

## Chapter 4: “jagatyām jagat” – Māyā

### Outline

- 4.1 Siddhāntasamāmnāya
- 4.2 Opening
- 4.3 Māyā – as explained in the Vacanāmṛta
- 4.4 The Process of Creation
- 4.5 The Creators: Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman
  - 4.5.1 The Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad
  - 4.5.2 The Ānandamayavidyā of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad
  - 4.5.3 “Ākāśa” of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.9.1
- 4.6 Separate or Inseparable?
- 4.7 Prakṛti as jagatkāraṇa?
- 4.8 Purpose for Creation
- 4.9 Material Creations – as explained in Vac. G. I 12
- 4.10 Three guṇas and ahaṃkāras
- 4.11 Manas (mind)
- 4.12 Buddhi (intellect)
- 4.13 Indriyas (senses)
  - 4.13.1 Are indriyas born?
  - 4.13.2 What is the count?
  - 4.13.3 Indriyas from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā
- 4.14 Prāṇa
- 4.15 Mahābhūtas
- 4.16 Closing

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## Chapter 4

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### “jagatyām jagat” – Māyā

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#### 4.1 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 Bhadresdas 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. First in this proclamation is the Sanskrit version of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s authoritative philosophical letter on the doctrines of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Next, the Sanskrit is presented in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>179</sup> authored by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami. Then, an English translation, based on the translation presented at the beginning of the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>180</sup>, follows the Sanskrit text.

- माया त्रिगुणात्मिका परिणामिनित्या जडाऽनन्तकोटिब्रह्माण्डरूपसृष्टेरुपादानं  
विविधविस्मयकारिणी च परब्रह्मणः शक्तिः । एषैव माया जीवेश्वराणाम्  
अहम्ममताहेतुत्वाद् भवति तेषामनादिसंसृतेः कारणम्। अक्षरब्रह्म परब्रह्म चाऽस्या  
मायायाः सदैवाऽत्यन्तनिर्लेपे परे तच्छरीरिणी चेति ।

“Māyā, an eternal and ever-changing entity, is formed by the three *guṇas*. It is characterized as insentient (*jaḍa*) and serves as the material cause for the creation of infinite *brahmāṇḍas*, and is Paramātman’s wondrous and mysterious power<sup>181</sup>. This very māyā is responsible for the ego and attachment experienced by both *jīvas* and

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<sup>179</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 1.6.4, pp. 10-14

<sup>180</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.

<sup>181</sup> It is an instrument, just like a sword is the ‘power’ of a soldier.

īśvaras, and it has been the cause of their births and deaths since eternity. Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are forever entirely untainted by, beyond, and the *śarīrin* of this māyā.”

## 4.2 Opening

Māyā, being a concept of great significance in various traditions, holds different interpretations. Some view it as an illusion that hinders the realization of one’s infinite nature, while others perceive it as a constantly changing force that binds all beings. Transcending māyā is considered a path to liberation, and some even define liberation as the act of crossing beyond māyā. However, the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana goes beyond this understanding and emphasizes that true liberation entails not only transcending māyā but also attaining a state of qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. This liberated state is characterized by becoming like Akṣarabrahman or *brahmarūpa*. In this chapter, we will delve into an elaborate exploration of māyā as described in the Prasthānatrayī, with insights from the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, and examine how this metaphysical concept can be consistently and coherently understood through these three texts.

To begin, we will focus on Bhagavān Swaminarayan’s interpretation of māyā in the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, specifically exploring his teachings found in the Vacanāmṛta. This endeavor will furnish us with invaluable insights into the essence of māyā and its significance in the spiritual odyssey.

## 4.3 Māyā – as explained in the Vacanāmṛta

Bhagavān Swaminarayan discusses māyā using the term “māyā” itself or “bhagavān nī māyā” - Parabrahman’s māyā - in seven of his Vacanāmṛtas. Let us explore how he elaborates on the concept:

- In the first Vacanāmṛta, G. I. 1, Bhagavān Swaminarayan describes māyā as “anything that hinders a devotee of Parabrahman from focusing or meditating on the form of Parabrahman”.

- Vac. G. I. 34 further explains this hindrance as affection. People develop affection for their partners, friends, offspring, and so on, and Bhagavān Swaminarayan identifies this affection or attachment as Parabrahman’s māyā.
- In Vac. Sarangpur 14, Bhagavān Swaminarayan presents an alternative perspective on māyā, referring to a dialogue between Sanatsujāta and Dhṛtarāṣṭra from the Udyoga-parvan of the Mahābhārata. Here, māyā is defined as laziness and infatuation, significant challenges that spiritual seekers must address on the path to liberation.
- Vac. Panchalā. 3 elucidates love as a form of māyā. Bhagavān Swaminarayan explains that this very māyā sustains the normal and orderly functioning of the world and “binds jīvas and īśvaras in the endless cycles of birth and death”.
- Vac. G. II. 36 characterizes māyā as love or affection directed towards anything other than Parabrahman (and anything associated with Parabrahman).
- In Vac. G. II. 65, Bhagavān Swaminarayan further describes māyā as the ignorance that hinders spiritual seekers from recognizing or understanding the divine and transcendental form of Parabrahman that is manifest before them. They may mistake this form for a human form, unaware of its true glory and divinity.
- Vac. G. III. 38 emphasizes that māyā’s deluding effect on unliberated beings is rooted in their strong identification with the body (I-ness or *aham*) and possessiveness towards objects related to the body (my-ness or *mamatva*).

By exploring these various aspects of māyā as explained by Bhagavān Swaminarayan, and now through various appellations, we gain a deeper understanding of its influence and significance in the spiritual journey. Māyā acts as an obstruction, manifesting in forms such as affection towards the mundane, laziness, infatuation, and ignorance that hinders one from realizing their true self.

In the Upaniṣads, māyā is characterized as “sentient” due to its ability to act like a sentient entity. It houses countless bound jīvas and īśvaras within its womb, even before and after the creation of universes. However, māyā is fundamentally insentient, serving as the cosmic raw material that requires the presence of a sentient entity to animate it in the creation of infinite universes. This dual nature of māyā gives rise to its categorization as *jada-cidātmikā* (insentient-sentient). It is famously referred to as *prakṛti*, while Parabrahman is referred to as *māyin* (the controller of māyā) in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad – माया तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।<sup>182</sup> (SU 4.10).

Māyā is characterized by its ever-changing and ever-producing nature, which is evident in our daily activities. It is composed of the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—giving it the technical name *triguṇātmikā*. As the primordial matter, māyā serves as the material cause of the infinite insentient universes, providing a platform for bound jīvas and īśvaras to progress towards liberation. It is important to note that māyā’s role as the raw material of creation is a result of the eternal intention of Parabrahman. While māyā serves as the root cause, the wondrous phenomena of creation manifest through the inspiration of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. Parabrahman, as both the material and efficient cause of creation, remains the ultimate creator, enlivening and creating from māyā.

Māyā, within the metaphysical system of Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, is an eternal entity among the five independently existing entities. It possesses the quality of surprising and overwhelming all unliberated beings, hence its name, *viśmāyākāriṇī*. Its workings, expressed through name, form, and other aspects, remain elusive even to the most perceptive scholars and philosophers. It is also known by names such as *tamas* and *andhakāra* (darkness), as it overshadows the inherent enlightened nature of jīvas and īśvaras, resulting in their bondage. Furthermore, māyā is referred to as *avidyā* due to its opposing nature to knowledge (*vidyā*). However, the most significant characteristic of māyā is its role as Parabrahman’s *śakti* (power, energy, or potency). It is crucial to note that Parabrahman is inherently omnipotent, regardless of māyā.

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<sup>182</sup> *māyā tu prakṛtiṃ vidyānmāyinaṃ tu mahēśvaram*

However, māyā is employed by Parabrahman's eternal will as the material for all creation, similar to how a sword is the power of a soldier.

This very māyā, as nescience, entangles infinite jīvas and īśvaras in countless cycles of births and deaths. The process of māyā's evolution during creation is further explored in this chapter, focusing on the consistent analysis of māyā offered by the Prasthānatrayī.

#### 4.4 The Process of Creation

Firstly, let us delve into the intricate details of the protological process of infinite universes (*jagat*) within the framework of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. This process of creation aligns with the traditional understanding found in scriptures like the Purāṇas while also drawing parallels to the metaphysics of Sāṃkhya philosophy. It is important to note that Sāṃkhya is a dualistic school of thought, and the resemblance of note here lies in its description of the evolutes of *prakṛti*.

The protological process is expounded in various Vacanāmṛtas, serving as the foundation for Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami's commentaries on texts such as the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.1.7 and Brahmasūtras 2.3.16. Following the final dissolution, māyā merges with Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, wherein all unliberated jīvas and īśvaras rest dormant within its womb. When the ultimate authority, Parabrahman, desires – with extreme compassion – to create the *jagat*, he gazes upon Akṣarabrahman intending to procreate infinite universes for mukti of infinite jīvas and īśvaras. This divine gaze charged with the wish of creation prompts Akṣarabrahman to select one of the infinite divine Akṣaramuktas, liberated jīvas, and īśvaras, to join with māyā.

It is essential to emphasize that Parabrahman does not require the support or assistance of Akṣarabrahman. Prior to their union, māyā exists in a state of absolute equilibrium, with its three *guṇas* – *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* – maintaining an equal proportion of 33.33% each. As the chosen Akṣaramukta offers its presence to māyā, the mere existence of the Akṣaramukta serves as the link between the two, causing the

equilibrium of māyā to be disrupted and giving rise to the process of creation. This union of māyā, or *prakṛti*, and Akṣaramukta, or *puruṣa*, is referred to as *prakṛti puruṣa*.

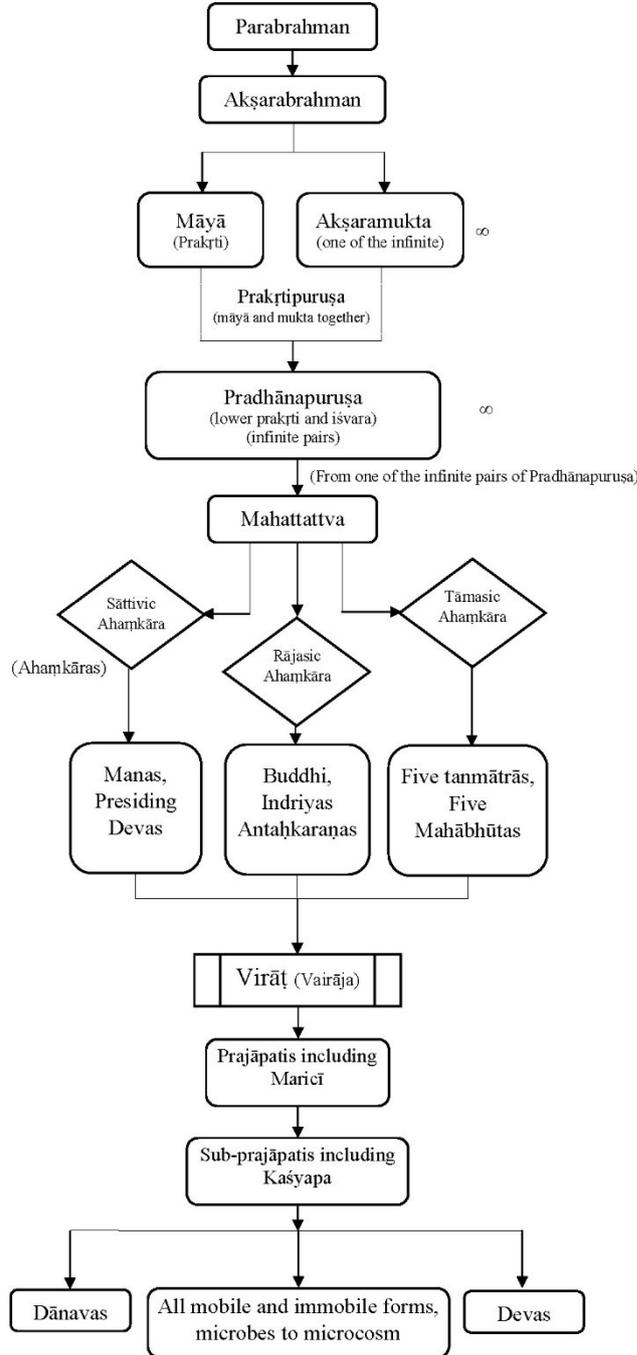


Figure 4.1: Process of Creation: Utpatti Sarga of Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana

The consequence of māyā becoming unstable is the emergence of infinite *pradhānaprakṛtis*. Each of these *pradhāna* bodies is presided over by an *īśvara*, and

*prakṛti* serves as a lower form of *mūla-māyā*. Thus, from the initial coupling of *māyā* and the Akṣaramukta, numerous *pradhānaprakṛtis* evolve, with each giving birth to a universe (*brahmāṇḍa*).

Let us explore the creation process within a single universe, as the principles remain consistent across all universes. The first entity to arise from *pradhāna prakṛti* is *mahattattva*, representing *citta*, which can be understood as the perceptive mind—one of the four *antaḥkaraṇas* (internal faculties). With the participatory will of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, *mahattattva* manifests the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—of *māyā* in the form of cosmic ego, *Ahaṁkāra*. These *guṇas* possess inherent qualities of goodness, passion, and ignorance.

The *sattvic ahaṁkāra* gives rise to *manas* (mind) and the presiding deities of the senses, which are the faculties that enable sentient beings to perceive their surroundings. The *rājasic ahaṁkāra* develops into the ten senses (*indriyas*), *buddhi* (intellect), and *prāṇas* (life-breaths). On the other hand, the *tāmasic ahaṁkāra* unfolds into the five *mahābhūtas* (gross elements) and their corresponding *tanmātrās* (subtle base elements). The intricate connections and relationships among these entities will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

These various entities come together to form the body of Virāt, with Vairāja serving as the presiding *īśvara* that enters this body following the wishful instigation of Parabrahman. The gross body of Virāt represents the entire universe itself. From the navel, heart, and forehead of Virāt, the manifestations of the renowned Hindu trinity of deities—take place. Inspired to create and protect the forthcoming creation, Brahmā engenders Marīci and other *prajāpatīs*, who, in turn, give rise to additional *prajāpatīs* such as Kaśyapa and others. These *prajāpatīs* play a vital role in creating and sustaining all life forms, encompassing the animal and plant kingdoms and single-celled microbes. This process repeats in every universe. It is essential to recognize that the participation and divine inspiration of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman permeate the entire creation process, as it is solely through their wish that the process begins and reaches its culmination.

#### 4.5 The Creators: Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman

In this section, I will delve into the specific details regarding the entities and principles elaborated upon in the Prasthānatrayī. A crucial aspect to explore is the roles played by Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman in the process of creation. Māyā serves as the fundamental substance from which all creation arises. However, due to its inherent insentience, māyā cannot actively participate in creation without the inspiration provided by these two divine entities.

Furthermore, it is Parabrahman who initiates the desire for the manifestation of creation. Therefore, both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman serve as *nimitta kāraṇa* (efficient cause) and *upādāna kāraṇa* (material cause) for the creation to come into being. They are inseparable in their roles as described by the term “*abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa*” in the tradition. This signifies their indispensable involvement in the entire process of creation.

