

## Chapter 6: “anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdād” – Sādhana and Mukti

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## Chapter 6

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### “anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdād” – Sādhanā and Mukti

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#### 6.1 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 Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana’s principles. Next, the Sanskrit is presented in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>1</sup> authored by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami. Then, an English translation, based on the translation presented at the beginning of the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā<sup>2</sup>, follows the Sanskrit text.

- आत्यन्तिककल्याणार्थं मुमुक्षुभिः परब्रह्मपुरुषोत्तमभगवति स्वामिनारायणे  
तस्याऽखण्डं धारके प्रकटाऽक्षरब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरुहरौ च निर्दोषबुद्धिः परमदिव्यभावः  
प्रत्यक्षपरब्रह्मभावेन च दृढा प्रीतिः कार्या । मनःकर्मवचनैस्तद्वृद्धप्रसङ्गं कृत्वा  
तमतिशयं प्रसादयेत् ।
- एतद्रीत्या साधनां कुर्वन्तो मुमुक्षवो जीवास्तथेश्वराः परब्रह्मकृपयैकान्तिकधर्मसिद्धिं  
प्राप्य ब्रह्मरूपा भूत्वाऽक्षरब्रह्मसाधर्म्यं प्राप्येति, परब्रह्मणः परां भक्तिं प्राप्नुवन्ति । तेषां  
सकलदुःखानि दोषाश्चाऽत्यन्तं नश्यन्ति । सत्यपि च देहे परमात्मनः परमम्

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

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

आनन्दमनुभवन्ति । परमात्मेच्छयैतादृशो ब्रह्मरूपो भक्तो देहं त्यक्त्वाऽर्चिर्मार्गेण  
परमात्मनोऽक्षरधाम प्राप्य ब्राह्मतनुयुक्तो भूत्वा सदैवाऽक्षरधामाऽधिपतेः परब्रह्मणो  
दासभावेन दर्शनरूपां सेवां कुर्वाणो भुङ्क्ते दिव्यमानन्दमिति ।

“To achieve ultimate liberation, spiritual seekers (mumukṣus) must develop unwavering devotion for Parabrahman Puruṣottama Bhagavān Swaminarayan and the present Akṣarabrahman Guru, who embodies Parabrahman fully and continuously. These seekers should cultivate a faultless perception of their divinity (*nirdoṣa buddhi*) and, upon encountering them, firmly believe that they have met the present manifestation of Parabrahman. They should wholeheartedly associate with them through their thoughts, words, and actions to please them greatly.”

“By diligently following this path, and with the grace of Parabrahman, the aspirant jīvas and īśvaras attain the highest devotion to Parabrahman, having attained *ekāntika dharma* and become *brahmarūpa*, meaning attaining the liberating virtues of Akṣarabrahman. All their sorrows and imperfections are permanently eradicated, and they experience the supreme bliss of Parabrahman while still alive. By the will of Paramātman, such a devotee, as *brahmarūpa*, attains Paramātman’s Akṣaradhāman after leaving the mortal body through the *arcirmārga*. In Akṣaradhāman, the devotee, now possessing a divine brāhmic-body, eternally enjoys divine bliss while rendering service to the master of Akṣaradhāman, Parabrahman, with the attitude of a devoted servant (*dāsabhāva*), through beholding the divine form of Parabrahman.”

## 6.2 Opening

In this chapter, we delve into a critical analysis of the Vedāntic principles of *sādhana* (spiritual endeavor or praxis) and *mukti* (liberation) as expressed in the sacred scriptures of the Prasthānatrayī, namely the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā, and Brahmasūtras. Our exploration is enriched by the profound insights presented in Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami’s Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

In order to comprehend the essence of *sādhana* and *mukti*, one must have a clear understanding of the fundamental nature of *jīvas* and *īśvaras*. *Jīvas*, encompassed within their three bodies - gross, subtle, and causal, and *īśvaras*, dwelling within their three forms - *virāt* (cosmic form), *sūtrātman* (subtle form), and *avyākṛta* (unmanifest form), strive relentlessly towards attaining the ultimate state of bliss. However, they find themselves entangled in various unfortunate and discomfoting situations, unable to find respite from the ceaseless rounds of birth and demise.

Derived from the profound teachings enshrined in the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, it becomes palpable that genuine tranquility can solely be ascertained through the cognizance of a qualitative unity with Akṣarabrahman and via unwavering devotion to Parabrahman. Without this realization and devotion, all *jīvas* and *īśvaras* remain trapped in the ceaseless cycle of transmigration. Therefore, the key to liberating oneself from this predicament lies in emulating the qualities of Akṣarabrahman and seeking the benevolence of Parabrahman through the practice of *sādhana* – the transformative praxis that leads to *mukti* – liberation, which marks both an end and a new beginning.

Throughout this chapter, we shall embark upon an in-depth exploration of the profound insights provided by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami in his Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. By analyzing the interpretations of the Prasthānatrayī's Vedāntic principles of *sādhana* and *mukti*, we aim to shed light on their inherent consistency and significance. This analysis will further elucidate the profound interplay between human endeavor, divine grace, and the ultimate attainment of spiritual liberation.

### **6.3 Brahmavidyā: The Path to Mukti**

Central to our inquiry is the profound concept of Brahmavidyā, signifying the knowledge of the ultimate realities – Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. This knowledge emerges as the sole avenue towards achieving *mukti*, liberation from the ceaseless cycles of birth and death. This fundamental notion finds affirmation not only in the Upaniṣads but also in the Brahmasūtras and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. Indeed, Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa himself, commencing the fourth section of the third chapter (BS

3.4.1), unequivocally validates the fulfillment of the highest *puruṣārtha*, the ultimate aim of human life, through Brahmavidyā, as enunciated in the *śrutis* – Upaniṣads.

- पुरुषार्थोऽतः शब्दादिति बादरायणः<sup>3</sup> (BS 3.4.1)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami, in his illuminating Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, elucidates various references from the Upaniṣads that emphasize the significance of Brahmavidyā. Let us explore some of these notable mentions:

- वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥<sup>4</sup> (MU 3.2.6)
- तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं यद् विभाति ॥<sup>5</sup> (MU 2.2.7)
- भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।  
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥<sup>6</sup> (MU 2.2.8)
- तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद् विमुक्तः परात् परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥<sup>7</sup> (MU 3.2.8)
- ब्रह्मविद् आप्नोति परम् ॥<sup>8</sup> (MU 2.1.1)
- स य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षरं प्रणौत्येतदेवाऽक्षरममृतमभयं प्रविशति तत्प्रविश्य यदमृतं देवास्तदमृतो भवति ॥<sup>9</sup> (CU 1.4.5)

Through the knowledge of Brahmavidyā, the realized souls who have renounced worldly attachments attained association with Akṣarabrahman Guru and transcended the realm of mundane existence, get liberated from māyā and attain absolute devotion to Parabrahman, in the immortal Akṣaradhāman. The knots of ignorance in the heart are

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<sup>3</sup> *puruṣārthp 'taḥ śabdāditi bādarāyaṇaḥ*

<sup>4</sup> *vedāntavijñānasuniścitārthāḥ sannyaśayogādyatayaḥ śuddhasattvāḥ te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve ||*

<sup>5</sup> *tadvijñānena paripaśyanti dhīrā ānandarūpamamṛtaṃ yad vibhāti ||*

<sup>6</sup> *bhidiate hṛdayagranthiśchidyante sarvasaṃśayaḥ | kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare ||*

<sup>7</sup> *tathā vidvān nāmarūpād vimuktaḥ parāt paraṃ puruṣamupaiti divyam ||*

<sup>8</sup> *brahmavid āpnoti param |*

<sup>9</sup> *sa ya etadevaṃ vidvānakṣaraṃ praṇautyetadevā 'kṣaramamṛtamabhayaṃ praviśati tatpraviśya yadamṛtā devāstadamṛto bhavati*

severed, all doubts are dispelled, and one's karma dissolves upon this realization of the most transcendental reality, Parabrahman.

Thus, Brahnavidyā, passed down through an unbroken lineage of gurus, holds profound significance in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. As interpreted by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami, it serves as the gateway to mukti, empowering seekers to transcend the incessantly rotating wheel of births and deaths, and attain a spot in the ultimate abode, Akṣaradhāman.

Brahnavidyā encompasses the wisdom that leads to the comprehension of both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. This wisdom is the most crucial and beneficial knowledge, as evidenced by the Brahmasūtras themselves, which commence with an inquiry into Brahnavidyā. The contemplation of Brahnavidyā is also explicitly mentioned in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami notes: वेत्ति विद्यते ज्ञायतेऽनयाऽक्षरं ब्रह्म परं ब्रह्म चेति ब्रह्मविद्या तामिति व्युत्पन्नोऽर्थः । अक्षरब्रह्मपरब्रह्मशब्दयोरुभयोरपि ब्रह्मपदघटितत्वाद् ब्रह्मविद्या ।<sup>10</sup>

- अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा<sup>11</sup> (BS 1.1.1)
- येनाऽक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम्<sup>12</sup> (MU 1.2.13)

In Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.13, it is stated that Brahnavidyā is that by which the true knowledge of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman is acquired. Therefore, Brahnavidyā can be identified as the very essence of the Prasthānatrayī and Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

This Brahnavidyā, being the supreme knowledge, is accessible to all individuals and is regarded as the pinnacle of all knowledge. The Brahmasūtras devote two adhikaraṇas to establish this point. When a debate arises concerning the comparison of Brahnavidyā

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<sup>10</sup> Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 1.1.1, p. 232; *vetti vidyate jñāyate 'nayā 'kṣaram brahma paraṃ brahma ceti brahnavidyā tāmiti vyutpanno 'rthaḥ | akṣarabrahmaparabrahmaśabdayorubhayorapi brahmapadaghaṭitatvād brahnavidyā |*

<sup>11</sup> *athāto brahmajijñāsā*

<sup>12</sup> *yenā 'kṣaram puruṣaṃ veda satyaṃ provāca tāṃ tattvato brahnavidyām*

with rites and rituals, Vyāsa states in the Itarajyāyastva adhikaraṇa, अतस्त्वितरज्ज्यायो लिङ्गाच्च<sup>13</sup> (BS 3.4.39). This can be investigated as Brahmavidyā, given the aforementioned rationale and corroborating evidence from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and some of the ten Upaniṣads, stands as superior to other spiritual pursuits. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami offers supplementary citations from these texts, thereby fortifying and ultimately concluding the ongoing discourse initiated within the Brahmasūtras. These references reinforce the supremacy of Brahmavidyā and its significance in attaining ultimate knowledge and liberation.

- एष नित्यो महिमा ब्राह्मणस्य न वर्धते कर्मणा नो कनीयान् तस्यैव स्यात् पदवित्तं विदित्वा न लिप्यते कर्मणा पापकेन ...<sup>14</sup> (BU 4.4.23)
- अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।  
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग् व्यवसितो हि सः ॥<sup>15</sup> (BG 1.30)
- क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।  
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥<sup>16</sup> (BG 1.31)
- किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।<sup>17</sup> (BG 1.33)
- मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।  
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति पराङ्गतिम् ॥<sup>18</sup> (BG 2.32)

The significance of Brahmavidyā as the supreme wisdom is further emphasized by Kṛṣṇa in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. He states, तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि

<sup>13</sup> *atastvitarajjyāyo liṅgācca*

<sup>14</sup> *eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya na vardhate karmaṇā no kaṇīyān tasyaiva syāt padavittam viditvā na lipyate karmaṇā pāpakena...*

<sup>15</sup> *api cet sudurācāro bhajate māmananyabhāk |  
sādhureva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ ||*

<sup>16</sup> *kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvacchāntim nigacchati |  
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati ||*

<sup>17</sup> *kiṃ punarbrāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayastathā*

<sup>18</sup> *mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ |  
striyo vaiśyāstathā śūdrāste 'pi yānti parāṅgatim ||*

मतोऽधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद् योगी भवार्जुन ॥<sup>19</sup> (BG 6.46). This verse means that the *yogin* who possesses knowledge of Brahmavidyā among ascetics is considered superior. Such a *yogin* transcends the performance of mere rituals and recognizes them as a means to attain liberation. In this regard, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami notes that this explanation highlights the greatness of Brahmavidyā and does not imply the disregard of the *varṇāśrama* rules.

Although Brahmavidyā is the most incredible and highest wisdom of all, it is inclusive and open to all individuals. The Prasthānatrayī welcomes everyone, irrespective of gender, color, creed, race, or any other worldly parameter, to contemplate the divine forms of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. This Vedāntic principle is addressed explicitly in the Antarā adhikaraṇa of the third chapter of the Brahmasūtras.

- अन्तरा भूतग्रामवत्स्वात्मनोऽन्यथा भेदाऽनुपपत्तिरिति चेन्नोपदेशान्तरवत्<sup>20</sup> (BS 3.3.34)

It can be unanimously agreed upon that Brahmavidyā is the paramount wisdom accessible to all and, more importantly, the only path to mukti. This consensus is consistently upheld by all three texts of the Prasthānatrayī, thereby affirming the centrality of Brahmavidyā in the journey toward liberation.

In conclusion, the analysis of the Prasthānatrayī in the context of sādhanā (spiritual endeavor) and mukti (liberation) as presented in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam reveals the pivotal role of Brahmavidyā. This wisdom, encompassing the understanding of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, holds the key to ultimate bliss and liberation.

This short study highlights the significance of Brahmavidyā as the essential means to achieve mukti. It is emphasized that association with Akṣarabrahman and proper practice of Brahmavidyā can lead an aspirant towards liberation. The scriptures consistently affirm that without attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman and devotion to

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<sup>19</sup> *tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah |*  
*karmibhyaścādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavāṛjuna ||*

<sup>20</sup> *antarā bhūtagrāmvatstvātmano 'nyathā bheda 'nupapattiriti cennopadeśāntaravat*

Parabrahman, jīvas and īśvaras remain trapped in the continuous loops of being born and dying. Brahmavidyā is the wisdom that enables one to transcend the limitations of the three bodies and to experience the divine realm. Moreover, it is elucidated that Brahmavidyā is not only the greatest of all knowledge but also the only path to mukti, as consistently asserted by the Prasthānatrayī texts. The profundity of Brahmavidyā transcends the efficacy of rites, rituals, and other spiritual pursuits, as it directly guides one towards the apprehension of the ultimate truth.

In essence, the exploration of Brahmavidyā in the context of sādhanā and mukti underscores its profound importance in the spiritual journey.

#### 6.4 Brahmabhāva of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā

In order to ensure consistency among the Brahmasūtras, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and Upaniṣads this chapter explores the process of sādhanā as elucidated by the Prasthānatrayī and interpreted in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. The central focus of sādhanā is the attainment of *brahmabhāva*, a state of being that resembles that of Akṣarabrahman. In this section, we shall examine how the principle of *brahmabhāva* is consistently emphasized throughout the Bhagavad Gītā.

The first chapter concludes with Arjuna's distress, which Kṛṣṇa begins to alleviate at the beginning of the second chapter. Sañjaya describes the situation:

- तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् ।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥<sup>21</sup> (BG 2.1)

Kṛṣṇa, addressing his dear friend and disciple, describes *brahmabhāva* as a means to relieve Arjuna of his distress and worldly concerns. This relief becomes evident at the end of the Bhagavad Gītā, where Arjuna is convinced, relieved, and invigorated. Kṛṣṇa states: ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।<sup>22</sup> (BG 18.54). These words enlighten Arjuna, and in a few verses, he declares:

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<sup>21</sup> *taṁ tathā kṛpayāviṣṭamaśrupūrṇākulekṣaṇam |  
viṣīdantamidaṁ vākyamuvāca madhusūdanaḥ ||*

<sup>22</sup> *brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |*

- नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।  
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥<sup>23</sup> (BG 18.73)

This attainment is one of the expected outcomes, as the resolution of Arjuna’s plight begins the Gītā. However, *brahmabhāva* encompasses more than merely dispelling infatuation or acquiring wisdom. The essence of this divine state, akin to Akṣarabrahman, lies in the jīva or īśvara’s actualization of qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman; in other words, attaining the state of Akṣarabrahman and the ability to offer devotion to Parabrahman. The Bhagavad Gītā repeatedly reinforces the concept of *brahmabhāva*, beginning from the second chapter.

In the second chapter, Arjuna poses a question:

- स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।  
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥<sup>24</sup> (BG 2.54)

Kṛṣṇa responds to Arjuna’s query starting from the following verse: प्रजहाति यदा कामान्<sup>25</sup> (BG 2.55) until स शान्तिमधिगच्छति<sup>26</sup> (BG 2.71). Concluding this section, Kṛṣṇa states:

- एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।  
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥<sup>27</sup> (BG 2.72)

In these concluding words, Kṛṣṇa presents the term “*brāhmī sthiti*” as a state where all the previously mentioned qualities of *sthitaprajña* reside. In the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, it is interpreted as follows: ब्राह्मी ब्रह्मण इयमिति ब्राह्मी साक्षादक्षरब्रह्मसम्बन्धिनीति यावद् तदक्षरब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरुमननप्रकर्षलभ्या स्वात्मनस्तदक्षरब्रह्मगुणसाधर्म्यलक्षणतद्भावरूपा

<sup>23</sup> *naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta | sthito ’smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṃ tava ||*

- <sup>24</sup> *sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava | sthitadhīḥ kim prabhāṣeta kimāsīta vrajeta kim ||*

<sup>25</sup> *prajahāti yadā kāmān*

<sup>26</sup> *sa śāntimadhigacchati*

<sup>27</sup> *eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha naināṃ prāpya vimuhyati | sthitvāsyāmantakāle ’pi brahmanirvāṇamṛcchati ||*

परमात्मोपासनपरमानुकूला स्थितिः परिशुद्धात्मनो ब्रह्मविभावनसंस्कृता दिव्यदशोच्यते ।<sup>28</sup> “*Brāhmī* signifies the association with Akṣarabrahman as of utmost significance, and the qualities of Akṣarabrahman are acquired through loving and absolute contemplation of the Akṣarabrahman Guru. This state is characterized by aligning one’s ātman with the qualities of Akṣarabrahman, facilitating unwavering devotion to Parabrahman.”

Bhadreshdas Swami further states: एषैव ब्राह्मी स्थितिर्गीतोपदेशसर्वस्वम्<sup>29</sup> - “This *Brāhmī sthiti*, as explained, is the essence of all the teachings in the *Gītā*.”

Throughout the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā*, and indeed, across various chapters, this divine state of *brahmabhāva* is repeatedly emphasized using diverse terminology. In the third chapter, particularly when delving into the path of karma yoga, Kṛṣṇa articulates:

- मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।<sup>30</sup> (BG 3.30)

The compound term “*adhyātmacetasā*” is explained in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the *Bhagavad Gītā* as follows: “*Adhyātmacetasā* refers to directing one’s mind towards the ātman of one’s own ātman, Akṣarabrahman.” The commentary reads: अध्यात्मचेतसा आत्मनि स्वात्मनोऽप्यात्मभूतेऽक्षरब्रह्मात्मनि यच्चेतस्तदध्यात्मं तेन चेतसेति विग्रहः।<sup>31</sup>

In the fourth chapter of this *smṛti* text, Kṛṣṇa underscores the profound importance of comprehending the nature of actions (karma) and their intrinsic connection to the eternal Akṣarabrahman. The verses declare that “Akṣarabrahman is the offering, Akṣarabrahman is the oblation, and Akṣarabrahman is the offering poured into the fire of Akṣarabrahman. Akṣarabrahman is, in essence, the culmination of all.” The verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā* articulates:

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<sup>28</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam* 2.72, p. 68; *brāhmī brahmaṇa iyamiti brāhmī sākṣādakṣarabrahmasambandhinīti yāvad tadakṣarabrahmasvarūpagurumananaprakarṣalabhyā svātmanastadakṣarabrahmaguṇasādharmyalakṣaṇatadbhāvarūpā paramātmopāsanaparamānukūlā sthitiḥ parisuddhātmano brahmavibhāvanasamskr̥tā divyadaśocyate* |

<sup>29</sup> *Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā* 8.2.3, p. 316; *eṣaiva brāhmī sthitiḥgītōpadeśasarvasvam*

<sup>30</sup> *maya sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṁnyasyādhyātmacetasā* |

<sup>31</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam* 3.30, p. 84; *adhyātmacetasā ātmani svātmano ’pyātmabhūte ’kṣarabrahmātmani yacetastadadhyātmaṁ tena cetaseti vigrahaḥ* |

- ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥<sup>32</sup> (BG 4.24)

In the following verse, BG 4.25, Kṛṣṇa speaks about the significance and pervasion of the Akṣarabrahman through the same analogy of the fire of Akṣarabrahman, while describing *brahmabhāva* as indispensable for the *karmayoga*:

- ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥<sup>33</sup> (BG 4.25)

Transitioning to the fifth chapter, Kṛṣṇa expounds upon the qualities of a *jīvanmukta*, an individual who achieves liberation during their earthly existence. The verses BG 5.19, 5.20, and 5.21 emphasize the qualities of a *jīvanmukta* who has attained oneness with the Akṣarabrahman. *Brahmayogayuktātman* is a *jīva* or *īśvara* who has attained the association of and qualitative oneness with the Akṣarabrahman Guru. Here, the parts of the verses like ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः<sup>34</sup> (BG 5.19), ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः<sup>35</sup> (BG 5.20), and the one mentioned above, are the ones that express an absolute association with the Akṣarabrahman Guru.

- इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।  
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥<sup>36</sup> (BG 5.19)
- न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।  
स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥<sup>37</sup> (BG 5.20)
- बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।  
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥<sup>38</sup> (BG 5.21)

<sup>32</sup> *brahmārpaṇaṃ brahma havirbrahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam |  
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṃ brahmakarmasamādhinā ||*

<sup>33</sup> *brahmāgnāvapare yajñaṃ yajñenaivopajuhvati ||*

<sup>34</sup> *brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ*

<sup>35</sup> *brahmavid brahmaṇi sthitāḥ*

<sup>36</sup> *ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ |  
nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ ||*

<sup>37</sup> *na prahr̥ṣyetpriyaṃ prāpya nodvijetprāpya cāpriyam |  
sthira-buddhirasammūḍho brahmavid brahmaṇi sthitāḥ ||*

<sup>38</sup> *bāhya-sparśeṣvasaktātmā vindatyātmani yatsukham |  
sa brahmayogayuktātmā sukhamakṣayamaśnute ||*

These verses describe the state of a jīvanmukta who has attained a deep connection with Akṣarabrahman – *brahmabhāva* – and experiences the eternal bliss of Parabrahman.

In the sixth chapter, Kṛṣṇa speaks about the characteristics of a yogi and the fruits of yoga. The verses BG 6.8 and BG 6.9 describe the qualities of a yogi:

- ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तत्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।  
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥<sup>39</sup> (BG 6.8)
- सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।  
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥<sup>40</sup> (BG 6.9)

These verses highlight the qualities of a yogi who remains steady-minded, free from attachments and aversions, and treats all beings with equanimity. This is the result of attaining the *brahmabhāva*.

The words ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम्<sup>41</sup> (BG 6.27) and ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम्<sup>42</sup> (BG 6.28) are other words that express the meaning of *brahmabhāva*.

- प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।  
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥<sup>43</sup> (BG 6.27)
- युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।  
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥<sup>44</sup> (BG 6.28)

A *sthītaprajña yogin* – the one who has attained *brahmabhāva* – is a *jñānin*, as the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā utters in the seventh chapter through following and other verses.

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<sup>39</sup> *jñānavijñānatrptatmā kūṭastho vijitendriyah |  
yukta ityucyate yogī samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ ||*

<sup>40</sup> *suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnamadhyasthadveṣyabandhuṣu |  
sādhuṣvapi ca pāpeṣu samabuddhirviśiṣyate ||*

<sup>41</sup> *brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam*

<sup>42</sup> *brahmasaṁsparsam*

<sup>43</sup> *praśāntamanasaṁ hyenaṁ yoginaṁ sukhamuttamaṁ |  
upaiti śāntarajasam brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam ||*

<sup>44</sup> *yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ |  
sukhena brahmasaṁsparsāmatyantam sukhamasṅnute ||*

- तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।  
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥<sup>45</sup> (BG 7.17)
- उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।  
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥<sup>46</sup> (BG 7.18)

Continuing this elaborate study of *brahmabhāva*, in the eighth chapter, titled Akṣarabrahmayoga, Kṛṣṇa discusses the means of attaining qualitative oneness with the Akṣarabrahman Guru. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami explains in his Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā that by developing a strong association with the Akṣarabrahman Guru in body (kāyic), speech (vācic), and mind (mānasic), one realizes one’s own identity with Akṣara. “When one associates this way with constant contemplation that “I am Akṣara”, “I am Brahman”, “the Akṣarabrahman Guru is my ātman”, he or she attains the blissful state of being like Akṣarabrahman and savors the ultimate bliss of Parabrahman”: अहमक्षरमहं ब्रह्म गुरुरूपमिदमक्षरं ब्रह्म ममात्मेत्येवमादिरूपेण स्वात्मनि ब्रह्मरूपत्वसम्पत्तये गुरुरूपप्रत्यक्षब्रह्मणो दृढतमकायिकवाचिकमानसिक-प्रसङ्गं प्राप्य मननादिलक्षणतद्व्याहारं कुर्वन्नित्यर्थः।<sup>47</sup> The verse, while defining ॐ as Akṣarabrahman, indicates the approach to constant contemplation:

- ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।  
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥<sup>48</sup> (BG 8.13)

Through contemplation and the assimilation of these verses, we expand our comprehension of Akṣarabrahman, *brahmabhāva*, and the attributes of a jīvanmukta elucidated within the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā.

<sup>45</sup> *teṣāṃ jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktirviśiṣyate |  
priyo hi jñānino ’tyarthamaḥaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ ||*

<sup>46</sup> *udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tvātmaiva me matam |  
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā māmevānuttamāṃ gatim ||*

<sup>47</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 8.12-13, pp. 185-6; *ahamakṣaramaḥaṃ brahma gururūpamidamakṣaram brahma mamātmetyevamādirūpeṇa svātmani brahmarūpatvasampattaye gururūpapratyakṣabrahmaṇo dṛḍhatamakāyikavācikamānasikaprasaḍgam prāpya mananādilakṣaṇatadvyāhāraṃ kurvannityarthaḥ |*

<sup>48</sup> *Aum ityekākṣaram brahma vyāharanmāmanusmaran |  
yaḥ prayāti tyajandehaṃ sa yāti paramāṃ gatim ||*

In the ninth chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, verse 9.15, Kṛṣṇa characterizes *jñānayajña* in the same way as the idea reflected in BG 4.24 - ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः<sup>49</sup>, as embodying the qualitative oneness of one's ātman with Akṣarabrahman and attaining the realization of Parabrahman permeating all existence.

- ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये<sup>50</sup> (BG 9.15)

... and Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami's words are स्वात्मब्रह्मैक्यमासाद्य सर्वत्र परमात्मसाक्षात्कारलक्षणेन ज्ञानयज्ञेनेत्यर्थः<sup>51</sup> – “By attaining the oneness of the self with Akṣarabrahman and through the direct perception of Parabrahman, *jñānayajña* is accomplished.”

In the tenth chapter, when Kṛṣṇa brings in the concept of *adhyātmavidyā* while describing *vibhūtis*. This contemplation aligns with the one expressed in the eighth chapter. There, it is asked that what is *adhyātma* – किमध्यात्मम्<sup>52</sup> (BG 8.1), and it is answered that *svabhāva* is called *adhyātma* - स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते<sup>53</sup> (BG 8.3). Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami interprets that here *sva* means Akṣarabrahman, and thus *svabhāva* is *Akṣarabrahma-bhāva* or *brahmabhāva*. Back to the tenth chapter, Kṛṣṇa speaks of his *vibhūti* - अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानाम्<sup>54</sup>: “Of all the kinds of knowledge, I am *adyātmavidyā* (Brahmavidyā).”

Moving to the eleventh chapter, Arjuna expresses his gratitude to Kṛṣṇa for imparting the knowledge of “*adhyātma*,” which dispels his delusion. Arjuna sings:

- मदनग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।  
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥<sup>55</sup> (BG 11.1)

<sup>49</sup> *brahmārpaṇaṃ brahma haviḥ*

<sup>50</sup> *jñānayajñena cāpyanye*

<sup>51</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 9.15, p. 21; *svātmabrahmaikyamāsādyā sarvatra paramātmāsākṣātkāralakṣaṇena jñānayajñenetyarthaḥ* |

<sup>52</sup> *kimadhyātmaṃ*

<sup>53</sup> *svabhāvo 'dhyātmamucyate*

<sup>54</sup> *adhyātmavidyā vidyānām*

<sup>55</sup> *madanugrahāya paramaṃ guhyamadhyātmasaṃjñitam* |  
*yattvayoktaṃ vacastena moho 'yaṃ vigato mama* ||

Arjuna acknowledges the profound and transformative nature of the knowledge of *adhyātma*, which Kṛṣṇa has revealed to him, leading to the removal of his delusion, and he craves to learn and absorb more.

In the twelfth chapter, Arjuna inquires about the devotees who engage in Parabrahman's and Akṣarabrahman's absolute devotion. Kṛṣṇa establishes the superiority of this form of engagement with the form of Parabrahman in verse BG 12.2. He further explains that those who associate with the eternal and imperishable Akṣarabrahman, with constant contemplation, attain Parabrahman. However, He also points out the difficulties faced by those who lack *brahmabhāva* and love for Akṣarabrahman in verses 12.4 and 12.5, respectively. The verses read as follows:

- एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।  
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥<sup>56</sup> (BG 12.1)
- मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।  
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥<sup>57</sup> (BG 12.2)
- ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥<sup>58</sup> (BG 12.4)
- क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।  
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥<sup>59</sup> (BG 12.5)

These verses emphasize the significance of devotion and constant contemplation of Parabrahman for attaining liberation and the highest spiritual realization. The second part of the same chapter describes the qualities of a beloved devotee (*priyabhakta*) with the recollection of the same *brahmabhāva* - the heart of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. The verses read from BG 12.13 to BG 12.19 as below:

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<sup>56</sup> *evaṃ satatayuktā ye bhaktāstvāṃ paryupāsate |  
ye cāpyakṣaramavyaktaṃ teṣāṃ ke yogavittamāḥ ||*

<sup>57</sup> *māyāveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāsate |  
śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ ||*

<sup>58</sup> *te prāpnuvanti māmeva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ ||*

<sup>59</sup> *kleśo 'dhikatarasteṣāmyaktāsaktacetasām |  
avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṃ dehavadbhiravāpyate ||*

- अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।  
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥<sup>60</sup> (BG 12.13)
- सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।  
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥<sup>61</sup> (BG 12.14)
- यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।  
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥<sup>62</sup> (BG 12.15)
- अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।  
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥<sup>63</sup> (BG 12.16)
- यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥<sup>64</sup> (BG 12.17)
- समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।  
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥<sup>65</sup> (BG 12.18)
- तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।  
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥<sup>66</sup> (BG 12.19)

In the thirteenth chapter, verse BG 13.11, Kṛṣṇa describes the necessary attributes for a *mumukṣu* (one seeking liberation). The verse is as follows:

- अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ॥<sup>67</sup> (BG 13.11)

<sup>60</sup> *adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca |  
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ samaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī ||*

<sup>61</sup> *santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ |  
mayyarpitamanobuddhīryo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ ||*

<sup>62</sup> *yasmānnodvijate loko lokānnodvijate ca yaḥ |  
harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ ||*

<sup>63</sup> *anapekṣaḥ śucirdakṣa udāsīno gatavyathaḥ |  
sarvārambhaparitāgī yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ ||*

<sup>64</sup> *yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati |  
śubhāśubhaparitāgī bhaktimānyaḥ sa me priyaḥ ||*

<sup>65</sup> *samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ |  
śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitaḥ ||*

<sup>66</sup> *tulyanindāstutirmaunī santuṣṭo yena kenacit |  
aniketāḥ sthīramatirbhaktimānme priyo naraḥ ||*

<sup>67</sup> *adhyātmajñānanityatvaṃ tattvajñānārthadarśanam |*

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami comments on अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं<sup>68</sup> in his Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā. He explains, सततम् स्वात्मब्रह्मस्वरूपत्व-सम्पत्तिपूर्वकपरब्रह्मोपासनलक्षणब्रह्मविद्यानिष्ठत्वम्,<sup>69</sup> which directs one's attention to what it means to be engrossed in Brahmavidyā. It involves unwavering association with the Brahmaśvarūpa Guru, the cultivation of qualitative oneness with the Guru, and the expression of the highest devotion to Parabrahman in this state.

In the conclusion of the description of the virtues of “one who is beyond the three modes of material nature (*guṇas*)” – *guṇātīta* in the fourteenth chapter of the Gītā, Kṛṣṇa imparts the wisdom that only one who has attained the *guṇātīta* state is able to become like Akṣarabrahman in verse 14.26:

- स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥<sup>70</sup> (BG 14.26)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami elucidates *brahmabhūyāya* as the virtues essential for a devotee to attain liberation. It is important to note that these virtues do not include those exclusively possessed by Akṣarabrahman.

In the fifteenth chapter, while mentioning the traits of a devotee who deserves a place in Parabrahman's divine abode that is a form of Akṣarabrahman, Akṣaradhāman, Kṛṣṇa states in verse 15.5:

- निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।  
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥<sup>71</sup> (BG 15.5)

Meaning, “those who are devoid of pride and delusion, conquerors of the affliction of attachment, perpetually absorbed in Akṣarabrahman, with desires extinguished, liberated from the dualities of pleasure and pain, remain untouched by them. They ultimately attain the imperishable realm, Akṣaradhāman.” According to

<sup>68</sup> *adhyātmajñānānityatvaṃ*

<sup>69</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 13.11, p. 280; *satatam svātmabrahmasvarūpatva-sampattipūrvaka-parabrahmopāsanalakṣaṇa-brahmavidyāniṣṭhatvam*

<sup>70</sup> *sa guṇānsamatītyaitānbrahmabhūyāya kalpate*

<sup>71</sup> *nirmānamohā jitasāṅgadoṣā adhyātmānityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ | dvandvairvimuktāḥ sukhaduḥkhasaṃjñairgacchāntyamūḍhāḥ padamavyayaṃ tat ||*

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, *adhyātmanityāḥ* implies those who continuously perceive Akṣarabrahman within their own selves.

The sixteenth chapter starts with the tenet of divine natures with one of the first ones being *gñānayoga*'s constancy (*gñānayogavyavasthiti*). The commentator discerns this as “firm conviction in Parabrahman jeweled with qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman; and absolute wisdom of jīva, īśvara, māyā, Akṣarabrahman, and Parabrahman.” The words in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam are: जीवेश्वरमायाब्रह्मपरब्रह्मेति-तत्त्वपञ्चकयथावस्थिताऽवबोधलक्षणे ज्ञाने परमात्मस्वरूपाऽचलनिष्ठालक्षणयोगे चाऽवस्थानम् ।<sup>72</sup>

In the seventeenth chapter, Kṛṣṇa expounds on the glory of the sacred syllable, ॐ, and its connection to various sacrifices. In verse 17.24, he says that Aum is chanted by the speakers of Brahnavidyā and is recognized as referring to the two Brahman – Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman.

- तस्माद् ॐ इत्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।  
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥<sup>73</sup> (BG 17.24)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explains that those who possess Brahnavidyā (knowledge of Brahman) meditate on Parabrahman, along with Akṣarabrahman, using the foundation of the sacred syllable, ॐ. This meditation is performed to attain the state of *brahmasthiti*. Without association with Akṣarabrahman, all rites and rituals are ultimately futile. The following is the interpretation provided in the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā – यस्मात् प्रणवोऽक्षरब्रह्माऽभिधाय्यपि यस्माच्च यज्ञदानादिसकलक्रियाणां स्वात्मब्रह्मभावमप्राप्यैवाऽनुष्ठाने व्यर्थत्वाद् ब्रह्मस्थितिलाभाय प्रणवाऽलम्बनेन परब्रह्मणा सह ब्रह्मणोऽप्यनुसन्धानं ब्रह्मविद्यावतामिति भावः।<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 16.1, p. 318; *jīveśvaramāyābrahma-parabrahmetitattvapañcakayathāvasthitā* 'vabodhalakṣane jñāne

*paramātmavarūpā* 'calaniṣṭhālakṣaṇayoge cā 'vasthānam |

<sup>73</sup> *tasmād om ityudāhṛtya yajñādānatapahkriyāḥ* |  
*pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satataṁ brahmavādinām* ||

<sup>74</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 8.2.3, p. 318; *yasmāt praṇavo* 'kṣarabrahmā' *bhidhāyapi yasmācca yajñādānādisakalakriyāṇām svātmabrahmabhāvamaprāpyaivā* 'nuṣṭhāne vyarthatvād *brahmasthitilābhāya praṇavā* 'lambanena parabrahmaṇā *saha brahmaṇo* 'pyanusandhānaṁ *brahmavidyāvataṁiti bhāvāḥ* |

In the last chapter of the Gītā, Kṛṣṇa once again establishes the importance of *brahmabhāva* in verse 18.50, and the accomplishment that accompanies it in verse 18.54:

- सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।  
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥<sup>75</sup> (BG 18.50)
- ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥<sup>76</sup> (BG 18.54)

In interpretation, it is understood as follows: “Achieving success, *siddhi* on the spiritual path is only possible through the knowledge of Brahmayā. Upon reaching a state akin to that of Akṣarabrahman, profound joy ensues. There is no room for sorrow or desire. Equally inclined towards all sentient beings, one ultimately attains the pinnacle of devotion to Parabrahman.”

These verses emphasize the attainment of *brahmabhāva*, where one realizes both Brahman and achieves a state of transcendental joy and equanimity.

In this manner, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā starts with *brahmabhāva* and continues unflinchingly to focus on this essential topic until the end of the last chapter. This is how Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēśdas Swami interprets the Gītā and offers a consistent exploration of the heart of the Gītā.

The same *brahmabhāva* is discussed at near the end of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. The mantra reads:

- स यो ह वै तत् परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।  
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥<sup>77</sup> (MU 3.2.9)

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<sup>75</sup> *siddhiṃ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me |  
samāsenaiḥ kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā ||*

<sup>76</sup> *brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktiṃ labhate parām ||*

<sup>77</sup> *sa yo ha vai tat paramaṃ brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati nāsyābrahmavitkule bhavati |  
tarati śokaṃ tarati pāpmānaṃ guhāgranthibhyo vimukto 'mrto bhavati ||*

This mantra emphasizes the transformative power of realizing Akṣarabrahman. By associating with the divine Akṣarabrahman Guru and internalizing his form, words, and actions, the spiritual aspirant can attain the state of becoming *brahmarūpa*—having the nature and realization of Akṣarabrahman.

The idea is that through unwavering devotion, surrender, and absorption in the teachings and presence of the Guru, one can transcend the limitations of the material world and experience qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman while offering pure and ultimate devotion to Parabrahman. This process removes ignorance, therefore, liberation from worldly attachments and leads to the attainment of an immortal spot in Akṣaradhāman.

This understanding is consistent with the overall theme of the Bhagavad Gītā, which emphasizes the importance of spiritual knowledge, devotion, and the guidance of a realized Guru engrossed in Parabrahman.

In conclusion, the interpretation provided by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami offers a consistent exploration of the heart of the Bhagavad Gītā, focusing on the concept of *brahmabhāva*, or attaining the state of Akṣarabrahman. According to this interpretation, the Gītā begins with establishing *brahmabhāva* and emphasizes its importance throughout all its chapters.

The qualities and attributes described in the Gītā, such as *adhyātmajñāna* (knowledge of the self), *guṇātīta* (beyond the three *guṇas*), and *nirguṇa* (without the *guṇas*), are all seen as leading to the attainment of *brahmabhāva*. This interpretation also finds resonance with the teachings of the Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtras.

## 6.5 Ātmagr̥hīti from the Brahmasūtras

The concept of *ātmagr̥hīti* is considered the most significant spiritual endeavor. Vyāsa expounds it in the Brahmasūtras (3.3.15-18) and finds support in the other two texts. Various Upaniṣads, such as the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, emphasize the importance of realizing Akṣarabrahman as one's ātman.

Let us delve deeper into the contemplation of *ātmagr̥hīti*.

- आत्मगृहीतिरितरवदुत्तरात्<sup>78</sup> (BS 3.3.15)

### 6.5.1 What is *Ātmagr̥hīti*?

In this section, we explore the concept of *ātmagr̥hīti* as mentioned in the Brahmasūtras. As per the elucidation by Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami, the word “*gr̥hīti*” in the compound can be understood as *buddhi* (intellect) or *anusandhānam* (attending to), leading to the term *ātmabuddhi*.

