

## Chapter 3: “parataḥ paraḥ” – Parabrahman

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## Chapter 3

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### “parataḥ paraḥ” – Parabrahman

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#### 3.1 Siddhāntasamāmnāya

Akṣarabrahman Guru, HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj, wrote a proclamation of the Vedāntic principle, Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. This opening of the chapter is the Sanskrit version as presented by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami in his Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā. As these words fulfill the role of serving as both an abstract and introduction of the chapter, commencing with insightful and compact contemplation of the subject matter – Vedāntic principles – holds excellent value. At the forefront is the original Sanskrit rendition of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s authoritative philosophical missive, expounding the tenets of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Next, the Sanskrit is presented in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>1</sup> authored by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami. Then, an English translation, based on the translation presented at the beginning of the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>2</sup>, follows the Sanskrit text.

- अक्षराधिपतिः परब्रह्म पुरुषोत्तमो नारायणो नित्यः, सर्वोपरि, सदा दिव्यः, सदा साकारो, निर्दोषो, मायापरः, एकोऽद्वितीयश्चेतनश्च।
- स्वदिव्याऽक्षरधाम्नि स सदा दिव्यद्विभुजादि-सर्वाङ्गसम्पूर्ण-पुरुषाऽऽकृतिः, अतिप्रकाशवान्, किशोरमूर्तिः सन् दिव्यसिंहासने विराजमानः। मूर्तिमच्चाऽक्षरं ब्रह्म तदक्षरब्रह्मणः साधर्म्यमाप्ता ब्राह्मतनुयुक्ता अनन्तकोटिमुक्ताश्च भजन्ते तं दासभावेन।
- स सदा स्वाभाविकाऽनन्तदिव्यकल्याणकारिगुणैर्युक्तो मायिकगुणै रहितश्च । निर्दोषः सर्वदा सर्वैश्वर्यसम्पन्नः सर्वज्ञः सर्वकर्ता हर्ता च । स सकलसृष्टिर्निमित्तमुपादानं च

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<sup>1</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 1.6.4, pp. 10-14

<sup>2</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā, pp. xxxi-xxxiv; See Appendices 1.A and 1.B for a photocopy of the original Gujarati text in HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s handwriting.

कारणम्। स हि स्वदिव्याऽक्षरधाम्नि व्यतिरेकस्वरूपेण विराजमानः

सन्नेवाऽन्वयस्वरूपेणाऽनन्त-कोटिब्रह्माण्डेष्वन्तर्यामितया व्यापकस्तेषाञ्चाऽऽधारः।

- सदैव स जीव ईश्वरो मायाऽक्षरमुक्ता अक्षरब्रह्म चेत्येभ्यः सर्वेभ्योऽतिशयसमर्थस्तेषां सर्वेषां स्वतन्त्रतया नियन्ता प्रेरकः शरीरी च। स स्वेच्छया सर्वेषां जीवानां तथेश्वराणां कर्मफलप्रदाता तेषाञ्च क्रिया-शक्तेर्ज्ञान-शक्तेरिच्छाशक्तेश्च प्रेरकः।
- मायिकेन्द्रियाऽन्तःकरणाऽगोचरः सोऽयं परब्रह्म पुरुषोत्तमो नारायणः स्वयं स्वदिव्यसङ्कल्पेन करुणयाऽनन्तजीवेश्वराणामात्यन्तिककल्याणार्थं स्वभक्तमनोरथप्रपूर्तये चाऽक्षरधामाऽवस्थितः सन्नेव स्वसर्वगुणैश्वर्यादिसहित एव प्रतिब्रह्माण्डं साक्षान्मनुष्यरूपेणाऽवतीर्य भवति सर्वनयनगोचरः।
- स प्रत्यक्षः परब्रह्म परमात्मा सहजानन्दस्वामिमहाराजः श्रीस्वामिनारायणो भगवान्। स एवाऽस्माकं सर्वेषां परमोपास्यः। सदैव च स्वस्य प्रत्यक्षतयोपासनां विधापयितुं स्वयमन्तर्धानमन्वपि साक्षाद्ब्रह्मस्वरूप-गुरुहरिद्वारा सम्यगन्वयरूपेण सदा प्रकटोऽवतिष्ठते।
- स सर्वाऽवताराणां कारणमवतार्यधिपतिश्च। किञ्चित्कार्यं निमित्तीकृत्य जीवानाम् ईश्वराणां च चेतनेषु यदा करोति सङ्कल्पविशेषरूपाऽनुप्रवेशं तदाऽवताराः सम्भवन्ति।

“Parabrahman, also known as Puruṣottama-Nārāyaṇa, surpasses even Akṣara in his eternal and supreme nature. He is eternally divine, possessing a divine form that transcends māyā. Parabrahman is unparalleled, indivisible, and a sentient entity.”

“Within the divine realm of Akṣaradhāman, Parabrahman resides on a divine throne, embodying a luminous and human-shaped form with two arms and other divine attributes. He is worshipped with the sentiment of wilful humble service (dāsabhāva) by the *Sevaka* form of Akṣarabrahman, as well as infinite liberated beings (muktas) who have attained a state of qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman and a *brāhmitanu*.”

“Parabrahman is inherently endowed with infinite liberating virtues, free from the influence of māyā. He is devoid of any deficiencies, possesses absolute power and omniscience, and is the ultimate doer. As the material and efficient cause of all creation,

he resides eternally within his divine Akṣaradhāman. Simultaneously, he pervades and sustains the countless universes (*brahmāṇḍas*) in his all-pervasive form as their inner controller (*antaryāmin*).”

“Parabrahman’s supremacy extends beyond jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, *akṣaramuktas*, and Akṣarabrahman. He independently governs and inspires them all. It is by his divine will that he bestows the fruits of actions upon all jīvas and īśvaras and instills within them the capacity to will, know, and act.”

“Parabrahman himself manifested in this world as Sahajānanda Svāmī or Śrī Svāminārāyaṇa Bhagavān, who holds the ultimate position of worship for all. Even though he has physically departed from this world, he continues to remain present in his *anvaya* form through the Akṣarabrahman Guru. This eternal presence ensures that the beings of this world have the perpetual opportunity to engage in the worshipful service (*upāsanā*) of his manifest form. Thus, the path to liberation remains accessible as Parabrahman maintains his manifestation in the world through the Akṣarabrahman Guru.”

“Furthermore, Parabrahman is the ultimate cause of all avatāras (divine incarnations) – the avatārin, which is part and parcel of his being supreme.”

### 3.2 Opening

This chapter delves into the form of Parabrahman, the highest and supreme entity, as expounded in the Prasthānatrayī. By exploring this aspect, we aim to demonstrate the underlying consistency within the Prasthānatrayī. Parabrahman stands as the pinnacle, the ultimate reality of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. To truly grasp the magnificence of Parabrahman, it is crucial first to comprehend Akṣarabrahman. Thus, we have placed the chapter on Akṣarabrahman prior to that of Parabrahman.

Within this chapter, we will embark on an exploration of how Parabrahman is described and unveiled in the Prasthānatrayī. The trio of seminal texts in Vedānta and Hindu philosophical discourse – the Upaniṣads, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and Brahmasūtras –

stands as our sagacious guide. Conjointly, they unveil the multifaceted dimensions and profound nuances of Parabrahman's form and nature, offering an erudite and comprehensive insight into this transcendent reality that both transcends and envelops all existence. By immersing ourselves in the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī, we will attain profound insights into the glory of Parabrahman and discover the harmonious coherence within the words of these sacred texts as they illumine the divine form of Parabrahman.

Parabrahman, known as Puruṣottama, stands superior to all beings, encompassing both jīvas and īśvaras. He is superior to even Akṣarabrahman and serves as the ultimate controller of all sentient and insentient entities. Eternal and divine, he remains steadfast and unwavering in every circumstance. With a divine human-shaped form, he exists devoid of any traces of māyā, himself being the supreme master of māyā and existing as a singular entity without a second. He is indeed in a class of his own.

Residing in the divine realm of Akṣaradhāman, Parabrahman occupies a divine throne, bestowing blessings upon all liberated jīvas and īśvaras. Akṣarabrahman, in the form of the devoted *Sevaka*, and the liberated souls serve him with utmost devotion. Flawless and untainted by māyā and its manifestations, Parabrahman possesses an infinite array of divine qualities and virtues. He serves as the source of all creation and the doer of all actions while simultaneously embodying omniscience and omnipotence, and thus, functioning as the cause, sustainer, and destroyer of all creation.

While residing within Akṣaradhāman, Parabrahman permeates the entire expanse of creation, spanning infinite universes and extending beyond them. This is his *anvaya* form. Parabrahman stands independent and self-sufficient, while all other entities, including jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, and Akṣarabrahman, depend on his supreme authority. Furthermore, Parabrahman bestows the fruits of karma upon unliberated jīvas and īśvaras. Thus, he reigns as the eternal and supreme entity in all aspects throughout eternity.

Parabrahman, existing beyond the grasp of our sensory and cognitive faculties constructed by the veil of māyā, holds sovereign authority over all entities and beings, regardless of their sentience or inanimacy, mobility or immobility. Yet, out of his divine

intent to fulfill the aspirations of his devotees and bestow upon them liberation, he assumes a manifestation that can be comprehended and engaged with by the human intellect and senses. Simultaneously, he remains present within Akṣaradhāman in the company of Akṣarabrahman and Akṣaramuktas. Parabrahman manifested as Bhagavān Swaminarayan, the founder of the Swaminarayan *Sampradāya* and the revealer of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. It is he who deserves the highest worship and adoration from all of us. Even after the *vyatireka* form of Parabrahman departs from this earthly realm, he continues to remain present through an unbroken lineage of enlightened Akṣarabrahman Gurus who guide us on the path to liberation.

In this chapter, our endeavor will revolve around a profound exploration of the intricate comprehension of how the Prasthānatrayī converge to offer a unified and consistent portrayal of the form and characteristics of Parabrahman. By closely examining these texts, we aim to unravel the interconnectedness and consistency of their teachings, shedding light on the profound insights they offer into the divine manifestation of Parabrahman.

### **3.3 Sarvopari Parabrahman**

The Prasthānatrayī provides profound insights into various facets of Parabrahman. The term “*Parabrahman*” carries the literal meaning of being beyond Akṣarabrahman. In eternally being superior to Akṣarabrahman, Parabrahman is the supreme controller and sustainer of all entities, including both bound and liberated jīvas and īśvaras, as well as māyā and Akṣarabrahman. This section highlights Parabrahman’s superiority in three distinct aspects: his being superior to Akṣarabrahman and his supremacy over jīvas and īśvaras. Furthermore, Parabrahman holds the role of the controller and supporter of māyā.

#### **3.3.1 Jīveśvarādhipati**

Another aspect of Parabrahman’s supremacy is his absolute and independent control over us, jīvas and īśvaras. Parabrahman is referred to as Paramātman or Puruṣottama because he surpasses both *kṣara*, which represents the perishable bodies of the jīvas and

īśvaras, and Akṣara, which represents the imperishable Akṣarabrahman. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami, in his Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā, explains that when it is stated that Parabrahman is beyond Akṣarabrahman, it signifies that Parabrahman is the master of all entities. However, it is essential to understand and acknowledge the specific implications conveyed by the different terms used in the text. The words in the text are वस्तुतस्त्वक्षरब्रह्मसमुत्कृष्टत्वकथनेन सिद्धमेव तत्सर्वसमुत्कृष्टत्वमक्षरब्रह्मणः परमब्रह्माऽतिरिक्तसर्वसमुत्कृष्टत्वात् । तथाऽपि विभिन्नपदप्रयोगतात्पर्य-बोधनाय तत्तत्प्रवृत्तिनिमित्तदर्शनम्<sup>3</sup> convey the understanding of the absolute superiority of Parabrahman over Akṣarabrahman, while also indicating the intention to highlight specific aspects through the use of different terms. The Brahmasūtras, specifically in the Antastaddharma-adhikaraṇa, discuss the concept of Parabrahman being beyond jīvas and īśvaras. Vyāsa states in the Brahmasūtras 1.1.22: भेदव्यपदेशाच्चान्यः<sup>4</sup>, which means that Parabrahman is different from jīvas and īśvaras because the difference is mentioned in the revealed texts. This indicates that there is a distinction between Parabrahman and individual souls. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami refers to three Upaniṣadic verses that highlight Parabrahman's role as the controller, supporter, and śarīrīn of all jīvas and īśvaras.

One instance is found in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, where it is mentioned that the Sun, moon, and other luminous entities are prohibited from entering Parabrahman's divine abode, Akṣaradhāman. In the Kena Upaniṣad, there is a story where the devas forget to attribute their success to the entity to whom it rightfully belongs, Parabrahman. A Yakṣa tests them, and they fail the test until they realize that the Yakṣa is none other than Parabrahman himself when Umā appears. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.16 explains that the devas then engage in *upāsanā* (worshipful service) of Parabrahman, demonstrating their humility and respect towards him.

