CHAPTER II
"As a society develops, a great number of degrees and kinds of religious capacities and function will make their appearance. The faith can and must find room for many degrees of intellectual, imaginative and emotional respectivity to the same doctrines, just as it can embrace many variations of order and ritual."

Notes towards advancement of civilization by T. S. Eliot.

From the concept of Rta in the Samhitās, which is discussed elsewhere, it will be evident that Vedic people were thoroughly conversant with the order that is observed in the Universe. God Himself is called Rta. He manifests through Rta, and the order that rules the world is also called Rta. This Supreme Law is praised much in the Brāhmanas. It is the Rta that is real and through Rta one goes to higher worlds. As is clear from

\[ \text{\textit{1. ताक्ष्य ब्राह्मण १८.२.६}} \]
from the Brāhmaṇa texts, they are meant for sacrificial performances. Sacrifice is a great principle that rules the Universe, and its ceremonial to be performed is also significant.

चतो वै श्रेष्ठतम कर्म।

Gods Prajāpati and Āditya are called Yajña in Śatapatha 4.3.4.3 and 14.1.1.6. God is also called Rta after the manner of Samhitās and his manifestation too comes through Rta. Ceremonial Yajña is thus a miniature performance of this Universal Law, and hence every detail of this performance is held important. The concept of Universal Law with the belief in the efficacy of Mantra brought forth the elaborate ceremonial of Yajña.

1. Śatapatha Brahmana 1.7.1.5

2. Śatapatha Brā. 5.4.3.22; 6.7.2.11
Without appreciating the realisation of the cosmic law in the Brāhmaṇas, western scholars have often given outrageous estimates of these texts. Prof. Macdonell has also said that the Brahmanas "were already far removed from the spirit of the Vedic hymns, and contain very little capable of throwing light on the original sense of those hymns." Prof. Macdonell gives an example here. "Kasmāi Devāya haviśā vidhema" in the Ṛgveda should really mean "to what God should we offer worship with oblation." But the Śatapatha explains it as, "Ka is Prajāpati; to him let us offer oblation." The hymn of the Ṛgveda which is referred to here is very significant. God here is said to be existing before everything and supporting the heavens and the earth. His Being

1. History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature by Max Muller, p. 389
   A History of Sanskrit Literature by A. Macdonell, p. 32.
   A History of Indian Literature by A. Winternitz, p. 187-125

Being gives existence to everything in the world. Death and immortality are his reflections. All sentient and insentient beings are governed by Him. He regulates the heavenly spheres too. Even the Sun shines through his splendour. To say that the sage, who describes God in such words, starts enquiring as to his identity in the same breath, is entirely illogical. Kasmi Devāya thus has no meaning of a primitive inquiry after God. It rather points to the indescribability of God.

1. A tendency is generally seen (Vedānta Plato and Kant by Deussen, pp. 59, 60) to mark the development of the idea of God from Rgveda. The famous stanza "where was the forest, where was the tree", etc. of the Rgveda is said to have been replied in the Brāhmaṇa. "The Brahman was the tree and was the wood." It may however be considered that Vedas are not merely content in leaving questions unanswered, and the answers are not to be found in later literature exclusively. In Rgveda 1.164 questions are asked about the nature of an altar and sacrifice and they are replied at the same place. About the question mentioned above, it may be pointed out that "Viśvatah caksurutaviśvato mukho" etc. is a stanza that can be said to be its reply. It need not be supposed that for an answer to this question, we must turn to Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa as some (Doctrine of Māyā, p. 47) would suppose.
Prajāpati is many a time identified with the Supreme God in the Brāhmaṇas. Prajāpati himself is called indescribable:

अपरिमितो यै प्रजापति।
अनिरुक्तो यै प्रजापति।

Again the Satapatha uses this hymn for the Ādhāna of Purusa, and Prajāpati is supreme Puruṣa. Thus "Ka" means indescribable God and the Brāhmaṇa has interpreted it in its own way. Brāhmaṇas are thus not removed from the spirit of the composers of hymns.