It is through the combined agency of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman that the universe is brought into existence. Parabrahman’s intention and, in turn, Akṣarabrahman’s selection of the divine Akṣaramuktas to unite with māyā are essential steps in the creation process. The significance of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the creators becomes evident when we acknowledge their multifaceted roles as the efficient cause, providing the impetus for creation, and the material cause, pervading and thereby creating from the substratum that becomes the infinite universes. Their inseparable presence and involvement highlight their supreme authority and indispensability in the cosmic scheme.

By comprehending the profound roles of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the *abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa* – the inseparable efficient and material cause, we gain deeper insights into the cosmic dynamics and the intricate interplay between the divine and the phenomenal realms. These entities form the bedrock of creation, embodying the primal forces that set the wondrous dance of existence in motion.

In the subsequent sections, we will further explore the attributes and characteristics of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, unraveling their intricate relationship and significance in the grand tapestry of creation.

#### 4.5.1 Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad

Various perspectives emerge regarding the creator’s identity and nature in the varying realms of philosophical traditions. However, Vyāsa, a prominent sage and scholar, asserts that only entities designated by the term “*sat*” can be regarded as the true creators. According to Vyāsa, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman hold the position of creators in all of existence. This viewpoint differs from the beliefs held by the Sāṃkhya and other traditions, which attribute the role of the creator to concepts such as time, action, *māyā*, or *pradhāna*.

To substantiate this argument, Vyāsa refers to the Brahmasūtras and employs mantras from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad as the basis for discussion. One such sūtra states: ईक्षतेर्नाशब्दम्<sup>183</sup> (BS 1.1.5) – On account of seeing, it (the cause of Creation) is not *pradhāna*. This sūtra implies that the cause of creation cannot be attributed solely to *pradhāna*, which is a notion affirmed within the Sāṃkhya tradition.

The mantras from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad serve as the subjects for introducing and supporting Vyāsa’s arguments. While I present only a select few here, it is important to note that there are additional relevant verses from the same section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

- सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्<sup>184</sup> (CU 6.2.1)
- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>185</sup> (CU 6.2.3)

These mantras, along with others from the same section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, provide valuable insights into the nature of creation and the role of the creators. They

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<sup>183</sup> *īkṣaternāśabdām*

<sup>184</sup> *sadeva somyedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam*

<sup>185</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

shed light on the profound connection between Parabrahman and the manifold infinite universes, emphasizing the intentionality and agency behind the process of creation.

By examining the teachings of the Upaniṣad and the interpretation offered by Vyāsa, we gain a deeper understanding of the concept of Sadvidyā, which affirms Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the ultimate creators. The subsequent sections will further elucidate the significance and implications of this understanding, exploring the intricate aspects of creation and the interplay between the creators and the created.

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, a section known as Sadvidyā imparts teachings about the nature of creation. The term “*sat*” in this context refers to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. These two entities are considered the essence, controller, and ultimate cause of all past, present, and future creations. When the infinite universes that are created dissolve, they remain dormant within their cause.

The mantras in this section indicate that Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) is referred to as the creator due to the act of perceiving or witnessing. However, this designation does not extend to other entities. The act of perceiving requires a sentient being, as it is a capacity inherent to consciousness. Consequently, the Sāṃkhya tradition’s notion of *pradhāna*, an insentient entity composed of three *guṇas*, is ruled out as the cause of creation. When speaking literally, it is illogical to attribute actions associated with sentient beings to insentient objects, as exemplified by phrases such as “the ocean called me” or “the airplane smiled.”

An objection can be raised that the sentient entities capable of causing creation could be the *jīvas*, as one of the characteristics of *sat* is its unblemished nature under all circumstances, which is commonly possessed by all sentient beings. However, *jīvas* (and *īśvaras*) can be excluded as the ultimate creators because they are bound within the created world governed by *māyā*. In order for them to be creators, they would need to exist apart from and have control over the very elements that form their own bodies. Nevertheless, bound entities governed by *māyā* lack the ability to create these elements, let alone other bodies.

An objector may argue that even if bound jīvas and īśvaras are not creators, this does not disqualify the liberated jīvas and īśvaras from being creators. However, this position is not defensible because liberated beings, known as muktas, attain their liberated status and ability to transcend māyā from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. Their abilities are, therefore, contingent upon the will of these two entities. Moreover, the notion of independent creators among the muktas contradicts the principles outlined in the Prasthānatrayī. Vyāsa supports:

- जगद्व्यापारवर्जं प्रकरणादसन्निहितत्वाच्च<sup>186</sup> (BS 4.4.17)

The sūtra can be translated as, (to muktas), but the ability to create (independently) is prohibited because of the context (in the Upaniṣads) and not being mentioned (contextually, in the śrutis).

Furthermore, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, in verse 6.2.1, attributes the qualities of “*ekam*” (one) and “*advitīyam*” (singular) specifically to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. According to the teachings of the Prasthānatrayī, only these two entities can possess the attribute of being singular and uniquely one. On the other hand, jīvas and īśvaras are individual souls, and an infinite number exists. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as possessing the same level of capacities and powers as Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

The references from the śruti texts – Upaniṣads emphasize the roles of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the primary causes of creation. Multiple mantras within these texts depict Parabrahman as the supreme creator, underscoring the pivotal positions occupied by these two divine beings. Some of them are mentioned below:

- आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीन्नान्यत्किञ्चन मिषत् । स ईक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति<sup>187</sup>  
(AU 1.1.1)
- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत्पुरुषविधः । सोऽनुवीक्ष्य नान्यदात्मनोऽपश्यत्<sup>188</sup> (BU 1.4.1)

<sup>186</sup> jagadvyāpāraavarjaṃ prakaraṇādasannihitatvācca

<sup>187</sup> ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīnnānyatkiṃcana miṣat | sa īkṣata lokānṇu sṛjā iti

<sup>188</sup> ātmaivedamagra āsītpuruṣavidhaḥ | so ’nūvīkṣya nānyadātmano ’paśyat

... and the ones that regard Akṣarabrahman as the ultimate creator, blessed by Parabrahman's eternal will, are as follows:

- ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीत्<sup>189</sup> (BU 1.4.10)
- यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।
- यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाऽक्षरात्संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥<sup>190</sup> (MU 1.1.7)
- तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म<sup>191</sup> (MU 1.1.8)
- यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।
- तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते ॥<sup>192</sup>(MU 1.1.9)
- यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।
- तथाऽक्षराद्विधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति ॥<sup>193</sup> (MU 2.1.1)

In the same *adhikaraṇa*, known as the *Īkṣati* *adhikaraṇa*, the concept of *pradhāna* as creator is once again refuted. Vyāsa presents the argument that *pradhāna* cannot be considered the creator because this viewpoint contradicts the teachings of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which serve as a source of revelation and authority. Consequently, drawing from the illuminating verses of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, we can deduce that *pradhāna* is not the ultimate creator. The words of the original sūtra are as follows:

- प्रतिज्ञाविरोधात्<sup>194</sup> (BS 1.1.9)

The sūtra here refers to section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad noted above. The mantra is:

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<sup>189</sup> *brahma vā idamagra āsīt*

<sup>190</sup> *yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate gr̥hṇate ca yathā pṛthivyāmoṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti | yathā sataḥ puruṣātkeśalomāni tathā 'kṣarātsambhavatīha viśvam ||*

<sup>191</sup> *tapasā cīyate brahma*

<sup>192</sup> *yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvavidyasya jñānamāyām tapaḥ |*

*tasmādetadbrahma nāma rūpamannaṃ ca jāyate ||*

<sup>193</sup> *yathā sudīptātpāvakādvisphuliṅgāḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ |*

*tathā 'kṣarādvividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivāpiyanti ||*

<sup>194</sup> *pratijñāvirodhāt*

- येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवत्यमतं मतमविज्ञातं विज्ञातमिति<sup>195</sup> (CU 6.1.3)

The qualities mentioned at the beginning of the exposition of Sadvidyā directly contradict the fundamental characteristics of *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is inherently insentient; therefore, even if one were to possess knowledge of *pradhāna*, it would not grant them omniscient knowledge of everything.

Throughout the *adhikaraṇa*, Vyāsa engages in repeated debates to refute the notion that *pradhāna* is the ultimate creator. These debates and arguments are compiled and summarized in the final sūtra of the section, serving as a comprehensive refutation of the idea that *pradhāna* holds the role of the creator. It reads:

- श्रुतत्वाच्च<sup>196</sup> (BS 1.1.12)

The sūtra says, in translation, “and, also, it is declared by the *śrutis*.” Here, Bhadrashdas Swami, the commentator, compiles the arguments that precede this *adhikaraṇa*. The word *sat* refers to Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman because:

The Sadvidyā section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad starts by describing a divine human-shaped body. It emphasizes the significance of the faculty of sight, represented by the eyes, which enables perception and understanding. This faculty of sight is associated with the ability to “see” and comprehend the nature of existence. The text further highlights the inseparable nature of the efficient and material cause of all creation. It underscores that these two aspects, the *nimitta kāraṇa* (efficient cause) and *upādāna kāraṇa* (material cause), are intricately intertwined and cannot be separated. This signifies their crucial role in the process of creation.

- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>197</sup> (CU 6.2.3)

In the discussion within the Sadvidyā section, the concept of *sat* is established as the most significant aspect, serving as the soul of everything. This recognition of *sat* as the

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<sup>195</sup> *yenāśrutaṃ śrutaṃ bhavatyamataṃ matamavijñātaṃ vijñātamiti*

<sup>196</sup> *śrutatvācca*

<sup>197</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

central principle underscores its profound significance in understanding the nature of existence and the ultimate truth.

- स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा<sup>198</sup> (CU 6.8.7)

The attainment of stability in the concept of *sat* is considered indispensable on the path of *mokṣa*, liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Finding stability in *sat* refers to achieving a deep and unwavering understanding of the true nature of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman while recognizing their eternal and unchanging nature permeating through all existence.

- एवमेवेहाचार्यवान्पुरुषो वेद तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्षयेऽथ सम्पत्स्य इति<sup>199</sup>  
(CU 6.14.2)

In the state of deep sleep, a person unites with *sat*. Deep sleep is a state of temporary unconsciousness with an inactive mind and stable *indriyas* and *antaḥkaraṇas*, and the individual experiences a state of rest and rejuvenation. In this state, the distinctions of the waking world dissolve, and there is an experiential (and, of course, non-metaphysical) unity with Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

- सता सोम्य तदा सम्पन्नो भवति<sup>200</sup> (CU 6.8.1)

In conclusion, the Brahmasūtras and Upaniṣads offer a cohesive and coherent exposition regarding the nature of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the creators. By examining the scriptures and engaging in philosophical discourse, it becomes evident that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman indeed exhibit the attributes of being both the efficient and material causes of creation. They are inseparable and indissoluble in their involvement in the cosmic manifestation.

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad, in particular, presents the concept of Sadvidyā, where *sat* refers to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. These divine entities are recognized as the

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<sup>198</sup> *sa ya eṣo 'ṇimaitadātmyamiam sarvaṃ tatsatyam sa ātmā*

<sup>199</sup> *evamevehācāryavānpuruṣo veda tasya tāvadeva ciraṃ yāvanna vimokṣye 'tha sampatsya iti*

<sup>200</sup> *satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati*

sole creators of all existence, while other concepts like *pradhāna* are refuted as insufficient explanations.

The Upaniṣads highlight the singularity and indivisibility of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, distinguishing them from individual souls or *jīvas*. The Upaniṣads repeatedly affirm these divine entities' supremacy and ultimate causality, firmly establishing their position as the creators.

Furthermore, the Brahmasūtras supplement this understanding by refuting opposing views and solidifying the position of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the primary creators. The consistent exposition found in both the Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtras reinforces the significance and authority of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the universe's creators.

In this way, the teachings of these sacred texts align in their portrayal of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the central figures in the process of creation, providing a cohesive and coherent understanding of their role as the ultimate creators.

#### **4.5.2 Ānandamayavidyā of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad**

In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, there is another instance where the concept of Parabrahman as the creator is elaborated. This occurs in a section known as the Ānandamayavidyā. The second chapter of the Upaniṣad refers to *ātman* Parabrahman as *ānandamaya*, signifying its intrinsic nature of being blissful. The Upaniṣad further elucidates the connection between the creatorship and the nature of bliss. By associating Parabrahman with the concept of *ānandamaya*<sup>201</sup>, the Upaniṣad highlights the profound connection between the creator and the inherent bliss that permeates all of existence. It suggests that Parabrahman, as the ultimate source of bliss, is the underlying force behind all creations – microcosm or macrocosm. Through the Ānandamayavidyā, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad reinforces the idea that the ultimate creator is not only the source of all beings but also the source of profound and eternal bliss. The Upaniṣad reads:

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<sup>201</sup> Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.5.2

- सोऽकामयत । बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत । यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सृष्ट्वा । तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।<sup>202</sup> (TU 2.6.3)

The Brahmasūtras devote an entire adhikaraṇa, known as the Anandamāyā adhikaraṇa, to discuss and establish the identity of the *ānandamaya puruṣa*, who is regarded as the creator of everything. The opening sūtra of this adhikaraṇa states:

- आनन्दमयोऽभ्यासात्<sup>203</sup> (BS 1.1.13)

The sūtra, in translation, reads: “(Parabrahman is) the blissful (*puruṣa*) because of the repetition.” This repetition, in the same section, underscores the significance and association of Parabrahman with the concept of bliss or *ānanda*. The features that are mentioned in other mantras, in other words, point to Parabrahman as being *ānandamaya*.

The subsequent sūtras provide a comprehensive examination of the concept and shed light on the role of the *ānandamaya puruṣa* in the cosmic order. They serve to deepen the understanding of this divine entity and its relationship to the infinite universes, ultimately contributing to the overall understanding of creation as described in the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā.

- रसो वै सः । रस ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति । को ह्येवान्यात्कः प्राण्यात् । यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् । एष ह्येवाऽऽनन्दयाति ।<sup>204</sup> (TU 2.7.2)
- सैषाऽऽनन्दस्य मीमांसा भवति<sup>205</sup> (TU 2.8.2)
- यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह । आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न बिभेति कुतश्चनेति ।<sup>206</sup> (TU 2.9.1)

<sup>202</sup> *so 'kāmayāta | bahusyām prajāyeyeti | sa tapo 'tapyata | sa tapastaptvā | idaṃ sarvamasrjata | yadidaṃ kiñca | tatsṛṣṭvā | tadevānuprāviśat*

<sup>203</sup> *ānandamāyā 'bhyāsāt*

<sup>204</sup> *raso vai saḥ | rasa hyevāyaṃ labdhvā 'nandī bhavati | ko hyevānyātkah prāṇyāt | yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt | eṣa hyevā 'nandayāti |*

<sup>205</sup> *saiṣā 'nandasya mīmāṃsā bhavati*

<sup>206</sup> *yato vāco nivartante | aprāpya manasā saha | ānandaṃ brahmaṇo vidvān | na bibheti kutaścaneti |*

The mantras in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad collectively emphasize that while all sentient entities, from humans to Akṣarabrahman, possess some degree of bliss, their bliss is incomparable to that of Parabrahman. The Upaniṣad repeatedly asserts that Parabrahman’s bliss surpasses that of all other entities combined. Parabrahman’s bliss is not only the source of everyone’s bliss but also the highest and infinitely greater than the cumulative bliss of all other beings.

