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## Introduction

PARAMĀTMA SANDARBHA is the third book in the series of six treatises called *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas* or *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*. In the first of these, *Tattva Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins his exposition with a discussion of epistemology, establishing *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the most authoritative means of valid knowing (*pramāṇa*) in the matter of the self-disclosure of Absolute Reality. Having done so, he proceeds to examine the contents of the book to determine the knowable (*jñeya*). Taking up the topic of ontology (*prameya*), he inquires into the nature of the signified Reality (*sambandhi-tattva*), the means of Its immediate realization (*abhidheya*), and the end to be achieved in regard to that Reality (*prayojana*). To do so, he analyzes the *samādhi* of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, which contains the gist of the essential teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. In the state of supracognitive absorption (*śamādhi*), Absolute Reality was self-disclosed to Vyāsa as Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, replete with varieties of energies.

Vyāsa directly witnessed that among the potencies belonging to the Supreme Personal Absolute, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His extrinsic energy, *māyā*, was situated apart from Him, while yet entirely supported by Him (*tad-apāśraya*). Vyāsa also saw the individual living beings, the *jīvas*, as conscious integrated parts of the Complete Whole, Bhagavān. Although the *jīvas* are beyond the insentient *guṇas* of *māyā*, they become identified with those *guṇas* due to *māyā*'s influence and are thus subjected to the miseries of phenomenal existence. It was further disclosed to Vyāsa that the *yoga* of unalloyed devotion (*bhakti*) to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the direct means

of transcending such material identification, establishing the pure self in its intrinsic identity and relation with its conscious source.

This is the core teaching of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and also of the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*, which represent an analysis of the essential topics of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. In particular, Śrī Jīva cites verse 1.1.2 of the *Bhāgavatam* to outline its primary subject — that is, knowledge of the Supreme Immutable Reality (*vāstava-vastu*). The nature of this Reality is specified further in the seminal *vadanti* verse (SB 1.2.11) from which *Tattva Sandarbha* as well as the following two *Sandarbhās*, *Bhagavat* and *Paramātmā*, derive their names. This Reality, or *tattva*, is nondual consciousness (*jñānam advayam*) and is referred to as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī expands on this verse in the concluding portion of *Tattva Sandarbha* and the two *Sandarbhās* that follow.

In the second book, *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī demonstrates that Bhagavān, the transcendent Absolute replete with personhood, qualities, form, and action, is the most complete manifestation of the Absolute Reality, while Paramātmā and Brahman are but partial manifestations of that same truth. Reality is one only, but it manifests primarily in three aspects to three different types of spiritual seekers — as the qualified Absolute, Bhagavān, to the devotional transcendentalists, as the Immanent Self, Paramātmā, to the *yogīs*, and as the unqualified Absolute, Brahman, to the *jñānīs*. From this perspective, Brahman realization amounts to nothing other than the immediate intuition of the Absolute known as Bhagavān, yet divested of His intrinsic qualities, potencies, and form. Paramātmā is a partial manifestation of Bhagavān who animates *prakṛti* for the evolution and regulation of the cosmos. Realization of Bhagavān naturally includes awareness of the other two, and thus Bhagavān is considered to be the most complete manifestation of Absolute Reality (*tattva*).

Bhagavān is the Complete Person (*puruṣaṁ pūrṇam*), who has His own eternal abode and liberated associates in the spiritual realm. He has real potencies inherent within His nature, all of which can be divided into three categories — intrinsic (*antaraṅgā*), intermediary (*taṭasthā*), and extrinsic (*bahiraṅgā*). This



classification of the potencies of Bhagavān is based upon two verses from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61–62). Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's unique contribution to Vedānta philosophy was to make this distinction explicit, which is a significant aid in understanding Bhagavān, the conscious living beings, the manifested cosmos, and the interrelation between them. This refinement in understanding is not commonly brought to light by Indian theists, who tend to conflate Bhagavān and Paramātmā without differentiation.

Bhagavān's intrinsic potency manifests directly as His body, qualities, abode, associates, and activities. The limitless conscious living beings, both in the material as well as the transempirical realms, are manifestations of the intermediary potency — so called because they mediate between the intrinsic and extrinsic potencies. The phenomenal worlds, on the other hand, are manifestations of Bhagavān's extrinsic potency. Although Reality (*tattva*) is one only, it encompasses all three of the above-mentioned manifestations; they are not just theoretical concepts but ontological realities. Bhagavān is ever-present in His own abode and is engaged in His divine play with His devotees. He does not directly participate in the affairs of the phenomenal world. It is for this reason that Bhagavān expands as Paramātmā — also called Puruṣa or Īśvara — for the evolution, sustenance, and dissolution of the phenomenal world.

*Paramātmā Sandarbha* is an elaborate essay on the nature of Paramātmā. The distinction between Absolute Reality's manifestations as Paramātmā and Bhagavān is relatively unknown, even to those who study Vedānta. These two specific designations are often used synonymously to refer to a single aspect of the *tattva*. It was Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's genius to clearly define them and enumerate their characteristics and functions in detail. There is no other work in the entire gamut of Indian theological and philosophical literature that throws light on this subject so lucidly. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's approach is very simple and unique. Taking his cue from the *vadanti* verse (SB 1.2.11), he comments extensively on the three appellations of the *tattva* — Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.

Paramātmā is akin to what people usually conceive of as God, the creator and overseer of the cosmos, whereas Bhagavān is God in His supreme transcendence, without reference to the phenomenal world — God in His own intrinsic being. Paramātmā is the regulator of the intermediary potency (*taṭastha-śakti*) and the extrinsic potency (*bahiraṅga-śakti*), otherwise known as *māyā*. He is, thus, qualified (*viśiṣṭa*) by these two potencies. The conditioned living being, *jīva*, belongs to the former potency, while the latter is responsible for the evolution, sustenance, and dissolution of the cosmos. These two potencies are distinct from the intrinsic potency of Bhagavān, known as the *antaraṅgā* or *svarūpa-śakti*, and are to be understood as being directly under the jurisdiction of Paramātmā, not Bhagavān.

## A Bird's Eye-View of Paramātmā Sandarbha

In the radical nondualistic Vedānta of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the *ātmā* is equated with Brahman, relying solely on one-sided Upaniṣadic statements such as *tat tvam asi*, “You are that,” and *aham brahmāsmi*, “I am Brahman.” Śrī Jīva argues that such statements refer, rather, to the identity of consciousness between the self and Brahman and not to absolute identity. Taking a broader view that encompasses the Upaniṣads as a whole and not merely the identity statements, Śrī Jīva advocates the position of distinction within unity (*bheda-abheda*). This understanding is the key to ascertain the self's true identity in relation to the complete whole. To this end, he begins *Paramātmā Sandarbha* by making evident the distinction between the individual self (*ātmā*) and the Supreme Immanent Self (Paramātmā). Thus, the first section of the book delineates the ontology of Paramātmā as the supreme witness (*kṣetrajñā*), the animator of primordial nature (Puruṣa), and the regulator of the *jīvas* and the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*.

Since the entire analysis of God's potencies is intended solely for the benefit of rational beings, Śrī Jīva next turns his attention to an exposition of *jīva-śakti*. It is crucial for us to understand our true self-nature so that we can transcend our identification with a

falsely constructed phenomenal self. In this section, therefore, Śrī Jīva lays bare the intrinsic characteristics of the *ātmā* as a conscious integrated part of Paramātmā, distinct from *prakṛti*.

This picture would not be complete without a transparent view of *māyā*, since the extrinsic energy is what binds the *jīva*, inducing in us the artificial sense of separation from God. Consequently, the third topic taken up by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is the nature and functioning of *māyā*. This leads to a discussion of the evolution of the cosmos, which is a product of *māyā*. Since the *jīva* is part of the cosmos through participation in it, it is important for him to understand its nature and how to interact with it so as to transform it. To gain permanent release from a disease, it is necessary to know its cause. Similarly, to be freed from the false identification with *māyā*, it is imperative to trace out its cause and the process to attain release from it. Additionally, Śrī Jīva elucidates the true intention behind Paramātmā's creative act and accounts for His apparent indifference to the suffering of the living beings in conditional existence. He completes the book with an investigation into the prime subject of discussion in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, conclusively demonstrating that it is none other than Śrī Bhagavān. In this way, *Paramātmā Sandarbha* can be divided into four parts. A brief summary of these is provided below.

## The Ontology of Paramātmā

The first part, comprising the first eighteen *anucchedas*,<sup>1</sup> involves a deliberation on the essential nature and functions of Paramātmā. Being the source and shelter of the *jīva*, or *taṭastha-śakti*, Paramātmā is the interior regulator of all living beings. He is, thus, known as the supreme witness (*kṣetrajñā*) of the fields of action. The word *kṣetra* (lit., “a field”) refers to the body and the cosmos, and thus *kṣetrajñā* means “one who knows the presentational field of the body and the environment in which it participates.”

<sup>1</sup> The word *anuccheda* means a section or division. Each *anuccheda* has a verse of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as its subject.

To establish Paramātmā as *kṣetrajñā*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins his analysis by citing two verses from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* spoken by Jaḍa Bharata to King Rahūgaṇa (SB 5.11.12–13). Although Jaḍa Bharata uses the term *kṣetrajñā* for both the individual self as well as Paramātmā, Śrī Jīva argues that in its primary sense the word applies to Paramātmā alone. He refers to *Bhagavad Gītā* (13.1–2) to support his argument. The *jīva* knows only his own individual body, whereas Paramātmā is the knower of all bodies whatsoever, gross as well as subtle. Paramātmā is the inner regulator of these two types of bodies and yet is not influenced by them. Although the *jīva* is also a limited knower (*kṣetrajñā*) of the individuated field of his own body, his knowing capacity is not independent of Paramātmā, because he is but a part of His *taṭastha-śakti*. Paramātmā is thus the primary referent of the word *kṣetrajñā*. This is to say that the living beings depend upon Paramātmā even to gain knowledge about their gross and subtle bodies. This implies that without His grace, they cannot attain freedom from the conditioning caused by these two types of bodies.

According to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, there are three manifestations of Paramātmā — the metacosmic, the macrocosmic, and the microcosmic. The first manifestation, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is the inner regulator of the metacosm, meaning the totality of all *jīvas* and *prakṛti*. He is the one who glances at the unmanifest primordial nature at the onset of a new creative cycle, impregnating it with the *jīvas* along with their past *karma*. He manifests unlimited universes from the pores of His body. The second manifestation, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is the inner regulator of the macrocosm, who expands into as many forms as there are universes. He thus enters into each one of them as witness and support. The third manifestation, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is the inner regulator of the microcosm, or the individual *jīvas*. These three manifestations of Paramātmā are also known as Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, respectively, who along with Vāsudeva are called *caturvyūha*. In *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* it will be explained that Bhagavān has innumerable forms. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however, is the original form of Bhagavān, and Vāsudeva is His expansion.

Paramātmā, also called Puruṣa, can be further categorized in two ways, namely, as self-endowed with differentiated portions (*vibhinnāmśa*), called *jīvas*, and as endowed with plenary expansions (*svāmśa*), called *avatāras*. An *avatāra* has divine powers and the intrinsic self-identity of being God. He is never influenced by the extrinsic potency, even while present in the midst of it. The *jīvas*, however, being limited in their power, can easily fall prey to the extrinsic potency, whose influence induces in them a sense of separation from Paramātmā.

*Avatāras* are primarily of two types, *guṇāvatāras* and *līlāvatāras*. The *līlāvatāras* will be explained in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, which is next in the series of *Six Sandarbhas*. *Guṇāvatāras*, as the name suggests, are the regulators of the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, namely, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. These *guṇas* are governed respectively by Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva, also popularly known as the “Hindu Trinity.” They are in charge of the acts of sustenance, creation, and dissolution of the cosmos, respectively. They carry out these functions by regulating the *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, on the authority of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, shows that Viṣṇu is supreme among these *guṇāvatāras*, the other two being subservient to Him. It is only Viṣṇu who can release a conditioned being from the bondage of *māyā*. Śrī Jīva also explains incidentally that the scriptures can be classified according to the three *guṇas* and that only the *sāttvika* scriptures can bestow ultimate welfare to humanity.

## The Ontology of the Jīva

After completing the deliberation on Paramātmā and His various manifestations, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī turns his attention to the *jīva* in *Anucchedas* 19–47. He begins with a detailed analysis of the intrinsic characteristics of the pure self, the *ātmā*, who is under the jurisdiction of Paramātmā. For this, he builds upon the description of the *jīva* given by Jāmāṭṛ Muni, a teacher in the line of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. In the course of his discussion, he specifically refutes the concept of *ātmā* entertained by the radical nondualists, the Advaitavāda School of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. He shows that their view,

summed up as absolute idealism, is not supported by *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or the Vedas. Rather, the true Vedāntic position is that of inconceivable oneness within distinction (*acintya-bheda-abheda*). This understanding is essential to the path of *bhakti-yoga*, the prescribed method in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which will be described in *Bhakti Sandarbha*, the fifth book in the series.

## The Ontology of Māyā

The *jīvas* in the material world are conditioned by the extrinsic potency of Paramātmā. Consequently, after enumerating the inherent qualities of the *jīva* in the previous section, Śrī Jīva delineates the extrinsic potency (*bahiraṅga-śakti*), called *māyā*, in *Anucchedas* 48–55. *Māyā* is a real potency of Paramātmā and not a mere illusion, as propounded by the Advaitavāda School. It is through the agency of *māyā* that Paramātmā conducts the functions of creation, sustenance, and dissolution. *Māyā* has two divisions, the instrumental or efficient aspect (*nimitta*), known as *jīva-māyā*, and the constituent or material aspect (*upādāna*), known as *guṇa-māyā*. By its inscrutable power (*acintya-śakti*), the *jīva-māyā* obscures the self-awareness of the *jīva* — a state that is without beginning. The *guṇa-māyā*, on the other hand, manifests the world in all its multiplicity through endless intermixture of the three *guṇas*. With its two divisions, *māyā* operates like a modern-day manufacturing company that uses the media to advertise its products, generating desire in the minds of consumers, and then makes those products available in the market.

*Jīva-māyā* has two further divisions, *avidyā* (ignorance) and *vidyā* (wisdom). The former is the cause of bondage, while the latter is the doorway to release from that same bondage. Bondage and release are not part of the *jīva*'s intrinsic nature. By its very own inner constitution, the *jīva* is ever-liberated, but being devoid of awareness of its own true nature due to the influence of *jīva-māyā*, it remains shackled. The *avidyā* part has two functions, the potency of concealment (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) and the potency of projection or distortion (*vikṣepa-śakti*). Through its power of concealment, *avidyā*

obscures the true nature (*svarūpa*) of the *jīva*, and through its power of projection, it casts the *jīva* into delusion by inducing it to identify with the gross and subtle bodies. In contrast, the *vidyā* aspect of *jīva-māyā* removes the *jīva*'s ignorance about its intrinsic nature and thus leads to liberation. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī makes it clear, though, that the *vidyā* potency of *jīva-māyā* is only the doorway to the genuine *vidyā* potency, which, being part of Paramātmā's intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*), is fully transcendental in nature. The former cannot grant liberation by itself. This implies that liberation from the bondage of *māyā* is not possible without taking shelter of Paramātmā.

*Jīva-māyā* is called the efficient cause (*nimitta*), because it is instrumental in generating the cosmos as well as in granting material bodies to the *jīvas*. It has four constituents — time (*kāla*), destiny (*daiva*), *karma*, and innate disposition (*svabhāva*).<sup>2</sup> Time precipitates an imbalance in the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, which then evolves into twenty-four ontological categories of being (*tattvas*), beginning with cosmic intellect (*mahat*) and culminating in earth (*pr̥thvī*). All modifications occur within time. *Karma* is the efficient cause of the modifications. It is because of the force of *karma* that time acts on matter, modifying it in order to mete out the results of past actions performed by the *jīva* under the influence of *māyā*. Out of the total aggregate of past *karma*, that portion which is ready to fructify in the present life is called destiny, or *daiva*. Innate disposition (*svabhāva*) refers to the subconscious impressions (*saṁskāras*) left by past actions on the *citta* (the heart or unconscious mind). It is through the influence of such unconscious patterning that the *jīva* is impelled to act at present in a corresponding manner.

