

Chapter 5: “kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni” – Īśvaras and Jīvas

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Chapter 5

“kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni”- Īśvaras and Jīvas

5.1 Siddhāntasamāmnāya

Akṣarabrahman Guru, HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj, wrote a proclamation of the Vedāntic principle, Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. This opening of the chapter is the Sanskrit version as presented by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami in his Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā. As these words fulfill the role of serving as both an abstract and introduction of the chapter, commencing with insightful and compact contemplation of the subject matter – Vedāntic principles – holds excellent value. First in this proclamation is the Sanskrit version of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s authoritative philosophical letter on the tenets of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Next, the Sanskrit is presented in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā¹ authored by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami. Then, an English translation, based on the translation presented at the beginning of the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā², follows the Sanskrit text.

- ईश्वरः परब्रह्मणोऽक्षरब्रह्मणो जीवेभ्यश्च भिन्नं नित्यं चेतनं च तत्त्वम्। इमे चेश्वरा
अक्षरब्रह्मपरब्रह्माऽपेक्षयाऽत्यन्तमसमर्थाः सन्तोऽपि जीवाऽपेक्षयाऽधिकं सामर्थ्यं ज्ञानं
च बिभ्रति। परमात्मा तान् स्वेच्छया तत्तद्ब्रह्माण्डोत्पत्त्यादिकार्येषु प्रेरयति। ईश्वरा एते
जीवा इवाऽसङ्ख्येयाः स्वरूपतोऽणुवत्सूक्ष्मा अच्छेद्यादिलक्षणैर्युक्ता ज्ञानस्वरूपा
ज्ञातारोऽनादिकालतो मायाबद्धाः शुभाऽशुभकर्मकर्तारस्तत्तत्कर्मफलभोक्तारश्च।
प्रधानपुरुषो विराट्पुरुषस्तदिन्द्रियाऽन्तःकरणदेवताश्चेत्यादय
ईश्वरतत्त्वाऽन्तर्गताश्चेतनाः। ते च चेतनाः स्वरूपस्वभावतः परस्परं भिन्ना इति।

¹ Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 1.6.4, pp. 10-14

² 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.

- जीवः परब्रह्मणोऽक्षरब्रह्मण ईश्वरेभ्यश्च भिन्नं नित्यं चेतनं च तत्त्वम्। एते जीवा असङ्ख्येयाः स्वरूपतोऽणुवत्सूक्ष्मा अच्छेद्यादिलक्षणयुक्ता ज्ञानस्वरूपा ज्ञातारोऽनादिकालतो मायाबद्धाः शुभाऽशुभकर्मकर्तारस्तत्तत्कर्मफलभोक्तारश्चेति।

“Īśvara, as an eternal sentient entity, is distinct from Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and jīvas. Although extremely less powerful than Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, īśvaras possess greater knowledge and strength than jīvas. Guided by the will of Paramātmā, they carry out various tasks related to the creation and maintenance of the *brahmāṇḍas*. Similar to jīvas, īśvaras are innumerable, infinitesimally small, indivisible, and possess other inherent qualities. They embody the essence of knowledge (*jñānasvarūpa*) and possess the capacity to know (*jñātr*) yet remain perpetually bound by māyā. Engaging in karma, they inevitably experience the consequences of their deeds. Among the category of īśvaras, there exist distinct entities such as Pradhāna Puruṣa, Virāt Puruṣa, deities of the senses (*indriyas*), inner faculties (*antaḥkaraṇa*), and others. It is crucial to recognize that these īśvaras are ontologically separate from one another, each possessing its unique nature and essence.”

“The jīvas are also eternally existing sentient entities that are fundamentally distinct from Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and īśvaras. Just like īśvaras, jīvas are innumerable, infinitesimally small, indivisible, and possess various inherent qualities. They embody the essence of knowledge (*jñānasvarūpa*) and possess the capacity to know (*jñātr*). However, they, too, remain perpetually bound by māyā. Engaging in righteous and unrighteous actions (karma), they inevitably experience the outcomes of their deeds.”

5.2 Opening

Jīvas (individual souls) and īśvaras (empowered beings) are the last two entities of five in the discussion here. Jīvas and īśvaras remain ensnared within the intricate web of māyā until the attainment of liberation, a state heralding their release from the relentless cycle of countless births and deaths. The term “jīva” derives its etymology from the Sanskrit verb root √jīv, which signifies the act of living or existence. The meaning is also extended to that by which something lives. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas

Swami, in his Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā, expounds on the meaning of the word as one that enlivens the body and lives by it. A jīva is the metaphysical sentient entity by which the body thrives.

Moreover, a jīva needs a body to experience mundane pleasures and the fruits of karma – so it lives because of the body. Jīvas are infinite in count, immortal, uncuttable, devoid of old-age, and extremely minute. The same is to be understood for īśvaras too. They get their name because they are empowered. They are more powerful than jīvas as their activities include creating, sustaining, and demolishing realms – all in accordance with the independent and eternal will of Parabrahman. Īśvaras also acts as the main deities of *indriyas* and *antaḥkaraṇas*. The relationship of all Jīvas and īśvaras with Parabrahman is dependent since Parabrahman grants them the freedom to act. More about this will be discussed in the chapter. Akṣarabrahman is present amongst us in the form of Brahmasvarūpa Guru and shows us the way to Parabrahman and grants us *mokṣa*. All the jīvas and īśvaras that are blessed with a spot in Akṣaradhāman as Akṣaramuktas maintain their jīva or īśvara status, though they gain certain qualities of Akṣarabrahman. These jīvas or īśvaras are now Akṣaramuktas possessing qualities like that of Akṣarabrahman and are able to offer ultimate devotion to Parabrahman, to be able to participate in the creation of uncountable universes, and not being bound by māyā ever again. We further explore the jīvas and īśvaras in this chapter.

5.3 Īśvaras

Īśvara, in the context of Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana and the Prasthānatrayī, refers to empowered beings or divine controllers who possess qualities superior to jīvas and govern specific realms of existence. They are distinct from jīvas and gain their powers by the wish of Parabrahman.

The concept of Īśvara is discussed in various scriptures, including the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad.

- तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम् ।
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद्विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम् ॥³ (SU 6.7)

It is said that Parabrahman is the master of gods. These “gods” are īśvaras. In Vedānta philosophy, Īśvaras are considered to be greater, more knowledgeable, and more powerful than jīvas as they play a crucial role in the cosmic order, governing various aspects of creation, preservation, and dissolution – as willed by Parabrahman. While they possess greater qualities and authority, they are still distinct and deficient in front of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. These entities govern the universe they are assigned and perform assigned tasks. We shall discuss more about them with each progressing section.

As mentioned in the Parabrahman chapter, there are two types of the presence of Parabrahman in all entities. One is the witness and controller of all. The second is as *nitya* (eternal and endless) and complete presence in Akṣarabrahman. In the first type, Parabrahman also chooses to “re-enter” in jīvas or īśvaras. This special entry, or *anupraveśa*, is what makes the īśvaras capable of being avatāras of the avatārin Parabrahman. The process of *avatarāṇa* “coming down,” that by which *avatarāṇa* happens, and that in which *avatarāṇa* happens are all *avatāras*. However, all *avatāras* should be understood by Parabrahman, the *avatārin*.

Parabrahman does *anupraveśa* in the avatāras with a special intention of fulfilling some specific tasks. Upon completing those tasks, Parabrahman takes away the prowess bestowed for that task. This coming down of Parabrahman is temporary and dedicated to fulfilling the intended tasks. However, there are two other ways of “coming down” that are more important for the discussion here. Parabrahman sometimes manifests in front of our eyes, with all its divinity, abode, and muktas. This is not an *avatāra* as this is avatārin in the form of Bhagavān Swaminarayan (1781-1830).

Moreover, Parabrahman continued manifesting before his devotees even after his return to his abode in 1830. This lineage of Akṣarabrahman Gurus manifests Parabrahman to its fullest, blessing their contemporaries and the universe with exactly the same

³ *tamīśvarāṇām paramaṃ mahēśvaraṃ taṃ devatānām paramaṃ ca daivatam |
patim patīnām paramaṃ parastādvīdāma devaṃ bhuvaneśamīdyam ||*

compassion and love as Parabrahman did. This manifestation or entry of Parabrahman in Akṣarabrahman is not momentary. It is perpetual and absolute, unlike the entry in *avatāras*. Moreover, *avatāras*, too, are īśvaras, bound in māyā, and thus, Akṣarabrahman is infinitely superior to all jīvas and īśvaras.

In the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, the *avatāras*, which include Vairājapuruṣa, are tasked with the responsibilities of creating, sustaining, and ultimately dissolving their designated *brahmāṇḍas*, as delineated in the process of creation. Furthermore, the Pradhānapuruṣa and all the deities associated with the *indriyas* and *antaḥkaraṇas* also hold the status of īśvaras. This elucidates the nuanced understanding of the īśvaras and the differentiation between the *avatāras* and *avatārin* within the framework of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

5.4 Īśvaras: Extensions

A comparison of jīvas and īśvaras concerning their bodies, states of consciousness, and technical names are as follows.

<i>Predominant Nature</i>		<i>Sattva</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Tamas</i>
<i>Bodies</i>	Jīvas	<i>Sthūla</i>	<i>Sūkṣma</i>	<i>Kāraṇa</i>
	Īśvaras	<i>Virāṭ</i>	<i>Sutrāman</i>	<i>Avyākṛta</i>
<i>States</i>	Jīvas	<i>Jāgrat</i>	<i>Svapna</i>	<i>Suṣupti</i>
	Īśvaras	<i>Utapatti</i>	<i>Sthiti</i>	<i>Pralaya</i>
<i>Names</i>	Jīvas	<i>Viśva</i>	<i>Taijas</i>	<i>Prājña</i>
	Īśvaras	<i>Vairāja</i>	<i>Hiraṇyagarbha</i>	<i>Īśvara</i>

Table 5.1: Īśvaras: Bodies, States, and Names

Additionally, some other commonly known īśvara entities are the presiding deities of *indriyas* and *antaḥkaraṇas*.

- *Manas* – Aniruddha/Candra
- *Buddhi* – Pradyumna/Brahmā
- *Citta* – Vāsudeva
- *Ahaṃkāra* – Saṃkarṣaṇa/Rudra
- *Caksus* – Sūrya
- *Śrotra* – Dik
- *Ghrāṇa* – Aśvinikumāra
- *Rasanā* – Varuṇa
- *Tvak* – Vāyu
- *Vāk* – Agni
- *Pāni* – Indra
- *Pāda* – Viṣṇu
- *Pāyu* – Mitra
- *Upastha* – Prajāpati

5.5 Relationship with the Divine

Parabrahman stands as the ultimate transcendental entity, surpassing all others, and serves as the fundamental support for the entirety of existence. The Brahmasūtras explain in the first section of the first chapter:

- भेदव्यपदेशाच्चान्यः⁴ (BS 1.1.2)

The Upaniṣads too reveal this principle, while in coherence with the Brahmasūtras mentioned above and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā verses. Some of these references are provided below:

⁴ *bhedavyapadeśāccānyaḥ*

- य आदित्ये तिष्ठन्नादित्यादन्तरो यमादित्यो न वेद यस्याऽऽदित्यः शरीरं य आदित्यमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः⁵ (BU 3.7.9)
- य आत्मनि तिष्ठन्नात्मनो अन्तरो य आत्मा न वेद यस्यात्मा शरीरं य आत्मानमन्तरो यमयति⁶ (BU 3.7.22)
- भीषास्माद् वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति ॥⁷ (TU 2.8.1)

The same idea of Parabrahman being the most transcendental reality – therefore, beyond jīvas and īśvaras – can be found in the Ānandamayādhikaraṇa.

Moreover, this consistent study of how jīvas and īśvaras are related to Parabrahman is also reflected in the Bhotrāpatti adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. Jīvas and īśvaras experience bliss and suffering while in the body; however, are these experiences also felt by Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman as they reside as the soul and controller of all souls? This is the question that the adhikaraṇa considers. Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman remain extremely untouched by the vices or limitations, in any way, of the bound jīvas and īśvaras within which they reside. Vyāsa presents the relevant argument in sūtra form as follows:

- भोक्त्रापत्तेरविभागश्चेत् स्याल्लोकवत्⁸ (BS 2.1.13)

He argues that this is commonly explored in the world. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami expounds upon how. The example he provides is that an ātman remains unadulterated by the stages of life that the body it holds passes through. On a more familiar level, a ball of iron cannot turn fire dark, cold, or hard as it is when heated. Instead, what is seen is that the iron ball itself changes from dark cold to red hot and slowly softens to transform, unlike its basic form. The fire shows its form in the iron ball instead of an iron ball cooling or darkening the inferno. A mantra from the Muṇḍaka

⁵ ya āditye tiṣṭhannādityādantaro yamādityo na veda yasyā”dityaḥ śarīraṃ ya ādityamantaro yamayatyēṣa ta ātmā ’ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ

⁶ ya ātmani tiṣṭhannātmāntaro ya ātmā na veda yasyātmā śarīraṃ ya ātmānamantaro yamayati

⁷ bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate | bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ | bhīṣāsmādagnīścendraśca | mṛtyurdhāvati pañcama iti||

⁸ bhoktrāpatteravibhāgaścet syāllokavat

Upaniṣad also expounds the same principle with an analogy of two birds – sitting on a tree and Parabrahman.

- द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्योऽभिचाकशीति ॥⁹ (MU 3.1.1)
- समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥¹⁰ (MU 3.1.2)

These mantras first explore the relation between jīvas (and īśvaras) and Akṣarabrahman. Both of them are like close friends, birds perched on the same branch while the jīva enjoys the tree's sweet fruit, namely, the consequences of its karma, and Akṣarabrahman looks on without participating in the activity of enjoying the fruits of the tree. Moreover, on the same tree, Parabrahman resides. The jīva is freed of its sorrow by contemplating and recognizing the other *puruṣa* – Parabrahman.