In the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā, *ātmabuddhi* is defined as firm knowledge that Brahman is one’s ātman, that the imperishable Akṣara is one’s ātman, and that the Brahmasvarūpa Guru is one’s ātman. It represents a specific way of conceiving one’s ātman as being Brahman. The words read: आत्मबुद्धिर्नाम ब्रह्म ममाऽऽत्माऽक्षरं ममाऽऽत्माऽयं ब्रह्मस्वरूपो गुरुर्ममाऽऽत्मात्यद्यात्मकः प्रकृष्टप्रत्ययलक्षणः स्वाऽऽत्मनो ब्रह्मभावनया विभावनप्रकारविशेषः<sup>79</sup>

From the sūtra, we can understand that one should have *ātmabuddhi* with Akṣarabrahman because it (*ātmagr̥hīti*) is the best. “*itaravad*” is interpreted in two ways. One in reference to the sūtra before, i.e., आत्मशब्दाच्च<sup>80</sup> (BS 3.3.14), where the word *ātma* refers to Parabrahman, with reference to अन्योऽन्तर आत्माऽऽनन्दमयः<sup>81</sup> (TU 2.5.2). *Itarad*, “the one different” (from Paramātman), is Akṣarabrahman. Secondly, it can signify all māyic objects, distinct from the authentic essence of the ātman, such as the body, partner, money, and offspring. As individuals often have a strong attachment to these temporary and fleeting objects, it is asserted that they (we) should develop such a staunch association with Akṣarabrahman instead. An illustrative instance can be observed in the case of an individual overcome by love, who may proclaim their partner

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<sup>78</sup> *ātmagr̥hītiritaravaduttarāt*

<sup>79</sup> Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 8.2.5, p. 321; *ātmabuddhirnāma brahma mamā ’tmā ’kṣaram mamā ’tmā ’yam brahmasvarūpo gururmamā ’tmātyadyātmakaḥ prakṛṣṭapratyayalakṣaṇaḥ svā ’tmano brahmabhāvanayā vibhāvanaparakāra viśeṣaḥ*

<sup>80</sup> *ātmaśabdācca*

<sup>81</sup> *anyo ’ntara ātmānandamāyāḥ*

as their life, heart, or soul. Such figurative expressions are employed despite the absence of an actual merging of identities between the two individuals. This phenomenon exemplifies the concept of *ātmabuddhi* within the given context.

The last word, “*uttarād*” in the sūtra, means “because (it is) the best.” The root “*ut*,” signifying “up” or “beyond,” imparts a sense of elevation or advancement, and “*uttara*” is often used to denote superiority, excellence, or surpassing qualities. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami explains that without *ātmabuddhi*, characterized by the sense of oneness with Brahman (Akṣarabrahman), one is not eligible for the pure *upāsana* (worship and meditation) of Paramātmān.

Indeed, the Upaniṣads echo the idea of *ātmagr̥hīti*, as proposed in the *ātmagr̥hīti* adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. These mantras offer further validation of the concept of the individual self (ātman) being identical to Brahman. Here are some relevant Upaniṣadic verses:

- य एवं वेदाऽहं ब्रह्माऽस्मीति<sup>82</sup> (BU 1.4.10) – “One who in this way knows that ‘I am Brahman.’”
- अयमात्मा ब्रह्म<sup>83</sup> (MaU 1.2) – “This ātman is Brahman.”
- एष म आत्माऽन्तर्हृदय एतद् ब्रह्म<sup>84</sup> (CU 3.14.4) – “This ātman of mine in the heart is Brahman.”
- योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि<sup>85</sup> (IU 16) – “I am that person (Akṣarabrahman) in the light.”

These mantras highlight the realization and affirmation of the ultimate truth that the individual self (ātman) is to be understood as having oneness with Akṣarabrahman. Although ontologically jīvas and īśvaras, and Akṣarabrahman are different, understanding oneself to be Akṣarabrahman is the path to *brahmabhāva*, which means

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<sup>82</sup> *ya evaṃ vedaā 'haṃ brahmā 'smīti*

<sup>83</sup> *ayamātmā brahma*

<sup>84</sup> *eṣa ma ātmā 'ntarhṛdaya etad brahma*

<sup>85</sup> *yo 'śāvasau puruṣaḥ so 'hamasmi*

the cultivation of liberating qualities of Akṣarabrahman. These Upaniṣadic statements further strengthen the significance of *ātmagr̥hīti* and its role in spiritual realization. Moreover, *ātmagr̥hīti* is not merely an intellectual understanding of spiritual concepts but a direct experiential unity of oneself with Akṣarabrahman. It involves a shift in one's identification from mundane to divine, leading to profound inner freedom, peace, and liberation from the bondage of māyā.

In summary, *ātmagr̥hīti*, as mentioned in the Brahmasūtras, emphasizes the importance of developing firm knowledge and a deep sense of identification with Akṣarabrahman. It encourages individuals to cultivate *ātmabuddhi* that recognizes their ātman as one with Akṣarabrahman.

### 6.5.2 An Inquiry

In the same adhikaraṇa, an inquiry and its solution are presented. The sūtra raises the question of whether the state of being like Akṣarabrahman or having an unshakable association with Akṣarabrahman is inherent in the ātman or not.

- कार्याख्यानादपूर्वम्<sup>86</sup> (BS 3.3.17)

The term *apūrvam* indicates that it is not something existing previously. If it were already present in the ātman, it would not have been mentioned or explored in the Prasthānatrayī (the three primary texts of Vedānta). When something does not exist beforehand, a process is prescribed to attain it. The commentator, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami, illustrates this with an example: we tell someone to “speak the truth” only if they have not been speaking it, not to those already uttering it. It is said in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad – तमेवैकं जानथाऽत्मानम्<sup>87</sup> (MU 2.2.5) and ॐ इत्येवं ध्यायथाऽऽत्मानम्<sup>88</sup> (MU 2.2.6), and in some of the mantras<sup>89</sup> referenced earlier, that one should cultivate association with Akṣarabrahman. Thus, it is clear that *brahmabhāva* -

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<sup>86</sup> *kāryākhyānādapūrvam*

<sup>87</sup> *tamevaikaṃ jānathā 'tmānam*

<sup>88</sup> *Om ityevaṃ dhyāyathā 'tmānam*

<sup>89</sup> *ya evaṃ vedā 'haṃ brahmā 'smīti* and others

the state being like Akṣarabrahman is something that does not exist before for an aspirant and comes anew.

### 6.5.3 Akṣarabrahman Guru

The question arises regarding whom one should associate with, understanding them to be Akṣarabrahman. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami answers this in the commentary on the following sūtra, समाने एवं चाऽभेदात्<sup>90</sup> (BS 3.3.18). Akṣarabrahman is one of the two entities beyond māyā; thus, it cannot be equated or assimilated with anything else. This Akṣarabrahman allows oneness with the spiritual seekers; however, this oneness does not imply ontological unity where one becomes indistinguishable from Brahman in every aspect. Certain characteristics necessary for the performance of the supreme *upāsana* (worship) of Parabrahman are granted and thereby possessed by the aspirant. In contrast, others, such as being the independent creator of the Creation, like Akṣarabrahman, are not granted.

- स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याऽब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।  
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥<sup>91</sup> (MU 3.2.9)

It is essential to have Akṣarabrahman right before our eyes to attain the aforementioned state of *brahmabhāva*. Fortunately, this Akṣarabrahman exists in the form of the Guru, specifically the *Guṇātīta* Guru, as confirmed by the Muṇḍaka Upanishad. The Upanishad states,

- तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्म निष्ठम्<sup>92</sup> (MU 1.2.12)

Meaning, “to realize that knowledge, one must go, with sacrificial firewood in hand, to the Guru, the knower of the revelatory texts, Brahman, and fixed in Parabrahman.”

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<sup>90</sup> *samāne evaṃ cā'bhedāt*

<sup>91</sup> *sa yo ha vai tatparamaṃ brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati nāsyā'brahmavitkule bhavati | tarati śokaṃ tarati pāpmānaṃ guhāgranthibhyo vimukto'mṛto bhavati ||*; More about brahmabhāva and ātmagr̥hīti can be found in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of MU 3.2.9, pp. 299-304, and Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā 8.2, pp. 307-330.

<sup>92</sup> *tadvijñānārthaṃ sa gurumevābhigacchet samitpāṇiḥ śrotriyaṃ brahma niṣṭham*

In summary, *ātmagr̥hīti* is a process of realizing the state of *brahmabhāva*, which is not inherently present in the ātman. To achieve this state, one needs to associate with Akṣarabrahman and, thus, embody the characteristics necessary for worshipping Parabrahman.

#### 6.5.4 A Muṇḍaka Analogy

In order to illustrate the profundity of *ātmabuddhi*, various examples are provided. Just as a greedy person considers money their life, a person in love considers their partner their life, and ordinary individuals consider their body to be their everything, *ātmabuddhi* or the feeling of oneness is born out of ultimate love for something or someone. This intense love should be directed towards the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, the manifestation of Parabrahman for us. This is supported by statements from the Vacanāmṛtas, such as G. II 54 and G. III 11.

In the Upaniṣads, there are occasional analogies to expound upon such topics. Let us consider an analogy of a bow and an arrow from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. Two consecutive mantras from the Upanishad highlight this analogy:

- धनुर्गृहीत्वौपनिषदं महास्त्रं शरं ह्युपासानिशितं सन्दधीत ।  
आयम्य तद्भ्रावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥<sup>93</sup> (MU 2.2.3)

“After grasping the Upaniṣad bow, a great weapon, join it with an arrow sharpened by worship. With an intellect that has attained its qualities, oh son, one should draw the bow and then pierce that very Akṣara, which is the target.”

- प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।  
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत् तन्मयो भवेत् ॥<sup>94</sup> (MU 2.2.4)

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<sup>93</sup> *dhanurgr̥hītvaupaniṣadaṃ mahāstraṃ śaraṃ hyupāsānīṣitaṃ sandadhīta |*

*āyamyā tadbhāvagatena cetasā lakṣyaṃ tadevākṣaraṃ somya viddhi ||*

<sup>94</sup> *praṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate |*

*apramattena veddhavyaṃ śaravat tanmayo bhavet ||*

“The *praṇava* is the bow. The arrow is the ātman. Brahman is said to be the target. It should be pierced by one who is vigilant, and like an arrow, one should become wholly absorbed in it.”

In this analogy, just as an archer focuses solely on the aim while putting the bow and arrow together, a spiritual aspirant should concentrate and meditate only on the aim, the Brahmasvarūpa Guru. The Guru becomes the aim, and the aspirant, like an arrow, is about to reach the aim of becoming like Brahman (*brahmarūpa*) through complete association with heartfelt devotion. Such unwavering devotion leads the aspirant to Brahman, the Akṣaradhāman. Thus, the metaphor fits the concept well.

Furthermore, this exploration of *brahmabhāva* demonstrates consistency in the Prasthānatrayī. Similar themes can be found in the other two scriptural texts as well. For example:

- भेदव्यपदेशात्<sup>95</sup> (BS 1.3.5)
- मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।  
स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते॥<sup>96</sup> (BG 14.26)

These examples highlight consistency in the exploration of *brahmabhāva* and its attainment across the Prasthānatrayī.

In conclusion, this section explores the concept of *ātmagr̥hīti* from the Brahmasūtras and its attainment as presented in the Prasthānatrayī. We start by understanding what this term entails, and the mantras from the Upaniṣads emphasize identifying oneself with Akṣarabrahman. Then, the study delves into the inquiry of establishing *ātmagr̥hīti* and highlights the significance of this process that brings in a state of existence that was not prior available. It explains that association with Akṣarabrahman or having an unshaken connection with it is something to be cultivated. The presence of a Guru, who is the knower of the revelatory texts and fixed in Parabrahman, is crucial in realizing

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<sup>95</sup> *bhedavyapadeśāt*

<sup>96</sup> *māṃ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogana sevate |  
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahmabhūyāya kalpate ||*

this knowledge. We then understand who is such Brahmasvarūpa Guru that can bless us with such a state like his.

Finally, the profound nature of *ātmabuddhi* is elucidated using the analogy of a bow and an arrow of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, emphasizing the concentration and devotion of the aspirant towards the aim, the Brahmasvarūpa Guru. The consistent exploration of *brahmabhāva* across the Prasthānatrayī is highlighted, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the texts in presenting this concept.

This intricate exploration of *ātmagr̥hīti* is revisited with profound depth in the third section of the third chapter of the Brahmasūtras. It unfolds across three consecutive adhikaraṇas – Akṣaradhi adhikaraṇa (BS 3.3.32-33), Antarā adhikaraṇa (BS 3.3.34), and Vyatihāra adhikaraṇa (BS 3.3.35-39), offering a comprehensive and scholarly analysis of this concept. Some of the important sūtras are presented below, as the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam of each opens up new perspectives on the dynamics of the experience of oneness with Akṣarabrahman – the manifest Guru.

- अक्षरधियां त्ववरोधः सामान्यतद्भावाभ्यामौपसदवत् तदुक्तम्<sup>97</sup> (BS 3.3.32)
- इयदामननात्<sup>98</sup> (BS 3.3.33)
- अन्तरा भूतग्रामवत्स्वात्मनोऽन्यथा भेदाऽनुपपत्तिरिति चेन्नोपदेशान्तरवत्<sup>99</sup> (BS 3.3.34)
- व्यतिहारो विशिषन्ति हीतरवत्<sup>100</sup> (BS 3.3.35)

One of the important discussions at the end of this set begins with an objector's question that if everything – all sādhanā and mukti happens through association with Akṣarabrahman, Parabrahman feels redundant in the reaction. Thus, it harms Parabrahman's greatness. Vyāsa disagrees, saying that Parabrahman is already respected; thus, his glory remains as is.

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<sup>97</sup> akṣaradhiyāṃ tvavarodhaḥ sāmānyatadbhāvābhyāmaupasadavat taduktam

<sup>98</sup> iyadāmananāt

<sup>99</sup> antarā bhūtagrāmvatsvātmano 'nyathā bhedā 'nupapattiriti cennopadesāntaravat

<sup>100</sup> vyatihāro viśiṣanti hītaravat

- आदरादलोपः<sup>101</sup> (BS 3.3.38)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami presents a few references for the objector to contemplate in arriving to same conclusion as Vyāsa.

- ह्यक्षरात् परतः परः<sup>102</sup> (MU 2.1.2)
- अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः<sup>103</sup> (KU 3.11)
- अव्यक्तात्तु परः पुरुषः<sup>104</sup> (KU 6.8)
- तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे<sup>105</sup> (MU 2.2.8)
- परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम्<sup>106</sup> (MU 3.2.8)
- एतस्माज्जीवघनात् परात्परं पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते<sup>107</sup> (PU 5.5)
- न तत्समश्चाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते<sup>108</sup> (SU 6.8)
- पुरुषः स परः पार्थ<sup>109</sup> (BG 8.22)
- ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहम्<sup>110</sup> (BS 14.27)
- उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः<sup>111</sup> (BG 15.17)
- अक्षरादपि चोत्तमः<sup>112</sup> (BG 15.18)

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<sup>101</sup> *ādarādalopaḥ*

<sup>102</sup> *hyakṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ*

<sup>103</sup> *avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ*

<sup>104</sup> *avyaktāttu paraḥ puruṣaḥ*

<sup>105</sup> *tasmin dr̥ṣṭe parāvare*

<sup>106</sup> *parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam*

<sup>107</sup> *etasmājjīvaghanāt parātparam puriśayaṃ puruṣamīkṣate*

<sup>108</sup> *na tatsamaścābhyadhikaśca dr̥śyate*

<sup>109</sup> *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha*

<sup>110</sup> *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*

<sup>111</sup> *uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ*

<sup>112</sup> *akṣarādapi cottamaḥ*

Upāsana can only happen with *brahmabhāva* at heart. There is no other complete formula to access the ultimate bliss of Parabrahman. The sūtra, उपस्थितेऽतस्तद्वचनाद् (BS 3.3.39), states this, as do the other scriptures.

- ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम्<sup>113</sup> (TU 2.1.1)
- ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा... मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम्<sup>114</sup> (BG 18.54)
- अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा<sup>115</sup> (KU 2.12)
- स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षय्यमश्रुते<sup>116</sup> (BG 5.21)
- ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन्<sup>117</sup> (BG 8.13)

This path stands as the sole means to attain liberation (mukti), and its absence entails grave consequences of profound magnitude.

- असन्नेव स भवति । असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत्<sup>118</sup> (TU 2.6.1)
- यो वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यविदित्वाऽस्मिंल्लोके जुहोति यजते तपस्तप्यते बहूनि वर्षसहस्राण्यन्तवदेवास्य तद् भवति। यो वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यविदित्वाऽस्माल्लोकात् प्रैति स कृपणः<sup>119</sup> (BU 3.8.10)

In the first half of this chapter, we explored how Brahmadevyā is the path to mukti and is the greatest of all endeavors. While exploring various sections from the Brahmasūtras, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and Upaniṣads like the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, we see that Brahmadevyā is open to all irrespective of any parameters of worldly biases. We, therefore, consider a study of *brahmabhāva*, a state of becoming like Akṣarabrahman, from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā as part of the

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<sup>113</sup> *brahmavidāpnoti param*

<sup>114</sup> *brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā... madbhaktiṃ labhate parām*

<sup>115</sup> *adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaṃ matvā*

<sup>116</sup> *sa brahmayogayuktātmā sukhamaḡsayaṃśrute*

<sup>117</sup> *aum ityekākṡaraṃ brahma vyāharan māmanusmaran*

<sup>118</sup> *asanneva sa bhavati | asad brahmeti veda cet*

<sup>119</sup> *yo vā etadakṡaraṃ gārgyaviditvā 'smiṃlloke juhōti yajate tapastapyate bahūni varṡasahasraṇyantaṃvadevāsya tad bhavati | yo vā etadakṡaraṃ gārgyaviditvā 'smāllokāt praiti sa kṡpaṇaḡ*

study of Brahnavidyā and spiritual praxis. The final part of this half is about *ātmagr̥hīti* – the contemplation that Akṣarabrahman is one’s ātman, and this is something that needs to be done or accomplished; it is not inherently possessed. This brings us to the final fruit of all spiritual endeavors, mukti. Moreover, as a miscellaneous part of this chapter, let us explore other parts and forms of Brahnavidyā and their significance.

## 6.6 Miscellaneous Sādhanās in the Brahmasūtras

Let us now delve into the exploration of various miscellaneous *upāsanās* and *sādhanās* as expounded in the Brahmasūtras. Most of these *sādhanās* are from the third chapter of the text, while Vyāsa engages in a dialogue with various other thinkers. One such topic is the Aṅgāvabaddha adhikaraṇa, which addresses the fact that the meditative practice (*upāsanā*) of perceiving all the body parts as *brahmamaya* is indeed present in all the Upaniṣads. The sūtra, अङ्गावबद्धास्तु न शाखासु हि प्रतिवेदम्<sup>120</sup> (BS 3.3.53), emphasizes that Brahnavidyā constitutes the ultimate teaching of the Vedas. The sūtra includes the word “*prativedam*,” underscoring the comprehensive nature of this knowledge in all of the Vedas. The significance of perceiving Brahman in our body parts lies in the fact that initially, we may not possess the capacity to directly perceive or fully realize Brahman within our ātman. Engaging in this *upāsanā* aids us in wholly and swiftly attaining that stage of realization. Furthermore, the second sūtra in this adhikaraṇa, मन्त्रादिवद्वाऽविरोधः<sup>121</sup> (BS 3.3.54), elucidates the principle that when something is not contradictory and proves to be beneficial, it is advisable to incorporate it (*upasamhāra*).

The subsequent adhikaraṇa under consideration is the Bhūmajyāyastva adhikaraṇa, which addresses the question of whether all the *sādhanās* mentioned in the Upaniṣads possess equal efficacy or if they yield different results based on their respective powers. The first sūtra that provides an answer is भूमनः क्रतुवज्ज्यायस्त्वं तथा च दर्शयति<sup>122</sup> (BS 3.3.55), which references the Chāndogya Upaniṣad mantra: यो वै भूमा तत्सुखम्<sup>123</sup> (CU

<sup>120</sup> aṅgāvabaddhāstu na śākhāsu hi prativedam

<sup>121</sup> mantrādivadvā`virodhah

<sup>122</sup> bhūmnaḥ kratuvajjyāyastvaṃ tathā ca darśayati

<sup>123</sup> yo vai bhūmā tatsukham

7.23.1). In this mantra, Paramātman is identified as the highest and most blissful. It indicates that among all the *sādhana*s where the presence of Paramātman is acknowledged, they are considered the most superior. Furthermore, to attain the complete *upāsanā* of Parabrahman and effectively engage in it, one must cultivate the realization of Akṣarabrahman – as the scriptures reveal.

- नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।  
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥<sup>124</sup> (KU 2.23)
- मया प्रसन्नेन तवाऽर्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।<sup>125</sup> (BG 11.47)
- न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनेन दानेन च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।  
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥<sup>126</sup> (BG 11.48)

Consequently, the attainment of the state of being *brahmarūpa* should also be considered within this context. More about this could be studied from the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam series and Parabrahman Swaminarayan’s Vacanāmṛta.

The significance of the varied *vidyās* (knowledge) and *vidhis* (prescribed rituals) pertaining to Parabrahman is addressed in the Śabdādibheda adhikaraṇa, which seeks to explain why these *vidyās* are presented independently and with distinctions. While Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are the proclaimed entities in all the *vidyās*, serving as the ultimate goal, the *ācāryas* (teachers) have taken into consideration the seeker’s desires, faith, curiosity, spiritual needs, temperament, inclinations, and other factors in order to accommodate and cater to their individual dispositions. In a manner reminiscent of Yājñavalkya’s multifaceted explication of Brahmanvidyā within the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, wherein he adeptly adjusted his teachings to suit the questions and backgrounds of various individuals—Maitreyi, Janaka, and Gārgī & other brahmins in the second, third, and fourth chapters respectively—a parallel adaptability is observed in the presentation of Brahmanvidyā across different contexts.

<sup>124</sup> *nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena |  
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyastasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṃ svām ||*

<sup>125</sup> *mayā prasannena tavā ’rjunedaṃ rūpaṃ paraṃ darśitamātmayogāt |*

<sup>126</sup> *na vedayajñādhyayanairna dānairna ca kriyābhirna tapobhirugraiḥ |  
evamrūpaḥ śakya ahaṃ nṛloke draṣṭuṃ tvadanyena kurupravīra ||*

The second sūtra, विकल्पोऽविशिष्टफलत्वात्<sup>127</sup> (BS 3.3.57), of this adhikaraṇa, elucidates that these vidyās do not conflict with each other and, as they are different forms of Brahmavidyā itself, they ultimately lead to the attainment of mukti. Consequently, they can be practiced interchangeably. Examples of different vidyās found in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad include the Śāṅḍilyavidya (CU 3.14.4), the Bhūmavidyā (CU 7.26.2), and the Daharavidyā (CU 8.12.2), and the same goes for Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and the other Upaniṣads. Similarly, in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, various approaches to Brahmavidyā are elucidated. It is important to note that *kāmya karma* (desire-driven actions), which differ from Brahmavidyā *karma* (actions supporting Brahmavidyā), are performed according to one’s wishes to fulfill specific desires. Brahmavidyā is distinct because it yields the supreme fruit of attaining the state of Akṣarabrahman, becoming *brahmarūpa*. Hence, by sincerely practicing any of the forms of Brahmavidyā, one attains the highest realization.

The Yathāśrayabhāva adhikaraṇa, spanning from Brahmāsūtras 3.3.59 to 3.3.64, delves into the concept of *upāsanās* (worship or meditation) of various deities mentioned in different *vidyās*. The initial sūtras establish the *pūrvapakṣa* (opposing view) that one should perform *upāsanā* of other devas and īśvaras as prescribed in other *vidyās* because doing so empowers the individual, and the scriptures support this. Furthermore, there are desirable fruits associated with such *upāsanās*, as stated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.12.1-2. However, Vyāsa presents the *siddhānta* saying, न वा तत्सहभावाऽश्रुतेः<sup>128</sup> (BS 3.3.63), refuting the opposing claims. He states that these different forms of *upāsanās* should not be performed because no actual scriptural reference supports their simultaneous practice. In the fifth chapter of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, it is considered erroneous when the ātman is referred to as other entities. One engages in such *upāsanās* due to a lack of clear understanding of the Vaiśvānara Paramātmā that surpasses the realms of Dyuloka (heaven), Ādityaloka (the realm of the Sun god), and others. The adhikaraṇa concludes with the last sūtra, दर्शनाच्च<sup>129</sup> (BS 3.3.64), emphasizing that the Upaniṣads clearly demonstrate that only the Akṣarādhipati

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<sup>127</sup> *vikalpo 'viśiṣṭaphalatvāt*

<sup>128</sup> *na vā tatsahabhāvā 'śruteḥ*

<sup>129</sup> *darśanācca*

Parabrahman is the object of *upāsana* for attaining ultimate liberation. Numerous *śrutis* and *smṛtis* emphasize the exclusive worship of the highest, as nothing comparable to the realization obtained through the *upāsana* of Parabrahman can be attained through any other means.

- तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम् ।  
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद् विदाम देवम् ॥<sup>130</sup> (SU 6.7)
- मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते<sup>131</sup> (BG 7.14)
- तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते<sup>132</sup> (BG 7.17)
- अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद् भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।  
देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥<sup>133</sup> (BG 7.23)
- अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते<sup>134</sup> (BG 9.22)
- भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।  
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥<sup>135</sup> (BG 11.54)
- मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।  
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥<sup>136</sup> (BG 12.2)

The Anuṣṭheya adhikaraṇa addresses the question of whether a *brahmacārin* (celibate student) who has committed to *ūrdhvaretas* (one who has upward-moving energy) should engage in the *āśrama vidhi* (rituals and practices associated with a particular stage of life). Jaimini initially believes it is unnecessary or even refuted in the *śāstras*.

<sup>130</sup> *tamīśvarāṇām paramaṃ mahēśvaraṃ taṃ devatānām paramaṃ ca daivatam |  
patim patīnām paramaṃ parastād vidāma devam ||*

<sup>131</sup> *māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetām taranti te*

<sup>132</sup> *teṣām jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktirviśiṣyate*

<sup>133</sup> *antavattu phalaṃ teṣām tad bhavatyalpamedhasām |  
devān devayajo yānti madbhaktā yānti māmapi ||*

<sup>134</sup> *ananyāścintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate*

<sup>135</sup> *bhaktiyā tvananyayā śakya ahamevaṃvidho 'rjuna |  
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum ca parantapa ||*

<sup>136</sup> *māyāveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāsate |  
śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ ||*

However, Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) counters Jaimini’s perspective by referencing the *śāstras* on this matter. The sūtra, अनुष्ठेयं बादरायणः साम्यश्रुतेः<sup>137</sup> (BS 3.4.19), expresses Bādarāyaṇa’s standpoint. The three pillars of dharma mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad: त्रयो धर्मस्कन्धा यज्ञोऽध्ययनं दानमिति प्रथमस्तप एव द्वितीयो ब्रह्मचार्याचार्यकुलवासी तृतीयः<sup>138</sup> (CU 2.23.1) remain the same for both the *gṛhastha* (householder) and *brahmacārin* (student) or *parivrājaka* (wandering ascetic). The mantra specifies that *yajña*, meditation, and charity are the primary practices for the *gṛhastha*, while *brahmacarya* is the focus for the *brahmacārin*. The term “*tapas*” encompasses both *vānaprastha* (forest dweller) and *saṃyāsa* (renunciate) stages because austerity (*tapas*) is the central activity in these two *āśramas*.

Should individuals within any of these *āśramas* persist in their activities without attaining the state of yoga, characterized by transcending the three *guṇas* and becoming firmly established in Parabrahman, they will remain ensnared in the relentless cycles of being born and dying until the fortuitous encounter with Akṣarabrahman, who possesses the capacity to guide them toward liberation. The relationship between the Akṣarabrahman Guru and a *śiṣya* (teacher and disciple) continues even for *parivrājakas* (wandering ascetics). Furthermore, an objector claims no specific *vidhi* (prescribed action) for *parivrājakas* exists. However, a sūtra, विधिर्वा धारणवत्<sup>139</sup> (BS 3.4.20), refutes this claim by stating that they do have a *vidhi* related to carrying various items and performing various rites and rituals.

Once again, the skeptic argues that all this is mere praise (*stuti*) and is not practically achievable. Vyāsa counters this by asserting, स्तुतिमात्रमुपादानादिति चेन्नापूर्वत्वात्<sup>140</sup> (BS 3.4.21), that as there is no other authoritative scriptural evidence, their earlier statements should be understood as the final answer, and the situation should be approached accordingly. If individuals are solely engrossed in fulfilling the duties prescribed by their *āśramas* or following the specific guidelines of their respective

<sup>137</sup> *anuṣṭheyam bādarāyaṇaḥ sāmyaśruteḥ*

<sup>138</sup> *trayo dharmaskandhā yajñōsdhyayanaṃ dānamiti prathamastapa eva dvitīyo brahmacāryā-cāryakulavāsī trtīyāḥ*

<sup>139</sup> *vidhirvā dhāraṇavat*

<sup>140</sup> *stutimātramupādānāditi cennāpūrvatvāt*

stages of life, they will not attain mukti and will remain caught in the endless cycles of being born and dying until they come into association with Akṣarabrahman. Śāstric references support this perspective, such as the statement, उत्सन्नाग्निको वा यदहरेव विरजेत् तदहरेव प्रव्रजेद्<sup>141</sup> (Jābāla Upaniṣad 4), which implies that one should renounce worldly attachments at the appropriate time.

The question of whether one can eat anything one wants or if there should be some distinctions and adherence to scriptural orders arises in practical terms. An incident that sheds light on this matter is the story of Cākrāyaṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. Due to a drought, Cākrāyaṇa moves to a village of elephant owners, where he experiences extreme hunger and is forced to beg for food. A villager provides him with half-eaten grains, and Cākrāyaṇa consumes them. However, when the villager offers him water, Cākrāyaṇa refuses. The villager becomes curious as to why Cākrāyaṇa ate the grains despite knowing they were impure but refused the water. Cākrāyaṇa explains that he consumed the grains for survival, as he would have perished without them. However, after consuming the grains, he no longer needed anything further for survival. His desire for water was more of a want than an essential need, so he declined the offer. The story in its original Sanskrit is as follows:

- मटचीहतेषु कुरुष्वाटिक्या सह जाययोषस्तिर्ह चाक्रायण इभ्यग्रामे प्रद्राणक उवास  
॥<sup>142</sup> (CU 1.10.1)
- स हेभ्यं कुल्माषान्खादन्तं बिभिक्षे तं होवाच । नेतोऽन्ये विद्यन्ते यच्च ये म इम  
उपनिहिता इति ॥<sup>143</sup> (CU 1.10.2)
- एतेषां मे देहीति होवाच तानस्मै प्रददौ हन्तानुपानमित्युच्छिष्टं वै मे पीतं स्यादिति  
होवाच ॥<sup>144</sup> (CU 1.10.3)

<sup>141</sup> *utsannāgniko vā yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajed*

<sup>142</sup> *maṭacīhateṣu kuruṣvāṭikyā saha jāyayoṣastirha cākrāyaṇa ibhyagrāme pradrāṇaka uvāsa ||*

<sup>143</sup> *sa hebhyaṃ kulmāṣāṅkhādantaṃ bibhikṣe taṃ hovāca |*

*neto 'nye vidyante yacca ye ma ima upanihitā iti ||*

<sup>144</sup> *eteṣāṃ me dehīti hovāca tānasmāi pradadau hantānupānamityucchiṣṭaṃ vai me pītaṃ syāditi hovāca ||*

- न स्वदेतेऽप्युच्छिष्टा इति न वा अजीविष्यमिमानखादन्निति होवाच कामो म उदपानमिति ॥<sup>145</sup> (CU 1.10.4)

The sūtras, सर्वान्नानुमतिश्च प्राणात्यये तद्दर्शनात्<sup>146</sup> (BS 3.4.29) and अबाधाच्च<sup>147</sup> (BS 3.4.30), clarify that in a situation of life and death, one can consume any food necessary for survival. However, under normal conditions, one should refrain from consuming contaminated food as it hinders spiritual progress. This principle is also found in *smṛtis* (codes of conduct). It should be noted that permission to eat any and all food is only applicable in cases of extreme urgency (*āpatkāla*) or for those who lack control over their senses (*a-manasvin*). Thus, the concept of *sarvānnānumati* (permission to eat everything) is restricted to exceptional circumstances and does not apply to daily experiences.

Furthermore, performing the prescribed karmas is helpful in understanding and realizing a *vidyā* (spiritual knowledge). This is explained in the sūtra, सहकारित्वेन<sup>148</sup> (BS 3.4.33), which states that both *vidyā* and *avidyā* (knowledge and ignorance) should be known together. The Īśā Upaniṣad verse, विद्यां चाऽविद्यां च यस्तद् वेदोभयं सह<sup>149</sup> (IU 3), reinforces this fact. However, it is essential to understand that attaining ultimate *mokṣa* cannot be accomplished solely through āśrama karma. While engaging in the prescribed duties may lead to a higher status or spiritual growth, the primary goal is to attain *mukti* that can only be granted by Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

The question of whether a spiritual aspirant who has deviated or slipped from the path of Brahmadevidyā can regain their original status or even progress further through *prāyaścitta* (atonement) is addressed in the Tadbhūta adhikaraṇa - तद्भूतस्य तु तद्भावावो जैमिनेरपि नियमातद्रूपाऽभावेभ्यः<sup>150</sup> (BS 3.4.40). Jaimini's viewpoint is presented first, stating that the systems of *naiṣṭhika* (lifelong celibacy) and *vānaprastha* (forest dwelling) *parivrājakas* are meant for those who never fall from their chosen path. According to

<sup>145</sup> na svidete 'pyucchiṣṭā iti na vā ajīviṣyamimānakhādanniti hovāca kāmō ma udapānamiti ||

<sup>146</sup> sarvānnānumatiśca prāṇātyaye taddarśanāt

<sup>147</sup> abādhācca

<sup>148</sup> sahakāritvena

<sup>149</sup> vidyāṃ cā 'vidyāṃ ca yastad vedobhayaṃ saha

<sup>150</sup> tadbhūtasya tu tadbhāvo jaiminerapi niyamādrūpā 'bhāvebhyaḥ

Jaimini – and not Vyāsa -- if one falls off this path, regardless of the reason, one is not allowed to re-engage in Brahmavidyā, and there is no prescribed atonement for them. In response to this objection, Vyāsa provides an alternate perspective, उपपूर्वमपीत्येके भावशमनवत्तदुक्तम्<sup>151</sup> (BS 3.4.42). He explains that the mistakes made by the aspirant are minor flaws or faults, not major ones. Therefore, through the process of atonement, one can be forgiven and allowed to progress further on the spiritual path. The key aspect of this process is to approach the manifest form of Akṣarabrahman in the form of the Guru and openly acknowledge one's faults without concealing anything. The Guru can purify the aspirant and relieve them of their burdens. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami writes, अतो नैष्ठिकादीनामपि प्रच्यनमात्रे न ब्रह्मविद्याऽधिकारोऽपगच्छति । साक्षाद्ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरोः समक्षं स्वप्रच्युतिं छद्मरहितया सम्पूर्णा निवेद्य तदादिष्टप्रायश्चित्तेन स्वात्मानं विशोध्य ब्रह्मविद्यायां यतितव्यमिति भावः ।<sup>152</sup> When individuals deviate from their prescribed dharma, they may fall from their current position. However, this does not disqualify them from Brahmavidyā. Through atonement, they can be cleansed and rejuvenated to resume their pursuit of the spiritual path. The commentator also supplies some relevant references from the *smṛti* texts to solidify the argument.

The Āsīna adhikaraṇa discusses the proper way to perform *upāsanā* (meditation) in the seated posture. The sūtra, आसीनः सम्भवात्<sup>153</sup> (BS 4.1.7), states that *upāsanā* should be done while sitting, as it is the most conducive and suitable position for meditation. It emphasizes that while lying on the ground, there is a risk of falling asleep; while walking, there is a risk of losing concentration; and while standing, there is a risk of getting tired. Therefore, sitting is considered the most appropriate posture for dhyana (meditation). This is also supported by the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, where the importance of sitting comfortably in a clean and quiet place for meditation is highlighted.

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<sup>151</sup> *upapūrvamapītyeke bhāvaśamanavattaduktam*

<sup>152</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.4.42, p. 377; *ato naiṣṭhikādīnāmapi pracyanamātre na brahmavidyā' dhikāro 'pagacchati | sākṣādbrahmasvarūpaguroḥ samakṣaṃ svaprac्यutiṃ chadmarahitayā sampūrṇāṃ nivedya tadādiṣṭaprayāścittena svātmānaṃ viśodhya brahmavidyāyām yatitavyamiti bhāvaḥ |*

<sup>153</sup> *āsīnaḥ sambhavāt*

- शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।  
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥<sup>154</sup> (BG 6.11)
- तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।  
उपविश्याऽऽसने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥<sup>155</sup> (BG 6.12)

The significance of sitting is further explained by saying, अचलत्वं चापेक्ष्य<sup>156</sup> (BS 4.1.9), as maintaining a stable physical posture helps in achieving mental stability and focus during meditation. It provides a solid foundation for the mind to settle and concentrate on the object of meditation. There is no specific rule or restriction regarding the direction in which meditation should be performed. One can choose any direction that facilitates concentration and creates a better connection with Parabrahman. The direction is not as crucial as the state of mind and the ability to establish a deep spiritual connection. As for the time limit, there is no prescribed duration for meditation. It is a continuous practice that should be carried out throughout one's life. The state of meditation and connection with the divine should be cultivated in such a way that it becomes effortless and integrated into every aspect of one's existence. Even in the state of *jīvanmukta* (liberated while living), one continues to follow the rules and practices, not for personal benefit, but to serve as an inspiration for others. By observing the elders and spiritual practitioners following the rules, the younger generation is motivated and encouraged to do the same, fostering a sense of discipline and spiritual growth in the community.

The *Śamadama adhikaraṇa* - शमदमाद्युपेतः स्यात् तथाऽपि तद्विधेस्तदङ्गतया तेषामवश्याऽनुष्ठेयत्वात्<sup>157</sup> (BS 3.4.27) addresses the significance of internal (*āntaric*) *sādhana* in the path of *Brahmavidyā*. The question at hand is whether internal *sādhana* is essential for all individuals in different *āśramas*. An objector raises the point that householders (*gṛhin*) who already perform external rituals like *yajñas* may not require

<sup>154</sup> *śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthīramāsanamātmanah |*  
*nātyucchritaṃ nātinīcaṃ cailājīnakūśottaram ||*

<sup>155</sup> *tatraikāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyah |*  
*upaviśyā 'sane yuñjyādyogamātmaviśuddhaye ||*

<sup>156</sup> *acalatvaṃ cāpekṣya*

<sup>157</sup> *śamadamādyupetaḥ syāt tathā 'pi tadvidhestadaṅgatayā teṣāmavaśyā 'nuṣṭheyatvāt*

internal *sāadhanā* to attain Brahnavidyā. However, the Brahmasūtrakāra clarifies in the sūtra, as mentioned above, that even householders need to engage in internal *sāadhanā*. While they may already have external rituals, internal *sāadhanā* is still necessary. This is because it is explicitly stated in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mantra - तस्मादेवंविच्छान्तो दान्त उपरतस्तिक्षुः समाहितो भूत्वाऽऽत्मन्येवाऽऽत्मानं पश्यति<sup>158</sup> (BU 4.4.23) - that those desiring Brahnavidyā should practice internal disciplines such as *śamadama* (control of the senses and mind), *uparati* (cessation from worldly desires), *titikṣā* (tolerance), and *sama* (mental tranquility and equilibrium). These practices enable the seeker to turn their attention inward and realize the self within. The significance of internal *sāadhanā* is emphasized over external rituals because it helps individuals develop inner qualities and transcend the limitations of the mind and senses. It is acknowledged that it may take time for aspirants with less *śraddhā* (faith) to overcome obstacles and fully engage in internal *sāadhanā*. However, the pursuit of internal *sāadhanā* is crucial for all individuals on the path of Brahnavidyā, be they householders or monastics, males or females, as it deepens their spiritual growth and leads them closer to the realization of Parabrahman while becoming like Akṣarabrahman.

This *sāadhanā* of contemplation is intended for attaining siddhi, or perfection. The fourth chapter of the Brahmasūtras begins with the Āvṛtti adhikaraṇa shedding light on a significant method to embody this *sāadhanā*. The term *āvṛtti* means repetition, indicating the question of whether one should repeatedly contemplate upon Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman to attain a spiritual state. Is it not possible to accomplish this in a single instance? An objector raises the point that it should be done only once, as what is done once regarding these divine entities is not destroyed. Therefore, there seems to be no specific need for repeated contemplation to attain *phala*, the desired outcome. However, Vyāsa responds by stating that repetition should be done more than once, as it is done in the same way in Vedānta. Numerous scripture passages support this notion, repeatedly emphasizing thoughtful engagement with Brahnavidyā.

