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Introduction

AMONG the pantheon of Hindu gods, *avatāras*, and / or manifestations of Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa stands out as one of the most popular and highly revered. Even among non-Hindus, He is widely acclaimed for His universal teachings on the path of enlightenment in the form of *Bhagavad Gītā*, the most renowned scripture of the Hindus, and for His fascinating life-stories. In spite of this extensive notoriety, His identity remains a great enigma. No other Hindu deity is shrouded in as much mystery as He. People from different backgrounds hold diverse opinions about Kṛṣṇa, many of which seem contradictory. They consider Him as a great lover, a skilled statesman, and a highly realized mystic. As an irrepresible lover, He is famous for stealing the clothes of the young *gopīs* while they were bathing in the Yamunā River and for marrying 16,108 princesses. Yet, as an accomplished mystic, He is esteemed as the speaker of *Bhagavad Gītā* and as Yogeśvara, the “Master of Yoga,” in which celibacy and reticence are fundamental principles. He is well-known as a simple cowherder, yet He is also famous as the most venerated royal scion, who received the principal honors at Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira’s *rājasūya-yajña*,¹ in the presence of the world’s foremost kings, scholars, and sages.

Notwithstanding Kṛṣṇa’s enigmatic nature, it is essential to gain a clear picture of His true ontological status in order to grasp the significance of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the method by which it self-discloses truth, namely, *bhakti-yoga*. As established in

¹ An elaborate ritual undertaken by an all-conquering monarch to establish his authority over all other kings operating under his jurisdiction.

Tattva Sandarbha (Anucchedas 50–52) with reference to the *Bhāgavata*'s second verse (SB 1.1.2), this *Purāṇa* specifically propounds the supreme *dharma* of humanity, which is love for Bhagavān — our very source and refuge. To be infused with transcendental love for Bhagavān, authentic and unambiguous knowledge about Him and His essential being is of utmost importance. Since Bhagavān has innumerable forms, such as Viṣṇu, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Nṛsiṃha, the question must be asked, are They all equiprimordial in Their constitutional status or is there some hierarchy of being among Them? To address this question, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī wrote this book, *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*.

The conventional and for the most part unexamined point of view is that Kṛṣṇa is simply an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. In *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī uproots this misconception, demonstrating that Bhagavān Viṣṇu, being ontologically related to the play of creation and hence to immanence, is Himself implicitly included within a more complete transcendent Whole (*avatāri*), technically known as Svayaṁ Bhagavān, who is clearly identified in the text as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although Śrī Jīva previously delineated the ontology of Bhagavān in general terms in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, he did not address the question of the identity of Svayaṁ Bhagavān Himself, or Bhagavān in His ownmost essential being, nature, and original form. In this respect, Kṛṣṇa's status in regard to the various *avatāras* was not yet made a subject of inquiry. By first establishing a comprehensive universal understanding of Bhagavān in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī laid the foundation for a detailed investigation into the ontology of Svayaṁ Bhagavān in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*. His fundamental conclusion in the latter volume is that Kṛṣṇa is the source of all other *avatāras* of Bhagavān and that He has no source other than Himself.

Jīva Gosvāmī's primary intention in writing this book is to reveal Kṛṣṇa as the supreme object of worship and love. In the very beginning of *Tattva Sandarbha*, he clearly stipulated that the subject of the *Six Sandarbhas* is meant specifically for those whose sole aspiration is to be immersed in the *bhājana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He even declared that the *Sandarbh*as should be studied only by such

devotees. The present *Sandarbha* is surely in line with this declaration. In order for a devotee to be rightly established in such *bhajana*, he must have a clear understanding of the true nature of his object of worship. In *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī provides this distinct and esoteric knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme worshipable deity.

This book is truly a work of genius. No other book in or related to its field of study can compare to it. There have been many essays or short treatises written about Kṛṣṇa, but no one else has afforded this subject such a thorough and systematic treatment. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī traces out Kṛṣṇa's factual status among all the *avatāras* of Bhagavān based upon his careful study of *Bhāgavata Purāna*. Not only does he demonstrate that Kṛṣṇa is the original form of God, Svayaṁ Bhagavān, he goes a step further to establish a hierarchy within Kṛṣṇa's own multifaceted manifestations. In this respect, he discloses that Kṛṣṇa as a cowherder and lover in Vraja is superior to His manifestation as a royal statesman in Mathurā and Dvārakā. This fact is so abstruse that even among Vaiṣṇavas, there are some who have difficulty in comprehending and accepting it. This precise realization, however, is crucial for the practice of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, or pure devotion in the wake of natural affection, which is the subject of the next book in this series, *Bhakti Sandarbha*. *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* is therefore the most important of all the ontological writings in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava School, because it unravels the mystery regarding the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava's worshipable deity, which gives the school its unique identity.

Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha is the fourth book in the series of the *Six Sandarbhas*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī wrote the first three *Sandarbhas* — *Tattva*, *Bhagavat*, and *Paramātmā* — based on the *Bhāgavata Purāna*'s famous “*vadanti*” verse (SB 1.2.11).² In these three books, he elaborated on the key words mentioned in this verse: *tattva*, *brahma*, *paramātmā*, and *bhagavān*. While treating their own graded thematic subjects, these first three *Sandarbhas* ultimately serve as an introduction to the fourth volume, *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, in which Śrī

² *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

Jīva Gosvāmī ascertains the identity of the original form of Bhagavān. In doing so, he brings to light the true significance of another key phrase from the *vadanti* verse — namely, that ultimate reality (*tattva*) is nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*). Śrī Jīva conclusively establishes that this phrase is a reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Nondual Personal Absolute replete with His own interiority.

Summary of Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha

Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha begins with a brief recapitulation of the two previous books, specifying the distinction between Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. The special role of Paramātmā as the source of all *avatāras* appearing within the cosmos is described next. After enumerating twenty-two *avatāras*, Jīva Gosvāmī points out that although Kṛṣṇa is initially included within this list, He is not an *avatāra* of Paramātmā but the original form of Bhagavān: *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (SB 1.3.28). Even though this phrase is just a quarter verse out of some 18,000 verses, it is the foundation for the entire *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and, hence, of *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* as well. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī thus goes to great length to fully unpack its meaning and to establish Kṛṣṇa as Svayaṁ Bhagavān, the original form of God.

In reply to the objection that Kṛṣṇa is also counted among the *avatāras* of the Puruṣa (SB 1.3.23), Śrī Jīva points out that in the entire list of *avatāras*, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are singled out as unique by the fact that only They are designated by the word *bhagavān*. More importantly, he argues from the point of view of hermeneutics that in the case of a disparity between precepts, the later injunction (SB 1.3.28) overrides the earlier one (SB 1.3.23). In this respect, he identifies the statement “*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*” as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*’s *paribhāṣā-sūtra*.³ In doing so, he lays down the authoritative context to correctly interpret the entire *Purāṇa*, a meaning hierarchy with the power to override

³ A definition of terms, a rule, or a theme, usually placed in the beginning of a book, which must be understood in order to accurately assess the remainder of the book.

all contrary interpretations of any statement therein. Moreover, since the *Bhāgavata* is the emperor of all the Vedas (as established in *Tattva Sandarbha*), its *paribhāṣā-sūtra* — *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* — has the power to override contrary statements or interpretations from any Vedic scripture. It is a *mahā-vākya*, a great declaration, like the *tat tvam asi* proclamation of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

In this light, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī analyzes various statements from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that seem to depict Kṛṣṇa only as a partial manifestation of Viṣṇu. In the course of such deliberations, he clearly establishes that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source of all *avatāras*, including the *guṇa-avatāras* of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. He then cites a number of verses from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that support the empirical decree, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. He compares these to an army surrounding and strengthening the emperor-like statement. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī proposes that not only *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* but all other Vedic scriptures also accept Kṛṣṇa as the original Bhagavān. This is called *gati-sāmānya-nyāya*, or the universal concordance among different scriptures. He cites statements from other scriptures to this effect.

Next, Śrī Jīva shows that the sole intention of all the speakers and listeners in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is to speak and hear about Kṛṣṇa, whom they accept as the supreme form of Bhagavān. Although Kṛṣṇa is obviously the subject of the First, Tenth, and Eleventh Cantos, the complete exposition of His being is in fact the main theme of the entire *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Jīva Gosvāmī confirms this by analyzing the *Purāṇa* with reference to the two sets of six criteria employed in textual interpretation, known as *ṣaṭ-pramāṇa* and *ṣaḍ-liṅga*.

The first set of six indicators (*ṣaṭ-pramāṇa*) determines the subject or the meaning of a statement primarily through an analysis of language itself. The six “linguistic” criteria are as follows:

1. *Śruti*, direct statement.
2. *Liṅga*, inferential mark or word meaning.
3. *Vākya*, sentence or syntactical connection.
4. *Prakaraṇa*, context or interdependence.
5. *Sthāna*, position or order of words.
6. *Samākhyā*, name or etymology.

