CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

I. UPAŅIŚADIC VEDĀNTA

The first, among the group of authoritative texts that the Vedānta recognises, are undoubtedly the Upaniṣads. The germs of monism are definitely present in the Upaniṣads. In fact, all of them seem to smell monism throughout. Śaṅkara has to be credited for having discovered those germs and imbedding them into a powerful system. But the Upaniṣads do not follow a strict and a consistent terminology. They seem to employ assertive and sometimes even aggressive, method rather than adopting an argumentative method. On the other hand, it may be observed, that the Upaniṣads did not deny the reality of the world in clear terms. Nor do they discard the efficacy of obligatory duties. The whole tradition in this respect undergoes a thorough change when Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara come in the field.

1. It is very often doubted that the Upaniṣads advocate the doctrine of Mayā. It may be remarked in this connection that the said doctrine is definitely implicit in the Upaniṣads and can very well be logically deduced from the premises gathered through a careful selection of Upaniṣadic passages. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (II/5/19) does refer it. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad speaks of it at three places (I/10, IV/8-10)
Chief of the tenets of the Upanisâdic Vedânta are summarised below:

a) The Nature of Brahman

The Upanisâds seem to emphasize unanimously that there underlies some definite changeless Reality in the external world of objects. This discovery led them to conceive a single creator and controller of the universe. The quest into the nature of this creator, termed as 'Brahman', brought a stage when Upaniâsad sages and thinkers identified Brahman with the presiding deities of the natural powers like the Sun etc. But, the idea of Brahman that they were cherishing could not be satisfied by any of these powers of Nature. Thus an entity was taken for Brahman and consequently rejected as it did not satisfy the implications of Brahman. "And this process of negation, or what may truly be called abstraction, goes on, till every leaf of the flower is plucked off, and nothing remains but the calyx or the seed, the inconceivable Brahman, the self of the world".  

Thus Brahman is the essence of every object of the Universe. That is why it is asserted that everything made of clay is known immediately when the clay itself is known. Similarly, everything becomes known if this Brahman is known. If we trace the nature of the creator in the Upaniâsads, we find that the creator, after projecting

1. Quoted from Max-muller's "Vedânta Philosophy".
himself as the objective world is said to have entered himself in all the objects.

This universe has been created by Brahman out of himself alone. Then he is said to have entered into it as its inward controller. Here duality is clearly implied. In order to reconcile it, Shamkara attributed the difference to name and form.

Brahman of the Upanisads "creates all, wills all, smells all, tastes all, he has pervaded all, silent and unaffected". The majority of the Upanisadic texts identify the Universe with Brahman and thus Brahman is the sole reality, everything else is unreal.

The creator can reabsorb the multifarious creation within himself. This is known as world-dissolution. At that time it passes into its same, original, non-dual state. Thus we see that the process of creation cannot affect the creator in any way.

There are discussions among the Upanisadic philosophers like Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Prāṇa, Āditya etc. over the nature of the Absolute. Yajñavalkya criticises them. Sages like Vishvāmitra, Jamadagni, Brāhadvāja, Gautama and Vasishtha also discuss the possibilities of different conceptions of Brahman. Best among them is that of Vasishtha. The gist of the discussion is that the true nature of Brahman can be

2. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV/1-2.
known by Brahman alone. The knowledge of Brahman need not be sought in anything external to the Self itself.

Thus the Upaniṣads do not furnish any exclusive matter regarding the nature of the Absolute. But still, cosmological definition of Brahman is given at one place. Brahman is 'that from which all these things are born in which, having been born, they subsist, and into which ultimately they are absorbed'. An epistemological definition is also available: "That by knowing which whatever has not been known, becomes something already known".

Brahman is that whose desires are truth, whose intentions are truth. It is all omniscient, omnipotent. This is also called as "mass of consciousness". This "mass of consciousness" is always the subject and never the object. "It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the breath of the breath and the eye of the eye". "One does not think it by thought, but the thought, they say, is itself thought by it: that is the True Brahman". "When everything here has become the Ātman alone, who can smell what, and by what means, who can see what and by what means.... by what means can know the knower?"

1. Vide Taittiriya Upaniṣad III/1.
2. Vide Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI/1/3.
3. Vide Chāndogya Upaniṣad VIII/1.
4. Vide Kenopaniṣad I/2-5.
5. Vide Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II/14/14.
There are certain Upanisads which give us scientific analysis of the problem of world-creation. For example, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad gives us the Ether-Wind-Fire-Water-Earth cosmology. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI/2) speaks of the Light-Water-Food cosmology. The latter is comparatively less scientific.

c) Theory of Causation

The Upaniṣads do not say anything definite about the theory of Causation. But Śaṅkara maintains that the ultimate cause is unchanged, but it appears as if changed into the successive effect. This he derived probably from a number of examples given in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad where the reality is attributed only to the cause even though it might have transformed itself into pot, jug etc. Thus Śaṅkara concluded that these distinctions are only due to name and form. So Brahmaṇ, the uncaused First Cause, remains ever the same and unchanged.

