Śrī Kṛṣṇa Is Svayaṁ Bhagavān

28.1

Kṛṣṇa Is the Avatārī

२८ । तदेवं परमात्मानं साङ्गमेव निर्धार्य प्रोक्तानुवादपूर्वकं श्रीभगवन्तमप्याकारेण निर्धा-रयति "एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्" (भा० १।३।२८) इति ।

IN THIS WAY, having ascertained [the identity of] Paramātmā along with His parts, Śrī Sūta now identifies Śrī Bhagavān by His form [(*ākāra*), i.e., by the explicit display of His complete power] after summarizing what he has already stated: "All these are either portions (*aṁśas*) or minute portions (*kalās*) of the Puruṣa, but Kṛṣṇa alone is Bhagavān Himself" (SB 1.3.28).[1]

एते पूर्वोक्ताः । चशब्दादनुक्ताश्च । प्रथममुद्दिष्टस्य पुंसः पुरुषस्यांशकलाः । केचिदंशाः स्वयमेवांशाः साक्षादंशत्वेनांशांशत्वेन च द्विविधाः । केचिदंशाविष्टत्वादंशाः केचित् तु कलाविभूतयः । इह यो विंशतितमावतारत्वेन कथितः स कृष्णस्तु भगवान् । पुरुषस्या-प्यवतारी यो भगवान् स एष एवेत्यर्थः ।

The pronoun *ete*, "all these," refers to the *avatāras* previously mentioned in the verses above. The word *ca*, "and," implies the inclusion of those [*avatāras*, etc.] that have not been specifically named. All these are the *aṁśas* and *kalās* of the first Puruṣa (*puṁsaḥ*), described [in verse 1.3.1]. Some are themselves portions (*aṁśas*). These are of two types: (1) direct portions (*sākṣād-aṁśa*), and (2) portions of portions (*aṁśāṁśa*). Some are portions due to being infused by other portions, whereas others are *kalās*, or in other words, *vibhūtis* (displays of lesser

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[1]   *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*

power). Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however, who has been counted as the twentieth *avatāra* in this list, is Bhagavān. He alone is that [very same] Bhagavān who is the original source (*avatārī*) even of the Puruṣa [as mentioned in SB 1.3.1].

अत्र "अनुवादमनुक्त्वैव न विधेयमुदीरयेत्" इति वचनात् कृष्णस्यैव भगवत्त्वलक्षणो धर्मः साध्यते न तु भगवतः कृष्णत्वमित्यायातम् । ततश्च श्रीकृष्णस्यैव भगवत्त्वलक्षणधर्मित्वे सिद्धे मूलावतारित्वमेव सिध्यति न तु ततः प्रादुर्भूतत्वम् । एतदेव व्यनक्ति "स्वयम्" इति । तत्र च स्वयमेव भगवान् न तु भगवतः प्रादुर्भूततया न तु वा भगवत्ताध्यासेनेत्यर्थः ।

In the above verse, by the principle "the predicate should not be stated without specifying the subject,"[2] the characteristic of being Bhagavān (*bhagavattva*) [i.e., the predicate] is established as belonging specifically to Kṛṣṇa [the subject], and not the reverse, that the characteristic of being Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇatva*) is established of Bhagavān. Consequently, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone has been determined as being the repository (*dharmī*) of the characteristics of being Bhagavān (*bhagavattva*), it is thereby proven that He is the original source (*avatārī*) of all *avatāras* and not [merely] a manifestation of the Puruṣa. Sūta expresses this very fact by the word *svayam* ("Himself"), which is to say that He is Bhagavān in and of Himself, not because He has appeared from Bhagavān, nor because of the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of "Godhood" (*bhagavattā*) upon Him.

Commentary

Up to the 27th verse of the Third Chapter, Sūta Gosvāmī listed the various *avatāras* and partial manifestations of the Puruṣa (or Paramātmā) forms of Bhagavān. In the present verse, after summarizing all the *avatāras* in the first quarter of the verse,

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[2]   *anuvādam anuktvaiva na vidheyam udīrayet*
   na hy alabdhāspadaḥ kaścit kutracit pratitiṣṭhati
   Tantra-vārttika (verse untraceable)

he speaks of Bhagavān directly. This verse, along with the *vada-nti* verse (SB 1.2.11) — which was discussed in the previous three books — forms the foundation of Gauḍīya theology. Therefore, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī minutely analyzes this verse in systematic fashion.

The general belief held among Hindus of all *sampradāyas* is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Although Kṛṣṇa, besides Lord Rāma, is one of the most popular forms of God, He is understood to be only an *avatāra*. In light of this widespread misconception, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī endeavors painstakingly to establish the truth and expose this erroneous view.

In the verse under discussion, the pronoun *ete* ("these") refers to the nouns from the preceding verses. It includes all the *avatāras* and *vibhūtis* listed in verses 1.3.6–27. The word *ca* ("and") refers to the *avatāras* and *vibhūtis* not mentioned in these verses. Thus, these two words together encompass all types of *avatāras* and *vibhūtis*. The next compound is *aṁśa-kalāḥ*, meaning portions and displays of lesser power (*vibhūtis*). *Puṁsaḥ* here means "of the Supreme Person." It is the genitive singular of the word *pumān*. *Pumān* and *puruṣa* are synonyms. Hence, the comprehensive meaning of the first quarter of the verse can be stated as follows: "These *avatāras* and *vibhūtis*, listed above in verses 1.3.6–27, as well as all those that are unmentioned, are either *aṁśas* or *kalās* of the Puruṣa." This is a complete sentence that doesn't depend on any part of the remaining verse to convey its meaning.

