Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

With the Govinda-bhāṣya Commentary of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
Translated by His Grace Kuṣakratha das Brahmacārī

Adhyāya 1

Expanded Commentary and Vedic Evidence

— by —

Śrī Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī

ISBN 978-0-557-25422-4

— Published by —

Esoteric Teaching Seminars

http://esotericteaching.org

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.
You are free:

● To Share — to copy, distribute and transmit the work
● To Remix — to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:

● Attribution: You must attribute the work (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work) by providing a link to the above website.
● Noncommercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
● Share Alike: If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/
Any of the above conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder. Nothing in this license impairs or restricts the author's moral rights.
Table of Contents

Author’s Preface ................................................................................................................1
Introduction to Vedānta-sūtra ..........................................................................................12
    The Structure of Vedānta-sūtra..................................................................................19
The Domain and Nomenclature of Absolute Truth ......................................................20
    Qualifications of the student....................................................................................21
    Transcendental knowledge.......................................................................................22
Absolute nomenclature .................................................................................................23
Brahman, the origin of everything ................................................................................24
The process of self-realization ......................................................................................25
Quantum Physics and Vedic Metaphysics ...................................................................27
    Translating Vedānta ..................................................................................................27
    What is Vedānta? ......................................................................................................28
    Differing interpretations............................................................................................28
    Expressing Vedānta in scientific language...............................................................29
    Terminology and definitions...................................................................................30
    The problem of existence.......................................................................................31
The Theory of Everything ............................................................................................32
    The immanence of Absolute Reality ....................................................................33
    The role of consciousness ......................................................................................34
    Changing consciousness .......................................................................................35
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................36
Śrī Vedānta-sūtra ............................................................................................................37
    Adhikārāṇya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman..................37
        Pāda 1: Words which, taken by themselves, would not necessarily refer to Brahman, but in the Vedic context certainly refer to Brahman.........................................................37
    Adhikārāṇya 1: Inquiry into the Absolute...............................................................37
        Śūtra 1.1.1............................................................................................................38
    Adhikārāṇya 2: The Origin of Everything...............................................................47
        Śūtra 1.1.2............................................................................................................49
    Adhikārāṇya 3: The Supreme Brahman may be Understood by the Revelation of the Vedic Scriptures .................................................................................................................53
        Śūtra 1.1.3............................................................................................................54
    Adhikārāṇya 4: Personality of Brahman Confirmed by the Vedic Scriptures........56
        Śūtra 1.1.4............................................................................................................57
    Adhikārāṇya 5: Brahman is Knowable by the Descriptions of the Vedas................59
        Śūtra 1.1.5............................................................................................................61
        Śūtra 1.1.6............................................................................................................68
        Śūtra 1.1.7............................................................................................................70
        Śūtra 1.1.8............................................................................................................71
        Śūtra 1.1.9............................................................................................................73
        Śūtra 1.1.10.........................................................................................................74
        Śūtra 1.1.11.........................................................................................................75
    Adhikārāṇya 6: The Supreme Brahman is Full of Bliss...........................................79
        Śūtra 1.1.12.........................................................................................................81
        Śūtra 1.1.13.........................................................................................................90
        Śūtra 1.1.14.........................................................................................................91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adhikāraṇa 7: The Nature of the Supreme Person Within</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.20......................................................</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.21..........................................................</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.22..........................................................</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 8: Ākāśa Refers to Brahma.....................</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.22..........................................................</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 9: Prāṇa Refers to Brahma.....................</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.23..........................................................</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 10: Jyotis refers to Brahma....................</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.24..........................................................</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.25..........................................................</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.26..........................................................</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.27..........................................................</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 11: Prāṇa refers to Brahma....................</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.28..........................................................</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.29..........................................................</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.30..........................................................</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.1.31..........................................................</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrī Vedānta-sūtra..................................................</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahma.</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pāda 2: Certain other words, though less clearly related to Brahma, also describe Him.</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 1: The Word &quot;Manomaya&quot; Refers to Brahma ....</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.1...........................................................</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.2...........................................................</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.3...........................................................</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.4...........................................................</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.5...........................................................</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.6...........................................................</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.7...........................................................</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.8...........................................................</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 2: The Eater is Brahma...........................</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.9...........................................................</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.10.........................................................</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 3: The Associate in the Cave is Brahma........</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.11.........................................................</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.12.........................................................</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 4: The Person in the Eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.13.........................................................</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.14.........................................................</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.15.........................................................</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.16.........................................................</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra 1.2.17.........................................................</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhikāraṇa 5: The Internal Ruler is the Supreme Personality of Godhead</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adhikaraṇa 6: "Aksara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead ........................................ 150
Sūtra 1.2.21 .................................................................................................................. 151
Sūtra 1.2.22 .................................................................................................................. 152
Sūtra 1.2.23 .................................................................................................................. 153
Sūtra 1.2.24 .................................................................................................................. 154
Adhikaraṇa 7: "Vaiśvānara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead ................................ 155
Sūtra 1.2.25 .................................................................................................................. 159
Sūtra 1.2.26 .................................................................................................................. 160
Sūtra 1.2.27 .................................................................................................................. 160
Sūtra 1.2.28 .................................................................................................................. 161
Sūtra 1.2.29 .................................................................................................................. 161
Sūtra 1.2.30 .................................................................................................................. 162
Sūtra 1.2.31 .................................................................................................................. 162
Sūtra 1.2.32 .................................................................................................................. 162
Sūtra 1.2.33 .................................................................................................................. 163
Śrī Vedānta-sūtra...
Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman
Pāda 3: Scriptural Texts that may Seem to Describe the Jīva or some other Topic, but in Truth
Describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.......................................................... 164
Adhikaraṇa 1: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Abode of Heaven........... 164
Sūtra 1.3.1 .................................................................................................................... 166
Sūtra 1.3.2 .................................................................................................................... 167
Sūtra 1.3.3 .................................................................................................................... 167
Sūtra 1.3.4 .................................................................................................................... 168
Sūtra 1.3.5 .................................................................................................................... 169
Sūtra 1.3.6 .................................................................................................................... 169
Sūtra 1.3.7 .................................................................................................................... 170
Adhikaraṇa 2: The Fullness is the Supreme Personality of Godhead......................... 170
Sūtra 1.3.8 .................................................................................................................... 176
Sūtra 1.3.9 .................................................................................................................... 178
Adhikaraṇa 3: ‘Aksara’ Refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead......................... 179
Sūtra 1.3.10 ................................................................................................................... 179
Sūtra 1.3.11 ................................................................................................................... 180
Sūtra 1.3.12 ................................................................................................................... 181
Adhikaraṇa 4: The Puruṣa Seen in Satyaloka is the Supreme Personality of Godhead... 182
Sūtra 1.3.13 ................................................................................................................... 183
Adhikaraṇa 5: The ‘Dahara’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.......................... 185
Sūtra 1.3.14 ................................................................................................................... 186
Sūtra 1.3.15 ................................................................................................................... 187
Sūtra 1.3.16 ................................................................................................................... 188
Sūtra 1.3.17 ................................................................................................................... 189
Sūtra 1.3.18 ................................................................................................................... 190
Sūtra 1.3.19 ................................................................................................................... 191
Sūtra 1.3.20 ................................................................................................................... 191
Some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the jīvas or some other topic actually describe the Supreme Brahman.

Adhikaraṇa 1: The Avyakta in Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11 Refers to the Subtle Body and Not to Pradhāna.

| Sūtra 1.3.21 | 192 |
| Sūtra 1.3.22 | 192 |
| Sūtra 1.3.23 | 193 |
| Adhikaraṇa 6: The Person the Size of a Thumb is the Supreme Personality of Godhead | 193 |
| Sūtra 1.3.24 | 194 |
| Sūtra 1.3.25 | 194 |
| Adhikaraṇa 7: The Devas Can Meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead | 195 |
| Sūtra 1.3.26 | 197 |
| Sūtra 1.3.27 | 198 |
| Sūtra 1.3.28 | 199 |
| Sūtra 1.3.29 | 200 |
| Sūtra 1.3.30 | 201 |
| Sūtra 1.3.31 | 203 |
| Sūtra 1.3.32 | 204 |
| Sūtra 1.3.33 | 204 |
| Adhikaraṇa 8: Śūdras Not Qualified For Vedic Meditation | 205 |
| Sūtra 1.3.34 | 208 |
| Sūtra 1.3.35 | 209 |
| Sūtra 1.3.36 | 209 |
| Sūtra 1.3.37 | 210 |
| Sūtra 1.3.38 | 211 |
| Adhikaraṇa 9: The ‘Thunderbolt’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead | 213 |
| Sūtra 1.3.39 | 213 |
| Sūtra 1.3.40 | 214 |
| Adhikaraṇa 10: The ‘Ākāśa’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead | 214 |
| Sūtra 1.3.41 | 215 |
| Sūtra 1.3.42 | 216 |
| Sūtra 1.3.43 | 217 |
| Vedānta-sūtra | 219 |
| Adhyāya 1, Pāda 4 | 219 |
| Some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the jīvas or some other topic actually describe the Supreme Brahman | 219 |
| Adhikaraṇa 1: The Avyakta in Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11 Refers to the Subtle Body and Not to Pradhāna | 219 |
| Sūtra 1.4.1 | 222 |
| Sūtra 1.4.2 | 226 |
| Sūtra 1.4.3 | 226 |
| Sūtra 1.4.4 | 228 |
| Sūtra 1.4.5 | 228 |
| Sūtra 1.4.6 | 230 |
| Sūtra 1.4.7 | 230 |
| Adhikaraṇa 2: The Ajā of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.5 Does Not Mean Pradhāna | 230 |
| Sūtra 1.4.8 | 232 |
| Sūtra 1.4.9 | 233 |
| Sūtra 1.4.10 | 234 |
| Adhikaraṇa 3: Pañca-pañca-janāh in Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.17 Does Not Refer to the 25 |
Elements of Saṅkhya.......................................................................................................................... 236
Sūtra 1.4.11........................................................................................................................................... 237
Sūtra 1.4.12........................................................................................................................................... 238
Sūtra 1.4.13........................................................................................................................................... 238
Adhikaraṇa 4: Brahman is the Only Original Cause........................................................................... 239
Sūtra 1.4.14........................................................................................................................................... 240
Sūtra 1.4.15........................................................................................................................................... 241
Adhikaraṇa 5: The Puruṣa of the Kauśitaki Upaniṣad Is Brahman...................................................... 242
Sūtra 1.4.16........................................................................................................................................... 243
Sūtra 1.4.17........................................................................................................................................... 244
Sūtra 1.4.18........................................................................................................................................... 245
Adhikaraṇa 6: The Ātmā of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5 is Brahman and Not Jīva........................ 246
Sūtra 1.4.19........................................................................................................................................... 249
Sūtra 1.4.20........................................................................................................................................... 249
Sūtra 1.4.21........................................................................................................................................... 250
Sūtra 1.4.22........................................................................................................................................... 252
Adhikaraṇa 7: Brahman is Both Primary and Secondary Cause......................................................... 254
Sūtra 1.4.23........................................................................................................................................... 256
Sūtra 1.4.24........................................................................................................................................... 256
Sūtra 1.4.25........................................................................................................................................... 257
Sūtra 1.4.26........................................................................................................................................... 258
Sūtra 1.4.27........................................................................................................................................... 260
Adhikaraṇa 8: All Names Are Names of Lord Viṣṇu........................................................................... 260
Sūtra 1.4.28........................................................................................................................................... 261
Vedānta-sūtra is the ultimate knowledge of the Vedas. Vedic knowledge is very elevated, having issued forth from Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Supreme Godhead, at the time of creation. The Vedānta-sūtras are extremely laconic, recondite and esoteric, and are thus accessible to ordinary human intelligence only in the context of a commentary. The natural commentary on Vedānta-sūtra is the Bhagavata-Purāṇa or Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, written by the same author, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, Himself recognized as an incarnation of God in the Vedic literature.

The story of Vedānta-sūtra is narrated in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedas and Upaniṣads and the author of Mahābhārata, after writing many sacred Vedic texts and dividing them among his various disciples, was feeling depressed due to the onset of evil in the age of Kali, the current Vedic historical period. He could see that due to faithlessness, the people in general would be reduced in wealth, happiness and duration of life, and would always be disturbed due to lack of goodness and religious principles. Thus he contemplated the Absolute Truth for the spiritual welfare of men in all statuses and orders of life.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva had unpretentiously worshiped the Vedas, the spiritual master and the altar of sacrifice under strict disciplinary vows. He also abided by the rulings of the scriptures and showed the import of disciplic succession through the explanation of the Mahābhārata, by which anyone and everyone can
see the path of religion. However, after His mature contemplation, He concluded that His dissatisfaction was due to the fact that He had not specifically pointed out the devotional service of the Lord, which is dear both to perfected beings and to the infallible Lord Himself.

Just as Vyāsadeva was regretting His defects, Vyāsadeva’s spiritual master Nārada reached His cottage on the banks of the Sarasvatī. At the auspicious arrival of Śrī Nārada, Śrī Vyāsadeva got up respectfully and worshiped him, giving him veneration equal to that given to Brahmā, the creator. Nārada confirmed that Vyāsadeva’s dissatisfaction was because, although He compiled the divisions of karma-kaṇḍa [fruitive work] in the Vedas and jñāna-kaṇḍa [speculative knowledge] in the Upaniṣads, these are flawed because they identify the gross and subtle body, respectively, as objects of self-realization.

Śrī Nārada concluded: “You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless. Although, great sage, You have very broadly described the four Vedic principles [dharma, ārtha, kāma and mokṣa], You have not described the glories of the Supreme Personality, Vāsudeva. Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there. On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.8-11]

Heeding the instructions of His spiritual master, Vyāsadeva then sat in meditation. As He contemplated His task, He saw that the various misunderstandings and false doctrines invented by faulty human intelligence were great obstacles on the path of complete self-realization. Not wanting to break His meditation to write about his realizations in detail, He jotted them down concisely in the form of sūtras and instructed them to His disciples. A sūtra is a short, pithy statement of the essence of a spiritual truth. The sūtras of Vedānta are so laconic and abstruse that their proper context and relationship are impossible to deduce from the sūtras themselves. A commentary is required to bring them within range of human understanding, so Vyāsadeva wrote Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to expand and explain Vedānta-sūtra. Thus the beautiful Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on Vedānta-sūtra; this is explained in Garuḍa Purāṇa:.

artho ‘yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇāṁ
bhāratārthā-viniṁnayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo ‘sau
vedārthapaṁbrmhitah

purānānāṁ sāma-rūpah
sākṣād-bhagavatoditaḥ
dvādaśa-skandha-yukto ‘yaṁ
śata-viccheda-saṁyutah
grantho ‘ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraḥ
śrīmad-bhāgavatābhidhah

“The meaning of the Vedānta-sūtra is present in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The full purport of the Mahābhārata is also there. The commentary of the Brahma-gāyatrī is also there and fully expanded with all Vedic knowledge. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the supreme Purāṇa, and it was
The process of authorizing initiating spiritual masters in his line. He wrote: The purpose of this book is to fulfill my spiritual master where I link the topics of each Adhikara
... references from the source material for this book. Vasu’s translation is particularly valuable for its extended
Bengali scholar This coming through Lakṣṇa’s instructions regarding the
Vidyābhūṣāṇa’s disciples. However, he refused out of his sincere humility. In the pages of Govinda-
Vidyābhūṣāṇa’s connection with the line of Madhvācārya, coming through Lakṣṇipati Tīrtha, Madhavendra Purī and Īśvara Purī.

This Govinda-bhāṣya is the basis of the present work. It was first translated into English in 1912 by the
Bengali scholar Śrīṣa Chandra Vasu and published in Benares. Later on our Godbrother Kuśakratha
Prabhu produced a fragmentary translation in the style of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Both of these works furnish the source material for this book. Vasu’s translation is particularly valuable for its extended references from the Upanisads. However, I have added many additional quotations from my spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, especially Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, as well as explanatory sections where I link the topics of each Adhikaraṇa with issues of importance familiar to contemporary thought. The purpose of this book is to fulfill my spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions regarding the process of authorizing initiating spiritual masters in his line. He wrote:
“So you have now taken charge of the sunrise of New Vrindaban. Our program is there for constructing seven temples. One Rupanuga Vidyapitha—that is a school for educating brahmanas and Vaisnavas. We have enough of technological and other types of educational institutions, but perhaps there is none where actual brahmanas and Vaisnavas are produced. So we will have to establish an educational institution for that purpose.

“A first examination will be held sometimes next January on *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, and those passing will have the degree of Bhakti-sastri. Next year we will hold an examination on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the person who passes will have the title Bhakti-vaibhava. And the next year we shall hold an examination on *Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Nectar of Devotion* and *Vedanta Sutra*, and those who will successfully pass will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Consciousness population.” [letter to Kirtanananda Swami, 12 January 1969]

Unfortunately, due to the immaturity of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples, these instructions were never carried out. Yet they remain the only unambiguous written instructions detailing the qualifications for initiating spiritual masters in succession from Śrīla Prabhupāda for his worldwide movement. At the time of writing, none of the initiating gurus in succession from Śrīla Prabhupāda have satisfied this requirement, except for our humble self. If as Śrīla Prabhupāda himself predicted, our movement is to remain the source of Vedic spiritual authority on this planet for the next 10,000 years, then it must be based solidly on the conclusions of the *Vedas* as expressed in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Therefore there is a great need in the international society of devotees for a contemporary English edition of *Vedānta-sūtra*, to serve as a textbook for study by those who would follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s clear instructions for authorizing initiating spiritual masters. For as stated in *Vedānta-sūtra* itself, an authentic guru is not an mere official of a religious organization appointed by his peers through some political process, but a fully self-realized soul in intimate relationship with the Supreme Lord Himself. Only someone who has attained direct personal *darśana* of the Lord is qualified to write about exalted subjects such as *Vedānta-sūtra*, for only such a person has actual personal experience of the topics discussed in the text.

Our qualification for this work is due to the confidential instructions received from Śrīla Prabhupāda, through his beloved sister Pishima, at the time of his passing from this world. Śrīla Prabhupāda warned me that there would be many problems in ISKCON, the society that he founded, and that I should leave ISKCON and work independently and quietly for 25 years. Then, he told me, I should begin to preach and reveal everything, and that Lord Govinda would protect me. Now by the great blessings of my spiritual master, the inconceivable mercy of the Lord, and the selfless support and service of my dedicated disciples Uddhava, Florian, Neville, Conor, Carl and many more, all this is gradually coming to pass.

My spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda is an ocean of mercy. He deeply studied, understood and realized Baladeva Vidyābhūṣāna’s *Govinda-bhāṣya*, and based his own writing and preaching work solidly on its exalted ontological platform and vast scope. Whatever I have been able to understand, realize and write about spiritual life and especially *Vedānta-sūtra* is due only to his blessings. Therefore I offer my obeisances unto him, for whatever success we may have in presenting *Vedānta-sūtra* is by His Divine Grace alone.

David Bruce Hughes (Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī)  
Esoteric Teaching Seminars Master Course Retreat  
Village of Benito Juarez,
Introduction to *Vedānta-sūtra*

```sanskrit
satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ
brahma-śivādi-stutāṁ bhajad-rūpam
govindaṁ tam acintyaṁ
hetum adolaṁ namasyāmaḥ
```

“Lord Govinda is the Supreme Brahman, the absolute transcendental reality. He is transcendental knowledge. He is the original cause of all causes. He is limitless and faultless. Lord Śiva and all the demigods praise Him. The devotees worship His transcendental form. We offer our respectful obeisances unto Him.”

```sanskrit
sūtrāṁśubhis tamāṃsi
vyudasya vastūni yah parikṣayate
sa jayati satyavataye
harir anuvṛtto nata-presṭhaḥ
```

“All glories to Śrīla Vyāsa-deva, the son of Satyavatī. Vyāsa-deva is the incarnation of Lord Hari, and He is very dear to the devotees. With the effulgence of His *Vedānta-sūtra* He has dispelled the darkness of ignorance and revealed the truth.”

During the Dvāpara-yuga the *Vedas* were destroyed. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, responding to the prayers of Lord Brahmā and the other bewildered demigods, appeared as Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, restored the *Vedas*, divided them into parts, and composed the *Vedānta-sūtra* in four sections to explain them. This is described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

At that time many fools propounded various misinterpretations of the *Vedas*. Some said that the highest goal of life was to act piously in order to reap the benefits of good *karma*. Some said that Lord Viṣṇu is Himself bound by the laws of *karma*. Some maintained that the fruits of good *karma*, such as residence in *svarga* [the upper material planets] were eternal. Some said the *jīvas* [individual living entities] and *prakṛti* [material energy] acted independently, without being subject to any higher power, or God. Some said the *jīvas* [individual living entities] are actually the Supreme Brahman [God], and that the *jīvas* are simply bewildered about their identity, or that the *jīvas* are a reflection of God, or separated fragments of God. Some said that the *jīva* becomes free from the cycle of repeated birth and death when He understands his real identity as the perfectly spiritual Supreme Brahman [God].

*Vedānta-sūtra* presents and then refutes all these misconceptions, and establishes Lord Viṣṇu as supremely independent, the original creator and cause of all causes, omniscient, the ultimate goal of life for all living entities, the supreme religious principle and the supreme transcendental knowledge.

The *Vedānta-sūtra* describes five *tattvas* [principal ontological categories of existence]: 1. *īśvara* [the Supreme Personality of Godhead]; 2. *jīva* [the individual living entity, or spirit soul]; 3. *prakṛti* [matter]; 4. *kāla* [time]; and 5. *karma* [action]. The *īśvara* or Supreme Lord is omniscient, but the *jīva* soul has only limited knowledge. Still, both are eternal beings, are aware of the spiritual reality, and have a variety of spiritual qualities. Both are alive, have personality, and are aware of their own identity.

At this point someone may object: “In one place you have said that the Supreme Godhead is omniscient, and in another place you have said that He is knowledge itself. This is a contradiction, for
the knower and the object of knowledge must be different. They cannot be the same."

To this objection I reply: Just as a lamp is not different from the light it emanates, and its light reveals not only other objects but also itself by its luminescence, in the same way the Supreme Personality of Godhead is simultaneously the supreme knower and the supreme object of knowledge. There is no contradiction inherent in the concepts that God is pure consciousness, and at the same time Self-conscious.

Now let us consider the five tattvas or ontological categories of existence given above.

1. Īśvara or the one Supreme Personality of Godhead is supremely independent. He is the master of all potencies. He creates the universe, then enters and controls it. He arranges for the material suffering and enjoyment of the living entities residing in material bodies through the laws of karma, and awards ultimate liberation to qualified individual spirit souls [jīvas]. Although He is one, He manifests in many forms. They who understand the transcendental science maintain that although He is one and indivisible, He is not different from His innumerable transcendental forms and qualities. Although He cannot be perceived by the material senses, He can be perceived by bhakti [devotional service]. He is changeless. He reveals His own blissful spiritual form to His devotees.

2. The many jīvas [individual spirit souls] are situated in different conditions of existence. Some are averse to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and turn their faces from Him. Such jīvas are bound by material illusion. Other jīvas are friendly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and turn their faces to Him. These jīvas become free from the bondage of material illusion, which hides both the Supreme Lord's form and His qualities, and in this way they become able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face-to-face.

3. Prakṛti [material nature] is the total material nature, consisting of the three modes: goodness, passion and ignorance. Prakṛti is known by many names, such as tamah [ignorance] and māyā [illusion]. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead glances at prakṛti, she becomes able to perform her various duties. Prakṛti is the mother of many variegated material universes.

4. Kāla [time] is the origin of past, present, future, simultaneity, slowness, quickness, and many other similar states. Kāla is divided by the Vedic literature into many different units, from the extremely brief truti [about 0.0006 second] to the extremely long parārdha [50 years of Lord Brahmā, or about 155,100,000,000 terrestrial years]. Turning like a wheel, time is the cause of repeated creation and annihilation of the universes. Time is an unconscious, unintelligent substance; unlike the three previous tattvas, it is not a person.

These four tattvas [īśvara, jīva, prakṛti, and kāla] are eternal. This is confirmed by the following scriptural quotations:

\[
\text{aham evāsamb evāgre}
\]
\[
nānyad yat sad-asat param
\]
\[
paścād ahaṁ yad etac ca
\]
\[
yo 'vaśisyeta so 'smy aham
\]

“Brahmā, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.33]

\[
sad eva saunyedam agra āśīt
\]
“My dear saintly student, please understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal. He is existed before the manifestation of this universe.” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1]

nityo nityānāṁ cetanas cetanānāṁ
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān
tam piṭhā-gaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās
tesāṁ śāntiḥ śāsvatī netareśām

“Of all the eternal living entities, one [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] is the supreme eternal. Of all conscious entities one [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] is the supreme conscious entity who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot.” [Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad 6.13 and Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13]

gaur anādy anantaṁ

“Prakṛti is like a cow who was never born and never dies.” [Culika Upaniṣad, Mantra 5]

aham evākṣayaḥ kālo

“I am time, which is certainly inexhaustible.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.33]

The jīvas, prakṛti, and kāla are subordinate to īśvara, and subject to His control. This is confirmed by the following statement of Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad [6.16]:

sa viśva-kṛd viśva-viḍ ātma-yonir
jñaḥ kāla-kāro guṇi sarva-viḍ yaḥ
pradhāna-ksetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ
samsāra-mokṣa-sthiti-bandha-hetuh

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead [īśvara] is the creator of the material universes. He is the creator of everything that exists within the universes. He is the father of all living entities. He is the creator of time. He is full of all transcendental virtues. He is omniscient. He is the master of pradhāna [the unmanifest material nature]. He is the master of the guṇas [three modes of material nature]. He is the master of the individual spirit souls residing in material bodies [kṣetrajña]. He imprisons the conditioned souls in the material world, and He also becomes their liberator from bondage.”

5. Karma [the result of fruitive action] is not a conscious, living person. It is the mechanical material principle of cause and effect. Although no one can trace out its beginning, it has a definite end at some point in time; therefore it is not eternal, and that is our hope of deliverance. It is known by the name adṛṣṭa [the unseen hand of fate] and many other names such as destiny, fortune, etc.

These four [jīva, prakṛti, kāla, and karma] are all potencies of īśvara, the supreme master of all potencies. Because everything that exists is the potency of the Supreme, the Vedic literatures declare: “Only Brahman exists, and nothing is separate from Him.” This fact is nicely explained in the four Adhyāyas [divisions] of the Vedānta-sūtra. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the perfect commentary on Vedānta-sūtra, the Supreme īśvara and His potencies are described in the following words:

bhakti-yogena manasi
samyak praṇīhitte 'male
apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam
māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam
“Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under full control.”

yayā sammohito jīva
ātmānāṁ tri-guṇāmakaṁ
paro 'pi manute 'narthaṁ
tat-kṛtaṁ cābhīpadyate

“Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries.”

anarthopāśamaṁ sākṣād
bhakti-yogam adhoksaje
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś
cakre sātvata-samhitāṁ

“The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.4-6]

dravyaṁ karma ca kālaś ca
svabhāvo jīva eva ca
yad-anugrahataḥ santi
na santi yad-upekṣayā

“One should definitely know that all material ingredients, activities, time and modes, and the living entities who are meant to enjoy them all, exist by His mercy only, and as soon as He does not care for them, everything becomes nonexistent.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.10.12]

That Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra is confirmed by the following statement of Garuḍa Purāṇa:

artho 'yam brahma-sūtrānām

“Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra.”

An Adhikārī or person who is qualified to study Vedānta-sūtra is one whose heart is peaceful, pure, self-controlled, pious, and free from material desires, who is eager is associate with saintly devotees, who has faith in the Lord and the scriptures, who is eager to discharge his religious duties, and who is decorated with saintly qualities, is qualified to study the scriptures and strive after Brahman.

The Sambandha or relationship expressed in Vedānta-sūtra is that the scriptures describe Brahman, and Brahman is the object described in the scriptures. The Viṣaya or subject matter of Vedānta-sūtra and other Vedic scriptures is the description of Brahman as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is the master of unlimited inconceivable potencies, and who possesses unlimited pure, transcendental attributes. The Prayojana or result of properly understanding the Vedānta-sūtra and other Vedic scriptures is that the spiritual aspirant becomes free from all material imperfections, and able to see the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, face-to-face.

The Vedānta-sūtra, which consists of aphorisms revealing the method of understanding Vedic knowledge, is the concise form of all Vedic knowledge. It begins with the words athāto brahma
sjñāṇa: “Now is the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth.” The human form of life is especially meant for this purpose, and therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* very concisely explains the human mission. This is confirmed by the words of the *Vāyu and Skanda Purāṇas*, which define a *sūtra* as follows:

> alpāksaram asandigdhām sāra-vat viśvato-mukham
> astobham anavadyāṃ ca sūtram sūtra-vido viduḥ

“A *sūtra* is a compilation of aphorisms that expresses the essence of all knowledge in a minimum of words. It must be universally applicable and faultless in its linguistic presentation.”


There are four sections [Adhyāyas] in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and there are four divisions [pādas] in each chapter. Therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* may be referred to as *ṣoḍaṣa-pāda*, or sixteen divisions of aphorisms. The theme of each and every division is fully described in terms of different subject matters [adhiṭṭhāna], which have five divisions technically called *pratijñā* [declaration], *hetu* [cause], *udāharana* [example], *upanaya* [bringing closer] and *nimamana* [scriptural quotes]. Every theme must necessarily be explained with reference to *pratijñā*, or a solemn declaration of the purpose of the treatise. The solemn declaration given in the beginning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is *aṭhāto brahma sjñāṇa*, which indicates that this book was written with the solemn declaration to inquire about the Absolute Truth. Similarly, each *adhiṭṭhāna* in *Vedānta-sūtra* displays all five syllogistic parts: the theme must be declared [pratijñā] and any objections or counter-arguments discovered and counteracted, reasons must be expressed [hetu], examples must be given in terms of various facts [udāharana], the theme must gradually be brought nearer for understanding [upanaya], and finally it must be supported by authoritative quotations from the Vedic *śāstras* [nimamana].

According to the great dictionary compiler Hemacandra, also known as Koṣākāra, *Vedānta* refers to the purport of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Vedas*. Professor Apte, in his dictionary, describes the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Vedas* as that portion which states the rules for employment of hymns at various sacrifices and gives detailed explanations of their origin, sometimes with lengthy illustrations in the form of legends and stories. It is distinct from the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*. Hemacandra says that the supplement of the *Vedas* is called the *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Veda* means knowledge, and *anta* means the end. In other words, proper understanding of the ultimate purport of the *Vedas* is called *Vedānta* knowledge. Such knowledge, as given in the aphorisms of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, must be supported by the *Upaniṣads*.

According to learned scholars, there are three different sources of knowledge, which are called *prasthāna-traya*. According to these scholars, *Vedānta* is one of such sources, for it presents Vedic knowledge on the basis of logic and sound arguments. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [13.5] the Lord says,

> ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītām
candobhir vividhaḥ prthak
> brahma-sūtra-padaś caiva
> hetumadbhār vinīṣcitaḥ

“That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in various Vedic writings—especially in the *Vedānta-sūtra*—and is presented with all reasoning as to cause and effect.”

In the Vedic literature there are three divisions of transcendental knowledge, called *prasthāna-traya*. Knowledge which is proved by Vedic instruction like the *Upaniṣads* is called *śruti-prasthāna*.
Authoritative books indicating the ultimate goal and written by liberated souls like Vyāsadeva—for example, Bhagavad-gītā, Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, especially Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇa—are called smṛti-prathāṇa. From Vedic literatures we understand that the Vedas originated from the breathing of Nārāyaṇa. Vyāsadeva, who is an incarnation of the power of Nārāyaṇa, has compiled the Vedānta-sūtra. Therefore the Vedānta-sūtra is known as nyāya-prathāṇa, the Upaniṣads are known as śruti-prathāṇa, and the Gītā, Mahābhārata and Purāṇas are known as smṛti-prathāṇa. All scientific knowledge of transcendence must be supported by śruti, smṛti and a sound logical basis [nyāya].

It is said that both the Vedic knowledge and the supplement of the Vedas called the Sātvata-paṇcarātra emanated from the breathing of Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Vedānta-sūtra aphorisms were compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a powerful incarnation of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. The Nāradapaṇcarātra, a directory of devotional service, and Vedānta-sūtra express the same opinions. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore confirms that there is no difference in opinion between the two, and He declares that because the Vedānta-sūtra was compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, it may be understood to have emanated from the breathing of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Tḥākura comments that while Vyāsadeva was compiling the Vedānta-sūtra, seven of his great saintly contemporaries were also engaged in similar work. These saints were Ātreyā Rṣi, Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi, Kārṣṇājīni, Kāsakṛṣṇa, Jaimini and Bādārī. In addition, it is stated that Pārāśārī and Karmandī-bhikṣu also discussed the Vedānta-sūtra aphorisms before Vyāsadeva.

As mentioned above, the Vedānta-sūtra consists of four Adhyāyas or sections. The first two Adhyāyas discuss the relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is known as sambandha-jñāna, or knowledge of the relationship. The third Adhyāya describes how one can act in his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called abhidheya-jñāna. The relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Lord is described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: jīvera ‘svārūpa’ haya krṣnera ‘nitya-dāsa’, “The living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme God.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 20.108] Therefore, to act in that relationship one must perform sādhana-bhakti, or the prescribed duties of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called abhidheya-jñāna. The fourth Adhyāya describes the result of such devotional service [prayojana-jñāna]. This ultimate goal of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. The words anāvrttiḥ śabdāt in the Vedānta-sūtra indicate this ultimate goal.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a powerful incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, compiled the Vedānta-sūtra, and in order to protect it from unauthorized commentaries, he personally composed Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on the instruction of his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, as the original commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra. Besides Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there are commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtra composed by all the major Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, and in each of them devotional service to the Lord is described very explicitly. Only those who follow Śaṅkara’s commentary have described the Vedānta-sūtra in an impersonal way, without reference to viṣṇu-bhakti, or devotional service to the Lord, Viṣṇu. Generally people very much appreciate this Śārīraka-bhāṣya, or impersonal description of the Vedānta-sūtra, but all commentaries that are devoid of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu must be considered to differ in purport from the original Vedānta-sūtra. In other words, Lord Caitanya definitely confirmed that the commentaries, or bhāṣyas, written by the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas on the basis of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu, and not the Śārīraka-bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya, give the actual explanation of the Vedānta-sūtra.

The Vedic literature is not open to unauthorized speculative misinterpretation to support our pet theories; it gives the following guidelines for interpretation of difficult or ambiguous Sanskrit verses: upakramopasamāhārav abhyāsā ’pūrvata-phalam artha-vādopapatī ca lingam tātparya-nirṇaye
“The beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author’s statement of his own intention, and appropriateness are the factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages.”

If we apply these criteria, called samanvaya, to interpreting difficult passages in the Vedic literature, we clearly see that the Vedas consistently describe the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity as two distinct entities. For example, let us analyze the following passage from Śvetāsvatāra Upanisad [4.6-7] in the light of the above six criteria:

\[
dvā suparṇā sayujā sakāhā śamānanya vrkṣam pariśasvajāte
tayor anyaḥ pippalam svādv atty anaśnann anyo ’bhicakāśiti
\]

“The individual living entity and the superconscious living entity, Brahman or the Personality of Brahman, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds [the individual living entity] is eating the fruit of the tree [the sense gratification afforded by the material body], and the other bird [the superconscious living entity] is not trying to eat these fruits, but is simply watching His friend.”

\[
samāne vrkṣe puruṣo nimagno ‘nīśāya śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyati anyam īśam aṣya mahimānam iti vīta-śokah
\]

“Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness, bewildered by his own ignorance as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his eternal friend Brahman and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties.”

In this passage, the upakrama [beginning] is dvā suparṇā [two birds]; the upasaṁhāra [ending] is anyam īśam [the other person, who is Brahman or the Personality of Brahman]; the repeated feature is the word anya [the other person], as in the phrases tayor anyo ‘śnan [the other person does not eat] and anyam īśam [he sees the other person, who is the Supreme Brahman]. The apūrvata [unique feature] is the relationship between the individual conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman, which cannot be understood without the revelation of the Vedic scripture; the phalam [object or general purpose of the passage] is vīta-śokah [the individual conscious living entity becomes free from suffering by seeing Brahman]. The artha-vāda [author’s statement of his own intention] is mahimānam eti [one who understands the Supreme Brahman becomes glorious] and the upapatti [appropriateness] is anyo ‘naśan [the other person, the Supreme Brahman, does not eat the fruits of material happiness and distress].

By carefully analyzing this passage, we see that in all six points of interpretation, it teaches the difference between the jīva and Brahman. One can analyze many other passages from Vedic literatures in the same way, and one may clearly understand the difference between the Personality of Brahman and the individual living entity. As we present the sūtras, we will analyze each one in detail according to the principles of samanvaya, providing a wealth of detailed quotations from the original Vedic literature and showing their correct interpretations.

**The Structure of Vedānta-sūtra**

The structure of Vedānta-sūtra consists of four divisions called Adhyāyas; each Adhyāya has four parts called Pādas; each Pāda contains several Adhikaraṇas, or topics; each Adhikaraṇa contains one or more sūtras.

Adhikaraṇas—Vedic syllogisms—consist of five parts: 1. viṣaya [thesis, or statement]; 2. saṃśaya [the arisal of doubt in the tenability of the statement]; 3. pūrvapakṣa [presentation of an antithetical view
opposing the original statement] 4. *siddhānta* [determination of the actual truth, the final Vedic conclusion, in the form of a *śūtra*], and 5. *saṅgati* or consistency.

*Saṅgati* requires that each Adhikaraṇa remain harmonious with the Vedic literature. The *saṅgati* of an Adhikaraṇa is of four kinds:

- *śāstra-saṅgati* [confirmation of the final conclusion established by quoting from the Vedic scriptures];
- *adhyāya-saṅgati* [consistency with the theme or subject of the whole Adhyāya];
- *pāda-saṅgati* [consistency with the entire Pāda];
- *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* [consistency with previous and subsequent Adhikaraṇas].

The subject of the entire *Vedānta-sūtra*, and indeed the entire Vedic literature, is Brahman; therefore to maintain *śāstra-saṅgati*, the interpretation of each *śūtra* must remain consistent with the subject of Brahman. Each Adhyāya in *Vedānta-sūtra* has a particular topic.

- The First Adhyāya explains that Brahman is the subject matter discussed in all Vedic literatures.
- The Second Adhyāya explains that all Vedic literatures, although variegated, do not actually contradict each other; they present the same conclusion.
- The Third Adhyāya describes how to attain Brahman
- The Fourth Adhyāya explains the result of attaining Brahman.

Therefore to maintain *adhyāya-saṅgati*, each passage must remain consistent with the theme of its Adhyāya. Maintaining *pāda-saṅgati* is similar; each Adhikaraṇa must show consistency with the theme of the Pāda in which it appears.

Besides these three kinds of *saṅgati*, *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* shows that each Adhikaraṇa is consistent with the preceding and following Adhikaraṇas. Each of the Adhikaraṇas in a particular Pāda leads to the next through a particular association, relationship or progression of thoughts. *Adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* is thus of six kinds:

- *ākṣepa-saṅgati* [objection]
- *drṣṭānta-saṅgati* [illustration]
- *prati-drṣṭānta-saṅgati* [counter-illustration]
- *prasānga-saṅgati* [incidental illustration]
- *utpatti-saṅgati* [introduction]
- *apavāda-saṅgati* [exception]

We will note the type of *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* at the beginning of each Adhikaraṇa.
The Domain and Nomenclature of Absolute Truth

“Now, therefore, one should inquire about Brahman.” [Vedāṇṭa-sūtra 1.1.1]

The first principle of Vedāṇṭa is to inquire into Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth, for the purpose of this discussion, is defined as the source from which everything emanates, or Brahman.

The domain of inquiry into Absolute Truth of Vedāṇṭa is therefore, in the broadest sense, the field of ontology or the study of origins. Absolute Truth corresponds to absolute existence, which is the source of the relative existence described by relative truth. Since Absolute Truth is eternal, it exists a priori and a posteriori relative, limited, temporary existence and relative truth.

Relative truth describes relative existence as a thing in itself, without reference to Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth describes absolute existence, and can also describe relative existence in the context of its proper relation to absolute existence. Absolute Truth therefore is unconditional, all-inclusive and self-referential, whereas relative truth is exclusive, conditional, and dependent for its meaning on the constantly changing conditions of relative existence.

Everything we experience in relative existence has its source in Absolute Truth. Therefore although Absolute Truth is by definition unary and undifferentiated, one without a second, it also contains all attributes of relative existence, including multiplicity, illusion, emanation, energy, form, activity, individuality, personality, identity, desire, consciousness, perception, variety, cause and effect, and paradoxically, also contains all the opposite qualities.

All qualities originate in Absolute Truth, which has no qualities and all qualities simultaneously. After all, the source of everything must contain the qualities and substance of all that emanates from it, and at the same time is beyond all such qualitative and quantitative distinctions. This is certainly paradoxical. Yet in Absolute Truth, these attributes are eternal and unchanging, while in relative existence they are temporary and always in a state of flux.

Absolute Truth is often called ‘spiritual,’ in contradistinction to relative material existence. But this label is itself relative since it is defined in terms of relative, material existence. Therefore we use the term Absolute Truth to refer to the eternal source from which everything emanates.

Material science, speculative philosophy and ordinary theology limit their scope of inquiry to varying degrees of relative truth. Only Vedāṇṭa actually treats the science of Absolute Truth in detail. Vedāṇṭa is therefore beyond the limitations of the domains of mundane science, philosophy and sectarian theology, for it deals with Absolute Truth on its own level, rather than attempting to extrapolate from relative truth, which of course can only generate more relative truth.

Material science is especially limited in its ability to describe consciousness; since consciousness is an absolute factor, the language of mathematics has no way to quantify it except for zero and infinity. Philosophy and psychology attempt to deal with consciousness indirectly by analyzing it in terms of mental phenomena or systems of morality and ethical values. None of these relative disciplines makes any real attempt to embrace the paradoxes of Absolute Truth, or treat consciousness as a fundamental substance. Therefore anyone who wants to understand consciousness, the most primary and fundamental fact of our existence, must approach Absolute Truth through the study of Vedāṇṭa.
Qualifications of the student

*Vedānta* begins from the assumption that the student is in a position to inquire into the domain of Absolute Truth. This does presuppose certain conditions. The student should be intelligent and sincere, well-versed in the literature of ontological inquiry in general, and Vedic lore in particular. He should be moral and ethical in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the terms, and be inclined by nature to goodness, truthfulness and appreciation of the ontological and aesthetic value of Absolute Truth.

The successful aspirant should also possess purity of mind and heart. This means he should be free from the desire for material gain, and have transcended lust, greed, anger, pride, envy and the desire for dominating others. He should be a pure vegetarian, free from intoxication, illicit sexual habits and gambling.

While mundane scholars and theologians scoff at these requirements for purity, they cannot follow them; nor can they properly understand or explain *Vedānta* or Absolute Truth, let alone realize it within themselves. The standards of purity are requisites for spiritual initiation into the Vedic guru-disciple lineage, precisely because they prepare one to realize Absolute Truth. In practice, no one can maintain such high standards of purity without the personal instruction of a self-realized soul.

Therefore the most important qualification is that the aspiring student of *Vedānta* must be in association with a pure soul who has realized Absolute Truth himself, who can initiate and instruct the student by example in the practices and lifestyle required to realize Absolute Truth. Since such realization requires complete concentration of purpose and energy, one must be ready to renounce all activities motivated by relative gain and material enjoyment, and devote oneself fully to *Vedānta* for the duration of the apprenticeship.

The student must understand that working in the relative conception of life, including study of religious literature, and even ordinary academic or theological study of *Vedānta*, will not lead him to the desired goal of self-realization and unlimited happiness attainable through proper study of *Vedānta*. In fact, without the esoteric practices of the Absolute Truth, no one can realize *Vedānta*. The *Vedānta* philosophy only provides a transcendental contextual framework in which to hold and evaluate the experiences of direct practice of Absolute Truth.

The esoteric school of the teacher of *Vedānta* is an extension of Absolute Truth in the relative material world. It partakes of the absolute qualities of Absolute Truth, but these qualities are only reflected, not innate. The school of *Vedānta* is the form; Absolute Truth is the essence. Without the essence, the form is useless. Without the self-realized teacher, the school is simply another relative manifestation, for the teacher is the representative of Absolute Truth. The student must be careful not to confuse the form with the essence. The great value of association with a self-realized soul is described in the following statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.34]:

\[
\textit{tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā}
\]

\[
\textit{upadeksyānti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ}
\]

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”

The student’s association with the teacher may be in person, or it may be through a more advanced student, or even through a medium such as a recording or a book. The potency of Absolute Truth is such that it may be transmitted through any medium without change. The important thing is the degree of realization of the teacher, since the student cannot attain any realization beyond that of his teacher.
While the qualifications for successful study of Vedānta may seem daunting, they are easily acquired by one who chants the Holy Name of the Lord:

\[
japyenaiva ca saṁsiddhyad  
brahmaṇā nātra saṁśayaḥ  
kuryād anvyan na vā kuryān  
maitro brāhmaṇa ucyate
\]

“Whether he performs other rituals and duties or not, one who perfectly chants mantras glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered a perfect brāhmaṇa, eligible to understand the Supreme Lord.” [Manu-saṁhitā 2.87]

\[
yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād  
yat-prahvanād yat-smaranād api kvacit  
śvādo ’pi sadyāḥ savanāya kalpate  
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darsanāt
\]

“To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face-to-face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.33.6]

For a detailed explanation of the potency of the Holy Name, please see the Preface to our book Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma.

**Transcendental knowledge**

The motivation of the student of Vedānta is crucial to proper understanding. Generally, three kinds of persons inquire into Absolute Truth: those who have performed all kinds of religious duties faithfully, and have come to realize the limitations of institutionalized religion and ritualized spiritual practices; those who compassionately desire the greatest benefit for all living beings; and those who have tasted the bliss of meditation and want to completely renounce the activities of this world to attain full self-realization of Absolute Truth.

People who have performed all kinds of religious rituals and duties gradually come to understand that beyond the rote performance of canonical ritual, there is an inexpressible essence of Absolute Truth. Nevertheless they also experience the inability of such practices to grant more than a hint of this Truth. Therefore they embark on a search for a higher esoteric teaching, and if they are sincere, are awarded the opportunity to inquire into Absolute Truth from a realized teacher.

Those who are involved in teaching, counseling, healing, philanthropy and other forms of welfare work gradually come to understand the limitations of such relative assistance. It is said that one can give a hungry man food, and that will satisfy him today. But teach him to cook, and that will satisfy him for life. Similarly, those who perform relative welfare can see that they cannot provide permanent relief from suffering in that way. Therefore they begin to inquire into Absolute Truth to find a permanent solution to the problems of life, both for themselves and others.

Fortunate people who have attempted to experience Absolute Truth through meditation may also come to understand that without proper guidance and a rich fund of transcendental knowledge, they can make but little progress. Their hit-and-miss experiences of meditation have convinced them that there is a higher reality, but they also realize their own inability to attain steady and complete realization of it.
Therefore they also begin the search for a qualified teacher to initiate them into the mysteries of Absolute Truth.

These three kinds of students indirectly understand the nature of Absolute Truth according to their own respective abilities. By their independent efforts they eventually become purified enough to attain the association of a self-realized teacher. Once they enter the esoteric school of the teacher, they can continue to make progress until they have attained full realization of Absolute Truth, and their quest is successful.

These three types of aspirants hold in common the experience that relative methods of approaching Absolute Truth are doomed to failure. While many methods of enhancing knowledge and mitigating suffering exist in the relative world, all of them are limited and temporary. All beings existentially crave the full degree of self-realization; but material welfare work, conventional religious piety and even meditation cannot provide it without transcendental knowledge, initiation into the living tradition of *Vedānta* and the personal guidance of a self-realized soul. For they do not contain the most nourishing food of Absolute Truth.

Therefore the practical study of *Vedānta* begins from transcendental knowledge. The first item of transcendental knowledge is that insufficient relative methods provide only limited and temporary results, and to obtain the perfection of Absolute Truth requires methods that are directly absolute. Therefore one should fill his intelligence with the transcendental knowledge described by the absolute nomenclature of *Vedānta*. We will discuss this point very elaborately in later sections of this book.

We remind the student again that simply comprehending the difference between the relative and the absolute, and developing the qualifications of a student of *Vedānta* as described above, are insufficient to realize Absolute Truth. However, if one attains the association of a self-realized soul and follows his instructions, then this transcendental realization, ordinarily impossible to attain, becomes easy.

**Absolute nomenclature**

The most important principle of the philosophy of *Vedānta* is the nomenclature of Absolute Truth. Certain verbal formulas called *mantras* express the transcendental potencies of Absolute Truth, and by being initiated into and practicing these mantras, one can realize the qualities of Absolute Truth within oneself.

It may be difficult for the person educated in the relative conceptions of symbology and semantics to comprehend the idea of an absolute nomenclature. In relative existence, all words and symbols are different from the phenomena they represent. For example, one can repeat the word ‘water’ as much as one likes, but this will not quench his thirst.

In relative consciousness, even terms intended to denote various aspects of Absolute Truth commonly are defined in terms of relative existence, and are therefore actually relative terms. For example, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines God as “(in esp. Christian, Jewish and Muslim belief) the being which made the universe, the Earth and its people and is believed to have an effect on all things.” Note that here God is defined entirely in terms of relative existence, i.e. the material creation.

However, there does exist a class of absolute terminology that has no referent in relative existence whatsoever, and these terms are the nomenclature of Absolute Truth. In keeping with the undifferentiated quality of absolute existence, these terms are nondifferent from the aspects of Absolute Truth they describe. Experience shows that meditating on the transcendental sounds of *mantra* can induce realization of Absolute Truth in properly trained practitioners.
The nomenclature of Absolute Truth is a large subject, to which we have already devoted several books. For the purposes of this discussion, the nomenclature of Absolute Truth may be understood to consist of words that have no relative referent. In later sections we will present and explain many specific examples.

**Brahman, the origin of everything**

Absolute Truth is the origin of everything, both in the absolute and relative realms. The creation, maintenance and destruction of the relative world occur completely within the context of the eternal existence of Absolute Truth.

\[
\text{atha kasmād ucyate brahmaḥḥi bhantaḥḥi asmin guṇāḥ}
\]

“From Whom has this universe become manifest? From Brahman, who possesses an abundance of exalted transcendental qualities.” [śruti-śāstra]

Since the entire relative world is an effect, Absolute Truth alone is its cause. The first cause of the relative world cannot be found within the relative existence itself, therefore speculative theories of the origin of the universe attempt to place it in some hypothetical ancient period when conditions were, somehow, different than at present. Nevertheless, matter or energy can never be the cause of itself, since its very existence requires the pre-existence of consciousness, intelligence, space and time, which no theory of the relative realm can explain.

The only explanation for the relative world that makes sense is that it emanates from Absolute Truth, exists within Absolute Truth and is reabsorbed into Absolute Truth at the end. Absolute Truth is described in *Vedānta* philosophy as bhūma, all-pervading, and ātmā, consciousness or soul. And in the description of Absolute Truth as the source of everything, *Vedānta-sutra* uses the word yataḥ, ‘from Whom.’

\[
\text{janmādy asya yataḥ}
\]

“[Brahman is] He from Whom everything emanates.” [*Vedānta-sutra* 1.1.2]

Therefore in the ultimate issue, Absolute Truth is not only all-pervading, but also conscious and personal. Actually, it is not possible that Absolute Truth is impersonal, because Absolute Truth is the source of everything, including persons. And how can the source of persons be without the quality of personality? Of course, it is quite possible for Absolute Truth to be simultaneously personal and impersonal without any contradiction, and we will explore this paradox more fully in later sections.

Absolute Truth as the transcendental Supreme Person emanates everything, maintains the existence of everything, and reabsorbs everything relative when it becomes unmanifest. As such, Absolute Truth contains all qualities of all manifestations. *Vedānta* philosophy calls the reservoir of all qualities Brahman. In this work we use the term Brahman interchangeably with Absolute Truth.

Brahman also indicates an eternal, conscious, unconditionally existing person. *Vedānta-sutra* uses the term Brahman to indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We therefore prefer Brahman to the Western theological term ‘God’ because as described above, ‘God’ is defined in terms of the relative existence, whereas Brahman explicitly indicates Absolute Truth without any referent to relative existence.

Brahman or Absolute Truth, then, is the subject matter of *Vedānta*. Regarding the qualities of Brahman, the Vedic literature states:

\[
\text{yo vai bhūma tat sukhaṁ nānyat sukham asti bhūmaiva}
\]

\[
\text{sukhaṁ bhūmatveva vijñāsitavyaḥ}
\]
“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the source of genuine happiness. Nothing else can bring one actual happiness. Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead can bring one happiness. For this reason one should inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.25.1]

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo
nididhyāsitavyo maɪreyi

“O Maitreyī, one should see, hear, remember, and inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5]

tam etaiḥ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividisanti
yajñena dānena tapasānaśanena

“The brāhmaṇās strive to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by Vedic study, sacrifice, charity, austerity, and fasting.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22]

satyena labhayas tapasā hy eṣa ātmā samyak
jñāṇena brahma-caryena nityam

“By constant truthfulness, transcendental knowledge and austerity, one becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.5]

Therefore we who are suffering an uncertain existence in the relative world can derive all benefit from inquiring into Brahman or Absolute Truth; for Brahman, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the reservoir of all desirable qualities, up to and including complete independence from the relative existence. These qualities are imbibed through transcendental knowledge of Absolute Truth and the esoteric practice of chanting the Holy Name.

**The process of self-realization**

Knowledge is of two kinds: direct and indirect. Direct knowledge is gathered through the senses, and indirect knowledge is obtained from authorities such as the spiritual teacher, and scriptures such as Vedānta-sūtra and the Vedas. In relative consciousness, we cannot have direct knowledge of Absolute Truth, but we can gain indirect knowledge of Brahman through spiritual authorities.

However, by performing the process to attain Brahman received through the process of indirect knowledge, we uncover our original absolute consciousness and perceive Absolute Truth directly through absolute senses. In this way we come to direct knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and also become cognizant of our real eternal identity in the absolute existence.

For, while the Supreme Personality of Godhead is certainly the Supreme Brahman, the dependent living entities emanated from Him also have the qualities of Brahman such as consciousness, desire, will, perception, action and intelligence. Therefore we are also Brahman, but we are not identical with the Supreme Brahman. Rather, we living beings are subordinate emanations of the Supreme Brahman. Because we are only infinitesimal individual emanations of Brahman, out of ignorance of our real nature our original absolute identity has become covered by relative existence in the form of the temporary material mind and body.

prthag-ātmānaṁ preritaṁ ca matvā
juṣṭas tatas tenāṁrtaṁ eva

“When one understands that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit souls are eternally distinct entities, then he may become qualified for liberation, and live eternally in the spiritual world.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 1.6]
By associating with the qualities of Absolute Truth through the process of transcendental sound vibration, the Holy Name, we can free ourselves from all relative limitations, uncover our original absolute nature and join the Supreme Brahman in eternal existence in the absolute world. This is the aim of Vedānta philosophy and the yoga practices given in the Vedic literature.
Quantum Physics and Vedic Metaphysics

Consciousness is the primary issue in human life. Indeed, without consciousness, there are no other issues. Consciousness and its corollaries are fundamental to every thought, word and action. Yet how strange it is that no universally accepted, comprehensive theory of consciousness exists in Western science. The reason for this is clear: until recently, science intentionally restricted its domain to empirical investigations of the manifest objective world, while consciousness is intrinsically subjective and immanent.

However, without a practical theory of consciousness, science cannot adequately explain the world in which we live. Consciousness is the most basic experiential fact of existence. Without a theory of consciousness, Quantum Mechanics in particular has nowhere to turn but to mathematical theories of probability and chance to explain observations of subatomic energy transactions. Einstein famously expressed his discomfort with this by saying, “God does not play dice with the Universe.” Quantum Mechanics cannot predict the behavior of a quantum system until a macroscopic conscious entity interferes with it, decohering the indeterminate superposition of the quantum wave function into a definite classical result by the process of measurement and observation.

Clearly, Quantum Mechanics is missing something; just as clearly, what is missing is a workable theory of consciousness. The sometimes bizarre concepts and calculations of quantum theory all depend on the existence and actions of an observer. Any observer must be conscious, and therefore the consciousness of the observer is critical to the outcome of any quantum experiment. However, so far Quantum Mechanics still treats the observer’s consciousness as a ‘black box,’ as if consciousness were proscribed from serious scientific inquiry. Whether this is a consequence of Western science’s origins as a weapon against the intellectual repression of the Church, or because of materialistic empirical bias of theorists and researchers, is not the issue here. The intent of this work is to present and explore an extant theory of consciousness from an ancient tradition of vital, living importance to hundreds of millions of adherents and practitioners all over the world, and to evaluate its potential value to modern science.

Translating Vedānta

With recent developments in Quantum Mechanics and the philosophy of science, the dialogue of Western scientific thought has advanced to the point where its cutting edge exposes many issues equivalent to those discussed in Vedānta. Now that this has occurred, the timeless principles of Vedānta can be expressed in the technical language of Quantum Mechanics and the philosophy of science, with little or no attenuation of meaning. Quantum physics and Vedānta address the same philosophical object: the inconceivable, immeasurable and immanent nature of Absolute Reality, of which the observable phenomenological cosmos is but a tiny subset. The two disciplines approach the subject from widely divergent points of view and use vastly different language to treat it. Nevertheless, the commonality of subject between Western science and Vedānta makes it possible to reconcile them without diminishing the importance or subtlety of either. Scientific Vedanta is the first attempt to translate the enduring wisdom of Vedānta into the new scientific language of Quantum Physics.

The insights of Vedānta philosophy and practice provide tremendous theoretical and practical advantages over a strictly Western scientific approach to the mysteries of life and existence. The keys to these advantages are that Vedānta recognizes the transcendental nature of consciousness, and the practical ability of directed consciousness to act, in effect, as co-creator of the universe to realize its full potential. Vedāntic consciousness theory provides a workable interface between the individual and the Universal Quantum Wave Function, which contains all possibilities of all possible universes.
Through this interface, one can enter into a direct personal relationship with the Infinite and engage in an eternal, ecstatic dance of mutual reciprocation. Translating the recondite philosophy and practical methods of Vedānta into accessible Western scientific language opens profound possibilities of expanded consciousness to millions of scientific-minded people all over the world.

**What is Vedānta?**

The term Vedānta is a compound of *veda + anta*. *Veda* can refer to the *Vedas*, the sacred *saṅgātana-dharma* tradition of Bhārata (India), or in a more general sense it simply means true knowledge. *Anta* means the conclusion or end. So Vedānta can be interpreted either literally, as the ultimate conclusion of the voluminous literature of the Vedic tradition; or more figuratively, as the ultimate knowledge, once knowing which, there is nothing further to be known. Vedānta appears herein in both meanings, but chiefly in the latter sense. In other words, Vedānta is the highest knowledge of the Vedic tradition, exactly as Quantum Mechanics and allied fields are the most advanced subjects in Western science.

While Westerners usually think of Vedānta as a religious work, its tone is actually closer to a terse mathematical or scientific analysis. Vedānta examines evidence, asserts hypotheses, quotes established authorities both pro and con its thesis, and closely reasons its way to a well-substantiated conclusion. That Vedānta is available in the West primarily through religious interpreters has perhaps skewed our evaluation of its relevance to scientific concerns.

Certainly, Vedānta-sūtra requires substantial exegesis to be intelligible to those uninitiated in its arcane mysteries. It is essentially the class lecture notes of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a great teacher of Vedic philosophy about 50 centuries ago in Bhārata (India). Various schools of interpretation exist, muddying the clear original meaning of the work. This is quite unnecessary, since the author himself explains the meaning of Vedānta-sūtra elaborately in his epic work Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The following statement of Garuḍa Purāṇa, one of the oldest Purāṇas (Vedic histories), confirms that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra:

\[
\text{artho 'yam brahma-sūtṛānāṁ}
\]

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra.

In researching and preparing Scientific Vedanta, we made extensive reference to the *Govinda-bhāṣya* of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a great author and interpreter of Vedic works, well situated in the direct lineage of both Vedānta-sūtra and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

**Differing interpretations**

Vedānta is chiefly known in the West as a vehicle for the theory of impersonalism: that the Ultimate Reality is somehow devoid of all qualities, energies and activity, and that self-realization consists of merging one’s existence with Brahman. In other words, self-realization equals self-annihilation. However, this interpretation is not supported by Vedānta-sūtra itself, or by its author in his commentary. Śrīla Vyāsadeva confirms the personal nature of the Absolute and His potencies in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [1.7.4-6] in the following words:

\[
\text{bhakti-yogena manasi samayak prāṇihite 'male}
\]
\[
\text{apaśyat puruṣāṁ pūrṇāṁ māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam}
\]

“Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in directed consciousness [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Brahman along with His external illusory energy, which was under full control.”
Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes unwanted reactions of material miseries.

The unwanted material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of directed consciousness. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is in relation to Vedānta-sūtra.

We will also see in our scientific analysis that, in order for the Vedāntic practices of directed consciousness to be effective, one must conceive of a personal interface to the Absolute. Even if the Absolute actually is ultimately impersonal (which is impossible to know because the Absolute is unobservable by definition in both Quantum Mechanics and Vedānta), we must relate to the Absolute as a person simply because we are persons. Since all possible qualities and states of existence and energy are contained within the Universal Quantum Wave Function in unlimited potential, this is not a theoretical problem. It is a well-substantiated observation that the impersonal practice of transcendental consciousness is much more difficult, and its followers seldom achieve the success they desire. This very important issue will be discussed elaborately in the text.

Expressing Vedānta in scientific language

Those who approach Vedānta from a spiritual or religious viewpoint should not be dismayed by this work. Vedānta and Quantum Mechanics describe the same subject—ultimate reality—from two widely divergent points of view. Since the subject in both cases is identical, there is scope to demonstrate many parallels between the two disciplines. While this book is written chiefly for Western readers trained in scientific thought, it is equally valuable to students and teachers of the Vedic tradition, for it shows how the timeless Vedic tradition remains relevant, and easily can be expressed in terms of contemporary scientific concepts or any sufficiently sophisticated frame of reference.

My Vedic guru Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda often spoke of Vedānta as a great science, global in scale and application, and encouraged his students to speak and write about it to the scientific community. He wrote, “Vedānta is the medium of philosophical interpretations, and thus Vedānta cannot be the absolute property of any particular class of philosopher. A sincere seeker of the Absolute Truth is called a Vedantist. Veda means ‘knowledge.’ Any department of knowledge is a part of Vedic knowledge, and Vedānta means the ultimate conclusion of all branches of knowledge. As philosophy is called the science of all sciences, Vedānta is the ultimate philosophy of all philosophical speculations.” He would be delighted to see this work, as would his predecessor Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who wrote the inspired Govinda-bhāṣya Vedānta commentary on which much of this book is based.

Mysticism generally is troublesome to the Western mind, which makes great efforts to avoid it. However, the findings of Quantum Mechanics, and philosophical theories such as the Anthropic Principle, highlight the central role of consciousness in the human existential situation, opening the door to a constructive dialogue between Eastern and Western modes of thought. This book is not meant to be the last word on the subject, and the future contributions of thoughtful and intelligent readers—from both Vedic and scientific perspectives—will certainly enrich the dialogue begun here.
Terminology and definitions

In view of the many parallels between *Vedānta* and Quantum Mechanics, we find many pairs of terms with equivalent meanings. We consider these terms synonyms, and use them as appropriate to the context. That is, when explaining Vedantic texts we generally use the Vedic terms, and when discussing parallel scientific issues we use Western terms. The following table lists the principal synonymous terms used in this work (additional technical terms and definitions are listed in the Glossary):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vedic Term</th>
<th>Scientific Term</th>
<th>Functional Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satyam param</td>
<td>Absolute, Absolute Truth</td>
<td>The unconditioned, infinite, immanent and unknowable source and context of everything; the ground against which everything exists, is measured, and finds its destiny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avatāra</td>
<td>Personification of the Absolute</td>
<td>A terminal self-manifested by the Universal Quantum Wave Function to facilitate communication with humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>Universal Quantum Wave Function</td>
<td>The unobservable, immanent, immeasurably potent origin and reservoir of all possibilities, energies, space-time continua, universes, beings, consciousness etc. (See Absolute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ātmā</td>
<td>Conscious individual living entity</td>
<td>A fundamental atomic particle of consciousness found in all living bodies; the individual person or soul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhyāna</td>
<td>Directed consciousness</td>
<td>The science and art of concentrating the attention, mind and consciousness on a single transcendental object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramātmā</td>
<td>Superconscious individual living entity</td>
<td>The all-pervading, all-cognizant form of Brahman, the sum total of all consciousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagavān</td>
<td>Personality of Brahman</td>
<td>The personal form of Brahman preferred by the practicing Vedantist to communicate with, and influence the decoherence of, the Universal Quantum Wave Function. (see Avatāra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūtra</td>
<td>Aphorism</td>
<td>A short, telegraphic statement implying a much larger context and significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem of existence

One day we awaken to find that we are born into a strange and often uncomfortable world. If we desired or asked to take birth here, we certainly don’t remember doing so. A few of us are born into relatively benign circumstances, while most have to cope with difficulty and privation from the start. In any event, as soon as we are able, we begin to develop theories about why life is the way it is. Theories are useful because they often give us insights into how to make our lives better. They also reassure us
that we have some small measure of control over our existence, and give us hope that we can make our future better than our past.

While our research and inquiries enrich us with insight and help us explain the world to ourselves, they also force us to confront the stark limits of our ability to control our fate. No one can avoid being born, growing old, or dying. We are thrust into this world without our consent, forced by circumstances to participate in various activities and struggle for survival, watch helplessly as the years pass by, our body withers and sickens, and at last we go the way of our ancestors into death.

Our precious knowledge and security are surrounded on all sides by impenetrable mysteries: Where did this astonishing universe come from? How is it constructed and maintained? Why the amazing variety and complexity of life? Is there life on other planets? What are time, life and consciousness, and why do we have to die? What will happen in the future? We know a little about these things, but the explanations we have are incomplete and unsatisfying, because they seem little help in controlling our fate.

Nevertheless, the insoluble problems of life drive us to perfect our knowledge, even against seemingly insuperable odds, and we have had some small success in doing so. We can point to our success in economic development and technology, our knowledge of the atom and the universe, global travel by jet planes, ever-faster computers and genuinely useful software, instant worldwide communications and so on. These rewards are enough to encourage us to continue to invest substantial human time and energy in scientific research and technological development, including theoretical and philosophical speculations that may not be immediately useful, but whose value we may realize in some future we cannot yet glimpse.

In fact, our collective wisdom places great value on ideas and concepts: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” For we have seen how concepts that seem far out or impossible today often become harbingers of great power and prosperity when their time finally arrives. The gleam in some visionary theorist’s eye may become tomorrow’s better energy source or gigantic global industry. These visions of the future encourage us to stay the course of progress, and advance the cause of understanding toward a future of greater knowledge and felicity.

Emboldened by success, every so often scientists try to tackle the really big questions of life: Where do we come from? What is life? How did it begin? How did the universe come into existence? Why is the universe designed the way it is? What is consciousness and what role does it play in the physical world? Scientific method’s insistence on empirical proof for any theory means that these kinds of questions will always be more philosophical than scientific in the strictest interpretation of the terms. However, that will not stop people from asking them; it just makes us less certain of the answers we have for them.

However, it is much harder to prove a theory than to disprove it. In scientific method, a single observation or experimental result can falsify an existing theory and spark the search for a new and better explanation of the facts. Through many iterations, this scientific method of observation, hypothesis, prediction and experimentation results in constantly improving theories and resulting applications.

There is a certain amount of faith involved in accepting any theory that cannot be conclusively demonstrated by experiment. Barring the invention of time travel, theories of the origin of the universe, of life or of the human species must remain just intriguing possibilities. However, even an unproven theory can have an important role as a catalyst for innovation. A new theory that lets us see familiar phenomena in fresh ways can open previously inaccessible possibilities in engineering or applied science, even if the theory is unconfirmed or unprovable. So even unprovable theories can be profitable by expanding our conception of what is possible.
The reader should approach Scientific Vedanta with this mindset. Experienced practitioners of *Vedānta* assert that the proof of its theories of consciousness and reality is in the experience of its practice. This may well be, but not every reader will have the time or inclination to personally test and confirm them. Those who do will be better served by taking the traditional path of initiation and discipleship. Then the best value of this work may be to convince the scientific reader that *Vedānta* is more than philosophy or mythology: the authors and practitioners of the Vedāntic tradition have experienced something subjective and intuitive, though real, that can profoundly expand our knowledge of the world of consciousness, and more accurately map its relation to physical reality and our understanding of the design of the universe.

**The Theory of Everything**

According to the ‘many worlds’ interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, all possible states and outcomes of the Universal Quantum Wave Function have equal probabilities of existence. Thus by the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, there are a very large—possibly infinite—number of worlds, all slightly different, coexisting simultaneously in the same possibility space. Following Schrödinger’s famous paradox, the many possible worlds are reduced to one actual world by quantum decoherence when viewed by a conscious observer.

According to the Strong Anthropic Principle, we observe the universe as it is because it is the only universe that can produce us exactly the way we are. If the structure and parameters of the universe were substantially different, we human beings would not exist to observe it. It follows, by the Self-Selection Assumption, that of all possible universes, we live in the one best suited to our needs. If it seems that the parameters of this universe are fine-tuned to the needs of human beings, it is precisely because the nature of our senses and consciousness decrees that we will bring exactly that kind of universe into manifestation from the ‘quantum soup’ of all possible manifestations of the primordial Universal Quantum Wave Function.

The role of consciousness is thus central and pivotal. We see how observers in every field tend to emphasize data that confirms their expectations, and ignore data that contradict them. Anyone who has sat through a morning in court can understand that no two witnesses see an event in the same way. Each conscious observer gets the universe that he or she creates by causing the decoherence of the indeterminate Quantum Wave Function of all possible worlds by contacting, observing and measuring it with the mind and senses. If the universe we observe seems tailor-made for us, it is because the universe we observe is the one that we bring out of the universal wave function by our very nature and state of consciousness.

Consciousness is absolute, thus each conscious observer observes himself or herself at the center of the universe, and tends to interpret everything in the observed universe in relation to, or in terms of, the meaning it acquires for that observer. This is why consciousness is not an observable in the empirical universe—it has to be outside the universe because it selects the observed universe from the infinitude of possible universes contained in the Universal Quantum Wave Function.

**The immanence of Absolute Reality**

We see that all comprehensive theories of reality, both religious and scientific, require the existence of an unobservable factor. *Vedānta* has Brahman, and Western science has the Universal Quantum Wave Function. This common unobservable factor is due to the certainty that limited human consciousness is incapable of universal awareness. Indeed, another common factor of all-embracing theories is the quest for simplicity; as Einstein said, “[Theories] should be made as simple as possible—but no simpler.”
The unobservable factor is also an artifact of all ontological and semantic systems, since they all rest on certain assumptions that are unprovable because they are outside the domain of the system.

Even a relatively small amount of information—the contents of the telephone directory, for example—overwhelms the human mind. In this age of the Internet, we suffer from information overload and complain of email burnout. Even if we had immediate access to all the information in the universe, there is no way we could assimilate it. We must accept that the capacity of the human mind and consciousness is finite and limited.

Yet we still desire to know all about life, the world and everything, because we intuitively understand that it will improve our life to do so. This intuition and the resulting thirst for knowledge constantly drives us to learn everything we can about the questions that interest us. If we find that knowing everything is impossible, then we look for a theory that packages an equivalent understanding into a symbolic form that we can digest. Thus cosmological theory becomes the ontological background, the set of unprovable assumptions against which we perceive and evaluate the foreground of our everyday experiences and actions.

Some early and largely inadequate theories of the cosmos invoke an all-powerful God or Goddess to explain away the vast excess of information and complexity embodied by the real world. Later theories call upon unknown, but mechanical natural laws; still later ones blame chance for inexplicable observations. All these are simply different names for an unknown, unobservable and unknowable infinite reality that transcends our limited ability to perceive, process and understand information.

The great value of *Vedānta* philosophy is that it also posits an immanent, unobservable Absolute Reality—Brahman—but also asserts that it is possible to establish a channel of communication with Brahman. *Vedānta* refers to ancient histories, the *Purāṇas*, that recount occasions when Brahman chose to appear as a person, the better to communicate with humans. These personifications of Brahman are communication terminals called *avatāras* that make it possible to communicate with Brahman directly, even today. A vast assortment of mental disciplines, collectively known as yoga (linking) details the practice of transcendental communication with the immanent Brahman, or the Universal Quantum Wave Function.

Someone may object, “Come now. How is it possible to communicate with the Universal Quantum Wave Function? Even if it were possible, certainly some scientists would have noticed by now.” I reply: “We are constantly immersed in, and penetrated by, the Universal Quantum Wave Function. Can a fish communicate with the ocean? A better question might be to ask, ‘How is it possible that anyone could avoid communication with the Universal Quantum Wave Function?’ ”

When the Universal Quantum Wave Function is posited as an unobservable, that means although it is an objective, empirically accessible phenomenon, it is simply, by definition, outside of our semantic and ontological framework. The only obstacle to our interacting with it in a subjective framework is our own disbelief that such a thing is possible. If our mental constructs and the semantic structures of our theories do not allow us to conceive of such a possibility, then we will not be aware of it even if it is going on all around us all the time. For example, no one was aware of cosmic rays, even though they penetrate us constantly, until 1912 when Victor Hess noticed certain anomalous behavior in the discharge of an electroscope, and took the trouble to hypothesize their existence and search for them.

Thus belief in the existence of a possibility is often prerequisite to realizing it. For example, if I do not believe that I can learn French, no one can teach it to me with any amount of time and effort. In fact, we interact with the Universal Quantum Wave Function at all times; *Vedānta* simply provides a theoretical framework that allows us to observe this interaction, albeit subjectively. We request the reader to keep an open mind on this point.
It is easy to lose sight of the fact that theories are metaphors. For example, electrons exhibit wave behavior under certain circumstances, and particle behaviors under other circumstances. This does not mean that electrons are either waves or particles, but that their behavior can be described by equations similar to those describing waves and particles. We do not have to believe that electrons are waves or particles to use the wave or particle equations to calculate their behavior. Wave-like behavior and particle-like behavior are both simply metaphors that help us predict the behavior of electrons. Similarly, we do not have to believe that the Universal Quantum Wave Function is a person to use the theories of Vedānta as metaphors to understand, design experiments or predict its behavior as a person. We can use any theory or metaphor to advantage, simply by suspending our disbelief in it long enough to understand and apply it properly.

The tremendous advantage of the Vedāntic theory of communication with Brahman is that through this relationship we can directly influence the local decoherence of the Universal Quantum Wave Function in much more powerful ways. This makes it possible to address certain classes of formerly inaccessible and insoluble problems, such as the purpose of existence, the directed evolution of consciousness, the mechanism of intuition, the condition and destination of consciousness after death, the mechanism of the Anthropic Principle and many others. The potential power of the new theoretical possibilities opened by Vedānta—whether immediately experimentally verifiable or not—alone makes its theory a worthwhile field for scientific study. The purpose of this work is to facilitate this study by exploring the connections of Vedānta with existing scientific theory.

The role of consciousness

Consciousness is the central fact of existence. The attempt of materialistic science to restrict the domain of human inquiry to so-called 'objective' phenomena is more or less a cheating process, since without consciousness all observations, and thus the process of empiricism itself, are impossible. Just as consciousness is a precondition of empirical investigation, so is an ontology or semantic domain. Reductionism has tried to eliminate subjectivity from the domain of scientific semantics, although the symbology of mathematics and the philosophy of science, concepts of truth and untruth, logical proof and so on are highly subjective.

Every working scientist or philosopher, if he is honest, will have to admit that the actual process of scientific advancement occurs in intuitive leaps that transcend the dry process of formal logic. Solutions to intractable problems, such as James Watson's discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA, often come in dreams or intuitive visions. Many great scientists have had luminous moment of transcendent insight, such as Albert Hoffman's youthful vision of the interconnectedness of nature, consciousness and God.

Consciousness itself is transcendental, immanent and subjective, therefore being conscious is itself a spiritual experience. But because most of us subscribe to a materialistic explanation of the world and phenomena, we miss this profound dimension of our own experience because of a crippled ontological background. Thus the quality of our consciousness, and thus the quality of our experience of life, is predicated on our ontological commitment, because in general, people do not see what they do not acknowledge to exist.

A famous historical example of this was when the first colonists arrived in what is now the United States, the local inhabitants literally could not see their sailing ships moored just off the coast, because after all, sailing across the ocean on a rickety bucket made of fragile wood is impossible. In a related and even more tragic example, the entire Incan army, hundreds of thousands of men, were defeated by a few hundred Spanish cavalry at Mexico City because the Incans had never before seen mounted soldiers. Thus they regarded them as undefeatable divine manifestations, panicked and fled.
Similarly, although we are used to magical appliances such as television and computers, we cannot understand the immense possibilities of our own consciousness simply because our world view, whether by accident or design, excludes subjectivity from the domain of reality. Many people even deny that consciousness exists except as an epiphenomenon of brain electrochemistry. Thus they denigrate the most important and vital part of their own self to the status of an illusion, focusing obsessively on the material body as the only reality.

We refuse to accept such a crippling view. Our own experience confirms that consciousness can change, and that the quality of our consciousness determines the quality of our experience of life. Real happiness or fulfillment is impossible in the limited, conditional consciousness provided by the reductionistic ontology; to attain the optimum state of being and full enjoyment of life requires full acceptance of our qualitative identity with Brahman, the transcendental source of all energies. Changing our consciousness requires opening our minds to the higher, more abstract and inclusive ontology derived from Vedic sources. When we accept this Vedantic ontology and begin to work with it, our empirical investigations take on a new dimension, the dimension of transcendental consciousness. This changes everything, because it changes how we look at the world and ourselves.