In contrast to the former, the second set of six indicators (*ṣaḍ-liṅga*) determines the subject or meaning through a thematic analysis of the text as a whole. The six “thematic” criteria are as follows:

1. Determination of the subject through concurrence of the introductory and closing statements.
2. Analysis of what is repeated throughout the book.
3. Evaluation of what is described in the text as extraordinary.
4. Assessment of the subject derived from statements describing the fruit to be attained by such an investigation.
5. Identification of what is praised throughout the text.
6. Appraisal of what is established through logic.

From both sets of criteria, Jīva Gosvāmī establishes that the subject of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the nondual Absolute and Svayaṁ Bhagavān.

Up to this point in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī has been concerned solely with the determination of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Svayaṁ Bhagavān, which concludes the first major division of the book. In the second division, he delineates at length the constitutional facets of being of Svayaṁ Bhagavān. He begins with an exposition of Svayaṁ Bhagavān’s own *mūla-catur-vyūha*. The concept of *catur-vyūha* — the fourfold manifestation of Bhagavān as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha — is an important subject of the Itihāsas, Purāṇas, and Āgama literature, the latter of which includes the Tantras, Pañcarātras, and Saṁhitās. Within the context of Kṛṣṇa’s manifest *līlā* on earth, His own *mūla*, or “root” *catur-vyūha* consists of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’s brother Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa’s son Pradyumna, and His grandson Aniruddha. In Śrī Rāma’s *līlā*, the *catur-vyūha* is manifest as Rāma and His three brothers, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna. Within the

context of the world appearance or of phenomenality, only the last three members of the *catur-vyūha* are present as the underlying ground of being, manifest as the three forms of the Immanent Self (Paramātmā) — Kāraṇodakśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakśāyī Viṣṇu.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī shows that Kṛṣṇa is the original source of the *catur-vyūha*. Since Kṛṣṇa is the original form of Bhagavān, He implicitly contains all other *avatāras*. Like Him, His brother, Balarāma, is also not merely an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu but a direct expansion of Kṛṣṇa Himself. Sometimes Balarāma is depicted as an *avatāra* of the celestial serpent Śeṣa, the bed of Viṣṇu, or as a manifestation of Saṅkarṣaṇa. Śrī Jīva, however, refutes such opinions and demonstrates that Balarāma is Mahā-saṅkarṣaṇa, or He who is beyond the Saṅkarṣaṇa of the *catur-vyūha*. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna is not an *avatāra* of the celestial being, Kāmadeva (Cupid), as misunderstood by some. Kāmadeva was burnt by the wrath of Śiva, and thereafter he merged into Pradyumna, when the latter manifested in Dvārakā as Kṛṣṇa's son.

After elucidating the constitutional status of the members of Svayaṁ Bhagavān's own *mūla-catur-vyūha* and showing that Kṛṣṇa implicitly includes all *avatāras*, Śrī Jīva takes up the discussion of Svayaṁ Bhagavān's form. Although the subject of Bhagavān's body was discussed elaborately in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī revisits the topic here again, but this time as it pertains specifically to Svayaṁ Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The reason for this repetition is to clarify the nature of Kṛṣṇa's own original form in which He appeared on earth. Because His own form is human-like in appearance, one might question how His body could possibly have the transcendental characteristics belonging to the superhuman body of Viṣṇu. Śrī Jīva demonstrates, however, that Kṛṣṇa's body is not only on par with the four-handed forms of Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu, but transcends them altogether. Kṛṣṇa's body is not an imposition, *adhyāsa*, of a phenomenal form onto Brahman, as proposed by the Advaitavādīs. His body is eternal, transphenomenal, all-pervading, self-luminous, and self-manifest.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī next takes up the topic of Svayaṁ Bhagavān's personal abode. It is a direct manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's intrinsic potency, *svarūpa-śakti*, and is nondifferent from Him. Like Kṛṣṇa Himself, His abode is all-pervading, even though it appears to be spatially delimited in its earthly manifestation. It is superior to and beyond all the other spiritual abodes (Vaikuṅṭhas) of all other forms of Bhagavān, such as Rāma. For this reason, Kṛṣṇa's abode is called Mahā-vaikuṅṭha. When Kṛṣṇa appears on earth, He does so along with His abode and associates. Kṛṣṇa eternally exists in His own abode, which is sometimes manifest and at other times unmanifest to our perception, just as He Himself is. His abode has three divisions — Gokula, Mathurā, and Dvārakā. Gokula is also called Vraja or Vṛndāvana. Among the three abodes, Gokula is supreme and most dear to Kṛṣṇa. It is here that Kṛṣṇa manifests His most enchanting *līlā*, which is not disclosed anywhere else.

All three abodes have their replicas on earth and bear the same names as their respective counterparts. There is no difference between the original abodes and their earthly manifestations. Thus, the visible abodes on earth are not merely places of worship but are also ultimate destinations to be attained. Their transphenomenal nature has been confirmed by the experience of self-realized devotees even of modern times. Taking this into consideration, it can be said that Kṛṣṇa's abodes have three types of existence. The first is the *aprakāṣa-prakāśa*, an unmanifest state of being in which the abode exists but without visible contact with the earthly plane. The second is the phenomenal appearance, *bhauma*, a form of the abode that has permanent contact with the earthly plane. The Vṛndāvana that is visible to people at present is an example of this. The third is the *prakāṣa-prakāśa*, a state of being fully manifest on the earthly plane, which occurs when Kṛṣṇa personally becomes manifest along with His associates.

After discussing Svayaṁ Bhagavān's abodes, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī next takes up the topic of Kṛṣṇa's personal associates, who reside eternally in these three abodes. The Yādavas are His associates in Mathurā and Dvārakā, and the cowherd people, the *gopas* and *gopīs*, are His associates in Gokula. Like Bhagavān and His abode, these

associates are real, eternal, and intrinsically endowed with divine qualities like those of Kṛṣṇa. Although their bodies are spiritual and conscious in nature, there are isolated scriptural statements that seem to depict their bodies as mortal or as subject to material limitations, such as bleeding or being wounded by a weapon. These characterizations are only to make them appear like ordinary human beings for the sake of the *līlā*'s conformity to human conventions.

In the *mauṣala-līlā*, for example, in which Kṛṣṇa's family members become intoxicated, quarrel among themselves, and ultimately kill each other, their deaths are only an illusory display. Before Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth, He ordered the *devas* and their wives to take birth on earth and participate in His *līlā*. These *devas* then merged into the bodies of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates and became His relatives among the Yādavas. When it was time for Kṛṣṇa to wind up His *līlā* on earth, He used the *mauṣala-līlā* as a pretext to again separate the *devas* from His eternal associates, thus allowing the latter to enter into His unmanifest (*aprakāṣa*) *līlā*.

Kṛṣṇa engages in His human-like *līlā* with these associates. Although Kṛṣṇa was born to Vasudeva and Devakī, it was Nanda and Yaśodā who raised Him and relished His childhood *līlās*. The love of Nanda and Yaśodā for Kṛṣṇa is vastly superior to that of Vasudeva and Devakī. This was clearly illustrated by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the narrator of *Bhāgavata Purāna*, through the *dāma-bandhana-līlā*, in which Yaśodā bound child Kṛṣṇa with ropes as a punishment for His prank of breaking a clay pot full of yogurt.

Jīva Gosvāmī next discusses Svayaṁ Bhagavān's *līlā*, which is of two types — manifest (*prakāṣa*) and unmanifest (*aprakāṣa*). When Kṛṣṇa appears on earth, His *līlā* is called *prakāṣa*. Otherwise, it is called *aprakāṣa*. The *aprakāṣa-līlā* has no contact with the people or objects of this world and is without beginning or end. The *prakāṣa-līlā*, however, has a beginning and an end within a given universe and involves some mixture of earthly objects and people. It is only in the *prakāṣa-līlā* that Kṛṣṇa enacts the pastimes of birth, moving from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā, and finally departing from

the earth. Kṛṣṇa eternally sports in His three abodes — Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, and Dvārakā — but when He is present in His *prakaṭa-līlā* in Vṛndāvana, He remains *aprakaṭa* in the other two realms. Similarly, when He moves from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā, He becomes *aprakaṭa* in Vṛndāvana and *prakaṭa* in Mathurā.

A worshiper can meditate upon the *aprakaṭa-līlā* through two distinct yet interrelated methods — *mantropāsanā-mayī* and *svārasikī*. In *mantropāsanā-mayī* meditation, a particular *mantra* describes the posture of Kṛṣṇa and His associates in one specific location and in which there is no movement. In *svārasikī* meditation, there is no such limitation of place and time. The meditative attunement to the *aprakaṭa-līlā* proceeds as Kṛṣṇa tends the cows, plays with His friends in the forest, and so on. The *svārasikī* meditation is compared to the continuous flow of the river Gaṅgā, while *mantra-mayī* meditation is like a still pond formed from that river.

Within the context of the discussion of the fundamental structure of the *prakaṭa* and *aprakaṭa-līlās*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī launches into a lengthy deliberation on Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the young *gopīs* of Vraja. A relationship with a spouse is called *svakīya*, while a relationship with an unmarried partner, or a partner married to another, is called *parakīya*. In the *prakaṭa-līlā*, the *gopīs'* relationship with Kṛṣṇa takes the form of *parakīya*. This topic has been the subject of great controversy since the ancient time of King Parīkṣit, the first student of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. When the king heard about Kṛṣṇa dancing and playing at night in the forest with the *gopīs*, who in the context of the *līlā* were married to other men, he submitted a question about the morality of such behavior. In reply, Śukadeva said that just as fire can consume filth without becoming impure, so too beings of supernal power are never subject to immorality. He explained, moreover, that Kṛṣṇa is the Immanent Self in all living beings — including the *gopīs* and their husbands. Consequently, even though the *gopīs* appeared externally as though married to other men, from an ontological perspective they are His own intrinsic potencies and thus eternally belong to Him alone and to no other.