The constituent aspect of *māyā*, known as *upādāna* or *guṇa-māyā*, is the material cause of creation. It consists of the five subtle elements (*dravya*), the presentational field (*kṣetra*), meaning the unmanifest primordial nature (*prakṛti*), the vital force (*prāṇa*), the empirical self (*ātmā*), here referring to the phenomenal ego (*ahaṅkāra*), the eleven senses, and the five gross elements

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<sup>2</sup> See SB 10.63.26.

(*vikāra*).<sup>3</sup> All these combined together constitute the various bodies and objects in the material world. Modifications in *prakṛti* occur through the influence of Paramātmā.

Within the same discussion of the ontology of *māyā*, an important subdivision (*Anucchedas* 56–81) is devoted to the cosmos, which is a manifestation of the extrinsic potency. The relation of the cosmos with Paramātmā is elucidated in this subsection. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī vehemently refutes the theory propagated by the radical nondualists that the cosmos is a mere illusory appearance (*vivarta-vāda*). On the authority of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, he argues that the cosmos is a modification (*pariṇāma*) of the extrinsic potency (*bahiraṅga-śakti*) of Paramātmā and not a mere appearance (*vivarta*). The cosmos is a real effect of the real potency of Paramātmā, who is the Supreme Real.

According to *vivarta-vāda*, however, it is Brahman who appears as the cosmos through the agency of *māyā*, just as a rope appears as a snake in semi-darkness. Hence, in the opinion of the Advaitavādīs, the cosmos is not real, just as the snake misperceived in the rope is not real. At the same time, the cosmos cannot be determined as altogether unreal or non-existent, like the horns of a rabbit, because it can be perceived. An unreal object cannot be perceived at all. They conclude, therefore, that the cosmos is like a rope mistaken for a snake, which, in spite of its illusory status, can still produce the real effect of fear in the mind of a person who sees it. Thus, *vivarta-vāda* attributes only empirical reality (*vyāvahārikasattā*) to the world but not ontological reality (*pāramārthikasattā*). For them, Brahman is the one and only reality in the absolute sense.

Śrī Jīva does not consent to this view. He reasons that the world is not unreal (*mithyā*), because it is nondistinct from its real source, Paramātmā. So, it is real but dissoluble, like a clay pot. It is, nevertheless, ever existent in the sense that it merely undergoes cycles of manifestation and non-manifestation in the form of creation and dissolution. Even during the state of dissolution, it exists still in unmanifest form, enfolded within Paramātmā. The cosmos is thus

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<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*



a modification (*pariṇāma*) of just one of the potencies of Paramātmā, called *bahiraṅgā*. He Himself remains unchanged by the modification of His energy. Śrī Jīva offers the traditional example of a philosopher's stone (*cintāmaṇi*) that is supposed to transform iron into gold by its mere contact while at the same time remaining unmodified. Similarly, by His inscrutable power, Paramātmā remains immutable while impelling His *māyā-śakti* to manifest the cosmos. Being a potency of Paramātmā, the cosmos is nondifferent from Him, by the principle that potency is nondistinct from its potent source.

All theistic schools of Vedānta accept the theory of modification, *pariṇāma-vāda*, to explain the evolution of the cosmos. The one problem they all must face as a consequence of this theory is in how to account for the immutability of Paramātmā. In particular, Paramātmā is posited not only as the instrumental cause of the cosmos, but also as its material, or constituent, cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*). This would seem to negate His immutability, because in our experience, a material cause always undergoes change to manifest a product, just as clay is modified in producing a pot.

Śrī Jīva solves this riddle by pointing out that the part that undergoes modification, *māyā*, is extrinsic to Paramātmā's essential nature. At the same time, *māyā* is not different from Him, being His potency. It is for this reason that Śrī Jīva postulates his theory known as *acintya-bheda-abheda-vāda*, "the transrational coexistence of distinction within the indivisible nondual Whole." In *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 15), it was established that Bhagavān has transrational (*acintya*) powers by which He can accomplish actions that defy conventional logic.

Another important subtopic under the heading of the extrinsic potency is that of *māyā's* relation to the *jīva* and Paramātmā (*Anucchedas* 82-104). Central to this discussion is the topic of the *jīva's* bondage and release from *māyā*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī refers to a query raised by Vidura to sage Maitreya about how the bondage of the *jīva* can be possible at all, when the latter is superior to

Paramātmā's extrinsic potency. The sage replies that by the translational power of Māyā, a *jīva* becomes infatuated with her creation. This bondage, however, is not real but only apparent, like the apparent shimmering of the moon when reflected on the surface of a lake, caused by the displacement of water. The *jīva*'s illusory bondage is without beginning but can come to an end when authentic self-knowledge dawns by the grace of Bhagavān through self-surrender.

In this context, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī discusses the intent behind the creative act. He frames the discussion by first raising an objection to Bhagavān's being the agent of creation. Because Bhagavān is fully satisfied in Himself (*ātmārāma*), what could possibly impel Him to create in the first place? No one acts without a purpose. Since Bhagavān has no purpose to fulfill, there is no reason for Him to take the trouble of creating the cosmos. Śrī Jīva offers a uniquely insightful reply by which he lays the ground for the *Bhakti* and *Prīti Sandarbhas*. He reasons that although Bhagavān is fully self-satisfied, He is subordinate to the love of His devotees and thus acts exclusively for their sake. It would be a defect on His part if He did not reciprocate His devotees' love. As such, He brings forth the cosmos simply out of love for those devotees who could not attain completion in the previous creative cycle and who are lying dormant within Paramātmā. The true intent behind creation is simply to provide such devotees a new opportunity to complete the course of their devotion. Although a person generally performs an action to bring about a particular effect, love expresses itself without any such motive. Thus, the act of creation does not render Paramātmā deficient in any way.

Śrī Jīva then raises another pertinent question in regard to the topic of creation: If Bhagavān is omnipotent, why does He not remove the sufferings of humanity? To answer this question, our author first examines the psychology of compassion, pointing out that a person can feel empathy toward another and be moved to redress their suffering only if the heart is in direct contact with that other person's pain. Since Bhagavān is never in contact with

material misery in any form, He never undergoes the transformation of heart that characterizes what we normally define as compassion. On the contrary, were He subject to a transformation of being associated with material pain, it would contravene His ontological status as the Supreme Transcendent. Material misery cannot influence Bhagavān any more than darkness can touch the sun.

This, however, does not mean that Bhagavān is altogether unaware of material suffering. He is conscious of such suffering, but not on an immediate feeling level, which would then become an impediment to the play of His divine *līlā*. His affect, being entirely transcendent in nature, is involved only with His own intrinsic potency wherein material misery cannot stand. Śrī Jīva clarifies this point with an example: Where there is light there can be no darkness, and so, if darkness were treated as an actual entity and not merely as the absence of light, it could be said that darkness is the one place where light cannot abide, because it vanishes as soon as light is present. But just as the all-pervasiveness of the sun's light is in no way undermined by the fact that it cannot abide in darkness, so too Bhagavān's omniscience is not marred by the fact that He is devoid of the experience of material misery. Rather, Bhagavān is directly involved only with His own devotees, since it is they alone who desire such relation, their consciousness being entirely turned toward Him in exclusive love. To such devotees, He grants His intrinsic potency of *bhakti*. He and His devotees both relish supreme delight under the influence of this potency, acting for the sole purpose of increasing each other's intrinsic joy.

From this, it is certainly not to be concluded that Bhagavān is devoid of the capacity for mercy. The whole discussion is simply to demonstrate His utter transcendence in regard to the workings of His extrinsic potency. Bhagavān's compassion is, however, often praised as one of His most excellent qualities. Indeed, His grace is built into the very fabric of creation as the ever present invitation, immediately available through Paramātmā, to turn our attention toward Him. Moreover, Bhagavān's devotees who are present within the world are in direct contact with the pain of humanity.

As such, their hearts are directly moved to alleviate the source of such pain, which is ignorance of the self's true identity. Thus, the grace of Bhagavān descends to people in general through the agency of His devotees.

Additionally, Bhagavān's grace extends not only to the virtuous, but even to those who oppose His devotees. His punishment of such miscreants is another form of His mercy, because, by so doing, He awards them liberation, either gradual or immediate. An example of this is seen in the case of Hiranyakaśipu, who terrorized his own son Prahāda, a great devotee. Bhagavān appeared as Narasimha and killed Hiranyakaśipu, who was liberated after two subsequent births. Bhagavān's punishment, therefore, is equally a blessing, because all of His acts whatsoever are meant exclusively for the welfare of those who come in contact with Him, in whichever manner or attitude. Superficially, it may appear that He favors only the *devas* or the devotees and not those who stand in opposition to them (the *asuras*). Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī endeavors to show that Bhagavān is not biased although appearing to be so to the ignorant.

## Determination of the Subject of Bhāgavata Purāṇa

In the final six *anucchedas* (105–110), Śrī Jīva demonstrates that the subject of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is Bhagavān. To do so, he employs the hermeneutical method of textual analysis consisting of six indicators, or *ṣaḍ-liṅga*, commonly used by the followers of Vedānta to determine the primary subject of a text. The reason for this determination is twofold. Firstly, Śrī Jīva intends to establish Bhagavān, not Brahman or Paramātmā, as the highest manifestation of *tattva*. Thus, *jñāna-yoga*, which leads to identity in Brahman, is not the ultimate recommendation of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as entertained by radical nondualists. Śrī Jīva points out that the conclusion that Bhagavān is the basis of Brahman and Paramātmā concurs with that of other scriptures, such as *Bhagavad Gītā*. Secondly, by this verdict, he lays the foundation for the next *Sandarbhā*, namely, *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, because this conclusion naturally leads to an investigation into the identity of Bhagavān.

Of the six criteria, Śrī Jīva lays special emphasis on the first, the concurrence of the opening and closing statements. In his analysis, he correlates the first verse of the *Bhāgavatam* to the first five *sūtras* of the *Brahma-sūtra*, to *Gāyatrī*, and to the ten primary topics of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The closing statement is shown to specify the Absolute, referred to in the opening statement in generic terms only as *satyaṁ param*, to be none other than *Svayam Bhagavān*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Jīva concludes his treatise by stating that the explanation of the famous *vadanti* verse of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (SB 1.2.11) that began in *Tattva Sandarbha* has now been completed.

## Conclusion

Out of the *Six Sandarbhas*, the first four deal with the subject of our relation (*sambandha*) with the Supreme Person, *Bhagavān*; the fifth describes the means (*abhidheya*) of becoming permanently and immediately established in that relation; and the sixth explains the completion stage (*prayojana*) of such relation. The *Sandarbhās* are like a GPS system that informs us about our present location (*sambandha*), the route to be followed (*abhidheya*), and the ultimate destination (*prayojana*). Among the four *Sandarbhās* that delineate the knowledge of *sambandha*, *Paramātma Sandarbha* is the most important because it analyzes the nature of the self and its conditioning by *māyā*. We have to begin where we stand at present. Without this knowledge, we cannot know in which direction to move, even if we are clear about the destination.

Some spiritualists are of the opinion that it is enough to know the process and goal. This situation can be compared to a person lost in a forest, who knows his destination but does not know which direction to take. Without knowing our present condition, we cannot become clear about the process. For this reason, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has explained *sambandha* in the first four *Sandarbhās*, the present volume being the third in this series. Thus, *Paramātma Sandarbha* is crucial to imbibe the knowledge of *sambandha*, and

every serious practitioner should study it carefully. The truths contained in this book can uproot many of the common misconceptions that may be lurking in our minds, sometimes even without our being aware of them. Among these misconceptions, the most troublesome are those that are akin to radical nondualism. Even Vaiṣṇavas on the path of *bhakti* can be subject to such pitfalls.

In conclusion, we provide here a list of the essential points discussed in this volume:

1. The difference between the Paramātmā and Bhagavān manifestations of *tattva*.
2. The three primary manifestations of Paramātmā and their functions.
3. The role of the three *guṇāvatāras*, popularly known as “the Hindu Trinity,” and their relative positions.
4. The difference between the terms *jīva* and *ātmā*.
5. The inherent nature of the *ātmā*.
6. *Māyā* and its various functions.
7. The relationship between *māyā* and the *jīva*.
8. The mystery behind the bondage and release of the *jīva*.
9. The dynamics involved in the evolution of the cosmos.
10. Examination of the nature of the world as real or unreal.
11. The intent behind the acts of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the cosmos.
12. Exploration of the question as to why God does not relieve the suffering of humanity.
13. The unbiased nature of God.

*Paramātmā Sandarbha* is the most philosophical of the Six *Sandarbhās*, and it demands focused attention and an unbiased attitude on the part of the reader. Anyone who is willing to take up this challenge will reap rich benefits from Śrī Jīva’s profound knowledge and unique insight into the above subjects. From my lifetime of study of the systems of Indian philosophy, I am unaware of any

## Introduction

other book that so lucidly explains the nature of *ātmā*, Paramātmā, *māyā*, and the cosmos (*jagat*). My commentaries are based upon my studies of the book under my Gurudeva. I share them with my readers and trust that they will benefit from them on their spiritual journey, as I did on mine.







## Dedication

*vraja-bhaktireva vedāntaḥ śrī-gaura eva rādhākāntaḥ  
prakhyāpito yena rāddhāntaḥ rātvidam mudam tasya svāntaḥ*

Loving service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the Vraja *gopīs* is the ultimate conclusion of all the Vedas and Vedic literature. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is indeed Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Rādhā. May this book delight the heart of my guru, who clearly disclosed this unequivocal truth unto me.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED to my guru Śrī Śrī 108 Śrī Śrotriya Bhagavad-niṣṭha Śrīmad Haridāsa Śāstrī Mahārāja Nava-tīrtha, an ideal example of a devotee and *ācārya*.

I bow down at the holy feet of my Gurudeva. He taught me with great love most of the works of Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana and Jīva Gosvāmī, and other Gauḍīya *ācāryas*. The *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas* were the first works I studied under him. He was a great admirer of the Gosvāmīs, not only through words but by being a strict adherent of their teachings. He was a living example of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology and philosophy. Thus, I learned from him not only during his discourses, but also through being with him, seeing him deal with various life situations, and serving in the *gośālā* and elsewhere. It is he who inspired me to propagate this knowledge by making it available in English.





I The Ontology of Paramātmā — The  
Supreme Immanent Self



## Maṅgalācaraṇa

तौ सन्तोषयता सन्तौ श्रीलरूपसनातनौ ।  
दाक्षिणात्येन भट्टेन पुनरेतद् विविच्यते ॥ १ ॥

FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE TWO SAGES, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, I am rearranging this book, compiled by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who was born in South India.

तस्याद्यं ग्रन्थनालेखं क्रान्तव्युत्क्रान्तखण्डितम् ।  
पर्यालोच्याथ पर्यायं कृत्वा लिखति जीवकः ॥ २ ॥

Some parts of his book were in order, some out of order, while others were incomplete or missing. After thorough deliberation, Śrī Jīva now writes [*Paramātma Sandarbha*] in the appropriate order.

## Commentary

*atha natvā mantra-gurūn śrī-gurūn sandarbhārthadān  
sandarbheṣu ṭṭīyaśya bhāṣā-ṭīkā karomy aham*

After offering obeisance to my initiating guru and to my instructing teachers, I am writing the translation and commentary to the third book of the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*.

ŚRĪLA JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ COMPOSED eight verses at the beginning of *Śrī Tattva Sandarbha* as *maṅgalācaraṇa*, or an auspicious invocation to the work. The *maṅgalācaraṇa* of *Paramātma Sandarbha* has

only two verses, the first having the same significance as the third and fourth verses of the *maṅgalācaraṇa* of *Tattva Sandarbha*, and the second being the fifth verse verbatim. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī did not compose a new *maṅgalācaraṇa* at the beginning of *Paramātmā Sandarbha* because he considered the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas* to form a single book.

In the first of these two verses, he again remembers the lotus feet of his teachers, Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, upon whose order the work was undertaken. In the second verse, he again expresses gratitude to Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who originally began it. In this way, he invokes the blessings of these masters for the completion of the work. For further explanation, the reader may refer to the commentaries on the third, fourth, and fifth invocatory verses of *Tattva Sandarbha*.



# Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña — The Presentational Field and the Witness

*Anucchedas 1.1–1.3*





## Paramātmā Defined

### 1.1

#### Paramātmā Is the Kṣetrajñā

१ । अथ परमात्मा विव्रियते । यद्यपि परमात्मत्वं वैकुण्ठेऽपि प्रभोरस्ति तदपि च भगवत्ता-  
ङ्गं तत् स्यादित्थं जगद्गतं वाच्यम् । तत्र तं जगद्गतजीवनिरूपणपूर्वकं निरूपयति द्वाभ्याम्  
(भा० ५।११।१२-१३) —

**Now Paramātmā will be explained. Although the Paramātmā aspect of Bhagavān exists in [the spiritual domain of] Vaikuṇṭha also, even that Paramātmā is just a function of Bhagavān Himself. For this reason, Paramātmā is said to be that feature of Bhagavān that pertains specifically to the cosmos. As such, in the following two verses, by first describing the nature of the individual being (the *jīva*) who is involved in the cosmos, Jaḍa Bharata specifies the nature of Paramātmā to King Rahūgaṇa:**

क्षेत्रज्ञ एता मनसो विभूतीर्जीवस्य मायारचितस्य नित्याः ।  
आविर्हिताः क्वापि तिरोहिताश्च शुद्धो विचष्टे ह्यविशुद्धकर्तुः ॥ ३ ॥  
क्षेत्रज्ञ आत्मा पुरुषः पुराणः साक्षात् स्वयञ्ज्योतिरजः परेशः ।  
नारायणो भगवान् वासुदेवः स्वमाययात्मन्यवधीयमानः ॥ ४ ॥

**The pure knower of the presentational field (*kṣetrajñā*) merely perceives these beginningless modifications (*vibhūtis*) of the impure actor, the mind, which is but an adjunct [*upādhi*]<sup>1</sup> of**

<sup>1</sup> An *upādhi*, or adjunct, is that which does not belong to the essential nature of an entity or object but is external to it. However, because the adjunct is somehow superimposed onto the object, the object comes to be identified with it. For example, a red color reflecting in a crystal is not part of the crystal but only appears to be so.

the empirical self (*jīva*) and a product of *māyā*. Its modifications are sometimes manifest [in the waking and dream states] and sometimes unmanifest [in deep sleep and *samādhi*]. The [Supreme] witness of the field is the Immanent Self (*ātmā*), the Primordial Person (*puruṣa*), [the most] ancient (*purāṇa*), who is unmediatedly self-revealing (*sākṣāt*<sup>2</sup> *svayañ-jyotiḥ*), unborn (*aja*), the almighty controller (*pareśa*), the interior regulator of all beings (Nārāyaṇa), inherently endowed with potency (Bhagavān), the substratum of all beings (Vāsudeva), and who is established in His own intrinsic being (*ātmani*) by virtue of the potency that is innate to His own being (*sva-māyayā*). (SB 5.11.12-13)<sup>3</sup>

यः शुद्धोऽपि मायातः परोऽपि मायारचितस्य वक्ष्यमाणस्य सर्वक्षेत्रज्ञस्य मायया कल्पित-  
स्य मनसोऽन्तःकरणस्यैताः प्रसिद्धा विभूतीर्वृत्तीर्विचष्टे विशेषेण पश्यन्स्तत्राविष्टो भवति  
स खल्वसौ जीवनामा स्वशरीरद्वयलक्षणक्षेत्रस्य ज्ञातृत्वात् क्षेत्रज्ञ उच्यत इत्यर्थः ।  
तदुक्तम् (भा० १।७।५) —

The one who, even though pure, perceives these familiar modifications of the mind, and upon seeing them becomes identified, is known as the *jīva*. “Even though pure” (*śuddhaḥ api*) means “although transcendental to *māyā*.” The verb *vicaṣṭe* (perceives) means “clearly seeing.” The phrase “these familiar presentations (*vibhūti*s) of the mind” refers to the modifications (*vṛtti*s) of the mind, which is the internal or psychological apparatus, generated by the *māyā* of He who is the witness of all fields

<sup>2</sup> There are different readings of verse 5.11.13 of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. In some editions, the word *sākṣāt* (direct or immediate) appears in place of *satyaḥ* (real). Correspondingly, in some editions of *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, the word *satyaḥ* appears in the verse itself in place of *sākṣāt*. Yet, even in these editions, when we come to Jīva Gosvāmī’s gloss on the verse, it is unanimously seen that he comments only on the word *sākṣāt* and has nothing to say about the word *satyaḥ*. He interprets the word in an adverbial sense as qualifying *svayañ-jyotiḥ* (self-revealing). The combination thus yields the meaning “unmediatedly self-revealing.” From this analysis, it would appear more consistent to give the word *sākṣāt* in the verse itself rather than *satyaḥ*.

<sup>3</sup> *kṣetrajaña etā manaso vibhūtir jīvasya māyā-racitasya nityāḥ  
āvīrhitāḥ kvāpi tirohitās ca śuddho vicaṣṭe hy aviśuddha-kartuḥ  
kṣetrajaña ātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ sākṣāt svayañ-jyotiḥ ajaḥ pareśaḥ  
nārāyaṇo bhagavān vāsudevaḥ sva-māyayātmany avadhīyamānaḥ*

[i.e., of Bhagavān as the Supreme Immanent Self]<sup>4</sup>, who will be described [in the next verse]. The *jīva* is [also] referred to as a witness of the field (*kṣetrajñā*) because it is the knower (*jñātr*) of the field (*kṣetra*) of its own two bodies [psychic and physical]. As is said:

यया सम्मोहितो जीव आत्मानं त्रिगुणात्मकम् ।  
परोऽपि मनुतेऽनर्थं तत्कृतं चाभिपद्यते ॥ ५ ॥ इति ।

Bewildered by this extrinsic potency, the individual self, although transcendental to the three *guṇas* of material nature, thinks of itself as consisting of the three *guṇas* and thus undergoes the misery resulting from this identification. (SB 1.7.5)<sup>5</sup>

तस्य मनसः । कीदृशतया मायारचितस्य ? तत्राह — जीवस्य जीवोपाधितया जीवतादात्म्येन रचितस्य । ततश्च तत् तयोपचर्यमाणस्येत्यर्थः ।

By what characteristics is the mind [to be understood as] a product of *māyā*? In response [Jaḍa Bharata] says that the mind is that “which pertains to the empirical self (*jīva*),” meaning that it is created as an adjunct (*upādhi*) of the empirical self. This indicates that the mind is a creation with which the *jīva* becomes

<sup>4</sup> We are here following the reading that is found in *Jīva’s Krama-sandarbha, sarva-kṣetrajñāsya*, to which the word *bhagavataḥ* has been added in at least one manuscript. The words *vakṣyamānāsya* (having a possessive case ending) and *māyā* (having an instrumental case ending) make it fairly clear that this is the correct reading. If, however, we take the reading as given in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (i.e., *sarva-kṣetrāsya* and not *sarva-kṣetrajñāsya*), it would mean that the psychical apparatus is generated by the *māyā* of the complete presentational field. This phrasing might create a doubt that some part of the field, such as the mind, is excluded from it. Moreover, to make sense, the word *vakṣyamānāsya* (“to be described later”), qualifying *sarva-kṣetrāsya*, would then have to refer to the division of *Paramātmā Sandarbha* described later in the book that deals with *māyā* and its two divisions of *nimitta* and *upādāna* (*Anuccheda*s 48–65). In contrast to this somewhat confusing phrasing, the reading *sarva-kṣetrajñāsya* (“the *māyā* of He who is the witness of all fields”) makes things more simple and natural.

<sup>5</sup> *yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ triguṇātmakam  
paro’pi manute’narthaṁ tat-kṛtaṁ cābhipadyate*

This verse is discussed extensively in *Tattva Sandarbha, Anuccheda*s 32–45.

identified, meaning that it [the mind as adjunct] is thenceforth taken to be the living entity's actual identity.

ततश्च कीदृशस्य ? अविशुद्धं भगवद्बहिर्मुखं कर्म करोतीति तादृशस्य । कीदृशीर्वि-  
भूतीः ? नित्या अनादित एवानुगताः । तत्र च कदा कीदृशीः ? इत्यपेक्षायामाह—  
जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोरविर्भूताः सुषुप्तौ तिरोहिताश्चेति ।

How is the mind further described? It is a performer of impure actions. The word “impure” here means those actions that are undertaken from the separate self-sense rooted in non-awareness of Bhagavān (*bhagavad-bahirmukha*). How are the presentations (*vibhūti*s) or modifications [of the mind] described? They are continuous (*nitya*), meaning that they are beginningless (*anādita*) and that they proceed in perpetual succession (*anugata*). How and when are these modifications [manifest and unmanifest]? In response to this, [Jaḍa Bharata] says, “They appear during the waking and dreaming states, and disappear during deep sleep.”

यस्तु पुराणो जगत्कारणभूतः पुरुषः “आद्योऽवतारः पुरुषः परस्य” (भा० २।६।४१) इत्या-  
दिना द्वितीयादौ प्रसिद्धः । साक्षादेव स्वयञ्ज्योतिः स्वप्रकाशः । न तु जीववदन्यापेक्षया ।  
अजो जन्मादिशून्यः । परेषां ब्रह्मादीनां अपीशः । नारं जीवसमूहः स्वनियम्यत्वेनायनं  
यस्य सः । भगवानैश्वर्याद्यंशवान् भगवदंशत्वात् । वासुदेवः सर्वभूतानामाश्रयः । स्वमा-  
यया स्वस्वरूपशक्त्या आत्मनि स्वस्वरूपे अवधीयमानोऽवस्थाप्यमानः । कर्मकर्तृप्र-  
योगः । मायायां मायिकेऽप्यन्तर्यामित्वेन प्रविष्टोऽपि स्वरूपशक्त्या स्वरूपस्थ एव न  
तु तत्संसक्त इत्यर्थः ।

[On the other hand,] there is another [Supreme] witness, described as follows:

1. He is the Primeval Person (*Purāṇa Puruṣa*), meaning that He is the unconditional cause of the cosmos, as is well known from descriptions, such as that in the Second Canto: “The Puruṣa is the first or primary descent (*avatāra*) of Bhagavān” (SB 2.6.41).<sup>6</sup>
2. He is unmediatedly self-existent and self-revealing (*sākṣāt svayañ-jyotiḥ*), meaning that He does not depend on anyone, as is the case with the *jīva*.

<sup>6</sup> *ādyo'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya*

3. He is unborn (*aja*), meaning that He is altogether free from birth and all other ensuing transformations.
4. He is the almighty controller (*pareśa*), meaning that He is the controller even of powerful gods like Brahmā.
5. He is Nārāyaṇa, meaning He who supports (*ayana*) all living beings (*nāram*) through His own power of interior regulation.
6. He is Bhagavān, meaning that He is partially endowed with inherent potency, because He is an integral portion of [Kṛṣṇa, or Svayaṁ] Bhagavān.
7. He is Vāsudeva, the shelter or substratum of all living beings.
8. He is established (*avadhīyamāna*) in the Self (*ātmani*), or in other words, in His own intrinsic being (*sva-svarūpa*) by virtue of the potency that is innate to His own being (*sva-māyayā*), which here refers to His own intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Here the passive voice has been used in the sense of the active.<sup>7</sup> The meaning is that though He has entered into the extrinsic potency of *māyā* and is immanent within the conditioned individual being (*māyike*) as its indwelling Self (*antaryāmi*), by His own innate potency (*svarūpa-śakti*), He remains situated in His own intrinsic being (*sva-svarūpa*), meaning that He is not in contact with *māyā*.

वासुदेवत्वेन सर्वक्षेत्रज्ञातृत्वात् सोऽपरो मायामोहिताज् जीवादन्यो मायारहितः शुद्धः क्षेत्रज्ञ आत्मा परमात्मेति । तदेवमपि मुख्यं क्षेत्रज्ञत्वं परमात्मन्येव ।

This other witness [*kṣetrajñā*] is distinct [from the *jīva*], because He is the knower or witness of all *kṣetras* due to being Vāsudeva [the shelter of all beings]. [In contrast, the *kṣetrajñā* described in the previous verse knows only its own *kṣetra*.] This means that the other [Supreme] witness is distinct from the *jīva* who is deluded by *māyā*.<sup>8</sup> Being utterly free [from the influence]

<sup>7</sup> The verb *avadhīyamāna*, which is glossed by the word *avasthāpyamāna* (is established), is in the passive voice. The use of the passive would imply that there is another agent who is doing the action of placing or situating, but Śrī Jīva is clarifying that there is no other such agent; Paramātmā accomplishes this by His own agency of intrinsic potency. Because this does not involve any effort on His part, the passive voice has been used.

<sup>8</sup> This follows the more sensible reading, *so'paro māyā-mohitāj jīvād anyo* →

of *māyā*, this other witness is the pure *kṣetrajñā* and the *ātmā* (the Self), which here refers to Paramātmā,<sup>9</sup> or the Supreme Immanent Self. For these reasons also, the primary quality of *kṣetrajñā* is found only in Paramātmā.

तदुक्तम् “सर्वं पुमान् वेद गुणांश्च तज्ज्ञो न वेद सर्वज्ञमनन्तमीडे” (भा० ६।४।२५) इति ।

This is stated by Dakṣa: “Although a *jīva* can know all these [the body, the senses, and so on], as well as the *guṇas* of primordial nature, he does not know the omniscient unlimited Bhagavān whom I worship” (SB 6.4.25).<sup>10</sup>

## Commentary

IN THE FIRST BOOK of the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*, i.e., *Tattva Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī established the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the supreme authority in the field of metaphysics. He also concluded that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which embodies the essence of the Vedas (see SB 1.1.2), primarily delineates the three topics of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*.

*Sambandha* means the relation between Absolute Reality (*tattva*) and Its energies. The cosmos is a manifestation of two energies in the form of the individual living beings (*jīvas*) and primordial nature (*prakṛti* or *māyā*). To understand *sambandha*, or relation, it is necessary to understand the *sambandhī*, or the referent of the relation. In *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, the author explained in detail who the Absolute Reality is. In this book, he focuses on the individual beings and primordial nature, the two constituents of the cosmos, and their regulator, Paramātmā, a partial manifestation of the *tattva* called Bhagavān. *Bhagavat Sandarbha* began with the citation of an important verse from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

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*māyā-rahitaḥ*, which is found in the *Krama-sandarbha* and some manuscripts of *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

<sup>9</sup> The word also appears in the last quarter of SB 5.11.13 in the locative case, “in the Self” (*ātmani*); there it has been glossed as *sva-svarūpe*, “in His own intrinsic being.”

<sup>10</sup> *sarvaṁ pumān veda guṇāṁś ca taj-jñō na veda sarvajñam anantam īde*

All those who have realized Absolute Reality (*tattva*) describe that Reality as nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*). That Reality is referred to as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. (SB 1.2.11)<sup>11</sup>

*Bhagavat Sandarbha* and *Paramātmā Sandarbha* together form an extended explanation of this verse, which refers to Absolute Reality by the three appellations, Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Brahman and Bhagavān were the subject matter of *Bhagavat Sandarbha*. Paramātmā will now be elaborately explained in this volume; hence, it is called *Paramātmā Sandarbha*. Paramātmā was defined by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* as follows:

When this *tattva* in the form of Bhagavān, which has all the above-stated qualities and is the complete manifestation of Absolute Reality, is described or realized as the controller / regulator of living beings by the process described before, He is called Paramātmā, or God as the Supreme Immanent. (*Bhagavat Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda 3*)

The definitive feature of Paramātmā is His controlling or regulating power (*aiśvarya*). Individual beings are never fully independent, either in their conditioned or liberated state. As discussed in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, there is only one supremely independent Reality, called Bhagavān, which Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has identified as Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with His various *līlā-avatāras*, such as Rāma. In other words, the aspect of Kṛṣṇa that embodies the regulatory or controlling function is called Paramātmā. In the spiritual world, Vaikuṅṭha, Bhagavān Himself acts as Paramātmā, but in the material world He takes a special Paramātmā form. This is the subject of this *Sandarbha*.

A doubt may be raised here. In the verse cited above (SB 1.2.11), Absolute Reality (*tattva*) is sequentially named as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Based on this order, it might be expected that *Paramātmā Sandarbha* would come before *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, and not *vice versa*. There are two reasons for this reversal of order.

<sup>11</sup> *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam  
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

First, there is no separate *Sandarbha* for the explanation of Brahman. According to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, *Brahma Sandarbha* is contained within *Bhagavat Sandarbha*.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, because Brahman is to be explained previous to Paramātmā, as per the order of words in SB 1.2.11, *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, which contains *Brahma Sandarbha*, must come prior to *Paramātma Sandarbha*. Brahman is the manifestation or realization of Bhagavān devoid of qualification. Thus, Brahman cannot be comprehended without knowing Bhagavān.