**Changing consciousness**

Changing our consciousness requires, first of all, accepting that it is possible. The next necessity is knowledge of consciousness: the characteristics, qualities, functions and potential of individual consciousness within the context of consciousness in general. Then we need practical methods of changing our consciousness in predictable, beneficial ways. Finally there must be some stable criterion of the optimal state of consciousness to serve as a goal. All this and more is provided by the *Vedānta* philosophy and ancillary works.

The methodology for changing our consciousness is also given in the literature of *Vedānta*: it is constant engagement of the attention and awareness in subjects of transcendental quality. Constantly hearing, repeating, remembering and serving the *Vedānta* philosophy itself and the sacred subjects in relation to it is the prime methodology for advancing in the transcendental science. Therefore *Vedānta* is supremely self-referential, another quality that we would expect from a truly transcendental science; it does not require any knowledge outside of itself for its complete implementation and realization.

But actually changing our consciousness requires more than just theoretical knowledge, belief in an alternate Vedic cosmology or even a transcendental methodology; it also requires personal discipline and training by an experienced teacher who has already made the journey from conditioned to absolute consciousness, and can impart guidance from his own experience. This practical apprenticeship is commonly accepted as a requirement for professional performance in many less demanding fields, for example medicine, law or even blacksmithing; how much more it must be true in the esoteric realm of consciousness enhancement.

Yet we see that most ostensible students of transcendental philosophy and *Vedānta* remain unwilling to take this final and actually, most important step. But it is precisely this total commitment that distinguishes the armchair speculator from the successful aspirant. It is a consistent observation over many years’ experience that those who are unwilling to give up their so-called independence and subject themselves to the discipline of a Master are unable to make any tangible advancement in the actual science of *Vedānta*. 
Conclusion

To properly understand the profound subject of *Vedānta*, then, requires a paradigmatic shift from the context of reductionistic materialism to that of Vedic transcendentalism. Otherwise accurate understanding and complete realization of the profound benefits of *Vedānta* will remain elusive. Any treatise, no matter how extensive, is only words. In and of itself, it cannot change our consciousness or lead to liberation from the existential suffering of material existence. We can describe the qualities and characteristics of *Vedānta* from now to the end of the universe; but unless one puts its principles and methods into practice in his life, he cannot taste the results. Certainly, knowledge and study are required; but so are good character and integrity. The glib student who recites his lessons perfectly but cannot apply them in practice will not find favor in the esoteric school of *Vedānta*.

*Vedānta* is a laboratory science, but the laboratory is our own mind and consciousness. Those who make superficial external changes in their lives, but who remain fixed in materialistic viewpoints will find little success, as will those whose studies remain theoretical and cannot bring themselves to practice. Each *sūtra*, each item of the doctrine of *Vedānta* has a corresponding practice and realization. So considering these caveats, anyone who applies themselves well to the discipleship of *Vedānta* can make significant progress in mitigating the sufferings of life.
Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman

Pāda 1: Words which, taken by themselves, would not necessarily refer to Brahman, but in the Vedic context certainly refer to Brahman.

Adhikaraṇa 1: Inquiry into the Absolute

Viśaya [thesis or statement]: The first Adhikaraṇa or or Vedic syllogism of Vedānta begins the inquiry into the Absolute [Brahman or the Universal Quantum Wave Function]. Everyone should inquire very seriously about the Absolute. Why? Because knowledge of the Absolute—the science of consciousness and spiritual life—is the only source of unconditional happiness. There is no other means to obtain perfect, uninterrupted, endless happiness, because consciousness is the fundamental existential fact of life.

This statement is confirmed by the following statements of Vedic scripture:

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi

“O Maitreyī, one should see, hear, remember, and inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5]

yo vai bhūma tat sukham nānyat sukham asti bhūmaiva sukhaṁ bhūmatveva vijijñāsitavyaḥ

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead (bhūma) is the source of genuine happiness. Nothing else can bring one actual happiness. Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead can bring one happiness. For this reason one should inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.25.1]

Such exalted happiness is possible only through understanding and practicing the recondite truths of Vedānta in regard to one’s personal relationship with the Absolute. Because without happiness life is not worth living, one should inquire extensively about the Absolute until one reaches a conclusive practical understanding. In other words, one should dedicate a significant portion of one’s time and resources to inquiring about the science of consciousness and practicing this transcendental knowledge until one attains self-realization, the source of unlimited happiness. This will bring the greatest satisfaction obtainable in human life.

Saṁśaya [arisation of doubt]: Students of religion and science often think that they have no need to inquire about the Absolute or investigate the esoteric teachings of the Vedas.

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: “The ordinary pleasures of material existence and the intellectual rewards of the pursuit of ordinary learning are enough,” materialistic people say. “There is no need to waste our time with abstruse philosophical matters, which are like a dream.” Others say, “We are satisfied with the opulences of morality and prosperity attained by the ritualistic functions of religion. What need do we have for this mysticism? Who knows, it may be irreligion in disguise. There are even statements in the Vedas that seem to contradict the necessity of inquiry into Brahman and advocate other spiritual processes.

apāma somam amṛtā abhūma

“We have attained immortality by drinking the soma juice.” [Ṛg Veda 8.18.3]
akṣayyaṁ ha vai cāturmāṣyājinah sukṛtaṁ bhavati

“They who follow the vow of cāturmāṣya attain an eternal reward.”

“These texts indicate that one can attain spiritual perfection by performing religious ceremonies and rituals and consuming their sacramental remnants [soma juice], or by performing austerities during the four months of the rainy season [cāturmāṣya]. Thus there is no need specifically to inquire into Brahman.”

Such conventional materialistic people think that there is no need to inquire into the Absolute. They think that anyone can enjoy life with full satisfaction by enthusiastic engagement in material work; and if one has any interest in spiritual things, simply by discharging ordinary pious duties described in various religious scriptures, one can attain immortality and an eternal reward. There is no doubt that cultivation of knowledge and performance of the pious duties given in various religious scriptures leads to favorable results. However, Adhyāya 3 of Vedānta-sūtra, along with many other passages in the Vedic scriptures, describe in detail the ultimate uselessness of the temporary benefits obtained by material work and religious piety.

Materialists may criticize Vedic culture and religion, but the conclusive truths revealed to the sincere student of Vedānta are outside of their experience. If they were to inquire even superficially into the Vedic teachings, they would be able to understand the difference between the temporary results of material fruitive activities and the eternal results of the authentic Vedic spiritual path. Material and transcendental activities, and their respective results, are in completely different ontological categories.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: One who is in knowledge of the Absolute, and thus personally familiar with the incomparable benefits of practicing this transcendental knowledge, feels that he has attained the highest benefit possible in human existence. Out of a genuine desire to help, he endeavors to convince others to inquire into the truths of the Absolute for their own benefit. Therefore, in the very first sūtra of Vedānta, the author Bhagavān Vyāsadeva encourages the student:

Sūtra 1.1.1

atha brahma-jijñāsā

atha—now; atah—therefore; brahma—about Brahman; jijñāsā—there should be desire to inquire.

Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.

Athā [now]: This word indicates the conditions that apply to inquiry into the Absolute. Inquiring into the Absolute, although open to everyone, does have a number of prerequisites. When one has properly studied both material science and ordinary religion, understood their meanings and successfully applied their principles, observed ethical practices of truthfulness, nonviolence and other good moral qualities, purified one’s mind and heart through prayer, mantras and other spiritual exercises, enjoyed the prosperity and material happiness resulting from virtuous activities, and still remains unsatisfied, one is a fit candidate for inquiring into the Absolute. As soon as such a person attains the association of a self-realized person, he or she becomes qualified to study Vedānta and inquire about the Absolute. It is best if the student associates with an enlightened person personally, but one may also obtain such association indirectly through a book or other information medium on the subject of knowledge of the Absolute.

Also, ‘now’ refers to the present time, when the depth and scope of scientific investigation has brought it face-to-face with the same issues discussed in Vedānta, namely the science of consciousness and the Absolute, which science terms the Universal Quantum Wave Function. Consciousness has become an inescapable obstacle to the progress of empirical science, because consciousness cannot be weighed
nor measured, nor observed with certainty in anyone but oneself. The ineluctably subjective nature of consciousness means that it is not amenable to conventional objective empirical methods of scientific exploration.

Nevertheless, the role of consciousness in Quantum Mechanics is crucial; for as Schrödinger found, without exact knowledge of consciousness it is impossible to predict the outcome of any quantum transformation with better than probabilistic accuracy. The actual quantum state remains a mystery until decoherence of the Quantum Wave Function occurs when a conscious entity interferes with it by measuring a quantum phenomenon, either with the bodily senses or a technological extension of those senses. Thus it is impossible to understand the ontological implications and actual mechanism of quantum decoherence without extensive, detailed and deep knowledge of consciousness. In addition, Quantum Mechanics has no clear information on the Universal Quantum Wave Function itself, because like consciousness, it is empirically unobservable and therefore immeasurable by definition, being outside the ontological domain of manifested objective existence. Science knows of its existence and can estimate its properties only by mathematical inference.

However, any sane and thoughtful person can immediately observe that he is conscious, and that consciousness has many subtle qualities. There is a definite cause-and-effect relationship between the quality of our consciousness and the quality of our experience in life. However, Western materialistic science refuses to accept evidence from subjective sources, therefore it has no robust theory or accurate functional model of consciousness. This is a great weakness, because of the central importance of consciousness to everyday experience. The scientific theory of consciousness is the specific contribution and importance of Vedānta. Vedānta provides a detailed theory of consciousness that is completely compatible with Quantum Physics.

Vedānta philosophy and practice provide an ideal experimental model and ontological platform for experiential exploration of the subjective mysteries of consciousness and the Absolute. The motivation for writing this work on Vedānta came from realizing the potential of Vedāntic model to deepen our understanding of the profound mysteries of consciousness and the Universal Quantum Wave Function. We have extracted this model from the original Vedic sources, formalized it using international standards for formal ontological notation, and explained it in our writings on Transcendental Ontology.

Ataḥ [therefore]: Material work and religious piety bring results of material happiness. Because material happiness is based on the material bodily senses, it is inevitably imperfect, limited and temporary. It is imperfect because material happiness is always mixed with distress; it is limited because no matter how much happiness we enjoy, we always desire more; it is temporary because everything that has a beginning has an end: the vehicles of material happiness, the material body and senses, as well as the experience of happiness itself, are subject to termination. These are existential limits brought about by the very nature of material existence.

Nevertheless everyone desires perfect, unlimited and unending happiness. Direct knowledge of the Absolute, realized by proper practice of directed consciousness as described in Vedānta and other Vedic works based upon it, is full of imperishable, limitless transcendental knowledge, eternity, bliss, and all transcendental qualities and attributes. Direct contemplation of the Absolute brings eternal bliss to the beholder. Therefore, instead of spending one’s entire time and energy pursuing temporary material sense gratification, one who wants substantial, permanent happiness should set aside a substantial amount of time and resources to inquire about the Absolute by studying and practicing the truths of Vedānta-sūtra.

At this point, someone may object: “Simply by studying material science, one attains knowledge of everything worth knowing. What is the use of slogging through this hoary old myth? What is the value of mysticism? What if, as a result of studying this knowledge, one abandons the reliable traditional
path of religious piety and fruitive work, and instead takes to the practice of meditation and a lifestyle of simplicity and renunciation? This seems very risky. If we can obtain happiness simply by ordinary religion and material work, what need is there to give it up and study the arcane theories of Vedānta-sūtra?"

To this objection I reply: “Even if one carefully studies all the scientific literature and religious scriptures of the world, nowhere will one encounter a complete, practical theory of consciousness except in Vedānta-sūtra and allied literature. Without this knowledge, misunderstanding and doubt will lead us away from the complete exercise of the power of enjoyment inherent in our consciousness. Because of this lack of transcendental knowledge, one’s actions and their results will default to the conventional material platform, which, as we have already pointed out, is temporary and limited. Thus in order to attain the unconditional, unending happiness we all desire, it is necessary to study Vedānta-sūtra and other Vedic works of transcendental knowledge to strengthen our understanding of consciousness and gain full practical application of its natural but latent spiritual powers.”

This is not to say that the study of Vedānta is for everyone. In fact, it is a great and rare privilege reserved for the most astutely intelligent and morally advanced human beings. Vedānta does not argue against ordinary material science and religion, but complements and extends them into the realm of transcendental knowledge of the Absolute. Material knowledge and skill is necessary for earning our livelihood and maintaining our existence. Performing the moral duties of religion helps to purify the heart, and ordinary religious faith provides a preliminary platform for approaching transcendental reality. The glorification of the Supreme as part of the practices of any religion helps qualify religious people to comprehend the Absolute. Similarly, study of mathematics, logic, philosophy, scientific theory and the rigor of scientific method provide a disciplined framework and valuable background experience for the study of transcendental knowledge. For although it builds on the statements of the transcendental scriptures, Vedānta philosophy encourages—and in the higher stages, requires—individual exploration, critical analysis and practical applications. Any pious and intelligent person who rigorously applies scientific method to the study and practice of Vedānta will attain its profound rewards very quickly.

Association with people who understand and practice this transcendental knowledge is a vital factor in apprehending the truth of Vedānta. In the long history of the esoteric teachings of Vedānta, almost all successful aspirants initially attain interest to inquire about the Absolute from personal association with a self-realized person. By constant practice of the principles of Vedānta in that association, they quickly became eligible to cognize the Absolute for themselves. Advanced Vedāntists, being free from envy and competitiveness, gladly help students attain self-realization through their personal association. Thus, any contact with a self-realized person is extremely valuable. If one somehow gets the great good fortune of personal association with a person who knows the complete science of individual consciousness and its relation to the Absolute, just try to learn Vedānta by humbly approaching him as a student. Bhagavad-gītā states:

\[ \text{tad viddhi pranipātena} \\
\text{pariprasṇena sevayā} \\
\text{upadeśyanti te jñānaṁ} \\
\text{jñāninas tattva-darśinah} \]

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.34]

Certainly the student must have a broad background in conventional religious and scientific knowledge, and some practical experience in life. This will convince an intelligent person that these
traditional sources of knowledge are incomplete, and that when doubts arise, he does not have sufficient personal realization of spiritual consciousness to adequately counteract them. Thus one with a conventional religious background will inevitably experience a crisis in faith. Study of the transcendental arguments and logic of Vedānta-sūtra is necessary to expose all possible doubts and strengthen the student’s faith, so he may proceed to realize these spiritual truths for himself.

The ordinary duties of religion are necessary prerequisites, but they are not sufficient to bring the student to complete realization of Brahman. The usefulness of the brahminical duties such as truthfulness, austerity, and mantra chanting is described in the following scriptural statements:

\[
\text{tam etai vedānvacanena brāhmaṇā vividisanti yajñena dānena tapasānaśanena}
\]

“By Vedic study, sacrifice, charity, austerity, and fasting, the brāhmaṇas strive to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22]

The above quote states that they strive, but does not indicate that they reach the understanding they seek by those means. The actual means of attaining transcendental realization of the Supreme will be discussed below.

\[
\text{satyena labhayas tapasā hy eṣa ātma samyak jñānena brahmacaryena nityam}
\]

“By constant truthfulness, austerity, transcendental knowledge, and austerity, one becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Mundaka Upaniṣad 3.1.5]

Notice here again, the verse says “one becomes eligible;” it does not say that one attains the association of the Lord by these methods.

\[
\text{japyenaiva ca saṁsiddhyad}
\text{brahmaṇā nātra saṁśayah}
\text{kuryād anyan na vā kuryān}
\text{maśtro brāhmaṇa ucyate}
\]

“Whether he performs other rituals and duties or not, one who perfectly chants mantras glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered a perfect brāhmaṇa, eligible to understand the Supreme Lord.” [Manu-saṁhitā 2.87]

Association with those who understand the truth also brings one transcendental knowledge. By this association Nārāyaṇa and many other spiritual aspirants attained interest to ask about spiritual life and were finally eligible to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face-to-face. Sanat-kumāra and many other great sages have also helped many devotees by giving their association in this way. The great value of contact with a self-realized soul is described in the following statement of Bhagavad-gītā [4.34]:

\[
\text{tad viddhi pranipātena}
\text{paripaścena sevayā}
\text{upadeksyanti te jñānām}
\text{jñāninas tatva-darśinah}
\]

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”

The material benefits obtained by following the pious rituals of ordinary religion are temporary. This fact is confirmed by the following statement of Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.1.3-6]:

\[
\text{tad yatheka karma-cito lokāḥ kṣiyante evam evāmutra puṇya-cito lokaḥ kṣiyate...}
\]
“By performing good works [karma] one is elevated to the celestial material world after death. One is not able to stay there forever, however, but one must lose that position after some time and accept another, less favorable residence. In the same way, by amassing pious credits [punya] one may reside in the upper planets. Still, he cannot stay there, but must eventually relinquish his comfortable position there, and accept a less favorable residence somewhere else. One who gives up his body without having realized the Self and his true nature will not be free, wherever he goes. But one who departs from this world after having discovered the Self and realized his true desire, for him there is freedom in all the worlds.”

The following statement of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.2.12] affirms that only transcendental knowledge will help one approach the Supreme Brahma:

\[
\text{parīkṣya lokān karma-citān brāhmaṇo}
\]
\[
nirvedam ayan nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena
\]
\[
tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
\]
\[
samit-pānīḥ śrotīyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham
\]

“Seeing that the celestial material planets, which one may obtain by pious work, provide only temporary benefits, in order to understand the truth the of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, an intelligent brāhmaṇa should humbly approach a bona-fide spiritual master learned in the scriptures and full of faith in the Supreme Lord.”

The material benefits obtained by material work and following the rituals of ordinary religion are all temporary. By having faith and performing good works, one may attain an exalted position in this material world. One may not remain there forever, however, but after some time must lose that position and accept a less favorable one. The rewards of material activities are impermanent, if only because the material body with which one enjoys these rewards is itself subject to decay and death. In contrast to the temporary material benefits obtained even in the celestial material planets, the Supreme Brahma is the reservoir of eternal, limitless bliss. Therefore, material work and piety are inferior to the practice of transcendental knowledge, which provides unconditional enjoyment beyond the deficiencies of the material body and senses. This is confirmed by the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.1.1]:

\[
satyāṁ jñānām anantaṁ brahma
\]

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is limitless, eternal, and full of knowledge.”

\[
ānando brahmety vyajanāt
\]

“He then understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of transcendental bliss.”

The Supreme Brahma is eternal, full of knowledge and endowed with all transcendental qualities. This is confirmed by the following statements of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad:

\[
na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
\]
\[
na tat-samaś cābhyyadhikaś ca drśyate
\]
\[
parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
\]
\[
svā-bhāvikā jñāna-bala-kriyā ca
\]

“He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between His body and His soul. He is absolute. All his senses are transcendental. Any one of His senses can perform the action of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8]
“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all modes of material nature.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 3.17]

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the creator and destroyer of the entire material cosmic manifestation. He is supremely auspicious, and He does not possess a material body, for His body is spiritual in all respects. He may be reached and understood only by loving devotional service. Those who thus serve Him and understand Him may become free from having to repeatedly accept various material bodies for continued residence in the material world. They become liberated from this world, and obtain eternal spiritual bodies with which to serve Him.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 5.14]

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead grants eternal transcendental bliss to His devotees is confirmed by the following statement of Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad [1.5]:

taṁ pīṭha-sthāṁ ye tu yajanti dhīrās
teśāṁ sukhaṁ sāsvataṁ netareśām

“The saintly devotees who worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead seated on the throne of the heart attain eternal transcendental bliss. Except for them no others can attain this eternal bliss.”

Since transcendental knowledge of Vedānta will help one approach the Absolute and gain these benefits, one should inquire about it immediately from a qualified teacher. Material work, and the faith which one may obtain by pious activities, provide only temporary benefits. In contrast, the Absolute is the reservoir of eternal, limitless consciousness and bliss. As the infinite source and reservoir of consciousness and being, the Absolute is supreme, limitless, eternal, and replete with the fullness of all knowledge and consciousness. Thus in order to understand the science of the Absolute, an intelligent person should humbly approach a bona fide teacher learned in Vedānta who is also experienced in its practical application.

Anyone who even begins to approach the Absolute by proper direction of consciousness experiences that our small individual consciousness can manifest ecstatic bliss and other wonderful qualities simply by the preliminary purification and concentration. When consciousness is liberated from the limitations of the body and mind, and concentrated by one-pointed contemplation on a transcendental object, it automatically manifests transcendental qualities such as compassion, bliss, unconditional love and transcendental knowledge. The Absolute is eternal, full of knowledge and consciousness, and endowed with unlimited wonderful transcendental qualities. The Absolute does not possess material form like a material living entity. There is no difference between the form and the consciousness of the Absolute. There is nothing greater than or equal to the Absolute, which has multifarious and immense potencies. Therefore if our limited consciousness is capable of experiencing causeless happiness simply by contemplation of its own transcendent qualities, the Absolute, the unlimited fount of all consciousness, certainly is full of unlimited transcendental bliss.
According to *Vedānta* philosophy, the Absolute is the original source of all senses, yet has no material senses. The Absolute is detached from everything, although the source and maintainer of everything and all living beings. The Absolute transcends the material universe, and at the same time is the creator and controller of material nature. The Absolute is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the entire material cosmic manifestation, but is beyond the control of material laws. The Absolute is supremely auspicious, but does not possess a material body, for the Absolute is noumenal in all respects. These paradoxical attributes are part of the essential nature of the Absolute as both the cause and ingredient of creation.

One can understand and reach the Absolute only by practicing directed consciousness as taught in *Vedānta*. Approaching the Absolute grants the student eternal transcendental bliss. Except for sincere students of *Vedānta*, no others can attain this eternal bliss. Those who approach and understand the Absolute also become free from repeatedly accepting material bodies for continued residence in the material world. They attain liberation from this world, and obtain eternal residence in the transcendental world of the Absolute, where they automatically attain complete fulfillment of their desires in the personal company of the Absolute. All this is described in detail in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

In summary, an intelligent person with good moral character who has studied and understood both religion and material science, who clearly understands the ontological difference between the temporary and the eternal, who has lost all attraction for the temporary and chosen the eternal, and who gets the opportunity to associate with a self-realized person, becomes a sincere student of *Vedānta-sūtra*. It is not a fact that simply by the study and practice of material science and religion one will naturally get the same benefits as the study of *Vedānta-sūtra* provides. We see that those who have studied material science and religion, but have not associated favorably with self-realized teachers of *Vedānta*, do not become eager to understand the Absolute, but attempt to adjust their expectations to the limited happiness offered by material knowledge and work. It is also untrue that simply by understanding the philosophical difference between the temporary and the eternal, and attaining the moral qualities and renunciation of saintly persons, one will become able to understand and realize the Absolute. These qualifications are necessary, but not sufficient to attain the platform of transcendental knowledge.

On the other hand, those who are not expert scientists or pious religionists, but who have come into favorable personal association with a self-realized person, naturally become attracted to understanding the Absolute. We have seen that in general, three kinds of persons become qualified to inquire into the nature of Brahman: 1. *Saniṣṭha*—pious people who faithfully perform their material and religious duties; 2. *Pariniṣṭha*—those who spontaneously act philanthropically for the benefit of all living entities; and 3. *Nirapekṣa*—those who are already rapt in meditation and aloof from the activities of this world. All these persons understand the nature of the Absolute according to their respective qualifications. If they gain the association of a self-realized person and follow his instructions, that higher study compensates for whatever they lack in qualifications. Even if they lack a broad background in religion, the arts, sciences and philosophy, or if their character or behavior is flawed, still they automatically obtain all prerequisite qualifications simply by studying *Vedānta* with a qualified teacher. Over time they gradually become more and more advanced in the discipline of *Vedānta*, and eventually they attain direct contact with the Absolute as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In conclusion, at a particular point in life, after certain understandings and realizations, a fortunate person may become eager to inquire about the nature of the Absolute. The Absolute is not merely a philosophical conception; nor is it a projection of an artificial philosophical construct or the consciousness of the individual on reality. All living entities have taken their birth because of the Absolute. They remain alive because they are maintained by the Absolute, and at the time of death they
again enter into the Absolute. Please try to understand that the Absolute is the eternal ground of Being, the universal fount of consciousness, existence and life.

The nature of the transcendental knowledge of the Absolute imparted by study of Vedānta is unlike any other kind of knowledge. It is not knowledge of a kind of material activity, because that kind of knowledge and activity can give only temporary, mundane results. It is not discursive knowledge like ordinary literature or mathematics, because such ordinary symbolic knowledge cannot free us from the materialistic realm it represents. Even if it were possible to impart an understanding of transcendental existence through language, this would not necessarily cure the deficiencies of our consciousness. For example, if a person who needs glasses sees the moon as double, simply hearing that the double vision is not a quality of the moon but of his vision may correct his understanding but not his astigmatism, even if he is firmly convinced that it is a fact. Thus, simply understanding the philosophical difference between mundane and transcendental categories of knowledge, consciousness and existence will not and cannot cure the disease of material suffering and rebirth.

Rather, the transcendental knowledge imparted by study of Vedānta is a direct experience that our common perception of the world and ourselves is an illusion based on ignorance. When the subjects in Aristotle’s cave break free from their bonds and see clearly that the entire world of their experience, upon which all their knowledge was based, is actually false and contrived, their awakening is similar to that experienced by the aspirant who contacts the Absolute during Vedāntic meditation. When we see that all along we have been imagining the world, ourselves and life to be one thing, when actually they are something completely different, we awaken to a new reality, one that was there all along but remained latent and unsuspected, covered and hidden by our imaginative substitute reality.

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.23] states:

\[
\begin{align*}
nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo \\
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena \\
yam evaiśa vṛṇute tena labhyas \\
tasyaiśa ātmā vīvṛṇute tanaṁ svām
\end{align*}
\]

“That Self cannot be gained by the study of the Veda, nor by thought or meditation, nor by much hearing. Whom the Self chooses, by him it may be gained; to him the Self reveals His being.”

And what kind of person does the Self choose?

\[
\begin{align*}
teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ \\
bhajatāṁ prṛti-pūrvakam \\
dadāmi buddhi-yogam tain \\
yena mām upayānti te
\end{align*}
\]

“To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.10]

\[
\begin{align*}
nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā \\
na dānena na cejayaḥ \\
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭunāṁ \\
dṛṣṭavān asi mām yathā
\end{align*}
\]

“The form which you are seeing with your transcendental eyes cannot be understood simply by studying the Vedas, nor by undergoing serious penances, nor by charity, nor by worship. It is not by these means that one can see Me as I am.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.23]
bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya
aham evaṁ-vidho 'ṛjuna
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena
praveṣṭuṁ ca parantapa

“My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.24]

Therefore the actual practice of Vedānta is complete in the form of bhakti-yoga, the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are many preliminary stages, each with its appropriate philosophical understanding, spiritual practices and realizations; but the stage of perfection is pure, undivided devotional service:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-sīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamaṁ

“When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.” [Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-līla 19.167]

The Vedic literature contains many scriptural passages on different levels, meant to appeal to people in various stages of self-realization. Vedānta-sūtra specifically addresses people on the cusp between the impersonal understanding of the Supreme and beginning to realize the personal nature of Brahman. Philosophical speculation and silent meditation may be an adequate method for addressing the impersonal aspect of the Supreme, but bhakti, or a direct personal service relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is necessary to realize the highest benefits attainable by study of Vedānta-sūtra.

Vedānta-sūtra is not an ordinary book, but transcendental sound vibration emanated by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of Vedānta-sūtra, is the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by the following statement of the smṛti-śāstra:

kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana-vyāsāṁ
viddhi nārāyaṇam prabhūm

“When please understand that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyāsa is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa.”

That Vedānta-sūtra is a product of greater than human intelligence will become self-evident to the sincere reader upon deep contemplation of the extremely elevated subjects contained herein.

In conclusion, we have described here how at a certain point in time [aṭṭhā], after tasting the experiences of life, contemplating their meaning and reaching certain conclusions about the existential condition of human existence in the material world, person should therefore [aṭṭhā] become eager to inquire about the nature of Brahman. Vedānta-sūtra is an opportunity to enter into the understanding of the Absolute Truth taught by the greatest sages, and attain personal, direct consciousness of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This bestows the highest spiritual perfections of full transcendental knowledge, immortality and eternal bliss upon the sincere student of Vedānta philosophy.

Adhikaraṇa 2: The Origin of Everything

The saṅgati [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is ākṣepa [objection].
Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The Vedic tradition asserts that the source or origin of everything in the creation is Brahma, who is an unlimited, all-powerful transcendental person different from the jīva [individual soul].

Saṃśaya [arising of doubt]: Someone may doubt: “In this Vedānta-sūtra does the term ‘the Absolute,’ ‘Brahman,’ ‘the all-pervading Infinity’ [bhūmā] or ‘the Self’ [ātmā] refer to the individual conscious living entity or the Supreme?” Some schools of Vedānta interpretation indeed claim that the word Brahmān in Vedānta-sūtra refers to the individual conscious living entity, and to support this view they quote statements like the following from Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.5]:

\[
\text{vijñānam brahma ced veda tasmāc cen na pramadyati} \\
\text{śarīre pāpmāno hitvā sarvaṁ kāmān samāśnute}
\]

“If one understands the true nature of Brahmā who lives in the body and uses the senses of the body to perceive the material world, then such a knower of Brahmā never becomes bewildered by illusion. Such a knower of Brahmā in the body refrains from performing impure actions, and at the time of leaving the body at death, he attains an exalted destination where all his desires are fulfilled at once.”

Some unauthorized traditions of Vedānta speculate that Brahmā and similar terms indicate the individual conscious living entity. They say, “Here the word brahma is applied to vijñānam, which is one of the names of the jīva, and therefore the verse teaches that the jīva is to be meditated upon.” Because they do not properly understand the difference between the unlimited Brahmān and the tiny jīva, they confute the Sanskrit terms brahman and ātmā with jīva, and mistakenly identify the individual living entity as the Absolute. For example, in the following passage Śrī Sanat-kumāra, after describing the Lord’s Holy Names and qualities, was asked a question by Śrī Nārada Muni [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.23.1-7.24.1]:

\[
bhūmā tv eva vijñāsītavya iti bhūmānam bhagavo vijñāsa iti. yatra nānyat paśyati nānyac chṛṇoti nānyad vijānāti sa bhūmā. atha yatrāṇyat paśyaty anyac chṛṇoti anyad vijānāti taddalpaṁ
\]

“‘One should ask about Bhūmā.’ ‘My lord, I wish to know about Bhūmā.’ ‘When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small. The Bhūmā is immortal, but that which is small is mortal.’ ”

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The context of the verse from Chāndogya Upaniṣad quoted above shows that the jīva is the topic of discussion there. As Sūtra 1.1.1 refers to this text and says that this Bhūmā is to be enquired into, the words brahma-jijñāsā of Sūtra 1.1.1 refer to the individual soul and not to the Supreme. Even the Sanskrit dictionary explains: “The word brahma means that which is big, the brāhmaṇa caste, the individual spirit soul, and the demigod Brahmā who sits on a great lotus flower.” The word ātmā also means the individual soul.

For example, the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [4.5.6] states:

\[
\text{ātmā vā are draśtvayāḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nidadhyāsitavyaḥ.}
\]

“It is the Self [ātmā] which must be observed, heard about, thought of and meditated upon with fixed concentration.”

The complete text of this passage [Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.1-6] is:

“And he said, ‘Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore a husband is dear.”
‘Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore a wife is dear.

‘Verily, sons are not dear, that you may love the sons; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore sons are dear.

‘Verily, wealth is not dear, that you may love the wealth; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore wealth is dear.

‘Verily, the brāhmaṇas are not dear, that you may love the brāhmaṇas; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore the brāhmaṇas are dear.

‘Verily, the kṣatriyas are not dear, that you may love the kṣatriyas; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore the kṣatriyas are dear.

‘Verily, the worlds are not dear, that you may love the worlds; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore the worlds are dear.

‘Verily, the devas are not dear, that you may love the devas; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore the devas are dear.

‘Verily, the living entities are not dear, that you may love the living entities; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore the living entities are dear.

‘Verily, every thing [that is dear] is not dear, that you may love every thing; but that you may love the Self [ātmā], therefore every thing [that is dear] is dear.

‘Verily, it is the Self [ātmā] which must be observed, heard about, thought of and meditated upon with fixed concentration, O Maitreyi! When we see, hear, perceive and know the Self then all this is known.”

Someone may indeed claim that the word Brahman here refers to the individual spirit soul, and to support his view he may quote the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.5]:

\[
\text{vijñānāṁ brahma ced veda}
\text{tasmāc cen na pramadyati}
\text{śarīre pāpānaha hitā}
\text{sarvāṁ kāmāṁ samāśnute}
\]

“If one understands the true nature of the Brahman who lives in the body and uses the senses of the body to perceive the material world, then such a knower of Brahman will never become bewildered by illusion. Such a knower of the Brahman in the body refrains from performing sinful actions, and at the time of leaving the body at death, he attains an exalted destination where all his desires become at once fulfilled.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Our philosophical opponent may claim in this way that the words Brahman and ātmā should be interpreted to mean the individual spirit soul. To clear away the misunderstanding of this objector, the following scriptural passages may be quoted:

\[
bhṛgu vai varuṇir varuṇaṁ pitaram upasāśāra adhihi bho bhagavo brahma... yato vā imāni
bhūtāṁ jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayānty abhisamāśanti tad brahma tad vijijñāsasva
\]

“Bhṛgu asked his father Varuṇa: ‘My lord, please instruct me about the nature of Brahman.’ Varuṇa replied: ‘All living entities have taken their birth because of Brahman. They remain alive because they are maintained by Brahman, and at the time of death they again enter into Brahman. Please try to understand the nature of Brahman.’” [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1]
“The Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead is Himself this cosmos, and still He is aloof from it. From Him only has this cosmic manifestation emanated, in Him it rests, and unto Him it enters after annihilation.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.20]

“Those who know this Supreme Brahman become immortal, and those who do not know Him suffer the miseries of the material world.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 3.10]

To refute this misinterpretation, Śrīla Vyāsa-deva, the author of Vedānta-sūtra, gives the actual definition of Brahman in the second sūtra:

**Sūtra 1.1.2**

\[janmādy asya yataḥ\]

\[janma–birth; ādi–beginning with; asya–of that; yataḥ–from Whom.\]

**Brahman is He from Whom everything emanates.**

The compound word *janmādi* is a Sanskrit compound expression technically known as *tad-guṇa-samvijñāna-bahurūhi-samāsa*, here meaning ‘the sevenfold material cycle of conception, gestation, birth, growth, production of byproducts, diminution and death.’ The word *asya* means ‘of this material universe with unlimited planetary systems inhabited by various creatures, who all enjoy and suffer the results of their various fruitive actions, but who cannot understand the astonishing structure of the universe where they live, nor the Supreme Person who has created it.’ The word *yataḥ* means ‘from Whom,’ and it clearly refers to Brahman as a transcendental person. This Absolute Person, who manifests the universe from His inconceivable potency, is the Brahman about whom one should inquire.

According to etymological analysis of Sanskrit word roots, Brahman means ‘the person who possesses boundless exalted qualities,’ and therefore cannot be applied to the insignificant jīva. Both Brahman and bhūmā also mean all-pervading; this will be fully explained in Sūtras 1.3.7 and 1.4.19. Brahman thus refers only to the Personality of Brahman, who possesses unlimited transcendental qualities, and this is clearly confirmed in the following words of the Vedas:

\[atha kasmād ucyate brahmety brhanto hy asmin guṇāḥ\]

\[“From Whom has this universe become manifest? From Brahman, who definitely possesses an abundance of exalted transcendental qualities.”\]

Brahman therefore primarily refers to the Personality of Brahman, and only secondarily to the individual conscious living entities, who although they emanate from Brahman and are composed of Brahman, can manifest the qualities of Brahman only to a very small degree. The individual living entities can be called Brahman, just as sons are called by their father’s family name, because their substance and qualities derive from their relationship with the Supreme Brahman. Although they are from Brahman and are eternally related to Brahman, the individual living entities are suffering the unwanted miseries of material life, such as birth, old age, disease and death, because of ignorance. This is the proof that they are not identical with the Supreme Brahman.

The Supreme Brahman is never subject to ignorance or suffering. Therefore the actual object of inquiry in *Vedānta-sūtra* is the Supreme Brahman, or the Personality of Brahman. *Vedānta-sūtra* is not an imaginary speculative description of Brahman’s qualities; it is the Absolute Truth about Brahman. To
attain ultimate liberation from all suffering, the individual living entities should inquire about the Supreme Brahman, who is very merciful towards those who take shelter of Him.

It is not possible for Brahman to be impersonal, for the same Brahman is the source of innumerable individual living beings, who are themselves persons. Can a product or emanation have more qualities than its source? We are persons, therefore our children and parents are also persons. Their parents were also persons, and so on back to the original Personality of Godhead. No one has ever observed persons coming from something impersonal; indeed, our everyday experience is that persons come from persons. Therefore the idea that persons come from something impersonal, or can be the result of some mechanistic or random process, is completely impossible and nonsensical.

The impersonal theory also is lacking from other perspectives. Later on in the text, we will present and elaborately discuss the theory that the individual living entity determines the type of universe, planetary system, environment and body in which he finds himself by the qualities of his consciousness and activities, and of his relationship with the Supreme Brahman. This so-called Anthropic Principle holds true because the living entity collapses or decoheres the Universal Quantum Wave Function in a particular way, depending on how his consciousness, energy and desires interfere with it.

To imagine the Supreme Brahman as impersonal drastically limits the range of possibilities of this decoherence, and forces the living entity into denser environments and less intelligent embodiments. After all, it is not possible to have a personal relationship with something impersonal. Therefore an impersonal conception of the Supreme Brahman does not permit normal personal relationships like communication, worship and the exchange of service, affection and love. Would anyone really want to spend eternity in relationship with something impersonal?

Different computer network configurations and protocols allow vastly greater communication bandwidth and computational throughput than others. Similarly, the impersonal conception greatly reduces the possibilities of communication with the Supreme Brahman. But when the living entity chooses a personal terminal configuration for interfacing with the Supreme Brahman, his communication bandwidth is greatly enhanced. Thus, as one inquires into Brahman, it is critical to keep an open mind on the issue of whether the Brahman discussed in Vedānta is impersonal or personal.

The following quotes from the Vedas indicate the real standard of success in the inquiry into Brahman:

\[ \text{tam eva dhīro vijñāya prajñāṁ kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ} \]

“An intelligent equipoised person who has realized Brahman must endeavor to know the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, and surrender unto Him with loving devotion.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.21]

\[ \text{vijñāya prajñāṁ kurvīta} \]

“After learning about the Personality of Brahman, one should become able to see Him directly.”

The word jijñāsā in the first sūtra means ‘the desire to know, or acquire jñāna.’ Knowledge is of two kinds: theoretical and conceptual, or practical and empirical. Theoretical knowledge of Vedānta helps bring us closer to the Supreme Brahman, and practical knowledge or realization of Vedānta should lead to the Supreme Brahman personally manifesting before us. If someone claims to be a teacher of Vedānta, yet does not display the symptoms of one who is rapt in ecstatic direct personal contact with the Supreme Brahman, we can understand that he has not yet attained perfection in the practice of Vedānta.

If one understands one’s real identity as an individual conscious living entity, that is certainly very helpful in understanding Brahman, because the transcendental qualities of the spiritual living entity are
similar to those of Brahman. Nevertheless that does not mean that the individual conscious living entity is identical to Brahman. The individual living entity is always different from Brahman, and even after liberation from material existence, he remains eternally different from the Supreme Brahman.

The difference between the individual living entity and Brahman is clearly described in Śūtras 1.1.16, 1.1.17, 1.3.5, 1.3.21 and 1.3.41. Because an error in this fundamental concept can completely derail the student’s progress in inquiring into Brahman, it is necessary to discuss this point in some detail before going further. Students who already accept the personal nature of the Supreme should also study these arguments to help them defeat the misinterpretations of Vedānta recently fabricated and introduced by the impersonalist school of Śaṅkara.

The impersonalist school misinterprets Vedic references to Brahman to force out the false conclusion that the individual living entity and the Supreme Brahman are identical. They take Vedic statements out of context, and use word jugglery to misinterpret them to convince the weak-minded that the authority of the Vedic scriptures supports their imaginary theory. This is not only illogical but also unethical. The Vedic literature is not open to unauthorized speculative misinterpretation to support our pet theories; it gives the following guidelines for interpretation of difficult or ambiguous Sanskrit verses:

\[
\text{upakramopasaṁhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvata-phalam}
\]

\[
artha-vādopapattī ca līṅgām tātāparya-nīrṇaye
\]

“The beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author’s statement of his own intention, and appropriateness are the factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages.”

If we apply these criteria to interpreting difficult passages in the Vedic literature, we clearly see that the Vedas consistently describe the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity as two distinct entities. For example, let us analyze the following passage from Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad [4.6-7] in the light of the above six criteria:

\[
dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ vrksam pariśaṣvajāte
tayor anyaḥ pippalaṁ svādv atty anāṣann anyo 'bhcakāṣīti
\]

“The individual living entity and the superconscious living entity, Brahman or the Personality of Brahman, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds [the individual living entity] is eating the fruit of the tree [the sense gratification afforded by the material body], and the other bird [the superconscious living entity] is not trying to eat these fruits, but is simply watching His friend.”

\[
samāne vrksa puruṣo nimagno ‘nīśāya śocati muhyamānah
juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyati anyam īśam asya mahimānam iti viṭa-śokaḥ
\]

“Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness, bewildered by his own ignorance as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his eternal friend Brahman and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties.”

In this passage, the upakrama [beginning] is dvā suparṇā [two birds]; the upasamhāra [ending] is anyam īśam [the other person, who is Brahman or the Personality of Brahman]; the repeated feature is the word anya [the other person], as in the phrases tayor anyo ‘śnan [the other person does not eat] and anyam īśam [he sees the other person, who is the Supreme Brahman]. The apūrvata [unique feature] is the relationship between the individual conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman, which cannot be understood without the revelation of the Vedic scripture; the phalam [object or general purpose of the passage] is viṭa-śokaḥ [the individual conscious living entity becomes free from
suffering by seeing Brahman]. The artha-vāda [author’s statement of his own intention] is mahimānam eti [one who understands the Supreme Brahman becomes glorious] and the upapatti [appropriateness] is anyo ’naśan [the other person, the Supreme Brahman, does not eat the fruits of material happiness and distress].

By carefully analyzing this passage, we see that in all six points of interpretation, it teaches the difference between the ātma and Brahman. One can analyze many other passages from Vedic literatures in the same way, and one may clearly understand the difference between the Personality of Brahman and the individual living entity. Later on in the text, we will analyze this topic in detail, providing a wealth of detailed quotations from the original Vedic literature and showing their correct interpretations.

At this point, the impersonalist may raise an objection similar to the following: “A text is useful when it teaches something unknown to its readers; but when a text simply repeats what its readers already know, it simply wastes time uselessly. People in general already think they are different from the Supreme Brahman, and therefore if the Vedas were to teach them something new, it would have to be that the Personality of Brahman and the individual living beings are completely identical. For this reason, it should be understood that the individual conscious living entities are identical with Brahman.”

To this objection I reply: “This view is not supported by the Vedic scriptures.” For example, the Śvetāsvatāra Upaniṣad [1.6] states:

\[
\text{prthag-ātmānam preritam ca matvā juṣṭas tatas tenāṃṛtatvam eti}
\]

“When one understands that the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entities are eternally distinct, then he may become qualified for liberation, and live eternally in the spiritual world.”

What people in general do not understand is the precise way in which the ātma and Brahman are different is in their contrary attributes: Brahman is almighty, the ātma is limited; God is all-pervading, the ātma is atomic; the Lord is the controller, while the ātma is controlled at every step. Nor does the average person know that the Lord and the ātma have an eternal spiritual relationship based on transcendental love. Therefore the scriptures of all religions teach the differences between the Lord and the ātma, while the doctrine of oneness remains inscrutable and inconceivable, even according to its proponents; therefore it is not a true philosophy, but simply an exercise in mental speculation. The impersonalist conception of the identity of the individual and the Supreme is a preposterous phantasmagoria, like the horn of a rabbit. It has no reference to reality, and is completely rejected by anyone with a grain of common sense. Those few texts of the Upāniṣads that apparently teach the impersonalist doctrine are interpreted in a personalist way by their author, Vyāsadeva himself. This will be described in Śūtra 1.1.30.

**Adhikaraṇa 3: The Supreme Brahman may be Understood by the Revelation of the Vedic Scriptures**

The saṅgati [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is ākṣepa [objection].

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The Personality of Brahman is the unlimitedly powerful creator, maintainer and destroyer of the material universes. Because He is inconceivable to the tiny brains of the conditioned living beings, He must be understood by studying Vedānta philosophy and similar Vedic scriptures. This is confirmed by the following statements of the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad and Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [3.9.26]:
taṁ tv aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣaṁ prechāmi

“I shall now inquire about the Personality of Brahman, who is revealed in the Upāniṣads.”

sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāyākṣita-kāriṇe
namo vedānta-vedyāya gurave buddhi-sākṣine

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Brahman whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is the rescuer from distress, who is understood by Vedānta, who is the supreme spiritual master, and who is the witness in everyone’s heart.”

Sāṁśaya [arising of doubt]: Western thought is very much enamored by logic and reason. We derive many technological and economic advances from the logic of science and mathematics. But here we are being told that we cannot understand Brahman with these tools, but must seek this understanding from the authoritative scriptures, and this may make us doubt: “What is the best method for understanding the Supreme Brahman: the mental speculation of the logicians, or the indications of Vedānta? Maybe He is so far beyond our intelligence that it is impossible for us to understand Him at all.”

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The impersonalist school of Vedānta argues that the sage Gautama and other authorities, especially Śaṅkara, prove that Brahman can be understood by logical speculation to be impersonal. Sometimes they quote the Vedic aphorism ātmavāre mantavya: “The Self is to be considered and reasoned about.” [Bṛhad-āranyaka Upāniṣad 4.5] They take this as proof that Brahman can be known through dialectic reasoning. This viewpoint agrees with the predisposition of the Western mind to inductive logic. Therefore, the impersonalist Vedāntists are widely known in the West, while the much older and more authorized traditional Vedic personalist bhakti school is not taken so seriously.

The trouble with this viewpoint is that Brahman, or the Universal Quantum Wave Function, is by definition completely beyond objective empirical observation and speculative logic. Empirical reason and logic certainly have their scope of appropriate application, but they fail when approaching the Absolute, which has no obligation to conform to the limitations of human reason. In addition to universes with rules of physics similar to our own, the Universal Quantum Wave Function contains an unlimited number of universes with different rules, or perhaps with no rules at all. Do we really think that our fragile logic, based on our limited experience and scope of observation, can accommodate Brahman?

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Our only hope of knowing anything about Brahman is if Brahman reveals Himself to us. Fortunately, Brahman has appeared in numerous avatāras or incarnations just for this purpose. In fact, the history of these avatāras comprises the bulk of the Vedic literature, and narrations of the teachings and pastimes of the avatāras form most of the Purāṇas [Vedic histories]. Therefore in the next sūtra, Śrīla Viṣṇuḍāś Ṛṣibrāhuṇḍa explains that Vedic scriptural revelation is the only way to understand the Supreme Brahman. He says:

Sūtra 1.1.3

śāstra-yonitvāt
śāstra— the scriptures; yonitvā— because of being the origin of knowledge.

[The inferential speculations of the logicians are unable to teach us about the Personality of Brahman] because He may only be known by the revelation of the Vedic scriptures.
In this *sūtra* the word “not” should be understood, even though it is unexpressed, to remain consistent with *Sūtra* 1.1.4. The actual language of the *sūtra* simply emphasizes the positive conclusion that one must take shelter of the revelations of the *Vedas*. Those who aspire after impersonal liberation are unable to understand the Personality of Brahman simply by logic and speculation. Why? Because logic is not the correct process for understanding the Supreme Brahman; He is known only by the revelation of the Vedic scriptures.

Among the Vedic scriptures known as *śruti-śāstra*, the *Upaniṣads* especially describe the Supreme Person. For this reason it is said, *taṁ tv aupanisadāṁ puruṣaṁ prechāmi*: “I am inquiring about the Supreme Person, who is understood through the revelation of the *Upaniṣads*.” The process of logic and speculation described by the word *mantavya* in Brhad-āranyaka *Upaniṣad* [4.5], “to be understood by logic,” definitely has its place: it should be employed to understand the revelation of the scriptures, and not independently in philosophical speculation. This is confirmed by the following statement of *śruti-śāstra* [Mahābhārata, Vana-parva and Kūrma Purāṇa]:

\[
pūrvāpara-virodhena ko 'ṛtho 'trābhimato bhavet
ity ādyam uhanāṁ tarkāḥ śuṣka-tarkāṁ vivarjayet
\]

“Logic is properly employed to resolve apparent contradictions in the texts of the *Vedas* by harmonizing each statement with its context. Speculative logic without reference to scriptural revelation should be abandoned.”

For this reason the dry speculative logic of Gautama, Śaṅkara and others, including the modern materialistic scientists, should be rejected in favor of applying logic to Vedic scriptural analysis. This is also confirmed in *Sūtra* 2.1.11. After understanding the Supreme Person by study of the *Upaniṣads*, one should become rapt in meditation on Him and see Him face-to-face. This will be explained later in *Sūtra* 2.1.27.

The Supreme Brahman, Hari, is identical with His own transcendental form. He and His form are not two separate identities. He is the witness of all living entities, He is the abode of an unlimited ocean of transcendental qualities, He is the creator of the material universes, and He remains unchanged eternally. One may worship Him perfectly simply by hearing about His transcendental glories from a person who has realized them.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “The *Vedānta* philosophy does not give either positive orders or negative prohibitions, but simply descriptions, as the sentence ‘On the earth there are seven continents.’ Men need instruction in how to act. Therefore, what is needed is a series of orders to guide men. Men need clear instructions such as, ‘A man desiring wealth should approach the king,’ or ‘One suffering from indigestion should restrict his intake of water,’ or the orders of the *Vedas*, such as *svarga-kāmo vajeta*—“One desiring to enter the celestial material planets should worship the demigods with sacrifices”—or *sūraṁ na pibet*: “No one should drink wine.” In fact no one speaks without some object, either positive or negative, in mind. But the *Upaniṣads* do not give us a string of orders and prohibitions, but merely describe the eternally perfect Brahman. For example, the *Upaniṣads* tell us *satyam jñānam*: “The Personality of Brahman is truth and knowledge.” This is of small help in the matter of orders and prohibitions, because it does not teach any particular action. Sometimes the *Upaniṣads*’ descriptions may be a little useful, as for example when they describe a certain demigod, the description may be useful when one performs a sacrifice to that demigod; but otherwise these descriptions afford us little practical benefit, and are more or less useless. This is confirmed by the following statements of Jaimini Muni [*Pūrva-mīmāṁsā* 1.2.1 and 1.1.25]:

\[
tad-bhūtānāṁ kriyārthena samāmnāyo 'ṛthasya tan-nimittatvāt
\]
The scriptures teach us pious duties. Any scriptural passage that does not teach us our duty is a senseless waste of our time.

Just as a verb gives meaning to a sentence, in the same way instructions for action give meaning to the statements of the scriptures.

To this objection I reply: Do not be bewildered. Even though the Upāniṣads do not give us a series of orders and prohibitions, still they teach us about the Supreme Brahman, the most important and valuable object to be attained by any living entity. Therefore even though this knowledge does not specify any definite action, it is not at all useless, for it teaches about the existence and qualities of the Supreme Being. If there were hidden treasure in your house, and a description of its location were spoken to you, those words would not be useless simply because they were a description. Understanding the existence and location of the treasure makes the means of recovering it self-evident.

Similarly the Upāniṣads’ description of the Personality of Brahman—who is the greatest treasure to be attained by any living being, whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is perfect and beyond any criticism, who is the friend of all living entities, the Supreme Brahman who is so kind that He gives Himself to His devotees, and who is the supreme whole of all existence, of whom I am a tiny part—is not useless, but of great value to the conditioned living entity. The descriptions of the Supreme Brahman in the Upāniṣads are valuable, because they produce a conviction in the existence of the Supreme, leading to the remission of fear and the experience of transcendental happiness. The description “your son is now born” is useful because it is a source of great joy, and the description “This is not a snake, but only a rope partly seen in the darkness,” is also useful because it is a great relief from fear.

Similarly, by understanding the knowledge of Brahman given in the Vedic scriptures, the means of attaining Him become self-evident. The specific benefits attained by understanding the Supreme Brahman are described in the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.1]:

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma yo veda nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ so ‘ṣnute sarvāṁ kāmān

“The Personality of Brahman is limitless. He is transcendental knowledge, and He is the eternal transcendental reality. He is present in everyone’s heart. One who properly understands Him becomes blessed and all his desires are completely fulfilled.”

So the knowledge of Brahman is not useless, but leads to the attainment of the highest blessings.

No one can say that the Upāniṣads teach about ordinary fruitive action [karma]. Rather, one may say that the Upāniṣads teach one to give up all material fruitive work. The Vedānta philosophy in particular teaches the value of transcendental knowledge. No one can say that the Upāniṣads and Vedānta describe anything other than the Personality of Brahman, who is the original creator, maintainer, and destroyer of all the universes, whose spiritual form is eternal, who is a great ocean of unlimited auspicious transcendental qualities, and who is the resting place and object of service of the goddess of fortune. Therefore the scope and focus of Vedānta is on matters relating to Brahman, and not karma or fruitive action according to Vedic principles.

In fact Jaimini was a disciple of Vyāsadeva, the author of Vedānta, and a faithful devotee of Brahman. He could not have taught a doctrine in conflict with that of his master. His apparent criticisms of Vedic texts that do not give specific directions are actually not meant to apply to the jñāna-kāṇḍa sections of the Vedas, such as the Upāniṣads and Vedānta-sūtras of Vyāsadeva, but to the karma-kāṇḍa portions of the Vedas describing ritualistic sacrifices. The two sūtras by Jaimini quoted above simply mean that
passages teaching *karma* or action must either command something to be done or prohibit something from being done.

In conclusion, Jaimini’s description of the importance of *karma* has no bearing on the *Upāniṣads*, because the temporary benefits obtainable from material work are insignificant compared with the eternal benefits of self-realization. They are a hint to us that there is far more than pious fruitive work in the instructions of the *Vedas*. In this way it may be understood that the Supreme Brahman is the actual subject matter described in the Vedic scriptures.

**Adhikaraṇa 4: Personality of Brahman Confirmed by the Vedic Scriptures**

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is ākṣepa [objection].

*Viṣaya* [thesis or statement]: That the Personality of Brahman is described in all Vedic scriptures is confirmed in the following scriptural quotations:

yo 'su sarvair vedair gīyate

“The Personality of Brahman is glorified by all the *Vedas*.” [*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*]

sarve vedā yat-padam āmananti

“All the *Vedas* describe the lotus feet of the Personality of Brahman.” [*Katha Upaniṣad* 1.2.15]

*Saṁśaya* [arise of doubt]: But some philosophers doubt that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the subject matter described in all the *Vedas*. Is this statement true or false?

Especially the impersonalist philosophers who want to deny the very existence of the Personality of Godhead argue in this way. Even the great transcendentalist Prahlāda Mahārāja stated in the presence of Lord Viṣṇu Himself:

dharmārtha-kāma iti yo 'bhīhitas tri-varga

“Religion, economic development and sense gratification—these are described in the *Vedas* as *tri-varga*, or three ways to salvation. Within these three categories are education and self-realization; ritualistic ceremonies performed according to Vedic injunction; logic; the science of law and order; and the various means of earning one's livelihood. These are the external subject matters of study in the *Vedas*, and therefore I consider them material. However, I consider surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu to be transcendental.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.26]

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Modern materialists in the guise of empirical scientists and speculative philosophers want to imagine that God does not exist. Unfortunately to do this, they must also imagine that the soul or conscious self does not exist, and that consciousness, personality etc. are just epiphenomena of the human nervous system and brain. The existence of a large body of impressive ancient literature such as the *Vedas*, describing the transcendental qualities of the soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead in detail, is as embarrassing to them as it is to the orthodox theologists competing to prove the superiority of their respective religious sects. They cannot defeat the Vedic philosophy because of its inherent superiority, therefore they resort to various devices, including outright disinformation, propaganda and lies, to convince others that the *Vedas* are inconsequential. Somehow or other they brand the *Vedas* as ‘mythology,’ while promoting their own schools as the real truth. Of course, this subterfuge reveals far more about their lack of integrity than it does about the actual value of the *Vedas*. 
Our philosophical opponents in various pseudo-Vedic lineages without a direct initiatory link with Vyāsadeva also maintain that it is not true that the Vedas teach only about the Personality of Godhead or the Supreme Brahman. They like to bring up the undeniable fact that the bulk of the Vedic literature describes various fruitive karma-kāṇḍa sacrifices, such as the kariri-yajña for bringing rain, the putra-kāmyeṣṭi-yajña for gaining a son, and the jyotiṣoma-yajña for traveling to the material heavenly planets [Svarga-loka]. For this reason, they say, it is not possible to accept the assertion of Vedānta that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the only topic discussed in the Vedas.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Vyāsadeva, the author of all the principal Vedic scriptures including Vedānta-sūtra, replies to this objection in the following sūtra:

Sūtra 1.1.4

tat tu samanvayāt

tat–this fact; tu–but; samanvayāt–because of the agreement of all the Vedic scriptures.

But that [Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in the Vedas] is confirmed by all scriptures.

The word tu [but] in this sūtra is used to rebut the previously stated opposing argument. It is proper to say that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in all the Vedas, in the jñāna-kāṇḍa and even in the karma-kāṇḍa section. Why? Samanvayāt: “Because the scriptures themselves bring us to this conclusion.” The word anvaya means “understanding the actual meaning according to the six maxims of Vedic interpretation given in the explanation of Sūtra 1.1.2,” and the word samanvaya means “perfect understanding after careful deliberation.” When we apply the above-mentioned rules of interpretation [beginning with upakrama and upasāṁhāra] to the texts of the Vedas, we will come to the conclusion that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in all the Vedas. If it were not so, then why should the Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad state that Brahman or Viṣṇu is glorified by all the Vedas? This is also confirmed by the lotus-eyed Personality of Brahman Himself, who says:

vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

“By all the Vedas I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of the Vedānta [Vyāsadeva], and I am the knower of the Vedas.” [Bhagavad-gītā 15.15]

kim vidhatte kim ācāṣte kim anūdyāya vikalpayet
ity asyā kṛdayām lokī nānyo mad veda kaścana
māṁ vidhatte ’bhidhatte māṁ vikalpapohyate hy aham

“What is the direction of all Vedic literatures? On whom do they set focus? Who is the object of all speculation? Outside of Me no one knows these things. Now you should know that all these activities are aimed at ordaining and setting forth Me. The purpose of Vedic literature is to know Me by different speculations, either by indirect understanding or by dictionary understanding. Everyone is speculating about Me.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.21.42-43]

The Vedic literatures also state:

sākṣat-paramparābhyaṁ veda brahmaṇi pravartate

“Either directly or indirectly, the Vedas describe Brahman.”

In the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas, Brahman is indirectly described in the discussion of fruitive action and various divisions of material knowledge, and in the jñāna-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas the transcendental forms and qualities of the Personality of Brahman are directly described. Material Vedic knowledge is a necessary prerequisite to the more advanced topics of transcendental knowledge and
realization. Therefore the *Vedas* discuss both mundane and transcendental subjects, just as a course in any subject begins with preliminaries and fundamentals, and only gradually exposes the more advanced topics once the student has sufficient preparation.

That the Personality of Brahman is the sole topic of discussion in the *Vedas* is also confirmed by the following scriptural passages:

\[
tam tv aupaniṣadāṁ puruṣam prcchāmi
\]

“I shall now ask about the Personality of Brahman, who is described in the *Upaniṣads.*” [*Brhad-āranyak Upaniṣad 9.21]*

\[
tam etam vedānvacanena brāhmaṇa vividiśanti
\]

“Brāhmaṇas study the *Vedas* to understand the Personality of Brahman.” [*Brhad-āranyak Upaniṣad 4.4.22]*

As for the various fruitive results that are offered to the followers of the *karma-kāṇḍa* rituals in the *Vedas*, such as the attainment of rain, a son, or residence in the celestial material planets, these benefits are offered to attract the minds of ordinary men who are attached to material fruitive activities. When ordinary men see that these material benefits are actually attained by performing Vedic rituals and chanting prayers such as the *viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra* [the Thousand Holy Names of Lord Viṣṇu], they become attracted to study the *Vedas*. By studying the *Vedas* they gradually become able to discriminate between what is temporary and what is eternal, what is illusory and what is real. Thus after prolonged study and practice of Vedic truth, they become averse to the temporary things of this world and come to hanker after Brahman. In this way it may be understood that all the sections of the *Vedas* actually describe the Personality of Brahman.

In other words, the *Vedas*’ descriptions of various religious practices and rituals assist the spiritual aspirant in becoming purified, so that his elevated character allows him to inquire into Brahman as described above. The preliminary process of worship and purification based on scriptural rules and regulations called *naimittika-dharma* helps establish the worshiper in pious credits, so he may pursue the actual eternal goal or *sanatana-dharma*. That the majority of the contents of the Vedic literature consists of such preliminary topics is no disqualification of the transcendental status of the Vedic literature in any way, because the final object of such preliminaries is becoming qualified to study and attain the actual transcendental goal of the *Vedas*: the personality of Brahman, or Viṣṇu.

Vedic rituals give material benefits only when the performer of the ritual is filled with material desire. If the performer is materially desireless, then he does not gain a material result, but rather he obtains purification of the heart and the manifestation of causeless spiritual knowledge. Therefore, the meaning of the previously quoted text from *Brhad-āranyak Upaniṣad* [4.4.22] is that the demigods are considered to be the various limbs of the Personality of Brahman, and by worshiping them, one actually worships the Supreme Brahman, and the result of such worship is that one gradually become pure in heart and awake with spiritual knowledge.

**Adhikaraṇa 5: Brahman is Knowable by the Descriptions of the Vedas**

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is *ākṣepa* [objection].

*Viṣaya* [thesis or statement]: So far we have applied ourselves to understanding the qualities and position of Brahman as described in *Vedānta-sūtra* and other Vedic scriptures, especially the *Upaniṣads*. The descriptions of Brahman or the Supreme Absolute are sometimes vague, because they are meant to be studied in the context of the Vedic system of disciplic succession.
evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājārsayo viduḥ

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.2]

In that environment, the student approaches, serves and hears from a self-realized soul who has already understood the message of the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadeśyanti te jīnānām jīnāninas tattva-darśināḥ

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.11]

Thus there is no chance of misinterpretation because the Master is always ready to give the correct meaning of the text from his own realization.

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: Problems arise, however, when people of lower character refuse to accept the role of a disciple and try to interpret the Vedas and Upaniṣads independently, on their own authority, instead of accepting the original version of the Vedic authorities like Vyāsadeva and his disciples. Generally people are attached to sense gratification, and so they try to make the Supreme impersonal. The Personality of Brahman has established certain rules for human life; these are described in the Vedic scriptures, and if we violate them we have to accept the karmic reaction. People who do not want to follow these rules theorize that if Brahman is impersonal, then He cannot impose His will on the creation, hence anyone can do whatever they like without any consequences. So the impersonalists, who are generally atheistic and possess a demoniac character, try to prove that Brahman is not a person to justify their aggressive lifestyle of material exploitation and illicit activities of sense gratification.

Thus the impersonalist philosophy of the demons tries to establish that the Vedas and Upaniṣads describe the Supreme Brahman as impersonal and ultimately void. Their chief strategy is to take certain statements of the Vedas and Upaniṣads out of context and twist the meaning to support their impersonal misinterpretation. They claim that Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedas and the author of the Upaniṣads and so many other scriptures, made a mistake. Yet they quote freely from his writings to support their philosophy when it suits them. Thus the impersonalists’ entire argument is based on the authority and writings of a person they consider to be mistaken. That it is very difficult to get them to admit this contradiction speaks volumes about their level of intelligence and integrity.

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: One of the main arguments of the impersonalists is that “Brahman is so high, so transcendent, so much beyond human intelligence, that our words and symbols cannot describe it.” However, if we accept this argument, then as a consequence we will doubt the authority of all the religious scriptures in the world. Of course, the impersonalists also use many words to describe their own views, but somehow they want us to accept their arguments and pet quotations at the same time as we reject the words of the scriptures as a whole. Thus the unspoken part of their argument is that it does not apply to themselves. This Adhikarana of Vedānta-sūtra defeats the hypocritical argument of the impersonalists in detail.

Simply by the use of logic and scriptural quotation, we certainly have already refuted the misconception that Brahman cannot be described, since we have doing exactly that for many pages already, and also showing many vivid examples of how He is described in the Vedas. Nevertheless no amount of verbiage can give a complete description of Brahman, who is by definition infinite. Impersonalists argue, therefore, that many scriptural passages support the theory that it is impossible to describe Brahman by words. For example:
yato vāco nivartate aprāpya manasā saha

“The mind cannot understand the Personality of Brahman, and words cannot describe Him.”
[Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.4.1]

yad vacanābhyyuditaṁ yena vāg abhyudyate tad eva
brahma tad viddhi nedaṁ yad idam upāsate

“No one has the power to describe Brahman with words, even though everyone’s speech occurs by the power granted by Brahman. Know that this Brahman is not material. Worship this Brahman.” [Kena Upaniṣad 1.5]

Many people doubt whether spiritual life in general, and Brahman in particular, is expressible by words. The śruti-śāstra quoted above states that Brahman cannot be described by words. That Brahman cannot be described with words is also explained in the following statement of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [3.6.40]:

yato ‘prāpya nyavartanta vacaś ca manasā saha
ahaṁ cānya ime devās tasmai bhagavate namaḥ

“Words, mind and ego, with their respective controlling demigods, have failed to achieve success in knowing the Personality of Brahman. Therefore, we simply have to offer our respectful obeisances unto Him as a matter of sanity.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes the argument of the impersonalists that Brahman cannot be described in words in the following sūtra:

Sūtra 1.1.5

īksater nāśabdam

īksateḥ–because it is seen; na–not; aśabdam–indescribable by words.

Because it is seen [that Brahman is vividly described in the Vedic scriptures, it should be understood that Brahman is not indescribable by words.

Here the word aśabdam means “that which cannot be described by words.” In this sūtra Brahman is described as not [na] indescribable by words [aśabdam]; on the contrary He is śabdam, describable by words. Why is this so? Because īksateḥ, it is seen that Brahman is described in the passages of the scriptures. We may also note that the word īksateḥ in the sūtra is bhava [passive], and it is formed by adding the affix tip-pratyaya. The unusual usage here is ārṣa, a certain degree of grammatical liberty allowed to an exalted author. For example, Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [9.21] states:

tam tv aupaniṣadāṁ puruṣaṁ prccāṁ

“I shall now ask about the Personality of Brahman, who is described in the Upaniṣads.”

We may note in this connection that the word aupaniṣada means “that glorious person who is described in the Upaniṣads.”

That the Personality of Brahman may be described in words is also confirmed by the following statement of Kathā Upaniṣad [2.15]:

sarve vedā yat-padam āmananti

“All the Vedas describe the lotus feet of the Personality of Brahman.”
There are many beautiful passages in the scriptures eloquently describing the Supreme Brahman in detail. For example:

“Brahmā could see that on the water there was a gigantic lotus-like white bedstead, the body of Śeṣa-nāga, on which the Personality of Godhead was lying alone. The whole atmosphere was illuminated by the rays of the jewels bedecking the hood of Śeṣa-nāga, and that illumination dissipated all the darkness of those regions. The luster of the transcendental body of the Lord mocked the beauty of the coral mountain. The coral mountain is very beautifully dressed by the evening sky, but the yellow dress of the Lord mocked its beauty. There is gold on the summit of the mountain, but the Lord's helmet, bedecked with jewels, mocked it. The mountain's waterfalls, herbs, etc., with a panorama of flowers, seem like garlands, but the Lord’s gigantic body, and His hands and legs, decorated with jewels, pearls, tulasi leaves and flower garlands, mocked the scene on the mountain. His transcendental body, unlimited in length and breadth, occupied the three planetary systems, upper, middle and lower. His body was self-illuminated by unparalleled dress and variegatedness and was properly ornamented. The Lord showed His lotus feet by raising them. His lotus feet are the source of all awards achieved by devotional service free from material contamination. Such awards are for those who worship Him in pure devotion. The splendor of the transcendental rays from His moonlike toenails and fingernails appeared like the petals of a flower. He also acknowledged the service of the devotees and vanished their distress by His beautiful smile. The reflection of His face, decorated with earrings, was so pleasing because it dazzled with the rays from His lips and the beauty of His nose and eyebrows. O my dear Vidura, the Lord's waist was covered with yellow cloth resembling the saffron dust of the kadamba flower, and it was encircled by a well-decorated belt. His chest was decorated with the śrīvatsa marking and a necklace of unlimited value. As a sandalwood tree is decorated with fragrant flowers and branches, the Lord's body was decorated with valuable jewels and pearls. He was the self-situated tree, the Lord of all others in the universe. And as a sandalwood tree is covered with many snakes, so the Lord’s body was also covered by the hoods of Ananta. Like a great mountain, the Lord stands as the abode for all moving and nonmoving living entities. He is the friend of the snakes because Lord Ananta is His friend. As a mountain has thousands of golden peas, so the Lord was seen with the thousands of golden-helmeted hoods of Ananta-nāga; and as a mountain is sometimes filled with jewels, so also His transcendental body was fully decorated with valuable jewels. As a mountains is sometimes submerged in the ocean water, so the Lord is sometimes submerged in the water of devastation. Lord Brahmā, thus looking upon the Lord in the shape of a mountain, concluded that He was Hari, the Personality of Godhead. He saw that the garland of flowers on His chest glorified Him with Vedic wisdom in sweet songs and looked very beautiful. He was protected by the Sudarśana wheel for fighting, and even the sun, moon, air, fire, etc., could not have access to Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.8.24-31]

When it is said in the Vedic literature that Brahman cannot be described in words, the intention is to assert that He cannot be completely described in words. This is evident by the fact that there are so many passages like the one quoted above, where Brahman is described vividly. In the same manner of speaking one could say that “No one can see Mount Meru,” because no one can see the entire mountain, but only small parts of it at any one time. Without accepting the understanding that Brahman is, at least to some degree, expressible by words or understandable by the mind—just not completely so—we would miss the real meaning of scriptural statements like yato vācō nivartate: “Words cannot describe Brahman;” aprāpya manasā saha: “The mind cannot understand Brahman;” and yad vacanābhhyuditam: “No one has the power to describe Brahman with words.” These statements simply explain that Brahman cannot be completely described in words; they do not indicate that He cannot be described by words at all.
Devadatta is metaphorically called a lion because of his lionlike qualities. In contrast, the example of related to the river.

rather be understood by its

literally means “the cowherd village in the Ganges.” But that idea is absurd, so here something in some way related to the object of the literal meaning. Thus, the phrase understood metaphorically if its

sense. This usage is called

beside its

purely conventional. The denotation of the word

For example, the word

material manifestations and their causes.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.1]

We should consider that words have three kinds of expressive capacities, called śabda-vṛttis. These are the different ways a word refers to its meaning, distinguished as mukhya-vṛtti, lakṣaṇa-vṛtti and gaṇa-vṛtti. The śabda-vṛtti termed mukhya is the primary, literal meaning of a word; this is also known as abhidhā, a word’s denotation or dictionary meaning. Mukhya-vṛtti is further divided into two subcategories, namely rūdhi and yoga. A primary meaning is called rūdhi when it is based on conventional usage, and yoga when it is derived from another word's meaning by regular etymological rules.

For example, the word go [cow] is an example of rūdhi, since its relation with its literal meaning is purely conventional. The denotation of the word pācaka [chef], on the other hand, is a yoga-vṛtti, through the word's derivation from the root pac [to cook] by addition of the agentive suffix -ka.

Beside its mukhya-vṛtti, or primary meaning, a word can also be used in a secondary, metaphorical sense. This usage is called lakṣaṇa [indirect definition]. The rule is that a word should not be understood metaphorically if its mukhya-vṛtti makes sense in the given context; only after the mukhya-vṛtti fails to convey a meaning suitable to the context may lakṣaṇa-vṛtti be justifiably presumed. The function of lakṣaṇa is technically explained in the kāvya-sāstras as an extended reference, pointing to something in some way related to the object of the literal meaning. Thus, the phrase gaṅgāyāṁ ghośah literally means “the cowherd village in the Ganges.” But that idea is absurd, so here gaṅgāyāṁ should rather be understood by its lakṣaṇa to mean “on the bank of the Ganges,” the bank being something related to the river. Gaṇa-vṛtti is a special kind of lakṣaṇa, where the meaning is extended to some idea of similarity. For example, in the statement siṁho devadattaḥ [“Devadatta is a lion”], heroic Devadatta is metaphorically called a lion because of his lionlike qualities. In contrast, the example of

śrī-drumila uvāca
yo vā anantasya gunān anantān
anukramiśyaṃ sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ
rajāmśi bhūmer ganayet kathaṃcit
kālena nātākhañila-sakti-dhāmmaḥ

Śrī Drumila said: “Anyone trying to enumerate or describe fully the unlimited qualities of the unlimited Supreme Lord has the intelligence of a foolish child. Even if a great genius could somehow or other, after a time-consuming endeavor, count all the particles of dust on the surface of the earth, such a genius could never count the attractive qualities of the Personality of Godhead, who is the reservoir of all potencies.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.4.2]
the general kind of lakṣaṇa, namely gaṅgāyāṁ ghosāḥ, involves a relationship not of similarity but of location.

In the verse quoted above, Parīkṣit Mahārāja expresses doubt as to how the words of the Vedas can refer to the Absolute Truth by any of the valid kinds of śabda-vṛtti. He asks, kathāṁ sākṣāt caranti: How can the Vedas directly describe Brahman by rūḍha-mukhya-vṛtti, literal meaning based on convention? After all, the Absolute is anirdeśya, inaccessible to designation. And how can the Vedas even describe Brahman by gauna-vṛtti, metaphor based on similar qualities?

The Vedas are guna-vṛttayāḥ, full of qualitative descriptions, but Brahman is nirguṇa, without material qualities. Obviously, a metaphor based on similar qualities cannot apply in the case of something that has no qualities. Furthermore, Parīkṣit Mahārāja points out that Brahman is sad-asataḥ param, beyond all causes and effects. Having no connection with any manifest existence, subtle or gross, the Absolute cannot be expressed by either yoga-vṛtti, a meaning derived etymologically, or lakṣaṇa, metaphor, since both require some relationship of Brahman to other entities.

The answer to this doubt is given in the next śloka:

śrī-śuka uvāca
buddhindriya-manah-prānān
janānām asrjat prabhuḥ
mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthatṁ ca
ātmane 'kalpanāya ca

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: “The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the [conditioned] living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives and ultimately attain liberation.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.2]

When the conditioned living entities lay dormant within the transcendental body of Lord Viṣṇu at the dawn of the material creation, He initiated the process of creation by sending forth the coverings of intelligence, mind and so on, only for the living entities’ benefit. As stated here, Viṣṇu is the independent Lord [prabhu], and the living entities are jana, His dependents. Thus the Lord creates the cosmos entirely for the living entities’ sake; as the creator and eternal Friend of the living entities, compassion is His sole motive.

The Supreme Lord enables the living entities them to pursue sense gratification by providing them with with gross and subtle bodies, and in the human form, the preliminary Vedic principles of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. In each body the conditioned soul utilizes his senses for enjoyment, and when he comes to the human form he must also discharge various duties assigned by the Vedic scriptures at the different stages of his life. If he faithfully discharges his duties, he earns more extensive and refined enjoyment in the future; if not, he is degraded by karmic reactions. And when the soul eventually hankers for freedom from material conditioned life, the path of liberation is available through the transcendental instructions of the Vedas.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī comments that in this verse the repeated use of the word ca [and] indicates the importance of all of what the Lord provides—not only the path of liberation, but also the paths of gradual elevation through religious life and appropriate sense enjoyment. Thus the living entities depend on the Lord’s mercy for success in all their endeavors. Without intelligence, senses, mind and life energy, the living entities cannot achieve anything—neither elevation to heaven, purification through knowledge, perfection of the eightfold meditational yoga, nor pure devotion through following the process of bhakti-yoga, beginning with hearing and chanting the transcendental sound vibration of the Holy Names of God.
If the Supreme Brahman arranges all these facilities for the conditioned souls’ welfare, how can He be impersonal? Far from presenting the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal, the *Upaniṣads* actually speak at great length about His personal qualities. The Brahman described by the *Upaniṣads* is free from all inferior material qualities, yet He is omniscient, omnipotent, the master and controller of all, the universally worshipable Lord, He who awards the results of everyone's work, and the reservoir of all eternity, knowledge and bliss. Therefore He is actually a transcendental person. The *Mundaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.9] states,

\[
yah sarva-jñaḥ sa sarva-vid yasya jña-na-mayaḥ tapah
\]

“He who is all-knowing, from whom the potency of all knowledge comes—He is the wisest of all.”

In the words of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.22, 3.7.3, and 1.2.4],

\[
sarvasya vāṣī sarvasyeśāṇaḥ
\]

“He is the Lord and controller of everyone”

\[
yah prthivyāṁ tiṣṭhan prthivyā āntaraḥ
\]

“He who resides within the earth and pervades it”

\[
so 'kāmayata bahu syām
\]

“He desired, ‘I will become many.’”