Some later scholars, apparently not satisfied with Śukadeva's reply, tried to prove that Kṛṣṇa was married to the *gopīs*. Others agreed with Śukadeva and insist there is nothing immoral in their apparent “*parakīya*” relationship. From the extent of the discussion Jīva Gosvāmī devotes to this topic, it seems this issue must have been very sensitive when he wrote *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*. In *Anuccheda* 177, he endeavors to prove that although Kṛṣṇa was seemingly the paramour of the *gopīs* in the *prakaṣa-lilā*, they attained Him as their husband in the *aprakaṣa-lilā*.

After delineating Svayaṁ Bhagavān's *lilā*, which has the two divisions of *prakaṣa* and *aprakaṣa*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī concludes the book with a discussion of His potencies, following the same strategy as adopted in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*. There are two divisions of the potencies belonging specifically to Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, namely the queens (*mahiṣīs*) in Mathurā and Dvārakā and the *gopīs* in Vraja. Both groups are direct embodiments of Kṛṣṇa's intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Between the two, the *gopīs*' ontological status is paramount, since they are an entirely unique expression of Kṛṣṇa's bliss potency, *hlādinī-śakti*. Even among the *gopīs*, gradations exist according to the degree of manifestation of *hlādinī-śakti* in them.

Among the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhā is supreme. Just as Kṛṣṇa is the supreme manifestation of Bhagavān, so too His female counterpart, Śrī Rādhā, is the personification of the highest completion of Kṛṣṇa's bliss potency, *hlādinī-śakti*. As such, Kṛṣṇa eternally sports with Her. They are one existential reality manifest as the supreme potency (*śakti*) and the supreme potent source (*śaktimān*) — being one and different simultaneously. Śrī Jīva asserts that the disclosure of this truth is implicit within the first verse of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the supreme authority in the matter of the transcendental Reality. In this regard, he ends the book with an entirely unique interpretation of the *Bhāgavata*'s opening verse, revealing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as its mutual object. This parallels the strategy employed in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, where Jīva Gosvāmī interprets the same verse in relation to Bhagavān.

Although this book is exclusively concerned with Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, its purpose is not to supply a biographical account of Kṛṣṇa's life on earth. For the latter, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī wrote a separate book in two volumes, entitled *Gopāla Campu*, which is a literary composition (*kāvya*), containing both poetry and prose.

Parakīya or Svakīya?

The relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* of Vraja has been a sensitive, thorny issue within the Gauḍīya School as well as in Hinduism at large. Kṛṣṇa's romantic relationship with young girls who are not His wives presents a formidable challenge for the religious mind to comprehend. Yet this topic is described so explicitly in the Purāṇas that one cannot deny it. Scholars and devotees of Kṛṣṇa have evolved various strategies to circumvent this issue. One group worships Kṛṣṇa only in His baby form, as Bāla Gopāla, averting the need to justify the morality of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* with the young *gopīs*. Other groups deny the veracity of this *līlā* altogether, considering it to be allegorical. They compare the *gopīs* to various mental states (*citta-vṛtti*), and Kṛṣṇa to the witness of those mental states (*ātmā*). Still others claim that Kṛṣṇa was in fact married to the *gopīs*. According to this view, the marriages of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs* took place during the year in which Brahmā stole Kṛṣṇa's friends. During this time, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself to replace the missing cowherd boys, and so the boys who were married with the *gopīs* were actually Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa, however, which delineates Kṛṣṇa's *prakaṣa-līlā*, is very explicit that Kṛṣṇa did not marry until after He left Vraja and moved to Dvārakā via Mathurā. He lived in Vraja only up to the age of eleven and later underwent the sacred-thread ceremony, *upanayana*, in Mathurā. According to Hindu custom, a *brāhmaṇa*, *ṣatriya*, or *vaiśya* boy was not permitted to marry without first undergoing the sacred-thread ceremony (*upanayana-saṁskāra*). On this basis, Kṛṣṇa's marriage with the *gopīs* in Vraja is ruled out.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī tows a middle line between the two points of view. Within the *prakaṭa-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa's *parakiya* relationship with the *gopīs* cannot be denied, for *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* makes it perfectly evident that the *gopīs* were not married to Kṛṣṇa. The intensity of love that they exhibited within the context of this relation is, indeed, an essential feature of their excellence and establishes them as the highest ideal of unconditional love. If they were married, there would be no significant difference between them and the queens of Dvārakā, and thus the queens' praise of the *gopīs* (in SB 10.83.43) would be absurd. However, to pacify religious Hindus, who could not accommodate the idea that Kṛṣṇa could be implicated in an apparent illicit relationship, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī devised an ingenious solution. He argues that the *gopīs* eternally belong to Kṛṣṇa as His own intrinsic potencies. Hence, their paramour relationship with Him in the *prakaṭa-līlā* is mere appearance. At the conclusion of the *prakaṭa-līlā*, this relationship is withdrawn and their eternal *svakiya* relation with Kṛṣṇa in the *aprakaṭa-līlā* is then self-disclosed. This reflects Śukadeva's point that Kṛṣṇa and His energies are ontologically wed. By adopting this line of argument, the author satisfied his conservative contemporaries without tampering with the message of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Since the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is concerned only with the *prakaṭa-līlā*, it does not address the question as to whether or not the *gopīs* are married to Kṛṣṇa in the *aprakaṭa-līlā*.

Other Special Features of Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha

One of the special features of *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* is the disclosure of the fact that Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* eternally unfolds in two dimensions of being — manifest (*prakaṭa*) and unmanifest (*aprakaṭa*). Kṛṣṇa eternally exists in His own abode, beyond the range of worldly inspection (*aprakaṭa*). Once in a day of Brahmā, however, He makes His *līlā* visible to people in general (*prakaṭa*). While invisible to the world, He carries on His divine play with His associates in the *aprakaṭa-līlā*. From the point of view of Kṛṣṇa and His associates, there is no difference between the two *līlās*.

A related concept is the principle that Kṛṣṇa, His associates, and His abodes all have multiple *prakāśa* manifestations on the basis of which the *prakaṭa* and *aprakaṭa-līlās* can be enacted in perfect synchronicity. Kṛṣṇa is one, but He can manifest Himself in many forms at one and the same existential moment, performing different acts in distinct locations and yet remaining one. These simultaneously one and yet distinct forms are called *prakāśa* manifestations. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī extends the concepts of *prakaṭa*, *aprakaṭa*, and *prakāśa* a step further to explain how each *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa is eternal. In the realm of conventional experience, all actions have a definite beginning and end and thus cannot be eternal. In contrast to this, however, each and every *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa continues to unfold in different *prakāśas* within the *aprakaṭa-līlā* and is thus eternal. On the basis of this understanding, Jīva Gosvāmī is able to reconcile how it could be possible for Kṛṣṇa to depart from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā in spite of His being ever present in both locations.

The supreme status of Gokula (Vraja) among Kṛṣṇa's three abodes is another unique insight brought to light by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*. The endearing blissful nature of His human-like *līlā*, known as *mādhurya*, is manifest in its highest form only in Vraja. As an expression of this *mādhurya*, Kṛṣṇa is perpetually present in Gokula in His beautiful adolescent form. This is His most astonishing, adorable, and supremely enchanting form — superior to His manifestations in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Correspondingly, Kṛṣṇa's associates in Vraja are superior to His associates in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Their love for Kṛṣṇa is paramount both qualitatively and quantitatively. This implies that the existential status of Vraja is such that in this particular setting, Kṛṣṇa Himself manifests beauty and love far exceeding that exhibited in the other two abodes. On the basis of this determination, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī concludes that in terms of aesthetic completion, Kṛṣṇa in Vraja surpasses even His own manifestation in Mathurā and Dvārakā.

Corresponding to the above understanding, it is to be pointed out that Kṛṣṇa has two essential features — His human-like state of existence (*narākāra*), known as *mādhurya*, and His majestic

existence, known as *aiśvarya*, replete with regulating powers. The first of these is prominent in Vraja, whereas the second is prevalent in Mathurā and Dvārakā. In His *aiśvarya* form, He sometimes manifests two hands and sometimes four. His Universal Form (*viśvarūpa*), described in the Eleventh Chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā*, is inferior to both these aspects. This is why Arjuna could not be satisfied at heart to witness this form. For average Hindus, such a distinction may appear strange indeed. But for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, this insight is crucial, because it establishes the foundational basis for the practice of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, recommended in *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

Another of Kṛṣṇa's unique characteristics pointed out by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is the fact that the *asuras* He slayed in Vraja were killed not by Him directly, but by Viṣṇu, who is implicit within Kṛṣṇa. As explained earlier, Kṛṣṇa, being Svayaṁ Bhagavān, includes all other forms of Bhagavān within His essential being. Thus, He personally does not engage in killing the *asuras*.