The repetition of the term “*ānanda*” (of Parabrahman) in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad reinforces the understanding that Parabrahman is not just a creator but also encompasses the essence of supreme joy and bliss. This facet of Parabrahman’s essence holds significance in comprehending its involvement in the genesis and maintenance of the cosmos.

By acknowledging Parabrahman as the *ānandamaya puruṣa*, the Brahmasūtras and the Taittirīya Upaniṣad align in their portrayal of Parabrahman as the supreme source of bliss and the ultimate creator.

On another note, even though the presiding deities of universes and other īśvaras do not experience the same level of suffering as humans and other jīvas, they are not completely untouched by *duḥkha*. It is important to note that all jīvas and īśvaras are either within the realm of māyā or have previously been bound by it. Consequently, none of these entities can attain the same level of bliss as Parabrahman. Even the bliss attributed to the ascending jīvas is not significant enough, as highlighted in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā.

- क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।<sup>207</sup> (BG 9.21)

The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā underscores the impermanence and limited nature of the bliss experienced by jīvas. It emphasizes that the highest state of bliss, which transcends worldly existence’s temporary joys and sorrows, can only be attained by realizing Parabrahman through association with Akṣarabrahman. The bliss derived from worldly

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<sup>207</sup> *kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokaṃ viśanti* |

achievements and experiences pales in comparison to the infinite and unbounded bliss inherent in the realization of Parabrahman.

Therefore, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad and the teachings of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā align in their assertion that the bliss of Parabrahman surpasses that of all other entities, including jīvas and īśvaras. The debate presented in the Ānandamaya adhikaraṇa also negates the notion that muktaṣ, or liberated beings, can possess such ultimate bliss. The bliss experienced by muktaṣ is also derived from Parabrahman, indicating that Parabrahman alone is the possessor of the ultimate bliss. As stated in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (TU 2.6.3), Parabrahman creates and bestows bliss upon all.

Another argument in the Ānandamayā adhikaraṇa pertains to the suffix “-mayaṭ” in the word “ānandamayā.” The conclusion drawn from this debate is that Parabrahman possesses an abundance of bliss. Moreover, Parabrahman’s bliss is so immense that it emanates to all other entities making them blissful in their respects. As the discussion progresses in the ānandamīmāṃsā (TU 2.8.2), with the establishment of Akṣarabrahman’s bliss, the description of the hierarchy of bliss reaches its pinnacle. The infinite bliss of Parabrahman defies measurement and comprehension. The subsequent sutras in the ānandamaya adhikaraṇa further elaborate on these profound principles.

In conclusion, the Ānandamaya adhikaraṇa of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad delves into the concept of bliss and its association with Parabrahman. Through various mantras and arguments, it establishes Parabrahman as the ultimate source of bliss, surpassing all other entities. The discussions refute the claims that muktaṣ or liberated beings can possess supreme bliss independently, highlighting that their bliss is also derived from Parabrahman. Overall, these teachings emphasize the unique and supreme nature of Parabrahman’s bliss. It establishes Parabrahman as the creator and the ultimate source of bliss, highlighting the dependence of all entities on Parabrahman.

### 4.5.3 “Ākāśa” of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.9.1

The Ākāśādhikaraṇa of the first chapter of the Brahmasūtras and the corresponding mantra from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad discuss the concept of *ākāśa* and its association with Parabrahman as the creator. In this particular context, it is worth noting that *ākāśa* does not refer to physical space or sky, as such material forms do not align with the traits mentioned in the mantra. Instead, *ākāśa* is understood to symbolize Parabrahman. The sūtra and the subject mantra from the Upaniṣad are as follows:

- आकाशस्तल्लिङ्गात्<sup>208</sup> (BS 1.1.23)
- सर्वाणि ह वा इमानि भूतान्याकाशादेव समुत्पद्यन्त आकाशं प्रत्यस्तं यन्त्याकाशो ह्येवैभ्यो ज्यायानकाशः परायणम्<sup>209</sup> (CU 1.9.1)

It's important to note that in this adhikaraṇa, Akṣarabrahman is not referred to as *ākāśa*. Rather, the Upaniṣad explores a form of Akṣarabrahman known as Cidākāśa in the section of Daharavidyā.

Within the exploration of the creation of the *jagat*, it is important to acknowledge that for creation to manifest, Parabrahman's will alone is sufficient. Through the divine intention of Parabrahman, everything and every element align and fall into their designated places, allowing creation to unfold. Parabrahman, being the soul of all existence, serves as both the primary cause and the efficient cause of creation, along with Akṣarabrahman.

However, one might object here, pointing to the fact that Parabrahman, despite the power of his will, requires a pre-existing source of material to bring about creation. Drawing an analogy, just as an engineer, for instance, may have the desire to build a car, they also need nuts and bolts, gears and axles, lubrication, and fuel for the actual realization of the car. The mere wish or verbal expressions of the engineer cannot, of course, spontaneously materialize a functioning vehicle. While their aspirations may

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<sup>208</sup> *ākāśastalliṅgāt*

<sup>209</sup> *sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtānyākāśādeva samutpadyanta ākāśaṃ pratyastaṃ yantyaśo hyevaiibhyo jyāyānakāśaḥ parāyaṇam*

inspire others to construct a car, the engineer, solely relying on their wish for the car's existence, cannot be considered the ultimate cause.

In response to this objection, the Brahmasūtras provide an aphorism that elucidates the matter: उपसंहारदर्शनान्नेति चेन्न क्षीरवद्धि<sup>210</sup> (BS 2.1.25). This sūtra employs an analogy involving the process of forming curd to illustrate its point. It concedes that in the making of curd, a pre-existing material, namely milk, is indeed necessary. However, it emphasizes that milk alone is insufficient for transforming into curd. The crucial component in this process is the starter, a small amount of existing curd, which serves as the catalyst for the transformation of milk into curd. Without the starter, the milk cannot undergo the desired metamorphosis.

By employing this analogy, the Brahmasūtras asserts that the situation with Parabrahman is distinct. While an engineer's wish without the necessary materials cannot bring a car into existence, the all-powerful and all-creator Parabrahman functions differently. Parabrahman's mere intent is enough to create the universe, irrespective of the presence or absence of other entities. In fact, the Brahmasūtras highlight that even bound or unliberated jīvas and īśvaras possess the ability to manifest and dissolve objects, thus performing awe-inspiring acts. Therefore, it follows that the all-encompassing Parabrahman, with its boundless power, can, without doubt, serve as the ultimate source and cause of creation.

In conclusion, the objection regarding the need for a pre-existing source of material for Parabrahman's creation is addressed through the analogy of curd formation. The analogy emphasizes that while an engineer's desire requires additional materials for the manifestation of a car, the will of Parabrahman alone is easily sufficient for the creation of all infinite universe. Thus, Parabrahman's role as the ultimate cause and creator remains unchallenged, demonstrating the awe-inspiring nature of power and authority.

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<sup>210</sup> *upasaṃhāradarśanānneti cenna kṣīravaddhi*

#### 4.6 Separate or Inseparable?

In the *Ananyatva adhikaraṇa*, Vyāsa introduces a profound question that frequently arises in philosophical discourse: Do Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman exist separately from creation, or are they inseparable from it? This inquiry is addressed in the *Brahmasūtras* with the following sūtra:

- तदनन्यत्वमारम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः<sup>211</sup> (BS 2.1.14)

In response to this query, an objection is raised, emphasizing that the constituent elements of an object, such as a pot or a cloth, cannot be independently identified as the object itself. They necessitate a specific configuration to acquire their distinctive forms. Furthermore, when a pot shatters or a cloth tears, we attribute the action to the object itself, not to the raw materials from which it was created. It is evident that the essence of the object is distinct from its elemental constituents. Acknowledging this valid objection, Vyāsa and Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami offer a counterargument, pointing to the fact that the raw materials, such as clay or threads, permeate the entirety of the resultant manifestation. The final product is nothing other than the raw materials fashioned in a particular manner. Consequently, the object and its elemental constituents are inseparable. On what basis, then, can one assert that a pot is not clay? Similarly, Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, through their *anupraveśa* (special entry), pervade all *jīvas*, *īśvaras*, *māyā*, and the created world. This inseparability holds true during dissolution, the process of creation, and throughout eternity.

While this argument remains within the confines of the objection, it is crucial to provide a broader clarification. The primary source of understanding lies in the teachings of the *śrutis* (scriptures), which serve as the ultimate authority. In any form, logical reasoning must yield to the supremacy of the *śrutis*. As the *śrutis* explicitly affirm the pervasion of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman throughout the entire *jagat* (universe), further logical substantiation becomes redundant.

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<sup>211</sup> *tadananyatvamārambhāṇaśabdādibhyaḥ*

- यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्याद्वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ॥<sup>212</sup> (CU 6.1.4)
- सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् |<sup>213</sup>(CU 6.2.1)
- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>214</sup> (CU 6.2.3)
- सेयं देवतैक्षत हन्ताहमिमास्तिस्रो देवता अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणीति ॥<sup>215</sup> (CU 6.3.2)
- सेयं देवतैक्षत हन्ताहमिमास्तिस्रो देवता अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणीति ॥<sup>216</sup> (CU 6.8.4)
- एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा<sup>217</sup> (CU 6.8.7)

Upon continuing to expand upon the arguments mentioned earlier, an important question arises: Can Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman be considered divisible since they serve as the material cause of creation, or are they fundamentally indivisible? If we assert that both Brahmanas are indivisible, then, by extension, they must constitute the entirety of creation and cannot be separate or transcendental in any sense. However, if we claim that they are divisible, implying the existence of parts, this contradicts the *śrutis* that describe them as *niraṃśa* (without parts). Resolving this apparent contradiction is essential. The sūtra that describes this objection reads as follows:

- कृत्स्नप्रसक्तिर्निरवयवत्वशब्दकोपो वा<sup>218</sup> (BS 2.1.27)

The solution offered by Vyāsa reads as:

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<sup>212</sup> *yathā somyaikena mṛtpiṇḍena sarvaṃ mṛnmāyāṃ vijñātaṃ syādvācārambhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*||

<sup>213</sup> *sadeva somyedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam* |

<sup>214</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

<sup>215</sup> *seyaṃ devataikṣata hantāhamimāstisro devatā anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇīti* ||

<sup>216</sup> *seyaṃ devataikṣata hantāhamimāstisro devatā anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇīti* ||

<sup>217</sup> *eṣo 'ṇimaitadātmayamidaṃ sarvaṃ tatsatyam sa ātmā*

<sup>218</sup> *kṛtsnaprasaktirniravayavatvaśabdakopo vā*

- श्रुतेस्तु शब्दमूलत्वात्<sup>219</sup> (BS 2.1.28)

In response to this objection, Vyāsa provides a solution by emphasizing the subtleties of language and the context in which terms are employed. He explains that although Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are referred to as the material cause, this does not imply a literal division or fragmentation within their nature. Instead, it signifies their role in manifesting the diversity of creation while remaining inherently indivisible. In essence, the concept of material causality should be understood in a metaphorical sense, as it pertains to the emanation and expression of the universe rather than implying any form of physical division.

By acknowledging the non-literal nature of their division as the material cause, the idea of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman being indivisible aligns harmoniously with the teachings of the *śrutis*. They remain beyond the limitations of physicality and transcend the boundaries of conventional understanding. In summary, the Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtras consistently support the notion that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are inseparable from their creation, serving as both its material and efficient cause.

In resolving the ongoing debates, it is important to emphasize the supremacy of *śruti* as the ultimate source of knowledge. Seeking answers from *śruti* provides us with conclusive and comprehensive solutions, unlike relying solely on logic, which often leads to dilemmas and uncertainties. In the context of determining the divisibility or indivisibility of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, the *śrutis* play a pivotal role in providing the final and irrefutable answers. To substantiate the *niraṃśa* (without parts) nature of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, numerous Upaniṣadic mantras are cited in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the Brahmasūtras 2.1.28. These mantras collectively reinforce the idea that despite being the material cause of creation, Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman remain indivisible entities. A compilation of some of these Upaniṣadic mantras is presented below:

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<sup>219</sup> *śruteṣtu śabdāmūlatvāt*

- सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत्<sup>220</sup> (CU 6.2.1)
- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>221</sup> (CU 6.2.3)
- सेयं देवतैक्षत हन्ताहमिमास्तिसो देवता अनेन जीवेनाऽऽत्मनाऽनुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणीति<sup>222</sup> (CU 6.3.2)
- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः सोऽनुवीक्ष्य<sup>223</sup> (BU 1.4.1)
- ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीद्<sup>224</sup> (BU 1.4.10)
- यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति।  
यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि तथाऽक्षरात् सम्भवतीह विश्वम्॥<sup>225</sup> (MU 1.1.7)
- तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते<sup>226</sup> (MU 1.1.8)
- तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते<sup>227</sup> (MU 1.1.9)
- यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकाद् विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।  
तथाऽक्षराद्विधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवाऽपियन्ति ॥<sup>228</sup> (MU 2.1.1)
- एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।  
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी॥<sup>229</sup> (MU 2.1.3)
- तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः सम्भूतः<sup>230</sup> (TU 2.1.1)

<sup>220</sup> *sadeva somyedamagra āsīt*

<sup>221</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

<sup>222</sup> *seyam devataikṣata hantāhamimāstiso devatā anena jīvenā 'tmanā 'nupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇīti*

<sup>223</sup> *ātmaivedamagra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ so 'nuvīkṣya*

<sup>224</sup> *brahma vā idamagra āsīd*

<sup>225</sup> *yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate grhṇate ca yathā pṛthivyāmoṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti | yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni tathā 'kṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam||*

<sup>226</sup> *tapasā cīyate brahma tato 'nnamabhijāyate*

<sup>227</sup> *tasmādetad brahma nāma rūpamannaṃ ca jāyate*

<sup>228</sup> *yathā sudīptāt pāvakād visphulingāḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ | tathā 'kṣarādvividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivā 'piyanti||*

<sup>229</sup> *etasmājjāyate prāṇo manaḥ sarvendriyāni ca |*

*khaṃ vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī||*

<sup>230</sup> *tasmādvā etasmādātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*

- सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति ... तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवाऽनुप्राविशद्<sup>231</sup> (TU 2.6.3)

These *śrutis* collectively emphasize the incomparable and indivisible nature of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. Serving as concrete evidence to surpass the need for further logical substantiation, they affirm that these entities transcend the limitations of fragmentation and exist beyond any notion of parts.