The second quarter of the verse forms a separate sentence: "Kṛṣṇa, however, is Bhagavān Himself." The indeclinable *tu* ("but" or "however") is used to indicate a change in topic or contrast with what was stated immediately before. Previously the discussion was about the *avatāras* and *vibhūtis*. Now, in this sentence, the topic shifts to the identification of Śrī Bhagavān, who accepted the form of the Puruṣa for the sake of evolving the cosmos, as stated in the first verse of this series (SB 1.3.1, *Anuccheda* 1). The very same Kṛṣṇa who was counted as the twentieth *avatāra* is Bhagavān Himself. This Bhagavān is the original source (*avatārī*) of the Puruṣa, who is in turn the repository of all the other *avatāras*.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī specifies that the statement *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* is to be translated as, "Kṛṣṇa, however, is Svayaṁ Bhagavān" and not, "Svayaṁ Bhagavān, however, is Kṛṣṇa." The reason for this is that according to Sanskrit grammatical theory, a nominal sentence contains two parts, namely, the subject and the predicate. The subject (*anuvāda*, lit., "the repetition of an idea or notion previously laid down") is something that is already known, stated, or given, whereas the predicate (*vidheya*, lit., "that which is to be established") provides additional information about the subject.

For example, in the sentence, "Rāma is beautiful," Rāma is known to the reader as a given fact, but that he is beautiful is not yet ascertained. If, however, the reader is unacquainted with Rāma, then the sentence, being devoid of the knowledge of a referent, will fail to convey its meaning. The reader will be unable to connect the quality of beauty with its intended subject. Therefore, the rule is not to state the predicate (*vidheya*) without its known subject (*anuvāda*).[3] In Sanskrit sentences where the word order is reversed, one can still distinguish the subject from the predicate by recognizing which part of the sentence is known and which contains new information.

When it is said, "Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān," the known subject is Kṛṣṇa, because He was already mentioned as the twentieth *avatāra*. His being Svayaṁ Bhagavān, however, was not known. This additional information is now being provided in the present verse. If the sentence is interpreted in reverse order, i.e., "Svayaṁ Bhagavān is Kṛṣṇa," then we have a case where the subject is unknown, because no earlier reference was made to any Svayaṁ Bhagavān. Moreover, if such a phrasing were posited, Kṛṣṇa, being the predicate, might be only one of a multitude of possible predications for the universalized subject, Svayaṁ Bhagavān, who could also be some other form of Bhagavān in addition to Kṛṣṇa. If Sūta Gosvāmī's intention were to convey the latter meaning ("Svayaṁ

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[3]   *anuvādam anuktvaiva na vidheyam udīrayet*
     na hy alabdhāspadaḥ kaścit kutracit pratitiṣṭhati
     Tantra-vārttika

Bhagavān is Kṛṣṇa"), then he would have had to construct the second quarter of the verse in reverse order, as *svayaṁ bhagavāṁs tu kṛṣṇaḥ*.

By establishing the meaning as, "Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān," it is concluded that only Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān and no one else. Kṛṣṇa alone has the intrinsic nature and qualification by which He is Svayaṁ Bhagavān. The word *svayam*, "in and of Himself," signifies that Kṛṣṇa is not an *avatāra* of some other Bhagavān, but is Bhagavān Himself. Furthermore, He is not Bhagavān because of the superimposition of an *upādhi* of *māyā*, as proposed by the Advaitavādīs. They claim that Brahman delimited by the *sāttvika* portion of *māyā* becomes Bhagavān.[4] If this were true, then the word *svayam* in the verse would become redundant. *Svayam* means "by His very own Self" and not because of any other medium or *upādhi*. The quality of being Bhagavān is intrinsic to His nature and not a superimposition.

28.2

Kṛṣṇa Is Not an Avatāra of the Puruṣa

न चावतारप्रकरणेऽपि पठित इति संशयः "पौर्वापर्ये पूर्वदौर्बल्यं प्रकृतिवत्" इति न्यायेन ।

One should not doubt this conclusion on the plea that Kṛṣṇa is also listed among the *avatāras*. [Such an allegation is dispelled] by the hermeneutical principle: "Among prior and succeeding [injunctions], the former is weaker, like *prakṛti* [the fundamental part of a *yajña*, or ritual, which is overridden by the atonement process (*vikṛti*)]" (*Jaimini-sūtra* 6.5.54).[5]

यथाग्निष्टोमे "यद्युद्गाता विच्छिद्यादृदक्षिणेन यजेत यदि प्रतिहर्ता सर्वस्वदक्षिणेन" इति श्रुतेः । तयोश्च कदाचिद् द्वयोरपि विच्छेदे प्राप्ते विरुद्धयोः प्रायश्चित्तयोः समुच्चयासम्भवे च परमेव प्रायश्चित्तं सिद्धान्तितं तद्व्रीहा पीति ।

For example, in the description of the *agniṣṭoma-yajña* in the Śruti, it is stated, "If the *udgātā* priest falters, then perform the

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4   See *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* 2.1.14, *Pañcadaśī* 6.236, *Siddhānta-leṣa-saṅgraha* 1.32.