The concept of "Being" in the Upaniṣads is undoubtedly a universal category. It is said that this "Being" cannot be caused either by "Being" or "non-Being". Therefore, it is regarded as self-subsistent.

d) Theory of Karman

The Upaniṣads do believe in the theory of Karman.  

1. Cf. VI/1.
2. Vide Chāndogya Upaniṣad V/3-10 and Bhādarāṇyaka Upaniṣad VI/2.
But they do not attach any importance to it because they do not emphasize it. The theory of Karman is, in fact, meant for the aspirants who are in the domain of ignorance. The course of transmigration ends immediately when the true knowledge dawns. The theory of Karman is propounded only to focus one's attention towards the inquiry into the nature of Brahman.

e) The Doctrine of Soul

The Upaniṣads do not tell us directly anything about the nature of soul. The method adopted is mythological and metaphorical. The metaphor of chariot given in the Kathopaniṣad may be taken as its example. Some Upaniṣads pursue the inquiry into the nature of Soul introspectively and experimentally. A critical review of the behaviour of Soul during the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep is taken and the uncoUmtaminated nature of the soul is convincingly brought forward.

The Māndūkya Upaniṣad sums up the investigation. It calls the waking state 'Vaishvānara'. It is the cogniser of the objective world. The dreaming soul is termed as "Taijas". It functions inwardly, being shut up from the objective world. The sleeping soul is called "Prājñā". It is free from all sense-functions, inward as well as outward. The text in question talks of the next "indescribable,  

1. Cf. Prashnopaniṣad IV, Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad II/1 and IV/3, Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI/8 and VIII/7-12.
unknowable, transcendent state of absolute oneness where the world and its manifoldness find their utter extinction.

The space in the heart is said to be the location of the individual soul. Its size corresponds to that of a thumb. The Upaniṣads speak of innumerable veins in human body. One such vein is called "Purital", into which rests the soul at the time of deep sleep. It is further asserted that if the soul happens to pass through this vein at the time of death, it becomes free from its course of transmigration.

f) Liberation

"Emancipation or Mukti means in the Upaniṣads the State of infiniteness that a man attains when he knows his own self and thus becomes Brahman". In fact, we are ever-liberated because we are nothing but Brahman. But we are simply to know this Truth. The moment it is known, we are liberated. Thus True knowledge is not the means to liberation. It constitutes liberation itself. So long as one identifies one's Self with the material things, one desires and wills. Thus he has to reap the fruits of his actions. This can only be immediately destroyed by the realisation of one's true nature. This state cannot be explained through the medium of words.

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1. "History of Indian Philosophy" by Dr. S.N. Dasgupta, Volume I, page 58.
We may close the topic with a pessimistic note where the Upaniṣads extend their eternal hope to the seekers of Brahman, that they would surely realise. It, if they have deep and sincere craze for It. In fact, Yajñavalkya, Janaka and Shvetaketu did realise Brahman.

The Upaniṣads nowhere dwell at length about the transitoriness of the world. They stress unanimously are the blissful and everlasting nature of human goal. Consequently, we find Śaṅkara nowhere talking elaborately about the painful aspect of life as Lord Buddha does or as the Sāṅkhyan teachers do. So, it may be concluded that Śaṅkara borrowed directly from Upaniṣads his stress on the importance of knowledge, law of Karman, belief in reincarnation, ideal of liberation and concept and criterion of absolute Reality.

II. VEDĀNTA OF GAUDAPĀDA AND BHARTA BRĀHPRAPANÇA

The Māndūkya-Kārika by Gaudapāda is perhaps the first treatise in the history of the making of the Advaita Vedānta. For that matter, Gaudapāda may be regarded as the founder of monism. According to him, "There is no such thing as coming into being. Duality is a distinction imposed on the basic non-dual Reality by nescience. The Real does not suffer any change".

2. Introduction to "The Brahma Sūtra" by S. Radhakrishnan, page 29.
a) Principal Tenets of Gaudapāda

The main argument of Gaudapāda can be summarised thus: The experiences of a dream, so long as they last, appear as real as those of the waking life. The waking life has no existence there, and appears so unreal as the dreaming state becomes when one passes over to the waking state. So the experiences of both the states are unreal, if looked from each other's point of view. Therefore, concludes Gaudapāda, that experiences of the wakeful life are similar to those of dreaming state and hence unreal. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta puts this issue thus: "Waking experiences, being similar to dream experiences, are equally false. For, both sets of experiences, involve the duality of subject and object, and are therefore fundamentally more or less the same: so that, if one of them is false, the other also is false".