Similarly, the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* [3.11] states,

\[
sa aikṣata tat tejo 'srjata
\]

“He glanced at His potency, who then manifested the creation,”

while the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1.1] declares,

\[
satyāṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma
\]

“The Supreme is unlimited truth and knowledge.”

The phrase *tat tvam asi*, “You are that [Brahman]” [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7], is often cited by impersonalists as a confirmation of the absolute identity of the finite jīva soul with his creator. Śaṅkara and his followers elevate these words to the status of a *mahā-vākyya*, a key phrase they imagine to express the essential purport of *Vedānta*. The leading thinkers of the authorized Vaiṣṇava schools of *Vedānta* strongly disagree with this misinterpretation. The phrase *mahā-vākyya* does not appear anywhere in the *Vedas* themselves. Ācāryas Rāmānuja, Madhva, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and others have offered numerous alternative explanations according to a systematic study of the *Upaniṣads* and other śrūtis.

The question Mahārāja Parīkṣit has submitted in the *sloka* quoted above—namely, “How can the *Vedas* directly refer to the Absolute Truth?”—has been answered as follows by Śukadeva Gosvāmī: “The Lord created intelligence and other elements for the sake of the conditioned living beings.” A skeptic may object that this answer is irrelevant. But Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s answer is not actually irrelevant. Answers to subtle questions must often be phrased indirectly. As Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself states in His instructions to Uddhava:

\[
parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayah parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam
\]

“The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.21.35]
The impersonalists on whose behalf Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked his question cannot appreciate the direct answer, so instead Śrīla Śukadeva gives an indirect reply: “You assert that Brahman is indescribable by words. But if the Supreme Lord had not created the intelligence, mind and senses, then sound and the other objects of perception would all be just as indescribable as your idea of Brahman. You would have been blind and deaf since birth, and would know nothing about physical forms and sounds, what to speak of the Absolute. So, just as the merciful Lord has given us all faculties of perception for experiencing and describing to others the sensations of sight, sound and so forth, in the same way He may give someone the receptive capacity to realize Brahman. He may, if He chooses, create some extraordinary way for words to function—apart from their ordinary references to material substances, qualities, categories and actions—that will enable them to express the Supreme Truth. He is, after all, the almighty Lord [prabhu], and He can easily make the indescribable describable.”

This is exactly the case. The Lord has created a special category of terminology—transcendental sound vibration—whose meaning is completely spiritual and has nothing to do with the material world. The Supreme Brahman describes to Citraketu,

\[
\text{ahaṁ vai sarva-bhūtāni} \\
\text{bhūtāmā bhūta-bhāvanah} \\
\text{śabda-brahma paraṁ brahma} \\
\text{manomhe śāsvatī tanā}
\]

“All living entities, moving and nonmoving, are My expansions and are separate from Me. I am the Supersoul of all living beings, who exist because I manifest them. I am the form of the transcendental vibrations [like omkāra, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rāma and other Holy Names], and I am the Supreme Absolute Truth. These two forms of Mine—namely, the transcendental sound and the eternally blissful spiritual form of the Deity, are My eternal forms; they are not material.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.51]

Lord Matsya, who saved the Vedas at the time of universal devastation by assuming the form of a gigantic fish, assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the Vedas:

\[
\text{madīyaṁ mahimāṁ ca} \\
\text{paraṁ brahmeti śabditam} \\
\text{vetsasya anugrahītam me} \\
\text{samprāsnair vivṛtāṁ hṛdi}
\]

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as paraṁ brahma, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.24.38]

Because śabda-brahma [transcendental sound vibration] is originally spoken by the Supreme Brahman Himself, it perfectly describes His spiritual forms, qualities and activities. It is very difficult to understand Brahman, but when He describes Himself in the words of the scriptures, then it becomes not only possible, but easy. If we take shelter of the authoritative statements of the Vedic scriptures with our intelligence, then very soon we will attain conclusive understanding of the Supreme Brahman through this transcendental sound vibration.

The fortunate soul who has been blessed by the Supreme Lord with a spirit of inquisitiveness into the nature and qualities of Brahman naturally will ask questions about the nature of the Absolute, and by hearing the answers given by the Supreme Himself and recorded in the Vedic literatures, he will come to understand the Lord as He is. Thus only by the special mercy of the Supreme Person does Brahman
become śabdītam, “denoted by words.” Otherwise, without the Lord’s exceptional grace, not even the words of the Vedas can reveal the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī suggests that the word buddhi in the sloka above spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī can indicate the mahat-tattva, from which evolve the various expansions of ether [such as sound], which are designated here as indriya [sense objects]. Mātrārtham, then, means “for the sake of using transcendental sound to describe Brahman,” since the Supreme Lord inspired prakṛti to evolve ether [space or air] and sound—the medium and object, respectively, of the sense of hearing—for that precise purpose.

A further understanding of the purpose of creation is given by the words bhavārtham and ātmane kalpanāya [if the reading kalpanāya instead of akalpanāya in some recensions of the text is taken]. Bhavārtham means “for the good of the living entities.” Worship [kalpanam] of the Supreme Self [ātmane] is the means by which the living entities can fulfill the divine purpose for which they exist. Intelligence, mind and senses are meant to be used for worshiping the Supreme Lord, whether or not the living entity has yet brought them to the stage of transcendental purification.

How both purified and unpurified devotees use their intelligence, mind and senses in worshiping the Lord is described in reference to the following quote from the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad [Pūrva 12]:

sat-puṇḍarīka-nayanāṁ
meghābhaṁ vaidyutāmbaram
dvī-bhujāṁ mauna-mudrādhyāṁ
vana-mālinam iśvarāṁ

“The Supreme Lord, appearing in His two-armed form, had divine lotus eyes, a complexion the color of a cloud, and garments that resembled lightning. He wore a garland of forest flowers, and His beauty was enhanced by His pose of meditative silence.”

The transcendental intelligence and senses of the Lord’s perfect devotees correctly perceive His purely spiritual beauty, and their realizations are echoed in the Gopāla-tāpanī-śrutī’s comparison of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eyes, body and clothing to a lotus, a cloud and lightning. On the other hand, devotees on the level of sādhana, who are in the process of becoming purified, have only barely realized the Supreme Lord’s boundless spiritual beauty. Nonetheless, after hearing scriptural passages such as this one from the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad, they engage in contemplating Him to the best of their ability.

arthāśrayatvaṁ śabdasya
draṣṭur liṅgatvaṁ eva ca
tan-mātratvaṁ ca nabhaso
lakṣaṇaṁ kavayo viduḥ

“Persons who are learned and who have true knowledge define sound as that which conveys the idea of an object, indicates the presence of a speaker screened from our view and constitutes the subtle form of ether.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.33]

The Vedic sound vibration conveys the idea of the Supreme Brahman and since in our materially conditioned state, we cannot see Him, it also reveals His presence. Although the neophyte devotees have not yet learned how to fully realize the Lord or even meditate steadily on the effulgence surrounding His body, still they take pleasure in presuming, “We are meditating on our Lord.” And the Supreme Lord, moved by the waves of His boundless mercy, Himself thinks, “These devotees are meditating on Me.” When their devotion matures, He draws them to His feet to engage in His intimate service. Thus it is concluded that the followers of the Vedas have access to the personal identity of the Supreme only by His mercy in the form of the transcendental words of the Vedas.
saiṣā hy upaniṣad brāhmī
pūrveśāṁ pūrva-jair dhṛtā
śraddhāyā dhārayedvas tāṁ
kṣemaṁ gacched akiñcanaḥ

“That those who came before even our ancient predecessors meditated upon this same confidential
knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Indeed, anyone who faithfully concentrates on this
knowledge will become free from material attachments and attain the final goal of life.”
[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.3]

That this confidential knowledge concerning the Absolute Truth can be expressed in words should not
be doubted, since it has been passed down through authoritative lines of learned sages from time
immemorial. One who cultivates the science of the Supreme with reverence, avoiding the distractions
of fruitive rituals and mental speculation, will learn to give up the false designations of material body
and mundane society, and thus he will become eligible for perfection.

The skeptics may admit that Brahman is describable by words to some extent, but still they may object
that the Supreme Person described in the words of the Vedas may be saguṇa—a false, temporary
manifestation of Brahman according to the modes of material nature—and not the perfect, complete,
eternal and pure original Brahman, who being completely transcendental, remains indescribable by
words. If this doubt were to arise, Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers it in the following sūtra.

**Sūtra 1.1.6**

gauṇaś cen nātma-śabdāt

gauṇaḥ—Saguṇa Brahman, or Brahman’s potencies; cet—if; na—not; ātma–ātma; śabdāt–because
of the word.

If [one says that the Brahman described in the Vedas as the creator is] Saguṇa Brahman [a
manifestation of the modes of material nature, and not the original Supreme Brahman
Himself, then I say] this cannot be true, because Brahman is described in the Vedas as
ātmā [the Supreme Self].

Two words in the revealed scriptures often applied to the Lord—saguna (“with qualities”) and nirguna
(“without qualities”)—are very important. The impersonalists argue that when Brahman appears in the
material world, He assumes a form made of material energy, and that only the Brahman in the spiritual
world remains pure and without qualities. However, the word saguna does not imply that when the
Lord appears with perceivable qualities He must take on a material form and be subject to the laws of
material nature. Because He is supreme, He is always spiritual and the source of all energies; therefore
He is always the cause, and never the effect of His energies.

mayādhyakṣena prakṛtiḥ

“This material nature is working under My direction.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

As the controller of all energies, He cannot at any time be under their influence, as we are. The material
energy works according to His direction, so He can use material energy for His purposes in creating the
universe and living beings, etc. without being influenced by the qualities of that energy. Thus even
when He appears in the material universe for the purpose of creation or pastimes, He is always nirguna
because He is never affected by material qualities. Nor does the Lord become a formless entity at any
time, for His eternal form as the primeval Lord is full of spiritual qualities. His impersonal aspect, the
Brahman effulgence, is but the glow of His personal form, just as the sun’s rays are the glow of the
sun-god.
Therefore the Brahman described in the Vedas is not merely a saguna manifestation of the mode of goodness. Why? Because the Vedas use the word ātmā, the Supreme Self, to describe Him. For example:

ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣa-vidhaḥ
“The Supreme Self [ātmā], who is a transcendental person, existed before this material world was manifested in the beginning.” [Vājasaneyā-samhitā]

ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt nānyat kiṃcana
miśāt sa īkṣata lokān nu sṛja
“Before the material world was manifest, the Supreme Self [ātmā] alone existed. Nothing else was manifested at that time. The Supreme Self then thought, ‘Let me create the material planets.’” [Aitareya Āranyaka]

aham evāsam evāgre
nānyad yat sad-asat param
pāścād ahaṁ yad etac ca
yo 'vaśisyeta so 'smy aham
“Brahmā, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.33]

These texts clearly refer to the Supreme Self [ātmā] who existed before the creation of the material world. Also, in the commentary on Sūtra 1.1.2, we discussed that the word ātmā primarily refers to the perfect Supreme Brahman, and not to anyone or anything else. For all these reasons the word ātmā used in the scriptures should be understood to refer to the transcendental Personality of Brahman, and not to any material manifestation of the mode of goodness. The transcendental Supreme Person is described in the following statements of Vedic literature:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti pāramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyaṁ
“Learned transcendentalist who know the Absolute Truth call this non-dual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.11]

śuddhe mahā-vibhūtākhye pare brahmaṇi śabdyaṁ
maitreya bhagavac-chabdaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇe
“O Maitreya, the word Bhagavān refers to the Supreme Brahman, who is full of all powers and opulences, the original cause of all causes, and the supreme transcendence, pure and always untouched by matter.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

In this way the supremely perfect and pure Brahman is described by the statements of the smṛti-śāstras. Therefore the scriptures can and do describe Him, and such Vedic transcendental sound vibration or śabda-brahma is qualitatively equivalent to the Lord Himself. Sound vibrations describing the Lord’s form, qualities and pastimes, and especially the Holy Names of the Lord, are identical with Him. One can realize this when one’s consciousness is situated on the absolute platform. Realization of transcendental sound vibration means that one clearly understands that the Holy Name and other descriptions of the Lord cannot be identified with any material sound. If this is true of the Lord’s Holy name and other descriptions of Him, how much more it must be true of the Lord Himself.
If it were not possible to describe Him with words, then the scriptures would not have been able to describe Him in the above quotations. Vedānta-sūtra will point out many instances of words in the Vedas that describe the Supreme Brahman. All these words are śabda-brahma or transcendental sound vibration, and as such are qualitatively equal to the Supreme Brahman Himself. This point is reinforced by the following Sūtra.

**Sūtra 1.1.7**

\[
\text{tan niṣṭhasya mokṣopadesāt} \\
\text{tat—that; niṣṭhasya—of the faithful devotee; mokṣa—of the liberation; upadesāt—because of the instructions.}
\]

[The Brahman described in the scriptures is the transcendental Supreme Brahman, and not a temporary manifestation of the mode of goodness, because the scriptures] teach us that His dedicated devotees attain liberation.

The word “not” is understood in this sūtra and the following three sūtras as well. The liberation of those devoted to Brahman is described in the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.7]:

\[
\text{asad vā idam agra āśū tato vai sad ajāyata tad ātmānāṁ svayam akuruta... yadā hy evaiṣa etasminn adṛśye anātmye anirukte 'nilayane abhayaiṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ vindate ‘tha so ‘bhayaṁ gato bhavati yadā hy evaiṣa etasminn udāram antaram kurute atha tasya bhayaṁ bhavati}
\]

“Before the material cosmos was manifested, it existed in a subtle form. At a certain time it became manifested in a gross form, and at a certain time the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Universal Form. When an individual conscious living entity takes shelter of that Supreme Brahman, who is different from the individual conscious living entities, invisible to the gross material senses, indescribable by material words, and self-effulgent, then the individual conscious living entity attains liberation and is no longer afraid of the cycle of repeated birth and death. If one does not take shelter of this Supreme Brahman, he must remain afraid of taking birth again and again in this world.”

This non-material, transcendental Supreme Brahman is described in the following statements of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [10.88.5] and Bhagavad-gītā [14.26]:

\[
\text{harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ} \\
\text{sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet}
\]

“Śrī Hari, the Personality of Brahman, is situated beyond the range of material nature; therefore He is the supreme transcendental person. He can see everything inside and outside; therefore He is the supreme overseer of all living entities. If someone takes shelter at His lotus feet and worships Him, he also attains a transcendental position.”

\[
\text{māṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa} \\
\text{bhakti-yogena sevate} \\
\text{sa guṇān samātītyaitāṁ} \\
\text{brahma-bhūyāya kalpate}
\]

“One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

The Brahman described in these passages of the Vedic literature must be the Supreme Brahman who is beyond the limitations of the material world, who is the creator of the material universes and yet is transcendental to them. These passages could not describe a Brahman that is actually a manifestation of
the modes of material nature; for if this were so, then it would not be possible for those who become devoted to this Brahman attain liberation from material existence. People who are devoted to the manifestations of the modes of nature do not attain liberation by that material devotion. Therefore, the Brahman mentioned here must be the transcendental Supreme Person, who is beyond the modes of nature and completely non-material in nature, because the devotees who worship Him attain liberation. And how do they attain this liberation?

satataṁ kīrtayanto mām
yatantaṁ ca drḍha-vratāṁ
namasyantaṁ ca mām bhaktāṁ
nitya-yuktā upāsate

“Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.14]

śrī-śrīnātha uvāca
śravanāṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇāṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāśyaṁ
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

iti puṁsārpiṁ viṣṇau
bhaktiś cec nava-lakṣaṇaṁ
kriyeta bhāgavaty addhā
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: “Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one’s best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) —these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23-24]

Hearing and chanting the Holy Name, pastimes, qualities and instructions of the Supreme are the principal methods of worship that bestow liberation. If these Holy Names and other words describing the Supreme Brahman were not transcendental, then how could they bestow liberation from material existence? Therefore the descriptions of the Lord in the Vedic literature are identical in quality with the Lord Himself, because their regular hearing and chanting are celebrated throughout the Vedas as the prime means for attaining liberation from material existence.

Sūtra 1.1.8

heyatva-vacanāc ca

heyatva—worthy of being abandoned; vacanāt—because of the statement; ca—also.

[The Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is not a manifestation of the modes of material nature,] because no scriptural passage advises one to abandon [Brahman in order to attain someone higher].

If the Brahman described in the scriptures were enmeshed in the modes of material nature, then why do the scriptures not direct us to abandon the worship of Brahman and worship someone higher? If this
Brahman were under the spell of the modes of nature, then why do those aspiring after liberation worship this Brahman to become free from the grip of the modes of nature? Clearly, the Brahman described in the scriptures is not entangled in the modes of material nature, and for this reason the scripture states:

\[
\text{anyā vāco vimuñcātha}
\]

“Give up talking about things that have no relation to the Supreme Brahman!”

\[
\text{rājya-kāmo manūn devān}
\]

\[
\text{nirṛtiṁ tv abhicaran yajet}
\]

\[
\text{kāma-kāmo yajet somam}
\]

\[
\text{akāmaṁ puruṣaṁ param}
\]

“One who desires domination over a kingdom or an empire should worship the Manus. One who desires victory over an enemy should worship the demons, and one who desires sense gratification should worship the moon. But one who desires nothing of material enjoyment should worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.9]

Because worship of the Supreme Brahman does not grant material benedictions but leads to complete liberation from material entanglement, it should be understood that the Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is not a product of the modes of material nature. Those who aspire for liberation should meditate with pure faith on this Supreme Brahman, who is eternal, filled with all transcendental qualities, and the original creator of the material universes, for this is the way to the highest attainment of eternal happiness. Therefore we advise that one should give up materialistic science, fruitive activity and speculative philosophy, and apply oneself to the scientific study of Vedānta and the cultivation of transcendental consciousness.

A person who aspires for liberation considers all the enjoyments of the material world to be absolutely useless, because they are temporary. Therefore it is seen that advanced transcendentalists are generally renunciants. Only those who are conditioned by the material modes of external energy are captivated by different types of material enjoyment. The transcendentalist has no material desires to be fulfilled, whereas the materialist has all types of desires to be fulfilled. Thus the materialist worships different material forms and names, while the liberated devotee worships the pure spiritual Supreme Brahman alone.

The impersonalists try to establish that the methods of worship of the Supreme Brahman given in the Vedas are actually material; then they teach that one can worship any material demigod and get the same result as worship of the Supreme Brahman. This is not only against the teachings of the Vedas but is also foolish, just as it is foolish to claim that purchasing a plane ticket to Paris will allow one to reach Australia. It is clearly stated in the scriptures that persons contaminated with material desires have different modes of worship, but one who has no desire for material enjoyment should worship the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Brahman. Generally worship of the Lord does not fulfill one’s material desires for sense enjoyment, but He awards His worshipers the benedictions of transcendental knowledge and detachment, so ultimately they renounce material enjoyment. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as puruṣaṁ param, or the Supreme Transcendental Person, in the sloka quoted above. Even Śrīpāda Śaṅkaraśāntī has admitted, nārāyaṇaḥ paro ‘vyaktāt: the Supreme Lord is the highest, transcendental, beyond all material entanglement. There is nothing higher than the Supreme Brahman.

Sūtra 1.1.9

\[
\text{svāpyāt}
\]
The Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic literatures is not bound by the modes of nature, because He merges into Himself, unlike the creatures bound by nature’s modes, who all merge into something other than their self.

The Creator of the material world is the unmanifested Brahman, and His creation is the manifested Brahman. At the end of the creation, the manifestation enters back into the unmanifested Brahman, thus it is said here that Brahman merges into Himself. The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [5.1.1] and Śrī Īśopaniṣad [Invocation] declare:

\[
\text{oṁ pūrṇam adāḥ pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśisyate}
\]

“The Personality of Brahman is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.”

In this mantra, the word adāḥ [this] refers to the aprakaṭa [not manifested in the material world] form of the Supreme Brahman, which is the root from which the various prakaṭa forms of Brahman emanate. Both aprakaṭa [manifested] and prakaṭa [unmanifested] forms of Brahman are perfect and complete. That is the actual meaning of pūrṇam [complete or Absolute]: He can expand into an unlimited number of forms, and each one is as complete in transcendental power and attributes as His original form. If there were actually a distinction between His nirguṇa [without qualities] and saguṇa [with qualities] aspects, the scriptures would state that the saguṇa Brahman expands from or enters into the nirguṇa Brahman, but the term “saguṇa Brahman” is not found in the scriptures. Therefore the idea of saguṇa Brahman is a concoction, as described in the next sūtra.

In the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa it is said,

“The same Personality of Godhead who is known in Vaikuṇṭha as the four-handed Nārāyaṇa, the friend of all living entities, and in the milk ocean as the Lord of Śvetadvipa, and who is the best of all puruṣas, appeared as the son of Nanda. In a fire there are many sparks of different dimensions; some of them are very big, and some are small. The small sparks are compared to the living entities, and the large sparks are compared to the Viṣṇu expansions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All the incarnations emanate from Kṛṣṇa, and after the end of their pastimes they again merge with Kṛṣṇa.”

This sūtra explains that the Supreme Brahman, which is pūrya [perfect and complete], enters into Himself. This cannot be said of that which is not perfect and complete: for example, material nature or the living entities:

\[
sarva-bhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām kalpa-kṣaye punas tāni kalpādau visṛjāmy aham
\]

“O son of Kuntī, at the end of the millennium all material manifestations enter into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency, I create them again.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.6]
If the Supreme Brahman described in the scriptures were a product of the modes of material nature, then He would be described as merging into the Supreme, and not into Himself. In this way He could not be described as truly perfect and complete.

Brahman expands from His aprakāṭa form and appears in the material world in His prakāṭa form, displaying His rāsa-līlā and other transcendental pastimes. When the prakāṭa form of Brahman leaves the material world and enters into the aprakāṭa form of Brahman, Brahman remains unchanged, eternally perfect and complete. That Brahman is untouched by the modes of material nature, and that He expands into many forms, is confirmed by the following statement of smṛti-śāstra:

\[
\text{sa devo bahudhā bhūtvā} \\
\text{nirguṇah puruṣottamaḥeki-bhūya punaḥ śete} \\
\text{nirdoṣo harir ādi-kṛt}
\]

“The Personality of Brahman is faultless. Even though He is the original creator of the material world, He remains always untouched by matter. He expands in innumerable viṣṇu-tattva incarnations, and then these incarnations enter Him and He again becomes one.”

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “There are actually two kinds of Brahman: Saguṇa Brahman [Brahman enmeshed in the modes of material nature], and Nirguṇa Brahman [Brahman untouched by the modes of material nature]. Saguṇa Brahman has a form constructed of the mode of material goodness. This Saguṇa Brahman is the omniscient, all-powerful creator of the material universes. Nirguṇa Brahman is pure transcendental existence only. This Nirguṇa Brahman is pure, perfect, and complete. The Saguṇa Brahman is the śakti [potency] described by the Vedas, and the Nirguṇa Brahman is the tātparya [meaning] of the Vedas.”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the next sūtra:

**Sūtra 1.1.10**

\[gati-samanyāt\]

\[gati–the conception; samanyāt–because of uniformity.\]

[This is not so] because the Vedas describe only one kind of Brahman.

In this sūtra the word gati means “conception.” The Vedic literatures describe Brahman as full of transcendental knowledge, omniscient, omnipotent, perfect, complete, pure, the all-pervading Superconscious living entity, the original creator of the material universes, the object of worship for the saintly devotees, and the bestower of liberation. The Vedas do not describe two kinds of Brahman: Nirguṇa and Saguṇa. In fact, the term “Saguṇa Brahman” does not even appear in the Vedas. This is a straw-man argument manufactured by the fallible human mind. Rather, the Vedas actually describe only one kind of Brahman: supreme, eternal and transcendental, without material qualities [nirguṇa]. This one Brahman is described by the Personality of Brahman Kṛṣṇa in the following words:

\[mattāḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya \]
\[mayi sarvam idāṁ protoṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā īva\]

“O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon me as pearls strung on a thread.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.7]

Thus the Vedic literatures describe only one kind of Brahman: Nirguṇa Brahman. There are many statements in the Vedic literature that confirm this:

\[sarvendriya-guṇabhāsaṁ\]
\[sarvendriya-vivarjitam\]
asaktaṁ sarva-bhṛc caiva
nirgunaṁ guṇa-bhoktr ca

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.” [Bhagavad-gītā 13.15]

rājovāca
brahmanā codito brahman
guṇākhyaṇe 'guṇasya ca
yasmai yasmai yathā práha
nārada deva-darśanaḥ

King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: “How did Nārada Muni, whose hearers are as fortunate as those instructed by Lord Brahmā, explain the transcendental qualities of the Lord, who is without material qualities, and before whom did he speak?” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.8.1]

anādir ātmā puruṣo
nirgunaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
pratyag-dhāmā svayaṁ-jyotir
viśvaṁ yena samanvitam

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.3]

evaṁ jyotir-mayo devah
sad-ānandaḥ parāt paraḥ
ātmārāmasya tasyāsti
prakṛtyā na samāgamaḥ
māyayāramamāṇasya

“The Lord of Gokula is the transcendental Supreme Godhead, the own Self of eternal ecstasies. He is the superior of all superiors and is busily engaged in the enjoyments of the transcendental realm, and has no association with His mundane potency. Kṛṣṇa never consorts with His illusory energy.” [Brahma-saṁhitā 5.6-7]

Śrīla Vyāsadeva describes this Nirguaṇa Brahman even more clearly in the next sūtra:

**Sūtra 1.1.11**

śrutavāc ca
śrutavāt—because of being described in the Vedas; ca—and.

[There is only one kind of Brahman: Nirguaṇa Brahman], because Nirguaṇa Brahman is described throughout the Vedic literatures.

Nirguaṇa Brahman alone is described in the statements of the Vedic literature:

oṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramāṁ padaṁ sadā
paśyanti sūrayo divīva caṣur ātataṁ
tad viprāṣo vipanyavo jāgvrāṁśaḥ
samindhate viṣṇor yat paramāṁ padam
“Just as those with ordinary vision see the sun’s rays in the sky, so the wise and learned devotees always see the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu. Because those highly praiseworthy and spiritually awake brähmaṇas can see that abode, they can also reveal it to others.” [Ṛg Veda 1.22.20]

eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpi sarva-bhūtāntarātmā
karmadhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ sāksī cetā kevalo nirguṇaḥ ca

“The Personality of Brahman manifests Himself as the all-pervading Superconscious living entity, the witness present in the hearts of all living entities. He witnesses all activities of the living entity. He is the supreme living force. He is transcendental to all material qualities.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.11]

ekas tvam eva sad asad dvayam advayaṁ ca
svānaṁ kṛtākṛtam iveha na vastu-bhedaḥ
ajñānatas tvayi janair vihito vikalpo
yasmād guṇa-vyatikaro nirupādhikasya

“My dear Lord, Your Lordship alone is the cause and the effect. Therefore, although You appear to be two, You are the Absolute One. As there is no difference between the gold of a golden ornament and the gold in a mine, there is no qualitative difference between the cause and effect [of the universal cosmic manifestation]; both of them are the same. Only because of ignorance do people concoct differences and dualities. You are free from material contamination, and since the entire cosmos is caused by You and cannot exist without You, it is an effect of Your transcendental qualities. Thus the conception that Brahman is true and the world false cannot be maintained.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.12.8]

Thus Nirguṇa Brahman alone is described in the śruti-śāstra. The śruti-śāstra does not say that it is impossible to describe Brahman. Some say that Brahman may be understood not from the direct statements of the Vedic literatures but only indirectly, or from hints found in the Vedic texts. This is an incorrect understanding, for if the Vedic scriptures had no power to describe Brahman directly, then they would also lack the power to describe or hint about Him indirectly. The Vedic literature may say that Brahman has no contact with guṇas [materialistic qualities, or the three modes of material nature], and it certainly says that He cannot be seen by material eyes [adrśya], still it does not say that the words of the Vedas have no power to describe Him.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not said in the Vedas that Brahman has no guṇas [qualities]? Your statement that Brahman has qualities contradicts the description of the scriptures.”

To this I reply: This is not true. You can only say this because you do not understand the confidential meaning of the word nirguṇa. Because the Supreme Brahman is all-knowing and possess many transcendental qualities, when the scriptures say that He is nirguṇa, it should be understood to mean that He has no [niḥ] contact with the three modes of material nature [guṇa]. Brahman’s qualities are all transcendental, therefore it is a fact that He has no material qualities. This is confirmed by the following statements of smṛti-śāstra:

sattvādayo na sānitiṣe yatra cāprakṛtā guṇāḥ

“The Personality of Brahman, who possesses numberless transcendental qualities, is eternally free from the touch of the three modes [guṇas] of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance.”

samasta-kalyāṇa-guṇātmako ‘sau
“The Personality of Brahman possesses all auspicious qualities.”

For all these reasons it should be accepted that the Vedic literatures have the power to describe the perfect, pure, complete Supreme Brahman. When it is said by the scriptures that the Supreme Brahman has no names, forms or qualities, it should be understood that the Supreme Brahman has no material names, forms or qualities; and that His spotless transcendental names, forms and qualities are limitless and beyond the accounting of limited conscious living entities.

At this point someone may object, saying that “The literal interpretation of the Vedic statements is that Brahman is without qualities [nirguṇa], and your interpretation of the word nirguṇa as having only transcendental qualities is wrong.”

To this objection I reply: Does this description that Brahman has no qualities help to positively understand Brahman? If you say yes, then you have to admit that the Veda do have the power to describe Brahman; and if you say no, then you have to admit that your careful studies of the scientific literature and religious scriptures have been a great waste of time, for you remain wholly ignorant of Brahman’s real transcendental nature and qualities.

śabdā vācakatāṁ yānti yantrānandamayādayah
vibhum ānanda-vijnānaṁ taṁ śuddhaṁ śraddadhīṁahi

“Let us place our faith in the Personality of Brahman, who is supremely pure, all-powerful, all-knowing and full of transcendental bliss. He is perfectly described in the ānandamaya-sūtra and the other statements of Vedānta-sūtra.”

Generally there are six great philosophers in Indian literature: Kaṇāda, the author of Vaiśeṣika philosophy; Gautama, the author of Nyāya [logic]; Patañjali, the author of mystic yoga; Kapila, the author of Sāṅkhya philosophy; Jaimini, the author of Kṛma-mīmāṁsā; and Vyāsadeva, the author of Vedānta-darśana. Five of these are atheistic philosophies:

1. The Mīmāṁsaka philosophers, following Jaimini, stress fruitive activity and say that if there is a God, He must be under the laws of fruitive activity. In other words, if one performs his duties very nicely in the material world, God is obliged to give one the desired result. According to these philosophers, there is no need to become a devotee of God; if one strictly follows moral principles, one automatically will be recognized by the Lord, who will give the desired reward. Such philosophers do not accept the Vedic principle of bhakti-yoga. Instead, they give stress to following one’s prescribed duty.

2. Atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers like Kapila analyze the material elements very scrutinizingly, and thereby come to the conclusion that material nature is the cause of everything. They do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes.

3. Nyāya philosophers like Gautama and Kaṇāda accept the combination and interaction of atoms as the original cause of the creation, and inductive logic can arrive at the Absolute Truth. This philosophy is very similar to modern materialistic science.

4. Māyāvādī philosophers say that everything is an illusion. Headed by philosophers like Aṣṭāvakra and Śaṅkara, they stress the impersonal Brahman effulgence as the cause of everything.

5. Philosophers following the precepts of Patañjali practice rāja-yoga. Their process of self-realization is to imagine a form of the Absolute Truth within many forms.

All five kinds of atheistic philosophers understand that impersonal Brahman is without material qualities, but they believe that when the Personality of Godhead appears, He is contaminated and
covered by the material qualities. For them, Nirguṇa Brahman means “the impersonal Absolute Truth without any material qualities” and Saguṇa Brahman means “the Absolute Truth accepts a form of contaminated material qualities.” All these types of philosophical speculation are varieties of Māyāvāda philosophy; they reject the predominance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and strive to establish their own philosophical theories.

So atheism and materialism are not new; they have existed in various forms, under different names and teachers, for many millennia. The fact is, however, that the Absolute Truth never has anything to do with material qualities because He is transcendental. He is always complete with full spiritual qualities. By writing Vedānta-sūtra, emphasizing the essence of all Vedic literature, Śrīla Vyāsadeva established the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, defeating the five kinds of atheistic philosophy. Because Vyāsadeva is the original Vedic authority, he is known as Vedavyāsa. Only his philosophical explanation of the Vedānta-sūtra is accepted by the intelligent devotees. As Kṛṣṇa confirms in the Bhagavad-gītā (15.15):

\[
\begin{align*}
sarvasya cāhain hṛdi sanniviṣṭo \\
matatāḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca \\
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo \\
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham \\
\end{align*}
\]

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known; indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.”

From the 12th śūtra [ānandamaya] to the end of this First Adhyāya, Śrīla Vyāsadeva will prove that the statements of the Vedic literatures are intended to describe Brahman. The First Pāda of Vedānta-sūtra discusses those words of the Vedic literatures which, taken by themselves, would not necessarily refer to Brahman, but which in their Vedic context certainly do refer to Brahman. These transcendental terms are actually qualitatively identical with Brahman, because they help to describe Brahman.

Thus śabda-brahma is a special ontological class of nomenclature that, although composed of ordinary words, is actually transcendental sound vibration because the subject matter it describes is Brahman alone. Since the ultimate purpose of the Vedas is to reveal Brahman to the inquiring soul, actually the entire Vedic literature falls into this category of transcendental sound, even though substantial portions of it describe material subjects, such as religious sacrifices. Not only is it possible for the Vedas to describe Brahman, but because they emanate from Him and because describing Him is their main purpose, they are qualitatively identical with Him. Therefore association with śabda-brahma, the transcendental sound vibration of the Vedas, leads to realization of Brahman and liberation of the living entity from material existence. This is seen and also personally experienced by the faithful devotee who takes complete shelter of such transcendental sound.

**Adhikaraṇa 6: The Supreme Brahman is Full of Bliss**

The saṅgati [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is prati-dṛṣṭānta [counter-illustration]. Viśaya [thesis or statement]: Brahman is full of eternal transcendental bliss, which manifests in His creation in different ways. There is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord's energy known as annamaya, by which one depends simply upon food for existence. *Anna* means food, and here the suffix -maya means a transformation of the original spiritual energy of the Lord. In the beginning of the development of consciousness, every living entity is food-conscious. A child or animal is satisfied simply by getting nice food, and all their thought and activity is centered on getting food. This
annamaya stage of consciousness, in which the goal of life is to eat sumptuously, is a materialistic realization of the Supreme at the lowest stage of consciousness, or animal life.

Then there is prāṇamaya; this means that after realizing the Supreme Absolute Truth as foodstuff, one can perceive and realize the Absolute Truth in the living symptoms of life forms. In this stage the living entity lives in the consciousness of being alive. If he can continue his life without being attacked or destroyed, he thinks himself happy, and his efforts center on getting more energy and power. This level of consciousness is slightly higher than annamaya because it is based on living energy, but it is still in reference to the gross body and is therefore associated with the lower stage of human life.

After this stage, when one’s consciousness is situated on the mental platform, that is called manomaya or jñānamaya. Manomaya indicates the lower mental platform of accepting and rejecting based on sense enjoyment. In jñānamaya the living symptoms develop to the point of thinking, feeling, and willing. This is the intellectual platform, or higher level of human life where knowledge and reason become most important. The material civilization is primarily situated in these three stages: annamaya, prāṇamaya and manomaya or jñānamaya. The first concern of civilized persons is economic development, the next concern is defense against being annihilated, and the next consciousness is mental speculation, the intellectual or philosophical approach to the values of life.

If by the evolutionary intellectual process of philosophical speculation one somehow or other reaches the platform of spiritual understanding—that he is not this material body but is a spirit soul—then by gradual evolution of spiritual life he comes to the understanding of the Supreme Soul or the Supreme Lord. This is spiritual intelligence or Brahman realization, called vijñānamaya, by which the living entity’s gross body, subtle mind and life symptoms are distinguished from the spiritual living entity himself. This is the beginning of real spiritual life.

The final, supreme stage called ānandamaya is realization of the all-blissful personal nature of the Supreme Brahman. When one develops his relationship with Him and executes devotional service, that stage of life is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the ānandamaya stage. Ānandamaya is the blissful life of knowledge and eternity. The Supreme Brahman and the subordinate Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, are both joyful by nature. When the subordinate Brahman or living entities become conscious of their eternal relationship with the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then their real life of perfect enjoyment begins.

This ānandamaya stage is explained in the Bhagavad-gītā as the brahma-bhūtā stage.

brahma-bhūtah prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samah sarvesu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parāṁ

“One who is thus transcendentally situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.54]

This stage begins when one becomes equally disposed toward all living entities, and it then expands to the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in which one always desires to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This desire for advancement in devotional service is not the same as hankering for sense gratification in material existence. In other words, desire is also there in spiritual life, but it becomes purified. When our senses are purified, they become free from all material stages of consciousness, namely annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya and vijñānamaya, and they become situated in the highest stage: ānandamaya, or blissful life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
Thus there are five stages of realization of Brahman, which is called brahma puccham. The first three stages—annamaya, prāṇamaya, and jñānamaya—involve the field of activity or the material body of the living entity. As long as the living entities are situated in the lower four stages of life—annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya and vijñānamaya—they are considered to be in the material condition or conception of life, but as soon as one reaches the stage of ānandamaya he becomes a liberated soul. The Supreme Lord, who is also called ānandamaya, is transcendental to all these fields of activities.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is by nature full of joy, and He expands into vijñānamaya, prāṇamaya, jñānamaya, and annamaya to enjoy His transcendental bliss. In this field of activities the living entity considers himself to be the enjoyer, and the ānandamaya is different from him. As long as the living entity tries to enjoy separately or independently from the Lord, he suffers; but when the living entity decides to enjoy by dovetailing himself with the ānandamaya, then he also achieves perfection and becomes blissful.

Saṁśaya [arising of doubt]: The Māyāvādī impersonalist philosophers consider ānandamaya to be the state of being merged in the Supreme. To them, ānandamaya means that the Supersoul and the individual soul become one. But the real fact is that oneness does not mean merging into the Supreme and losing one’s own individual existence. Merging in the spiritual existence is the living entity’s realization of qualitative oneness with the Supreme Lord in His aspects of sat [eternity] and cit [knowledge]. But the actual ānandamaya [blissful] stage is obtained when one is engaged in devotional service. That is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā verse quoted above. Mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parāṁ: the brahma-bhūtā ānandamaya stage is complete only when there is the exchange of love between the Supreme and the subordinate living entities. Unless one comes to this ānandamaya stage of life, the scriptures say that his breathing is like the breathing of a bellows in a blacksmith’s shop, his duration of life is like that of a tree, and he is no better than the lower animals like the camels, hogs and dogs.


taravah kiṁ na jīvanti
bhastrāḥ kiṁ na śvasanty uta
na khādanti na mehanti
kiṁ grāme paśavo 'pare

“Do the trees not live? Do the bellows of the blacksmith not breathe? All around us, do the beasts not eat and discharge semen?” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.18]

dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te 'nuvidhā
mahad-āham-ādayo 'ṇḍam asṛjan yad-anugrahatah
puruṣa-vidho 'nvayo 'tra caramo 'na-mayādiṣu yaḥ
sad-asataḥ param ivam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam rītam

“Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by Your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the mahat-tattva and false ego, created the egg of this universe. Among the manifestations known as annamaya and so forth, You are the ultimate one, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.17]

viṣayābhiniveśena
nātmāṇam veda nāparam
vrksa jīvikāyā jīvan
vyartham bhastravāya ṣvavan
Because of absorption in sense gratification, one cannot recognize himself or others. Living uselessly in ignorance like a tree, one is merely breathing just like a bellows. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.21.22]

These terms—annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya or jñānamaya, vijñānamaya and ānandamaya—give the complete picture of the Supreme Lord as supreme knower of the field, the living entity as subordinate knower, and the nature of the field of activities or material body and subtle mind, in terms of the development of consciousness. For a more elaborate explanation of these terms, see our article Six Stages of Conscious Evolution.

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: In the passages from Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.6.1] beginning brahma-vid āpnoti param and sa vā eṣa puruso ‘nna-rasamayaḥ, we find a description of the annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, and vijñānamaya stages of existence, and after that we find the following statement:

tasmād vā etasmād vijñānamayād anyo ‘ntarātmānandamayās tenaiṣa pūrṇah. sa vā eṣa puruṣa-vidha eva tasya puruṣa-vidhatām anyayaṁ puruṣa-vidhaḥ. tasya priyam eva śīraḥ. modo daksīṇāḥ pakṣaḥ. pramoda uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ. ānanda ātmā. brahma-pucchaṁ pratiśṭhā.

“Higher than the vijñānamaya stage is the ānandamaya stage of existence. The ānandamaya stage is a person whose head is pleasure [priya], whose right side is joy [moda], whose left side is delight [pramoda], and whose identity is bliss [ānanda]. The ānandamya is Brahman.”

Someone may doubt whether the ānandamaya person spoken of here is the individual conscious living entity or the Supreme Brahman. The impersonalists think that because ānandamaya is described as a person, it must refer to a conditioned conscious living entity residing in a material body, and that this jīva is identical with Brahman.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this argument by speaking the following śūtra:

Sūtra 1.1.12

ānandamayo ‘bhūyāsāt
ānanda–bliss; mayah–full of ; abhyāsāt–because of repetition.

The word ānandamaya [full of bliss] [used in the Vedic literatures must refer to the Supreme Brahman, for it is] repeatedly used [to describe Him.]

The Supreme Brahman is the ānandamaya described in Vedic literature. Why do we say so? Because the word ānanda is repeatedly used to describe the Supreme Brahman in the Vedic literature. The complete passage from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad referenced by this śūtra follows:

“He who knows Brahman attains the highest. On this the following verse is recorded: ‘He who knows Brahman, which is cause, not effect, which is conscious, which is without end, hidden in the depths of the heart, in the highest sky, enjoys all blessings in the company of the all-enjoying Brahman.’

“From that Self [Brahman] sprang ākāśa [ether, space or sky, through which we hear]; from ākāśa sprang air [through which we hear and feel]; from air, fire [through which we hear, feel and see]; from fire, water [through which we hear, feel, see and taste]; from water, earth [through which we hear, feel, see, taste and smell]. From earth sprang herbs; from herbs, food; from food, semen; from semen, man. Man thus consists of the essence of food. This [food] is his head, this is his right arm, this is his trunk [ātman], this is his seat [the support]. On this there is also the following śloka:
“All creatures that dwell on earth are produced from food [anna]. They live by food, and in the end they return to food. For food is the oldest of all beings, and therefore it is called sarvauṣādha [consisting of all herbs]. Those who worship Brahmā as food obtain all food. For food is the oldest of all beings, and is therefore called panacea. All creatures are produced from food; when born, they grow from food. Because it is fed upon, therefore it is called annamaya.’

“Different from this annamaya, which consists of the essence of food, is the other inner Self that consists of breath or life energy [prāṇa]. The annamaya is filled by prāṇa. He also has a human shape; prāṇa is it His head, vyāna is His right arm, apāna is His left arm, ākāśa is His trunk, the earth is His seat. On this there is also the following śloka:

“‘The devas breathe after prāṇa, as do men and cattle. Prāṇa is the life of all beings, therefore it is called sarvāyuṣa [all-enlivening]. Those who worship prāṇa as Brahmā obtain the full energy of life [prāṇamaya]. For prāṇa is the life of all beings, therefore it is called sarvāyuṣa. The inner Self of prāṇamaya is the same as that of annamaya [a human form].’

“Different from this prāṇamaya which consists of the essence of breath, is the other, the inner Self that consists of mind. The prāṇamaya is filled by mind [manomaya]. Similar to the human shape of prāṇamaya is the human shape of the manomaya: the Yajur-veda is His head, the Rg-veda is His right arm, the Sāma-veda is His left arm, the Brāhmaṇa is His trunk, the Atharvaveda is His seat. On this there is also the following śloka:

“‘He who knows the bliss of that Brahmā, from whom all speech and mind turn away unable to reach Him, attains fearlessness.’ The inner Self of the manomaya is the same as that of the prāṇamaya.

“Different from this manomaya, which consists of mind, is the inner Self that consists of understanding [jñāna]. The manomaya is filled with this jñānamaya. He also has the shape of a man, like the human shape of manomaya: faith is His head; what is right is His right arm; what is true is His left arm; absorption in yogic trance is His trunk; great intelligence is His seat. On this there is also the following śloka:

“‘Understanding [jñāna] performs the sacrifice; it performs all the sacred acts. All the devas worship understanding as Brahmā, as the oldest. If a man knows understanding as Brahmā, and if he does not swerve from it, he leaves all evils behind in the body, and attains all his wishes.’ Different from this jñānamaya, which consists of understanding, is the other inner Self that consists of bliss. The jñānamaya is filled with this ānandamaya. He also has the shape of a man, like the human shape of jñānamaya: joy is His head, satisfaction is His right arm, great satisfaction is His left arm, bliss is His trunk, and Brahmā is His seat. On this there is also the following śloka:

“‘One who thinks, “The Supreme Brahmā does not exist” becomes a demonic atheist, and one who thinks, “The Supreme Brahmā does exist” is known as a saint.’ The embodied Self of this ānandamaya is the same as the jñānamaya.”

Thereupon follow the questions of the student:

“Does anyone who does not know [this ānandamaya] ever go to that world [of bliss] after departing this life? Or does only one who knows [this ānandamaya] go to that world [of bliss] after departing this life?”

The answer is:

“He [Brahmā] wished, ‘May I become many; may I grow forth.’ He contemplated Himself, like a man performing penance. After He had thus contemplated, He created all [beings] and
everything that is. Having sent forth the creation, He entered into it. Having entered into it, He became sat [what is manifest] and nyat [what is unmanifest], defined and undefined, supported and unsupported, endowed with consciousness and not conscious, real and unreal. Brahman became all this, and therefore the wise call Him Satya [the Absolute Truth]. On this there is also a śloka:

“‘In the beginning this [creation] was nonexistent, not yet defined by form and name. From it was born whatever exists. The Self [Brahman] made it, therefore it is called the Self-born. That which is Self-born has a flavor [that can be tasted], for only after perceiving a flavor can one taste pleasure. Who could breathe, who could breathe forth, unless that bliss [ānandamaya] existed in the sky of the heart? For He alone causes blessedness.’ When one finds rest and freedom from fear in that which is invisible, incorporeal, undefined, unsupported, then he has obtained the fearless [Brahman]. For if he makes the smallest distinction from it, there is fear for him. But that fear exists only for one who [merely] thinks himself wise [and not for the truly enlightened sage]. On this there is also a śloka:

“‘From fear of Him [Brahman] the wind blows; from fear of Him the sun rises; from fear of Him Agni and Indra, even Death perform their duties.’ Now this is the definition of what is meant by ānanda [bliss]: Let there be a noble young man who is well read in the Vedas, very swift, firm and strong, and let the whole world be full of wealth for him; that is one measure of human bliss.

“‘One hundred times that human bliss is one measure of the bliss of human Gandharvas [angels], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the human Gandharvas is one measure of the bliss of divine Gandharvas [archangels], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the divine Gandharvas is one measure of the bliss of the Forefathers [pitrīs], enjoying their long sojourn in the heavenly realms, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the Forefathers is one measure of the bliss of the Demigods [devas], born in the Ajana heaven through the merit of their good karma, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the devas born in the Ajana heaven is one measure of the bliss of the sacrificial devas, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the sacrificial devas is one measure of the bliss of the 33 principal devas, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of the 33 principal devas is one measure of the bliss of Indra, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of Indra is one measure of the bliss of Brhaspati, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of Brhaspati is one measure of the bliss of Prajāpati [Lord Brahmā], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“‘One hundred times that bliss of Prajāpati is one measure of the bliss of Brahman, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“He who is this Brahman in man, and He who is that Brahman in the sun are one. He who knows [this Brahman], when he departs from this world, reaches the Self of food [annamaya],
the Self of breath [prāṇamaya], the Self of mind [manomaya], the Self of understanding [jñānamaya] and the Self of bliss [ānandamaya].

“He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, from Whom words and the mind recoil, not finding Him, fears nothing. Truly, thoughts like ‘Why did I not do the good? Why did I do the evil?’ do not afflict him. He who knows this Brahman pleases his self with both of these. Yes, he pleases his self with both of these. Indeed, this is the Upaniṣad.”

Directly following the description of ānandamaya in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.6.1] quoted above, we find the following statement:

\[
\text{asann eva sambhavati asad brahmeti veda cet}
\]

\[
\text{asī brahmeti ced veda santam enaṁ tato viduḥ}
\]

“One who thinks, ‘The Supreme Brahman does not exist’ becomes a demonic atheist, and one who thinks, ‘The Supreme Brahman does exist’ is known as a saint.”

In this passage the word Brahman was repeated. This repetition is called abhyāsa in the sūtra under discussion. Abhyāsa means repeating a word without any qualifications. In the previous quotation from Taittirīya Upaniṣad, the word Brahman appeared in the word brahma-puccham, but in that case the word only occurred once, and therefore there was no abhyāsa or repetition. So it is this Brahman, which is the cause of all the other aspects or embodiments of Brahman known as annamaya, etc., that is the ānandamaya, the knowledge of whom saves one from all fear, and whose bliss is calculated as 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 times the measure of human bliss.

We also see that the Supreme Person is repeatedly described as full of bliss in the Vedic scriptures. The śruti-manzras declare:

\[
\text{satyaṁ brahma, ānanda-rūpam}
\]

“Brahman is the Absolute Truth and complete ānanda, or bliss.”

\[
\text{muktā hy etam upāsate, muktānām api bhaktir hi paramānanda-rūpiṇī}
\]

“Even those who are liberated worship Him, and even for them devotional service is the embodiment of supreme bliss.”

\[
\text{amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānāṁ}
\]

\[
\text{caraṇāṁ no loke su-dhitāṁ dadhātu}
\]

“May His feet, which bountifully pour forth floods of nectar, bestow wisdom upon us who are living in this world.”

\[
\text{vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma}
\]

“The supreme reality is divine knowledge and bliss.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.34]

In his Vedānta-bhāṣya Śrīla Madhvācārya cites the following passage from the śruti:

\[
\text{vāsudevah saṅkarṣaṇaḥ pradyumno 'niruddho 'ham masyaḥ kūrmo varāho narasīṁho vāmano rāmo rāmo rāmāḥ krṣṇo buddhāḥ kalkir aham śatadāhāṁ sahasradhāhāṁ amito 'ham ananto 'ham naivaite jāyante naivaite mriyante naiśāṁ ajñāna-bandho na muktiḥ sarva eva hy ete pūrṇā ajārā amṛtāḥ paramāḥ paramānandāḥ.}
\]

“I am Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. I am Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasīṁha, Vāmana, the three Rāmas [Rāmacandra, Paraśurāma and Balarāma], Krṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. Immeasurable and unlimited, I appear in hundreds and thousands of forms, none of which ever takes birth or dies. These forms of Mine are not bound by ignorance, nor do they
have to strive for liberation. They are all complete, free from old age, immortal, supreme and supremely blissful.”

The Dhyāna-bindu Upaniṣad states:

\[
nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇa-vigraha ātma-tantro niścetanātmaka- śarīra-guṇaiś ca hīnaiḥ/ ānanda-mātra-mukha-pāda-sarorūhādīth
\]

“[The Lord's] personal form possesses complete and faultless transcendental qualities. Indeed, the form of the completely independent Lord is free from all material bodily characteristics. His lotus face and lotus feet consist simply of pure ecstacy.”

The Vāsudeva Upaniṣad states,

\[
sad-rūpam advayam brahma madhyādy-anta-vivarjitaṁ/ sva-prabhaṁ sac-cid-ānandaṁ bhaktīyā jānati cāvyayam
\]

“The Lord’s transcendental form is the Absolute Truth, devoid of duality or of middle, beginning or end. It is self-effulgent, eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. Only through devotional service can one understand that form to be infallible.”

The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa states,

\[
nanda-vraja-janānandī sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
\]

“The body of the Lord, who gives ecstacy to the residents of King Nanda's pastures, is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss.”

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [3.8], the Supreme is described as follows:

\[
ānanda-mātram ajaraṁ purāṇam ekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā drśyamānam
\]

“The Supreme is blissful, with no tinge of unhappiness. Although He is the oldest, He never ages, and although one, He is experienced in different forms.”

As stated in the Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad [1.38]:

\[
govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūraha-talāśīnaṁ satataṁ sa-marud-gaṇo 'ham paramayā styūyā tasayāmi
\]

“With transcendental prayers, I and the Maruts are always trying to satisfy Lord Govinda, whose personal form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, and who is sitting amidst the celestial desire trees of Vṛndāvana.”

Lord Brahma prayed to the Supreme Lord:

\[
ekas tvam ātmā puruṣah purāṇah satyah svayaṁ-jyotir ananta ādyah nityo 'ksaro 'jasra-sukho nirāṅjanah pūrṇādvayo mukta upādhiito 'ṁṛtaḥ
\]

“You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth—self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations. Your happiness can never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.23]

In the Tāttviriya Upaniṣad [2.7.1] it is said:

\[
raso vai saḥ rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.
\]
“He Himself is *rasa*, the taste or mellow of a particular relationship. And certainly one who achieves this *rasa* becomes *ānādī*, filled with bliss.”

*eṣaḥ *evānandayati. *yadāḥ *hy evaiṣa *etasmin *na *drṣye *nātye *anirukte *nilayane *bhayāṁ *pratiśṭhāṁ *vindate *tha *so *bhayāṁ *gato *bhavati.

“A living entity becomes established in spiritual, blissful life when he fully understands that his happiness depends on spiritual self-realization, which is the basic principle of *ānanda* [bliss], and when he is eternally situated in the service of the Lord, who has no other lord above Him.”

If a living entity becomes situated in bliss simply by serving the Lord, then what to speak of the Lord Himself? And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.14.32] we find,

*yān-mitrāṁ *paramānandāṁ *pūrṇāṁ *brahma *sanātam

“The source of supreme transcendental bliss, the eternal, complete Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.”

*satyā-jiñānānantānanda- mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah

*asyṛṣṭa-bhūrī-māhātmyā

*api *hy *upanīṣad-drśām

The *viṣṇu-mūrtis* all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the *jiñānīs* engaged in studying the *Upaniṣads.*” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.13.54]

There are many, many similar verses that describe the Supreme Brahman as full of blissfulness, *ānandamaya*. Therefore as the śūtra under discussion states, “*ānandamaya* must be accepted to refer to the Supreme Brahman, because of the repetition in the scriptures.”

The passage of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* beginning with the verse *annād vai prajāḥ prajāyante* quoted above describe the *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya*, and *vijñānamaya* levels of existence. Each of these levels is progressively higher than the preceding one, and after them the *ānandamaya* level, which is different in quality, is the highest of all. This will be more elaborately explained in the passage following *Śūtra* 3.3.13 of this book.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “These stages of existence [*annamaya, prāṇamaya* etc.] describe the conditioned conscious living entities who have fallen into the raging river of material suffering. Why has the stage of blissfulness [*ānandamaya*] been made the chief of these stages of suffering?”

To this objection I reply: These stages of existence [*annamaya, prāṇamaya* etc.] actually describe expansions of the energy of Brahman in the creation, which are gradually realized by the conditioned living entities. But even if you interpret *annamaya, prāṇamaya* etc. as descriptions of progressively subtler stages of consciousness of the conditioned living entities, there is no fault in this. The all-blissful Personality of Brahman is present in the hearts of all the suffering conditioned conscious living entities, and therefore it is perfectly appropriate to mention them together. The Vedic literatures speak in this way to make a difficult subject matter intelligible for the less intelligent common man. Just as one may point out a small, difficult-to-see star such as Arundhati [Alcor, the tiny companion of Mizar in the constellation of Ursa Major] by first pointing to its nearby easy-to-see companion, and then lead the viewer from that reference point to the tiny Arundhati, in the same way the Vedic literatures first describe the suffering-filled life of the conditioned conscious living entities, and then from that reference point teach about the all-blissful Personality of Brahman. So the *Upaniṣad* first points out Brahman as *annamaya*, the energy of the Supreme Brahman as food, then gradually proceeds to more
and more subtle descriptions of Brahman until reaching ānandamaya, the original Brahman, who is the source of all the others.

At this point someone may raise the following question: “Is it not, then, that the Vedic literatures mostly describe these reference-points to lead the reader indirectly to the Supreme, topics other than the Supreme Brahman, or do they mostly describe Brahman directly?”

I answer this question: Brahman is directly described throughout the Vedic literatures, because the final conclusion of the Vedas is Brahman. Just like a book on musical composition may begin by describing the notes of the scale and other preliminary subjects; even if the majority of the text is taken up with these preliminaries, the book as a whole is still about musical composition, because its ultimate purpose is to describe that subject to the reader. Similarly the Vedas describe the categories of the creation emanated by Brahman before describing Brahman Himself; therefore even though they devote so much space to subjects other than Brahman, their ultimate purpose is to describe Brahman, so actually they are describing Brahman the whole time.

For example, in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Varuṇa, upon being asked by his son to teach him about Brahman, explains to him that Brahman is the original creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the material universes. He further explains that the ānandamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, and vijñānamaya stages of existence, one by one, are all Brahman. Then he explains that the ānandamaya stage is the final Brahman. After explaining this, Varuṇa concludes his teaching by confirming that he has spoken a true description of the Personality of Brahman. He says:

\[
\text{etam ānandamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya imān lokān}
\]
\[
kāmāni kāma-rūpy anusaṅcaramān etat sama gāyān āste
\]

“The leaving his material body, one who understands the supreme ānandamaya person leaves this material world and enters the spiritual world. All his desires become fulfilled, he attains a spiritual form according to his own wish, and he dedicates himself to glorifying that supreme ānandamaya person.”

This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gīta [14.26]:

\[
māṁ ca yo ‘vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samātītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate
\]

“One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

So even though the description of annamaya, prāṇamaya, etc. may superficially seem to be materialistic, because the final conclusion is that they are all energies emanated by Brahman, actually the whole passage is about Brahman. Similarly even though there may be so many apparently materialistic passages in the Vedas as a whole, the ultimate conclusion is that everything is emanated from Brahman; therefore the Vedas, as a whole, describe nothing but Brahman.

That the ānandamaya person in the Vedic literatures is actually the Supreme Brahman is also described in the following statement of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [10.87.17]:

\[
puruṣa-vidhō ‘nvayo ‘tra caramo ‘nnamyādiṣu yah
sad asataḥ param tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣāṁrtam
\]

“Among the manifestations known as annamaya and so forth, You are the ultimate one, ānandamaya, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming
the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.”

We may note in this connection that it is not contradictory or illogical to say that the Supreme Brahman has a form. The form of the Supreme is described throughout the Vedic literatures. For example, the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [3.7.3] explains:

**prthivī śarīram**

“The material universe is the body of the Personality of Brahman.”

It is because the Personality of Brahman has a form [śarīra], that this book, the Vedānta-sūtra, is also called Śārīraka-sūtra [sūtras glorifying the Personality of Brahman, who has a form]. But as described above, the form of the Lord, being composed of transcendental bliss, is completely spiritual.

Some may say that the word ānandamaya does not refer to the Supreme Brahman, and that only the word brahma-puccham [the support of Brahman; ultimate Brahman] actually refers to Brahman. This proposal is not very intelligent, because it ignores the fact that Brahman’s energies, while different from Him, are also simultaneously one with Him.

**parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca**

“The Supreme Lord has multi-potencies, which act so perfectly that all consciousness, strength and activity are being directed solely by His will.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8]

**loke vitatam ātmānaṁ lokam cātmanī santatam ubhayam ca mayā vyāptaṁ mayi caiva bhayaṁ kṛtam**

“In this world of matter, which the conditioned soul accepts as consisting of enjoyable resources, the conditioned soul expands, thinking that he is the enjoyer of the material world. Similarly, the material world expands in the living entity as a source of enjoyment. In this way they both expand, but because they are My energies, they are both pervaded by Me. As the Supreme Lord, I am the cause of these effects, and one should know that both cause and effect, material and spiritual energies, rest in Me.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.52]

The Vedic scriptures regard the material energies as forms or embodiments of Brahman, because the total material energy [mahat-tattva] emanates from Him, and because the material energy follows His will in all respects. This view is reflected in the well-known Antaryāmi passage [3.7.3] of the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad, included in its entirety below:

“He who dwells in the earth and within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, and who rules the earth within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]”

“He who dwells in the water and within the water, whom the water does not know, whose body is the water, and who rules the water within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]”

“He who dwells in the fire and within the fire, whom the fire does not know, whose body is the fire, and who rules the fire within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]”

“He who dwells in the sky and within the sky, whom the sky does not know, whose body is the sky, and who rules the sky within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]”
“He who dwells in the air and within the air, whom the air does not know, whose body is the air, and who rules the air within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in heaven and within heaven, whom heaven does not know, whose body is heaven, and who rules heaven within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the sun and within the sun, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun, and who rules the sun within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in space and within space, whom space does not know, whose body is space, and who rules the space within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the moon and stars and within the moon and stars, whom the moon and stars do not know, whose body is the moon and stars, and who rules the moon and stars within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the ākāśa and within the ākāśa, whom the ākāśa does not know, whose body is the ākāśa, and who rules the ākāśa within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the darkness and within the darkness, whom the darkness does not know, whose body is the darkness, and who rules the darkness within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the light and within the light, whom the light does not know, whose body is the light, and who rules the light within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

In fact the Vedānta-sūtra is sometimes called Śārīraka-mīmāṁsā, because it deals extensively with the forms or embodiments of the Supreme Brahman.

Some others may object that “The word ānandamaya does not refer to Brahman because the suffix -maya means transformation.” They think that the word ānandamaya [transformation of bliss] cannot refer to the Supreme Brahman because He is naturally full of bliss, and not a transformation of some pre-existing state of happiness. For this reason the word ānandamaya must refer to the individual conscious living entity, and not Brahman. In order to refute this argument, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following śūtra:

**Sūtra 1.1.13**

vikāra-śabdāṁ neti cen na pracuryāt

vikāra–transformation; śabdāt–from the word; na–not; iti–thus; cet–if; na–not; pracuryāt–because of abundance.

If [someone argues that the Supreme Brahman cannot be the same as the ānandamaya person described in the Vedas] because the suffix -maya means ‘transformation’, [and the Supreme Brahman is not a transformation of ānanda, or bliss, then I reply by saying that] because the suffix -maya used here means ‘abundance’, this interpretation is not correct, [and therefore the word ānandamaya should be understood to mean “He who is filled with limitless bliss”].

The word ānandamaya does not mean “he who is a transformation of bliss.” Why? Because the suffix -maya here means ‘abundance,’ and therefore the word ānandamaya means “He who is filled with limitless bliss.” It occurs in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, which is a portion of the Vedas. The rules of Sanskrit grammar state that “the affix -maya may not be used to mean ‘transformation’ in vaidika
The word ānanda has three syllables, and therefore when the word ānandamaya appears in the vaidika text of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, it cannot be interpreted to mean “he who is a transformation of bliss.”

Thus ānandamaya does not mean mere absence of sorrow, but an overflowing abundance of transcendental bliss. The Supreme Brahman, therefore, is not only free from all suffering, but filled with limitless bliss. This is confirmed by the following statements of Vedic scripture:

\[
\text{eṣa sarva-bhūtāntarātmāpahata-pāpmā divyo deva eko nārāyaṇaḥ}
\]

“There is one Personality of Brahman: Brahman Nārāyaṇa. He is the transcendental Superconscious living entity in the hearts of all living entities, and He is completely free from all sin.” [Subala Upaniṣad]

\[
\text{parāḥ parāṇāṁ sakālā na yatra kleśādayah sānti parāvareśah}
\]

“He is the highest of the high, the Supreme Being. Suffering is not experienced by the Personality of Brahman.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

When the affix maya means ‘abundance’, it also implies the meaning ‘essential nature.’ Therefore, when we use jyotirmaya [full of light] to mean the sun, the affix -maya can also be understood to mean ‘essential nature.’ In this way the word jyotirmaya means “that of which the essential nature is light.” In this way the word ānandamaya may also be interpreted to mean “He whose essential nature is full of bliss.” From all this it may be understood that the word ānandamaya clearly refers to the Personality of Brahman. It does not refer to the individual conscious living entity.

Sūtra 1.1.14

\[
tad-hetu-vyapadeśāca
tat–of that; hetu–the origin; vyapadeśāt–because of the statement; ca–also.
\]

Because the Vedic literatures state [that the ānandamaya person is] the source [of bliss for others, it should be understood that the ānandamaya person is the Personality of Brahman, and not the individual conscious living entity].

This is confirmed by the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.7]:

\[
\text{ko hy evāṇyat kaḥ prāṇyāt yady eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt. esa evāṇandayati.}
\]

“Well is that person without whom the living entities cannot feel happiness? That is the Personality of Brahman, who delights the individual conscious living entities.”

This passage explains that the Supreme Brahman is the origin of happiness for the individual conscious living entities. From this we may understand that the cause of happiness [the Personality of Brahman], and the receiver of happiness [the individual conscious living entity] must be different persons. They cannot be identical. Therefore the word ānandamaya refers to the Personality of Brahman only. We may also note that the word ānanda used in this passage of Taittirīya Upaniṣad is identical in significance with the word ānandamaya in the passages quoted above.

The transcendental delight experienced in the presence of the Supreme Brahman cannot be compared with any other form of happiness, because it is pure, imperishable, ever-increasing, causeless transcendental bliss. This happiness is natural for the spiritual living entities because they are expansions or emanations from Brahman, who is a limitless ocean of such bliss. But because we have accepted a materialistic worldview in which we are separated from Brahman, we have to endure the
incompleteness and suffering of material existence. This is a spiritual disease akin to jaundice, where the patient sees everything as yellow. Similarly, we see everything including ourselves as separate from Brahman, although everything is actually connected with Him. Association with the transcendental sound vibration of the Vedas is the cure for this existential disease.

Sūtra 1.1.15

 mantra-varṇikam eva ca gīyate

 mantra–by the mantra portion of the Vedas; varṇikam–described; eva–certainly; ca–also; gīyate–is described.

 [The same Personality of Brahman] described in the mantra portion of the Vedas is also described [as the ānandamaya person in the text of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad].

The same Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic mantra, satyam jñānam anantam brahma, “The Supreme Brahman has no limits. He is eternal and full of knowledge,” is also described in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad by the word ānandamaya. In this way the above sūtra explains that the word ānandamaya does not refer to the individual living entity. Further, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad begins with the declaration:

 brahma-vid āpnoti param

“One who understands the Supreme Brahman attains the Supreme Brahman.”

 anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktāv kalevaram
 yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvam yāti nāsty atra saṁśayah

“Anyone who quits his body, at the end of life, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this.” [Bhagavad-gītā 8.5]

 asevayāyaṁ prākṛter guṇānāṁ
 jñānena vairāgya-vijñābhisena
 yogena maya arpitayā ca bhaktīyā
 māṁ pratyaṅga-ātmānām ihōvarundhe

“Thus by not engaging in the service of the modes of material nature but by developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, knowledge in renunciation, and by practicing yoga, in which the mind is always fixed in devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one achieves My association in this very life, for I am the Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.27]

These passages explain that the individual living entity worships the Supreme Brahman and then attains the association of that Supreme Brahman. This is the same Supreme Brahman previously described in the mantra, satyam jñānam anantam brahma. This is the same Supreme Brahman described by the word ānandamaya, the same Supreme Brahman described in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad in the passage beginning tasmād vā etasmāt:

 “Higher than the vijñānāmaya stage is the ānandamaya stage of existence. The ānandamaya stage is a person whose head is pleasure [priya], whose right side is joy [moda], whose left side is delight [pramoda], and whose identity is bliss [ānanda]. The ānandamaya is Brahman.”

Because the Supreme Brahman is the object of attainment for the individual conscious living entity, and because the object of attainment and the attainer must be two distinct entities, they cannot be identical; the Supreme Brahman and the individual living entities must be distinct persons, and
therefore the word ānandamaya refers only to the Personality of Brahman and not to the individual living entities.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “If the Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic mantras were different from the individual living entity, then the individual living entities could not be the ānandamaya person described in the scriptures. The actual fact is that the Supreme Brahman and the individual living entities are identical. The Vedic mantras state that when the individual conscious living entity is free from ignorance and liberated from material bondage, then he become identical with the Supreme Brahman.”

To answer this objection, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following sūtra.

**Sūtra 1.1.16**

netaro 'nupapatteḥ

na–not; itarah–the other; upapatteḥ–because it is illogical.

The other person [individual living entity] is not described [in the mantra satyam jñānam anantam brahma,] because [such an interpretation of the mantra] is illogical.

The itara [other person] mentioned in this sūtra is the individual living entity. This sūtra, therefore, states that the individual conscious living entity, even in the liberated condition, cannot be the Supreme Person described in the mantra, satyam jñānam anantam brahma. This is confirmed by the following statement of Vedic literature:

so 'śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaścitet

“The liberated conscious living entity enjoys the fulfillment of all his desires in the company of the omniscient Supreme Brahman.”

In this passage the difference between the liberated conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman is described in the words “He enjoys in the company of the Supreme Brahman.” The word vipascit means “He whose consciousness [cit] sees [paśyati] the great variety of that which exists [vividham]. The word paśya is changed to paś in this word by the grammatical formula prśodarādi-gaṇa [Pāṇini 6.3.109]. The liberated individual conscious living entity attains the association of the Personality of Brahman, who is expert at enjoying many varieties of transcendental bliss, and the individual conscious living entity enjoys with Him, fulfilling all his desires.

The word asnute should be understood in this context to mean ‘enjoys’. The verb aś means ‘to enjoy’, and although we would expect it to be conjugated in the parasmaipada, [aśnāti], in this passage it is conjugated in the ātmanepada [aśnute]. The reason for this is explained by Pāṇini in the sūtra, vyatyayo bahulam iti chandasi tathā smṛteḥ [3.1.85].

The Personality of Brahman is naturally the Supreme Enjoyer, and the individual conscious living entity is His subordinate in the matter of enjoyment. Still, the Personality of Brahman glorifies the liberated conscious living entities when He says:

mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāh
sādhavaḥ sama-darśānāḥ
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktīyā
sat-striyāḥ sat-patiṁ yathā

“As chaste women bring their gentle husbands under control by service, the pure devotees, who are equal to everyone and completely attached to Me in the core of the heart, bring Me under their full control.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.66]
Sūtra 1.1.17

bheda-vyapadeśāc ca
bheda–difference; vyapadeśāt–because of the statement; ca–also.

[The Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity are] different, because the Vedic literature teaches this fact.

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad [7.1] explains:

raso vai saḥ rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.

“When one understands the Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of pleasure Kṛṣṇa, he actually becomes transcendently blissful.”

This passage clearly shows the difference between the liberated individual conscious living entity and the Personality of Brahman, whom the Vedic mantras describe as ānandamaya, and who is the transcendental nectar attained by the individual conscious living entity by following the Vedic system of self-realization. This difference is also described in the following statement of Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [4.4.6]:

brahmaiva san brahmāpnoti

“After becoming Brahman, the individual conscious living entity attains Brahman.”

This statement does not mean that after liberation the individual conscious living entity becomes nondifferent from the Supreme Brahman, but rather the liberated conscious living entity becomes similar to Brahman in quality and consciousness, and in this condition meets Brahman and attains His association. This is confirmed by the following statement of Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad [3.1.31]:

niraṇjanah paramāṁ sāmyam upaiti

“This liberated conscious living entity becomes like the Personality of Brahman.”

Also, in the Bhagavad-gītā [14.2], the Personality of Brahman declares:

idaṁ jīnānam upāsritya mama sādharmyam āgatāḥ

“By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature, which is like My own nature.”

In this way the Vedic literatures teach us that the liberated conscious living entities become qualitatively similar the Personality of Brahman. However they do not state that the living entities become equal to Brahman in every way, especially quantitatively. This concept is the foundation of the philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference between the jīva and Brahman, known as acintya-bhedābheda-tattva. The living entities are qualitatively similar to, and quantitatively different from Brahman.

The principle of material creation is the sum total of the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—technically called the pradhāna. The Vedic hymns sarvāṁ hy etad brahma [Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 1.1.2], tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annaṁ ca jāyate [Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.2.10], and, in the Bhagavad-gītā [14.3], mama yonir mahad brahma indicate that everything in the material world is a manifestation of Brahman; and although the effects are manifested in combinations and permutations of three different modes, they are nondifferent from the cause. Therefore those who, according to atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy, accept prakṛti, the manifested material nature, as the original cause of the cosmic manifestation are incorrect in their conclusion. The material nature has no separate existence without the Lord.
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [3.26.10] states,

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yat tat tri-gunam avyaktāṁ
nityam sad-asad-ātmakam
pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur
avisēṣam viśeṣavat

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “The unmanifested eternal combination of the three modes is called pradhāna, and it is the cause of the manifest state. It is called prakṛti when in the manifested stage of existence.”

Pradhāna is the subtle, undifferentiated sum total of all material elements. Although the elements are undifferentiated, the potential to manifest the total material elements is contained in pradhāna. When the total material elements are manifested by the interaction of the three modes of material nature with material time, the manifestation is called prakṛti. Impersonalists say that Brahman is without variegatedness and differentiation. Some philosophers say that pradhāna is the Brahman stage of matter, but actually the Brahman stage is different from pradhāna. Pradhāna is distinct from Brahman because in Brahman there is no existence of the material modes of nature.

Pradhāna is the sum total of all material elements before the creation, when the reaction of the total elements with time does not take place, and the interactions of cause and effect are potential, or not yet manifested (avyakta). Pradhāna is separate from the time element because the time element contains actions and reactions, creation and annihilation. Nor is it the jīva, or marginal potency of materially designated, conditioned living entities, because the designations of the living entities are not eternal. One adjective used in this connection is nitya, which indicates eternality; the principle of the material creation is eternal, but the manifestation is temporary because it is controlled by the Supreme Lord in His form of time. Therefore the pradhāna is a potential state of material nature immediately previous to its manifestation.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is not the pradhāna feature of the mode of material goodness [sattva-guṇa] the actual origin of the ānandamaya person?” Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this objection in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.18

kāmāc ca nānumānāpekṣā
kāmāt–because of desire; ca–also; na–not; anumāna–to the theory; apeksā–in relation.

[The ānandamaya person] cannot be [a product of the mode of material goodness], because [the mode of goodness is insentient and desireless, whereas the ānandamaya person] is filled with desires.

The Taittiriya Upaniṣad explains:

so ‘kāmayata bahu syāṁ prajāyeya

“The Personality of Brahman desired: Let Me become many. Let Me father many living entities.”

In this way the śruti-śāstra explains that the universe was created by the desire of the ānandamaya person. Because the ānandamaya person is thus filled with desires, it is not possible for the pradhāna mode of material goodness, which is lifeless, insentient, and desireless, to be that ānandamaya person.
Many people think that simply by performing pious activities and cultivating the qualities of goodness such as nonviolence, charity, scriptural knowledge and so on, they can attain the highest destination. While these qualities of the mode of goodness are certainly praiseworthy and recommended, they are preliminary to actual self-realization, therefore they cannot elevate us to the highest destination because the ānandamaya person or Brahman is actually transcendental to all material qualities, even goodness.

Personality, individuality, cognition, desire, emotion, will, initiative, creativity, thought, reason, memory, imagination, life energy, activity, enjoyment and so on are all actually symptoms of the spirit soul or living entity. The proof of this is that when the living entity leaves the material body at the time of death, all these subtle qualities disappear simultaneously. Because these qualities belong to the living entity and not the body, they are actually spiritual. Since Brahman is the source of the spiritual living entities, we would naturally expect to find the same qualities in Him, but in unlimited abundance.

So all the most desirable qualities of the living entity are spiritual, and not a manifestation of the modes of material nature, which are inert and mechanical. Similarly the qualities of Brahman are spiritual, not material. Even though the qualities of goodness—purity, learning, self-discipline and so on—may be desirable, from the point of view of the Vedas it is not for their own sake, but because they are necessary-but-not-sufficient preliminaries to self-realization.

Sūtra 1.1.19

asminn asya ca tad-yogam śāsti
asmīn—in that ānandamaya person; asya—of the individual conscious living entity; ca—also; tat—of fearlessness; yogam—contact; sasti—the Vedic scriptures teach.

[The ānandamaya person cannot be manifested from the pradhāna mode of material goodness, because] the Vedic scriptures teach that contact with the ānandamaya person brings fearlessness [to the individual conscious living entity].

The śruti-śāstra teaches that by taking shelter of the ānandamaya person, the individual conscious living entity attains fearlessness, and by declining to take shelter of Him, the conscious living entity becomes plagued with all kinds of fear. This confirmed by the Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.7.2] in the passage beginning with the words yadā hy eva:

“When he finds repose and freedom from fear in that which is invisible, incorporeal, undefined, unsupported, then he has obtained fearlessness. For if he makes the slightest separation from Him, there is fear for him. But that fear exists only for those who think themselves wise, not for the true enlightened sage.”

On the other hand, contact with the material nature brings fear to the individual conscious living entities. The material nature does not bring a condition of fearlessness to the living entities, and for this reason it is not possible that the pradhāna mode of material goodness is the ānandamaya person.

bhayaṁ dvitiyāḥhiniveśataḥ syād
iśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyāyāto buddha abhajet tam
bhaktayaikayeśāṁ guru-devatātāmā

“Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called māyā. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service
of the Lord under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.37]

Therefore, the ānandamaya person is the Personality of Brahman, Hari. The ānandamaya person is not the individual conscious living entity or the material nature, because neither of them can deliver us from fear. But if the living entity takes shelter of the Vedic process under competent guidance, he can attain complete fearlessness.

