CHAPTER I

THEISM: ITS FLIGHT FROM THE VEDAS TO THE SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The problem of Theism constitutes one of the fundamental problems around which a storm of controversy exists in diverse systems of Indian Philosophy. The fundamentals of Theism, however, are traceable in the speculations of the seers of Rg Veda, who while expressing their profound feeling of surprise at the splendid charm of nature in the first morning of mankind give expression to certain philosophical thoughts, which ultimately receive full-bodied forms in the philosophical doctrines and metaphysical theories of later date. The Rg Veda constitutes a compendium of themes both secular and to some extent philosophical, where the poets present their warmth of feeling and experience of emotion, which over-flood their minds as they savour the delight of blue sky, the rising sun, the dancing moon-light and the rippling river. In this collection of hymns, the Vedic seers make certain observations which are capable of being interpreted as containing the germs of Theism. Theism is understood to connote at least three concepts: (1) Belief in the existence of God as a spiritual being; (2) profound faith in the principle that God controls the moral order of the universe and regulates
the entire system, as a result of which homogeneity is inducted into the system, and (3) the conception that God bears an intimate relation with his band of devotees, which is represented by all the members of the Association of the Universe and the string that binds together Him and His worshippers is mainly moral. The texture of Theism is comprised of these fibres, and it can be asserted with any amount of certainty that all these factors are incapable of being traced in the Rg Veda or the Vedic literature as a whole, where the profound feeling of surprise is expressed primarily. The Vedic seer betrays his sincere faith in the existence of God, and in some hymns he conceives of this God as controlling the moral order of the universe and inducting homogeneity to the entire chain.¹ The aspiration of the human being to move into the field of light from the arena of unfathomable darkness,² - his eagerness to cross into

¹. jagatah sthātur ubhayasya yo vaśī.
   - Rg Veda 4.54.6

². tamaso ma jyotir gamaya.
   - Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.4.1.30,32 ;
   Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.3.28.
   Śāmkhāyana Srauta Sūtra 6.8.0.
the domain of immortality from the narrow limits of mortality, \(^3\) all this is traceable in the hymns of Ṛg Veda, and it is not without reason, therefore, that the Vedic seer finds it prudent to propound the proposition that God is competent to lead the man from darkness to light, - from the bondage of death to the splendour of immortality and from the arena of non-existence to the grandeur of Existence and Being. \(^4\)

The Vedic seers are aware of the existence of a number of Gods, and in the Vedic pantheon Indra, Viṣṇu, Agni and Varuna occupy pre-eminent positions. Above all Gods, however, the form of Varuna towers in moral grandeur. A statement has been made, and that too rightly, by some scholars that, this

\(^3\) amṛtaṁ brahmaṇāḥ saha mṛtyuṁ tarati. - Manava Grhya Sūtra 1.13.15;
amṛtatvaṁ ca gacchati. - Khilas of the Ṛg Veda 9.67.16; Sāma Veda 2.653; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 7.13.4;
amṛtatvaṁ ca vindate. - Śaṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra 15.17; amṛta martyānāṁ. - Ṛg Veda 1.26.9; mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya. - Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad 1.3.28.

\(^4\) asato mā sad gamaya. - Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.4.1.30, 31; Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad 1.3.28;
Śaṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra 6.8.9.
God of the wide firmament and the shining sky, of the blooming day and the darkening night is capable of being identified with the deity named Ahura-Mazda of Avesta. So completely does Varuna dominate the scene that sometime one is tempted to draw the conclusion that the Vedas propound the monotheistic philosophy and in the Vedas we find the glorification of one deity or in other words, the postulation of monotheism in its diverse aspects. As the discerning mind analyses the form of Varuna, as presented in the Rg Veda, it appears that the supreme God has already established Him as a moral Lord presiding over the consciences of the human being. The supreme God covers himself with light as with a garment. He stretches out the Heaven like a curtain and bears up the pillars of the Earth. He lives on the high pride and glories of Heaven


6. yah svetr adhinirñajas cakre kṛṣṇa anu vratā. - Rg Veda VIII. 41.101.

7. astabhnät dyām asuro viśveda amimīta varimānaḥ prthivyāḥ/ - Rg Veda VIII. 42.1.
and extends the starry sky and the glittering Earth. He opens a path for the sun, the track of the bird and of the ships across the seas, and there is nothing hidden from his sight. Varuṇa is conceived, however, as the great Lord of the laws of things, and upholder and controller of their order and movement. He sites on his shining throne and sends his spies to the four corners of the Earth, who submit regular reports to him on the actions of the human being in order to enable him to punish the offenders and promote the welfare of the upholders of the law of the universe. This great guardian among the Gods is

8. dhīrā tv'asya maninā janūṃsi vi yas tastamha rodasi  
   pra nakam rśvaṃ nunude vṛhantam tvitā nakṣatram papra-
   thać ca bhūma//
   Rg Veda VII, 86, 1.

9. veda yo vināṃ padam antarikṣena patatām /
   veda nāvah samudriyah //
   Rg. Veda I. 25.7. See also Rg Veda 1.25.8-9; Vaidika
   Padānukhāmakosa 1.3301 J,1; brhann esām abhiśháta
   antikād iva paśyati / yas tāyan manyate carṇāt sarva
   devā idaṃ viduḥ // — Atharva Veda 4.16.1.

10. pro'ror mitrāvarūna prthivyāḥ
    pra diva rśvāt brhataḥ sudāhu
    spaśo dadhāthe oṣadhiśu vikṣvrdhag
    yato animiṣaṁ rakṣamāna //
    R.V. VII, 61.3.
omniscient and omnipresent, and it is possible for him
to trace the movement of the stars and the planets as they
move in their orbits. Here we have the closest
approximation to a real ethical form, inasmuch as the
Psalmist not only betrays his profound faith in the
existence of God, but conceives of him as the controlling
authority of the entire order of the universe and the moral
guardian of the entire association.