<sup>3</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 3.2.1, p. 99; *vastutastvakṣarabrahmasamutkṛṣṭatvakathanena siddhameva tatsarvasamutkṛṣṭatvamakṣarabrahmaṇaḥ paramabrahmā'iriktasarvasamutkṛṣṭatvāt | tathā'pi vibhinnapadaprayogatātparyabodhanāya tattatpravṛttinimittadarśanam*

<sup>4</sup> *bhedavyapadeśāccānyaḥ*

These instances highlight the subordinate position of jīvas and īśvaras in relation to Parabrahman and affirm that they are entirely supported by him, and all the power that they do possess is dependent on Parabrahman's will. The relevant mantras are provided below as follows:

- न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनु भाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥<sup>5</sup> (MU 2.2.10)
- सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीयध्वमिति ततो ह वै विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति  
॥<sup>6</sup> (KeU 4.1)
- अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद् देवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षद् । तद्भावतोऽन्यान्त्येति तिष्ठत्  
तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥<sup>7</sup> (IU 4)
- यस्मादर्वाक्संवत्सरोऽहोभिः परिवर्तते । तद्देवा ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरायुर्होपासतेऽमृतम् ॥<sup>8</sup>  
(BU 4.4.16)
- भीषास्माद् वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम  
इति ॥<sup>9</sup> (TU 2.8.1)

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, the third chapter extensively explores the supremacy of Parabrahman while discussing how each of the elements relates to Parabrahman. Uddālaka Āruṇi, the seeker, is satisfied by the comprehensive answers that Yāgñavalkya provides on this topic. To provide a glimpse of the material, here are some of the mantras from the lists of *adhibhūta* (in the physical elements) and *adhyātman* (in the individual self) - totaling 21 mantras:

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<sup>5</sup> *na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāraṇam nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto 'yamagniḥ |  
tameva bhāntamanu bhāti sarvaṃ tasya bhāsā sarvamideṣa vibhāti ||*

<sup>6</sup> *sā brahmeti hovāca brahmaṇo vā etadvijaye mahīyadhvamiti tato ha vai vidāñcakāra brahmeti ||*

<sup>7</sup> *anejadekaṃ manaso javīyo nainad devā āpnuvan pūrvamarṣad | tadbhāvato 'nyānatyeti tiṣṭhat  
tasminnapo mātariśvā dadhāti ||*

<sup>8</sup> *yasmādarvāksamvatsaro 'hobhiḥ parivartate | taddevā jyotiṣāṃ jyotirāyurhopāstate 'mṛtam ||*

<sup>9</sup> *bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate | bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ | bhīṣāsmādagnīścendraśca | mṛtyurdhāvati pañcama iti||*

- यः पृथिव्यां तिष्ठन्पृथिव्या अन्तरो यं पृथिवी न वेद यस्य पृथिवी शरीरं यः पृथिवीमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>10</sup> (BU 3.7.3)
- यो दिवि तिष्ठन्दिवोऽन्तरो यं द्यौर्न वेद यस्य द्यौः शरीरं यो दिवमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>11</sup> (BU 3.8.7)
- य आदित्ये तिष्ठन्नादित्यादन्तरो यमादित्यो न वेद यस्याऽऽदित्यः शरीरं य आदित्यमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>12</sup> (BU 3.8.9)
- यः सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्सर्वेभ्यो भूतेभ्योऽन्तरो य सर्वाणि भूतानि न विदुर्यस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि शरीरं यः सर्वाणि भूतान्यन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृत इत्यधिभूतमथाध्यात्मम् ॥<sup>13</sup> (BU 3.7.15)
- यः प्राणे तिष्ठन्प्राणादन्तरो यं प्राणो न वेद यस्य प्राणः शरीरं यः प्राणमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>14</sup> (BU 3.7.16)
- यो विज्ञाने तिष्ठन्विज्ञानादन्तरो यं विज्ञानं न वेद यस्य विज्ञानः शरीरं यो विज्ञानमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>15</sup> (BU 3.7.22)
- यो रेतसि तिष्ठनेतसोऽन्तरो यः रेतो न वेद यस्य रेतः शरीरं यो रेतोऽन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतोऽदृष्टो द्रष्टाऽश्रुतः श्रोताऽमृतो मन्ताऽविज्ञातो विज्ञाता नान्योऽतोऽस्ति द्रष्टा नान्योऽतोऽस्ति श्रोता नान्योऽतोऽस्ति मन्ता नान्योऽतोऽस्ति

<sup>10</sup> *yaḥ pṛthivyāṃ tiṣṭhanpṛthivyā antaro yaṃ pṛthivī na veda yasya pṛthivī śarīraṃ yaḥ pṛthivīmantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ* ||

<sup>11</sup> *yo divi tiṣṭhandivo 'ntaro yaṃ dyaurna veda yasya dyauḥ śarīraṃ yo divamantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ* ||

<sup>12</sup> *ya āditye tiṣṭhannādityādantaro yamādityo na veda yasyā 'dityaḥ śarīraṃ ya ādityamantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ* ||

<sup>13</sup> *yaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhansarvebhyo bhūtebhyo 'ntaro ya sarvāṇi bhūtāni na viduryasya sarvāṇi bhūtāni śarīraṃ yaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtānyantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ ityadhibhūtamathādhyātmam* ||

<sup>14</sup> *yaḥ prāṇe tiṣṭhanprāṇādantaro yaṃ prāṇo na veda yasya prāṇaḥ śarīraṃ yaḥ prāṇamantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ* ||

<sup>15</sup> *yo vijñāne tiṣṭhanvijñānādantaro yaṃ vijñānaṃ na veda yasya vijñānaḥ śarīraṃ yo vijñānamantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ* ||

विज्ञातैष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतोऽतोऽन्यदार्तं ततो होद्दालक आरुणिरुपरराम ॥<sup>16</sup>  
(BU 3.7.23)

These mantras emphasize the interconnectedness of various elements and their ultimate dependence on Parabrahman. They highlight the profound knowledge and realization of the supreme reality that leads to true realization. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad provides further insights and teachings regarding Parabrahman's supremacy and the relationship between different aspects of existence.

Certainly, the Prasthānatrayī, when considered collectively, offers a holistic comprehension of the essence of Parabrahman as the ultimate reality. It unequivocally affirms the supremacy of Parabrahman over Akṣarabrahman, Akṣaramuktas, and the bound jīvas and īśvaras.

The texts convey the idea of Parabrahman's supremacy by explaining that the capability of others to function depends on Parabrahman or emphasizing the incomparable nature of Parabrahman. Through various teachings, discussions, and descriptions, they highlight that nothing and no one can match the greatness and transcendence of Parabrahman.

By presenting Parabrahman as *sarvopari*, meaning superior to all, the texts convey the ultimate authority, control, and limitless attributes possessed by Parabrahman. This overarching supremacy of Parabrahman encompasses all aspects of existence, including the transcendental realm, the liberated souls, and the conditioned beings.

The Prasthānatrayī's teachings on the supremacy of Parabrahman invite seekers to recognize and realize the ultimate reality that surpasses all limitations and elevates the aspirants to the highest level of understanding. It encourages individuals to strive for a

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<sup>16</sup> *yo retasi tiṣṭhanetaso 'ntaro yaḥ reto na veda yasya retaḥ śarīram yo reto 'ntaro yamāyātyeṣa ta  
ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛto 'drṣṭo draṣṭā 'śrutāḥ śrotā 'mato mantā 'vijñāto vijñātā nānyo 'to 'sti draṣṭā  
nānyo 'to 'sti śrotā nānyo 'to 'sti mantā nānyo 'to 'sti vijñātaiṣa ta ātmā 'ntaryāmyamṛto 'to 'nyadārtam tato  
hoddālaka āruṇirupararāma ||*

deeper connection with Parabrahman and to align their lives and spiritual pursuits with the divine principles revealed in these sacred scriptures.

### 3.3.2 Māyin

Parabrahman is the controller and master of māyā, as elucidated in the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī. Māyā indeed serves as the raw material of creation, representing the insentient substance from which the universe originates. However, the activation and manifestation of this material cause occur solely through the independent will and desire of Parabrahman.

According to the teachings, when the time for creation arises after the ultimate dissolution, Parabrahman initiates the process by casting a divine glance upon Akṣarabrahman. Akṣarabrahman, in turn, directs its glance towards an Akṣaramukta (liberated soul) who becomes the connecting link with māyā. It is through this interplay and connection that the process of creation unfolds.

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad provides insights into the initial stages of this creative process. While the specific verses are not mentioned, the Upaniṣad describes the initiation of creation, emphasizing the pivotal role of Parabrahman's divine glance, the involvement of Akṣarabrahman, and the subsequent connection with māyā to bring forth the universe.

These teachings highlight the ultimate authority and control of Parabrahman over the cosmic manifestation. This highlights that the entire process of creation is initiated by the will and power of Parabrahman, who retains supreme authority and directs the intricate interplay of māyā and the unfolding cosmos.

The mantra from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is as follows:

- सोऽकामयत । बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत ।  
यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सृष्ट्वा । तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।<sup>17</sup> (TU 2.6.3)

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<sup>17</sup> *so 'kāmayāta | bahusyaṃ prajāyeyeti | sa tapo 'tapyata sa tapastaptvā | idaṃ sarvamasṛjata | yadidaṃ kiñca | tatsṛṣṭvā | tadevānuprāviśat |*

Moreover, in the Brahmasūtras, the relationship between Parabrahman and māyā, or māyīn, is extensively discussed. Specifically, the Jyotirupakramādhikaraṇa section of the Brahmasūtras sheds light on the concept of Parabrahman as the instigator of māyā. Within this context, a collection of profound mantras from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is presented, reinforcing the notion of Parabrahman’s pivotal role in the workings of māyā. These mantras serve to illuminate the intricate relationship between Parabrahman and māyā, emphasizing Parabrahman’s position as the supreme controller and orchestrator of māyā. Through these divine teachings, the Brahmasūtras and the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad unravel the profound nature of Parabrahman’s dominion over māyā, offering seekers an understanding of the fundamental principles underlying creation. The sūtra and the mantras are as follows:

- **ज्योतिरुपक्रमा** तु तथा ह्यधीयत एके ॥<sup>18</sup> (BS 1.4.9)
- अजामेकां लोहितशुक्लकृष्णां बह्वीः प्रजाः सृजमानां सरूपाः।  
अजो ह्येको जुषमाणोऽनुशेते जहात्यन्यां भुक्तभोगामजोऽन्यः॥<sup>19</sup> (SU 4.5)
- अस्मान् **मायी** सृजते विश्वमेतत्<sup>20</sup> (SU 4.9)
- मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं **च महेश्वरम्**।<sup>21</sup> (SU 4.10)
- यो योनिं योनिमधितिष्ठत्येकः<sup>22</sup> (SU 4.11)

Moreover, the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā too provides an understanding that is consistent with the preceding discussion. In the seventh chapter, known as Gñanavigñāyoga, Kṛṣṇa imparts profound wisdom. He reveals the nature of Parabrahman and its relationship with māyā. Kṛṣṇa asserts that Parabrahman is the source of all existence, the intelligence that governs all knowledge, the power that empowers every living

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<sup>18</sup> *jyotirupakramā tu tathā hyadhīyata eke*

<sup>19</sup> *ajāmekāṃ lohitaśuklakṛṣṇāṃ bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṃ sarūpāḥ |  
ajō hyeko juṣamāṇo ’nuśete jahātyanyāṃ bhuktabhogāmajo ’nyaḥ ||*

<sup>20</sup> *asmān māyī sṛjate viśvametat*

<sup>21</sup> *māyāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ vidyānmāyinaṃ ca mahēśvaram |*

<sup>22</sup> *yo yoniṃ yonimadhitiṣṭhatyekah*

being, the essence within all elements, and the eternal force behind the cycles of time. Kṛṣṇa states with clarity and depth:

- भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।  
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥<sup>23</sup> (BG 7.4)
- अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।  
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥<sup>24</sup> (BG 7.5)

The earth, water, fire or light, air, sky, *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahankāra*, collectively referred to as the eight *prakṛtis*, depend entirely on Parabrahman. These *prakṛtis*, which are only owing to Parabrahman, fulfill a vital function in ensuring our sustenance. These profound verses emphasize the all-pervading nature of Parabrahman, its divine qualities, and its connection with every aspect of creation.

Additionally, Parabrahman undertakes the profound responsibility of creating, sustaining, and ultimately dissolving infinite universe. All phenomena manifest and unfold through the divine inspiration of Parabrahman. In the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, the greatness of Parabrahman is extolled in the context of Kṛṣṇa’s teachings. Speaking in the first-person voice, Kṛṣṇa reveals the profound role of Parabrahman:

- अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।  
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ (BG 10.8)

“I am the origin of all and everything emanates from me.” These words highlight the majestic power and authority of Parabrahman as the ultimate sustainer of all. Parabrahman’s divine *prakṛti* encompasses and nurtures all living beings and divine beings. Through Parabrahman’s grace, individual entities acquire their unique identities and attributes. This acknowledgment emphasizes the fundamental role played by Parabrahman in shaping the intricate fabric of the universe, from its subtlest aspects to its manifest or visible forms.

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<sup>23</sup> *bhūmirāpo ’nalo vāyuh khaṃ mano buddhireva ca |*  
*ahankāra itīyaṃ me bhinnā prakṛtiraṣṭadhā ||*

<sup>24</sup> *apareyamitastvanyāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parām |*  
*jīvabhūtāṃ mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat ||*

By understanding such glory of Parabrahman, we gain a deeper appreciation for its omnipotence and continuous involvement in the unfolding cosmic processes. Parabrahman's ability to bestow names, forms, and characteristics reveals its supreme authority and profound influence over the entire creation. Understanding this aspect of Parabrahman's nature enriches our comprehension of its role as the ultimate creator and sustainer of the infinite universes. The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā śloka reads:

- सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।  
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥<sup>25</sup> (BG 9.7)

This verse unveils the profound truth that Parabrahman is the supreme controller of the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction. As the ultimate source of all existence, Parabrahman transcends all dualities and stands as the highest reality. Moreover, Parabrahman assumes the role of the supreme object of devotion for all living beings who aspire to attain liberation from the perpetual cycle of birth and death. This assertion finds resonance in other instances found in the Upaniṣads, reinforcing its significance and validity. The presence of these instances from various Upaniṣads creates a harmonious coherence, reinforcing the concept of Parabrahman as the supreme controller and ultimate reality. These instances collectively emphasize Parabrahman's being the sole object of devotion and the need for contemplative realization to attain liberation. By presenting consistent and interconnected teachings, the Upaniṣads establish a coherent understanding of Parabrahman's supremacy and invite seekers of truth to explore and contemplate this profound concept. Some of the mantras are as follows:

- यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति<sup>26</sup>  
(TU 3.1.1)
- स तपस्तप्त्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत ।<sup>27</sup> (TU 2.6.3)

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<sup>25</sup> sarvabhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṃ yānti māmikām |  
kalpakṣaye punastāni kalpādau visṛjāmyaham ||

<sup>26</sup> yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | yena jātāni jīvanti | yatprayantyabhisamviśanti

<sup>27</sup> sa tapastaptvā | idaṃ sarvamasṛjata |

- स ईक्षत लोकान्सृजा इति । स इमांल्लोकानसृजत<sup>28</sup> (AU 1.1.1)

Upon analyzing the aforementioned mantras, a pertinent question arises: How can Parabrahman be regarded as the creator of all jīvas and īśvaras when these entities are considered eternally distinct and existing? In addressing this query, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami provides an insightful interpretation. According to him, the verb “*jātani*” in verse above does not imply the birth or creation of jīvas and īśvaras, as they are eternally existent beings. Instead, it signifies the bestowal of distinctive names and forms upon them. The verse does not pertain to the creation of jīvas and īśvaras. Rather, it highlights Parabrahman’s role in granting them names and forms essential for their existence and prosperity in the world. This concurs with the explanation presented above for Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā 9.7. The explanation reads: प्रजननं नामेह नामरूपविभागाऽऽपादनमेव। तच्च स्वशरीरभूतमूलप्रकृतिद्वारैवेति सुतरां तदुपपद्यते। विकारमात्राऽऽश्रयभूता तु प्रकृतिरेवेति तद्व्यापकत्वेऽपि परमात्मस्वरूपस्य न विकारास्पदत्वप्रसङ्ग इति<sup>29</sup>.