5   *paurvāparye pūrva-daurbalyaṁ prakṛtivat*

yajña without offering a gift (*dakṣiṇā*) to the priest. However, if the *pratihartā* priest falters, then perform the *yajña* by offering everything [in *dakṣiṇā*]." If it should so happen that both of them [the *udgātā* as well as the *pratihartā*] falter, [then what is to be done?] The two opposing atonements [not offering *dakṣiṇā* and offering everything in *dakṣiṇā*] cannot be executed simultaneously. So [on the basis of the above hermeneutical principle], it is the latter atonement alone that is concluded to be the right course of action. The same principle is to be applied here. [Kṛṣṇa is first counted among the *avatāras*, and later He is identified as Svayaṁ Bhagavān. Of the two, the latter statement takes precedence.]

Commentary

A doubt is then raised in this regard. Kṛṣṇa is included in the list of *avatāras*. So, why should He not also be considered as an *avatāra* of the Puruṣa? In reply to this, Jīva Gosvāmī invokes the *Jaimini-sūtra* (6.5.54). This *sūtra* belongs to the *Apaccheda-adhikaraṇa*, the 19th *adhikaraṇa*, or "topic," of the chapter in which it is found. From the 17th *adhikaraṇa* onward (6.5.49), the topic of atonement (*prāya-ścitta*) related to the *agniṣṭoma-yajña* is discussed. This *yāga* is completed in six days. There are four *ṛtviks*, or officiating priests, who execute the *yāga*. They are called *pratihartā*, *udgātā*, *adhvaryu*, and *brahmā*.[6]

On the fifth day, *Soma-yāga* is performed in three parts (*savanas*), namely, morning (*prātaḥ*), noon (*mādhyandina*), and evening (*tṛtīya*, lit., "the third part of the day"). During the *prātaḥ-savana*, the *ṛtviks* for reciting the *bahiṣ-pavamāna-stotra* move out from the *maṇḍapa* or *yajña-śālā*, the place of the sacrificial fire (*havir-dhāna* or *vedi*), while each holds the loincloth of the *ṛtvik* in front

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[6] There are four main priests (*ṛtviks*) for performing a *Soma-yāga*, namely, *hotā*, *udgātā*, *adhvaryu*, and *brahmā*. They are experts in the execution of rituals related to the *Ṛg*, *Sāma*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva Vedas*, respectively. Each has four assistants. *Prastotā* and *pratihartā* are the names of the assistants of the *udgātā* priest.

of him. They walk in procession like a "row of ants." In sequential order, the *adhvaryu* is succeeded by the *prastotā*, *udgātā*, *pratihartā*, *brahmā*, and the *yajamāna* (the host or sponsor of the sacrifice). They must walk quickly. If, by chance, a *ṛtvik* should lose his footing, then a compensating atonement ritual (*prayaścitta*) is prescribed. If the *udgātā* slips, then the *yāga* is to be performed without offering any *dakṣiṇā*. If, however, the *pratihartā* slips, then the *yāga* is performed by offering all of one's possessions in *dakṣiṇā*.

The question is raised: If both of them slip, what action is to be taken? It is not possible to perform a *yāga* in which *dakṣiṇā* is both withheld and offered simultaneously. The *sūtra* cited in the text (6.5.54) provides the solution: The rule to be applied is in accordance with who slips last.

The example given in the *sūtra* is "like *prakṛti*." This refers to the popular principle *prakṛtivad vikṛtiḥ kartavyaḥ*, meaning that a *vikṛti-yāga* is to be executed like a *prakṛti-yāga*. A *prakṛti-yāga* is that which is described first, being outlined in detail with all its parts. The *vikṛti-yāga* is a part of the *prakṛti-yāga*. The parts of the *vikṛti-yāga* that have not previously been described are to be executed in like manner to those of the *prakṛti-yāga*. But those parts that have been described and are yet different will override the *prakṛti* parts. This is because *vikṛti*, being described after *prakṛti*, carries greater injunctive force.

So, this rule about precedence is to be applied in the present context. Kṛṣṇa is first counted as the twentieth *avatāra* of the Puruṣa, and later He is declared to be Svayaṁ Bhagavān. Of the two statements, the latter overrides the former.

28.3
A Direct Statement Overrides the Context

अथवा "कृष्णस्तु" इति श्रुत्या प्रकरणस्य बाधात् । यथा शङ्करशारीरकभाष्ये "श्रुत्यादि-बलीयस्त्वाच्च न बाधः" (ब्र॰ सू॰ ३।३।५०) इति सूत्रे ।

Alternatively, the statement "Kṛṣṇa, however, is Bhagavān Himself" (sb 1.3.28), is validated by the hermeneutical principle that a direct statement (*śruti*)[7] overrides the context (*prakaraṇa*) [which in this case is concerned with the *avatāras*]. An example of the application of this principle is found in the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya on *Vedānta-sūtra*, "Because a direct statement (*śruti*) carries greater authority [than the context (*prakaraṇa*)], there is no contravention [of the fact that these fires (*manaścit* and so on) are independent of ritual action (*kriyā*), being associated with knowledge (*vidyā*) instead]" (vs 3.3.50).[8]