Prajāpati is thus the Supreme Being, who Himself becomes subject to the eternal law signified by sacrifice. We find in the Rgveda, how the

1. ऐतरेय ब्रा. २.२.६
2. शतपथ ब्रा. १.१.१.१३
the Supreme Puruṣa is offered in sacrifice, and from him comes the whole creation. Dr. Winternitz says, "...... Prajāpati, who really is the highest God, has nothing lofty about him, and often plays a rather pitiful part." Once he is actually even offered as an oblation. Well, the creation of the world from the Supreme Being through his subjection to the eternal law or Yajña, is indeed a lofty idea and it has sacerdotal as well as philosophical significance. Many sages thus who were conversant with sacrificial details, were also great philosophers. Yājñavalkya, Kahoda Kausitaki, Śvetaketu etc. are the names of people, who were equally proficient in Karmakāṇḍa as well as Jñānakāṇḍa. Even in later times of Sūtras and Smṛtis, it will be seen that philosophers were ritualists also.

We have seen that law is held as supreme in sacrifice. But God is essentially beyond the sway

1. A History of Indian Literature, p. 221.
sway of this Law. Prajāpati is said to be Immortal:

प्रजापतिवाः अमृतः।

This is the transcendent aspect of God. His immanent aspect is also very clear:

सर्वेऽऽके प्रजापति:॥

Everything is Prajāpati. Apart from Him there is nothing. And as All is Prajāpati, all must be full. Hence it is said:

सर्वेऽऽके पूर्णम्॥

God is indescribable. Everything is God. Hence it follows that everything is indescribable.

सर्वेऽऽके अनिरुक्तम्॥

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1. उत्तराध्य ब्राह्मण 6.3.1.17
2. उत्तराध्य ब्राह्मण 1.3.5.10
3. उत्तराध्य ब्राह्मण 2.2.1.3
4. उत्तराध्य ब्राह्मण 2.2.1.3
All this suggests the idea laid down by the famous Upaniṣadic Mantra Pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam etc.

The fundamental unity of all Gods is illustrated well in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa:

"Now when it is first kindled, and there is as yet nothing but smoke, then indeed that (fire) is Rudra". ..........

"And when it burns rather brightly, then indeed that fire is Varuṇa." ........

"And when it is in full blaze, and the smoke whirls upwards with the utmost speed, then indeed that (fire) is Indra." ........

"And when the flame of the waning (fire) gets lower and lower, and (burns) as it were sideways, then, indeed, that (fire) is Mitra".....

"And when the coals are glowing intensely, then, indeed, that (fire) is the Brahman."

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The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa Translated by J. Eggling
The Commentator interprets the word Brahman as the Supreme Reality, the Parabrahma:

परब्रह्मात्मको भवति।

Agni is thus All Gods and also the Supreme God. Prajāpati is identified with Agni:

प्रजापतिवा अग्नि:।

Again we have Agni or Visnu as embodying all the Deities:

अग्निवै सवा देवता विष्णुः सवा देवता।

Prajāpati is again identified with Savitā:

प्रजापतिवै सवीता।

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1. शतपथ ब्रा.टीका Cf. पेतरेय ब्रा. 3.1.4
2. शतपथ ब्रा. 2.2.3.18
3. पेतरेय ब्रा. 1.1.1 Cf. पेतरेय 1.3.15
4. तांडय ब्रा. 16.5.16 Cf. शतपथ 12.2.7.1
Savitā is Yajña and so also Prajāpati and Āditya. Many such concepts can be given from different Brāhmaṇa texts that would illustrate transcendent as well as immanent aspect of God.