The second reason is that according to the hermeneutic principle, “The order according to meaning overrides the word order,”<sup>13</sup> *Bhagavat Sandarbha* should come before *Paramātma Sandarbha*, because Bhagavān is the source of Paramātmā as well as of Brahman. To understand these two in truth, knowledge of their source is indispensable.

Paramātmā is the regulator of the material energy, called *māyā* or *prakṛti*, which manifests the cosmos, and also of the individual living beings conditioned by the material energy. Material energy conditions a living being by covering his self-awareness and by providing him with a material body. To understand the Controller, it is also necessary to understand the controlled. Hence, Śrī Jīva cites two verses spoken by Jaḍa Bharata to King Rahūgaṇa that delineate both the characteristics of the individual self and Paramātmā in relation to phenomenality, or *māyā*. Both are here called *kṣetrajña*, i.e., “the knower of the presentational field,” meaning the witness of the field of all phenomena, both internal and external, that are presented to consciousness.

Like many verses in the *Bhāgavatam*, these two also involve a certain ambiguity in that they do not overtly state that the *kṣetrajñas* they describe are different from each other. The verses could therefore be interpreted from the monistic point of view, which holds that there is only a single consciousness that appears both as

<sup>12</sup> *ato'tra brahma-sandarbho'py avāntaratayā mataḥ*  
Bhagavat Sandarbha, Anuccheda 7

<sup>13</sup> *pāṭhakramād artha-kramo baliyān*  
Mahābhāṣya on PĀṆINI 1.1.58



the individual beings as well as Paramātmā. In his commentaries to both the previous and following verses, Śrīdhara Svāmī does make the statement that the two *kṣetrajñas* are different, as Parameśvara and *jīva*, a fact acceptable to all Vedāntīs. Śrīdhara, however, seems to lean toward the monistic view by saying, “The *kṣetrajña*, witness to the three states of wakefulness, dreaming, and deep sleep, is the *ātmā*, i.e., the Reality (*tattva*).” Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies the matter in his commentary, with special reference in the next subsection (1.2) to *Bhagavad Gītā*, where the subject of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* is discussed. He specifically chooses these two verses so that one cannot misconstrue the radical monistic theory of the self’s absolute identity with Brahman.

The word *kṣetra*, which literally means “a field,” is often used to signify the physical body. Just as seeds are sown in a field, grow and produce some fruit, the physical body serves as a field of action, *karma*, which is the seed from which the fruits of happiness or misery are produced. One who knows the field and its modifications is called *kṣetrajña* (*jña* means “a knower”), so it is applicable both to the *jīva* and Paramātmā, who is the companion of each *jīva* in the physical body. Nevertheless, though both are *kṣetrajñas*, they are not equal. The *jīva* misidentifies with the two types of material bodies, physical (gross) and psychical (subtle), which are products of *māyā*. The subtle body is the psychic apparatus attending the *jīva*, which includes the mind along with the five cognitive senses, the five conative (or active) senses, and the five divisions of the vital force (*prāṇa*). These two types of bodies are called the *upādhis* of the *jīva*.

*Upādhi* means “limitation,” “condition,” “adjunct,” “nomenclature,” or something external that has been superimposed upon and limits an object or entity. When a red rose is in proximity to a crystal, the latter reflects the color of the rose and appears reddish even though by nature it is colorless. This reddishness is the *upādhi* of the crystal. Similarly, a *jīva*, who is in reality pure (*śuddha*), or in other words, transcendental to *māyā*, as stated in SB 5.11.12, appears to reflect or possess the modifications of the mind in the form of happiness and misery when in their proximity.

The mental modifications are the *upādhis* of the *jīva*, because they impose a limitation on the pure nature of the *jīva*. The gross body is another *upādhi*, restricting the awareness of the *jīva* within its bounds. The mind is here called the “impure agent” (*aviśuddha-kartuḥ*). The mind itself is inert by nature and has no inherent agency. It exhibits consciousness only by the association of the *kṣetrajñā*, the individual conscious being. Once it is intelligized, it makes use of the senses and the vital force to perform action and thus becomes an agent. It is called impure because it functions only for its own independent and separative interest, in non-awareness of Bhagavān, who is the source and proprietor of everything in the cosmos. Not acknowledging the existence and ownership of Bhagavān is the impurity of the mind.

It should be noted that the term *jīva* can be used to indicate the living entity, both in its pure, transcendental, and eternal nature, as well as in its conditioned state. Therefore, the term *jīvopādhi* has been used by the commentators to gloss the word *jīvasya*, appearing in the verse, in order to clarify that it is the adjuncts or *upādhis* that are a product of illusion (*māyā*) and not the living entity itself.

The *jīva* considers the happiness and misery occurring in the body to be its own and thus remains absorbed in these feeling tones, ignorant of its own true nature, which is transcendental, beyond all material happiness and misery. Therefore, although the *jīva* is distinct from matter, it considers itself to be material. In this state, it engages in materialistic, non-integral pursuits, trying to fulfill its material desires. This conditioning of the *jīva* has no beginning, meaning that it is without prior cause, and hence it is causeless.<sup>14</sup> It is for this reason that the *vṛttis*, or mental modifications, are called *nitya*. Here, the word *nitya* (lit., “eternal”) does not mean that they are always manifest, but that their flow has no beginning. Every *vṛtti* is temporary but there is a continuous flow of them in the

<sup>14</sup> A cause is defined as that which must invariably exist prior to the effect that it produces. So if something is beginningless, it must be without cause. The reason why the *jīva*’s conditioning is stressed as being beginningless (i.e., causeless) is to refute the idea of original sin, or of a falldown from Vaikuṇṭha, or of an inceptive choice to come to the material world from an intermediate region (*taṭastha*), or other misconceptions that are rampant in the Vaiṣṇava world.

waking and dream states. The *ṽrttis* of the mind are perceived by the *jīva* in those states, while in deep sleep there is no experience arising from either of the two types of bodies. There is no external experience in this state.

The other *kṣetrajñā* is Paramātmā. He also witnesses the physical and psychical bodies of the *jīva* but is not influenced or conditioned by them. This is exemplified in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.1) by the allegory of two birds sitting on a tree out of which one eats the fruits of the tree and the other simply looks on. The reason for this is that Paramātmā is *svayañ-jyoti*, or self-luminous. He is not dependent on anyone else for His existence, knowledge, or power. Being an expansion of Bhagavān, He is inherently endowed with many of the same powers. Thus, unlike the *jīva*, He never comes under the sway of the extrinsic energy, *māyā*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī notes that the verb *avadhīyamāna* (“is being placed,” or, “is established”) in the second principal verse of this *anuccheda* (SB 5.11.13) is in the passive voice (*karma-kartṛ*) in the phrase, “who is established in the Self by His own *māyā*.” The use of the passive voice could be interpreted to imply that *māyā* is the agent who has caused Paramātmā to be placed interior to the individual self. Śrī Jīva clarifies, however, that Paramātmā’s establishment in the Self is not effected through any external agency, but rather by virtue of the potency that is innate to His own being (*sva-māyayā*), meaning through His own intrinsic potency (*sva-svarūpa-śakti*). This confirms the independent status of Bhagavān, who performs actions through His own energies. Furthermore, the word *ātmani* (“in the Self”) here is taken to mean “in His own Self” rather than “within the individual self,” which Śrī Jīva explains as meaning “in His own intrinsic being” (*sva-svarūpa*).

The word *puruṣa* (person) here has a particular significance. Etymologically, it means “one who reposes in the city.” The “city” (*pura*) signifies the bodies of living beings and therefore, like *kṣetrajñā*, *puruṣa* can refer to either the individual self or Paramātmā, who is present as a witness in each body. As will be made clear in Sections 2–4 of this volume, the word *puruṣa* refers to the three aspects of Bhagavān, the *puruṣāvatāras*, who expand from Him for

the sake of facilitating the creative unfoldment of the cosmos. In one of these aspects, He is present as the indweller in every body as the Immanent Self.

The word *vāsudeva* (from the verbal root √*vas*, “to reside”) similarly indicates that Bhagavān as the Immanent Self knows all bodies because He resides in them and is therefore the prime *kṣetra-jña*. The living being is the secondary *kṣetra-jña*, since it knows only one particular body. This will be explained further with recourse to *Bhagavad Gītā*.

1.2

## Paramātmā Is the Knowable and the Primary Knower of All Fields

श्रीगीतोपनिषत्सु (गीता १३।१-२) —

**Furthermore, it is said in the *Gītā*:**

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।  
एतद् यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञमिति तद्विदः ॥ ६ ॥  
क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत् तज् ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ ७ ॥ इति ।

This body, O son of Kuntī, is called the field (*kṣetra*) and the one who knows it is called the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jña*) by those who have directly intuited both the field and its knower. O Bhārata! Know Me also to be the *kṣetra-jña* situated within all *kṣetras* whatsoever. In My view, knowledge of the field and of [both these] knowers of the field is what is meant by [true] knowledge. (GĪTĀ 13.1-2)<sup>15</sup>

अत्र खलु “क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि” इति सर्वेष्वपि क्षेत्रेषु मां च क्षेत्रज्ञं विद्धि न तु जीवमिव स्वस्वक्षेत्र एवेत्येवार्थ इति ।

<sup>15</sup> *idam śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate  
etat yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetra-jña itī tad-vidāḥ  
kṣetra-jñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata  
kṣetra-kṣetra-jñayor jñānaṁ yat taj jñānaṁ mataṁ mama*

Here, in the statement, “and know Me also to be the *kṣetrajña*,” [the words “and” (*ca*) and “whatsoever” (*api*) are to be syntactically applied as follows:] “And in all fields whatsoever, you should know Me also to be the *kṣetrajña*. [I am] not like the *jīva*, whose knowledge is restricted only to its own individual field.” This alone is the intended meaning of the statement.

न च जीवेशयोः सामानाधिकरण्येन निर्विशेषचिद्वस्त्वेव ज्ञेयतया निर्दिशति “सर्वक्षेत्रेषु” इत्यस्य वैयर्थ्यापत्तेः । “ज्ञेयं यत्तत् प्रवक्ष्यामि” (गीता १३।१२) इत्यादिना । “सर्वतः पाणिपादं तद् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्” (गीता १३।१३) इत्यादिना च सविशेषस्यैव निर्देक्ष्यमाणत्वात् । “अमानित्वम्” (गीता १३।७) इत्यादिना ज्ञानस्य च तथोपदेक्ष्यमाणत्वात् ।

By pointing out that both *Īśvara* and the individual self have a common substratum [i.e., that they both share the characteristic of being knowers of the field], [Kṛṣṇa here] is not indicating that the substantive Reality to be known (i.e., the knowable — *jñeya*) is consciousness alone devoid of all attributes. If that were the case, the phrase “within all *kṣetras*” would be redundant. Moreover, the knowable (*jñeya*) is pointed out [in the same chapter of the *Gītā*] as being specifically inclusive of attributes. This is indicated in *GĪTĀ* 13.12, “I shall now describe that [Reality] which is to be known (*jñeya*),”<sup>16</sup> and in *GĪTĀ* 13.13, “That [Supreme] knowable has hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and faces all around.”<sup>17</sup> Again, in *GĪTĀ* 13.7–11<sup>18</sup> knowledge (*jñāna*) too will be defined in precisely the same manner [i.e., knowledge too is of a substantive inclusive of attributes and not that of unqualified consciousness].

किं च “क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि” इत्यत्र “तत्त्वमसि” (छा० ६।८।७) इतित्वत् सामानाधिकरण्येन तन्निर्विशेषज्ञाने विवक्षिते “क्षेत्रज्ञेश्वरयोर्ज्ञानम्” इत्येवानुद्येत न तु “क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानम्” इति ।

<sup>16</sup> *jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi*

The term *jñeya* (knowable) as it is used here assumes that the Reality being spoken of is naturally endowed with qualities by which It can be known. The implication is that an entirely unqualified entity is inscrutable and hence unknowable (*ajñeya*).

<sup>17</sup> *sarvataḥ paṇi-pādam tat sarvato'kṣi-śiro-mukham*

<sup>18</sup> *amānitvam adambhitvam*

Moreover, if Kṛṣṇa’s intention in the phrase, “know Me also to be the *kṣetrajña*,” had been to define knowledge as pertaining to an Absolute Reality utterly devoid of attributes, by equating their shared conscious substratum, as in the *mantra*, “You are That” (*tat tvam asi*, CHU 6.8.7), then Kṛṣṇa would have said, “In My view, knowledge of the *kṣetrajña* and Īśvara is [true] knowledge” and not “knowledge of the field and of [both these] knowers of the field.”

किन्तु क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरित्यस्यायमर्थः — द्विविधयोरपि क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्यज्ज्ञानं तन् ममैव ज्ञानं मतम् । “अन्यार्थश्च परामर्शः” (ब्र० सू० १।३।२०) इति न्यायेन मज्ज्ञानैकतात्पर्यकमित्यर्थः — ज्ञेयस्यैकत्वेनैव निर्दिष्टत्वाद् योग्यत्वाच्च ।

However, the meaning of the statement, “knowledge of the *kṣetra* and of *kṣetrajña*, in My opinion, is what is meant by knowledge,” is as follows: “Knowledge of both items inclusively, of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, is considered to be knowledge of Me alone, because the purpose of such knowledge is exclusively the knowledge of Me (Paramātmā), as stated in the *Brahma-sūtra*, “The deliberation (*parāmarśa*) on the individual self is in order to know the other (*anyārtha*) [i.e., the Supreme Self]” (vs 1.3.20).<sup>19</sup> This is in keeping with the fact that the knowable (*jñeya*) is stated to be only one (GĪTĀ 13.12), and it is indeed appropriate [because the Reality to be known has already been described in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (SB 1.2.11) as nondual in nature].

न च निरीश्वरसाङ्ख्यवत् क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञमात्रविभागादत्र ज्ञानं मतम् । “माम्” इत्यनेनेश्वरस्यापेक्षितत्वात् ।

Nor is it right to interpret the word “knowledge” as it is in the non-theistic Sāṅkhya philosophy, which understands it to mean merely [realization of] the distinction between the field (*kṣetra*) and its individuated knowers (*kṣetrajña*), because in GĪTĀ 13.2, the pronoun *mām* (Me) necessitates the inclusion of a Supreme Knower, i.e., Īśvara (*īśvarasyāpekṣitatvāt*).

<sup>19</sup> *anyārthas tu parāmarśaḥ*  
Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa:  
*jīva-parāmarśaḥ paramātma-jñānārtha eva.*

न च विवर्तवाद्दवदीश्वरस्यापि भ्रममात्रप्रतीतपुरुषत्वं तद्वचनलक्षणसवेदगीतादिशास्त्रा-  
गामप्रामाण्यात् बौद्धवादापत्तेः । तस्यां च सत्यां बौद्धानामिव विवर्तवादिनां तद्व्याख्या-  
नायुक्तेः ।

Nor can we agree with the *vivarta* doctrine that the personhood (*puruṣatva*) of God (Īśvara) is but an appearance born out of illusion, because then His words in the form of revealed scriptures, such as the *Gītā* along with the Vedas, would be rendered unauthoritative, thus insinuating the Buddhist philosophy. Such being the case, it would be just as illogical for the proponents of *vivarta-vāda* to comment on these scriptures as it is for the Buddhists.

न च तस्य सत्यपुरुषत्वेऽपि निर्विशेषज्ञानमेव मोक्षसाधनमिति तदीयशास्त्रान्तरतः  
समाहार्यम् । “एवं सततयुक्ता ये” (गीता १२।१) इत्यादिपूर्वाध्याये निर्विशेषज्ञानस्य  
हेयत्वेन विवक्षितत्वात् । तत्रैव च “ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि” (गीता १२।६) इत्यादि-  
नानन्यभक्तानुद्दिश्य “तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्” (गीता १२।७) इत्यनेन  
तज्ज्ञानापेक्षापि नादृतेति ।

Nor can it be argued that even if the personhood of God (Īśvara) is admitted to be real, we must still draw on [relevant] statements from Īśvara’s other revealed scriptures, wherein it is stated that knowledge of the unqualified Absolute (*nirviśeṣa-jñāna*) alone is the means to liberation. [This is indefensible] because the intention of the previous chapter of the *Gītā* (Chapter 12) was to show the inferiority of such knowledge [in response to Arjuna’s question in the first verse]. In that very chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made the following statement in regard to His exclusive devotees: “But I quickly become the liberator of those who offer all actions to Me, who are wholly devoted to Me, and who worship Me, meditating on Me through the *yoga* of exclusive devotion. O Pārtha, without delay I lift them up from the ocean of repeated birth and death because of their singular absorption in Me” (GĪTĀ 12.6-7).<sup>20</sup> Here Bhagavān does

<sup>20</sup> *ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-parāḥ  
ananyenaiva yogena mān dhyāyanta upāsate  
teṣām ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt  
bhavāmi nacirāt pārtha mayi āveśita-cetasām*

not regard knowledge of the unqualified Absolute as having any relevance [for liberation].