Nonetheless, though Parabrahman, being in the same *śarīra*, remains unaffected by mundane karmic experiences of jīvas and īśvaras, it remains the soul of all jīvas and īśvaras. Therefore, the jīva's faculties of knowledge, thought, and action are facilitated by Parabrahman. Thus, jīvas and īśvaras are not independent to act unless permitted by Parabrahman. The Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam turns to the Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad and shows that the word “*prāṇa*” contextually means Parabrahman and not the vital life-breaths. The mantras significant in this context start from अथ खलु प्राण एव प्रज्ञात्मा इदं शरीरं परिगृह्योत्थापयति in the Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad (3.27) and end with प्राण एव प्रज्ञात्मा आनन्दोऽजरोऽमृतः (3.62).

A relevant discussion holds its place in the Indraprāṇa adhikaraṇa in the following sūtras.

- प्राणस्तथाऽनुगमात्¹¹ (BS 1.1.29)

⁹ *dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṃ vṛkṣaṃ pariśvasvajāte |
tayoranyah pippalam svādvattyanasṅnannanyo 'bhicākaśīti ||*

¹⁰ *samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno 'nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ |
juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamīśamasya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ ||*

¹¹ *prāṇastathā 'nugamāt*

- न वक्तुरात्मोपदेशादिति चेदध्यात्मसम्बन्धभूमा ह्यस्मिन्¹² (BS 1.1.30)
- शास्त्रदृष्ट्या तूपदेशो वामदेववत्¹³ (BS 1.1.31)
- जीवमुख्यप्राणलिङ्गान्नेति चेन्नोपासात्रैविध्याद् आश्रितत्वादिह तद्योगात्¹⁴ (BS 1.1.32)

More should be known from the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the respective sutras. However, to add something to the discussion here, I present what Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami comments in the Brahmasūtras 1.1.31. He says that there are two ways Parabrahman enters into any entity. The typical entry is in all jīvas and īśvaras as a witness of their actions and provider of power to will, know, and act. Sometimes, pertaining to special events, Parabrahman does *anupraveśa* – a special entry in īśvaras or avatāras. The second type is the supreme type. This eternal type can only be characterized by being in Akṣarabrahman. Parabrahman continues its presence on our planet through these spiritual masters – the forms of same very Akṣarabrahman that is also the divine abode, divine space and divine devotee in Akṣaradhāman. Additionally, this understanding of Parabrahman as being the master of all, including *indra* and *prāṇa*, can be seen in some of the following mantras too.

- स एष प्राण एव प्रज्ञात्मा । आनन्दोऽजरोऽमृतः ॥ स न साधुना भूयान्, नो एवाऽसाधुना कर्मणा कनीयान् ॥ एष ह्येवैनं साधु कर्म कारयति तम्, यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्य उन्निनीषति ॥ एष लोकपाल एष लोकाधिपतिरेष सर्वेशः¹⁵ (Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad 3.62-66)
- भीषाऽस्माद्वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषाऽस्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति ।¹⁶ (TU 2.8.1)

¹² *na vakturātmopadeśāditi cedadhyātmāsambandhabhūmā hyasmin*

¹³ *śāstradr̥ṣṭyā tūpadeśo vāmadevavat*

¹⁴ *jīvamukhyapraṇāliṅgānneti cennopāsātraividhyād āśritatvādiha tadyogāt*

¹⁵ *sa eṣa prāṇa eva prajñātmā | ānando 'jaro 'mṛtaḥ || sa na sādhanā bhūyān, no eva 'sādhunā karmaṇā kanīyān || eṣa hyevainaṃ sādhu karma kārayati tam, yamebhyo lokebhya unninīṣati || eṣa lokapāla eṣa lokādhipatireṣa sarveśaḥ*

¹⁶ *bhīṣā 'smādvātaḥ pavate | bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ | bhīṣā 'smādagniścendraśca | mṛtyurdhāvati pañcama iti*

- ब्रह्मणो विजये देवा अमहीयन्त¹⁷ (KeU 3.1)
- अथेन्द्रमब्रुवन् मघवन्नेतद् विजानीहि¹⁸ (KeU 3.11)
- प्राणस्य प्राणः¹⁹ (KeU 1.2)
- एतस्माज्जायते प्राणः²⁰ (MU 2.1.3)
- प्राणशब्दवाच्य इति सिद्धम्²¹ (BS 1.1.29)

Thus, Parabrahman is referred to by the words like “*prāṇa*” and “*indra*,” thus establishing a master-servant relationship with all liberated and bound *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. This study is consistently found in the Upaniṣads and supported by the Brahmasūtras. Moreover, on a similar note, another *adhikaraṇa* also adds to the discussion. We have discussed the *Bhedanirdeśa* *adhikaraṇa* in the chapters before, but let us take a quick look here too. This also acts as concluding remarks for this section as it also establishes consistency in three texts – fulfilling the main aim of the thesis.

While discussing the sūtra - अधिकं तु भेदनिर्देशात्²² (BS 2.1.23), Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami presents a plethora of references from both the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā to show how different are Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman from bound and liberated *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. A deeper study into the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of each of these mantras promises to open a newer perspective on the natures and forms of these entities.

One of the most important ways of describing the relationship with the divine is that these *jīvas* and *īśvaras* are sometimes called a “part” – *aṃśa* of Parabrahman. Some believe that this part of Parabrahman is just intermixed with *māyā* and when blessed with knowledge, the *jīva* leaves ignorance and becomes one with Parabrahman, or others believe that they are either like sparks of Parabrahman analogized with fire and

¹⁷ *brahmaṇo vijaye devā amahīyanta*

¹⁸ *athendramabruvan maghavannetad vijānīhi*

¹⁹ *prāṇasya prāṇaḥ*

²⁰ *etasmājjāyate prāṇaḥ*

²¹ *prāṇaśabdavācyā iti siddham*

²² *bhedanirdeśāt*

its incandescent particles - sparks. Both of them are incorrect readings, at least according to Vyāsa, who disagrees, saying, अंशो नानाव्यपदेशादन्यथा चाऽपि दाशकितवादित्वमधीयत एके²³ (BS 2.3.43). Ātman is indeed an *aṃśa* of Parabrahman; however, this is in the sense that the jīva or īśvara beholds or possesses some of the divine virtues, or at least, tries to walk the path to cultivating them. When some of the infinite virtues are found in the unliberated entities, too, that is what being a “part” of Parabrahman means. Moreover, on the contrary, if they do not have those virtues or a yearning for them, they are not called an *aṃśa* of Parabrahman. The sūtra that immediately follows, मन्त्रवर्णात्²⁴ (BS 2.3.44), refers to instances in the Upaniṣads regarding the topic that Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami supplies.

- यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि सदश्चा इव सारथेः ॥²⁵ (KU 3.6)
- स तु तत्पदमाप्नोति यस्माद्भूयो न जायते²⁶ (KU 3.8)
- स एष परोवरीयान् उद्गीथः स एषोऽनन्तः परोवरीयो हास्य भवति परोवरीयसो ह
लोकाञ्जयति य एतदेवं विद्वान् परोवरीयांसमुद्गीथमुपास्ते²⁷ (CU 1.9.2)
- एतं संयद्दाम इत्याचक्षत एवं हि सर्वाणि वामान्यभिसंयन्ति सर्वाण्येनं
वामान्यभिसंयन्ति य एवं वेद²⁸ (CU 4.15.2)
- एष उ एव वामनीरेष हि सर्वाणि वामानि नयति सर्वाणि वामानि नयति य एवं वेद²⁹
(BS 4.15.3)

²³ *aṃśo nānāvvyapadeśādanyathā cā 'pi dāśakitavāditvamadhīyata eke*

²⁴ *mantravarṇāt*

²⁵ *yastu vijñānavān bhavati yuktena manasā sadā |
tasyendriyāṇi vaśyāni sadaśvā iva sārathēḥ ||*

²⁶ *sa tu tatpadamāpnoti yasmādbhūyo na jāyate*

²⁷ *sa eṣa parovarīyān udgīthaḥ sa eṣo 'nantah parovarīyo hāsya bhavati parovarīyaso ha lokāñjayati ya
etadevaṃ vidvān parovarīyāmsamudgīthamupāste*

²⁸ *etaṃ saṃyadvāma ityācakṣata evaṃ hi sarvāṇi vāmānyabhisamyanti sarvāṇyenam
vāmānyabhisamyanti ya evaṃ veda*

²⁹ *eṣa u eva vāmanīreṣa hi sarvāṇi vāmāni nayati sarvāṇi vāmāni nayati ya evaṃ veda*

- एष उ एव भामनीरेष हि सर्वेषु लोकेषु भाति सर्वेषु लोकेषु भाति य एवं वेद³⁰ (CU 4.15.4)
- न पश्यो मृत्युं पश्यति न रोगं नोत दुःखतां सर्वं ह पश्यः पश्यति सर्वमाप्नोति सर्वशः³¹ (CU 7.26.2)
- एष नित्यो महिमा ब्राह्मणस्य न वर्धते कर्मणा नो कनीयान् तस्यैव स्यात् पदवित्तं विदित्वा न लिप्यते कर्मणा पापकेनेति । तस्मादेवंविच्छान्तो दान्त उपरतस्तितिक्षुः समाहितो भूत्वाऽऽत्मन्येवात्मानं पश्यति सर्वमात्मानं पश्यति नैनं पाप्मा तरति सर्वं पाप्मानं तरति नैनं पाप्मा तपति सर्वं पाप्मानं तपति³² (BU 4.4.23)

Some of the references also explain that some jīvas and īśvaras are not an *aṃśa* of Parabrahman – since these are those who do not tread the path toward liberation.

- अथ येऽन्यथाऽतो विदुरन्यराजानस्ते क्षय्यलोका भवन्ति तेषां सर्वेषु लोकेष्वकामचारो भवति³³ (CU 7.25.2)
- इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः³⁴ (KeU 2.5)
- यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्यमनस्कः सदाऽशुचिः ।
न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारं चाऽधिगच्छति ॥³⁵ (KU 3.7)
- यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दुष्टाऽश्वा इव सारथेः ॥³⁶ (KU 3.5)

³⁰ *eṣa u eva bhāmanīreṣa hi sarveṣu lokeṣu bhāti sarveṣu lokeṣu bhāti ya evaṃ veda*

³¹ *na paśyo mṛtyuṃ paśyati na rogaṃ nota duḥkhatām sarvaṃ ha paśyaḥ paśyati sarvamāpnoti sarvaśaḥ*

³² *eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya na vardhate karmaṇā no kanīyān tasyaiva syāt padavittaṃ viditvā na lipyate karmaṇā pāpakeneti | tasmādevaṃvicchānto dānta uparatastitikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā ’tmānyevātmānaṃ paśyati sarvamātmānaṃ paśyati nainaṃ pāpmā tarati sarvaṃ pāpmānaṃ tarati nainaṃ pāpmā tapati sarvaṃ pāpmānaṃ tapati*

³³ *atha ye ’nyathā ’to viduranyarājānaste kṣayyalokā bhavanti teṣāṃ sarveṣu lokeṣvakāmacāro bhavati*

³⁴ *iha cedavedīdatha satyamasti na cedihāvedīnmahatī vinaṣṭiḥ*

³⁵ *yastvavijñānavān bhavatyamanaskaḥ sadā ’śuciḥ |
na sa tatpadamāpnoti saṃsāraṃ cā ’dhigacchati ||*

³⁶ *yastvavijñānavān bhavatyayuktena manasā sadā |
tasyendriyāṇyavaśyāni duṣṭā ’śvā iva sārathēḥ ||*

- असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥³⁷ (IU 3)

The third sūtra of the Aṃśa adhikaraṇa, अपि च स्मर्यते³⁸ (BS 2.3.45) is about how this principle is consistently explained in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā.

- ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥³⁹ (BG 15.7)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explores this sūtra through one of the teachings of Parabrahman Swaminarayan found in the Vac. G. II 8. Parabrahman Swaminarayan explains that the jīvas that are called *aṃśa* of Parabrahman are the ones that withdraw their five sense and mind from the objects of desire and keep those faculties focused solely on Parabrahman and that which is related to Parabrahman. On the other hand, those who choose to be led astray by their *indriyas* and *antaḥkaraṇas* are not an *aṃśa* of Parabrahman. That is why one should engage in *upāsana* of Parabrahman while offering one's *vṛtti* to the divine.

Jīvas and īśvaras, *aṃśa* or not, are still eternally and completely distinct from the highest supreme entity, Parabrahman. Here are a few mantras and verses that emphasize this fact.

- नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।⁴⁰ (KU 5.13)
- अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति⁴¹ (KU 4.12)
- यः आत्मनि तिष्ठन् आत्मनोऽन्तरो यमात्मा न वेद यस्यात्मा शरीरं य आत्मानमन्तरो
यमयति स त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः⁴² (BU 6.7)

³⁷ *asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasā ’vṛtāḥ |*
tāṃste pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātmahano janāḥ ||

³⁸ *smaryate*

³⁹ *mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ |*
manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati ||

⁴⁰ *nityo nityānāṃ cetanaśchetanānāmeko bahūnāṃ yo vidadhāti kāmān |*

⁴¹ *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati*

⁴² *yaḥ ātmani tiṣṭhan ātmano ’ntaro yamātmā na veda yasyātmā śarīraṃ ya ātmānamantaro yamayati*
sa ta ātmā ’ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ

- तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम् । पतिं पतीनाम्⁴³ (SU 6.7)
- एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा⁴⁴ (SU 6.11)
- पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा⁴⁵ (SU 1.6)
- उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः⁴⁶ (BG 15.17)

Here are also some mantras and verses that show that jīvas and īśvaras are different from the second highest entity, Akṣarabrahman.

- द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्योऽभिचाकशीति ॥⁴⁷ (MU 3.1.1)
- महतः परमव्यक्तम् ...⁴⁸ (KU 3.11)
- महतोऽव्यक्तमुत्तमम्⁴⁹ (KU 6.7)
- यः सेतुरीजानानामक्षरं ब्रह्म यत् परम् ।⁵⁰ (KU 3.2)
- शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते⁵¹ (MU 2.2.4)
- क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते⁵² (BG 15.16)

Most of these mantras have appeared multiple times through this project, and thus, can be well understood. Moreover, there are a few discussions of note that are based on the relationship of jīvas (and īśvaras) and Akṣarabrahman.