Śrī Jīva also emphasizes the fact that the real basis for relationship is love and not blood lineage. This is understood from Kṛṣṇa's life. Although He was born to Vasudeva and Devakī, He preferred to live with His foster parents, Yaśodā and Nanda. The love of Nanda and Yaśodā is far superior to that of Kṛṣṇa's own birth parents. This implies that it is possible even for modern day practitioners to develop love for Kṛṣṇa in the parental attitude without Kṛṣṇa literally taking birth from them. This fact also lays the foundation for the final book of the anthology, *Prīti Sandarbha*, in which Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī elaborately discusses the subject of divine love (*prīti*, or *prema*).

In *Tattva Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 50), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī stated that in order to elucidate the essential truth of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, he would examine in the *Six Sandarbhas* the three topics of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. *Sambandha* refers to the relation between the signified Reality (*vācya*) as subject of the text and the text itself as signifier (*vācaka*) of that Reality. In this respect,

the subject of the relation is known as *sambandhi-tattva*. *Abhidheya* refers to the prescribed means by which the subjective Reality (*sambandhi-tattva*) is immediately self-disclosed in consciousness, and *prayojana* refers to the state of ultimate completion to be arrived at through consummation of the means. In the first four *Sandarbhas*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī examined in great detail *sambandha-tattva*, the exposition of which reaches its peak in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* in the disclosure of ultimate Reality as Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Taking it a step further, he demonstrated at the close of the same volume that the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, being one indivisible Reality existing as the supreme potency and the supreme potent source, is the *sambandhi-tattva*, or the subject to be realized. In the next book, *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva proceeds to examine the *abhidheya*, or the means by which one can be permanently established in the completion state of authentic relatedness to this *sambandhi-tattva*.



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.



१ Kṛṣṇa Is Svayaṁ Bhagavān

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.¹

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 [*Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*] in the appropriate order.²



¹ tau santoṣayatā santau śrīla-rūpa-sanātanau
dākṣiṇātyena bhaṭṭena punar etad vivicyate

² tasyādyam granthanālekham krānta-vyutkrānta-khaṇḍitam
paryālocyātha paryāyam kṛtvā likhati jivakah

Kṛṣṇa Is the Source of the Puruṣāvatāras

Anucchedas 1-5

Anuccheda 1

Bhagavān Is the Source of Paramātmā

१ । अथ पूर्वं सन्दर्भत्रयेण यस्य सर्वपरत्वं साधितं तस्य श्रीभगवतो निर्धारणाय सन्दर्भोऽयमारभ्यते ।

THIS [KṚṢṆA] SANDARBHA is now being undertaken to determine the precise identity of Śrī Bhagavān, whose supremacy over all other forms [of the Godhead] has been established in the three previous Sandarbhas.

अथ तत्र प्रथमस्य द्वितीये “वदन्ति” (भा० १।२।११) इत्यादिना तदेकमेव तत्त्वं ब्रह्मादितया शब्द्यत इत्युक्तम् । तदेव ब्रह्मादित्रयं तस्य तृतीये विविच्यते । ब्रह्म त्विह (भा० १।३।३३) —

In those first three volumes, it was stated in accordance with the *vadanti* verse (SB 1.2.11)¹ that the one and only Reality, *tattva*, is designated by three names — Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. These three manifestations are distinguished in the third chapter of the First Canto [of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*]. In the following verse, however, it is specifically Brahman that is being pointed out:

यत्रेमे सदसद्रूपे प्रतिषिद्धे स्वसंविदा ।
अविद्ययात्मनि कृते इति तद् ब्रह्मदर्शनम् ॥ ३ ॥ इत्यादिना ।

¹ See *Tattva Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 51), *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 1), *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 1, 18, 105, 110), *Bhakti Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 7), and *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 1).

When these gross and subtle bodies, which are superimposed on the self through ignorance, are seen through by the appearance of authentic self-knowledge, then the immediate intuition of Brahman occurs. (SB 1.3.33)²

तत्र विविक्तमप्येकाकाराविर्भावतया संशयाभावात् तत्तन्निर्धारणार्थं तत्तद्वचनं नोद्ध्रियते । श्रीभगवत्परमात्मनोस्तु नानाविर्भावत्वात् तानि वचनानि तत्तन्निर्धारणार्थमुद्ध्रियन्ते ।

Yet, because Brahman is distinct and is disclosed as unitary, there is no doubt whatsoever as to Its nature. Consequently, statements to ascertain Brahman [from the *Bhāgavata*] are not being cited. Because, however, the manifestations of Śrī Bhagavān and Paramātmā are numerous, verses will be cited to determine their identities.

तत्रेश्वरो नाम निराकारो नास्तीति प्राङ् निर्णीतम् । परमात्मशब्देन च सर्वान्तर्यामिपुरुषः प्रतिपादितस्तेष्वेव सन्दर्भेषु । तथा च सति तस्मिंस्तृतीयाध्यायारम्भ एवमाभास्यम् ।

Of these two, it was earlier concluded³ that Īśvara [the Supreme Regulator of *māyā* and the *jīva*] is not formless. The Supreme Self (Puruṣa), who is immanent within all living beings (*sarvantaryāmi*), has been propounded by the word *paramātmā* in those very *Sandarbhās*. Such being the case, the Puruṣa is illustrated in precisely the same terms in the beginning of the third chapter of the First Canto.

ननु पूर्वं ब्रह्मादितया त्रिधैव तत्त्वमेकमुक्तम् । तत्र ब्रह्मणः किं लक्षणं भगवत्परमात्मनोर्वा, तत्र तत्र विशेषः कश्चिद्वा किमस्तीति श्रीशौनकादिप्रश्नमाशङ्क्य श्रीसूत उवाच (भा० १।३।१) —

It may be questioned here that the one Absolute Reality was earlier stated to have the three aspects of Brahman, and so on. In this regard, what then are the distinguishing characteristics of

² *yatre me sad-asad-rūpe pratiṣiddhe sva-saṁvidā avidyayātmani kṛte iti tad brahma-darśanam*

³ This is discussed in many places, such as *Tattva Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 34-45), *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 3), and *Paramātma Sandarbha* (Anucchedas 1-2).

Brahman, or for that matter, of Bhagavān or Paramātmā? Do they indeed possess such attributes and what are they?

Anticipating such a question from sage Śaunaka and others, Śrī Sūta responds as follows:

जगृहे पौरुषं रूपं भगवान् महदादिभिः ।
सम्भूतं षोडशकलमादौ लोकसिसृक्षया ॥ ४ ॥

In the beginning [prior to the cosmic manifestation], the Supreme Personal Absolute, Bhagavān, intending to evolve the cosmos, manifested the form of the Puruṣa, who was enfolded within (*sambhūtam*) Him along with the *tattvas* beginning with *mahat*, and endowed with the 16 evolutionary principles [necessary for creation]. (SB 1.3.1)⁴

यः श्रीभगवान् पूर्णषडैश्वर्यत्वेन पूर्वं निर्दिष्टः स एव पौरुषं रूपं पुरुषत्वेनाप्रायते यद्रूपं तदेवादौ सर्गारम्भे जगृहे प्राकृतप्रलयेष्वस्मिन् लीनं सत् प्रकटतया स्वीकृतवान् ।

It is specifically Śrī Bhagavān, described earlier as inherently self-endowed with six intrinsic opulences in full [*Bhagavat Sandarbha, Anuccheda 3*], who, at the onset of creation, assumed that particular form which is celebrated in the Veda as the Puruṣa (*pauruṣaṁ rūpam*). This is to say that He manifested the form of the Puruṣa who was enfolded within Him during the period of cosmic dissolution.

किमर्थम् ? तत्राह—लोकसिसृक्षया । तस्मिन्नेव लीनानां लोकानां समष्टिव्यष्ट्युपाधिजीवानां सिसृक्षया प्रादुर्भावनार्थमित्यर्थः । कीदृशं सत्तद्रूपं लीनमासीत् ? तत्राह—महदादिभिः सम्भूतं मिलितमन्तर्भूतमहदादितत्त्वमित्यर्थः ।

For what purpose? In response, it is said, “out of the intention to evolve the cosmos,” (*loka-sisṛkṣayā*). In other words, He does so with the intent to manifest the living beings (*loka*), or *jīvas* — together with their collective and individual designations (*upādhis*) — who were merged in that very Puruṣa. How was that form [i.e., the Puruṣa], who was enfolded within Him,

⁴ *jagrhe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ sambhūtaṁ ṣoḍaśa-kalam ādau loka-sisṛkṣayā*

depicted? In response, [Sūta] says, “He was united with *mahat*, and so on,” meaning that the evolutionary principles (*tattvas*) beginning with *mahat* were implicit within that form.

“सम्भूयाम्भोधिमभ्येति महानद्यो नगापगाः” इत्यादौ हि सम्भवतिर्मिलनार्थः । तत्र हि महदादीनि लीनान्यासन्निति ।

In this connection the following proverb is relevant: “The mighty rivers, issuing forth from the mountains, meet together and reach the sea.”⁵ In this and other similar sayings, the word *sambhavati* is employed in the sense of meeting or coming together.⁶ The evolutionary principles beginning with *mahat* were dissolved in Him alone [the Puruṣa].