**Adhikāraṇa 7: The Nature of the Supreme Person Within**

*Viṣṇya* [thesis or statement]: The wonderful *puruṣa* described as follows in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.6-7 is Brahman:

“The *devī* Sarasvatī called Rk verily pervades this earth; the *deva* Vāyu called Sāman pervades fire; therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Rk. Sā is this earth, and *Ama* is fire and that makes Sāma [Vedic hymn sung as a sacrificial offering].

“The *devī* Sarasvatī as presiding over sky is verily Rk, the *deva* Vāyu as presiding over air is Sāman. This Sāman is refuged in that Rk. The sky is Sā and the air is *Ama*, and thus the Sāma is made.

“The heaven Sarasvatī is verily Rk, and the sun Vāyu is Sāman, this Sāman is sung as based on the Rk, heaven is Sā and the sun is *Ama*, thus is Sāma made.

“The *devī* Sarasvatī dwelling in the stars is verily Rk and the *deva* Vāyu in the moon is Sāman. This Sāman is refuged on that Rk. Sā is the stars, *Ama* the moon, and thus Sāma is made.

“Now that which is the white light of the sun indeed is Rk; again that which is the blue, exceeding dark light of the sun, that verily is Sāman. Thus Sāman [darkness] is refuged in that Rk [light]; therefore the Sāman is sung as refuged on the Rk. Now the Sā is the white light of the sun; and the blue and deep dark is *Ama*, and that makes Sāma.

“Now that Being residing within Vāyu and Sarasvatī who is seen in the sun in meditation as full of intense joy, with joy as beard, joy as hair, joy altogether to the very tips of His nails,

“His two eyes are like a fresh red lotus. His mystic Name is Ut, for He has risen [udita] above all sins. He who knows this verily also rises above all sins.

“Rk and Sāma [Sarasvatī and chief Vāyu] are the minstrels of the Lord; therefore he [the chanter in a Vedic sacrifice] is called Udgātri. He, the Lord called Ut, is the ruler of the worlds above the plane of heaven. He rules those words and awards the desired objects to the devas. This is *adhīdītvata* [cosmological conception].

“Now the psychological conception [adhiātmika]. The Rk is speech, and the Sāma is the organ of respiration. Thus respiration is seen to rest in the organ of speech. Therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Rk. Sā is the organ of speech, and *Ama* is the organ of respiration. That makes Sāma.

“The eye is the Rk, and the jīva is the Sāman. This Sāman is seen to rest on the Rk, therefore the Sāman is sung as resting on the Rk. Sā is the eye, and *Ama* is the jīva; and that makes Sāma.

“The ear is the Rk and the mind is the Sāman. This Sāman is seen to rest on the Rk therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Rk. Sā is the ear, and *Ama* is the mind. That makes Sāma.
“Now the white light of the eye is indeed Ṛk, and the blue exceeding dark light of the eye is Sāman. This Sāman is refuged on that Ṛk. Therefore the Sāman is sung as refuged on the Ṛk. Sā is the white light of the eye, and Ama is the blue exceeding dark light, and that makes Sāma.

“Now the person who is seen in the eye is the all-wise, all-harmonious and uplifter of all. He is all-adorable, He is all-full. The form of the person in the eye is the same as the form of the other person in the sun, the minstrels of the one are the minstrels of the other, the name Ut of the one, is the name of the other.

“He is the Lord who rules the worlds beneath the physical, and awards all the wishes of men. Therefore all who sing any song, really sing to Him, and thus they actually attain all wealth from Him.

“Now he who knowing this sings a Sāman, sings to both, he really sings as if inspired by Him, and obtains the worlds beyond that and the wishes of the devas.

“Now through this alone he obtains all the lower worlds and the desires of the human beings. Therefore the Udgātri who knows this should say: ‘To accomplish what particular desire of yours, O Yajamāṇa, shall I sing?’ For he, who knowing this, sings out the Sāman, is able to accomplish the desires of his Yajamāṇa through his song, yea, through his song.”

In the Vedic conception of cosmology, everything is living, personal and intelligent. The universe is not some vast clockwork machine, wound up at the time of creation and now slowly running down according to the laws of thermodynamics. The personal form of the Lord, and the impersonal energy of the Lord known as the brahmajyoti, are clearly explained in the Vedas as the actual causes of the creation, maintenance and ultimate destruction of the cosmic creation. The brahmajyoti or effulgence of the personal form of the Lord is compared to the radiation of the sun. The sunshine may expand all over the universe, but the source of the sunshine is the deity known as Sūrya-nārāyaṇa, who lives within the sun and empowers it.

sva-dhiṣṇyaṁ pratapāṇ prāṇo
bahiṣ ca pratapaty asau
evāṁ virājan pratapāṁs
tapaty antar bahiḥ pumān

“The sun illuminates both internally and externally by expanding its radiation; similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by expanding His universal form, maintains everything in the creation both internally and externally.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.17]

A power plant requires so many intelligent engineers and trained technicians to construct and operate. Do we really think that a great source of radiant energy like the sun is simply mechanistic happenstance? Therefore the Vedic brāhmaṇas use the mantra mentioned in the Rj Veda, generally known as Gāyatrī mantra, to worship the Supreme Nārāyaṇa situated within the sun. The physical sun that gives light and warmth to the earth is simply a reflection of the rays of the brahmajyoti or spiritual radiance of the Lord’s transcendental body.

Although the reflected energy of the Lord displays various illusions to the eyes of persons afflicted with a poor fund of transcendental knowledge, the sane person knows clearly that the Lord can act by His different energies, even from far, far beyond our vision, just as fire can diffuse heat and light from a distant place, or microwaves can transfer power invisibly. In the medical science of the ancient sages, known as the Āyur-veda, there is definite acceptance of the Lord’s supremacy in the following words:

jagad-yoner anicchasya
cid-ānandaika-rūpiṇāḥ
puño 'sti prakṛtir nityā
pratīcchāyeva bhāsvataḥ
acetanāpi caitaṇya-
yogena paramātmannah
akarod viśvam akhilam
anityam nāṭakākṛtīm

“There is one Supreme Person who is the progenitor of this cosmic manifestation and whose
energy acts as prakṛti, or the manifested material nature, dazzling like a reflection. By such
illusory action of prakṛti, even dead matter is caused to move by the influence of the living
energy of the Lord, and the material world appears like a dramatic performance to the ignorant
eyes.”

Saṁśaya [arising of doubt]: The ignorant person, therefore, may even be a scientist or physiologist in the
drama of prakṛti, while the sane transcendentalist knows perfectly well that prakṛti or material nature is
merely the external illusory energy of the Lord, and the internal living conscious spiritual energy is
actually the cause of everything, including energetic manifestations like the sun. The passage of
Chāndogya Upaniṣad quoted above explains:

atha yā so ‘ntar ādityo hiraṇmayaḥ puruṣo drśyate hiranya-śmaśrur hiranya-keṣa aprāṇakhāt
sarva eva suvānasa tasya yathā kapyasaṁ puṇḍarikam evam akśini tasyodeti nāma sa eṣa
sarvebhyaḥ pāṁśabhyaḥ udita udeti hā vai sarvebhyaḥ pāṁśabhyaḥ ya evam veda tasya rक
śaṁ ca gesnau tasmād udīgīthas tasmāt tv evodgataitasya hi gāthā sa eṣa ye cāmuṇḍat
paraṇcok tāsāṁ cete deva-kāmānāṁ cety adhīdaivaṁ... athādhyātmam atha ya eṣo
‘ntar-akśini puruṣo drśyate saiva rक tat śaṁ tad ukthaḥ tad yajus tad brahma tasyaitasya tad
eva rūpaṁ yad amuṣya rūpam. yāv amuṣya gesnau tau gesnau yam nāma yam nāma.

“Within the sun-globe is a golden person with golden hair, a golden beard, and a body golden
from His fingernails to all His limbs. His eyes are like lotus flowers. He is above all sin. One
who understands Him also becomes situated above all sin. The Ṛg and Sāma Vedas sing His
glories. From Him the highest spiritual planets, where the demigods desire to go, have become
manifested. This is the golden person present among the demigods... Now I shall describe the
person within the human mind and heart. Within the eyes a wonderful person may be seen. The
Ṛg, Sāma, and Yājur Vedas glorify Him. He is identical with the golden person who resides in
the sun.”

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Someone may doubt: “Is this an individual conscious living entity who by
great piety and spiritual knowledge has attained this exalted position, or is this the Personality of
Brahman, who appears as the all-pervading Superconscious living entity? Because this person has a
form and various human-like features, He must be a pious conscious living entity. By his piety and
spiritual knowledge he has become able to become the great controller of demigods and human beings
who fulfills their desires and grants them the results of their actions.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsa deva addresses these views by giving the siddhānta [Vedic
conclusion] in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.20

antas tad-dharmopadesāt

antas–within; tad–of Him; dharma–nature; upadesāt–because of the instruction.
The person within [the sun and the eye is the Personality of Brahman], because the Vedic literatures explain that His nature fits the description of Brahman. The person within the sun and the eye is the Personality of Brahman, who is present everywhere as the original Superconscious living entity. This person is not the individual conscious living entity. Why? Because the Vedic literatures describe Him as being sinless and possessing all the qualities of the Personality of Brahman. He is free from all sin and all karma. The slightest fragrance of karma cannot touch Him. This is not possible for the individual conscious living entities, who remain subject to the laws of karma.

viśuddhaṁ kevalaṁ jñānaṁ
pratyak samyag avasthitam
satyaṁ pūrṇam anādy-antam
nirgunaṁ nityam adavyam

“The Personality of Godhead is pure, being free from all contaminations of material tinges. He is the Absolute Truth and the embodiment of full and perfect knowledge. He is all-pervading, without beginning or end, and without rival.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.40]

The individual conscious living entity does not fit the description of this person within the sun and the eye in many other ways as well. For example, the individual conscious living entity is not the fulfiller of the desires of the living entities, nor is he the awarder of the fruits of action, nor is he the object of the worship of the living entities.

At this point the impersonalists may raise the following objection: “Because the person within the sun and the eye is described as having a body, therefore He must be an individual conscious living entity, for the Supreme Brahman has no body.”

To this objection I reply: This is not necessarily so. The puruṣa-sūkta prayers [Ṛg Veda 10.90] and many other Vedic verses describe the transcendental body of the Personality of Brahman.

oṁ namo bhagavate mahā-puruṣāya mahānubhāvāya mahā-vibhūti-pataye sakala-sātvata-parivṛdha-ntkara-kara-kamala-kuṇḍmalalālīta-caranāravinda-yugala parama-parameśthin namas te.

“O transcendental Lord, who are situated in the topmost planet of the spiritual world, Your two lotus feet are always massaged by a multitude of the best devotees with their lotus-bud hands. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, complete with six opulences. You are the Supreme Person mentioned in the Puruṣa-sūktta prayers. You are the most perfect, self-realized master of all mystic power. Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto You.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.25]

The Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad also describes the Supreme Brahman’s transcendental body in the following words:

vedhāham etam puruṣaṁ mahāntam āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt

“I know that Personality of Brahman, whose form is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness.”

The difference between the form of an ordinary living entity and the body of the Lord is that His body is never material. The Śvetāsvatāra Upaniṣad [3.8-9] substantiates this as follows:

vedāham etam puruṣaṁ mahāntam
āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt
tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti
nānyāḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya
yasmāt paraṁ nāpāram asti kiṁcid
yasmān nāṁśno no jāyō 'sti kiṁcit
vrksa iva stabdha divi tiṣṭhaty ekas
tenemāṁ pūrṇaṁ puruṣena sarvam

“I know that Supreme Personality of Godhead who is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness. Only he who knows Him can transcend the bonds of birth and death. There is no way for liberation other than this knowledge of that Supreme Person. There is no truth superior to that Supreme Person, because He is the supermost. He is smaller than the smallest, and He is greater than the greatest. He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies.”

The transcendental form of the Lord is described in many other places in the scriptures. But as stated in Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.23],

yam evaisa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vṛṇute tanum svām

“All who is fully surrendered and engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can understand the Supreme Lord as He is.”

Therefore neither the materialistic scientists nor the impersonalist speculators can actually see the Lord, because being of atheistic temperament, they do not perform devotional service, which is the process for revealing Him as He really is.

Sūtra 1.1.21

bheda-vyapadeśāc cānyaḥ

bheda–difference; vyapadeśāt–because of the statement; ca–also; anyah–another.

[The Personality of Brahman is] different [from the individual conscious living entity] because this doctrine is taught in all Vedic literatures.

The golden person within the sun is not the solar deity, the individual conscious living entity who thinks the sun planet is his own body, but rather that golden person is the Personality of Brahman, the Superconscious living entity who is present in every atom. This is confirmed by the following statement of the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad:

ya ādiyē tisṭhann ādityād antaro yam ādityo
na vēda yasyādityah śarīraṁ ya ādityam antaro
yamayāty esa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtah

“That person situated within the sun, who is not the sun-god, whom the sun-god does not know, who manifests the sun planet as His own body, who controls the sun planet from within, that person is the immortal Personality of Brahman who is present within the heart of every living entity as the Superconscious living entity.”

From this description we may understand that the golden person within the sun is not the individual conscious living entity who is the sun-god, but the Personality of Brahman. Both this passage and the previous quoted passage from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad agree on this point.
The ordinary living entities cannot perceive the effulgent Supreme Person within the sun because their material vision is overwhelmed by the glaring radiance of the sun planet. Yet without the presence of the Lord, the energetic source of all emanations, the sun planet could not remain steady in its radiation over millions of years. The Lord can be seen only by the devotees whose minds are controlled by the process of devotional service. Lord Śiva prays:

\[
\text{namo namo 'niruddhāya} \\
\text{hrṣīkेसendriyātmane} \\
\text{namah paramahānśāya} \\
\text{pūrṇāya nibhr̥tātmāne}
\]

“My Lord, as the supreme directing Deity known as Aniruddha, You are the master of the senses and the mind. I therefore offer my obeisances unto You again and again. You are known as Ananta as well as Śaṅkarśaṇa because of Your ability to destroy the whole creation by the blazing fire from Your mouth.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.24.36]

**Hṛṣīkेसendriyātmāne:** The mind is the director of the senses, and Lord Aniruddha is the director of the mind. In order to execute devotional service, one has to fix his mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa; therefore Lord Śiva prays to the controller of the mind, Lord Aniruddha, to be pleased to help him engage his mind on the lotus feet of the Lord. It is stated in Bhagavad-gītā [9.34]:

\[
\text{man-manā bhava mad-bhakto} \\
\text{mad-yājī mām namaskuru} \\
\text{mām evaiṣyasi yachtvaivam} \\
\text{ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇah}
\]

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.”

The mind has to be engaged in meditation on the lotus feet of the Lord in order to execute devotional service. It is also stated in Bhagavad-gītā [15.15],

\[
\text{mattatḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca}
\]

“From Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness.”

Thus if Lord Aniruddha is pleased, He can help the mind engage in the service of the Lord. It is also indicated in this verse that Lord Aniruddha is the sun-god by virtue of His expansions. Since the predominating deity of the sun is an expansion of Lord Aniruddha, Lord Śiva also prays to the sun-god in this verse, and this is also why the brāhmaṇas use the Gāyatrī mantra of the Ṛg Veda to worship the Supreme Nārāyaṇa within the sun. Lord Kṛṣṇa, by His quadruple expansion of Vāsudeva, Śaṅkarśaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, is the Lord of all psychic action: thinking, feeling, willing and acting. Lord Śiva prays to Lord Aniruddha as the sun-god, who is also the controlling deity of the external material elements constituting the material body. Therefore in the Āyur-veda, those who desire health are also instructed to worship the sun.

The sun-god is addressed above as nibhr̥tātmāne, which indicates that he always maintains the various planets by providing rainfall. By emanating his dazzling rays, the sun-god evaporates water from the seas and oceans, forms the water into clouds and distributes it. When there is sufficient rainfall, grains are produced, and these grains maintain living entities in every planet. The sun-god is also addressed herein as pūrṇa, or complete, because the sun-god has been supplying heat and light without diminution for millions and millions of years since the creation of the universe. He is also addressed as paramāhāṁsa. The word paramāhāṁsa is applied to persons who are completely cleansed. When there is sufficient sunshine, the mind remains clear and transparent—in other words, the sun-god helps the
living entity to situate his mind on the platform of pure consciousness. Thus Lord Śiva prays to Lord Aniruddha to be kind upon him, so that his mind will always be in the perfect state of cleanliness and engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. Just as fire sterilizes all unclean things, the sun-god also keeps everything sterilized, especially dirty things within the mind, enabling one to attain elevation to the platform of spiritual understanding.

**Adhikaraṇa 8: Ākāśa Refers to Brahman**

**Viṣaya [thesis or statement]:** The ākāśa mentioned in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.9 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:

Then Sālavatya asked, “What is the goal of Brahmā?” “The all-luminous [ākāśa] Viṣṇu,” replied Pravāhana, “For all these mighty beings arise from the All-luminous and again set in the All-luminous. The All-luminous is greater than all these; the All-luminous is their great refuge. He indeed is higher than the highest, the Udgītha, the Infinite.

“He who meditates on the Udgītha as greater than the great, knowing Him thus to be the supreme goal, the greater than the great becomes his protector, and he obtains the worlds that are greater than the great [Vaikuṇṭha].

“Those among Mankind who know this Udgītha,” said Atidhanvan, the son of Śunaka to his disciple Udra Śaṅḍilya, “will live for the entire length of the yuga in which they get this knowledge, and for that whole time the Supreme Brahman will be their life in this world, and also in the next world, yea in the next world.”

**Saṁśaya [arisal of doubt]:** In Vedic cosmology, ākāśa, sometimes unfortunately mistranslated ‘ether’, actually means space. In the Vedic literature, ākāśa is sometimes translated ‘sky’ or ‘air,’ but it is most often used in the sense of the Vedic cosmological element which is equivalent to the Western scientific concept of space-time. Normally we do not think of space as a substance, but from the transcendental point of view of the Vedas, material space-time is a temporary, artificial manifestation unique to the material creation. It is of central importance because of course, nothing can exist without space. Distance, movement and thus energy, force and work all require space. Therefore ākāśa, space is an even more fundamental concept than energy or matter. Bhagavad-gītā [9.6] says,

\[
\text{yathākāśa-sthito nityām} \\
\text{vāyuḥ sarvatra-go mahān} \\
\text{tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni} \\
\text{mat-sthānīty upadhāraya}
\]

“As the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, always rests in ākāśa [etherreal space], know that in the same manner all beings rest in Me.”

One clue to the meaning of ākāśa is that it is described as the medium of śabda, or subtle sound. Śabda is the vibration of the element ākāśa, the ethereal space of the sky. Space is the medium of subtle vibrations like radio signals, light, cosmic rays and so on. Although modern scientists do not count ethereal space as a material element as do Vedic sages, they agree it is not a void, but rather a sea of energetic vibrations in which we and all other things in the universe exist. Some scientists suppose there is a fundamental vibration that permeates the universe, holding all matter together. The Vedas describe a fundamental vibration, called śabda-brahma or transcendental sound, that originates in the spiritual sky and is the basis of creation. We also experience subtle sound vibration in the internal conversations of the mind. This mental sound is transmitted by ākāśa.

The passage of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad quoted in full above states:
asya lokasya kā gatir iti ākāśa iti hovāca
sarvāṇi hā vā imāṇi bhūtāṇy ākāśād eva
samutpadyante. ākāśaṁ prayastāṁ yānty ākāśah parāyanam iti.

“He asked: ‘What is the ultimate destination of all living entities?’ He replied: ‘Ākāśa is the ultimate destination. All living entities and all material elements have emanated from ākāśa, and they will again enter into ākāśa.’”

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: What is the meaning of the word ākāśa here? Does it mean the element ether [sky or space], or does it mean the Supreme Brahman? The opposing argument is that “The word ākāśa here means the element ether or space, because air and the other elements evolve from it. Indeed, the zero-point energy of space is the origin of all the other energies and elements.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument by stating the siddhānta [Vedic conclusion] in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.22

ākāśas tal-liṅgāt
ākāśah–the word ākāśa; tat–of Him; lingat–because of the qualities.

The word ākāśa [in the Vedic literature refers to] the Supreme Brahman, for the description [of ākāśa aptly fits the description of the qualities of Brahman.]

The word ākāśa here refers to Brahman and not the material element ether. Why? Because the ākāśa described here has all the characteristics of Brahman. The ākāśa described here is the source from which the material elements emanate, the maintainer who sustains them, and the ultimate refuge into which they enter at the time of cosmic annihilation. That is a perfect description of Brahman.

The scriptures explain that sarvāṇi hā vā imāṇi bhūtāṇi: “All material elements have emanated from ākāśa.” Because ether is one of the material elements, it is included in the word sarvāṇi [all the elements]. It is not the independent origin of the causal chain, but merely one of the links. For this reason it cannot be the ākāśa that is the source of all the elements, including ether. The use of the word eva [certainly] in this context reinforces the interpretation that ākāśa refers to Brahman because eva implies “there is no other cause”. For this reason ākāśa cannot refer to the material element ether or space, because space is not a cause but an effect.

For example, clay is the origin from which clay pots are produced, and other material substances are the origins of other objects. But all these are not primal origins, they are merely intermediate steps in a great causal chain. By using the word eva [the sole cause] the text clearly refers to the primal, uncaused cause, Brahman, and not ether or any other particular intermediate stage in the causal chain. The Vedic literatures describe Brahman as the master of all potencies and the source of all forms, and therefore, because the ākāśa is described by the word eva as the sole cause, it can refer only to the primal cause Brahman and not the material element ether. Although the word ākāśa generally means ether or space in ordinary usage, in this context the secondary meaning “Brahman” is far more appropriate.

Adhikaraṇa 9: Prāṇa Refers to Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The prāṇa mentioned in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.10-11 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:
When the crops in the land of the Kurus were destroyed by hailstones, Uṣaṣṭi Cākrāyana lived with his young wife by begging at Ibhya-grāma. Seeing the lord of Ibhya eating beans, he begged some from him.

The master of the elephants said to Uṣaṣṭi “I have no more except these that are placed before me for eating.” Uṣaṣṭi said, “Give me some of those.” He gave him some of those and said, “Here is some water to drink in this water-bag.” Uṣaṣṭi said, “If I drink what has already been drunk by another, I shall drink impure water.” The master of elephants said, “Are not these beans impure also, as I am eating from them?”

Uṣaṣṭi replied, “No, because without eating them I cannot live; while drinking your water is not an absolute necessity, for water may be obtained anywhere.” After eating, Uṣaṣṭi brought the remnants to his wife. But she had already eaten, therefore she put them away.

The next morning after leaving his bed Uṣaṣṭi said, “Alas, if we could get a little food, we could get much wealth, because that king is going to offer a sacrifice, and he may choose me for the post of priest.”

His wife replied, “Alas, O husband, there is nothing in the house besides these stale beans that you brought yesterday.” Uṣaṣṭi after eating the beans, went to the big sacrifice that was being performed. There he sat down next to the Udgatrina priests who were singing hymns in the Astava ceremony. Then he said to the Prastotar priest, “O Prastotar, if you sing the prastāva without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off. O Udgātar, if you sing the udgithā without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off. O Pratiḥartrar, if you sing the pratihāra without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.”

Then they indeed stopped and sat down silent.

Then the Sacrificer said to him, “Sir, I desire to know who you are.” He replied, “I am Uṣaṣṭi the son of Cākrāyana.” The king said, “I had made up my mind, Sir, to appoint you alone to all these priestly offices; but not having found you, I have appointed others. But now that I have found you, I elect you to all these priestly offices.”

“Very well,” said Uṣaṣṭi “but do not send these others away, but let them indeed sing the sacred hymns under my direction. And promise that you pay me as much wealth as you would have given to them collectively.” The Sacrificer said, “Let it be so.”

Then the Prastotar priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Prastotar, if you sing the prastāva without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uṣaṣṭi replied: “It is Viṣṇu as the chief prāṇa, the great breath. From prāṇa all the material elements have emanated, and into prāṇa they enter at the end. This is the Deity belonging to the creation [prastāva]. If after being warned by me you had sung the prastāva hymn without knowing that Deity, you head would have fallen off.”

Then the Udgātar priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Udgātar, if you sing the udgithā without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uṣaṣṭi replied: “The sun. It is Viṣṇu residing in the sun who is the Deity of the udgithā. Verily all creatures sing His praises because He is the best and the highest. He alone is the Deity belonging to the udgithā. If after being warned by me you had sung the Udgitha hymn without knowing that Deity, you head would have fallen off.”
Then the Pratihartri priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Pratihartri, if you sing the pratihāra without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uṣaṭi replied: “It is Viṣṇu residing in the food who is the Deity of the pratihāra. Verily all creatures eat food, and live thereby because Viṣṇu lives in the food and maintains them. He alone is the Deity belonging to the pratihāra. If after being warned by me you had sung the pratihāra [guardian] hymn without knowing that Deity, you head would have fallen off.”

Sāṁśaya [arising of doubt]: The Vedic conception of prāṇa is very important. Prāṇa is sometimes poorly translated as ‘subtle airs’ or ‘breath,’ but it is actually closer to Chinese chi or Japanese ki, the subtle life energy that runs through the body under the direction of the soul. Prāṇa means subtle life energy, and although Western science does not want to admit the existence of prāṇa, it has been shown without a doubt that medical treatments that depend on the manipulation of prāṇa, such as acupuncture, are effective in treating all kinds of diseases.

In the Mundaka Upaniṣad [3.1.9] the relationship of prāṇa with the atomic spirit soul is further explained:

\[ \text{esō 'nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo} \]
\[ \text{yasmin prāṇah pañcadhā saṁviveśa} \]
\[ \text{prāṇaiś cittaṁ sarvam otaṁ prajānāṁ} \]
\[ \text{yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty eśa ātmā} \]

“The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of air (prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, samāna and udāna), is situated within the heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living entities. When the soul is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of material air, its spiritual influence is exhibited.”

These five kinds of subtle life energies are collectively known as prāṇa. The apāna-vāyu goes downwards, vyāna-vāyu acts to shrink and expand, samāna-vāyu adjusts equilibrium, udāna-vāyu goes upwards—and when one is enlightened, one engages all these in searching for self-realization. The haṭha-yoga system is meant for controlling the five kinds of prāṇa encircling the pure soul by different kinds of sitting postures. The yogic process of breathing exercises called prāṇāyāma is aimed at controlling the prāṇa; not for any material profit, but for liberation of the atomic soul from the entanglement of the material atmosphere.

The passage from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad quoted above mentions prāṇa in the following śloka:

\[ \text{katama sa devateti. prāṇa iti hovāca. sarvāṇi hā vai} \]
\[ \text{imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhīsmāvishiṣṭa prāṇam abhyujjīhate.} \]

They asked: “Who is this Deity of whom you speak?” He replied: “It is prāṇa. From prāṇa all the material elements have emanated, and into prāṇa they enter at the end.”

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Someone may object, “Does the word prāṇa here refer to the breath that travels in and out of the mouth, the subtle life energy, or does it refer to the Personality of Brahman? The ordinary meaning of the word prāṇa is the breath that travels in and out the mouth. That meaning is intended here.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this view by speaking the Vedic siddhānta [conclusion] in the following sūtra.
Sūtra 1.1.23

ata eva prāṇah

atah eva—therefore; prāṇah—the word prāṇa.

The word prāṇa [in the Vedic literatures refers to the Supreme Brahman,] for the same reasons expressed in the previous sūtra.

The word prāṇa in this passage from Chāndogya Upaniṣad refers to the Personality of Brahman, and not to the transformations of air. Why? Because this text describes prāṇa as the original cause from which all creatures and material elements have emanated, and into which they enter at the end. These are the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman, and not the material element air or the various kinds of prāṇa.

Adhikaraṇa 10: Jyotis refers to Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The jyotis [light] mentioned in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.13.7 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:

“The Lord called Gāyatṛī is verily this all-full, in whatever form He manifests. Gayatri is speech, because the Lord as speech controls and commands all beings. He sings the Vedas and gives salvation to all, therefore He is called Gāyatṛī.

“That same Lord who is in the sun and is called Gāyatṛī, is also the Lord who is in the earth and is called Pṛthivī [the broad]. All beings are established in this form, and nothing excels this form.

“That same Lord who in the earth and is called Pṛthivī, is also the Lord who is in the soul and is called Śarīra [bodily form], the joy, bliss-wisdom. In this form rest all the senses, and nothing excels this form.

“That same Lord who in the soul and is called Śarīra, is also the Lord who is in the innermost part of the soul and is called the heart. In this form rest all the senses, and nothing excels this form.

“That sixfold Gāyatṛī has four feet; this fact is declared by the Rg-Veda [10.90.3]:

   “Such is His greatness, and He is even greater. All [embodied] souls constitute one quarter of Him, and His immortal three-quarters are in the spiritual worlds.”

   “That Gāyatṛī form of the Lord is indeed Brahman, the all-pervading Godhead. This indeed is the all-luminous [ākāśa] who is within the jīva and all-pervading.

   “That all-luminous who is inside the jīva is verily the all-luminous who is in the heart of the jīva.

   “That all-luminous who is in the heart is verily the Fullness, the Self-determined Lord. He who knows this obtains happiness, complete and independent.

   “Of this Supreme Brahman called the heart, there are five divine gatekeepers. His eastern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of prāṇa, of the eye and of the sun. Let one meditate on him as the sun, as physical energy and health. He who meditates thus becomes energetic and healthy.

   “Now His southern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of vyāna, of the ear, and is the moon. Let one meditate on him as the moon possessed of beauty and fame. He who meditates thus becomes artistic and famous.
“Now His northern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of apāna, of the organ of speech, and is Agni. Let one meditate on him as Agni, possessed of intellectual energy and sanity. He who meditates thus becomes intellectual and sane.

“Now His western gatekeeper is the presiding deity of samāna, and of wind, and he is Indra. Let one meditate on him as Indra, possessed of renown and lordliness. He who meditates thus becomes renowned and lordly.

“Now His central gatekeeper is the presiding deity of udāna, the chief Vāyu, Ākāśa. Let one meditate on him as the chief Vāyu, possessed of spiritual energy and greatness. He who meditates thus becomes spiritually energetic and great.

“These verily are the five servants of Brahman, the gatekeepers of pure wisdom and joy. He who knows these five servants of Brahman as the gatekeepers of the heart and the world of pure wisdom and joy, gets a virtuous son born in his family, and himself enters that world of pure wisdom and joy, because he knows these five servants of Brahman, the gatekeepers of the world of svarga [heaven].

“Now the light [jyotis] that shines above that heaven, in the worlds higher than the world of Brahmā, higher than all, beyond which there are no higher worlds, and are the highest worlds; that verily is the same light [jyotis] that is within the heart of men. And the direct proof is this:

“Namely, the warmth that one perceives through touch here in the body. Of Him is this praise, which one hears as existing in the ears, namely, the sound like the roar of the ocean, or that of thunder, or that of burning fire. Let one meditate on Brahman as thus seen and heard. He who knows this thus becomes clear-seeing and celebrated; yes, he who knows this thus.”

The Supreme Brahman is described in many places in the scriptures as being the source of all light.

\[ \text{jyoti}\text{sām \ api \ taj \ jyotis} \]
\[ \text{tamasāḥ \ param \ ucyate} \]
\[ \text{jñānāṁ \ jñeyaṁ \ jñāna-gamyāṁ} \]
\[ \text{hrdi \ sarvasya \ viṣḥitam} \]

“He is the source of light in all luminous objects. He is beyond the darkness of matter and is unmanifested. He is knowledge, He is the object of knowledge, and He is the goal of knowledge. He is situated in everyone's heart.” [Bhagavad-gītā 13.18]

\[ \text{anādir \ ātma puruṣo} \]
\[ \text{nirguṇaḥ \ prakṛteḥ \ parah} \]
\[ \text{pratyag-dhāmā \ svayaṁ-jyotir} \]
\[ \text{viśvaṁ \ yena \ samanvitam} \]

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.3]

Samśaya [arisel of doubt]: Modern science has determined that the primary measurable energy in the universe is light. Einstein’s Theory of Relativity explains that the speed of light is a limit in this universe, and nothing can exceed that limit. Even time will bend to accommodate this limit, and this has been proven by numerous physical experiments. The quantum unit of light, the photon, is the fundamental particle of energy exchange in all subatomic, atomic and chemical reactions. Visible light is only a small part of the entire spectrum of electromagnetic radiation, all of which follows the same physical laws as apply to light. Thus light energy is the primary component of matter.
The *Vedas* and religious books of other ancient cultures talk about light as related to consciousness. Consciousness is what makes objects perceivable to us. Without consciousness, nothing is knowable and no action is possible. Therefore it is said that consciousness illuminates objects and makes them perceivable. In that sense, consciousness is like light. However, consciousness is intangible; it cannot be measured by any physical means. Only the secondary symptoms of consciousness, such as language, activity, and other external symptoms, can be observed. Consciousness itself remains ineluctably subjective.

Although the *Vedas* and similar sources indicate that a subjective process can demonstrate the existence of the soul and Brahman, insuperable difficulties stand in the way of verifying this information to the satisfaction of empirical scientific method. The strict standards of psychological experimental protocol demand that to eliminate bias, the operator of an experiment should not know what he is observing or measuring. This creates an insuperable difficulty for investigators, because any experiment based on the principles of consciousness given in the *Vedas* would have to be performed on the subjective platform; therefore we could never trust the objectivity of the experimental subjects’ reports. Most contemporary people agree that it is better to simply ignore this arcane and recondite tradition in favor of clear, repeatable material scientific knowledge, which after all has given us such great economic and so many other advantages.

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: In the passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted above, [3.13.7] states:

> atha yad atah paro divo jyotir dīpyate viśvataḥ prṣṭheṣu sarvataḥ prṣṭheṣv anuttamesūttamesu lokeṣu idaṁ vāva tad yad idam asminn antah puruṣe jyotih

> “*Jyotis* shines in the spiritual world, above all the material planets. *Jyotis* forms the context in which all material universes and all material planets, from lowest to highest, rest. This *jyotis* is present in the heart of every living being.”

Someone may argue, “What is the *jyotis* [light] described here? Is it the light of the sun and other luminous objects, or is it the Supreme Brahman? Because there is no mention of Brahman in this passage, the word *jyotis* in this text must refer to the light of the sun and other luminous objects.”

**Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]:** Śrīla Vyāsadeva replies by giving the *siddhānta* in the following *sūtra*.

**Sūtra 1.1.24**

> jyotiś-=-caraṇābhidhānāt
> jyotih–of the *jyotih*; caraṇa–of the feet; abhidhānāt–because of the mention.

Because the *jyotis* in this text is described as having feet, [it must refer to the Supreme Brahman].

The word *jyotis* here should be understood to mean the Supreme Brahman. Why? Because this *jyotis* is described as having four feet. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.12.6] states:

> etāvan asya mahimato jyāyāṁ √ca puruṣaḥ
> pado √sy a sarva-bhūtaṁ tri-pad asyāṁṛtaṁ divi

> “The Personality of Brahman is full of glory and opulence. His one foot is all material elements and all living entities, and His other three feet are the eternal spiritual world.”

In the previously quoted text of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.13.7], and in this text where Brahman is described as having four feet, the spiritual world is mentioned. Although both texts are separated by a little distance, they are brought together by joint mention of the spiritual world, as well as by use of the relative and co-relative pronouns *yat* and *tat*. For these reasons it should be understood that both texts...
describe the all-powerful Personality of Brahman. For these reasons the *jyotis* described in this text is the all-powerful Personality of Brahman, and not the light of the sun and other luminous objects.

**Sūtra 1.1.25**

*chando-'bhidhānān neti cen na tathā ceto ‘rpaṇa-nigādā tathā hi darśanam*

*chandah—of a meter; abhidhānāt—because of being the description; na—not; tathā—in that way; cetah—the mind; arpaṇa—placing; nigādā—because of the instruction; tathā hi—furthermore; darśanam—logical.*

*[If someone were to claim: “The word *jyotis* here does not refer to Brahman, but to the Gāyatrī meter,”] then I would reply:[] This is not true. [The Gāyatrī meter] is taught to assist meditation on Brahman. [For this reason it is] logical and appropriate [to interpret the word *jyotis* to mean Brahman.]*

In Sanskrit, there are definite rules that regulate poetry; rhyme and meter are not written whimsically, as in much modern poetry. Amongst the regulated Sanskrit poetic meters, the Gāyatrī mantra chanted by qualified brāhmaṇas is the most prominent. The Gāyatrī mantra is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; in fact, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam begins with a Gāyatrī mantra. The Gāyatrī mantra is very important in Vedic civilization and is considered to be the sound incarnation of Brahman. Brahmā is its initiator, and it is passed down from him in disciplic succession. To be successful in chanting the Gāyatrī mantra, one must first acquire the qualities of goodness according to the laws of material nature. Then one must be duly initiated into the disciplic succession from Brahmā by a bona fide spiritual master. This *mantra* is meant for spiritually advanced people, and when one attains success in chanting it, he attains the transcendental position. Because the Gāyatrī mantra is especially meant for God-realization, it represents the Supreme Lord.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not true that the Vedic literatures state:

\[\text{gāyatrī vā idaṁ sarvāṁ bhūtaṁ yad idaṁ kiñcit}\]

Gāyatrī is everything that exists.”

\[\text{tam eva bhūta-vāk-prthīvī-śarīra-hrdaya-prabhedaiv}\]

Gāyatrī is everything. Gāyatrī is speech, earth, body, and mind.”

\[\text{caĩs caṭuś-padā śaḍ-vidhā gāyatrī tad etad rcābhyyataṁ}\]

“The Gāyatrī meter, of which there are four feet and six varieties, is extensively employed in the mantras of the Vedas.”

\[\text{etāvan asya mahimā}\]

Gāyatrī is glorious.”

For these reasons it should be understood that the word *jyotis* in the Vedic literatures refers to the Gāyatrī mantra. Why, without any good reason, do you insist that the word *jyotis* refers to Brahman?”

To this objection I reply: Gāyatrī is a meter, and therefore it is not sensible to claim that it is everything, and everything has emanated from it. For this reason it is only reasonable to conclude that the word *jyotis* in this context refers to Brahman and not Gāyatrī. Why? Because in this sūtra Śrīla Vyāsadeva states: *tathā hi darśanam* [that the word *jyotis* refers to Brahman is only logical and consistent. Any other interpretation is illogical].
The esoteric truth is that the Supreme Brahman has incarnated in this world in the form of the Gāyatrī mantra to enable the living entities to meditate on Him. This fact is confirmed by the statements of Vedic literature.

\[
gāyatrī chandasām aham
\]

“Of poetry I am the Gāyatrī verse, sung daily by brāhmaṇas.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.35]

If we accept that Gāyatrī is an incarnation of Brahman, then the scriptural statement “Gāyatrī is everything” is perfectly sensible. Otherwise, the interpretation we concoct is illogical and forced. In this way we have demonstrated that the Gāyatrī mantra is an incarnation of Brahman.

Sūtra 1.1.26

\[
\text{bhūtādi-pada-vypadeśopapatteś caivaṃ}
\]

bhūta—the living entities; ādi—beginning with; pada—feet; vyapadeśa–of the statement; upapatteḥ—for the reason; ca—also; evam—in this way.

Because the Vedic literatures state that the living entities, [their speech, bodies, and minds are the four] feet [of Gāyatrī], it should be understood [that Gāyatrī is an incarnation of Brahman].

Gāyatrī should be considered the same as Brahman. Why? Because Gāyatrī is described in the words:

\[
tam eva bhūta-vāk-prthivī-śarīra-hṛdaya-bhedaiḥ
\]

“Gāyatrī is everything. The four feet of Gāyatrī are speech, earth, body, and mind.”

Without Gāyatrī being an incarnation of Brahman, it is not possible for these four things to be Gāyatrī’s feet. For this reason, as previously explained, it is only natural to interpret the word Gāyatrī to mean Brahman. Furthermore, the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [2.2.9-11] states:

\[
hiraṇmaye pare koṣe virajām brahma niśkalam
tac chubhrama āma jyotiśāṁ jyotis tad yad ātma-vido viduḥ

na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tārakāṁ
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto ‘yam āgniḥ

tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvāṁ
tasya bhāsā sarvam idāṁ vibhāti

brahmaivedam amṛtaṁ purastād brahma
paścād brahma daksīnataṁ cottaṛena

adhaś cordhvaṁ ca prasṛtaṁ brahmaivedaṁ viśvam idāṁ varīṣṭham
\]

“In the spiritual realm, beyond the material covering, is the unlimited Brahman effulgence, which is free from material contamination. That effulgent white light is understood by transcendentalists to be the light of all lights. In that realm there is no need of sunshine, moonshine, fire or electricity for illumination. Indeed, whatever illumination appears in the material world is only a reflection of that supreme illumination. That Brahman is in front and in back, in the north, south, east and west, and also overhead and below. In other words, that supreme Brahman effulgence spreads throughout both the material and spiritual skies.”

Here the word jyotis is clearly mentioned to be identical with Brahman.
In the two quotations from Vedic literature that have formed the basis of our discussion, the word dyu [the spiritual world] has occurred. This appearance of the word dyu in both passages further confirms that the ambiguous words in these two passages refer to Brahman, and not to something else.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “The word dyu appearing in these two passages refers to different things.”

To answer this objection, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.27

upadeśā-bhedān neti cēn nobhayasmīnaḥ api avirodhaḥ

upadeśā—of instruction; bhedāt—because of the difference; na—not; iti—thus; cet—if; na—not; ubhayasmīnaḥ—in both places; api—also; avirodhaḥ—because of non-contradiction.

[The objection that because the two scriptural passages employ the word dyu] in two different cases [locative and ablative], therefore they describe two different objects, [which cannot both be Brahman,] is not a valid objection. [The use of the two different cases does not mean that] the two passages must describe two different things.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Two contradictory descriptions of Brahman are found in the scriptures. In one place the scriptures state:

tri-padasyāṁrtaṁ divī

“The eternal Personality of Brahman resides in the spiritual world, which constitutes three-quarters of all existence.”

In another place the scriptures state:

paro divaḥ

“The Personality of Brahman resides on top of the spiritual world.”

In the first quotation the spiritual world was placed in the locative case. Since this is so, both passages contradict each other, They describe two different objects, one within the spiritual world, and the other above it.”

To this objection I reply: Why do you say this? Both passages refer to the same object. The use of the locative and ablative cases in these quotations does not present a contradiction. For example, in the material world a parrot may be said to be in a tree or on it. There is no real difference in the two statements. In the same way the Personality of Brahman may be said to be in the spiritual world or on it. There is no real difference.

Adhikaraṇa 11: Prāṇa refers to Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: In the Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa, Chapter 3, the following passage appears:

Pratardana, the son of Divodāsa, was able to enter the favorite residence of Mahārāja Indra by virtue of his chivalry and heroism. Indra said to him, “Pratardana, choose any benediction you like.” Pratardana answered, “Please choose the benediction for me that you think is most beneficial for a man.” Indra said to him, “No one who chooses, chooses for another; choose for yourself.” Pratardana replied, “I do not want any boon that I would choose myself.”

Then Indra did not swerve from truth, for Indra is truth itself. He said to Pratardana, “Then know me only; that is what I deem most beneficial for man, that he should know me. I slew the
three-headed son of Tvaṣṭri; I delivered the Arunmukhas, the devotees, to the wolves [śālavṛkas]; breaking many treaties, I killed the people of Prahlāda in heaven, the people of Pulomā in the sky, the people of Kalakanga on earth. And not one hair of myself was harmed thereby; and he who knows me thus, by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father, not by theft, nor by the killing of a brāhmaṇa. If he is going to commit a sin, the bloom does not depart from his face.”

Indra said, “I am prāṇa. An intelligent person will meditate on me as the conscious self, as life, as immortality. life is prāṇa; prāṇa is life. As long as prāṇa dwells in this body, surely there is life. By prāṇa he obtains immortality in the next world, by knowledge he obtains the true conception of spiritual life. He who meditates on me as life and immortality gains full life in this world, and immortality and indestructibility in the next world.”

Pratardana said, “Some philosophers maintain that the prāṇas become one, for otherwise no one could make known a name by speech, see a form by the eye, hear a sound with the ear and think a thought with the mind at the same time. After becoming one, the prāṇas perceive all these together, one by one. While speech speaks, all the prāṇas speak after it; while the eye sees, all the prāṇas see after it; while the ear hears, all the prāṇas hear after it; while the mind thinks, all the prāṇas think after it. While the prāṇa breathes, all the prāṇas breathe after it.”

“Thus it is indeed,” replied Indra, “nevertheless there is a pre-eminence among the prāṇas. Man lives deprived of speech, therefore we see dumb people. Man lives deprived of sight, for we see blind people. Man lives deprived of hearing, for we see deaf people. Man lives deprived of mind, for we see infants. Man lives deprived of his arms, deprived of his legs, for we see thus. But prāṇa alone is the conscious self, and having laid hold of this body, prāṇa makes it rise up. Therefore it is said, ‘Let man worship prāṇa alone with uktha [mantras of the karma-kanda fire sacrifices]’. What is prāṇa, that is prajña [self-consciousness]; what is prajña, that is prāṇa, for they live in this body and go out of it together. This is the evidence or understanding of that: When a man is in dreamless sleep, he becomes one with that prāṇa alone. Then when he is absorbed in prāṇa, speech goes to him with all names, the eye with all forms, the ear with all sounds, the mind with all thoughts. And when he awakes, then just as burning sparks proceed from a fire in all directions, then from that self, the prāṇas of speech, etc. proceed from their places; similarly the demigods like Agni, etc. proceed from the prāṇas, and from the demigods proceeds the world.

“This is the evidence or understanding of that: When a man is sick, going to die, falling into weakness and faint, they say, ‘His thought has departed, he hears not, he sees not, he speaks not, he thinks not.’ Then he goes with prāṇa alone. Then speech goes to him with all names, the eye with all forms, the ear with all sounds, the mind with all thoughts. Then when he departs from that body, he departs together with all these.

Speech gives up all names to him who is absorbed in prāṇa, so that by speech he obtains all names. The nose gives him all odors, so that by smell he obtains all odors. The eye gives up to him all forms, so that by the eye he obtains all forms. The ear gives up to him all sounds, so that by the ear he obtains all sounds. The mind gives up to him all thoughts, so that by the mind he obtains all thoughts. This is complete absorption in prāṇa. And what is prāṇa, that is prajña [self-consciousness]; what is prajña, that is prāṇa. For together they live in this body, and together they depart.

Now we shall explain how all things become one in that prajña. Speech is one portion taken out of that prajña, the word is its object, placed outside. The nose is one portion taken out of that prajña, odor is its object, placed outside. The eye is one portion taken out of that prajña, form
is its object, placed outside. The ear is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, sound is its object, placed outside. The tongue is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, the taste of food is its object, placed outside. The two hands are one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, its pleasure and pain are its object, placed outside. The sex organ is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, the happiness, joy and offspring are its object, placed outside. The two feet are one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, movement are its object, placed outside. The mind is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, thoughts and desires are its object, placed outside.

Having by *prajñā* taken possession of speech, by speech he obtains all words. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the nose, by the nose he obtains all odors. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of eye, by the eye he obtains all forms. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the ear, by the ear he obtains all sounds. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the tongue, by the tongue he obtains all tastes of food. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the two hands, by the two hands he obtains all actions. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the body, by the body he obtains all pleasures and pains. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the sex organ, by the sex organ he obtains all happiness, joy and offspring. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the two feet, by the two feet he obtains all movements. Having by *prajñā* taken possession of the mind, by the mind he obtains all thoughts and desires.

For without *prajñā* [self-consciousness], speech does not make known to the self any words. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that word.’ Without *prajñā* the nose does not make known any odor. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that odor.’ Without *prajñā* the eye does not make known any form. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that form.’ Without *prajñā* the ear does not make known any sound. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that sound.’ Without *prajñā* the tongue does not make known any taste. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that taste.’ Without *prajñā* the two hands do not make known any action. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that act.’ Without *prajñā* the body does not make known any pleasure or pain. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that pleasure or pain.’ Without *prajñā* the sex organ does not make known any happiness, joy or offspring. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that happiness, joy or offspring.’ Without *prajñā* the two feet do not make known any movement. ‘My mind was absent,’ he says, ‘I did not apprehend that movement.’ Without *prajñā* no thought succeeds, nothing can be known that is to be known.

Let no man try to find what speech is; let him know the speaker. Let no man try to find what odor is; let him know him who smells. Let no man try to find what form is; let him know the seer. Let no man try to find what sound is; let him know the hearer. Let no man try to find what the tastes of food are; let him know the knower of tastes. Let no man try to find what action is; let him know the agent. Let no man try to find what pleasure and pain are; let him know the knower of what pleasure and pain are. Let no man try to find what happiness, joy and offspring are; let him know the knower of happiness, joy and offspring. Let no man try to find what movement is; let him know the mover. Let no man try to find what mind is; let him know the thinker.

These ten objects [what is spoken, smelled, seen, heard, tasted, done, felt, enjoyed, moved and thought] have reference to the *prajñā* [self-consciousness]. These ten subjects [speech, odor, form, sound, taste, action, pleasure and pain; happiness, joy and offspring; movement and thoughts] have reference to objects. If there were no objects, there would be no subjects; if there were no subjects, there would be no objects, for nothing could be achieved by one without the other. But it should be known that the self-consciousness [*prajñā*, prāṇa, life] is not many, but one. For as in a chariot, the circumference of a wheel is placed on the spokes, and spokes on the
nave; thus are these objects placed on the subjects, and the subjects on the \textit{prāṇa}. And that \textit{prāṇa} is indeed the Self of the \textit{prajña}, the self-conscious self; blessed, imperishable, immortal. He does not increase by a good action; He does not decrease by a bad action. For He makes him whom He wishes to elevate from these worlds do good actions, and He makes him whom He wishes to denigrate do bad actions. He is the guardian of the world; He is the king of the world; He is the Lord of the universe. And He is my [Indra’s] Self, thus let it be known, yea, thus let it be known!

\textit{Saṁśaya} [arising of doubt]:

The great Vedic king named Pratardana, also known as Dyumān, lived in very ancient times. He was the son of Divodāsa and the great-great-grandson of Dhanvantari, the powerful incarnation of Godhead who gave the medical science to humankind. The passage from the \textit{Kauśīṭakī Brāhmaṇa} quoted above narrates how, when Indra granted Pratardana a benediction, Pratardana requested Indra choose the benediction he was to give. Indra instructed Pratardana in the following words:

\begin{quote}
\textit{prāṇo 'smi prajñātmā taṁ māṁ āyur-amṛtam upasasva}
\end{quote}

“I am \textit{prāṇa}. An intelligent person will worship me as the great immortal person.”

\textit{Pūrvapakṣa} [antithesis]: Our opponent may object, “Who is this person named \textit{prāṇa}? Is he an individual conscious living entity, or is He the Personality of Brahman who resides in everyone’s heart as the Superconscious living entity? The words \textit{indra} and \textit{prāṇa} here refer to a specific individual conscious living entity. When Pratardana inquired, Indra replied by saying the worship of Indra was the most beneficial activity for the living entities.

\textit{Siddhānta} [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva responds to this argument in the following \textit{sūtra}.

\textbf{Sūtra 1.1.28}

\textit{prāṇas tathānugamāt}

\textit{prāṇah}–the word \textit{prāṇa}; \textit{tathā}–in the same way; \textit{anugamāt}–because of the context.

The word \textit{prāṇa} \textbf{should be understood to refer to Brahman} because of the context of its use.

The \textit{prāṇa} here must refer to the Personality of Brahman, who is present in everyone’s heart as the Superconscious living entity. \textit{Prāṇa} here cannot refer to the individual conscious living entity. Why? Śrīla Vyāsadeva explains: \textit{tathānugamāt} [because of the context]. The \textit{prāṇa} described here is intelligence, the Self, and transcendental bliss. He is free from old age and death. These attributes clearly indicate that the word \textit{prāṇa} here refers to the Personality of Brahman.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “To interpret the word \textit{prāṇa} here to mean Brahman is very inappropriate. Mahārāja Indra is speaking, and he \textit{says} \textit{prāṇo 'smi}: “I am \textit{prāṇa}.” The speaker is Mahārāja Indra, and he clearly refers to himself. He then proceeds to further identify himself, saying \textit{tri-śirṣānaṁ tvāṣṭram ahanam aruṇmukhaṁ ṛṣin śalavrkebhyaḥ prayacchan}: “I killed Vṛtraśura, the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭā, and I gave the Aruṇmukha sages to the Śalavrkas.” These are all historical incidents, deeds performed by Indra. All this shows that the Indra described here is an individual conscious living entity who advises the living entities to worship him. Even though at the end of this passage \textit{prāṇa} is described as \textit{ānanda} [transcendental bliss], this also is consistent, because the transcendental glories of the individual conscious living entities are also described in the Vedic literatures. In fact, when Indra says he is \textit{prāṇa} and everyone should worship him, he refers to himself, the individual conscious living entity Indra. Indra’s statement may be compared to the advice of the
Vedic literature vācaṁ dhenum upāśita: “One should worship the goddess of speech just as one worships the cow.” Because Mahārāja Indra is the strongest of living entities, and because strength is identified with the living force [prāṇa], he identifies himself with that prāṇa. This is perfectly in accord with the statement of Vedic literature prāṇo vai balam: “The living force is strength.” In this way it should be understood that the words prāṇa and indra here refer to a specific individual conscious living entity.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the next sūtra.

**Sūtra 1.1.29**

na vaktur ātmopadeśād iti ced adhyātma-sambandha-bhūma hy asmin

na—not; vaktuḥ—of the speaker; ātma—of the self; upadeśāt—because of the instruction; iti—thus; cet—if; adhyātma—to the Personality of Brahman; sambandha—references; bhūma—abundance; hi—indeed; asmin—in this Upaniṣad.

If it is said that the speaker here refers to himself, I say that is not true. In this passage there are many references to the Personality of Brahman.

In this sūtra the word adhyātma-sambandha means “with reference to the Personality of Brahman”, and the word bhūma means “abundance”. In this chapter of Kauṭīkī Upaniṣad the word prāṇa repeatedly appears in various contexts where it must unavoidably be interpreted to mean “the Personality of Brahman.”

For example:

1. When Pratardana asked for the most beneficial gift, or in other words liberation, Indra replied replied by saying “Worship me as prāṇa.” In this context prāṇa must mean the Personality of Brahman, for only He can grant liberation.

2. The Upaniṣad explains:

   eṣa eva sādhu karma kārayati

   “Prāṇa bestows upon the living entity the power to act wonderfully.”

This must refer to the Personality of Brahman, the supreme controller, and not to the tiny demigod Indra.

3. The Upaniṣad also explains:

   tad yathā rathasyāresu nemir arpitā nābhavara arpita evam evaita bhūta-mātraḥ. prajñā-mātrāsv arpitāḥ. prajñā-mātrāḥ prāṇe ’ṛpitaḥ.

   “Just as in a chariot wheel the rim rests on the spokes, and the spokes on the hub, in the same way the material elements rest on prajñā [intelligence], and prajñā rests on prāṇa.”

This quote states that everything sentient and insentient is maintained by prāṇa.

4. The Upaniṣad also explains:

   sa eṣa prāṇa eva prajñātmānando ’jaro ’mrtaḥ. eṣa lokādhipatir eṣa sarveśvarah

   “Prāṇa is the Superconscious living entity present in all living entities. Prāṇa is the transcendental bliss. Prāṇa remains eternally untouched by old-age and death. Prāṇa is the master of all living entities and all planets. Prāṇa is the Supreme Controller.”
Because prāṇa is transcendental bliss and has the various qualities described here, the word prāṇa in this context can refer only to the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Brahman, the Supreme Controller who is present in the hearts of all living entities as the Superconscious living entity. The word prāṇa here cannot possibly refer to anyone else.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not so that Indra directly describes himself as prāṇa? Why does he do this if your interpretation that prāṇa means “Supreme Brahman” is correct?” Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this objection in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.30

śāstra-drṣṭyā tūpadeśo vāmadevavat
śāstra–of scripture; drṣṭyā–from the viewpoint; tu–but; upadeśaḥ–instruction; vāmadeva–Vāmadeva; var–like.

[Indra speaks in this way, identifying himself with Brahman] in accordance with the teaching of Vedic literature. He does this just as the sage Vāmadeva also did.

The word tu [but] is used here to remove doubt. Even though Indra was perfectly aware that he was an individual conscious living entity and not the Supreme Brahman, he still said, “Worship me, knowing me to be Brahman,” and this statement is actually perfectly correct according to the philosophy of Vedic literature. It is not untrue. For example, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad states:

na vai vāco na caṅsūmi na śrotrāṇi na manāṁśītya acakṣate prāṇa ity evacakṣate prāṇo hy evaitāṇi sarvāṇi bhavanti

“The senses are not properly called ‘voices’, ‘eyes’, ‘ears’, and ‘minds’. The proper name for them all is prāṇa. Everything that is exists is prāṇa.”

Because prāṇa maintains their activities, the senses are identified as prāṇa. The learned, self-realized speaker, Indra, wishing to teach his humble, well-behaved student, instructed him: “I am that prāṇa.” This means that Indra is dependent on prāṇa or Brahman, not that he is identical with Brahman in all respects.

The example of Vāmadeva is found in the following passage of Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [1.4.10]:

tad vaitat paśyan nṛṣir vāmadevaḥ pratipade aham manur abhavaṁ sūryaś ca

“Seeing this, the sage Vāmadeva repeated at every moment: ‘I was Manu. I was the sun-god.’”

Here Vāmadeva identifies himself with Manu and the sun-god because the Supreme Brahman is the controller who grants powers to Vāmadeva, Manu, and the sun-god. Because they all obtain their powers from the Supreme Brahman, in one sense they are all one. The Supreme Brahman is all-pervading. He is, in one sense, one with everything that is pervaded by Him. This confirmed by the following statements of smṛti-śāstra:

yo 'yaṁ tavāgato deva-sāṃpiṁ devatā-gaṇaṁ sa tvam eva jagat-sraṣṭā yataḥ sarva-gato bhavān

“Soever comes before You, be he a demigod, is created by You, O Personality of Brahman.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.9.69]

sarvaṁ samāpnośi tato ‘si sarvam

“You are all-pervading, and thus You are everything.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.40]
In ordinary usage also, when there is a great assembly in a certain place, people call that oneness because there is unity of place, and also when there is agreement of opinion that is also called oneness. For example, it is said: “In the evening the scattered cows assemble in one place and thus attain oneness,” and “The disputing monarchs finally agreed and became one in their opinion.”

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not so that although there are many passages indicating that the word prāṇa in this passage refers to Brahman, still there are many other passages that demonstrate that it is not possible for the word prāṇa to refer Brahman? Some examples are:

\[ na vācaṁ vijijñāsitā vaktāram vidyāt \]

“Do not try to understand the meaning of a statement without first understanding who has spoken it.” [Kauṭīkī Upaniṣad 3.8]

\[ tri-śirṣāṇam tvāṣṭram ahanam \]

“I am the Indra who killed Vṛśasura, the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭā.”

These two quotations clearly identify that the speaker of the passage in question was the demigod Indra, who is an individual conscious living entity. That the word prāṇa refers to the life-force, or breath within the body, is confirmed by the following scriptural statements:

\[ yāvad asmin śarīre prāṇo vasati tāvad āyor atha khalu prāṇa eva prajñātma idaṁ śarīram parighyothāpayati \]

“As long as prāṇa remains within it, the body is alive. Prāṇa is the conscious living entity. Prāṇa grasps this material body, and makes it rise up and move about.” [Kauṭīkī Upaniṣad 2.2-3]

\[ yo vai prāṇah sa prajñā yā prajñā sa prāṇah. sa hā hy etāv asmin śarīre vasataḥ. sahotkramate. \]

“Prāṇa is the same as prajñā [consciousness]. Prajñā is the same as prāṇa. Together they reside in the material body. At the last moment they both leave the body together.” [Kauṭīkī Upaniṣad]

These quotations clearly show that it is not impossible to interpret the word prāṇa in this context to mean “the individual conscious living entity” or “living force”. The scriptures teach us that both are actually identical, the living force being the active expression of the inactive conscious living entity. In this way it is valid to interpret the word prāṇa in three ways: 1. the individual conscious living entity; 2. the living force; and 3. the Supreme Brahman. The word prāṇa here refers to all three. All three are worshipable for the living entities.”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.1.31

\[ jīva-mukhya-prāṇa-liṅgān neti cen nopāsyā-traividhyād āśrītatvād iha tad-yogāt \]

jīva–of the individual conscious living entity; mukhya–the primary; prāṇa–living force; liṅgāt–the signs; na–not; iti–thus; cet–if; na–not; upāsyā–worshipable; taividhyāt–because of being there; āśrītatvāt–because of taking shelter; iha–here; tat-yogāt–because of appropriateness.

If someone says the word prāṇa also refers to the individual conscious living entity and the primary living force in addition to referring to Brahman, then I reply that such an interpretation is not correct. If the word prāṇa referred to all three, then all three would
be worshipable. This view is not correct, because neither logic nor the authority of scripture support it.

Someone may say that the natural features of the individual conscious living entity and the living force are such that they are proper objects of worship. To this I reply: This is not true. Why? For then there would be three objects of worship. When Indra says, “Worship me as prāṇa,” he uses only one sentence. The rules of rhetoric demand that a sentence have only one correct interpretation, and therefore if we say that the word prāṇa here refers to three different objects, we shall break that rule.

This is the true meaning: There are three possible ways to interpret the meaning of prāṇa in this context:

1. Take all these passages, including what directly mentions Brahman, as referring to the individual conscious living entity and living force;
2. Take these passages as referring some to the individual conscious living entity and living force, and some to Brahman; and
3. Take these passages as all referring to Brahman. The first possibility has already been clearly refuted, The second possibility is not very acceptable, for it recommends that there are three distinct objects of worship.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva says the third possibility is actually logical because āsritatvāt [this view is supported by the statements of Vedic literature]. We may see that many passages in Vedic literature that seem to refer to the individual conscious living entity or the living force, in fact refer to Brahman. For example, in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [5.1.15] it is said,

na vai vāco na ca kākṣūniṣi na śrotrāṇi na manāṁśīty ācakṣate prāṇa iti evācakṣate prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavanti

“In the body of a living being neither the power to speak, nor the power to see, nor the power to hear, nor the power to think is the prime factor; it is life which is the center of all activities.”

If at this point someone were to object: “Is it not true that in this passage the natural sense of the words supports the interpretations of the individual conscious living entity and the living force?” I would reply by saying: In this passage the worship of prāṇa is described as the most beneficial activity for the living entities. For this reason the interpretation of the Supreme Brahman is logical. For this reason Śrīla Vyāsadeva states in the sūtra, tad-yogāt [because this is logical].

Someone may then object: “Is it not true that the scriptures explain that the prāṇa and prajñā both reside within the body of the individual conscious living entity, and also leave that body together at the time of death? How is this possible if you say that prāṇa means Brahman?”

To this objection I reply: Brahman is present in the body of the individual conscious living entity in two ways: as kriyā-śaktī [the potency of action], which is also known as prāṇa, and as jñāna-śakti [the potency of knowledge], which is also known as prajñā. Both are manifested from Brahman. These two potencies remain within the body of the individual conscious living entity, and also leave it together at the time of death.

Another objection may be raised in the following words: “Is it not true that prāṇa and the other words you claim are names of the Supreme Brahman are all actually adjectives, and therefore cannot function as names?”

To this objection I reply: This not true. These words are simultaneously adjectives and nouns. When Indra says prāṇo ’smi prajñātmā [I am prāṇa, prajñā, and ātmā], he uses these words as nouns. For these reasons prāṇa, prajñā, and other words used by Indra should be understood to refer to Brahman.
At this point a further objection may be raised: “Is it not true that in the beginning you adequately demonstrated that the word *prāṇa* refers to Brahman? Most of your arguments are redundant.”

To this objection I reply: This is not true. In the beginning I dispelled the doubts that may have arisen in regard to the single word *prāṇa* taken by itself. After that I discussed the word *prāṇa* in relation to a specific quotation, where it was related with other words, such as ānanda, and in this discussion I demonstrated that the word *prāṇa* was used there in such a way that it could only be understood to mean Brahman, and not the individual conscious living entity, or anything else. For this reason I have discussed this specific passage of *Kauśītakī Upaniṣad* separately.

*Thus ends the First Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!*
Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman

Pāda 2: Certain other words, though less clearly related to Brahman, also describe Him.

manomayādibhiḥ śabdaiḥ
svarūpaṁ yasya kīrtaye
hrdaye sphuratu śrīmān
mamāsau śyāmasundaraḥ

“It is said that the Lord appears to one who calls out to Him with a pure mind and heart. May He appear within the core of my heart in His beautiful original form as Śyāmasundara.”

The First Pāda of this Adhyāya teaches that one should inquire about the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the creator of all universes. It has also been shown that certain words used in the Vedic literature, such as ānandamaya, jyotis, prāṇa, ākāśa, etc. although they normally refer to other things, in the Vedic context clearly refer to that Supreme Brahman because of the samanvaya or grammatical construction of the passages in which they appear. The Second and Third Pādas will demonstrate that certain other words, although less clearly related to Brahman, also describe Him.

Adhikaraṇa 1: The Word "Manomaya" Refers to Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: In the chapter of Chāndogya Upaniṣad describing Śāṇḍilya-vidyā [3.14.1-4] we read:

“This Brahman is indeed all-pervading. Let one meditate with devotion on Him as the Mover on the Water. Such meditation leads to faith. Because a man is a creature of faith, as his faith is in this life, so will be his condition after death. So let him generate full faith in the Lord.

“The Lord is omnipotent, known by those whose minds are pure [manomaya], glorious, resolute, all-wise, the doer, the ordainer, the heart’s desire, the most sweet-scented, the support of the creation, and the silent impartial witness in everyone’s heart.

“This Self within my heart is smaller than a grain of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a mustard seed or the kernel of a mustard seed. This Self within my heart is also greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than the entire universe.

“He is the enjoyer of all activities, all desires, all sweet fragrances, and all tastes. He embraces the entire creation, and is the silent impartial witness. This Self within my heart is that Brahman. Let one meditate on Him with this idea: When departing from this body I shall reach Him. He who has this faith certainly obtains Him. Thus said Śāṇḍilya, thus said Śāṇḍilya.”

In conditioned material consciousness, the soul is under the illusory impression that he can become the lord of the universe, and this misconception is dragged to the ultimate point of ludicrousness when he imagines himself to be the Supreme. The Māyāvādī theory is that the spiritual form of the Lord is a product of illusion, and Brahman is actually formless. Somehow or other (they are vague on this point) the Supreme becomes fragmented into many and becomes covered by illusion. They assert that when
one gets free from illusion and attains self-realization, one will realize that he is actually God, and that self-realization means losing one’s individual identity and merging into the existence of the Supreme.

The foolish conditioned soul overwhelmed by ignorance does not consider that by definition, the Supreme cannot be fragmented nor covered by illusion. If the Supreme can become conditioned by illusion, where is His supremacy? In that case māyā, or illusion, would be supreme. So the impersonalist speculators actually worship illusion as the supreme.

But it is a matter of everyday experience that illusion is always subordinate to reality. For example, the shadow of a pot exists because of the existence of the pot, a solid object. Words and other symbols exist because of the existence of the real objects they represent. Similarly, the temporary material world full of individual living entities exists because of the existence of the eternal spiritual world and the independent, all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme is eternally Supreme; if the living entities were actually supreme, then they would be supreme already, and no process of self-realization would be necessary. Therefore the living entities can never become supreme because they are constitutionally subordinate, conditioned and dependent.

The Vedic scriptures explain this truth on every page. Nevertheless, because of their desires for sense gratification, the conditioned living entities try to explain the scriptures in a way that justifies the misconception that they are the owners, controllers and enjoyers of the cosmic manifestation. Since the direct meaning of the scriptures flatly contradicts that theory, they must resort to imaginative speculation and false logic. The Māyāvādīs may try to masquerade their deliberate obfuscation and misinterpretation of the scriptures as a noble search for truth, but the actual scientific understanding is that the intelligence of the conditioned souls is impure and covered by illusion due to contact with the material energy of the three modes of nature.

Therefore if they are to be rescued from illusion, it is necessary that they purify themselves under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, who not only is a brāhmaṇa or knower of Brahman by qualification, but must also be a Vaiṣṇava or knower of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by perfect self-realization. The only purifying process recognized in the Vedas is to worship the Supreme Lord under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession from Him. That is the actual Vedic spiritual path; the imaginary sādhana of the impersonalists is not found in the Vedas. Bhagavad-gītā [7.19] confirms this truth as follows:

 bahūnāṁ janmanāṁ ante
 jhānāvān māṁ prapadyate
 vāsudevāḥ sarvam iti
 sa mahātma sudurlabhaḥ

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Śaṅkilya-vidyā [3.14.1] the following explanation is given:

 sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma taj jālān iti śānta upāśita. atha khalu kratumayaḥ puruṣaḥ. yathā
 kratur asmin loke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati. sa kratuṁ kurvita. manomayaḥ
 prāṇa-śarīro bhā-rūpaḥ satya-saṅkalpa ākāśātma sarva-karmā sarva-kāmāḥ sarva-gandhaḥ
 sarva-rasaḥ sarvam idaṁ abhyāto avākyān ādaraḥ.

“Everything is Brahman. From Him everything has come. The peaceful sage should worship Brahman with this idea. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the activities of devotional service. Whenever devotional service is performed in this world, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is present. According to [the degree of] one’s performance of devotional service in
this life, he will attain an appropriate body after death. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known by those whose minds are pure [manomaya]. He is the controller of all life. He is effulgent and glorious. His every desire is automatically fulfilled. He is all-pervading. He is the original creator of everything. He fulfills all desires. He possesses all pleasant fragrances. He is all sweetness. He is present everywhere. He cannot be described in words. He cannot be known.”

Here the word manomaya appears in a different context than in the First Pāda, Adhikarana 6. Whereas there it indicates the mental platform, a developmental stage of consciousness prior to full self-realization, here it means the state of pure mind or perfect spiritual consciousness. The overall significance is that to attain self-realization or direct consciousness of the Personality of Brahman, one must have a perfectly pure mind. The passage goes on to describe some of the wonderful qualities of Brahman, such as His being the controller, His effulgence, glory, all-pervasive presence and so on.

Śaṁśaya [doubt]: Do the adjectives in this passage, beginning with manomaya, describe the jīva or the Paramātmā?

Pūrvapakṣa [the opponent speaks]: “The words manah [mind] and prāṇa [life-breath] here appropriately describe the jīva. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [2.1.2] explains, aprāṇo hy amanāḥ śubhrah: ‘The splendid Supreme Person has neither breath nor mind.’ Because this passage from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad contradicts this description of the Supreme Lord, it should be understood to refer to the jīva. The opening words sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma, ‘Everything is Brahman,’ do not necessarily mean that the entire passage following them is about Brahman, but are merely spoken so that the worshiper may become peaceful. The teaching there is that because Brahman is everything, one should become peaceful, as this is a prerequisite for meditation. The rest of the passage should then be understood to refer to the jīva, and the word brahma at the end of the passage should also be understood to refer to the jīva.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: This passage from Chāndogya Upaniṣad is a perfect example of how the impersonalists take Vedic statements indicating the Supreme Brahman out of context and try to apply them to the individual jīva. This passage mentions kratu [sacrifice in devotional service], but it is not logical or even possible that the jīva can offer sacrifice to himself. Yet the impersonalist tries to twist the meaning of the scripture to match his own preconceptions. The proper conclusion is:

Sūtra 1.2.1

sarvatraya prasiddhopadeśāt
sarvatraya—everywhere; prasiddha—celebrated; upadeśāt—because of the teaching.

[The word manomaya and others here refer to the Paramātmā] because [in this passage] the famous [attributes of the Paramātmā taught] everywhere [in Vedānta literature] are described [in the phrase beginning taj-jalān].

This passage from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad describes the Paramātmā and not the jīva. Why? Because the qualities that belong only to the Paramātmā, beginning with His being the creator of the material universes, and which are described everywhere [sarvatraya] in Vedānta literature, are mentioned in this passage in the phrase beginning taj-jalān, and other phrases and words. Although the upakrama or opening words of this passage [sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma] are not intended to teach about Brahman but to invoke peacefulness, beginning with the word manomaya it definitely describes the Supreme Brahman. Here manomaya means ‘He who can be understood by a pure mind.’ The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [4.4.19] explains:
manasaivānudraṣṭavyam
“He may be seen by a pure mind.”

Bhagavad-gītā 6.20-23 explains:

yatroparamate cittaṁ niruddhaṁ yoga-sevāṁ
yatra caiva caivaṁ sthitaṁ calati tattvataṁ
yāṁ labdhvā cāparaṁ lābhaṁ manyate nādhiṁ tataḥ
yasmin sthīto na duṣkhena gurūnāpi vīcālyate
taṁ vidyād duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyoγam yoga-saṁjñitam
“The stage of perfection is called trance, or samādhi, when one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This is characterized by one’s ability to see the ātmā [Supreme Self] by the pure mind, and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.”

The word kratu means the process of sacrifice or devotional service. This is confirmed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

oviṁ namo bhagavate mantra-tattva-liṅgāya yajña-kratave mahā-dhvarāvayavāya mahā-puruṣāya namah
“O Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You as the gigantic person. Simply by chanting mantras, we shall be able to understand You fully. You are yajña [sacrifice], and You are the kratu [ritual]. Therefore all the ritualistic ceremonies of sacrifice are part of Your transcendental body, and You are the only enjoyer of all sacrifices.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.18.35]

viṣṇuḥ sthitau kratu-patir dvija-dharma-setuḥ
The Lord manifested His form as Viṣṇu, the Lord of sacrifice and protector of the twice-born brahmaṇas and their religious duties, to maintain the universe. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.4.5]

Another significant idea presented here is that the Lord is present in acts of sacrifice and devotional service. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā 3.15:

karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhī
brahmākṣara-samudbhavam
tasmāt sarvā-gataṁ brahma
nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam
“Regulated activities are prescribed in the Vedas, and the Vedas are directly manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently the all-pervading Transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice.”

When we perform sacrifice for the satisfaction of the yajña-puruṣa, Viṣṇu, then we are directly in the presence of the Lord. We must find out the instructions for this kind of work in Brahman, or the transcendental Vedas. The Vedas provide the regulations or codes of directions for practical work in
devotional service. Any work done according to these directions has the extraordinary quality of not creating karmic reactions, because it is done to further the Supreme purpose of the Lord. Even ordinary religious rituals, charity and other work done in the mode of goodness creates *karma*, such as attaining the heavenly planets, that binds one to material existence. On the other hand, work performed in defiance of the Vedic instructions is called *vikarma* [unauthorized or sinful work] which leads to degradation. Therefore, one who takes direction from the *Vedas* is saved from the good and bad reaction sof work, and is situated in the liberated stage of spiritual life, for the directions in the *Vedas* are directly manifested from the breathing of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is said:

\[
\text{asya mahato bhūtasya naśvasitam etad yad r̥g-vedo yajur-vedah sāma-vedo 'tharvāṇa girasaḥ.}
\]

“The four *Vedas*—namely the R̥g-veda, Yajur-veda, Sāma-veda and Atharva-veda—are all emanations from the breathing of the great Personality of Godhead.” [*Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.11]

All this can be known by those whose minds are pure, or in other words, who have no desire to benefit materially from the results of their work. They are free from desire, material work and its reactions because their only desire is to satisfy the Supreme Brahman by all their activities. Nevertheless, the Lord does not depend on the service of His devotees to be satisfied. He is always fully satisfied, because He is *satya-saṅkalpa*: all His desires are automatically fulfilled by His inconceivable potencies.

“He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between His body and His soul. He is absolute. All His senses are transcendental. Any one of His senses can perform the action of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.7-8]

\[
nityaṁ ca pūrṇa-kāmasya
\]

“My desires are always automatically fulfilled.” [*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 14.32]

\[
\text{kim asmābhīr vanaukobhir}
\]

\[
\text{anyābhīr vā mahātmanah}
\]

\[
\text{śrī-pater āpta-kāmasya}
\]

\[
\text{kriyārthāḥ kṛtātmanah}
\]

“The great soul Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the Goddess of Fortune, and He automatically achieves whatever He desires. How can we forest-dwellers or any other women fulfill His purposes when He is already fulfilled within Himself?” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.47.46]

\[
bibhrad vapuḥ sakala-sundara-sanniveśaṁ
karmācaraṁ bhuvi su-maṅgalam āpta-kāmāḥ
\]

“The Lord, who bore His body as the amalgamation of everything beautiful, dutifully executed the most auspicious activities while on the earth, although He was, in fact, without any endeavor already satisfied in all desires.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.1.10]

Passages like *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha* [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.4.1] that refer to the Supreme as, “Where words cease, and where the mind cannot reach,” really mean that Brahman cannot be apprehended by the faithless, and not totally understood even by the knowers of wisdom, but must be approached by meditation and pure intuition without material desire. This topic was already discussed in *Pāda 1, Adhikarana 5*.

\[
bhavisyāṁ ca bhūtāni māṁ tu veda na kaścana
\]
“I also know all living entities; but no one knows Me.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.26]

The word prāṇa-śarīra means “He who is the controller of life.” Some also interpret this word to mean “He whose transcendental form is most dear.” The words aprāṇo hy amanāḥ—“He has neither breath nor mind”—may be interpreted either that He is supremely independent and does not need breath or mind, or that because His form is completely spiritual, He does not depend upon prāṇa like ordinary creatures. The śruti-śāstra explains manovān—“The Supreme has a spiritual mind”—meaning that His mind is not like ours, since He is eternal, all-pervading and all-cognizant, He knows everything that can be known through direct perception. And ānīda-vātam—“The Supreme has spiritual breath.”—means that He does not require air to breathe.

