

The Lord declares that the Vedas are several but out all of them, it is only He Who is to be known and He is also their knower. It means that only He is all.



*Link:—The Lord, in this chapter from the first verse to the fifteenth verse (in three sub-topics), has described the tree of creation i.e., the world, the embodied soul and God, in detail. While concluding the topic, He in the next two verses, describes them respectively in explicit words as Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama.*

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca  
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho'kṣara ucyate

There are two kinds of Puruṣas in the world, the perishable (Kṣara) and the imperishable (Akṣara). All bodies of beings are said to be perishable and the unchanging Jīvātmā is called imperishable. 16

*Comment:—*

'Dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca'—Here, the term 'Loke', stands for the entire world. In the seventh verse of this chapter the term 'Jīvaloke', also stands for the world.

The world is divided into two aspects (categories), the perishable objects, such as the body etc., (the insentient), and the imperishable soul (the sentient), which resides in the body. It is because of the soul, that the life-breath and the body function. As soon as, life-breath within the soul, leaves the body, it stops functioning, and it starts to rot. People burn a dead body, because it is useful, only so long as, the soul resides in it. It means that it is the soul, rather than the body, which is significant.

All the objects, such as the body etc., made of the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether, are insentient and

perishable. The physical body, has its identity with physical world; the subtle body consisting of the ten senses, five vital airs, the mind and the intellect (these seventeen), has its identity with the subtle world, while the causal body (nature, impressions of the actions, ignorance), has its identity with causal world (nature). They are called 'Kṣara', because they are perishable.

In fact, there is nothing as individual; but when a person regards a little portion of the world, as his own, he says that it is individual. The body and other objects, seem different from the world, because of a man's attachment, a sense of mineness to them, otherwise they are one, and the same. In fact, all objects and actions, belong only to Nature.\* Therefore, all actions with the physical, subtle and causal bodies, are to be performed for the welfare of the world only, not for one's own self.

The term 'Akṣaraḥ', stands for the imperishable soul, which never undergoes any modification.† Nature is insentient, (matter), while the soul, being a fragment of God, is sentient.

\* If a striver regards the objects and actions as the world's, it means he follows the path of action; if he regards them as Nature's, he follows the path of knowledge; if he regards them as God's, it means he follows the path of devotion. They may be of the world or of Nature, or of God, in no case they are not one's own.

† In the Gītā the perishable (Kṣara), the imperishable (Akṣara) and the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) have been described by different names as follows:

Chapter-Verse	Kṣara (perishable)	Akṣara (imperishable)	Puruṣottama
7/4—6	Aparā prakṛti (lower Nature)	Parā prakṛti (higher Nature)	Aham (I)
8/3-4	Adhibhūtaḥ (elements); Karma (action)	Adhyātmaḥ (Self); Adhidaiva (Self)	Brahma (the Supreme) Adhiyajña (the Lord)
13/1-2	Kṣetra (field)	Kṣetrajña (knower of the field)	Mām (Me)
14/3-4	Mahadbrahma (Nature); Yoni (womb)	Garbha (germ)(seed); Bija (seed)	Aham (I); Pitā (father)

The term 'Kṣaraḥ', used in the verse stands for the Pīpala tree in the form of the world, which should be cut, as is mentioned in the third verse, while 'Akṣaraḥ' is the soul, a fragment of God, as is described in the seventh verse.

In Gītā, for each of the Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama, different words belonging to the three genders, have been used on different occasion. It means, that Nature, the soul, and God are neither female, nor male nor a hermaphrodite. They are free from the restrictions of gender.\*

In order to, show the superiority of 'Puruṣottama' (the Supreme Person), the Lord has used, for both 'Kṣara' (perishable) and Akṣara (imperishable), the term 'Puruṣa' (person).

'Kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni'—Here, the term 'Kṣara', stands for a tree in the form of universe, as described at the beginning of the universe, which is without end, or origin or foundation, and which according to the Lord, should be cut with a strong axe, of non-attachment.

Here the term 'Bhūtāni', stands for all the three physical, subtle and causal bodies, because, bodies rather than the soul, are perishable.

'Kūṭastho'kṣara ucyate'— The Lord, here has called the soul 'Akṣara' (imperishable), while in the seventh verse, He called It, His eternal fragment.

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\*In the Gītā the perishable (Kṣara), the imperishable (Akṣara) and the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) have been used in all the three genders. For example—

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| (1) Kṣara—       | Kṣaraḥ (15/16)— masculine gender<br>Aparā (7/5)—feminine gender<br>Mahadbrahma (14/3-4)—neuter gender     |
| (2) Akṣara—      | Jīvabhūtaḥ (15/7)—masculine gender<br>Jīvabhūtām (7/5)— feminine gender<br>Adhyātmam (8/3)— neuter gender |
| (3) Puruṣottama— | Bhartā (9/18)—masculine gender<br>Gatiḥ (9/18) —feminine gender<br>Śaraṇam (9/18) —neuter gender          |

The soul, may acquire anybody or may go to any world, but ever remains uniform, without undergoing any modifications (Gītā 8/19; 13/31). Therefore, It has been called 'Kūṭastha', (immutable or unchanging).

In the Gītā, both God and the soul, have been described as possessing the same characteristics. God (in 12/3) has been called 'Kūṭastha' (unchanging) and (in 8/4) 'Akṣara' (imperishable), while here, the soul has been described as 'Kūṭastha' (unchanging), and 'Akṣara' (imperishable). Both of these have identity in essence and character.

The soul, is ever-uniform and according to non-dualistic principle, is the same as God, but becomes the embodied soul by identifying Itself with Nature, and its evolute body etc.

**Appendix**—In the sixth verse and from the twelfth verse to the fifteenth verse the Lord described the divine entity that has its independent existence, while the earthly entity has no independent existence. The earthly entity seems to exist because of the divine entity. The earthly entity is illumined by the unearthly (divine) entity only. Whatever influence is perceived in the worldly entity, that is all of the divine one. Now in the sixteenth verse the Lord by the term 'loke' describes the 'worldly entity'.

The universe (perishable) and the soul (imperishable)—both are 'laukika' (worldly)—'dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca', and God is different from the two and is singular (unique) viz., is 'alaukika' (divine)—'uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyah' (Gītā 15/17). Karmayoga and Jñānayoga—these two paths are also worldly—'loke'smīdvividhāniṣṭha' ..... (Gītā 3/3). One who attaches importance to the perishable, should practise Karmayoga while he who attaches importance to the imperishable (soul) should practise Jñānayoga but Bhaktiyoga is 'alaukika' (unworldly) (divine) which pertains to God. The 'aparā prakṛti' described in the seventh chapter has been called here 'kṣara', while the 'parā prakṛti' described in the seventh chapter has been named 'akṣara'.