- येनाऽक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम्<sup>159</sup> (MU 1.2.13)

<sup>158</sup> *tasmādevaṃvicchānto dānta uparatastitikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā ’manyevā ’tmānaṃ paśyati*

<sup>159</sup> *yenā ’kṣaraṃ puruṣaṃ veda satyaṃ provāca tāṃ tattvato brahnavidyām*

- ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम्<sup>160</sup> (TU 2.1.1)
- आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः<sup>161</sup> (BU 2.4.5)
- तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः<sup>162</sup> (MU 3.1.8)
- ॐ इत्येवं ध्यायथाऽऽत्मानम्<sup>163</sup> (MU 2.2.6)
- आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा<sup>164</sup> (MU 2.2.3)
- ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन्<sup>165</sup> (SU 1.3)

The pattern of repetition is significant because not everyone can fully comprehend and attain knowledge with just one exposure. Maya's eternal bondage of the atman and the prevalence of *vāsanās* necessitate repeated efforts. In the Kāṭha Upaniṣad, Yama explains to Naciketas that even after hearing many times, many do not comprehend this knowledge. Similarly, in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, the instruction “*tat tvam asi*” is repeated over seven times to Śvetaketu.

- श्रवणायाऽपि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः ।<sup>166</sup> (KU 2.7)
- स एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो<sup>167</sup> (CU 6.8.7)

The second sūtra, लिङ्गाच्च<sup>168</sup> (BS 4.1.2) in this adhikaraṇa refers to the teachings of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, where the word, *abhyāsa* (repetition; practice) itself is repeatedly emphasized. Concepts and teachings are reiterated throughout the text, either through repetition of specific words or through gradual exploration.

- अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामाप्तुमिच्छ धनञ्जय<sup>169</sup> (BG 12.9)

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<sup>160</sup> *brahmavidāpnoti param*

<sup>161</sup> *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsītavyaḥ*

<sup>162</sup> *taṃ paśyate niṣkalaṃ dhyāyamānaḥ*

<sup>163</sup> *Aum ityevaṃ dhyāyathā 'tmānam*

<sup>164</sup> *āyamyā tadbhāvagatena cetasā*

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

<sup>166</sup> *śravaṇāyā 'pi bahubhiryo na labhyaḥ śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṃ na vidyuh |*

<sup>167</sup> *sa eṣo 'nimaitadātmīyamidaṃ sarvaṃ tatsatyam sa ātmā tattvamasi śvetaketu*

<sup>168</sup> *liṅgācca*

<sup>169</sup> *abhyāsayogena tato māmāptumiccha dhanañjaya*

- अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते<sup>170</sup> (BG 6.35)
- अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा<sup>171</sup> (BG 8.8)
- तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम्<sup>172</sup> (BG 10.10)

Gunātītānanda Swami also affirms the significance of repetition by emphasizing the need to repeat the “Svāminārāyaṇa” *mahāmantra*.

In summation, the Brahmasūtras offer an exhaustive investigation into Brahavidyā, the comprehension of the supreme reality, and its pragmatic implementation in the spiritual odyssey of individuals. These sūtras meticulously examine numerous facets including the essence of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, the importance of *upāsanā*, and the significance of internal *sādhanā* and repetitive practices. Through these teachings, it becomes evident that Brahavidyā encompasses both theoretical understanding and practical engagement. The sūtras emphasize the need for proper guidance and adherence to scriptural injunctions to attain the desired spiritual goals. They address objections and establish certain practices’ superiority over others while accommodating individual differences and circumstances. The Brahmasūtras stresses the importance of discernment and discrimination in choosing the right path, highlighting the supremacy of the Akṣarādhipati Parabrahman as the ultimate object of worship. While recognizing the validity of various vidyās, they emphasize that ultimate liberation can only be attained through the worship of Parabrahman.

Additionally, the sūtras shed light on the significance of *āśrama dharmas*, the duties, and responsibilities associated with different stages of life, as well as the necessity of internal *sādhanā* and repetition. They demonstrate that irrespective of one’s stage, internal practices such as control of the senses, mental tranquility, and self-realization are indispensable for progressing on the path of Brahavidyā. Ultimately, the Brahmasūtras offer profound insights into the philosophical and practical dimensions of Brahavidyā, guiding seekers toward realizing the ultimate truth. They emphasize the integration of knowledge and action, the importance of scriptural wisdom, the

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<sup>170</sup> *abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate*

<sup>171</sup> *abhyāsayogayuktēna cetasā*

<sup>172</sup> *teṣāṃ satatayuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prītipūrvakam*

transformative power of internal spiritual practices, the cruciality of repetition in leading individuals towards *mokṣa*, and the experience of oneness with Akṣarabrahman and realizing Parabrahman.

## 6.7 Mukti: Definition and Types

Here we delve into the contemplation of mukti (liberation) within the context of the Prasthānatrayī. While mukti is considered the ultimate goal and the highest *puruṣārtha* by proponents of Sanātana Dharma, its understanding varies.

The definition of mukti is derived from the final sūtra of the Brahmasūtras, which states: अनावृत्तिः शब्दादनावृत्तिः शब्दात्<sup>173</sup> (BS 4.4.22). The same principle of non-return is repeated twice here, establishing its significance and also suggesting the end of the Brahmasūtras text. The state of non-return is mentioned as one of the most fundamental characteristics of mukti by the commentator Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami.

In the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, mukti is not merely the abandonment of māyā-related attributes, but it involves both abandonment and attainment. The negation or elimination of vices that hinder becoming like Akṣarabrahman and devotion to Parabrahman. This is accompanied by the positive acquisition of qualities that facilitate these activities. Notably, once mukti is attained, there is nothing more to lose and nothing more to gain. Here, while commenting on Brahmasūtras 4.4.22, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explains when and how is this state of non-return achieved. He employs the mantra of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad:

- यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।  
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥<sup>174</sup> (SU 6.24)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explains that achieving the state of no regression is contingent upon establishing a profound connection with the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, infused with the utmost affection. This connection should

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<sup>173</sup> *anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*

<sup>174</sup> *yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau|  
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah||*

manifest as a sense of oneness, fostered through dedicated *upāsanā*, which encompasses practices such as truthfulness, self-knowledge, detachment from worldly bonds, and unwavering devotion to Parabrahman, among other *sādhana*s. The mukta, blessed by Parabrahman, experiences the ultimate mukti while still alive and, after passing away, ascends to Parabrahman's divine abode to engage in the same *upāsanā* and immerse in the supreme peace of Parabrahman. This state of experiencing ultimate mukti marks the eternal liberation from which a mukta never returns.

As described above, mukti is classified into two types in the Prasthānatrayī: *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. *Jīvanmukti* refers to the state of complete self-realization qualitative identification with Akṣarabrahman and offering *upāsanā* to Parabrahman, all the while living in the same human body, in this very lifetime. *Videhamukti*, on the other hand, denotes liberation attained after death, where one goes to Parabrahman's abode and experiences bliss while being like Akṣarabrahman, an *akṣaramukta*.

According to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, only Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are *nityamukta*, entities eternally beyond the influence of *māyā*. We have seen in the chapters before that both Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman are the masters of *māyā*, absolutely untouched and untainted by it. All other *jīvas* and *īśvaras*, unless they attain the sublime state of liberation, find themselves ensnared by the intricate web of *māyā*, endlessly traversing the ceaseless loops of being born and dying – relentless dance of *māyā*'s rhythm. It is imperative to recognize that their state of liberation was not inherent or eternal. The divinity of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman alone exists eternally, while the mukti experienced by all others has a sure beginning point. Moreover, it is crucial to emphasize that mukti, though initiated at a certain point for each individual, extends infinitely. It is noteworthy that while all beings, excluding Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, embark on their mukti journey from a specific starting point; there is no starting point or moment when muktas began arriving at Akṣaradhāman because the creation of the infinite universes, and the possibility of liberation, has no beginning point.

In summary, this section delves into the definition of mukti in the context of the Prasthānatrayī, exploring its characteristics, types (jīvanmukti and videhamukti), and the distinction between Akṣarabrahman, Parabrahman, and other liberated jīvas and īśvaras. The comprehension of mukti, an epitome of spiritual liberation, places paramount emphasis on breaking free from the relentless māyic loops. This liberation is intricately woven with the profound bond established with the Brahmaśvarūpa Guru and the unswerving dedication to the practice of *upāsana*. In the upcoming sections, we embark on an in-depth exploration of nuanced facets of mukti, unraveling its types and significance.

## 6.8 Jīvanmukti

Jīvanmukti, elucidated in various mantras found in the Upaniṣads, is now being explored in this section. One such mantra from the Katha Upaniṣad (6.14) states that when one realizes Parabrahman, untouched by māyā, and relinquishes all desires while associating with the Akṣarabrahman Guru, who perceives Paramātman in all aspects, they attain spiritual immortality.

- यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।  
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥<sup>175</sup> (KU 6.14)

Despite being mortal, they achieve the state of Akṣarabrahman *atra* – “here, in this realm, in this body, that is, while living”. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also contains such a mantra, along with adding an analogy. As a snake sheds its skin, the skin does look like a dormant snake. In the same way, when a mukta has given up all connections of I-ness and my-ness related to his mortal body and the mortal world, although having a physical body, they have transcended it. They are not bound by any objects or the body itself. The mantra reads:

- तदेष श्लोको भवति । यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो  
भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुत इति । तद्यथाऽहिनिवयनी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्ता शयीतैवमेवेद

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<sup>175</sup> *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hṛdi śritāḥ |  
atha martyo 'mrto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute ||*

शरीर शेतेऽथायमशरीरोऽमृतः प्राणो ब्रह्मैव तेज एव सोऽहं भगवते सहस्रं ददामीति  
होवाच जनको वैदेहः ॥<sup>176</sup> (BU 4.4.7)

In the Aihika-adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras, a debate arises regarding jīvanmukti. Prior to introducing sūtra BS 3.4.50, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami presents an objector's claim, which Vyāsa then addresses. The objector argues that based on certain Upaniṣadic mantras, mukti attained through genuine Brahmanvidyā can only occur after death. Therefore, the state of jīvanmukti is deemed impossible. Some of the mantras that the objectors might cite in support of their claim are as follows:

- तेन धीरा अपियन्ति ब्रह्मविदः स्वर्गं लोकमित ऊर्ध्वं विमुक्ताः ॥<sup>177</sup> (BU 4.4.8)
- ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥<sup>178</sup> (MU 3.2.6)
- तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥<sup>179</sup> (MU 3.2.8)
- एवमेवैष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन  
रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते<sup>180</sup> (CU 8.12.2)
- अस्माल्लोकात् प्रेत्य<sup>181</sup> (TU 2.8.2)

While the objections raised in the Brahmasūtras remain unquoted, Vyāsa provides responses to address them. This response counters the objector's argument, asserting the possibility and existence of jīvanmukti and emphasizing the attainment of liberation in the present life itself.

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<sup>176</sup> tadeṣa śloka bhavati | yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye'sya hṛdi śritāḥ | atha martyo 'mrto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnuta iti | tadyathā 'hinivayanī valmīke mṛtā pratyastā śayītaivameveda śarīra śete 'thāyamaśarīro 'mṛtaḥ praṇo brahmaiva teja eva so 'haṃ bhagavate sahastraṃ dadāmīti hovāca janako vaidehaḥ ||

<sup>177</sup> tena dhīrā apiyanti brahmanvidāḥ svargaṃ lokamita ūrdhvaṃ vimuktāḥ ||

<sup>178</sup> te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve ||

<sup>179</sup> tathā vidvān nāmarūpādvimuktaḥ parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam ||

<sup>180</sup> evamevaiṣa samprasādo 'smāccharīrātsamutthāya paraṃ jyotirupasampadya svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate

<sup>181</sup> asmāllokāt pretya

- ऐहिकमप्रस्तुतप्रतिबन्धे तद्दर्शनात्<sup>182</sup> (BS 3.4.50)

This sūtra asserts that in the absence of any obstructions caused by vices like anger, lust, ego, or external factors such as place and time, a person who associates with Akṣarabrahman through the power of Brahmavidyā experiences mukti (liberation) in this very life, in this very body. This state is known as jīvanmukti. The *śruti* and *smṛti* also support this understanding. Furthermore, it is essential to note that the references mentioned earlier, claimed by the objector, speak of videhamukti while in no way contradicting the existence of jīvanmukti.

- यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।  
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥<sup>183</sup> (KU 6.14; BU 4.4.7)
- यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।  
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥<sup>184</sup> (IU 6)
- यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।  
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥<sup>185</sup> (IU 7)
- यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।  
बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥<sup>186</sup> (KU 6.10)
- एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥<sup>187</sup> (MU 2.1.10)
- पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ॥<sup>188</sup> (MU 3.2.2)

Moreover, the Gītā supports this principle in its fifth and sixth chapter, and in some other chapters as well.

<sup>182</sup> *aihikamaprastutapratibandhe taddarśanāt*

<sup>183</sup> *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hṛdi śritā |*  
*atha martyo 'mṛto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute ||*

<sup>184</sup> *yastu sarvāṇi bhūtānyātmānyevānupaśyati |*  
*sarvabhūteṣu cātmānaṃ tato na vijugupsate ||*

<sup>185</sup> *yasminsarvāṇi bhūtānyātmāivābhūdviśānataḥ |*  
*tatra ko mohah kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ ||*

<sup>186</sup> *yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha |*  
*buddhiśca na viceṣṭate tāmāhuḥ paramāṃ gatim ||*

<sup>187</sup> *etadyo veda nihitaṃ guhāyāṃ so 'vidyāgranthiṃ vikiratīha somya ||*

<sup>188</sup> *paryāptakāmasya kṛtātmanastu ihaiva sarve pravilīyanti kāmāḥ ||*

- न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।  
स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥<sup>189</sup> (BG 5.20)
- शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।  
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥<sup>190</sup> (BG 5.23)
- यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।  
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥<sup>191</sup> (BG 5.28)
- सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।  
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥<sup>192</sup> (BG 6.31)

Therefore, Vyāsa’s sūtra affirms that by removing the obstacles of vices and māyā and by attaining the knowledge of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, an individual can experience jīvanmukti. This sūtra reconciles the objector’s claim and establishes the validity of jīvanmukti as a legitimate and attainable state of liberation.

The fifth chapter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā delves into the intricate behavioral intricacies characterizing an individual in the state of jīvanmukti, a state often referred to as that of a jīvanmukta. One who has attained the realization of Brahman achieves a state of unwavering stability within Brahman, maintaining an unshaken and unperturbed state of mind. Such an enlightened soul neither experiences elation when encountering pleasurable stimuli for their physical body, senses, and mind, nor succumbs to sorrow when confronted with adverse circumstances. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami unequivocally asserts that this elevated condition of jīvanmukti, characterized by being like Akṣarabrahman i.e., *brahmarūpa* and basking in the

<sup>189</sup> na praṁṣyētpriyaṁ prāpya nodvijetprāpya cāpriyam |  
sthīrabuddhīrasammūḍho brahmavid brahmaṇi sthītaḥ ||

<sup>190</sup> śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhuṁ prākśarīravimokṣaṇāt |  
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukḥī naraḥ ||

<sup>191</sup> yatendriyamanobuddhīrmunīrmoṣaparāyaṇaḥ |  
vigatecchābhayakrodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ ||

<sup>192</sup> sarvabhūtaśthitaṁ yo māṁ bhajatyekatvamāśthitaḥ |  
sarvathā vartamāno ’pi sa yogī mayi vartate ||

transcendent bliss of Parabrahman, is indeed an achievable state. He writes: ब्रह्मरूपात्मना प्रत्यक्षपरब्रह्मसहजानन्दतत्परमानन्दाद्यनुभूतिलक्षणपरममुक्तिरूपं फलमुत्पद्यते ।<sup>193</sup>

The usage of the word “*aihika*” itself indicates the presence of two types of liberation - one that occurs while still in the physical body (*jīvanmukti*) and another that happens after the individual leaves the body (*videhamukti*). Notably, throughout the *Prasthānatrayī*, no references reject the possibility of being liberated in the human body, and many affirm it, as shown above.

Without accepting the concept of *jīvanmukti*, indeed, many mantras and verses would lose their significance. For instance, the mantras 6 and 7 of the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, mentioned earlier, would not make sense if liberation only occurred after death, as a post-mortem mukta does not possess a physical body and, thus, is already devoid of ego, jealousy, and other vices. Therefore, the existence of *jīvanmukti* is supported by various scriptures and is essential for the proper interpretation of many verses. It allows for a meaningful understanding of the *Upaniṣadic* teachings and the profound experience of being liberated while still embodied.

In conclusion, *jīvanmukti*, the state of liberation while living is a significant concept discussed in various *Upaniṣads* and scriptures. It entails realizing *Akṣarabrahman* as one’s own *ātman*, resting in *Akṣarabrahman* with a steady and undisturbed mind, and experiencing the supreme bliss of *Parabrahman* in a manifest form. The concept of *jīvanmukti* affirms that liberation is not solely an event after death but can be experienced while still embodied. The *mukti* that takes place post-mortem is called *videhamukti*.

## 6.9 Videhamukti

*Videhamukti*, as the name suggests, refers to liberation after the body or post-mortem liberation. This state is attained by the divine will of *Parabrahman* when a *jīvanmukta*,

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<sup>193</sup> *Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam* 3.4.50, p. 382; *brahmarūpātmanā pratyakṣaparabrahmasahajānandatparamānandādyanubhūtilakṣaṇaparamamuktirūpaṃ phalamutpadyate* |

free of *prarabdha karma*, has no more attachments to the physical body. While the body is still bound by the effects of karma (*prarabdha karma*), Parabrahman's will transcends all karma and its consequences. Thus, Parabrahman waits for the completion of *prarabdha karma* and the death of the *jīvanmukta*'s body. Videhamukti is the only state in which *jīvas* and *īśvaras* can attain Akṣaradhāman, the divine abode of Parabrahman, from which there is no return that is the ultimate state of existence.

Akṣaradhāman is attainable. It is not that this state of liberation is just an experience that has no physical aspect to it; videhamukti takes an *ātman* – *jīva* or *īśvara* to Parabrahman's Akṣaradhāman. The second sūtra of the Dyubhvādyadhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras reads:

- मुक्तोपसृप्यव्यपदेशाच्च<sup>194</sup> (BS 1.3.2)

This sūtra implies that Akṣaradhāman is attainable because it is described as the place that can be reached by those who have attained liberation (Akṣaramuktas). Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami's interpretation of the word “*upasṛpyam*” in his Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam emphasizes that Akṣaradhāman is a special place, distinct from this realm, and can be attained - उपसृप्यं देशान्तरसंसर्गलभ्यं प्राप्यं गन्तव्यं स्थानविशेषम्<sup>195</sup>.

To attain the divine abode of Parabrahman, one must associate with the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, a form of Akṣarabrahman itself. Through unwavering faith and absolute conviction, one develops a clear understanding of oneself as one with Akṣarabrahman and eventually attains a state similar to Akṣarabrahman. During videhamukti, the liberated soul finds its place in Akṣaradhāman. Various Upaniṣadic mantras support this concept. Here are a few examples:

- सूर्यद्वारेण ते त्रिरजाः प्रयान्ति यत्राऽमृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा<sup>196</sup> (MU 1.2.11)
- ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते<sup>197</sup> (MU 2.2.4)

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<sup>194</sup> *muktopasṛpyavyapadeśācca*

<sup>195</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 1.3.2, p. 88

<sup>196</sup> *sūryadvāreṇa te trirajāḥ prayānti yatrā'mṛtaḥ sa puruṣo hyavyayātmā*

<sup>197</sup> *brahma tallakṣyamucyate*

- स वेदैतत्परमं ब्रह्मधाम<sup>198</sup> (MU 3.2.1)
- एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वांस्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम<sup>199</sup> (MU 3.2.4)
- वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।  
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे॥<sup>200</sup> (MU 3.2.6)

Indeed, these references and the Brahmasūtras affirm the attainability of Akṣaradhāman. A jīvanmukta takes a specific *gati* – going to videhamukti leading its way to Akṣaradhāman. That is *utkrānti*, and its course is arcirmārga – the bright way. We then continue understanding the body received upon arriving at Akṣaradhāman and the relationship between Parabrahman and Akṣaramuktas. Finally, we understand the glory of Akṣaramuktas. Let us delve deeper into these subsections while appreciating the consistency among the Prasthānatrayī texts.