Gaudapāda proceeds with his thesis thus: It has been an established fact that the dreaming and the waking consciousnesses are both unreal from each other's point of view. A closer scrutiny reveals and points to the existence of some basic conscious entity which underlies both of them and is common to each of them as well. This third state does not possess any such content as may be said to be particularly belonging to and of the two states. And we see that both the states of waking and

1. Gaudapāda does admit a few differences in both these states (4/39).
dreaming, in fact cover all our conscious and subconscious experiences. As such we have to imagine that the basic consciousness, the existence of which is necessary, is beyond the dualistic behaviour. This state can be no other than the state of deep sleep where there is the cessation of all subjective and objective experiences. During this state the Self is of the nature of a "mass of consciousness" i.e. "Caitanya Ghana". The normal laws of reason and causation cannot be applied there because the functioning of senses and the mind stops at that time.

Gaudapāda's penetrating intellect brings out quite successfully, the unworkability of the ordinary laws of causation. He says, "The becoming, as having been already produced, cannot be produced; the non-becoming, because it cannot be produced on the theory of Satkāryavāda, cannot be produced". If we grant this production, we shall face the fallacy of unending chain of cause and effects, technically known as the "Anavastha dośa". We may proceed onward from the cause to the effect or backward from the effect to the cause, the fallacy can never be avoided. This undoubtedly exhibits Gaudapāda's 'minute observation' and 'acute reasoning'.

2. Ibid 4/4
If like cosmologist, says Gaudapāda, we try to apply the universally-recognised laws of causation there, and try to determine the First Principle, on the analogy of the universality of the law of causation, we shall be contradicting our own position in so far as we shall be going against the held view that the first cause is uncaused. A monist, on the other hand, can very comfortably throw the same principle overboard when he supposes that diversity finally merges back into the unity from where it sprung. Thus it becomes easy for Gaudapāda to maintain in both the cases that the imperishable and unborn cause cannot transform itself into the effect which is perishing and is being born.

That the causality is not possible even in mental sphere is proved thus: Ideas arise in us. They may be regarded more real than the knowledge of external objects because our knowledge of ideas is most intimate. Hence everything is only a particular 'idea'. Most of our ideas arise due to an inwardly and regulated process which can be followed step by step. Beginningless Vāsanās can appropriately account for the ideas that sprung up voluntarily. Hence, says Gaudapāda, this chain of mental causation also involves the fallacy of Regress in Infinitum, the fallacy of beginningless and endless infinity.

1. Vide Māndukya Kārikā, 4/19.
Thus Gaudapāda successfully proves that both wakeful and the dreaming states are meaningless from the point of view of deep sleep. Causation, objectivity, movement—all these are fancies of imagination. Reality is one, unique, serene and mass of consciousness. The birth and death that are ordinarily attributed to the Self, do no actually belong to it. These accidents are similar to those that the dreamer associates with his dreaming Self. Sleep, death or rebirth do not affect the continuity of the consciousness. "Whatever the self was (prior to falling asleep) whether a tiger or a lion or a wolf, or a boar or an insect or a butterfly, becomes the same once again (on his return to the wakeful life)."

There is also a fourth state beyond sleep, called Yogic trance, where there is no subjective or objective world. Consciousness of the lower plane becomes one with the Absolute. Thus the Ultimate reality is Cit which is limitless and devoid of all relations. All the objective and the subjective world is merely an illusion, superimposition on this Cit. The embodied Self becomes free from this illusion during deep sleep. In reality, the embodied Self is essentially identical with the Creator. The attainment

1. Vide Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā, 4/68.
2. Vide Chandogya Upanisad VI/9/2-3.
of liberation due to the dawn of knowledge brings permanent freedom from the illusion. When bondage is non-existent (considered from the ultimate point of view), its cause, i.e. Jāti or birth in Sansāra, must also be unreal from that point of view. Thus furnishing the illustration of the whirling fire brand, Gaudapāda convincingly brings out his famous doctrine of Ajātivāda. "All that is born through illusion is unreal. Hence there exists nothing eternal. From the ultimate point of view everything is unborn, and hence there ensue no destruction of anything". It may be remarked here that Gaudapāda has not brought out in clear terms why the internal world of thoughts, ideas, emotions and volitions and the external objective world should be regarded illusory. Even Śaṅkara did not take pains to prove with a keen logical dialectic the illusory nature of the world.

The real aim of one's life is to realise the highest truth of the Ajāti. To attain this state, one has to detach one's mind from the world of duality and focus one-pointed concentration on the Absolute. The union of the mind and the Absolute is entirely different from the ordinary union during deep sleep. The practical way to realise this end is called "Asparsha Yoga". This state

2. Ibid, 4/57.
3. Ibid, 3/34.
b) World-Creation

While giving a general evaluation of the philosophical problems discussed in the Upaniṣads, the process of world creation is one that attracts one's attention at once. Dr. S.K. Belvalkar has traced three stages with regard to the development of the theory of world-creation in the Upaniṣads.

i) In the first stage are grouped those passages which say that the world was non-existent prior to its coming into being.  

ii) Then comes the second stage where we find the above explanation of the world-creation improved a little. The Upaniṣadic passages, grouped under this category, call the world before creation as non-manifest, and not non-existent. The example of seed and oil is cited as its illustration.

iii) The third stage comes very near to monism. The world is said to be "the manifestation of the Power of the Absolute". There is a passage which clearly calls this power as illusory because it is "contingent upon a perceiver".