तदुक्तमेकादशे स्वयं भगवता “यत्कर्मभिर्यत्तपसा” (भा० ११।२०।३२) इत्यादि ।

**Bhagavān Himself confirms the same in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam:** “Whatever may be attained by performing meritorious acts (*karma*), penances, the culture of *jñāna*, non-attachment, *yoga*, charity, religious virtue (*dharma*), or any other means of ultimate welfare, is easily attained by My devotee simply by engagement in *bhakti-yoga* to Me. Although My devotee does not desire anything except Me, if at any time he should somehow desire heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode, he can very easily attain any of them” (SB 11.20.32-33).<sup>21</sup>

मोक्षधर्मे च —

And in the *Mokṣa-dharma* [of *Mahābhārata*]<sup>22</sup> it is said:

या वै साधनसम्पत्तिः पुरुषार्थचतुष्टये ।  
तया विना तदाप्नोति नरो नारायणाश्रयः ॥ ८ ॥ इति ।

A person who has taken refuge in Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa achieves the four goals of human life even without [recourse to] the appropriate means [generally] employed for attaining them.<sup>23</sup>

अत्र तु पूर्वाध्यायविश्लाघितं तदेवावृथाकर्तुं सविशेषतया निर्दिश्य (गीता १३।१८) —

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।  
मद्भक्त एतद् विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ ९ ॥

इत्यन्तेन भक्तिसंवलिततया सुकरार्थप्रायं कृतम् ।

<sup>21</sup> *yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat yogenā dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogenā mad-bhaktō labhate'ñjasā*

<sup>22</sup> This verse is not found in the *mūla* of the critical edition. According to Baladeva (GĪTĀ 12.7), it is from the *Nārāyaṇīya*. It is quoted in Sundara Bhaṭṭa's commentary to *Mantra-śoḍaśī* 9. Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes it in SB 11.29.5 without naming a source text.

<sup>23</sup> *yā vai sādhanā-sampattiḥ puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaye tayā vinā tad āpnoti naro nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ*



Here again [in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Gītā*], so that the specific praises [of the personhood of God] made in the previous chapter do not go in vain, and after indicating that knowledge means knowledge of the qualified Absolute [in verses 13.7–11], Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes by saying that such knowledge is easily attainable if pursued along with devotion:

In this way, the field (*kṣetra*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and the knowable (*jñeya*) have been described in brief. Knowing this, My devotee attains My nature. (GĪTĀ 13.18)<sup>24</sup>

अत एवात्र व्यष्टिक्षेत्रज्ञ एव भक्तत्वेन निर्दिष्टः समष्टिक्षेत्रज्ञस्तु ज्ञेयत्वेनेति क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञज्ञानाभ्यां सह ज्ञेयस्य पाठादनुस्मार्य तदनन्तरं च तस्य तस्य च जीवत्वमीश्वरत्वं च क्षरं नेति दर्शितम् । यतः (गीता १३।२१) —

Therefore, in this verse of the *Gītā*, only the knower of the individual field (*vyasṭi-kṣetrajña*) is identified as the devotee, whereas the knower of the aggregate of all fields (*samaṣṭi-kṣetrajña*) is the [Substantive Reality] to be known (*jñeya*). So here, after reminding us of this by citing the knowable (*jñeya*) together with the knowledge of the field and its knowers, Kṛṣṇa continues in the following verses by showing that the *jīva*-nature of the individuated knower [*vyasṭi-kṣetrajña*] and the *īśvara*-nature of the aggregate knower [*samaṣṭi-kṣetrajña*] are both imperishable:

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।  
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ १० ॥

The living entity situated within material nature experiences the qualities born of that nature [such as happiness and sorrow].

<sup>24</sup> *iti kṣetraṁ tathā jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ coktaṁ samāsataḥ  
mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāyopapadyate*

We have translated *mad-bhāvāya* as “attains to My nature,” but there are several different translations given by the various commentators. The Vaiṣṇavas favor translating *bhāva* as love, but this does not seem appropriate here. Further on in this commentary, Śrī Jīva himself translates it as *sārṣṭi*, or “[the liberation of attaining] equal rank, condition, or power as the Lord.” *Upapadyate* is often glossed by the commentators as *yogyo bhavati*, or “becomes qualified [for such liberation].” The primary meaning, however, is “reaches” or “attains.”

**The cause of its birth in species of greater or lesser evolutionary complexity is its association with the *guṇas* of primordial nature. (GĪTĀ 13.21)<sup>25</sup>**

इति जीवस्य प्रकृतिस्थत्वं निर्दिश्य स्वतस्तस्याप्राकृतत्वदर्शनया स्फुटमेवाक्षरत्वं ज्ञापितम् (गीता १३।२२) —

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।  
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥ ११ ॥

इति जीवात् परत्वेन निर्दिष्टस्य परमात्माख्यपुरुषस्य तु कैमुत्येनैव तद्दर्शितम् ।

**By indicating that the *jīva* is situated within material nature, from which it logically follows (*svataḥ*) that it is beyond matter (*aprākṛta*), Kṛṣṇa clearly teaches here that the *jīva* is imperishable (*akṣara*). Then, by pointing out that the [supreme conscious being or] Puruṣa known as Paramātmā is superior to the *jīva*, He shows *a fortiori* that He is imperishable:**

**The other Puruṣa residing in the body is known as the witness, the sanctioner, the sustainer, the maintainer, the almighty regulator, and also the Supreme Self (Paramātmā). (GĪTĀ 13.22)<sup>26</sup>**

गीता १५।१६-१७ —

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।  
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १२ ॥  
उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।  
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ १३ ॥

इत्यत्र जीवस्याप्यक्षरत्वं कण्ठोक्तमेव ।

**Then, in the following two verses [from *Bhagavad Gītā*, Chapter 15], Bhagavān authoritatively declares the imperishability even of the *jīva*, saying:**

<sup>25</sup> *puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhuṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*

<sup>26</sup> *upadrāṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ paramātmēti cāpy ukto dehe'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ*

There are two kinds of *puruṣas* in this world — the perishable and the imperishable. All these embodied beings (*bhūta*) are perishable, whereas the immutable [self] (*kūṭa-stha*) is called the imperishable. But different from these two is the Supreme Puruṣa, called Paramātmā. He, the imperishable regulator, enters the three worlds and then sustains them. (GĪTĀ 15.16–17)<sup>27</sup>

तत्रोपद्रष्टा परमसाक्षी । अनुमन्ता तत्तत्कर्मानुरूपः प्रवर्तकः । भर्ता पोषकः । भोक्ता पालयिता । महेश्वरः सर्वाधिकर्ता । परमात्मा सर्वान्तर्यामीति व्याख्येयम् ।

In the *Gītā* verse [quoted above (13.22)], the word *upadraṣṭā* (witness) means “the Supreme Witness”; *anumantā* (sanctioner) means “He who inspires the living beings in accordance with their past actions”; *bhartā* (sustainer) means “He who provides nourishment”; *bhoktā* (maintainer) means “the protector”;<sup>28</sup> *maheśvara* (the almighty regulator) means “the superintendent of all”; and *paramātmā* (the Supreme Self) means “the indweller in all.” This is how the words are to be explained.

उत्तरपद्योस्तु कूटस्थ “एकरूपतया तु यः कालव्यापी स कूटस्थः” इत्यमरकोषादवगतरर्थः । असौ शुद्धजीव एव “उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः” इत्युत्तरात् । तदेवमत्रापि क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसर्वक्षेत्रज्ञा उक्ताः । अत्र चोत्तरयोरन्य इत्यनेन भिन्नयोरिव सतोरक्षरयोर्न तत्तद्रूपतापरित्यागः सम्भवेदिति न कदाचिदपि निर्विशेषरूपेणावस्थितिरिति दर्शितम् ।

Regarding the next two verses quoted above (GĪTĀ 15.16–17), the word *kūṭa-stha* (the immutable [self]) means “one who does not undergo change through time,” according to *Amara-kośa* (3.1.73).<sup>29</sup> This is the pure individual conscious being (*śuddhā-jīva*), because in the very next verse it is said, “But different from these two is the Supreme Puruṣa (*uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ*), called Paramātmā.” Thus, here also [in GĪTĀ 15.16–17], the field (*kṣetra*), the knower of the individual field (*kṣetrajañā*), and the knower of

<sup>27</sup> *dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyañ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ yo loka-trāyam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ*

<sup>28</sup> The verbal root √*bhuj* carries both the sense of enjoyment or consumption and that of protecting or governing.

<sup>29</sup> *eka-rūpatayā tu yaḥ kāla-vyāpī sa kūṭasthaḥ*

the aggregate of all fields (*sarva-kṣetrajña*) are being indicated [as corresponding to the three divisions of *kṣara-puruṣa* (the perishable body), *akṣara-puruṣa* (the imperishable self), and *uttama-puruṣa* (the Supreme Self)]. By use of the word “different” (*anya*) [in *GĪTĀ* 15.17], Kṛṣṇa indicates that the latter two imperishable beings are indeed different. It is not possible for them to give up their respective natures. By this it is also shown that they never exist without attributes.

तस्मात् “मद्भावायोपपद्यते” (गीता १३।१८) इति यदुक्तं तदपि तत्सार्ष्टिप्राप्तितात्पर्य-  
कम् । तदेवं द्वयोरक्षरत्वेन साम्येऽपि जीवस्य हीनशक्तित्वात् प्रकृत्याविष्टस्य तन्निवृत्त्य-  
र्थमीश्वर एव भजनीयत्वेन ज्ञेय इति भावः ।

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa’s statement, “He attains My nature” (*mad-bhāvāyopapadyate*, *GĪTĀ* 13.18),<sup>30</sup> also means that he attains the same status or condition as Bhagavān (*sārṣṭi*) [not an attribute-less state of liberation]. The import is that although both are equal in terms of their imperishability, the *jīva* is the one who is captivated by material nature due to its inferior strength, and to dissolve this captivation, Īśvara alone is to be known as the Reality meant to be worshiped.

## Commentary

In this portion of the first *anuccheda*, Śrī Jīva discusses Chapter 13 of *Bhagavad Gītā* where the concepts of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* are introduced, along with an elaborate discussion of *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. This analysis is also further related to the corresponding portions of the *Gītā*’s 15<sup>th</sup> chapter. In both these chapters, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa not only differentiates between consciousness and non-conscious phenomena, but also between the individual consciousness and the supreme conscious entity, or *Paramātmā*. In the course of doing so, it is necessary for Śrī Jīva to deal with erroneous interpretations of these passages that deny any distinction between the two kinds of conscious beings.

<sup>30</sup> In some editions of the *Gītā*, this is verse 13.19.

Śrī Jīva begins by referring to Kṛṣṇa's words in GĪTĀ 13.1-2, which identify the presence of two distinct *kṣetrajñās* in the body, i.e., the individual *ātmā* and Paramātmā. In doing so, he refutes *vivarta-vāda*, the Advaita doctrine that acknowledges the existence of only one *ātmā*, otherwise called Brahman. The statement, "And know Me also to be the *kṣetrajña* residing in all *kṣetras*," clearly affirms that besides the individual self there is another *kṣetrajña*. This is the implication of the word *ca* (also). An individual *ātmā* knows only one particular *kṣetra*, but Paramātmā knows them all. To emphasize this point, the verse employs the compound *sarva-kṣetreṣu*, "in all bodies" (GĪTĀ 13.2).<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, the word *ca* highlights the distinction between the individual self and the Supreme Self. Śāṅkara's radical nondualistic (*kevalādvaita*) philosophy adopts the view that there is one absolute, unqualified Reality called Brahman, which manifests as Paramātmā when delimited by pure *sattva-guṇa* (i.e., perpetual being unmixed with *rajas* and *tamas*) and as the individual *ātmā* when delimited by *sattva-guṇa* mixed with the other *guṇas*.<sup>32</sup> Adherents of this doctrine claim that there is no ultimate difference between the two *kṣetrajñās*. For them, the one unqualified conscious Reality is the ultimate and unique substantive to be known, *jñeya*. Everything else is ultimately *mithyā*, or devoid of ontological reality.

While commenting on this verse (GĪTĀ 13.2), Śrī Śāṅkarācārya writes:

Know Me, the Supreme Regulator, who am transcendental to conditional existence, to be the *kṣetrajña*, endowed also with the above-mentioned characteristics, and present in all *kṣetras*. The implication here is that the *kṣetrajña* is [apparently] distributed in all bodies beginning from Brahmā and extending down to immovable forms by virtue of the limitations imposed by these bodies. Know the *kṣetrajña* to be devoid of all these divisions or limitations, and as imperceptible [i.e., unknowable] through the notions conveyed

<sup>31</sup> *kṣetrajñām cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata*

<sup>32</sup> Vide *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* 1; *Vedānta-sāra* 7; *Pañcadaśī* 3.40, 1.16; *Vicāra-sāgara* 4.88-89.

by words such as *sat* (cause) and *asat* (effect). (*Bhagavad Gītā*, *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* 13.2)<sup>33</sup>

Śrī Jīva refutes Śāṅkara’s interpretation by arguing that were this the case, the compound *sarva-kṣetreṣu*, “in all *kṣetras*,” would be redundant, as the one who knows all bodies would be identical with the one who knows the individual body. Then he would have used the word *eva* instead of *api* (i.e., *kṣetrajñam eva mān viddhi*, “Know Me alone to be the *kṣetrajña*”), and *sarva-kṣetreṣu* would serve no additional purpose because there would be only one *kṣetrajña*. Thus, Kṛṣṇa does not instruct that there is one absolute unqualified consciousness that alone is real but which appears as many by the influence of *māyā*.

Moreover, later in GĪTĀ 13.2, Ultimate Reality is stated to be knowable (*jñeya*). An object devoid of form, energies, and qualities cannot be knowable. Furthermore, the knowable is described as qualified, not as devoid of attributes. This contradicts the Advaitavāda concept that Ultimate Reality is unqualified indivisible consciousness alone that appears as many due only to the *upādhis* in the form of material bodies. The qualified nature of the knowable is expressed as follows:

That [Supreme] knowable has hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and faces all around, and with ears in all directions. It abides, pervading everything in the world. (GĪTĀ 13.13)<sup>34</sup>

Here the affirmation that Bhagavān has senses and limbs, even though they are of an all-pervading nature, shows that they are real and that He is thus a conscious being with senses and not mere unqualified consciousness. Furthermore, the knowledge described in verses 13.7–11 also pertains to a Reality inclusive of attributes, because ceaseless exclusive devotion is counted as one

<sup>33</sup> *kṣetrajñam yathokta-lakṣaṇam cāpi mān parameśvaram asaṁsāriṇam viddhi jānīhi. sarva-kṣetreṣu yaḥ kṣetrajño brahmādi-stamba-paryantāneka-kṣetropādhipravibhaktaḥ. tañ nirasta-sarvopādhi-bhedam sad-asad-ādi-śabda-pratyayāgo-caram viddhity abhiprāyaḥ.*

<sup>34</sup> *sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṁ tat sarvato’kṣi-śiro-mukham sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati*

of its elements (verse 10, *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*). Such devotion is not possible toward an unqualified substantive. If there were no real distinction between the individual witness (*jīva-kṣetrajñā*) and the Supreme Witness (*īśvara-kṣetrajñā*), any instruction to the former to be devoted to the latter would be meaningless.