An analysis of the process of evolution of Theism
as reflected in the Rg Veda reveals that a period soon
came when Monotheism yielded place to Pantheism, and Vedic
society felt that there was no need for one God as con-
trolling the righteous conduct of all men and the entire
universe. In the last book of the Rg Veda, it is
interesting to note, there is no hymn dedicated to Varuna,
for by that time Monotheism had definitely given place in
the development of Indian religion to Pantheism, and a
number of Gods including Indra and Agni had taken concrete
shape and demanded prayer and oblation from the Vedic
society. In several Hymns we obtain glimpses of the

11. ute'yan bhūmir varuṇasya rājña
   utā'sau dyaur bhṛhatī dūre antā /
   uto samudrau varuṇasya kukai
   utā'sminn alpa udake nilānāḥ //
   - Atharva Veda IV. 16.3.
struggle by which this process is accomplished, and Indra finally establishes himself as one of the supreme gods in the Vedic Pantheon. In conceiving the forms of the deities Indra, Varuna and Agni, the Vedic seers take recourse to the process of personification, and all the Gods in the Vedic Pantheon are presented as human beings, possessing human forms in toto and having qualities common to individuals. Judged from this angle of vision, the Vedic deities are anthropomorphic, and the process of anthropomorphisation reveals only in a feeble form in the Vedas. It is not without reason, therefore, that natural phenomena are normally traceable in the character of most of the deities and the discerning mind easily locates the particular natural phenomenon in the particular deity. The wild forces of nature persist in maintaining

12. eko viśvasya bhuvanasya rājā.
Rg Veda 3.76.2; 6.36.4; viśve devāso amadonn anu tvā - Rg Veda 1.52.15; 103.7; vayaṁ te ta indra ye ca deva.- Rg Veda 7.30.4.

13. "........... it is therefore only natural that in the main the high gods of the Rg Veda should be essentially conceived as human, as men of supernatural power, and free from death, but still as subject to birth and akin in their family relation to men". - Keith's Religion and Philosophy of the Veda, Part II, Chapter 5, Page 58, Lines 3-6, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 31.
their concealed self in the glorious forms of personified deities. This concept of "Partial Personification" is regarded as the process of "Arrested Personification" by leading Indologists,14 since the process of personification, leading to anthropomorphisation is not complete here. Even Indra who is more fully humanised than most of the Vedic deities crashes down from Heaven in thunder and it is born on waters and clouds, while Usas, still becoming the glowing sun, displays her breasts to the human being, eager to savour the delight of the physical charm of lovely ladies. In no case is the process of personification nothing like complete. In the case of Varuna also the marked moralisation of the conception of the God prevents the deity to appear in full-fledged form of human being before the devotee. This tendency to retain the traits of natural phenomenon in the forms of the different deities stands in the way of establishment of Theism on a firm footing, since the texture of Theism is comprised of variety of strings, of which the relationship between the God and His devotees is one, and this

relationship is incapable of being established between the dry natural phenomenon and the human being, teeming and pulsating with life. This deficiency in the attitude of the Vedic seer is to be taken note of while making an assessment of the contribution of the Vedic seer to the doctrines relating to Theism. When one is required to take stock of the flight of Theism from the Vedic age to the Indian philosophical theories one is definitely to start from the Vedas, which contains some of the aspects of the multi-cornered Theism, but he is to keep himself satisfied with a few elements only, because neither the process of personification is complete in the Vedas nor does Monotheism persist for a pretty long time throughout the Vedic period.

When we pass from the Rg Veda and the religion which had been given expression to by the Vedic Psalmist and enter into arena of the Brāhmaṇas we breathe a new atmosphere, which is completely different from the lyrical set up of the earlier one. Instead of the bracing air of the mountain passes we have the heavy torpid climate of the plains. A single rapid river of thought and inspiration, flowing keen through the hills gives place to many sluggish streams winding their courses into rocky region and ultimately loosing themselves in the sands of theological speculations. The Brāhmaṇas represent this new atmosphere
and arid field, where the inspiration of Vedic seer yields place to dry theological discussion, indicating the details of the rituals to be followed by priests for propitiation of different deities. The change and the greater complexity and obscurity of the religious facts which accompanied make it still more difficult to estimate the strength and character of theistic belief during this period. In the Brāhmaṇas the composers betray their distressing fear of the God and continuously try to impress on the performer of different sacrifices the necessity of following the details of the rituals with punctilious care. This proposition of fear or the theory that God is always trying to do harm to the individuals and other beings is detrimental to development of real Theism, which embraces for its constituent elements the idea that the God is benevolent and is eager to do good to the humanity. Because of the obscurity and paucity of materials presented in the Brāhmaṇas it becomes difficult to ascertain the theistic tendency in the outlook of the writers belonging

15. "The fear of death and of repeated death is one of the most marked characteristics of the Brāhmaṇas" - Macknicol's Indian Theism, page 33.
to the Brahminical age, but certain elements of Theism are capable of being traced in them, though this Theism may fall short of being a real ethical Theism. Sincere devotion, which constitutes the sheet-anchor of Theism reveals itself in some of the observations and speculations, and sometimes it appears that the expressions come from the heart and move the will. It is by means of such criteria as this that we must test the various expressions of religious feelings and devotional theories emanating from the pen of writers belonging to the period that succeeds the period which the hymns of the Ṛg Veda serve so brilliantly to illuminate.