The sūtra found in the Dyubhāvādyadhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras draws attention to the differentiation between jīvas (and īśvaras) and Akṣarabrahman. It reads:

⁴³ *tamiśvarāṇāṃ paramaṃ maheśvaraṃ taṃ devatānāṃ paramaṃ ca daivatam | patiṃ patīnām*

⁴⁴ *eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā*

⁴⁵ *pṛthagātmānaṃ preritāraṃ ca matvā*

⁴⁶ *uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ*

⁴⁷ *dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṃ vṛkṣaṃ pariśvasvajāte |*

tayoranyaḥ pippalaṃ svādvattyaṇaśnannanyo 'bhicākaśīti ||

⁴⁸ *hataḥ paramavyaktam*

⁴⁹ *mahato 'vyaktamuttamam*

⁵⁰ *yaḥ seturījānānāmakṣaraṃ brahma yat param |*

⁵¹ *śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate*

⁵² *kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate*

भेदव्यपदेशात्⁵³ (BS 1.3.5). The contention is about who is the bridge to the immortal Parabrahman referred to by the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad mantra below:

- यस्मिन् द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरीक्षमोतं मनः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वैः ।
तमेवैकं जानथाऽऽत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुञ्चथामृतस्यैष सेतुः ॥⁵⁴ (MU 2.2.5)

Also, there are characteristics of Akṣarabrahman that are absolutely not possible in any bound or liberated jīvas and īśvaras. This is interestingly brought up in the middle of the Dahara adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. In the sūtra, इतरपरामर्शात्स इति चेन्नाऽसम्भवात्⁵⁵ (BS 1.3.38), the opposition doubts that the word *samprasāda* appearing in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad might be for the jīvas and īśvaras. The mantra reads:

- अथ य एष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात् समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन
रूपेणाऽभिनिष्पद्यते । एष आत्मेति होवाच⁵⁶ (CU 8.3.4)

Who is that ātman referred to by the word *samprasāda*? It could not be jīvas or īśvaras. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami presents four reasons.

One, Akṣarabrahman is eternally devoid of all vices and full of divine virtues and superior in this way in comparison to jīvas and īśvaras.

- एष आत्माऽपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोको विजिघत्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः
सत्यसङ्कल्पो यथा ह्येवेह प्रजा अन्वाविशन्ति यथाऽनुशासनं यं यमन्तमभिकामा
भवन्ति यं जनपदं यं क्षेत्रभागं तं तमेवोपजीवन्ति⁵⁷ (CU 8.1.5)

Akṣarabrahman is the supporter of *jagat* manifested as infinite universes filled with infinite bound and some liberated jīvas and īśvaras.

⁵³ *bhedavyapadeśāt*

⁵⁴ *yasmin dyauh pṛthivī cāntarīkṣamotaṃ manaḥ saha prāṇaiśca sarvaiḥ |
tamevaikaṃ jānathā 'tmānamanyā vāco vimuñcathāmṛtasyaiṣa setuḥ ||*

⁵⁵ *itaraparāmarśātsa iti cennā 'sambhavāt*

⁵⁶ *atha ya eṣa samprasādo 'smāccharīrāt samutthāya paraṃ jyotirupasampadya svena
rūpeṇā 'bhiniṣpadyate | eṣa ātmeti hovāca*

⁵⁷ *eṣa ātmā 'pahatapāpmā vijaro vimṛtyurviśoko vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satyakāmaḥ satyasankalpo yathā
hyeveha prajā anvāviśanti yathā 'nuśāsanam yaṃ yamantamabhikāmā bhavanti yaṃ janapadam yaṃ
kṣetrabhāgaṃ taṃ tamevopajīvanti*

- अथ य आत्मा स सेतुर्विधृतिरेषां लोकानाम सम्भेदाय नैतं सेतुमहो रात्रे तरतो न जरा न मृत्युर्न शोको न सुकृतं न दुष्कृतं सर्वे पाप्मानोऽतो निवर्तन्तेऽपहतपाप्मा ह्येष ब्रह्मलोकः ॥⁵⁸ (CU 8.4.1)

Akṣarabrahman is eternally beyond the measures of mundane virtue and vice.

- तद्य एवैतं ब्रह्मलोकं ब्रह्मचर्येणाऽनुविन्दन्ति तेषामेवैष ब्रह्मलोकस्तेषां सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचार⁵⁹ (CU 8.4.3)

Akṣarabrahman has the agency of all, unlike any jīvas and īśvaras.

- अथ य इहात्मानमनुविद्य ब्रजन्त्येतांश्च सत्यान् कामांस्तेषां सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारो भवति⁶⁰ (CU 8.1.6)

To conclude this section, one might ask, when there is already oneness described between Akṣarabrahman and jīvas (and īśvaras), why is there a need to say that again and again? To answer this question, the Ākāśārthāntara adhikaraṇa steps in. Both entities are said to be one; they are so different metaphysically. Consolidating the study of consistency that has propelled this section, let us understand a proposition relevant to a state of existence – *suṣupti* (deep sleep) and *utkrānti* (ascension) after death as seen in the Upaniṣads. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad explore *suṣupti* and *utkrānti* in their multiple chapters. The following mantra shows the difference between both entities at issue.

- तद्यत्रैतत्सुप्तः समस्तः संप्रसन्नः स्वप्नं न विजानात्यासु तदा नाडीषु सृप्तो भवति तं न कश्चन पाप्मा स्पृशति तेजसा हि तदा संपन्नो भवति ॥⁶¹ (CU 8.6.3)

⁵⁸ *atha ya ātmā sa seturvidhṛtīreṣāṃ lokānāma sambhedāya naitaṃ setumaho rātre tarato na jarā na mṛtyurna śoko na sukṛtaṃ na duṣkṛtaṃ sarve pāpmāno 'to nivartante' pahatapāpmā hyeṣa brahmalokaḥ||*

⁵⁹ *tadya evaitaṃ brahmalokaṃ brahmacaryeṇā 'nuvindanti teṣāmevaiṣa brahmalokasteṣāṃ sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmacāra*

⁶⁰ *atha ya ihātmānamanuvidya vrajantyetāṃśca satyān kāmāṃsteṣāṃ sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmacāro bhavati*

⁶¹ *tadyatraitatsuptaḥ samastah saṃprasannaḥ svapnaṃ na vijānātyāsu tadā nāḍīṣu sṛpto bhavati taṃ na kaścana pāpmā spr̥ṣati tejasā hi tadā saṃpanno bhavati ||*

- यत्रैतत्पुरुषः स्वपिति नाम सता सोम्य तदा सम्पन्नो भवति⁶² (CU 6.8.1)
- अयं शारीर आत्मा प्राज्ञेनात्मनाऽन्वारूढ उत्सर्जन् याति⁶³ (BU 4.3.35)

This section about the relationship of jīvas and īśvaras with the divine Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman highlights, in more than a couple of ways, how the description of jīvas and īśvaras is consistently found in the Prasthānatrayī, creating a harmony that when explored from any side, brings out a new beauty of the study. A clear distinction from Parabrahman is found in the sūtra of Antasstaddharma adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. While the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Taittirīya Upaniṣad support that principle, the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā too contributes support through the verses of its 15th chapter. The same idea of Parabrahman being the most transcendental reality – therefore, beyond and different from jīvas and īśvaras – can be found in the Ānandamayādhikaraṇa. Also, the bliss and suffering experienced by jīvas and īśvaras remain inferior to that of Parabrahman, although Parabrahman resides in the very same ātman as the sūtra, भोक्त्रापत्तेरविभागश्चेत् स्याल्लोकवत् (BS 2.1.13), suggests. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad mantras add to the discussion by providing a beautiful analogy of a tree and birds sitting on it. The Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad provides support for the doctrine that jīvas and īśvaras are not independent unless permitted to act by Parabrahman, as Parabrahman grants them their ability to gain knowledge, to have thoughts, and to perform any action. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami too explains in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam the two types of entry of Parabrahman into all other sentient entities. The section called the Bhedanirdeśa adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras concerns the jīvas and īśvaras and their relationship to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. In accordance with Vyāsa’s assertions, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami provides a substantial array of references derived from both the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā to substantiate and elucidate his points. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad mantras reveal Akṣarabrahman to be the bridge to Parabrahman (MU 2.2.5) and, thus, making jīvas and īśvaras the purposeful walkers of the bridge. Moreover, it is interesting to note how Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami comments on the word *samprasāda*,

⁶² *yatraitatpuruṣaḥ svapiti nāma satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati*

⁶³ *ayaṃ śārīra ātmā prājñēnātmanāḥsnvārūḍha utsarjan yāti*

first found in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, to state the explicit differences between the mundane and the divine. In bringing this section closer to a close, we finally see how the multiple chapters of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Chāndogya Upaniṣad explore *susupti* and *utkrānti* to differentiate the jīvas and īśvaras from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

5.6 Ātman: Anādi

The second part of our exploration of consistency through the elucidation of jīvas and īśvaras in the Prasthānatrayī continues with a study of ātman (a term used for both jīvas and īśvaras, as they both are sentient and pervade within their respective bodies). Here, the discussion concerns whether jīvas and īśvaras are created rather than being eternal, sentient entities. The objectors make known this view of the creation of jīvas and īśvaras while supporting it through various mantras from the Upaniṣads. This seemingly apparent support is just an unsound interpretation that we will understand through the words of Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami by the end of this section. Nonetheless, some of the references that the objector provides are as follows:

- यतः प्रसूता जगतः प्रसूती तोयेन जीवान् व्यससर्ज भूम्याम्⁶⁴
- यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते⁶⁵ (TU 3.1.1)
- यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः⁶⁶ (MU 1.1.6)
- सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः⁶⁷ (CU 6.8.4)
- तस्माद् इमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते⁶⁸ (PU 1.14)
- आत्मनः सर्वे प्राणाः सर्वे लोकाः सर्वे देवाः सर्वाणि भूतानि व्युच्चरन्ति⁶⁹ (BU 2.1.20)

⁶⁴ *yataḥ prasūtā jagataḥ prasūtī toyena jīvān vyasasarja bhūmyām*

⁶⁵ *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*

⁶⁶ *yadbhūtayoniṃ paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*

⁶⁷ *sanmūlāḥ somyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ*

⁶⁸ *tasmād imāḥ prajāḥ prajāyante*

⁶⁹ *ātmanah sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti*

As the study of the Prasthānatrayī suggests the harmony of the three texts, various other mantras expound on the other side of the debate – jīvas and īśvaras are, in fact, not created. The Brahmasūtras discusses this debate in the Ātmā adhikaraṇa. The sūtra mentions that these two entities (and indeed all five entities) are said to be eternal in a variety of references from the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. This sūtra reads:

- नात्मा श्रुतेर्नित्यत्वाच्च ताभ्यः⁷⁰ (BS 2.3.18)

Various mantras of Upaniṣads and the verses of the second chapter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā offer support to this sūtra.

- न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चिद् ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥⁷¹ (KU 2.18)
- ज्ञाज्ञौ द्वावजौ⁷² (SU 1.9)
- नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानाम्⁷³ (SU 6.13)
- अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युद्ध्यस्व भारत ॥⁷⁴ (BG 2.18)
- न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥⁷⁵ (BG 2.20)
- वेदाऽविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्⁷⁶ (BG 2.21)
- नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः⁷⁷ (BG 2.24)

⁷⁰ *nātmā śruternityatvācca tābhyaḥ*

⁷¹ *na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścinnāyaṃ kutaścinna babhūva kaścīd |
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ||*

⁷² *jñājñāu dvāvajau*

⁷³ *nityo nityānāṃ cetanaścetanānām*

⁷⁴ *antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ |
anāśino 'prameyasya tasmādyuddhyasva bhārata ||*

⁷⁵ *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācinnāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ |
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ||*

⁷⁶ *vedā 'vināśinaṃ nityaṃ ya enamajamavyayam*

⁷⁷ *nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuracalo 'yaṃ sanātanaḥ*

- देही नित्यमवध्योऽयम्⁷⁸ (BG 2.30)

However, the question of what should be made of the references presented before suggesting that *jīvas* and *īśvaras* are created, still remains. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami provides a clarification: स्वस्वकर्मानुसारं परमात्मेच्छया देहान्तरसंसर्गस्यैव तदुत्पत्त्यर्थत्वात्। तथैव पूर्वदेहविश्लेष एव मरणं न तु स्वरूपे कोऽपि विकारः। न च पुनरात्मनो विकाराऽभावे तस्य कार्यत्वाऽभावात् तं प्रति ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मणोः कारणत्वाऽसम्भवात्, तद्विज्ञानेन सर्वविज्ञानप्रतिज्ञा व्याहन्येतेति वाच्यं, स्वरूपाऽन्यथाभावरूपो विकारो हि निषिध्यते । तज्ज्ञानसङ्कोचविकासलक्षणविकारस्य तु तत्राऽपि सत्त्वान्न दोषः । अतो न प्रलये जीवेश्वरात्मानो नश्यन्ति न वा सर्गे नूतना उत्पद्यन्ते इति सिद्धम्।⁷⁹ Here, the “creation” of *jīvas* and *īśvaras* should be understood as them receiving an appropriate body with respect to their karma. This blessing of Parabrahman is interpreted as their “creation”, and thus, not in the metaphysical sense. As a body perishes, a new body is received; however, there is no change – good or bad – in the form of individual souls or empowered beings. Therefore, there is no change in the infinite number of already existing *jīvas* and *īśvaras* – even amid the procreation of *jagat* or its ultimate dissolution.

Indeed, the refutation presented here pertains to the distortion of *svarūpa*, the true nature itself, as even knowledge can be subject to distortion. Thus, the concept of eternality extends to the *ātman*, transcending the cycles of death and rebirth that occur during dissolution and creation, respectively. It highlights the timeless nature of the *ātman*, existing beyond the limitations of temporal existence.