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1. For example, Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad I/2/1, Aitareya Upaniṣad I/1, Taittiriya Upaniṣad II/1/7, Chāndogya Upaniṣad III/19/1.
2. Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad I/4/7 and Shvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I/15.
3. Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI/2.
is steady, serene, sorrowless, unruffled by cares, trials and tribulations of life. It is one, unique and eternal. Illumination is the direct outcome of this state. If we attain this state once, we feel that we always had it. This state is indescribable in words because the ordinary means of knowledge cannot be applied there.

Thus we may observe that all the essentials of Śaṅkarācārya's metaphysical concepts, a unique contribution towards the systematised development of Upanisadic thinking, are definitely present in the Gaudapāda- Kārikās. Śaṅkara only seized these ideas and suggestions and wielded them into a powerful coherent system.

b) The Doctrine of Bhaṭṭṛpurṣaṇa

Bhaṭṭṛpurṣaṇa is considered to be a monist because he advocates that there underlies a basic unity in the whole of the universe, viz. the unmanifested non-qualified and attributeless Brahman. The whole universe (individual souls naturally included) evolves from the Brahman. Just as the waves do not possess an independent identity of their own, similarly, this world, being an effect of the First Cause (Brahman), is also non-different from its cause.

The Brahman is conceived by Bhaṭṭṛpurṣaṇa to be of the nature of knowledge, because the individual souls possess consciousness, they are the nearest transformations

of Brahman, and in fact they are parts (ansha) of Brahman. But due to the attachment of worldly pleasures and ignorance they forget their divine inheritance. No sooner the soul realises this fact and consequently starts contemplating on Brahman than it becomes intellectually united with Brahman. The actual Realisation is possible only when the body gets dissolved. This state of intellectual union is as good as to make the realiser emancipated, but it is distinct from the final Sākṣātkāra when all activity, voluntary or involuntary, stops.

As a corollary from the above view Bhartrāprapanca advocates that Nitya Karmas are to be performed till death. Thus, unlike Śaṅkara, he holds action and knowledge both to be necessary in bringing about the final Realisation. We see that Bhartrāprapanca's doctrine ignores the possibility of vivid Realisation attainable by means of Yogic concentration, say in the Yogic trance. Absoluistic Vedāntin improves this Pehābheda view of Bhartrāprapanca and discovers the factor of Maya because the illusory nature of things could actually and not intellectually be realised by the person liberated even when embodied.

1. The doctrine of Bhartrāprapanca comes under attack in the third Chapter of this thesis.

2. Śaṅkara has mentioned Bhartrāprapanca while commenting on the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad. Anandajñāna, in his commentary on the Śaṁkara Bhāṣya, gives extracts from the commentary written by Bhartrāprapanca on the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad. Prof. M. Hiriyana of Mysore collected all such fragmentary information and read it out in the proceedings of the Third Oriental Congress in Madras in 1924.
The Brahma-Sutras mention a number of teachers of Vedanta. But nothing can be said with a definite sense of exactitude as to what were their philosophies. But their bare mention in the Brahma-Sutras makes us infer that their views were certainly different from those of Pādarāyanya. This is sufficient to indicate that interpretations of the Upaniṣads other than that of Pādarāyanya were also prevalent in those days. That is why divergent views are mentioned with regard to the nature of the liberated soul and the relation of the individual soul to Brahman. Leaving aside all considerations of the different commentaries on the Brahma-Sutras, let us attempt to make out what was the shape of Vedanta in the Sūtras.

1. Pādarī is mentioned four times in the Sūtras, Audulomi thrice, Ashmarathyā twice, Kāshakṛtstna Kārṣṇājini and Atreya only once and Jamini as many as eleven times.

2. While attempting a sketch of Pre-Shāmkara Vedanta, the celebrated learned scholar of Indian Philosophy, Mahāmahopādhyāya Gopi Nath Kaviraj of Benaras, has worked out in brief the views of all these teachers.

a) **Nature of Brahman**

According to the Brahma-Sutras, Brahman is that from which this world originates, in which it subsists and into which it ultimately merges. It is the efficient as well as the material cause of the world. It is the creator of every material element. It creates the world independently out of itself and does not stand in need of any external help. The process employed in the creation of the world is that of transformation. Though the world is caused by Brahman, yet it differs from Brahman in a number of respects. It has certain qualities which are not at all found in Brahman. The world, before creation, is immanent in Brahman. Thus it has no independent identity from Brahman. At the time of final dissolution when the world merges into Brahman, Brahman does not get contaminated by its merger.