Closely linked with the speculations of the Brāhmaṇas are the assertions containing in the Atharva Veda, which though not included in the group of the holy Triad occupies a pre-eminent position in the Vedic literature by virtue of the peculiar nature of its contents and thoughts. Atharva Veda has for its contents magical formulae and sorceries and contains descriptions of
rituals through performance of which one can get rid of diseases or enemies. Here the order of the universe is presented in a disturbed state and the seers take it for granted that in the heterogeneous system of the universe there is ample scope for enmity and disorder, disharmony and destruction, as a result of which it becomes necessary to invoke those powerful extranormal agencies which are in a position to remove the ill and deliver the well-being.

The entire complex of thought which constitutes the foundation of the super-structure of the Atharva Veda is thus opposed to development of an ethical and moral Theism, but the Psalmist in the Atharva Veda demands atleast the power of the God to grant welfare to the

16. yadi ksitayur yadi va pareto
   yadi mrtyor antikaṁ nīta eva /
   tam ā harāmi nir ṛte upasthād
   ut krāmātah puruṣā māva patthā ā
   mṛtyoh sadvīsam avamuñcamānāh /
   mā cchitthā asmāl lokād
   agneḥ sūryasya samdṛṣṭah // - A.V. VIII. 1.4.

17. ya āgāre mrgayante pratikroṣe amāvasye /
   kravyado anyān dipsatāḥ sarvā tān sahasā mude // - A.V. 4.36.3.
performance of the rituals, and consequently, it may not be wrong to assume that a slender thread in the texture of Theism is capable of being traced in this Veda which is completely different from the Rg Veda in its outlook approach and content. 'The outlook and approach of the Brāhmaṇa have a close parallel to those of the Arthava Veda, since both approach the God with a feeling of fear for the purpose of bringing the downfall of the enemy betray their strong desire for reaping a rich harvest in the shape of personal prosperity. \(^{18}\) As we pass from the Rg Veda to the Atharva Veda and the Brāhmaṇa, we leave the arena of lyrical experience and profundity of feeling and reach the land of dry priestly culture, where material incentive is given preference over moral and ethical incentive, and depth of emotion yields place to increase in fee-packet or acquisition of personal benefit. In such a situation Theism cannot be traced in its myriad multi-coloured aspects.

As we move from the land of the Brāhmaṇas to the domain of the Upanīṣads, we breathe in a completely new atmosphere, marked by play of intellectual inspiration and ethical percepts. Instead of extending their energies in

\(^{18}\) See Atharva Veda 11.2.1-23.
detailing the diverse aspects of rituals and the significance of incantations employed in them, the Upaniṣads prefer to devote their total energy in finding out a solution to the riddle of the universe and probing into the nature of the Absolute. The Upaniṣads start their enquiry into the problems of the universe by casting a sarcastic fling at the theological juggleries incorporated in the Brāhmaṇas and have compared sacrificial priests to the barking dogs moving in procession for morsel of food. The period of Upaniṣads is signalised by remarkable activity and freedom of thought. It is interesting to note that the Brāhmaṇas who received so much in the earlier age is relegated to an inferior position and it is the knower of the Absolute alone who is eulogised and put to an exalted position. With great emphasis at their command the Upaniṣads proclaim that the non-Brāhmaṇas in possession of higher truths are more venerable than those Brāhmaṇas who are presumed to be special guardians of spiritual knowledge, so much so that these Brāhmaṇas are required to sit at their feet and learn of them.  

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19. **brahmaṇo rājānam anucarati.** - *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.2.3.3; 
**tasmād brahmaṇo rājānam anu yasaḥ** - *Ibid* 5.4.2.7; 
**bahu vai rājaṃgo nṛtaḥ karoti : upa jāmyai harate, jināti brahmaṇam.** - *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.2.6.
do not mean that the Upanisads take an anti-Brahmanical attitude, as it prevalent in some of the States of modern India. The Upanisads emphasise all this in order to establish their proposition that it is the Absolute alone which sustains the universe and the knowledge relating to it alone can furnish a solution to the riddle of the universe could be found. It is amazing to trace in the Upanisads this system of thought, which seems to have prevailed at this time and of which we have indications.

The great emphasis put to intellectual construction, however, has rendered it very difficult to find out constituents of ethical Theism in the Upanisads. The composers of the Upanisads might have been worshippers of Viṣṇu or of other Gods in their religious life, but so far as metaphysical and reflective analysis is concerned they do not betray their fondness for any such God around whom popular devotion had gathered. Colder atmosphere of the Upanisads is the inevitable atmosphere of reflection and it may not be wrong to assume that these thoughtful men who showered their bounteous praise on such personal Gods as Kṛṣṇa or Vāsudeva in their religious life preferred to contemplate in the colder atmosphere of the Upanisads and gave expression to the metaphysical thoughts visualised by
them in course of this contemplation. It is futile to attempt to discriminate among the various currents of religious tendency prevailing at the time of the Upaniṣads and to say as to how much boldness of thought and freedom of expression were troubling deep water of the Indian spiritual river in that age. It may well have been that in that atmosphere some could have engaged themselves in finding out the nature of the Absolute, others could have enquired into the life beyond death and yet others could have found a relief in the process of complete self-restraint in the manner prescribed in the Yoga system of philosophy of much later date. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad refers to the process of ascent to the Absolute Reality by the ladder of progressive Tapas and maintains that it is possible to combine disciplined faith and inward emotion, as a result of which Emancipation can be obtained.

The Kathopaniṣad is vitally engaged with the problem of human laws and human destiny and puts great emphasis on the process of self-purification which is brought into being by the restraint of all the senses including the eleventh

20. yadā vai śraddadhaty atha manute, nā' śraddadhan manute, śraddadhad eva manute. - Chāndyogya Upaniṣad. 7.19.1.
sense-organ, represented by the mental apparatus. The region of ethical Theism is the region of life, and when the doctrines and speculations of the Upanisads take us away from the real figure of life, we move away really from ethical Theism, which draws its inspiration from the claims of life.