### 6.9.1 Arcirādimārga – “Utkrānti” to Mukti

Upon attaining jīvanmukti, both jīva and īśvara ascend to Akṣaradhāman as part of their videhamukti. The Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtras shed light on this most unique, transcendental experience, while the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā supports the understanding. Parabrahman takes the liberated jīva or īśvara to the arcirmārga – the path of brilliant radiance to ascend to the most divine realm of all, Akṣaradhāman. This is the more desirable and auspicious path post-mortem that directly leads the soul to the immortal Parabrahman residing in immortal Akṣaradhāman.

Various Upaniṣads introduce this higher path. One of them from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad is presented here, with more provided later.

- अथ यदु चैवास्मिञ्छव्यं कुर्वन्ति यदि च नार्चिषमेवाभिसंभवन्त्यर्चिषोऽहरह  
आपूर्यमाणपक्षमापूर्यमाणपक्षाद्यान्षडुदङ्ङेति मासांस्तान्मासेभ्यः संवत्सरं  
संवत्सरादादित्यमादित्याच्चन्द्रमसं चन्द्रमसो विद्युतं तत् पुरुषोऽमानवः स एनान्ब्रह्म

<sup>198</sup> *sa vedaitatparamaṃ brahmadhāma*

<sup>199</sup> *etairupāyairyatate yastu vidvāṃstasyaiṣa ātmā viśate brahmadhāma*

<sup>200</sup> *vedāntavijñānasuniścitārthāḥ sannyaśayogādyatayaḥ śuddhasattvāḥ |  
te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve ||*

गमयत्येष देवपथो ब्रह्मपथ एतेन प्रतिपद्यमाना इमं मानवमावर्तं नावर्तन्ते नावर्तन्ते  
॥<sup>201</sup> (CU 4.15.5-6)

The path to Akṣaradhāman consists of the elimination of all the vices of māyā and becoming then a jīvanmukta. Introducing and encapsulating this concept in the Brahmasūtras comes this sūtra, साम्पराये तर्तव्याऽभावात् तथा ह्यन्ये<sup>202</sup> (BS 3.3.26), in the Sāmparāya adhikaraṇa of the Brahmasūtras. Supported by the mantras and verses from the other two texts, this sūtra notes that the scriptures declare that there is nothing more to be attained on the way to Akṣaradhāman for a liberated jīvas or īśvaras, as it has surpassed all of māyā, is beyond any good or bad, and is absolutely engrossed in Parabrahman, while being in the state like Akṣarabrahman.

- यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्रुते<sup>203</sup> (KU 6.14, BU 4.4.7)
- अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः<sup>204</sup> (MU 3.1.5)
- उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः<sup>205</sup> (MU 3.2.1)
- बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते<sup>206</sup> (BG 2.50)

As the first part of the ascension of the soul, the ātman moves out of the body. It is crucial from where it exits the body. The Brahmasūtras present the longest of its sūtras.

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<sup>201</sup> *atha yadu caivāsmiñchavyaṃ kurvanti yadi ca nārçiṣamevābhisaṃbhavantyarçiṣo 'harahna āpūryamānapakṣamāpūryamānapakṣādyānṣadudañneti māsāmstānmāsebhyaḥ saṃvatsaram saṃvatsarādādityamādityāccandramasaṃ candramaso vidyutaṃ tat puruṣo 'mānavah sa enānbrahma gamayatyeṣa devapatho brahmapatha etena pratipadyamānā imaṃ mānavamāvartaṃ nāvartante nāvartante ||*

<sup>202</sup> *sāmparāye tartavyā 'bhāvāt tathā hyanye*

<sup>203</sup> *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā yessya hṛdi śritāḥ |  
atha martyo 'mrto bhavatyatra brahma samaśrute ||*

<sup>204</sup> *antaḥśarīre jyotirmayo hi śubhro yaṃ paśyanti yatayaḥ kṣiṇadoṣāḥ*

<sup>205</sup> *upāstate puruṣaṃ ye hyakāmāste śukrametadativartanti dhīrāḥ*

<sup>206</sup> *buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte*

- तदोकोऽग्रज्वलनं तत्प्रकाशितद्वारो विद्यासामर्थ्यात्तच्छेषगत्यनुस्मृतियोगाच्च  
हार्दानुगृहीतः शताधिकया<sup>207</sup> (BS 4.2.16)

The jīva or īśvara gracefully traverses the *suṣumṇā* vein, commencing the journey through the illuminated gateway and entering a path, thereafter guided by the luminous radiance of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman dwelling within, nurtured by their blessings, profound realization, and contemplation of the divine entities, ultimately leading to the abode of Akṣaradhāman. Vyāsa also refutes the argument about the illuminated path not being available when it is dark! The sūtra can be found in the following adhikaraṇa - निशि नेति चेन्न सम्बन्धस्य यावद्देहभावित्वाद् दर्शयति च<sup>208</sup> (BS 4.2.18). The Upaniṣads validate the argument as the sūtra, रश्म्यनुसारी<sup>209</sup> (BS 4.2.17), refers to evidence from the source text for the path of divine illumination.

- अथ यत्रैतदस्माच्छरीरादुत्क्रामत्यथैतैरेव रश्मिभिरूर्ध्वमाक्रमते । स ॐ इति  
वाहोद्वा मीयते ।<sup>210</sup> (CU 8.6.5)
- एतेषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु यथाकालं चाऽऽहुतयो ह्याददायन् ।  
तं नयन्त्येताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयो यत्र देवानां पतिरेकोऽधिवासः ॥<sup>211</sup> (MU 1.2.5)
- एह्येहीति तमाहुतयः सुवर्चसः सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिर्यजमानं वहन्ति ।  
प्रियां वाचम् अभिवदन्त्योऽर्चयन्त्य एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः ॥<sup>212</sup> (MU  
1.2.6)

More about this path and the waypoints – and their lords – until the Akṣaradhāman are discussed in the first five adhikaraṇas of the following section in the Brahmasūtras – Arcirādi adhikaraṇa (BS 4.3.1); Vāyu adhikaraṇa (BS 4.3.2); Varuṇa adhikaraṇa (BS

<sup>207</sup> tadoko 'grajvalanaṃ tatprakāśitadvāro vidyāsāmarthyāttaccheṣagatyanusmṛtiyogācca  
hārdānugrīhītaḥ śatādhikayā

<sup>208</sup> niśi neti cenna sambandhasya yāvaddēhabhāvītvād darśayati ca

<sup>209</sup> raśmyanusārī

<sup>210</sup> atha yatraitadasmāccharīrādutkrāmatyathaitaireva raśmibhirūrdhvamākramate |  
sa aum iti vāhodvā mīyate |

<sup>211</sup> eteṣu yaścārate bhrajamāneṣu yathākālaṃ cā''hutayo hyādadāyan |  
taṃ nayantyetāḥ sūryasya raśmayo yatra devānāṃ patireko 'dhivāsaḥ ||

<sup>212</sup> ehyehīti tamāhutayaḥ suvarcaṣaḥ sūryasya raśmibhiryajamānaṃ vahanti |  
priyāṃ vācam abhivadantyo 'rcayantya eṣa vaḥ puṇyaḥ sukṛto brahmalokaḥ ||

4.3.3); Ātivāhika adhikaraṇa (BS 4.3.4); and Vaidyuta adhikaraṇa (BS 4.3.5). Let us discuss some crucial insight from this section. The first sūtra reads, अर्चिरादिना तत्प्रथितेः<sup>213</sup> (BS 4.3.1). Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami explains that when all the verses relating (to this context) are compiled, only one path – the arcirmārga – is concluded as the path to Akṣaradhāman. Therefore, there is no inconsistency in the study of this path across the Upaniṣads, Akṣaradhāman is this path. He writes, अन्यत्र श्रुतानां पदानामन्यत्रोपसंहारेण सकलश्रुतीनामेकवाक्यतोपपत्तेरेकस्यैवाऽर्चिरादिमार्गस्योपपत्तेः। इत्थं सर्वासामध्वपराणामैक्यान्न प्रकरणभेदान्मार्गभेद इत्यादिदोषः । अतो ब्रह्मधामगमनानुकूल एक एवाऽर्चिरादिलक्षणोऽध्वेति सिद्धम्<sup>214</sup>. Moreover, who leads one on this path? The *ātivāhikas* on this path could only be Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. There are some other entities along the way, but none of them sustains this relationship, no one other than Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. The Vaidyuta adhikaraṇa refutes other entities, and Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami comments that only the *alaukika*, *amānava*, *puruṣa* – referencing Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.15.5-6, possess the virtue of leading a liberated soul to Akṣaradhāman, and such an entity is either Parabrahman or Akṣarabrahman – ब्रह्मधामप्रापकत्वमलौकिकाऽमानवपुरुषादन्यत्र क्वापि नेति सूत्रकारहृदयम्। स चाऽमानवोऽलौकिकः पुरुषः पुरुषाकारं परं ब्रह्म चाऽक्षरं ब्रह्म चेति ।<sup>215</sup>.

Other mentions of the arcirmārga are compiled below.

- तद्य इत्थं विदुर्ये चेमेऽरण्ये श्रद्धा तप इत्युपासते तेऽर्चिषमभिसम्भवन्त्यर्चिषोऽहरह्य आपूर्यमाणपक्षम् आपूर्यमाणपक्षाद् यान्षडुदड्डेति मासांस्तान्<sup>216</sup> (CU 5.10.1)

<sup>213</sup> *arcirādinā tatprathiteḥ*

<sup>214</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.3.1, p. 408; *padānāmanyatropasamhāreṇa sakalaśrutīnāmekavākyatopapatterekasyaivā'rcirādimārgasyopapatteḥ | itthaṃ sarvāsāmadhvaparāṇāmāikyānna prakaraṇabhedānmārgabheda ityādidoṣaḥ | ato brahmadhāmagamanānukūla eka vā'rcirādilakṣaṇo'dhveti siddham |*

<sup>215</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, 4.3.5, p. 411;

*brahmadhāmaprāpakatvamaalaukikā'mānavapuruṣādanyatra kvāpi neti sūtrakārahṛdayam | sa cā'mānavo'laukikaḥ puruṣaḥ puruṣākāraṃ paraṃ brahma cā'kṣaraṃ brahma ceti |*

<sup>216</sup> *tadya itthaṃ vidurye ceme'raṇye śraddhā tapa ityupāsate*

*te'rciṣamabhisambhavanyarciṣo'harahna āpūryamāṇapakṣam āpūryamāṇapakṣād yāṇṣaḍuḍḍeti māsaṃstān*

- अथ यत्रैतदस्माच्छरीरादुत्क्रामत्यथैतैरेव रश्मिभिरूर्ध्वमाक्रमते । स ॐ इति वाहोद्वा मीयते । स यावत्क्षिप्येन्मनस्तावदादित्यं गच्छति । एतद्वै खलु लोकद्वारं विदुषां प्रपदनं निरोधोऽविदुषाम्<sup>217</sup> (CU 8.6.5)
- तेन स ऊर्ध्व आक्रमते स लोकमागच्छत्यशोकमहिमं तस्मिन् वसति शाश्वतीः समाः<sup>218</sup> (BU 5.10.1)
- ते य एवमेतद्विदुर्ये चामी अरण्ये श्रद्धां सत्यमुपासते तेऽचिरभिसंभवन्त्यर्चिषोऽहरह आर्प्यमाणपक्षम् आपूर्यमाणपक्षाद् यान्षण्मासानुदङ्डादित्य एति मासेभ्यो देवलोकं देवलोकाद् आदित्यमादित्याद्वैद्युतं तान् वैद्युतात् पुरुषो मानस एत्य ब्रह्मलोकानामयति ते तेषु ब्रह्मलोकेषु पराः परावतो वसन्ति तेषां न पुनरावृत्तिः<sup>219</sup> (BU 6.2.15)
- स एतं देवयानं पन्थानमापद्याऽग्निलोकम् आगच्छति स वायुलोकं स वरुणलोकं स आदित्यलोकं स इन्द्रलोकं स प्रजापतिलोकं स ब्रह्मलोकम्<sup>220</sup> (Kauṣītaka Upaniṣad 1.3)

Moreover, it is crucial to note that by the end of this path, a jīva or īśvara reaches Akṣaradhāman. This path does not lead to just cognitive mukti and no concrete attainment result. One actually reaches Akṣaradhāman, attains the *Brāhmī tanu*, and performs the ultimate *upāsanā* of Parabrahman along with infinite Akṣaramuktas who are doing the same. The Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā too encourage this study.

- सोध्वनः पारमाप्नोति<sup>221</sup> (KU 3.9)

<sup>217</sup> *atha yatra itadasmāccharīrādutkrāmatyathaitaireva raśmibhirūrdhvamākramate | sa ॐ iti vāhodvā mīyate | sa yāvatkṣipyenmanastāvadādityaṃ gacchati | etadvai khalu lokadvāraṃ viduṣāṃ prapadanam nirodho 'viduṣām*

<sup>218</sup> *tena sa ūrdhva ākramate sa lokamāgacchatyaśokamahimaṃ tasmin vasati śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*

<sup>219</sup> *te ya evametadvidurye cāmī aranye śraddhāṃ satyamupāsate te 'cirabhisamḥbhavantyarciṣo 'harahna āpūryamāṇapakṣam āpūryamāṇapakṣād yāṅṣaṇmāsānudaññāditya eti māsebhya devalokaṃ devalokād ādityamādityādvaidyutaṃ tān vaidyutāt puruṣo mānasa etya brahmalokāngamayati te teṣu brahmalokeṣu parāḥ parāvato vasanti teṣāṃ na punarāvṛttiḥ*

<sup>220</sup> *sa etaṃ devayānaṃ panthānamāpadyā 'gnilokam āgacchati sa vāyulokaṃ sa varuṇalokaṃ sa ādityalokaṃ sa indralokaṃ sa prajāpatilokaṃ sa brahmalokam*

<sup>221</sup> *sodhvanah pāramāpnoti*

- स्वयंभूः<sup>222</sup> (IU 8)
- तयोर्ध्वमायन्नमृतत्वमेति<sup>223</sup> (KU 6.16; CU 8.6.6)
- स सामभिरुनीयत ब्रह्मलोकम्<sup>224</sup> (PU 5.5)
- तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम<sup>225</sup> (MU 3.2.4)
- स एनान्ब्रह्म गमयत्येषु देवपथो ब्रह्मपथ<sup>226</sup> (CU 4.15.6)
- तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः<sup>227</sup> (BG 8.24)

This concludes a short introduction to ascension (*utkrānti*) to Akṣaradhāman through the path of divine radiance (*arcirmārga*) as we encountered on our journey studying consistency in the three texts of the Prasthānatrayī. Moreover, in the state of videhamukti, liberated jīvas and īśvaras, upon shedding their mortal bodies, are bestowed with the most divine form possible—the body composed of Akṣarabrahman. This divine body or *Brāhmī tanu* is beyond the limitations and constraints of the physical realm, and it allows the liberated beings to reside in the eternal abode of Parabrahman. This divine body is not subject to decay or death and is the body that holds the highest achievement of mukti.

## 6.9.2 Brāhmī Tanu

The concept of *Brāhmī tanu*, where *Brāhmī* means “related to Brahman” and Tanu is “body,” is of great significance in contemplating the nature of videhamukti. Only this divine body, composed of Akṣarabrahman, is capable of existing in Akṣaradhāman, as all other bodies, being inferior to Akṣarabrahman and bound by māyā, are not permitted in that divine abode. This *Brāhmī tanu* is the form that all liberated jīvas and īśvaras, Akṣaramuktas, receive while residing in Akṣaradhāman forever. We shall draw in this

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<sup>222</sup> *svayambhūḥ*

<sup>223</sup> *tayordhvamāyannamṛtatvameti*

<sup>224</sup> *sa sāmabhirunnīyata brahmalokam*

<sup>225</sup> *tasyaiṣa ātmā viśate brahmadhāma*

<sup>226</sup> *sa enānbrahma gamayatyeṣu devapatho brahmapatha*

<sup>227</sup> *tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahmavido janāḥ*

section from various Brahmasūtras to notice the consistency established in the words of all three texts concerning this matter. Setting the tone for a clearer definition of *Brāhmī tanu*, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami writes in the Kāṭha Upaniṣad: स च विग्रहो मुक्तानां साक्षादक्षरब्रह्मतत्त्वत एव भगवत्सहजानन्दपरमसुखभोगानुरूपतया संपादितत्वाद्, दिव्यधामस्थभगवत्सेवापरायणमूर्तिमदक्षरब्रह्मसमानाकारत्वादेश्च ब्राह्मी तनुरुच्यते ।<sup>228</sup>

This divine body is essential because it shares many similarities with Akṣarabrahman and allows the Akṣaramuktas to reside in Akṣaradhāman. It is the most suitable and perfect body for engaging in the divine service of Parabrahman in the ideal manner. Furthermore, when a jīva or īśvara contemplates themselves as Akṣarabrahman while in the mortal body, it is in anticipation of attaining the state of being like Akṣarabrahman. This contemplation of the future outcome as the ultimate goal becomes the most crucial practice (*sādhana*) for the aspirant, as explained in the Ātmagr̥hīti section above.

This idea is reflected in the Tadbhāvabhāvitva-adhikaraṇa (BS 3.3.51-52) of the Brahmasūtras. After presenting the opposing viewpoint, Vyāsa responds by stating that one should not identify oneself based on the physical body, as the body is subject to decay and impermanence. Instead, the ātman, which is distinct and separate (*vyatireka*), should be contemplated. In the state of liberation, the jīva attains the qualities and characteristics of Akṣarabrahman, and thus, the contemplation of one's true nature as Akṣarabrahman becomes significant.

- व्यतिरेकस्तद्भावभावित्वान्न तूपलब्धिवत् ॥<sup>229</sup> (BS 3.3.52)

A series of consecutive mantras from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad supports this understanding. These mantras accentuate the profound distinction between the ātman and the transitory physical vessel and the realization of the ātman's timeless and imperishable essence. They highlight the idea that the liberated jīvas, through the

<sup>228</sup> Kāṭha Upaniṣad 3.1, p. 122; *sa ca vighraho muktānāṃ sākṣādakṣarabrahmatattvata eva bhagavatsahajānandaparamasukhabhogānurūpatayā sampāditatvād, divyadhāmathabagavatsevāparāyaṇamūrtimadakṣarabrahmasamānākāratvādeśca brāhmī tanurucyate |*

<sup>229</sup> *vyatirekastadbhāvabhāvitvānna tūpalabdhiḥ ||*

attainment of the *Brāhmī tanu*, become akin to Akṣarabrahman and partake in the eternal existence and bliss of Akṣaradhāman.

- सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति शान्त उपासीताऽथ खलु क्रतुमयः पुरुषो यथाक्रतुरस्मिंल्लोके पुरुषो भवति तथेतः प्रेत्य भवति ॥<sup>230</sup> (CU 3.14.1)
- एष म आत्माऽन्तर्हृदयेऽणीयान् व्रीहेर्वा यवाद्वा सर्षपाद्वा श्यामाकाद्वा श्यामाकतण्डुलाद्वा एष म आत्माऽन्तर्हृदये ज्यायान्पृथिव्या ज्यायानन्तरिक्षाज्ज्यायान्दिवो ज्यायानेभ्यो लोकेभ्यः ॥<sup>231</sup> (CU 3.14.3)
- एतद्ब्रह्मैतमितः प्रेत्याभिसम्भविताऽस्मीति यस्य स्यादद्वा न विचिकित्साऽस्तीति ह स्माऽऽह शाण्डिल्यः शाण्डिल्यः ॥<sup>232</sup> (CU 3.14.4)

Indeed, the Upaniṣads and the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā provide profound insights into contemplating oneself as Akṣarabrahman. These sacred texts contain enlightening mantras that reveal the inherent beauty and divinity of the self when qualitative oneness with the divine Akṣarabrahman is attained. Here are a few of the mantras that emphasize the realization of oneself as Akṣarabrahman:

- अहं ब्रह्मास्मि<sup>233</sup> (BU 1.4.10)
- योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि<sup>234</sup> (IU 16)
- ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन्<sup>235</sup> (BG 8.13)

These mantras highlight the importance of recognizing and realizing the true nature of oneself as Akṣarabrahman. Such a realization does not mean one becomes ontologically Akṣarabrahman but attains similitude of some virtues with this divine entity in gaining

<sup>230</sup> *sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma tajjalāniti śānta upāsītā 'tha khalu kratumāyāḥ puruṣo yathākraturasmimlloke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati* ||

<sup>231</sup> *eṣa ma ātmā 'ntarhṛdaye 'ṇīyān vṛihervā yavādvā sarṣapādvā śyāmākādvā śyāmākataṇḍulādvā eṣa ma ātmā 'tarhṛdaye jyāyānpṛthivyā jyāyānantarīkṣājyāyāndivo jyāyānebhyo lokebhyaḥ* ||

<sup>232</sup> *etadbrahmaitamitaḥ pretyābhisambhavitā 'smīti yasya syādaddhā na vicikitsā 'stīti ha smā 'ha śāṇḍilyaḥ śāṇḍilyaḥ* ||

<sup>233</sup> *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*

<sup>234</sup> *yo 'sāvasau puruṣaḥ so 'hamasmi*

<sup>235</sup> *Om ityekākṣaraṃ brahma vyāharan māmanusmaran*

its virtues. There is more to our existence than being mere individual ātmans confined to mortal bodies. We are, in fact, like Akṣarabrahman itself. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami emphasizes that Paramātman Swaminarayan has taught the inadequacy of solely contemplating on oneself as the mere ātman in the *upāsanā* to Parabrahman, stressing the necessity of striving to realize oneness with Akṣarabrahman. The words are: ब्रह्मात्मैक्यवैधुर्येण केवलाऽऽत्मस्वरूपाऽनुसन्धानस्य यथावस्थितपरब्रह्मोपासने-ऽपर्याप्तत्वं स्वयं परमात्मस्वामिनारायणैरुपदिष्टम्<sup>236</sup>.