2. Ibid., 1/4/23.
3. Ibid., 2/1/24.
5. Ibid., 1/4/23.
6. Ibid., 2/1/16.
7. Ibid., 2/1/7.
8. Ibid., 2/1/8-9.
In order to prove the reality of Brahman, Bādrīyāṇa has offered us a psychological proof, citing the example of deep sleep. He gives us two illustrations while discussing the relationship of Brahman and the world in the form of cause and effect. Brahman is compared to a rolled up piece of cloth and the world to the same piece of cloth fully spread out. He attributes the creative power to pure Brahman. The power lives with Brahman just in the same way as heat with fire. It is the natural sport on the part of Brahman to develop itself into this world. In doing so, it does not suffer any change in itself.

At one place, the Śītrakāra certainly discusses the nature of the ultimate Reality. As nothing can be made out from the wording of the Śūtra, because of its ambiguous terms one has to consult the commentaries. The inquisitor is rather disappointed to find commentators differing on the interpretation of this Śūtra. But the Śītrakāra does not seem to talk anywhere about the two types of Brahman — qualified and non-qualified. This seems to be a creation of Śaṅkara's mind only. But most of the later commentators agree with Śaṅkara here.

2. Vide Brahma-Sūtras, 2/1/14-20.
3. Ibid., 1/3/1.
4. Ibid., 2/1/33
5. Ibid., 2/1/27.
6. Cf., Ibid., 3/2/11.
b) The Process of Creation and Dissolution

The Brahma-Sūtras speak of world-creation in the following sequence—Ether, Mind, Heat, Waters, Earth. Brahman enters at each stage into the succeeding product. Intellect, mind and other senses are created when the creation of the gross elements takes place. It may be mentioned here that Badarayana is silent over the question of the further order of creation. He does not work out clearly the process of Creation after the five gross elements. But this is clear that Badarayana was in favour of attributing conscious effort on the part of the Creator when it wanted to create.

At the time of dissolution the world merges into Brahman in its reverse order of creation and does not pollute Brahman by its impurities. Brahman is ever unique and partless. Badrayana accepts Shruti as the final authority in this regard.

c) The Embodied Self

Badarayana gives us his positive and clear idea of the nature and functions of the embodied self. The soul is distinguished separately from intellect, mind, sense organs, vital airs and the physical and the subtlebodies both.

1. The Brahma-Sūtras, 2/3/13 and 15.
2. Ibid., 1/1/5, 1/4/24 and 2/3/13.
The size of the embodied self is said to be minute. It is distinct from the Creator and the relation between these two is that of the drops and the ocean or of the sparks and the fire. As it is basically nothing but Brahman, therefore, it cannot be regarded a new creation. Transmigrating nature is attributed to the embodied self. It is relieved of its transmigrative function at once, when it attains liberation by means of true knowledge.

The Sutrakāra mentions three states through which the embodied self passes—wakeful state, dreaming state and the state of sound sleep. The last state cuts it off from the experiences of the waking as well as dreaming states. At that time it gets united with Brahman and re-emerges when it passes on to its original wakeful state.

The Sutrakāra does not clear his view with regard to the relation of the embodied self to the Absolute Brahman. Although a discussion on this topic occurs in the third quarter of the Second Chapter, yet Pādarāyaṇa has not indicated to which view he adheres. But an aphorism has brought out the contradictory nature of the two. Acts, enjoyment, acquisition of merit and demerit, pleasure and pain are attributed to the embodied self; and the absolute Brahman is quite contrary to it and has nothing to do with all these.

2. Ibid., 2/3/19, 3/1/1,13.
3. Ibid., 3/2/7.
Heart is the abode of the embodied self. It is a very delicate meeting place of the spinal cord connected with as many as 101 nerves. One of them is Susumna that goes up to Cranium. When death comes, the knot of the heart gets opened due to the grace of God. Thus the individual soul passes out of the body through the passage of Susumna nerve and the skull. The subtle senses, mind and the chief vital air accompanies the individual soul in the next birth.

d) Epistemology

Bādarāyana has mentioned only two means of knowledge in the Sūtras. The first is called Perception, i.e., the Scriptures which cover the whole range of Upaniṣads. The second is Inference or Sārti which is constituted of the Bhagavat Gītā, the Mahābhārata and the Manu-Sārti. It is declared in emphatic and clear terms that metaphysical pursuits cannot be carried on by the use of Reason.

e) Means for the Realisation

The highest goal of the embodied self is to realise the Self. But Bādarāyana does not work out clearly the nature of this realisation. The third Chapter deals with the

1. The Brahma-Sūtras, 2/3/23.
2. Ibid., 4/2/11, 4/2/17
3. Ibid., 3/1/1-7 and 4/2/3-21
4. Ibid., 2/1/11.
5. Ibid., 1/1/9.
methods which can possibly make the embodied self qualified for the dawn and of the knowledge of Brahman and it can receive final realisation immediately. Yogic discipline and meditation are also recommended. Action done as a result of ignorance is said to be an impediment towards the rise of knowledge. On the other hand, it is also said that the Jīvanmukta has also to engage himself in some action or the other.