The coherence within the doctrine of Parabrahman being the master of māyā, the controller of creation, is further exemplified by the words of the second sūtra of the Brahmasūtras. This sūtra explicitly states that the entire creation process, including its sustenance and eventual dissolution, occurs due to the agency of both Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. These two fundamental aspects work in tandem to bring about the intricate workings of the manifested universe. The inclusion of Akṣarabrahman in this context signifies its subordinate role under the supreme authority of Parabrahman in the cosmic manifestation. Thus, the sūtra elucidates the interconnected relationship between Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the ultimate causes behind the creation process. The sūtra, which is one of the first four – *catuḥsūtrī* – sūtras, reads:

- जन्माद्यस्य यतः<sup>30</sup> (BS 1.1.2)

<sup>28</sup> *sa īkṣata lokānnsrjā iti | sa imāṃllokānāsṛjata*

<sup>29</sup> *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.6.3, p. 378; prajānanam nāmeha nāmarūpavibhāgā”pādanameva | tacca svaśarīrabhūtamūlaprakṛtidvāraiveiti sutarāṃ tadupapadyate | vikāramātrā”śrayabhūtā tu prakṛtireveti tadvyāpakatve’pi paramātmāsvarūpasya na vikārāspadatvaprasaṅga iti |*

<sup>30</sup> *janmādyasya yataḥ*

To support the argument put forth in the aforementioned sūtra, a multitude of *śrutis* (revealed scriptures) and *smṛtis* (traditional texts) affirm the complete dependence of the processes of creation, sustenance, and dissolution on Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. Furthermore, several references explicitly highlight the pivotal role played by these two entities. Here are a few examples that emphasize the origin and dependence of all existence on Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman:

- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः<sup>31</sup> (BU 1.4.1)
- ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीत्<sup>32</sup> (BU 1.4.10)
- तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः सम्भूतः<sup>33</sup> (TU 2.1.1)
- अक्षरात् सम्भवतीह विश्वम्<sup>34</sup> (MU 1.1.7)

Here are some references from various scriptures that highlight the role of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman in the origin and dissolution of all Creation:

- अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा<sup>35</sup> (BG 7.6)
- तथाऽक्षराद् विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवाऽपियन्ति<sup>36</sup> (MU 2.1.1)

These references highlight the integral role of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman in the dissolution and creation of the universe, emphasizing their supreme authority and control over the cosmic processes.

- यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च उभे भवत ओदनः । मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनम्<sup>37</sup> (KU 2.25)
- कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धो लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः<sup>38</sup> (BG 11.32)

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<sup>31</sup> *ātmaivedamagra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ*

<sup>32</sup> *brahma vā idamagra āsīt*

<sup>33</sup> *tasmādvā etasmādātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*

<sup>34</sup> *akṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam*

<sup>35</sup> *ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā*

<sup>36</sup> *tathā 'kṣarād vividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivā'piyanti*

<sup>37</sup> *yasya brahma ca kṣatram ca ubhe bhavata odanaḥ | mṛtyuryasyopasecanam*

<sup>38</sup> *kālo 'smi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddho lokān samāhartumiha pravṛttaḥ*

- सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः<sup>39</sup> (CU 6.8.4)

These references, among many others, elucidate the inseparable connection between Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and the entire cosmic process. They emphasize that all creation's origin, sustenance, and dissolution are intricately woven within the divine play orchestrated by these supreme entities. Indeed, the consistent proclamation of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the masters of māyā and the creators, sustainers, and destroyers of all of Creation underscores their supreme authority and control over the cosmic manifestations. The Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtras, and other scriptures highlight their pivotal role in the existence and functioning of the universe. As the ultimate reality and the source of all beings, Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman transcend the limitations of the manifested world and possess the power to shape and govern it. Their mastery over māyā enables them to orchestrate the intricate workings of the cosmos, ensuring its order, preservation, and eventual dissolution.

### 3.3.3 Akṣarādhipati

In the previous chapter, we explored the relationship between Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. Parabrahman is superior to Akṣaradhāman, which is, as is evident, a form of Akṣarabrahman. This unique concept is presented distinctly in the Brahmasūtras. Within the same adhikaraṇa that we discussed earlier, namely the Parādhikaraṇa, there is a third sūtra that is relevant to this context. It reads:

- स्थानविशेषात्<sup>40</sup> (BS 3.2.32)

The sūtra mentioned here, as elucidated by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, is based on the concept of *sthāna*, which refers to a special place. Drawing from our shared experiences in the mundane world, we can understand that the owner of a place always holds a higher position than the place itself. The owner has complete control over the organization and even the minute details of the place, such as its temperature. In a similar vein, Parabrahman is the owner and inhabitant of Akṣaradhāman, making

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<sup>39</sup> *sanmūlā: somyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sadāyatanāḥ satpratiṣṭhāḥ*

<sup>40</sup> *sthānaviśeṣāt*

Parabrahman superior in power and opulence to Akṣaradhāman or Akṣarabrahman. This principle is reiterated in various *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. Vyāsa, in his exposition, derives this doctrine from the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

The third *vallī* (chapter) of the Kāthopaniṣad employs a metaphor where the ātman (self) is likened to a charioteer, and the body is likened to a chariot. As this discussion concludes, it is said – सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद् विष्णोः परमं पदम्<sup>41</sup> – “for he who has controlled his senses, ultimately reaches the end of the road, the place that is Parabrahman’s highest abode.” Numerous mantras highlight that Akṣarabrahman is the divine realm of Parabrahman, affirming the superiority of Parabrahman. These mantras support various interconnected doctrines. Furthermore, the Bhagavad-Gītā also discusses the relationship between Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman in chapters 8 (Akṣarabrahmayoga) and 15 (Parabrahmayoga). The mentioned mantras and *ślokas* substantiate these teachings.

- तद् विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः<sup>42</sup> ... (R̥gveda 1.22.20)
- विष्णोर्यत् परमं पदम्<sup>43</sup> ... (R̥gveda 1.22.21)
- तद् विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।<sup>44</sup> (KU 3.9)
- यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद् धाम परमं मम ॥<sup>45</sup> (BG 8.21)
- यद् गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद् धाम परमं मम ॥<sup>46</sup> (BG 15.6)

It is important to acknowledge that although Akṣaradhāman possesses inherent divine virtues, it ultimately belongs to Parabrahman, highlighting the supremacy of Parabrahman. Some of the qualities attributed to Akṣaradhāman are expounded by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami, such as that it is the eternal and superior abode, as well as being beyond the limitations of time. It is described as indivisible,

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<sup>41</sup> *so 'dhvanah pāramāpnoti tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam*

<sup>42</sup> *tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*

<sup>43</sup> *viṣṇoryat paramaṃ padam*

<sup>44</sup> *tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam |*

<sup>45</sup> *yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṃ mama ||*

<sup>46</sup> *yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṃ mama ||*

limitless, transcendent, and divine. Akṣaradhāman is beyond the influence of the *triguṇas* – three modes of material nature and is characterized by eternal bliss. The words from the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam that pertain directly to this point are as follows: एतच्चाक्षरं धामरूपेणावस्थितं सदन्यधामभ्योऽपि परभूतं श्रेष्ठमेव, तथैव शब्दितत्वात्, स्वरूपस्वभावतोऽस्य त्रिकालाबाधितत्वेन नित्यत्वाद्, अद्वितीयैकत्वाद्, अपरिमितपरिमाणत्वाद्, अप्राकृतत्वाद् दिव्यत्वात् त्रिगुणातीतत्वाद् अपुनरावृत्तिशीलत्वात् सर्वावतारिसर्वोपरिपरमात्म-सहजानन्दनिलयनत्वाद् ब्रह्मरूपभक्तैकलभ्यत्वाच्च ।<sup>47</sup>.

A thorough analysis of the three texts of the Prasthānatrayī reveals a remarkable consistency in their portrayal of the divine qualities and nature of Parabrahman. This consistency is particularly evident in portraying Parabrahman as the supreme authority, the master who governs over Akṣarabrahman. It highlights the unparalleled power and majesty of Parabrahman, establishing a hierarchical relationship between these divine entities.

### 3.3.4 Eka and advitīya

The Brahmasūtras, just before diving into Parādhikaraṇa, notes:

- प्रतिषेधाच्च <sup>48</sup> (BS 3.2.29)

Here, *pratiṣedha* means prohibition - प्रतिषेधो हि निषेधः<sup>49</sup>. A resolute prohibition exists against the notion that anything can be equated to or surpass Parabrahman in any manner. The Upaniṣads, along with numerous other instances, firmly assert this principle. Throughout these texts, the majestic stature of Parabrahman is consistently upheld, illustrating that there is no equal or superior entity to be found. These revelatory texts illuminate the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of Parabrahman, emphasizing that it stands alone as the ultimate reality beyond all comparisons.

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<sup>47</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 8.21, p. 189; *etaccākṣaraṃ dhāmarūpeṇāvasthitam sadanyadhāmabhyo 'pi parabhūtaṃ śreṣṭhameva, tathaiva śabdītatvāt, svarūpasvabhāvato 'sya trikālābādhitatvena nityatvād, advitīyāikatvād, aparimitaparimāṇatvād, aprākṛtatvād divyatvāt triguṇātītatvād apunarāvṛttiśīlatvāt sarvāvatārisarvopariparamātma-sahajānandanīlayanatvād brahmarūpabhaktaikalabhyatvācca*

<sup>48</sup> *pratiṣedhācca*

<sup>49</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.2.29, p. 304; *pratiṣedho hi niṣedhaḥ*

Such affirmations serve as a reminder of the absolute singularity of Parabrahman, unchallenged by any other being or concept. They emphasize the need to perceive and understand Parabrahman as an entity that is beyond comparison, surpassing all limitations of the human intellect and comprehension.

By recognizing the rejection of likening anything to Parabrahman, we acknowledge the vastness and immeasurable grandeur of the divine being that is Parabrahman. This understanding allows us to approach Parabrahman with utmost reverence and humility, realizing that it is beyond our ability to fully grasp or express its true essence. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad read:

- एकमेवाऽद्वितीयम्<sup>50</sup> (CU 6.2.1)
- यस्मात् परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिद् यस्मान् नाणीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति किञ्चित्।<sup>51</sup> (SU 3.9)
- न तत्समश्चाऽभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते<sup>52</sup> (SU 6.8)
- न तस्य कश्चित् पतिरस्ति लोके न चेशिता नैव च तस्य लिङ्गम् ।  
स कारणं करणाधिपाधिपो न चास्य कश्चिज्जनिता न चाधिपः ॥<sup>53</sup> (SU 6.9)

While interpreting the mantra 6.2.1 of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad where the words *eka* and *advitīya* occur, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami comments: स्वरूपत एकत्वादेव जीवेश्वरात्मान इव द्वितीयः स्वसजातीय परमात्माऽक्षरं ब्रह्म च नाऽस्तीत्यर्थः । एकमेवेत्युक्तेऽपि प्रकारान्तरेण कथनमिदं मुक्त्यवस्थायामपि कश्चन जीवात्मेश्वरात्मा वा स्वरूपतः परमात्मा वाऽक्षरब्रह्म वा नैव भवतीति प्रतिपादयति।<sup>54</sup> Therefore, it is firmly asserted that there exists no semblance of another entity akin to Parabrahman, for Parabrahman is singular and incomparable.

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<sup>50</sup> *ekamevā'dvitīyam*

<sup>51</sup> *yasmāt paraṃ nāparamasti kiñcid yasmān nāṇīyo na jyāyo'sti kiñcit |*

<sup>52</sup> *na tatsamaścā'bhyadhikaśca drśyate*

<sup>53</sup> *na tasya kaścit patirasti loka na ceśitā naiva ca tasya liṅgam |*

*sa kāraṇaṃ karaṇādhipādhipo na cāsya kaścijjanitā na cādhipaḥ ||*

<sup>54</sup> Chāndogya Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 6.2.1, p. 254; *svarūpata ekatvādeva jīveśvarātmāna iva dvitīyaḥ svasajātīya paramātmā'kṣaraṃ brahma ca nā'stīyarthah | ekamevetyukte'pi prakārāntareṇa kathanamidaṃ muktyavasthāyāmapi kaścana jīvātmeśvarātmā vā svarūpataḥ paramātmā vā'kṣarabrahma vā naiva bhavatīti pratipādayati |*

His unparalleled nature surpasses any comparison, and until the realm of Akṣarabrahman is reached, no entity can even approach the exalted status of Parabrahman. This fundamental truth resonates throughout various Upaniṣads, reiterating the supreme and unrivaled position of Parabrahman. The notion of Parabrahman's singularity is likewise echoed in the sacred text of Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, specifically in the illuminating discourse of Vibhūtiyoga. It reads:

- न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यः<sup>55</sup> (BG 11.43)

Furthermore, reinforcing the earlier sūtra, another significant sūtra from the Parādhikaraṇa contributes to this discourse. This sūtra explicitly states that while Parabrahman is rightfully acknowledged as the master of Akṣarabrahman, no other entity can be designated similarly. The words of the sūtra are as follows:

- तथाऽन्यनिषेधात्<sup>56</sup> (BS 3.2.34)

The supporting Kāṭha Upaniṣad mantra and a verse from the fifteenth chapter – Puruṣottamayoga – of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā are:

- अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः । पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः॥<sup>57</sup> (KU 3.11)
- उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।  
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः॥<sup>58</sup> (BG 15.17)

In conclusion, our exploration of Parabrahman has shed light on its nature as the supreme and ultimate entity. Through the analysis of various scriptures, including the Brahmasūtras, Upaniṣads, and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, we have established the concept of Parabrahman as the master of māyā, the instigator of creation, and the source of all existence. It is through the power of Parabrahman that the cosmic cycle of creation, sustenance, and dissolution unfolds.

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<sup>55</sup> *na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto 'nyah*

<sup>56</sup> *tathā 'nyaniṣedhāt*

<sup>57</sup> *avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ | puruṣānna paraṃ kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ||*

<sup>58</sup> *uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ paramātmetyudāhṛtaḥ |*

*yo lokatrayamāviśya bibhartavyaya īśvaraḥ ||*

Furthermore, our investigation has delved into the intricate relationship between Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. It has become evident that while Akṣarabrahman functions as a distinct and divine realm, its existence and authority are ultimately subject to the control and supremacy of Parabrahman. This notion aligns with the teachings of the scriptures and highlights the transcendence and greatness of Parabrahman.

Furthermore, we have explored the concept of Parabrahman as singular and without a second. It is emphasized that nothing can be compared to or equated with Parabrahman, and the idea of any other entity being superior to or like Parabrahman is strictly rejected.

In light of these discussions, it becomes evident that Parabrahman possesses unmatched omnipotence and is the ultimate source of all power, creation, and dissolution. The coherence and consistency of these teachings across various scriptures affirm the supreme status of Parabrahman in the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana and, more generally, the Hindu philosophical tradition. Building upon understanding Parabrahman as the ultimate entity based on its nature, we now delve into the awe-inspiring concept of its omnipotence and limitless power.

### **3.4 Kartṛ Parabrahman**

Parabrahman, as the Supreme Brahman, transcends all descriptions, conceptualizations, and entities such as jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, and Akṣarabrahman. An essential characteristic of Parabrahman is his omnipotence, signifying his absolute power and authority. He is the ultimate source and sustainer of all agents and actions, operating beyond the reach of any influence or limitation. Parabrahman serves as the eternal inspiration behind all actions while simultaneously assuming the role of the impartial witness and support for all deeds and doers. Unlike ordinary beings, he remains untouched by karma and is unaffected by the laws of nature conceived by human minds. Parabrahman surpasses the boundaries of individual jīvas and īśvaras, offering them a pathway to liberation from the illusions of māyā through the medium of Akṣarabrahman. This divine reality represents the ultimate aspiration for spiritual seekers seeking mukti, liberation from

the ceaseless cycles of existence. Parabrahman graciously bestows his divine grace upon those who lovingly dedicate and devote themselves to him.