It is extremely difficult to present in this small compendium the contents touched by the Upanisads, since the intellectual gymnastics adopted by the Upanisadic seers embraces for its contents many of the fundamental problems and the issues raised in earlier philosophical disquisitions. The main content, however, is represented by the nature of the Absolute Reality, the identity of the Individual Soul with the Absolute, the nature of attaining this identity, leading ultimately to the state of complete Emancipation. In general, one may affirm that in the

21. yadā pancā, vatiśthante jñānāni manasaḥ saha / biddhis' ca na vicēstate tām āhuḥ paramām gatim // - Kathopanisad 2.3.10.

22. brahma tallakṣyam ucyate. - Mundaka Upanisad, 2.2.4.; lakṣyam tad evā'ksaram . - Ibid 2.2.3; ātmā vāre drastavyaḥ - Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 4.5.6; so'nvestavyas sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ. -Chāndogya Upanisad 8. 7.1.
Upaniṣads the central thought is that all these creatures, as Uddālaka Arunī says to his son Svetaketu, have their roots in the true, they dwell in the true and rest also in the same, proclaiming the identity of the individual with this True Absolute. The Chandogya Upaniṣad asserts "Thou art that." This great sentence is regarded as the sheet-anchor of all philosophical enquiries presented in the Upaniṣads and a number of commentators have expended their considerable energies in furnishing real explanation to this difficult proposition, which is regarded as profound Summum Proposition to the Vedāntin. To this is added the speculations relating to self-restraint, the chief of which is contained in Kaṭhopaniṣad. Through the splendid imagery of chariot this Upaniṣad tries to impress on the humanity of posterity the necessity of controlling the

23. sanmūlāḥ somye' māḥ sarvāḥ praṇāḥ sādāyatanāḥ satpratisthāḥ - Chandogya Upaniṣad 6.8.6.
24. tat tām asi. - Chandogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7.
25. See Kathopaniṣad - 2.3.10 - 11.
journey of life by the rein of conscience. A sharp contrast to a successful journey of life is furnished by the futile journey, where reins are in the hands of unrestrained sense-organs. The question that is posed naturally before the discerning mind is whether this Absolute Reality, which is frequently equated with Knowledge par excellence is compatible with the concept of real Theism, which presupposes the existence of the deity and the devotee and recognises the existence of God as the controlling agent of the moral order of the universe. It is fairly obvious that in any religion excessive intellectualism is opposed to a warmly ethical Theism. The more the Upanisads tend to limit the nature of Brahman to the nature of pure consciousness and intellectual construction, and betray their fondness for the path of the intellect for arriving at the goal of liberation, they recede far from the track of Theism, as also from any view of the religious life which is likely to be ethically valuable. This does not,

26. yas tu vijñānāvān bhavati yuktena manasā sadā /
tasye' ndriyāni vasyāni sadāvā iva sāratheḥ //
- Kathopanisad 1.3.6.

27. yas tva' vijñānāvān bhavaty ayuktena manasā sadā /
tasye' ndriyāny avaśyāni duṣṭāsvā iva sāratheḥ //
- Kathopanisad 1.3.5.
however, mean that the Upaniṣads do not contain at least some of the fundamentals of Theism and that the approach of them is incapable of being reconciled with the Theistic conceptions. No doubt intellectual perception has a chief place among the means by which the goal of liberation is obtained, but at the same time, as has been indicated before, the Upaniṣads emphasise the moral process of self-purification and self-control\textsuperscript{28}, of meditation \textsuperscript{29} and insight. This particular speculation relating to the moral process of purgation furnishes one of the fundamental aspects of Theism, and while the curious reader is likely to be baffled in his attempt to trace the fundamentals of Theism in the philosophical enquiries into the riddle of the universe, he is sure to get some valuable materials when he directs his attention to this disquisition relating to self-purification and ethical control.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{yaś tu vijñānavān bhavatī samānśkāḥ sadā śuciḥ} / 
\textit{sa tu tat padam āpnoti yasmād bhūyo na jāyate} //
- \textit{kāṭhopaniśad 1.3.8.}

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{nā viraṭo duścarītān nā śānto nā' samāhitāḥ} / 
\textit{nā' sāntamākāsō vā' pi prajñānenai 'nām āpnyāt} //
\textit{Kāṭhopaniśad 1.2.24}; \textit{yastu duścarītād virata indriyalauyāc ca, samāhitachītah samādhānaphalād api upśāntamānāsas ca ācāryavān prajñānenena enam yathoktam atmānām prāpnoti' tyārthah.- Śaṅkāra Bhāṣya on ibid.}
All this, however, is limited by the general proposition that the Upaniṣads which regard intellectual culture as the first and foremost means of attainment of the highest goal of mankind represented by liberation cannot supply and contain all the aspects of ethical and spiritual Theism, which is applied to the whole man. Theism demands a democratic approach while the Upaniṣads with their pre-eminent emphasis on intellectual culture betray an aristocratic attitude. The basic conflict between the democratic and aristocratic approaches are to be borne in mind while making appraisal of the Theism of the Upaniṣads.