Concluding the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of Brahmasūtras 2.1.28, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami adds: इति श्रुतिशतेन स्वरूपतो निरंशस्यैव ब्रह्मणः परब्रह्मणश्च जगदुपादानत्वस्य सिद्धान्तितत्वात् तत्तथैव स्वीकर्तव्यमिति<sup>232</sup>. The inclusion of the term “*ityādi*” by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami further strengthens the argument by suggesting that the list of Upaniṣadic mantras provided is not exhaustive. In fact, numerous additional *śrutis* support the principle being discussed. The word “*śrutiśatena*” or “by a hundred other *śrutis*,” emphasizes the abundance and overwhelming support of *śruti* in affirming the indivisible nature of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

The extensive support from *śrutis* reinforces the notion of the indivisibility of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. As a multitude of *śrutis* establishes this notion, it is not a matter of interpretation or speculation but an unequivocal truth derived from the highest authority of scriptural knowledge.

In essence, the discussions within the Ananyatva adhikaraṇa and others from the Brahmasūtras shed light on the inseparability of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman from creation, emphasizing their integral role as the material cause of the universe. The objections raised regarding their divisibility are effectively addressed by the overwhelming support of *śruti*, which provides extensive evidence of their indivisible nature. By grounding our understanding in the scriptures, we gain a comprehensive perspective on the inseparability of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman from creation, transcending any doubts or uncertainties that may arise from mere logical analysis.

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<sup>231</sup> so 'kāmāyāta. Bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti ... tatsṛṣṭvā tadevā'nuprāviśad

<sup>232</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.1.28, p. 178-9; iti śrutiśatena svarūpato nirāṃśasyaiva brahmaṇaḥ parabrahmaṇaśca jagadupādānavasya siddhāntitativāt tattathaiva svīkartavyamiti |

#### 4.7 Prakṛti as Jagatkāraṇa?

In this section, the focus turns to the question of whether māyā, often described as the “power” of Parabrahman, can be considered as the raw material of creation. While the arguments presented so far consistently attribute this role to Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, a closer look at the character of māyā and its role in the creative process is indispensable. The objection raised highlights that māyā, being ever-changing and alterable (*vikāriṇī*), cannot serve as the material cause of the universe. It distinguishes sentient entities, including jīvas and īśvaras, as unchanging and unaltering. Consequently, this objection also challenges the notion of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the material cause. Even if they are acknowledged as efficient causes, the objection posits that a material cause must consistently result in the production, in this case, the creation of the universe.

In response to this objection, Vyāsa asserts that *prakṛti* is indeed the *jagatkāraṇa* or the cause of the universe. However, this designation does not imply an independent role for *prakṛti*. Rather, *prakṛti* is pervaded by Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, indicating their inseparable presence within the creative process.

- प्रकृतिश्च प्रतिज्ञादृष्टान्तानुपरोधात्<sup>233</sup> (BS 1.4.24)

By exploring *prakṛti* as the *jagatkāraṇa*, the discussion expands to encompass the intricate relationship between māyā, Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and the manifested world. While māyā is recognized as an essential aspect of the creative process, it is not regarded as the sole or independent material cause. Instead, *prakṛti* acts as the medium through which the divine Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman create.

Indeed, to comprehend the role of māyā in the creation process, it is important to recognize its inherent insentience and its inability to act or function independently. Drawing an analogy, we can consider a chalk stick lying on the ground. By itself, the chalk stick cannot lift itself, write on its own, or transform into chalk dust. These actions require an external agent—a doer, such as a teacher or a student—to interact with the

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<sup>233</sup> *prakṛtiśca pratijñādr̥ṣṭāntānuparodhāt*

chalk stick and bring about these specific effects. Similarly, māyā, being insentient, lacks the inherent capacity to create the universe on its own. It requires the presence of intelligent and conscious entities, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, to interact with it in a specific way, just as the chalk stick requires a doer to impart purposeful actions. This understanding further reinforces the idea that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are independent creators.

Furthermore, the *śrutis*, the sacred scriptures of the Upaniṣads, provide comprehensive and authoritative teachings on the nature of the sentient and insentient. They emphasize the inseparable presence of the divine principles, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, in the creative process, implying māyā acts as the raw material only in their underlying presence. The following mantras from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad are cited, in this context, by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami in his Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam.

From the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

- Pledge: तमादेशमप्राक्ष्यः येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवत्यमतं मतमविज्ञातं विज्ञातमिति<sup>234</sup> (CU 6.1.3)
- Examples: यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्याद्वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ॥<sup>235</sup> (CU 6.1.4)

... and others. Here, as discussed earlier, the word *sat* refers to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. Without establishing them as *sat*, the interpretation is deficient.

From the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad:

- Pledge: कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥<sup>236</sup> (MU 1.1.3)

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<sup>234</sup> *tamādeśamaprākṣyaḥ yenaśrutam śrutam bhavatyamataṁ matamavijñātaṁ vijñātamiti*

<sup>235</sup> *yathā somyaikena mṛtṭpiṇḍena sarvaṁ mṛnmayāṁ vijñātaṁ syādvācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyaṁ mṛttiketyeva satyam ॥*

<sup>236</sup> *kasminnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvamidam vijñātaṁ bhavatīti ॥*

- Examples: यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।  
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाऽक्षरात्संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥<sup>237</sup> (MU 1.1.7)
- यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।  
तथाऽक्षराद्विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति ॥<sup>238</sup> (MU 2.1.1)

Here, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are mentioned while defining Brahmanvidyā. These two Brahmans are understood as the inner controllers, supporters, and souls of māyā, emphasizing their integral role in the cosmic order. It is explicitly stated that māyā cannot act independently as the material cause of creation; instead, it relies on the involvement of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. By recognizing the limitations of māyā and aligning our understanding with the teachings of the *śrutis*, we can grasp the harmonious interplay between the sentient and insentient existent entities creating the grand tapestry of creation.

An intriguing insight into the relationship between Parabrahman (and Akṣarabrahman) and māyā is found in the Jyotirupakramā adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. In this context, māyā is described as “*jyotirupakramā*,” which can be understood as the progressive manifestation of light. Here, the term “*jyoti*” signifies Parabrahman, the luminous and supreme reality. This designation implies that Parabrahman holds the position of the creator and master of māyā. Additionally, the sūtra refers to *prakṛti* as “*ajā*,” meaning the unborn. This characterization further accentuates the subordinate nature of māyā, which originates from *prakṛti* but is ultimately governed and directed by the supreme power of Parabrahman. The sūtra reads:

- ज्योतिरुपक्रमा तु तथा ह्यधीयत एके<sup>239</sup> (BS 1.4.9)

The mantra which is the focus of the sūtra is from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad –

<sup>237</sup> *yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate grhṇate ca yathā pṛthivyāmośadhayaḥ sambhavanti |yathā sataḥ puruṣātkeśalomāni tathā 'kṣarātsambhavatīha viśvam ||*

<sup>238</sup> *yathā sudīptātpāvakādvisphuliṅgāḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ | tathā 'kṣarādvividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivāpiyanti ||*

<sup>239</sup> *jyotirupakramā tu tathā hyadhīyata eke*

- अजामेकां लोहितशुक्लकृष्णां बह्वीः प्रजाः सृजमानां सरूपाः।  
अजो ह्येको जुषमाणोऽनुशेते जहात्यन्यां भुक्तभोगामजोऽन्यः ॥<sup>240</sup> (SU 4.5)

Vyāsa argues that *prakṛti* independently could not be the cause of all. Therefore, it is the cause necessarily because of the *anupraveśa* of Parabrahman. The master of *māyā*, Parabrahman is established as the Creator in the following consecutive mantras of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad:

- अस्मान् मायी सृजते विश्वमेतत्<sup>241</sup> (SU 4.9)
- मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं च महेश्वरम्<sup>242</sup> (SU 4.10)
- यो योनिं योनिमधितिष्ठत्येकः<sup>243</sup> (SU 4.11)

The Upaniṣads, with their profound teachings, shed light on the intrinsic nature of Parabrahman as the ultimate Creator. In various Upaniṣads, Parabrahman is depicted as the originator of fundamental aspects of creation such as *prāṇa* (life-breaths), *buddhi* (intellect), and other essential elements. These mentions highlight Parabrahman's role as the source and sustainer of the cosmic materials that constitute the fabric of creation.

When we consider the collective characteristics described in these sections of the Brahmasūtras and Upaniṣads, remarkable consistency and coherence emerge. These texts not only cohere with one another but also affirm the fundamental understanding of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the ultimate cause of the infinite universes. The intricate details presented in these scriptures converge to emphasize the central theme of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman as the *jagatkāraṇa*. By highlighting these characteristics, the Brahmasūtras and Upaniṣads provide a comprehensive framework that solidifies our understanding of the divine nature and cosmic dynamics.

In conclusion, the exploration of the Brahmasūtras, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and Upaniṣads concerning the concept of *jagatkāraṇa* reveals profound insights into the

<sup>240</sup> *ajāmekāṃ lohitaśuklakṛṣṇāṃ bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṃ sarūpāḥ |  
ajo hyeko juṣamāṇo 'nuśete jahātyanyāṃ bhuktabhogāmajo 'nyaḥ ||*

<sup>241</sup> *asmān māyī sṛjate viśvametat*

<sup>242</sup> *māyāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ vidyānmāyinaṃ ca maheśvaram*

<sup>243</sup> *yo yoniṃ yonimadhiṣṭhatyekah*

nature of creation and its ultimate cause. These scriptures consistently assert that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are inseparable from creation, serving as both its material and efficient causes. They permeate every aspect of the manifested universe, from the subtlest elements to the sentient beings that inhabit it.

#### 4.8 Purpose for Creation

The persistent dilemma concerning the purpose of creation arises when one contemplates why Parabrahman, eternally blissful and lacking nothing, would engage in the act of creation. Given that any action typically stems from a purpose, it becomes crucial to ascertain the reason behind this creative manifestation. This inquiry becomes even more significant in light of the immense suffering present in the world. If creation were solely for the benefit of all sentient beings, one would expect a pleasant and blissful existence to be the outcome. However, such a line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that Parabrahman cannot be the creator. When confronted with this question, Vyāsa provides his response:

- लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम्<sup>244</sup> (BS 2.1.34)

Vyāsa's response to the question of the purpose of creation sheds light on the profound nature of Parabrahman's intentions. He explains that Parabrahman's act of creation is not driven by personal desires or self-interest. Instead, it is an expression of his infinite compassion and divine plan. Through the challenges and obstacles faced in the created universes, individuals have the chance to develop virtues, cultivate wisdom, and transcend limitations, ultimately attaining a deeper understanding of their true nature and liberation from the shackles of māyā.

Furthermore, the diversity and complexity of creation reflect the magnificence and boundless creativity of Parabrahman. Every aspect of the cosmos, from the grandeur of galaxies to the intricacy of living organisms, serves as a testament to the limitless potential and divine craftsmanship inherent in the act of creation.

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<sup>244</sup> *lokavattu līlākaivalyam*

In essence, it is evident that Parabrahman's intention is rooted in ultimate benevolence. Through the tapestry of creation, souls embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery and spiritual realization, guided by the eternal presence of Parabrahman's love and grace. Just as a billionaire may generously bestow wealth without any personal gain or a musician may spontaneously create beautiful melodies for the sheer joy of it, Parabrahman's act of creation stems from his profound benevolence and self-contentment.

Parabrahman, being beyond the limitations of human emotions and desires, does not create a need for pleasure or personal fulfillment. It is the divine will that every soul be liberated and experience the ultimate bliss through cultivating qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman and offering devotion to Parabrahman. Parabrahman is complete in its own bliss, fulfilled in every aspect, and self-contained. Parabrahman's creation expresses his divine abundance, overflowing with blessings for all beings.

In recognizing Parabrahman as "*avāpta-samasta-kāma*" (one whose all wishes are fulfilled and has no more) and "*nijānanda-santripta*"<sup>245</sup> (one who is absolutely content and pleased with his own bliss), or all-good, all-fulfilled, self-blessed, self-contained, and self-abundant, we come to understand that the purpose of creation is rooted in his infinite love and grace. Through creation, he provides the means for souls to evolve, learn, and ultimately attain liberation. It is a testament to his limitless compassion and the inherent goodness that permeates the cosmic order.

Following the previous argument, which echoes the Problem of Evil posed to and by Western philosophers and theologians, another question arises as to how the world is. The question of the existence of both good and evil, happiness and suffering, and the disparities observed in the world raises concerns about the nature of creation. The world seems to be characterized by a partiality encompassing various parameters such as high and low, rich and poor. Even within the animal kingdom, countless beings lack the opportunity to break free from the cycle of endless births and deaths, a condition marked by partiality. It can also be argued that the act of creation itself displays an

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<sup>245</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.1.34, p. 184

element of cruelty or indifference. Countless jīvas and īśvaras have been subjected to the grip of *prakṛti* for eternity, experiencing lives filled with suffering as they endlessly cycle through the rounds of birth and death. This notion is explicitly addressed in the Vaiṣāmya-nairghṛṇya-adhikaraṇa, as captured by the following sūtra:

- वैष्यम्यनैर्घृण्ये न सापेक्षत्वात्तथा हि दर्शयति<sup>246</sup> (BS 2.1.35)

This sūtra prompts an inquiry into the apparent imbalance and suffering present in the world and proceeds to respond to it too. This line of inquiry delves into the philosophical exploration of why such disparities exist and how they are reconciled within the creation framework. The exploration of this topic requires a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between individual karma, the law of cause and effect, and the divine plan. It is within this context that the sūtras and Upaniṣads offer profound insights and teachings.

Indeed, the concept of karma plays a crucial role in our gaining an effective understanding of the consequences we experience in life. Just as a seed of avocado can only yield an avocado plant and not anything from grass or conifer species, our actions in the past determine the outcomes we face in the present. The principle of ‘you reap what you sow’ governs the law of cause and effect.

In the context of partiality, consider the scenario where a boss, in a bias-free setting, pays employees based on their performance. At first glance, one might perceive this as partiality, as those who achieve better results receive higher compensation. Conversely, it would be unfair for employees who did not fulfill their assigned duties to receive the same payment as diligent workers. However, this partiality is justified because the rewards directly relate to the effort and work performed.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad offers insights into this concept, emphasizing the relationship between action and consequence. It teaches us that every individual is responsible for their own karma and must face the outcomes of their actions.

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<sup>246</sup> vaiṣyamyanairghṛṇye na sāpekṣatvāttathā hi darśayati

- यथाकारी यथाचारी तथा भवति । साधुकारी साधुर्भवति पापकारी पापो भवति पुण्यः पुण्येन कर्मणा भवति पापः पापेन । अथो खल्वाहुः काममय एवायं पुरुष इति स यथाकामो भवति तत्क्रतुर्भवति यत्क्रतुर्भवति तत्कर्म कुरुते यत्कर्म कुरुते तदभिसम्पद्यते ॥<sup>247</sup> (BU 4.4.5)

The disparities we encounter can be seen as the results of individual karma, shaping the unique circumstances and experiences of each being.

This raises the question of whether Parabrahman is subject to the laws of karma when bestowing the results of actions. Is Parabrahman obligated to adhere to a predetermined standard where specific actions must yield predetermined outcomes, or is he free to exercise his will to bestow the fruits of karma? Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides an answer based on the scriptures, stating that Parabrahman is absolutely independent and not bound by anything influenced by māyā.