This idea finds itself expressed in a unique discussion in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad introduces the term “*samprasādaḥ*,” which refers to the liberated ātman, and the phrase “*svena rūpeṇa*,” which denotes “in its – Akṣarabrahman’s form”. The second half of the mantra further elucidates this concept:

- एवमेवैष संप्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते ॥<sup>237</sup> (CU 8.12.2)

These teachings of Prajāpati, regarding the form of the ātman, conclude his discussion of the two types of liberation: *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. Vyāsa recognizes the significance of this particular mantra, highlighting that a liberated soul attains a body composed of Akṣarabrahman. This new embodiment is existent for infinite time and holds immense importance. The Brahmasūtras affirm this notion in one of its concluding sūtras:

- सम्पद्याऽऽविर्भावः स्वेन शब्दाद् ॥<sup>238</sup> (BS 4.4.1)

This verse acknowledges that the liberated soul indeed acquires a divine form like and composed of Akṣarabrahman. Furthermore, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also provides support for this understanding, stating that a liberated ātman assumes a more auspicious form than anything mundane, similar to that of Akṣarabrahman:

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<sup>236</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.3.52, p. 349; *brahmātmāikyavaidhuryeṇa kevalā ’tmasvarūpā ’nusandhānasya yathāvasthitaparabrahmopāsane ’paryāptatvaṃ svayaṃ paramātmāsvāminārāyaṇairupadiṣṭam*

<sup>237</sup> *evamevaiṣa samprasādo ’smāccharīrātsamutthāya param jyotirupasampadya svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate*||

<sup>238</sup> *sampadyā ’virbhāvaḥ svena śabdād*

- तद्यथा पेशस्करी पेशसो मात्रामुपादायाऽन्यन्नवतरं कल्याणतरं रूपं तनुते । एवमेवाऽयमात्मेदं शरीरं निहत्याऽविद्यां गमयित्वाऽन्यन्नवतरं कल्याणतरं रूपं कुरुते ब्राह्मं वा<sup>239</sup> (BU 4.4.4)

Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami adds that this human-like body *of* Brahman is inclusive of divine organs, senses, and faculties – they behold the most opulent form of Parabrahman and forever stay in Akṣaradhāman. He says: तद्धि वपुरलौकिकदिव्यब्रह्माऽक्षरोपादानकं तद्धामस्थपुरुषाकारब्रह्माऽक्षरविग्रहसमाकारं चक्षुरादिसकलदिव्य-करणादिसंवलितम् ।<sup>240</sup>

However, a question arises: Does a liberated soul actually require a form, divine or otherwise, to experience the bliss of Parabrahman? If not, then the concept of the *Brāhmī tanu* becomes redundant. On the other hand, if a form is necessary, wouldn't it be similar to the mortal realm, where a body is essential for experiencing? In response to this query, the Brahmasūtras address the topic of Tanvadhikaraṇa (BS 4.4.13-14). The sūtras addressing this question are as follows:

- तन्वभावे सन्ध्यवदुपपत्तेः <sup>241</sup> (BS 4.4.13)
- भावे जाग्रद्वत् <sup>242</sup> (BS 4.4.14)

These sūtras explain that Parabrahman, being independent, can provide experiences without needing a physical form. This can be likened to our dream experiences, where we engage in various activities without possessing a physical body, organs, senses, or faculties. Nonetheless, Parabrahman has ordained a divine body composed of Akṣarabrahman to be granted to a liberated jīva or īśvara. The *Brāhmī tanu* is described as luminous, imperishable, and filled with supreme bliss. It is a medium through which the liberated souls experience the eternal presence of Parabrahman in Akṣaradhāman

<sup>239</sup> tadyathā peśaskārī peśaso mātrāmupādāyā 'nyannavataṛaṃ kalyāṇataṛaṃ rūpaṃ tanute | evamevā 'yamāmedaṃ śarīraṃ nihatyā 'vidyāṃ gamayitvā 'nyannavataṛaṃ kalyāṇataṛaṃ rūpaṃ kurute brāhmaṃ vā

<sup>240</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.1, p. 416; taddhi vapuralaukikadivyaabrahmā 'kṣaro-pādānakaṃ taddhāmathapuruṣākārabrahmā 'kṣaravigrahasamākāraṃ cakṣurādīsakaladivyakaraṇādīsamvalitam |

<sup>241</sup> tanvabhāve sandhyavadupapatteḥ

<sup>242</sup> bhāve jāgradvat

and partake in the unending divine bliss. The attainment of the divine body of Akṣarabrahman is the culmination of the soul's journey toward liberation.

Parabrahman is the supreme controller, irrespective of anyone else's position or status. This consistent explanation from the three texts leads us to the next point concerning the *upāsanā* of Parabrahman that Akṣaramuktas are blessed with.

### 6.9.3 Upāsanā of Parabrahman

Here, we focus on debates surrounding the relationship between Parabrahman and Akṣaramuktas. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami mentions in the Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam that Vyāsa wants us to know that even in a liberated state, the master-servant relationship between Parabrahman and Akṣaramuktas does not get destroyed. He writes: अतो मुक्तावपि सेव्यसेवकभावो नोच्छिद्यत इति रहस्यं विज्ञापयितुकाम इह सूत्रकारः।<sup>243</sup> This is the sūtra where Vyāsa expresses this fact.

- हानौ तूपायनशब्दशेषत्वात् कुशाच्छन्दस्तुत्युपगानवत् तदुक्तम्<sup>244</sup> (BS 3.3.25)

Vyāsa asserts that this *upāsanā* happens effortlessly. Even after eliminating all *vāsanās*, the devotion and worship of Parabrahman endure eternally. Various references from the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā affirm that those who have attained the state of Akṣarabrahman (*brahmabhūta*) remain unaffected by worldly bonds of sorrow, desire, attachment, and they offer profound devotion to Parabrahman. Furthermore, the dissolution of *vāsanās* aids in engaging in *upāsanā* with greater and perfect completeness, as Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami expresses in his Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam.

- अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा<sup>245</sup> (KU 2.12)
- ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः<sup>246</sup> (BG 7.28)

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<sup>243</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 3.3.25, p. 331; *ato muktāvapi sevyasevakabhāvo nocchidyata iti rahasyaṃ vijñāpayitukāma iha sūtrakārah |*

<sup>244</sup> *hānau tūpāyanaśabdaśeṣatvāt kuśācchandastutyupagānavat taduktam*

<sup>245</sup> *adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaṃ matvā*

<sup>246</sup> *te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante māṃ dṛḡhavratāḥ*

- न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति<sup>247</sup> (BG 9.31)
- ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥<sup>248</sup> (BG 18.54)

In addition to the Hāni adhikaraṇa, it is pertinent to mention the Kārya adhikaraṇa (BS 4.3.6-15) in this section. It encompasses various opposing viewpoints and supporting points of view while Vyāsa puts the debate to rest in referring to various *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. By the end of this long discussion, he concludes presenting these two sūtras:

- अप्रतीकालम्बनान् नयतीति बादरायण उभयथा च दोषात्<sup>249</sup> (BS 4.3.14)
- तत्क्रतुश्च विशेषं च दर्शयति<sup>250</sup> (BS 4.3.15)

Wrapping up his exposition on these sūtras, Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami underscores that “those *bhaktas* of Parabrahman who have achieved unity with Akṣarabrahman are guided to Parabrahman’s Akṣaradhāman by the arcirmārga, where they are immersed in the divine bliss of Parabrahman – this is the complete meaning.” The words in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam are: तथा हि ब्रह्मरूपाः परब्रह्मभक्ताः परमात्मनिलयभूतदिव्याऽक्षरधाम प्रत्यर्चिरादिना नीयन्ते। तत्र च ते परमात्मसहजानन्दपरमानन्दमनुभवन्तीति सकलोऽर्थः ।<sup>251</sup>.

Another such debate happens regarding the distinction between Akṣaramuktas and Parabrahman. This debate is presented as Avibhāga adhikaraṇa by Vyāsa in the Brahmasūtras. The only sūtra of this adhikaraṇa reads as follows:

- अविभागेन दृष्टत्वात्<sup>252</sup> (BS 4.4.4)

<sup>247</sup> *na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

<sup>248</sup> *brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktiṃ labhate parām ||*

<sup>249</sup> *apratīkālanbanān nayatīti bādarāyaṇa ubhayathā ca doṣāt*

<sup>250</sup> *tatkratuśca viśeṣaṃ ca darśayati*

<sup>251</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.3.15, p. 415; *tathā hi brahmarūpāḥ parabrahmabhaktāḥ paramātmanilayabhūtadivya’kṣaradhāma pratyarcirādinā nīyante | tatra ca te paramātmasahajānandaparamānandamanubhavantīti sakalo ’rthaḥ |*

<sup>252</sup> *avibhāgena dṛṣṭatvāt*

This sūtra is in response to misinterpretation of various mantras proposed by the opposing view. These mantras when correctly interpreted are in support of the *siddhāntpakṣa*; however, they are presented here as speaking of the lack of difference between Parabrahman and Akṣaramuktas.

- स यथेमा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रायणाः समुद्रं प्राप्याऽस्तं गच्छन्ति भिद्येते तासां नामरूपे समुद्र इत्येवं प्रोच्यते । एवमेवास्य परिद्रष्टुरिमाः षोडशकलाः पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्याऽस्तं गच्छन्ति भिद्येते चासां नामरूपे पुरुष इत्येवं प्रोच्यते ॥<sup>253</sup> (PU 6.5)
- यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय । तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद् विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम्<sup>254</sup> (MU 3.2.8)
- न तु तद्द्वितीयमस्ति ततोऽन्यद्विभक्तं यद् विजानीयाद्<sup>255</sup> (BU 4.3.30)

The response, and the correct way to understand mantras in which the relationship between muktas and Parabrahman is described as unseparated is that absorption or being engrossed does not mean being ontologically one; no ontological change occurs. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami's Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam reads: परमात्मसहजानन्ददिव्यपरमानन्दपरमसागरे परमभक्त्युद्रेकतो लीनत्वात् परमात्मपरमस्वरूपैश्वर्यादितश्च तदात्मस्वरूपाऽभिभवाद् विग्रहाकारवैषम्याऽभावाच्च स्वरूपतस्तद्विन्नोऽपि तदाऽविभक्त इत्युच्यते<sup>256</sup>. Akṣaramuktas are called *avibhakta* with Parabrahman for three reasons – i) The mukta is absorbed in the divine ocean of bliss of Parabrahman, resulting from their ultimate devotion; ii) the mukta is overpowered by Parabrahman's divine form and prowess; iii) their forms are similar. For these reasons, they are said to be inseparable.

<sup>253</sup> *sa yathemā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudrāyaṇāḥ samudraṃ prāpyā'staṃ gacchanti bhidyete tāsāṃ nāmarūpe samudra ityevaṃ procyate | evamevāsya paridraṣṭurimāḥ ṣoḍaśakalāḥ puruṣāyaṇāḥ puruṣaṃ prāpyā'staṃ gacchanti bhidyete cāsāṃ nāmarūpe puruṣa ityevaṃ procyate ||*

<sup>254</sup> *yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre'staṃ gacchanti nāmarūpe vihāya | tathā vidvān nāmarūpād vimuktaḥ parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam*

<sup>255</sup> *na tu taddvītiyamasti tato 'nyadvibhaktaṃ yad vijānīyād*

<sup>256</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.4, p. 419;

*paramātmāsahajānandadivyaṣaramānandaparamasāgare paramabhaktyudrekato līnatvāt paramātmāparamasvarūpāiśvaryaḍitaśca tadātmasvarūpā 'bhibhavād vighrahākāravaiṣamyā 'bhāvācca svarūpatastadvhinno 'pi tadā 'vibhakta ityucyate|*

When the concept of “*līnatva*” (absorption) is explained in the Upaniṣads, it is meant to illustrate how a person immersed in lust remains attached to desires, or one engrossed in greed remains attached to material possessions. They do not lose their identities and merge with each other physically. Instead, it is a state of intense absorption. This is reflected in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad too.

- तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति<sup>257</sup> (MU 3.1.3)

This is how an Akṣaramukta attains similarity with Parabrahman. Again, although “*sāmya*” is mentioned, it does not imply the ātman merging into Parabrahman. Rather, it signifies a relationship characterized by absorption between the mukta and Parabrahman. Once an akṣaramukta is in Akṣaradhāman, what is its glory and nature – let us explore that to appreciate the consistency the Prasthānatrayī has to offer.

#### 6.9.4 Mukta’s Blissful Glory

In this last subsection of the analyzing consistency through the study of videhamukti found in the Prasthānatrayī, we now delve into the part where a mukta is already in Akṣaradhāman. What comes along upon reaching the greatest state of existence for any entity except eternally divine Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman is expressed as a compilation in the last part of the Brahmasūtras.

As one of the crucial questions arises when discussing the topic of videhamukti and reaching the final destination, one wonders if there are any of the objects of desire there. What does a mukta do there for all infinity? Vyāsa explains that there is the absence of viṣayas as there is nothing more to mundanely or divinely enjoy but the bliss of Parabrahman. Although a mukta does not lack a body and organs as a mechanism to receive viṣayas, all of that is solely focused on Parabrahman. Vyāsa says, अभावं बादरिराह ह्येवम्<sup>258</sup> (BS 4.4.10), as the scriptures proclaim this fact. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami too expounds upon that saying, मुक्तस्य हासविलासस्त्रीरमणादिभोगानां ब्रह्मदेशे ... नास्ति तत्र किमपि प्राकृतलोकवदुपभोग्यम्<sup>259</sup>. Some of the scriptural references

<sup>257</sup> *tadā vidvān puṇyapāpe vidhūya nirañjanaḥ paramaṃ sāmīyamupaiti*

<sup>258</sup> *abhāvaṃ bādarirāha hyevam*

<sup>259</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāmīnārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.10, pp. 422-3; *muktasya*

*hāsavilāsastrīramaṇādibhogānāṃ brahmadeśe ... nāsti tatra kimapi prākṛtalokavadupabhogyam*

which explain that the mukta does not desire anything to see, hear, feel, taste, or smell and that the bliss of Parabrahman is all that is enjoyed are provided below:

- यत्र नान्यत् पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति<sup>260</sup> (CU 7.24.1)
- न तु तद्द्वितीयमस्ति ततोऽन्यद् विभक्तं यत् पश्येत्<sup>261</sup> (BU 4.3.23)
- न तु तद्द्वितीयमस्ति ततोऽन्यद् विभक्तं यज्जिघ्रेत्<sup>262</sup> (BU 4.3.24)
- यत्र वा अन्यदिव स्यात् तत्राऽन्योऽन्यत् पश्येदन्योऽन्यज्जिघ्रेदन्योऽन्यद्रसयेदन्योऽन्यद् वदेदन्योऽन्यच्छृणुयादन्योऽन्यन्मन्वीताऽन्योऽन्यत्स्पृशेदन्योऽन्यद् विजानीयाद्<sup>263</sup>  
(BU 4.3.31)

By the end of the Abhāva adhikaraṇa, Bhadrashdas Swami highlights a crucial note. Blessed with divine prowess by Parabrahman, akṣaramuktas are not independent to put it to work. However, that also does not mean that they lack this glorious power – infinitely greater than the power of all unliberated jīvas and īśvaras. The commentator pens, नान्यत् पश्यतीत्यादिर्हि मोक्षावस्थायां मुक्तात्मनां ब्रह्मदेशे परमात्मस्वरूपदर्शनजाऽऽनन्दैकमग्नत्वेनाऽविभक्ततामाह । स एकधा भवतीत्यादिश्च परमात्मकृपालब्धतदैश्वर्यविशेषमाह । तत्सामर्थ्यलाभेऽपि स्वातन्त्र्येण तद्विनियोगो नास्तीत्येव विशेषः । न तावता सामर्थ्यमपगच्छति । न हि समर्थाः स्वसामर्थ्यमविनियुञ्जानास्तच्छून्या भवन्ति । तथा मुक्ता अपि । एवं तात्पर्यविशेषेण द्वयोर्विरोधाऽभावादुभयविधत्वे न दोषः ।<sup>264</sup>

A question might arise on a similar note concerning whether muktas are omniscient. Vyāsa also addresses this argument in the Brahmasūtras. In fact, Akṣaramuktas – the ones with *Brāhmī tanu* and residing in Akṣaradhāman – blessed by Parabrahman can

<sup>260</sup>yatra nānyat paśyati nānyacchṛṇoti nānyadvijānāti

<sup>261</sup>na tu taddvītiyamasti tato 'nyad vibhaktam yat paśyet

<sup>262</sup>na tu taddvītiyamasti tato 'nyad vibhaktam yajjighret

<sup>263</sup>yatra vā anyadiva syāt tatrā 'nyo 'nyat paśyedanyo 'nyajjighredanyo 'nyadrasayedanyo 'nyad vadedanyo 'nyacchṛṇuyādanyo 'nyanmanvītā 'nyo 'nyatsprśedanyo 'nyad vijānīyād

<sup>264</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.12, p. 424; nānyat paśyatītyādirhi mokṣāvasthāyām muktātmanām brahmadeśe paramātma- svarūpadarśanajā ”nandaikamagnatvenā 'vibhaktatāmāha | sa ekadhā bhavātītyādiśca paramātmakṛpālabdhatadaiśvaryaiviśeṣamāha | tatsāmarthyālābhe 'pi svātantryeṇa tadviniyogo nāstītyeva viśeṣaḥ | na tāvatā sāmarthyamapagacchati | na hi samarthāḥ svasāmarthyamaviniyuñjānāstacchūnyā bhavanti | tathā muktā api | evaṃ tātparyaviśeṣeṇa dvayorvirodhā 'bhāvādubhayavidhatve na doṣaḥ |

pervade a lot more than unliberated jīvas and īśvaras. Literally, everything is subject to mukta's illuminated knowledge – such is its omniscience. They are *sarvajña* – all-knowing. This understanding is presented in the Pradīpa adhikaraṇa, the first sūtra which reads, प्रदीपवदावेशस्तथा हि दर्शयति<sup>265</sup> (BS 4.4.15). As a lamp illuminates the surroundings, in a similar way, an akṣaramukta is illuminated by the knowledge infinite times more than any other unliberated entity. Here are a few examples of references from the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā that illuminate these concepts:

- स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो भवति<sup>266</sup> (PU 4.10)
- तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वमेवाऽऽविवेश<sup>267</sup> (PU 4.11)
- ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीरा युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवाविशन्ति<sup>268</sup> (MU 3.2.5)
- स सर्वविद् भजति माम्<sup>269</sup> (BG 15.19)

Akṣaramuktas participate in the creative process; however, how much of that is their independent will? The lack of that itself leads to a study that Vyāsa provides in the Jagadvyāpāra adhikaraṇa (BS 4.4.17-22).