Throughout the Brahmasūtras, a central theme revolves around establishing the supremacy and uniqueness of Parabrahman, the supreme reality and the cause of all existence, including Akṣarabrahman. The omniscience and omnipotence of Parabrahman are underscored in multiple instances, allowing for the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and Upaniṣads to augment the principles and arguments presented in the text. Vyāsa seizes the opportunity in the second sūtra of the Brahmasūtras, following the initial exploration of the two Brahmanas – Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman – to reinforce Parabrahman's nature as the omnipotent entity.

The second sūtra, जन्माद्यस्य यतः<sup>59</sup> (BS 1.1.2), signifies that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are the sources from which the origin, sustenance, and dissolution of this universe arise. This sūtra suggests that Parabrahman (along with Akṣarabrahman) is not merely the creator but also the sustainer and destroyer of the universe. Furthermore, this sūtra indicates that Parabrahman is the material cause and the efficient cause of the infinite universes. It highlights that Parabrahman transcends the universe yet simultaneously manifests within it, showcasing both transcendence and immanence.

In light of this understanding, the Brahmasūtras emphasize that any inference or conclusion that contradicts or deviates from the teachings of *śruti* must be rejected as unreliable or inadequate. The revelations of *śruti* are considered to be the ultimate authority and serve as the guiding light in comprehending the nature of Parabrahman.

The *smṛti prasthāna* states that Parabrahman is the source of all beings, and everything emanates from Parabrahman. The *śloka* अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते<sup>60</sup> (BG 10.8) conveys this idea, emphasizing that everything originates from Parabrahman. A *śloka*, presented below, highlights the role of Parabrahman as the overseer and controller of nature, from which all animate and inanimate beings arise.

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<sup>59</sup> *janmādyasya yataḥ*

<sup>60</sup> *ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate*

- मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम्<sup>61</sup> (BG 9.10)

Similarly, in the Upaniṣads, there are many passages that extol Parabrahman as the supreme omnipotent being. For example, in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, it is stated:

- यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।  
तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा<sup>62</sup> (TU 3.1.1)

This passage underscores the profound inquiry into the supreme reality, recognizing Parabrahman as the source from which all beings originate, the sustaining force that allows them to exist, and the ultimate destination into which they ultimately belong. The notion of merging or origination is, as is evident, not to be taken to suggest that jīvas are, for example, literal parts of Parabrahman or that they merge into Parabrahman and lose their independent existence.

Rather these verses from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and Upaniṣads highlight the concept of Parabrahman as the omnipotent and ultimate source of all existence. They affirm that everything in the manifested universe arises from and is sustained by Parabrahman's divine power and will.

In the explanation of the sūtra – BS 1.1.2 – and the tasks managed by Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman), Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami defines *utpatti* (creation), *sthiti* (sustenance), and *pralaya* (dissolution). He writes: उत्पत्तिरिह तत्तज्जीवेश्वरचेतना-  
ऽनुष्ठितकर्मानुसृततत्तत्फलोपभोगानुकूलतत्तल्लोकलोकपालादिसर्जनम् । उत्पादितानां स्वकारणे लयो हि  
प्रलयः । स्थितिश्च तयोरन्तरालकालीनप्रपञ्चाऽवस्था । तयोरन्तरालकालप्रपञ्चाऽवस्था<sup>63</sup> Creation, dissolution, and sustenance all occur through the will and power of Parabrahman. Creation involves bringing forth realms and their masters to support the fruition of karma. Dissolution refers to the return to the original cause, resolving all manifestations. Finally, sustenance (the phase between creation and dissolution)

<sup>61</sup> *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram*

<sup>62</sup> *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | yena jātāni jīvanti | yatprayantyabhisamviśanti | tadvijijñāsva |  
tadbrahmeti | sa tapo 'atapyata | sa tapastaptvā*

<sup>63</sup> *Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 1.1.2, p. 13; utpattiriha tattajjīveśvaracetanā 'nuṣṭhitakarmā-  
nusṛtatataphalopabhogānukūlatattalokalokapālādisarjanam | utpāditānāṃ svakāraṇe layo hi  
pralayaḥ | sthitiśca tayorantarālakālīnaprapañcā 'vasthā.*

maintains the universe's functioning and preserves the cosmic order. Together, they reflect the cyclical nature of existence and offer opportunities for beings to attain liberation.

By presenting such evidence and arguments, Vyāsa's objective is to systematically refute the perspectives of various schools of thought that propose diverse causative factors for the universe, including *pradhāna* (primordial matter; *māyā*), *puruṣa* (individual souls; *jīvas*), *īśvara* (empowered beings), *śakti* (cosmic energy; *māyā*), etc. He also tries to reconcile the apparent contradictions and variations in the scriptural descriptions of Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) by showing that they are meant to convey different aspects and attributes of the same reality. Thus, Vyāsa establishes Parabrahman as the absolute and supreme reality worthy of inquiry and devotion by all seekers of truth.

He also establishes Parabrahman as the supreme and omnipotent reality. By refuting alternative theories and highlighting the authority of *śruti* (revelation) as the highest source of knowledge, he establishes the unique position of Parabrahman as the source, sustainer, and dissolver of the universe. This divine omnipotence encompasses the creation, dissolution, and sustenance of all realms, *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. By reconciling apparent contradictions and variations in scriptural descriptions, Vyāsa reveals, and Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami expounds upon, the multifaceted nature of Parabrahman, encompassing both transcendence and immanence. Parabrahman's omnipotence transcends human concepts and limitations, yet it pervades every aspect of existence. We shall now embark on an exploration of the concept of "*abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa*," illuminating the integral nature of Parabrahman as both the efficient and material cause of the universe.

### **3.4.1 Abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa**

This part of the discussion leads us to the intriguing concept of Parabrahman as the inseparable efficient, and material cause of all creation. In the Prakṛtyadhikaraṇa (BS 1.4.24-28) of the Brahmasūtras, the focus is on discussing the roles of both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the cause. This adhikaraṇa sheds light on the

profound nature of their relationship. Expanding on this theme, we delve into various mantras that exemplify the idea of Parabrahman as the *nimitta kāraṇa* (efficient cause) of creation. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad includes one such mantra.

- यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति<sup>64</sup>  
(TU 3.1.1)

Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman actively participate in the process of Creation as the efficient cause. A sūtra supports this understanding and finds ample backing from the other two *prasthānas* (canonical texts), namely, the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. These sources collectively emphasize the vital role of Parabrahman in the intricate workings of the universe, highlighting its status as the ultimate driving force behind creation. The last sūtra of this adhikaraṇa is as follows:

- योनिश्च हि गीयते<sup>65</sup> (BS 1.4.28)

*Prakṛti* or *māyā* is called the womb. Parabrahman, along with Akṣarabrahman, operates through the *mūla-puruṣa* (Akṣaramukta) and assumes the role of the cause behind all creation. This understanding highlights the profound connection between the transcendent reality and the manifested world, as Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) acts as the underlying source and catalyst for the expansive and diverse cosmos. Some of the references that explore *prakṛti* as a womb can be found below:

- यो योनिं योनिमधितिष्ठति<sup>66</sup> (SU 5.2)
- यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः<sup>67</sup> (MU 1.1.6)
- कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम्<sup>68</sup> (MU 3.1.3)
- मम योनिर्महद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम्<sup>69</sup> (BG 14.3)

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<sup>64</sup> *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | yena jātāni jīvanti | yatprayantyaabhisamviśanti*

<sup>65</sup> *yonisca hi gīyate ||*

<sup>66</sup> *yo yoniṃ yonimadhitiṣṭhati*

<sup>67</sup> *yadbhūtayoniṃ paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*

<sup>68</sup> *kartāramīśaṃ puruṣaṃ brahmayonim*

<sup>69</sup> *mama yonirmahad brahma tasmin garbhaṃ dadhāmyaham*

The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the mantras discussed earlier, shedding new light on their nuances. It offers a detailed understanding of the relationship between Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and *prakṛti* in creation. The first sūtra of the adhikaraṇa sets the stage for this discussion by asserting that *prakṛti* is inseparable from Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. By examining the examples and declarations from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, a clear and harmonious view emerges, affirming that *prakṛti*, moved or set in motion by the will of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, serves as the material cause for creation. At the same time, the two divine entities act simultaneously as the material cause and efficient cause. This understanding is further supported by the sūtras and corresponding mantras found in the Sadvidyā section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, which are also expounded upon in the Māyā chapter.

The preceding section has shed light on the consistency within the Prasthānatrayī concerning the notion of Parabrahman as the inseparable efficient and material cause of all creation. Now, let us embark on an exploration of another facet of Parabrahman's nature: his role as the bestower of the consequences of karma upon jīvas and īśvaras. This understanding sheds light on the intricate workings of the cosmic order and the just distribution of rewards and consequences based on one's actions. By exploring this aspect, we gain a deeper insight into the multifaceted nature of Parabrahman and his involvement in the dynamics of karma and its repercussions.

### **3.4.2 Atṛ from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad**

In the journey of understanding Parabrahman's nature, we now explore his role as the cause and sustainer of creation, as described in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The first mantra of the fourth section of the Upaniṣad sheds light on the contingency of Creation on the grace and foresight of Parabrahman. The mantra emphasizes Parabrahman's eternal presence and ability to bring forth the infinite universes into the state we experience. However, Parabrahman's omnipotence extends beyond creation alone, as he also has the power to dissolve and destroy all created. The Upaniṣad mantra reveals Parabrahman's role as the ultimate consumer, signifying his authority over the entire

cosmic cycle. The first mantra discusses the notion that Parabrahman was present before creation transpired and, with the most gracious sight, brought Creation to manifestation. The words of the mantra are as follows:

- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत्पुरुषविधः सोऽनुवीक्ष्य नान्यदात्मनोऽपश्यत्सोऽहमस्मीत्यग्रे  
व्याहरत्ततोऽहंनामाभवत् तस्मादप्येतर्ह्यामन्त्रितोऽहमयमित्येवाग्र उक्त्वाऽथान्यन्नाम  
प्रब्रूते यदस्य भवति स यत्पूर्वोऽस्मात्सर्वस्मात्सर्वान्पाप्मन औषत्तस्मात्पुरुष ओषति ह  
वै स तं योऽस्मात्पूर्वो बुभूषति य एवं वेद ॥<sup>70</sup> (BU 1.4.1)

Parabrahman's omnipotence transcends the act of creation, as he assumes the role of the *attr*, the one who consumes and destroys. Parabrahman's ability to bring forth the infinite universes into existence and subsequently dismantle them is the focus of this section. This mantra highlights the cyclical nature of creation and dissolution, emphasizing Parabrahman's role as the ultimate orchestrator of cosmic processes. As the *attr*, Parabrahman holds the power to disintegrate all that has been manifested, signifying his complete dominion over the entire cosmic order. Let us delve deeper into the profound implications of this aspect of Parabrahman's omnipotence. It is as follows:

- स ऐक्षत यदि वा इममभिमस्ये कनीयोऽन्नं करिष्य इति स तया वाचा तेनाऽऽत्मनेद  
सर्वमसृजत यदिदं किंचर्चे यजूषि सामानिच्छन्दांसि यज्ञान्प्रजाः पशून्स यद्यदेवासृजत  
तत्तदनुमधियत सर्वं वा अत्तीति तददितेरदितित्वं सर्वस्यैतस्यात्ता भवति  
सर्वमस्यान्नं भवति य एवमेतददितेरदितित्वं वेद ॥<sup>71</sup> (BU 1.2.5)

In the Brahmasūtras, the concept of Parabrahman as the *attr*, the one who eats or destroys, is further explored in the *Attr* *adhikaraṇa*. This section specifically addresses the interpretation and significance of the words – सर्वं वा अत्तीति तददितेरदितित्वं

<sup>70</sup> *ātmaivedamagra āsītpuruṣavidhaḥ so 'nuvīkṣya nānyadātmano 'paśyatso 'hamasmītyagre  
vyāharattato 'hamnāmābhavat tasmādapyetarhyāmantrito 'hamāyāmityevāgra uktvā 'thā-nyannāma  
prabrūte yadasya bhavati sa yatpūrvo 'smātsarvasmātsarvānpāpmana auṣattasmātpuruṣa oṣati ha vai  
sa taṃ yo 'smātpūrvo bubhūṣati ya evaṃ veda ||*

<sup>71</sup> *sa aikṣata yadi vā imamabhimasye kanīyo 'nnaṃ kariṣya iti sa tayā vācā tenā 'tmaneda  
sarvamasṛjata yadidaṃ kiṃcarce yajūṣi sāmānicchandāṃsi yajñānpajāḥ paśūnsa yadyadevāsṛjata  
tattadattumadhiyata sarvaṃ vā atīti tadaditeradititvaṃ sarvasyāitasyāttā bhavati sarvamasyaṅnaṃ  
bhavati ya evametadaditeradititvaṃ veda ||*

सर्वस्यैतस्याऽत्ता भवति<sup>72</sup> of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The first sūtra of the adhikaraṇa delves into the meaning of these words, examining the nature of Parabrahman's all-consuming power and its implications for the *jagat* of infinite universes. It reads:

- अत्ता चराचरग्रहणात्<sup>73</sup> (BS 1.2.9)

Through detailed analysis and interpretation, the Brahmasūtras establish that the words “*sarvam va attī*” in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad commentary do not refer to jīvas (individual souls), īśvaras (empowered beings), or the deity of death. Instead, they unequivocally point to Parabrahman as the subject. By clarifying the intended meaning of these words, the Brahmasūtras and the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam affirm Parabrahman's role as the ultimate dissolver of all creation and emphasize his all-encompassing power over the infinite universes. This conclusion is supported by the context of the Upaniṣad and corroborated by relevant mantras from other Upaniṣads.

- यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च उभे भवत ओदनः । मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनम्<sup>74</sup> (KU 2.25)
- यस्य मृत्युः शरीरं यो मृत्युमन्तरे सञ्चरन् यं मृत्युर्न वेद<sup>75</sup> (Subāla Upaniṣad 7)
- मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः<sup>76</sup> (TU 2.8.1)

The resonance between the mantras from various Upaniṣads, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, and the Brahmasūtras reinforces the idea presented earlier regarding Parabrahman's omnipotent nature. These mantras affirm Parabrahman as the *abhinna-nimitta-upādānā-kāraṇa*, the inseparable efficient, and material cause of all creation. They highlight the interconnectedness and inseparability of Parabrahman's role as both the source and sustainer of the universe. This understanding further solidifies the comprehensive vision of Parabrahman as the supreme reality deserving of contemplation and devotion by seekers of truth.