Manomaya refers to Brahman, because this word is frequently used to refer to Him in the Upaniṣads. All these references prove that the passage refers to the Supreme Brahman and not the individual jīva.

Sūtra 1.2.2

vivakṣita-gunopapattē ca
vivakṣita—wished to be said; guṇa—qualities; upapatteḥ—because of being appropriate; ca—and.

[The word manomaya here must refer to Brahman] because the qualities [given here] most appropriately [describe Brahman.]

Manomaya [knowable by the pure mind], prāṇa-śarīra [the controller of life], bhā-rūpa [effulgent and glorious] and the other qualities mentioned here describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but are not at all appropriate for the jīva. Many scriptural passages also show that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described by the word manomaya:

manomayah prāṇa-śarīra-netā
“He is understood by the pure mind [manomaya]. He is the guide of the body and senses.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.7]

sa eṣo 'ntar-hṛdaya ākāśas tasminn ayaṁ puruṣo manomayo 'mṛtamayo hiraṇmayaḥ
“The golden Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is full of nectar, and who is known by the pure mind [manomaya], resides in the sky of the heart.” [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 1.6.1]

yatroparamate cittāṁ
niruddham yoga-sevāyā
yatra caivaṁtāṁmāṁ
paśyāṁ ātmani tuṣyati
“In the stage of perfection called trance, or samādhi, one’s mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by one’s ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self.” [Bhagavad-gītā 6.20]

ḥṛdā maṇiśā manasābhiklpto ya etad amṛtas te bhavanti
“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known by they who have a pure heart and a pure mind. They who know Him in this way become free from death.” [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 7.9]

namo namas te 'khila-mantra-devatā-
dravāyā sarva-kratave kriyāmame
vairāgya-bhāktyātmajayānubhāvita-
jñānāya vidyā-gurave namo namaḥ

“O Lord, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and are worshipable by universal prayers, Vedic hymns and sacrificial ingredients. We offer our obeisances unto You. You can be realized by the pure mind freed from all visible and invisible material contamination. We offer our respectful obeisances to You as the supreme spiritual master of knowledge in devotional service.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.13.39]

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
animitta-nimittena
sva-dharmenāmalatmanā
tīvrayā mayi bhaktyā ca
śrūta-sambhraya cīram

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: One can get liberation by seriously discharging devotional service unto Me with a pure mind, and thereby hearing for a long time about Me or from Me. By thus executing one's prescribed duties, there will be no reaction, and one will be freed from the contamination of matter.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.27.21]

prāṇasya prāṇah

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the life of all life.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.18]

bhṛtyasya paśyati gurūn api nāparādhan
sevām manāg api kṛtām bahudhābhuyaiti
āvīkaroṭi piśunesv api nābhasyāyām
śilena nirmala-matī puruṣottamo ‘yam

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known as Puruṣottama, the greatest of all persons, has a pure mind. He is so gentle that even if His servant is implicated in a great offense, He does not take it very seriously. Indeed, if His servant renders some small service, the Lord accepts it as being very great. Even if an envious person blasphemes the Lord, the Lord never manifests anger against him. Such are His great qualities.” [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.138]

Sūtra 1.2.3

anupapattes tu na śārīraḥ

anupapatteḥ—because of inappropriateness; tu—indeed; na—not; śārīraḥ—the jīva.

[The word manomaya here] cannot refer to the jīva because the qualities [described in this passage] cannot be attributed to him.

The manomaya here cannot refer to the jīva because it is not possible that the qualities described here refer to the tiny, glowworm-like jīva. For example, “He is the controller of all life. He is effulgent and glorious. His every desire is automatically fulfilled. He is all-pervading. He is the original creator of everything. He fulfills all desires. He possesses all pleasant fragrances. He is all sweetness. He is present everywhere.” All these superior transcendental qualities are impossible to ascribe to the limited jīva.

amśo nānāvyapadeśāt

“The living entities are parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, they are not the Supreme Brahman Himself. Their relationship with the Lord is that of dependence on the Lord.” [Brahma-sūtra 2.3.43]
jñājñau dvāv ajāv īśānīśau
harah kṣarātmānāv īśate deva ekaḥ

“Both the Supreme Lord and the living entities are spiritual. Of the two, the Supreme Lord is
great, omnipotent, and omniscient, and the living entities are minute, subordinate spiritual
sparks and therefore eligible to possess only limited knowledge and to be controlled by māyā.
But both are eternal. Although the living entities are inexhaustible, being proud by considering
themselves the enjoyers of material objects, they are prone to be conditioned by māyā. Both
material nature and the living entities are energies of and controlled by the Supreme Lord. The
Supreme Lord is one without a second.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 1.9-10]

ātmā svāśrayāśrayaḥ

“The Supreme Being is independent of all, and therefore He is the supreme shelter.” [Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam 2.10.9]

Sūtra 1.2.4

karma-kartr-vyapadeśāc ca

karma—object; kartr—agent; vyapadeśāt—because of the statement; ca—also.

And because the distinction is drawn here between the agent and the object.

With the words [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.4] etam itaḥ pretyābhisambhayātām [After death I will
attain Him] at the end of the passage, the manomaya is clearly designated as the object of the sentence
and the jīva, with the words abhisambhayātām [I will attain] is clearly identified as the agent. The
manomaya, being the object, must be different from the jīva, which is the agent. The manomaya must
therefore be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The word abhisambhayātām here describes
meeting. The jīva meets the Supreme Lord as a great river meets the ocean. Chāndogya Upaniṣad
[8.12-13] states:

sa uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ sa tatra paryeti jākaṣat krīḍan ramamāṇaḥ. taṁ vā etaṁ deva ātmānam
upāsate—śyāmāc chavalam prapadye śaivalaḥ chyāmaṁ prapadye. vidhūya pāpamdhūtvā
śarīraṁ kṛtaṁ kṛtātmā brahma-lokam-abhisambhayāṁti

“The topmost person is he who achieves the Supreme Lord through devotional service. He
enjoys food and sports in the abode of the Lord. The demigods worship that Supreme Lord. For
receiving the mercy of the Lord, I surrender unto His energy [Rādhā], and for receiving the
mercy of His energy, I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. By worshiping Them a practitioner becomes freed
from all sinful reactions and, being fully satisfied, he goes to the eternal abode of the Lord.”

bhaktyā māṁ abhijñātī
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato māṁ tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantarām

“One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional
service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the
kingdom of God.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.55]

Sūtra 1.2.5

śabda-viśeṣāt
śabda—words; viśeṣāt—because of the difference.

[The word manomaya here cannot refer to the ātma] because the words are in different cases.

The text [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.3] says eṣa ma ātmāntar-hṛdaye: “He is within my heart.” In these words the devotee jīva is placed in the genitive case and the object of his worship is placed in the nominative case. Because the ātma and the object of his worship are in different cases they must be two distinct persons. Therefore the manomaya here must be the worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is different from the devotee jīva. Brhad-aranyaka Upaniṣad [2.1] states:

yathagnēḥ kṣudra visphulinga vyuccaranty evam evasmad atmanah sarvāh sarvāh sarvāh sarvāh bhutāni vyuccaranti. tasyopanisat satyasya satyam iti.

“Just as small sparks emanate from a big fire, similarly all living entities, all planets, all the demigods, and all material elements such as the earth emanate from the supreme soul, Sri Govinda. His instructions are the supreme truth.”

Taittirīya Upaniṣad [3.6] confirms:

ānando brahmaṁ vyayānāt. ānandoddhy eva khilvīmāni bhūtāni jāyante. ānandaṁ jātāni jīvanti. ānandaṁ prayanty abhisāṁviśantīti. tad brahmety upāśīta

“By undergoing austerity, he realized the blissful Supreme Brahman, from whom all living entities are born, by whom the living entities are maintained, and into whom the living entities enter at the time of annihilation.”

Sūtra 1.2.6

smṛteś ca

smṛteḥ—because of the smṛti-śāstra; ca—also.

And because of the statement of smṛti-śāstra also.

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is different from the jīva is also confirmed by the following statement of Bhagavad-gītā [18.61]:

iśvāraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
ḥṛd-deṣe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayaṁ sarva-bhūtāṁ
yantrārādhaṁ māyāyā
dēhāḥ svarūpaṁ tattvāndavaṁ
dāra-śaktiṁ jīvabhūtaṁ savantānāṁ
dāra-sādānim jīvabhūtaṁ savantānāṁ

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.”

sa vā idaṁ viśvam amogha-līlaḥ
sṛjyā svarūpaṁ tattva-saṁyogāḥ
bhūteṣu cántaraṁ ātma-tantraḥ
sād-vargikāṁ jīvṛti sād-guṇeśāḥ

“The Lord, whose activities are always spotless, is the master of the six senses and is fully omnipotent with six opulences. He creates the manifested universes, maintains them and annihilates them without being in the least affected. He is within every living being and is always independent.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.36]
sa vyāpakatayātmānaṁ vyatiriktatayātmāni
vidvān svapna ivāmarśa-sākṣiṁṁaṁ virarāṁha

“He (King Malayadhvaja) attained perfect knowledge by being able to distinguish the Supersoul from the individual soul. The individual soul is localized, whereas the Supersoul is all-pervasive. He became perfect in knowledge that the material body is not the soul but that the soul is the witness of the material body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.28.40]

Someone may object: “The Chāndogya Upaniṣad [3.14.3] describes the manomaya in the following words: esa ma ātmāntar-hṛdaye 'nīyān vṛṛ heva yavād vā: ‘In my heart is the Self, smaller than a grain of rice or barley.’ This text shows that because it is very tiny, the manomaya must be the jīva and cannot be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Sūtra 1.2.7

arbhakaukastvāt tad-vyapadeśāc ca neti cen na nicāyyatvād evaṁ vyomavac ca

arbhaka—small; okastvā—because of the residence; tat—of that; vyapadeśāt—because of the teaching; ca—and; na—not; iti—thus; cet—if; na—not; nicāyyatvāt—because of meditation; evaṁ—in this way; vyomavat—like the sky; ca—also.

If it be said that the word manomaya here cannot refer to Brahman because here it is said that the residence of manomaya is very tiny, then I say no, because Brahman should be meditated on in this way, and because in the same passage the manomaya is said to be as great as the sky.

For these two reasons it cannot be said that the manomaya is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this passage from Chāndogya Upaniṣad the manomaya is said to be greater than the entire Earth planet. The text says jyāyān antarīkṣāt [He is greater than the sky]. Because the Supreme Brahman is all-pervading the word vyomavat [like the sky] is used in this sūtra.

How may these two statements, that Brahman is very small and very great, be reconciled? To answer this question he says nicāyyatvād evaṁ [Because Brahman should be meditated on in this way]. This means that it is said that Brahman is very small so He may become the object of meditation. This means that when in the Vedic literatures it is said that the infinite, all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead is as small as the distance between the thumb and forefinger or some other very small size, in some instances it is meant to be taken figuratively and in other places literally. In the first instance [figuratively] the devotee meditates on the Lord in his heart and in the second [literally] by His inconceivable potencies, the Lord personally appears in the heart out of kindness to His devotee.

Although the Supreme Lord has only one original form, He still manifests in many different forms to His devotees. This is described in the smṛti-śāstra in the words eko 'pi san bahudhā yo 'vabhāti [Although He is one He manifests in many forms]. Because of His inconceivable potency the Supreme Lord, although He is all-pervading, may become as small as an atom. This will be described in Adhikarana 7, Sūtra 1.2.25, describing Vaiśvānara. In this way when the Supreme Personality of Godhead is manifested in a very small form, as the size of an atom or the distance between the thumb and forefinger, that very small size is present everywhere, so in this way also the Supreme Lord is all-pervading. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [1.15] states:

evam ātmātmāni grhyate 'sau satyenaināṁ tapasā yo 'nupaśyati

“The Supersoul is situated within the core of everyone’s heart. One who searches after that Supreme Lord through meditation and austerity can see Him within his heart.”
“He [the Lord] was only thumb high, but He was all transcendental. He had a very beautiful, blackish, infallible body, and He wore a dress of lightning yellow and a helmet of blazing gold. Thus He was seen by the child.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.12.8]

“...sphurat-puraṭa-maulinam...VIṣoko ’bhayam rcchasi

“...mām ātmānaṁ svayam-jyotih...sambho...prāptir iti cen na vaiśeṣyāt

“...In your own heart, through your intellect, you will always see Me, the supreme self-effulgent soul dwelling within the hearts of all living entities. Thus you will achieve the state of eternal life, free from all lamentation and fear.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.24.39]

Someone may object: “If the Paramātmā is then also present within the material body just as the jīva is, then, because of His contact with the body the Paramātmā must also feel all the pleasures and sufferings of the body just as the jīva does.” To answer this he says:

**Sūtra 1.2.8**

*sambhoga-prāptir iti cen na vaiśeṣyāt*

*sambhoga—of enjoyment; prāptir—attainment; iti—thus; cet—if; na—not; vaiśeṣyāt—because of the difference.

If it is said that [the Paramātmā in the heart also] experiences [the pains and] pleasures [of the material body], then I say no because there is a great difference [between Him and the jīva].

In the word *sambhoga* the prefix *sam-* means “with,” as it also does in the word *samvāda* [with + words = conversation]. Therefore this Sūtra states that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not enjoy and suffer along with the jīva. Why? Because of the great difference between them. This is the meaning: mere contact with a certain body does not by itself bring suffering and enjoyment. Being under the dominion of *karma* is the real cause of material suffering and enjoyment. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not under the power of the law of *karma*, for He is simply the witness and does not participate in the activities of the jīva. This is described in the Upaniṣads:

*anaśnann anyo ’bhicākaśīti*

“Two birds sit in the metaphorical tree of the material body. One bird eats. The other bird does not eat, but only looks.” [Mundaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1]

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā...anaśnann anyo ’bhicākaśīti*

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.6]

and in the Bhagavad-gītā [4.14], where Lord Kṛṣṇa says:
"There is no work that affects me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action."

and in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, where the Pracetās pray:

namah kamala-kiñjalka-  
piśāṅgāmala-vāsase  
sarva-bhūta-nivāsāya  
namo 'yuṅksmaḥi sākṣine

“Dear Lord, the garment You have put on is yellowish in color, like the saffron of a lotus flower, but it is not made of anything material. Since You live in everyone’s heart, You are the direct witness of all the activities of all living entities. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You again and again.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.30.26]

and in the prayers of the personified Vēdas:

sa yad ajayā tv ajām anuśayita guṇāṁś ca juṣan  
bhajati saruṣaṭāṁ tad anu mṛtyum apeta-bhagaḥ  
tvam uta jahāsi tāṁ ahiṁ iva tvacām āti-bhagō  
mahasi mahiṣāse 'ṣṭa-guṇite 'parimeya-bhagaḥ

“The illusory material nature attracts the minute living entity to embrace her, and as a result he assumes forms composed of her qualities. Subsequently, he loses all his spiritual qualities and must undergo repeated deaths. You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in Your possession of eight mystic perfections, You enjoy unlimited opulences.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.38]

Adhikaraṇa 2: The Eater is Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: As we have seen above, the impersonalist doctrine is based on the process of speculation. Because the power of human intelligence is limited and subject to being illusioned by logical fallacies, the result of human reason is always uncertain. The Vedic epistemological process is to accept the verdict of the scriptures as authoritative and final, and the role of intelligence is simply to understand how to apply their instructions. This is a superior process of receiving knowledge because it does not depend on unreliable inductive logic, but applies deductive logic to the perfect wisdom received from the Lord through the scriptures.

evaṁ paramparā-prāptam  
imāṁ rājaṃśa yo viduḥ

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.2]

It is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam [1.2.28-29]:

vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ  
vāsudeva-parā yoṣā vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ

vāsudeva-parāṁ jñānaṁ vāsudeva-parāṁ tapaḥ  
vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatiḥ

“In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. The purpose of performing sacrifice is to please Him. Yoga is for realizing Him. All fruited activities are ultimately rewarded by Him only. He is supreme knowledge, and all
severe austerities are performed to know Him. Religion [dharma] is rendering loving service unto Him. He is the supreme goal of life.”

In his commentary on Bhagavad-gītā [2.45], Śrī Madhvācārya quotes the following verses:

vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārata tathā
daśe ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate

“In the Vedic literature, including the Rāmāyaṇa, Purāṇas, and Mahābhārata, from the very beginning [daśa] to the end [ante ca], as well as within the middle [madhye ca], only Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is explained.”

sarve vedā yat padam āmananti

“All Vedic knowledge is searching after the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.15]

veda-pranihito dhamma
hy adharmas tad-viparyayaḥ
vedo nārāyaṇaḥ sāksāt
svayambhir iti śuśruma

“That which is prescribed in the Vedas constitutes dharma, the religious principles, and the opposite of that is irreligion.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.40]

“The source of dharma, or religious principles, is the Vedas, the smṛtis, their commentaries, the conduct of sadhus, and the satisfaction of the soul.” [Manu-sanhitā 2.6]

Thus the Vedas are primarily concerned with declaring the supremacy of Viṣṇu. In his commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā, Śrī Madhvācārya quotes from the Nāradīya Purāṇa as follows:

“It is proclaimed that the Vaiṣṇava scriptures consist of the Pañcarātra, the Mahābhārata, the original Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Purāṇas glorifying Lord Śiva should be adjusted so their statements do not conflict with the Vaiṣṇava literatures. Those who dishonor the Vedas by taking shelter of philosophies like Gautama’s Nyāya, Kaṇāda’s Vaiśeṣika, [the atheist] Kapila’s Sāṅkhya, Patañjali’s Yoga, and that found in Śaivite Purāṇas are of low intelligence.”

So we should understand that speculation always leads to misunderstanding, because human intelligence is limited and imperfect. The process of receiving perfect knowledge is simply hearing the Absolute Truth from a self-realized soul, or hearing directly from the Lord through the Vedas. Rather than taking the Vedic statements out of context and twisting them to fit a preconceived notion, to ascertain their real purport we should carefully examine them in their original context, and contemplate their meaning according to the rules of Sanskrit interpretation under the guidance of a self-realized spiritual master. This is the process of samanvaya explained in the Introduction. Even if the statements of the scriptures appear obscure and esoteric, we can at once understand their clear meaning by applying the principles of samanvaya.

For example, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.25] says:

yasya brahma ca kṣātraṁ ca
ubhe bhavataḥ odanaḥ
mrtyur yasyopasecanaṁ
ka ṭithā veda yatra saḥ

“There is a person for whom the brahmaṇas and kṣatriyas are food, and death is the sauce. Who knows where this person is?”
Saṁśaya [arival of doubt]: Here the words odana [food] and upasecana [sauce] indicate an eater. Who is the eater? Is it fire, the jīva, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: “Because there is nothing specific to show that of these three fire is not the eater, and because the questions and answers in this passage seem to indicate fire, and because the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [1.4.6] declares agnir annādaḥ [Fire is the eater], therefore fire is the eater in this passage. Or perhaps the jīva is the eater here because eating is an action and the jīva performs actions although the Supreme does not perform any actions. This is also confirmed by the śruti-śāstra [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1 and Kaṭha Upaniṣad 3.1] which describes an eater accompanied by a non-eater who simply looks: tayor anyah pappalam ‘Two friendly birds sit on a tree. One eats the pippala fruit and the other does not eat but only looks.’ From all this it may be understood that the eater here is the jīva.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The proper understanding follows.

Sūtra 1.2.9

attā carācara-grahaṇāt

attā—the eater; cara—the moving; acara—and the non-moving; grahaṇāt—because of taking.

The eater [is Brahman] because He takes the moving and non-moving [as His food].

The eater is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? Because of the words carācara-grahaṇāt [Because He takes the moving and non-moving as His food]. In the passage under discussion [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.25] the words brahma kṣātram indicate the entire universe, which is then sprinkled with the sauce of death and eaten. This passage must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because besides Him, no one can eat the entire universe. A sauce is something that, while being eaten itself, is also the cause of other things being eaten. The eating of the entire universe sprinkled with the sauce of death must refer to the periodic destruction of the material universes. In this way it is proved that the eater of the universes here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is not refuted by the statement of Upaniṣads [anaśnan] that He does not eat.

dvā suparnā sayujā sakāyā
samām vṛksam pariṣavajāte
tayor anyah pippalāṁ svād atty
anaśnann anyo ‘bhicākaśiti

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1]

The Supreme Personality of Godhead does not eat the results of karma, but He has His own transcendental eating.

yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgān
viśanti nāśaya samṛddha-vegāḥ
tathaiva nāśaya viśanti lokāś
tavāpi vaktrial samṛddha-vegāḥ

lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl
lokān samagraṁ vadanair jvaladbhiḥ
tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagraṁ
bhāsas tavogrāḥ pratapantī viṣṇo
“I see all people rushing with full speed into Your mouths as moths dash into a blazing fire. O Viṣṇu, I see You devouring all people in Your flaming mouths and covering the universe with Your immeasurable rays. Scorching the worlds, You are manifest.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.29-30]

Sūtra 1.2.10

prakaraṇāt ca

prakaraṇāt—because of the context; ca—also.

This is also confirmed by the context.

That this passage refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also confirmed by the following statement of Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.20]:

aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān

“They Supreme Personality of Godhead is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest.”

This is also confirmed by the following words of smṛti-śāstra:

atāsi lokasya carācarasya

“You are the eater of this complete cosmic manifestation, of the moving and the non-moving.”

Adhikarāṇa 3: The Associate in the Cave is Brahman

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.3.1-9] states:

“There are the two aspects of the Lord; as the drinkers of the truth, existing in the body obtained by good works, both dwelling in the cavity of the heart, in the most highly splendid sky. The knowers of Brahman, and those who perform the five great sacrifices and observe the triple nāciketa fire, describe these as shade and sun.

“I know the Lord Viṣṇu, both as the Spirit in the nāciketa fire, and as the refuge of all His worshipers, the imperishable Supreme Brahman, the Giver of security to the frightened voyagers on the ocean of saṁśāra, the Lord dwelling on the opposite shore as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, directing the liberated souls.

“You should know the jīvātmā as one seated in the chariot of the body, the intelligence as the driver and the mind as the reins.

“The wise say that the senses are the horses and their objects are the road; they also say that the spirit soul, joined with the senses and the mind but devoid of spiritual intelligence, is the sufferer.

“For he who is without discrimination, with mind out of harmony, his senses are always uncontrolled like unbroken horses.

“But he who discriminates, and has his mind always harmonized, his senses are controlled like well-trained horses.

“He who is without discrimination, with uncontrolled mind, being always impure, never reaches the goal, but returns again to this world.

“But he who discriminates, and has his mind always harmonized and senses pure, certainly reaches the places where he is not born again.”
“The man who has reason for his charioteer, and holds the reins of the mind, reaches the end of the road that highest place of Viṣṇu.”

The Vedic literature confirms that Brahman is concentrated transcendental knowledge, or unlimited consciousness. Vedic knowledge is given by the Supreme Lord, who is situated in everyone’s heart, to those who are anxious to realize that superconscious Supreme Being. One Vedic mantra [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.18] says,

tāṁ ha devam ātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ mumukṣur vai śaraṇam aham aham prapadye

“One must surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead if he at all wants liberation.”

As far as the goal of ultimate knowledge is concerned, it is also confirmed in Vedic literature:

tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti

“Only by knowing Him can one surpass the boundary of birth and death.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 3.8]

He is situated in everyone’s heart as the supreme controller and eternal friend of the living entity. Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.20] states:

anor anīyāṁ mahato mahīyāṁ
ātmāsyā jantror nihitō guhāyām
tam akratuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko
dhātuḥ prasādāṁ mahimānam ātmanāḥ

“Both the Supersoul [Paramātmā] and the atomic soul [jīvātmā] are situated on the same tree of the body within the same heart of the living being, and only one who has become free from all material desires as well as lamentations can, by the grace of the Supreme, understand the glories of the soul.”

Saṁśaya [araisal of doubt]: The Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.3.1] quoted above states:

ṛtaṁ pibantau suktasya loke
guhāṁ praviṣṭau parame parārdhe
chāyā-tapau brahma-vido vadanti
pañcāṅgavo ye ca trināciketāḥ

“Two persons drink the results of karma in the cave of the heart. They who know Brahman, they who keep the five sacred fires, and they who perform the three nāciketa sacrifices say these two persons are shade and light.”

In this passage a companion to the jīva, who experiences the results of karma, is described. This companion may be interpreted to be either intelligence, life-breath, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The companion here must be either intelligence or life-breath for they assist the jīva as he experiences the results of karma. The companion cannot be the Supreme Personality of Godhead for the Supreme Lord never experiences the results of karma. Therefore the companion must be either intelligence or life-breath.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.2.11

guhāṁ praviṣṭāv ātmānau hi tad darśanāt
The two persons that have entered the cave of the heart are the two selves [the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the jīva] because this explanation is seen in Vedic literature.

The two persons that have entered the cave of the heart are the jīva and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, not the jīva and intelligence, and not the jīva and the life-breath. Why? The Śūtra says tad darśanā [because this explanation is seen in Vedic literature].

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad [2.1.7] says that the jīva has entered the cave of the heart:

*yā prāṇena sambhavaty
aditir devatāmayī
guhāṁ praviśya tiṣṭhanāṁ
yā bhūtebhīr vyajayata*

“Accompanied by the life-breath and a host of powers, the jīva, who is the king of the senses, enters the cave of the heart.”

Another verse [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.12] says that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has entered the cave of the heart:

*tāṁ durdarśañ gūḍham anupraviśtam
ghuḥitaṁ ghavareṣṭaṁ purāṇam
adhyaṁtya-yogādhigamena devaṁ
matvā dhīro harsa-śokau jahāti*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the oldest person, and who is worshiped in the jungle of this world, remains hidden in the cave of the heart. A wise man, meditating on Him in a trance of spiritual yoga, gives up all material joy and grief.”

The word hi [indeed] in this Śūtra means “This is indeed corroborated by all the Purāṇas.”

krṣṇa krṣṇāprameyātman
yogeṣa jagad-īśvara
vāsudevākhitśāvāsa
sātvatāṁ pravara prabho
tvam ātmā sarva-bhūtānām
eko jyotir ivaiḍhasām
gūḍho guḥā-śayaḥ sākṣi
mahā-puruṣa śvarāḥ

[Nārada Muni said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, unlimited Lord, source of all mystic power, Lord of the universe! O Vāsudeva, shelter of all beings and best of the Yadus! O master, You are the Supreme Soul of all created beings, sitting unseen within the cave of the heart like the fire dormant within kindling wood. You are the witness within everyone, the Supreme Personality and the ultimate controlling Deity. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.37.10-11]

The word pibantau [they both drink] in the passage of the Upaniṣad is used in the same sense as the phrase “the two parasol-bearers.” Although only one of the pair carries the parasol, they are still known as “the two parasol-bearers.” In the same way only one of the two ‘drinkers’ here actually drinks. The Supreme Lord never becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of material nature, because He is the source and controller of material nature. The word chāyā-tapau [shade and light] here means either
that the knowledge of the two persons is different, or it means that one of the persons is bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death and the other is free from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.1] it is said:

\[
\begin{align*}
ṛtaṁ pibantau sukṛtasya loke \\
guhāṁ praviṣṭau parame parārdhe \\
chāyātapau brahmavido vadanti \\
pañcāgnayo ye ca tri-ṇāciketāḥ
\end{align*}
\]

“O Nāciketā, the expansions of Lord Viśṇu as the tiny living entity and the Supersoul are both situated within the cave of the heart of this body. Having entered that cavity, the living entity, resting on the chief of the life airs, enjoys the results of activities, and the Supersoul, acting as witness enables him to enjoy them. Those who are well-versed in knowledge of Brahman and those householders who carefully follow the Vedic regulations say that the difference between the two is like the difference between a shadow and the sun.”

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [6.16] it is said:

\[
\begin{align*}
sa viśvakṛd viśvavidātmayoniḥ \\
jñāḥ kālañāro guṇī sarvavid yah \\
pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ \\
samsāra-mokṣa-sthiti-bandha-hetuḥ
\end{align*}
\]

“The Supreme Lord, the creator of this cosmic manifestation, knows every nook and corner of His creation. Although He is the cause of creation, there is no cause for His appearance. He is fully aware of everything. He is the Supersoul, the master of all transcendental qualities, and He is the master of this cosmic manifestation in regard to bondage to the conditional state of material existence and liberation from that bondage.”

**Sūtra 1.2.12**

\[
\begin{align*}
viśeṣaṇāc ca \\
viśeṣaṇāt—because of distinctive qualities; ca—also.
\end{align*}
\]

Also because of the differences between them.

In the section of *Katha Upaniṣad* in which the verse under discussion appears, the *jīva* and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are carefully distinguished; the *jīva* is described as the meditator, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the object of meditation. Thus *Katha Upaniṣad* 1.2.12, quoted above, distinguishes one as the meditator and the other as the object of meditation. In *Katha Upaniṣad* 1.3.1, in the words *chāyā-tapau* [shade and light] they are again distinguished: one being all-knowing and the other having only a small sphere of knowledge.

*Katha Upaniṣad* 1.3.9 explains:

\[
\begin{align*}
vijñāna-sārathir yas tu \\
manah-pragrahavān naraḥ \\
sa ‘dhvanāḥ pāram āpnoti \\
tad viṣṇoh paramaṁ padam
\end{align*}
\]

“A person who has transcendental knowledge as his charioteer and who carefully holds the reins of the mind reaches the end of the path: the transcendental realm of Lord Viṣṇu.”

\[
\begin{align*}
kaścid dhīraḥ pratyag ātmānām aikṣad āvṛtta-caksur amṛtatvam icchan
\end{align*}
\]
“With a desire to attain immortality, a sober practitioner sees the Supreme Lord while closing his eyes.” [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.1.1]

\[\text{jiṅna-prasādena viśuddha-sattvas tu taṁ paśyate niśkalaiṁ dhyāyamānaḥ}\]

“If by the mercy of spiritual knowledge one meditates on the unchangeable, pure Supreme Lord, he can get darśana of Him.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.8]

In these words they are again distinguished: one being the goal to be attained and the other the person who attains the goal. Thus there is no doubt that the relation between the individual soul and the Supersoul is like shade and light, or atomic part and Supreme Whole.

Adhikaraṇa 4: The Person in the Eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [4.15.1-6] we read:

He said: “He who is seen in the eye is called the ātmā. He is immortal, He is nectar. He is the greatest. Because He is present, neither water nor liquid butter will stay on the eye, but both will slide from it. He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him all desires are at once fulfilled.

“The wise call Him samyadvāma [the most beautiful] because He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him, all desires are at once fulfilled.

“He is called Vāmana because He alone is the origin of all beauty. He who knows Him also becomes most beautiful.

“He is also called Bhāmanī, because He shines resplendently in all the worlds. He who knows Him, also becomes resplendent.

“Now when such persons die, whether their relatives perform their śraddha ceremony or not, they go to the plane of light, from the plane of light to the plane of the day, from the plane of the day to the plane of the ūṭakla-pakṣa [bright fortnight], from the plane of the śukla-pakṣa to the plane of the uttarāyana [the six months when the sun travels in the north], from the plane of the uttarāyana to the solar plane, from the solar plane to the lunar plane, from the lunar plane to the plane of Sarasvatī, and from the plane of Sarasvatī to the plane of the chief Vāyu, who is her Lord and the beloved of God.

“He leads them to Brahman. This is the path guarded by the devas, the path that leads to Brahman. Those who proceed on that path do not return to saṁsāra, yea, they do not return.”

The process of philosophical speculation is basically guesswork; there is never final certainty in the conclusion. Human knowledge and reason are imperfect; one philosopher or scientist may publish a certain theory, then after some time it is usurped by another researcher with a better theory. Although this happens again and again, they argue that “Our knowledge is gradually improving, and someday it will be perfect.” But why should we wait for an indefinite someday, when we can accept perfect knowledge from the Vedas today?

The materialist wants to understand everything by the āroha-panthā—by the ascending process of argument and inductive logic—but transcendental matters cannot be understood in this way, because they are beyond the jurisdiction of the material mind and senses. Rather, one must follow the avaroha-panthā, the process of descending knowledge or deductive logic. The word avaroha is related to the word avatāra, which means “one who descends.” Therefore one must accept the paramparā system. And the best paramparā is that which extends from Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Supreme Brahman.
evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājārṣayo viduḥ

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in this way.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.2]

Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, we should accept [imaṁ rājārṣayo viduḥ]. This is the descending process of certainty, avaroha-panthā. Śrīla Madhvācārya has quoted the following statement from the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa:

“One should have complete faith in transcendental literature such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other literature that directly glorifies the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should also have faith in Vaiṣṇava-tantras, the original Vedas, and Mahābhārata, which includes Bhagavad-gītā and which is considered the fifth Veda. The Vedic knowledge originally emanated from the breathing of Viṣṇu, and Vedic literature has been compiled in literary form by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of Viṣṇu. Therefore, Lord Viṣṇu should be understood to be the personal speaker of all this Vedic literature.”

One who takes wholehearted shelter of the Vedic wisdom with firm faith, under the guidance of an authentic self-realized spiritual master, can actually see the Supreme Truth.

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23]

There is no need for materialistic speculation and guesswork, because we can receive perfect knowledge of spiritual life directly from the Lord through the Vedic literature.

Śaṁśaya [arise of doubt]: Chāndogya Upaniṣad [4.15.1-2] says:

ya eṣo 'ntar-akṣini puruṣo drśyate sa eṣa ātmeti hovāca. etad amṛtam ayam etad brahma tad yad yad asmin sarpir vodakaṁ va sīncati vartmani eva gacchati. etāṁ sampad-dhāma ity ācakṣate etāṁ hi sarvāṇi kāmāṇy abhisaṁyanti

“He said: He who is seen in the eye is called the ātmā. He is immortal, He is nectar. He is the greatest. Because He is present, neither water nor liquid butter will stay on the eye, but both will slide from it. The wise call Him samyadvāma [the most beautiful] because He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him all desires are at once fulfilled.”

Is this person a reflection, a demigod, the jīva, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: It may be a reflection, for the observer sees himself reflected in another’s eye. It may be a demigod because Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [5.5.2] says raśmibhir eṣo 'smin pratiṣṭhitah: “With the rays of sunlight the sun-god enters the eye.” It may be the jīva because a person sees with his eyes, so he may also be the person in the eye. In this way the person in the eye may be any one of these three.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The authoritative Vedic conclusion follows, ending all speculation.

Sūtra 1.2.13

antara upapatteḥ

antaraḥ—the person within; upapatteḥ—because of reason.
The person within [the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because [that conclusion is dictated] by reason.

The person in the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The Sūtra says upapatteḥ: “Because that conclusion is dictated by reason.” This is so because, in the quote from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, the description of the qualities of the person in the eye includes being the Supreme Self [ātmā], immortality [amṛta], being the greatest [brahma], being untouched by material things, and being the abode of all opulences [sampad-dhāma]. These qualities can properly be attributed only to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

But we cannot know Him by the ascending speculative process, therefore we must receive Vedic knowledge from a self-realized soul, the qualified spiritual master.

om ajñāna-timirāṇḍhasya
jñānānjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unābhitam yena
tasmā śrī-gurave namaḥ

“I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.” [traditional Vedic prayer]

Sūtra 1.2.14

sthānādi-vyapadeśāc ca
sthāna— the place; ādi— beginning with; vyapadeśāt— because of the statement; ca— also.

And also because of the teaching [in the scriptures that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is present] in this place and in other places as well.

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller who resides with the eye is described in Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [3.7.18]:

yaś cakṣuṣi tiṣṭhaṁ cakṣuso 'ntaro yaṁ cakṣur na veda yasya cakṣur śarīraṁ yaś cakṣur antaro yam ayaty esa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ

“He who stays in the eye, who is within, whom the eye does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the eye and the body, and who, residing within, controls the eye, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.”

The ordinary eyes cannot see the transcendental Supreme Person, because in our conditioned state of consciousness, our vision is covered by illusion. This is an arrangement by the Supreme Brahman to satisfy our desire to live independently from Him:

yathā ghano 'rka-prabhavo 'rka-darśito
hy arkāṁśa-bhūtasya ca cakṣuṣas tamaḥ
evaṁ tv ahaṁ brahma-guṇas tad-ikṣito
brahmāṁśakasyātmama ātmā-bandhanah

“Although a cloud is a product of the sun and is also made visible by the sun, it nevertheless creates darkness for the viewing eye, which is another partial expansion of the sun. Similarly, material false ego, a particular product of the Absolute Truth made visible by the Absolute Truth, obstructs the individual soul, another partial expansion of the Absolute Truth, from realizing the Absolute Truth.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.4.32]
But by hearing for a long time from a pure devotee spiritual master about the exalted character, qualities and activities of the Supreme Brahman, we gradually develop love for Him. This loving service mood is the cure for the spiritual blindness of illusion. Thus we can see Him, not with ordinary vision, but with the eye of love within the heart.

premA-njana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yain śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion, tinged with the salve of love.” [Brahma-saṁhitā 5.38]

Sūtra 1.2.15

sukha-viśiṣṭābhidhānād eva
sukha—by happiness; viśiṣṭa—distinguished; abhidhānāt—because of the description; eva—indeed.

Also because He is described as [full of] bliss.

This Sūtra refers to Chāndogya Upaniṣad [4.10.5], which says prāṇo brahma kaṁ brahma khaṁ brahma: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is life; the Supreme Personality of Godhead is bliss; the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sky.” The discussion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead beginning with these words continues through some paragraphs up to the verse under discussion in this Adhikāraṇa [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.15.1], describing the person in the eye. For this reason the person in the eye must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is also a discussion of agni-vidyā between 4.10.5 and 4.15.1; however, the interpolation of agni-vidyā does not break the context, because agni-vidyā is a subordinate part of the discussion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The word viśiṣṭa [distinguished] in this Sūtra means that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has complete knowledge, bliss and all other transcendental qualities in His original form as Govinda, the transcendental cowherd boy.

sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya
kṛṣṇāyāḍhiśita-kārīne
namo vedānṭa-vedyāya
gurave buddhi-sāksine

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa, who has a transcendental form of bliss, eternity and knowledge. I offer my respect to Him, because understanding Him means understanding the Vedas and He is therefore the supreme spiritual master.” [Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.1]

tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham

“You are Govinda, the pleasure of the senses and the cows, and Your form is transcendental, full of knowledge, bliss and eternality.” [Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.35]

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇah
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam
“Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. His eternal spiritual body is full of complete knowledge and bliss. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, for He is the prime cause of all other causes.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1*]

### Sūtra 1.2.16

 śrutopaniṣatka-gaty-abhidhānāc ca
śrūta—heard; upaniṣatka—Upaniṣad; gati—destination; abhidhānāt—because of the description; ca—also.

**And because of the description of the destination of they who hear the Upaniṣads.**

One who hears the *Upaniṣads* and understands the confidential knowledge of the *Vedas* travels to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Of the person who knows the person in the eye, Upakośala Muni says *arcīṣam abhisambhavati:* “He attains the realm of light.” Because these two persons—he who knows the esoteric teaching of the *Vedas* and he who knows the person in the eye—attain the same destination, it must be understood that the person in the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

One who understands the confidential meaning of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* does not want to become one with the Lord; nor does he wish to attain the heavenly planets for extensive sense enjoyment. His destination is the spiritual world, where he can meet the Supreme Brahman face-to-face and engage in eternal service to Him.

*pūṣann ekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya*
vyūha raśmin samūha
teto yat te rūpaṁ kalyaṇa-tamaṁ
tat te paśyāmi yo 'sāv asau puruṣaḥ so 'ham asmi

“O my Lord, O primeval philosopher, maintainer of the universe, O regulating principle, destination of the pure devotees, well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind, please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I.” [*Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Mantra 16*]

avyakto 'ksara ity uktas
tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim
yaiḥ prāpya na nivartante
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

“That supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode.” [*Bhagavad-gītā 8.21*]

### Sūtra 1.2.17

anavasthiter asambhavāc ca netaraḥ

anavasthiteḥ—because the abode is not eternal; asambhavāt—because of being impossible; ca—and; na—not; itaraḥ—anyone else.

*[The person in the eye] is not anyone else [but the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because [the others] do not stay always in the eye and because it cannot be them [according to the context].
These other persons cannot be the person in the eye because none of them stay permanently in the eye, and because none of them possess immortality or any of the other qualities attributed to the person in the eye. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is therefore the person in the eye referred to in this text.

\[
nirbhinne akṣinī tvāṣṭā
loka-pālo 'viṣad vibhoḥ
cakṣuṣāṁśena rūpānāṁ
pratipattir yato bhavet
\]

“Thereafter, the two eyes of the gigantic form of the Lord were separately manifested. The sun, the director of light, entered them with the partial representation of eyesight, and thus the living entities can have vision of forms.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.6.15]

The living entities cannot perceive the material world independently, because their nature is completely spiritual. The Supreme Personality of Godhead expands Himself as light and as the eye, so we can see. We can sense the material world only by the extraordinary potency of the Lord. Therefore by conclusive Vedic knowledge we can understand that the Lord is the person in the eye.

**Adhikaraṇa 5: The Internal Ruler is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

**Viṣaya** [thesis or statement]: The principle of material creation is a sum total manifestation of the three modes of material nature, technically called the *pradhāna*.

\[
śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yat tat tri-guṇam avyaktam
nityam sad-asad-ātmakam
pradhānāṁ prakṛtiṁ prāhur
aviśeṣam viśeṣavat
\]

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “The unmanifested eternal combination of the three modes is the cause of the manifest state and is called *pradhāna*. It is called *prakṛti* when in the manifested stage of existence.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.10]

Material nature in its subtle stage is called *pradhāna*, the undifferentiated sum total of all material elements. Although they are undifferentiated, the total material elements are contained in *pradhāna*. When the total material elements are manifested by the interaction of the three modes of material nature with the force of time, the manifestation is called *prakṛti*.

Impersonalists argue that Brahman is without variegatedness or differentiation. They try to equate *pradhāna* with Brahman, but actually Brahman is not *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is distinct from Brahman, because there are no material modes of nature in Brahman. One may argue that the *mahat-tattva* is also different from *pradhāna* because in the *mahat-tattva* there are manifestations. The actual explanation of *pradhāna*, however, is given above: *pradhāna* is the stage of material nature when the actions and reactions of cause and effect are unmanifested [avyakta]. Therefore *pradhāna* and the *mahat-tattva* are identical.

*Pradhāna* is not the time element because in the time element there are actions and reactions, creation and annihilation. Nor is it the jīva, the Lord’s marginal potency of living entities, or designated conditioned living entities, because the designations of the living entities are not eternal. The adjective *nitya* in the verse above indicates eternality. Therefore *pradhāna* is the external creative potency of the Lord, and specifically the condition of material nature immediately previous to its manifestation. It is stated in the *Sātvata-tantra*: 
viṣṇos tu trīni rūpāṇi
puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ
ekaṁ tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ
dvitiyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁśhitam
trīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-sthaṁ
tāṁ jñātvā vimucyate

“For material creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion assumes three Viṣṇus. The first one, Mahā-Viṣṇu, creates the total material energy, known as the mahat-tattva. The second, Garbhodakāśayī Viṣṇu, enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third, Kṣīrodakāśayī Viṣṇu, is diffused as the all-pervading Supersoul in all the universes and is known as Paramātma. He is present even within the atoms. Anyone who knows these three Viṣṇus can be liberated from material entanglement.”

The material creation is the external, inferior potency of the Supreme Brahman. The Vedic hymns sarvam hy etad brahma [Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 2], tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annaṁ ca jāyate [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.10], and, in the Bhagavad-gītā [14.3], mama yonir mahad brahma indicate that everything in the material world is a manifestation of Brahman; and although the effects are differently manifestated, they are nondifferent from the cause. In the Īśopaniṣad it is said that everything is related to the Supreme Brahman, or Kṛṣṇa, and thus everything belongs to Him only.

ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣa-viduḥ

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) existed even before the appearance of the puruṣa incarnations.” [Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.1]

One who knows perfectly well that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, that He is the proprietor of everything and that, therefore, everything should be engaged in the service of the Lord, is never affected by the results of his activities, whether virtuous or sinful. This practice of karma-yoga is the actual secret of liberation. When one’s material body, being a gift of the Lord for carrying out a particular type of action, is fully engaged in activities of devotional service, it is then beyond contamination by sinful reactions; exactly as the lotus leaf, though remaining in the water, does not get wet. The Lord also says in Bhagavad-gītā [3.31-32],

ye me matam idaṁ nityam
anuśīṣṭanti mānavaḥ
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto
mucyante te 'pi karmabhīḥ
ye tv etad abhyasūyanto
nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jañāna-vimūḍhāṁ tāṁ
viddhi naśtān acetasaḥ

“One who executes his duties according to My injunctions and who follows this teaching faithfully, without envy, becomes free from the bondage of fruitive actions. But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not practice them regularly, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and doomed to ignorance and bondage.”

The mundane speculators do not surrender to the Lord, but follow their own desires for fruitive activity and sense enjoyment. Therefore they try to make the Lord impersonal, or at best, also subject to the material actions and reactions of karma. They misinterpret the statements of the scriptures to force a conclusion that allows them to continue their independent activities. Of course, this subjects them to the full force of their karmic reactions, meaning they must accept an unending succession of material
bodies and experience the sufferings concomitant with material existence without relief. This is the terrible price of their independent, rebellious spirit.

**Saṁśaya [aristol of doubt]: Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.18 says:**

*yaḥ prthivyāṁ tiṣṭhan prthivyā antaro yaṁ prtvī na veda yasya prthivī śarīraṁ yaḥ prthivīṁ antaro yaṁ ayaty eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ...*

“He who stays in the earth, who is within, whom the earth does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the earth and the body, and who, residing within, rules the earth, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.

“He who stays in the water, who is within, whom the water does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the water and the body, and who, residing within, rules the water, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.

“He who stays in the fire, who is within, whom the fire does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the fire and the body, and who, residing within, rules the fire, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.”

In this verse is the ruler who lives within the earth and other elements *pradhāna*, the *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

**Pūrva pakṣa [antithesis]:** The ruler within may be *pradhāna* because *pradhāna* resides within. The cause is always woven into the effect, and is the controller of the effect. Because *pradhāna* is the cause of the earth, *pradhāna* must therefore be the controller within the earth also. Because it gives happiness and because it is all-pervading, the *pradhāna* may be figuratively called ātmā [the great self]. Because it is eternal it may also be called *amṛta* [eternal].

Or, the ruler within may be a certain *jīva* who is a great *yogī*. With the yogic powers of entering everywhere and becoming invisible at will, a great *yogī* may become the ruler [within] and with this ruling power, the ability to become invisible and other yogic powers, he may be called ātmā [the great self], and *amṛta* [eternal] in the direct senses of the words without resorting to figurative language. In this way the ruler within must be either the *pradhāna* or a *jīva*.

**Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]:** The conclusion follows.

**Sūtra 1.2.18**

*antaryāmy adhidaiśdiśu tad-dharma-vyapadeśāt*

*antaryāmī—the ruler within; adhitai— the elements; adiṣu— beginning with; tat— of Him; dharma— the nature; vyapadeśāt— because of the description.

**The ruler who resides within the elements [is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because His qualities are described [in this passage].**

The ruler within described in these words of *Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The *Sūtra* says *tad-dharma-vyapadeśāt*: “Because His qualities are described in this passage. The Supreme Person is described here because the qualities of the person described here, which include being situated within the earth and all other material elements, being unknowable, being the supreme controller, and being all-pervading, all-knowing, all-blissful, and eternal, are all qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyo*

*vāyor athāpi manaso muni-punīvānāṁ*
so 'py asti yat-prapada-sīmny a vicintya-tatte
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, only the tips of the toes of whose lotus feet are approached by the yogīs and jñānīs, who travel for billions of years at the speed of the wind or mind.” [Brahma-saṁhitā 5.34]

bhūtair mahadbhir ya imāḥ puro vibhur
nirmāya āte yaṁ amīśu pūruṣaḥ
bhūṅkte guṇān śoḍaśa śoḍaśātmakaḥ
so 'laṅkṛṣṭaḥ bhagavān vacāmsī me

“May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who enlivens the materially created bodies of the elements by lying down within the universe, and who in His puruṣa incarnation causes the living beings to be subjected to the sixteen divisions of material modes which are their generators, be pleased to decorate my statements.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.4.23]

yathā mahānti bhūtāni
bhūteṣucāvaceṣv anu
praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni
tathā teṣu na teṣv aham

“O Brahmā, please know that the universal elements enter into the cosmos and at the same time do not enter into the cosmos; similarly, I Myself also exist within everything created, and at the same time I am outside of everything.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.35]

punyo gandhah prthivyāṁ ca

“I am the original fragrance of the earth.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.9]

Sūtra 1.2.19

na ca smārtam atad-dharmābhilāpāt

na—not; ca—and; smārtam—what is taught in the smṛti; atad—not of it; dharma—the qualities; abhilāpāt—because of description.

The ruler within is not [the pradhāna, which is] described in the smṛti, because the qualities [mentioned in this passage] cannot be attributed [to pradhāna].

For these reasons it may not be said that the pradhāna, which is described in the smṛti, is the ruler within. Why? The Sūtra says atad-dharmābhilāpāt: “Because the qualities mentioned in this passage cannot be attributed to it.”

The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [3.7.23] says:

adṛṣṭo draṣṭā aśrūto śrotā amato mantā avijñāto vijñātā nānyato 'sti draṣṭā nānyato 'sti śrotā nānyato 'sti mantā nānyato 'sti vijñātaiṣā ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛta ito 'nyat smārtam

“Unobserved, He is the observer. Unheard, He is the hearer. Inconceivable, He is the thinker. Unknown, he is the knower. There is no other observer. There is no other hearer. There is no other thinker. There is no other knower. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal ruler within. [The pradhāna] described in the smṛti is different from Him.”

The list of qualities here, beginning with being the observer, may be attributed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone.
sarpendra-guṇabhāsaṁ
sarpendra-guṇavaryat
asaktam sarva-bhre caiva
nirgunaṁ guṇa-bhoktra ca

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.” [Bhagavad-gītā 13.15]

In the smṛti it is said:

pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśah

“The Supreme Lord as the Supersoul is the chief knower of the body, and He is the master of the three modes of material nature [pradhāna].” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.16]

Sūtra 1.2.20

śarīraś cobhaye ‘pi hi bhedainam adhīyate
śarīrah—the ḥīva; ca—also; ubhaye—in both recensions; api—also; hi—indeed; bhedena—by the difference; enam—this; adhīyate—is read.

The ruler within is not a ṣīva because in both [recensions of the Upaniṣad] the ṣīva is described as different from Him.

The word na [not] from the preceding Sūtra should be understood in this Sūtra also. For the reasons already given it cannot be said that a ṣīva who is a great yogī is the ruler within. Why? The Sūtra answers hi, which means “because,” ubhaye [in both], which means “in both the Kāṇva and Mādhyaandina recensions of the Upaniṣad,” enam [He], which means “the ruler within,” bhedena adhīyate [is described as different].

[The Kāṇva recension gives] yo vijñānam antaro yamayati [The transcendental knowledge that rules within] and [the Mādhyanidina recension, gives] ya ātmānam antaro yamayati [The Supreme Personality of Godhead who rules within]. In both readings is a clear distinction between the ruler and the ruled. Therefore the ruler within is Lord Hari, the Personality of Godhead.

In the smṛti it is said:

dāsa-bhūto harer eva nānyasvaiva kadācana

“The living entities are eternally in the service of the Supreme Lord.”

In the Subala Upaniṣad the Kaṭhas say:

prthivy-ādīnām avyaktāksarāṁmaṁ śrī-nārāyo‘ntaryāmī
datahīyate [is described as different].

“Lord Nārāyaṇa is the ruler within the earth and other elements, within the unmanifested pradhāna, and within the unchanging, eternal jīva].”

The Brāhmaṇas say:

antaḥ-ṣarīre nihito guhāyām

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead stays in the heart of the jīva”

aja eko nityah

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is unborn, eternal, and one without a second
“The earth is His body. He stays within the earth. The earth does not understand Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Adhikaraṇa 6: "Ākṣara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣṇa [thesis or statement]: There are two kinds of living entities: kṣara [diminishing] and ākṣara [undiminishing]. Kṣara refers to those who have fallen down into material existence and become conditioned, and ākṣara refers to those who remain unconditioned, in their original eternal spiritual position. The vast majority of living entities live in the spiritual world and are called ākṣara. They are in the position of Brahman, pure spiritual existence. Although both types of living entities are spiritual by nature, the unconditioned ākṣara are qualitatively superior to the kṣara, who have been conditioned by the three modes of material nature.

Above both the kṣara and ākṣara living entities is the Supreme Brahman Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, who is described in Bhagavad-gītā [15.18] as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham
ākṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato 'smi loke vede ca
prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

"Because I am transcendental, beyond both the fallible and the infallible, and because I am the greatest, I am celebrated both in the world and in the Vedas as that Supreme Person."

The impersonalists may theorize that Vāsudeva is the impersonal Brahman, but actually the impersonal Brahman is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa, as confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā [14.27]:

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham
amṛtyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmaṇya
sukhāyaikāntikasya ca

“And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness.”

That Kṛṣṇa is the source of the impersonal Brahman is also confirmed in Brahma-saṁhitā 5.40:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-anda-koti-
koṭiśv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhīnnaṁ
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtāṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam aham bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose effulgence is the source of the undifferentiated Brahman mentioned in the Upaniṣads, which being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe, appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless truth.”

The impersonal Brahman is nothing but the effulgence or bodily rays of Kṛṣṇa, and in those bodily rays there are innumerable universes floating. Thus Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is the Supreme Lord in all respects. Yet the Māyāvādīs try to describe Him as impersonal or identical with Brahman.

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: The Munḍaka Upaniṣad [1.1.5-6] says:
atha parā yāyā tad aksaram adhigamyate. yat tad adreyam agrāhyam agotram avarṇam
cacaksuḥ-srotām tad apānī-pādaṁ nītam vibhum sarva-gataṁ su-sūkṣmaṁ tad ayyamaṁ yad
bhūta-yonīṁ pariṣāyanti dhīrāḥ

“Here is the transcendental knowledge by which the Supreme Personality of Godhead is known. The great sages directly see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who cannot be seen, who cannot be grasped, who has no name, who has no color, who has no eyes or ears, who has no hands or feet, who is eternal, all-powerful, all-pervading, subtle, and changeless, and who is the Creator of all that is.”

Later the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [2.1.2] also says:

divyo hy amūrtah puruṣah sa-bāhyābhyantaro hy ajāḥ aprāṇo hy amanāḥ śubhro ‘ksarāt
parataḥ paraḥ

“The Supreme Person is transcendental, formless, without inside or out, unborn, unbreathing, without mind, splendid, and higher than the highest of the eternals.”

Do these two passages describe first the pradhāṇa and then the puruṣa [jīva], or do they describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Because in these passages there is no mention of being the observer or any other qualities of a conscious being, and because there is mention of the word yoni [source of everything], which refers to the ingredient of which the creation is made, these passages describe the eternal pradhāṇa, and above that eternal pradhāṇa, the puruṣa [jīva]. Above the eternal, ever-changing pradhāṇa is the jīva, who is the knower of the field of activities. Therefore in these passages the pradhāṇa and jīva should be known to be the topics of discussion.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.2.21

adṛṣyatvādi-guṇako dharmokteḥ

adṛṣyatva—being invisible; ādi—beginning with; guṇako—qualities; dharma—qualities; ukteḥ
—because of the statement.

[These passages describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses many transcendental qualities, including invisibility, because His qualities are described here.]

In both passages the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses many transcendental qualities, including invisibility, should be understood [to be the topic of discussion]. Why? The Sūtra says dharmokteḥ [because His qualities are described here].

The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.1.9] says:

yah sarvajñāḥ sarvavid yasya jñānamayaṁ tapāḥ. tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpaṁ annaṁ ca
jāyate

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead knows everything. He knows everything. He is full of knowledge. From Him is born that Brahman that is the material form of this world.”

Because in the passage of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.1.6] that begins divyo hy amūrtah puruṣah: “The Supreme Person is transcendental and formless,” the aksara is described as possessing a host of transcendental qualities, including omniscience, and because the aksara is described as the ultimate goal of all knowledge, the aksara must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
Although He is described as formless, this simply means that His form is not material but fully spiritual.

\[
    rūpaṁ bhagavato yat tan
    manah-kāntam śucāpaham
\]

“That transcendental form of the Lord satisfies the mind’s desire and at once erases all mental incongruities.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.18]

\[
    avyaktam vyaktim āpannāṁ
    manyante mām abuddhayaḥ
    param bhāvam ajānanto
    mamāvavayam anuttamam
\]

“Unintelligent men, who know Me not, think that I have assumed this form and personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is changeless and supreme.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.24]

That the Lord is not formless is experienced by every pure devotee who attains His darśana. But His form is completely different from all material forms. For our whole duration of life we see different forms in the material world, but no form in the material world can satisfy the seer; none of them can satisfy the mind, nor can any of them vanish all mental incongruity and disturbance. These are unique features of the transcendental form of the Lord, and one who has even once seen His form is not satisfied with anything else. That the Lord is formless or impersonal means that His form is not material, and He is not like any material personality.

Similarly, being described as without breath or mind indicates that His breathing and mind are not material. As stated in Kaṭha Upaniṣad [1.2.23]:

\[
    yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
    tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tānuṁ svāṁ
\]

“Only one who is fully surrendered and engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can understand the Supreme Lord as He is.”

Sūtra 1.2.22

\[
iṣṭa-bheda-vyapadeśābhyyāṁ ca netarau
\]

\[
iṣṭa—modifiers; bheda—difference; vyapadeśābhyyāṁ—because of the description; ca—and; na—not; itarau—the other two.
\]

Because of the description of the qualities [of the aksara] in these two [passages, the aksara] cannot be the other two [pradhāna and jīva].

The other two, that is pradhāna and jīva, should not be thought [to be the topic of discussion here]. Why? the Sūtra says iṣṭa [because of the description of the qualities]. Because the description in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.1.9], beginning with the words yah sarvajña [The Supreme Personality of Godhead knows everything], specifically identifies the aksara as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and because the description in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.1.6], beginning with the word divya [The Supreme Person is transcendental], identifies the aksara as a being different from the jīva, therefore the aksara mentioned in both passages must be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original cause of all causes.

\[
vāsudeve bhagavati
    sarva-jīne prayag-ātmani
\]
páreṇa bhakti-bhāvena
labdhātmā mukta-bandhanah

“He thus became liberated from conditioned life and became self-situated in transcendental
devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, the omniscient Supersoul within
everyone.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.24.45]

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
hanta te kathayiṣyāmi
divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayaḥ
prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha
nāsty anto vistarasya me

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “Yes, I will tell you of My splendorous
manifestations, but only of those which are prominent, O Arjuna, for My opulence is limitless.”
[Bhagavad-gītā 10.19]

Sūtra 1.2.23

rūpapanyāśāc ca
rūpa—of a form; upanyāsāt—because of the mention; ca—also.

And also because there is mention of a form.

Because the form of the aksara is described in this way as the original cause of all causes, the form of
the aksara here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It cannot be either pradhāna or jīva. The
Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [3.1.3] says:

yadā paśyāḥ paśyate rukma-varṇāṁ
kārtāraṁ iśam puṣāṁ brahma-yonim
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūyā
niraṅjanaḥ paramaṁ samyam upaiti

“One who sees the golden-colored Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, the supreme
actor, who is the source of the Supreme Brahman, becomes free from the reactions to past pious
and sinful deeds, and becomes liberated, attaining the same transcendental platform as the
Lord.”

iśvaraḥ paramaṁ krṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

“Krṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual
body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes.”
[Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1]

Sūtra 1.2.24

prakaraṇāt
prakaraṇāt—because of the context.

[The aksara here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the context.
The meaning of this Śūtra is clear. The smṛti-śāstra also confirms that this text refers to Lord Viṣṇu. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa [6.5.65-70] says:

\[
dve vidye veditavye iti cātharvaṇī śrutiḥ
darśanāṃ ca pāṇipādī-asyānyutam
\]

As discussed in the first Pāda, the Vedas recommend various pious ritualistic activities, such as sacrifices to the demigods, as a prerequisite to actual self-realization. This is called inferior knowledge because it is within the scope of the three modes of material nature. Superior knowledge means direct knowledge of the Supreme personality of Godhead, and devotional service to Him. When one attains superior knowledge, he automatically gives up inferior knowledge. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, a great devotee and acārya in the line of devotional service, says:

\[
sandhyā-vandana bhadram astu bhavato bhoḥ snāna tubhyāṁ namo
bho devaḥ pitaraś ca tarpaṇa-vidhau nāhaṁ kṣamaṁ kṣamayatāṁ
yatra kṛṣṇa nīśādya yādava-kulottāṃsasya kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ
smāraṁ smāraṁ aghāṁ harāṁ tad alaṁ manye kim anīna me
\]

Thus once a person understands that the actual aim of Vedic wisdom is devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he automatically gives up the ritualistic activities and philosophical speculation of lower stages of knowledge. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself:
“The Vedas deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the Supreme Self [ātmā].” [Bhagavad-gītā 2.45]

**Adhikaraṇa 7: "Vaiśvānara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.11.1-24.5] we read as follows:

Prācīnaśāla the son of Upamanyu, Satyayajñya the son of Pulusa, Indradyumna the son of Bhallava, Jana the son of Śarkarākṣa and Buḍila son of Aśvatarśva, these five great sacrificers and scholars once met together and held a discussion, asking “Who is our Self, the Lord to be worshiped, and what is Brahman?”

They concluded, “Uddālaka the son of Aruṇa at present knows best this ātmā called Vaiśvānara. Let us go to him.” So they went to him.

But Uddālaka considered, “These great sacrificers and scholars will put questions to me and I will not be able to answer them all; therefore let me recommend another teacher to them.”

He said to them, “Dear Sirs, Aśvapati, King of Kekaya, at present best knows this ātmā called Vaiśvanara. Let us go to him.” So they went to him.

When they arrived, the king caused proper honors to be paid to each of them separately. Then in the morning after leaving his bed, he said to them, “What makes you come here? Are you troubled by bad men? But there are no such people in this land. In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no irreligious or illiterate person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress. But if you have come to get wealth, then stay for I am going to perform a sacrifice, Sirs; and I shall give you as much wealth as I shall give to each of the Ṛtvik priests. So stay here, please.”

They replied, “May Your Honor tell us through what means a man may attain liberation. You know at present the Supreme Person Vaiśvānara. Please tell us about Him.”

He said to them, “I shall give you an answer tomorrow.” They went to him again the next morning with sacrificial fuel in their hands, and without ceremony, Aśvapati said this to them:

“Aupamanyava! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Dyu [heaven] only, O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Sutejas [the Supreme Light]. Therefore in you house there are sons, grandsons and great-grandsons. Therefore you eat well and are healthy and prosperous, with many opulent possessions. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Dyu is only the head of the Lord, so your head would have fallen [you would have been defeated in a discussion] if you had not come to me.”

Then he said to Satyayajña Paulusi, “O eternally elect! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Āditya [the Lord in the sun and attracting all], O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Viśvarūpa, the all-seeing. Therefore in your house is seen much and many different kind of wealth. There are chariots yoked with pairs of mules, slaves and jewels. You are, therefore, healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic
Then he said to Indradyumna Bhāllaveya, “O Vaiyāgrapadya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Vāyu, the Lord in Vāyu called knowledge-life, O holy King.” Āśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Prthavargartma [the unusual, the mysterious]. Therefore offers come to you in an unusual way, and rows of chariots follow you. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Vāyu is but the breath of the Lord, therefore your breath would have left you, if you had not come to see me.”

Then he said to Jana, “O Śārkarākṣya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Ākāsa [the All-effulgent], O holy King.” Āśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Bahula [abundant]. Therefore you are full of offspring and wealth. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Bahula is only the trunk of the Lord. Your trunk would have perished if had not come to me.”

Then he said to Buḍila Āsvataraśvi, “O Vaiyāgrapadya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Apas [the All-pervading Lord], O holy King.” Āśvapati said, ”The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Rāyi [giver of delight]. Therefore you are wealthy and flourishing. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Rāyi is only the loins of the Lord. Your loins would have broken if had not come to me.”

Then he said to Uddālaka Āruni, “O Gautama! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Vṛthiv [the support of the earth], O holy King.” Āśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Pratiṣṭhā [the firm foundation]. Therefore you stand firm with offspring and cattle. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Pratiṣṭhā is only the feet of the Lord. Your feet would have given way if had not come to me.”

Then he said to all six of them, “Now you, knowing this Lord Vaiśvānara as many, eat your food [get a small reward]. But he who worships this Lord Vaiśvānara as the size of the heart and at the same time limitless, eats food in all worlds, in all beings, and in all selves. Certainly the head of the Lord Vaiśvānara is the good energy of thought, His eye is all-seeing, His breath is all-moving, His trunk is the space containing all, His loins are the giver of all enjoyment, and His feet are the earth, His chest is the altar, His hairs are the grass, His heart is the Gārhapatya fire, His mind is the Anvāhārya fire, and His mouth is the Ahavanīya fire.

“At the time of eating, the first morsel that is taken should be considered as a homa offering. The first oblation should be offered with the mantra Prānāya svāhā. Then the Lord as prāṇa is satisfied. When prāṇa is satisfied, then the eye is satisfied; when the eye is satisfied, then the sun is satisfied; when the sun is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu is satisfied, the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Dyau [consort of Vāyu] and sun rule the Eastern gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the second oblation, let him offer it with the mantra Vyānāya svāhā. Then Lord as Vānā is satisfied. When the vyāna is satisfied, then the ear is satisfied; when the ear is satisfied, then the moon is satisfied; when the moon is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu [Diś]
is satisfied; when the consort of Vāyu is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Diś consort of Vāyu and the moon rule the Southern gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets magnanimity, bliss and Vedic splendor.

“Then when he offers the third oblation, let him offer it saying apanāya svāhā. Then the Lord as apāna is satisfied. When the apāna is satisfied, then the speech is satisfied; when speech is satisfied, then fire is satisfied; when fire is satisfied, then Pṛthivī is satisfied; when Pṛthivī is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Pṛthivī and fire rule the Western gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the fourth oblation, let him offer it saying samānāya svāhā. Then the Lord as samāna is satisfied. When the samāna is satisfied, then the mind is satisfied; when the mind is satisfied, then Indra is satisfied; when Indra is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu Vidyut is satisfied; when Vidyut or Vāyu is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The consort of Vāyu Vidyut and Indra rule the Northern gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the fifth oblation, let him offer it saying Udānāya svāhā. Then the udāna is satisfied. When the udāna is satisfied, then Vāyu is satisfied; when Vāyu is satisfied, then Ākāśa is satisfied, and the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. Vāyu and Ākāśa rule the central or upper gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“He who offers an Agnihotra without knowing this Lord Vaiśvānara is like someone who removes the live coals and offers libations on dead ashes.

“But he who offers an Agnihotra knowing that Lord, in fact offers oblations to all the souls animating all the bodies on all the worlds.

“As the tuft of the Iṣhikā reed is quickly reduced to ashes upon entering the fire, thus indeed are all the sins burnt of one who, knowing the Lord, offers an Agnihotra.

“Therefore, even if such a knower of the Lord gives the remnants of his food to a caṇḍala, it would be offered to the Vaiśvānara Self of that caṇḍala.

“The following śloka is actually on this subject: ‘As in this world the hungry infants cluster around their mother, so do all beings have recourse to Agnihotra.’”

The Vedic scriptures sometimes describe the Lord indirectly, in terms of His energies. The Lord explains to Arjuna,

\[
\begin{align*}
puruṣaś  cādhidaiva  \\
adhiyajño  'ham evātra  \\
dehe deha-bhṛtāṁ vara
\end{align*}
\]

“The universe is the cosmic form of the Supreme Lord, and I am that Lord expanded as the Supersoul, dwelling in the heart of every embodied being.” [Bhagavad-gītā 8.4]

This universal form is further explained in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [2.1.33]:

\[
\begin{align*}
nadyo  'syā  nādyo  'tha  tanī-ruhāṇi  \\
mahī-ruhā  viśva-tanor  nṛpendra
\end{align*}
\]
ananta-vīryaḥ śvasitaṁ mātariśvā
gatir vayaḥ karma guṇa-pravāhah

“O King, the rivers are the veins of the gigantic body, the trees are the hairs of His body, and the omnipotent air is His breath. The passing ages are His movements, and His activities are the reactions of the three modes of material nature.”

It is proper to explain the Lord in terms of His energies, because in one sense, everything is simply a transformation of His potency. Also, this description of the Lord as His energies gives conditioned living entities a chance to perceive Him in the ordinary material elements.

It is proper to explain the Lord in terms of His energies, because in one sense, everything is simply a transformation of His potency. Also, this description of the Lord as His energies gives conditioned living entities a chance to perceive Him in the ordinary material elements.

It is proper to explain the Lord in terms of His energies, because in one sense, everything is simply a transformation of His potency. Also, this description of the Lord as His energies gives conditioned living entities a chance to perceive Him in the ordinary material elements.

raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoh

“O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon.”
[Bhagavad-gītā 7.8]

The idea is that when the conditioned living entities become accustomed to seeing Him expanded as the material elements, gradually they will develop a sense of God-consciousness, and attain to the higher platform of devotional service to the Lord.

Saṁśaya [aristol of doubt]: The Chāndogya Upaniṣad [5.11.1] says:

ko nu ātmā kiṁ brahmeti

“What is the ātmā? Who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead?”

Chāndogya Upaniṣad [5.11.6] says:

ātmānam evaṁ vaiśvānaram sampraty adhyeṣi tam eva no bruhi

“You know about Vaiśvānara. Please describe Him.”

Chāndogya Upaniṣad [5.18.1] states:

yas tv enam evaṁ prādeśa-mātram abhivimānam ātmānam vaiśvānaram upāste sa sarveṣu lokeṣu sarvaṁ bhūteṣu sarveṣu ātmasu annam atti

“One who meditates on Vaiśvānara, who is the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger, and who is present in all worlds, in all elements, and in all hearts, eats food and is nourished.”

and Chāndogya Upaniṣad [5.18.2] continues:

etasya ha vā etasyātmato vaiśvānarasya mūrdhaiva su-tejāś caṣṣur viśvarūpah prāṇah prthivavartmā sandeho ṛahulō vastir eva vayih prthivy eva pādaṁ ura eva vedir lomānir bahir hṛdayaṁ gārhapatyo mano 'nvāhāryapacana āsyam āhavanīyāḥ

“Heaven is the head of Vaiśvānara, the sun is His eye, the wind is His breath, the sky is His body, the oceans are His bladder, the earth is His feet, the sacrificial arena is His chest, the sacrificial grass is His head, the gārhapatya fire is His heart, the anvāhāryapacana fire is His mind, and the āhavanīya fire is His mouth.”

Is the Vaiśvānara the fire of digestion, the demigod Agni, the fire element, or Lord Viśnu?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The word vaiśvānara is commonly used in all these four meanings, so its meaning in this passage is unclear.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.
The ambiguous word vaiśvānara [in this passage of Chāndogya Upaniṣad refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because the qualities described here [are appropriate for the Lord].

The word vaiśvānara here refers to Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The Śūtra says sādharana-sabda-viśeṣāt: “Because the qualities described here are appropriate for the Lord.” This is the meaning: Even though the word vaiśvānara has many meanings, here it must mean Lord Viṣṇu. The description beginning with the phrase “Heaven is His head” clearly show that vaiśvānara here means Lord Viṣṇu.

śīrṣṇo 'syā dyaur dharā padbhīyāṁ
kham nābher udapadyāta

“Thereafter, from the head of the gigantic form, the heavenly planets were manifested, and from His legs the earthly planets and from His abdomen the sky separately manifested themselves.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.6.27]

Also, the words ātmā and brahma generally refer to Lord Viṣṇu. The result one obtains by knowing vaiśvānara is the same as the result of knowing Lord Viṣṇu. The scriptures say yatheśikā tulaṁ: “As reeds are burned by fire, so are sins burned into nothing by Vaiśvānara.” This clearly shows that Vaiśvānara here is Lord Viṣṇu, for only Lord Viṣṇu has the power to negate sins. The word vaiśvānara is composed of the two words—viśva [all] and nara [human beings]—thus it means “He who is the resting place of all human beings.” For all these reasons, the word vaiśvānara here must indicate Lord Viṣṇu.

tasmai namo bhagavate puruṣāya bhūmne
viśvāya viśva-gurave para-daivatāya

“I offer my humble obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the universe, as well as its spiritual master.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.8.47]

Furthermore, he says:

Sūtra 1.2.26

smaryamāṇam anumāṇam syād iti
smaryamāṇam—described in the smṛti-śāstra; anumāṇam—inference; syād—is; iti—thus.

This may also be inferred from the statements of the smṛti-śāstra.

The word iti here means “this is the reason.” In Bhagavad-gītā [15.14], Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā
prāṇināṁ deham āśrītaḥ

“I am the vaiśvānara in the bodies of all living entities.”

In these words the smṛti-śāstra affirms that the Vaiśvānara is Lord Viṣṇu. From this statement it may also be understood that the vaiśvānara in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad is also Lord Viṣṇu.
Now he refutes the idea that vaiśvānara refers to the fire of digestion.

Sūtra 1.2.27

śabdādibhyo 'ntah pratiṣṭhānāc ca neti cen na tathā dṛṣṭy-upadesād asambhavāt puruṣa-vidham api ca ainam adhiyate

śabda—the words; ādibhyaḥ—beginning with; antah—within; pratiṣṭhānāt—because of abiding; ca—and; na—not; iti—thus; cet—if; na—not; tathā—thus; dṛṣṭi—sight; upadesāt—from the teaching; asambhavāt—because of being impossible; puruṣa—a person; vidham—the nature; api—also; ca—and; enam—Him; adhiyate—is read.

If [it is said the vaiśvānara here] cannot [be Lord Viṣṇu] because many words here refute this idea and because [the vaiśvānara is said here] to reside in the heart, [then I say] no because the teaching [of the scriptures is that one should] meditate [on Lord Viṣṇu in the heart] in this way, because it is not possible [to interpret the word here to mean anything else], and because [the text here describes the vaiśvānara] as a person with a human-like form.

The objection may be raised: “The vaiśvānara here cannot be Lord Viṣṇu. The text says ayam agnir vaiśvānarah: ‘This is the vaiśvānara fire.’ Because these words prove that vaiśvānara here means fire, the passage hrdayaṁ gārhapatya mano 'nvāhāryapacana āsyam āhyāyaḥ—’The gārhapatya fire is His heart, the anvāhāryapacana fire is His mind, and the āhavaniya fire is His mouth’—presents the vaiśvānara as a fire, and not Lord Viṣṇu, because vaiśvānara is said to be the resting place of prāṇa [breath] and again because the Vedas say vaiśvānara stays within the heart of the living entity.”

Here the Sūtra answers this objection by saying cen na, which means “If it is said that the vaiśvānara is fire, then I say no.” Why? The Sūtra says tathā dṛṣṭy-upadesād asambhavāt puruṣa-vidham api ca ainam adhiyate: “Because the teaching of the scriptures is that one should meditate on Lord Viṣṇu in the heart in this way, because it is not possible to interpret the word here to mean anything else, and because the text here describes the vaiśvānara as a person with a human-like form.” Tathā here means “by considering to be the fire of digestion,” dṛṣṭi means “meditation on Lord Viṣṇu,” and asambhavāt means “it is not possible to interpret the word vaiśvānara to mean anything but Lord Viṣṇu, because the text of the Upaniṣad says that heaven is the head of the vaiśvānara and the other parts of the world are other parts of the body of vaiśvānara.” Furthermore, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa [10.6.1.11] says

sa yo hy etam evāgnaṁ vaiśvānaraṁ puruṣa-vidham puruṣe 'ntah pratiṣṭitaṁ veda

“He knows the agni vaiśvānara, who has a human-like form and who stays in the hearts of the living entities.”

If the word vaiśvānara is interpreted to mean ‘fire,’ then the explanations here that the vaiśvānara resides in the hearts of the living entities may be accepted but not the statement that vaiśvānara has a human-like form. If vaiśvānara is interpreted to mean Lord Viṣṇu, then both statements may be easily accepted.

Next he refutes the idea that vaiśvānara means either the demigod Agni or the element fire.

Sūtra 1.2.28

ata eva na devatā bhūtam ca

ataḥ eva—therefore; na—not; devatā—demigod; bhūtam—element; ca—and;
For the same reasons vaiśvānara is neither the demigod Agni nor the element fire.

The objector may say: “Because the demigod Agni is very powerful and great, it may indeed be said that heaven is his head and the other parts of the world are parts of his body, and the same may also be said of the fire element. This is so because of the following description of Rg Veda [10.88.3]:

 yo bhāmunā prthivī dyām utemām ātatāna rodasī antarīkṣam

“Agni, in his form of the sun, is spread through the earth, heaven, and everything between.

Even if this be said, still I say no. Why? The Sūtra says ata eva [therefore], which means “for the reasons already given, vaiśvānara is neither the demigod Agni nor the element fire.” The words of this mantra of the Rg Veda are flattery only.

Avataraṇikā [corroboration]: In the opinion of Jaimini, the word agni may also directly mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” just as the word vaiśvānara does.

Sūtra 1.2.29

sāksāt āpy avirodham jaiminīḥ
sāksāt—directly; āpy—also; avirodham—without contradiction; jaiminīḥ—Jaimini.

Jaimini is of the opinion that the word agni may be interpreted to directly mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” and there is no inconsistency in this.

Just as the word vaiśvānara, interpreted to mean either “the leader [nara] of the world [viśva]” or “the proprietor of all human beings [nara] in the universe [viśva],” is a Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original cause of all causes, in the same way the word agni, interpreted to mean “the leader of all,” is also a name of Lord Viṣṇu. Jaimini Muni considers that there is no contradiction in these interpretations because they are based on the specific meanings of each word’s component parts.