"ते हैते विद्याचित एव" इति श्रुतिः । मनश्चिदादीनामग्नीनां प्रकरणप्राप्तं क्रियानुप्रवेशल-क्षणमस्वातन्त्र्यं बाधित्वा विद्याचित्त्वेनैव स्वातन्त्र्यं स्थापयति तद्वदिहापीति ।

Śaṅkarācārya comments that the *śruti* statement, "All these [fires, *manaścit*, and so on] are built up through knowledge (*vidyā*) alone [and not through ritual action (*kriyā*)]," overrides their subsidiary nature (*asvātantryam*) — determined by the context (*prakaraṇa*) — of being included within the scope of ritual action (*kriyā*). Rather, this direct statement establishes their independence in the form of being built up [or "ignited"] through knowledge alone (*vidyā-cittva*). The same principle is to be applied here. [Although Kṛṣṇa is listed as the twentieth *avatāra* and is thus included within the context of the *avatāras*, His characteristic of being an *avatāra* is overridden by the direct statement (*śruti*), "Kṛṣṇa (alone) is Bhagavān Himself."]

अत एतत्प्रकरणेऽप्यन्यत्र क्वचिदपि भगवच्छब्दमकृत्वा तत्रैव "भगवानहरद् भरम्" (भा॰ १।३।२३) इत्यनेन कृतवान् । ततश्चास्यावतारेषु गणना तु स्वयं भगवानप्यसौ स्वरूपस्थ एव निजपरिजनवृन्दानामानन्दविशेषचमत्काराय किमपि माधुर्यं निजज-न्मादिलीलया पुष्णन् कदाचित् सकललोकदृश्यो भवतीत्यपेक्षयैवेत्यायातम् । यथोक्तं ब्रह्मसंहितायाम् (ब्र॰ सं॰ ५।३९) —

Consequently, here also, in the context of the discussion of the *avatāras*, Sūta Gosvāmī did not use the word *bhagavān* for any

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7 The word *śruti* here is a technical word from Pūrva-mīmāṁsā (*Jaimini-sūtra* 3.3.14), and should not be mistaken for the Veda.

8 *śruty-ādi-balīyastvāc ca na bādhaḥ*

other *avatāra* but did so only in reference to Kṛṣṇa: "Bhagavān removed the burden [of the earth]"[9] [SB 1.3.23, *Anuccheda* 23]. Hence, His inclusion in the list of *avatāras* is because of the fact that although He is Bhagavān Himself and is ever situated in His own intrinsic nature, He sometimes becomes visible to the world at large, nourishing a special sweetness through His divine play (*līlā*), such as taking birth, in order to bestow uniquely astonishing bliss upon His personal associates. [His being Bhagavān] is thus stated as follows in *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

रामादिमूर्तिषु कलानियमेन तिष्ठन् नानावतारमकरोद् भुवनेषु किन्तु ।
कृष्णः स्वयं समभवत् परमः पुमान् यो गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥ ४२ ॥

I worship Govinda, the original Puruṣa, who, being situated [eternally] in forms such as Rāma through partial limitation of His complete power (*kalā-niyamena*), avatārically descends in these various forms into the fourteen worlds. When, however, Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in the world, He does so in His very own self-nature (*svayam*), as the Supreme Person (*paramaḥ pumān*). (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.39)[10]

अवतारश्च प्राकृतवैभवेऽवतरणमिति ज्ञेयम् । श्रीकृष्णसाहचर्येण श्रीरामस्यापि पुरुषांश-त्वात्ययो ज्ञेयः । अत्र तुशब्दोंऽशकलाभ्यः पुंसश्च सकाशाद् भगवतो वैलक्षण्यं बोधयति । यद्वा अनेन तुशब्देन सावधारणा श्रुतिरियं प्रतीयते । ततः "सावधारणा श्रुतिर्बलवती" इति न्यायेन श्रुत्यैव श्रुतमप्यन्येषां महानारायणादीनां स्वयं भगवत्त्वं गुणीभूतमापद्यते ।

The term *avatāra* means to become visible within the material creation. Since Śrī Balarāma is mentioned in connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa [in SB 1.3.23], He too transcends the classification of being an *aṁśa* of the Puruṣa. In the statement [*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*], the word *tu* ("however") indicates that Bhagavān is distinct from the *aṁśas* and *kalās* [of the Puruṣa] and also from the Puruṣa [Himself]. Alternatively, by the word *tu*, the *śruti*, or express statement, is understood as definitive (*sāvadhāraṇā*).

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9   *bhagavān aharad bharam*
10 *rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan*
    nānāvatāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
    kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo
    govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

Thus, by the principle, "The definitive *śruti* is stronger [than other statements]" (*sāvadhāraṇā śrutir balavatī*), even if Mahā-Nārāyaṇa and others are referred to as Svayaṁ Bhagavān in certain statements of the Śruti itself, this is to be understood in a secondary sense by virtue of the above direct statement.