Though sacrificial performance is more predominant in the Brāhmaṇas, the importance of knowledge seems to be well realised. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.5.4.15-16 say that the golden Puruṣa is the Self, and he indeed is the interior Self of all. No desire or no sacrificial gift makes one able to attain him. He is to be attained only through knowledge:

विषयं त्वारोऽहति — — — । ।

A comparison is made between two types of sacrifices. Sacrifice towards Gods and that towards Atman. It is told clearly that sacrifice towards self is greater:

1. Cf. कौषि. ब्रा. 10.1 शतपथ 14/1/1/6
   गोपय पूर्व ब्रा. 1.33
1. शतपथ 10.5.8.11-14
The Commentator says:

किमात्मयाजी श्रेयाजी इति। - - - -
तत्र प्रशस्तं पशं वर्षयति आत्मयाजीति।

The concept of self is very important in the Brāhmaṇas, and hence we come across the Ātma-
yajña. Ātman is said to be self-proved, self-proved, self-evident. It is experienced directly:

अद्वृधा हि तव यदृ भूतमदृधो तथवात्मा - - - -।

The Commentator here explains:

यच्च भूतं तव “अद्वृधा”; अनुभूतत्वादू प्रत्यक्षमू।

1. उष्टपथ ब्रा. ११.२.७.१३
2. उष्टपथ ब्रा. २.३.१.२५
What is directly experienced is called Addhā, and Ātman is always present in every experience. We are reminded how Śaṅkara calls Ātman or Brāhmaṇ as Bhūtavastu. For the existence of Ātman, no other proof is required. Experience is the supreme evidence. About Ātman we also find another concept, that Ātman is essentially immortal:

It is clearly declared that whatever is not-self is mortal. The statement could not have come so easily, unless the immortality of the Self was treated as a fact proved beyond doubt. The commentator too has nicely explained this point:

�नात्मानमात्माः । अत्मात्मानरहिताः अविवेकिनो
जाताः । अनात्मात्मावदेव हेतोः मत्याः: मरणवर्धकम्
संजाताः ।

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१। खतपथ ब्रा, २.२.२.८
In the beginning Gods did not know the real nature of the Self. They were ignorant. Then they meditated on Agni, the immortal, and established immortality within themselves. Thus they became immortal and invulnerable. This suggests the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Self God, for we have already seen that Agni is also known as the Supreme God, and identified with Prajāpati. The individual is said to attain identity Sātmātā — with the Brahman:

पुनर्वत्त्वं मुच्छले गच्छति ब्रह्मणः सात्मताम् — —।

The commentator explains:

ब्रह्मणः सात्मतां समानरूपतां सायुज्यं गच्छति।

1. Cf. ऐतरेय ब्रा. १७.७

14. खतपथ ब्रा. ११.५.६.९
In face of such a high idea of Ātman in the Satapatha, it is rather surprising to see Eggling rendering the word Ātma in Satapatha 11.2.1.2 as body. The vital airs or Prāṇas are sustained not by body, but by the soul beyond them. In 11.6.3.7 these vital airs and Ātman are said to shed the mortal body. Here Eggling is constrained to render la Ātman as Self.

In the Brāhmaṇas, the idea of conquering repeated death occurs many a time. Taittīrya Brāhmaṇa 3.11.8.6, Satapatha 2.3.3.9, 10.2.6.9, 11.4.3.20 and Kauṣītaki 25.9 are enough instances to convince us about the final attainment wished by the people in times of Brāhmaṇa. Like sacrifice, even knowledge was deemed as a supreme means for the purpose. The Kāthaka Saṁhitā says:

न वै प्रजापतिः सवनेराप्युमहंस्ति ।
न वै प्रजापतिः वाचाप्युमहंस्ति मनसैवैनमाप्नोति ॥

3. काठकसाहित्य २.९.६
This can be compared with the Upaniṣadic utterance:

मन्त्रैवेदमाप्तिर्मूर्त्याम्

And the Āptavya, the desired attainment is explicitly described as follows:

सत्यं ब्रह्मपुस्तपासीत्।
स आत्मान् नमस्तः।

Here we find the Ātman or the Self is Brahman. He is all pervading, as speedy as mind, beyond speech, minute like seed, greater than all existing.