In this section, we focus on understanding how *jīvas* and *īśvaras* are described as “born” while acknowledging that they are not newly created entities. It is crucial to recognize that they possess an eternal existence, with an infinite number of *jīvas* and *īśvaras* that

⁷⁸ *dehī nityamavadhyo 'yam*

⁷⁹ Brahmasūtras Svāmīnārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.18, p. 232; *svasvakarmānusāraṃ paramātmecchayā dehāntarasamsargasyaiva tadutpattiyarthatvāt | tathaiva pūrvadehaviśleṣa eva maraṇaṃ na tu svarūpe ko 'pi vikārah | na ca punarātmano vikārā 'bhāve tasya kāryatvā 'bhāvāt taṃ prati brahmaparabrahmaṇoḥ kāraṇatvāssambhavāt, tadvijñānena sarvavijñānapratijñā vyāhanyeteti vācyam, svarūpā 'nyathābhāvarūpo vikāro hi niṣidhyate | tajjñānasāṅkocavikāśalakṣaṇavikārasya tu tatrā 'pi sattvāna doṣaḥ | ato na pralaye jīveśvarātmāno naśyanti na vā sarge nūtanā utpadyanta iti siddham |*

neither increase nor decrease in count. Vyāsa resolves this debate by presenting a coherent argument for the fact that jīvas and īśvaras are not created; Vyāsa asserts they are eternal and ever-existent in nature. This is exemplified in the sūtra नात्मा श्रुतेर्नित्यत्वाच्च ताभ्यः⁸⁰ (BS 2.3.18), which is elucidated upon by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami in his commentary, bridging the gap and providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

5.7 Ātman: Aṇu

The nature of the ātman is delineated as indivisible and minutely subtle, often analogized to an atomic entity, or “of atomic size” – *aṇuparimāṇa*, which signifies its infinitesimal size. It neither possesses an infinite magnitude nor is it restricted in its ability to accommodate the body it inhabits. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad emphasizes this aspect, proclaiming एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश⁸¹ (MU 3.1.9) - implying that ātman should be realized through a discerning intellect. Furthermore, as atomic in size. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad also provides multiple instances that portray the ātman as atomic, though presented in distinct manners. These references collectively reinforce the concept of the ātman’s atomic nature, accentuating its subtle and imperceptible essence.

- आराग्रमात्रो ह्यवरोऽपि दृष्टः⁸² (SU 5.8)
- बालाऽग्रशतभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च ।
भागो जीवः स विज्ञेयः स चाऽऽनन्त्याय कल्पते ॥⁸³ (SU 5.9)

Why is the argument significant? For a few reasons, as defended by Vyāsa in the Jñā adhikaraṇa, one of the longest adhikaraṇas in the Brahmasūtras, regarding the ātman’s ascension, going, and return provides a compelling rationale for contemplating its atomic size.

⁸⁰ *nātmā śruternityatvācca tābhyaḥ*

⁸¹ *eṣo ’nurātmā cetasā veditavyaḥ yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā samviveśa*

⁸² *ārāgramātro hyavaro ’pi dṛṣṭaḥ*

⁸³ *bālā ’grasatabhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca |
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cā ’nantyāya kalpate ||*

Considering the returning of the ātman – it vividly makes sense to contemplate ātman as atomic; the concept aligns with the experiences and observations of the ascension, journey, and subsequent return of the ātman. It offers a vivid understanding of how the ātman traverses realms and bodies while establishing its infinitesimal size and ability to transcend physical constraints.

- उत्क्रान्तिगत्यागतीनाम्⁸⁴ (BS 2.3.20)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami emphasizes the significance of the atomic nature of the ātman, stating, अणुपरिमाण एवाऽऽत्मा न तु विभुः।⁸⁵ This statement reinforces the understanding that the ātman is indeed atomic in size and not all-pervading. A collection of references supporting the three arguments mentioned above is presented to substantiate this argument. First and foremost, the ātman is depicted as ascending – *utkrānti*⁸⁶ to Akṣaradhāman, the eternal abode of Parabrahman, as described in the Upaniṣads.

- स यदाऽस्माच्छरीरादुत्क्रामति सहैवैतैः सर्वैरुत्क्रामति ... एतेन प्रज्ञेनात्मनाऽस्माल्लोकादुत्क्रम्य⁸⁷ (AU 3.4)
- अथ यत्रैतदस्माच्छरीरादुत्क्रामत्यथैतैरेव रश्मिभिरूर्ध्वमाक्रामते⁸⁸ (CU 8.6.5)
- तेन प्रद्यातेनैष आत्मा निष्क्रामति चक्षुषो वा मूर्ध्ना वाऽन्येभ्यो वा शरीरदेशेभ्यस्तमुत्क्रामन्तं प्राणोऽनूत्क्रामति⁸⁹ (BU 4.4.2)

Ātman goes

- ये वै के चाऽस्माल्लोकात् प्रयन्ति चन्द्रमसमेव ते सर्वे गच्छन्ति⁹⁰ (Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad 1.2)

⁸⁴ *utkrāntigatyāgatīnām*

⁸⁵ Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.20, p. 233; *aṇuparimāṇa evā'ṛtmā na tu vibhuḥ* |

⁸⁶ We shall analyze consistency through this topic later in the following chapter.

⁸⁷ *sa yadā'smāccharīrādutkrāmati sahaivaitaiḥ sarvairutkrāmati ... etena prajñenātmanāsmāllokādutkrāmya*

⁸⁸ *atha yatraitadasmāccharīrādutkrāmatyathaitaireva raśmibhirūrdhvamākrāmate*

⁸⁹ *tena pradyātenaiṣa ātmā niṣkrāmati cakṣuṣo vā mūrdhnā vānyebhyo vā śarīradeśebhyastamutkrāmantam prāṇonūtkrāmati*

⁹⁰ *ye vai ke cā'smāllokāt prayanti candramasameva te sarve gacchanti*

- यतो यत आवर्तते तत्तद् गच्छति⁹¹ (CU 4.17.1)
- सर्वं तदत्र गत्वा विन्दते⁹² (CU 8.3.2)
- तान् स गच्छति ता ददत्⁹³ (KU 1.3)
- अगच्छन्वै ते तद्यत्राऽश्वमेधयाजिनो गच्छन्ति⁹⁴ (BU 3.3.2)
- तांस्ते प्रेत्याऽभिगच्छन्ति⁹⁵ (IU 3)

Ātman returns

- तस्माल्लोकात् पुनरेत्यस्मै लोकाय कर्मणे⁹⁶ (BU 4.4.6)
- सत आगम्य न विदुः सत आगच्छाम इति⁹⁷ (BU 6.10.2)

The argument becomes evident when we consider that if the ātman were infinite and all-encompassing in size, the notions of ascending, going, or returning would be rendered impossible, as expressed by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami: स्वरूपतः सर्वगतस्येदमुत्क्रमणगमनाऽऽगमनादिकं न सम्भवेत्⁹⁸. Furthermore, the sūtra स्वशब्दोन्मानाभ्याम् (BS 2.3.23) supports the concept that the ātman is atomic, which is corroborated by references in the Upaniṣads. The inherent limitations of spatial existence are acknowledged upon recognizing the atomic nature of the ātman. This understanding aligns with the notion that the ātman's movements transcend physical dimensions, operating subtly beyond ordinary comprehension. The sūtra and the Upaniṣadic references lend credence to the idea that the ātman's true essence is indeed atomic, underscoring its individuality and distinct presence within the cosmos.

⁹¹ *yato yata āvartate tattad gacchati*

⁹² *sarvaṃ tadatra gatvā vindate*

⁹³ *tān sa gacchati tā dadat*

⁹⁴ *agacchanvai te tadyatrā 'śvamedhayājino gacchanti*

⁹⁵ *tāṃste pretyā 'bhigacchanti*

⁹⁶ *tasmāllokāt punaretyasmai lokāya karmaṇe*

⁹⁷ *sata āgamyā na viduḥ sata āgacchāma iti*

⁹⁸ *Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.20, p. 234; svarūpataḥ sarvagatasyedamutkramaṇagamanā "gamanādikaṃ na sambhavet*

In refutation of the opposing argument that posits the limited size of the ātman, referred to as *madhya parimāṇa*, contingent upon the size of the body it assumes, Vyāsa presents a compelling counterpoint. He argues that such a limited view would imply an inherent incompleteness in the nature of the ātman, as expressed in the sūtra एवं चाऽऽत्माऽकात्स्न्यम्⁹⁹ (BS 2.2.34). This would reflect the incompleteness of ātman. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami further elucidates this concept with an insightful analogy.

Drawing inspiration from, and building upon, Vyāsa’s teachings, The Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyakāra illustrates that considering the ātman as having body parts and senses or being of limited size would to inconsistencies. When the ātman transitions from a small-bodied creature, like an ant, to a larger-bodied creature, like an elephant, the pervasion would be incomplete or inconsistent. This is, of course, an absurdity that the objector would not want to affirm. Conversely, when transitioning from a larger mammal to a smaller one, one might contemplate how the expansive essence of the ātman can seamlessly fit within the confined dimensions of the diminutive physical vessel. It is inconceivable to argue that the ātman changes its size to accommodate different bodies, as such a notion contradicts the inherently and definitionally eternal nature of the ātman.

The debate regarding the ātman’s limited size and shape is further refuted in the sūtras न च पर्यायादप्यविरोधो विकारादिभ्यः¹⁰⁰ (BS 2.2.35) and अन्त्याऽवस्थितेश्चोभयनित्यत्वादविशेषः¹⁰¹ (BS 2.2.36). These sūtras emphasize that no contradiction arises from variations or modifications in the ātman, as it possesses a unique eternal nature that transcends size or shape limitations.

5.8 Ātman: Kartṛ

The ātman is the *kartṛ* - doer and thus responsible for getting the fruits of that karma. However, this agency is not limited to some action, but it is open for exploration for all *indriyas*, making the ātman “the one who sees,” “the one who feels,” “the one who

⁹⁹ *cā ’tmā ’kārtsnyam*

¹⁰⁰ *na ca paryāyādapyavirodho vikārādibhyaḥ*

¹⁰¹ *sntyā ’vasthiteścobhayanityatvādaviśeṣaḥ*

hears,” “one who smells,” “one who tastes,” “one who thinks,” “one who knows,” “one who does,” and more. The Praśna Upaniṣad encapsulating this principle reads:

- एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः स परेऽक्षर आत्मनि सम्प्रतिष्ठते ॥¹⁰² (PU 4.9)

This profound statement from the Praśna Upaniṣad, stating the individual souls as “the seer, the hearer, the thinker, the knower, the doer, and as the source of both pleasant and uncomfortable experiences,” affirms the all-encompassing nature of the ātman, as it assumes multiple roles and functions within the realm of experience. It highlights that the ātman is not limited to a single mode of perception but possesses the inherent capacity to engage with the world through various faculties.

The question of agency, whether it lies with the ātman or some insentient nature, is a subject of debate explored in the Kartṛ adhikaraṇa. The opposing view argues that certain actions mentioned in the Upaniṣads or the Bhagavad-Gītā do not explicitly indicate ātman as the doer. Instead, it seems that the ātman is controlled by nature, relieving it of responsibility for any good or bad actions. The opposition presents various verses, such as न जायते म्रियते वा¹⁰³ (KU 2.18), and हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् । उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥¹⁰⁴ (KU 2.19) from the Upaniṣads, and verses from the Bhagavad-Gītā, including प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः । अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताऽहमिति मन्यते ॥¹⁰⁵ (BG 3.27), नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टाऽनुपश्यति ।¹⁰⁶ (BG 14.19), कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।¹⁰⁷ (BG 13.20), among others.

However, Vyāsa refutes this perspective, asserting that the proponents of this argument lack a comprehensive understanding of the topic and, unfortunately, of the quoted

¹⁰² *eṣa hi draṣṭā spraṣṭā śrotā ghrātā rasayitā mantā boddhā kartā vijñānātmā puruṣaḥ sa pare 'kṣara ātmani sampratiṣṭhate* ||

¹⁰³ *na jāyate mriyate vā*

¹⁰⁴ *hantā cenmanyate hantuṃ hataścenmanyate hatam | ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṃ hanti na hanyate* ||

¹⁰⁵ *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ | ahankāravimūḍhātmā kartā 'hamiti manyate* ||

¹⁰⁶ *nānyaṃ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ yadā draṣṭā 'nupaśyati* |

¹⁰⁷ *kāryakāraṇakartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtirucyate* |

mantras and verses. His stance aligns with a careful interpretation of the scriptures, recognizing the ātman as an agent of action. This viewpoint is supported by the sūtra, कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्त्वात्¹⁰⁸ (BS 2.3.33), which is, in turn, substantiated by a range of mantras. By upholding the sūtra and drawing on a multitude of supporting mantras, Vyāsa constructs a compelling argument that establishes the ātman as endowed with agency, counteracting the opposing view and affirming the scriptures' intended meaning.

- कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः¹⁰⁹ (IU 2)
- तदेतत्सत्यं मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो यान्यपश्यंस्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्ततानि ।
तान्याचरथ नियतं सत्यकामा एष वः पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके ॥¹¹⁰ (MU 1.2.1)
- स्वर्गकामो यजेत ... शान्त उपासीत¹¹¹ (CU 3.14.1)
- आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः¹¹² (BU 2.4.5)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami counters the argument that is not supported by Vyāsa. See the authoritative Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam with reference to the above-mentioned sūtra. References from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā firmly establish clearly state that ātman is indeed an active agent with some agency over its actions.

- न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्¹¹³ (BG 3.5)
- कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वम्¹¹⁴ (BG 4.15)
- यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥¹¹⁵ (BG 9.27)

¹⁰⁸ *kartā śāstrārthavattvāt*

¹⁰⁹ *kurvanneveha karmāṇi jijīviṣecchatam samāḥ*

¹¹⁰ *tadetatsatyam mantreṣu karmāṇi kavayo yānyapaśyaṃstāni tretāyāṃ bahudhā santatāni | tānyācaratha niyataṃ satyakāmā eṣa vaḥ panthāḥ sukṛtasya loke ||*

¹¹¹ *svargakāmo yajeta ... śānta upāsīta*

¹¹² *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*

¹¹³ *na hi kaścit kṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt*

¹¹⁴ *kuru karmaiva tasmāttvam*

¹¹⁵ *yatkaroṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat |*

yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam ||

- तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः॥¹¹⁶ (BG 18.16)

Nevertheless, within the comprehensive discussion concerning the volition of jīvas and īśvaras, it is imperative to acknowledge that their capacity for agency does not exist in isolation from the divine will of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. This foundational tenet is underscored in the Paratantra adhikaraṇa – परात्तु तच्छ्रुतेः¹¹⁷ (BS 2.3.41), stating that Parabrahman, being infinitely transcendent to jīvas and īśvaras, possesses the ultimate agency. Parabrahman bestows upon jīvas and īśvaras the capacity to know, will, and act, as discussed previously. Various references underscore the supremacy of Parabrahman over infinite beings, including jīvas, īśvaras, and even Akṣarabrahman, lending further support to this understanding are helpful to provide here.

- एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम्¹¹⁸ (KU 2.16)
- महतः परं ध्रुवं निचाय्य¹¹⁹ (KU 3.15)
- अक्षरात् परतः परः¹²⁰ (MU 2.1.2)
- एतस्माज्जीवघनात् परात्परं पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते¹²¹ (PU 5.5)
- सदसद् वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद् यद् वरिष्ठम्¹²² (MU 2.2.1)
- परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति¹²³ (MU 3.2.8)
- अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमम्¹²⁴ (BG 8.3)

¹¹⁶ *tatraivaṃ sati kartāramātmānaṃ kevalaṃ tu yaḥ |
paśyatyakṛtabuddhitvānna sa paśyati durmatih||*

¹¹⁷ *parāttu tacchruteḥ*

¹¹⁸ *etaddhyevākṣaraṃ brahma etaddhyevākṣaraṃ param*

¹¹⁹ *mahataḥ paraṃ dhruvaṃ nicāyya*

¹²⁰ *akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ*

¹²¹ *etasmājjīvaghanāt parātparam puriśayaṃ puruṣamīkṣate*

¹²² *sadasad vareṇyaṃ paraṃ vijñānād yad varīṣṭham*

¹²³ *parātparam puruṣamupaiti*

¹²⁴ *akṣaraṃ brahma paramam*

- पुरुषः स परः पार्थ¹²⁵ (BG 8.22)

However, a significant shift in the discourse occurs with the introduction of the second and last sūtra of this *adhikaraṇa*, कृतप्रयत्नापेक्षस्तु विहितप्रतिषिद्धाऽवैयर्थ्यादिभ्यः¹²⁶ (BS 2.3.42). An essential inquiry arises from these considerations: if the *jīva* (or *īśvara*) is not inherently independent, it raises doubts regarding its innate sense of agency (*karṭṛtva*) discussed earlier. Conversely, if all forms of agency are solely attributed to *Paramātmān*, it questions the necessity of adhering to any rules and regulations of prescribed or prohibited deeds (*vidhi* and *niśedha*). This raises the profound question of how one can exercise free will and make conscious choices if *Parabrahman* ultimately orchestrates all actions. Moreover, this line of reasoning leads to a critical flaw in the concept of *mokṣa*. How can one attain *mukti* if every action they perform is ultimately carried out by *Parabrahman* itself, leaving no space for autonomous actions by the *jīvas*? This perspective suggests that although individuals are bound by their circumstances, liberation remains a viable possibility, whether in the near or distant future.

These perplexing doubts find their resolution in the profound insights of *Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami*. It is emphasized that *jīvas* and *īśvaras* are not permitted to act independently without the consent and guidance of *Akṣarabrahman* and *Parabrahman*. A counterargument may arise here: if *jīvas* and *īśvaras* lack “independent” agency, then where does their past karma originate from? How do they attain a body based on their karma? Are they merely experiencing the consequences of other *jīvas*’ or *īśvaras*’ karmas?

Additionally, where does the notion of being bound by *māyā* and the subsequent freedom through *Akṣarabrahman* and *Parabrahman* fit into this framework? The concept of independence here is a blessing in the form of dependence. Without it, numerous questions, as previously posed, would arise. These two sūtras of the

¹²⁵ *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha*

¹²⁶ *kṛtaprayatnāpekṣastu vihitapratīṣiddhā’vaiyarthyaḍibhyaḥ*

Paratantra adhikaraṇa profoundly explore free will, dependence, and the intricate interplay between independence and dependence within ourselves.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami develops a relationship between being a doer and knower of actions, saying, तस्य चैतस्य शास्त्रस्याऽऽत्मनः कर्तृत्वे सत्येवाऽर्थवत्त्वादचेतनप्रकृतिगुणानां कर्तृत्वे त्वानर्थक्यमेव स्यात् । न हि जडः शिक्ष्यते क्वापि । न वा जडं प्रेरयितुं चेतन आदिश्यते । ज्ञातैवाऽऽदिष्टमवधारयितुमर्हः । ज्ञातैव कर्ता भवति । ज्ञातृत्वं च ज्ञानक्रियाकर्तृत्वम् । तद्धि चेतनमात्राभियोगि । अतो यजनध्यानोपासनादिषु नियोजयच्छास्त्रशिक्षणं विज्ञापयति ज्ञातुरात्मनः कर्तृत्वमस्येवेति ।¹²⁷ Regarding this scripture, if the ātman were to have agency, it would only be meaningful if conscious nature and qualities were capable of agency. Insentient can neither be taught nor be directed by something sentiment. It is only the knower who is capable of perceiving. The knower alone becomes the doer. Knowledge itself is the ability to perform actions. That indeed pertains solely to consciousness. Therefore, by engaging in acts such as worship, meditation, and other forms of practice, the scripture teaches the self's agency as that of the knower.

The ātman is *kartr* because it is also the knower. An interesting relationship between the knower and to be known is found in the Prasthānatrayī.

5.9 Ātman: Jñātr

In the Jñā adhikaraṇa, अविरोधश्चन्दनवत्¹²⁸ (BS 2.3.24), a captivating analogy is masterfully presented to vividly portray the all-pervasive essence of the atomic ātman within the physical body, propelled by its innate power of knowledge (*jñāna śakti*). This compelling analogy draws a parallel between the atman and a drop of sandalwood paste, whose mere presence in any part of the body permeates the entire being, diffusing a delightful aroma that envelops it entirely. Thus, the ātman, akin to this fragrant drop, abides within the sanctuary of our hearts, serving as the central locus from which its

¹²⁷ Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 2.3.33, p. 240; *tasya caitasya śāstrasyā'īmanah kartrtve satyevā' rthavattvādacetanaprakṛtiḡuṇānām kartrtve tvānarthakyaṃeva syāt | na hi jaḡaḡ śikṣyate kvāpi | na vā jaḡaḡ prerayituḡ cetana ādiṣyate | jñātaivā' diṣṡamavadhārayitumarhaḡ | jñātaiva kartā bhavati | jñātrtvam ca jñānakriyākartrtvam | taddhi cetanamātrābhīyogī | ato yajanadhyānopāsanādiṣu niyōjayacchāstrāśikṣaṇam vijñāpayati jñāturātmanah kartrtvamasyeveti |*

¹²⁸ *avirodhaścandanavat*

profound influence radiates, imbuing the entire body with purpose, functionality, and profound significance.

Continuing the tapestry of profound metaphors, the गुणाद्वाऽऽलोकवत्¹²⁹ (BS 2.3.26) sūtra unveils another enlightening example, leveraging the metaphor of light. Just as a single luminous source can illuminate an entire room, the ātman resides within the depths of our hearts, disseminating its radiant effulgence throughout the vast expanse of the body. It is crucial to discern the distinctiveness between the ātman and its quality of knowledge (*jñāna*). While references affirm the ātman as the embodiment of wisdom (*jñānasvarūpa*), it is imperative to grasp that the ātman transcends the boundaries of knowledge as an attribute (*jñāna guṇa*). This distinction is further illuminated in the sūtra पृथगुपदेशात्¹³⁰ (BS 2.3.28), which expounds upon the discerning comprehension found within the scriptures, wherein the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* acknowledge and honor this nuanced perspective.

- न हि विज्ञातुर्विज्ञातेर्विपरिलोपो विद्यते¹³¹ (BU 4.3.30)
- सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि¹³² (BG 3.33)
- उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः¹³³ (BG 4.34)
- ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते¹³⁴ (BG 7.19)

Moreover, instances can be found where the *śrutis* attribute the quality of knowledge (*jñāna guṇa*) to the atman. However, in such cases, it is essential to focus on the specific characteristic being emphasized rather than conflating it with the atman's inherent nature (*svarūpa*). The final three sutras of this adhikaraṇa seamlessly weave together, exploring its intricacies with meticulous reverence and aligning with the harmonious pattern of exploration established throughout this sacred text.

¹²⁹ *guṇādvās''okavat*

¹³⁰ *prthagupadeśāt*

¹³¹ *na hi vijñāturvijñāterviparilopo vidyate*

¹³² *sadrśaṃ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavānapi*

¹³³ *upadekṣyanti te jñānaṃ jñānīnastattvadarśinaḥ*

¹³⁴ *jñānavān māṃ prapadyate*

- यावदात्मभावित्वाच्च न दोषस्तद्दर्शनात्¹³⁵ (BS 2.3.30)
- पुंस्त्वादिवत् त्वस्य सतोऽभिव्यक्तियोगात्¹³⁶ (BS 2.3.31)
- नित्योपलब्ध्यनुपलब्धिप्रसङ्गोऽन्यतरनियमो वाऽन्यथा¹³⁷ (BS 2.3.32)

5.10 Three States of Consciousness

As we continue our inquiry into the essence of a *jīva*, we turn our attention to examining the profound significance of the three states (*avasthās*) in which *jīva* functions and remains firmly entrenched in its unliberated state. These states serve as crucial platforms through which *jīvas* experience and derive pleasure from the objects of material sense gratification. By exploring these *avasthās*, we gain deeper insights into the intricate dynamics of the *jīva*'s relationship with the material world and the mechanisms through which it seeks enjoyment.

The states of consciousness, known as *avasthās*, can be classified into three primary categories: *jāgrat* (the waking state), *svapna* (the dream state), and *susupti* (the deep sleep state). Each of these states presents unique experiential qualities and represents varying levels of consciousness within the context of human cognitive awareness.

Nonetheless, the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* introduces a fourth state of consciousness that transcends and holds supremacy over the other three *avasthās*. This fourth state, known as *turīya avasthā*, is the state of *brahmabhāva*, where the individual becomes one having qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman and experiencing the sublime bliss of Parabrahman, which we explore in the following chapter. This state is not universally common to all individuals, unlike the other three *avasthās*. Only liberated *jīvas* and *īśvaras* have the privilege of experiencing this state while in their living state. That is also why we will not discuss it here in detail. Here, our focus will be on a comprehensive exploration of three primary states of consciousness, drawing insights primarily from *Brahmasūtras* and the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

¹³⁵ *yāvadātmabhāvitvācca na doṣastaddarśanāt*

¹³⁶ *puṁstvādivat tvasya sato 'bhivyaktiyogāt*

¹³⁷ *nityopalabdhyanupalabdhiprasaṅgo 'nyataraniyamo vā 'nyathā*

5.10.1 Jāgrat Avasthā

With the state of heightened *sattva guṇa*, this awakened being, known as Viśvābhīmānin or Vaisvānara, remains conscious and, through that attention, along with the ego of the gross body, enjoys the external pleasures of the senses of consciousness, knowledge, action, and other faculties. With discernment and an awareness of past actions, the ego of the physical body derives enjoyment from these sensory delights. The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad aptly describes this state of senses and with discrimination, such as the manifestation of the perceptual prescribed sound of the previous action. The light of perception obtained by the trade of the senses is awakened. It is characterized by the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad as follows.

- जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूलभुग्वैश्वानरः प्रथमः पादः
॥¹³⁸ (MaU 2.1)

This particular state is primarily located in the eyes. Moreover, the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad also associates this state with Aumkāra.

- जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकारः प्रथमा मात्राऽऽप्तेरादिमत्त्वाद् वाऽऽप्नोति ह वै सर्वान्
कामानादिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥¹³⁹ (MaU 3.2)

5.10.2 Svapna Avasthā

This is the second state of consciousness with peaking *rajoguna*, and this is the state of creation for Hiraṇyagrābha īśvara in its *sūtrātman* body. In the dream world, a jīva, through its subtle body, experiences the pleasures of happiness and distress in all the forms like chariots and castles, swimming pools and snakes, tango and tigers, and other things created by Parabrahman, based on the past events and actions of that specific jīva. That is primarily located in the neck. The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad defines the state and presents its connection with *praṇava*.

¹³⁸ jāgaritasthāno bahiṣprajñah saptāṅga ekonaviṁśatimukhaḥ sthūlabhugvaiśvānarah prathamah pādah ||

¹³⁹ jāgaritasthāno vaiśvānaro 'kārah prathamā mātrā "pterādimattvād vā "pnoti ha vai sarvān kāmānādiśca bhavati ya evaṃ veda ||

- स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविविक्तभुक्तैजसो द्वितीयः पादः
॥¹⁴⁰ (MaU 2.2)
- स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो द्वितीया मात्रोत्कर्षात् उभयत्वाद्वोत्कर्षति ह वै ज्ञानसन्ततिं
समानश्च भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति य एवं वेद ॥¹⁴¹ (MaU 3.3)

In the third chapter of the Brahmasūtras, the second section focuses on the adhikaraṇas related to the states of dream and deep sleep. The Sandhya adhikaraṇa, introduced by the sūtra सन्ध्ये सृष्टिराह हि¹⁴² (BS 3.2.1), reads into and contemplates the *svapna avasthā* (state of dream). Here, the term “*sandhya*” refers to the state of dreams. This adhikaraṇa explores the intricacies and significance of the dream state, shedding light on its nature and characteristics.