The radical nondualists may reply that such instructions are only meant to help the conditioned self to realize its Brahman nature. They claim that worship of God is an intermediary step for less intelligent practitioners. For example, Nīlakaṇṭha, while commenting on GĪTĀ 12.2, writes:

While indicating the superiority of *nirguṇa* [meditation], specifically because it is said to be difficult to attain, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks the present verse, linguistically affirming the importance of *saguṇa* [worship]: “Those who worship (i.e., meditate upon) Me as the Supreme Īśvara, do so with their minds constantly fixed upon (i.e., entering) Me (the qualified Brahman), being endowed with superior (i.e., *sāttvika*) faith (*śraddhā*), meaning belief in My personal existence, or in other words, with the conviction that by worshipping Paramātmā, they will certainly be delivered by Him. In reality, it is the *jñānīs* [Advaitavādīs] whom I look upon as My very Self, as previously stated, ‘I regard the *jñānīs* as My very Self’ (7.18). Yet, being omniscient, I take the side even of such fools [the *saguṇa* worshippers] out of compassion for them, and it is in this sense only that I consider them as the best of those who are united with Me.” (*Bhāva-dīpa* 12.2)<sup>35</sup>

This is how the Advaitavādīs interpret Kṛṣṇa’s reply to Arjuna. But if the *jīva* believes that he is identical to this Īśvara, which certainly is the case for those who aim at *nirguṇa* Brahman realization, how could he be sincerely devoted to Him? If a non-devotee actor

<sup>35</sup> *nirguṇasya duṣprāptvoktyaivaṁ śreṣṭhatvaṁ sūcayan saguṇa-prāśastyai ca śabdato darśayan śrī-bhagavān uvāca mayīti. mayi saguṇe brahmaṇi mana āveśya praveśya ye nitya-yuktāḥ sadodyuktā mām parameśvaram upāsate cintayanti śraddhayā āstikya-buddhyā parayā sāttvikyā “avaśyaṁ paramātmā yamārādhito ’smāns tārayiṣyati” ity evaṁ niścaya-rūpayā śraddhayā upetās te me mama “jñānī tvātmaiva me matam” iti jñāninam ātmatvenaiva paśyato mūrkheshv api kārūṇyāt pakṣapātavataḥ sarvajñasya yuktatamā matāḥ.*

on stage plays the role of a devotee and another that of God, can the former's show of devotion be considered genuine? Certainly not. An actor can make a portrayal of devotion but that would not benefit him spiritually. Indeed, from the point of view of *bhakti* theology, to regard oneself as identical to Īśvara would be tantamount to an offence.

Jīva raises the following question: Some say that the common conscious substratum (*sāmānādhikāraṇya*) of the two *ḷṣetrajañña*s described in GĪTĀ 13.1-2 should be interpreted according to the famous statement from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.7), “You are that” (*tat tvam asi*). In this interpretation, called *pratibimba-vāda*, the pronoun “that” here refers to the unqualified unlimited consciousness and the pronoun “you” to the conditioned or limited consciousness. Though the two are not equal in our experience, one being unlimited and the other limited, they can be understood as such through the analytical principle of *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣaṇa*, or discarding one part of a statement to obtain the correct meaning.

Here, if the adjectives “unlimited” and “limited” are dropped, then what remains is “consciousness.” Then “you,” the conditioned reality, can be equated with the unconditioned reality. In other words, a conditioned *jīva* (*tvam-padārtha*) can be equal to the qualityless reality (*tat-padārtha*) only if its conditioning is dropped. In the same way, the Advaitavādī may argue that in the *Gītā* verses under discussion, the purpose of mentioning two types of *ḷṣetrajañña* is to offer instruction about the qualityless reality called Brahman, with whom the individuated knower is equated, just as is done in the *mantra* from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* cited above.

Śrī Jīva replies that if such were Kṛṣṇa's intention, He would have expressed Himself differently and said, “Knowledge of the *ḷṣetrajañña* and Īśvara is called knowledge” (*ḷṣetrajañña-iṣvarayor jñānam yat taj jñānam*) instead of “Knowledge of the field and its knowers is called knowledge” (*ḷṣetra-ḷṣetrajaññayor jñānam yat taj jñānam*).

The statement *tat tvam asi* (“You are that”) teaches the identity of the limited consciousness, i.e., the individual living being referred to by the pronoun *tvam* or “you,” and the unlimited or



all-pervading consciousness called Brahman, referred to by the pronoun *tat* or “That.” It does not, however, teach the identity of the inert material body (*kṣetra*) and the supreme consciousness (Īśvara).

Jīva Gosvāmī here reads the verse somewhat differently from the way it is taken customarily. He joins *mama* (My) with *jñānam* (knowledge) rather than *matam* (view). Thus, the sentence, instead of reading, “In My view (*matam mama*), knowledge of the field and the knower of the field is [true] knowledge (*jñāna*),” is construed as “Knowledge of the field and the knower of the field is understood (*mata*) to be knowledge of Me (*mama jñānam*).” The intent is that knowledge of the body, the individual self, the Supreme Self, and the interrelations between them is meant to lead to an understanding of the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

To support this argumentation, Śrī Jīva refers to a *sūtra* (vs 1.3.20) from the *Daharādhikaraṇa* of the *Brahma-sūtra*, where a section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.1.1 ff.) is under scrutiny. The *Upaniṣad* states that there is a tiny (*dahara*) lotus-like space (*ākāśa*) in the “city of Brahman” (i.e., the body) and that one should seek out and inquire into that which dwells in that space. What then is this space? It could mean the material element of ether (*bhūtākāśa*), the individual self (*jīva*), or Brahman / Viṣṇu. The first part of the *Daharādhikaraṇa* (vs 1.3.14–17) establishes that this “sky” (*ākāśa*), a word that is also used to indicate Brahman, cannot be the material element ether.

The next portion of the *adhikaraṇa* raises the possibility that the *dahara* is a reference to the individual self, as indicated further in CHU 8.3.4, but then refutes this proposition: “If it is argued that because there is a reference to the other, namely the *jīva*, in the *dahara* section, and that therefore *ākāśa* means the *jīva*, this is denied as impossible” (*itara-parāmarśāt sa iti cen nāsambhāvāt*, vs 1.3.18). In the section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* to which this *sūtra* refers, the word *prajāpati* refers to the *jīva*, and it is pointed out that when the *jīva* meditates on Brahman, the eightfold

qualities<sup>36</sup> appear in him. These qualities naturally exist in Brahman, not in the *jīva*. Thus, the word *dahara* does not refer to the *jīva* but to Brahman, by meditation on whom the *jīva* is endowed with the eightfold qualities.

After this, another doubt is raised: “Why, then, is there a reference to the *jīva* in this section related to *dahara*” (i.e., CHU 8.3.4)? This question is answered by *sūtra* vs 1.3.20 cited by Śrī Jīva here in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, “The deliberation (*parāmarśa*) on the individual self is in order to know the other (*anyārtha*) [i.e., the Supreme Self].” The meaning here is that the reference to the *jīva* is intended to impart knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. It indicates that when a *jīva* attains perfection, it also becomes endowed with the eightfold qualities (as in CHU 8.1.5) belonging to the Supreme Reality.

In other words, although it appears that the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is describing the *jīva*, its intention is to explain the nature of the Supreme. Likewise, Śrī Jīva says that although Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is describing *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñā* in the verses cited, His intention is to disclose knowledge about Himself, because the *jñeya*, the substantive Reality to be known, is expressed in the singular. If there were two *jñeyas* (a *kṣetra* and a *kṣetrajñā*), the dual number would have been used. Moreover, since Kṛṣṇa is the Ultimate Reality, as Śrī Jīva has established in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, He is that which is most worthy to be known (*jñeya*), because knowledge of Him includes knowledge of everything else, as stated in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: “O most honorable one, what is that Reality by knowing which all this becomes clearly known” (MUU 1.1.3)?<sup>37</sup>

One may misconstrue that Kṛṣṇa’s teachings in this section of the *Gītā* speak only of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñā*, the former referring to *prakṛti* and the latter to *puruṣa*, the two ontological categories of the classical Sāṅkhya philosophy of Kapila, and that therefore He is just

<sup>36</sup> *ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso’pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ*

The Supreme Self is free from sin, old age, death, grief, hunger, and thirst. He has infallible desires and infallible will.

<sup>37</sup> *kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvām idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati*

confirming the classical Sāṅkhya view. Śrī Jīva disagrees with this idea because Kapila does not himself mention Īśvara, the Supreme Person, but in GĪTĀ 13.2, Kṛṣṇa says *mām* (Me), which implies that there is a third reality beyond material nature and the individual living beings. This is confirmed later in *Bhagavad Gītā*:

There are two kinds of *puruṣas* in this world — the perishable and the imperishable. All these embodied beings (*bhūta*) are perishable, whereas the immutable [self] (*kūṭa-stha*) is called the imperishable. But different from these two is the Supreme Puruṣa, called Paramātmā. He, the imperishable regulator, enters the three worlds and then sustains them. (GĪTĀ 15.16-17)<sup>38</sup>

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly mentions three divisions of ontological being — the *kṣara-puruṣa* (the self conditioned by a perishable body, *baddha-jīva*), the *akṣara-puruṣa* (the imperishable self, *mukta-jīva*), and the *uttama-puruṣa* (the Supreme Self). These refer to *kṣetra* (the body-mind complex of the empirical self), *kṣetra-jñā* (the pure self), and *jñeya* (the Supreme Self), respectively of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. If the Advaitavāda theory that there is only one type of *kṣetra-jñā* is admitted, there would be incoherency in Kṛṣṇa's instruction. One may object that the physical body cannot be called a *puruṣa*. Although this argument is valid, it is not the body in isolation that is called *puruṣa*. Rather, the body along with the individual self is called the *puruṣa*. Such usage is also seen in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.1).<sup>39</sup> In that *Upaniṣad*, the first three *puruṣas* — *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, and *manomaya* — correspond to the presentational field (*kṣetra*), the *vijñānamaya-puruṣa* refers to the individuated knowers (*kṣetra-jñās*), and the *ānandamaya-puruṣa* is the Supreme Self, who is to be known (*jñeya*).

A further objection may be raised: In Śāṅkarācārya's *vivartavāda* philosophy, Īśvara (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is also considered to be an

<sup>38</sup> *dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca  
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho'kṣara ucyate  
uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ  
yo loka-trayam āviśya bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ*

<sup>39</sup> *sa vā eṣa puruṣo'nna-rasa-mayaḥ*  
That *puruṣa* verily consists of the essence of food.

illusion and does not refer to the Ultimate Reality. As said earlier, the *vivarta-vāda* holds that there is only one reality called Brahman; everything else is an illusion, including Īśvara, or God. Śrī Jīva responds to this by saying that if this were the case, then the statements of scriptures like the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the Upaniṣads would have no authority, since an illusory person would have uttered them. Moreover, there would be no difference between the Vedic schools of theology and Buddhism, since Buddhists neither accept the revealed scriptures nor the authority of their speaker.

The *vivarta-vādi* might further argue that even if Īśvara and the scriptures spoken by Him are admitted to be real, the essence of their teaching is to inform us about Brahman, the qualityless reality. So, in case this insight is not made evident from the verses of the *Gītā* under discussion, then one has to supplement his understanding by recourse to other revealed texts. To this, Śrī Jīva responds that in the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa deliberately and clearly states that knowledge of Brahman and intuition of identity with Brahman is inferior to knowledge of Bhagavān and devotion to Him:

Arjuna asks: Between those devotees who are constantly devoted to You in the manner previously described, who worship You in the fullness of being, and those who worship the Imperishable, Unmanifest [Brahman], who have better realized the nature of *yoga*?

Bhagavān replies: Those who, having fixed their minds upon Me, are constantly devoted to Me, and who, being endowed with transcendental faith, worship Me — them I regard as the best of *yogīs*.  
(GĪTĀ 12.1-2)<sup>40</sup>

Kṛṣṇa also says that meditation on the qualityless Brahman is troublesome (GĪTĀ 12.5), but that He personally intervenes to liberate His devotees from the ocean of material suffering, as in the

<sup>40</sup> arjuna uvāca  
*evaṁ satata-yuktā ye bhaktās tvāṁ paryupāsate*  
*ye cāpy akṣaram avyaktaṁ teṣāṁ ke yoga-vittamāḥ*  
*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*mayy āveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate*  
*śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ*

verse quoted by Śrī Jīva (GĪTĀ 12.7). Later, of course, Kṛṣṇa states that He is the source of the Brahman feature:

I am indeed the source and shelter of Brahman, of imperishable liberation, of eternal religion, and of absolute bliss. (GĪTĀ 14.27)<sup>41</sup>

This suggests that Brahman is nothing but an unqualified aspect of Bhagavān, as argued by Śrī Jīva in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anucchedas* 3, 6, and 7). From all these statements it is clear that the essential intent of scripture is to establish Bhagavān as the Ultimate Reality, not Brahman. Śrī Jīva thus shows on the authority of the *Bhagavad Gītā* that there are two *kṣetrajñās*, the individual living being and Paramātmā. They are distinct and can never be absolutely one.<sup>42</sup> Wherever their oneness is indicated, it is only because the *jīva* is an integrated part of Paramātmā and thus shares some identity of nature with Him. But they are never identical, as stated in the *Gītā*:

In this way, the field (*kṣetra*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and the knowable (*jñeya*) have been described in brief. Knowing this, My devotee attains My nature. (GĪTĀ 13.18)<sup>43</sup>

According to this verse, the individuated knower is certainly not the Supreme Reality to be known (*jñeya*).

The Advaitavāda scholars interpret the statement “attains to My nature” to mean that the *jīva* becomes one with the Supreme. But this contradicts numerous other statements, such as, “But there is another, the Supreme Puruṣa, who is called Paramātmā” (GĪTĀ 15.17). Śrī Jīva thus glosses *mad-bhāva* here as *sārṣṭi*, or “[the liberation of attaining] equal rank, status, or power as Bhagavān.” This is supported by the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (CHU 8.1.5), which states that a liberated *jīva* attains the eightfold attributes of God.

<sup>41</sup> *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyaṃśa ca śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

<sup>42</sup> *uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyañ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ*  
GĪTĀ 15.17

<sup>43</sup> *iti kṣetraṃ tathā jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ coktaṃ samāsataḥ mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāyopapadyate*

Thus, it is perfectly clear that the individual *jīva* is ever distinct from and subservient to the Supreme Person, or Puruṣottama. He alone is the Substantive Reality to be known (*jñeya*), and the means for the self-revelation of that truth is unconditional devotion. After being endowed with this realization, the *jīva* becomes like Him, and yet still remains ever distinct and subservient.