The ultimate goal as represented in the Upaniṣads also makes it difficult to have fundamentals of proper Theism in them. With all emphasis at their command the Upaniṣads proclaim Emancipation as the highest goal of the human being and describes Emancipation as a state in which the individual experiences his complete identity with the Absolute, and savours the delight through experience of his oneness with the great and all-pervading Absolute. The question which naturally arises is whether union with the Absolute which is always the goal is a state of absorption in which all difference is lost or whether the emancipated soul still retains its consciousness after attaining liberation. While in many passages this identification is

30. avibhakta eva pareṇāḥ tmanā mukto' vatiṣṭhate - Saṅkarabhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra 4.4.4.
described as a state of complete merger, where the individual is completely merged and indistinguishably lost in the Absolute\textsuperscript{31}, in a few others this is described as a state where consciousness is retained at least to some extent\textsuperscript{32}. With profound care the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad describes the state of liberation and puts forward the parallelism of a man being embraced by his beloved wife in its endeavour to describe the state. As a man, when embraced by beloved wife, knows nothing that is without

\textsuperscript{31} sa sarvātmaḥāväḥ sarvasaṁsāradharmātītābrahma - svarūpātvaṁ eva. - Saṅkarabhasya on Taittīrya Upaniṣad 2.1; tat tvam eva. - Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7; aham brahma' śmi - Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10; na tu tad dvitiyam asti tato nyad vibhaktāṁ yat pāṣyet - Ibid. 4.3.23; sa bhagavāḥ kasmin pratīṣṭhītāḥ iti sve mahimmi. - Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.24.1.

\textsuperscript{32} brahmaṁo bhāvaḥ na tu svarūpaikyam. Śrībhāṣya on B.S. 1.1.1, \textsuperscript{Page } 4.3.30; Bhagavatypaṁ kāmāṁ saha brahmaṁ vipaścitā. - Taittīrya Āraṇyaka 1.2; yadā pāṣyāṁ pāṣyate rukmavarṇaṁ kartāram īdāṁ pursūṣaṁ brahmayonim /

tadā vidvāṁ punyapāpe vidhūya niraṅkayāḥ paramāṁ saṁyam upaṁti //

- Mundaka Upaniṣad 3.1.3; īdāṁ jhānam upādṛitya mama sādharmacya āgataḥ. - Bhagavadgītā 14.2; sāyujyaṁ saṁsthānam. - Kaṭiṭakī Upaniṣad 1.3.

See also Ranade's \textsuperscript{1} 'A Constructive Survey of the Upaniṣad-s', Page 165.
and nothing that is within but knows only the loving consent
similarly this man also concentrates on the Absolute.\(^{33}\)

This simile of union has continued as a hallmark of mysticism
in every country and in every age. In continuing his explana-
tion to this parallelism and the state of liberation the
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says when this state of Emancipation
is obtained the individual does not see, and yet he sees: he
does not listen, and yet he listens.\(^{34}\) This may mean that there
is no actual empirical consciousness in the state of Emancipa-
tion, even though consciousness is possible in that state. If
the state of Emancipation is described as one in which the
state of consciousness exists even in a latent form and the
individual reaches his ego even to the smallest extent, then
it can be emphasised that Theism is possible in the philoso-
phical disquisition presented in the Upaniṣads. As has been
indicated earlier, Theism requires the existence of the
deity and the devotee in order to complete its circuit, and
the second element in the circuit is rendered possible if the

33. \( \text{tad yatāḥ priyāḥ striyāḥ samparīśvaktō na bāhyāṁ} \)
\( \text{kiṅcana veda nāntaram, evam evāṁ yāṁ puruṣaḥ} \)
\( \text{prājñenā tmanā samparīśvaktō na bāhyāṁ kiṅcana} \)
\( \text{veda nāntaram.} \) - Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.21

34. \( \text{yad vai paśyati paśyaṁ vai tan na paśyati, na hi} \)
\( \text{draṣṭur drṣṭer viparīlopo vidyate, vināśītvāt.} \) -
\( \text{Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.23. See also ibid. 4.3.24-30.} \)
state of Emancipation is explained as a state where self-consciousness is retained even to a small extent in the individual. All this analysis shows that the river of Theism which takes its start from the hills of lyrical exuberations presented in the Vedas loses its course in the arid sands of theological speculations presented by the Brāhmaṇas, but subsequently, it gathers some momentum in the creative period of the Upaniṣads, which though marked by profound intellectual activity betrays some of the fundamental aspects of ethical Theism.

Indian Theism manifests in its full-bodied form in Śrīmad-bhagavadgītā, which is regarded as constituting a chapter of the Great Mahābhārata epitomising the height of ancient Indian wisdom and representing a whole literature which took as many as eight to nine centuries to develop. The deities presented in the Vedic period reappear in the Mahābhārata in a fresh form and the process of "Arrested Personification" yields place to complete personification and Anthropomorphisation, as a result of which the Gods appear as so many human beings, bearing direct personal relation to their devotees. With the Bhagavadgītā we pass into a new region of clearer atmosphere. The most towering personality among the Gods appearing in the Vedic period is Varuṇa, who controls the entire system of the universe, and in the entire Hindu Pantheon there is only one deity other than Varuṇa in the first morning of mankind, who occupies such a paramount position and regulates the entire system of the
universe 35. This new deity is Kṛṣṇa, as recorded in the Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā as the most important God worthy of worship and competent to do good to the entire humanity. In the Bhagavadgītā we are conducted to splendid speculations on ethical monotheism, which furnish brilliant data for manifestation of real Theism. The ancients describe the Bhagavadgītā as the cream of the Upaniṣads, and maintain that Lord Kṛṣṇa himself milked this cream of teachings from the milch cow of Upaniṣads and gave a new shape to it in the form of the teachings of the Gītā 36. In intellectual seriousness, in ethical nobility and in religious fervour the Bhagavadgītā presents to us a combination, rarely found in another religious literature, and this explains the remarkable influence which this treatise has exerted on the minds of the Indian people and Indian culture itself. It is not without reason, therefore, that the diverse schools of the Vedic system of Philosophy — the Advaita, the Viśisṭadvaita, and the Dvaita furnish

35. māttah parataram nānyat kiṁcid asti dhanañjaya / mayi sarvam idam proktam sūtre maṇiṁñātiva // - Bhagavadgītā 7.7.

different interpretations to the verses of the immortal work and try to show that their doctrines are backed by the authority of this fundamental work. It is also remarkable that this book has supplied nourishment to devout souls in India throughout the ages, since even sects opposed to the sect of Lord Kṛṣṇa have tried to draw inspiration from this work.