- न तत्र रथा न रथयोगा न पन्थानो भवन्त्यथ रथान् रथयोगान् पथः सृजते न
तत्राऽऽनन्दा मुदः प्रमुदो भवन्त्यथाऽऽनन्दान् मुदः प्रमुदः सृजते न तत्र वेशान्ताः
पुष्करिण्यः स्रवन्त्यो भवन्त्यथ वेशान्तान् पुष्करिणीः स्रवन्तीः सृजते स हि कर्ता ॥¹⁴³
(BU 4.3.10)

“No chariots, charioteers, horses, or pathways are inherently present in the dream state. However, it is Parabrahman who creates these objects within the dream world. Even though there is no inherent joy or delight in the dream state, Parabrahman manifests joy and delight for the dreamer. Similarly, while there are no ponds, lakes, or rivers in reality, Parabrahman brings forth their existence within the dream. Parabrahman assumes the role of the sole creator, the *kartṛ*, in the realm of dreams.”

The question arises as to who is responsible for creating the objects in the dream state: Is it Parabrahman, the individual ātman experiencing the dream, or the mind? Vyāsa

¹⁴⁰ *svapnasthāno 'ntaḥprajñāḥ saptaṅga ekonaviṁśatimukhaḥ praviviktabhuktaijaso dviṭīyaḥ pādah ||*

¹⁴¹ *svapnasthānastaijasa ukāro dviṭīyā mātrotkarṣāt ubhayatvādvotkarṣati ha vai jñānasantatiṃ samānaśca bhavati nāsyaābrahmavitkule bhavati ya evaṃ veda ||*

¹⁴² *sandhye sṛṣṭirāha hi*

¹⁴³ *na tatra rathā na rathayogā na panthāno bhavantyatha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ sṛjate na tatrā "nandā mudāḥ pramudo bhavantyathā" nandān mudāḥ pramudāḥ sṛjate na tatra veśāntāḥ puṣkariṇyaḥ sṛvantiyo bhavantyatha veśāntān puṣkariṇīḥ sṛvantīḥ sṛjate sa hi kartā ||*

addresses this query by asserting that मायामात्रं तु कात्स्न्येनाऽनभिव्यक्तस्वरूपत्वात्¹⁴⁴ (BS 3.2.3) It is Parabrahman who creates all the objects in the dream state. Out of compassion, Parabrahman takes into account the *vāsanās*, and thus, *jīvas*' causal body – *kāraṇa*, the *īśvaras*' unmanifest form – *avyākṛta*, and their past deeds to shape the dream world. As the *jīvas* are still bound and unliberated, having not fully realized their true nature as *ātman* and achieved unity with Akṣarabrahman, they do not possess the qualities of a liberated *jīva* or *īśvara* for their own benefit.

Furthermore, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad suggests, यदा कर्मसु काम्येषु स्त्रियं स्वप्नेषु पश्यति । समृद्धिं तत्र जानीयात् तस्मिन् स्वप्ननिदर्शने ॥¹⁴⁵ (CU 5.2.9), Vyāsa argues, सूचकश्च हि श्रुतेराचक्षते च तद्विदः¹⁴⁶ (BS 3.2.4), that if the dreamer is the actual creator, then why do bad dreams occur? Why would not one wish for the best luxuries and experiences instead of troubling nightmares? This highlights the fact that *jīvas* and *īśvaras* can experience dreams but lack the ability to create them. It is Parabrahman who crafts these realms with limited and exclusive experiences for each individual *ātman* of all unliberated *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami aptly states, इत्थमिष्टाऽनिष्टसूचके स्वप्नदर्शने स्वेष्टार्थमात्राऽभिकाङ्क्षिणो जीवस्येश्वरस्य वाऽकिञ्चत्करत्वान्न तेषां तत्सृष्टिकर्तृत्वमिति परमात्मना सोत्पाद्यत इति निश्चीयते ॥¹⁴⁷. This firmly establishes that the power of creation within the dream state belongs solely to Parabrahman. Moreover, all these states of consciousness and the transitions between them are a blessing bestowed by Parabrahman. Without Parabrahman's influence, such experiences and shifts would not be possible, as Vyāsa states, पराभिध्यानात्तु तिरोहितं ततो ह्यस्य बन्धविपर्ययौ¹⁴⁸ (BS 3.2.5). The final sūtra of this adhikaraṇa, देहयोगाद्वा सोऽपि¹⁴⁹ (BS 3.2.6), highlights that the gross,

¹⁴⁴ *māyāmātraṃ tu kārtsnyenā 'nabhivvyaktasvarūpatvāt*

¹⁴⁵ *yadā karmasu kāmyeṣu striyaṃ svapneṣu paśyati | samṛddhiṃ tatra jānīyāt tasmin svapnanidarśane ||*

¹⁴⁶ *sūcakaśca hi śruterācakṣate ca tadvidah*

¹⁴⁷ Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.2.4, p. 286; *itthamiṣṭā 'niṣṭasūcake svapnadarśane sveṣṭārthamātrā 'bhikāṅkṣiṇo jīvasyēśvarasya vā 'kiñcatkaratvānna teṣāṃ tatsṛṣṭikartṛtvamiti paramātmanā sotpādyata iti niścīyate ||*

¹⁴⁸ *parābhidyānāttu tirohitam tato hyasya bandhaviparyayau*

¹⁴⁹ *dehayogādvā so 'pi*

subtle, and causal bodies are formed by eternal *vāsanās*, and these bodies are attained by us because Paramātman, out of his divine will, desired us to have them.

5.10.3 Suṣupti Avasthā

This *avasthā* is the third state of consciousness, with *tamogūṇa* at its highest. For *īśvaras*, who reside in their *avyakṛta* body, it signifies the state of dissolution. However, for *jīvas*, it is the state of the *kāraṇa*, or causal body, where they are known as *prājñā* and experience the profound bliss of *pradhanapurūṣa*. In this state, all the senses, faculties, desires, knowledge, and the sense of doership are dissolved within the causal body, and the *jīva* experiences *sat*. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad beautifully expresses this truth, stating, एवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सत आगत्य न विदुः सत आगच्छामह इति¹⁵⁰ (CU 6.10.2), in the Sadvidyā section. The Brahmasūtra, अतः प्रबोधोऽस्मात्¹⁵¹ (BS 3.2.8), explains that this is the state of immersion in Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman because when the *jīvas* and *īśvaras* wake up, they stop experiencing the bliss of Parabrahman. Just as one cannot fall asleep in one place and wake up in another, the profoundness of deep sleep is firmly established in the Upaniṣads through various instances.

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad:

- अथ यदा सुषुप्तो भवति यदा न कस्यचन वेद हिता नाम नाड्यो द्वासप्ततिः सहस्राणि हृदयात् पुरीततमभिप्रतिष्ठन्ते ताभिः प्रत्यवसृष्य पुरीतति शेते ॥¹⁵² (BU 2.12.19)

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

- तद्यत्रैतत् सुप्तः समस्तः संप्रसन्नः स्वप्नं न विजानात्यासु तदा नाडीषु सृप्तो भवति तं न कश्चन पाप्मा स्पृशति तेजसा हि तदा सम्पन्नो भवति ॥¹⁵³ (CU 8.6.3)

¹⁵⁰ *evameva khalu somyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sata āgatya na viduḥ sata āgacchāmaha iti*

¹⁵¹ *ataḥ prabodho 'smāt*

¹⁵² *atha yadā suṣupto bhavati yadā na kasyacana veda hitā nāma nāḍyo dvāsaptatiḥ sahasrāṇi hṛdayāt purītatamabhipratiṣṭhante tābhiḥ pratyavasṛpya purītati śete ||*

¹⁵³ *tadyatraitat suptaḥ samastāḥ samprasannaḥ svapnaṃ na vijānātyāsu tadā nāḍīṣu sṛpto bhavati taṃ na kaścana pāpmā spr̥śati tejasā hi tadā sampanno bhavati ||*

- यत्रैतत् पुरुषः स्वपिति नाम सता सोम्य तदा सम्पन्नो भवति ॥¹⁵⁴ (CU 6.8.1)
- एवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सति सम्पद्य न विदुः सति सम्पद्यामह इति ॥¹⁵⁵
(CU 6.9.2)

In the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad:

- यत्र सुप्तो न कञ्चन कामं कामयते न कञ्चन स्वप्नं पश्यति तत्सुषुप्तम् । सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवाऽऽनन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः ॥¹⁵⁶
(MaU 2.3)
- सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा मितेरपीतेर्वा मिनोति ह वा इदं सर्वमपीतिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥¹⁵⁷ (MaU 3.4)

One of the interesting discussions on this topic is found in the Karmānusmṛti adhikaraṇa of the third chapter of the Brahmasūtras.

- स एव तु कर्मानुस्मृतिशब्दविधिभ्यः¹⁵⁸ (BS 3.2.9)

The question arises whether there is a different ātman (self) when the previous one tries to wake up from deep sleep. This question can be addressed by considering karma (action), *anusmṛti* (remembrance), *śabda* (word), and *vidhi* (instruction). These four reasons can be explored as follows:

i) Karma: Just as when a person has an unfinished task that requires more than a day to complete, they sleep at night and wake up the next day to resume and finish the same task.

ii) *Anusmṛti*: The power of remembrance (*anusmṛti*) is significant, as we can recall past experiences even when we are far removed from those moments. For example, we might think, “Oh, I remember being in Sarangpur last year for the festival of colors,

¹⁵⁴ *yatraitat puruṣaḥ svapiti nāma satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati* ||

¹⁵⁵ *evameva khalu somyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sati sampadya na viduḥ sati sampadyāmaha iti* ||

¹⁵⁶ *yatra supto na kañcana kāmam kāmayate na kañcana svapnam paśyati tatsusuptam | susuptasthāna ekībhūtaḥ prajñānaghana evā”nandamayo hyānandabhuk cetomukhaḥ prājñastrīyaḥ pādah* ||

¹⁵⁷ *susuptasthānaḥ prājño makārastrīyā mātṛā miterapītervā minoti ha vā idam sarvamapītiśca bhavati ya evam veda* ||

¹⁵⁸ *sa eva tu karmānusmṛtiśabdividhibhyaḥ*

where HH Mahant Swami Maharaj blessed, with compassion and care, the groups of devotees and brought them happiness.”

iii) *Śabda*: From the words of the *śruti* (scriptures), we can understand that the *jīva* (individual soul) returns from the state of *susupti* (deep sleep) in Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman to its normal daily activities upon waking up. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad states that even after being in Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, day after day, the subjects do not attain Akṣaradhāman, एवमेवेमाः सर्वाः प्रजा अहरहर्गच्छन्त्य एतं ब्रह्मलोकं न विन्दन्ति¹⁵⁹ (CU 8.3.2) and त इह व्याघ्रो वा सिंहो वा वृको वा वराहो वा कीटो वा पतङ्गो वा दंशो वा मशको वा यद् यद् भवन्ति तदाभवन्ति¹⁶⁰ (CU 6.10.2).

iv) *Vidhi*: Furthermore, if there were any other explanations for the waking state, it would pose a problem for the *vidhis* suggested by the *śrutis*, such as उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत (KU 3.14), आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः¹⁶¹ (BU 4.5.6) and others.

It is important to clarify that the aforementioned *śruti* passage, सता सोम्य तदा सम्पन्नो भवति¹⁶² (CU 6.8.1), holds relevance primarily for the realm of bound *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. This distinction is crucial, as a liberated being (*mukta*) who has attained the state of *brahmarūpa* has already transcended the realm of aspirations and accomplishments. Such a *mukta* is already immersed in Parabrahman with unwavering devotion, having acquired some of the qualities of the divine entity Akṣarabrahman. For the *mukta*, it is expressly stated, परं ज्योतिरूपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाऽभिनिष्पद्यते¹⁶³ (CU 8.12.2). Here, the *mukta* is perpetually immersed in the supreme radiance of Parabrahman, experiencing boundless bliss. On the contrary, unliberated *jīvas* and *īśvaras* incessantly traverse the realm of existence, transitioning in and out of the state of *susupti*, characterized by the dissolution of phenomenal experiences. Within this state, they temporarily withdraw into the realm of pure souls, albeit with inherent limitations.

¹⁵⁹ *evamevemāḥ sarvāḥ prajā aharahargacchantya etaṁ brahmalokaṁ na vindanti*

¹⁶⁰ *ta iha vyāghro vā siṁho vā vṛko vā varāho vā kīṭo vā pataṅgo vā daṁśo vā maśako vā yad yad bhavanti tadābhavanti*

¹⁶¹ *ātma vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*

¹⁶² *satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati*

¹⁶³ *param jyotirupasampadya svena rūpeṇā'bhiniṣpadyate*

These three states of consciousness hold distinct characteristics for both *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. Alongside them is the *turīya avasthā*, known as the “fourth” state, which signifies the embodiment of Brahman. While *susupti* grants a temporary experience of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, this fourth state immerses one eternally in the realm of Parabrahman. Individuals attain this absolute transcendence through the guidance and association of the revered Brahmasvarūpa Guru. The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad delves into the depths of this state, presenting its profound significance.

- नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतःप्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् ।
अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणं अचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं प्रपञ्चोपशमं
शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥¹⁶⁴ (MaU 2.5)
- अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव
संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद ॥¹⁶⁵ (MaU 4.1)

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the intriguing concept of “*mugdha avasthā*,” which refers to the state of temporary unconsciousness or fainting, as expounded in the मुग्धेऽर्धसम्पत्तिः परिशेषात् (BS 3.2.10) sūtra of the Mugdha adhikaraṇa. The vivid term “*ardhasampatti*” suggests that within this diminished state of consciousness, there exists a partial realization of the *jīva*’s intrinsic nature. It signifies that the *jīva* retains a subtle imprint of its authentic essence even during temporary unawareness. This notion highlights the enduring presence of the *jīva*’s fundamental identity amidst the ebb and flow of consciousness. The following table, only using the original words of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad mantras, offers a succinct, side-by-side comparison of all three states, alongside the fourth *avasthā*.