As is done in some of the Upaniṣads, gods are also recommended to be the objects of worship. But it is not to be forgotten that gods themselves are ruled by the supreme Brahman. After all, symbols cannot be regarded as the reality. They only represent the Reality which definitely lies beyond them. They can at best point to the Reality. It may be noted that the worship of gods is recommended for the aspirants who are comparatively less qualified.

It may be mentioned that Bādrīyana restricts the right of Brahman- Vidya to the upper three classes- Brāhmaṇa, Vaishya and Kśatriya. But Shūdras and ladies may also get liberation if there is some special favour of the lord.

1. The Brahma-Sūtras, 4/2/1 and 3/3
2. Ibid., 3/4/26 and 42
3. Ibid., 3/2/38-41.
4. Ibid., 4/1/4.
f) Liberation

Badarayana believes in the doctrine of Jīvanmukti. He admits that fruits of the accumulated actions are at once destroyed at the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman but the Ārādhā Karmas will have to be exhausted by being enjoyed.

The author of the Brahma-Sūtras does not give us his views clearly on the nature of Liberation. In the last chapter, a discussion is raised with regard to the characteristics of the liberated soul. Audulomi says that it is chiefly characterised by thought. Jaimini, on the other hand, advocates that it 'has a number of exalted qualities'. Badarayana favours a synthetic view of these two. It is also said that emancipation brings infinite power and knowledge to the liberated soul. But it has to be kept clear that none of the liberated souls can create, sustain and destroy like God. These functions are exclusively reserved for God alone. On the whole, this is certain that the embodied self attains Brahman by way of devayāna, never to return to this world.

We may conclude with Dr. Belvalkar's valuable observation in this connection: "The Śātrakāra's metaphysics is in short a clever combination of monism and pluralism, of idealism

2. Ibid., 4/4/5-7.
and realism, of pantheism as well as transcendentalism; and of evolution as well of freedom of the will.

IV. VEDÂNTA IN THE BHAGAVADGÎTÂ

Gîtâ is the most popular and authoritative work of Indian Philosophy. It was not an attempt to expound some speculative philosophy where evolution and development of the universe are traced and worked out. It was, in fact, a compromised and blended state of the Ultimate Reality of the Upaniśads on the one hand and some "monotheistic supreme deity" on the other. This may have been the reason why it is one of the most popular poetic expositions of Indian Philosophy. In view of the contents of the Gîtâ, it may be observed that it is primarily a work of metaphysics. As such, it is next to Upaniśads in authority and therefore, serves as the second pillar of Indian Philosophy. Hence, there is nothing illogical or unjustifiable in making an attempt to work out the shape of Vedânta in the Gîtâ.

The Gîtâ analyses the nature of human existence in deeper details by discussing these four basic topics of the Vedânta Philosophy:

(i) The nature of the Self.

(ii) The relation of the Self with the Physical body with which it is conditioned.

(iii) Are these two absolutely different from each other or they are non-different?

(iv) Means for the attainment of emancipation.

1. Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedânta Philosophy by Dr. S.K. Belvalkar, Page 158.
It is obvious that the first two topics deal with the epistemological approach of the Gītā in analysing the nature of human existence, whereas the last two topics bring out the ontological treatment of the problem in hand. The method in which the Gītā attacks these problems and gives their solutions in the same as employed by the Upaniṣads.

a) The Ultimate Reality

It cannot be exactly deciphered which term is employed in the Gītā to denote the Ultimate Reality. It mentions Brahman in a number of contexts. Whatever be that entity, it is pure ontological potency and lies beyond the unmanifest. We are clearly told that it never perishes even though all creatures may perish. Lord Kṛśna says, "My highest abode is that reaching which, none returns. It is known as the Unmanifest, Imperishable and the highest aim". It may be inferred from the contents of the Gītā that it regards the Supreme deluding power as a real creative force of Brahman and as the factor which unfolds its inherent potentialities.

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2. Cf. Gītā, Verse 8/21

It may be observed that this connection of the Absolute separates the Philosophy of the Bhagavat-Gītā from that of the dualistic Sāṅkhya. Dr. S.N. Dasgupta is also of the view that the term "Sāṅkhya" has been used in the Gītā to denote true knowledge or self-knowledge. (A History of Indian Philosophy, Volume II, Page 458.)
b) **Nature of the Self**

The Self is regarded the true reality in the Gītā. It has got an infinite span of life during which birth, death and disease etc. happen to be accidents only. The Self remains unaffected by the happenings of these accidents. It is body that suffers changes of birth, growth and decay etc. These changes do not affect the Self in any way. The Self, according to the Gītā, is eternal, all-pervading and unchangeable.

The Self is devoid of action because it is characterised to be immutable. It is the transcendental ego and the inactive Witness of all the modifications of the Gunas. It is due to ignorance that we ascribe action to it. "It is eternally pure and autonomous. It erroneously identifies itself with egoism, and regards itself as an active agent". There are a number of passages which clearly say that the Self is Omnipresent. It is, in fact, the nucleus of everything.