The objector may say: “How can the limitless Supreme Personality of Godhead become the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger, as vaiśvānara is said to be in this passage of the Upaniṣad?”

To answer this question he says:

Sūtra 1.2.30

abhivyakteḥ ity āśmarathyah
abhivyakteḥ—because of manifestation; ity—thus; āśmarathyah—Āśmarathya.

Āśmarathya is of the opinion that the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in this way [a size the distance between the thumb and forefinger] because He manifests Himself [in the heart of His devotee].

Lord Viṣṇu appears in this way in the hearts of His devotees, who have the eyes to see Him. This is the opinion of Āśmarathya. Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad [3.12-13] describes Him as follows:

mahān prabhur vai puruṣāḥ sattvasyaś ca pravartakaḥ
su-nirmalāṁ imāṁ prāptaṁ iśāno jyotir avyayah

aṅgūṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo 'ntar-ātmā sadā janānāṁ hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ
hṛdā maniṣā maṇasaḥbhiklpto ya etad vidur amṛtāṁ te bhavanti
“The Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the Puruṣa to initiate the expansion of this cosmos. He is the perfectly pure goal that yogīs strive to reach, the effulgent and infallible ultimate controller. Measuring the size of a thumb, the Puruṣa is always present as the Supersoul within the hearts of all living beings. By exercising proper intelligence, one can realize Him within the heart; those who learn this method will gain immortality.”

Sūtra 1.2.31

anuṣmṛter iti bādariḥ

anuṣmṛteḥ—because of meditation; iti—thus; bādariḥ—Bādari Muni.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is thought to be this small size because that conception is very convenient for meditation. This is the opinion of Bādari.

Because the Supreme Lord is meditated as residing in the heart, and because the heart itself is the size of the distance between thumb and forefinger, the Lord is thought to be the size of the distance between thumb and forefinger also.

Sūtra 1.2.32

sampatter iti jaiminis tathā hi darśayati

sampatteḥ—because of transcendental opulences; iti—thus; jaiminīḥ—Jaimini; tathā—in this way; hi—because; darśayati—the śruti-śāstra declares.

[The Supreme Personality of Godhead can assume this very small size] because of His transcendental powers and opulences. This is the opinion of Jaimini. [It is known that the Supreme Personality of Godhead assumes this very small size] because śruti-śāstra reveals [this information].

The Supreme Personality of Godhead can become the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger because of His sampatti, His transcendental opulence in the form of inconceivable potencies. This action does not limit or restrict the Lord in any way. Jaimini thinks in this way. Why? He says tathā hi darśayati: “It is known that the Supreme Personality of Godhead assumes this very small size because śruti-śāstra reveals this information.” The word hi here means “because.”

The śruti-śāstra says tam ekāṁ govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Govinda, who transcendental form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss,” and eko ’pi san bahudhā yo ’vabhāti “Although He is one, the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests as many.” In this way the śruti-śāstra teaches that many contradictory qualities are simultaneously present in the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His inconceivable potencies. Some of these contradictory qualities are that even though He is Himself all transcendental knowledge, he still has a body; and even though He is one, He is also many. This will be explained in detail later in this book. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is simultaneously all-pervading and of a small size. There is no fault in saying this.

Sūtra 1.2.33

āmananti cainam asmin

āmananti—they declare; ca—also; enam—this; asmin—in Him.

[The āthārvaṇikas] say this of Him.
The ātharvaṇikas [students of the Atharva Veda] declare that this inconceivable potency is present in the Supreme Lord. In the Kaivalya Upaniṣad [21] the Lord says apāṇi-pādo 'ham acintya-śaktiḥ: “Although I have no hands or feet, I still have inconceivable potencies.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [3.33.3] says,

    sa eva viśvasya bhavān vidhatte   
    guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ   
    sargādy anīho 'vitathābhīsandhir   
    ātmeśvaro 'tarkya-sahasra-śaktiḥ

“My dear Lord, although personally You have nothing to do, You have distributed Your energies in the interactions of the material modes of nature, and for that reason the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation take place. My dear Lord, You are self-determined and are the Supreme Personality of Godhead for all living entities. For them You created this material manifestation, and although You are one, Your diverse energies can act multifariously. This is inconceivable to us.”

These different opinions do not contradict each other. The Skanda Purāṇa explains:

    vyāsa-citta-sthitākāśād   
    aviccinnāni kānicīt   
    anye vyavaharanty etad   
    urī-krtya grhādivat

“Other sages take up small portions broken from the vast sky of Vyāsadeva's opinions, just as houses and other enclosures take up a small portion of the vastness of space.”

Thus ends the Second Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman

Pāda 3: Scriptural Texts that may Seem to Describe the Jīva or some other Topic, but in Truth Describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead

viśvāṁ bibharti nihsvāṁ yaḥ
kāruṇyād eva deva-rāṭ
mamāsau paramānando
govindas tanutāṁ ratim

“I pray that Lord Govinda, the supremely blissful king of the demigods, who mercifully maintains this pathetic material world, may give me pure love for Him.”

This Third Pāda considers some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the jīva or some other topic, but actually describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Adhikaraṇa 1: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Abode of Heaven

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The essence of the materialistic mindset is fear: fear of losing control, fear of suffering and ultimately, fear of annihilation. The material existence seems like a vast and dangerous ocean, and to us tiny, weak living entities it seems very possible to become lost like a tiny bubble of foam on its endless waves. Thus we try to set limits on this unruly ocean of life by naming things, by identifying causes and setting boundary conditions. In this way we seek to impose our will upon the vast ocean of existence and establish a sense of identity.

But in reality we are completely helpless, because the ocean of time is unlimited and eternal by nature, and sends wave after wave of change without respite. We are no more able to restrain the waves of time and change than a tiny minnow is able to calm the mighty ocean in which it lives. This existential situation leads to our creating various theories to assuage our anxiety and give us comfort. One of these theories is impersonalism, and another is materialism. They are often found in close relationship, for they share a common atheistic ontological bias.

Materialistic impersonalism says, “There is no God, no intelligence in control of this world; the ultimate cause of everything is actually material nature. Although, being the source of life, material nature is ultimately good, or at least neutral; but because it is mechanical and unintelligent it develops into the wild and disorderly world that we experience, where everyone is on his own, and we, the pinnacle of intelligent life that has developed by chance evolution, must solve the problems of life and death for themselves.” Therefore despite our best efforts to create an illusion of stability by weaving various defective theories with our limited intelligence, inevitably we return again and again to the existential truth that our lives are constantly permeated by a sense of uncertainty and vulnerability.

What we do not see, due to our ignorant self-preoccupation and disregard for the actual laws of the universe, is that actually the creation is very orderly; it is we ourselves who have introduced conflict and danger into the world by desiring and acting independently of God’s plan. This plan, expressed in grand scope and style in the Vedic literatures, is that everyone in the material creation, especially every
intelligent human being, must work toward self-realization by a gradual process of self-purification. The process of purification is based on devotional service to the Supreme Lord, which is given in the Vedas by the Lord Himself, and taught by the great souls who become His representative ācāryas in disciplic succession from the Lord.

Therefore God certainly exists, is firmly in control of the world and nature, and He has set a limit on the existence and changes of the material world. This limit is the shore of eternity, or the spiritual world, and takes the form of the Lord Himself as the force of time.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
kālo 'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho lokān

The Blessed Lord said: “Time I am, destroyer of the worlds, and I have come to engage all people.”

Thus the Lord Himself is the shore of the ocean of time, the limit of the material existence, and the bridge from the dangerous material world, where everything is temporary and changeable, to the spiritual world where we exist eternally along with Him in an unlimited ocean of bliss and perfect knowledge. Pleasing Him by the process of devotional service is the solution for all the ills of material existence. Yet the impersonalists and materialists fight against the plan of the Lord, creating chaos for themselves and others by refusing to follow His clear instructions in the Vedic scriptures. To explain their painful experiences of life and justify their lusty sinful appetites and independent activities, they invent many bogus theories.

The real cause of all our problems is our rebellious attitude against the authority of the Lord, and our lusty attempts to enjoy His material resources by sinful activities like eating meat and indulging in illicit sex, intoxication and speculation. Therefore His servants in this world write many books like Vedānta-sūtra to inform people of the real truth, so they can solve the problems of life and return to the eternal blissful atmosphere. A key ingredient of these transcendental literatures is the refutation of the incorrect speculative theories of impersonalism and materialism that keep us immersed in the endless ocean of birth and death in the material world.

The impersonalist speculators’ favorite trick is to throw doubt on the scriptures through imaginative misinterpretations. By attributing false and illogical conclusions to the scriptures, they try to make them seem unauthoritative. Then when the people doubt the scriptures because of their propaganda, they can advance their own absurd theories, based on nothing more than their own defective imaginations. For example, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.5 says:

yasmin dyauḥ prthivī cāntarikṣam
otaṁ manāṁ saha prāṇaiś ca sarvaiḥ
tam evaikam jānatha ātmānam
anyā vāco vimuñcathāṁrtasyaiśa setuḥ

“Know that He in whom heaven, earth, sky, mind, breath and everything else are woven is the ātmā. Give up talking of anything else. He is the shore of the eternal.”

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: Is the abode of heaven described here the pradhāna, jīva, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The abode of heaven here is the pradhāna, because pradhāna is the cause of all material transformations, and also because the words amṛta-setu [the shore of the eternal] appropriately describe pradhāna, which leads the living entities to liberation just as milk brings nourishment to a calf. The word ātmā in this passage may refer to pradhāna either because pradhāna brings happiness to the living entities, or because it is all-pervading. Then again the words in this
passage may refer to the jīva, because the jīva is the enjoyer of the things in this world and because the jīva possesses the mind and the breath mentioned in this passage.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: This is a typical miscalculation of the materialistic impersonalists. Rather than simply accept the superior wisdom of the Vedas, they prefer to employ speculation to conclude that there is no personal God to create the world, but simply an impersonal, mechanical cause behind nature, so they can justify their independent activities by claiming, however tenuously, to be God themselves. Now the author of the sūtras sets aside this doubt by speaking the Vedic conclusion.

Sūtra 1.3.1

dyu-bhv-ādy-āyatanaṁ sva-śabdāt

dyu – of heaven; bhū – and earth; ādi – beginning with; āyatanaṁ – the abode; sva – own; śabdāt – because of the word.

The description “the abode of heaven, earth, and other things,” refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the words in this passage specifically describe Him.

The words “the abode of heaven” in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.5 refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The sūtra says sva-śabdāt: “Because the words in this passage specifically describe Him.” The Supreme Personality of Godhead is referred to here because the words amṛtasya setuḥ: “The shore of the eternal,” can refer to Him alone, and no one else. Amṛtasya means “of the immortal”; and because setuḥ comes from the verb sinoti, which means “to bind,” the phrase amṛtasya setuḥ means “He who enables one to attain the eternal.” Or the word setuḥ here may mean “like a bridge.” As a bridge enables one to cross to the other side of rivers and other bodies of water, in the same way the bridge of devotional service to the Supreme Lord enables one to attain the liberation that lies on the other shore of the cycle of repeated birth and death. That is the meaning of this phrase. In this matter the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [3.8 and 6.15] says,

tam eva vidītvāti mṛtyum eti

“One can overcome the path of birth and death only by understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

yadātma-tattvena tu brahma-tattvāṁ
dīpopameneha yuktāḥ prapaśyet
ajaṁ dhrūvaṁ sarva-tattvāṁ viśuddham
jnātvā devaṁ mucyate sarva-pāśaiḥ

“Without the mercy of the Supreme Lord, there is no alternative for the living entities to get freedom from material bondage. Moreover, in order to receive His mercy, a living entity requires self-realization just as the darkness inside a pot can only be dissipated by a lamp. Similarly, due to our ignorance the Supreme Lord, who is the controller of the entire universe, appears unreal to us. When a living entity realizes himself, he will automatically realize the Supreme Lord. Through knowledge of self-realization a living entity understands that though the Supreme Lord is situated within his heart, He does not take birth like an ordinary living entity. He is aloof from material activities, untouched by nescience, infallible, and supremely pure. Knowing this, the living entity becomes freed from all bondage.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 2.15]

Next he says:
Sūtra 1.3.2

muktopasṛpya vyapadeśāt

mukta – liberated; upasṛpya – attaining; vyapadeśāt – because of the statement.

Because it is said [that] the liberated souls attain [this spiritual abode of heaven, earth, and other things].

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is attained by the liberated souls is described in the following statement of Munḍaka Upaniṣad [3.1.3]:

yadā paśyāḥ paśyate rukma-varṇaṁ
kārtāram iṣāṁ puruṣāṁ brahma-yonim
tadā vidvāṁ punya-pāpe vidhiyā
nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ samyam upaiti

“One who sees that golden-colored Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, the supreme actor, who is the source of the Supreme Brahman, becomes free from the reactions to past pious and sinful deeds, and becomes liberated, attaining the same transcendental platform as the Lord.”

Munḍaka Upaniṣad [3.2.1] says:

upāsate puruṣāṁ ye hy akāmās te śukram etad ativartanti dhīrāḥ

“Those sober persons who worship the most pure personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, become free from all material desires and are liberated from the bondage of māyā.”

Sūtra 1.3.3

nānumānam atac-chabdāt

na – not; anumānam – that which is inferred; atat – not that; śabdāt – because of a word.

[The “abode of heaven and earth” here is not the pradhāna] because there is no word appropriate to it in this passage.

The pradhāna described in the Smṛti-śāstras is not referred to in this passage. Why? The sūtra says atac-chabdāt, which means that none of the words in this passage are appropriate for the insentient pradhāna. The abode of heaven, earth, sky, mind, breath and everything else cannot be anything material. Heaven is considered the highest destination for a materially conditioned soul, so what material context can contain it? It is not possible that pradhāna is indicated, because the text mentions breath, but pradhāna is the non-living composite of all material energy. The principle of life is not material, but the energy of the soul that animates the inert material body. The abode mentioned in the text must be spiritual, because it is attained by liberated souls.

The ultimate abode of everything is the spiritual world, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead engages in beautiful, unlimited pastimes with His eternal associates. Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.3] states:

atha ya eṣa samprāśado ‘smāc charīrāt samutthāya param jyoti-rūpa-sampadya svena rūpenābhinnispadyata eṣa ātmety hovācaitad amṛtam bhayam etad brahmeti, tasya ha vā etasya brahmaṇo nāma satyam iti
“Then the liberated soul who has achieved the causeless mercy of the Lord leaves his body and attains the supreme effulgent Lord. He is then reinstated in his constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. He then reaches the conclusion that the Lord is the immortal, fearless, and almighty Supreme Soul.”

Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.12] states:

\[ sa uttamah puruṣaḥ sa tatra paryeti jākṣat krīḍan ramamānaḥ. taṁ vā etaṁ devā ātmānam upāsate \]

“The topmost person is he who achieves the Supreme Lord through devotional service. He enjoys food and sports in the abode of the Lord. The demigods worship that Supreme Lord.”

Sūtra 1.3.4

\[ prāṇa-bhṛc ca \]
\[ prāṇa-bhṛt – the ātma; ca – and. \]

For the same reason the ātma [is not the “abode of heaven and earth.”]

The word \( na \) [not] and the phrase giving the reason [\( tac-chabdāt \)] should be understood here from the previous sūtra. The word \( ātmā \) in the text under discussion also cannot be understood to be the ātma because the word \( ātmā \), because it is derived from the verb \( atati \) [to go], primarily refers to the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the primary meaning of a word is suitable to the context, one cannot take the secondary meaning. The word \( sarva-vit \) [all-knowing] also cannot refer to the ātma. For these reasons, because the words in this passage of the Upaniṣad are not appropriate for such an interpretation, he says that the ātma cannot be the “abode of heaven and earth” mentioned here.

The ātma or spirit soul is atomic in size and insignificant in potency and knowledge. The soul is described as one ten-thousandth part of the upper portion of the hair point in size. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [5.9] confirms this:

\[ bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya \]
\[ śatadhā kalpitasya ca \]
\[ bhūgo jīvāḥ sa vijñeyāḥ \]
\[ sa cānantāyāva kalpate \]

“When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul.”

Therefore, the individual particle of spirit soul is a spiritual atom smaller than a material atom, and although there are innumerable ātmas, they are not fit to be the abode of anything. Rather, this tiny spiritual spark is the living principle of the material body, and the influence of the spiritual spark is felt all over the body as consciousness; that is the proof of the presence of the soul. Anyone can understand that the material body minus consciousness is a dead body, and that once the soul leaves the body, this consciousness cannot be revived in the body by any material treatment. Therefore, consciousness is not due to any combination of material elements, but to the spirit soul. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [3.1.9] the measurement of the atomic spirit soul is further explained:

\[ eṣo 'nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo \]
\[ yasmin prāṇah pañcadhā saṁviveśa \]
“The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of subtle air [prāṇa, apāṇa, vyāṇa, samāṇa and udāna], is situated within the heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living entities. When the soul is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of material prāṇa, its spiritual influence is exhibited.”

Sūtra 1.3.5

bheda-vyapadeśāc ca

bheda – difference; vyapadeśāt – because of the description; ca – and.

And also because the difference [between them] is specifically described.

The jīva is not the “abode of heaven and earth” because the scriptures affirm that the jīva and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are different, as explained in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [2.2.5]

tam evaikāṁ jānathātmanam

“Know Him to be the only Supreme Lord.”

tam ātmasthamīṁ ye’ nupāṣyanti dhīras-teṣāṁ sukham śāśvataṁ [śānti śāsvati] netaresāṁ

“Only the wise person who can see that Supreme Soul within his heart becomes peaceful and enjoys transcendental bliss.” [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.12-13]

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānaṁ vrkṣam pariṣavitajāte
tayor anyāḥ pippalaṁ svādv atty
anaśnann anyo ‘bhicākaśīti

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1-3]

Sūtra 1.3.6

prakaraṇāt

prakaraṇāt – because of the context.

[And also] because of the context.

The “abode of heaven and earth” here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of the context. The opening statement of this passage under discussion [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.1.3], asks yasmin nu vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati: “What is the one thing, knowing which everything becomes known?” Therefore the passage that follows must describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyām
pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamāṁ dharmyāṁ
su-sukham kartum avyayam

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.2]

Sūtra 1.3.7

sthity-adanābhyaṁ ca
sthiti – staying; adanābhyaṁ – eating; ca – and.

And also because one is eating and the other standing.

After describing the “abode of heaven and earth,” the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [3.1.1] goes on to say:

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānaṁ vrksam pariṣasvajāte
tayor anyah pippalāṁ svādy atti
anaśnann anyo ‘bhicākaśīti

“Two friendly birds stay on the same tree. One eats the sweet pippala fruits and the other, not eating, shines with great splendor.”

If the “abode of heaven and earth” had not been previously mentioned then there would be no reason to assume that the splendid bird here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Otherwise if the “abode of heaven and earth” had not been mentioned, the sudden, unannounced mention of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the allegory of the two birds would not be understandable. The Upaniṣad did not need to mention the jīva, who is already well known in the world, in the same way. For all these reasons, the “abode of heaven and earth” here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Adhikaraṇa 2: The Fullness is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The Upaniṣads are the essence of the Vedas, extracted and compiled by Vyāsadeva to help us learn their most important truths. The common theme of the Upaniṣads is that of a student approaching a self-realized spiritual master for instruction and enlightenment. In fact, the very meaning of the word upaniṣad is upa: “come close [to a self-realized soul],” + aniṣa: “sit down [and hear about the Supreme Absolute Truth].” So the Upaniṣads collectively teach us to follow the Vedic process of approaching a guru and inquiring about the Absolute Truth, Brahman.

Just as the Upaniṣads are the essence of the Vedas, the Vedānta-sūtra is the essence of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are sometimes deliberately vague and metaphorical, because they are meant to provoke us to inquire about the Absolute Truth from a qualified source. Vedānta-sūtra also begins with this process of inquiry about Brahman, athāto brahma-jiñānā: “Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.” [Sūtra 1.1.1] Therefore one should study Vedānta-sūtra under the guidance of a self-realized soul, and inquire into the mysteries of the Upaniṣads from someone who has experienced them directly. A fully self-realized spiritual master can explain all these mysteries clearly, and offer practical guidance to the student based on his experience.

Upaniṣadic writing is deliberately mysterious to stimulate this inquiry, and also to protect the confidential Vedic truths from unqualified people. But in the absence of a qualified spiritual master, such vague and paradoxical pronouncements can lead to speculation and guesswork. Often, an
unqualified person will pose as a spiritual master and mislead his students with imaginative explanations of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. Sometimes such false teachers are sincere, but simply deluded; others are cynical exploiters seeking fame and fortune at the expense of their followers. Either way, accepting a fraudulent teacher is the most dangerous pitfall on the path of spiritual progress.

The conditioned soul is already too much under the influence of the material body and mind. So when a so-called spiritual teacher offers an easy path based on the material body, it seems attractive because the body is something familiar and well-understood. Other false teachers portray the spiritual path as a matter of abstract knowledge alone. They hint at a shortcut to enlightenment based on some tricky mental adjustment. All these prey on the natural tendency of the conditioned soul towards laziness and lack of intellectual integrity.

The actual spiritual path has a number of well-known stages, where the Supreme Absolute Truth is realized in a progressively more subtle series of His energies and aspects, culminating in direct realization of the complete Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. In the passage below, the great teacher Śrī Sanat-kumāra explains this path, beginning with meditation on the Holy Name of the Lord as given in all scriptures. The whole passage [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.1.1-7.26.2] is given here for context:

Nārada approached Śrī Sanat-kumāra saying, “Please teach me, Sir.” Sanat-kumāra replied, “First tell me what you know already, then I will tell you what is beyond that.”

Nārada said, “I know the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda and the Atharva Veda, the fourth; the Itihāsa Purāṇa [Mahābhārata], which is a fifth book among the Vedas; the science of ancestors, the science of numbers, the science of devatās, the science of finding treasure, the undivided original Veda and its twenty-four branches, the superhuman deva sciences, the science of Brahman, the science of ghosts, the science of politics, the science of the stars, the science of serpents and Gandharvas; all this I know, venerable Sir.

“But Sir, with all this, I am like one who knows the mantras only, but not the Lord. I have heard from persons like Your Honor that one who knows the Lord overcomes all grief. I am in grief; therefore, O Sir, take me over this ocean of grief.” Sanat-kumāra replied, “Whatever you have read is verily only the name of the Lord.

“Verily the name of the Lord is the presiding Deity of the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda and the Atharva Veda, the fourth, and the rest [of the Vedic scriptures]. All these are verily name only; meditate on Brahman in the name.

“He who meditates on Brahman in name gets freedom of movement throughout all that region over which name has her scope; therefore, meditate on Brahman in name.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than name?” “Yes, there is something better than name.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Speech is better than name. Speech makes us understand the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda and the Atharva Veda, the fourth and the rest. Meditate on Brahman in speech.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than speech?” “Yes, there is something better than speech.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Mind is higher than speech. For name and speech are enclosed in mind, just as when two myrobalan plums or haritaki fruits are held in one’s closed fist. When one wishes to study the mantras, he does so in mind as Brahman. Meditate on Brahman in mind.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than mind?” “Yes, there is something better than mind.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”
“Will [mitra] is better than mind. For when a man wills, then he thinks in his mind, then he utters speech, and sends it forth as a name. In name all mantras are included, and all Vedic rituals abide in mantras. Therefore all these have their refuge in will; they have will as their Lord, abide in will and so on. Meditate on Brahman in will.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than will?” “Yes, there is something better than will.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Flickering memory [cītta] is verily greater than will. For when a man recollects, then he thinks in his mind, then he utters speech, and sends it forth in a name. In name all mantras are included, and all Vedic rituals abide in mantras. All these, beginning with mind and ending in sacrifice, have memory as their center, have memory as their Lord and are supported in memory. Meditate on Brahman in memory.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than memory?” “Yes, there is something better than memory.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Meditation [dhyāna] is better than memory. The earth is in meditation, as it were; and also the sky, the intermediate region, heaven, the water, the mountains and divine men. Meditate on Brahman in dhyāna. Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than meditation?” “Yes, there is something better than meditation.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Understanding is better than meditation. Through understanding, one understands the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda and the Atharva Veda, the fourth and the rest, food and its tastes, this world and that world; all this we understand through understanding. Meditate on Brahman in understanding. Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than understanding?” “Yes, there is something better than understanding.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Spiritual power is verily better than understanding. Here is this world, one man of spiritual power makes a hundred men of understanding tremble. If a man is spiritually powerful, he rises to higher planes; rising to higher planes, he serves the Masters; serving the Masters, he attracts their attention; attracting their attention, he gets their audience and their teachings; then he ponders over their teachings and begins to understand them and act on them; thus he becomes wise. By power, the earth stands firm; by power the intermediate world stands firm; by power the deva-loka stands firm; by power the mountains and divine men, the cattle and birds and herbs and beasts down to the worms, insects and ants stand firm; by power the world stands firm. Meditate on Brahman in power.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than power?” “Yes, there is something better than power.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Food [Aniruddha or spiritual love] is better than spiritual power. Meditate on Brahman in spiritual love.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than spiritual love?” “Yes, there is something better than spiritual love.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Water [prāṇa or spiritual peace] is better then spiritual love. Therefore, if seasonal rain were not to fall, all beings become wretched from lack of food; while if seasonal rains fall, all living beings rejoice, for there will be plenty of food. Therefore meditate on Brahman in water.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than water?” “Yes, there is something better than water.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Fire [Indra or the fire of genius] is better than water. Therefore when heat pervades the atmosphere, people say ‘it is warm and sultry, it will rain.’ Meditate on Brahman in fire.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than fire?” “Yes, there is something better than fire.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”
“Ether [Umā or the steady light of genius] is higher than fire. Meditate on Brahman in ether.”
Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than ether?” “Yes, there is something better than ether.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Memory [Rudra or spiritual omniscience] is higher than ether. Meditate on Brahman in memory.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than memory?” “Yes, there is something better than memory.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Hope [Sarasvatī or the bliss of divine vision] is better than memory. Kindled by hope, memory reads the sacred hymns, performs sacrifices, desires sons and cattle, desires this world and that world. Meditate on Brahman in hope.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than hope?” “Yes, there is something better than hope.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“The chief breath of life [prāṇa] is better than hope. As the spokes of a wheel are all attached to the hub, so all are attached to this prāṇa. But the chief breath himself moves through the Supreme Breath. This Supreme Breath gives to the Chief Breath all that he desires, when the prāṇa mediates between the soul and the Supreme; yea, gives to him his very life. This Supreme Breath is verily the father; the Supreme Breath is the sister; the Supreme Breath is the teacher; the Supreme Breath is the priest.

“The Supreme Breath verily exists in all these. He who sees it thus, perceives it thus, knows it thus, becomes the teacher of the highest truth [ativādin]. If the people say to him, “You are an ativādin,” let him say “I am an ativādin.” He need not conceal it.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than prāṇa?” “Yes, there is something better than prāṇa.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“The Lord called the Absolute Truth is higher than prāṇa. But he in reality is a higher ativādin who declares the Lord Viṣṇu to be the Absolute Truth.” “Sir, may I become an ativādin by the grace of the Absolute Truth?” “Yes, but first we must desire to know the Absolute Truth.” “Sir, I desire to know the Absolute Truth.”

“When one understands the Lord as omniscient, then one declares the Lord good [satyam]. One who does not understand Him as omniscient cannot declare Him good. Only he who understands the omniscience of the Lord can declare Him good. This omniscience, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the omniscient Lord.”

“When one realizes Him as the Thinker, then one understands Him as omniscient. One who does not so realize cannot understand Him as omniscient. This Thinker, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the Thinker.”

“When one known Him as the All-holy, then one understands Him as the Thinker. One who does not know Him as the All-holy, cannot understand Him as the Thinker. This All-holy, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the All-holy.”

“When one knows Him as firm, then one believes Him holy. One who has no knowledge of His firmness cannot believe Him to be holy. One who knows Him as firm, believes Him holy. This firm Lord, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the firm one.”

“When one understands Him as the creator, then he can know Him as having firmness. One who has no knowledge of Him as the creator cannot know Him to be firm. One who knows Him as the creator, knows Him as firm. This creator Lord, however, we must desire to know.” “Sir, I desire to know the creator.”

“When one knows Him as pleasure, he knows Him as the creator. One who does not know Him as pleasure does not know Him as the creator. Realizing Him as pleasure alone, one knows Him
as the creator. This pleasure, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to know Him as pleasure.”

“He who is the Lord Nārāyaṇa called the infinity [Bhūmā] is the real pleasure. Without the grace of the infinity [Bhūmā] there is no pleasure for the finite living beings. The Bhūmā alone is happiness. One must therefore inquire into Bhūmā.” “Sir, I desire to know Bhūmā.”

“When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small. He who is the Bhūmā, He is verily the Immortal. But what is limited, that is the mortal.” “Sir, in what does this Bhūmā rest?” “In His own glory, or perhaps not even there.

“In this world, cows and horses, elephants and gold, slaves and wives, fields and houses are said to be glorious. But I do not mean this glory,” said Sanat-kumāra, “I mean something different from worldly glory.

“He indeed is below, above, behind, before, right and left; thus He indeed is full. Now the teaching regarding Him called as ‘I’: the ‘I’ is below, the ‘I’ is above, the ‘I’ is behind, the ‘I’ is before, the ‘I’ is to the right and left; thus the ‘I’ is verily the nearest and the full.

“Next follows the teaching regarding Him as the Ātman. The Ātman is below, Ātman is above, Ātman is behind, Ātman is before, Ātman is to the right and left; thus Ātman alone is the nearest and the full. He who sees Him thus, understands Him thus, thinks Him thus, always thinks the Ātman to be the highest; he sports in the Ātman, he unites with the Ātman, has the Ātman for his joy, and comes directly under the rule of the Ātman. For him there is freedom of movement in all the worlds. But those who understand Him differently live in worlds that are perishable, and are under inferior rulers; for them there is no freedom of movement in all the worlds.

“For the realized soul who sees thus, who thinks thus, who understands thus, there is the vision of how the Chief Prāṇa comes out of the Ātman, how the hope comes out of the Ātman, how the steady memory comes out of the Ātman, how the ether comes out of Him, how the fire comes out of Him, how the water comes out of Him, how the appearance and disappearance of the worlds comes out of Him, how the food comes out of Him, how the power comes out of Him, how the understanding comes out of Him, how meditation comes out of Him, how the flickering memory comes out of Him, how the will comes out of Him, how the mind comes out of Him, how the speech comes out of Him, how the name comes out of Him, how the mantras of the Vedas come out of Him, how the karmas come out of Him; verily the realized soul sees how all this universe come out from the Ātman alone.

“There is this verse about it: ‘The liberated soul does not see death, nor illness nor pain. The realized soul sees everything and obtains everything, everywhere. He becomes one, he becomes three, he becomes five, he becomes nine, and it is said he becomes eleven as well, nay he becomes one hundred and eleven, and one thousand and twenty.’

“Right doctrine leads to right thinking. Right thinking leads to firm meditation. When meditation is form, all bondage is loosed completely, through the grace of the Lord.”

Thus the great teacher Sanat-kumāra showed the other side of darkness to the sage Nārada. Sanat-kumāra is called the Great Warrior; yea, he is called the Great Warrior.

In this passage, after describing the Lord’s Holy Names and qualities, Śrī Sanat-kumāra was asked by Śrī Nārada Muni [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.23.1-7.24.1]:
bhūmā tv eva vijñāsitavya iti bhūmānam bhagavo vijñāsa iti. yatra nānyat paśyati nānyac chṛṇoti nānyad vijāṇāti sa bhūmā. atha yatrāṇyat paśyaty anyac chṛṇoty anyad vijāṇāti tad-alpam

‘One should ask about Bhūmā.’ ‘My lord, I wish to know about Bhūmā.’ ‘When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small.’

The word bhūmā often means “many,” but here it means “the all-pervading fullness.” The text says yatrāṇyat paśyati... tad-alpam: “When one sees something else, he sees that which is very small.” The Bhūmā is contrasted against alpa [the small]. The opposite of small is “all-pervading,” not “many.” Therefore Bhūmā here means “the all-pervading fullness,” and indirectly indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental pastimes.

Bhūmā is one of a class of Holy Names of the Lord that is derived from His qualities, such as Brahma [pure consciousness, the cosmic root substance], Caitanya [living force], Ātmā [the soul of the universe], Paramātmā [the Supreme Soul], Jagadīśa [controller of everyone], Virāt [the universal form], Vibhu [He who is full of all opulence], Viśvarūpa [whose body is the universe] and Vyāpaka [the all-pervading Lord]. One may get a little light from these names, but it is difficult to realize that the Holy Name of the Lord is identical with the Personality of Godhead through these indirect names. Therefore the impersonalists are fond of these names, because unlike Holy Names such as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda or Viṣṇu, they do not force one to confront the reality that the Supreme is a transcendental personality.

Saṁśaya [arisel of doubt]: Does Bhūmā here mean prāṇa [life-breath or energy], or Lord Viṣṇu?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: In the passage previous to this, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [7.15.1] says prāṇa vā āśāyā bhūyān: “prāṇa is better than hope.” Because prāṇa is the topic immediately preceding Bhūmā, and because no question and answer intervenes between them, therefore prāṇa and Bhūmā are the same. Here the word prāṇa [life-breath] means the jīva soul, who has breath for his companion. It does not mean merely air. Because this passage begins [7.1.3] by describing the jīva soul, tarati śokam ātma-vit: “He who knows the soul crosses beyond grief,” and ends [7.26.1] by again describing the jīva soul as ātmā evedaṁ sarvam: “The soul is everything,” therefore the description of Bhūmā situated between these two statements must be a description of the jīva soul. When the Upaniṣad says [7.25.1] yatra nānyat paśyati: “When one attains Him one sees nothing else,” it means, in this interpretation, that when the jīva is rapt in deep sleep and his senses are all in the grip of prāṇa, he cannot see anything beyond himself. When the Upaniṣad says [7.23.1] yo vai bhūmā tat sukham: “the Bhūmā is bliss,” it does not contradict the idea that the Bhūmā is the jīva here, because the śruti-śāstra says tasyāṁ sukham aham avāpsam: “I slept very happily.” In this way it is proved that this passage of the Upaniṣad describes the jīva soul. All the other portions of this passage are also very favorable to this interpretation of the jīva.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: He says:

**Sūtra 1.3.8**

bhūmā samprasādād adhyupadesāt

bhūmā – the Bhūmā; samprasādāt – than the jīva, who is the object of the Lord’s mercy; adhi – greater; upadesāt – because of the teaching.

[The Bhūmā here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the scriptural teaching that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the jīva soul.
The Bhūmā here is Lord Viṣṇu and not the ṇīva, who has prāṇa [life-breath] as his companion. Why? The Śūtra says, samprasādād adhy upadeśāt: “Because of the scriptural teaching that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the ṇīva soul.” The Bhūmā is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the passage here [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.23.1] says in the words yo vai bhūmā tat sukham—“The Bhūmā is bliss”—and because the Śūtra here says that the Bhūmā is superior to all. Also, Bhūmā indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.3.4, 8.12.3] says:

esa samprasādo ‘smāc chariṁrā samuṭṭhāya...

“‘Now the ṇīva who has attained the mercy of the Lord rises above the gross material body, attains the effulgent spiritual world and in his true spiritual form comes before Ṁātmān.’ Thus he spoke when asked by his pupils. This Ṁātmān or Viṣṇu is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahmān, and the name of the Brahmān is the Absolute Truth, satyam.”

“Thus does that liberated ṇīva, after having been released from the body, reach the highest light, and appears in his true spiritual form before the highest Spirit. He moves about there laughing, playing and rejoicing, be it with women, carriages or relatives, never being conscious of persons near him, so great is his ecstasy. As the charioteer is appointed to the chariot, so is the Prāṇa appointed in this body.”

Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the ṇīva, who is dependent on the Lord’s mercy, and who has prāṇa [life-breath] as his companion.

The meaning is this: After describing names and a host of other things, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [7.15.2] says sa vā esa evaṁ paśyan evaṁ manvāna evaṁ vijānann ati-vāḍī bhavati: “He who sees prāṇa, meditates on prāṇa, and understands prāṇa becomes a true knower of things.” Then after saying that the knower of prāṇa becomes a true knower of things, the Upaniṣad then says [7.16.1] esa tu vā ativadati yaḥ satyenātivadati: “He who knows the Supreme Personality of Godhead is in reality the true knower of things.” The word tu [but] in the passage under discussion ends the discussion of prāṇa. Then the greatest ati-vāḍī [wise man] is described as “he who knows the satya [Absolute Truth],” which here means Lord Viṣṇu. In this way the Upaniṣad explains that the Bhūmā is both different from and superior to prāṇa. Because in this way the Bhūmā is declared to be superior to prāṇa, prāṇa cannot be identical with the Bhūmā. The Bhūmā is here taught to be superior to the series beginning with name and culminating in prāṇa, and therefore it is clearly seen to be different from speech and the other items in this series. In this way Sanat-kumāra teaches that the Bhūmā is superior to prāṇa.

The word satya is famous as a Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu. The scriptures often use the word satya in this way. For example, the Taippīṭṭi Upaniṣad [2.1.2] says satyaṁ jñānam anantam—“The unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of transcendental knowledge”—and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [1.1.1] says satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥi: “I meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” And in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.26, the demigods pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa:

satya-vrataiṁ satya-paraṁ tri-satyaṁ
satyasya yoniṁ nihiṁ ca satye
satyasya satyaṁ ṇṛta-satyaṁ-netraṁ
satyāṁkaiṁ tvāṁ saraṇaṁ prapannāḥ

“O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation-creation, maintenance and annihilation—You are the Supreme Truth.
Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as antaryāmī, the inner force. You are equal to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection.”

The word satyena in the passage under discussion is in the instrumental case, in the sense of “because.” The meaning here is that one becomes a true ativādi [wise man] by knowing Satyena, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The person who meditates on prāṇa as an energy of the Supreme is called an ativādi [wise man], because he is wise in comparison to those who meditate on the series of objects mentioned previously, beginning with prāṇa and culminating in hope. But he who meditates on Lord Viṣṇu directly is superior to the person who meditates on prāṇa. Therefore he who meditates on Lord Viṣṇu is the real ativādi, the best ativādi.

For this reason the student asks [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.16.1] so ‘haṁ bhagavaḥ satyenātivadāni: “My lord, I will become a man wise with knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” The guru then answers satyaṁ tv eva vijñānātivayam: “One must yearn to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” The objection of the pūrvaṇāka that “because there are no further questions and answers after the description of the ativādi wise with knowledge of prāṇa, therefore the subject of prāṇa continues into the next sentence,” is invalid. Moreover, the objection that “because there are no questions after the description of prāṇa, therefore prāṇa is the highest,” is also invalid. In describing the series of inanimate things, beginning with name and culminating in hope, the guru did not say that the knower of any of these was an ativādi [wise man]. However, when he described prāṇa [here meaning the jīva] he did say that the knower of prāṇa is an ativādi. The student then assumes that prāṇa is the highest. That is why he asks no further question. However, the guru Sanat-kumāra, not accepting prāṇa as the highest, proceeds to explain that Lord Viṣṇu is higher than prāṇa. The student, now taught that Lord Viṣṇu is the highest, becomes eager to know how to meditate on Him, and asks so ‘haṁ bhagavaḥ satyenātivadāni: “My lord, I will become an ativādi wise with knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The opponent may say, “What is referred to here is the jīva, who is the companion of prāṇa [life-breath], and who is referred to in the beginning of this passage as ātmā.”

The reply is: No. Here the word ātmā primarily means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because to interpret the word otherwise would contradict the statement at the beginning of the passage [7.26.1] ātmanah prāṇah: “prāṇa is manifested from the ātmā.” This view of the opponent also contradicts the statement [7.24.1] yatra nāṇyaḥ paśyati nāṇyaḥ cṛṇoti nāṇyaḥ vijnānī sa bhūmā: “When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā.” This description of the perception of Bhūmā clearly refutes any idea that the word Bhūmā could mean anything other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The scriptures say sausūptikam sukham alpam—“The happiness of deep sleep is very slight”—and therefore to say that the word Bhūmā here means “the jīva who is soundly sleeping” is simply laughable. For all these reasons, therefore, the Bhūmā described here is Lord Viṣṇu.

Sūtra 1.3.9

dharmopapatteś ca

dharma – qualities; upapatteh – because of the appropriateness; ca – and.
And also because the qualities described here can be ascribed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone.

The qualities ascribed here to the Bhūmā are suitable only for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, and not for anyone else. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad says [7.24.1]:

yo vai bhūmā tad amṛtam
“The Bhūmā is the eternal.”

This describes the eternality that is a natural feature of the Supreme. The Upaniṣad also says sa bhagavāḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti sve mahimni: “Where does the Supreme Personality of Godhead stay? He stays in His own glory.” This explains that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not depend on anyone. The scriptures also say sa evādhasētāḥ: “The Supreme Person is above, below, in front, behind, to the left and to the right.” This shows that the Lord is the ultimate shelter of everyone and everything.

The scriptures say [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.1]:

ātmanah prāṇah
“The life-force is manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

This shows that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause of all causes. These are some of the qualities of the Supreme described in the Vedic literatures. Finally, the word Bhūmā is used to describe Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu in this passage from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [10.89.57]:

tāv āha bhūmā paraṃeṣṭhinaṁ prabhur
bedḍhāṅjalī sa-smitam ājrayā girā

“Then, as the two of them stood before Him with joined palms, the almighty Mahā-Viṣṇu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.”

The Vedic principle of samanvaya means that when the meaning of a word is vague, it should be interpreted according to the context. The purpose of all the Vedic scriptures is to reveal the highest truth as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the best process of self-realization as devotional service to Him. Even though the Vedas may mention other subjects, that is their ultimate conclusion. Therefore when one encounters an ambiguous term in the Vedic literature, there is never any fault in interpreting it as indicating the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Adhikaraṇa 3: ‘Aḵṣara’ Refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: Here is another passage containing a word that ostensibly means one thing, but that according to context indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [3.8.6-8] says:

She said, “O Yajñavalkaya! That which is above heaven, and below the earth, which is between heaven and earth, which is in the past, present and future, in what is that woven, warp and woof?”

He replied, “O Gārgi, that which is above heaven, and below the earth, which is also between heaven and earth, which is in the past, present and future, that is woven as warp and woof in the ākāśa [sky].” “In what then is the sky woven, warp and woof?”
He said, “O Gārgi, the brāhmaṇas say it is woven in the imperishable [aṅka]. The
imperishable is not large, not small, not short, not tall, not red, not liquid, without shadow,
without darkness, without air, without ether, without attachment, without taste, without smell,
without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without activity, without breath,
without a door, without measure; having no inside or outside, it devours nothing, and no one
devours it.”

Samśaya [arisal of doubt]: Is the aṅka [eternal] here pradhāna, jīva, or the Supreme Personality of
Godhead?
Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The word aṅka here may denote any of the three. The meaning is
ambiguous.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.3.10

aṅkaram ambarānta-dhṛteḥ

aṅkara – the eternal; ambarā – with sky; anta – at the end; dhṛteḥ – because of being the
support.

[The word] aṅka [here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because the
aṅka is described as] the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest
and culminating in sky.

The aṅka here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The sūtra says ambarānta-dhṛteḥ:
“Because the aṅka is described as the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest
and culminating in sky.” The Upanisad says etasmin khalu aṅka gāryā akāśa otaḥ ca protaś ca: “O
Gārgi, the sky is woven, warp and woof, in the eternal.” The word aṅka must refer to the Supreme
Personality of Godhead because it is here described as the resting place of all the elements, which
culminate in sky. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [11.24.19], Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

prakṛtir yasyopādānam
ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ
sato 'bhivyānjakaḥ kālo
brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham

“The material universe is real, having prakṛti as its original ingredient and final state. Lord
Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus
nature, the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.”

mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat
kiṁcid asti dhanaṁjaya
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ
sūtre maṁ-gaṁ īva

“O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], there is no Truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me,
as pearls are strung on a thread.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.7]

The objection may be raised: “Aṅka here may refer to pradhāna because pradhāna is the origin of all
the changes of this world. Aṅka may also refer to the jīva because the jīva is the resting place of all
inanimate objects that come within its perception.”
If these objections are raised, he then says:

**Sūtra 1.3.11**

\[ sā ca praśāsanāt \]

\[ sā – that; ca – and; praśāsanāt – because of the command. \]

*Ākṣara* here must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the text says that everything is supported by His command.

In the previous *sūtra* the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest and culminating in sky. Why is this? The *sūtra* says *praśāsanāt*: “Because the text says that everything is supported by His command.” The *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [3.8.9] says

\[ etasya vā ākṣarasya praśāsane gārgī dyāvā-prthivī vidhṛte tiṣṭhataḥ. Etasya vā ākṣarasya praśāsane gārgī sūryā-candramasau vidhṛtau tiṣṭhataḥ... \]

“By the command of the eternal, O Gārgī, heaven and earth are manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgī, the sun and moon are manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgī, the moments, hours, days and nights, bright and dark fortnights, months, seasons and years all become manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgī, some rivers flow to the east from the white mountains, others to the west, or any other quarter. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgī, men praise those who give, the gods follow the sacrificer, the father, the *darvi* offering.”

\[ yac-cakṣur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇāṁ rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ yasyājñayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam aham bhajāmi \]

“The sun who is the king of all the planets, full of infinite effulgence, the image of the good soul, is as the eye of this world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, in pursuance of whose order the sun performs his journey mounting the wheel of time.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.52]

\[ nabho dadāti śvasatāṁ padaṁ yan-niyamād adāḥ lokaṁ sva-dehaṁ tanute mahān saptabhir āvṛtam \]

“Subject to the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sky allows outer space to accommodate all the various planets, which hold innumerable living entities. The total universal body expands with its seven coverings under His supreme control.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.43]

Because these words describe the order of the eternal, the eternal should be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Neither the inanimate, unconscious *pradhāna*, nor the conditioned or liberated *jīva* can create everything simply by their command.

**Sūtra 1.3.12**

\[ anya-bhāva-vyāvṛtteḥ ca \]

\[ anya – another; bhāva – nature; vyāvṛtteḥ – because of the exclusion; ca – also. \]
And also because the text describes certain qualities that specifically exclude any other being.

The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [3.8.11] says

\[ \text{tad vā etad aksaraṁ gārgy adṛṣṭaṁ draṣṭr aśrutaṁ śrotṛ...} \]

“O Gārgi, this eternal sees, but is unseen. He hears, but is unheard. He is inconceivable but thinking, unknown but knowing. There is nothing that sees but He, nothing that hears but He, nothing that thinks but He, nothing that knows but He. In that imperishable [aṅkṣara] O Gārgi, the ether is woven, warp and woof.”

Because these words describe the aṅkṣara in terms that cannot be applied to anyone but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, aṅkṣara must refer to the Supreme Person. The pradhāna is inanimate and unconscious and therefore it cannot see. Because the text here says that the aṅkṣara sees everything but cannot be seen by anyone, it cannot mean the jīva. Similarly, [Bhagavad-gītā 13.15] says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sarvendriya-guṇābhāsaṁ} \\
\text{sarvendriya-vivarjītam} \\
\text{asaktaṁ sarva-bhṛc caiva} \\
\text{ nirguṇaṁ guṇa-bhoktr ca}
\end{align*}
\]

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.”

The conditioned souls in the material world want to see the creation as a pleasurable place for their own enjoyment, therefore they concoct so many false theories about the nature of the cosmos. They want to imagine there is no God in control, to remove all impediments to their false proprietorship and enjoyment. They do not understand that a material creation without a spiritual cause is an impossibility; nor do they see the Lord expanded everywhere by His personal expansions and energies. Therefore they are unaware that He is actually the resting place of everything.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{loke vitatam ātmānaṁ} \\
\text{lokaṁ cāṁ ca mayā vyāptaṁ} \\
\text{mayi caivobhayaṁ kṛtam}
\end{align*}
\]

“In this world of matter, which the conditioned soul accepts as consisting of enjoyment, the conditioned soul expands, thinking that he is the en joyer of the material world. Similarly, the material world expands in the living entity as a source of en joyment. In this way they both expand, but because they are My energies, they are both pervaded by Me. As the Supreme Lord, I am the cause of these effects, and one should know that both of them rest in Me.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.52]

**Adhikāraṇa 4: The Puruṣa Seen in Satyaloka is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: In the Praśna Upaniṣad [5.2] the following passage is read:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{etad vai satyakāma paramā cāparaṁ ca brahma yad oṁkāras tasmād vidvān} \\
\text{enenaivaṉatenaivaṅkataram anvēti... yaḥ punar etāṁ tri-mātrentom ity anenaivaṅkṣareṇa paramāṁ} \\
\text{puruṣam abhidhyāyita sa tejasi sūrye sampanno yathā pādodaras tvacāvinirmucyate evaṁ}
\end{align*}
\]
haiva sa pāmabhīr vinirmuktaḥ sa sāmabhīr unniyate brahma-locanī sa etasmāt jīva-ghanāt
parāt param puriṣayaṁ puruṣaṁ vikṣaṭet

Next Saibya Satyakāma asked him “O Master! What world does he conquer by unceasing meditation on omkāra, up to his death?”

“O Satyakāma, the syllable om is both the superior Brahman and the inferior Brahman. A wise man attains one of these two Brahmans through the vehicle of meditation on omkāra.

“One who meditates on the syllable om up to the level of exoteric realization, after death he is welcomed by the Supreme Self, and attains another human birth on earth. The devas of the Rg Veda lead him to a human body. In that birth he is endowed with austerity, celibacy and faith, and realizes the greatness of the fruit of these.

“Next if he meditates on the syllable om up to the level of mesoteric realization, after death he is carried up by the mantras of the Yajur Veda to the Antarīkṣa or world of the moon. Having enjoyed the vast powers of the moon-world, he returns again.

“But one who meditates on the eternal om up to the level of esoteric realization, meditating on the Supreme Person, will attain the sun-planet [tejas]. As a snake sheds its skin so does he become free from all sins. By the hymns of the Sāma Veda he is carried to Satyaloka. There he directly sees the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Person residing in the heart. To that effect are the following two verses:

“The three notes [svara] become fatal when uttered singly or in couples, or without harmony. But when properly uttered either in high, low or middle pitch, there is no fear to the wise.

“By the Rg Veda one gains this physical world, by the Yajur Veda one gains the astral world, by the Sāman he gains that which is known only by the wise. The knower of Brahman also reaches that which is peace, imperishable, free from fear and Supreme, by the vehicle of om alone.”

Sainśaya [arisal of doubt]: Is the person seen and meditated on the four-faced demigod Brahmā or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The text here says that the devotee who meditates on om of one length attains the world of men, the devotee who meditates on om of two lengths attains the world of heaven, and the devotee who meditates on om of three lengths attains the world of Brahma. The planet here is the planet of the four-faced demigod Brahmā, and the person seen by one who goes there is the four-faced demigod Brahmā.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.3.13

īkṣati-karma-vyapadeśāt saḥ

īkṣati – of seeing; karma – object; vyapadeśāt – because of the description; saḥ – He.

The person here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the description of the object of vision here fits the Supreme Person.

Here the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the īkṣati-karma, or object of vision. Why? The sūtra says vyapadeśāt [because the description of the object of vision here fits the Supreme Person]. This is so because the Upaniṣad [5.2.7] describes the qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the following words:
tam oṁkāraṁvāyatanenānveti vidvān yat tac chāntam ajaram amṛtam abhayam paramān parāyaṇaṁ ca

“By reciting oṁ the wise man attains the supremely peaceful, ageless, eternal, fearless Supreme, the ultimate goal of life.”

The conclusion is that, according to the argument of niśāda-sthapaty-adhikaraṇa-nyāya, the word brahmaloka here means Viṣṇuloka [the planet of Lord Viṣṇu]. The mantra oṁkāra, also known as praṇava actually indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā 7.8:

raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu
śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nyṣu

“O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable oṁ in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.”

There are three stages of chanting mantras for self-realization; the exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric stages, called kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī: the neophyte, the intermediate student and the mahā-bhāgavata, or the highly advanced devotee. One whose faith is not very strong, who is just beginning, is considered a neophyte devotee. One who is not very expert in argument and logic based on the revealed scriptures, but who has firm faith, is considered a second-class devotee. Such an advanced devotee is very fortunate. One who is expert in understanding the revealed scriptures and in discussing them with transcendental logic, who has firm conviction and deep faith that is not blind, but is based on his own personal experience of self-realization, is considered a topmost devotee in devotional service. He is the most fortunate, for he has personally realized the Absolute Truth.

Typically the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is eager to engage his materialistic qualifications in the service of the Lord, mistaking such material expertise to be a sign of advanced devotion. But by continuing to serve the Supreme Lord and the devotees engaged in propagating His mission, the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī gradually advances in realization, and comes to the stage of dedicating his activities to helping more advanced Vaiṣṇavas. Even such kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs can help ordinary living entities by their association, since at least the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs have some faith that self-realization is the purpose of human life and that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of this faith, the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī gradually becomes detached from those who are opposed to the conclusions of the Vedas and the purposes of the Lord. As he gradually becomes more and more neglectful of those who hate the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and becomes more attracted to friendship with other faithful servants of the Lord, the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī approaches the second-class stage, called madhyama-adhikārī. In the madhyama stage the Vaiṣṇava sees the Lord as the cause of all causes and the chief goal of everyone’s loving propensity. He sees the Vaiṣṇavas as his only friends within this morbid world and is eager to bring innocent people within the shelter of Vaiṣṇava society. Also, a madhyama-adhikārī avoids associating with the self-proclaimed enemies of God. When his devotional service becomes mature, the devotee advances to the stage of ecstatic love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and attains the vision of the Lord face-to-face by the Lord’s mercy. At that time he comes to the stage of uttama-adhikārī. Such a perfect self-realized soul is described as follows:

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmānaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ
A person advanced in devotional service sees within everything the soul of souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he always sees the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes and understands that all things are situated in Him." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45]

The progression of devotional service from the neophyte stage to the perfection of self-realization is described in detail in this famous passage from Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu [1.4.15-16], the science of devotional service:

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyaudañcati
sādhakānāṁ ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ

“In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in bhāva, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called prema, the highest perfectional stage of life.”

Adhikaraṇa 5: The ‘Dahara’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: The Vedānta teaching distinguishes between external religious practices performed for personal spiritual merit, and internal devotional service performed out of transcendental love for the Supreme Brahman. Ritualistic practices performed for self-advancement are good, but they are only preliminary to the actual transcendental life of the inner consciousness of Brahman. One may gain great material facility, elevation to heavenly regions, great knowledge, and even superhuman powers or appointment to the post of a demigod by performance of the ritualistic practices of external religion. But the actual fruit of religion, which only the wise know, is the inner enlightenment of direct consciousness of the Supreme Brahman, by which all doubts are erased, all obstacles vanquished and all desires achieved. This is eternal, whereas the fruit of external ritualistic religious practices is but temporary.

It is stated in the Vedic literature that hrīḍi hy ayam ātmā pratiṣṭhitah: “Both the jīvātmā, the individual soul, and the Paramātmā, the Supreme Soul, live together within the heart.” Wherever the Lord is situated, the Lord’s abode, the spiritual sky is also there. So this transcendental sky is also present within the heart of every living entity. As Lord Jesus Christ said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.” When we come to know that transcendental Lord within our hearts, His abode the spiritual sky is also automatically revealed.

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.1.1-6] is heard the following:

atha yad idam asmin brahma-pure daharaṁ puṇḍarīkaṁ veśma daharo śminn antar ākāśas
tasmin yad antas tad anvēṣaṇayaṁ tad vijīṣṇāsitavyam...

“In a great city is a small lotus palace. In that palace is a small sky. That sky should be sought. That sky should be asked about.
“And they should say to him, ‘Now with regard to that city of Brahman, and the small lotus palace in it, and the small sky within the heart, what is there that deserves to be sought for, or that is to be understood?’

“Then he should say, ‘As large as this sky is [all space], so large is that sky within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of the self within this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.’

“And if they should say to him, ‘If everything that exists is contained within that city of Brahman, all beings and all desires, whatever can be imagined or desired, then what is left of it when old age reaches it and scatters it, or when it falls to pieces?’

“Then he should say, ‘By the old age of the body, that sky or the Brahman within it do not age; by the death of the body, that ether or the Brahman within it do not die. That Brahman is the true Brahma-city, not the body. All desires are contained within it. It is the Self, free from sin, from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, who desires nothing but His true eternal desires. Now, as here on earth people follow what they are commanded, and depend on the object they are attached to, be it a country or a piece of land;

“‘And as here on earth, whatever has been acquired by exertion perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired in the next world by sacrifices and other actions performed on earth. Those who depart from here after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds.’”

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: What is the small sky here in the lotus of the heart? Is it the element sky, the ākāśa, or Lord Viṣṇu?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Because the word ākāśa generally means the element sky, it must also have that same meaning here. Or, because the jīva is very small and also the master of the city of the body, it may mean the jīva.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion is given in the following sūtras.

Sūtra 1.3.14

dahara uttarebhyah

daharaḥ – the small; uttarebhyah – because of the descriptions that follow.

The small [sky here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the description given in the remainder of the text.

The small sky here is Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The sūtra says uttarebhyah: “Because of the description given in the remainder of the text.” The descriptions used here to describe the small sky, such as “as great as the sky,” “maintaining everything,” and “free from all sin,” cannot be used to describe either the element sky [ākāśa] or the jīva soul. The “great city” described in this Upaniṣad is the body of the devotee. The “lotus” is the heart in the body. The “palace” is the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who should be meditated upon and sought after, and who possesses a host of transcendental qualities, including being always free of all sin. The passage should be interpreted in this way. Therefore the small sky here is Lord Viṣṇu.

The city of the body is also described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [4.25.13]:
“Once, while wandering in this way, he saw on the southern side of the Himalayas, in a place named Bhārata-varṣa [India], a city that had nine gates all about and was characterized by all auspicious facilities.”

The human body is a city of nine gates: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, the genital and the rectum. When the nine gates are clean and working properly, it is understood that the body is healthy. Good health is prerequisite to the mental concentration that is the basis of meditation and spiritual life. If the health is disturbed, then the mind is disturbed and cannot focus on the Lord. Therefore cleanliness and freedom from sinful activities like meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication and gambling are required to keep the body in a healthy condition so that one may make progressive advancement in spiritual life by meditating on the Lord within the heart.

The ākāśa of sky within the heart is the spiritual sky, or abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The quality of ākāśa is that it is the medium of sound vibration. Just like the material sky, the spiritual sky is always vibrating with śabda, sound. But the sound vibration in the spiritual world is śabda-brahman: spiritual sound vibration, beginning with the Holy Name of the Lord and the Vedic hymns. When we come into contact with śabda-brahman, then our whole existence is purified and we can think of the Supreme Lord with love. This is the aim and purpose of human life. Our predecessor spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings,

\[
jīvera kalyāṇa-sādhana-kāma \\
jagate āsi 'e madhura nāma \\
avidyā-timira-tāpana-rupe \\
hṛd-gagane virāje
\]

“The Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa descends into the darkness of the material world just to benedict the conditioned souls. The Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is just like the sun that rises in the clear sky of the heart of the devotees.”

Those who are trying to exploit the material creation of the Lord, either in the name of piety or atheism, cannot understand such brilliant transcendental knowledge. One must become a pure devotee of the Lord, approach Him within the palace of the city of the body and enter the sky of the heart by the transcendental sound vibration of the Holy Name; then one’s knowledge illuminates everything in all directions. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad [1.3] states:

\[
yasmin vijñāte sarvam evam vijñātam bhavati
\]

“The devotee of the Lord knows everything material and spiritual in relationship with the Lord.”

Then he says:

**Sūtra 1.3.15**

\[
gati-śabdābhyām tathā hi drṣṭam liṅgaṁ ca
\]

\textit{gati} – because of going; \textit{śabdābhyām} – and because of a certain word; \textit{tathā hi} – furthermore; \textit{drṣṭam} – seen; \textit{liṅgaṁ} – hinted; \textit{ca} – and.
This is so because of the description of going, because of a certain word, and because it is both directly seen and also hinted at.

Enam [this], which points to the “small sky” within the heart, is the “certain word” mentioned in the sūtra, and the description here of the living entities’ going to the spiritual world of Brahman is the “going” mentioned in the sūtra. Both enam and the going mentioned here show that Lord Viṣṇu is the “small sky.” The Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.3.2] says:

yathā hiranya-nidhin nihitam aṣṭetrajāṇa upari
sañcaranto ‘pi na vidus tathemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāh ahar ahar
gacchantya enam brahmalokāṁ na vidanty anṛtena hi pratyūḍhāḥ

“As people, unaware of what the ground actually holds, walk again and again over buried golden treasure, so do the people of this world day after day go to the spiritual world of Brahman without knowing it.”

Furthermore, in another place the scriptures again describe the living entities’ going to the Supreme in these words:

satā saumya tadā sampanno bhavati

“O gentle one, the living entities are again and again in contact with the Supreme.”

The daily journey to contact Brahman occurs during deep sleep, when the living entity unknowingly rests in the arms of Brahman. This is discussed in Adhyāya 3 Pāda 2 of Vedānta-sūtra, and it is the “directly seen” mentioned in the sūtra. In the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [2.1.17] it is said:

ya eṣo ‘ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmin ēte

“Entering the sky of the heart, the soul sleeps.”

The use of the word brahmaloka hints that Lord Viṣṇu is the topic of discussion here. This is the hint mentioned in the sūtra. The word brahmaloka here cannot refer to the Satyaloka planet because it is not possible for the living entities to go day after day to the Satyaloka planet.

Sūtra 1.3.16

dhṛteṣ ca mahimno ‘syāśminn upalabdheḥ

dhṛteḥ – because of maintaining; ca – and; mahimnaḥ – of the glory; asya – of Him; asmin – in this; upalabdheḥ – because of being stated.

This is so because of the description of His glory in maintaining all the worlds.

In the passage beginning with the words daharo ‘sminn antar ākāśaḥ: “In that palace is a small sky,” the descriptions “as great as the sky,” “maintaining everything,” and “free from all sin,” and the use of the word ātmā clearly, and show that the “small sky” mentioned here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead without need for support from any other passage. The Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [4.4.22] also says:

atha ya ātmā sa setur vidhṛtir eṣāṁ lokānām asambhedāya

“He is the Supreme Person, the bridge, the controller who prevents the worlds from becoming broken and destroyed.”
Because the “small sky” is thus shown to possess the glory of maintaining all the worlds, the “small sky” here must be Lord Viṣṇu. The Čhāndogya Upaniṣad also says:

\[ \text{eṣa setur vidhāraṇa eśāṃ lokānām asambhedāya} \]

“He is the bridge, the controller who prevents the worlds from becoming broken and destroyed.”

In these passages and in others also, this glory of the Supreme Personality of Godhead may be understood. The method of entering that transcendental sky by spiritual sound vibration, whose source is given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [12.6.37-41] as the sky of the heart:

\[ \text{samāhitātmano brahman brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhināḥ} \]
\[ \text{ḥṛdy ākāśād abhūn nādo vr̥tti-rodhād vibhāvyate} \]

Sūta Gosvāmī said: “O brāhmaṇa, first the subtle vibration of transcendental sound appeared from the sky of the heart of the most elevated Lord Brahmā, whose mind was perfectly fixed in spiritual realization. One can perceive this subtle vibration when one stops all external hearing.

\[ \text{yad-upāsanayā brahman yogino malam ātmanāḥ} \]
\[ \text{dravya-kṛtyā-kāraṇākhyāṁ dhūtvā yānty apunar-bhavam} \]

“By worship of this subtle form of the Vedas, O brāhmaṇa, mystic sages cleanse their hearts of all contamination caused by impurity of substance, activity and doer, and thus they attain freedom from repeated birth and death.

\[ \text{tato 'bhūt tri-vrd oṃkāro yo 'vyakta-prabhavaḥ sva-rāṭ} \]
\[ \text{yat tal līṅgāṁ bhagavato brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanāḥ} \]

“From that transcendental subtle vibration arose the oṃkāra composed of three sounds. The oṃkāra has unseen potencies and manifests automatically within a purified heart. It is the representation of the Absolute Truth in all three of His phases—the Supreme Personality, the Supreme Soul and the supreme impersonal truth.

\[ \text{śṛṇoti ya imaṁ sphaṭāṁ supta-śrotre ca śūnya-drk} \]
\[ \text{yena vāg vyajyate yasya vyaktir ākāśa ātmanāḥ} \]
\[ \text{sva-dhāmno brahmaṇaḥ sākṣād vācakaḥ paramātmanaḥ} \]
\[ \text{sa sarva-mantropaniṣad veda-bījaṁ sanātanaṁ} \]

“This oṃkāra, ultimately nonmaterial and imperceptible, is heard by the Supersoul without His possessing material ears or any other material senses. The entire expanse of Vedic sound is elaborated from oṃkāra, which appears from the Supreme Soul within the sky of the heart. It is the direct designation of the self-originating Absolute Truth, the Supersoul, and is the secret essence and eternal seed of all Vedic hymns.”

**Sūtra 1.3.17**

\[ \text{prasiddheś ca} \]
\[ \text{prasiddheḥ – because of being famous in this way; ca – and.} \]

**And also because this is a traditional usage of the word.**

This is so because the word “sky” is commonly used to mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” as may be seen in the following statement of Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.7.1]:

\[ \text{prasiddheḥ ca} \]
\[ \text{prasiddheḥ – because of being famous in this way; ca – and.} \]
ko hy evānyat kaḥ prāṇyāt. yad eṣā ākāśā ānando na syāt, eṣa evānandayati.

“Who could breathe if the sky were not bliss? Indeed, He alone is the source of all pleasure.”

viśuddha-sattvasyāntar-hṛdayākāśa-śarīre

“The yogīs who are completely purified meditate on [He who is] the sky in the heart of the body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.7.7]

anubhavataḥ sarva-prataya-sākṣinaḥ ākāśa-śarīrasya sākṣat para-brahmaṇaḥ paramātmānaḥ

“You are the witness of all different activities, the Self of the universal sky, and directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Supersoul.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.9.42]

Someone may raise the following objection: “The Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.3.4] says:

sa eṣa samprasādo ’smāc chariṝrāt samutthāya param jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇābhinispadyate. Eṣa ātmety hovāca. Etaḍ amṛtam etad abhayam etad brahma

“The liberated jīva rises from the material body. He attains the spiritual effulgence and manifests his original form. ‘This is the self,’ he said. ‘He is immortal. He is fearless. He is Brahman.’ ”

Because this description of the jīva appears immediately afterward, the description of the small sky should be understood to refer to the jīva.”

If this objection is raised, he replies:

Sūtra 1.3.18

itara-parāmarsṭaḥ sa iti cen nāsambhavāt

itara – the other; parāmarsṭaḥ – because of reference; saḥ – he; iti – thus; cet – if; na – not; asambhavāt – because of impossibility.

[If it is said that] because there is mention of something else [the jīva] in the same passage [and therefore the “small sky” here is the jīva, then I say] no, because it is impossible.

Although in the middle of this passage there is a description of the jīva, nevertheless it is not possible to say that the beginning of this passage describes the jīva. Why? The sūtra says asambhavāt: “Because it is impossible.” This is so because in the beginning of this passage there is a description of eight qualities, beginning with “being free from sin,” that cannot be ascribed to the jīva.

A jīva falls down into material nescience because of countless sinful activities, and in these alien surroundings he goes up and down, traveling through all the planetary systems, from Lord Brahmā’s planet down to Pātalaloka. In the material world the jīva experiences birth, disease, old age, and death and is forced to accept three types of suffering: adhyātmika [from his own self], adhidaivika [from the demigods] and adhibhautika [from other living entities]. Bhagavad-gītā speaks of the living entity as an eternal fragment of the Lord. The atomic fragment of God, the living entity, may fall down into the material world, but the Supreme Lord Acyuta never falls down.

Now our opponent may say: “So be it. Still, after the description of the ‘small sky,’ the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.7.1] says:

ya ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso ’pipāsah satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ so ’nveṣṭavyaḥ sa vijīṁśita-vyāyaḥ
“The soul is free from sin, old age, death, suffering, hunger, and thirst. It desires only the good. Whatever it desires is attained at once.”

Because these words of the Prajāpati describe the jīva, the qualities described in 7.7.1, and the ‘small sky’ described before that, may also refer to the jīva.”

Considering that this doubt might arise, he says:

Sūtra 1.3.19

uttarāṅc ced āvirbhāva-svarūpas tu

uttarāt – because of a later passage; cet – if; āvirbhāva – manifestation; svarūpas – form; tu – indeed.

[If it is said that] a later passage [proves that the “small sky” is the jīva then I say no.] The description of the true nature of the jīva [is confined to that passage alone.]

The word tu [but] is used here to dispel doubt. The word na [no] should be understood from the previous sūtra. In this passage spoken by the Prajāpati the teaching is that the jīva manifests the eight qualities mentioned in Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad [8.7.1] quoted above by engaging in spiritual activities, but otherwise these qualities are not manifested. In the passage describing the “small sky” these eight attributes are said to be eternally manifested. The statement of the Prajāpati is, however, that these qualities are present in the jīva only if he engages in spiritual activities. The Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad [8.3.4] clearly explains the difference between the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses these eight qualities in all circumstances, and the jīva, who possesses these qualities only when he becomes liberated, in the following words:

sa eṣa samprāśa dīṣāc cha rūpaḥ samutthāya param jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇābhinispadaye. Eṣa ātmeti hovāca. Ety eṛtaly etad abhayyam etad brahma.

“The liberated jīva rises from the material body. He attains the spiritual effulgence and manifests his original form. This is the self,” he said. “He is immortal. He is fearless. He is Brahman”.

Although the jīva may manifest some of these eight qualities by engaging in spiritual activities, he still cannot manifest all of them. The qualities of being the “bridge that spans the worlds,” and being the “maintainer of the worlds” are some of the qualities the jīva can never attain. This proves that the “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Now our opponent says: “If this is so, then why is the jīva mentioned at all in this passage?”

To answer this question he says:

Sūtra 1.3.20

anyārthaḥ ca parāmarṣaḥ

anyā – another; arthaḥ – meaning; ca – and; parāmarṣaḥ – reference.

The description of the jīva here has a different object.
The jīva is described here in order to teach about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the jīva becomes liberated and attains his original spiritual form, he also manifests these eight qualities. In this way it may be understood that the “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [5.18.12] confirms:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{yasyāstī bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā} \\
\text{sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ} \\
\text{harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā} \\
\text{mano-rathenāsatī dhāvato bahiḥ}
\end{align*}
\]

“One who has unflinching devotion for the Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material qualifications that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.”

Now our opponent says: “Because the ‘small sky’ within is described as very small it must refer to the jīva, which was previously described as also being very small.”

If this objection is given, then he says:

Sūtra 1.3.21

\[
\text{alpa-śruter iti cet tad-uktam}
\]

\text{alpa – small; śruteḥ – from the śruti; iti – thus; cet – if; tat – that; uktam – said.}

If it is said that when the śruti describes the “small” it must refer to the jīva, then I say no because of what has already been said.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests a very small form to facilitate meditation on Him. This has already been described in Sūtra 1.2.7, which says nicāyyatvād evaṁ vyomavac ca: “Brahman should be meditated on in this way, and because in the same passage the manomaya is said to be as great as the sky.” Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-pervading, in order to facilitate meditation on Him, He manifests a small form the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger. He appears in this small form so He may be easily meditated upon. Of course, His glories have no limit and His size also has no limit. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [2.2.8] mentions:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kecit sva-dehāntar-hrdayāvakāśe} \\
\text{prādeśa-mātraṁ puruṣaṁ vasantam} \\
\text{catur-bhujaiṁ kañja-rathāṅga-śaṅkha-} \\
\text{gadā-dharam dhāraṇayā śmaranti}
\end{align*}
\]

“Others conceive of the Personality of Godhead residing within the body in the region of the heart and measuring only eight inches, with four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conchshell and a club respectively.”

Then he gives another explanation.

Sūtra 1.3.22

\[
\text{anukṛtes tasya ca}
\]

\text{anukṛteḥ – because of imitation; tasya – of Him; ca – also.}
And also because [the jīva] merely resembles [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] in some respects.

Because, according to the statement of the Prajāpati, the jīva, who only manifests the eight qualities when engaged in spiritual activities, merely resembles in some respects the “small sky,” who manifests the eight qualities eternally, the “small sky” must be different from the jīva. Previously the original form of the jīva is covered by illusion, and then afterwards, by worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the illusion becomes broken and the jīva, manifesting these eight qualities, becomes qualitatively similar to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way, as explained by the Prajāpati, the jīva resembles, in some respects, the “small sky.” The sentence pavanam anuharate hanūmān: “Hanuman resembles the wind,” shows the difference between the resembled object and the thing that resembles it.

That the liberated jīva resembles the Supreme Personality of Godhead may also be seen in the following words from Munḍaka Upaniṣad [3.1.3]: nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti: “The liberated jīva resembles the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā [8.5]:

antā-kāle ca mām eva
smaran muktvā kalevaram
yah prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ
yāti nāstī atra samśayāḥ

“And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this.”

Sūtra 1.3.23

api smaryate
api – and; smaryate – described in the smṛti-śāstra.

This is also described in the smṛti-śāstra.

In the Bhagavad-gītā [14.2] the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, also explains:

idam jñānam upāśritya
mama sādharmyam āgataḥ
sarge ’pi nopajāyante
pralaye na vyathanti ca

“By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature like My own. Once established, one is not born at the time of creation or disturbed at the time of dissolution.”

In this way the smṛti-śāstra explains that the liberated jīvas attain a nature like that of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For these reasons the “small sky” is Lord Hari and not the jīva.

Adhikaraṇa 6: The Person the Size of a Thumb is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viṣaya [thesis or statement]: In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad [2.1.12-13] the following words are read:
Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: Is this person the size of a thumb the jīva or Lord Viṣṇu?  

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The person here is the jīva because the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad [5.7-8] says

> prāṇādhipah saṅcarati sva-karmabhir aṅguṣṭha-mātroravi-tulya-rūpah

> “The ruler of breath moves about, impelled by his karma. He is the size of a thumb. He is splendid as the sun.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

**Sūtra 1.3.24**

śabdād eva pramitaḥ

śabdāt – because of the word; eva – even; pramitaḥ – limited.

Even though [He is] very small [this person is the Supreme Lord] because of the words [in the text].

The person here the size of a thumb is Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The sūtra says śabdāt [because of the words in the text]. The Upaniṣad text referred to here is iśāno bhūta-bhayayasa: “He is the master of the past and future.” It is not possible for the jīva to possess this power, because he is controlled by his karma.

Now it may be asked: “How is it possible for the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead to become limited to this very small form?” To answer this question he says:

**Sūtra 1.3.25**

hrdy upeksayā tu manuṣyādikāratvāt

hrdi – in the heart; upeksayā – with relation; tu – indeed; manuṣya – of human beings; adikāratvāt – because of the qualification.

This is so because the Supreme Personality of Godhead indeed appears in the hearts of men.

The word tu [indeed] is used here for emphasis. The all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the size of a thumb because He is meditated on as being the size of thumb within the heart. Another interpretation is that because He appears, by His inconceivable potency, in such a small form in the heart He is meditated on in that way, as has been already described.

adhiyajño 'ham evātra dehe deha-bhṛtāṁ vara

“I, the Supreme Lord, represented as the Supersoul in the heart of every embodied being, am called adhiyajaṇa [the Lord of sacrifice].” [Bhagavad-gītā 8.4]

evaṁ sva-citte svata eva siddha
ātmā priyo 'rtho bhagavān anantaḥ
tāṁ nīrṛto niyātārtho bhajeta
sāṁsāra-hetūparamaś ca yatra
“Thus being fixed [in renunciation], one must render service unto the Supersoul situated in one’s own heart by His omnipotency. Because He is the Almighty Personality of Godhead, eternal and unlimited, He is the ultimate goal of life, and by worshiping Him one can end the cause of the conditioned state of existence.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.2.6]

Someone may object, “Because the different species have bodies of different sizes and hearts of different sizes it is not possible that the Lord can appear in all of them in this size.” If this objection is raised, to answer it he says māṇuyādhi-kāraṇa-vāt: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in the hearts of men.” Although the scriptures do not specify any particular species, implying that the Lord appears in the hearts of all living entities, he [Vyāsa] singles out human beings. He does this because it is human beings who are able to meditate and therefore the measurement is given here according to the human body. For this reason there is no contradiction here. In the same way in the hearts of elephants, horses, and all other creatures the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in a form the size of the thumb of each creature. In this way there is no contradiction.

It is not possible for the jīva, however, to be present within the heart in a form the size of a thumb because the original form of the jīva is atomic in size, as explained in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [5.9] in the words bālāgra-sata-bhāgaśya: “When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the jīva soul.” For all these reasons, therefore, the person the size of a thumb is Lord Viṣṇu.

### Adhikarana 7: The Devas Can Meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead

**Viṣaya** [thesis or statement]: Advanced yogīs meditate on the Supreme Brahman in the form of the Supreme Lord within the heart, but ordinary people cannot see Him there.

- kumārā ācuḥ
  - yo 'ntarhito hṛdi gato 'pi durātmanāṁ tvaṁ
  - so 'dyaiva no nayana-mūlam ananta rādhaḥ

The Kumāras said: “Our dear Lord, You are not manifested to rascals, even though You are seated within everyone’s heart, although You are unlimited. But as far as we are concerned, we see You face-to-face.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.15.46]

In order to prove that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the person the size of a thumb seated in the heart of every living entity, the Vedic scriptures were quoted to establish that human beings who have the right to meditate on the Supreme Person. For example, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [1.15] states:

- evam ātmātmanī grhyate 'sau satyenaināṁ tapasā yo 'nupaśyati
  - “The Supersoul is situated within the core of everyone’s heart. One who searches after that Supreme Lord through meditation and austerity can see Him within his heart.”