तदेवम् “विष्णोस्तु त्रीणि रूपाणि” इत्यादौ महत्स्रष्टृत्वेन प्रथमं पुरुषाख्यं रूपं यच्छ्रूयते यच्च ब्रह्मसंहितादौ कारणार्णवशायिसङ्कर्षणत्वेन श्रूयते तदेव “जगृहे” इति प्रतिपादितम् ।

In this way, the form that is propounded in the *jagrhe* verse (SB 1.3.1) is specifically that of the first Puruṣa, described as the creator of the *mahat* in verses such as, “There are three forms of Viṣṇu ...” (*Sātvata-tantra* 1.30),⁷ and as the Saṅkarṣaṇa who reposes in the Causal Ocean, in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.13).

पुनः कीदृशं तद्रूपम् ? तत्राह — षोडशकलं तत्सृष्ट्युपयोगिपूर्णशक्तीत्यर्थः । तदेवं यस्तद्रूपं जगृहे स भगवान् । यत् तु तेन गृहीतं तत् तु स्वसृज्यानामाश्रयत्वात् परमात्मेति पर्यवसितम् ॥

Again, how was that form of the Puruṣa [in the state of dissolution] further illustrated? To this it is said that He was endowed with the 16 evolutionary principles (*ṣoḍaśa-kalam*), meaning

⁵ *sambhūyāmbhodhim abhyeti mahān adyā nagāpāgeti*

Śiśupāla-vadha 2.100

⁶ The word *sambhūta* in the verse under discussion is formed from the root $\sqrt{bhū}$ with the prefix *sam* and the *ta* suffix, denoting a past passive participle. Similarly, the word *sambhūya* is derived from the root $\sqrt{bhū}$ with the prefix *sam* and the gerund-forming *lyap* suffix, meaning “having joined together.” The same meaning is conveyed by the word *sambhūtam*.

⁷ *viṣṇoḥ tu trīṇi rūpāṇi*

See *Paramātmā Sandarbha, Anuccheda* 2.

that He is replete with the complete potency required for the evolution of the cosmos. Consequently, the one who manifested such a form is Bhagavān. The form manifested by Him, however, is that of Paramātmā, because it is the support and shelter of all that is to be brought forth by Him. This is the conclusion [to be drawn from the verse].

Commentary

IN TATTVA SANDARBHA (ANUCCHEDA 9), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī initiated a discussion to determine a suitable means of valid knowing (*pramāṇa*) to ascertain the core truths of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. After establishing the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the most authoritative and accessible *pramāṇa* in the matter of the self-disclosure of Reality, he began an analysis of its essential meaning (*tātparya*), which constitutes the *Six Sandarbhas*.

The second verse of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.1.2) declares that the subject of the book is the Absolute Reality (*vāstava-vastu*). This *vāstava-vastu* is further defined in the famous *vadanti* verse:

All those who have realized Absolute Reality (*tattva-vidas*) say that Reality (*tattva*) is nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*). This nondual consciousness is referred to as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. (SB 1.2.11)⁸

Brahman and Paramātmā were discussed in detail in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, while Bhagavān was examined in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*. The discussion of Bhagavān in *Bhagavat Sandarbha*, however, was of a general nature and did not evaluate the specific forms of Bhagavān, such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, or Nṛsimha. The fact that Bhagavān has innumerable forms brings up the question whether He has one original primary form, the other forms being emanations from Him, or whether all these forms are independent of each other. Moreover, if both Paramātmā and Bhagavān are the Absolute Reality, what is the relation between Them? Additionally, what is the

⁸ *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

role of Bhagavān in regard to the material cosmos? To answer all these questions, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī begins this book, the fourth in the series of six.

Once again he refers to the *vadanti* verse, which was the basis of the earlier *Sandarbhās*. A description of the three manifestations of *tattva* is found in the third chapter of the First Canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Prior to this, in the first chapter of the First Canto, Śaunaka Ṛṣi had posed six questions to Sūta Gosvāmī. The fifth question is about the *avatāras* of Bhagavān Hari (SB 1.1.17). Sūta Gosvāmī answers this question in the third chapter. Therein, he explains how Bhagavān expands as Paramātmā, referred to as the Puruṣa, for the purpose of evolving the cosmos. He then provides a list of the prominent *avatāras* of the Puruṣa. As a conclusion to the whole discussion, Sūta makes a statement of tremendous import, affirming that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not an *avatāra* but the original or seminal form of Bhagavān, Svayaṁ Bhagavān. In two additional verses (SB 1.3.33–34), it is specifically the process of Brahman realization that is being summarized.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies that although Brahman is distinct from the *jīva*, It is immediately apprehended through an awareness of identity. The *jīva*'s awareness of its own self-nature is dependent upon, and co-existent with, the awareness of Brahman. Consequently, there can be no doubt as to Brahman's nature or identity, which is self-evident, or "self-disclosed," through the consciousness of identity. Moreover, Brahman is one without a second, *ekam evādvitīyaṁ brahma* (CHU 6.2.1). Being unitary in nature, Brahman is devoid of a multiplicity of manifestations. For this reason, there is no confusion in regard to Brahman, and so Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī does not discuss anything more about It.

Brahman is devoid of attribution (*nirguṇa*) and is immediately apprehended through identity consciousness. This is the implication of the verse (SB 1.3.33) spoken by Sūta Gosvāmī. When a *jīva* is freed from identification with the gross and subtle bodies by the appearance of authentic self-knowledge, such a person becomes

eligible for Brahman realization. The process of Brahman realization is delineated by Kapiladeva to His mother Devahūti in Chapter 28 of the Third Canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

Unlike Brahman, the forms of Paramātmā and Bhagavān are numerous, and therefore an analysis is required to ascertain the system by which such expansions occur. In the second chapter of the *Bhāgavata*, Sūta Gosvāmī affirms that Absolute Reality is one only as nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*), but It manifests in a variety of aspects pertaining to corresponding diverse levels or dimensions of being.

It should be noted once again that the phrase “nondual consciousness” does not imply an Absolute utterly devoid of potencies, as is propounded by the radical nondualists (Advaitavādīs). Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has earlier explained that the nonduality of the Absolute involves three principles:

1. There is no other Reality (*tattva*), either similar or dissimilar, that is self-existent.
2. The nondual Absolute is supported only by Its own inherent potencies.
3. These potencies can have no existence without It as their absolute foundation.⁹

In the third chapter, Sūta describes in brief the various manifestations of *tattva*. A summary of this is given as follows: There are two types of universes, transphenomenal and phenomenal. Both are unlimited in number. The transphenomenal universes are called Vaikuṅṭha. Their characteristics are described in *Bhagavat Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 61–74). The Vaikuṅṭha realms are eternal and atemporal, operating outside of any influence of time as we know it. Each is presided over by a specific form of Bhagavān. Although there are unlimited forms of Bhagavān, they are one ontologically.

By contrast, the phenomenal universes undergo repeated cycles of evolution (*śṛṣṭi*) and dissolution (*laya*). The nature of the material creation as well as that of its regulator, Paramātmā, are

⁹ *Tattva Sandarbha, Anuccheda* 51, p. 346

described in *Paramātma Sandarbha*. At the time of dissolution, the entire material creation becomes unmanifest through a process of involution (*laya*), the gross effects being merged systematically into their subtle causes. As a consequence, the totality of living beings and primordial nature as a whole become enfolded within the body of Mahāviṣṇu, also called Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī, or one who reposes on the Causal Ocean, the boundary between the spiritual and material universes. Mahāviṣṇu is also called Puruṣa or the first Puruṣa, Paramātmā, Nārāyaṇa, and Viṣṇu. Mahāviṣṇu also merges into the body of Bhagavān during the complete dissolution.

Bhagavān, however, does not participate directly in the acts of creation and dissolution. When it is time for a new creation cycle to begin, He manifests the form of Mahāviṣṇu. This is stated by Sūta Gosvāmī in the opening verse of the third chapter of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*:

In the beginning [prior to the cosmic manifestation], the Supreme Personal Absolute, Bhagavān, intending to evolve the cosmos, manifested the form of the Puruṣa, who was enfolded within (*sambhūtam*) Him along with the *tattvas* beginning with *mahat*, and endowed with the 16 evolutionary principles [necessary for creation]. (SB 1.3.1)¹⁰

The meaning of this verse is that Bhagavān manifested the form of Mahāviṣṇu who is endowed with all the material ingredients required for creation. Implicit within this form are the totality of *jīvas* along with their individual *karmas* carried over from the previous creation cycle. The 16 evolutionary principles (*kalā* or *tattva*) refer to the five *mahābhūtas* (space, air, fire, water, and earth), the five cognitive senses, the five conative senses, and the mind. The compound *mahad-ādi* signifies cosmic intellect (*mahat*), the “I”-consciousness (*ahaṅkāra*), individuated intellect (*buddhi*), and the five subtle elements (*tan-mātras*).