The essence of the Self is knowledge. Body, sense-organs, mind and the intellect originate emotions and desires which obscure the true nature of the Self.

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1. Vide Gītā 2/12
3. Vide Gītā 13/12
4. Vide Gītā 13/12
c) The Embodied Self

The Self of the Gītā is immutable, eternal, imperishable and free from all sorts of modifications and sufferings. "It is never born, nor does it die. Even after becoming existent, it is never existent; for, it is unborn, eternal, unchangeable and primæval and it is never killed even when the body is killed". "Weapons cannot cut it, nor can fire burn it, water cannot drench it, nor can wind make it dry". But this very soul is bound by the law of Karman and passes through its empirical existence taking up a physical frame.

The embodied Self is the eternal part of God. It is regarded as the ray of the Lord. The Gītā says, "An eternal embodied Self among other embodied selves in this world is a ray of Myself. It attracts the senses along with the mind as the sixth one, all of which abide in Prakṛti". The embodied selves are infinite in number. Time and space are the factors which limit the body, a conditioning factor of the Self.

The Gītā conceives the embodied Self as the enjoyer of all modifications born of Prakṛti. It says, "Puruṣa, when seated in Prakṛti, experiences the qualities born of Prakṛti". The embodied Self is freed from its sufferings of birth, old age and death etc. which it wrongly ascribes to itself, when it rises above the domain of the three Guṇas. Lord Kṛṣṇa says

2. Ibid., Verse 15/7.
3. Ibid., Verse 13/21.
to Arjuna, "Having transcended the Guṇas, which produce the body, the embodied Self becomes free from the pains of birth, death and old age and attains immortality".  

**d) Emancipation**

According to the Gītā, emancipation means affinity with God who is characterised by eternal peace and infinite bliss. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Verily, this supreme deluding power, constituted of the three Guṇas, is very hard to be overcome. But those who seek me alone, taking refuge in me, can cross this uncrossable ocean of this supreme deluding power, made up of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Thus they realise their eternal inherent nature and attain emancipation by my grace". The liberated souls rise above the domain and workings of the three Guṇas.

The course of transmigration of the embodied Self lasts till the Supreme Self remains associated with the unconscious mind-body-complex. The moment it is completely detached from the Guṇas and their workings, it is at once emancipated. In other words, the embodied Self has to disconnect itself from its wrong identification with the mind-body-complex if it is to realise his innate purity.

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Gītā recognises the efficacy of knowledge as the means towards the realisation of the Self. "Having resorted to knowledge and having attained unity with Me, they are neither born at the time of creation nor disturbed at the time of dissolution". It highly praises the Jñāna method for self-realisation. Some verses say that knowledge is necessary for the realisation of the Absolute. It is not easy to gain true knowledge because it is preceded by a constant and untiring effort of mental concentration. Here selfless action and unshaking faith become necessary. Thus it leads to the revelation of the Absolute, a very very rare achievement of the embodied Self.

The Gītā recognises triple method for the realisation of the Self Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Jñāna-yoga. Yoga, in fact, means perfect union of the embodied self with the Lord. This union may be achieved by means of performing selfless action, intense devotion or right knowledge. Renunciation and performance of duties with a detached attitude are both considered to be conducive to emancipation. A few verses may be quoted here to elaborate this triple

1. Vide, Gītā, verses 4/33-42.
2. Vide, Gītā, 14/2.
5. Cf. Ibid., 18/55, 65 and also 9/34 and 4/10.
Those who think on Me, meditating on Me with single-minded exclusive devotion and renouncing all actions up to Me, ..... are saved and delivered by me from the ocean on their empirical existence.  

"Vedas, austerities, gifts, sacrifices—none of these can reveal Me in the manner you have seen Me. This Form can be known through one-pointed devotion."  

"He who serves me exclusively with unalloyed devotional love, transcends these three Guṇas and qualifies himself for being Brahman itself."

Thus the Gītā admits a compromised path of action and devotion. In fact, both these factors are interdependent. Any one of them, followed individually may delay the attainment of emancipation. Sometimes, the Gītā emphasises devotion strongly because it is considered to be the easiest way to emancipation. The Gītā recognises two types of devotion. The first is the worship of the unmanifest and the second is the worship of the manifest. It is further observed that the former devotional approach is difficult than the latter. The worship of the unmanifest presupposes that the aspirant has to tune his mind with the abstract Absolute, an achievement which cannot be gained without much labour and

unusual effort. But on the other hand, it is easy to concentrate the mind on some given idol.

f) Cosmology

The Gītā regards God as the omnipotent creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that he himself is the source of origination and dissolution of the world. "Great Brahman is my womb, where I put the germ wherefrom all these beings are originated". And therefore, "I am the seed-giving Father of everything that is produced".