- जगद्व्यापारवर्जं प्रकरणादसंनिहितत्वाच्च<sup>270</sup> (BS 4.4.17)

Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman provide a role for akṣaramuktas to be involved in the process of creation, thus making a jīva or īśvara the supreme master of creation following the two superior divinities. However, this is no autonomous or self-standing role. Of all instances found in the Prasthānatrayī, Akṣaramukta's independent role in any creative process is nowhere to be found. It is always of Parabrahman and, because of its eternal will, of Akṣarabrahman. Below, we highlight a few instances that express this fundamental truth:

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<sup>265</sup> *pradīpavadāveśastathā hi darśayati*

<sup>266</sup> *sa sarvajñaḥ sarvo bhavati*

<sup>267</sup> *tadakṣaraṃ vedayate yastu somya sa sarvajñaḥ sarvamevā"viveśa*

<sup>268</sup> *te sarvagaṃ sarvataḥ prāpya dhīrā yuktātmānaḥ sarvamevāviśanti*

<sup>269</sup> *sa sarvavid bhajati mām*

<sup>270</sup> *jagadvyāpāravarjaṃ prakaraṇādasaṃnihitatvācca*

- सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीद्<sup>271</sup> (CU 6.2.1)
- तदैक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति<sup>272</sup> (CU 6.2.3)
- सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः<sup>273</sup> (CU 6.8.4)
- आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः<sup>274</sup> (BU 1.4.1)
- आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाऽग्र आसीत्<sup>275</sup> (AU 1.1.1)
- ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीद्<sup>276</sup> (BU 1.4.10)
- अक्षरात् सम्भवतीह विश्वम्<sup>277</sup> (MU 1.1.6)
- तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते<sup>278</sup> (MU 1.1.7)
- तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते<sup>279</sup> (MU 1.1.9)
- अक्षराद् विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवाऽपियन्ति<sup>280</sup> (MU 2.1.1)
- यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति<sup>281</sup> (TU 3.1.1)
- जन्माद्यस्य यतः<sup>282</sup> (BS 1.1.2)

Exclusion, or deprivation of the power of creation, sustenance, and destruction itself, is the ultimate prowess a jīva or īśvara could possess – अतो जगद्व्यापारवर्जमेव तदैश्वर्यम्<sup>283</sup> – that itself is Akṣaramukta’s greatness. This is because when the liberated ātman has received the blessings of Parabrahman in the form of *satyakāma* (true to will) and

<sup>271</sup> *sadeva somyedamagra āsīd*

<sup>272</sup> *tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti*

<sup>273</sup> *sanmūlāḥ somyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sadāyatanāḥ satpratiṣṭhāḥ*

<sup>274</sup> *atmaivedamagra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ*

<sup>275</sup> *atmā vā idameka evā'gra āsīt*

<sup>276</sup> *brahma vā idamagra āsīd*

<sup>277</sup> *akṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam*

<sup>278</sup> *tapasā cīyate brahma tato 'nnamabhijāyate*

<sup>279</sup> *tasmādetad brahma nāma rūpamannaṃ ca jāyate*

<sup>280</sup> *akṣarād vividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivā'piyanti*

<sup>281</sup> *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti*

<sup>282</sup> *janmādyasya yataḥ*

<sup>283</sup> *Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.17, p. 428; ato jagadvyāpāravarjameva tadaiśvaram*

*satyasaṅkalpa* (true to resolve) qualities, it is still without the self-sustaining power to create, sustain, and destroy the Creation.

Also, this might elicit curiosity concerning the fact that if akṣaramuktas already possess particular virtues mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, do these virtues actually exist, or are they just “said”? These special characteristics are as follows: एष आत्माऽपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोकोऽविजिघत्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पः<sup>284</sup> (CU 8.1.5) – the ātman is free from sin, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, appetite-less, and thirst-less – these six qualities are already in ātman, but only manifest upon being *brahmarūpa*. However, the last two qualities – *satyakāma* and *satyasaṅkalpa* are novel and are blessings of Parabrahman as the ātman becomes *brahmarūpa*. Nonetheless, does an akṣaramukta need any of these qualities while in Akṣaradhāman? The first six qualities, among others, are definitely possessed by the *Brāhmī tanu*. Vyāsa picks up these arguments and asserts, ब्राह्मेण जैमिनिरुपन्यासादिभ्यः<sup>285</sup> (BS 4.4.5), using Jaimini’s perspective. These are qualities of Brahman, and they do exist. As the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā explains, स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षय्यमश्रुते<sup>286</sup> (BG 5.21). Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadresdas Swami expresses that all of these eight qualities are only obtained by being like Akṣarabrahman. एते चाऽपहतपाप्मादयोऽक्षरब्रह्मणः स्वाभाविका नित्योदिताः । ते हि प्रत्यगात्मना प्रकटाऽक्षरब्रह्मदृढतमप्रसङ्गादिभिर्ब्रह्मरूपत्वसम्पत्त्यनन्तरं लभ्यन्ते । तत्रापि सत्यकामत्वं सत्यसङ्कल्पत्वमित्युभयं तु नूतनमेवाऽभिजायते। ये ह्यपहतपाप्मत्वाद्यपिपासत्वान्ताः षट् ते यद्यपि तस्याऽपि स्वाभाविकास्तथाऽपि तेषामाविर्भावस्तु ब्रह्मभावसम्पत्तेरन्वेवैति सर्वेऽपि ते ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शनैव लभ्यन्ते।<sup>287</sup>

This brings us to the last part of this subsection.

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<sup>284</sup> *eṣa ātmā 'pahatapāpmā vijaro vimṛtyurviśoko 'vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satyakāmaḥ satyasaṅkalpaḥ*

<sup>285</sup> *brāhmeṇa jaiminirupanyāsādibhyaḥ*

<sup>286</sup> *sa brahmayogayuktātmā sukhamakṣayyamaśrute*

<sup>287</sup> *Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.5, p. 420; ete cā 'pahatapāpmādayo 'kṣarabrahmaṇaḥ*

*svābhāvikā nityoditāḥ | te hi pratyagātmanā*

*prakaṭā 'kṣarabrahmadṛḍhatamaprasaṅgādibhirbrahmarūpatvasampattyanantaram labhyante | tatrāpi*

*satyakāmatvaṃ satyasaṅkalpatvamityubhayaṃ tu nūtanamevā 'bhijāyate | ye*

*hyapahatapāpmatvādyapipāsatvāntāḥ ṣaṭ te yadyapi tasyā 'pi svābhāvikāstathā 'pi teṣāmāvirbhāvastu*

*brahmabhāvasampatteranvevaiti sarve 'pi te brahmasaṃsparśenaiva labhyante |*

- अनावृत्तिः शब्दादनावृत्तिः शब्दाद्<sup>288</sup> (BS 4.4.22)

Mukti itself is defined as the state of no return. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami pens down a beautiful and insightful commentary for this concluding sūtra of the great Brahmasūtras of Vyāsa, which reads as follows: By taking refuge, as per the established procedure, in Akṣarabrahman Guru, and by attaining self-realization of qualitative oneness with the Guru, one becomes absorbed in the bliss of Parabrahman. It is in this state that the profound teachings of the scriptures, such as “One who has supreme devotion to Parabrahman, just as to the Guru, gains the knowledge of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.” (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23), reveal their true meaning, as the Guru himself illuminates them. Following the guidance of the scriptures, one attains the realization of the supreme form of Parabrahman by practicing its ultimate *upāsanā*, with qualities such as righteousness, knowledge, detachment, and others. The culmination of this worship is the direct experience of Parabrahman, a transcendental state achieved only through its divine grace. Gradually, the soul transcends to Akṣaradhāman, liberating from the incessant loops of being born and dying by following the path of divine enlightenment. In this exalted state, the liberated soul, wholly and absolutely devoted to the worship of Parabrahman, immersed in the sacred *darśana*, and enjoying in boundless divine bliss of Parabrahman. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami writes, साक्षादक्षरब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरोर्विधिवत्समाश्रयणेन तत्प्रसङ्गप्रकर्षमाप्य दृढतमाऽऽत्मबुद्ध्या स्वयमपि तद्भावभावितो ब्रह्मरूपः सन् तत्रैव पुनः ‘यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे । तथा गुरौ तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ (श्वे. ६/२३) इति श्रुतिशासनानुसारेण प्रत्यक्षनारायणस्वरूपभावोद्रेकतां प्राप्य धर्मज्ञानवैराग्याद्यनुगृहीतपरभक्तिलक्षणपरब्रह्मोपासनेन जीवद्दशायामेव तदुपासनप्रसन्नपरमात्मप्रसादेन परमनिःश्रेयसमनुभवन् स्वदेहपातोत्तरमर्चिरादिपथेन ब्रह्मदेशं प्राप्तो नैककोटिब्रह्मरूपमुक्तोपास्यमानपरब्रह्मसहजानन्दोपासनरतस्तद्विव्यदर्शनजन्यदिव्यानन्दाऽनुभूति-निमग्नोऽवतिष्ठते ।<sup>289</sup>.

<sup>288</sup> *anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdād*

<sup>289</sup> Brahmasūtras Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam 4.4.22, p. 431;

*sākṣādakṣarabrahmasvarūpagurorvidhivatsamāśrayaṇena tatprasāṅgaprakarṣamāpya*

*dr̥dhatamā*”*tmabuddhayā svayamapi tadbhāvabhāvito brahmarūpaḥ san tatraiva punaḥ ‘yasya deve*

*parā bhaktiryathā deve | tathā gurau tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah* ||’ (SU 6.23) iti

Also, the nature of mukti as being that from which there is no return is also found in the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā.

- ब्रह्मलोकमभिसम्पद्यते न च पुनरावर्तते न च पुनरावर्तते<sup>290</sup> (CU 8.15.1)
- इमं मानवमावर्त नावर्तन्ते नावर्तन्ते<sup>291</sup> (CU 4.15.6)
- तयोर्ध्वमायन्नमृतत्वमेति<sup>292</sup> (CU 8.6.6)
- यदेतदक्षरमेतदमृतमभयं तत्प्रविश्य देवा अमृता अभया अभवन्<sup>293</sup> (CU 1.4.4)
- एतेन प्रतिपद्यमाना इमं मानवमावर्त नावर्तन्ते नावर्तन्ते<sup>294</sup> (CU 4.15.6)
- तत्प्रविश्य यदमृता देवास्तदमृतो भवति<sup>295</sup> (CU 1.4.5)
- तेषां न पुनरावृत्तिः<sup>296</sup> (BU 6.2.15)
- मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।  
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥<sup>297</sup> (BG 8.15)
- आब्रह्मभुवनल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।  
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥<sup>298</sup> (BG 8.16)

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*śrutisāsanānusāreṇa pratyakṣanārāyaṇasvarūpabhāvodrekatām prāpya  
dharmajñānavairāgyādyanugrhitaparabhaktilakṣaṇaparabrahmopāsanena jīvaddaśāyāmeva  
tadupāsanaprasannaparamātmāprasādena paramaṇiḥśreyasamanubhavan  
svadehapātottaramarcirādipathena brahmadeśam prāpto  
naikakoṭībrahmarūpamuktopāsyamānaparabrahmasahajānandopāsanaratastaddivyadarśanajanyadivya  
ānandā'nubhūtinimagno'vatiṣṭhate |*

<sup>290</sup> *brahmalokamabhisampadyate na ca punarāvartate na ca punarāvartate*

<sup>291</sup> *imaṃ mānavamāvartaṃ nāvartante nāvartante*

<sup>292</sup> *tayordhvamāyannamṛtatvameti*

<sup>293</sup> *yadetadakṣarametadamṛtamabhayaṃ tatpraviśya devā amṛtā abhayā abhavan*

<sup>294</sup> *etena pratipadyamānā imaṃ mānavamāvartaṃ nāvartante nāvartante*

<sup>295</sup> *tatpraviśya yadamṛtā devāstadamṛto bhavati*

<sup>296</sup> *teṣāṃ na punarāvṛtīḥ*

<sup>297</sup> *māmupetya punarjanma duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam |*

*nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṃsiddhiṃ paramāṃ gatāḥ ||*

<sup>298</sup> *abrahmabhuvanāllokāḥ punarāvartino'rjuna |*

*māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate ||*

- यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते<sup>299</sup> (BG 8.21)
- यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः<sup>300</sup> (BG 15.4)
- यद् गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते<sup>301</sup> (BG 15.6)

Here ends the study of consistency while traversing through the Prasthānatrayī to understand the blissful glory of mukta residing in Akṣaradhāman. Although a mukta possesses all body, organs, and senses, it still does not wish for anything to see, hear, feel, taste, smell, or even do except for the *darśana* of Parabrahman. Moreover, although mukta possesses divine prowess, not employing it does not mean it lacks it, and it only is devoid of the nature of being an independent doer of the creative process. That virtue is eternally reserved for Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman.

## 6.10 Closing

Like all other chapters, we open this chapter too with the words of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj, as translated to Sanskrit in the Siddhāntsamāmnāya of the Svāminārāyaṇa-Siddhāntā-Sudhā. In accordance with these words, this chapter too focuses on the instances from the Prasthānatrayī that relate to sādhanā and mukti. At the same time, I strive to study the harmonious consistency that the Prasthānatrayī presents. We then see how fundamental are sādhanā and mukti for all jīvas and īśvaras to escape the ceaseless cycles of infinite births and deaths. The original text, when seen in the light of the Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrashdas Swami's Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, allows the coherence of the Brahmasūtras, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and ten Upaniṣads to be vividly perceived. The first significant exploration in the chapter is about Brahmavidyā as the path to mukti. Brahmavidyā encompasses the profound knowledge of both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, serving as a reflection of the sādhanā aspect within this chapter. Vyāsa introduces the final aim as a *puruṣārtha* in the last part of the third chapter of the Brahmasūtras – पुरुषार्थोऽतः शब्दादिति बादरायणः<sup>302</sup> (BS 3.4.1). The mantras

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<sup>299</sup> *yaṃ prāpya na nivartante*

<sup>300</sup> *yasmīn gatā na nivartanti bhūyah*

<sup>301</sup> *yad gatvā na nivartante*

<sup>302</sup> *puruṣārtho 'taḥ śabdāditi bādarāyaṇaḥ*

from the Upaniṣads support the sūtra. Then, we see why Brahmavidyā is established as the highest and greatest when compared to any other spiritual endeavor in the Itarjyāyastva adhikaraṇa, supported by the first and second chapter from the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and the fourth chapter of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The last part focuses on how Brahmavidyā is available to all, irrespective of gender, color, creed, race, or any other worldly parameters.

The subsequent section is particularly captivating, as it expands our examination of consistency by exploring how the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā conveys the concept of brahmabhāva – the state of existence resembling that of Akṣarabrahman. Starting from the point Arjuna cries out his plight to friend, philosopher, and mentor Kṛṣṇa until one of the last verses of the text where Arjuna humbly states that he is free of doubts and delusion and has gained wisdom – a part of attaining *brahmabhāva*. This section, which spans over a dozen pages, delves into each chapter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, establishing its connection to *brahmabhāva* and, ultimately, its consistency with the teachings of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad and the Brahmasūtras.

On a similar note, the next section is about *ātmagr̥hīti* (*ātmabuddhi*) – a firm contemplation that Akṣarabrahman, the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, is one's ātman. Establishing this notion in the sūtra आत्मगृहीतिरितरवदुत्तरात्<sup>303</sup> (BS 3.3.15), Vyāsa presents this sādhanā as the best. A couple of mantras from the Upaniṣads back this endeavor to contemplate Akṣarabrahman. We then explore the inquiry to know if the oneness with Akṣarabrahman is inherent or, instead, something a seeker must strive for. A sūtra from the same adhikaraṇa – कार्याख्यानादपूर्वम्<sup>304</sup> (BS 3.3.17) – says it is *apūrvam* – something that did not exist previously. That is why, repeatedly in the Upaniṣads, it is said that one must cultivate an association of qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. We then see who the Brahman for us in the manifest form is.

Establishing and expounding on oneness, while still being two separate entities, is highlighted in one of the analogies proposed by the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. In the bow and arrow analogy, the ātman is the arrow, and Akṣarabrahman as Akṣaradhāman is the

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<sup>303</sup> *ātmagr̥hītiritaravaduttarāt*

<sup>304</sup> *kāryākhyānādapūrvam*

target, and the bow is Akṣarabrahman too, in the form of the Brahmasvarūpa Guru. Similar analogies and themes are also found in the Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā and the Brahmasūtras.

The latter half of the chapter concerns itself with the theme of mukti as perceived in the Prasthānatrayī by the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. As a part of our interest in examining the consistency of the Brahmasūtras, Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, and Upaniṣads, we explore the Vedāntic principles while expounding on them through Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdas Swami's Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam. One of the defining characteristics of mukti is non-return from the state and place. That is precisely what the last sūtra of the Brahmasūtras states, अनावृत्तिः शब्दादनावृत्तिः शब्दात्<sup>305</sup> (BS 4.4.22). Mukti entails not only abandonment but also attainment, as elaborated upon in this chapter. The attainment of a state beyond return necessitates a connection with the Brahmasvarūpa Guru, the practice of *upāsanā*, and the cultivation of virtues such as truthfulness, self-knowledge, detachment, and unwavering devotion to Parabrahman. The mukta, blessed by Parabrahman, experiences liberation while alive and ascends to Parabrahman's divine abode after death. Both these states of existence – experiencing mukti while living and attaining it following death are existent and actual, and not just theoretical. Akṣaramuktas experience both *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*; and only Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are *nityamukta*, eternally beyond *māyā*. We then look for consistency in the expounding of *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*.

*Jīvanmukti* can be found in various Upaniṣads like Kaṭha Upaniṣad – अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते।<sup>306</sup> (KU 6.14) and others<sup>307</sup>. The word *atra* means here, in this realm, in this body, or while living. The Brahmasūtras too speak of the existence of mukti while in the present life – ऐहिकमप्रस्तुतप्रतिबन्धे तद्दर्शनात्<sup>308</sup> (BS 3.4.50). The Śrīmad-

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<sup>305</sup> *anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*

<sup>306</sup> *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hṛdi śritāḥ |  
atha martyo 'mṛto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute ||*

<sup>307</sup> Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.7, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.8, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.12.2, Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.8.2, Īśā Upaniṣad 6, 7, etc.

<sup>308</sup> *aihikamaprastutapratibandhe taddarśanāt*

Bhagavad-Gītā, too, presents its view on jīvanmukti while adding appellations like *yogin*, *sukhin*, and others for the jīvanmukta.

To explore the coherence of the Prasthānatrayī more elaborately, we study the post-mortem videhamukti. The study of consistency starts with the basic understanding of this type of mukti and an affirmative study that the Akṣaradhāman is indeed attainable. The focus of all following subsections is through the lens provided by the Brahmasūtras. The first subsection deals with the divine illuminated way that leads to the divine realm of Parabrahman. The jīva or īśvara gracefully traverses the *susumṇā* vein, guided by the luminous radiance of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman dwelling within, ultimately leading to the abode of Akṣaradhāman as the longest sūtra, तदोकोऽग्रज्वलनं तत्प्रकाशितद्वारो विद्यासामर्थ्यात्तच्छेषगत्यनुस्मृतियोगाच्च हार्दानुगृहीतः शताधिकया<sup>309</sup> (BS 4.2.16), and references from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, reveal. Further, this mukti is concrete as an ātman travels to Akṣaradhāman. By the time an akṣaramukta enters Akṣaradhāman, it receives a divine body composed of Akṣarabrahman as the Tadbhāvabhāvitva adhikaraṇa (BS 3.3.51-52) and others show. This new embodiment is existent for infinite time and holds immense importance as सम्पद्याऽऽविर्भावः स्वेन शब्दाद्<sup>310</sup> (BS 4.4.1) acclaims. The third subsection comprises arguments related to a mukta performing *upāsanā* of Parabrahman through Hāni and Avibhakta adhikaraṇas and the commentary. A brief study of the words *līnatva* and *sāmya* is presented. The last part encapsulates the sublime magnificence of the mukta, who dwells in the divine realm of Akṣaradhāman. Even though the mukta possesses a complete divine form, they do not yearn to see, hear, touch, taste, or smell anything apart from the divine *darśana* of Parabrahman. Furthermore, while the mukta possesses divine capabilities, their non-engagement with them does not signify their absence; and they are only deprived of the capability of independently engaging in the creative process. This attribute remains forever reserved for Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman alone. Mukti, the pinnacle state of existence, signifies an irreversible state of liberation,

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<sup>309</sup> *tadoko 'grajvalanaṃ tatprakāśitadvāro vidyāsāmarthyāttaccheṣagatyanusmṛtiyogācca hārdānugrīhītaḥ śatādhikayā*

<sup>310</sup> *sampadyā "virbhāvaḥ svena śabdād*

a release from the ceaseless cycles of being born and dying, and an eternal submersion in the profound bliss of Parabrahman while embodying the state of Akṣarabrahman.