एवं पुंस इति भगवानिति च प्रथममुपक्रमोद्दिष्टस्य तस्य शब्दद्वयस्य तत्सहोदरेण तेनैव शब्देन च प्रतिनिर्देशात् तावेव खल्वेताविति स्मारयति । उद्देशप्रतिनिर्देशयोः प्रतीति-स्थगिततानिरसनाय विरुद्धिरेक एव शब्दः प्रयुज्यते तत्समवर्णो वा । यथा ज्योतिष्टोमा-धिकरणे "वसन्ते वसन्ते च ज्योतिषा यजेत" इत्यत्र "ज्योतिः" शब्दो ज्योतिष्टोमविषयो भवतीति ।

In the opening verse of this chapter of the *Bhāgavata* (SB 1.3.1),[11] Sūta Gosvāmī used the two words *pauruṣam* and *bhagavān*, while in the concluding verse of the section (SB 1.3.28), he uses the two words *puṁsaḥ* and *bhagavān*. Because the word *puṁsaḥ* is a synonym [for *puruṣa*] and because the word *bhagavān* is identical, Śrī Sūta here reminds us that these are the very same two words employed earlier. To dispel all obstacles to clear understanding, the learned use the same or equivalent words in their opening (*uddeśa*) and concluding statements (*pratinirdeśa*). For example, in the section that deals with the topic of Jyotiṣṭoma, in the injunction "In each spring worship by *jyotiṣ*," the word *jyotiṣ* refers to the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice.

Commentary

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī offers an additional line of reasoning for overriding the statement that Kṛṣṇa is an *avatāra*. To this end, he points to another *sūtra* from Pūrva-mīmāṁsā, which states:

> When direct statement (*śruti*), inferential mark or word meaning (*liṅga*), sentence or syntactical connection (*vākya*), context or interdependence (*prakaraṇa*), position or order of words (*sthāna*), and name (*samākhyā*) are present simultaneously, each member is

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11 *jagṛhe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ*
    sambhūtaṁ ṣoḍaśa-kalam ādau loka-sisṛkṣayā

progressively weaker in interpretive force, because of increasing remoteness from the meaning. (*Jaimini-sūtra* 3.3.14)[12]

In this list, each preceding term is stronger than the one following it, i.e., *śruti* is stronger than the following five, *liṅga* is stronger than the following four, and so on. The strength of a particular *pramāṇa* is determined by its proximity to the meaning. For example, *śruti* is a direct statement or a self-sufficient word or sound. This signifies that such words express their sense without any of the intermediate steps that are required in the case of *liṅga* and the other interpretive factors. Consequently, *śruti* provides the strongest evidence in regard to the determination of meaning.

Liṅga (inferential mark) refers to the power of a word to denote an object or idea. This power is the word's conventional meaning. A *vākya* (sentence) is a connected utterance. It is the pronouncing together of two or more words expressing principal and subsidiary meanings. *Prakaraṇam* (context) entails interdependence, expectancy, or the mutual need for complementarity. *Sthāna* (position) is proximity of location. *Samākhyā* (name) is a word understood in its derivative, or etymological sense, which can be of two types, either based on the Veda or colloquial. The difference between *śruti* and *samākhyā* is that *śruti* supplies the conventional meaning (*rūḍhi*) while *samākhyā* is based on the word's etymology. This is similar to the distinction between *rūḍhi* (conventional) and *yaugika* (etymological) meanings described in Sanskrit linguistics. This *sūtra* thus provides a hierarchical order for hermeneutics in determining the relation of subordinate procedures to principal ones in the application of an injunction (*viniyoga-vidhi*).

As with much of Mīmāṁsā, the object of all of these six *pramāṇas* is to convey *viniyoga*, or application. Mīmāṁsā is preoccupied with the accurate execution of Vedic sacrifices and interprets the Vedic texts in that context. *Śruti* conveys this application directly and independently, without the help of any other *pramāṇa*. The

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[12] *śruti-liṅga-vākya-prakaraṇa-sthāna-samākhyānāṁ samavāye pāra-daurbalyam artha-viprakarṣāt*

other *pramāṇas*, on the other hand, require the help of the preceding *pramāṇa* or *pramāṇas* to clearly denote their application. Therefore, *liṅga* denotes the application through *śruti*; *vākya*, through *liṅga* and *śruti*, and so on. The need to evaluate the comparative strength of the *pramāṇas* arises when two or more of them are present together (*samavāye*) in any particular case. The strength of a particular *pramāṇa* is decided by the distance that separates it from its final goal, i.e., the application. The greater the distance, the weaker it is.

In the present context, Kṛṣṇa is listed among the *avatāras*, which forms part of the *avatāra-prakaraṇa*. But the affirmation, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, is a direct statement (*śruti*), which overrides the context (*prakaraṇa*). Hence, Kṛṣṇa is not an *avatāra* but Bhagavān Himself.

As an example of the application of this rule, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī refers to Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on *sūtra* 3.3.50: "Because a direct statement (*śruti*) carries greater authority [than the context (*prakaraṇa*)], it is not possible to override [the independent nature of fires, such as *manaścit*, on the strength of the context, classifying them instead as subsidiary parts of ritual action (*kriyā*)]."[13]

This *sūtra* is part of the *liṅga-bhūyastva-adhikaraṇa*, which begins from *sūtra* 3.3.44 and discusses the status of the fires described in the *Agni-rahasya* part of *Vājasaneyī-saṁhitā*. In this part of the book, there is mention of the seven *agnis*: *manaścit*, *vākcit*, *prāṇacit*, *cakṣuścit*, *śrotracit*, *karmacit*, and *agnicit*. A doubt is raised as to whether these *agnis* are a part of the sacrificial process (*kriyā*) or independent of it. From the *prakaraṇa*, it appears that they are part of the sacrificial process. But there is a *śruti* statement proclaiming that all these *agnis* are *vidyācit*, meaning that they are built up or "ignited" through knowledge (*vidyā*) alone. This signifies that they are independent and hence do not belong to ritual action (*kriyā*). The *sūtra* in question (vs 3.3.50) provides the conclusion on the basis of *Jaimini-sūtra* (3.3.14). This example is employed to confirm that *śruti* overrides *prakaraṇa*.