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<sup>72</sup> *sarvaṃ vā attīti tadaditeradititvaṃ sarvasyaitasyā 'tā bhavati*

<sup>73</sup> *attā carācaragrahaṇāt*

<sup>74</sup> *yasya brahma ca kṣatram ca ubhe bhavata odanaḥ | mṛtyuryasyopasecanam*

<sup>75</sup> *yasya mṛtyuḥ śarīram yo mṛtyumantare sañcaran yaṃ mṛtyurna veda*

<sup>76</sup> *mṛtyurdhāvati pañcamah*

### 3.4.3 Karmaphalapradātr

Continuing our exploration of Parabrahman's omnipotence, we delve into its role as the bestower of the resultant fruits of karma. This discussion is initiated in the Phalādhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras, where Vyāsa addresses the question of who is responsible for yielding the fruits of karma performed by individuals. The debate in the adhikaraṇa commences with the unequivocal declaration that Parabrahman alone is the source of the resultant fruits of karma. Vyāsa points out that since karma, being insentient, cannot independently provide the appropriate consequences, there must be a conscious and sentient entity responsible for bestowing the fruits of karma. The logical inference is that Parabrahman, with its omniscient and omnipotent nature, is the ultimate dispenser of the consequences of one's karma. This perspective is in harmony with the broader teachings of the Upaniṣads, with a particular emphasis on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which underscores the supreme authority and power of Parabrahman. By recognizing Parabrahman as the ultimate dispenser of karmic fruits, we gain a deeper understanding of its all-encompassing omnipotence.

- फलमत उपपत्तेः<sup>77</sup> (BS 3.2.26)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides an insightful interpretation of the topic, stating that karma, being insentient and momentary in nature, cannot independently bestow its own fruits in subsequent moments. Additionally, it is not plausible to assume that the fruition of karma occurs without any prior cause, as that would contradict the very nature of karma. In light of this, it is reasonable to conclude that the bestowal of karmic fruits can only be attributed to Parabrahman, who possesses omniscience, omnipotence, and the compassionate disposition to oversee and administer the results of all actions. Hence, it is Paramātman who grants the consequences of karma in response to the deeds of individual jīvas and īśvaras. The corresponding elucidation in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam is as follows: न हि क्षणप्रध्वंसप्रकृतीनि कर्माणि स्वतोऽचेतनानि कालान्तरभाविफलानि प्रदातुं प्रभवन्ति । न चाऽपूर्वकल्पनया तत्फलसिद्धिरुपपद्यत इति वाच्यं, तस्याऽपि कर्माणीव तदसम्भवात् । सर्वज्ञस्य सर्वशक्तिमतः सर्वान्तर्यामिणः

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<sup>77</sup> *phalamata upapatteḥ*

परमकृपालोरेव खलु सर्वकर्मफलप्रदत्वमुपपद्यते । अतः परमात्मा तत्तज्जीवेश्वरकर्मानुसारेण तेभ्यस्तत्तत्फलमुत्पादयतीति सिद्ध्यति ॥<sup>78</sup>.

This interpretation highlights the understanding that Parabrahman, as the all-knowing and all-powerful entity, is indeed the provider of karmic outcomes in accordance with the actions performed by individual beings. Moreover, proceeding further in the debate, Vyāsa allows the commentator to bring in the references from the *śruti*: श्रुतत्वाच्च<sup>79</sup> (BS 3.2.37). The commentator presents two references from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

- स वा एष महानज आत्माऽन्नादो वसुदानः<sup>80</sup> (BU 4.4.24)
- एष ह्येवाऽऽनन्दयाति<sup>81</sup> (TU 2.7.2)

The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā also has *ślokas* that bear on these discussions.

- यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तो श्रद्धयाऽचितुमिच्छति ।  
तस्य तस्याऽचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥<sup>82</sup> (BG 7.21)
- स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याऽऽराधनम्रीहते ।  
लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥<sup>83</sup> (BG 7.22)

The exploration of Parabrahman's omnipotence reveals that Parabrahman not only creates the universe but also sustains and destroys it. This understanding is rooted in the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī, which highlight Parabrahman's multifaceted role as

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<sup>78</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.2.26, p. 310; *na hi kṣaṇapradhvaṃsaprakṛtīni karmāṇi svato'cetanāni kālāntarabhāvīphalāni pradātuṃ prabhavanti | na cā'pūrvakalpanayā tatphalasiddhirupapadyata iti vācyaṃ, tasyā'pi karmāṇīva tadasambhavāt | sarvajñasya sarvaśaktimataḥ sarvāntaryāmiṇaḥ paramakṛpāloreva khalu sarvakarmaphalapradatvamupapadyate | ataḥ paramātmā tattajjīveśvarakarmānusāreṇa tebhyaḥstattatphalamutpādayatīti siddhyati ||*

<sup>79</sup> *śrutatvācca*

<sup>80</sup> *sa vā eṣa mahānaja ātmā'nnādo vasudānaḥ*

<sup>81</sup> *eṣa hyevā'nandayāti*

<sup>82</sup> *yo yo yāṃ yāṃ tanuṃ bhakto śraddhayā'citumicchati | tasya tasyā'calāṃ śraddhāṃ tāmeva vidadhāmyaham ||*

<sup>83</sup> *sa tayā śraddhayā yuktastasyā'rādhanaṃrīhate | labhate ca tataḥ kāmān māyāiva vihītān hi tān ||*

the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of all that exists. The Upaniṣads also reveal that Parabrahman possesses the power to disintegrate and destroy all that has been created. This aspect is depicted through the concept of the *atṛ*, the one who eats. The *atṛ* represents Parabrahman's role as the destroyer, consuming and dissolving the created universe back into its essence. We continued the journey of understanding Parabrahman as the inseparable efficient, and material cause of creation. In exploring Parabrahman's omnipotence, we also discussed the notion of Parabrahman as the giver of fruits of karma. The scriptures emphasize that only Parabrahman, with his all-encompassing knowledge and power, can bestow the results of karma upon jīvas and īśvaras. This understanding is supported by the commentary of Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, who clarifies that the insentient nature of karma cannot independently yield its own fruits.

In conclusion, Parabrahman's omnipotence is a fundamental principle in the philosophical inquiry into its nature. Through the teachings of the Brahmasūtras, the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and the Upaniṣads, we gain insights into the limitless power and transcendental nature of Parabrahman.

### **3.5 Saḡuṇa and Nirḡuṇa Parabrahman**

The concept of *sagūṇatva* and *nirḡuṇatva* adds another layer of divine glory to Parabrahman, which is prominently discussed in the Prasthānatrayī. These terms refer to the state of being with or without certain characteristics or qualities.

When Parabrahman or Akṣarabrahman is said to possess (*sa-*) qualities (*-guṇa*), the qualities spoken of are divine. Even when they assume a human-like form on Earth, Parabrahman or Akṣarabrahman transcend all mundane traits and embody absolute divinity. On the other hand, when they are described as being without (*nir-*) qualities (*-guṇa*), they are devoid of any māyic attributes, existing in an absolute state.

Bhagavān Swaminarayan further elaborates on his unique definitions of *sagūṇa* and *nirḡuṇa* forms in his discourse recorded in the Vacanāmṛta Kariyaṇī 8. In response to Muktananda Swami's inquiry about how the *sagūṇa* and *nirḡuṇa* forms of God are described in Hindu scriptures and the benefits of understanding these forms, Bhagavān

Swaminarayan provides profound insights that builds the upon the Vedāntic principle found in the Upaniṣads and Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami’s Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā begins its discussion on this topic with a paragraph that further explores and elucidates the concepts of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* forms. अथ तत्सगुणत्वनिर्गुणत्वे । तत्सगुणत्वं द्विविधम् । दिव्यगुणसहितत्वं सर्वमहत्त्वं चेति । एवं तन्निरगुणत्वमपि द्विविधम् । प्राकृतगुणशून्यत्वमणोरणीयस्त्वं चेति । सर्वमहत्त्वमतिबृहद्रूपधारकत्वं तद्दर्शकत्वं सूक्ष्मपदार्थेभ्योऽपि स्थूलताप्रापकत्वं चेति सगुणत्वम् । सूक्ष्माऽतिसूक्ष्मत्वं सर्वाऽन्तर्यामित्वं सर्वात्मत्वमतिनिर्लेपत्वमतिशुद्धत्वमत्यसङ्गित्वमतिशयप्रकाशशालित्वमत्यैश्वर्यवत्त्वं स्वसङ्कल्पमात्रेण स्थूलपदार्थेभ्योऽपि सूक्ष्मताप्रापकत्वं चेति तन्निरगुणत्वमिति भावः । तदिदं गुणयुगलं कृपाधृतमनुष्यरूपे स्वस्मिन् स्वेच्छया दर्शयति परमात्मा<sup>84</sup>. “The concept of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* is twofold. *Saguṇatva* entails possessing divine qualities and transcending the grandest magnificence – being larger than the largest. On the other hand, *nirguṇatva* signifies the absence of all māyic traits or the state of being eternally and infinitely untouched by māyic influences. It further encompasses being subtler than the subtlest, the inner-controller (*antaryāmin*) of all, the pervader of every soul, immaculate and untainted by any impurity (*nirlepa*), supremely pure, utterly detached from the realm of illusion, radiant in its luminosity, bestowing radiance upon all luminous beings, and effortlessly bestowing subtlety and intangibility upon the physical and gross aspects of existence with a mere thought.”

By comprehending these two definitions, we can explore how the Prasthānatrayī establishes its inherent coherence and consistency concerning this profound subject matter.

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<sup>84</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 3.2.14, p. 123; *atha tatsaguṇatvanirguṇatve | tatsaguṇatvaṃ dvividham | divyaguṇasahitvatvaṃ sarvamahattvaṃ ceti | evaṃ tannirguṇatvamapi dvividham | prākṛtaguṇaśūnyatvamaṇoraṇīyastvaṃ ceti | sarvamahattvamatiḥhadrūpadhārakatvaṃ taddarśakatvaṃ sūkṣmapadārthebhyo 'pi sthūlatāprāpakatvaṃ ceti saguṇatvaṃ | sūkṣmā 'tisūkṣmatvaṃ sarvā 'ntaryāmitvaṃ sarvātmavamatinirlepatvamatisuddhatvamatyasāṅgitvamatisayaprakāśāśālitvamatyaiśvaryavattvaṃ svasaṅkalpamātreṇa sthūlapadārthebhyo 'pi sūkṣmatāprāpakatvaṃ ceti tannirguṇatvamiti bhāvaḥ | tadidaṃ guṇayugalaṃ kṛpādhṛtamanuṣyarūpe svasmin svecchayā darśayati paramātmā |*

### 3.5.1 Divya and Nirdoṣa

The first interpretation of *saguntva* and *nirgunatva* is contemplating Parabrahman as *divya*, divine and without māyic traits, i.e., *nirdoṣa*, or flawless. This concept is further expounded in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, where it is affirmed that the birth and deeds of Parabrahman are divine – जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः । त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥<sup>85</sup> (BG 4.9). Understanding Parabrahman in this way leads to the cessation of the cycle of birth and death as one attains liberation. The word “*divyam*” signifies both the divine existence and actions of Parabrahman while also indicating its pure and untainted nature, free from the influence of māyā. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami notes in the commentary for the word – कल्याणमयं मायामलमालिन्यशून्यमेव<sup>86</sup> – “liberating (and) devoid of dirt in the form of māyā.”

This concept is further explored in the Brahmasūtras’ Ubhayalingādhikaraṇa (BS 3.2.11-25). The term “*ubhayalingā*” refers to the dual characteristics or nature of Parabrahman. It signifies that Parabrahman simultaneously embodies divine attributes and is free from the influence of māyā. In his commentary, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami employs an interesting choice of words and provides insightful explanations to convey this idea. This discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of Parabrahman, encompassing both its divine qualities and its transcendence over māyic limitations. It reads:

- सदा स्वभावतोऽस्तमितसमस्तदोषत्वस्वाभाविकाऽनतिशयदिव्यगुणगण-  
निधित्वेत्युभयचिह्नलक्षितमित्यर्थः ।<sup>87</sup>

Parabrahman is forever, and naturally, devoid of all flaws of māyā and contains the limitless treasure of virtues; that is what the compound *ubhayalinga* means. Moreover, if one agrees that Parabrahman is flawless and devoid of all traits of māyā, the true

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<sup>85</sup> *janma karma ca me divyamevaṃ yo veti tattvataḥ |  
tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjanma naiti māmeti so' rjuna ||*

<sup>86</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.9, p. 96; *kalyāṇmāyām  
māyāmalamālinnyasūnyameva*

<sup>87</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.2.11, p. 292; *sadā svabhāvato 'stamitasamastadoṣatva-  
svābhāvikā' natiśayadivyaḥ guṇagananidhitvetyubhayacihnalakṣitamityarthaḥ*

nature of Parabrahman is highlighted. However, does Parabrahman, as an *antaryāmin* residing in all *jīvas* and *īśvaras*, get affected by *māyā* from the “places” he resides in? This argument is raised in the first *sūtra* of the *adhikaraṇa*:

- न स्थानतोऽपि परस्योभयलिङ्गं सर्वत्र हि <sup>88</sup> (BS 3.2.11)

The *Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyakāra* strengthens the *purvapakṣa*. He acknowledges that in ordinary situations, the qualities of a place can affect the objects within it. For instance, wood becomes wet when it falls into the water because it is the nature of water to make objects wet. Similarly, cloth catches fire when it falls into the fire because it is the nature of fire to burn. Applying this analogy, one could argue that when Parabrahman resides within *jīvas* and *īśvaras* as their controller, master, soul, etc., he should be influenced by their inherent nature. This would mean being bound by *māyā* or experiencing pleasure and pain associated with the bodies it inhabits.

However, *Vyāsa* explains in resolving the misunderstanding underlying the argument in the *sūtra*, stating that Parabrahman is not affected by the “place” (the *jīvas* and *īśvaras*) because the scriptures (*śrutis* and *smṛtis*) describe Parabrahman as possessing the dual characteristics of being *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*. References from the *Upaniṣads* support this assertion. These references affirm the coexistence of divine qualities and transcendence over *māyic* limitations in Parabrahman.

