought.

Here, we shall discuss some of these Upaniṣads, which could help us in tracing the Drsti-srṣṭivāda. Of course, they do not emphasize this concept clearly, but they have some expressions, which can lead us onwards in the direction of the Drṣṭi-srṣṭivāda.

The Tejobindu Upaniṣad shows considerable development towards a bold type of Idealism, which stresses the sole reality of the supreme self. It reiterates that

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everything is just consciousness and nothing else. So, from the highest point of view, everything other than the self is negated. Even the scriptures, bondage, liberation, happiness, sorrow etc. do not exist! It says, "This phenomenal world does not exist. Whatever is of the form of perception and perceived, is unreal like the horns of hare." While denying the world, it emphasizes the great role of the mind in the world construction. It also states that sound, touch, form, taste, colour, the five sheaths, the waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep are products of the mind.

In the sixth adhyāya, the Tejobindu upaniṣad has boldly denounced the reality of the world. It has very

1. Tejobindu. Up. II, IV, V.
2. Tejobindu. Up. V. 43, 44.
clearly stated, "If anything exists except Brahman, it is unreal (mithyā) like mirage water. If any one fears because of the statement of a barren woman's son, then a thing exists! Further, presenting the analogies of hāre's horn, gandharvanagara, mother of pearl, rope-snake, etc. it has emphasized the unreality of the world.

We find a few verses in the Yogasikhopanishad also regarding the unreality of the world. They put forth the similes of gandharvanagara, phantom, double moon, barren woman's son, mirage etc. to explain the unreality of the world. Whatever appears is Brahman only. So obviously the world, apart from Brahman is unreal, like a barren woman's son or mirage-water.

1. भौतिक्यतः वै निर्मित्यतः यथा भौतिक्यतः।
   वनाहृतम् सर्वं प्रातितिक्यतः किंतुः ॥ ७३ ॥
   Tejo. Up. VI. 73.

   यथैव शून्यावै वै निर्मित्यावै पुरे यथा।
   यथाकै वै निर्मित्यावै तदन्तर्यै जगतिस्यति: ॥ १६ ॥
   जगन्नामा चिदाम्बाति यवेन वै निर्मित्यावै केलम्।
   यथा वनाहृतम् नापित्य तथा नापित्य नरो जलम्। ॥ १८ ॥

We may say that some of the minor upanisads contain much thought of the type of Idealism, which strongly denies the reality of the phenomenal world. Perhaps under Buddhistic influence, these minor upanisads have emphasized the rule of the mind (citta) as a creative factor so far as the concept of world creation is concerned. In the later upanisads, we find a clear cut distinction between the two rival trends of philosophy, namely-Realism and Idealism. No doubt, none of the upanisads asserts the reality of the world apart from the Ultimate Reality viz. Brahman, and in this sense they plainly put forth Idealism.

Conclusion:

We may conclude here, that in the early upanisads, especially the major upanisads, which are believed to be pre-buddhistic, we do not find much to support the unreality of the world. As Dasgupta states in Indian Idealism, "On the whole the central doctrine of the upanisadic philosophy seems to be an idealism of a mystical type, in which the Innermost Self is regarded as the highest reality, from which the world has somehow come into being or of which the world is a manifestation, and
which is also somehow to be regarded as the inner controller of all natural forces.\textsuperscript{1}

Hence, the main purport of the Upaniṣads is to declare the Ultimate Reality as the original cause and the sole ruling force of the universe. In this sense they are idealistic in thought. But we do not find the type of Idealism, which holds the world to be unreal like a mirage, as this is a later philosophical development. Nevertheless, we do find some expressions which can serve as a germinal force, and which sprouted forth in full bloom as subjective Idealism at a later stage. Some of the later Minor Upaniṣads propound Idealism and stress the unreality of the world - phenomena, both personal and universal. But since these seem to be of quite a later date, they would not be of much help in tracing the development of Idealistic thought immediately after the Upaniṣadic period. Nevertheless, the Idealistic thoughts contained in them are interesting inasmuch as they herald the entry, into the Brahmanical or Vedaṃtic current of

\textsuperscript{1} Dasgupta S.N., \textit{Indian Idealism.}

philosophy, of Idealistic thought which denies outright the reality of the world-phenomena. These upaniṣads would provide a complete picture along with the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha and Gauḍapādakārikā.