Parabrahman, being beyond the realm of māyā, transcends any limitations or constraints. He is not compelled by a preexisting system dictating the consequences of karma. However, Parabrahman has established this system of cause and effect to provide spiritual aspirants with a comprehensible framework and motivation to engage in spiritual practices. Without such a system, ignorance or negligence may hinder the path of spiritual growth. To illustrate this point, we can consider the analogy of a king granting gifts to someone based on their performance. The king may choose to bestow a gift not solely because of the performer’s merit but also out of a desire to promote art, motivate the artist, or simply because he is pleased. However, the king follows the reward system based on performance, even though he has the power to overrule that rule. Similarly, we can understand Parabrahman’s benevolence in granting the fruits of karma.

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<sup>247</sup> *yathākārī yathācārī tathā bhavati | sādhu-kārī sādhubhavadati pāpakārī pāpo bhavati puṇyaḥ puṇyena karmaṇā bhavati pāpaḥ pāpena | atho khalvāhuḥ kāmamāyā evāyaṃ puruṣa iti sa yathākāmo bhavati tatkraturbhavati yatkraturbhavati tatkarma kurute yatkarma kurute tadabhisampadyate ||*

Parabrahman's independence does not undermine his compassion and benevolence. He orchestrates the system of cause and effect to facilitate spiritual growth. While Parabrahman has the freedom to exercise his will, he chooses to adhere to the system he has established for the benefit of spiritual seekers.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami elaborates on the benevolence of Parabrahman, emphasizing that: “*sarvā'pi dayā*”<sup>248</sup> – it is all mercy. Parabrahman creates bodies, objects, and situations for jīvas and īśvaras to experience the fruits of their karmas and ultimately be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths. In the world, Parabrahman is pleased by the faith and perseverance of devotees and blesses them with the opportunity to associate with the Brahmasvarūpa Satpuruṣa. By meditating on the form of the Guru and realizing oneself as Akṣarabrahman, through his grace, jīvas and īśvaras are granted *mokṣa*, liberation from the incessant cycles of births and deaths.

This understanding aligns with the consistency found in the three texts of the Prasthānatrayī. When examined collectively, these texts present a unified and interconnected comprehension of the objective of creation and the functions of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman in conferring *kṛpā* and mukti. Let us now move to the essential natures of various elements as the Prasthānatrayī walks us through them. First, we start with a comprehensive listing of various characteristics of the elements in the process of creation, as Parabrahman Swaminarayan explains in the Vacanāmṛta.

#### **4.9 Material Creations – Vacanāmṛta Explains**

In the Vacanāmṛta, Bhagavān Swaminarayan provides a detailed explanation of the elements, which is significant to our discussion. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami also references this section and highlights the characteristics described therein. The specific Vacanāmṛta we refer to is Vac. G. I 12, titled “The Attributes of the Elements, Creation.”

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<sup>248</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.1.35, p. 185

During the assembly, Parabrahman Swaminarayan emphasizes the importance of understanding and contemplating the nature of the 24 elements, as it can help individuals transcend ignorance and ultimately break free from the bondage imposed by these elements. He explains some of them to his audience. These 24 elements consist of five elements that constitute the gross body of jīvas, known as the *mahābhūta* and nineteen elements that form the subtle body of jīvas. The subtle body includes the five *jñāna indriyas* (cognitive senses), five *karma indriyas* (conative senses), four *antahkaraṇas* (inner faculties), and five *prāṇas* (life-breaths). Let us briefly explore the characteristics of these elements.

The five *mahābhūtas*, or gross elements, are fundamental physical body components. They comprise *pṛthivī* (earth - solidity), *āpaḥ* (water - liquidity), *tejas* (fire - heat), *vāyu* (air - gaseous form), and *ākāśa* (space - emptiness).

The subtle body consists of the five *jñāna indriyas*, which are the cognitive senses responsible for perceiving the external world. They include *śabda* (hearing), *spṛśa* (touch), *rūpa* (sight), *rasa* (taste), and *gandha* (smell). The five *karma indriyas*, or conative senses, are responsible for performing actions and interacting with the external world. They include *vāk* (speech), *pāṇi* (grasp), *pāda* (locomotion), *pāyu* (excretion), and *upastha* (procreation).

The four *antahkaraṇas*, or inner faculties, play a crucial role in mental and emotional processes. They comprise *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *citta* (sometimes, memory), and *ahaṃkāra* (ego). These faculties contribute to the formation of thoughts, understanding, memory, and the sense of individual identity.

Lastly, five *prāṇas*, or life-breaths, are vital energies that sustain life functions. They include *prāṇa* (respiration), *apāna* (elimination), *vyāna* (circulation), *udāna* (vital breath), and *samāna* (digestion).

Understanding the characteristics and functioning of these elements can aid seekers in their journey toward liberation by transcending the limitations imposed by these components of existence.

After detailing the features of a *puruṣa*, Parabrahman Swaminarayan describes the characteristics of *māyā/prakṛti* and its components.

- *Prakṛti* is made up of three *guṇas*, and it is both sentient and insentient, eternal, featureless (that is, in its base form, it has no special attributions like the *mahābhūtas* or *tanmātrās*), a terrain for all *jīvas* and all other entities, that is to be known as creation following the protological process.
- *Prakṛti* is disturbed and inhabits the state of disequilibrium by *kāla*.
- *Mahattattva* is regarded as a (cosmic) form of *citta*. It is made up of *sattvagūṇa*, largely unadulterated by *rajas* and *tamas*. It is luminous, pure, tranquil, and the beholder of all Creation (only because Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman have wished it to be so) in its subtlest form.

*Ahaṁkāra* has the following traits:

- It is made up of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*;
- and, therefore, it has tranquility (*sāttvic*), passion or activity (*rājasic*), and ignorance (*tāmasic*)
- It is also the cause of the evolution of all the *mahābhūtas*, *indriyas*, and *antaḥkaraṇas*.

*Manas* (mind) is described as follows:

- It is the locus of generating all desires and infatuations for objects.
- It is formed of fluctuating thoughts.
- It governs all of the *indriyas*.

The features of *buddhi* (intellect) are described as follows:

- It is the possessor of the knowledge of all objects.

- Special and in-depth knowledge acquired by the *indriyas* is also attributable to *buddhi*.
- Doubts, conviction, sleep, and memories are found therein.

The five cognitive senses (*jñāna indriyas*) are as follows:

- *Śrotra* – hearing
- *Tvak* – touch
- *Cakṣu* – sight
- *Rasanā* – taste
- *Ghrāṇa* – smell

The five conative senses (*karma indriyas*) are as follows:

- *Vāk* – Speech
- *Pāda* – locomotion
- *Pāṇi* – dexterity
- *Pāyu* – excretion
- *Upastha* – reproduction

These senses engage themselves in their respective objects of perception or grasping – to serve as means of experience for the ātman. Now, the five tanmātrās – *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa*, and *gandha* – are discussed.

- *Śabda* (sound)
  - It is the supporter of the meanings.
  - A reason for all social interactions
  - Discloses the background and nature of its speaker.
  - Dwells in *ākāśa*, one of the *mahābhūtas*

- The sense of hearing, or ears, grasps it.
- *Sparśa* (touch)
  - It is the *tanmātrā* of *vāyu* (air)
  - Recognized by the touch sense or skin.
  - It also comprises softness, hotness, coldness, hardness, roughness, smoothness – and other features of an object.
- *Rūpa* (sight)
  - Reveals forms of objects in sight.
  - It dwells in objects inferiorly.
  - Depending on the object.
  - *Tanmātrā* of *teja* (light/fire)
  - Perceived by the sense of sight or eyes.
- *Rasa* (taste)
  - Distinguished as sweet, astringent, pungent, bitter, sour, and salty.
  - A *tanmātrā* of water (*jala*)
  - Perceived by the taste sense or tongue.
- *Ghrāṇa* (smell)
  - Distinguished as fragrance or stench.
  - A *tanmātrā* of *pṛthivī* (earth)
  - Perceived by the sense of smell or nose.

Now, the five *mahābhūtas* – *pṛthivī*, *jala*, *tejas*, *vāyu*, and *ākāśa* – are discussed.

*Pṛthivī* (Earth)

- Supports all sentient beings and insentient objects.
- In the form of realms, it is a place of dwelling.
- Distinguishing mark in all four other bhūtas
- It is the material that the physical form of all living beings is made up of.

#### *Jala* (Water)

- It binds *pṛthivī*.
- Softens an object.
- Moistens
- Satiates
- Sustains lifeforms.
- Quenches thirst
- Eliminates heat.
- It is found in abundance

#### *Tejas* (light/fire)

- Luminance
- Digests food
- Absorbs *rasa*.
- Burns wood and other combustibles.
- Subdues cold.
- Dries
- Strikes hunger.

#### *Vāyu* (air)

- Shakes trees and other objects.
- Collects hay and other such objects.
- Carries viṣayas to their *indriyas*.
- In the form of *prāṇas*, being the soul of all *indriyas*

#### *Ākāśa* (space)

- Provides space/void to all *jīvas*.
- Furthermore, thus, it causes and allows internal and external functioning of the body and other activities.
- Dwelling for *prāṇas*, *indriyas*, and *antaḥkaraṇas*

The gross elements, represented by the five elements, constitute the physical body, while the subtle elements, encompassing the cognitive and conative senses, inner faculties, and life-breaths, shape the subtle body. Each element has its specific role in the functioning and experience of life.

This comprehensive understanding of the elements allows us to comprehend the protological process described in the discussion of Creation. By recognizing the intricate interplay of these elements, we gain deeper insights into the divine design and the purpose behind creation. The consistent teachings found in the *Vacanāmṛta* affirm the profound wisdom and depth of the *Prasthānatrayī*.

Delving into the profound depths of metaphysical intricacies, we embark upon a scholarly expedition, meticulously unraveling the esoteric teachings encapsulated within the revered *Prasthānatrayī*. With scholarly ardor, we now venture into the profound expanse of philosophical discourse, where we meticulously scrutinize and contemplate the subtle nuances surrounding the elements elucidated within these sacred texts.

#### 4.10 Three Guṇas and Ahaṃkāras

Within the fundamental essence of māyā, we encounter the intricate interplay of three primal *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Sattva*, encompassing qualities such as purity, honesty, contentment, knowledge, wakefulness, and discernment, illuminates the path of understanding. In contrast, *rajas* signifies the impetus of a passion characterized by attachment and the relentless pursuit of worldly desires. *Tamas*, on the other hand, embodies darkness and inertia, manifesting as sleep, indolence, and sluggishness.

Furthermore, these *guṇas* find expression in the form of cosmic egos, known as the *sāttvic ahaṃkāra*, the *rājasic ahaṃkāra*, and the *tāmasic ahaṃkāra*. These egoic manifestations depict one's character and temporary mental states, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of māyā's constituents.

These *ahaṃkāras*, originating from the three *guṇas*, give rise to distinct sets of significant evolutes that play a crucial role in the unfolding of Creation. The inner faculty known as *manas* emerges from the *sāttvic ahaṃkāra*, accompanied by the governing deities of the *indriyas*. From the *rājasic ahaṃkāra*, a set of senses is brought forth. This refers to the creation of the senses themselves rather than the physical organs that house them (*golakas*), which are formed in the final stages of Creation. Additionally, *buddhi*, another inner faculty, and the *prāṇas*, a set of life-breaths serving different functions, arise from the second cosmic ego. The *tāmasic ahaṃkāra*, on the other hand, gives rise to the *tanmātrās*, subtle elemental forms that serve as the basis for the subsequent creation of corresponding gross elements. The *śabda tanmātrā* (sound or word) initiates the process by self-generating *ākāśa* (space), which then gives rise to the sense of touch. From touch emerges the element of air, followed by *rūpa* or sight, which leads to the creation of *tejas* (fire or light). Subsequently, *rasa* (taste) and *jala* (water) come into existence. Finally, the *tanmātrā* of *gandha* (odor) is formed from water, ultimately leading to the manifestation of the earth element. A comprehensive overview of these evolutes can be observed in the accompanying table<sup>249</sup>, providing a clearer understanding of the intricate progression of Creation.

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<sup>249</sup> The rectangular shape is for the *tanmātrās* and the hexagonal shape represent the *mahābhūtas*.

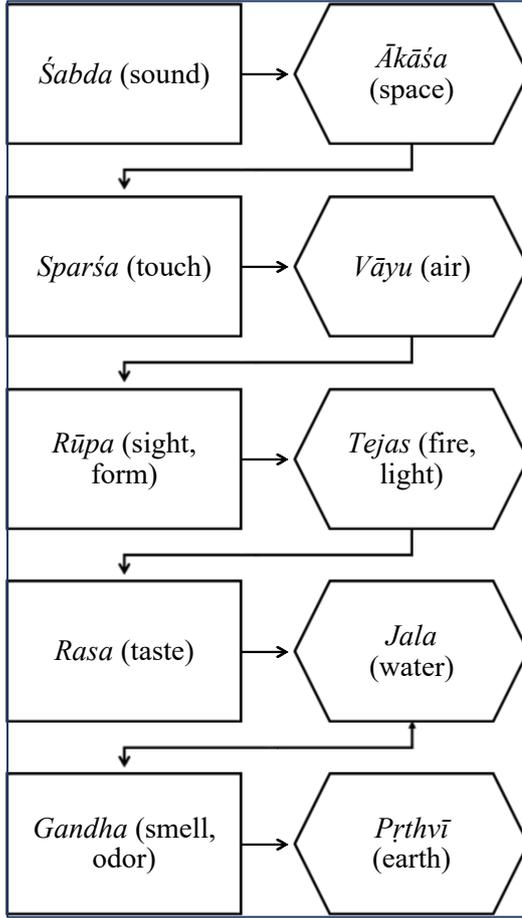


Figure 4.2: Creation: Tanmātrās and Mahābhūtas

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the three *guṇas* are extensively discussed in the Bhagavad Gītā, appearing on multiple occasions. It is particularly significant to observe that in these mentions, the three *guṇas* are consistently described as “born of māyā.” This observation holds importance as it emphasizes that the *guṇas* are not only derived from māyā but also constitute its fundamental elements. Although they are often perceived as separate entities, they are essentially the components that form and comprise māyā itself. It is essential to recognize this interconnected relationship between the *guṇas* and māyā to attain a more profound comprehension of their inherent nature and functioning.

Below are some verses from the *smṛti prasthāna* that explicitly mention the *guṇas*

as being originate of māyā:

- न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।  
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥<sup>250</sup> (BG 3.5)
- प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।  
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥<sup>251</sup> (BG 3.27)

<sup>250</sup> *na hi kaścitkṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt |*  
*kāryate hyavaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijairguṇaiḥ ||*  
<sup>251</sup> *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |*  
*aḥaṅkāravimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate ||*

- प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।  
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥<sup>252</sup> (BG 13.19)
- पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।  
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥<sup>253</sup> (BG 13.21)
- सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।  
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥<sup>254</sup> (BG 14.5)
- न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।  
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥<sup>255</sup> (BG 18.40)

In the fourteenth chapter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, an elaborate explanation of the *guṇas* is provided, along with their various manifestations. This chapter provides a comprehensive guide to understanding the nature of the *guṇas*. However, to maintain conciseness, let us now proceed to the next topic of discussion, which is the concept of “*manas*” or the mind.