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[13] *śruty-ādi-balīyastvāc ca na bādhaḥ*

The same principle is applicable in this context, where Kṛṣṇa is first counted as an *avatāra* within the *avatāra-prakaraṇa*. This, however, appears to be contradicted later in ѕв 1.3.28 by the direct statement that He is Svayaṁ Bhagavān. The direct or self-sufficient statement overrides the one identifying Him as an *avatāra*. Keeping this conclusion in mind, Sūta Gosvāmī uses the word *bhagavān* only for Kṛṣṇa, even after having named Him as the twentieth *avatāra*.

If Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān, then why is He counted among the *avatāras*? This is due to the fact that when He appears on earth, He too enacts the function of an *avatāra*. This situation is comparable to that of the president of a country, who may take the portfolio of a ministry and be counted as one among the ministers, yet who remains the president all the while. That Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān even while He appears on earth is confirmed by the *Brahma-saṁhitā* verse cited in the *anuccheda*.

The word *tu* in *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* distinguishes Kṛṣṇa from all the *avatāras* mentioned in the preceding verses, including all the *aṁśas*, *vibhūtis*, and even the Puruṣa Himself. According to *Amara-kośa*, a noun followed by *tu* has no relation to anything that precedes it.[14] Alternatively, the word *tu* implies restriction, in the sense of "only" or "exclusively."[15] The verse would then be understood to mean, "Only Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān [and no one else]."

A direct statement (*śruti*) that is employed definitively (*sāvadhāraṇā*), using emphatic particles such as *eva* or *tu*, carries the greatest authority, overriding all other statements. Therefore, even if Mahā-Nārāyaṇa is referred to as Svayaṁ Bhagavān in some scriptural statements, these are to be understood in a secondary sense. This is to say that Nārāyaṇa can be indirectly considered as Svayaṁ Bhagavān only in relation to all the *avatāras* that expand from Him, but not in relation to His own source, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is to be concluded because there cannot be two forms of Svayaṁ Bhagavān.

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[14] *tv-antāthādi na pūrva-bhāk*
[15] *syur evaṁ tu punar vai vety avadhāraṇa-vācakāḥ*
      Amara-kośa 3.4.5

In the opening verse of the Third Chapter, Sūta Gosvāmī used the two words *pauruṣam* ("of the Puruṣa") and *bhagavān*. In concluding his description of the *avatāras*, he again uses the words *puṁsaḥ* ("of the Pumān," i.e., the Puruṣa) and *bhagavān*. The words *puruṣa* and *pumān* are synonymous. It is indeed quite appropriate to conclude a topic by using the same words with which it was begun, or synonyms thereof. Otherwise, if a speaker were to introduce one subject in the beginning and a different one in the conclusion, it would be difficult to understand his or her intention. This repetition of the same words in the opening and closing statements also shows not only that Bhagavān is distinct from and the source of the Puruṣa, but that Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān Himself.

28.4

The Distinction between the Whole and Its Parts

अत्र तत्त्ववादगुरवस्तु चशब्दस्थाने स्वशब्दं पठित्वैवमाचक्षते — एते प्रोक्ता अवतारा मूलरूपी स्वयमेव । किं स्वरूपाः ? स्वांशकला न तु जीववद् भिन्नांशाः । यथा वाराहे —

In his reading of this verse (sb 1.3.28), the honorable *ācārya* of Tattvavāda [Śrī Madhvācārya] reads the word *sva* in place of *ca* and explains it as follows: "All those (*ete*) mentioned above are *avatāras*, but the original form (*mūla-rūpī*) is Kṛṣṇa Himself. What is the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) [of the *avatāras*]? [They are] *sva-aṁśas* and -*kalās* [of the Puruṣa], but not differentiated portions (*vibhinnāṁśas*) like the *jīvas*, as it is said in *Varāha Purāṇa*:

> स्वांशश्चाथ विभिन्नांश इति द्वेधांश इष्यते ।
> अंशिनो यत् तु सामर्थ्यं यत् स्वरूपं यथा स्थितिः ॥ ४३ ॥
> तदेव नाणुमात्रोऽपि भेदः स्वांशांशिनोः क्वचित् ।
> विभिन्नांशोऽल्पशक्तिः स्यात् किञ्चित् सामर्थ्यमात्रयुक् ॥ ४४ ॥ इति ।

Aṁśas, or portions, are of two types: selfsame (*svāṁśa*) and differentiated (*vibhinnāṁśa*). A *svāṁśa* is defined as a portion endowed with the same prowess (*sāmarthya*), the same intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*), and the same existential status (*sthiti*) as

the whole (*aṁśī*) that encompasses it. There exists not even an atom (*aṇu*) of distinction (*bheda*) between a *svāṁśa* and its *aṁśī*. The *vibhinnāṁśa*, on the other hand, has minute potency and limited prowess. (*Varāha Purāṇa*)"[16] [End of Madhva's comment.]