Out of the intent to evolve the cosmos, Mahāviṣṇu unfolds primordial nature (*prakṛti*) from within Himself. He animates

¹⁰ *jaḡrhe pauraṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ
sambhūtaṁ ṣoḍaśa-kalam ādau loka-sisṛkṣayā*

it through His glance and impregnates it with the *jīvas*, who are compared to His semen. Prakṛti is thus compared to a woman, as stated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna, “The vast material nature, called Brahman, is My womb, into which I sow the seed of living beings” (GĪTĀ 14.3-4). Mahāviṣṇu’s glance also activates the time potency (*kāla*), which precipitates a chain of modifications within *prakṛti*.

With all these elements, Mahāviṣṇu generates the *brahmāṇḍas*, or the egg-shaped universes, along with their coverings. Then from the same elements, He creates the Virāṭ Puruṣa (the gross Cosmic Being) of the size of 500 million *yojanas* within each of the universal eggs. Mahāviṣṇu enters into the universal eggs in the form of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, also called the second Puruṣa, or Paramātmā. He fills half of the universal egg with water secreted from His own body. Thereafter, He takes the Virāṭ Puruṣa into His belly and lies down on the water for a thousand years. After this period, a lotus sprouts from His navel. The stem of this lotus contains the fourteen planetary systems, also called Vairāja or Virāṭ Puruṣa. The four-headed Brahmā takes birth on top of this lotus. The subtle form of this Vairāja or Virāṭ Puruṣa is called Hiranyagarbha, also known as the aggregate or *samaṣṭi-jīva*. This process of evolutionary unfolding is summarized in the verse under discussion (SB 1.3.1) and in the following two verses cited in the next *anuccheda*.¹¹ This is called *sarga*, or primary creation, which is one of the ten principal topics described in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as discussed in *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anucchedas* 56-63).

In common usage the word *sambhūta* generally means “born” or “produced.” In verse 1.3.1, however, it means “mixed” or “united with.” According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary, the latter is one of the connotations of this word:

The word *bhūta*, which can be used in all three genders (*triṣu*), means “united with” (*yukta*), “the five *mahābhūtas*” (*kṣmādi*, lit., “earth and so on”), “truth” (*ṛta*), “a living being” (*prāṇi*), “past” (*atīta*), and “similar” (*sama*). (*Amara-kośa* 3.3.78)¹²

¹¹ This explanation is based upon the fifth chapter of the Second Canto and the fifth and 20th chapters of the Third Canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

¹² *yukte kṣmādāv ṛte bhūtaṃ prāṇy-atīte same triṣu*

The three Viṣṇus are the three manifestations of Paramātmā, also called the first, second, and third Puruṣas (Mahāviṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, respectively). They were discussed in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* (*Anucchedas* 2–4). In this volume of the series, Jīva Gosvāmī’s intention is to make evident that Kṛṣṇa is the original form of Bhagavān. It is for this reason that he cites the explanation of the various *avatāras* given by Sūta Gosvāmī. He continues the discussion in the following *anucchedas*.



Anuccheda 2

Pradyumna Manifests Brahmā

२ । तस्य पुरुषरूपस्य विसर्गनिदानत्वमपि प्रतिपादयितुमाह सार्धेन (भा० १।३।२-३) —

To VERIFY that this form of the Puruṣa [Mahāviṣṇu] is also the source of the secondary creation (visarga), Śrī Sūta speaks the following one and a half verses:

यस्याम्भसि शयानस्य योगनिद्रां वितन्वतः ।
नाभिहृदाम्बुजादासीद् ब्रह्मा विश्वसृजां पतिः ॥ ५ ॥
यस्यावयवसंस्थानैः कल्पितो लोकविस्तरः ॥ ६ ॥

While He [the Puruṣa's second manifestation] was displaying His “yogic sleep” of supraconscious absorption (yoga-nidrā),¹ reposing on the Garbhodaka Ocean, Brahmā, the master of

¹ The word *nidrā* literally means sleep. The *yoga-nidrā*, or “yogic sleep,” of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, however, is not factually sleep in any sense that we know it. In his commentary on *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.17), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī first states that the *yoga-nidrā* of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is but a portion (*aṁśa*) of the *mahā-yoga-nidrā* of Mahāviṣṇu, mentioned in verse 12. He then glosses the term *yoga-nidrā* as *bhagavatī svarūpānanda-samādhimayatvād antarbhūta sarvaiśvarya saṅgatā śrīr iveti*, “the state in which the sum total of Viṣṇu’s intrinsic potencies, just like the Goddess Śrī Herself, are enfolded within Him, due to His supraconscious absorption (*samādhi*) in the bliss (*ānanda*) that is intrinsic to His own being (*svarūpa*), stemming from, or coextensive with, His own eternal *śakti* (*bhagavatī*).” In his commentary on verse 19, Śrī Jīva adds that in this state, Viṣṇu is inactive (*nirhatayā*) in any outward sense. Consequently, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu’s *yoga-nidrā* is a state of transcendence, internally experienced, in which He is united with the Goddess Śrī and with His intrinsic potencies. Taking all of this into consideration, we have rendered the term *yoga-nidrā* as “the ‘yogic sleep’ of supraconscious absorption.”

the progenitors of the world, appeared from a lotus growing from the lake of His navel. It is on the configuration of His [the Puruṣa's] limbs that the world is conceived to extend. (SB 1.3.2-3)²

यस्य पुरुषरूपस्य द्वितीयेन व्यूहेन ब्रह्माण्डं प्रविश्य अम्भसि गर्भोदके शयानस्येत्यादि योज्यम् । यस्य च तादृशत्वेन तत्र शयानस्य अवयवसंस्थानैः साक्षाच्छ्रीचरणादिसन्निवेशैर्लोकस्य विस्तारो विराडाकारः प्रपञ्चः कल्पितः ।

The pronoun *yasya*, “of Him,” refers to the [first] Puruṣa’s second manifestation (*dvitīya-vyūha*), who, having entered the universal egg, was reposing on the water of the Garbhodaka Ocean. This is how the sentence is to be syntactically arranged. It is on the configuration of the limbs, or in other words, the overt arrangement of feet and so on, of that Puruṣa, lying there in that manner, that the world is conceived to extend in the shape of the universal form (*virāḍ-ākāra*).

यथा तदवयवसन्निवेशास्तथैव “पातालमेतस्य हि पादमूलम्” (भा० २।१।२६) इत्यादिना नवीनोपासकान् प्रति मनःस्थैर्याय प्रख्यापितः । न तु वस्तुतस्तदेव यस्य रूपमित्यर्थः ।

The configuration of His limbs is as described in the *Bhāgavata*: “Pātāla constitutes the soles of His feet” (SB 2.1.26).³ Such descriptions are put forth for the benefit of beginners on the path of worship to steady the mind. In other words, it is not that this is a factual form of the Puruṣa.

यद्वा “चन्द्रमा मनसो जातः” (ऋग्वेद १०।१०।१३) इत्यारभ्य “पद्भ्यां भूमिर्दिशः श्रोत्रात् तथा लोकानकल्पयत्” (ऋग्वेद १०।१०।१४) इति श्रुतेस्तैर्हेतुभूतैर्लोकविस्तारो रचित इत्यर्थः ।

Alternatively, it is to be understood that He created the world expanse by His limbs, which are its cause, as expressed in the Śruti, beginning with, “The moon was born from the mind of the Puruṣa” (*Rg Veda* 10.90.13),⁴ up to, “The earth appeared from His

² *yasyāmbhasi śayānasya yoga-nidrām vitanvataḥ nābhi-hradāmbujād āsīd brahmā viśva-srjām patīḥ yasyāvayava-saṁsthānaiḥ kalpito loka-vistarahaḥ*

³ *pātālam etasya hi pāda-mūlam*

⁴ *candramā manaso jātaḥ*

two feet, and the directions, from His ears, and in like manner the various planets also came into being” (*Rg Veda* 10.90.14)⁵

तथा च भारते मोक्षधर्मे नारायणीये गर्भोदके शयानस्य रूपान्तरेण श्वेतद्वीपपतेर्वाक्यम्
(म० भा० १२।३३९।७२-७४) —

Similarly, in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mokṣa-dharma* division of the *Mahābhārata*, we find the following statement of the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, who lies on the Garbhodaka Ocean in a different form:

अस्मन्मूर्तिश्चतुर्थी या सासृजच्छेषमव्ययम् ॥ ७ ॥
स हि सङ्कर्षणः प्रोक्तः प्रद्युम्नं सोऽप्यजीजनत् ।
प्रद्युम्नादनिरुद्धोऽहं सर्गो मम पुनः पुनः ॥ ८ ॥
अनिरुद्धात् तथा ब्रह्मा तत्रादि कमलोद्भवः ।
ब्रह्मणः सर्वभूतानि चराणि स्थावराणि च ॥ ९ ॥

Our fourth form [Śrī Vāsudeva] manifested the imperishable Śeṣa, who indeed is called Saṅkarṣaṇa. He in turn manifested Pradyumna. From Pradyumna, I, Aniruddha, appeared; and I do so again and again. Brahmā sprang from Aniruddha’s lotus navel. From Brahmā all living beings, both mobile and immobile, took birth. (*Mahābhārata*, *Śānti-parva* 339.72-74)⁶