#### 4.11 Manas (Mind)

The concept of “*manas*” can be understood as a multifaceted element, an inner faculty, and an *antaḥkāraṇa* responsible for the contemplation process or “*manana*.” The term “*manas*” itself derives from its role as the site where thoughts arise and fluctuate in the realm of existence. It is a dynamic entity that external factors and associations can influence. It primarily comprises the sattvic aspect of *ahaṁkāra* (ego) and catalyzes desires related to sensory activities. It acts as a friend and collaborates with the cognitive and conative senses while also playing as a master to them. The *indriyas*

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<sup>252</sup> *prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi |*  
*vikārāṁśca guṇāṁścaiva viddhi prakṛtisambhavān ||*

<sup>253</sup> *puruṣaḥ prakṛtiṣtho hi bhun̄kte prakṛtijānguṇān |*  
*kāraṇaṁ guṇasaṅgo'sya sadasadyonijanmasu ||*

<sup>254</sup> *sattvaṁ rajastama iti guṇāḥ prakṛtisambhavāḥ |*  
*nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinamavyayam ||*

<sup>255</sup> *na tadasti pṛthivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ |*  
*sattvaṁ prakṛtijairmuktaṁ yadebhiḥ syātribhīrguṇaiḥ ||*

(senses) follow the mind’s guidance, moving according to its directives and indulging in activities determined by the mind’s influence. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad beautifully illustrates the significance of *manas* with the following verses:

- आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।  
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥<sup>256</sup> (KU 3.3)
- इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।  
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥<sup>257</sup> (KU 3.4)

“The ātman (individual soul) is the rider in the chariot, and the body is the chariot. *Buddhi* (intellect) is the charioteer, and the mind is the reins. The senses are the horses, and their objects of perception are the paths they travel on.” These verses highlight the interplay between the mind, intellect, senses, and the ātman, emphasizing the role of *manas* as a crucial and indispensable component in our experience.

The mind assumes a central and transformative role in shaping our interpretations of experiences, whether they be moments of profound joy or the depths of suffering. It serves as the interpreter, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of calm even in distressing situations and vice versa. The functionality of the mind can be illustrated through an example: Imagine a person sitting in an airplane who simultaneously observes a passenger in the opposite aisle, locates and presses the flight attendant button, and gazes out of the window to enjoy the view of double layers of fluffy clouds and a rainbow. The mind directs the senses on where to focus their attention, how long to do so, and what aspects to grasp from the surrounding space.

The mind’s involvement extends beyond a single sense organ. For instance, one can see and touch an object simultaneously, with the mind processing information from various directions to form a coherent mental picture. The mind maintains immediate connections with all the senses, facilitating their smooth functioning. This

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<sup>256</sup> *ātmānaṃ rathinaṃ viddhi śarīraṃ rathameva tu |  
buddhiṃ tu sārathiṃ viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva ca ||*  
<sup>257</sup> *indriyāṇi hayānāhurviṣayāṃsteṣu gocharān |  
ātmendriyamanoyuktaṃ bhoktetyāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ ||*

interconnectedness is not limited to cognitive senses alone. When offered a glass of water, the mind directs the eyes to perceive the offering, processes the information, and subsequently instructs the hand to reach out and grasp the glass. Simultaneously, it maintains eye contact with the steward and utilizes speech to express gratitude for the service rendered. The senses, or *indriyas*, act as receivers of sensory stimuli while the mind processes this information, allowing individuals to experience pleasure or aversion. For example, upon encountering a gruesome image or perceiving an unpleasant odor, the mind can quickly shift the focus to a pleasant image or fragrance, thereby altering the experience from disgust to delight. The mind's ability to direct and regulate the sensory input enhances the overall experience of joy or repulsion.

Furthermore, the mind possesses a remarkable attribute of fickleness. It can traverse great distances, being unsettled, merely through the power of thought. While individual thoughts may appear insignificant on their own, a mere gentle reminder can initiate a cascade of interconnected thoughts, intertwining to form a coherent fabric of ideas. The mind has the ability to present past events and distant places as though they were unfolding in the present moment. This quality of the mind exemplifies its capricious nature. To emphasize the extent of its fickleness, Arjuna compares the task of controlling the mind to taming the wind itself. In the Bhagavad Gītā, he states that “the mind is restless and unruly, akin to a forceful gale.” Arjuna expresses his struggle in attempting to subdue the mind, recognizing it as an arduous endeavor comparable to taming the uncontrollable winds.

- चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।  
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥<sup>258</sup> (BG 6.34)

This analogy vividly captures the elusive and unpredictable nature of the mind, highlighting its tendency to fluctuate and resist restraint constantly. Just as the wind cannot be easily harnessed, the mind, too, poses a formidable challenge in terms of maintaining control and steadiness for progression.

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<sup>258</sup> *cañcalaṃ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham |*  
*tasyāhaṃ nigrahaṃ manye vāyoriva suduṣkaram ||*

Furthermore, the mind is highly susceptible to the influence of thoughts. It swiftly responds and reacts to both pleasant and unpleasant circumstances, undergoing changes accordingly. When faced with favorable situations, the mind becomes delighted, while encountering challenging experiences leads to its disturbance. Similarly, in the absence of any external stimulation, the mind can become restless and mischievous, seeking something to cling to. The nature of the mind can be likened to that of a very young person yearning to play with fire or handle a pair of scissors. Allowing him to engage in such activities may result in harm, while denying him the opportunity evokes feelings of hurt and dejection. Similarly, the mind possesses immense power, capable of captivating even scholars and philosophers within its whirlpool of thoughts, potentially wreaking havoc upon their intellectual pursuits.

Due to its inherent instability, the mind proves to be a formidable challenge to control. Its fluctuations and wavering nature make it resistant to restraint, demanding a great deal of effort and discipline to master its influence.

In conclusion, the mind plays a pivotal role in the human experience as an essential element and inner faculty. It serves as a landscape for generating diverse thoughts, influenced by external associations and the interplay of the three *guṇas*. It functions as the interpreter of experiences, enabling one to navigate the realms of happiness and suffering, and it possesses the power to shape one's perception and response to the world. The mind's susceptibility to thoughts, its sensitivity to external circumstances, and its powerful influence highlight the need for cultivating mastery over it. The Upaniṣads remind us of the mind's role as the charioteer, directing the senses and intellect, while the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā emphasizes the significance of self-control and the pursuit of knowledge to govern the mind's fluctuations. These timeless teachings inspire individuals to embark on the path of self-awareness, seeking to transcend the transient nature of the mind and establish a state of inner harmony and serenity.

#### 4.12 Buddhi (Intellect)

*Buddhi*, among the inner faculties, assumes a crucial position as intellect or wisdom, being the very source of all knowledge. It acts as a conduit through which knowledge is acquired, fostering diverse forms of comprehension, including doubts, contradictions, convictions, and memories. Furthermore, *buddhi* facilitates sleep and serves as an essential catalyst for both general and specialized knowledge.

A point of debate surrounding *buddhi* is its association with the concept of *karṭṛ*, the doer or agent. In the *Karṭṛ adhikaraṇa*, Vyāsa offers a clarification, asserting that *buddhi* is not synonymous with the doer. While *buddhi* plays a crucial role in decision-making and guiding actions, it is distinct from the concept of agency or the individual responsible for actions.

- शक्तिविपर्ययात्<sup>259</sup> (BS 2.3.38)

It serves as a cognitive tool for acquiring knowledge and discernment, allowing individuals to navigate the complexities of thought and decision-making. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides further insights into the role of *buddhi* as an instrument rather than the doer. According to Bhadreshdas Swami, *buddhi* functions as a tool or medium for the ātman, the true self. By attributing the role of the doer to *buddhi*, it deviates from its inherent nature as an instrument.

Attempting to argue that *buddhi* should relinquish its role as an instrument to become the doer is not tenable. This is because enjoying the fruits of actions is inherently linked to the ātman, and *buddhi* is the means to realize particular ends. Therefore, the ātman remains the ultimate doer of actions, while *buddhi* serves as a means to facilitate the fulfillment of those actions.

Furthermore, it is elucidated that in pursuing *mukti*, liberation from the cycle of mundane existence, the thought of being separate from worldly affairs arises within *buddhi*. This highlights the role of *buddhi* as the mechanism that distinguishes the doer

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<sup>259</sup> śaktiviparyayāt

from the objects of action (*viṣayas*). Therefore, while *buddhi* plays a crucial role in discernment and realization, it cannot be considered the doer of actions.

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad establishes the role of *buddhi* as the charioteer for the ātman. In verse – बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि<sup>260</sup> (KU 3.3), it is emphasized that *buddhi* is to be understood as akin to the charioteer. This metaphor emphasizes the importance of *buddhi* in guiding and directing the ātman in its journey through life. Furthermore, in the second part of the Kaṭha Upaniṣad 3.4, it is mentioned that the ātman is the enjoyer in conjunction with the *indriyas* (senses) and *manas* (mind), highlighting the interplay between these faculties. *Buddhi* serves as the driver that steers the ātman toward its desired destinations.

Moreover, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad also alludes to the state of supreme existence - where one is associated with Parabrahman and attains a state in which one has qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman, where *buddhi* becomes dormant. The verse – बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमां गतिम्<sup>261</sup> (KU 6.10) describes this state where *buddhi* ceases its active functioning. In this state, *buddhi* no longer operates as it does in the normal state of *māyā*'s bondage. It is in this dormant state that one attains the ultimate transcendental goal.

The Bhagavad Gītā also provides various insights into the multifaceted nature of *buddhi*. It explores different aspects and functions of *buddhi* through verses that shed light on discernment, wisdom, and decision-making processes. These verses, when seen through their respective Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, offer deeper contemplation on the role of *buddhi* in navigating the complexities of life and attaining spiritual realization.

- बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु |<sup>262</sup> (BG 2.39)
- बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ<sup>263</sup> (BG 2.39)

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<sup>260</sup> *buddhiṃ tu sārathiṃ viddhi*

<sup>261</sup> *buddhiśca na viceṣṭate tāmāhuḥ paramām gatim*

<sup>262</sup> *buddhiryoge tvimāṃ śṛṇu |*

<sup>263</sup> *buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha*

- व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।<sup>264</sup> (BG 2.41)
- बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम्<sup>265</sup> (BG 2.41)
- बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय<sup>266</sup> (BG 2.49)
- बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ<sup>267</sup> (BG 2.49)
- बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह<sup>268</sup> (BG 2.50)
- कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि<sup>269</sup> (BG 2.51)
- बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।<sup>270</sup> (BG 2.52)
- समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥<sup>271</sup> (BG 2.53)
- स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥<sup>272</sup> (BG 2.63)
- बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥<sup>273</sup> (BG 2.65)
- नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य<sup>274</sup> (BG 2.66)
- मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन<sup>275</sup> (BG 3.1)
- बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे<sup>276</sup> (BG 3.2)
- न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम्<sup>277</sup> (BG 3.26)

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<sup>264</sup> *vyavasāyātmikā buddhirekeha kurunandana |*

<sup>265</sup> *buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

<sup>266</sup> *buddhiyogāddhanañjaya*

<sup>267</sup> *buddhau śaraṇamanviccha*

<sup>268</sup> *buddhiyukto jahātīha*

<sup>269</sup> *karmajaṃ buddhiyuktā hi*

<sup>270</sup> *buddhirvyatitariṣyati |*

<sup>271</sup> *samādhāvācalā buddhistadā yogamavāpsyasi ||*

<sup>272</sup> *smṛtibhraṃśād buddhināśo buddhināśātpṛaṇāśyati*

<sup>273</sup> *buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate ||*

<sup>274</sup> *nāsti buddhirayuktasya*

<sup>275</sup> *matā buddhirjanārdana*

<sup>276</sup> *buddhiṃ mohayasīva me*

<sup>277</sup> *na buddhibhedaṃ janayedajñānāṃ karmasaṅginām*

- इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।<sup>278</sup> (BG 3.40)
- मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥<sup>279</sup> (BG 3.42)
- एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा<sup>280</sup> (BG 3.43)
- कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।<sup>281</sup> (BG 5.11)
- बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्<sup>282</sup> (BG 6.21)
- शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।<sup>283</sup> (BG 6.25)
- तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते<sup>284</sup> (BG 6.43)
- भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।<sup>285</sup> (BG 7.4)
- बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि<sup>286</sup> (BG 7.10)
- बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसम्मोहः<sup>287</sup> (BG 10.4)
- ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं<sup>288</sup> (BG 10.10)
- मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय<sup>289</sup> (BG 12.8)
- बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च<sup>290</sup> (BG 13.5)
- बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते<sup>291</sup> (BG 18.17)

<sup>278</sup> *indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate |*

<sup>279</sup> *manasastu parā buddhiryo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ ||*

<sup>280</sup> *evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā*

<sup>281</sup> *kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalairindriyairapi |*

<sup>282</sup> *buddhigrāhyamatīndriyam*

<sup>283</sup> *śanaiḥ śanairuparamed buddhyā dhṛtigrhītayā |*

<sup>284</sup> *tatra taṃ buddhisamyogaṃ labhate*

<sup>285</sup> *Bhūmirāpo 'nalo vāyuh khaṃ mano buddhireva ca |*

<sup>286</sup> *buddhirbuddhimatāmasmi*

<sup>287</sup> *buddhirjñānamasammohaḥ*

<sup>288</sup> *dadāmi buddhiyogaṃ taṃ*

<sup>289</sup> *mayi buddhiṃ niveśaya*

<sup>290</sup> *buddhiravyaktameva ca*

<sup>291</sup> *buddhiryasya na lipyate*

- बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव<sup>292</sup> (BG 18.29)
- बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी<sup>293</sup> (BG 18.30)
- बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी<sup>294</sup> (BG 18.31)
- बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी<sup>295</sup> (BG 18.32)
- बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो<sup>296</sup> (BG 18.51)
- बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य<sup>297</sup> (BG 18.57)

By examining these references from the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, we gain a comprehensive understanding of *buddhi* as the charioteer, the facilitator of enjoyment, and its significance in spiritual evolution and transcendence.

In conclusion, both *buddhi* and *manas* play significant roles as inner faculties in the human experience. *Buddhi* referred to as intellect, serves as the charioteer for the ātman, guiding and directing its actions and experiences. It acts as an instrument for the ātman to fulfill its actions and plays a crucial role in knowledge acquisition, decision-making, and discernment. *Buddhi's* active functioning allows for the smooth coordination between the ātman, *indriyas*, and *manas*, enabling the enjoyment of objects and experiences.

Conversely, the *manas*, the mind, serves as a terrain for generating fluctuating thoughts and is easily influenced by outer circumstances. It is instrumental in perceiving and interpreting the experiences of happiness, suffering, and the fluctuations of the mind. *Manas* exhibits fickle tendencies, swiftly traveling through thoughts and bringing the past and distant times near and here. It also possesses great power, capable of both elevating scholars and philosophers through profound contemplation and leading them

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<sup>292</sup> *buddherbhedaṃ dhṛteścaiva*

<sup>293</sup> *buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī*

<sup>294</sup> *buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī*

<sup>295</sup> *buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī*

<sup>296</sup> *buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto*

<sup>297</sup> *buddhiyogamupāśritya*

astray in its whirlpool of thoughts. Due to its instability, controlling the mind is a challenging endeavor.