The Bhagavadgītā has stolen a march over the Upaniṣads in this respect that while the Upaniṣads conceive of the Absolute as an impersonal being capable of being identified with a conglomeration of Bliss, Consciousness and Existence, the Gītā has propounded a theory in which the God has been conceived as a personal deity possessed of human form and as one being guided by the sole consideration of doing good to all members of the association of the universe. In the Upaniṣads intellectual fervour is the most important, while in the Bhagavadgītā the warmth of personal devotion and profound attachment are of tremendous significance. The mere reflective and metaphysical religion of the older Upaniṣads thus transforms itself into the warmer and more living personal devotion, and finally a new type of theistic doctrine is evolved which finds expression through the beautiful teachings of the Gītā. The question that is likely to haunt to the curious readers is — how can this warmer personal devotion be linked with intellectual activity of the Upaniṣads. It may be that this element of personal devotion and complete
surrender was prevalent in popular beliefs and religious practices prevailing among different sections of the society, and in its eagerness to make the work more popular and of abiding interest to posterity, the author of the Gītā carved out his philosophy by taking all these elements from popular faiths and social religious practices. This employment of material prevailing in social customs and popular religious practices has made the Gītā more popular and easily approachable. We must remember that the subtlety of thoughts of the Upaniṣads a mist hangs over them all. It is extremely difficult to find out the real crux of the problem from this cloud of mists. The teaching of the Upaniṣads partakes all that indefiniteness which is inevitable in early thinkers, when the scopes of different disciplines like religion and politics, ethics and economics did not separate themselves completely from one another. It is for this reason that while real ethical Theism does not manifest itself in its full-bodied form in the Upaniṣads, in the Gītā it appears in its multi-coloured frame absorbing all the elements which go to constitute the structure of real ethical Theism.

The Gītā tries to make to harmonious blending of the different doctrines of action, knowledge and devotion and in this respect it attains a spectacular success and brings about a real synthesis of all conflicting doctrines. It is because of this that the vagueness of the earlier Upaniṣads yields place to clarity in the Gītā and the doctrines
assume a more complete and systematic character in it. The Gita draws its materials from Kathopanisad in respect of the doctrine relating to the Absolute and the means of attaining it. The imagery of the chariot as introduced in the Kathopanisad reappears in a more vivid form in the Gita and the transience of the individual soul and the permanence of the Absolute reality are harped upon times without number. In splendid lyrical passage the Gita describes the state of emancipation and tries to bring out the characteristic features of the man who has been able to realise his communion with the Absolute. Such a person stands undisturbed with his total attention fixed on the thought of the Absolute; he is unruffled by the attractions of the petty earthly things and undisturbed by trifling emotions like love and the like. Nevertheless the mind of such a person overflows with affection for the entire humanity, and this prompts him to do good to the society and discharge his social commitments.

The Gita preaches the philosophies of complete surrender and

37. bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas ca' smi tattvatah 
   tato mam tattvato jhatva visate tadanantaram //
   - Bhagavadgita 18.55. See also Ibid 8.7; 7.14.

38. mavanah bhava madbhakto madyajii mam namaskuru /
   - Bhagavadgita 18.65.
absolute withdrawal from the exigencies of the ordinary world. It teaches the doctrine of surrendering everything to God, who is not a representative of any natural phenomenon or a deity residing high up in the firmament and moving in terrestrial region. This God is a personal God who comes down from the shining heaven and occupies His seat in the midst of the man to deliver him from the bondage of the world and place him on the high pedestal of humanity. In fine expressions the Gītā clarifies the path of devotion, and with all emphasis at its command maintains that the Supreme Lord is bound to do good to its devotee and to pull him out of the dirt of the earthly existence. It also enumerates the characteristic features of those devotees who are true to God and are able to have a full view of Him in His full splendour. The characteristic features so enumerated do not differ mainly from those belonging to the man blessed with the vision of


40. tēṣāṁ ahaṁ samuddhartaṁ mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarat / bhavāmi na cīrāt pārtha mayyāvesi tacetasām // - Bhagavadgītā 12.7.

the Absolute, and this shows that the Absolute of the
Upanisads has assumed the shape of personal God in the Gita.
The religious power of the Bhagavadgita and the continuous
influence which it has exerted over the human hearts in India
are explained mainly by this approach. While the Gita rests
upon the Upanisads and accepts their teaching of the Absolute,
who is emmanent in all the entities of the universe, at the
same time it passes beyond that abstract structure and reveals
Him as a saviour, near to the distressed man's need and as
responding in his grace to the cry of their faith. Krsna,
the charioteer of Arjuna and the spokesman of SrImadbhaga-
vadgita, is far away from the ordinary human being in that
He epitomises the entire universe so much so that even a
hero of Arjuna's stature is astounded to recognise the entire
universe with all its greatness and grandure in the form of
Krsna. But at the same time He is so near the ordinary
man and at the call of human need He is born from age to
age. To those who are very devout and worship Him with love

42. adṛṣṭapūrvvaṁ hṛṣito' smi dṛṣṭvā
bhayena ca pravayathitam mano me /
tad eva me darsāya devarūpaṁ
prasīda deyeṣa jagan nivāsa //
- Bhagavadgītā 11.45

43. paritrāṇaya sādhūnāṁ vināśaya ca dukṣrtāṁ /
dharmasāṃsthapanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge //
- Bhagavadgītā 4.8
He bestows the attainment of knowledge through which they come to Him. The best of all ways by which He is capable of being approached, is that of love and undivided devotion.