¹⁶⁴ *nāntaḥprajñam na bahiṣprajñam nobhayataḥprajñam na prajñānaghanam na prajñam nāprajñam |
adrṣṭamavyavahāryamagrāhyamalakṣaṇam acintyamavyapadeśyamekātmapratyayasāraṃ
prapañcōpaśamaṃ śāntaṃ śivamadvaitaṃ caturthaṃ manyante sa ātmā sa vijñeyah ||*

¹⁶⁵ *amātraścaturtho 'vyavahāryaḥ prapañcōpaśamaḥ śivo 'dvaita evamoṅkāra ātmaiva
saṃviśatyātmanā 'tmānaṃ ya evaṃ veda ||*

Waking State	Dream State	Deep Sleep State	“The Fourth State”
जागरितस्थानः	स्वप्नस्थानः	सुषुप्तस्थानः	
बहिष्प्रज्ञः	अन्तःप्रज्ञः	एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघनः	नान्तःप्रज्ञम् न बहिष्प्रज्ञम् नोभयतःप्रज्ञम् न प्रज्ञम् नाप्रज्ञम् न प्रज्ञानघनम्
सप्ताङ्गः	सप्ताङ्गः		
एकोनविंशतिमुखः	एकोनविंशतिमुखः	चेतोमुखः	
स्थूलभुक्	प्रविविक्तभुक्	ह्यानन्दभुक्	ऐकात्मप्रत्ययसारम् प्रपञ्चोपशमम् शान्तम् शिवम् अद्वैतम्
वैश्वानरः	तैजसः	प्राज्ञः	
प्रथमः पादः	द्वितीयः पादः	तृतीयः पादः	चतुर्थम्

Table 5.2: Three States of Consciousness and the “Fourth” State From the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

5.11 Three Bodies

In the realm of unliberated existence, both *jīvas* and *īśvaras* possess three distinct bodies. For the *jīvas*, these bodies are referred to as *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle), and *kāraṇa* (causal). On the other hand, the bodies attributed to the *īśvaras* are known as *virāṭ* (cosmic), *sūtrātman* (subtle or thread-like), and *avyākṛta* (unmanifest). While the Prasthānatrayī does not extensively elaborate on the bodies of *īśvaras*, it does provide some insights that contribute to a certain level of coherence. As for the bodies of *jīvas*, detailed discussions have already occurred in the preceding chapter. However, it is worth exploring certain significant aspects within this context.

5.11.1 Sthūla

The physical form, woven from the five elemental strands of *tamasic ahaṃkāra*, stands as the tangible manifestation through which the *jīva* finds its identity in the material domain. However, it is important to recognize that the *jīva* and the physical body are distinct entities, and the realization of qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman leads to the transcendence of the *jīva*'s identification with the physical form. With each successive birth, the *jīva* takes on a pristine gross body, whereas upon the culmination of a life, the physical form is relinquished, a departure that contrasts with the continued journey of the subtle body alongside the *jīva* in the cycle of transmigration. The Upaniṣads provide contemplative insights into this aspect, as reflected in the following mantras from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

- 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
तदभिसंपद्यते ॥¹⁶⁶ (BU 4.4.5)

¹⁶⁶ *yathākārī yathācārī tathā bhavati sādhukāri sādhubhavati pāpakārī pāpo bhavati puṇyaḥ puṇyena karmaṇā bhavati pāpaḥ pāpena atho khalvāhuḥ kāmamaya evāyaṃ puruṣa iti sa yathākāmo bhavati tatkraturbhavati yatkraturbhavati tat karma kurute yat karma kurute tadabhisampadyate ||*

- तद्य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन् ब्राह्मणयोनिं क्षत्रिययोनिं वैश्ययोनिं वा, अथ ह इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरन् श्वयोनिं वा सूकरयोनिं वा चाण्डालयोनिं वा ॥¹⁶⁷ (CU 5.10.7)

The categorization of the gross body is based on its origin, which encompasses four distinct types. These types include *svedaja* (born of sweat and dirt), *aṇḍaja* (born of an egg), *udbhijja* (born by breaking the ground), and *jarāyuja* (born of a womb). These classifications encompass both the plant and animal kingdoms, giving rise to a diverse array of 8.4 million different bodily forms, each comprising 2.1 million. While these categorizations are recognized and acknowledged in various traditions, including the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana within Hinduism, it is essential to note that the Prasthānatrayī, consisting of the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-Gītā, and Brahmasūtras, does not extensively delve into these specific classifications, except a few spots – one of them is mentioned below.

- तेषां खल्वेषां भूतानां त्रीण्येव बीजानि भवन्त्याण्डजं जीवजमुद्भिज्जमिति ॥¹⁶⁸ (CU 6.3.1)

However, the notion of diverse bodily forms and the recurring cycle of birth and death stands as a foundational element within the broader teachings of the Prasthānatrayī.

5.11.2 Sūkṣma

Comprising five *jñāna indriyas* (senses of knowledge), five *karma indriyas* (senses of action), four *antaḥkaraṇas* (inner faculties), and five *prāṇas* (vital energies), the subtle body serves as the support for the gross body, which includes elements such as blood, muscles, fat, bones, hair, flesh, and semen. These components were explored in detail in the preceding chapter. The Brahmasūtras present an intriguing analysis based on the Pañcāgnividyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, indicating that the subtle body undergoes transmigration in an unceasing cycle of births and deaths for unliberated *jīvas* and

¹⁶⁷ *tadya iha ramaṇīyacaraṇā abhyāśo ha yatte ramaṇīyāṃ yonimāpadyeran brāhmaṇayoniṃ kṣatriyayoniṃ vaiśyayoniṃ vā, atha ha iha kapūyacaraṇā abhyāśo ha yatte kapūyāṃ yonimāpadyeran śvayoniṃ vā sūkarayoniṃ vā cāṇḍālayoniṃ vā ||*

¹⁶⁸ *teṣāṃ khalveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ trīṇyeva bījāni bhavantyāṇḍajaṃ jīvajamudbhijjamiti*

īśvaras. This concept sheds light on the perpetual journey of the individual soul and its intricate relationship with the subtle body in the context of reincarnation.

- तदन्तरप्रतिपत्तौ रंहति सम्परिष्वक्तः प्रश्ननिरूपणाभ्याम्¹⁶⁹ (BS 3.1.1)

One of the following sūtra asserts the same principle, and Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami supports it with *śruti* and *smṛti*.

- प्राणगतेश्च¹⁷⁰ (BS 3.1.3)
- तमुत्क्रामन्तं प्राणोऽनूत्क्रामति प्राणमनूत्क्रामन्तं सर्वे प्राणा अनूत्क्रामन्ति¹⁷¹ (BU 4.4.2)
- शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥¹⁷² (BG 15.8)

Intricately intertwined with the gross body, the subtle body relies on its presence to fully manifest its capabilities. Conversely, the gross body, devoid of the subtle body, remains inert and non-functional. The symbiotic relationship between these two bodies is undeniable, as they rely on each other for mutual functioning and integration. However, it is essential to acknowledge that both the subtle and gross bodies find their foundation in the third body, which serves as the underlying framework for their existence and interdependence.

5.11.3 Kāraṇa

The term “*kāraṇa*” aptly captures the essence of this body, as it serves as the underlying cause of the perpetual cycle of *māyā* in which both *jīvas* and *īśvaras* find themselves entangled. This *kāraṇa* body, being an intrinsic part of *māyā* itself, embodies ignorance and contributes to the bondage of individuals. However, in the state of *jīvanmukti*, where liberation is achieved while still alive, both the *kāraṇa* (causal) and *avyākṛta*

¹⁶⁹ *tadantarapratipattau raṅhati sampariṣvaktāḥ praśnanirūpaṇābhyām*

¹⁷⁰ *prāṇagateśca*

¹⁷¹ *tamutkrāmantaṃ prāṇo 'nūtkrāmati prāṇamanūtkrāmantaṃ sarve prāṇā anūtkrāmanti*

¹⁷² *śarīraṃ yadavāpnoti yaccāpyutkrāmatīśvaraḥ |*

grhītvaitāni saṃyāti vāyurgandhānivāśayāt ||

(unmanifest) bodies of jīvas and īśvaras are dissolved, symbolizing the transcendence of ignorance and the liberation from the cycles of māyā.

5.11.4 Distinction of Ātman From Its Three Bodies

The relationship between the eternal ātman and the transient body is a recurring theme in the sacred texts of the Prasthānatrayī. The Bhagavad Gītā, in particular, delves into the essence of the self, its connection to the material world, and the path toward spiritual realization. It invites us to explore the profound distinction between the master, the ātman, and the medium, the body. The text unequivocally proclaims the eternal and unchanging nature of the ātman, in stark contrast to the impermanence of the physical body. It teaches us that the ātman transcends the limitations of the material realm, remaining untouched by the cycles of birth and death. Within the confines of the body, the ātman resides as the innermost self, the conscious entity that perceives and experiences the activities of the bodily apparatus, which is referred to as the field. Insightful analogies are drawn to illustrate the transient nature of the physical body. In a manner akin to shedding old garments and donning new ones, the ātman casts off its worn-out bodies and assumes fresh ones, all the while retaining its intrinsic nature, which is timeless and immutable. This profound metaphor invites contemplation on the impermanence of the bodily form and the eternal essence that resides within. Ultimately, our attention is directed to the ultimate goal of mukti, liberation from the cycle of birth and death. By disidentifying with the limited identification of the body and cultivating a connection with the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, the embodiment of the divine, one embarks on a transcendent journey that leads them beyond the confines of material existence towards the coveted state of liberation.

The unchanging and eternal ātman is contemplated by Kṛṣṇa in these verses, along with many others. I present just a few to give a gist of the general argument for the section.

- न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥¹⁷³ (BG 2.20)

¹⁷³ *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācinnāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ |
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ||*

- वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥¹⁷⁴ (BG 2.22)
- जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥¹⁷⁵ (BG 2.27)
- अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥¹⁷⁶ (BG 2.28)

Furthermore, the differentiation between the ātman and the physical body can be firmly delineated through the following *śloka*, which also serves as the prelude to the subsequent set of *ślokas* referencing the ātman as the dweller and sovereign of the corporeal form.

- अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥¹⁷⁷ (BG 2.17)
- यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥¹⁷⁸ (BG 13.14)
- देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥¹⁷⁹ (BG 2.13)

These references highlight the eternal nature of the ātman and its distinct existence within the perishable human body. In addition, the body is ever-changing and subject

¹⁷⁴ *vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi |
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī ||*

¹⁷⁵ *jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca |
tasmādaparihārye 'rthe na tvaṃ śocitumarhasi ||*

¹⁷⁶ *avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadyāni bhārata |
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā ||*

¹⁷⁷ *avināśi tu tadviddhi yena sarvamideṣa tatam |
vināśamavyayasyāsyā na kaścikartumarhati ||*

¹⁷⁸ *yathā prakāśayatyekah kṛtsnaṃ lokamimaṃ raviḥ |
kṣetraṃ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṃ prakāśayati bhārata ||*

¹⁷⁹ *dehino 'sminyathā dehe kaumāraṃ yauvanaṃ jarā |
tathā dehāntaraprāptirdhīrastatra na muhyati ||*

to decay and perishing. The Upaniṣads too reflect upon the mortality of mundane body as वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।¹⁸⁰ (IU 17), मघवन् मर्त्यं वा इदं शरीरमात्तं मृत्युना तदस्याऽमृतस्याऽशरीरस्याऽऽत्मनोऽधिष्ठानम् ।¹⁸¹ (CU 8.12.1), and न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे¹⁸² (KU 2.18) amongst others.

- जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥¹⁸³ (BG 2.27)
- देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥¹⁸⁴ (BG 2.30)

Finally, the association with the Akṣarabrahman Guru leads to realizing bliss of Parabrahman.

- दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥¹⁸⁵ (BG 2.56)
- यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाऽशुभम्।
नाऽभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥¹⁸⁶ (BG 2.57)
- एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥¹⁸⁷ (BG 2.72)

¹⁸⁰ vāyuranilamamṛtamathedaṃ bhasmāntaṃ śarīram |

¹⁸¹ maghavan martyaṃ vā idaṃ śarīramāntaṃ mṛtyunā tadasyā 'mṛtasyā 'śarīrasyā 'tmano 'dhiṣṭhānam |

¹⁸² na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre

¹⁸³ jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca |

tasmādaparihārye 'rthe na tvaṃ śocitumarhasi ||

¹⁸⁴ dehī nityamavadhyo 'yaṃ dehe sarvasya bhārata |

tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṃ śocitumarhasi ||

¹⁸⁵ duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigatasprahaḥ |

vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ sthitadhīrmunirucyate ||

¹⁸⁶ yaḥ sarvatrā 'nabhisnehastattatprāpya śubhā 'śubham |

nā 'bhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya praññā pratiṣṭhitā ||

¹⁸⁷ eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha naināṃ prāpya vimuhyati |

sthitvāsyāmantakāle 'pi brahmanirvāṇamṛcchati ||

- जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥¹⁸⁸ (BG 6.7)
- यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाऽशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥¹⁸⁹ (BG 12.17)
- समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥¹⁹⁰ (BG 12.18)
- समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाऽप्रियोधीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥¹⁹¹ (BG 14.28)
- ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥¹⁹² (BG 18.54)

The interplay of the three bodies and their relationship with jīvas, both in their bound and liberated states, is crucial to understanding the nature of existence. It also necessitates an exploration of the concepts of pre-incarnation and reincarnation for jīvas and īśvaras as they navigate the cycles of birth and death. These eternal beings, with countless lives already experienced and infinite ones yet to come, remain entwined in the web of māyā until they attain the state of *brahmarūpa*.

The profound insights offered by the Upaniṣads shed light on these aspects, guiding us toward a more profound comprehension. They reveal that the journey of jīvas and īśvaras spans multiple lifetimes, with each incarnation influenced by past actions and karmic imprints. As these beings traverse the cycles of samsara, they carry remnants of

¹⁸⁸ *jitātmanah praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitah |*

śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ ||

¹⁸⁹ *yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati |*

śubhā 'śubhaparitāyāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyah ||

¹⁹⁰ *samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ |*

śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitah ||

¹⁹¹ *samaduḥkhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ |*

tulyapriyā 'priyodhīrastulyanindātmāsamstutiḥ ||

¹⁹² *brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |*

samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktim labhate parām ||

previous lives, shaping their experiences and destinies in subsequent existences. These sacred texts invite us to delve into the mysteries of *pūrvajanma* (previous lives) and *punarjanma* (rebirth), guiding us toward a deeper understanding of the eternal journey of the *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. Some of the Upaniṣad mantras can be understood as below:

- एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापियन्ति¹⁹³ (MU 1.2.7)
- अनुपश्य यथा पूर्वे प्रतिपश्य तथाऽपरे ।
सस्यमिव मर्त्यः पच्यते सस्यमिवाजायते पुनः ॥¹⁹⁴ (KU 1.6)
- स सोमलोके विभूतिमनुभूय पुनरावर्तते¹⁹⁵ (PU 5.4)

5.12 Multiplicity

Jīvas and *īśvaras* exist in a multitude, distinct from one another. They are not mere fragments or a singular whole but possess individual identities and distinct natures that set them apart. Their numbers are infinite, reflecting the boundless diversity of nature and experience.