- tam ātmasthāṁ ye 'nupaśyantī dhīras-teṣāṁ sukhaṁ śāśvataṁ [śānti śāśvatī] netareśāṁ
  - “Only the wise person who can see that Supreme Soul within his heart becomes peaceful and enjoys transcendental bliss.” [Khāṭa Upaniṣad 2.2.12-13]

- tam imam aham ajāṁ śaṁra-bhājāṁ
  - hṛdi hṛdi dhīṣhitam ātma-kalpitāṁ
  - pratidṛṣṭam iva naikadhārkaṁ ekaṁ
  - samadhi-gato 'ṣmi vidhūta-bhedā-mohāḥ
“Now I can meditate with full concentration upon that one Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, now present before me because now I have transcended the misconceptions of duality in regard to His presence in everyone's heart, even in the hearts of the mental speculators. He is in everyone's heart. The sun may be perceived differently, but the sun is one.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.9.42]

This evidence may lead to the belief that human beings alone have the right to meditate on the Supreme Person. But this is a wrong view. But all men on the path of gradual elevation through karma-yoga must pass through the stage of being devas. Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [4.4.7 and 6.2.15] declares:

\[
yadā sarve pramucyante kāmāḥ ye 'syā hṛdi śrītāḥ 
atha martyo 'mṛto bhavaty atra brahma samaśnute 
te 'rcir abhisambhavanti
\]

“Those who are free from all material desires, which are diseases of the heart, are able to conquer death and enter the kingdom of God through the Arci [higher heavenly] planets.”

And Kṛṣṇa states in Bhagavad-gītā [9.25], yānti deva-vratā devān: “Those who worship the devas will take birth among them.” This is the gradual path of elevation to the spiritual world described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [2.2.22-31]. If meditation on Brahman is enjoined only for human beings, then those men who become devas will not be able to continue their spiritual path. Thus this idea creates a contradiction. Now, by refuting that false belief, the right of others besides men to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead will be proved.

The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [1.4.10] says:

\[
tad yo yo devānāṁ pratyabudhyata sa eva tad abhavat 
tathārśināṁ tathā manusyānāṁ
\]

“Whoever among the devas meditated on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, attained Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whoever among the sages meditated on Him attained Him. Whoever among the human beings meditated on Him attained Him.”

The Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [4.4.16] also says:

\[
tad devā jyotiśāṁ jyotir āyur hopāsate 'mṛtam 
amī hi tvāṁ surai-saṅghā viśanti 
kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo grñṇanti
\]

“All the hosts of demigods are surrendering before You and entering into You. Some of them, very much afraid, are offering prayers with folded hands.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.21]

Saṁśaya [arise of doubt]: Is it possible for the devas to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as human beings do, or is it not possible?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Because the devas have no senses they are not able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indra and the other devas are simply thought-forms, beings created by mantras. They have no bodily senses. Because they have no senses they have no material desires or spiritual renunciation. Hence the devas are not capable of meditation on Brahman.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.
Sūtra 1.3.26

tad upary api bādarāyaṇaḥ sambhavāṁ

tad – that; upari – above; api – also; bādarāyaṇaḥ – Vyāsadeva; sambhavāṁ – because of being possible.

Beings superior [to humankind] also can [meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the opinion] of Vyāsa.

The devas and other beings superior to humankind are able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the opinion of Lord Vyāsadeva. Why? Because according to the Upaniṣads, Vedic mantras, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, and ancient tradition, they do indeed have bodies and senses. While the senses of different kind of bodies may differ in quality, the principle of embodiment is common to all beings, including the demigods.

kvacit pumān kvacic ca strī
kvacin nobhayam andha-dīh
devo manusyas tīryag vā
yathā-karma-guṇam bhavaḥ

“Covered by the mode of ignorance in material nature, the living entity is sometimes a male, sometimes a female, sometimes a eunuch, sometimes a human being, sometimes a demigod, sometimes a bird, an animal, and so on. In this way he is wandering within the material world. His acceptance of different types of bodies is brought about by his activities under the influence of the modes of nature.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.29]

sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikaṁ
bhāvam avyayam iṅkṣate
avibhakteṣu vibhakteṣu
taj jñānam viddhi sāttvikam

“That knowledge by which one undivided spiritual nature is seen in all living entities, though they are divided into innumerable forms, you should understand to be in the mode of goodness.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.20]

Because the demigods are servants of the Supreme Lord, and have heavenly bodies and senses, they are certainly able to meditate and pray to Him:

ete devāḥ kalā viṣṇoḥ
kāla-māyāṁśa-liṅginaḥ
nānātvāṁ sva-kriyāniśāḥ
procuḥ prāṇjalayo vibhum

“The controlling deities of all the above-mentioned physical elements are empowered expansions of Lord Viṣṇu. They are embodied by eternal time under the external energy, and they are His parts and parcels. Because they were entrusted with different functions of universal duties and were unable to perform them, they offered fascinating prayers to the Lord as follows.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.38]

Because the demigods are well aware of the baseness and impermanence of their celestial opulence, the root of the suffering of material existence, they are able to be detached from their opulence and renounce it in the mood of service to the Lord. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa [6.5.50] explains:

na kevalaṁ dvija-śreṣṭha
narake duḥkha-paddhatiḥ
svarge ‘pi yāta-bhītasya
ksāyīṣṇor nāsti nirvṛtiḥ

“O best of the brāhmaṇas, torment does not exist only in hell. The residents of the heavenly planets, afraid that they may one day fall from heaven, have no happiness.”

For this reason the devas desire spiritual happiness. This is so because they have heard from the śruti-śāstra that spiritual bliss is limitless, eternal, and pure. The śruti explains that the devas and other celestial beings observe vows of celibacy to attain spiritual knowledge. This is described in the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [5.2.1] in these words:

tatra yāḥ praśātpatyaḥ praśātpatau pitari brahmacaryam uṣur devā manusyā asurāḥ

“The devas, humans, and asuras, who were all sons of Lord Brahmā, lived with their father as celibate students of spiritual knowledge.”

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.11.3] King Indra is described in the following words:

eka-śataṁ ha vai varṣāṇi maghavā praśātpatau brahmacaryam uvāsa

“King Indra lived as a celibate student of spiritual knowledge [brahmacārī] in the home of Lord Brahmā for a hundred years.”

For these reasons, therefore, we must accept that the devas and other higher beings are able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The following objection may be raised: “Your idea, that the devas are not beings created by mantras but are conditioned living entities residing in material bodies, is not consistent with the activities of the devas and other higher beings, because it is not possible that a single embodied demigod could come to many different places at once when called to appear at many agnihotra-yajñas in many different places simultaneously.”

If this is said, he [Vyāsa] speaks the following words:

Sūtra 1.3.27

virodahā karmaṇīti cen nāneka-pratipattra darśanāt

virodahā – contradiction; karmanī – in activities; iti – thus; cet – if; na – not; aneka – many; pratipatteḥ – because of the acceptance; darśanāt – because of seeing.

[If it is objected that this idea] is refuted by the activities of the devas, then I say no, because it is seen [that the devas have the power to manifest] many [forms simultaneously.]

There is no contradiction here if it accepted that the devas are embodied souls with material bodies. Why? The Sūtra says aneka-pratipattra darśanāt: “Because it is seen that the devas have the power to manifest many forms simultaneously.” This is so because the scriptures describe that many powerful beings, such as Saubhāri Muni, Kardama Muni and others, are able to manifest many forms simultaneously.

vibhajya navadhātmānāṁ
mānaviṁ suratotsukāṁ
rāmāṁ niramayān reme
varṣa-pūgāṁ muhūrtavat
“After coming back to his hermitage, Kardama divided himself into nine personalities just to give pleasure to Devahūti, the daughter of Manu, who was eager for sex life. In that way he enjoyed with her for many, many years, which passed just like a moment.” [ Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.23.44]

The objector may say: “It may be that there is no contradiction in the description of the devas’ activities for those who believe that the devas have bodies. There remains, however, a contradiction in the description of the words of the Vedas. Before the birth and after the death of each demigod, a period would exist when the name of that demigod would not have any meaning. At that time the words of the Vedas would become meaningless, like the statement ‘the son of a barren woman.’ In this way this idea is refuted. The Mīmāṁsā-Sūtra says: autpattikas tu śabdenārthasya sambandhaḥ: ‘In the Vedas the relation between name and the object named is eternal.’ This idea [that the devas are embodied souls] would then contradict the eternality of the names in the Vedas.”

If this objection is raised, then he [Vyāsa] replies:

Sūtra 1.3.28

śabda iti cen nātaḥ prabhavāt pratyakṣānumāṇābhyyām
śabdaḥ – the words of the Vedas; iti – thus; cet – if; na – no; atah – from this; prabhavāt – because of creation; pratyakṣa – because of śruti; anumāṇābhyyām – and smṛti.

[If someone objects that this idea is inconsistent with the eternal nature of] the words in the Vedas, then I say no, because of [the description of] the creation [of the world, and also because of the evidence given] in śruti and smṛti.

The idea stated here that the devas have bodies is not inconsistent with the nature of the words in the Vedas. Why? The sūtra says prabhavāt pratyakṣānumāṇābhyyām: “Because of the description of the creation of the world and also because of the evidence given in śruti and smṛti.” The creation of the material bodies of the devas and other beings in the universe is done by Lord Brahmā, remembering their eternal, archetypal forms recorded in the statements of the Vedas. These archetypal forms are eternal, and existed before any of the bodies of the living entities were manifested. These archetypal forms are described by Viśvākarma in his own scripture for drawing forms in the words yamaṁ daṇḍa-pāṇīṁ likhanti varuṇaṁ tu pāśa-hastam: “They draw the demigod Yama with a mace in his hand, and the demigod Varuṇa with a noose in his hand.” The Vedic words describing the devas and other kinds of living entities are not names of specific individuals, but of certain classes of living entities, just as the word “cow” is the name of a certain kind of living entity.

Because the words of the Vedas are eternal, the Vedas are genuine sources of knowledge. This explanation is not at all inconsistent with the previously quoted explanation from the Mīmāṁsā-sūtra. Why is this? The sūtra says pratyakṣānumāṇābhyyām, which means “because of the evidence given in śruti and smṛti.” The śruti [Paṁca-vaiśeṣati Brāhmaṇa 6.9, 13 and 22] discussing the creation of the world, which was preceded by the eternal words of the Vedas, gives the following description:

eta iti ha vai prajāpatir devāṁ asrjat asrgram iti manusyaṁ indava iti pīṭhas tirah-pavitram iti grahāṁ āśuva iti stotram viśvāṁ mantram abhisaubhagety anyāḥ prajāḥ

“Reciting the word ete from the Vedas, Lord Brahmā created the devas. Reciting the word asrgram, he created the human beings. Reciting the word indava, he created the pīṭhas. Reciting the word tirah-pavitram, he created the planets. Reciting the word āśuva, he created songs. Reciting the word viśvāṁ, he created mantras. Reciting the word abhisaubhaga, he created the other creatures.”
Both the primary creation by the Lord and the secondary creation by Lord Brahmā are performed by the power of Vedic sound vibration. The idea of mechanical creation held by the impersonalists and materialistic scientists will be refuted in Adhyāya 2 of Vedānta-sūtra. Kṛṣṇa describes the process of creation from Vedic sound vibration in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

śabda-brahma su-durbodhaṁ prāṇendriya-mano-mayam
ananta-pāraṁ gambhirāṁ durvīkāyaṁ samudra-vat
yathorṇābhīṁ hṛdayāṁ ūrṇāṁ udvamate mukhāṁ
ākāśād ghośavāṇ prāṇo manasā sparśa-rūpīṇā
chando-mayo ‘mṛta-mayah sahasra-padavīṁ prabhuḥ
omkārād vyaṁjita-sparśa-svaroṣmāntastha-bhūṣitāṁ
vicitra-bhāṣā-vitattāṁ chandobhiś catur-uttaraiḥ
ananta-pārāṁ brhaiṁ srjaty ākṣipate svayam

“The transcendental sound of the Veda is very difficult to comprehend and manifests on different levels within the prāṇa, senses and mind. This Vedic sound is unlimited, very deep and unfathomable, just like the ocean. ... Just as a spider brings forth from its heart its web and emits it through its mouth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests Himself as the reverberating primeval vital air, comprising all sacred Vedic meters and full of transcendental pleasure. Thus the Lord, from the ethereal sky of His heart, creates the great and limitless Vedic sound by the agency of His mind, which conceives of variegated sounds such as the sparśas. The Vedic sound branches out in thousands of directions, adorned with the different letters expanded from the syllable om: the consonants, vowels, sibilants and semivowels. The Veda is then elaborated by many verbal varieties, expressed in different meters, each having four more syllables than the previous one. Ultimately the Lord again withdraws His manifestation of Vedic sound within Himself:” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.21.36, 38-40]

The smṛti also confirms this in the following words [Viśṇu Purāṇa 1.5.64]:

nāma rūpaṁ ca bhūtānāṁ
krtyānāṁ ca prapañcanam
veda-śabdebhya evādau
devādīṁ ca kāra saḥ

“By reciting the words of the Vedas in the beginning, Lord Brahmā created the names and forms of the material elements, the rituals, the devas, and all other living entities.”

Sūtra 1.3.29

ata eva ca nityatvam
atah eva – therefore; ca – and; nityatvam – eternity.

And therefore the eternity [of the Veda is proved].

The eternity of the Vedas is proved by the fact that the creator Lord Brahmā creates the world by reciting the Vedic words describing the eternal forms and by remembering the previous creation. Kaṭhaka Muni and the other sages should be understood to be merely the speakers and not the authors of the Vedas. It is stated in the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa:

“The Vedas, in their entirety, are eternal, enduring, and present in the mind of Viśṇu; in creation after creation, they are brought up as they are, with the same order, same characters and the same notes, never otherwise.”
śrī-bhagavān uvāca
urdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham
aśvattham prāhur avyayam
chandānsi yasya parṇāni
yas taṁ veda sa veda-vit

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “It is said that there is an imperishable banyan tree that has its roots upward and its branches down and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is the knower of the Vedas.” [Bhagavad-gītā 15.1]

The objection may be raised: “So be it. The śruti explains that by remembering the words of the Vedas Lord Brahmā creates the forms of the devas and other living entities. This may be in the case after the partial cosmic devastation [naimittika], but how can this method of creation be employed after the complete cosmic devastation [prākṛta], when absolutely everything is destroyed, and how can the Vedas be eternal under the circumstances of such complete destruction?”

If this is said, then he replies:

Sūtra 1.3.30

samāna-nāma-rūpatvāc cāvṛttāv apy avirodho darśanāt smṛteṣ ca

samāna – same; nāma – because of the names; rūpatvāt – and forms; ca – also; avṛttāu – in the repetition; api – also; avirodhah – not a contradiction; darśanāt – because of the śruti; smṛteṣ – because of the smṛti; ca – indeed.

Because the names and forms remain the same even at the beginning of a new creation, there is no contradiction. This is proved by śruti and smṛti.

The word ca [indeed] is used here to dispel doubt. That after a complete cosmic devastation there must be a new creation does not at all disprove the eternalness of the words of the Vedas. Why? The sūtra says samāna-nāma-rūpatvāc cāvṛttāv apy avirodho darśanāt smṛteṣ ca: “Because the names and forms remain the same even at the beginning of a new creation, there is no contradiction. This is proved by śruti and smṛti.”

The core of the meaning is “Because the previously spoken names and forms remain the same.” At the time of the great cosmic devastation, the eternal Vedas and the eternal archetypal forms described by the Vedas enter Lord Hari, the master of transcendental potencies, and rest within Him, becoming one with Him. At the time of the next creation they again become manifested from the Lord. Lord Hari and the four-faced demigod Brahmā both precede their acts of creation with recitation of Vedic mantras, which leads to meditation on the archetypal forms. At the time of a new creation, the Creator remembers what He created in the previous creation, and He again creates as He did before. This is like a potter, who by saying the word “pot” remembers the forms of pots he previously fashioned, and goes on to make another pot just like them. The process of creation after the partial cosmic devastation, and also after the complete cosmic devastation, is performed in this way.

How is all this known? The sūtra says darśanāt smṛteṣ ca: “Because this is proved by śruti and smṛti.” The śruti says:

ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āṣīt sa aikṣata lokān utsṛjāh

“In the beginning was only the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He thought: I shall create many worlds.” [Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1]

yo brahmānaṁ vidadhāti pūrvaṁ yo vai vedāṁś ca prahiṇoti tasmi tam
“The Supreme Personality of Godhead created the Vedas and taught them to the demigod Brahmā.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.18]

sūryā-candramasau dhātā yathā-pūrvtam akalpat

“The sun created the sun and moon as he had done before.” [Ṛg Veda]

The smṛti says:

nyagrodhaḥ su-mahān alpe
yathā bije vyāvasthitah
samyame viśvam akhilam
biśa-bhūte yathā tvai

“O Lord, just as a great banyan tree rests within a tiny seed, in the same way at the time of cosmic devastation the entire universe rests within You, the seed from which it originally sprouted.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

nārāyaṇaṁ paro devas
tasmā jātaś caturmukhaḥ

“Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. From him the demigod Brahmā was born.” [Varāha Purāṇa]

tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kaveye

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmā, the original living being.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.1]

A summary of this explanation follows: The Supreme Personality of Godhead, at the end of the period of cosmic devastation, meditating on the material universe at it had been before, desiring in His heart “I shall become many,” differentiating again the jīvas and material elements that had become merged within Him, creating again the material universe extending from the mahat-tattva to the demigod Brahmā as it had been before, manifesting the Vedas exactly as they had been before, teaching the Vedas to the demigod Brahmā within his heart, engaging the demigod Brahmā in the creation of the forms of the devas and other living entities as they had been before, and personally entering the universe and controlling it from within. Omniscient by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the demigod Brahmā, meditating on the archetypal forms described in the Vedas, creates the devas and other creatures as they had been before. In this way the relationship between the names of the devas headed by Indra and their archetypal forms described in the Vedas is explained.

So the opponent’s argument of the Vedic words does not at all refute this explanation of the nature of the devas, therefore it is proved that the devas and other superior beings have the ability to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead’s form being the size of a thumb is not at all contradicted by this description of the ability of the devas to meditate on Him. This is so because the form of the Lord is the size of a deva’s thumb in this case.

Now will be considered the question of whether the devas are eligible or not to engage in those meditations where they themselves are the object of meditation. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [3.1.1] is the statement

asau vā ādito deva-madhur tasya dyaur eva tiraścīna-vaṁśaḥ

“The sun is honey for the devas. The heavenly planets are the crossbeam, the sky is the beehive, and the rays of sunlight are the children.”
It is said here that the sun is the honey of the devas, and the rays of sunlight are the openings for drinking the honey. Five classes of devas—the vasus, rudras, ādityas, maruts, and sādhyas—all headed by their leaders, gaze at the honey of the sun and become happy. The sun is called honey because it is the abode of a certain sweetness; one becomes eligible for this sweetness by performing certain religious sacrifices described in the Ṛg Veda, and one attains it by entering through the doorway of the sun’s rays. It is also said that the devas can perform these meditations in other places in the scriptures. For example, it is stated in the Padma Purāṇa [Śrṣṭi-khaṇḍa, Chapter 17]:

“Accompanied by brahmanas and other devas, or demigods, Lord Brahmā once went to Puṣkara to perform a sacrifice.”

vedāham antar manasīpsitaṁ te
dadāmi yat tad duravāpam anyaiḥ
satre purā viśva-srjāṁ vasūnāṁ
mat-siddhi-kāmena vaso tvayeṣṭaḥ

“She asked the Vasus, ‘O Vasus, I know from within your mind what you desired in the days of yore when the Vasus and other demigods responsible for expanding the universal affairs performed sacrifices. You particularly desired to achieve My association. This is very difficult to obtain for others, but I award it unto you.’” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.4.11]

prajāpates te śvaśurasya sāmprataṁ
niryāpito yajña-mahotsavaḥ kila
vayaṁ ca tatrābhisarāma vāma te
yady arhitāṁ vibudhā vrajanti hi

“My dear Lord Śiva, your father-in-law is now executing great sacrifices, and all the demigods, having been invited by him, are going there. If you desire, we may also go.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.3.8]

The author of the sūtras now explains the opinions of others in this matter.

Sūtra 1.3.31

madhy-ādiśv asambhavād anadhikāram jaiminiḥ
madhu-ādiśu – in madhu-vidyā and other Vedic meditations; asambhavāt – because of impossibility; anadhikāram – qualification; jaiminiḥ – Jaimini.

Jaimini says the devas do not engage in madhu-vidyā and other forms of Vedic meditation because it is not possible for them to do so.

Jaimini Muni thinks that the devas are not qualified to engage in madhu-vidyā and other forms of Vedic meditation. Why? The sūtra says asambhavāt: “Because it is not possible for them to do so.” The object of worship cannot also be the worshiper. It is not possible for one person to be both. Furthermore, because the devas do not aspire to attain the result of madhu-vidyā meditation, namely to become vasus or exalted devas, because they already are vasus and devas.

Sūtra 1.3.32

jyotiṁ bhāvāc ca
jyotiṁ – in the splendor; bhāvāt – because of existence; ca – and.

And because the devas do meditate on the effulgent Supreme Personality of Godhead.
The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.16] says:

\[
\text{tad devā jyotisām jyotih}
\]

“The *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the light of all lights.”

Because the *devas* do meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is described in this passage from the *śruti* as the supreme effulgence, they naturally do not engage in the *madhu-vidyā* and other inferior meditations. The explanation that the *devas*, as well as the human beings, naturally engage in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead shows that the *devas* are averse to any other kind of meditation.

Now that this view has been expressed, he [Vyāsa] gives his opinion.

**Sūtra 1.3.33**

\[
bhāvam tu bādarāyaṇo 'sti hi
\]

\[
bhāvam – existence; tu – but; bādarāyaṇaḥ – Vyāsadeva; āsti – is; hi – because.
\]

 Vyāsadeva says the *devas* do engage in these meditations.

The word *tu* [but] is used here to dispel doubt. Lord Vyāsa thinks the *devas* are able to engage in *madhu-vidyā* and other kinds of Vedic meditation. The word *hi* [because] here implies “desiring to again become *devas* and ādityas, they worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the archetypal *deva* and aditya. Because of this worship they develop a desire to gain the company of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way it is possible for them to engage in the *madhu-vidyā* and other Vedic meditations.” This is so because it is understood that the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is both the goal and the means of attaining the goal.

They who are now *vasus*, ādityas, and other kinds of *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the archetypal *vasu* and āditya. At the end of the *kalpa* they become *vasus* and ādityas and engage in the meditation and worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul in their hearts, and who is the cause of their becoming *vasus* and ādityas again. As a result of this worship they will eventually become liberated.

The words āditya, *vasu*, and the names of the other *devas*, are all also names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by the words *ya etam evaṁ brahmopaniṣadaṁ veda*: “He who understands this *Upaniṣad* describing the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” at the end of the *Upaniṣad*.

It is not that because the *devas* have already attained their exalted positions therefore they have no desire to become *devas* and therefore have no interest in attaining the results of Vedic meditation. This is so because it is seen in this world that many people, even though they already have sons in this lifetime, yearn to again have sons in the next life. Furthermore, because they are actually meditations on the Supreme Personality of Godhead the *madhu-vidyā* meditations of the devas are described in the words of the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.16]

\[
tad devā jyotisām jyotir
\]

“The *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The scriptures say

\[
prajāpatir akāmayata prajāyeyeti sa etad agnihotram mithunam apaśyat. Tad udite sūrye 'juhot.
\]
The demigod Brahmā desired: “Let me create children.” He then saw two agnihotra sacrifices. When the sun rose he performed agnihotra sacrifices.

The scriptures also say

\[
\text{devā vai satram āsata}
\]

“The devas then performed a Vedic sacrifice.”

These and other passages from the scriptures show that the śruti does not disagree with the idea that the devas are able to perform Vedic sacrifices. They perform these sacrifices by the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in order to protect the material world.

Now someone may object: “They who perform the madhu-vidyā and other Vedic meditations must wait many kalpas before they attain liberation. How is it possible for one who yearns for liberation to tolerate such a delay? They who yearn for liberation do not desire to enjoy any material happiness, even the happiness of Brahmaloka.”

The answer is given: This is true. Still, the scriptures explain that because of certain unknown past actions some persons voluntarily postpone their personal liberation to take up the duties of administering the affairs of the material world. This Adhikaraṇa shows that because even the devas perform the ordinary Vedic duties, how much more so should human beings perform these duties.

**Adhikaraṇa 8: Śūdras Not Qualified For Vedic Meditation**

*Viṣaya* [thesis or statement]: It was stated above that human beings, devas, and other higher beings are qualified to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not possible to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead without having studied and properly understood the Vedānta, for one has to know what he is meditating on, and that information is given in Vedānta-sūtra and similar Vedic works. Therefore the scriptures say *aupaniṣadah puruṣah*: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is revealed in the Upaniṣads.” From this the next topic follows.

In the beginning of Vedānta-sūtra, we discussed the need for adequate qualifications of the student. This understanding is expressed by the word *athāto* [now, therefore] in Śūtra 1.1.1, *athāto brahma-jiñānāsā*: “Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.” We see the application of this principle every day in our teaching work, where we contact many people to share the wealth of this exalted science of the Absolute Truth. Every living entity is a spirit soul, and therefore in principle everyone is qualified to study this great Esoteric Teaching of the Vedas which is for their greatest good; but in actual practice we find that very few can actually take it up. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa confirms:

\[
\text{manusyānāṁ sahasreṣu}
\]
\[
\text{kaścid yatati siddhayas}
\]
\[
\text{yatatām api siddhānāṁ}
\]
\[
\text{kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ}
\]

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.3]

When a spirit soul, although eternal and pure by nature, becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of the material world, his natural spiritual intelligence becomes covered over by nescience. He then sees things in terms of temporary, relative material designations instead of in relation to the Absolute Truth. Because of this ignorance, he commits many sinful activities, and then has to suffer for them. Until he sincerely desires to escape from this life of suffering, he is blocked by his karma from approaching a self-realized soul and taking up the study of Vedānta.
This understanding is inherent in the Vedic concept of varnāśrama-dharma. In this system, people are classified into four occupational divisions and four orders of spiritual life. The occupational divisions are brāhmaṇas [intellectuals], kṣatriyas [warriors and administrators], vaiśyas [farmers and businessmen] and śūdras [workers], and the spiritual orders are brahmacārīs [celibate students], grhastras [householders], vānaprasthas [retirees] and sannyāsīs [renunciants.]

catur-varṇyāṁ mayā srṣṭaṁ
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaṁ
tasya kartāram api māṁ
viddhya akartāram avyayam

“According to the three modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me. And, although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.13]

It is understood that people all over the world naturally fall into these occupational categories, whether or not they subscribe to the Vedic model of understanding. This is because the entire system is based on the concept of the three modes of material nature [guṇas]. The intelligent class of men called brāhmaṇas are situated in the mode of goodness. The administrative class called the kṣatriyas are situated in the mode of passion. The mercantile men, the vaiśyas are situated in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, and the śūdras or laborer class are situated in the ignorant mode of material nature.

Thus these classifications of people exist in every society, and we find that the great mass of people are śūdras. The intelligent class of brāhmaṇas is a very small minority of the population. And even among the brāhmaṇas, most are engaged in pursuing temporary material opulence by intellectual work, and very few are interested in self-realization and spiritual culture. However, the qualifications of a brāhmaṇa are required to engage in the study and practice of Vedānta. Consequently very few people can begin, and even fewer can successfully complete the study of Vedānta philosophy, because the exalted qualifications of a brāhmaṇa are rarely found in human society, especially today.

It is important to note that these classifications are not determined by birth, but by the qualities and activities of the individual. Moreover, they are subject to modification by experience and training. Thus even a śūdra, if he is willing to take up the Vedic disciplines of abstention from meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex and gambling, and chant the Holy Name of the Lord under the direction of a self-realized soul, can advance in spiritual life until he develops the purity and intelligence of a brāhmaṇa and becomes qualified to study Vedānta philosophy. However this kind of transformation requires enormous austerity, determination, patience and self-discipline, qualities that unfortunately are rarely found in śūdras.

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ
kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca
jnānaṁ vijnānam āstikyaṁ
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities by which the brāhmaṇas work.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.43]

We generally find that only those who already possess the qualities of a brāhmaṇa can successfully study and practice the path of Vedānta philosophy; although it is theoretically possible for others, the requirements are usually too demanding. Therefore teachers of Vedānta generally screen their students for these qualities, and do not accept those who are, in their judgment, unqualified. They have learned by hard experience that trying to teach these exalted and recondite truths to an unqualified student is a
recipe for heartache. Therefore they test each prospective student to see whether he is sufficiently pure and determined. For example, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [4.1.1-5] narrates the story of Janaśruti Pautrāyaṇa:

There was a king named Janaśruti Pautrāyaṇa. He was a hospitable prince and profuse in his generosity, possessing many good qualities. The mighty devāsīs were satisfied with his high-mindedness and assuming the forms of swans, flew across his palace when the prince was lying in the open air on the roof on a sultry summer evening. The swan in the rear addressed the swan in the front, saying “O short-sighted one, do you not see the auric light of this noble prince, extending from his body high up into the air? Do not heedlessly cross his aura, lest it may destroy you.” Hearing this the other swan replied, “Is his aura stronger than Raiṅka Muni? Raiṅka is always on his chariot, making pilgrimages from one sacred place to another, and thus sanctifying all those shrines with his aura. He possesses a Brahmic aura, far more potent than the aura of this petty prince.” The object of the compassionate rṣīs was to break the shell of self-complacency into which the prince had unconsciously fallen, so that he would not rest satisfied with the mere performance of charity, though on a profuse scale, and might make efforts to know the Brahma-vidyā.

The king hearing this speech of the swans, found out his inferiority to Raiṅka and was distressed in his heart, passing the night in a state of restless grief. At dawn when the royal bards were playing soft music praising the king and his many noble qualities, the prince rising from his bed, at once sent for his chamberlain and told him to find out without delay the location of this Raiṅka, who was always traveling in his chariot. The chamberlain, after much effort, found Raiṅka in a secluded spot, sitting under his chariot and scratching his itches. He at once returned to the king and informed him of his discovery.

The king taking cows, gold and chariots, went to Raiṅka, and presenting them to him said “Venerable Sir, teach me the God that you worship.” Raiṅka replied, away with your necklace and chariots, O Śūdra! Let your cows remain with you.” Thus rejected and called a śūdra, the king went back a brought more wealth, cows, chariots and even his daughter as a present for the sage. But Raiṅka this time replied tam ājahāremāḥ śūdrānenaiva mukhenālāpaysiyathāḥ: “O Śūdra, take this away! You hope to gain this knowledge through these means?” However he ultimately relented and taught the king the science of saṁvarga-vidyā.

In this story, after hearing the words of some swans, Janaśruti approached Raiṅka Muni and offered him many cows, necklaces, and chariots. Raiṅka, however, said ahaha hāre tvā śūdra tavaiva saha gobhir astu: “O Śūdra, keep your cows, necklaces, and chariots!” After being addressed as a śūdra in this way, Janaśruti again came, this time offering cows, necklaces, chariots, and his daughter in marriage. Raiṅka this time replied tam ājahāremāḥ śūdrānenaiva mukhenālāpaysiyathāḥ: “O Śūdra, take this away! You hope to gain this knowledge through these means?” Then the Upaniṣad describes how Raiṅka taught him the science of saṁvarga-vidyā.

Samśaya [arisal of doubt]: Is a śūdra qualified to study the Vedic knowledge or not?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: A śūdra is qualified to study the Vedic knowledge for the following reasons: 1. because it is said that all human beings are qualified, 2. because śūdras have the ability to study, 3. because the śruti sometimes uses the word śūdra, thus hinting that śūdras are qualified to read the Vedas, and 4. because Vidura and other śūdras are described as knowers of the Vedas in the Purāṇas and other Vedic literatures.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.
The word *na* [not], taken from *Sūtra* 1.3.28, is understood in this *sūtra* also. Here it means “a śūdra is not qualified to study the *Vedas.*” Why? The *sūtra* says *hi,* which here means “because.” Because Jānaśruti Pautrāṇa, who was not enlightened with spiritual knowledge, by hearing the swans’ disrespectful words *kam u vara enam etat santam sayugvānam iva rainyam ātha:* “What is he compared to the great saint Raiṅka?” became unhappy [*ṣuk*] and thus ran [*dru*] to meet Raiṅka. The word śūdra here means “he who was unhappy” and “he who ran.” The sage uses the word śūdra here to display his omniscience in knowing the previous events. The word is not used here to indicate the fourth class of men: the śūdras.

Raiṅka wanted to impress Jānaśruti that the esoteric religion of *Vedānta* or *bhagavata-dharma* cannot be approached through external means such as charity, performance of sacrifice, etc. These are only preliminary. Neither should one be motivated to approach a great teacher or the Supreme Lord by personal unhappiness or envy, but by love and a desire to serve. When Arjuna approaches Kṛṣṇa in the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* for relief from his lamentation over having to fight his relatives in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, the first thing Kṛṣṇa tells him is that such lamentation is for fools.

*śrī*-bhagavān uvāca
*aśocīyān anvaśocas tvāṁ
prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase
**gatāsūn agatāsūṁś ca
nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ**

The Blessed Lord said: “While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.11]

So even if Jānaśruti is not a śūdra, he was acting like one because he approached the sage Raiṅka out of envy and grief. These are not proper motivations for learning transcendental knowledge, therefore Raiṅka rejected him. If Jānaśruti is not a śūdra, then to what class does he belong? To answer this question the next *sūtra* says he is a kṣatriya.

*Sūtra* 1.3.35

*kṣatriyatvāvagateś cottaratra caitrarathena liṅgāt
kṣatriyatva – status of being a kṣatriya; avagateś – from the understanding; ca – also; uttaratra – in a later passage; caitrarathena – with Caitraratha; liṅgāt – because of the sign.

**That he is a kṣatriya is understood from the clue related to the caitraratha.**

Jānaśruti is understood to be a kṣatriya. He possesses religious faith and a host of other virtues. He is very charitable. He gives charity generously. He is the ruler of the people. Because he sent a messenger
to search for Raiṅka and because he gave cows, necklaces, chariots, his daughter, and many other things in charity, it is said that he is a ksatriya. It is not possible for anyone but a ksatriya to possess these qualities. Because he thus displays the qualities of a king, Jānaśrutī should be understood to be a ksatriya. At the end of the story it is also understood that he is a ksatriya. At the end of the story, where the description of saṁvarga-vidyā is concluded, there is mention of the ksatriya status of a person named Abhipratārī Craitaratha. In the concluding passage a brāhmaṇa begged alms from Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Kākṣaseni when these two were serving food to others.

If someone objects: “In this passage the status of Abhipratārī as either a ksatriya or caitraratha is not proved in any way,” then the sūtra answers: liṅgārī: “Because of a clue.” The clue that Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Kākṣaseni were friends proves it. The Tāndya Brāhmaṇa [20.12.5] says: caitraraṁ caitraraṁ käpeyo ayājayan: “The members of the Kāpeya family made Craitaratha perform a sacrifice.” In this way the śruti maintains that because of his relationship with the Kāpeyas, Abhipratārī must have been a Craitaratha.

That the Craitaratha family were ksatriyas is confirmed by the words tasmāc caitrarathir nāma ksatra- patir ajāyata: “From him was born another ksatriya of the Craitaratha family.” In this way his ksatriya status is clearly proved. Therefore Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Craitaratha, who were both learned in saṁvarga-vidyā, were a brāhmaṇa and a ksatriya respectively, and in the subject of saṁvarga-vidyā they were also guru and disciple respectively. Raiṅka and Jānaśrutī had the same relationship, and therefore Jānaśrutī must have been a ksatriya. In this way it is proved that a śūdra is not qualified to study the Vedas.

Referring to the śruti, he again establishes this point.

**Sūtra 1.3.36**

<samskāra>-parāmarṣāt tad-abhāvabhilāpāc ca

*samskāra* – of the purificatory rituals; *parāmarṣāt* – because of the reference; *tad* – of them; *abhāva* – of the non-existence; *abhilāpāt* – because of the explanation; *ca* – also.

This is also so because the scriptures state both the necessity of undergoing the samskāras [rituals of purification] and the exclusion of the śūdras from these rituals.

In the śruti-śāstra is the passage:

*aṣṭa-varṣaṁ brāhmaṇam upaṇiṣata tam adhyāpayed ekādeše ksatriyam dvādaśe vaiśyaṁ*

“One should perform the samskāra and teach a brāhmaṇa boy when he is eight years old a ksatriya boy when he is eleven years old, and a vaiśya boy when he is twelve years old.”

This shows that brāhmaṇas are eligible to study the Vedas because they are also eligible for the samskāras. The scriptures also say:

*nāgner na yajñon kriyā na samskāra na vratāni śūdrasya*

“A śūdra is not allowed to light the sacred fire, perform a fire-sacrifice, perform religious rituals, undergo the samskāras, or follow vows of penance.”

In this way it is established that because a śūdra is not allowed to undergo the samskāras, he is also not allowed to study the Vedas. The twice-born classes of men, namely the brāhmaṇas, ksatriyas and vaiśyas, are expected to undergo a cultural purificatory process known as samskāras or purification by Vedic rituals. The dvija-bandhus [friends of the twice-born] are those who are born in the families of
brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, but who are not equal to their forefathers because they do not go through the saṁskāras. Such descendants are not recognized as twice-born for want of purificatory qualifications.

The saṁskāras [purificatory activities] begin even before the birth of a child, with the seed-giving reformatory process called garbhādhāna-saṁskāra. One who is not the product of a garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, or conscious conception ceremony, is not accepted as being an actual dvija [twice-born man]. If the father and the mother do not perform garbhādhāna-saṁskāra and simply beget children out of passion, their children are called dvija-bandhus. The dvija-bandhus are certainly not as intelligent or spiritually advanced as the children created in the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, because the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra is required to attract the most qualified soul to the womb of the mother. The dvija-bandhus are classified with the śūdras and the woman class, who are by nature less intelligent. The śūdras and the woman class do not have to undergo any saṁskāras except the ceremony of marriage.

To be fully accepted as a dvija, the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra must be followed by other saṁskāras, of which the sacred thread ceremony is performed at the time of spiritual initiation. The seed-giving saṁskāra is considered the first birth, and the spiritual initiation is considered the second birth, after which one is fully qualified as twice-born. Only one who has been able to undergo such important saṁskāras, or attain their equivalent by spiritual training, discipline and initiation, can be called a bona fide dvija [twice-born].

Now he confirms the view that the śūdras are not eligible for the saṁskāras.

Sūtra 1.3.37

tad-abhāva-nirṛṭaṁ ca pravṛtteh

tat – of that; abhāva – of the non-existence; nirṛṭaṁ – in ascertaining; ca – also; pravṛtteh – because of endeavor.

[This is so] also because care is taken to determine that [a student] is not [a śūdra].

In the Chāndogya Upanিগd [4.4.4-5] when asked about his varṇa, Jābali said:

nāham etad vede bho yad gotro ‘ham asmi

“I do not know into what varṇa I was born.”

These truthful words convinced the sage Gautama that Jābali was not a śūdra. Gautama then said:

naitad abṛāhmaṇo vivaktum arhati samidham saumyāhara tvopanesye na satyād agāh

“One who is not a brāhmaṇa cannot speak in this way. O gentle one, please bring the sacred fuel and I shall initiate you as a brāhmaṇa. You did not deviate from the truth.”

This endeavor by the guru Gautama to determine the varṇa of Jābali before accepting him as a student demonstrates that only the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, and vaiśyas are eligible to receive the saṁskāras. The śūdras are not eligible, because they generally suffer from the animalistic tendencies of uncontrolled senses. Only one who can control the senses, not by force but by intelligence, can make real spiritual advancement.

karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya
ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate
yas tv indriyāṇi manasā
niyamārabhate 'rjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam
asaktaḥ sa viśisyate

“One who restrains the senses and organs of action, but whose mind dwells on sense objects, certainly deludes himself and is called a pretender. On the other hand, he who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion, without attachment, is by far superior.” [Bhagavad-gītā 3.6-7]

So artificial control of the senses is equally condemned, because it leads to hypocrisy. Actual renunciation means that one realizes the true nature of the self as spirit soul and also realizes his eternal loving service relationship with the Lord. He then automatically ceases to desire material things, for they can never satisfy the soul, nor can they equal the spiritually attractive qualities of the Supreme Brahman.

Sūtra 1.3.38

śravanādhyayanārthāṁ pratiṣedhāt smṛteś ca
śravana – hearing; ādhyayana – study; arthaṁ – for the purpose; pratiṣedhāt – because of the prohibition; smṛteḥ – from the smṛti-śāstra; ca – also.

This is so because the smṛti-śāstra also prohibits the śūdras from hearing and studying [the Vedas].

The smṛti-śāstra says

pady u ha vā etat śmaśānaṁ yac chūdras tasmāc chūdra-samīpe nādhyetavyam

“A śūdra is a beast. He is a crematorium. For this reason he should not be taught the Vedas.”

The smṛti also says

tasmāc chūdro bahu-paśur ayajñīyaḥ

“A śūdra is a big beast. He cannot perform the Vedic sacrifices.”

Because of these prohibitions a śūdra is not eligible to hear the Vedas. Because he is not allowed to hear the Vedas, it is therefore also not possible for him to study the Vedas, understand their meaning, or follow the rituals and penances described in them; what to speak of approaching the sanctus sanctorum of Vedānta. All these are forbidden for him.

The smṛti-śāstra says

nāgnir na yajñāḥ śūdrasya tathaivādhhyayanāṁ kutaḥ kevalaiva tu śuśruṣā tri-varṇānāṁ vidhiyate

“A śūdra is not allowed to light the sacred fire or perform Vedic sacrifices. Neither is he allowed to study the Vedas. What is he allowed to do? His sole duty is to faithfully serve the three higher varṇas.”

The smṛti also says
vedāksara-vicārāne śūdros patati tat-kaṇāt

“A śūdra who studies the Vedas at once falls into degraded life.”

There are also prohibitions against śūdras studying the Vedic sciences, such as astrology and other vedāṅgas. This is because materialistic, sensual-minded people will always misunderstand and misbehave, making offenses to the Vedas, to the Lord and the elevated devotees. Therefore it is actually better for them to keep them away from the more esoteric teachings, so they cannot damage their spiritual life any further by their natural offensiveness.

Some souls, such as Vidura and others, although born as śūdras, become elevated by their attainment of perfect transcendental knowledge. By hearing and understanding the Purāṇas, Mahābhārata and other transcendental literatures suited to their understanding, following the regulative principles of abstention from meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex, gambling and speculation, and chanting the Holy Name of the Lord under the direction of a self-realized spiritual master, śūdras and others can become liberated.

While the standards of Vedic society are very high, the only real classes of higher and lower among men are determined by the final spiritual result of their lives.

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye ’pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayah
stṛyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās
te ’pi yānti parāṁ gatim

“O son of Prthū, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, vaiśyas [merchants], as well as śūdras [workers]—can approach the supreme destination.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.32]

kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayāḥ
ye ’nya ca pāpa yaḍ-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ

“Kirātas, Hūnas, Āṇdhras, Pulindas, Pulkaśas, Ābhīras, Śumbhas, Yavanas, members of the Khasa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of devotees of the Lord, for He is the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him. Even such sinful persons can certainly all be purified if they chant the holy name of the Lord under the direction of a pure devotee.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.4.18]

brahma-hā pitṛ-hā go-gīno
mātr-hācārya-hāghavān
śvādaḥ pulkasako vāpi
śuddhyeran yasya kārtanāt

“One who has killed a brāhmaṇa, one who has killed a cow or one who has killed his father, mother or spiritual master can be immediately freed from all sinful reactions simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Other sinful persons, such as dog-eaters and caṇḍālas, who are less than śūdras, can also be freed in this way.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.13.8]

Adhikaraṇa 9: The ‘Thunderbolt’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Vīṣaya [thesis or statement]: Now that the digression of Adhikaraṇas 7 and 8 is concluded, he again reflects on the original topic, namely how the Supreme Personality of Godhead is discussed under various names in the scriptures. In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad [2.6.17-18] is read the following passage:
“This transcendental Person is always seated in the hearts of men. Let a man draw that Self forth from his body, like drawing the pith from a reed. Let him know that Self as the effulgent, immortal Lord, yea as the bright and effulgent Lord. When He breathes, all the manifested world trembles in fear. They who know this thunderbolt become immortal.”

Sāṃśaya [arisal of doubt]: Does the word vajra here mean “thunderbolt” or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: Because the vajra here causes trembling, and because the description of liberation attained by understanding this vajra is merely a collection of meaningless poetic words, the word vajra here should be understood to mean “thunderbolt.” For these reasons, and because the word prāṇa here does not mean “breath” but “protector,” in this passage it is not possible to say that the word vajra means “the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Because the phrase udyatāṁ vajram [raised thunderbolt] contradicts this second interpretation, the word vajra must mean “thunderbolt.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.3.39

kampanā
kampanā – because of trembling.

Because [the entire world] trembles [the vajra must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead].

Because it makes the entire universe tremble, this vajra must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not an ordinary thunderbolt. This is so also because of the following statement of Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa:

cakraṁ caṅkramaṇād eṣa
vajanaḥ vajram ucyate
khaṇḍanāḥ khadga evaiṣa
heti-nāmā hariḥ svayam

“Because He goes [caṅkramaṇa] everywhere He is called “Cakra” [moving in a circle]. Because He moves about [vajana] He is called “Vajra” [thunderbolt]. Because He cuts apart [khaṇḍana] the demons He is called “Khadga” [sword]. These are names of Lord Hari.”

Also, because the word prāṇa [breath] and the word bhaya [fear] are used, the passage must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In these ways it is established that the word vajra here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Sūtra 1.3.40

jyotir-darśanā
darśanā – because of seeing.
It is so because the vajra is described as jyotih [splendor].

Before the passage discussed is the following statement [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.15]:

na tatra sīryo bhāti na candra-tārake

“When He does not shine, then neither sun, moon, nor stars show their splendor.”

After the passage discussed is the statement [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.3.3]

bhayād asyāgnis tapati

“Out of fear of Him fire glows.”

In both these passages the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as transcendental splendor, and therefore the passage describing the vajra [thunderbolt] between these two passages, must refer to the effulgent Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Adhikaraṇa 10: The ‘Ākāśa’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Viśaya [thesis or statement]: In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.14.1] is the following statement:

ākāśo ha vai nāma-rūpayor nirvahīte te yad antarā tad brahma tad amṛtam sa ātmā

“Sky [akāśa] is the creator of names and forms. That sky within is expanded without limit. That sky is eternal. That sky is the Self.”

Samsaya [arise of doubt]: Does the word “sky” here refer to the jīva liberated from bondage of repeated birth and death, or does “sky” here refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Pūrvapakṣa [antithesis]: The scriptures say aśva iva romāṇi vidhūya pāpam: “As a horse shakes its mane, so do I shake off all sins and become liberated.” This shows that the “sky” here refers to the liberated jīva. The words yad antarā [which is within] clearly points to the liberated jīva who is free from all names and forms. This is also so because the phrase “the creator of names and forms” may refer to the jīva before he was liberated. The word ākāśa here means “effulgence.” Everything therefore indicates that the “sky” here is the liberated jīva. The words tad brahma tad amṛtam: “It is expanded without limit. It is eternal,” describe the qualities the jīva attains when he becomes liberated.

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.3.41

ākāśo ‘ṛthāntaratvādi-vyapadeśāt

ākāśah – sky; artha – meaning; antaratva – difference; ādi – beginning with; vyapadeśāt – because of the description.

The “sky” here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the “sky” described here is different from the liberated jīva, and for other reasons also.

The “sky” here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not the liberated jīva. Why? The sūtra says arthāntaratvādi-vyapadeśāt [because the “sky” described here is different from the liberated jīva, and for other reasons also]. The meaning is this: Because the liberated jīva cannot be the creator of names and forms, the “sky” here must be something other than him. When the jīva is not liberated but bound
to the material world, he attains various names and forms by the force of his previous karma. By himself he has no power to create these names and forms. When the jīva is liberated he takes no part in the affairs of the material world, as will be described in a later Sūtra [4.4.17]. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, is described in the śruti as the creator of the material world. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad therefore says anena jīvānātmamānupraviṣya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāni: “With the jīvas I will now enter the material world. Now I will create a variety of names and forms.” For all these reasons the “sky” here should be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The word ādi [and for other reasons also] in the śūtra refers to the phrase brahma [expanded without limit] in the passage of the Upaniṣad. This phrase cannot describe the liberated jīva, although it may very naturally describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way the word “sky” refers to a sky that is all-pervading. Because this description can properly refer only to the Supreme, the “sky” here is proved to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

An objector may say, “So be it. Still, it cannot be held that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is different from the liberated jīva. This is said because of the overwhelming evidence of scripture. For example, in the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad it is said:

katama ātmeti yo ‘yaiṇ vijñānāmayaḥ puruṣaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdy-antar-jyotiḥ sa samānāḥ sann ubhau lokāv anusāścarati

“Who is the Self? He is a person full of knowledge who stays in the life-breath. He is the splendor in the heart. Remaining always the same, he wanders in the two worlds.”

Describing the conditioned jīva in this way, the text continues:

sa vā ayam ātmā brahma vijñānāmayaḥ

“This Self is the omniscient Brahman.”

In this way it says that the jīva is Brahman. It further says:

athākāmamayamānāḥ

“He becomes free from all desires.”

This described the liberated jīva’s condition. Then it says:

brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti

“Being Brahman, he attains Brahman.”

In this way it is conclusively stated that he is identical with Brahman. Then, at the end it says:

abhayaṁ vai brahma bhavati ya eva veda

“He who knows this becomes the fearless Brahman.”

The result of hearing the passage is given here. The statement, in some passages, that the jīva and Brahman are different are like the sky within a pot and the great sky beyond it. When he is liberated, the jīva becomes the Supreme just as when the pot is broken the sky in the pot becomes the same as the great sky beyond. Because the jīva is thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is the creator of the universes and everything else that the Supreme is. In this way there is no difference between the liberated jīva and the Supreme Brahman.”

Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]: To refute this, he says:
Sūtra 1.3.42

susūpyo-utkrāntyor bhedena
susūpti – in dreamless sleep; utkrāntyor – and in death; bhedena – because of the difference.

Because the difference is present in both death and dreamless sleep.

The word vyapadeśāt [because of the description], which was used in the previous sūtra, should be understood in this sūtra also. In the previously quoted passages it is not possible to derive the understanding that the liberated jīva is actually Brahman. Why? Because it is clearly explained that in the states of dreamless sleep and death the jīva and Brahman are different. The difference in dreamless sleep is described in these words [Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.12]:

prājñenātmānā sampariṣvakto na bāhyam kiṇcana veda nāntaram
“Embraced by the omniscient Self, he knows nothing else, either without or within.”

The difference in death is described in these words from the same passage:

prājñenātmānā anvāruḍha utsarjan yāti
“Mounted by the omniscient Self, and groaning, he leaves.”

The word utsarjan here means groaning. It is not possible that the jīva, who knows hardly anything, can be the omniscient Self by whom he is mounted. Because the jīva is not omniscient it is also not possible that the omniscient Self here is another jīva.

If it is said “Because in these conditions the jīva is still influenced by material designations, your point is not proved,” then the author replies:

Sūtra 1.3.43

paty-ādī-śabdebhyaḥ
pati – Lord; ēdi – beginning with; śabdebhyaḥ – because of the words.

Because of the use of Pati [Lord] and other words.

In the same Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, a little afterwards, the word pati and other similar words are used in this passage [Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22]:

sa vā ayam ātmanā sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeṣaḥ sarvasyaśādhipatiḥ sarvam idam praśāsti yad idam kiṇca sa na sādhunā karmanā bhūyān nātra vāsādhunā kanīyān eṣa bhūtādhipatir eṣa lokesvara eṣa loka-pālaḥ sa setur vidharana eṣāṁ lokānām asambhedāya

“He is the Self, the dominator over all, the controller of all, the king of all. He rules over all. He is not made greater by pious work, nor lesser by impious work. He is the king of all that is. He is the master of the worlds. He is the protector of the worlds. He is the boundary so the worlds will not break apart.”

From this is may be understood that Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is different from the liberated jīva. Because it cannot be said that the liberated jīva has dominion over all or control over all, and because Sūtra 4.4.17 will say jagad-vyāpāra-varjyam: “The liberated jīva has not the power to create the universes,” the idea the Brahman and the liberated jīva are identical is refuted.
This idea is also refuted by the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, where it is said of Brahman:

\textit{antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śastā janānām}

“He is the controller in the living entities’ hearts.”

Neither can it be said that the difference between them is only because of the \textit{jīva}’s identification with a material body, because the \textit{śruti-śāstra} explains that the difference between them is present even after the \textit{jīva} is liberated. In the \textit{aṁśādhikaraṇa} of this book [2.3.41] we will refute the identification of \textit{jīva} and Brahman in more detail.

The statement \textit{ayam ātmā brahma}: “The self is Brahman,” simply means that the \textit{jīva} has a small portion of Brahman’s qualities. The phrase \textit{brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti}: “Becoming Brahman, he attains Brahman,” should be understood to mean that the \textit{jīva}, by attaining a portion of eight of Brahman’s qualities, becomes like Brahman. Because the \textit{śruti-śāstra} says \textit{paramamaṁ sāmyam upaiti}: “He becomes like Brahman,” and because of the previous explanation of \textit{brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti}, therefore the nature of Brahman is different from that of the liberated \textit{jīva}.

In this proof that Brahman is different form the \textit{jīva} in either conditioned or liberated states of existence, that the “sky” from which all names and forms have come is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not the liberated \textit{jīva}, is also proved. Any doubt that may have remained in spite of the statements of the \textit{sūtras netaro ‘nupapatteḥ} [1.1.16] and \textit{bheda-vyapadeśaḥ ca} [1.1.17] is dispelled by this proof that even at the time of liberation the \textit{jīva} remains different from Brahman. Therefore there is no fault in the explanations given for these two [1.1.16 and 1.1.17] \textit{sūtras}.

\textit{Thus ends the Third Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!}
Some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the jīvas or some other topic actually describe the Supreme Brahman

tamaḥ saṅkhya-ghanodīrṇa-vidīrṇam yasya go-gaṇaḥ
taṁ samvid-bhūṣaṇaṁ kṛṣṇa-pūṣaṇaṁ samupāṣmahe
“Let us offer our respectful obeisances to the Kṛṣṇa-sun, which is decorated with transcendental knowledge, and which with its effulgence dispels the deep darkness of Saṅkhya.”

Adhikaraṇa 1: The Avyakta in Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11 Refers to the Subtle Body and Not to Pradhāna

Viṣaya: The Fourth Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Śrī Vedānta-sūtra begins with a refutation of the theory of creation held by atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy. They say that there is no need for God, and that the material nature and the actions of the jīvas are sufficient to explain the material creation. Atheistic theories of creation are nothing new; even 5,000 years ago when the Vedānta-sūtras were compiled, there was a need to refute such atheistic theories. A more detailed and thorough refutation of the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy will appear in Adhyāya 2, Pāda 1 of Śrī Vedānta-sūtra.

Vedānta-sūtra’s refutation of Sāṅkhya, Buddhism and other atheistic cosmogonies is well-known. The important point for the contemporary reader is that the same refutation applies equally well to modern so-called scientific theories of creation. Matter is inert. If we place a rock in the desert, we can come back after a day, a year, ten years or a millennium, and barring some event like an earthquake, the rock will remain exactly as we left it. Matter does not move itself; it requires some application of energy to animate it. Nor does matter possess any sort of intelligence; it blindly follows the applicable laws of physics. All theories excluding God or the transcendental world from consideration fail on this account: they cannot explain the initial injection of energy and intelligence into the system of the material world.

For example, all the variations of the currently popular ‘Big Bang’ theory assume that the material world possessed or generated its own energy. But even if the universe has its own energy, that energy originally had to come from some source. It must have a point of emanation, just like the sunlight radiates from the sun and electricity comes from the powerhouse. The materialistic scientists cannot explain how this took place. They cannot answer the simple question of how the matter of the universe went from the inert, unmanifested stage to the dynamic, energetic state we see it in today.

There is also the problem of the origin of the physical laws of the universe. Scientists have observed that the fundamental forces and physical constants of the universe have to be finely tuned to permit organic life to exist. The stability of many essential structures, from atomic nuclei to the whole universe, depends upon delicate balances among various fundamental forces and physical constants. For example, for life as we know it to exist, there must be atoms; and if any one of several fundamental physical constants were different by a small amounts, atoms could not exist.

As far as anyone can tell, the physical laws and constants are permanent features of the universe and are consistent everywhere. But how did these physical laws originate, how are they enforced, and how did they acquire values that guarantee favorable conditions for life? No one is prepared to argue that
the laws of physics evolved over time, for that would destroy the basis of all science: namely, that there are unchangeable physical laws and universal principles underlying all existence. If there is no chance to change or correct the laws of the universe, they had to be tuned properly from the very beginning of creation to permit the existence of life as we know it. Therefore for life to exist, the universal physical laws and constants could only have been designed by a sentient Creator with perfect intelligence and foreknowledge. This is the basic argument behind the theory of Intelligent Design.

Of course, the simple and correct answer to these difficulties is that both the original energy of the creation and the physical laws of the universe came from God. But the modern scientists are unreasonably biased against this simple, clear explanation. For example, the author of this frank statement is Professor Richard Lewontin of Harvard:

“We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, ... in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated commitment to materialism. ... we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.” [Lewontin, Richard, Review of the Demon-Haunted World, by Carl Sagan. In New York Review of Books, January 9, 1997.]

The scientists abuse the trust students naturally place in their highly educated college professors to propagate a false explanation of the creation, merely to forward the materialistic agenda of a world without a controller, without spirit:

“And I use that trust to effectively brainwash them. ... our teaching methods are primarily those of propaganda. We appeal—without demonstration—to evidence that supports our position. We only introduce arguments and evidence that supports [sic] the currently accepted theories and omit or gloss over any evidence to the contrary.” [Singham, Mark, "Teaching and Propaganda," Physics Today (vol. 53, June 2000), p. 54.]

These frank and cynical statements of prominent so-called scientists reveal that their atheistic mindset is not the result of careful, unbiased empirical investigation of nature, as they try to reassure us. Their thinking is not scientific at all. Is is, instead, part of a broad, calculated strategy to disempower people in general by feeding them a view of the world that makes them appear weaker and less important than they really are. The materialists want people to believe that they are nothing but soulless bags of flesh in a world with no God, no right or wrong, and no continued existence or consequences for our present behavior after death. That explanation is just a cynical lie to make the innocent people easier to control and exploit by ruthless, amoral nation-states and corporations. They take advantage of the moral paralysis engendered by this destructive and toxic worldview to profit at the expense of the rest of the world. Hence the research funding controlled by the same governments and corporations goes to researchers and educators who support their atheistic agenda, and is withheld from programs with a theistic worldview.

An intelligent person demands conclusive proof for any theory. The conventional atheistic explanation of the creation has numerous deficiencies, but as evinced by the above quotes, the scientists collude to cover them up. Most people are intellectually lazy, and never bother to think through the explanations they are given for the creation of the world. The theories of theistic creation offered by most religious organizations are not very convincing because they lack a detailed description of the creation; nor do they know how to refute the materialistic explanation. But as soon as we understand the clear arguments of Vedānta-sūtra and the detailed descriptions of the creation contained in its natural commentary Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, all doubts are destroyed. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam gives wonderful theistic explanations of all the difficulties of creation theory, especially the main problems of the
original energy and the origin of the physical laws outlined above. By studying Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, any actually intelligent person will certainly conclude that the Supreme Lord is the Designer and Creator of the universe.

Vedānta-sūtra philosophy calls this Creator of the universe the Supreme Brahman. It is He who created the laws of physics, generated the material of the universe, and injected the original impulse of creative energy to set it into motion. Then He entered into the creation as the Supersoul to direct the further development and activities of the living entities. No atheistic theory can explain these functions of the divine Creator; therefore the efforts of the materialistic theorists center on trying to avoid answering these questions: Where did the original material of the creation come from? What is the source of the original energy of the universe? How did the physical laws of the universe originate? Why are these laws favorable for the existence of life as we know it? What intelligence is responsible for the continued development and maintenance of the material universe?

Anyone who has been involved with a large, complex project such as building a house knows that the materials do not simply take their positions automatically; the energy and cooperation of many intelligent workers is required. For the project to be a success there must an architect, a designer who plans everything; sufficient amounts and proper types of materials must be available; sufficient skilled labor to assemble the materials must be present; a competent manager must supervise the work; finally, continued upkeep and regular maintenance are required to prevent the finished product from decaying due to the influence of time, and keep it useful for its intended purpose. If these requirements apply to a house, a car or any other complex construction, how much more do they apply to the entire universe? Therefore an intelligent, energetic Creator must exist, and all attempts to explain the universe and life without such a Creator must fail.

Just as the universe and life as we know it cannot exist without an intelligent Creator, they cannot exist without the prior existence of the spiritual world. The space and time of the material universe do not exist before the creation; therefore before the material creation is brought into manifestation, there must be a continuum in which its dormant material and energetic ingredients, including the living entities, can exist in an unmanifest state. Since material time has a beginning and an end, the spiritual world must be eternal, or beyond material time. The spiritual world is also the abode of the Creator and contains His potencies, associates and eternal activities. The purpose of Vedānta-sūtra and indeed, all Vedic philosophy and practices, is to enable the conditioned living entities in the material world to transfer their existence to the spiritual world, where there is unending, perfect felicity in association with the Creator, the Supreme Brahman.

Previously the sūtras affirmed that the Supreme Brahman is He, the knowledge and realization of whom bring liberation, He who is the seed and material cause of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the material universes, who is different from both the jīvas and dead matter, who possesses innumerable inconceivable potencies, who is all-knowing, who possesses all auspicious qualities, who is free from all inauspiciousness, who possesses unlimited opulences, and who is supremely pure. He is the ultimate answer to all questions regarding the mystery of the creation of the universe, and the miracles of life and consciousness.

Earlier in Pāda 3 we discussed pradhāna, the unmanifested stage of material nature. Now we will consider the theory that the pradhāna and the pum [individual living entities] together comprise all that exists, and there is no God separate from them. This theory is propounded in the Kapila-tantra and perhaps also seen in some branches of the Vedas. The followers of Sāṅkhya philosophy quote the following passage from Katha Upaniṣad [1.3.10-11]:

\[
\text{indriyebhyaḥ paraḥ hy arthā}\\
\text{arthebhyaś ca paraṁ mananā}
\]
manasas tu parā buddhir
buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ
mahataḥ param avyaktam
avyaktā puruṣah paraḥ
puruṣān na param kiṣcit
sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ

“The sense-objects are higher than the senses. The mind is higher than the sense-objects. Intelligence is higher than the mind. The mahat is higher than the intelligence. The avyakta [the unmanifested] is higher than the mahat. The puruṣa [person] is higher than the unmanifested. Nothing is higher than the puruṣa. The puruṣa is the highest destination.”

Saṁśaya: The doubt here is whether the word avyakta [the unmanifested] refers to the pradhāna [the primordial stage of material nature] or the śarīra [the body].

Pūrva-pakṣa: The opponent may answer this doubt by saying that because both śruti and smṛti give the sequence as first mahat, then avyakta, and then puruṣa, therefore the word avyakta here must refer to the pradhāna.

Siddhānta: Whether the word avyakta refers to pradhāna or śarīra is explained in the following sūtra.

Sūtra 1.4.1

anumānikam apy ekeṣām iti cen na śarīra-rūpaka-vinyasta-grhītair darśayati ca

anumānikam – the inference; apy – even; ekeṣām – of some; iti – thus; cen – if; na – not; śarīra – the body; rūpaka – the metaphor; vinyasta – placed; grhītair – because of being accepted; darśayati – reveals; ca – and.

If some assume [that the word avyakta in this passage of the Kaṭha Upaniṣad refers to the pradhāna], then I say “No. The fact that this passage is part of a metaphor referring to the body clearly shows [that the word avyakta here means śarīra].”

The Kaṭhakas [those who study the Kaṭha Upaniṣad] consider that the word avyakta here refers to the pradhāna. The opponent says: “The etymology of the word avyakta is ‘That which is not [a-] manifested [-vyakta]’. If this is so, then the word avyakta cannot mean anything except the pradhāna [unmanifested material nature].”

What is the answer to this objection? The answer is given in this sūtra in the phrase beginning with the word śarīra. Because it is employed in a passage where the body is compared to a chariot, the word avyakta here refers to the śarīra [body]. The passage preceding this mention of avyakta, which is a metaphor where the material body is considered to be a chariot, clearly shows this. The entire passage is given here:

“The individual is the passenger in the car of the material body, and the intelligence is the driver. Mind is the driving instrument, and the senses are the horses. The self is thus the enjoyer or sufferer in the association of the mind and senses. So it is understood by great thinkers. For a fool who does not control his mind, the senses are wild horses overwhelming the charioteer. For the wise man who controls his mind, the senses are good horses obedient to the charioteer. An impious fool who does not control his mind does not attain the spiritual world; he attains the world of repeated birth and death. A pious wise man who controls his mind attains the spiritual world. He never again takes birth. A person who has transcendental knowledge as a charioteer,
and who tightly holds the reins of the mind, attains the path’s final destination: the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu. The sense objects are higher than the senses. The mind is higher than the sense-objects. Intelligence is higher than the mind. The mahat [material nature] is higher than the intelligence. The avyakta [the unmanifested] is higher than the mahat. The puruṣa [person] is higher than the unmanifested. Nothing is higher than the puruṣa. The puruṣa is the highest destination. That Self is hidden within all beings and does not shine forth; but He is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellects. A wise man should control speech and knowledge; he should keep his consciousness within the Self, which is the Great, and he should keep the Great within the Self, which is the Quiet.” [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.3-13]

Here the devotee who desires to attain the abode of Lord Viṣṇu is described as the passenger in a chariot. His body and other possessions are described as a chariot with its various parts. The traveller who keeps the chariot and its parts under control attains the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu; one who fails to control his mind and senses attains only the misery of continued material existence. After this passage, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad continues to explain how the body and its various parts, which are metaphorically considered a chariot and its parts, are more or less difficult to control. In the metaphor of the chariot in the above passage, the senses and other adjuncts of the body are described as horses or other adjuncts of the chariot. The Upaniṣad continues this discussion in the same terms. Of the several things mentioned in the previous verses, only the body itself is not listed in the subsequent verses, and therefore the single ambiguous item avyakta must refer to the śarīra [body] by default. In the metaphorical description of the chariot in ślokas 1-9 of the passage quoted above, we have the following entities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>śarīra [body]</td>
<td>chariot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buddhi [reason, intelligence]</td>
<td>charioteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manas [mind]</td>
<td>reins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arthas [sense objects]</td>
<td>roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indriyas [senses]</td>
<td>horses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now comparing the terms of this metaphor with the words of the passage under discussion, only the body is left out, therefore the word avyakta must refer to the body, by process of elimination. The same metaphor is expressed in the passage under discussion, showing how the senses are easier to control than the sense objects, the mind and intelligence. Therefore a wise man simply controls the senses, and the rest are controlled automatically because the chariot, or body, is the main entity and the others are the more subtle adjuncts of the body.

The interpretation of avyakta as pradhāna is also disproved because the contents of the passage quoted above and the following verses of the Kaṭha Upaniṣad disagree with the tenets of Saṅkhya philosophy. The Saṅkhya philosophy does not accept that the sense objects are the cause of the senses, or that mind is higher than the sense objects.
There are many similar passages in the Vedic literature. We find a similar description of the hierarchy of the senses, mind etc. in *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.42]:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur} \\
& \text{indriyebhyāḥ parāṇ manaḥ} \\
& \text{manasas tu parā buddhir} \\
& \text{yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ}
\end{align*}
\]

“The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.”

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{ekāyano 'sau dvi-phalas tri-mūlaś} \\
& \text{catū-rasah pañca-vidhaḥ śad-ātmā} \\
& \text{sapta-tvag asa-vātapo navākṣo} \\
& \text{daśa-cchadī dvi-khago hy ādi-vrkṣaḥ}
\end{align*}
\]

“The body [the total body and the individual body are of the same composition] may figuratively be called ‘the original tree.’ From this tree, which fully depends on the ground of material nature, come two kinds of fruit—the enjoyment of happiness and the suffering of distress. The cause of the tree, forming its three roots, is association with the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. The fruits of bodily happiness have four tastes—religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation—which are experienced through five senses for acquiring knowledge in the midst of six circumstances: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst. The seven layers of bark covering the tree are skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen, and the eight branches of the tree are the five gross and three subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. The tree of the body has nine hollows—the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the rectum and the genitals—and ten leaves, the ten airs passing through the body. In this tree of the body there are two birds: one is the individual soul, and the other is the Supersoul.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.27]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{iśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ} \\
& \text{hrd-deśe 'ṛjuna tiṣṭhati} \\
& \text{bhūmayan sarva-bhūtānī} \\
& \text{yantrārūḍhāṇi māyāyā}
\end{align*}
\]

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine made of the material energy.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.61]

The subtlety of the Saṅkhya argument is not due to its refinement; it is because the *Vedas* never directly state anywhere that *pradhāna* is the cause of creation. Rather, they always state that the Supreme Brahman is the real cause, and *pradhāna* is only a secondary cause. Thus to gain support for their atheistic theory, the Saṅkhyas are forced to rely on indirect references taken out of context. The descriptions of the causal relationship between the Lord and material nature given in the *Vedas* are clear:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ}
\end{align*}
\]

“The Supreme Lord as the Supersoul is the chief knower of the body and the master of *pradhāna* [the unmanifested three modes of material nature].” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.16]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{kāla-vṛttyā tu māyāyāṁ} \\
& \text{guṇa-mayyāṁ adhokṣajaḥ}
\end{align*}
\]
The Supreme Living Being in His feature as the transcendental puruṣa incarnation, who is the Lord's plenary expansion, impregnates the material nature of three modes, and thus by the influence of eternal time the living entities appear.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.26]

“My dear mother, O daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu, as I have explained, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the time factor, from whom the creation begins as a result of the agitation of the neutral, unmanifested nature.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.17]

Thereafter, influenced by the interactions of eternal time, the supreme sum total of matter called the mahat-tattva became manifested, and in this mahat-tattva the unalloyed goodness, the Supreme Lord, sowed the seeds of universal manifestation out of His own body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.27]

“O gentle one, of all the physical elements, beginning from the sky down to the earth, all the inferior and superior qualities are due only to the final touch of the glance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.37]

“When the equilibrium of the combination of the three modes of nature was agitated by the unseen activity of the living entity, by Mahā-Viśu and by the force of time, the total material elements were produced.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.20.12]

“This material nature is working under My direction.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

So the Vedic scriptures assert again and again that the material energy is incapable of manifesting the creation without the transcendental glance of the Supreme.

Now the following objection may be raised: “The body is clearly manifest. How is it that in this passage it is described as unmanifest?” To answer this doubt the author says:
Sūtra 1.4.2

sūkṣmaṁ tu tad-arhatvāt

sūkṣmaṁ – subtle; tu – certainly; tad-arhatvāt – because of appropriateness.

[The word śaṅkṣipta here] certainly [means the] subtle [body] because that is appropriate [in this context.]

The word tu [certainly] is used here to dispel doubt. The word śaṅkṣipta here means sūkṣma-śaṅkṣipta [the subtle body]. Why? Because that meaning is appropriate. It is appropriate to describe the sūkṣma-śaṅkṣipta as avyakta [unmanifest]. The quote from Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [1.4.7] says tad dhedaṁ tarhy avyākṛtam āsīt: “Then there was the unmanifested.” This shows that before the gross material universe was manifested, the living force was present. This shows that the word avyakta [unmanifested] is appropriate to describe the subtle body. For example, the word vyaktāvyaktaṁ in the following śloka means “the gross and subtle bodies”:

labdhvā nimittam avyaktaṁ
vyaktāvyaktaṁ bhavaty uta
yathā-yoni yathā-bijāṁ
svabhāvena baliyāsā

“The fruitful activities a living being performs, whether pious or impious, are the unseen cause for the fulfillment of his desires. This unseen cause is the root for the living entity’s gross and subtle bodies. Because of his intense desire, the living entity takes birth in a particular family and receives a body which is either like that of his mother or like that of his father. The gross and subtle bodies are created according to his desire.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.54]

The objection may be raised: “If the original cause is subtle, then why should that subtle cause not be described as the pradhāna [unmanifested material nature] of the Saṅkhya theory?” To answer this doubt he says:

Sūtra 1.4.3

tad-adhīnatvād arthavat

tad – on Him; adhīnatvād – because of dependence; arthavat – possessing the meaning.

[This meaning should be accepted] because [the pradhāna is ultimately] dependent on Him [the Supreme Brahman].

The meaning here is that the creative actions of pradhāna are not the original cause, but are themselves caused by the Supreme Brahman. Pradhāna is ultimately dependent on the Supreme Brahman, the original cause of all causes, because pradhāna is naturally inactive. It only acts when inspired by the glance of Brahman. This is described in the following statements of Vedic literature.

māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidyāṁ māyināṁ tu maheśvaram

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is a magician, and the material world is His magical show.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.10]

asmāṁ māyāṁ sṛjate viśvam etat

“The master of Māyā creates this world.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.9]
ya eka varno bahudhā śakti-yogād varṇān anekān nihitārtho dadhāti

“He who has no rival creates the varieties of this world, using His own potencies according to His own wish.” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 4.1]

sa eva bhūyo nija-vīrya-coditaṁ
sva-jīva-māyāṁ prakṛtiṁ sīrṣa-katīṁ
anāma-rūpātmanī rūpa-nāmanī
vidhītasyaṁ nusasāra śāstra-kṛt

“The Personhood of Godhead, again desiring to give names and forms to His parts and parcels, the living entities, placed them under the guidance of material nature. By His own potency, material nature is empowered to re-create.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.10.22]

pradhānāṁ puruṣāṁ cāpi
praviṣyātmecchāyā hariḥ
ksobhayāṁ āsa samprāpte
sarga-kāle vyayāvyayau

“At the time of creation Lord Hari enters the changing pradhāna and the unchanging living souls, and agitates them according to His wish.” [Viśṇu Purāṇa]

mayādhīkṣeṇa prakṛtih
siyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya
jagad viparivartate

“The material nature, which is one of My energies, is working under My direction, O son of Kunti, producing all moving and non-moving beings. Under its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

We do not accept the Saṅkhya theory because it considers pradhāna the original, independent cause of all causes, whereas the Vedic literature clearly states that the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original cause.

yasmin yato yena ca yaśa yaśmai
yad yo yathā kurute kāryate ca
parāvaśeṣāṁ paramāṁ prāk prasiddhāṁ
tad brahma tad dhetur ananyad ekam

“The Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa, is the ultimate resting place and source of everything. Everything is done by Him, everything belongs to Him, and everything is offered to Him. He is the ultimate objective, and whether acting or causing others to act, He is the ultimate doer. There are many causes, high and low, but since He is the cause of all causes, He is well known as the Supreme Brahman who existed before all activities. He is one without a second and has no other cause. I therefore offer my respects unto Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.4.30]

In the next sūtra, the author gives another reason for holding that avyakta is not to be interpreted as pradhāna.

Sūtra 1.4.4

jñeyatvāvacanatvāc ca

jñeyatva – the state of being the object of knowledge; avacanatvāt – because of non-description; ca – and.
[The avyakta of this passage is not described] as the object of knowledge. This is another reason [for not interpreting this avyakta to be pradhāna.]

Claiming that liberation is obtained by understanding the difference between the spiritual living entity, or soul and the modes of material nature, the Saṅkhya theorists claim that one should know the real nature of pradhāna in order to obtain certain powers. Because this passage from the Katha Upaniṣad in no way describes any of this, the word avyakta here cannot refer to the pradhāna of the Saṅkhyas. Actual mystic power is to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the master of pradhāna:

kālenātmānubhāvena sāmyaṁ nītāsu śaktiṣu
sattvādiṣv ādi-puruṣā pradhāna-puruṣeśvaraḥ
parāvarāṇāṁ parama āste kaivalya-saṁjñītaḥ
kevalānbhavānanda-sandoho nirupādhikāḥ

“When the Supreme Personality of Godhead displays His own potency in the form of time and guides His material potencies, such as the mode of goodness, into a neutral condition of equilibrium, He remains as the supreme controller of that neutral state, called pradhāna, as well as of the living entities. He is also the supreme worshipable object for all beings, including liberated souls, demigods and ordinary conditioned souls. The Lord is eternally free from any material designation, and He constitutes the totality of spiritual bliss, which one experiences by seeing the Lord's spiritual form. The Lord thus exhibits the fullest meaning of the word ‘liberation.’ ” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.9.17-18]

Sūtra 1.4.5

vadatīti cen na prājño hi prakaraṇāt

vadati – says; iti – thus; cet – if; na – no; prājño – the omniscient Paramātmā; hi – indeed; prakaraṇāt – because of reference.

If someone says [“This passage does describe pradhāna in this way”] then I say no. That statement refers to the omniscient Personality of Godhead.

Someone may object: “Your contention that the word avyakta in this passage of Katha Upaniṣad cannot refer to pradhāna because the avyakta here is not described as the object of knowledge has in no way been proved. Pradhāna is described in this way in the very next verse [Katha Upaniṣad 1.3.15]:

aśabdam asparśam arūpam avyayaṁ
tathā-rasaṁ nityam agandhavac ca yat
anādy anantaṁ mahataṁ paraṁ dhrvaiṁ
nicāyya taṁ mṛtyu-mukhāt pramucyate

“By meditating on the soundless, touchless, formless, unchanging, tasteless, eternal, fragranceless, beginningless, endless, Supreme Great, one becomes free from the mouth of death.”