Sometimes intellectual tradition of the Upanishads reasserts itself in the Gita and the man of knowledge is regarded as a suprman competent to have a total view of the Lord, but this trend appears only in a few cases. In most cases the Gita showers praise on the devout worshipper whose mind is fulfilled with love and devotion for the Supreme Lord and who surrenders all his actions and desires to God. The poem is throughout surcharged with this glow of emotion and the depth of devotionalism, and this has enabled it to appeal to the heart as also to the reason of India through the ages.

In its attempt to present the means of attainment of liberation, the Gita mentions among other things the doctrine of special grace and maintains that the affection of the Lord is competent to thwart the effect of actions done in previous

44. teṣāṁ satatayuktanām bhajatāṁ prītipūrvakam /
    dadāmi buddhiyogam tāṁ yena mām upayānti te //
    - Bhagavadgītā 10.10

45. puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ partha bhaktyā labhyas tv anantaya /
    - Bhagavadgītā 8.22. See also 7.17; 18.55

46. See Bhagavadgītā 7.16
births 47. This concept goes to falsify other familiar doctrines which assert that man is a slave to the actions committed in previous births and that he is sure to enjoy the results of these deeds. In the Gītā the Supreme Lord appears for the first time in the role of a saviour, competent to save the man from the bondage of life and death, and the wheel of action perpetrated in sequence of previous births. This theory inducts a positive content into the body of religion and transforms dry philosophy into a real living religion and a life of asceticism into a life of noble service. While the Upaniṣads emphasise the necessity of self-denial and repression of sense organs leading to self-negation, the Gītā propounds the doctrine of extending the arena of love and affection so that all the members of the community can be brought into closer relation with the devout. It is not without reason, therefore, that in enumerating the qualities of the devotee surrendering himself completely to the personal God, the Gītā says that such a person does not inflict injury to any being and bears no malice to any entity. Thus while the Upaniṣads impress on humanity the necessity of practising withdrawal from the world, the Gītā preaches the doctrine of expansion of ego-boundaries, so much so that all beings are comprehended under the orbit of the self of the

47. sarvakarmāṇy api sadā kurvāṇo madvyāpaśrayāḥ / matprāśādāt avāpnoti śāsvataṁ padam avyayam // - Bhagavadgītā 18.56; mac cittaḥ sarvadurgāṇi matprāśādāt tariṣyasi. - Ibid 18.58.
devout. It is interesting to note that though the Gītā draws its inspirations from the Upaniṣads, it reveals a completely different approach marked by warmth of personal affection and graceful devotion. Thus the real ethical Theism which starts from the Vedas winds its courses through many religions, and after passing through many stages it finally receives full-bodied form in the Śrīmadbhagavatgītā, where personal God establishes Himself on a firm footing and warmth of personal feeling reveals itself in its full splendour. In its attempt to infuse a new form to real ethical Theism Gītā is influenced at least to some extent by popular beliefs and religious faiths, including the faith propounded by the Buddhists and Jains.

The stream of human thought is a continuous one, and it is wrong to assume that when the flow of Buddhistic religion originated, Hindu religious ideas came to a halt. The continuous flow of human thought is nourished persistently by diverse lines of thinking and different solutions to the same problem, and it is natural, therefore, to trace in Buddhistic faiths the influence of Hindu beliefs and thoughts, as recorded in the Vedic literature and the Śrīmadbhagavatgītā. It may seem strange that one should have the reason to trace the elements of Theism in beliefs across the borders of original Hindu systems and have a look at the systems of Buddhism and Jainism, that are regarded as Atheist ones according to traditional theories. While Buddhism and Jainism
propound different theories, they have one thing in common between them, namely the doctrine that there is no single personal supreme spirit or Absolute Reality. The doctrine of Jainism prefers the difficult path of practising cruelest form of asceticism and taking recourse to a method of tremendous self-torture, as a result of which it becomes difficult for the ordinary man to tread on this path of austerity and complete withdrawal from the ordinary world of existence. The doctrine of Jainism is thus characterised by an aristocratic approach inasmuch as its gates are closed to the ordinary man. In sharp contradiction to this theory the doctrine propounded by the Gītā portrays a democratic approach, since it tries to impress on the common mass the necessity of

48. "Both Jains and Buddhists now worship a succession of defied saints in place of the many gods adored by the Hindus. The Jains divide time into three successive eras and assign twenty-four jains to each era". - E.O. Martin's The Gods of India, page 306, lines 20-23.

49. diptottaptatapahpa pariṣahajayodyogair niyogodyamaiḥ sadbhikṣupratimābhīr āpy anasanair māsopāsādībhīhī kayakleśabharaiḥ prayāti kṛṣṭatām kāyo na karmacayas te karmakṣayaheḥhavas tava sadā svastho yadā sthāsyati // - Kumārakavi’s Atmaprabodha, Verse 25. See also verse 26.
taking recourse to the path of devotionalism, where the devotee surrenders himself completely to the supreme Lord and obtains His blessings, as a result of which he is lifted above the ordinary plain of consciousness and is elevated to an exalted position reaching which he experiences his communion with the divine Lord, the donor of all blessings and benefits. Mahāvīra, however, tenders advice to the ordinary man to tread into the path of self-negation and self-torture formulated by him, but great disrespect shown by his followers to the basic philosophy propounded by him has failed to infuse attraction into the system of Jainism, as a result of which the philosophy of Jainism is no longer a popular belief in the Country. Fortunately Buddhism takes a different stand and though acquiescing with the theory that there is no single personal Supreme Spirit, it propounds the doctrine of divine grace and conceives of the character of Buddha as one who is competent to rescue the bonded man from the bondage of earthly existence and present before him the lofty vision of Enlightenment. The discerning mind of the curious reader is surprised to find remarkable points of similarity between the characters of Kṛṣṇa, the central figure of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā and Buddha, the central figure of Buddhism and Buddhistic theories. Both in the new testament of the Hindus the Bhagavadgītā and the scriptures of Buddhism—these two superhuman beings are represented as possessed of divine grace and full of love and
affection for the suffering humanity. It is this induction of divine grace in the character of Buddha that makes Buddhism so dear to the heart of the orthodox Hindus who regard Lord Buddha as an incarnation of the Supreme Spirit.