1.3

### Paramātmā Is the Primary Kṣetrajañña in All

तस्मात् “इदं शरीरम्” (गीता १३।१) इत्यादिकं पुनरित्थं विवेचनीयम् । इदमिति स्वस्वा-  
परोक्षमित्यर्थः । शरीरक्षेत्रयोरेकैकत्वेन ग्रहणमत्र व्यक्तिपर्यवसानेन जातिपुरस्कारेणैवेति  
गम्यते । “सर्वक्षेत्रेषु” (गीता १३।२) इति बहुवचनेनानुवादात् ।

**Therefore [in light of the above discussion], we must re-examine the statements of the *Gītā* (13.1–2), beginning with, “This body is called the field (*kṣetra*),”<sup>44</sup> in the following way: The pronoun *idam* (this) indicates that which is directly perceptible or in proximity to each individual [i.e., every individual directly perceives his or her own body]. The use of the singular for both *śarīra* and *kṣetra* in this verse should be taken to mean the individual bodies [and not just one in any absolute monistic sense], taking an individual body as representative of the whole class. This is necessarily the case because in the next verse the plural, “in all *kṣetras*,”<sup>45</sup> is used.**

“एतद् यो वेत्ति” (गीता १३।१) इत्यत्र । “देहोऽसवोऽक्षा मनवः” (भा० ६।४।२५) इत्यादौ  
“सर्वं पुमान् वेदगुणांश्च तज्ज्ञः” इत्युक्तदिशा । “क्षेत्रज्ञ एता मनसो विभूतीः” (भा०  
५।११।२) इत्युक्तदिशा च जानातीत्यर्थः ।

**In the statement, “The one who knows this [body is called the knower of the field],”<sup>46</sup> the act of knowing means to know from the [particular] perspective indicated in the [previously quoted] *Bhāgavatam* verse: “Although a *jīva* can know all these**

<sup>44</sup> *idam śarīraṁ kaunteya*

<sup>45</sup> *sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata*

<sup>46</sup> *etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ*

[the body, the senses, and so on], as well as the *guṇas* of primordial nature, he does not know the omniscient unlimited Bhagavān” (SB 6.4.25);<sup>47</sup> and from the perspective mentioned in the first verse under discussion here: “The pure knower of the presentational field merely witnesses these beginningless modifications of the impure mind” (SB 5.11.12).<sup>48</sup>

“क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि” इत्यत्र मां स्वयं भगवन्तमेव सर्वेष्वपि समष्टिव्यष्टिरूपेषु क्षेत्रेषु न तु पूर्वक्षेत्रज्ञवत् निजनिजक्षेत्र एव क्षेत्रज्ञं च विद्धीति । “विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्” (गीता १०।४२) इति ।

In GĪTĀ 13.2, “Know Me also to be the *kṣetrajña*,” should be read: “Know Me alone, the Original Complete Person (Svayaṁ Bhagavān), to be the knower of all fields whatsoever, both individual and collective, unlike the previously mentioned knowers of the field [in GĪTĀ 13.1], who know only the individual field of their respective bodies.” This same [idea] was stated [by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in an earlier chapter of the *Gītā*]: “I pervade and support this entire cosmos by a single fraction of My power” (GĪTĀ 10.42).<sup>49</sup>

यत्र गत्यन्तरं नास्ति तत्रैव लक्षणामयकष्टमाश्रीयते । तथापि तेन सामानाधिकरण्यं यदि विवक्षितं स्यात् तर्हि “क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि” इत्येतावदेव तं च मां विद्धीत्येतावदेव वा प्रोच्येत न तु सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारतेत्यधिकमपि । किन्तु “क्षेत्रज्ञ एता मनसो विभूतीः” (भा० ५।११।१२) इत्यादिवत् क्षेत्रज्ञद्वयमपि वक्तव्यमेव स्यात् । तथा च ब्रह्मसूत्रम् “गुहां प्रविष्टावात्मानौ हि तद्दर्शनात्” (ब्र० सू० १।२।११) इति ।

One should resort to a secondary meaning only when there is no other alternative. Even so, if by these words Kṛṣṇa’s intention was to equate the *jīva* to Himself, then instead of saying, “Know Me also to be the knower (*kṣetrajña*) situated within all fields,” He would have simply said, “Know Me to be the *kṣetrajña* also of that precise nature” or “Know Me [to be the *kṣetrajña*] to that exact same extent,” and there would have been no need of the addition, “in all fields, O Bharata.” Instead, He considered it necessary to speak of two *kṣetrajñas*, as in the

<sup>47</sup> *deho’savo’kṣā manavo bhūta-mātrām*

<sup>48</sup> *kṣetrajña etā manaso vibhūtīr jīvasya māyā-racitasya nityāḥ*

<sup>49</sup> *viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat*

two *Bhāgavatam* verses [cited as the principal verses of this section, i.e., SB 5.11.12–13]. Likewise, the *Brahma-sūtra* states, “Two *ātmās* have entered the cavity of the heart, because it is so described in the scriptures” (VS 1.2.11).<sup>50</sup>

तद्वैध्यमेव चोपसंहृतम् “पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि” (गीता १३।२१) इत्यादिना । तस्मादुपक्रमार्थस्योपसंहाराधीनत्वादिष एवार्थः समञ्जसः । यथोक्तं ब्रह्मसूत्रकृद्भिः “असद् व्यपदेशान् नेति चेन् न धर्मान्तरेण वाक्यशेषात्” (ब्र० सू० २।१।१७) इति ।

Furthermore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes [this topic, GĪTĀ 13.21–22] by saying that there are indeed two types of *kṣetrajñā*. Therefore, because the introductory meaning is dependent upon the conclusion, this alone is the appropriate understanding. [The same principle of the conclusion determining the proper understanding of an introductory statement applies in the following text of] *Brahma-sūtra*: “If it be argued that the effect does not exist in the cause because the Śruti speaks of the world’s non-existence (*asat*) prior to creation, this is not so, because concluding statements show that the word [*asat*] is used instead to denote a difference of characteristics [and not absolute non-existence]” (VS 2.1.17).<sup>51</sup>

अथ “क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानम्” (गीता १३।२) इत्यत्र यत् क्षेत्रे ज्ञानेन्द्रियगतं तेनागतं च ज्ञानं दर्शयिष्यते । यच्च पूर्वक्षेत्रज्ञे निजनिजक्षेत्रज्ञानं दर्शितं तत्तन्मज्जानांशस्य क्षेत्रेषु च्छायारूपत्वात् क्षेत्रज्ञेषु यत् किञ्चिदंशशततया प्रवेशान् ममैव ज्ञानं मतमिति । तस्मात् साधूक्तं मुख्यं क्षेत्रज्ञत्वं परमात्मन्येवेति ।

In the statement, “knowledge of the field (*kṣetra*) and of the knower of the field (*kṣetrajñā*)” (GĪTĀ 13.2), the knowledge pertaining to the field, which will be shown either as acquired through the senses or as not so acquired, is understood as My [Kṛṣṇa’s] knowledge alone. Similarly, the knowledge present to the knower of the field, which was previously described as that related to its corresponding individual body, is also understood as My [Kṛṣṇa’s] knowledge alone. This is so [in regard to the field] because it is My [Kṛṣṇa’s] knowledge alone that pervades

<sup>50</sup> *guhām praviṣṭāv ātmānau hi tad-darśanāt*

<sup>51</sup> *asad vyapadeśān neti cen na dharmāntareṇa vākya-śeṣāt*



the fields (*kṣetras*) as a shadow of a portion of My cognition. Again, it is so [in regard to the knowers of the field] because it is My consciousness alone that pervades the knowers of the fields as individuated portions of My consciousness. Therefore, the statement [made above] that the primary *kṣetrajña* is Paramātmā [and not the *jīva*] is confirmed.

अत्र श्रीभगवतः परमात्मरूपेणाविर्भावोऽपि “अजनि च यन्मयं तदविमुच्य नियन्तु भवेत्” (भा० १०।८७।३०) इत्युक्तदिशा शक्तिविशेषालिङ्गित्वाद् यस्मादेवांशाज् जीवानामाविर्भावस्तेनैवेति ज्ञेयम् । तदुक्तं तत्रैव “विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्” (गीता १०।४२) इत्यादि । श्रीविष्णुपुराणे च (वि० पु० १।९।५२) —

The manifestation of the Paramātmā feature of Bhagavān is also indicated by the personified Śrutis: “O eternal One. You [Paramātmā] from whom all these *jīvas* have come, being their cause, pervade them unrestrictedly [i.e., completely]; thus You are their regulator” (SB 10.87.30).<sup>52</sup> According to this understanding, Paramātmā is to be known as that partial form [of Bhagavān] who possesses special potency and from whom the living entities appear. As is said in the *Gītā*: “I pervade and support this entire cosmos by a single fraction of My power” (GĪTĀ 10.42). And also in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

यस्यायुतायुतांशांशे विश्वशक्तिरियं स्थिता ।  
परब्रह्मस्वरूपस्य प्रणमाम तमव्ययम् ॥ १४ ॥ इति ।

We offer obeisances to the immutable Supreme Brahman; this entire cosmic energy is situated in a portion of a 100,000,000<sup>th</sup> part of His potency. (VP 1.9.52)<sup>53</sup>

पूर्णशुद्धशक्तिस्तु “कलाकाष्ठानिमेषादि” (वि० पु० १।९।४४) इत्यनेन दर्शिता ।

The complete, pure potency [of Bhagavān] is indicated in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: “May that Bhagavān Hari, who is pure, be propitiated

<sup>52</sup> *ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyantr bhavet*  
See *Anuccheda* 34.

<sup>53</sup> *yasyāyutāyutāmśāṁśe viśva-śaktir iyaṁ sthitā*  
*para-brahma-svarūpasya praṇamāma tam avyayam*

by us. The potency instrumental in the perception of the various divisions of time, such as *kalā*, *kāṣṭhā*, and *nimeṣa*, is not that of the pure [i.e., Bhagavān, but of Paramātmā]” (VP 1.9.44).<sup>54</sup>

तथा श्रीनारदपञ्चरात्रे श्रीनारद उवाच —

**And in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, Śrī Nārada says:**

शुद्धसर्गमहं देव ज्ञातुमिच्छामि तत्त्वतः ।  
सर्गद्वयस्य चैवास्य यः परत्वेन वर्तते ॥ १५ ॥

O Deva, I wish to know in truth of the pure creation, and of the two types of creation, and of the one who exists beyond these two types of creation.<sup>55</sup>

तत्रैतत्पूर्वोक्तः प्राधानिकः शाक्तश्चेत्येतत् सर्गद्वयस्येति ज्ञेयम् ।

**The two types of creation are those of *pradhāna* [the unmanifest primordial nature] and of *śakti* [the extrinsic potency of *Māyā*], which were described prior to this verse:**

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
यः सर्वव्यापको देवः परब्रह्म च शाश्वतम् ।  
चित्सामान्यं जगत्यस्मिन् परमानन्दलक्षणम् ॥ १६ ॥  
वासुदेवादभिन्नस् तु वह्न्यर्केन्दुशतप्रभम् ।  
वासुदेवोऽपि भगवांस्तद्धर्मा परमेश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥  
स्वां दीप्तिं क्षोभयत्येव तेजसा तेन वै युतम् ।  
प्रकाशरूपो भगवानच्युतं चासृजद् द्विज ॥ १८ ॥  
सोऽच्युतोऽच्युततेजाश्च स्वरूपं वितनोति वै ।  
आश्रित्य वासुदेवं च स्वस्थो मेघो जलं यथा ॥ १९ ॥  
क्षोभयित्वा स्वमात्मानं सत्यभास्वरविग्रहम् ।  
उत्पादयामास तदा समुद्रोर्मिजलं यथा ॥ २० ॥  
स चिन्मयः प्रकाशात्मा उत्पाद्यात्मानमात्मना ।

<sup>54</sup> *kalā-kāṣṭhā-nimeṣādi-kāla-sūtrasya gocare*

*yasya śaktir na śuddhasya prasīdatu sa me hariḥ*

<sup>55</sup> *śuddha-sargam ahaṁ deva jñātum icchāmi tattvataḥ*

*sarga-dvayasya caivasya yaḥ paratvena vartate*

This as well as the following verses are not found in any extant versions of *Nārada-pañcarātra*.

पुरुषाख्यमनन्तं च प्रकाशप्रसरं महत् ॥ २१ ॥  
 स च वै सर्वजीवानामाश्रयः परमेश्वरः ।  
 अन्तर्यामी च तेषां वै तारकाणामिवाम्बरम् ॥ २२ ॥  
 सेन्धनः पावको यद्वत् स्फुलिङ्गनिचयं द्विज ।  
 अनिच्छातः प्रेरयति तद्वदेष परः प्रभुः ॥ २३ ॥  
 प्राग्वासनानिबन्धानां बन्धानां च विमुक्तये ।  
 तस्माद् विद्वि तदंशास्तान् सर्वांशं तमजं प्रभुम् ॥ २४ ॥ इति ।

Śrī Bhagavān replied: O *dvija*, the all-pervading Deva is the Supreme Brahman, the eternal, the universal consciousness of this world, who is of the nature of transcendental bliss, nondifferent from Vāsudeva, and as effulgent as hundreds of fires, suns, and moons. Although Bhagavān Vāsudeva is the Supreme Controller (Parameśvara), being intrinsically endowed with such qualities, He caused a movement in His own radiance through His own potency. Being the personification of light, this Bhagavān emitted Acyuta, who was endowed with that same radiance.

Taking shelter of Bhagavān Vāsudeva, Acyuta, who has infallible splendor, expanded His own form just as a cloud situated in the sky sends forth rain. As the ocean agitates itself and produces waves, He incited His own Self and thus produced a form that was true and radiant. This Bhagavān, who is pure consciousness and self-luminous, after generating His own Self by Himself, caused an unlimited form to become manifest, called Puruṣa, who is of the nature of all-pervasive light.

This Supreme Regulator is the shelter of all living beings. He is their indweller, [related to them] like the sky to the stars. O twice-born, just as a fire laden with tinder sends off many sparks unintentionally, similarly, this transcendental Bhagavān sends forth or emits the living beings, who are bound by their previous desires, so that they can become liberated. Thus, know all these [living beings] as integrated parts of Bhagavān and Him, the unborn Bhagavān, as the all-encompassing Whole. (*Nārada-pañcarātra*)<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*yaḥ sarva-vyāpako devaḥ para-brahma ca śāśvatam*  
*cit-sāmānyam jagaty aśmin paramānanda-lakṣaṇam →*

अत एव यत् तु ब्रह्मादौ श्रीप्रद्युम्नस्य । मन्वादौ श्रीविष्णोः । रुद्रादौ श्रीसङ्कर्षणस्यान्तर्यामित्वं श्रूयते तन्नानांशमादायावतीर्णस्य तस्यैव तत्तदंशेन तत्तदन्तर्यामित्वमिति मन्तव्यम् । अत एव रुद्रस्य श्रीसङ्कर्षणप्रकृतित्वं पुरुषप्रकृतित्वं चेत्युभयमप्याम्नातम् “प्रकृतिमात्मनः सङ्कर्षणसञ्ज्ञां भव उपधावति” (भा० ५।१७।१६) इत्यादौ । “आदावभूच्छतधृतिः” (भा० ११।४।५) इत्यादौ च । एष एव (वि० पु० ५।१८।५०) —

Therefore, when it is said that Śrī Pradyumna is the indweller of Brahmā, Śrī Viṣṇu of Manu, and Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa of Rudra, it is to be understood that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone, having manifested along with His various parts, becomes the [root] indweller of these diverse beings through these [corresponding] partial manifestations. For this reason, Rudra is said to have his source (*prakṛti*) both in Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa [for the play of cosmic dissolution], as well as in the Puruṣa [for the play of cosmic creation] as in [the prose passage from the Fifth Canto]: “Śrī Śiva worships his own source, who is known as Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa” (SB 5.17.16).<sup>57</sup> And also, “That Primeval Puruṣa, united with *rajas*, appeared in the beginning as Brahmā for the creation of this universe, and, united with *tamas*, He appeared as Rudra for its destruction” (SB 11.4.5).<sup>58</sup> This is also explained in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

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vāsudevād abhinnas tu vahny-arkendu-śata-prabham  
vāsudevo’pi bhagavāns tad-dharmā parameśvaraḥ  
svām dīptim kṣobhayaty eva tejasā tena vai yutam  
prakāśa-rūpo bhagavān acyutaṁ cāsrjad dvija  
so’cyuto’cyuta-tejās ca svarūpaṁ vitanoti vai  
āsritya vāsudevaṁ ca svastho megho jalaṁ yathā  
kṣobhayitvā svam ātmānaṁ satya-bhāsvara-vigraham  
utpādayāmāsa tadā samudrormi-jalaṁ yathā  
sa cinmayaḥ prakāśātmā utpādyātmānaṁ ātmānaṁ  
puruṣākhyam anantaṁ ca prakāśa-prasaraṁ mahat  
sa ca vai sarva-jīvānām āsrayaḥ parameśvaraḥ  
antaryāmī ca teṣāṁ vai tārakāṇām ivāmbaram  
sendhanaḥ pāvako yadvat sphuliṅga-nicayaṁ dvija  
anicchātaḥ prerayati tadvad eṣa paraḥ prabhūḥ  
prāg-vāsanā-nibandhānām bandhānām ca vimuktaye  
tasmād viddhi tad-aṁśāns tām sarvāṁśān tvam ajaṁ prabhum

<sup>57</sup> prakṛtim ātmanaḥ saṅkarṣaṇa-saṅjñāṁ bhava upadhāvati

<sup>58</sup> ādāv abhūc chata-dhṛti rajasāsyā sarge

This verse will be discussed in full in *Anuccheda* 8.

भूतात्मा चेन्द्रियात्मा च प्रधानात्मा तथा भवान् ।  
आत्मा च परमात्मा च त्वमेकः पञ्चधा स्थितः ॥ २५ ॥

Although You are One, You are situated in five ways: as *bhūtātmā* (the Self of the gross material elements), *indriyātmā* (the Self of the senses), *pradhānātmā* (the Self of the unmanifested primordial nature), *ātmā* (the individual self), and *paramātmā* (the Supreme Self). (VP 5.18.50)<sup>59</sup>

इत्यादौ विवृतः । तस्मात् सर्वान्तर्यामी पुरुष एव “ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति” (भा० १।२।११) इत्यादौ परमात्मत्वेन निर्दिष्ट इति स्थितम् ।

Therefore, it is concluded that the Puruṣa alone is the immanent indweller (*antaryāmī*) of all beings, who is referred to as Paramātmā in the following verse: “All those who have realized Absolute Reality (*tattva*), describe this Reality as nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*). This Reality is referred to as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān” (SB 1.2.11).