While there are fundamental aspects that are common to all *jīvas* and *īśvaras*, such as the inherent nature of knowledge, the capacity to know and act, and their atomic form, what truly distinguishes them is their karma and causal (*kāraṇa*) bodies. In the *Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā*¹⁹⁶, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami delves into a rich array of references, presenting a myriad of reasons for infinite *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. These references not only enhance our understanding but also contribute to establishing consistency in Vedāntic principles across the texts of the Prasthānatrayī. The causal body, karma, and the prior and consequential impressions carried forward from past lives (*pūrvasaṃskāra*) exert a substantial influence in molding the distinctive individuality of each being. Even individuals who may appear identical, such as twins or close friends, possess distinct tastes, preferences, and inclinations. Despite external

¹⁹³ *etacchreyo ye 'bhinandanti mūḍhā jarāmṛtyuṃ te punarevāpiyanti*

¹⁹⁴ *anupaśya yathā pūrve pratipaśya tathā 'pare |
sasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate sasyamivājāyate punaḥ ||*

¹⁹⁵ *sa somaloke vibhūtimanubhūya punarāvartate*

¹⁹⁶ *Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā* 6.16, pp. 284-6

similarities, the underlying framework of karma grants them a distinct identity akin to the DNA that distinguishes physical bodies.

The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā attests to the inherent differences among individuals, acknowledging the diversity and unique nature of each jīva. It highlights that every being possesses a distinct inner disposition, influenced by their past actions, karmic imprints, and the inherent differences in their causal bodies. The Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā states,

- मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥¹⁹⁷ (BG 9.12)
- महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥¹⁹⁸ (BG 9.13)

This infinitude in count is also clear from the ontological perspective. There have been an infinite number of liberated jīvas and īśvaras (akṣaramuktas) like in Akṣaradhāman since eternally. However, there are also infinite still bound in the relentless shackles of māyā.

As one's consuming of food would not satisfy another's hunger, in the same way, the experiences of pleasure or pain differ from jīva to jīva. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad, on multiple occasions, refers to the jīvas and īśvaras in a plural form. Therefore, they are at least not one; they are infinite, as other mantras too bring in their part of the study of consistency.

- श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः¹⁹⁹ (KU 2.7)
- योनिमन्ये प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देहिनः²⁰⁰ (KU 5.7)

¹⁹⁷ *moghāśā moghakarmāṇo moghajñānā vicetasah |*
rākṣasīmāsurīm caiva prakṛtiṃ mohinīm śritāḥ ||

¹⁹⁸ *mahātmānastu māṃ pārtha daivīm prakṛtimāśritāḥ |*
bhajantyananyamanaso jñātvā bhūtādimavyayam ||

¹⁹⁹ *śravaṇāyāpi bahubhiryo na labhyaḥ śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṃ na vidyuh*

²⁰⁰ *yonimanye prapadyante śarīratvāya dehinaḥ*

- नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान्²⁰¹ (KU 5.13)

There is difference in the way that jīvas and īśvaras attain.

- तद्य इत्थं विदुर्ये चेमेऽरण्ये श्रद्धा तप इत्युपासते तेऽर्चिषमभिसम्भवन्ति²⁰² (CU 5.10.1)
- अथ य इमे ग्राम इष्टापूर्ते दत्तमित्युपासते ते धूममभिसम्भवन्ति²⁰³ (CU 5.10.3)
- तद् य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन् ... अथ य इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरन्²⁰⁴ (CU 5.10.7)
- शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययाऽऽवर्तते पुनः ॥²⁰⁵ (BG 8.26)

The Upaniṣads elaborate on various destinies that await jīvas and īśvaras based on their actions, karma, and spiritual progress. Some beings may attain heavenly realms, where they experience blissful states and enjoy the rewards of their virtuous deeds. Conversely, those who have accumulated negative karma may undergo experiences in realms associated with suffering or hellish conditions. Furthermore, the Upaniṣads emphasize the ultimate destination of Akṣaradhāman, the eternal abode of Parabrahman. If all beings were unified as a singular entity, such distinctions would not arise.

- असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याऽभिगच्छन्ति ये के चाऽऽत्महनो जनाः ॥²⁰⁶ (IU 3)

²⁰¹ *nityo nityānām cetanaścetanānāmeko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

²⁰² *tadya itthaṃ vidurye ceme'raṇye śraddhā tapa ityupāsate te'rciṣamabhisambhavanti*

²⁰³ *atha ya ime grāma iṣṭāpūrte dattamityupāsate te dhūmamabhisambhavanti*

²⁰⁴ *tad ya iha ramaṇīyacaraṇā abhyāśo ha yatte ramaṇīyām yonimāpadyeran ... atha ya iha kapūyacaraṇā abhyāśo ha yatte kapūyām yonimāpadyeran*

²⁰⁵ *śuklakṛṣṇe gatī hyete jagataḥ śāśvate mate |*

ekayā yātyanāvṛttimanyayā"vartate punaḥ ||

²⁰⁶ *asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamaśā"vṛtāḥ |*

tāṃste pretyā'bhigacchanti ye ke cā"tmahano janāḥ ||

- एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते²⁰⁷ (KU 2.17)
- यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत एवं ह वै स पाप्मना विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते ब्रह्मलोकम्²⁰⁸ (PU 5.5)
- तेनाऽऽतुराः क्षीणलोकाश्च्यवन्ते²⁰⁹ (MU 1.2.9)
- नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वेमं लोकं हीनतरं वा विशन्ति²¹⁰ (MU 1.2.10)
- हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गम्²¹¹ (BG 2.37)
- प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ²¹² (BG 16.16)

Moreover, the consequential fruits of karma are also different. If karma performed by one entity results in some fruits, why does everyone have different fruits and, thus, experiences?

- इहैव सन्तोऽथ विद्मस्तद्वयं न चेदवेदिर्महती विनष्टिः।
य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्त्यथेतरे दुःखमेवाऽपियन्ति ॥²¹³ (BU 4.4.14)
- यो वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यविदित्वाऽस्माल्लोकात् प्रैति स कृपणोऽथ य एतदक्षरं गार्गि विदित्वाऽस्माल्लोकात् प्रैति स ब्राह्मणः ॥²¹⁴ (BU 3.8.10)
- असन्नेव स भवति। असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् । अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद् वेद । सन्तमेनं ततो विदुरिति²¹⁵ (TU 2.6.1)

²⁰⁷ *etadālabanaṃ jñātvā brahmaloke mahīyate*

²⁰⁸ *yathā pādodarastvacā vinirmucyata evaṃ ha vai sa pāpmanā vinirmuktaḥ sa sāmabhirunnīyate brahmalokam*

²⁰⁹ *tenā 'turāḥ kṣīṇalokāścyavante*

²¹⁰ *nākasya pṛṣṭhe te sukṛte 'nubhūtvemaṃ lokaṃ hīnataraṃ vā viśanti*

²¹¹ *hato vā prāpsyasi svargam*

²¹² *prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu patanti narake 'śucau*

²¹³ *ihaiva santo 'tha vidmastadvayaṃ na cedavedirmahatī vinaṣṭiḥ|*

ya etadviduramṛtāste bhavantyathetare duḥkhamevā 'piyanti ||

²¹⁴ *yo vā etadakṣaraṃ gārgyaviditvā 'smāllokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇo 'tha ya etadakṣaraṃ gārgi viditvā 'smāllokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ*

²¹⁵ *asanneva sa bhavati| asad brahmeti veda cet | asti brahmeti ced veda | santamenaṃ tato viduriti*

Indeed, based on the insights provided by the Upaniṣads and philosophical interpretations, it can be concluded that a distinct and individual soul (ātman) exists for each embodied being. These ātmans are not only multiple but, in fact, infinite in number. The notion of infinite ātmans resonates with the understanding that each being possesses a distinct karmic history, tendencies, and individual experiences. This multiplicity reflects the infinite possibilities of existence and the diverse paths undertaken by jīvas and īśvaras.

5.13 Closing

This chapter, too, opens with the Siddhāntasamāmnāya leading the way into the study of jīvas and īśvaras. We open with a basic understanding of the jīvas and īśvaras while diving deeper into īśvaras to understand what are avatāras and Parabrahman's *anupraveśa*. By creating a concise tabular comparison of the bodies, states of consciousness, and technical names of jīvas and īśvaras, we can readily observe their differences while grasping their underlying similarities. The relationship of jīvas and īśvaras with the divine serves as the crucial section of the chapter. The first idea appearing in this context is that of the difference between Parabrahman and jīveśvaras, as established by भेदव्यपदेशाच्चान्यः²¹⁶ (BS 1.1.22) and other mantras from the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad and Taittirīya Upaniṣad. We explored the topic through the aphorisms of the Ānandamaya adhikarana, Indraprāṇa adhikarana, and others. अधिकं तु भेदनिर्देशात्²¹⁷ (BS 2.1.23) provides a nice closing opening doors for us to contemplate how are some jīvas and īśvaras called Parabrahman's *aṃśa*, as established and compiled by अंशो नानाव्यपदेशान्यथा चाऽपि दाशकितवादित्वमधीयत एके²¹⁸ (BS 2.3.43). Encountering numerous references of the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, we deduce the uniformity observed concerning the connection between jīvas and īśvaras with Parabrahman. As natural curiosity might draw, we also find consistency in how the Prasthānatrayī explores the relationship of jīvas (and īśvaras) with Akṣarabrahman. The word *samprasāda*, of अथ य एष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात् समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन

²¹⁶ *bhedavyapadeśāccānyah*

²¹⁷ *adhikaṃ tu bhedanirdeśāt*

²¹⁸ *aṃśo nānāvyaapadeśādanyathā cā'pi dāśakitavādītvamadhīyata eke*

रूपेणाऽभिनिष्पद्यते। एष आत्मेति होवाच²¹⁹ (CU 8.3.4), used in the context of Akṣarabrahman is surely in the context of its defined relationship with the jīvas and īśvaras. The Ākāśārthāntara adhikaraṇa steps in when on multiple occasions, the idea of oneness between the two is introduced, while both the mundane and divine are ontologically, absolutely different in way too many aspects.

The following part of the chapter is about finding coherence in the fact that the jīvas and īśvaras are eternal, unborn, and therefore, uncreated or unoriginated. They have existed since literally, forever, without any beginning whatsoever. However, when they are said to be “born” like in the following mantra of Taittirīya Upaniṣad, यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते²²⁰ (TU 3.1.1), it is understood in the sense of them receiving the body to progress on the path of mukti. Nonetheless, they are eternal and infinite, as both the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā reveal the same truth consistently throughout. Here, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā read, almost exactly the same: न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चिद् । अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥²²¹ (KU 2.18), and न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः । अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥²²² (BG 2.20). Vyāsa tries to bridge the study through नात्मा श्रुतेर्नित्यत्वाच्च ताभ्यः²²³ (BS 2.3.18) sūtra.

The form of ātman is atomic and not infinite or limitedly suiting to the new body it transmigrates to or is in, in that case. Vyāsa gives three reasons for that in the sūtra, उत्क्रान्तिगत्यागतीनाम्²²⁴ (BS 2.3.20); he also argues against the other ideas with एवं चाऽऽत्माऽकात्स्न्यम्²²⁵ (BS 2.2.34). Moreover, the following section is about how ātman is still a *kartr*, doer, even after being provided everything necessary by Parabrahman.

²¹⁹ *atha ya eṣa samprasādo śmāccharīrāt samutthāya paraṃ jyotirupasampadya svena rūpeṇā 'bhiniṣpadyate | eṣa ātmeti hovāca*

²²⁰ *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*

²²¹ *na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścinnāyaṃ kutaścina babhūva kaścid | ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ||*

²²² *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācinnāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ | ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre ||*

²²³ *nātmā śruternityatvācca tābhyaḥ*

²²⁴ *utkrāntigatyāgatīnām*

²²⁵ *evaṃ cā 'tmā 'kārtsnyam*

The individual *jīva* or *īśvaras* is expressed as, एष हि द्रष्टा स्पृष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः स परेऽक्षर आत्मनि सम्प्रतिष्ठते ॥²²⁶ (PU 4.9), in the *Praśna Upaniṣad*. We explore the topic through the words of other *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*. *Parabrahman* remains infinitely beyond, powerful, master over all *jīvas* and *īśvaras* as contemplated in the *Paratantra adhikaraṇa*, along with other opposition doubts. *Jīvas* and *īśvaras* are doers – *kartr* because they are knowers – *jñātr*. Although *ātman* is atomic, it pervades the body and area as a drop of sandalwood paste with its aroma and light with its luminosity.

We then discuss the three states of consciousness – *jāgrat* (waking state), *svapna* (dream state), and *susupti* (deep sleep or non-dreaming state) for *jīvas*, as it is found in, majorly, the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. While exploring other mantras and *sūtras*, we conclude the consistency in understanding these *avasthās*. We also delve into the three bodies – *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle), and *kāraṇa* (causal) of *jīvas*, along with the *ātman*'s differentiation from each of these *māyic* manifestations. Employing the compilation produced by *Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami* in the *Sudhā*, we study consistent exploration of multiplicity, or infinite in count, of *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. And that concludes the study of coherence in the *Prasthānatrayī* about the nature and form of *jīvas* and *īśvaras*.

²²⁶ *eṣa hi draṣṭā spraṣṭā śrotā ghrātā rasayitā mantā boddhā kartā vijñānātmā puruṣaḥ sa pare 'kṣara ātmani sampratiṣṭhate* ||