An analysis of Buddhism reveals that not only are old Gods transformed into the character of Buddha and old legends concerning him are rewritten, but along with these ones a strong element of religious faith and strings of ethical Theism are inducted into the theories by Buddha himself. The seers of the Upaniṣad consider religion as a method of Emancipation and do not expend their energies in determining the number of the God. The personal Gods may be one or many, but the absolute reality is represented by one, and the goal of human being is achieved through Emancipation. It has already been asserted that the Upaniṣads attach profound importance to intellectual activity and recommends the path of knowledge, which enables one to realise his identity with the supreme spirit. The approach of the Buddhism is more human. The philosophy of Buddhism is essentially "Humanism", not a metaphysic or theology, but a vehicle for man's salvation, - a path for giving him relief from the stress and strains of the ordinary world. Lord Buddha himself impresses on humanity the necessity of following the middle way, - of avoiding not only the path of cruel and bloody ritual but also that of unfruitful metaphysics and spiritual confabulations. Buddha in his preachings does not dilate upon the
problem whether the world is eternal or transient, whether this is finite or infinite, because as he says, these have no value and do not serve any purpose for the suffering man, undergoing immense miseries in the ordinary world of existence. Instead, Buddha tries to formulate the definition of misery and to show wherefrom miseries start and how it can be terminated. All these he does, because according to him, this concept of misery and formulation of the way by which misery can be obviated is sure to bring some good to the suffering man. This pragmatic approach infuses a new charm to the doctrine of Buddhism, as a result of which it finds it easy to cross the borders of its country of origin and travel abroad. This pragmatic agnostic, however, is not peculiar to Buddhism, since sometimes the Upaniṣadic seers also tenders advice to humanity to steer clear of intellectual gymnastics. In the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad even Yājñavalkya in the midst of his daring speculations advises Gārgi to see that knowledge is not pursued to its furthest limit, because great emphasis placed on intellect is likely to divert the mind from the real goal represented by Splendid Salvation. Buddhism, however, deals the supersstructure of its faith on


51. sa ho'vāca gārgi, mā' tiprākṣir mā te mūrddha vyapaptad anatipradnyām vai devatām atiprochasi.
   - Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.6.
this attractive opportunism to a considerable extent, and while the Upaniṣadic thought betrays this opportunism in stray manner, the Buddhist doctrine is permeated through and through with this pragmatic approach.

A few other elements of real Theism are also traceable in Buddhism, and these are represented by moral law and the necessity of obeying the rule of nature by virtue of which the earth revolves round its orbit, the stars and the moon shine and the entire universe is sustained. Buddhism calls its adherents back to the moral law and to its claim in order to give more room to ethics in its philosophical system that maintains that the experience of Bodhi or Enlightenment is capable of being obtained through adherence to moral and ethical laws. This Enlightenment is in sharp contrast to the Salvation intended to be obtained through rigorous asceticism or total withdrawal from the world: it is something primarily ethical and capable of being enriched by moral conduct, meditation and insight. By presenting before

52. paññātipata veramanī sikkhapadāh samādiyāmi.
adinnadāna veramanī .......... kāmesu micchācārā ....
..... musavādā veramanī .......... surāmereya majja –
pamāṭṭhāna ..........  .
- Ratnamana, Chapter II, items 26, 28, 30, 32, 34.
humanity a new picture of Enlightenment Buddhism calls its followers back to purity of conduct: it sets before them a moral ideal which is at once awful as law and humanly dear and gracious as the Lord himself: it is universal in its appeal to man. It is this concept of grace, which appears to be a new induction of Buddhism inasmuch as neither the Vedic seer nor the theological teacher of the Brāhmanas nor the Upaniṣadic sage envisages God as possessed of profound grace and compassion. Only in one stanza of the Kathopanisad, the Upaniṣadic seer proclaims that, the Absolute is incapable of being obtained through scholarship, intellect or acquaintance with diverse subjects: He is capable of being obtained only by him, who is favoured by the Absolute itself. This concept of "Approach by the Absolute itself" is certainly divine grace, traceable in works of Buddhism. Buddhism derives clue from the Vedic and Upaniṣadic thoughts and infuses flesh, blood and marrow into the dry bones of divine approach and ultimately succeeds in giving shape to the concept of divine grace which ultimately blossoms forth

\[
\text{nā'yaṁ ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhaya na bahunā}
\text{srutena}
\]
\[
yam evai' sa vrñute tena labhyas tasy' aīsa ātmā
\text{vivrñute tanum svām}
\]

- Kathopanisad 1.2.23.
into the concept of divine compassion and good will in the teachings of Srimadbhagavadgītā. It is no surprise, therefore, to find springing from these roots a doctrine of grace, a view of Buddha closely approaching to that of Avatāras and conception of the message of the master as a gospel to be preached to all, whose salvation is worthier to win than attainment of personal salvation or practice of egoistic contemplation. All these elements presented in Buddhism indicate that the current of Theism continued to flow from the Vedas to the Bhagavadgītā through such Theistic philosophies as Buddhism also. This only goes to substantiate the proposition that in carving out its doctrine of ethical Theism the Bhagavadgītā obtains materials not only from the Vedic literature but from popular religious faiths including the faith of Buddhism, where the concept of divine grace and compassion looms large.