अत्रोच्यते — अंशानामंशिसामर्थ्यादिकं तदैक्येनैव मन्तव्यम् । तच्च यथाविदासिन इत्यादौ तस्याक्षयत्वेन तासामक्षयत्वं यथा तद्वत्, अंशांशित्वानुपपत्तेरेव ।

In this regard, the following is to be said: The *aṁśa's* identity of prowess, nature, and so on with that of the *aṁśī* is to be understood as due specifically to their oneness [of categorical being (*jātīyatva*)]. This situation is comparable to that of rivulets flowing from an inexhaustible lake, where the inexhaustibility of the rivulets is due to the inexhaustibility of their source; otherwise, it would be impossible to distinguish between the part (*aṁśa*) and its all-encompassing whole (*aṁśī*).

तथा च श्रीवासुदेवानिरुद्धयोः सर्वथा साम्ये प्रसक्ते कदाचिदनिरुद्धेनापि श्रीवासुदेवस्या-विर्भावना प्रसज्येत । तच्च श्रुतिविपरीतमित्यसदेव । तस्मादस्त्येवावतार्यवतारयोस्तार-तम्यम् ।

Moreover, if Śrī Vāsudeva [the *aṁśī*] and Śrī Aniruddha [His *aṁśa*] were identical in all respects, then Śrī Vāsudeva would at times be expected to appear from Aniruddha. This, however, contradicts the direct statements of scripture and is hence invalid (*asat*). Consequently, a hierarchy (*tāratamya*) certainly exists between the *avatārī* and His *avatāras*.

अत एव तृतीयस्याष्टमे (भा० ३.८.३–४) —

आसीनमुर्व्यां भगवन्तमाद्यं सङ्कर्षणं देवमकुण्ठसत्त्वम् ।
विविन्सवस्तत्त्वमतः परस्य कुमारमुख्या मुनयोऽन्वपृच्छन् ॥ ४५ ॥
स्वमेव धिष्ण्यं बहु मानयन्तं यद्वासुदेवाभिधमामनन्ति ।

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[16] *svāṁśaś cātha vibhinnāṁśa iti dvedhāṁśa iṣyate*
aṁśino yat tu sāmarthyaṁ yat svarūpaṁ yathā sthitiḥ
tad eva nāṇumātro'pi bhedaḥ svāṁśāṁśinoḥ kvacit
vibhinnāṁśo'lpa-śaktiḥ syāt kiñcit sāmarthya-mātra-yuk
These verses are untraceable in the printed edition.

इत्यादौ वासुदेवस्य सङ्कर्षणादपि परत्वं श्रूयते ।

Thus, in the eighth chapter of the Third Canto, Vāsudeva is described as superior even to Saṅkarṣaṇa:

> The four topmost celibate sages (the Kumāras), desiring to know the truth regarding He who is superior even to Bhagavān Saṅkarṣaṇa, approached and inquired from Him [Saṅkarṣaṇa], the original Deva, whose consciousness [*sattva*, i.e., *jñāna*] is unobstructed and who was situated in the Pātāla region. At that time, He was worshiping [through complete meditative absorption] His own source, [whom the Vedas] proclaim as Vāsudeva. (SB 3.8.3–4)[17]

यत् तु तेषां तथा व्याख्यानम् — अत्र "कृष्णस्तु" इत्यनर्थकं स्यात् "भगवान् स्वयम्" इत्य-नेनैवाभिप्रेतसिद्धेः । किं च तैः स्वयमेव "प्रकाशादिवन् नैवं परः" (ब्र० सू० २।३।४५) इति सूत्रे स्फुटमंशांशिभेदो दर्शितः । "अंशत्वेऽपि न मत्स्यादिरूपी पर एवम्विधो जीवस-दृशः — यथा तेजोंऽशस्यैव सूर्यस्य खद्योतस्य च नैकप्रकारता" इत्यादिना ।

In the explanation offered by Śrī Madhvācārya, the phrase *kṛṣṇas tu* would become redundant, because its purpose would be served merely by the phrase, *bhagavān svayam*.[18] Moreover, in his explanation of *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.45),[19] Madhva himself has explicitly pointed out the difference between the *aṁśa* and *aṁśī* by the statement, "Although they are *aṁśas* (portions), Matsya and other [*avatāras*] of the Supreme [(*para*), i.e., Īśvara] are not so in the same sense as the *jīvas*, just as, although both the sun and a firefly are portions of light alone (*teja-aṁśa*), they are not of one and the same category."

तस्मात् स्थिते भेदे साधवेव व्याख्यातम् "कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्" (भा०१।३।२८) इति ।

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[17] *āsīnam urvyāṁ bhagavantam ādyaṁ saṅkarṣaṇaṁ devam akuṇṭha-sattvam vivitsavas tattvam ataḥ parasya kumāra-mukhyā munayo'nvapṛcchan svam eva dhiṣṇyaṁ bahu mānayantaṁ yad vāsudevābhidham āmananti*

[18] In other words, since Madhva here makes no distinction whatsoever between the *aṁśī* and *svāṁśa*, the specific identification of Kṛṣṇa as Svayaṁ Bhagavān (i.e., as *aṁśī*) becomes meaningless, since all *svāṁśas* would at any rate be identical in all respects to Svayaṁ Bhagavān.

[19] *prakāśādivan naivaṁ paraḥ*

Therefore, since a distinction exists between the part (*aṁśa*) and the whole (*aṁśī*), we have appropriately explained the meaning of the statement, "Kṛṣṇa, however, is Bhagavān Himself" (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*).