तत्रैव वेदव्यासः (म० भा० १२।३४०।२८-३१) —

In the same *parva*, Śrī Vedavyāsa said:

परमात्मेति यं प्राहुः साङ्ख्ययोगविदो जनाः ॥ १० ॥
महापुरुषसञ्ज्ञां स लभते स्वेन कर्मणा ।
तस्मात् प्रसूतमव्यक्तं प्रधानं तद् विदुर्बुधाः ॥ ११ ॥
अव्यक्ताद् व्यक्तमुत्पन्नं लोकसृष्ट्यर्थमीश्वरात् ।
अनिरुद्धो हि लोकेषु महानात्मेति कथ्यते ॥ १२ ॥
योऽसौ व्यक्तत्वमापन्नो निर्ममे च पितामहम् ॥ १३ ॥ इति ।

⁵ *padbhyām bhūmir diśaḥ śrotrāt tathā lokān akalpayat*

⁶ *asman-mūrtiś caturthī yā sāsrjac cheṣam avyayam*
sa hi saṅkarṣaṇaḥ proktaḥ pradyumnaḥ so’py ajjanat
pradyumnād aniruddho’haṁ sargo mama punaḥ punaḥ
aniruddhāt tathā brahmā tatrādi kamalodbhavaḥ
brahmaṇaḥ sarva-bhūtāni carāṇi sthāvarāṇi ca
Śānti-parva 326.68-70 (critical edition)

He whom the learned scholars of Sāṅkhya-yoga refer to as Paramātmā is renowned by the appellation Mahāpuruṣa by virtue of His own [magnanimous] deeds. From Him the unmanifest [(*avyakta*) i.e., *prakṛti*] is brought forth, which is known as *pradhāna* by the wise. From the unmanifest [*pradhāna*] the manifest [*mahat* and so on] arises, through the intentionality of Īśvara [Paramātmā] for the purpose of evolving the cosmos. It is specifically Aniruddha who is addressed as the Supreme Self (*mahān ātmā*) throughout the worlds (*lokeṣu*). He [Aniruddha], having become manifest, created the grandsire, Brahmā. (*Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva* 340.28–31)⁷

तदेवं सङ्कर्षणस्य वैभवमुक्त्वानिरुद्धस्याप्याह — अनिरुद्धो हीति । लोकेषु प्रत्येकं ब्रह्मा-
ण्डेषु महानात्मा परमात्मा । व्यक्तत्वं प्राकट्यं प्रद्युम्नादिति शेषः ।

In this way, after describing Saṅkarṣaṇa’s majesty [MB 12.304.28–29], Śrī Vedavyāsa spoke also of Aniruddha’s majesty in the verses beginning with *aniruddho hi* (MB 12.340.30). In the latter verse, the word *lokeṣu* (lit., “in the worlds”) means in each *brahmāṇḍa*, or universe. The appellation *mahān ātmā*, “the Supreme Self,” means Paramātmā. [He is the Paramātmā (*mahān ātmā*) in each universe (*lokeṣu*).] *Vyaktatvam* [in verse MB 12.340.31] means “having become manifest” (*prākāṣyam*); “from Pradyumna” is to be added to the latter sentence to complete the sense.

सूतेन त्वभेदविवक्षया प्रद्युम्नः पृथङ्नोक्तः “विष्णोस्तु त्रीणि रूपाणि” इतिवत् । सेयं प्रक्रिया द्वितीयस्य षष्ठे दृश्यते यथा “स एष आद्यः पुरुषः” (भा० २।६।३९) इत्यादिपद्ये टीका “स एष आद्यो भगवान् यः पुरुषावतारः सन् सृष्ट्यादिकं करोति” इत्येषा ।

Sūta, however, intending to speak of the essential nondifference [of Pradyumna and Aniruddha], did not mention Pradyumna separately, as is also the case in the verse, “Viṣṇu has three

⁷ *paramātmēti yaṁ prāhuḥ sāṅkhya-yoga-vido janāḥ*
mahā-puruṣa-saṅjñān sa labhate svena karmaṇā
tasmāt prasūtam avyaktāṁ pradhānaṁ tad vidur budhāḥ
avyaktād vyaktam utpannaṁ loka-sṛṣṭy-artham īśvarāt
aniruddho hi lokeṣu mahān ātmēti kathyate
yo’sau vyaktatvam āpanno nirmame ca pitāmahaṁ
Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva 327.24–26 (critical edition)

forms.” This manner of description is evident in the sixth chapter of the Second Canto, as in Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on verse SB 2.6.39: “The clause *sa eṣa ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ*, ‘He is the original Puruṣa,’ means ‘He is the original Bhagavān, who, appearing as the Puruṣa, enacts the functions of creation and so on.’”

एवम् “आद्योऽवतारः पुरुषः परस्य” (भा० २।६।४२) इत्यत्र टीका — परस्य भूम्नः, पुरुषः प्रकृतिप्रवर्तको यस्य “सहस्रशीर्षा” (ऋग्वेद १०।१०।१) इत्याद्युक्तो लीलाविग्रहः स आद्योऽवतार इत्येषा ।

Similarly, in Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on SB 2.6.42 [“The Puruṣa is the first *avatāra* of Para”]: “The word *parasya* means ‘of the Supreme’ (*bhūmnaḥ*); Puruṣa means ‘the impeller of *prakṛti*,’ whose form in the matter of cosmic play (*līlā-vigraha*) is described in Vedic *mantras* such as *sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḥ* (*R̥g Veda* 10.90.1). He is the first *avatāric* descent, *ādyo’vatāraḥ*.”

तथा तृतीयस्य विंशे “दैवेन” (भा० ३।२०।१२) इत्यादिकं “सोऽनु” (भा० ३।२०।१७) इत्यन्तं सटीकमेव प्रकरणमत्रानुसन्धेयम् । तस्माद् विराट्त्वेन तद्रूपं न व्याख्यातम् । तस्माच्च वासुदेवस्थानीयो भगवान् पुरुषादन्य एवेत्यायातम् ॥

Similarly, in this regard, one should examine the section of verses from 12 to 17 of the 20th chapter of the Third Canto along with Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary. Therefore, His form is not interpreted as that of the Virāṭ. It is, thus, also to be concluded that Bhagavān as Vāsudeva is certainly distinct from the Puruṣa.

Commentary

IN THIS ANUCCHEDA, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī continues to explain the process of evolution, as described by Sūta Gosvāmī. His intention is twofold:

1. To delineate the three manifestations of the Puruṣa, or Param-ātmā, as distinct from Bhagavān, and,
2. To show that the Virāṭ Puruṣa is not a real form of the Puruṣa but an imaginary portrayal of the universal structure as a

form of God to provide an object of meditation for neophyte spiritualists.

Cosmic evolution is described in different places in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as well as in other scriptures. Sometimes these descriptions seem to contradict each other. The reason for this is that they may not all provide the same measure or precision of detail. There are four expansions (*catur-vyūha*) of Bhagavān in the spiritual world, called Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Vāsudeva is the original form, and the other three proceed from Him in that order. In *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa is Vāsudeva, His brother, Balarāma, is Saṅkarṣaṇa, His son is Pradyumna, and His grandson, Aniruddha. In *Rāma-līlā*, the four *vyūhas* are the four brothers, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna, respectively. But it is not necessary that with every *avatāra* all the *vyūhas* are manifest.

In the process of creation, Vāsudeva manifests as the first Puruṣa (Mahāviṣṇu, or Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu), who is an expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa. The second Puruṣa, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is an expansion of Pradyumna, and the third Puruṣa, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is an expansion of Aniruddha.

There are two stages of creation, known as *sarga* (primary) and *visarga* (secondary). *Sarga* is enacted by Mahāviṣṇu, and *visarga*, by Brahmā. Although among the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa, Brahmā is popularly referred to as the creator, it is to be understood that he is merely the secondary creator. The primary creation (*sarga*) is effected by Mahāviṣṇu, who is the Paramātmā for the metacosm, or the aggregate material nature (*prakṛti*). By His glancing at the unmanifest *prakṛti*, He sets in motion the evolution of the primary elements through the influence of time in accordance with the cumulative fate of the *jīvas*.

The glance of Mahāviṣṇu is identical with His intention to bring forth the cosmos. It signifies the activation of time, which operates on and modifies *prakṛti*, and His injecting the *jīvas* into the womb of *prakṛti*. From the primary elements, He creates the universal egg, or *brahmāṇḍa*, along with its coverings. He then expands Himself

as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Paramātmā for the macrocosm, or an individual *brahmāṇḍa*, and reposes on the Garbhodaka Ocean in the lower half of that particular universe. He manifests the fourteen planetary systems (*lokas*) within a lotus stem that sprouts from His navel. Brahmā takes birth on top of the lotus flower at the crest of the stem. Sūta describes this in verse 1.3.2.

The system of planets within the stem is meditated upon as a form of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, known as Virāṭ Puruṣa, or the universal being. It is not an actual form of Viṣṇu but only imagined as such for the sake of meditation. A neophyte *yogī*, whose awareness is oriented toward overt phenomena, can conceive of God only in terms of gross objects. He is therefore advised to contemplate the universe as the Virāṭ Puruṣa. Such a recommendation is offered by Śukadeva in verses 2.1.23–39. This meditation helps the aspiring *yogī* to abandon his exploitative nature, recognizing everything as part of the body of God. Ultimately, the *yogī* must progress beyond such meditation and shift his focus to the real form of Paramātmā. This description of the creation has an additional purpose — to uproot the idea that the universe is imaginary, *mithyā*. Thus, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* supports neither the notion that the universe itself is Bhagavān nor that the universe is unreal.