- तस्य यथा कप्यासं पुण्डरीकमेवमक्षिणी तस्योदिति नाम स एष सर्वेभ्यः पाप्मभ्य उदितः<sup>89</sup> (CU 1.6.7)
- एतं संयद्द्वाम इत्याचक्षत<sup>90</sup> (CU 4.15.2)
- एष द एव वामनीरेप हि सर्वाणि वामानि नयति<sup>91</sup> (CU 4.15.3)
- एष उ एवं भामनरिय हि सर्वेषु लोकेषु भाति<sup>92</sup> (CU 4.15.4)

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<sup>88</sup> *na sthānato 'pi parasyobhayaliṅgaṃ sarvatra hi*

<sup>89</sup> *tasya yathā kapyāsaṃ puṇḍarīkamevamakṣiṇī tasyoditi nāma sa eṣa sarvebhyaḥ pāpmabhya uditah*

<sup>90</sup> *etaṃ saṃyadvāma ityācakṣata*

<sup>91</sup> *eṣa da eva vāmanīrepa hi sarvāṇi vāmāni nayati*

<sup>92</sup> *eṣa u evaṃ bhāmanariya hi sarveṣu lokeṣu bhātiḥ*

- विरजः पर आकाशादजः<sup>93</sup> (BU 4.4.20)
- य एषोऽन्तर्हृदय आकाशस्तमिच्छेते सर्वस्य वशी सर्वस्येशानः सर्वस्याऽभिपतिः स न साधुना कर्मणा भूयान्नी एवासाना कनीयान् एष सर्वेश्वर एवं भूताधिपतिरेष भूतपालः<sup>94</sup> (BU 4.4.22)
- स वा एष महानज आत्माऽजरोऽमरोऽमृतोऽभयः<sup>95</sup> (BU 4.4.25)
- स हि कर्ता<sup>96</sup> (BU 8.3.20)
- निरवद्यं निरञ्जनम्<sup>97</sup> (SU 6.19)

The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā notes this on various instances:

- न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।<sup>98</sup> (BG 4.14)
- सर्वभूतस्थितं यो माम्<sup>99</sup> (BG 6.31)
- अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।  
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥<sup>100</sup> (BG 8.6)
- मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय ।  
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥<sup>101</sup> (BG 7.7)
- ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाथ ये ।  
मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु से मयि ॥<sup>102</sup> (BG 7.12)

<sup>93</sup> *virajaḥ para ākāśādaja*

<sup>94</sup> *ya eṣo 'ntarhṛdaya ākāśastamicchete sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeshānaḥ sarvasyā 'bhipatiḥ sa na sādhanā bhūyānnī evāsānā kanīyān eṣa sarveśvara evaṃ bhūtādhipatiṛeṣa bhūtapālah*

<sup>95</sup> *sa vā eṣa mahānaja ātmā 'jaro 'maro 'mrto 'bhayaḥ*

<sup>96</sup> *sa hi kartā*

<sup>97</sup> *niravadyaṃ nirañjanam*

<sup>98</sup> *na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karmaphale sprhā |*

<sup>99</sup> *sarvabhūtasthitam yo mām*

<sup>100</sup> *ajo 'pi sannavyayātmā bhūtānāmīśvaro 'pi san | prakṛtiṃ svāmadhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmyātmamāyayā ||*

<sup>101</sup> *mattaḥ parataram nānyatkiñcidasti dhanamjaya | mayi sarvamideṃ protaṃ sūtre maṇigaṇā iva ||*

<sup>102</sup> *ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasātha ye | matta eveti tān viddhi na tvahaṃ teṣu se mayi ||*

- त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।  
मोहितं नाऽभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥<sup>103</sup> (BG 7.13)
- न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।  
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥<sup>104</sup> (BG 9.9)
- अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुष तनुमाश्रितम्।  
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥<sup>105</sup> (BG 9.11)
- समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु<sup>106</sup> (BG 9.23)

The concept of *saguna* and *nirguna* establishes the divine glory of Parabrahman, wherein he is described as possessing divine qualities while simultaneously being beyond the influence of māyic traits. This comprehension offers a profound perspective on the nature of Parabrahman and underscores the coherent teachings present in the *śruti* and *smṛti prasthānas*.

### 3.5.2 Vyatireka or Sākāra

In this second subsection, we delve into the aspect of Parabrahman's divine form, distinct from any mundane form. This subsection sets the stage for a deeper understanding of Parabrahman's divine form. Unlike ordinary beings who rely on physical senses and faculties, Parabrahman transcends such limitations. His divine form is beyond the mundane realm, characterized by the absence of physical constraints, yet endowed with unlimited divine attributes and capabilities. The Prasthānatrayī illuminate the divine glory of Parabrahman, presenting a comprehensive understanding of his omnipotence, transcendence, and divine attributes. The Brahmasūtras shed light on this matter, particularly in the opening of the second chapter, where Vyāsa

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<sup>103</sup> *tribhīrguṇamāyāirbhāvāirebhiḥ sarvamidaṃ jagat|  
mohitaṃ nā'bhijānāti māmēbhyaḥ paramavyayam ||*

<sup>104</sup> *na ca māṃ tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhananjaya |  
udāsīnavadāsīnamasaktaṃ teṣu karmasu ||*

<sup>105</sup> *avajānanti māṃ mūḍhā mānuṣa tanumāśritam|  
paraṃ bhāvamajānanto mama bhūtamahēśvaram ||*

<sup>106</sup> *samo 'haṃ sarvabhūteṣu*

emphasizes the role of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the efficient cause of all creation. He lays the foundation of the topic of this subsection by asserting that an efficient cause requires the possession of senses, faculties, and organs to carry out its work. He says:

- सर्वोपेता च तद्दर्शनात्<sup>107</sup> (BS 2.1.31)

Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) indeed has divine senses, faculties, and organs; thus, both entities have a definite human-shaped form. Let us look into the Upaniṣads for this matter.

- मनोमयः प्राणशरीरो भारूपः सत्यसङ्कल्प आकाशात्मा सर्वकर्मा सर्वकामः  
सर्वगन्धः सर्वरसः<sup>108</sup> (CU 3.14.2)
- मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता<sup>109</sup> (MU 2.2.7)
- य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषो दृश्यते हिरण्यश्मश्रुर्हिरण्यकेश आप्रणखात् सर्व  
एव सुवर्णः । तस्य यथा कप्यासं पुण्डरीकमेवमक्षिणी ...<sup>110</sup> (CU 1.6.6-7)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explains that Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) is not devoid of a form. He is the efficient cause of all Creation while being in human-shaped form with divine hands and feet, and so on. The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam reads: अतो न कथमपि निराकृतितया ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मणोर्जगत्कारणत्वमपि तु साकृतिकतयैव, साकृतिकत्वेऽपि दिव्यकरचरणादिमत्त्वलक्षणसाकृतित्वेन तत्रापि मानुषाकृतित्वेनैवेति संकलितोऽर्थः ॥<sup>111</sup>

On the same note, sometimes the Upaniṣads have explored the form of Parabrahman as small, like the size of a human thumb. The Brahmasūtras raises an argument: who is

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<sup>107</sup> *sarvopetā ca taddarśanāt*

<sup>108</sup> *manomāyāḥ prāṇaśarīro bhārūpaḥ satyasaṅkalpa ākāśātmā sarvakarmā sarvakāmaḥ sarvagandhaḥ sarvarasa*

<sup>109</sup> *manomāyāḥ prāṇaśarīranetāḥ*

<sup>110</sup> *ya eṣo 'ntarāditye hiraṇmāyāḥ puruṣo dṛśyate hiraṇyaśmaśrurhiraṇyakeśa āpranakhāt sarva eva suvarṇaḥ | tasya yathā kapyāsam puṇḍarīkamevamakṣiṇī ...*

<sup>111</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.1.31, p. 181; *ato na kathamapi nirākṛtitayā brahmaparabrahmaṇorjagatkāraṇatvamapi tu sākṛtikatayaiva, sākṛtikatve 'pi divyakaracaraṇādimmattvalakṣaṇasākṛtitvena tatrāpi mānuṣākṛtitvenaiveti saṅkalito 'rthaḥ ||*

that thumb-sized entity – is it Parabrahman or the jīva? Vyāsa answers this question by saying:

- शब्दादेव प्रमितः<sup>112</sup> (BS 1.3.24)

The word itself reveals the form that is measured as the size of a human thumb. Several mantras from the Kaṭha Upaniṣad collectively show that the thumb-sized person is indeed Parabrahman, and ultimately, Parabrahman has a form; he is not formless. The mantras are as follows:

- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।<sup>113</sup> (KU 4.12)
- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।<sup>114</sup> (KU 4.13)
- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रपुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।<sup>115</sup> (KU 6.17)

In the analysis of Kaṭha Upaniṣad 4.12-13, it is crucial to consider the mantras in their entirety to arrive at the correct interpretation. While a partial analysis may lead one to conclude that the thumb-sized person refers to a jīva, a comprehensive understanding of these mantras reveals that, in fact, this reference is only to Parabrahman. When we examine these mantras holistically, we recognize that the thumb-sized person represents the divine presence of Parabrahman within each individual. This interpretation aligns with the broader teachings of the Upaniṣads and the concept of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Parabrahman. The mantras speak of Parabrahman as the ruler, the controller, and the support of all beings.

- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।  
ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य न ततो विजुगुप्सते । एतद् वै तत् ॥<sup>116</sup> (KU 4.12)

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<sup>112</sup> śabdādeva pramitah

<sup>113</sup> aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati |

<sup>114</sup> aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakah |

<sup>115</sup> aṅguṣṭhamātrapuruṣo 'ntarātmā sadā janānām hṛdaye saṁniviṣṭah |

<sup>116</sup> aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati |

īśāno bhūtabhavyasya na tato vijugupsate | etad vai tat ||

- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।  
ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य स एवाद्य स उ श्वः । एतद् वै तत् ॥<sup>117</sup> (KU 4.13)

The words “*īśāno bhūtabhavyasya*” (appearing in both the mantras) indicate the mastership of Parabrahman over all time – past and future. This eradicates the argument that the mantras could mention jīvas (or īśvaras, in this case). They are not equipped with such great power to control both the past and future. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami writes in his Kaṭha Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam: ईशानत्वं चेदं मन्त्रस्यास्य जीवादिविषयत्वं निराकरोति<sup>118</sup>.

Moreover, the word “*puruṣa*” is used for Parabrahman on multiple occasions throughout almost all of the Upaniṣads. A whole adhikaraṇa is dedicated in the Brahmasūtras to explore the *puruṣavidyā* - the *vidyā* (wisdom/knowledge) of *puruṣa* (here, Parabrahman). The first sūtra of this group, entitled Puruṣavidyā adhikaraṇa, reads: पुरुषविद्यायामिव चेतरेषामनाम्नानात्<sup>119</sup> (BS 3.3.23).

In this particular case, the sūtra speaks of the mantras from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.

- यत्राऽमृतः स पुरुषः<sup>120</sup> (MU 1.2.11)
- येनाऽक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम्<sup>121</sup> (MU 1.2.13)
- दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः<sup>122</sup> (MU 2.1.2)
- पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।  
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सौम्य ॥<sup>123</sup> (MU 2.1.10)

<sup>117</sup> *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakah |*

*īśāno bhūtabhavyasya sa evādya sa u śvaḥ | etad vai tat||*

<sup>118</sup> Kaṭha Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.12-13, p. 145; *īśānatvaṃ cedam mantrasyāsyā jīvādiviṣayatvaṃ nirākaroti*

<sup>119</sup> *puruṣavidyāyāmiva cetareṣāmanāmnānāt*

<sup>120</sup> *yatrā'mṛtaḥ sa puruṣaḥ*

<sup>121</sup> *yenā'kṣaraṃ puruṣaṃ veda satyaṃ provāca tāṃ tattvato brahmavidyām*

<sup>122</sup> *divyo hyamūrta: puruṣaḥ*

<sup>123</sup> *puruṣa evedaṃ viśvaṃ karma tapo brahma parāmṛtam| etadyo veda nihitaṃ guhāyām so'vidyāgranthiṃ vikiratīha saumya ||*

- समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः<sup>124</sup> (MU 3.1.2)
- यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।  
तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ॥<sup>125</sup> (MU 3.1.3)
- उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते<sup>126</sup> (MU 3.2.1)
- तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद् विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम्<sup>127</sup> (MU 3.2.8)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami concludes this discussion with an affirmation that this *puruṣavidyā* is defined by the *paravidyā* of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, and the *puruṣa* is indeed Parabrahman. The words are as follows: एवं यथाऽऽथर्वणे पुरुषविद्यायामक्षरब्रह्मरूपत्वसंस्कृतस्यैव परमात्मोपासनस्य मोक्षहेतुत्वेनाम्नानं तत इतरेषां साधनानां न, तथा सर्वत्राऽपि ब्रह्मविद्यायां तादृशोपासनस्यैव मोक्षहेतुत्वेनाऽम्नानात्<sup>128</sup>. Moreover, no other endeavor or knowledge is given such importance as the knowledge of Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) – or Brahmadevyā. Other knowledge is not potent enough to bring the ultimate fruit and bliss.

Moreover, Parabrahman has a form with ultimate and infinite luminosity. This lustrous form of Parabrahman is discussed in the Brahmasūtras in the Jyotiścaraṇādhikaraṇa (BS 1.1.25-28). The first sūtra of this adhikaraṇa reads:

- ज्योतिश्चरणाभिधानात्<sup>129</sup> (BS 1.1.25)

Here, the word *jyoti* is used for Parabrahman, as the Chāndogya Upaniṣad mantra that serves as the subject of this discussion would allow us to appreciate.

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<sup>124</sup> *samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagnaḥ*

<sup>125</sup> *yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukmavarṇaṃ kartāramīśaṃ puruṣaṃ brahmayonim | tadā vidvān puṇyapāpe vidhūya nirañjanaḥ paramaṃ sāmyamupaiti*

<sup>126</sup> *upāsate puruṣaṃ ye hyakāmāste*

<sup>127</sup> *tathā vidvān nāmarūpād vimuktaḥ parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam*

<sup>128</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.3.23, p. 329; *evaṃ yathā 'tharvaṇe puruṣavidyāyāmakṣarabrahmarūpatvasaṃskṛtasyaiva paramātmopāsanasya mokṣahetutvenāmnānaṃ tata itareṣāṃ sādhanānāṃ na, tathā sarvatrā 'pi brahmadevyāyām tādrśopāsanasyaiva mokṣahetutvenā 'mnānāt*

<sup>129</sup> *jyotiścaraṇābhidhānāt*

- अथ यदतः परो दिवो ज्योतिर्दीप्यते विश्वतः पृष्ठेषु सर्वतः पृष्ठेष्वनुत्तमेषूत्तमेषु लोकेष्विदं वाव तद्यदिदमस्मिन्नन्तः पुरुषे ज्योतिः।<sup>130</sup> (CU 3.13.7)

To end this discussion of Parabrahman's form, and thus, leading to find a consistent idea about it from the Prasthānatrayī, we explore a mantra (CU 1.6.6-7) mentioned above and explore it through the Antastaddharmādhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. The mantra at issue is provided below.