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1. कठोपनिषद् ४.१।
2. तत्पथ व्रा. १०.६.३. १-२
existing things, the heavens, the skies, the earth and all beings, the innermost of praṇas - the vital airs. The aspirant says, that he will attain that Atman, when he departs from the earth. It may only be mentioned that the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 3.12.9.7-8 reveal the same anxiety of an adept. No elaboration is needed to show that these ideas are thoroughly Upanīṣadic. Atman is also said to be everything:

सबं हृदयमात्मा - - - ।

So far we have seen that two aspects of the Advaitic ideology are clearly to be found in the Brāhmaṇas. (1) The Brahman or the Supreme God is immortal, transcendent, as well as immanent. (2) The individual Self who can also be all-pervading is essentially the Supreme Self, God, Prajāpati, Brahman. We have now to see whether the

1. खतपथ ब्रा. ४.२.२.१

1a. घेतरेरे ब्रा. ३.५.२
the concept about creation and its real nature can also be Advaitic or not. The Advaitic idea of the unreality of the world is many a time wrongly interpreted. The world is unreal in the sense that it is changeful. And a changeful thing can never be absolutely real. Brahman is absolutely real. There is no change in It. Unreality of the world is thus a relative expression. Change exists only when there is an underlying unchangeable Reality. For the appearance of Becoming, fundamental Being must exist before. Again, apart from Being, Becoming has no existence. Becoming is thus essentially Being. The same truth is time and again proclaimed by the Vedānta, when it says that the world is essentially Brahman. When the Brāhmaṇas say that all this is Prajāpati the Supreme Being, they have the same truth to express. The world is nothing else but Brahman in another form. The real nature of Brahman is unchangeable, while its apparent form is changeable. The changeable Brahman is called Svovasyasam:  

प्रजापति: प्रजा अशुज्जत। तदा इंद मनस्येव परम्  
प्रतिभिषिदतम्। यविं किं च। तदैवमद्वोवमयसं
Sāyanacārya explains here:

The world is thus nothing but the changeable, apparent Brahman. As in the Samhitās, so in the Brāhmaṇas, we find the difference marked between the Real and the apparent; and this can be compared with the Upaniṣadīc concept:

देव बाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे - - - 

which is explained later by Sankara as:

द्विविधं हि ब्रह्म अवगम्यते - - - -

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१. तैत्तिरीय ब्रा. २.२.९
It may be assumed from this that the general spirit of the legends of creation that we come across in Brāhmaṇa is to indicate that everything is rooted in the Supreme Reality, lives in and through it, and is essentially the Supreme Reality. The Tattirīya Brāhmaṇa 2.2.9 speaks of Asat as the beginning of the world. Asat must mean here undifferentiated existence and not "not at all existing" or "non-existing" as is interpreted by some. The Aitareya 5.32, Tāṇḍya 4.10.1 and 24.11.2, Śatapatha 6.1.1.8 etc. speak of Prajāpati as the origin of the world; but Śatapatha 11.2.3.1 speaks of Brahman as the creator.

Like some Upaniṣadic accounts we have the order of involution also given in the Brāhmaṇas. The Tattirīya Brāhmaṇa says:

अग्निमेय वाचि क्रियः। वाष्ण्वव्रष्यः। हेदं मन्य।
अहम्मृतेः। अमृतं व्रह्मवर्णः।

1. Creative Period by Ranade and Belvalkar, p.67.
This passage indicates that a rhythm exists between the Creation and an individual. Microcosm is but a miniature macrocosm. Each evolute of both returns to the finer evolute till ultimately all is lost in Brahman. The commentator says:
Thus the essential nature of the world is pointed out to be Brahman. There is nothing apart from Brahman. When the world is looked upon independently it is mere name and form. The following passage of the Satapatha gives the notion about the world as mere name and form, and can easily be compared with the Upaniṣadic utterance Vācārambhaṇam Vikāro Nāmadheyam.

अथ ब्रह्मेऽव परार्धमगच्छत। तत्त्वपार्थ गत्वायेकत् कथं
ि-विवक्लोक=प्रत्येवामिति तदू श्राम्यामेव प्रत्येवेदूपेऽपेन
चैव नामं च - - - - पतावद वा इहं यदृपूर्ण चैव
नामं च।

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१०. शतपथ ब्रा. १०.२.३.३
The Brahman went to the yonder hemisphere. Having gone there it thought "How should I pervade the world?" By means of these two He pervaded the world, by name and form. The world is thus nothing but name and form. There is another word that the nature of the world, and that is Vayuna. Vayuna is generally taken to mean Karma. It is however derived from the root Aj, which denotes motion:

प्राणा वै वयोनाथा: । प्राणैहींवं सर्वे वयुं बद्वधम ।
हन्वांसि वै देवा वयोनाथा हन्वौपिहींवं सर्वे वयुं बद्वधम ।

The whole world, which is nothing but condensed motion, is surrounded by Prāṇas, the Vayonādhas. Vayonādhas are themselves motioned objects.