The efficient cause of this world is God and Prakṛti is its material cause. The world is only a variety of modifications of Prakṛti. God supervises and guides the act of creation. Prakṛti is the root cause which produces all that is knowable, and all that is enjoyed and experienced. It may be noted that Gītā nowhere says that "Buddhi" and "Ahamkāra" are the products of Prakṛti. It recognises eightfold division of Prakṛti and says,"Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether (5 subtle Essences), mind, intellect and egoism constitute eightfold division of my Prakṛti". The Gītā gives us four main divisions of elements:-

i) Parā Prakṛti or the Puruṣa, which is one in number.

ii) The Aparā Prakṛti or simple "Prakṛti" (premordial matter). It is also one in number.

1. Vide Gītā, Verse 7/6
iii) Eight Elements of Apara Prakṛti, i.e. Cosmic intellect (Mahan), Egoism (Ahankara), Five subtle Essences and the mind.

iv) Fifteen Modifications. They are: 5 organs of sense, 5 motor organs and 5 gross elements.

Thus the whole epistemological classification of the Gita consists of twenty five elements in all. Though the number of categories is the same here as recognised by the Sānkhyas, but the scholars are of the view that Gita differs from the dualistic concepts of the Sānkhyas in many ways.

Although the classification of the Gita treats "Puruṣa" as a special category, but it cannot be regarded as distinct from and absolutely indifferent to the remaining twenty four elements, all of which are related to the Puruṣa in one way or the other. But it cannot be denied that Gita regards the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti both as epistemological categories. Following verses bring out this issue clearly:

"There is no existence on earth or in heaven or among the gods, that may be devoid of these three Guṇas born of Prakṛti".

"Know Prakṛti and the Puruṣa to be beginningless and know all modifications and Guṇas to be produced from Prakṛti". "The effect and the cause are born of Prakṛti and

1. Cf. "The three Fourtainheads of Indian Philosophy" by Shri N.V. Joshi.
2. Cf. Gita, Verse 13/23
3. Vide Gita 18/40.
Puruṣa is the cause of the experiences of pleasure and pain. For the clarity of the point at hand, we may quote Dr. Jadunath Sinha: "With regard to the Puruṣa, the Gītā declares that he is the knower of the field while the Prakṛti comprises the total range of objects that fall within the purview of knowledge. This is a clear indication of the fact that the Gītā establishes a purely epistemological relation between the two. In so far as the one is the knower and the other is the known, they cannot be said to be metaphysically disparate. For in that case the bond of connection between the knower and the known would have been completely snapped and no knowledge would have been possible."

g) Psychology of the Gītā

The Gītā is of the view that human existence can never be devoid of desires. Therefore, it advocates a path of emancipation where an aspirant has to sublimate his egoistic desires into altruistic desires. One cannot eradicate all his desires. Therefore, the only possible undertaking that is assigned to him is that he should labour hard to sublimate his base emotions into purer and purer emotions. In fact, it is impossible to contemplate a feelingless and desireless life of a living being. Hence, the Gītā pleads a man to conquer his lower desires. It does not contemplate a complete

2. "History of Indian Philosophy", by Dr. Jadunath Sinha, Volume I, Chapter VIII.
annihilation of those desires.

According to the Gītā, pleasure and pain are caused by Prakṛti. Analysing this fact a little deeper, Gītā goes to say that all mental states are caused by the thirteen elements — the five cognitive organs, the five motor organs, mind, intellect and egotism which are all modifications of Prakṛti or the three Guṇas. Because of the proximity of the embodied Self with these thirteen elements, it is he who experiences pleasure and pain.

Ontologically speaking, Gītā is of the view that egoism which is constituted of the three Guṇas — Sattva, Rajas and Tamas — is the subject or doer of all acts ascribed to the embodied Self. Because the three Guṇas are the very nature of egoism, therefore, it can never be conceived to be devoid of them. Gītā says further that Rajas controls Tamas and Sattva controls Rajas.

h) Ethics of the Gītā

The Ethics of the Gītā does not advocate anti-social escapism. It urges strongly to face the problems of life bravely. In a way, it denounces superstitions, ritualism and passive ceremonialism. It lays stress on the purity of mind, motives and intentions. Rigid observance of temperance, recommended so strongly by the Gītā, indicates that the control of sense organs is the basic qualification for the aspirant following the path of the Gītā. That is why immoral acts are condemned here and there and it is said that
a person should never be overpowered by base emotions of
envy, greed and lust, anger or hatred etc.

In fact, the broad philosophical outlook of the Gītā
brought a very liberal type of ethics. Gītā says that all
the individual souls are identical with each other. No
difference can be admitted in one individual soul and the
other. Therefore, it was obvious that one who tried to injure
others, tried to injure himself in reality. Hence, it was
natural that none should bear ill-will or any mean and base
feeling not only against a human being, but also against any
creature of the universe. Thus ethics of the Gītā is aimed
at the achievement of universal good.