- य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषो दृश्यते हिरण्यश्मश्रुर्हिरण्यकेश आप्रणखात् सर्व एव सुवर्णः । तस्य यथा कप्यासं पुण्डरीकमेवमक्षिणी ...।<sup>131</sup> (CU 1.6.6-7)

The sūtra reads:

- अन्तस्तद्धर्मोपदेशात्<sup>132</sup> (BS 1.1.21)

The profound teachings of the śrutis disclose the sublime attributes of Parabrahman, an elegant example of which is found within the Chāndogya Upaniṣad through a reference to the Sun: “eṣo 'ntarāditye hiraṇmāyāḥ puruṣo.” This particular mantra gracefully encapsulates the essence of Parabrahman, and no other entity can lay claim to the distinctive qualities enshrined within it.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami deftly navigates the interpretation of this enlightening mantra, utilizing it as a gateway to address other scriptural verses that may superficially allude to the formlessness of Parabrahman. Various mantras can be quoted in this regard, such as:

- अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं तथाऽरसन्नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।  
अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात्प्रमुच्यते ॥<sup>133</sup> (KU 3.15)

<sup>130</sup> *atha yadataḥ paro divo jyotirdīpyate viśvataḥ pṛṣṭheṣu sarvataḥ pṛṣṭheṣvanuttameṣūttameṣu lokeṣvidam vāva tadyadidamasminnantah puruṣe jyotiḥ |*

<sup>131</sup> *ya eṣo 'ntarāditye hiraṇmāyāḥ puruṣo dṛśyate hiraṇyaśmaśrurhiranyakeśa āpranakhāt sarva eva suvarṇaḥ | tasya yathā kapyāsam puṇḍarīkamevamakṣiṇī ...|*

<sup>132</sup> *antastaddharmopadeśāt*

<sup>133</sup> *aśabdamaśparśamarūpamavyayaṃ tathā 'rasannityamagandhavacca yat |  
anādyanantaṃ mahataḥ paraṃ dhruvaṃ nicāyya tanmrtyumukhātpromucyate ||*

- अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः ।  
स वेत्ति वेद्यं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता तमाहुरग्र्यं पुरुषं महान्तम् ॥<sup>134</sup> (SU 3.19)
- अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।<sup>135</sup> (KU 2.22)

In his profound exposition, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides a nuanced explanation for these verses. He elucidates that these verses convey that Parabrahman transcends the limitations of a māyic form that may comprise mundane limbs, organs, and body. However, it does not negate the possibility of Parabrahman possessing a divine form—a form imbued with divine attributes, limbs, organs, and a resplendent body. This distinction is crucial to recognize, for it allows us to comprehend the heartfelt prayers of the Īsā Upaniṣad, where devotees yearn to behold the most exquisite, divine, benevolent, and blissful form of Parabrahman.

- यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि ...<sup>136</sup> (IU 16)

In his enlightening discourse, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami further reveals the profundity of the form of Parabrahman as depicted in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads unveil the resplendent beauty of Parabrahman's form and emphasize its ontological distinction from all other forms in the realm of māyā. It is emphasized that Parabrahman cannot be confined or defined by any material form, as he transcends all limitations. This divine form is not haphazard or arbitrary; it bears a striking resemblance to the human form, complete with limbs and organs akin to our own. Parabrahman radiates a captivating aura, exhibiting a profound and luminous complexion. He reigns supreme over the divine abode of Akṣaradhāman, and in a remarkable manifestation, he graced our earthly realm as Parabrahman Swaminarayan (1781-1830).

Through these profound insights, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides a profound contemplation of the divine nature of Parabrahman, illuminating the divine magnificence that transcends all material descriptions and establishes a profound connection between the eternal and the transient realms. He writes: इत्थमिह परमात्मैव

<sup>134</sup> *apāṇipādo javano grahītā paśyatyacakṣuḥ sa śṛṇotyakarnaḥ |*

*sa vetti vedyaṃ na ca tasyāsti vettā tamāhuragryaṃ puruṣaṃ mahāntam ||*

<sup>135</sup> *aśarīraṃ śarīreṣvanavastheṣvavasthitam |*

<sup>136</sup> *yatte rūpaṃ kalyāṇatamaṃ tatte paśyāmi ...*

साकृतिकत्वेन निरूपितः । साकृतिकोऽपि न येन केनचिदप्याकारेणाऽपि तु दिव्यकरचरणादिकरणयुतपुरुषाकार एवेति 'पुरुषः' इत्यनेन सिद्धान्तितम्। स च पुनर्द्विभुजचरण एव चतुर्भुजादित्वं तु द्विभुजचरणस्य सत एव तस्य निमित्तविशेषनिबन्धनं स्वैश्वर्ययोगजनितं न सर्वकालिकम् । स च सदा किशोरमूर्तिर्घनश्यामोऽपि दिव्यतेजोऽतिशयाद्धिरण्मयत्वेन वर्णितः । स चेदृग्विधोऽयं स्वदिव्याऽक्षरधाम्नि दिव्यसिंहासनरूढः सन्नेव तद्रूपमजहदेव स्वसङ्कल्पमात्रतः कृपया मानुषादिरूपेणाऽऽविर्भवतीतीहामुष्यसर्वत्रसाकृतिकः । प्रलयाऽवस्थायामपि कालाऽस्पृष्टोऽयं नैककोट्यक्षरमुक्तैरीक्ष्यमाणो विराजत इति दर्शनेन दृश्याकारसिद्धिः ।<sup>137</sup>

Some other instances from the Upaniṣads that add to this discussion are provided below.

- स एष ये चाऽमुष्मात् पराञ्चो लोकास्तेषां चेष्टे देवकामानाम्<sup>138</sup> (CU 1.6.8)
- तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम् ।  
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद् विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम् ॥<sup>139</sup> (SU 6.7)
- पराऽस्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते<sup>140</sup> (SU 6.8)

In conclusion, the section on the divine qualities of Parabrahman, as presented in the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī and elucidated by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, offers a profound exploration of Parabrahman's nature and attributes. The concept of *saguna-nirguna* highlights the dual nature of Parabrahman, encompassing both divine qualities and transcendence from māyic traits.

The discussion emphasizes that Parabrahman is *divya*, divine, and flawless, devoid of any imperfections associated with māyā. Additionally, Parabrahman is depicted as

<sup>137</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāmīnārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 1.1.21, pp. 45-46; *itthamiha paramātmaiva sākṛtikatvena nirūpitaḥ | sākṛtiko 'pi na yena kenacidapyākāreṇā 'pi tu divyakaracaranādikarāṇayutapuruṣākāra eveti 'puruṣaḥ' ityanena siddhāntitam | sa ca punardvibhujacaraṇa eva caturbhujāditiḥ tu dvibhujacaraṇasya sata eva tasya nimittaviśeṣanibandhanam svaiśvarya-yogajanitam na sarvakālikam | sa ca sadā kiśoramūrtirghanaśyāmo 'pi divyatejo 'tiśayāddhiraṇmāyātvena varṇitaḥ | sa cedṛgvidho 'yaṁ svadivyā 'kṣaradhāmnī divyasimhāsanarūḍhaḥ sanneva tadrūpamajahadeva svasaṅkalpamātrataḥ kṛpāyā mānuṣādirūpeṇā "virbhavatīīhāmuṣyasarvatrasākṛtikaḥ | pralayā 'vasthāyāmapī kālā 'sprṣṭosyaṁ naikakoṭyakṣaramuktairīkṣyamāno virājata iti darśanena drśyākārasiddhiḥ |*

<sup>138</sup> *sa eṣa ye cā 'muṣmāt parāñco lokāsteṣāṁ ceṣṭe devakāmānām*

<sup>139</sup> *tamīśvarāṇām paramam maheśvaram taṁ devatānām paramam ca daivatam | patim patīnām paramam parastād vidāma devaṁ bhuvaneśamīdyam ||*

<sup>140</sup> *parā śya śaktirvividhaiva śrūyate*

possessing a divine form beyond material existence's limitations. This divine human-like form radiates divine beauty and effulgence, transcending the mundane realm. We now explore the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman.

### 3.5.3 Anvaya and Antaryāmin

In this section, we delve into the exploration of a significant sūtra from the Brahmasūtras, specifically the Antaryāmi adhikaraṇa. This adhikaraṇa addresses the topic of *antaryāmin*, the inner controller, and examines the nature and characteristics of Parabrahman. The sūtra in question, अन्तर्याम्यधिदैवादिषु तद्धर्मव्यपदेशात्<sup>141</sup> (BS 1.2.27), directs our attention to a set of mantras from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad that highlight the greatness and transcendence of Parabrahman over all other entities.

Within the dialogue between Ṛṣi Yājñavalkya and King Janaka, these mantras describe Parabrahman as the inner controller present within every element, sense, and entity. The first mantra of the series of over a score of mantras emphasizes that Parabrahman resides in and simultaneously transcends all beings. It portrays Parabrahman as the immortal master who dwells within each being and yet remains unknown to it. This mantra serves as a profound testament to the supreme nature of Parabrahman, who governs and sustains all existence. The mantra reads:

- यः पृथिव्यां तिष्ठन्पृथिव्या अन्तरो यं पृथिवी न वेद यस्य पृथिवी शरीरं यः  
पृथिवीमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः ॥<sup>142</sup> (BU 3.7.3)

The sūtra, BS 1.2.27, succinctly conveys that the attribute of being *antaryāmin*, the inner controller, belongs to Parabrahman. The source of this sūtra lies in a mantra from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, where Vyāsa draws the term *antaryāmin* from. Within this context, we unravel the profound implications of Parabrahman's role as the master of all jīvas (individual souls) and īśvaras (empowered beings).

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<sup>141</sup> *antaryāmyadhidaivādiṣu taddharmavyapadeśāt*

<sup>142</sup> *yaḥ pṛthivyāṃ tiṣṭhanpṛthivyā antaro yaṃ pṛthivī na veda yasya pṛthivī śarīraṃ yaḥ pṛthivīmantaro yamāyātyeṣa ta ātmā'ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ ||*

As we delve deeper into the subject matter, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami sheds light on this topic using the famous verse from the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, emphasizing the significance of Parabrahman as the *antaryāmin*.

- अन्तः प्रविष्टः शास्ता जनानां सर्वात्मा<sup>143</sup> (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 11.20)

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mantra catalyzes a deeper exploration of Parabrahman’s distinctiveness and pervasiveness, respectively, from and in all other entities. This notion is further reinforced by a Brahmasūtra that highlights the unique nature of Parabrahman with respect to the rest of existence.

- भेदव्यपदेशाच्चान्यः<sup>144</sup> (BS 1.1.22)

Moreover, in the context of both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, the Sarvatra adhikaraṇa discusses the pervasive nature of these two entities as being “everywhere,” literally *sarvatra*. In his analysis, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami focuses on a select number of references to support his argument regarding the contemplation of the form of Parabrahman as *anvaya* and *antaryāmin*. However, it is essential to note that numerous other references within the scriptures can also lead to a consistent understanding of Parabrahman’s form in this context.

- स एवाऽधस्तात् स उपरिष्ठात्स पश्चात्स पुरस्तात्स दक्षिणतः स उत्तरतः<sup>145</sup> (CU 7.25.1)
- एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा<sup>146</sup> (SU 6.11)

One of the instances from the Upaniṣads that can be employed for both the entities being *anvaya* and pervasive is from the Īśā Upaniṣad. The mantra itself reads:

- ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्<sup>147</sup> (IU 1)

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<sup>143</sup> *antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śāstā janānāṃ sarvātmā*

<sup>144</sup> *bhedavyapadeśāccānyaḥ*

<sup>145</sup> *sa evā dhastāt sa upariṣṭātsa paścātsa purastātsa dakṣiṇataḥ sa uttarataḥ*

<sup>146</sup> *eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā*

<sup>147</sup> *īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat |*

In Chapter 15 of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, which is entitled Puruṣottamayoga, Kṛṣṇa speaks about the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman, which highlights its immanent presence within the material world. Just before introducing the famous set of three *ślokas* 15.16-18, Kṛṣṇa speaks about the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman. The verse reads:

- सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।  
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥<sup>148</sup> (BG 15.15)

Another instance of Parabrahman residing in our hearts in his *anvaya* form appears in the last chapter. There Kṛṣṇa says that Parabrahman is the lord of all beings. He dwells in the hearts of all beings, and Parabrahman controls and employs *māyā* to fulfill the cycles of birth and death. Furthermore, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami clarifies that Parabrahman resides within our hearts as the *antaryāmin*, the inner controller. The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam states that Parabrahman is established within us with the power of *antaryāmin*, controlling and regulating everything from within – सन्निविष्टः तदन्तर्यामिशक्त्या तन्नियमयंस्तदन्तः प्रविष्टः।<sup>149</sup>. Another reference to the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman is found in the final chapter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that Parabrahman is the supreme master of all beings. He resides in their hearts, guiding them through their physical existence while employing *māyā* to facilitate the cycles of birth and death. The verse reads:

- ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।  
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥<sup>150</sup> (BG 18.61)

Moreover, both these Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā *ślokas* draw from the Kaṭha Upaniṣad mantras mentioned above speaking of Parabrahman dwelling in our hearts being size of human thumb.

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<sup>148</sup> *sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi saṅniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanam ca |  
vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo vedāntakṛdvedavideva cāham ||*

<sup>149</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 15.15; *sanniviṣṭaḥ tadantaryāmiśaktyā  
tanniyamayamstadantaḥ praviṣṭaḥ |*

<sup>150</sup> *īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hṛddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati |  
bhrāmāyānsarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā ||*

- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति।<sup>151</sup> (KU 4.12)
- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः।<sup>152</sup> (KU 4.13)
- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रपुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः।<sup>153</sup> (KU 6.17)

In conclusion, the discussion on the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman emphasizes the inherent nature of Parabrahman as dwelling within the hearts of all beings as the *antaryāmin*, the inner controller. Various scriptures, including the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and the Bhagavad-Gītā, support this understanding. These references affirm the presence of Parabrahman as the divine force that governs and guides all aspects of existence. By recognizing the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman, we deepen our understanding of the profound connection between the eternal divine essence and the individual beings it pervades, all the while possessing a divine human-shaped form.

### 3.6 Parabrahman: Imperceivable Yet Attainable

Indeed, the nature of Parabrahman poses a unique paradox. On the one hand, Parabrahman, as the highest and most divine entity, surpasses the limitations of our māyic senses and inner faculties. Our limited perception and understanding cannot fully grasp Parabrahman's essence, a testament to the transcendence and incomprehensibility of Parabrahman's nature.

However, this imperceptibility does not imply that Parabrahman is entirely beyond our reach. While our ordinary faculties may fall short, the path to attaining Parabrahman exists through different means. The teachings of the Brahmasvarūpa Guru and understanding scriptures through his words guide how one can transcend the limitations of the senses and faculties to establish a connection with Parabrahman. While Parabrahman remains imperceivable through conventional means, the path of inner transformation through the association of Akṣarabrahman allows for a direct and profound connection with the ultimate reality.