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1. अजियमिशीयम्यथच। उपादिसूत्र ३.६१
2. श्लोकय ब्रा. ८.२.२.८
The appearance of the world thus is effected through motion.

The Brāhmaṇas are not the texts of philosophy. It need not therefore be expected that they should give the whole speculative process of philosophical theories. The remark that philosophical problems are "inadequately" solved in the Brāhmaṇas is only partially true. It may be, that philosophical doctrines which were already established in those or even in earlier times, were occasionally referred to in the Brāhmaṇa works. Brāhmaṇa texts deal mainly with rituals. If scholars can find sociological or other views in it, they can also find philosophical thoughts. The origin of Bandhūtā concept is magical as remarked by scholars. The origin of this concept is in Rgveda 3.60.1, and its principle is spoken in the last stanzas of the Rgveda Saṃgacchadvam Saṃvadadhvam etc. Bandhūtā

2. Creative Period by Ranade and Belvalkar, p. 62.
is thus not merely a magical concept. It is also sociological. There is nothing to disprove that it is not philogohical also. It has already been discussed, that in the earlier Indian literature we need not seek primitive stages of civilization, and hence primitive sociology and philosophy. Higher philosophical concepts are not absent in the Samhitās; they are not absent even in the Brāhmaṇas. We have seen that essentials of Advaita philosophy are traceable in the Vedas. The foregoing account on the Brāhmaṇas shows, that though a consistent description of Advaita is absent in them, the idea of Advaita was known to the people.

The Āranyakas are the texts which include the Upaniṣads. The word is variously interpreted. Manu 4.123 and Kātyāyana seem to interpret it as Vedā-dhyayana. The Mahābhārata tells us that Aranyaka stanzas were sung at an horse-sacrifice. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa calls it Rahasya in its former half 2.10. This word and also the word Upaniṣad are thus not bereft of sacrificial significance. The spirit 1. “पाणिनि” कलक्ताविकश्वविभागलयकृत्त प्रकाशित रजनीकांत गुप्त प्रणीत १९२८ घ.४५. contd.
spirit of renunciation is emphasised in these texts, but it should only be considered a matter of emphasis. It need not be supposed that renunciation was unknown earlier; for the Taittirīya Aranyakā 2.3.7 refers to the Rgveda and interprets the stanza “Munayo Vātaraśana”. The Rṣis are called Śramaṇas here. The word Śramaṇa is thus very old.

The subject matter of the Aranyakas is to show philosophical significance of sacrificial performances. A whole Anuvāk elaborates the sacrifice of a learned man. All the limbs of the body of a person form the material of sacrifice; his mental and physical activities are different sacrifices. All his life is thus a big sacrifice, which ultimately leads him to the lustre of Brahman. Śāyānacārya describes this final beatitude thus:

दत्रोत्त्पन्नन्निमासात्कारस्तस्माज्ञानादृव्रेमलोकेः
विनाशाधूर्वं सत्यशानाविद्वेषस्य ब्रह्मणो महिमां
प्राप्योऽति। २

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महायात्मवाचस्पदम् ३३.१०-१३
1. तैत्तिरिय आराण्यक १०.१० तस्थैवं चिदुष्णो यत्स्यात्मा ह
2. पैतृक आराण्यक २.३.२
The Aitareya Āraṇyaka 2.3.2 tells us that Aṭman is all pervading. He is undeveloped in plants. In animals He finds more scope for development, and hence we mark instincts, passions, etc. in them. He is more developed in man, and goes on developing.

There is thus abundant matter in the earlier literature which might have given inspiration to the Upaniṣadic seers to elaborate high metaphysics, which has evoked admiration from every corner of the globe.