While *buddhi* and *manas* are distinct faculties, they are interconnected – easily understood through the analogy of the Kāṭha Upaniṣad. *Buddhi* acts as the charioteer, directing the mind and senses toward their respective objects, while the *manas*, in turn, influence and affects the functioning of *buddhi*. It utilizes the capabilities of the *manas* to process contemplation and generate thoughts, contributing to the overall functioning of the mind.

Together, *buddhi* and *manas* shape our cognitive and intellectual processes, mediating our interactions with the external world and guiding our spiritual journey. Understanding the intricate relationship between these inner faculties deepens our comprehension of human nature and its role in self-realization and the pursuit of higher truths.

#### 4.13 Indriyas (Senses)

*Indriyas*, which can be understood as instruments or senses, play a crucial role in acquiring and processing knowledge. These *indriyas*, also called senses, act as conduits for information. The process of receiving knowledge unfolds systematically. Initially, the *indriyas* engage with their respective objects, detecting and interacting with the external world. The information thus gathered is then relayed to the *manas*, the inner faculty responsible for contemplation and processing. Subsequently, the processed information is presented to ātman, the inner self, and ruler of all internal systems.

The *indriyas* can be classified into two categories based on their functions. The *jñāna indriyas* serve as entry senses, enabling the reception of knowledge, while the *karma indriyas* function as exit senses, facilitating the expression of thoughts and intentions. Let us delve into the five *jñāna indriyas* and their specifications:

1. The *śrotra indriya*, located in the ears, serves as the hearing faculty, perceiving the viṣaya or object of sound.

- The *tvak indriya*, associated with the skin, is responsible for the sense of touch and the perception of different textures.
- The *cakṣu indriya*, situated in the eyes, enables vision and the perception of visual stimuli.
- The *rasanā indriya*, located in the tongue, facilitates the sense of taste, allowing us to discern different flavors.
- Lastly, the *ghrāṇa indriya*, residing in the nose, is the faculty of smell, enabling the perception of various odors.

In contrast to the *jñāna indriyas*, which receive sensory input, the *karma indriyas* function as motor organs, carrying out actions in response to the directives of the *manas* and *ātman*. These exit senses are instrumental in executing desired actions and fulfilling the objects of desire. Let us explore the five *karma indriyas*:

- The *vāk indriya* is the faculty of speech, allowing for verbal expression. It utilizes the same organ, the tongue, as the *jñāna indriya* for taste.
- The *pāṇi indriya* represents the grasping or holding capacity and is associated with the hands. It enables the manipulation and interaction with objects in the external world.
- The *pāda indriya* is the faculty of walking, involving using the feet for locomotion and movement.
- *Pāyu*, the *indriya* associated with the anus or rectum, is responsible for eliminating waste products from the body.
- Lastly, the *upastha indriya* pertains to the reproductive organ and is involved in the process of procreation.

These ten *indriyas* form an intricate network connecting the individual with the external world. Through the *jñāna indriyas*, the *manas* receive and process information, while the *karma indriyas* enable actions and the manifestation of desires.

	<i>Indriyas</i>	<b>Organs</b>	<b>Senses/Actions</b>	<i>Viśayas</i>	<i>Devas</i>
<i>Jñāna indriyas</i> (input) Cognitive (entry senses)	<i>Śrotra</i>	Ears	Hearing faculty	<i>Sabda</i> (sound)	<i>Diś</i>
	<i>Tvak</i>	Skin	Sensibility faculty	<i>Sparśa</i> (touch)	<i>Vāta</i>
	<i>Cakṣu</i>	Eyes	Vision faculty	<i>Rūpa</i> (form)	<i>Surya</i>
	<i>Rasanā</i>	Tongue	Taste faculty	<i>Rasa</i> (taste)	<i>Pracetā</i>
	<i>Ghrāṇa</i>	Nose	Smell faculty	<i>Gandha</i> (odor)	<i>Aśvina</i>
<i>Karma indriyas</i> (output) Conative (exit senses)	<i>Vāk</i>	Mouth /Tongue	Speech faculty	Speech	<i>Agni</i>
	<i>Pāṇi</i>	Hands	Grasping faculty	Dexterity	<i>Indra</i>
	<i>Pāda</i>	Feet	Walking faculty	Locomotion	<i>Upendra</i>
	<i>Pāyu</i>	Anus	Elimination faculty	Excretion	<i>Mitra</i>
	<i>Upastha</i>	Genitals	Procreation faculty	Reproduction	<i>Ka</i>

Table 4.1: *Jñāna and Karma Indriyas*

In summary, the *indriyas* serve as vital instruments for perceiving and interacting with the external environment. They enable the reception of knowledge through the *jñāna indriyas* and the execution of actions through the *karma indriyas*. By understanding the functions and interdependencies of these senses, one can gain insight into the complex mechanisms that facilitate our engagement with the world around us.

#### 4.13.1 Are Indriyas Made?

In the Brahmasūtras, a discussion emerges regarding the origin of the *indriyas*, referred to as *prāṇas* in the text. The sūtra तथा प्राणाः<sup>298</sup> (BS 2.4.1) states, “In the same way, the *prāṇas* (*indriyas*) (are born).” This suggests that, just like other elements, the *indriyas* also have their birth from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, the divine entities. This assertion finds support in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, which proclaims the origin of *prāṇa* (vital airs), *manas* (mind), all *indriyas*, sky, wind, and light, and so on from Parabrahman.

- एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च खं वायुर्ज्योतिः<sup>299</sup> (MU 2.1.3)

Notably, the term *prāṇa*, commonly associated with vital airs, is specifically mentioned separately from all *indriyas* in the mantra. Therefore, there is no confusion regarding the change in terminology in the aforementioned sūtra. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami, in his commentary Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, highlights that the preceding mantras and *muṇḍakas* (sections for the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad) praise Akṣarabrahman as the Creator of all. Thus, this particular mantra solely focuses on Parabrahman. Significantly, the concept of the *indriyas* finding their source in the divine entities of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman aligns with the Prasthānatrayī—the three foundational texts of Vedānta.

The *indriyas* are not merely biological or physiological functions but channels through which we experience and navigate knowledge and action. In conclusion, the Brahmasūtras and the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad shed light on the origin of the *indriyas*, affirming their birth from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

#### 4.13.2 What is the Count?

Another question that arises is the number of *indriyas*: are they five, seven, ten, or eleven? Vyāsa raises this question in the Saptagati adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. The objectors’ view suggests that the *indriyas* are seven in number. However, Vyāsa

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<sup>298</sup> *tathā prāṇāḥ*

<sup>299</sup> *etasmājjāyate prāṇo manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca khaṃ vāyurjyotiḥ*

disagrees and argues that the *karma indriyas* should also be included in the count. The sūtra – हस्तादयस्तु स्थितेऽतो नैवम्<sup>300</sup> (BS 2.4.6) – states, “Because hands and others are present; therefore, no (*indriyas* are not seven).” This implies that the *indriyas* extend beyond the commonly perceived seven and require the inclusion of the *karma indriyas*.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mantra and verses from the Gītā concur with this perspective, providing a coherent understanding of the count of the *indriyas*.

- दशमे पुरुषे प्राणा आत्मैकादशः<sup>301</sup> (BU 3.9.4) – “In this human being, there are ten *prāṇas* (*indriyas*), and *ātman* (*manas*) is the eleventh”.
- इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च<sup>302</sup> (BG 13.5) – “And the five senses, along with the mind as the sixth.”

These mantras support the notion that there are ten *indriyas* in a human being, with the mind (*manas*) being the eleventh.

Expanding on the concept and count of the *indriyas* in the commentary on Brahmasūtras 2.4.6, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami discusses how the senses (*indriyas*) and inner faculties (*antaḥkaraṇas*) are counted. He explains that the *antaḥkaraṇas* are sometimes counted as four: *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta*, and *ahaṃkāra*, to illustrate their distinct activities. However, when they are counted as one or simply as *mana*, they are considered a single entity. Additionally, in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam on the aforementioned mantra, the Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhāṣyakāra highlights that *manas* is the inner faculty that governs both *jñāna* and *karma indriyas*. It states, एकं च मनो ज्ञानकर्मोभयेन्द्रियाऽनुग्राहकमन्तरिन्द्रियम्।<sup>303</sup>

Through these explanations, it becomes evident that the count of the *indriyas* encompasses more than the traditionally recognized seven senses. The inclusion of *karma indriyas* emphasizes the holistic understanding of human faculties and their

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<sup>300</sup> *hastādayastu sthite 'to naivam*

<sup>301</sup> *daśeme puruṣe prāṇā ātmaikādaśaḥ*

<sup>302</sup> *indriyāṇi daśaikam ca*

<sup>303</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 13.5-6; *ekam ca mano jñānakarmobhayendriyā 'nugrahakamantarindriyam |*

interconnectedness. The mind (*manas*) serves as the central governing force, coordinating both the *jñāna indriyas* (senses of knowledge) and the *karma indriyas* (senses of action).

#### 4.13.3 Indriyas from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā

In the Bhagavad Gītā, Kṛṣṇa discusses the nature of the *indriyas* and their relationship with the mind (*manas*). He emphasizes the challenge of controlling the *indriyas*, even for a wise person who possesses various skills and knowledge. The mind, as an inner faculty, seeks to explore its desired objects through the *indriyas* - विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन्<sup>304</sup> (BG 2.64). When the *indriyas* wander and indulge in sensory objects, the mind follows suit – इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते<sup>305</sup> (BG 2.67). This interaction between the *indriyas* and the mind highlights their interdependence and the difficulty of restraining their turbulence.

- यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।  
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥<sup>306</sup> (BG 2.60)

Another aspect of the relationship between the *indriyas* and the mind is presented in an ascension chart mentioned in the Gītā, drawing from the Kaṭha Upaniṣad. The *indriyas* are considered superior to the gross body as they draw the ātman (soul) towards sensory objects, hindering meditation or spiritual progress. Although the ātman is the ruler of all elements within the body, it forgets its power and becomes entangled and deceived by the *indriyas* and the mind. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami expresses this idea lucidly: स्वेष्टविषयं प्रति प्रधावन्ति तानि देहिंनं ध्यानोपासनादिषु बलाद् विक्लेषयन्तीति तेषां परत्वम्<sup>307</sup> — while Kṛṣṇa explains that “the *indriyas* are superior, *manas* is superior to the *indriyas*. *Buddhi* is beyond *manas*, and he (ātman) is beyond *buddhi*.”

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<sup>304</sup> *viṣayānindriyaiścāran*

<sup>305</sup> *indriyāṇāṃ hi caratāṃ yanmano ’nuvidhīyate* |

<sup>306</sup> *yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ* |  
*indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṃ manaḥ* ||

<sup>307</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.42, p. 90; *sveṣṭaviṣayaṃ prati pradhāvanti tāni dehināṃ dhyānopāsanādiṣu balād vikṣepayantīti teṣāṃ paratvam* |

- इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।  
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥<sup>308</sup> (BG 3.42)

Furthermore, in different verses of the Bhagavad Gītā, the mind (*manas*) is counted among the *indriyas*. It is regarded as the highest among the *indriyas* in the tenth chapter- इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि<sup>309</sup> (BG 10.22) and the sixth in the count of *indriyas* in the fifteenth chapter - मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि<sup>310</sup> (BG 15.7). There are also instances in the Gītā where the *indriyas* are collectively mentioned with the mind, *prāṇas*, and *viśayas* (sensory objects).

- इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥<sup>311</sup> (BG 2.58, 68)
- यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।<sup>312</sup> (BG 3.7)
- इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।<sup>313</sup> (BG 3.34)
- इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।<sup>314</sup> (BG 3.40)
- सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।<sup>315</sup> (BG 4.27)
- इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥<sup>316</sup> (BG 5.9)
- मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥<sup>317</sup> (BG 6.24)
- धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।<sup>318</sup> (BG 18.33)
- विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।<sup>319</sup> (BG 18.38)

<sup>308</sup> *indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurindriyebhyaḥ paraṃ manaḥ |  
manasastu parā buddhiryo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ ||*

<sup>309</sup> *indriyāṇāṃ manaścāsmi*

<sup>310</sup> *manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi*

<sup>311</sup> *indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ||*

<sup>312</sup> *yastvindriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate 'rjuna |*

<sup>313</sup> *indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau |*

<sup>314</sup> *indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate |*

<sup>315</sup> *sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare |*

<sup>316</sup> *indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan ||*

<sup>317</sup> *manasaivendriyagrāmaṃ viniyamya samantataḥ ||*

<sup>318</sup> *dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ |*

<sup>319</sup> *viśayendriyasamyogādyattadagre 'mṛtopamam |*

The repeated mention of the *indriyas* and the mind in the Bhagavad Gītā, with over 38 references throughout its 700 verses, underscores the significance of contemplating their nature and their impact on an individual's spiritual journey. It highlights the consistent and coherent portrayal of the *indriyas* and their relationship with other elements of creation in the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā, and Brahmasūtras.

#### 4.14 Prāṇa

Initiating our exploration of *prāṇas*, we must first address the fundamental question of their nature. Vyāsa raises this question in the Vāyukriyā adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. The sūtra states that *prāṇas* are not the *vāyu* (air) or its functions, as they are mentioned separately.

- न वायुक्रिये पृथगुपदेशात् ॥<sup>320</sup> (BS 2.4.9)

Some may suggest that *prāṇas* are simply air or an extension of it. However, according to Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, *prāṇa* is indeed related to air but in a distinct state or form - अतोऽवस्थाविशेषाऽऽपन्नो वायुरेव प्राणः<sup>321</sup>. This understanding is supported by the mention of *prāṇa* separately from *vāyu* in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad and other Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads provide further insights into *prāṇas*, offering an extensive study of their nature.

- एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च । खं वायुर्ज्योतिः<sup>322</sup> (MU 2.1.3)

Among the Upaniṣads, the Kena Upaniṣad holds significant importance in discussing *prāṇa*. It goes beyond the concept of *prāṇa* itself and explores what gives life to the life-breaths. The Upaniṣad reveals that there is something by which the *prāṇa* is drawn and sustained and is not grasped by the *prāṇas*. That something is identified as Parabrahman, as interpreted by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami.

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<sup>320</sup> na vāyukriye pṛthagupadeśāt ||

<sup>321</sup> Brahmasūtras-Svāmīnārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.4.9, p. 258; avasthāviśeṣā'panno vāyureva prāṇaḥ

<sup>322</sup> etasmājjāyate **prāṇo** manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca | khaṃ vāyurjyotiḥ

- यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।  
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥<sup>323</sup> (KeU 1.9)

Furthermore, *prāṇa* finds numerous references in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. These references provide additional insights into the concept.

- सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।  
आत्मसंयमयोगान्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥<sup>324</sup> (BG 4.27)
- अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।  
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥<sup>325</sup> (BG 4.29)
- अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।  
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥<sup>326</sup> (BG 4.30)
- स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।  
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥<sup>327</sup> (BG 5.27)
- प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।  
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥<sup>328</sup> (BG 8.10)
- सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।  
मूर्ध्न्याधियात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥<sup>329</sup> (BG 8.12)

<sup>323</sup> *yatprāṇena na prāṇiti yena prāṇaḥ pranīyate |*

*tadeva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yadidamupāsate ||*

<sup>324</sup> *sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare |*

*ātmasaṃyamayogāgnau juhvati jñānadīpīte ||*

<sup>325</sup> *apāne juhvati prāṇaṃ prāṇe 'pānaṃ tathāpare |*

*prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ ||*

<sup>326</sup> *apare niyatahārāḥ prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati |*

*sarve 'pyete yajñavido yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ ||*

<sup>327</sup> *sparsāṅkr̥tvā bahirbāhyāṃścaḥśuścaivāntare bhruvoḥ |*

*prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyanantaracārīnau ||*

<sup>328</sup> *prayāṇakāle manasā 'calena bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva |*

*bhruvordhaye prāṇamāveśya samyaks tvaṃ paraṃ puruṣamupaiti divyam ||*

<sup>329</sup> *sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca |*

*mūrdhnyādhīyātmanaḥ prāṇamāsthito yogadhāraṇām ||*

- अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।  
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥<sup>330</sup> (BG 15.14)

In conclusion, the *prāṇas* are distinct from *vāyu* and encompass a more profound understanding beyond being mere air or its extension. The Upaniṣads, including the Kena Upaniṣad and the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, bring to light on the nature of *prāṇa* and its connection to the life-breaths. Exploring the references in the Bhagavad Gītā further enriches our understanding of *prāṇas* and their significance in spiritual teachings.

#### 4.15 Mahābhūtas

The concept of the five *mahābhūtas* - *pṛthivī* (Earth), *jala* (water), *tejas* (fire or light), *vāyu* (air), and *ākāśa* (space or sky) - is extensively discussed in the Upaniṣads and consequently in the Brahmasūtras. Let us explore the Viyad adhikaraṇa and Tejodhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras.

At the beginning of the Brahmasūtras, an overview and conclusion of all debates about creation state that the masters of creation, sustenance, and dissolution are Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman – जन्माद्यस्य यतः (BS 1.1.2). However, Vyāsa delves deeper into the debate, addressing the opponent’s opinion that the *mahābhūtas* are not created, as presented in the Viyad adhikaraṇa. The opponent questions how *ākāśa* can be considered created when there are no explicit mentions of it in the Upaniṣads - न वियदश्रुतेः (BS 2.3.1). Vyāsa confidently responds, अस्ति तु (BS 2.3.2) - it does exist. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami provides two Upaniṣadic references to support Vyāsa’s response:

- तस्माद्वा एतस्माद् आत्मन आकाशः सम्भूतः<sup>331</sup> (TU 2.1.1)
- एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च। खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः<sup>332</sup> (MU 2.1.3).

<sup>330</sup> *aḥam vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṃ dehamāśritah | prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ pacāmyannaṃ caturvidham ||*

<sup>331</sup> *tasmādvā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*

<sup>332</sup> *etasmājjāyate prāṇo manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca | khaṃ vāyurjyotirāpaḥ*

Furthermore, while presenting multiple arguments against the opponent's viewpoint, Vyāsa emphasizes an interesting point in one of the sūtras: यावद्विकारं तु विभागो लोकवत् (BS 2.3.7). This implies that whatever undergoes transformation or change is created, just as we observe in the world. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami interprets the word *vibhāga* as creation, stating that everything born of *prakṛti* with a name and form is subject to creation by Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman, also referred to as *sat* (from the Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad) - प्रकृतिजा यावन्तो नामरूपविभागाऽऽपन्ना विकारास्तेषां सर्वेषामप्युत्पत्तिः सच्छब्दवाच्यब्रह्मपरब्रह्मणोर्वाच्या।<sup>333</sup> It is evident that the creation of each *mahābhūta* overrides the argument against their creation. It is also seen in our world that although a rule might be dictated targeting one student, the teacher means to convey it all students present. In a similar manner, the words ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वम् ...<sup>334</sup> (CU 6.8.7) dictates that everything is created by the two divinities.

Nevertheless, Vyāsa clarifies that even *vāyu* (air) is created - एतेन मातरिश्वा व्याख्यातः (BS 2.3.8). In the Tejoadhikaraṇa, the opponent argues that while the *mahābhūtas* may be created, they are produced from other entities and not from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. The following three sūtras dismantle these half-nailed arguments. The first sūtra states that *tejas* (fire or light) is produced from *vāyu*, as mentioned in the *śrutis* - तेजोऽतस्तथा ह्याह (BS 2.3.10). This argument finds support in the words from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad – वायोरग्निः ...<sup>335</sup> (TU 2.1.1). The subsequent sūtra argues that water is even produced from fire - आपः<sup>336</sup> (BS 2.3.11), a notion which is supported by अग्नेरापः...<sup>337</sup> (TU 2.1.1) and तदपोऽसृजत<sup>338</sup> (CU 6.2.3). The final sūtra addresses the creation of the earth - पृथिवी<sup>339</sup> (BS 2.3.12), backed by the same mantra from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad - अद्भ्यः पृथिवी...<sup>340</sup> (TU 2.1.1) and ता

<sup>333</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.7, p. 222; *prakṛtijā yāvanto nāmarūpavibhāgā'pannā vikārāsteṣāṃ sarveṣāmapyutpattiḥ sacchabdavācyabrahmaparabrahmaṇorvācyā*

<sup>334</sup> *aitadātmymidaṃ sarvaṃ ...*

<sup>335</sup> *vāyoragniḥ ...*

<sup>336</sup> *āpaḥ*

<sup>337</sup> *agnerāpaḥ...*

<sup>338</sup> *tadapo'sṛjata*

<sup>339</sup> *prthivī*

<sup>340</sup> *adbhyaḥ prthivī...*

अन्नमसृजत (CU 6.2.4). However, these opposing propositions do not diminish the authority of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. It is essential to acknowledge that all these productions are only possible through the *abhidhyāna*, *saṅkalpa*, or will of Parabrahman. Vyāsa draws attention to this by stating: तदभिध्यानादेव तु तल्लिङ्गात् सः (BS 2.3.14) - it is because of the will and recognized mentions that he (i.e., Parabrahman) is the creator of all elements. It is solely through the divine will of Parabrahman that the creation of all elements occurs. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami adds: स्वदिव्यसङ्कल्पादेव तयोस्तत्तत्कार्याऽव्यवहितपूर्वकारणाऽनुप्रवेशपूर्वकं तत्तद्रूपेण सकलजगत्कारणता<sup>341</sup>. Multiple instances can be found where Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are identified as the creators, as explored in the first half of this chapter.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami adds the perspective of lack of sentience in the elements to be able to procreate. He says: आत्मनो बहुभवनाऽभिध्यानरूपस्यैक्षणस्य चेतनमात्रधर्मत्वात् तेजआदीनामचेतनानां तदसम्भवात् तत्तयोरेव स्वकार्यभूततेजआदिकारणवर्गाऽनुप्रविष्टयोर्दिव्यचेतनतत्त्वयोरुपपद्यते<sup>342</sup>, and while putting a close to this argument and the *adhikaraṇa* he confidently states that Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are undeniably in this way, the absolute cause of all – अतो ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मण्येव तत्तद्रूपेण कृत्स्नकार्यकारणभूत इति निश्चप्रचम् ।<sup>343</sup>.

Additionally, the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā presents various instances that occasionally speak of the creation of the five *mahābhūtas* and other elements, attributing their creation to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam further elucidates these references.

- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>344</sup> (CU 6.2.3)

<sup>341</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.14, p. 226; *svadivyaṣaṅkalpādeva tayostattatkāryā 'vyavahitapūrvakāraṇā' nupraveśapūrvakam tattadrūpeṇa sakalajagatkāraṇatā*

<sup>342</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.14, p. 226; *ātmano bahubhavanā 'bhidhyānarūpasyaikṣaṇasya cetanamātradharmatvāt tejādīnāmacetanānām tadasambhavāt tattayoreva svakāryabhūtatejādīkāraṇavargā' nupraviṣṭayor-divyacetanattvayorupapadyate*

<sup>343</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.14, p. 226; *ato brahmaparabrahmanyeva tattadrūpeṇa kṛtsnakāryakāraṇabhūta iti niścāpracam* |

<sup>344</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

- ता आप ऐक्षन्त बहव्यः स्याम प्रजायेमहीति<sup>345</sup> (CU 6.2.4)
- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः सोऽन्वीक्ष्य<sup>346</sup> (BU 1.4.1)
- सोऽकामयत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>347</sup> (TU 2.6.3)
- तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म<sup>348</sup> (MU 1.1.8)
- यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।  
तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते ॥<sup>349</sup> (MU 1.1.9)

The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā also adds to the understanding of the creation of the elements and the role of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as their creators. The Gītā teachings emphasize these entities’ divine nature and their overarching role in the cosmic order. Overall, the Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtras provide deep philosophical insights into the relationship between *manas* (mind), *indriyas* (senses), *prāṇas* (life-breaths), and the elements. They elucidate the intricate workings of the universe and the ultimate reality of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the creators and sustainers of all existence. These profound teachings continue to inspire seekers of knowledge and provide a thorough grasp on the nature of reality.

#### 4.16 Closing

This chapter commences with the Siddhāntasamāmnāya verses, which serve as a guiding framework for the exploration of the “*jagatyām jagat*” – the Māyā chapter. It begins by offering a foundational understanding of the concept of māyā as interpreted within our traditional approach to the Prasthānatrayī. The subsequent section delves into the multifaceted definitions of māyā found in the Vacanāmṛta, encompassing both its physical and cognitive dimensions. Parallely, the Upaniṣads and the revered text

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<sup>345</sup> *tā āpa aikṣanta bahavyaḥ syāma prajāyemahīti*

<sup>346</sup> *ātmaivedamagra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ so ’nviṅṣya*

<sup>347</sup> *so ’kāmayata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

<sup>348</sup> *tapasā cīyate brahma*

<sup>349</sup> *yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvavidyasya jñānamayaṃ tapaḥ |*

*tasmādetad brahma nāma rūpamannaṃ ca jāyate ||*

Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā intricately employ an array of terminologies to delineate the intricate nature and far-reaching consequences of māyā. This scholarly exegesis of māyā, as meticulously expounded upon by the erudite interpretations of Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami within the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā, adds a profound layer of depth and nuance to our scholarly comprehension of these intricate philosophical concepts.

Similarly, the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā employ diverse terminologies to describe the nature and effects of māyā, as elucidated by the interpretations of Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā.

The primary understanding of māyā is examined in relation to Creation and the creative process from a traditional perspective. This exploration leads us to contemplate the identities of the creators themselves. The subsequent significant section expounds upon the nature of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the ultimate creators, encompassing their roles as the essence and masters of all jīvas and īśvaras. Here, we begin the investigation with the Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. Drawing from these Upaniṣadic verses - सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्<sup>350</sup> (CU 6.2.1) the Brahmasūtras state - ईक्षतेर्नाशब्दम्<sup>351</sup> (BS 1.1.5). Guided by the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, we navigate through the Īkṣati adhikaraṇa, which involves delving into numerous sūtras and incorporating diverse mantras from the Upaniṣads that lend support to our discussion.

Another vidyā that expounds on Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as the creators is the Ānandamayāvidyā from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. The first sūtra, आनन्दमयोऽभ्यासात्<sup>352</sup> (BS 1.1.13), introduces the debate presented in the Brahmasūtras. The famous verses from the Upaniṣad - रसो वै सः । रस ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति । को ह्येवान्यात्कः प्राण्यात् । यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् । एष ह्येवाऽऽनन्दयति ।<sup>353</sup> (TU 2.7.2) serve as the focal point for this discourse.

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<sup>350</sup> *sadeva somyedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam*

<sup>351</sup> *īkṣaternāśabdām*

<sup>352</sup> *ānandamayā'bhyāsāt*

<sup>353</sup> *raso vai saḥ | rasa hyevāyaṃ labdhvā "nandī bhavati | ko hyevānyātkah prāṇyāt | yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt | eṣa hyevā "nandayāti |*

Another subsection that maintains our pursuit of consistency in the Prasthānatrayī revolves around the representation of “*ākāśa*” - Cidākāśa in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. To counter an objection, the sūtra उपसंहारदर्शनान्नेति चेन्न क्षीरवद्धि<sup>354</sup> (BS 2.1.25) asserts the involvement of Parabrahman as the initial curd in the milk for curdling. Similarly, the mere intention of Parabrahman is sufficient for the manifestation of everything, irrespective of the presence or absence of other entities.

As we venture into the Ananyatva adhikaraṇa, we aim to ascertain consistency in the Prasthānatrayī by contemplating whether the Creation is separate from its creators, Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. While examining an array of references from the Upaniṣads, we discover that *Prakṛti* is the cause of the universe, while Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are presented as the creators. One of the relevant mantras that addresses this quandary is मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं च महेश्वरम्<sup>355</sup> (SU 4.10) - Māyā is *prakṛti*, and Parabrahman is the māyīn (the master of māyā).

The subsequent section explores the purpose behind the entire Creation. Why does “*avāpta-samasta-kāma*” and “*nijānanda-sanṛpta*”<sup>356</sup> Parabrahman wish for all to be created? Out of immense compassion, Parabrahman creates bodies, objects, situations, locations, and surroundings for jīvas and īśvaras to experience the outcomes of their karmas and eventually attain liberation from māyā. While individuals are in the world, pleased with the faith and perseverance of devotees, Parabrahman blesses them with the divine opportunity to associate with the Brahmaśvarūpa Akṣarabrahman Satpuruṣa.

Furthermore, Parabrahman Swaminarayan expounds upon the elements and provides insightful details about their natures in the Vacanāmṛta. We delve deeper into the three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*), the *ahaṃkāras* (*sāttvic*, *rājasic*, and *tāmasic*), the mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), and their respective mentions, as well as the *indriyas* (both *jñāna* and *karma indriyas*). Within the *indriyas* section, we explore the debate surrounding the origin and count of *indriyas*. Additionally, we include references from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā pertaining to the *indriyas*. We then proceed to discuss

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<sup>354</sup> *upasaṃhāradarśanānneti cenna kṣīravaddhi*

<sup>355</sup> *māyāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ vidyānmāyinaṃ ca maheśvaram*

<sup>356</sup> Brahmaśūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.1.34, pp. 184

*prāṇas* through the Vāyukriyā adhikaraṇa, of the Brahmasūtras, with condensed references from the other two sacred texts. The *mahābhūtas* are then studied through Viyad adhikaraṇa and Tejodhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. The Tejodhikaraṇa creates a wondrous harmony of opposition and *siddhāntapakṣa* as the Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami walks us through it. The chapter, and the overall dissertation, extensively scrutinize the various elements and entities within the context of the Prasthānatrayī, aiming to establish a coherent framework and ensure congruity among them.