"इन्द्रारि" इति पद्यार्धं त्वत्र नान्वेति । तुशब्देन वाक्यस्य भेदनात् । तच्च तावतैवाका-
ङ्क्षापरिपूर्तेः । एकवाक्यत्वे तु चशब्द एवाकरिष्यत । ततश्च "इन्द्रारि" इत्यत्रार्थात् त एव
पूर्वोक्ता एव "मृडयन्ति" इत्यायाति ॥ श्रीसूतः ॥

The second half of the verse is not connected syntactically with the first half, because the word *tu* indicates a break in sentence structure. Consequently, the statement, "Kṛṣṇa, however, is Bhagavān Himself," is complete in itself. Had [Sūta's] intention been to compose a single sentence, he would have used the word *ca* instead [of *tu*]. In that case, the statement beginning with *indrāri* [i.e., the second half of the verse] would then mean that it is they only — the above stated *avatāras* — who appear [(*mṛḍayanti*), lit., "who grace" the earth] in each *yuga* [and not Kṛṣṇa].

Commentary

In his *Bhāgavata-tātparya-ṭīkā*, the Tattvavāda guru, Śrī Madhvā-cārya, accepts a different reading of the verse under discussion. In place of *ca* he reads *sva*. The resultant verse would then be *ete svāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, which translates as, "All these are *sva-aṁśas* and -*kalās* of the Puruṣa, but Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān."

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī takes exception to this reading. According to Madhvācārya, Bhagavān has two types of manifestations, namely, *svāṁśa* (selfsame portions) and *vibhinnāṁśa* (differentiated portions).[20] All the *avatāras* belong to the first category, whereas the *jīvas* belong to the second. Madhva makes it clear in his own direct statement that the *avatāras* do not belong to the *jīva* category, but to that of Bhagavān. By quoting the *Varāha Purāṇa* verse, however,

[20] For a more detailed description, see *Anuccheda 8* of *Paramātma Sandarbha*.

Madhva intends something extra, namely, that all *svāṁśas* are identical in potency and intrinsic nature to the *aṁśī*, i.e., Svayaṁ Bhagavān. To affirm this still further, the verse goes on to say that there exists not even an atom (*aṇu*) of distinction between the two.

Śrī Jīva argues that such is not the case. Even among the *avatāras* there is a gradation. This is understood from SB 1.3.26, which compares the *avatāras* to unlimited inexhaustible streams flowing from an inexhaustible lake. The sense is that the streams are inexhaustible just like their source, and yet they are not equal to it in every respect. The inexhaustibility of the streams is dependent upon that of the lake. Hence, the streams are dependent upon the lake and not *vice versa*. Although Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha are all unlimited, Vāsudeva is superior to the other three, being their source. This is evident from the *Bhāgavata* verses 3.8.3–4, where Vāsudeva is stated to be beyond Saṅkarṣaṇa:

> The sages headed by Sanat-kumāra, desiring to know the truth regarding He who is superior even to Bhagavān Saṅkarṣaṇa, approached and inquired from Him [Saṅkarṣaṇa], the original Deva, whose consciousness is unobstructed and who was seated in Pātāla. At that time, Sankarsana was engaged in meditation on His own source, whom the Vedas proclaim as Vāsudeva. To grace the sages, He slightly opened His eyes, which resembled the interior of a lotus and which had, until then, been turned inward. (SB 3.8.3–4)

This gradation existing between Svayaṁ Bhagavān and His innumerable *avatāras* is understood to be present even in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* among the manifestations of Bhagavān who participate therein. Kṛṣṇa, who is the source and shelter of all other expansions, is Vāsudeva. Proceeding from Him in order are Balarāma — who is Saṅkarṣaṇa — Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Similarly, in the *Brahma-mohana-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa manifested innumerable Viṣṇu forms, which were not equal in each and every aspect to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, their original source.

Additionally, if the reading adopted by Śrī Madhvācārya is accepted, then the words *kṛṣṇas tu* in the second quarter of the verse would become redundant. The reason for this is that in his

explanation, Madhva makes no distinction whatsoever between the Puruṣa and His *aṁśas*, nor between the Puruṣa and Svayaṁ Bhagavān. In that case, the words *kṛṣṇas tu* would not provide any extra information. It would have been sufficient to say *bhagavān svayam*, i.e., "The Puruṣa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān, and Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from the Puruṣa." Therefore, the reading with *ca* instead of *sva* is shown to be appropriate.

The second half of the verse is an independent sentence, applicable to the *avatāras* of the Puruṣa. It is not connected syntactically to the sentence *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. Because the indeclinable *tu* separates *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* from the rest of the verse, the latter statement forms an independent sentence. This indicates, therefore, that Kṛṣṇa does not appear in every *yuga* in His own original form.

Establishing Kṛṣṇa as Svayaṁ Bhagavān is the principal theme of *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*. This is also one of the chief distinctive features of the Gauḍīya School of Vaiṣṇavism. Although it contravenes the popular belief of Hindu indologists, this understanding is crucial for the highest type of devotion, *uttama-bhakti*, known as *rāgānugā*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī thus endeavors to dispel any doubts in this regard. This is his unique contribution to Hindu theology. He continues to develop this theme until *Anuccheda* 43.