व्याख्यातं च स्वामिभिः “नमस तुभ्यं भगवते ब्रह्मणे परमात्मने” (भा० १०।२८।६) इत्यत्र वरुणस्तुतौ “परमात्मने सर्वजीवनियन्त्रे” इति ।

Śrīdhara Svāmī has also given a similar explanation while commenting on the prayers of Varuṇa: “I offer obeisance unto Bhagavān, who is Brahman and Paramātmā” (SB 10.28.6).<sup>60</sup> Here he says, “Paramātmā means the regulator of all living beings.”

अस्य परमात्मनो मायोपाधितया पुरुषत्वं तूपचरितमेव । तदुक्तं वैष्णवे एव (वि० पु० ६।८।६०-६१) —

When it is said that Paramātmā appears as the Puruṣa due to the limiting adjunct of *māyā*, it is in the figurative sense only. This is stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

नान्तोऽस्ति यस्य न च यस्य समुद्रवोऽस्ति  
वृद्धिर्न यस्य परिणामविवर्जितस्य ।

<sup>59</sup> *bhūtātmā cendriyātmā ca pradhānātmā tathā bhavān*

*ātmā ca paramātmā ca tvam ekaḥ pañcadhā sthitaḥ*

<sup>60</sup> *namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate brahmane paramātmane*

नापक्षयं च समुपैत्य विकल्पवस्तु  
यस्तं नतोऽस्मि पुरुषोत्तममाद्यमीड्यम् ॥ २६ ॥  
तस्यैव योऽनु गुणभुग् बहुधैक एव  
शुद्धोऽप्यशुद्ध इव मूर्तिविभागभेदैः ।  
ज्ञानान्वितः सकलसत्त्वविभूतिकर्ता  
तस्मै नतोऽस्मि पुरुषाय सदाव्ययाय ॥ २७ ॥ इति ।

I bow down to the primeval, worshipable Supreme Person (Puruṣottama), who has no end, no origin, no increase, no modifications, no decrease, and no by-products. I always bow to the imperishable Puruṣa, who proceeds from and partakes of the same virtues as Puruṣottama, who though one alone manifests as many, who though pure appears as if impure due to the differences [arising from] divisions of form, who is endowed with knowledge, and is the creator of the powers of all created beings. (VP 6.8.60-61)<sup>61</sup>

अत्र “तस्यैव अनु पूर्वोक्तात् परमेश्वरात् समनन्तरं बहुधा ब्रह्मादिरूपेण । अशुद्ध इव सृष्ट्यादिष्वासक्त इव । मूर्तिविभागानां दक्षादिमन्वादिरूपाणां भेदैः । सर्वसत्त्वानां विभूतिकर्ता विस्तारकृत्” इति स्वामिपादाः ।

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, *tasyaiva anu* here means subsequent to the aforementioned Supreme Person [the Puruṣottama spoken of in the previous verse]. “Manifests as many” (*bahudhā*) refers to His appearing in the forms of Brahmā, and so on. “As if impure” (*aśuddha*) means “as if attached to the work of creation, etc.” “Due to the differences [arising from] divisions of form” (*mūrti-vibhāga-bhedaiḥ*) refers to the forms of Dakṣa, Manu, and so on. “Creator of the powers of all created beings” (*sakala-sattva-vibhūti-kartā*) means that He disperses the living beings [throughout the creation].

<sup>61</sup> *nānto'sti yasya na ca yasya samudbhavo'sti  
vṛddhir na yasya pariṇāma-vivarjitasya  
nāpekṣayaṁ ca samupaitya vikalpa-svastu  
yas taṁ nato'smi puruṣottamam ādyaṁ iḍyam  
tasyaiva yo'nu guṇa-bhug bahudhaika eva  
śuddho'py aśuddha iva mūrti-vibhāga-bhedaiḥ  
jñānānvitaḥ sakala-sattva-vibhūti-kartā  
tasmai nato'smi puruṣāya sadāvyayāya*

तत्र गुणभुगिति षाड्गुणानन्दभोक्तेत्यर्थः ।

[To Śrīdhara's comment, it should be added that] the word *guṇa-bhuk* ("who partakes of the same virtues") means that He is a relisher of the bliss of the six intrinsic qualities [of Bhagavān].

म० भा० १२।३३४।२९-३० —

यत् तत् सूक्ष्ममविज्ञानमव्यक्तमचलं ध्रुवम् ।  
इन्द्रियैरिन्द्रियार्थैश्च सर्वभूतैश्च वर्जितम् ॥ २८ ॥  
स ह्यन्तरात्मा भूतानां क्षेत्रज्ञश्चेति कथ्यते ।  
त्रिगुणव्यतिरिक्तो वै पुरुषश्चेति कल्पितः ॥ २९ ॥

इति मोक्षधर्मेऽपि नारायणीयोपाख्याने ।

In the *Nārāyaṇīyopakhyaṇa* of the *Mokṣa-dharma* it is also said:

That [Brahman] which is subtle and thus imperceptible, unmanifest, immovable, unchanging, and without any connection to the senses, sense objects, and all created beings, is verily Him, the interior Self of all living beings, also called the witness of the field (*kṣetrajaña*). He is beyond the three *guṇas* of nature and is also known as the Puruṣa. (*Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva* 334.29-30)<sup>62</sup>

श्रुतयोऽप्येनं शुद्धत्वेनैव वर्णयन्ति (श्रे० ६।११, ४।५) —

The Śrutis also describe Him as pure:

एको देवो सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।  
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेताः केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥ ३० ॥  
अजामेकां लोहितशुक्लकृष्णां बह्वीः प्रजाः सृजमानां सरूपाः ।  
अजो ह्येको जुषमाणोऽनुशेते जहात्येनां भुक्तभोगामजोऽन्यः ॥ ३१ ॥

There is one Deva who is hidden within all beings. He is all-pervading and the Immanent Self of all beings. He is the overseer of

<sup>62</sup> *yat tat sūkṣmam avijñānam avyaktam acalam dhruvam  
indriyair indriyārthaiś ca sarva-bhūtaiś ca varjitam  
sa hy antarātmā bhūtānām kṣetrajañaś ceti kathyate  
triguṇa-vyatirikto vai puruṣaś ceti kalpitaḥ*

all actions, the abode of all beings, the witness, conscious, pure, and untouched by the material *guṇas*. (ŚU 6.11)<sup>63</sup>

There is a red, white, and black she-goat [“the unborn” or Māyā] that produces offspring all of the same nature as herself. There is one ram [the *jīva*, also “unborn”] who is captivated and enjoys her, but another ram [the unborn Paramātmā] abandons this she-goat, considering her as already enjoyed. (ŚU 4.5)<sup>64</sup>

इत्याद्याः । तस्मात् साधु व्याख्यातम् “क्षेत्रज्ञ एताः” इत्यादिपद्यद्वयम् ॥ श्रीब्राह्मणो  
रहूगणम् ॥

**Therefore, the explanation given for the two verses (SB 5.11.12–13) has been shown to be appropriate.**

## Commentary

After demonstrating that there are two *kṣetrajñas*, i.e., the *jīva* and Paramātmā, and that Paramātmā is the Supreme Witness, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī returns to the *Gītā* verses 13.1–2 to remove any further doubts about this topic. His main objection is to the *vivarta* theory, which denies the ontological existence of the individual self. Yet, individuality is essential for *bhakti-yoga*, in which a *jīva* is understood as an eternally distinct conscious entity, but not independent of Bhagavān.

The demonstrative adjective *idam* (this) in GĪTĀ 13.1 indicates proximity,<sup>65</sup> namely that the body is directly perceivable to the *kṣetrajña*. Although the words *śarīra* (body), *kṣetra* (field), and *kṣetrajña* are all used in the singular, this does not mean that there is only one knower of the field in an absolute monistic sense. The singular here represents the whole class. According to Sanskrit

<sup>63</sup> *eko devo sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ sāksi cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇaś ca ajām ekām lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇām bahviḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānām sarūpāḥ ajo hy eko juṣamāṇo ’nuśete jahāty enām bhukta-bhogām ajo’nyaḥ*

<sup>65</sup> *idam astu sannikṛṣṭam samīpatara-varti caitadorūpam adas astu viprakṛṣṭam tad iti parokṣe vijānīyāt*

Source unknown



grammar, the singular can also sometimes be used while referring to a group (*jāti-puraskāra*, cf.<sup>66</sup> *Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* 4.6).<sup>67</sup>

In the statement, “Know me also to be the *ḥṣetrajñā* in all bodies whatsoever,” the pronoun “Me” (*mām*) indicates that Bhagavān is the *ḥṣetrajñā* in all bodies, whereas the individual self is the knower only of its own body. This is the difference between the two knowers of the field. It is, therefore, improper to consider these two *puruṣas* or *ḥṣetrajñas* as one by use of the principle of *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣaṇā* (discarding one part of a statement to obtain the correct meaning). A secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇārtha*) is resorted to only when the primary or direct meaning does not make sense,<sup>68</sup> which is not the case here.<sup>69</sup>

In *Bhagavad Gītā* (13.2) there is no need to take the word *ḥṣetrajñā* to mean the same knower of the field spoken of in the previous verse, thus interpreting the single *ḥṣetrajñā* to mean the qualityless Brahman. If this were Kṛṣṇa’s intention, He would have spoken only the first half of the first line in verse 13.2, i.e., “Know the *ḥṣetrajñā* to be Me alone,” and there would have been no need to add, “in all *ḥṣetras*, O Bharata.” This latter phrase would then serve no purpose and would become redundant. Since it has been used, and, assuming that Kṛṣṇa is not using words unnecessarily, His statement clearly identifies two distinct *ḥṣetrajñas*, one the individual self and the other Paramātmā.

In the concluding verses in the discussion of the *ḥṣetrajñā* (GĪTĀ 13.21–22), Kṛṣṇa again speaks of the two *puruṣas* or *ḥṣetrajñas* as distinct. Because an introductory statement must be confirmed by the conclusion, the verse at the beginning of the chapter (13.1) must again be seen in that light and as referring to two *ḥṣetrajñas*. The principle of an introductory statement (*upakrama*) being

<sup>66</sup> The Latin abbreviation *cf.* stands for “confer,” meaning, “to compare with” or “consult” the reference given for confirmation of the point in question.

<sup>67</sup> *jātyākhyāyāmekavacane bahuvacanaṁ vā*

<sup>68</sup> *mukhyārtha-bādhe tad-yukto yayānyo’rthaḥ pratiyate rūḍheḥ prayojanād vāpi lakṣaṇā śaktir arpitā Sāhitya-darpaṇa 2.5*

<sup>69</sup> For a detailed explanation of the various meanings of words, see *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, pp. 940–943.

dependent on the conclusion (*upasaṁhāra*), is also used in the *Brahma-sūtra* (2.1.17), to which Śrī Jīva refers:<sup>70</sup>

If it be argued that the effect does not exist in the cause because the Śruti speaks of the world's non-existence (*asat*) prior to creation, this is not so because concluding statements show that the word [*asat*] is used instead to denote a difference of characteristics [and not absolute non-existence]. (vs 2.1.17)

This *sūtra* presents an argument based on different statements in the Upaniṣads that seem to imply that the creation arose out of non-existence, or *asat*, e.g., “In the beginning all this was the unmanifested (*asat*) alone” (TU 2.7.1, CHU 6.2.1). The word *asat* literally means non-existence, but such a meaning would be inappropriate because later both these Upaniṣads say that from this *asat* arose *sat*, or existence. This is absurd, because existence cannot arise from non-existence. If that were the case, the cause-effect relation would become meaningless, for anything could arise from anything, or from nothing at all.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) further says in the same *mantra*, “That unmanifested [i.e., Brahman] created Itself by Itself” (*tad ātmānaṁ svayam akuruta*). This is the concluding statement. So, adopting the principle that the introduction must be understood with reference to the conclusion,<sup>71</sup> *asat* cannot be taken to mean non-existence, since *asat* is referred to in the latter statement by the pronoun *tat* (that), “which created Itself by Itself.” The import of this statement is that the Reality indicated by the pronoun “that” has potency to manifest, and thus it is not non-existent. If *asat* meant absolute non-existence, then it could not be referred to by a pronoun. Therefore, *asat* is interpreted to mean “the uncaused cause,” or in other words, the unmanifested source condition as contrasted with the state in which distinctions of phenomenal name and form become manifested.

Additionally, if it be said that the effect does not exist in the

<sup>70</sup> See also *Anuccheda* 105 of this volume.

<sup>71</sup> This principle is based on *Brahma-sūtra* (3.3.17) and is also accepted by Śaṅkara in his commentary there.

cause after dissolution because there is a statement that the world is then *asat* (non-manifest), it is replied that such is not the case, because the word *asat* there refers to an alternate state of the effect and does not mean absolute non-existence, as can be deduced from the concluding statement. The existence of two *kṣetrajñās* is also confirmed by *Brahma-sūtra* (1.2.11), “The two *ātmās* who have entered the cavity of the heart are the *jīva* and Paramātmā, because it is so described in the scriptures.”

Of the two *kṣetrajñās*, however, Paramātmā is primary, whereas the *jīva* is subordinate. The reason for this is that the *jīva* has but limited knowledge of just one *kṣetra* and is devoid of immediate knowledge of the other *kṣetrajñās*, whereas Paramātmā has complete knowledge of all *kṣetras* and *kṣetrajñās*. Moreover, a *jīva* is not independent of Paramātmā in its knowing capacity. It is dependent upon Him for its existence and powers. Thus, independently it cannot be called a *kṣetrajña*. Sage Vaiśampāyana, therefore, concludes that only Hari is the *kṣetrajña* (*Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva* 348.58).<sup>72</sup>

Paramātmā is a partial manifestation of Bhagavān, as stated by Kṛṣṇa in *GĪTĀ* 10.42 (*ekāṁśena sthito jagat*). The *jīvas* are integrated parts of the energy of Paramātmā, who is the possessor of the *jīvas* that make up Bhagavān’s intermediary (*taṭastha*) potency. Being the Whole of which the *jīvas* are but parts, Paramātmā is the controller and they are the controlled. This is a very significant point to be noted and a unique observation on the part of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. The general opinion is that the *jīva* is part of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as He Himself states in the *Gītā* (15.7). Jīva Gosvāmī makes it clear, however, that the *jīva* is within the direct jurisdiction of Paramātmā and not of Bhagavān.

This is confirmed by the prayers of the Vedas personified cited in the text. This understanding also accords with the principle that the conditioning of the *jīva* is beginningless and that the *jīva* did not fall into the material creation from *Vaikuṅṭha*.<sup>73</sup> It is only when a conditioned living being surrenders to Bhagavān that he comes directly under His jurisdiction. Hence, in the following statement

<sup>72</sup> *harir eva hi kṣetrajñō nirmamo niṣkalas tathā*

<sup>73</sup> For details of this see *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 63).

Kṛṣṇa describes the nature of His dealings both as Paramātmā, in relation to the non-devoted, and as Bhagavān, in relation to the devotees: “I am equal to all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me, but those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them” (GĪTĀ 9.29).<sup>74</sup> Being an integrated part of Paramātmā, the *jīva* is naturally also part of Bhagavān.

Just as the word *kṣetrajñā* is used for both the *jīva* and Paramātmā, the word *puruṣa* is also used for both of them. The reason for this is that just as a *jīva* has a material body as his delimiter, likewise Paramātmā has the material energy as His field of action, which is taken figuratively to be His delimiter, though in reality it is not.<sup>75</sup>

After establishing Paramātmā as the root or primary *kṣetrajñā*, Śrī Jīva devotes the rest of the section to the presentation of supporting statements from various sources, declaring that Paramātmā is the same as the Puruṣa expansion of Bhagavān for the sake of material creation. He also mentions that Paramātmā has different forms, such as Pradyumna and Saṅkarṣaṇa. Viṣṇu is also one of the names of Paramātmā. In the next *anuccheda*, he will go on to explain the three manifestations of the Puruṣa.



<sup>74</sup> *samo'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ  
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*

<sup>75</sup> For more on this see *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 10.3).