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<sup>151</sup> *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati* |

<sup>152</sup> *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakah* |

<sup>153</sup> *aṅguṣṭhamātrapuruṣo 'ntarātmā sadā janānāṃ hṛdaye saṃniviṣṭaḥ* |

In the subsequent discussion, we will delve deeper into the concepts of Parabrahman's imperceptibility and attainability, exploring the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī. In this matter, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad explains:

- एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोत्मा न प्रकाशते<sup>154</sup> (KU 3.12)

While Parabrahman dwells within every living being, encompassing all jīvas and īśvaras, it remains hidden and does not manifest openly. It exists in a state of imperceptibility, eluding easy apprehension. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad adds:

- तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम्<sup>155</sup> (KU 2.12)
- न सन्दृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम्<sup>156</sup> (KU 6.9)
- नैव वाचा न मनसा प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा<sup>157</sup> (KU 6.12)

The Brahmasūtra from the same Ubhayalingādhikaraṇa discussed earlier reads: तदव्यक्तमाह हि<sup>158</sup> (BS 3.2.22) – Parabrahman is indeed imperceivable (through mediums formed of māyā). The Gītā too makes contributions to this discussion. Two of those instances are as below:

- नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः<sup>159</sup> (BG 7.25)
- मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना<sup>160</sup> (BG 9.4)

However, the discussion does not end with the notion of Parabrahman being imperceivable. Our journey would be incomplete without any means to perceive or attain Parabrahman. Parabrahman is accessible to those who are bestowed with divine grace. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad, which previously emphasized the transcendence of Parabrahman beyond our limited senses and faculties, also affirms:

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<sup>154</sup> *eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍhotmā na prakāśate*

<sup>155</sup> *taṃ durdarśaṃ gūḍhamanupraviṣṭaṃ guhāhitaṃ gahvareṣṭhaṃ purāṇam |*

<sup>156</sup> *na sandr̥ṣe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam*

<sup>157</sup> *naiva vācā na manasā prāptuṃ śakyo na cakṣuṣā*

<sup>158</sup> *tadavyaktamāha hi*

<sup>159</sup> *nāhaṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ*

<sup>160</sup> *mayā tatamidaṃ sarvaṃ jagadavyaktamūrtinā*

- नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।  
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥<sup>161</sup> (KU 2.23)

The Upaniṣad conveys that Parabrahman cannot be realized through mere intellectual knowledge, scholarly pursuits, or the accumulation of information. It is not a matter of external means or intellectual prowess. Instead, the attainment of Parabrahman is dependent on the divine grace of Parabrahman himself. Only those whom Parabrahman chooses can truly attain him and perceive his divine form. This highlights the importance of a heartfelt connection with Parabrahman (through the means of Akṣarabrahman Guru, as Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami explains), transcending the limitations of mere intellectual understanding or external methods of seeking.

The above mantra also serves as one of the significant references for the following sūtra:

- अपि च संराधने प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्याम् ॥<sup>162</sup> (BS 3.2.23)

Parabrahman is experienced by *saṁrādhanam*, as the *śruti* (*pratyakṣa*) and *smṛti* (*anumāna*) inform us. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami presents a beautiful interpretation of *saṁrādhanam* in his treatise. It refers to *bhakti*, or devotion, that is offered by purity enhanced by realizing one's self to be Akṣarabrahman. The exact words read: संराधनं स्वात्मब्रह्मरूपत्वसंस्कृता भक्तिः<sup>163</sup>. Some of the mantras and verses from the *śruti* and *smṛti prasthānas*, as the sūtra itself mentions, could be as follows:

- ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः<sup>164</sup> (MU 3.1.8)
- ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन्<sup>165</sup> (SU 1.3)

<sup>161</sup> *nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena |  
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyastasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām ||*

<sup>162</sup> *api ca saṁrādhanam pratyakṣānumānābhyām ||*

<sup>163</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.2.23, p. 300; *saṁrādhanam  
svātmabrahmarūpatvasaṁskṛtā bhaktiḥ*

<sup>164</sup> *jñānaprasādena viśuddhasattvastatastu taṁ paśyate niṣkalaṁ dhyāyamānaḥ*

<sup>165</sup> *te dhyānayogānugatā apaśyan*

- नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।  
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥<sup>166</sup> (BG 11.53)
- भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।  
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥<sup>167</sup> (BG 11.54)
- ध्यानेनाऽऽत्मनि पश्यन्ति<sup>168</sup> (BG 13.24)
- मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।  
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥<sup>169</sup> (BG 9.34)

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad provides a clear answer to the question of how such devotion can be acquired. According to the mantra, those who have unwavering devotion (*bhakti*) towards Parabrahman and the Guru representing Akṣarabrahman are blessed with the illumination of all the profound teachings and mysteries of the Upaniṣads. By cultivating this ultimate devotion and surrendering to the Guru, one gains the ability to explore, comprehend, and attain the divine knowledge that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Moreover, such profound devotion becomes the gateway to liberation (*mukti*), offering the ultimate blessing of spiritual liberation and constant experience of the infinite bliss of Parabrahman. While emphasizing the significance of a sincere and devoted relationship with the Akṣarabrahman Guru in the path of enlightenment and *mukti*, the Upaniṣad sings:

- यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।  
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥<sup>170</sup> (SU 6.23)

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<sup>166</sup> *nāhaṃ vedairna tapasā na dānena na cejyayā |*

*śakya evaṃvidho draṣṭuṃ dr̥ṣṭavānasi māṃ yathā ||*

<sup>167</sup> *bhaktiyā tvananyayā śakya ahamevaṃvidho 'rjuna |*

*jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṃ ca parantapa ||*

<sup>168</sup> *dhyānenā 'tmani paśyanti*

<sup>169</sup> *manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru |*

*māmevaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānaṃ matparāyaṇaḥ ||*

<sup>170</sup> *yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau|*

*tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ||*

In conclusion, Parabrahman, while remaining imperceivable to our limited senses and faculties, is indeed attainable for those chosen and blessed by Parabrahman. It is not through mere intellectual understanding or external information that one can attain Parabrahman but through unwavering devotion and surrender to the two divinities. The journey to attain Parabrahman may be beyond the realm of our senses, but it is made accessible through the path of devotion, surrender, and divine grace.

### 3.7 Pratyakṣa Parabrahman

Parabrahman manifests for all seekers of mukti. The *vyatireka* form of Parabrahman was as Bhagavān Swaminarayan (1781-1830) and the continued presence is through the lineage of Akṣarabrahman Gurus. These are also *anvaya* forms of Parabrahman with no difference in bliss for those who encounter and associate with these forms. This legacy of Akṣarabrahman Gurus is everlasting. For the population of this world, it was in the form of Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, and today, Mahant Swami Maharaj.

The Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā notes that multiple uses of the first case adjectives in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā denote the continued presence of Parabrahman. इदमेव गीतायामपि पुनः 'वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यः' (गी. १५/१५), 'मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।' (गी. ७/७), 'सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः। इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु । मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥ सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज । अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥' (गी.१८/६४-६६) इत्यादिषु शताधिकेषु श्लोकेषु - अहम्, माम्, मया, मे, मत्तः, मम, मयि, मन्मना इत्यादिभिरस्मत्पदप्रयोगैर्दृढायितम् ।<sup>171</sup>.

<sup>171</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 3.2.17.5.3, pp. 135-6; *idameva gītāyāmapī punaḥ vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedya: (BG 15.15), mattaḥ parataraṃ nānyatkiñcidasti dhanañjaya (BG 7.7), sarvaguhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ| iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍhamiti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam|| manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru | māmevaiśyasi satyaṃ pratijāne priyo 'si me|| sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja | ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ|| (BG 18.64-66) ityādiṣu śatādihikeṣu ślokeṣu - aham, mām, mayā, me, mattaḥ, mama, mayi, manmanā ityādibhirasmatpadaprayogairdṛḍhāyitam|*

Expanding on this same principle, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami writes, with focus on the grammatical nature of this interpretation and commentary, in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मप्रत्यक्षतामनुभावयिष्यन्तीति भावः । बहुत्वं पूजार्थं, स्वरूपतोऽभिन्नस्यापि ब्रह्माक्षरस्य सम्प्रदायपरम्परा- रक्षकतया गुरुरूपेण नरविग्रहस्वीकाराद् बाह्याकारभेददर्शनात् तत्परम्पराभिप्रायेण च वाच्यम् । लृटा विशेषार्थद्योतनम् । को विशेषः । यद्यपीदानीन्तु साक्षादहमेव तव गुरूपदेष्टृभूतः किन्तु भविष्यति काले मन्नरनाट्यलीलासमाप्त्यनन्तरमपि ममात्मभूतान् मत्परमप्रीतिमतो मन्निकटतमान् साक्षादक्षरब्रह्मस्वरूपज्ञानिगुरून् द्वारीकृत्य तत्कार्यं करिष्ये इति । एवमनेन ह्यक्षरब्रह्मणि परब्रह्मणः शाश्वतं प्राकट्यमुद्बोधयता भवष्यित्प्रयोगेण ब्रह्मविद्यासम्पत्तये परब्रह्मप्रत्यक्षताऽनुभावकस्य प्रकटनारायणस्वरूपभूतस्य ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरोरनिवार्यता सिद्धान्तिता । इत्थमिह ‘तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाऽभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्म निष्ठम्’ (मु. १/२/१२), ‘यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ’ (श्वे. ६/२३) इत्याद्युक्तोऽर्थ उपबृंहितः ॥<sup>172</sup>.

More about this section can be explored from “Akṣarabrahman as Brahmasvarūpa Guru” section.

### 3.8 Closing

In conclusion, this study has taken us on a profound journey through the scriptures, unveiling the divine nature and form of Parabrahman. We have explored the various aspects of, including but not limited to, Parabrahman’s sovereignty, power, and involvement in the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. The

<sup>172</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.34, p. 110;

*brahmaparabrahmapratyakṣatāmanubhāvayīṣyanīti bhāvah| bahutvaṃ pūjārtham, svarūpato 'bhinnasyāpi brahmākṣarasya sampradāyaparamparā- rakṣakatayā gururūpeṇa naraviagrahasvīkārad bāhyākārabhedadarśanāt tatparamparābhīprāyeṇa ca vācyam| lṛṭā viśeṣārthadyotanam | ko viśeṣah| yadyapīdānīntu sāksādahameva tava gurūpadeṣṭṛbhūtaḥ kintu bhaviṣyati kāle mannanāṭyālīlāsamāptyanantaramapi mamātmabhūtān matparamaprītimato mannikatamān sāksādakṣarabrahmasvarūpajñānīgurūn dvārīkr̥tya tatkāryaṃ kariṣya iti| evamanena hyākṣarabrahmaṇi parabrahmaṇaḥ śāśvataṃ prākāṭyamudbodhayatā bhavaṣyitprayogeṇa brahmavidyāsampattaye parabrahmapratyakṣatā 'nubhāvakasya prakāṭanārāyaṇasvarūpabhūtasya brahmasvarūpaguroranivāryatā siddhāntitā| ithamiha tadvijñānārtham sa gurumevā 'bhigacchetsamitpāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahma niṣṭham (MU 1.2.12), yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau (SU 6.23) ityādyukto 'rtha upabr̥mhitah ||*

Brahmasūtras, Upaniṣads, and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā have served as our guiding lights, offering deep insights into the divine essence.

The chapter begins with the profound words of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s letter titled “Siddhāntasamāmnāya.” Then, it introduces us to Parabrahman, the highest supreme reality and the sole master of Akṣaradhāman. Throughout the chapter, we have delved into the divine nature and form of Parabrahman, as well as his continued legacy. Parabrahman, being all-powerful and sovereign, holds control over all bound and liberated jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, and Akṣarabrahman. The first subsection of this section establishes Parabrahman as the independent and unequalled master of jīvas and īśvaras. We further explore Parabrahman’s role as the master of māyā, as it is through his influence that māyā fulfills its functions in both the macrocosm and microcosm.

While Akṣarabrahman serves as the support and essence of all jīvas and īśvaras, Parabrahman surpasses even Akṣarabrahman. Parabrahman is the sovereign of Akṣaradhāman, as indicated in the Kāṭha *vallī* and chapters 8 and 15 of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. Akṣaradhāman surpasses all other abodes and realms of deities, as elucidated by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami in his commentary on Bhagavad Gītā 8.21. Parabrahman is the ultimate ruler of that supreme abode. We conclude this section by contemplating the immeasurable and incomprehensible glory of Parabrahman, who is singular, unique, and without a second. This concept aligns with the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad’s declaration, – न तत्समश्चाऽभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते<sup>173</sup> (SU 6.8) and the statement from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, – न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यः<sup>174</sup> (BG 11.43).

Furthermore, Parabrahman embodies omnipotence as the source and sustainer of all actions. The Brahmasūtras introduce us to two Brahmins, emphasizing their involvement in the creation, sustenance, and destruction of *all* existence – जन्माद्यस्य यतः<sup>175</sup> (BS 1.1.2). The Upaniṣads employ various words and adjectives to depict these characteristics of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad’s mantra,

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<sup>173</sup> *na tatsamaścā'bhyadhikaśca drśyate*

<sup>174</sup> *na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyah*

<sup>175</sup> *janmādyasya yataḥ*

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति<sup>176</sup> (TU 3.1.1), attributes all creation to Parabrahman. The first subsection highlights Parabrahman as the inseparable efficient and material cause of the universe, supported by references to the “*yonī*” in various Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. We also explore Parabrahman as the ultimate destination, encompassing everything. The Brahmasūtras and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad propose this concept, as elaborated upon in the chapter. Finally, we delve into the glory of Parabrahman as the bestower of the fruits of karma for all *jīvas* and *īśvaras*.

Parabrahman possesses both *saguṇatva* and *nirguṇatva*, which signifies his having and not having characteristics. These attributes encompass the notion that Parabrahman possesses divine virtues and form while being free eternally of all *māyic* traits or that Parabrahman has a divine form larger than the largest and smaller or subtler than the subtlest. Parabrahman is divine and flawless (*divya* and *nirdoṣa*), as described in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and the Ubhayalingādhikaraṇa. Numerous references from the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā support these claims, as highlighted in the words of Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. Parabrahman, while luminous, possesses a divine form, as mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and argued in the Brahmasūtras. The Īśā Upaniṣad beautifully concludes this topic, stating, यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि ...<sup>177</sup> (IU 16).

Furthermore, Parabrahman manifests as the *Antaryāmin*, the inner controller. The Antaryāmi adhikaraṇa introduces the Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇa from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (BU 3.7.3-24). Through twenty-one mantras, we gain a vivid understanding of the *anvaya* form of Parabrahman. The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam quotes the verse from the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka multiple times, stating, अन्तः प्रविष्टः शास्ता जनानां सर्वात्मा<sup>178</sup> (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 11.20). As we explore various mantras from the Upaniṣads, we

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<sup>176</sup> *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | yena jātāni jīvanti | yatprayantyaḥsamsvishanti | tadvijijñāsasva | tadbrahmeti |*

<sup>177</sup> *yatte rūpaṃ kalyāṇatamaṃ tatte paśyāmi ...*

<sup>178</sup> *antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śāstā janānāṃ sarvātmā*

find continuity and consistency with verses from the *smṛti prasthāna*, exemplifying the harmony of the Prasthānatrayī.

Ultimately, this chapter delves into the profound discussion of Parabrahman's divine nature and form, offering a comprehensive understanding of his supreme sovereignty, omnipotence, and involvement in the universe's creation, sustenance, and destruction. It has been a transformative journey through the scriptures, guided by the wisdom of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj, shedding light on the eternal truth of Parabrahman's existence and his significance in our lives.