“If these words do not describe pradhāna as the ultimate object of knowledge, then what do they describe?”
To this objection I reply: These words describe the omniscient Personality of Godhead. They are an appropriate description of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, about whom the following words are said:

\[ \textit{puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit sā kāśṭhā sā parā gatiḥ} \]

“Nothing is higher than the Supreme Person. The Supreme Person is the highest.” [\textit{Kaṭha Upaniṣad} 1.3.11]

\[ \textit{esa sarvesu bhūteṣu gūḍhātmā na prakāṣate} \]

“Hiding in the hearts of all beings, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not openly manifest.” [\textit{Kaṭha Upaniṣad} 1.3.12]

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains how the manifested material nature and sense objects merge into the Supreme at the time of universal annihilation:

“As at the time of annihilation, the mortal body of the living being becomes merged into food. Food merges into the grains, and the grains merge back into the earth. The earth merges into its subtle sensation, fragrance. Fragrance merges into water, and water further merges into its own quality, taste. That taste merges into fire, which merges into form. Form merges into touch, and touch merges into ether. Ether finally merges into the sensation of sound. The senses all merge into their own origins, the presiding demigods, and they, O gentle Uddhava, merge into the controlling mind, which itself merges into false ego in the mode of goodness. Sound becomes one with false ego in the mode of ignorance, and all-powerful false ego, the first of all the physical elements, merges into the total nature. The total material nature, the primary repository of the three basic modes, dissolves into the modes. These modes of nature then merge into the unmanifest form of nature, and that unmanifest form merges into time. Time merges into the Supreme Lord, present in the form of the omniscient Mahā-puruṣa, the original activator of all living beings. That origin of all life merges into the unborn Supreme Soul, who remains alone, established within Himself. It is from Him that all creation and annihilation are manifested.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.24.22-27]

Therefore He alone is the Supreme Great, and the cause and source of everything else, including pradhāna. To further explain that the word avyakta does not refer to pradhāna he says:

**Sūtra 1.4.6**

\[ \textit{trayāṇām eva caivam upanyāsah praśnaś ca} \]

\[ \textit{trayāṇām} – of the three; \textit{eva} – indeed; \textit{ca} – certainly; \textit{evam} – in this way; \textit{upanyāsah} – mention; \textit{praśnaś} – question; \textit{ca} – and.

\textbf{In this context three questions certainly are mentioned.}

The word \textit{ca} [certainly] here is meant to remove doubt. In this passage of Kaṭha Upaniṣad only three questions are asked. They are:

1. Naciketa’s request that his father be kind to him
2. His request for celestial fire
3. His desire to know the true nature of the self
Nothing else is asked, and so it would have been irrelevant for the teacher to have given teachings on pradhāna. There is no mention of pradhāna because there was no inquiry about it.

Sūtra 1.4.7

mahadvac ca
mahat – the mahat; vat – like; ca – also.

This usage is like the usage of the word mahat.

Because the word mahān in the phrase buddher ātmā mahān parah: “The Great Self is higher than the intelligence,” is never taken to mean the mahat-tattva [material nature] of the Saṅkhya theory, in the same way the avyakta [unmanifested] mentioned here to be higher than this mahat should not be taken to mean the pradhāna of Saṅkhya.

Thus, the attempt of the atheistic Saṅkhya philosophers to misinterpret the ambiguous word avyakta in the passage of Kaṭha Upaniṣad is baseless, and relies on taking the word out of context and reading in a meaning that was never intended. The atheistic Saṅkhya philosophers cannot depend on the support of the Vedic literature, because the real import of the Vēdas is that the Lord alone is the supreme cause of the creation and everything else. Similarly, the atheistic material scientists of today want to prove that the creation comes from nothing, without any other cause but itself. But they cannot explain how the inert matter of the universe originates, nor where the energy and laws of the universe come from. Because they are averse to God and intent on material exploitation, they manufacture so many bogus theories and mislead the people in general. But anyone who understands Vedic philosophy can easily defeat all their arguments by insisting on sensible answers to these simple questions.

Adhikaraṇa 2: The Ajā of Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 4.5 Does Not Mean Pradhāna

Viśaya: Another wrong theory of the Saṅkhya philosophers is refuted in this Adhikaraṇa. The impersonalists do not follow any strict principle in interpreting the Vedic texts. They freely use the primary or secondary meanings of words, and the direct meaning or metaphorical interpretation of phrases, without any regard to contextual considerations, as long as it supports their preconceptions. They sometimes even create entirely new meanings for words based on etymological analysis of their roots. Thus their interpretation of the scriptures is only speculation, but it serves to confuse the layman as to the actual intent of scriptural passages.

The Vedic literature is not ordinary writing, but the Absolute Truth or sacred revelation of God; therefore it should not be interpreted whimsically or in a doctrinaire sectarian manner. To do so is not only a breach of scholarly ethics, but also blocks our only opportunity to receive definitive information of the inconceivable world of transcendence. For the all-perfect Vēdas are originally spoken by the the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, also an incarnation of the Lord.

śrī-nārada uvāca
namas tasmai bhagavate
krṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye
yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām
abhavāyośatiḥ kalāḥ
Śrī Nārada said: “I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation.”

*Sūtra 1.4.8*

*Sūtra 1.4.8*
camasa – a cup; vat – like; aviśeṣāt – because of not being specific.

[The word ajā in Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 4.5 does not mean the Saṅkhya conception of material nature] because of the lack of a specific description. It is not like the word camasa [cup] [in Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 2.2.3.]

The word na [not] should be read into this sūtra from Sūtra 1.4.5. It cannot be said that the female described here is the material nature as described in the Saṅkhya-smṛti. Why? Because the material nature is not specifically described in this passage. There is no specific description, but only the mention of being unborn in the word ajā, which is derived from the phrase na jāyate [it is not born].

It is not like the example of the cup in the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [2.2.3] where it is said:

arvāṅ-g-bilaś camasa ūrdhva-budhna...

“There is a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up. Manifold glory has been placed within it. On its lip the seven Rṣis sit; the tongue as the eighth communicates with Brahman. What is called a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up is this head, for its mouth is below and its bottom [the skull] is above. When it is said that manifold glory has been placed within it, the senses are that manifold glory. When he says that the seven Rṣis sit on its lip, the Rṣis are the active senses. And when he says that the tongue as the eighth Rṣi communicates with Brahman, it is because the tongue does communicate with Brahman [by chanting mantras and prayers].”

It is not possible to take the word camasa, which is derived from the verb cam [to drink], in this mantra as literally a cup, or vessel used to consume what was offered in a yajña. It is not possible because one must consider the meaning of a word not only with reference to its etymology, but also considering the principles of samanvaya or interpretation according to context, as described in the Introduction to this work. For the reason of lack of supporting context, it is not possible to interpret the word ajā in the passage under discussion as the material nature described in the Saṅkhya-smṛti. It is also not possible because the Saṅkhya-smṛti considers that material nature creates the living entities independently, and there is nothing in this passage to support that concept.

The ajā here is the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is described in the Vedas. Giving a specific reason to accept this, he says:

Sūtra 1.4.9

jyotir upakramā tu tathā hy adhiyate eke

jyotiḥ – light; upakramā – beginning with; tu – indeed; tathā – in that way; hi – indeed; adhiyate – I read; eke – some.

Light is its origin. Also, other passages confirm it.

The word tu [but] is used in the sense of certainty. The word jyotiḥ [light] in the sūtra means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is celebrated as light in the śruti-śāstra [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 10.4.16]:

tad deva jyotiṣām jyotiḥ

“The demigods meditate on Him, the light of lights.”

The word upakrama should be understood here in the sense of “cause”. Because this ajā [unborn] has Brahman as its cause, its being unborn is metaphorical only, just as the “cup” in Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 2.2.3 discussed in the previous sūtra. In that passage it is said:
“There is a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up.”

As the “cup” here is actually the skull, in the same way the ajā [unborn] here is not actually unborn, but is the potency born from Brahman, as is described in the first and fourth chapters of Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad. The first quote is [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 1.3]:

> te dhyāna-yogānugata apāśyan
> devāma-śaktim sva-guṇair nigūḍhām

> “The dhyāna-yogīs saw the Supreme Lord’s potency, which was hidden by its own qualities. He, being one, superintends all these causes, time, self, and the rest.”

The second quote is [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 4.1]:

> ya eka-varṇo bahudhā śakti-yogāt

> “He [the Lord] who is one has become many by the touch of His potency.”

Then the author gives another reason in the sūtra’s words tathā hi. Hi in this context means “reason”. The reason is the evidence given in other passages [adhiyāte eke]. That the material nature is born from the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also explained in the following passage [Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.1.9]:

> tasmād etad brahma nāma rūpam annaṁ ca jáyate

> “From Him [the Lord], pradhāna, names, forms, and food, are all born.”

The word brahma here means pradhāna, which is situated in the three modes of nature, and which is also called brahma in Bhagavad-gīta [14.3]:

> mama yonir mahād brahma

> “The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth.”

Now our opponent may ask: “How, then, is the material nature unborn? Then, if it is unborn, how can it be born from light?”

Fearing that these questions may be raised, he says:

**Sūtra 1.4.10**

> kalpanopadeśāc ca madhv-ādi-vad avirodah

> kalpana – creation; upadesāt – from the instruction; ca – certainly; madhv – honey; ādi – beginning with; vad – like; avirodah – not a contradiction.

**Because it is said to be created by the Supreme, it is not a contradiction to say that pradhāna is both created and uncreated. In this way it is like honey and some other things [that are both created and uncreated.]**

This doubt is dispelled by the word ca [certainly]. It is possible for pradhāna to be both created and uncreated. How is that? That is explained by the word kalpana. Kalpana here means “creation”. It should be understood in that way because it was used with that sense in the Rg Veda’s statement, yathā-pūrvaṃ akalpayat: “In the beginning the Supreme Personality of Godhead created the world.” The
meaning of this is that the pradhāna is manifested from the Supreme Brahman, who is the master of the potencies of darkness.

That is the truth in this matter. The Lord has an eternal and very subtle potency named tamas [darkness], which is described in the following statement [Rg Veda 10.1.29.3]:

\[ tama \dot{\text{a}} \text{śīt tamasā gūḍham agre praketām yadā tamas tan na divā na rātrih } \]

“In the beginning was darkness. Darkness covered everything. When the darkness was manifested there was neither day nor night.”

Tamas is also described in the Culika Upaniṣad:

\[ gaur anādavatī \]

“Matter has no power to speak.”

At the time of cosmic annihilation pradhāna attains oneness with Brahman, but does not merge into Brahman. In the passage from śruti-śāstra beginning with the words prthivy apsu pralīyate it is said that the material elements, beginning from earth and culminating in ether, all merge into tamas [darkness], but there is no mention of tamas merging into another substance because tamas is already one with the Supreme. Because tamas is very subtle there is no possibility of it being separate from the Supreme, and therefore it is one with Him. It is not otherwise. This does not mean that tamas is identical with the Supreme. If it meant identity with the Supreme the use of the pratyaya cvi in ekī-bhavati, would not be appropriate.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of the tamas potency, desires to create, from Him arises the unmanifested [avyakta] three modes of material nature. The śruti-śāstra explains:

\[ mahān avyakte liyate avyaktam akṣare akṣaram tamasi \]

“The mahat merges into the avyakta, the avyakta merges into the akṣara, and the akṣara merges into tamas.”

The Mahābhārata explains,

\[ tasmād avyaktam uppannaṁ tri-guṇam dvija-sattama \]

“Oh best of the brāhmaṇas, the unmanifested three modes of material nature were born from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

These passages from scripture clearly describe the creation of pradhāna and the other elements. In this way the scriptures teach that pradhāna is created and that it is both cause and effect simultaneously. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa explains this in the following words:

\[ pradhāṇa-puṁsor ajayoh kāraṇam kārya-bhūtayoh \]

“Lord Viṣṇu is the cause of the unborn pradhāna and puruṣa.”

At the time of creation the three modes of material nature arise in pradhāna and pradhāna manifests many different names, such as pradhāna-avyakta, and many different forms in red and other colors. At this time it is said that the pradhāna is manifested from the Supreme Light [jyotir-utpannā].

Next he [the author of the sutras] gives an example: “It is like honey and other similar things [madhvādi-vat].” The sun, when it is a cause, remains one, and when it is an effect it becomes other things, such as the honey enjoyed by the Vasus. In this way the sun is both cause and effect simultaneously. There is no contradiction in this.
Thus we see that the interpretation of the Vedic scriptures is an extremely subtle matter, requiring not only great scholarship and integrity but also complete faithfulness to the revelation of the Supreme Brahman, which is the actual subject matter of all the Vedic scriptures. The history of the Vedic knowledge is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead impregnated it within Brahmā, the first created being in the universe, and then Brahmā distributed the Vedic knowledge to his sons and disciples. Brahmā was inspired by the Lord to receive this transcendental knowledge as it directly descends from the Lord. The Vēdas are therefore called apauruṣeya, or not imparted by any created being. The Lord and the transcendental world alone existed before the creation [nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt], and therefore the words spoken by the Lord are vibrations of transcendental sound.

There is a gulf of difference between the two qualities of sound, namely prākṛta and aprākṛta or material and transcendental. The materialists like the Śaṅkhya philosophers and others can deal only with prākṛta sound, or sound vibrated in the material sky, because their consciousness is limited to the manifested material nature. Therefore we must know that the transcendental sound vibrations recorded in the symbolic expressions of the Vēdas cannot be understood by anyone within the material universe unless and until he is inspired by the chain of disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa and so on, as described above. No mundane scholar can translate or reveal the true import of the Vedic mantras. They cannot be understood unless one is inspired or initiated by the authorized spiritual master. The original spiritual master is the Lord Himself, and the succession comes down through the sources of paramparā, as clearly stated in Bhagavad-gītā [4.2]:

\[ \text{evāṁ paramparā-प्राप्तम इमाँ राजर्षयो विदुह} \]

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.”

So unless one receives the transcendental knowledge from the authorized paramparā, even though he may be greatly qualified in the mundane advancements of arts or science, his speculative interpretation of the Vedic sound vibration should be considered useless.

**Adhikāraṇa 3: Pañca-pañca-janāḥ in Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.17**

**Does Not Refer to the 25 Elements of Saṅkhya**

Viṣaya: The Saṅkhya philosophers analyze this material world into twenty-four elements, and they place the individual soul as the twenty-fifth item. According to their philosophy the 25 tattvas of the material creation are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>prakṛti</th>
<th>Material nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>prakṛti</td>
<td>Material nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>puruṣa</td>
<td>Soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>mahat-tattva</td>
<td>Great principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ahaṅkāra</td>
<td>False ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>manas</td>
<td>Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>śravāṁsi</td>
<td>Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ākṛti</td>
<td>Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Saṅkhya philosophers are desperate to find support for their atheistic views from the theistic Vedic literatures. So even though the purport of the Vedas completely contradicts their philosophy, any time they see even a glimpse of a reference to their thinking, they pounce on it and hold it up as a supporting statement, even though it is actually a mirage, like a lake seen in the desert. For example the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.17 explains:

\[
yasmin pañca-pañca-janā
ākāśāś ca pratiṣṭhitāḥ tam eva manya ātmānam
vidvān brahmāṁyto 'ṁrtam
\]

“I, who am immortal spirit, meditate on the Supreme Brahman, in whom the ether element and the pañca-pañca-jana rest.”
Samśaya: Do the words pañca-pañca-jana refer to the 25 elements described in the Kapila-tantra, or to some five other things?

Pūrvapakṣa: Because pañca-pañca is a bahuvrīhi-samāsa and pañca-pañca-janāḥ is a karmadhāraya-samāsa, the word pañca-pañca-janāḥ refers to the 25 elements described by Kapila. Somehow the two elements ātmā and ākāśa are here added to the list of elements. The word jana here means tattva [elements].

Siddhānta: He says:

Sūtra 1.4.11

na saṅkhyaopasaṅgrahād api nānā-bhāvād atirekāc ca

na – not; saṅkhya – of numbers; upasaṅgrahāt – because of enumeration; api – even; nānā – various; bhāvāt – states; atirekāt – because of going beyond; ca – and.

Even though they give the same numbers as the Saṅkhya theory, these words do not refer to the Saṅkhya theory because the numbers here actually exceed Saṅkhya numbers and because the elements of Saṅkhya are variegated [and not grouped into five groups of five].

The word api [even] here is used in the sense of “even if we consider for a moment this view.” By noting that the number here is the same number as the Saṅkhya elements does not prove that pañca-pañca-jana refers to the Saṅkhya elements. Why? The answer is given in the words beginning nānā-bhāvāt. Because the variegated Saṅkhya elements are not divided into five groups of five, it is not possible to accept the 5 x 5 here as referring to the 25 Saṅkhya elements. Also, the addition of ātmā and ākāśa brings the number up to 27. Simply by hearing the word pañca [five] twice, one should not be bewildered into thinking these two fives refer to the 25 elements of the Saṅkhya theory.

Someone may ask, “What is your interpretation of pañca-pañca-jana?” The word pañca-jana is the name of a group, just as the word saptaṛṣi [the seven sages] is the name of a group. This is explained by Pāṇini [Āṣṭādhyāyī 2.1.50] in the words dik-saṅkhya saṁjñāyām: “Words indicating direction or number may be compounded with another word in the same case.” As each of the saptaṛṣis may be called saptaṛṣi, in the same way there may be five pañca-janas, each of whom may be called a pañca-jana, and all the pañca-janas together may be called the five pañca-janas. In this way the meaning of the word pañca-jana is very clear.

Who or what actually are these pañca-janas? To answer this question he says:

Sūtra 1.4.12

prāṇādayo vākya-śeṣāt

prāṇa – breath; ādayah – beginning with; vākya – of the statement; śeṣāt – from the remainder.

[The pañca-janas here are five things] beginning with prāṇa [breath], as is clear from the words immediately following the mention of pañca-jana.

The five things beginning with prāṇa are described in the following words [Bṛhad-āranyaka Upanīṣad 4.4.18]:


prāṇasya prāṇam uta cakṣuṣaś ca cakṣur uta śrotasya śrotam annasyāṁannam manaso ye mano vidūḥ

“They know the breath of breath, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the food of food, the mind of the mind.”

The objection may be raised: “The word annam [food] here is included in the Madhyandina recension of the Upaniṣad but not in the Kaṇva recension. In the Kaṇva recension, then, there are only four items and not five.”

To answer this doubt he says:

Sūtra 1.4.13

jyotisaikeśāṁ asaty anne
jyotiṣā – by light; ekeśāṁ – of some; asaty – in the absence; anne – of food.

In some versions [the Kaṇva recension] the word jyotih [light] replaces the word anna [food].

In the version of the Kaṇvas, even though the word anna is missing, the addition of the word jyotih brings the number up to five. This word jyotih is found in Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.6 in the words tad devā jyotiśāṁ jyotih: “The demigods worship Him, the light of lights.” The word jyotih appears here in both recensions and it should be counted among the five or not as is appropriate.

Because the Saṅkhya philosophy does not accept the Vedic version that the the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the root cause of all causes of the material creation and everything else, it is useless for them to seek confirmation from the Vedas. The entire Vedic literature is staunchly theistic, as the many quotations presented in this work affirm. It is simply not the case that certain sections of the Vedas support the idea that material nature is independent of the control of the Lord. The sūtras of Vedānta systematically establish the correct interpretation. When we interpret these sections properly according to the principles of samanvaya given in the Introduction, they remain congruent with the theistic conclusions of the entire Vedic literature, and do not lend support to any other interpretation.

Adhikaraṇa 4: Brahman is the Only Original Cause

Viṣaya: If the materialistic impersonalist speculators cannot find support in the Vedic literature for their pet theory, that the creation arises from matter alone, by taking Vedic statements out of context, their next tactic is to accuse the Vedas of inconsistency. Because the Supreme Brahman is called by many different names in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, they may say that the Vedic literatures contain many conflicting theories of creation. The modern scientific critics are especially quick to assert that the Vedic literature is the quaint mythology of a primitive people, and that their scientific knowledge has made tremendous advancement since those ancient times. But all these arguments are pointless, because actually the Vedic literature consistently presents the fact that the the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the sole cause and ingredient of the cosmic creation.

Saṁśaya: The Saṅkhya theorist thus raises another doubt: “It cannot be said that the Vedānta describes Brahman as the sole cause of the universe, for the Vedānta philosophy does not describe a single original cause of creation.”

Pūrupakṣa: In Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1.1 ātma [self] is revealed as the source of creation in the following words:
tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ

“From ātmana the sky was born.”

Another passage [Tatitriya Upaniṣad 2.7.1] describes asat [non-existence] as the original cause in the following words:

asad vā idam agra āsīt tato vā sad ajāyata tad ātmānam svayam akuruta

“In the beginning was non-existence. From non-existence existence was born. Existence created the self.”

Another passage [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.9.1] affirms that ākāśa [sky] is the original cause:

asya lokasya kā garit ity ākāśa iti havōca

“What is the origin of this world? Sky is the origin, he said.”

Another passage [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.11.5] affirms that breath [prāṇa] is the original cause in the following words:

sarvāni hā vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhisamviśanti

“Everything was born from breath and ultimately enters into breath again.”

Another passage again proclaims asat [non-existence] as the original cause in the following words:

asad evedam agra āsīt tat samabhavat

“In the beginning was non-existence. From non-existence this world was manifested.”

Another passage [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1] proclaims Brahman the original cause in the following words:

sad eva saumyedam agra āsīt

“O saintly one, in the beginning was Brahman.”

Another passage [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.7] proclaims avyākṛta [the unmanifested] as the original cause in the following words:

tad vaidāṁ tarhy avyākṛtam āsīt tan-nāma-rūpābhyāṁ vyākriyata

“In the beginning was the unmanifested. From it all the names and forms have come.”

Many other passages could also be quoted to show the different theories of creation. Because in these passages of the Vedas many different things have been described as the sole original cause of creation, it cannot be said that Brahman is the sole cause of the creation of the world. However, it is possible to say that pradhāna is the sole cause of creation, as we find in the passage beginning with the word tarhi already quoted from the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad. If this view is accepted, then the contradiction of seeing one thing sometimes as the original cause and sometimes as a product of the original cause becomes at once resolved. Because it is all-pervading the pradhāna can appropriately be called ātmā, ākāśa, and brahma, because it is the resting-place of all transformations and because it is eternal it may appropriately be called asat, and because it is the origin of all breathing it may metaphorically be called breath. When the scriptures state that the original cause performed activities, such as thinking. Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 1.2.5 explains sa aikṣata: “The original cause thought.” these may also be considered metaphors. All this evidence clearly demonstrates that pradhāna is the original cause of creation of the world as described in the Vedānta literature.

Siddhānta: In the context of this argument:
The Upaniṣads state that Brahman is the cause of sky and the other elements.

The word *ca* [certainly] is used here to dispel doubt. It may be said that Brahman is the only cause of the world. Why? Because “the Upaniṣads state that Brahman is the cause of sky and the other elements.” The words *yathā vyapadiṣṭam* [as described] mean Brahman who in the *lakṣaṇa-sūtra* of Vedānta [1.1.2] and in other places in Vedic literature is described as all-knowing, all-powerful, and full of all other powers and virtues.” This is true because in all Vedānta literatures Brahman is described as the original cause of sky and all the elements. That Brahman is all-knowing and full of a host of transcendental qualities, and is described in the following words [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 1.2.2]:

satyam jñānam anantam

“Brahman is eternal, limitless, and full of knowledge.”

That Brahman is the original cause of all causes is described in these words [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 1.2.3]:

tasmād vā etasmāt

“From Brahman sky is manifested.”

The qualities of Brahman are described in the following words [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1]:

sad eva saumyedam

“O gentle one, in the beginning was the eternal Brahman.”

Also, in these words [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.3]:

tad aikṣata bahsyām

“He thought: I shall become many.”

The truth of Brahman is also described in the following words [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 6.2.3]:

tat tejo ’srjata

“Then He created light.”

The relationship between cause and effect in regard to Brahman we will describe later on. The words *atmā, ākāśa, prāṇa, sat,* and Brahman mean all-pervading”, “all-effulgent,” “all-powerful,” “the supreme existence,” and “the greatest,” respectively. These words are very appropriate as names for Brahman. In the same way the statement *sa aikṣata* [He thought.] is very appropriate for Brahman.

Now, describing the meaning of the words *asat* [non-existence] and *avyākṛta* [unmanifested], he says:

Sūtra 1.4.15

samākarsāt

samākarsāt – from appropriateness.

The words *asat* [non-existence] and *avyākṛta* [unmanifested] also refer to Brahman, for that interpretation is appropriate in this context.
Because it is preceded by the words so ‘kāmayata [He desired] the word asat in the Taîtrīya Upaniṣad 2.7.1 passage asad vā idam agra āśīt: “In the beginning was asat,” must refer to the Supreme Brahman, and because it is preceded by the words ādityo brahma [splendid Brahman] the word asat in the passage asad evedam [In the beginning was asat] must also refer to the Supreme Brahman. Because before the creation of the material world the Supreme Brahman’s names and forms had not existed in the material world, the Supreme Brahman is sometimes known as asat [nonexistence].

The idea that asat and not the Supreme Brahman is the original cause of creation is refuted in the following statement of Chāndogya Upaniṣad [6.2.1-2]:

$$\text{sad eva saumyedam agra āśīd ekam evādviṣṭyaṁ tad dhaika āhur asad evedam agra āśīd ekam evādviṣṭyaṁ tasmād asataḥ saj jāyate. kutas tu khalu saumyaivaṁ syād iti hovāca katham asataḥ saj jāyeteti sat tv eva saumyedam agra āśīd ekam evādviṣṭyaṁ.}$$

“O gentle one, in the beginning was sat, who is one without a second. Some say that in the beginning was asat, who is one without a second, and from that asat the sat was born. O gentle one,” he said, “how is it possible that the sat was born from the asat? O gentle one, it is the sat, which is one without a second, that existed in the beginning.”

The idea that asat was the original cause of creation is also refuted by the argument of time. The argument of time is that is not possible to use the verb “to be” with the noun asat [non-existence]. Because it is thus not possible to say “In the beginning non-existence was,” it is also not possible to say that asat [non-existence] was the original cause of creation.

In this way the wise declare that it is not possible for non-existence to be the cause of creation and for this reason when asat is described as the cause of creation it must refer to the Supreme Brahman, who is asat because His transcendental potencies are supremely subtle and fine. That is the proper understanding of the word asat in this context.

The Brhaḍ-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad [1.4.7] explains:

$$\text{tad vaidāṁ tarhy avyākṛtaṁ āśīt tan-nāma-raũpāhyāṁ vyākriyata}$$

“In the beginning was the avyākṛta. From it all the names and forms have come.”

The word avyākṛta should be understood to mean Brahman. In the words sa eṣa iha praviṣṭhaṁ: “Then He entered within,” that immediately follow it becomes clear that the avyākṛta that becomes manifested by name and form is the powerful Supreme Brahman who appears by His own wish. Any conclusion other than this would oppose the clear teachings of Vedānta-sūtra and the general conclusions of all the śruti-śāstras. For these reasons it is therefore confirmed that the Supreme Brahman is the actual cause of the material universes.

Addhikaraṇa 5: The Puruṣa of the Kauśitaki Upaniṣad Is Brahman

Viṣaya: In the next passage the author of the sūtras again refutes the Saṅkhya theory that the cause of the world is the collective activity of the individual living entities [jīvas]. We find this theory today in spurious new-age cults that maintain, contrary to everyone’s daily experience, that one can create one’s own reality. This philosophy originates from an attempt to get around the difficulty of atheistic theories of creation discussed earlier, that matter is inert and cannot organize itself into the energetic universe we observe. However, the jīvas, being atomic in size and power, do not possess sufficient creative
energy to account for the gigantic material creation. Such unlimited creative power belongs only to the Supreme Brahman.

In the Kausūṭakī Upaniṣad 4.18, Bālākī Vipra promises “I shall tell you about Brahman,” and proceeds to describe 16 puruṣas, beginning with the sun-god, as Brahman. King Ajātaśatru then rejects these instructions and says: “O Bālākī, the person who is the creator of these sixteen puruṣas, the person engaged in this karma is the actual Brahman.”

Saṁśaya: At this point the doubt may be raised: “Is the superintendent of matter, the enjoyer described in the saṅkhya texts, or is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, to be understood as the Brahman mentioned here?”

Pūrvapakṣa: Someone may object: “Because the use of the word karma here identifies this Brahman with the experiencing the results of good and bad work, because it the next passage this Brahman is described as sometimes sleeping [tau ha suptaṁ puruṣam ājagmatuḥ], and because in the passage after that this Brahman is described as an enjoyer [tad yathā śreṣṭhī svair bhūṅkte], it should be understood that the Brahman here is the jīva [individual spirit soul] described in the tantras.

“The use of the word prāṇa [life-breath] here also confirms that the Brahman described here is the living individual soul. This Brahman [the jīva], which is different from matter, should thus be understood as the original cause of the many enjoyer-puruṣas and the original cause of their sinless activities as well. In this way it has been proven that the Brahman described in this passage is the individual spirit soul [jīva]. The theory that there is a Supreme Personality of Godhead is separate from the individual soul [jīva] is thus completely untenable. The text [sa aikṣata] that explains that the creator thinks is thus very appropriate if it is understood that the original cause, the controller of the material energy that creates this world, is in fact the individual soul [jīva].”

Siddhānta: In response to this, he says:

Sūtra 1.4.16

jagad-vācitvāt

jagat – the world; vācitvāt – because of the word.

[The word Brahman here means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because the word karma here should be understood] to mean jagat [creation].

The word Brahman here does not mean the kṣetrajña [individual spiritual soul] described in the tantras, but rather it means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known by study of Vedānta. Why? Because of the use of the word jagat. Because it is accompanied by the word jagat, the word karma in this passage means “the material world composed of a mixture of matter and spirit.” Because He is the original creator, this karma [material world] may be understood to be His property [vasya karma]. The truth is this: the word karma, which is derived from the verb kr [to do, create] here means creation. When this interpretation is accepted the actual meaning of the word here is understood. This interpretation refutes the mistaken idea that the individual spirit soul [jīva] is the original creator. Even the Kapila-tantra does not accept the individual living entity as the original creator. One also cannot say that by adhyāsa [association] the individual living entity may be considered the creator of the material world, for all the scriptures maintain that the spirit soul is always aloof from matter. For these reasons it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is the original creator of the material world. It cannot be that King Ajātaśatru speaks lies in this passage. Rejecting Bālākī’s teaching that the sixteen puruṣas [persons] are Brahman, Ajātaśatru promises, “I will tell you about Brahman.” If Ajātaśatru then teaches
that the *jīvas* [individual spirit souls] are Brahman then his teaching is no different than Bālākī’s, and he is dishonest to reject Bālākī’s instruction as untrue, and then teach the same instruction as the truth. In this way the meaning of this passage is understood. “You have described these *purusās* [persons] as Brahman, but I will tell you of someone who is the creator of all of them,” is the gist of Ajātaśatru’s statement. In this way it should be understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause and the entire material world is His creation.

:idam hi viśvam bhagavān ivetaro:
yatō jagat-sthāna-nirodha-sambhavāḥ

“The Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead is Himself this cosmos, and still He is aloof from it. From Him only has this cosmic manifestation emanated, in Him it rests, and into Him it enters after annihilation.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.20]

:aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattāḥ sarvam pravartate
iti matvā bhajante māṁ
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.8]

Pūrvapakṣa: If someone objects “Because it mentions *mukhya-prāṇa* [the chief breath of life] the Brahman here must be the *jīva* and not anyone else,” then he replies:

Sūtra 1.4.17

:jīva-mukhya-prāṇa-liṅgān neti cet tad-vyākhyātām

*jīva* – the individual spiritual entity; *mukhya* – the chief; *prāṇa* – breath of life; *liṅgān* – because of the characteristics; *na* – not; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *tad* – that; *vyākhyātām* – has been explained.

If the objection is raised that the *jīva* or chief breath of life is described as Brahman in this passage, then I say, “No. This has already been explained [in *Sūtra* 1.1.31].”

In *Sūtra* 1.1.31, which dealt with the conversation of Indra and Pratardana, this question was conclusively decided. There it was explained that in a passage where in both the beginning and the end Brahman was explicitly named, what in the beginning may seem perhaps by its characteristics to refer to the *jīvas* or something else, without them being explicitly mentioned, must be taken as referring to Brahman also.

This passage from the Kauśītakī *Upaniṣad* begins with the words *brahma te bravāni*: “Now I will tell you about Brahman,” and ends with the words *sarvān pāśmāno ʿpahatya sarvesāṁ bhūtānāṁ śreṣṭhām ādhipatyaṁ paryeti ya eva veda:* “A person who understands this becomes free from all sins. He becomes the king of all men.” Because of these words understood according to the explanation given in the conversation of Indra and Pratardana [*Sūtra* 1.1.31] and because of the other arguments given here, the words *yasya caitat karma* in this passage of Kauśītakī *Upaniṣad* should not be understood to refer to anything other than Brahman, the Personality of Godhead.

Someone many object, “Certainly you may connect the words *karma* and *prāṇa* with the word *etat* and then interpret them to refer to Brahman, but still there are direct references to the *jīva* in this passage of Kauśītakī *Upaniṣad*. The evidence of the questions and answers in this passage make it impossible to
consider Brahman different from the jīva. In the question about the sleeper the jīva is asked about, and in the questions about the place of sleep, the naḍīs, and the senses, the jīva, who is here called prāṇa, is also asked about. It is the jīva who awakens at the end. In this way the entire passage is about the jīva. In this way it may be understood that the jīva is the Supreme.”

This argument is based on the rest of the passage quoted from Kauśitakī Upaniṣad 4.18, which is given in its entirety below:

Bālākī first mentions the puruṣa in the sun as Brahman. Then on being refuted by Ajātaśatru, he goes on mentioning various puruṣas in the moon, lightning, the thundercloud, in the wind, in the ether, in the fire, in the waters, in the mirror, in the shadow, in the echo, in sound, in sleep, in body, in the right eye, and in the left eye. All these were refuted by Ajātaśatru. Then having exhausted all his ideas of Brahman, Bālākī fell silent. Ajātaśatru said to him, “Is this as far as your knowledge goes, O Bālākī?” “Thus far only,” he replied.

Ajātaśatru said, “Do not speak proudly without cause, saying ‘Let me tell you about Brahman.’ O Bālākī, the person who is the creator of these sixteen puruṣas, the person engaged in this karma is the actual Brahman.” Then Bālākī approached him with fuel in his hand, saying, “Let me accept you as guru.”

Ajātaśatru said, “I consider it unnatural that a kṣatriya should be the guru of a brāhmaṇa. Come, I will tell you all I know.” Taking Bālākī by the hand, Ajātaśatru went out. They came to a man asleep. Ajātaśatru pushed him with his staff, and the man immediately got up. Ajātaśatru said to Bālākī, “Where was this sleeping soul resting? Where did he go, and from where did he return upon awakening?” Bālākī did not know what to say. Then Ajātaśatru said to Bālākī, “The vessels of the heart named Hitā surround the heart membrane; thin as a hair divided into a thousand parts and filled with the minute essence of various colors—white, black, yellow and red—when a jīva is in dreamless sleep, he abides therein.

“Then he is absorbed in that prāṇa. Then speech enters into it with all names, sight enters into it with all forms, hearing enters into it with all sounds, the mind enters into it with all thoughts. As sparks go out in all directions from a blazing fire, when the soul awakens, all the prāṇas go out to their stations; from the prāṇas come the devas, from the devas the worlds. This is the true prāṇa, identical with prajñā; entering this body and soul, to the hair and nails. The subordinate souls follow this Soul, as the household follows the householder. As the householder feeds with his household, and as the household feeds on the householder, so this Soul, itself prajñā, feeds with those souls, and those souls feed on this Soul. As long as Indra did not know this Soul, the asuras defeated him. When he knew Him, then then having conquered and slain the asuras, he attained the pre-eminence of all the demigods and all beings, he attained sovereignty and empire. Thus too it is with him who has this knowledge; having destroyed all sins, he attains the pre-eminence of all beings, and sovereignty and empire, who knows thus, who knows thus.”

To answer this doubt he says:

**Sūtra 1.4.18**

anyārthaṁ tu jaiminīḥ praśna-vyākhyānābhhyāṁ api caivam eke

*anyā* – another; *arthaṁ* – meaning; *tu* – but; *jaiminīḥ* – Jaimini; *praśna* – with the questions; *vyākhyānābhhyāṁ* – and answers; *api* – also; *ca* – and; *eke* – in this way; *eke* – some.

Jaimini thinks these questions and answers convey a different meaning, and some versions of the text also give a different meaning.
The word *tu* [but] is used here to dispel doubt. The description of the *jīva* here has a different meaning. Jaimini considers that this passage explains that Brahman and the *jīva* are different. Why? Because of the questions and answers in this passage. The questions ask about the living soul, sleeping and awake, who is different from the life-breath. The text reads: *kvaiṣa* *etad* *bālāke* *puruṣa* *śayiṣṭa* *kva* *vā* *etad* *abhūt* *kuta* *etad* *agāt:* “O Bālākī, where does this person rest while he sleeps? From where does he come when he wakes?” In this question the difference between Brahman and the *jīva* may be clearly seen. The answer is given, *yadā* *suptah* *svapnaṁ* *na* *kaṅcana* *paśyati* *tathāṁśin* *prāṇa* *evaikadāḥ* *bhavati:* “When he sleeps without seeing a dream he becomes one with the life-breath.” The passage *etasmād* *ātmānaḥ* *prāṇāḥ* *yathāyatanam* *vipraṭiṣṭante* *prāṇebhyo* *devā* *devebhyo* *lokāḥ:* “From that Supreme Self the breath of life comes. From the breath of life the demigods come. From the demigods the planets come,” shows the difference between Brahman and the *jīva*.

The word *prāṇa* here means Lord Paramātmā, because Paramātmā is famous as the resting-place of dreamless sleep. Into Him the *jīvas* merge, and from Him they become manifested again. The meaning of the following passage is that the *nāḍīs* are merely the gateways leading to the realm of sleep. The Paramātmā should be understood to be where the *jīva* sleeps, and from whom the *jīva* emerges to enjoy. In the Vājasaneyī recension of this conversation between Bālākī and Ajātāstra, the *jīva* is described as *vijñānamaya* [full of knowledge] and Brahman is clearly distinguished from him. In that reading the question is, *ya esa* *vijñānamayah* *puruṣāḥ* *kvaiṣa* *tadābhūt* *kuta* *etad* *agāt:* “O Bālākī, where does this person full of knowledge rest while he sleeps? From where does he come when he wakes?” The answer is given, *ya eso ’ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmin śete:* “He rests in the sky within the heart.” We have already discussed in Śūtra 1.3.14 that the Supreme Brahman is found in the small sky within the heart of the living entities. In this way it is proved that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the object of knowledge taught in this passage.

**Adhikāraṇa 6: The Ātmā of Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.5 is Brahman and Not Jīva**

*Viṣaya:* The materialistic impersonalist speculators again try to misuse the authority of the Vedic literatures to prove their theory that the *pradhāna,* not Brahman, is the source of creation, and that knowledge of the *jīvas* is the cause of liberation. In this example they try to redefine the word *ātmā,* which primarily signifies Paramātmā, the Supersoul or Self of existence. There is a famous passage in the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5 where Yājñavalkya teaches his wife Maitreyī about Brahman:

Yājñavalkya had two wives, and Kātyāyanī. Maitreyī was conversant with Brahman, but Kātyāyanī had only such knowledge as is commonly possessed by women. Yājñavalkya, when he was preparing to give up the life of a householder and enter into the forest, said “Maitreyī, certainly I am going away from this my house, into the forest. Let us make a settlement between you and Kātyāyanī.”

Maitreyī said “My lord, if all the wealth in this whole earth were to belong to me, tell me, would I be immortal by it, or not?” Yājñavalkya replied “No, your life would be like the life of rich people, but there is no hope of immortality by wealth.” Then Maitreyī said “What use is that by which I do not become immortal? What my lord knows of immortality, tell that clearly to me.”

Yājñavalkya said, “You who are truly dear to me, and you have increased what is dear to me in you. Therefore if you like, I will explain it to you, and mark well what I say.
“Verily a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the husband is dear.

“Verily sons are not dear, that you may love the sons; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the sons are dear.

“Verily a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the wife is dear.

“Verily wealth is not dear, that you may love wealth; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore wealth is dear.

“Verily cattle are not dear, that you may love the cattle; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the cattle are dear.

“Verily the \textit{brahmanas} are not dear, that you may love the \textit{brahmanas}; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the \textit{brahmanas} are dear.

“Verily the \textit{kṣatriyas} are not dear, that you may love the \textit{kṣatriyas}; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the \textit{kṣatriyas} are dear.

“Verily the worlds are not dear, that you may love the worlds; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the worlds are dear.

“Verily the \textit{devas} are not dear, that you may love the \textit{devas}; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the \textit{devas} are dear.

“Verily the \textit{Vedas} are not dear, that you may love the \textit{Vedas}; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the \textit{Vedas} are dear.

“Verily the living entities are not dear, that you may love the living entities; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore the living entities are dear.

“Verily everything is not dear, that you may love everything; but that you may love the Self \textit{ātmā}, therefore everything is dear.

“Verily, the Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyi, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self \textit{ātmā}, everything becomes known.”

“Whoever looks for the \textit{brahmanas} elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the \textit{brahmanas}.

“Whoever looks for the \textit{kṣatriyas} elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the \textit{kṣatriyas}.

“Whoever looks for the worlds elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the worlds.

“Whoever looks for the \textit{devas} elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the \textit{devas}.

“Whoever looks for the living entities elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the living entities.

“Whoever looks for everything elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by everything.

“These \textit{brahmanas}, these \textit{kṣatriyas}, these worlds, these \textit{devas}, these \textit{Vedas}, all these living entities, all and everything is the Self.

“Now as the sounds of a drum being beaten cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the drum is seized, or the beater of the drum; or as the sounds of a conch being blown cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the conch is seized, or the blower of the conch; and as the sounds of a flute being played cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the flute is seized, or the player of the
flute; as smoke comes from a fire made with wet fuel, the *Rg Veda, Sāma Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, Purāṇas, Itihāsas, Vidyās, Upaniṣads, ślokas, sūtras, vyākhyās, and anuvyākhyās*, come from the breath of the Supreme Person. As the ocean is the sole resting place of all waters, so the skin is the sole resting-place of all tactile sensations, the nose is the sole resting-place of all fragrances, the tongue is the sole resting-place of all tastes, the eyes are the sole resting-place of all forms, the ears are the sole resting-place of all sounds, the mind is the sole resting-place of all thoughts and desires, the heart is the sole resting place of all knowledge, the hands are the sole resting-place of all work, the genitals are the sole resting-place of all material bliss, the anus is the sole resting-place of all expulsions, the feet are the sole resting-place of all pathways, and words are the sole resting-place of all the *Vedas*. As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them. When He has departed, there is no more knowledge, I say, O Maitreyī.” Thus spoke Yājñavalkya.

Then Maitreyī said, “Here, Sir, you have landed me in utter bewilderment. Indeed I do not understand Him [the Self].” But he replied, “Maitreyī, I say nothing that is bewildering. Verily, that Self is imperishable, of an indestructible nature. For when there seems to be duality, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other, one salutes the other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one touches the other, one knows the other; but when the Self only is all this, how should he see another, how should he smell another, how should he taste another, how should he salute another, how should he hear another, how should he touch another, how should he know another? That Self is to be described by ‘No, no!’ He is incomprehensible, for He cannot be understood; He is imperishable, for He cannot perish; He is unattached, for He does not attach Himself; unfettered, He does not suffer, He does not fail. How, O Beloved, should one know the Knower?

“Thus, O Maitreyī, you have been instructed; thus far goes immortality.” Having said this, Yājñavalkya went away into the forest.

The most significant verses in this passage are the following:

\[na \text{ vā } \text{are } \text{kāmāya } \text{patīḥ } \text{priyo } \text{bhavati}\]

“A husband is not dear because the wife loves the husband; the husband is dear because she loves the Self [ātmā].”

He also says:

\[na \text{ vā } \text{are } \text{sarvasya } \text{kāmāya } \text{sarvāṁ } \text{priyāṁ } \text{bhavati } \text{ātmanas } \text{tu } \text{kāmāya } \text{sarvāṁ } \text{priyāṁ } \text{bhavati}\]

“Everything is not dear because one loves everything; everything is dear because one loves the Self [ātmā].”

Again, he says:

\[ātmā \text{ vā } \text{are } \text{draṣṭavyaḥ } \text{śrotavyo } \text{mantavyo } \text{nidadhyāṣṭavyo } \text{maṅturey } \text{ātmano } \text{vā } \text{are } \text{darśanena } \text{śravanena } \text{matyā } \text{vijñānena } \text{idāṁ } \text{sarvāṁ } \text{viditam}\]

“The Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyī, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self [ātmā], everything becomes known.”

*Sāṃśaya: In this passage which self is to be understood: the jīva [individual spirit soul] described in the Kapila-tantra, or the Paramātmā [the Supreme Personality of Godhead]?*
Pūrvapakṣa: Because in this passage he describes the love of husband and wife and because in the middle of the passage he says: etebhyo bhubhāya samutthāya tāny evaṁvinaśyati na pretya-saṁjñāsti: “He leaves the material elements, his body is destroyed, he dies and is no longer conscious,” words that clearly describe a resident of the material world who is subject to birth and death, and because at the end he says: vijñātāram are kena vijāniyāt: “How should we understand the person who is the knower?” this passage should be interpreted to describe the jīva, who is the knower described in the Kapila-tantra.

You may object: “But it says that by knowing the Self everything becomes known. Certainly this refers to the Paramātmā and not the jīva.” but this objection is not valid. The jīva takes birth in this world with an aim to enjoy and one may figuratively say that by knowing the jīva one knows everything for one then knows the world around him meant for his enjoyment. You may again object, “This passage cannot refer to the jīva because the text says amṛtavasya tu nāśāsti vittena: ‘By knowing Him one becomes immortal.’ Because it is only by knowing the Paramātmā that one becomes immortal, how can this passage refer to the jīva?” This objection is also invalid because one may also attain immortality by understanding that the jīva is by nature different from matter. In the same way, all descriptions in this passage that seem to refer to Brahman should be understood to refer to the jīva. Therefore it should be understood that the material nature, which is under the control of the jīva, is the original cause of the world.

Śiddhānta: In this matter:

Sūtra 1.4.19

vākyānvayāt

vākya – statement; anvayāt – because of the connection.

The context of this passage [proves that Brahman is the object of discussion.]

In this passage the Paramātmā, and not the jīva of the Kapila-tantra, is described. Why? Because in the context of the whole passage, including what precedes and follows this quote, that is the appropriate interpretation. Three sages also confirm this interpretation:

Sūtra 1.4.20

pratijñā-siddher liṅgam āśmarathyāḥ

pratijñā – of the promise; siddher – of the fulfillment; liṅgam – the mark; āśmarathyāḥ – Āśmarathyā.

Āśmarathyā [maintains that the Self here is Paramātmā because only in that way] is the promise [that by knowledge of the Self everything is known] fulfilled.

Āśmarathyā maintains that the promise ātmamo vijñānenasarvam viditam: “By knowledge of the Self everything is known,” indicates that the Self referred to here is the Paramātmā. It is not taught here that by knowledge of the jīva everything becomes known. On the other hand, everything becomes known by knowledge of the cause of all causes. It is not possible to interpret these words in a figurative way, because after promising that by knowing the Self everything becomes known, in the passage beginning brahma tam parādāt: “One who thinks the brāhmaṇas rest in a place other than the Self is spurned by the brāhmaṇas. One who thinks the kṣatriyas rest in a place other than the Self is spurned by the
ksatriyas. One who thinks the worlds rest in a place other than the self is spurned by the worlds,” he affirms that the Paramātmā is the form of everything and the resting place of the brāhmaṇas, ksatriyas, and world. For these reasons it is not possible that the Self here can be any other than the Paramātmā.

It is also not possible for the individual living entity who remains under the control of karma to be the original cause of all causes described in the passage beginning tasya vā etasya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam: “The Vedas were manifested from the breathing of this Supreme Being.” It is also not possible for the sage Yājñavalkya to have taught his wife, who had renounced all wealth and material benefits to attain liberation, only about the jīva and not about the Supreme Brahman. It is also not possible that the Self referred to here is the jīva because one cannot attain liberation simply by knowing the jīva. That liberation is attained only by understanding the Supreme Brahman is confirmed in the following statement of Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 3.8 and 6.15: tam eva viditvāi mṛtyum eti: “By understanding the Supreme Brahman one is able to transcend death.” For all these reasons it should be understood that the Self described in this passage is the Paramātmā.

The objection may be raised: “Because the Self in this passage is described as the object of love for the husband and other persons, this self must be the jīva bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death and not the Paramātmā. It cannot be said that the Self described here must be the Paramātmā because that interpretation answers the promise of Yājñavalkya to speak certain words, nor can it be said that the Self here must be the Paramātmā because this Self is the shelter of the devotees, the creator of everything, all-powerful, and the origin of transcendental bliss. The jīva may also be these things, as the Padma Purāṇa explains:

yenārcito haris tena tarpitāni jaganty api rajyanti jantvas tatra sthāvarā jaṅgamā api

“One who worships Lord Hari pleases all the worlds. All moving and non-moving creatures love the devotee.”

In this way the Self described here is not the Paramātmā.”

Siddhānta: Fearing that the opponent may speak these words, he says:

Sūtra 1.4.21

utkramisyata evaṁ bhāvād ity auḍulomiḥ

utkramisyataḥ – of a person about to depart; evaṁ – in this way; bhāvāt – from this condition; iti – thus; auḍulomiḥ – Auḍulomi.

Auḍulomi maintains that one about to become liberated attains the transcendental qualities of the Lord.

The word utkramisyataḥ here means a person who by following spiritual practices attains the Paramātmā. Evaṁ bhāvāt means “because of being dear to everyone.” Ātmā means “Paramātmā.” This is the opinion of Auḍulomi. The passage patyuḥ kāmāya patiḥ priyobhavati: “A husband is not dear because the wife loves the husband; a husband is dear because she loves the Self,” means that if a wife thinks “By my own power I shall become dear to my husband” her husband will not love her. However, if the wife loves the Paramātmā, then Lord Paramātmā will make everyone love this devotee-wife. The word kāma here means “desire” and kāmāya means “to fulfill the desire.” The use of the dative case here is described in Pāṇini’s sūtras [Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.3.1 or Siddhānta-kaumudi 581] in the following words:

kriyārthopapadasya ca karmanīi sthāninaḥ
“The dative case is used for the object of a verb understood but not expressed. In the dative two verbs are used together and the action is in the future.”

In other words this passage [patyuh kāmāya] of the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad means “When He is worshiped with devotion, the Supreme Personality of Godhead makes everything a source of happiness for His devotees.” This is corroborated by the following statement of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [11.14.13]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{aksiñcanasya dāntasya} \\
\text{sāntasya sama-cetasah} \\
\text{mayā santuṣṭa-manasaḥ} \\
\text{svāhā sukhamayā diśah}
\end{align*}
\]

“For a person who is renounced, self-controlled, peaceful, equal to all, and who finds his happiness in Me, every place in this world is full of joy.”

The passage patyuh kāmāya may also be interpreted to mean “Trying to please the husband does not please him. Only when the wife tries to please the Paramātmā does the husband become pleased.” This interpretation is corroborated by the following statement of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [10.23.27]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{prāṇa-buddhi-manaḥ-svāṭma-} \\
\text{dārāpatya-dhanādayah} \\
\text{yat-samparkāḥ priyā āsaṁs} \\
\text{tataḥ ko 'nyah paraḥ priyāḥ}
\end{align*}
\]

“Our life, property, home, wife, children, house, country, society, and all paraphernalia which are very dear to us are expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who is more dear to us than the Supreme Person?”

In this interpretation the word kāma means “happiness” and the dative case is used in the same sense as the previous interpretation. This interpretation means that by the will of the Paramātmā, by the nearness of the Paramātmā, or by the touch of the Paramātmā, even what is ordinarily unpleasant becomes blissful. Therefore when the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad says ātmā vā are draṣṭavyah: “The Self should be seen,” the word ātmā means the dear Lord Hari. It is not possible to interpret the word ātmā here to mean the jīva because here the primary meaning of ātmā is the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead. To interpret ātmā in any other way would contradict the way the word had been used in the previous passage [vākya-bheda]. We do not see how it is possible to interpret ātmā in a way different from the way it was clearly used in the immediately previous passage. In this way the word ātmā in ātmā vā are draṣṭavyah must be the Paramātmā. In both passages [ātmanas tu kāmāya and ātmā vā] the word ātmā cannot mean the jīva, for in these contexts the word ātmā can only refer to Brahman.

Although Auḍulomi is a nirguṇa-ātmavādi [impersonalist] as will be explained later on [Vedanta-sūtra 4.4.6] in the words citi tan-mātreṇa tad-ātmakatvād ity auḍulomīḥ: “When he is liberated the jīva enters the Supreme Intelligence, for the jīva is actually intelligence only. This is the opinion of Auḍulomi.” Still Auḍulomi maintains that Lord Hari should be worshiped in order to dispel ignorance and reveal the true nature of the self, as will be explained in the following words [Vedānta-sūtra 3.4.45]: ārtvijyām ity auḍulomītasmaihī parikrīyate: “Just as a Vedic priest is purchased to perform a yajña, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is purchased by His devotees’ love.” In this way it is proved that pure devotion to Lord Hari fulfills all desires.

Our opponent may say: “So be it. However, in the same Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad [2.4.12] we find the following words:
“As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them.”

How do you reconcile this statement with your interpretation of the word ātmā in this Upaniṣad? Clearly this passage refers to the jīva described in the Kapila-tantra, because that is the appropriate interpretation.”

To answer this doubt he says:

**Sūtra 1.4.22**

avasthiter iti kāśakṛtsnaḥ

avasthiter – because of residence; iti – thus; kāśakṛtsnaḥ – Kāśakṛtsna.

This passage refers to Paramātmā, for Paramātmā resides within the jīva. This is the opinion of Kāśakṛtsna.

In this statement the word avasthiteḥ [residing] which refers to the Paramātmā, the Great Being who is different from the jīva, and who is described as vijñāna-ghanā [full of knowledge], teaches that the Paramātmā is different from the jīva and resides within him. Kāśakṛtsna considers that because the Paramātmā and the jīva are different the words mahad-bhūtam [Great Being], anantam [limitless] and vijñāna-ghanā cannot refer to the jīva. A summary of the passage from Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad under discussion follows.

yenāhāṃ nāṁrtaḥ syām kim ahaṁ tena kuryām

“Tell me what I must do to become free of death.” [Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.4]

Asked this question about the means to attain liberation, the sage answered:

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ srotavya mantavya nidhyāṣṭatyāvato maitreyaḥ ātmavo vā are darśanena śravanena matyā vijñānena idam sarvaṁ viditam

“The Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyī, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self, everything becomes known.”

In this way he explains that the worship of Paramātmā is the way to attain liberation. Then he says:

sa yathā dundubher hanyamāṇasya
bāhyāṁ chabdāṁ chakreyāḥ grahanāya dundubhes tu
grahaṇena dundubhyā-āghātasya vā śabdo grītah

“As the sounds of a drum when beaten cannot be seized externally, although when the drum or the player of the drum are seized then the sounds are also seized.”

Thus, in a very general way he explains the proper method of worshiping the Paramātmā: sense-control. He continues in the following words:

sa yathārdhradho ‘gneṛ abhyāḥtaṣya prthag dhūmā víniścaranty evaṁ vā are ‘syā mahato bhūṭasya niśvāsitam etad yad ṛg vedo yajur vedāḥ sāma-vedo ‘tharvāṅgirasa itiḥāsāḥ purāṇāṁ
Consider the words: and he no longer thinks of himself as a human being, demigod, or any other kind of material being. At that time the liberated devotee when he leaves the material body and attains liberation. At that time the liberated devotee non-devotees who do not worship the Lord, who mistake the external material body for the self, who at To encourage the desire for liberation he says:

"As smoke comes from a fire made with wet fuel, the Rg Veda, Sāma Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, Purāṇas, Itihāsas, Vidyās, Upaniṣads, ślokas, sūtras, vyākhyās, and anuvyākhyās, come from the breath of the Supreme Person. As the ocean is the sole resting place of all waters, so the skin is the sole resting place of all tactile sensations, the nose is the sole resting place of all fragrances, the tongue is the sole resting place of all tastes, the eyes are the sole resting place of all forms, the ears are the sole resting place of all sounds, the mind is the sole resting place of all thoughts and desires, the heart is the sole resting place of all knowledge, the hands are the sole resting place of all work, the genitals are the sole resting place of all material bliss, the anus is the sole resting place of all expulsions, the feet are the sole resting place of all pathways, and words are the sole resting place of all the Vedas."

To encourage the desire for liberation he says:

sa yathā saṁsthavākhilya udake prāptam udakam evānulīyate na hāsyodgrahānāyaiva syād yato yatas tv ādīta lavanam evaivaṁ vā. are idaṁ mahād bhūtam anantam apāraṁ vijñāna-
ghana evaitebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāṁ evānuvinaśyati

"As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this Great Being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them."

In this way he explains that the supreme object of worship is immanent: always near to the jīva. In the words ete bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāṁ evānuvinaśyati: "So does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them,” he describes the non-devotees who do not worship the Lord, who mistake the external material body for the self, who at the time of death remain in the cycle of repeated birth and death, and for whom the Supreme Lord remains invisible, hidden within the material elements.

The words na pretya saṁjñāstī, “After death he becomes free of the world of names,” describe the devotee when he leaves the material body and attains liberation. At that time the liberated devotee becomes aware of his real spiritual identity. He then considers all material designations to be the same and he no longer thinks of himself as a human being, demigod, or any other kind of material being. Consider the words:

yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati tad itara itaraṁ paśyati tad itara itaraṁ jighrati tad itara itaraṁ rasayate tad itara itaraṁ abhivadati tad itara itaraṁ śrṇoti tad itara itaraṁ manute tad itara itaraṁ spṛṣati tad itara itaraṁ vijñānāḥ yatra tv asya sarvam ātmāvābhūḥ tat tena kaṁ paśyet tat tena kaṁ jighret tat kena kaṁ rasayet tat kena kaṁ abhivadet tat kena kaṁ śrṇyāt tat kena kaṁ manvītā tata tena kaṁ spṛṣet tat tena kaṁ vijñānīyat

“Where there is duality one sees another, smells another, tastes another, offers respect to another, hears another, thinks of another, touches another, and is aware of another. But for one for whom the Supreme Self is everything how can he see another? How can he smell another?
How can he taste another? How can he offer respect to another? How can he hear another? How can he think of another? How can he touch another? How can he be aware of another?"

This explains how the liberated jīva takes shelter of the the Paramātmā. The words yenedain sarvam vijānāti tāṁ kena vijānīyāt: “How can a person, even if he understands the entire world, understand Him?” teach that it is very difficult to understand the Supreme Lord. The words vijñāram are kena vijānīyāt: “How can one understand the Supreme Knower?” mean “How can one understand the all-knowing Supreme Personality of Godhead without first worshipping Him and attaining His mercy? There is no other way than this.” In this way the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as the actual means of liberation. The speaker of the Upaniṣad concludes by declaring that actual liberation is the same as attaining the Paramātmā.

From all this it may be understood that this passage of the Brhad-ārañyaka Upaniṣad describes the Paramātmā and not the puruṣa as described in the Kapila-tantra, or the material nature controlled by the puruṣa.

**Adhikaraṇa 7: Brahman is Both Primary and Secondary Cause**

_Viṣaya:_ Now that he has refuted the atheistic pradhāna theory, he will refute some theistic theories and prove that all scriptural descriptions of the cause of the universe refer to the Supreme Brahman. Some philosophers consider that the material world is an illusion, and only the spiritual existence is actually real. However, for this to be the case, the material energy would have to be completely different from the the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The actual Vedic philosophy is that the Lord is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the material manifestation; in other words, He is both the Creator and the ingredient of the material world. In this way it may be understood that the vivarta theory, that the material world is an illusion, is untrue and the pariṇāma theory that the material world is a transformation of Brahman is the truth taught in the Vedic scriptures.

Let us consider the following scriptural passages:

tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ

“From ātmana the sky was manifested.” [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1.1]

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante

“From the Supreme these creatures were born.” [Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1.1]

sad eva saumyedam agra āśīd ekam evādvitiyaṁ tad aikṣata bahu syāṁ prajāyeya

“O gentle one, in the beginning was the Supreme, who was one without a second. He thought: ‘Let me become many. Let me become the father of many.’ ” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1]

sa aikṣata lokān nu srjā

“He thought: ‘Now I shall create the worlds.’ ” [Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1.2]

_Saṁśaya:_ Should Brahman be considering the primary cause or the ingredient of the creation? Because the Upaniṣads say sa aikṣata: “He thought: ‘Now I shall create the worlds’,” the first proposal, that Brahman is the primary cause and not the ingredient of creation, should be considered true. Although the Upaniṣad says tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ: “From ātmana the sky was manifested,” still this should be interpreted to mean only that the Supreme is the primary Creator, and not the ingredient of creation of the worlds. The quotes tad aikṣata bahu syāṁ prajāyeya: “He thought, ‘Let me become many. Let me become the father of many.’ ” and sa aikṣata lokān nu srjā: “He thought: ‘Now I shall create the worlds’,” because of their clear explanation that the Lord’s thinking precedes the creation, show that the Lord is the primary Creator in the same way a potter is the creator
of pots. Because the creation itself and the ingredients of which it is made must have the same nature, the ingredient of the material creation must be the material energy \[prakṛti\]. It is not possible to say that the primary cause of creation is identical with the ingredients of the creation. In the material world made of dull matter, the ingredients are earth and the other elements, and the creator is consciousness, just as pots are made of the elements and the creator of the pots is the conscious potter. Here the pots and the potter are clearly different. Furthermore, many diverse causes may create a single effect. Therefore it cannot be said that a single thing is both the primary cause and the ingredient of creation.

The changing material energy \[prakṛti\], which is controlled by the unchanging Brahman is the ingredient of the changing material universe, and Brahman is only its primary cause. This statement is not based only on logic, for it is also supported by the following passage of the Culika Upaniṣad:

\[
vikāra-janaṇīṁ ajñāṁ aṣṭa-rūpāṁ ajāṁ dhruvam
dhyāyate ‘dhyāsītā tena tanyate preritā punah
\]
\[
sīyate puruṣārthāṁ ca tenaivalīhitā jugat
gaur anādy-antavaṁ sā janitrī bhūta-bhāvinī
\]
\[
sītāsī ca raktā ca sarvakāṁ adhunā vibhoṁ
pibanty enāṁ aviṣamāṁ avijñātāṁ kumārakāṁ
\]
\[
ēkas tu pibate devah svacchando ‘tra vaśānugām
dhyāṇa-kriyābhīyaṁ bhagavāṁ bhūkite ‘sau prasabham vibhuṁ
\]
\[
sarva-sādhāraṇīṁ dogdhṛīṁ pīyamāṇāṁ tu yajvabhiṁ
catur-vimśati-sāṅkhyaṁ avyaktaṁ vyaktam ucyate
\]

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead meditates on the unborn, eternal, unintelligent material nature \[prakṛti\], which has eight forms, and by His order the material nature creates the material worlds and the various goals of life adopted by the living entities. Material nature is a beginningless, endless cow, the mother of the worlds. Without knowing, her children, the creatures in goodness, passion, and ignorance all drink her nourishing milk. The one independent, all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead strongly enjoys her with thought and deed, she who is the milk-giving mother of all, who is drunk by the performers of sacrifice, and who is said to be both the unmanifested and the manifested divided into 24 elements.”

Furthermore, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

\[
yathā sannidhi-mātreṇa gandhaḥ kṣobhāya jāyate
manaso nopakaritrvaṁ tathāsaṁ prameśvarāṁ
\]
\[
sannidhānād yathākāśa-kālādyāṁ kāraṇaṁ taroṁ
tathaiśvāpyāgāmnena viśvasya bhagavāṁ hariṁ
\]
\[
nimitta-mātram evāsau srṣṭāṁ sarga-karmanī
pradhāna-kāriniṁ bhūtā yato vai srjya-śaktayaṁ
\]

“When there is a fragrant flower before someone, the fragrance is touched by the smelling power of the person, yet the smelling and the flower are detached from one another. There is a similar connection between the material world and the Supreme Personality of Godhead: actually He has nothing to do with this material world, but He creates by His glance and ordains. In summary, material nature, without the superintendence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot do anything. Yet the Supreme Personality is detached from all material activities.”
For these reasons, whatever scriptural passages state that Brahman is the ingredient of the creation should be interpreted to have a different meaning.

_Siddhānta:_ To this argument he replies:

**Sūtra 1.4.23**

*prakṛti ca pratijñā dṛṣṭāntāṃ uparodhāt*

*prakṛtiḥ* – material nature; *ca* – and; *pratijñā* – the proposition to be proved; *dṛṣṭānta* – example; *anuparodhāt* – because of not contradicting.

**Brahman is also the material nature [prakṛti] because this view is not contradicted by the statements and examples [given in the scriptures].**

Brahman is the material nature [*prakṛti*], the ingredient of the world. How is that? It is so because *pratijñā-dṛṣṭāntāṃ uparodhāt*, which means “Because this view is not contradicted by the statements and examples of the scriptures.” An example may be given from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.3:

śvetaketō yan nu saumyaedān mahā-manā anūcāṇa-māṇī stabdho ’sy uta tam ādeśam aprākṣīr yenāśrutaṁ śrutaṁ bhavaty amataṁ matam avijñātaṁ vijñātam ity eka-vijñānena sarva-vijñāna-visayā pratijñā

“Gentle Śvetaketu, you are now very proud and arrogant, thinking yourself a great Vedic scholar. Did you ask for the teaching that makes the unheard heard, the unthinkable thinkable, and the unknown known?”

Here the statement is the existence of a single teaching, the knowledge of which makes everything known. This teaching must be about the ingredient of the world for only that knowledge would not contradict the description in this passage. That ingredient of the world is not different from the original creator of the world. They are one, unlike the pot and the potter, which are different from each other.

The following example is given [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.10]:

yathā saumyaikena mṛt-piṇḍena sarvaṁ mṛṣ-mayam vijñātaṁ syāt

“O gentle one, as by knowing the nature of clay, everything made of clay becomes known, in the same way by understanding this one teaching everything becomes known.”

These words of the _śruti_ must refer to the ingredient of the world. They cannot refer to only the original creator of the world, for by understanding only the potter one does not understand the pot. Therefore, to avoid contradicting these words of the scripture, it must be concluded that Brahman is not only the original creator of the world, but the ingredient of which the world is made as well.

**Sūtra 1.4.24**

*abhidhyopadeśāc ca*

*abhidhyā* – will; *upadeśāc* – because of the teaching; *ca* – and.

_Because [the scriptures] teach [that in this age the world was created by His] will and [in previous creations the world was also created by His will, it must be concluded that Brahman is both the original cause of creation and the ingredient of the creation as well]._
In this sūtra the word ca [and] means “and many other things that are not explicitly mentioned here.”

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad [2.6.1] explains:

so ‘kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeya sa tapo ‘tapyata tapas taptvā idaṁ sarvam asrjat. Yad idaṁ kiñcana tat srṣṭvā tad evānuprāviṣat. Tad anupraviṣya sac ca tyac cābhavat.

“He desired: I will become many. I will father many children. He performed austerities and created everything. Then He entered within the world He had created. After He entered He became all that is manifest and all that is unmanifest.”

Because it is here taught that He resides as Paramātmā within all conscious living entities and unconscious matter by His own desire, and because it is also taught here that he is the creator of everything, it must be concluded that He is both the ingredient of the which the creation is made and the original creator and as well.

Sūtra 1.4.25

sāksāc cobhayāmnānāt

sāksāt – directly; ca – certainly; ubhaya – both; āmnānāt – because of direct statement.

[Brahman is both creator and the ingredient of creation] because both [truths] are directly stated [in the scriptures].

The word ca here means “certainly.” The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa [2.8.9.6] explains:

kiṁsvid vanam ka u sa vrksa āsīt
yato dyāvā-prthivī niṣṭataksuḥ
maṇiśiṇo manasā prcchaitat
yad adhyatiṣṭhad bhuvanāni dhārayan

brahma vanam brahma sa vrksa āsīt
yato dyāvā-prthivī niṣṭataksuḥ
maṇiśiṇo manasā prabravīmi
vo brahmādhyatiṣṭhad bhuvaṁni dhārayan

“What was the forest? What was the tree? From what tree in what forest did He fashion heaven and earth? Ask these questions, O wise ones. Where did He stand when He created the worlds?”

“What was the forest? Brahman was the forest. Brahman was the tree. From Brahman He created heaven and earth. O wise ones, I tell you, He stood on Brahman when He created the worlds.”

These questions and answers clearly show that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient from which the creation is made. From the tree-ingredient the creation, designated by the word “heaven and earth” comes. The word niṣṭataksuḥ means “the Supreme Personality of Godhead created.” Although niṣṭataksuḥ is plural, the opposite, the singular, is intended here. This is a use of Vedic poetic license. The questions “What is the tree? What is the forest where the tree rests? Where does He stand when He created the worlds?” are asked in terms of the things of this world and the answers describe something beyond this world. In this way it may be understood that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which the world is made.

Sūtra 1.4.26

ātma-kṛteḥ parināmāt
ātma – self; kṛteḥ – because of making; pariṇāmāt - because of transformation.

[Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of the creation] because He transformed Himself [into the world].

The Taittirīyā Upaniṣad [2.6.2] says:

so ‘kāmayata

“He desired: ‘I shall become many.’ ”

It also says [2.7.1]:

tad ātmānam svayam akuruta

“He created the world from His own Self.”

In this way the scriptures explain that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient from which the creation is made.

Someone may object: “How can the eternally perfect creator be also the creation?”

To answer this objection he says pariṇāmāt: “Because He has transformed Himself.” This does not contradict the changelessness of Brahman, for a certain kind of transformation is not incompatible with changelessness.

Here is the truth of this. In the following passages the śruti explains that Brahman has three potencies:

parāsyat saktir vividhaiva śruyate

“The Supreme has many potencies.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8]

pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeṣah

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the master of pradhāna [material nature], kṣetrajña [the individual spirit souls], and guṇa [the three material modes].” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.16]

The smṛti [Viśṇu Purāṇa] also explains:

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā
kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-sanjñānyā
tṛṭīyā saktir ucyate

“The potency of Lord Viṣṇu is summarized in three categories: namely the spiritual potency, the living entities, and ignorance. The spiritual potency is full of knowledge; the living entities, although belonging to the spiritual potency, are subject to bewilderment; and the third energy, which is full of ignorance, is always visible in fruitive activities.”

In this way the scriptures explain that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which the creation is made. He is the creator by the agency of His spiritual potency and He is the ingredient of which the creation is made by the agency of the other two potencies. This interpretation is confirmed by the aphorism sa-viśeṣena vidhi-niśedhau viśeṣanam upasaṅkrāmate: “An adjective describes both what a noun is and what it is not.”

The scriptures also explain [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.1]:
“May the one, unrivaled Supreme Personality of Godhead, who for His own purpose created the many varieties of living entities by the agency of His potencies, who created everything in the beginning and into whom everything enters at the end, grant pure intelligence to us.”

As the supreme unchangeable, the Supreme Brahman is the original cause of creation, and as the parināmi [the transformable], Brahman is also the ingredient of which the creation is made. Brahman is the creator in His subtle nature, and He is the creation itself in His nature as gross matter. In this way it is established that the Supreme Brahman is both creator and creation.

The creation is thus like a lump of clay that may be shaped in different ways. The word parināmāt [because of transformation] in this sūtra clearly refutes the theory that declares the material world a vivarta [illusion] that has no reality. The statement that the material world is an illusion superimposed on Brahman, just as the existence of silver is an illusion superimposed on an oyster shell with a silvery sheen, cannot be accepted because the oyster shell is an object that can be placed before the viewer; but Brahman, cannot be placed before the viewer because He is all-pervading, and therefore an illusion cannot be superimposed on Him. One may object that although the sky is all-pervading, illusions may be superimposed on it. However, Brahman is not like the sky in the sense that the sky may be approached by the material observer, but Brahman remains beyond the reach of the material senses; and therefore an illusion cannot be superimposed on Him. Furthermore, the existence of an illusion implies the existence of something different from the thing on which the illusion is superimposed. Without the existence of something separate there is no possibility of an illusion.

In the end, therefore, the vivarta theory postulates the existence of something different from Brahman. This is the fault in their theory. When the scriptures state that the material world is an illusion, it should be understood these words are are a device intended to create renunciation. This is the opinion of they who know the truth. The material world, however, displays a complicated structure of different elements grouped in categories of higher and lower, and in this way it is very much unlike an illusion, where nothing is very stable and one things is continually changing into another. In this way it may be understood that the vivarta theory, that the material world is an illusion, is untrue and the parināma theory that the material world is a transformation of Brahman is the truth taught in the Vedic scriptures.

Sūtra 1.4.27

yoniṣ ca hi gīyate

yoniḥ – the place of birth; ca – also; hi – indeed; gīyate – is declared.

[The scriptures] declare that [Brahman is the] womb [from which the material world was born].

The śruti-śāstra explains:

yad bhūta-yonim paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ

“The wise see that Brahman is the womb from which everything was born.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.1.6]

kartāram iṣaṁ puruṣaṁ brahma-yonim
“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original creator, the womb from which everything was born.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.6]

In these verses the word yonim [womb] describes Brahman as the ingredient of creation and the words kartāram puruṣam [the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original creator] describe Brahman as the creator. In this way Brahman is described as both the creator and the ingredient of which the creation is made. The word yoni [womb] means “the ingredient of which the creation is made.” This is confirmed in the words:

\[prthivī yonir oṣadhi-vanaspātinām\]

“The earth is the womb from which the trees and plants are born.”

In both common sense and Vedic revelation the creator and the ingredients from which the creation is made are considered are always considered different and it is not possible to say that the creator and the ingredient of which his creation is made are identical. However, the previously quoted passages from the śruti clearly explain that in this case Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which His creation is made.

**Adhikaraṇa 8: All Names Are Names of Lord Viṣṇu**

Viṣaya: Someone may object: “Many passages in the scriptures do not support your conclusion at all.” This adhikaraṇa is written to dispel this doubt.

The Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad explains:

\[ksaraṁ pradhānam amṛtāksaraḥ haraḥ\]

“Material nature is in constant flux and the Supreme, Lord Hara is eternal and unchanging.” [1.10]

\[eko rudro na dvitīyāya tasthuḥ\]

“Lord Rudra is the Supreme. He has no rival.” [3.2]

\[yo devānāṁ prabhavaś codbhavaś ca viśvādhiko rudraḥ śivo maharṣiḥ\]

“Lord Śiva, who is known as Rudra, is the omniscient ruler of the universe. He is the father of all the demigods. He gives the demigods all their powers and opulences.” [3.4]

\[yadā tamas tan na divā na rātrir na san na cāsac chiva eva kevalaḥ\]

“When the final darkness comes and there is no longer day or night, when there is no longer being and non-being, then only Lord Śiva exists.” [4.18]

The scriptures also explain:

\[pradhānād idam utpannam pradhānam adhigacchati pradhāne layam abhyeti na hy anyat kāranaṁ matam\]

“From pradhāna this material world was born. This world knows only pradhāna. This world merges into pradhāna at the time of annihilation. Nothing else is the cause of this world.”
From the jīva all the elements of this world have come. In the jīva they rest without moving, and they finally merge into the jīva. Nothing else is the cause of this world.

Samśaya: Should Hara and the other names given in these quotes be understood in their ordinary senses, as names of Lord Śiva, pradhāna, and jīva, or should they all be understood to be names of the Supreme Brahman?

Pūrva-pakṣa: The names should all be understood in their ordinary senses, as names of Lord Śiva, pradhāna, and jīva.

Siddhānta: The conclusion follows.

Sūtra 1.4.28

etena sarve vyākhyātā vyākhyātāḥ
etena – in this way; sarve – all; vyākhyātāḥ – explained; vyākhyātāḥ – explained.

All [words in the scriptures] should be interpreted to agree with the explanation [that the Supreme Brahman is the original cause].

In this sūtra the word etena means “according to the explanations already given,” sarve means “Hara and the other names,” and vyākhyātāḥ means “should be understood to be names of the Supreme Brahman because all names are originally names of the Supreme Brahman.”

The Bhālaveya-śruti explains:

nāṁāni viśvāni na santi loke
yad āvirāsī puruṣasya sarvam
nāṁāni sarvāṇi yam āviśanti
tam vai viśnūṁ paramam udāharanti

“The names of this world are not different from Him. All names in this world are names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All names refer to Him, Lord Viṣṇu, whom the wise declare is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Vaiśampāyana Muni explains that all these names are names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Skanda Purāṇa also explains:

śrī- narāyaṇādīni nāṁāni vināṇyāni rudrādibhyo harir dattavān

“Except for Nārāyaṇa and some other names, Lord Hari gave away His names to Lord Śiva and the other demigods.”

This is the rule that should be followed: When the ordinary sense of these names does not contradict the essential teaching of the Vedas, the ordinary meaning should be accepted. When the ordinary sense of these names does contradict the teaching of the Vedas, these names should be understood to be names of Lord Viṣṇu.

The repetition of the last word [vyākhyātāḥ] here indicates the end of the Adhyāya.
“May we always fix our hearts on Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the final goal taught by all the Vedas, who is the master of unlimited and inconceivable transcendental potencies, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and who in His own pastimes creates, maintains and destroys the material universes.”

Thus ends the Fourth Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!