As a further elaboration on the *Bhāgavata*'s evolutionary theory, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī recommends that verses 3.20.12–17 should be examined along with the commentary of Śrīdhara Svāmī. The discussion is summarized as follows: During the period of dissolution, the material universes as a whole are enfolded within the unmanifest state of *prakṛti* in which the three *guṇas* remain in a neutralized condition. At the onset of a new creative cycle, Mahāviṣṇu, who is the regulator of *prakṛti*, impels time to unsettle the equilibrium of the *guṇas*, in accordance with the aggregate *karma* of the *jīvas* from the previous cycle.

The first evolute generated from the *guṇas*' interaction is *mahat*, or cosmic intellect. Although *mahat* is predominantly of the nature of *sattva* (luminosity), it becomes dominated by *rajas* (dynamism) at the time of creation. *Ahaṅkāra*, the phenomenal “I”-awareness,

with its three divisions of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, becomes manifest from *mahat*. From *ahaṅkāra* predominated by *sattva* the mind is generated along with the presiding deities (*devas*) of the senses. From *ahaṅkāra* predominated by *rajas* come the ten senses. And from *ahaṅkāra* predominated by *tamas* come the five *tan-mātras* (the subtle essences of the elements), which further give rise to the five *mahābhūtas* (the mega elements).

Thereafter, by the intention of Mahāviṣṇu, these elements combine together to form a golden egg. This universal egg lies lifeless in the Causal Ocean for a thousand years. After that, Viṣṇu enters the egg, thus bringing it to life. A lotus then sprouts from the lotus navel of Viṣṇu. Its brilliance is that of a thousand suns, as it encompasses the totality of all *jīvas* within its fold. Brahmā appears on top of that lotus. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu enters the heart of Brahmā and inspires him to evolve the universe according to the system laid down in the previous cycle.



Anuccheda 3

The Puruṣa's Form Is of Pure Sattva

३ । अथ तस्य रूपद्वयस्य सामान्यत ऐकविध्येन स्वरूपमाह “तद् वै भगवतो रूपं विशुद्धं सत्त्वमूर्जितम्” (भा० १।३।३) इति ।

THEREAFTER, Śrī Sūta describes the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of these two forms, considering them as one in a general sense: “That is verily the form of Bhagavān, consisting of extremely potent (*ūrjita*) unalloyed being (*viśuddha-sattva*)” (SB 1.3.3).¹

तत् श्रीभगवतः पौरुषं रूपं वै प्रसिद्धौ विशुद्धोर्जितसत्त्वाभिव्यक्तत्वाच्छक्तिस्वरूपयोरभेदाच्च तद्रूपमेवेत्यर्थः । उक्तं च द्वितीयं पुरुषव्यूहमधिकृत्य स्वरूपत्वं तद्रूपस्य “नातः परं परम यद् भवतः स्वरूपम्” (भा० ३।९।३) इत्यत्र ।

The pronoun *tat* refers to the Puruṣa form of Śrī Bhagavān. The emphatic particle *vai* implies that it is well-known [as such]. Because it manifests from extremely potent unalloyed being (*viśuddha-ūrjita-sattva*) and because [Bhagavān's] potency (*śakti*) is nondifferent from His essential being (*svarūpa*), the form of the Puruṣa is indeed *viśuddha-sattva*. It is also said, regarding the second Puruṣa, that His form is identical to His *svarūpa*: “O Supreme Lord, I do not regard Your essential being, which is purely blissful, free from duality, and of the nature of unobstructed effulgence, to be different from this form of Yours” (SB 3.9.3).²

¹ *tad vai bhagavato rūpaṁ viśuddhaṁ sattvam ūrjitam*

² *nātaḥ paraṁ parama yad bhavataḥ svarūpam
ānanda-mātram avikalpam aviddha-varcaḥ*

विशुद्धं जाड्यांशेनापि रहितं स्वरूपशक्तिवृत्तित्वात् । ऊर्जितं सर्वतो बलवत् परमानन्दरूपत्वात् “को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्” (तै० २।७।१) इति श्रुतेः । तस्मात् साक्षाद्भगवद्रूपे तु कैमुत्यमेवायातम् ॥

In verse 1.3.3, the word *viśuddham* (“unalloyed”) means devoid of even a portion of inert matter, it being a manifestation of His *svarūpa-śakti*. *Ūrjita* (“extremely potent”) means the most powerful of all, because it is the embodiment of supreme bliss, as stated in the Śruti (TU 2.7.1): “If this [Paramātmā] were not present in the space of the heart (*ākāśa*) as the personification of bliss, who indeed would breathe, who would live?” Consequently, if the body of the Puruṣa consists of unalloyed being, how much more must this be so in regard to Svayaṁ Bhagavān Himself?

Commentary

IN THE PREVIOUS ANUCCHEDA, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī made it clear that the Virāṭ Puruṣa is not a real form of the Puruṣa, let alone it being a form of Bhagavān. Here he supplies the reason for making this distinction. The form of Bhagavān is devoid of any tinge of inert matter. Its essence is that of pure (*viśuddha*) *sattva*, or unalloyed being, which is inherently conscious, whereas the phenomenal *sattva* that constitutes *prakṛti* is inert. The second adjective used to specify *viśuddha-sattva* is *ūrjita*, which Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī glosses as “the most powerful of all,” being supremely blissful by nature. It is quite telling that Bhagavān’s power is not due primarily to His physical or mental prowess, but because He is intrinsically *ānanda*. This theme will be elaborated in *Pṛiti Sandarbha*, and it seems that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has planted a seed here for that future discussion.

Indeed, it is observed that *ānanda* is the most powerful driving force throughout creation, and Bhagavān is the very source of all *ānanda*. Everybody is searching for *ānanda*, and this search will continue until one comes to its source. It is for this reason that Kṛṣṇa declares that no one returns to worldly existence once having reached His abode (GĪTĀ 15.6). At that point the search comes

to an end. This proves that Bhagavān is not a phenomenal being and that His body is not material. His body is thus different from the Virāṭ Puruṣa. In the case of embodied beings, the forms (*rūpa*) they take on are distinct from their intrinsic natures (*svarūpa*). But in Bhagavān there is no such duality. This was directly realized by Brahmā when he saw the form of the second Puruṣa, as described in verse 3.9.3, cited in the text.



Anuccheda 4

Identity of the Forms of the First and Second Puruṣa

४ । तदेवं पुरुषस्य द्विधा स्थानकर्मणी उक्त्वा स्वरूपवदाकारं त्वेकप्रकारमाह (भा० १।३।४) —

IN THIS WAY, having described two domains and functions of the Puruṣa, Sūta now explains that His form is of one type only, exactly like His essential being (*svarūpa*):

पश्यन्त्यदो रूपमदभ्रचक्षुषा सहस्रपादोरुभुजानानाद्भुतम् ।
सहस्रमूर्धश्रवणाक्षिनासिकं सहस्रमौल्यम्बरकुण्डलोल्लसत् ॥ १४ ॥

[The devotional transcendentalists] behold with enlightened vision that form [of the Puruṣa], wonderful with thousands of feet, thighs, arms, and faces, possessing thousands of heads, ears, eyes, and noses, and effulgent with thousands of crowns, garments, and earrings. (SB 1.3.4)¹

अदः पौरुषं रूपमदभ्रचक्षुषा भक्त्याख्येन “पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया” (गीता ८।२२) इत्युक्तेः, “भक्तिरेवैनं नयति भक्तिरेवैनं दर्शयति” इत्यादि श्रुतेश्च ।

The pronoun *adaḥ* (“that”) refers to the form of the Puruṣa. The compound *adabhra-cakṣuṣā*, “with enlightened vision” [lit.,

¹ *paśyanty ado rūpam adabhra-cakṣuṣā sahasra-pāḍoru-bhujānanādbhutam sahasra-mūrdha-śravaṇākṣi-nāsikam sahasra-mauly-ambara-kuṇḍalollasat*

“with undiminished eye”], means through the eye of devotion, as Kṛṣṇa said, “O Arjuna, the Supreme Puruṣa is attainable only by exclusive devotion” (GĪTĀ 8.22);² and also in the Śruti, “Only devotion leads to Him, only devotion reveals Him” (*Māthara-śruti*).³

तत्र प्रथमस्य सहस्रपादादित्वं परमात्मसन्दर्भे व्यञ्जितम् । तृतीयस्याष्टमे तु द्वितीयपुरुषस्य व्यूहमुपलक्ष्य श्रीमैत्रेयेण “वेणुभुजाङ्घ्रिपाङ्घ्रेः” (भा० ३।८।२४) इति ।

Out of these two manifestations of the Puruṣa, the first, having thousands of feet and so on, was delineated in *Paramātma Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 2). Referring to the form of the second Puruṣa, Śrī Maitreya said in the eighth chapter of the Third Canto: “By His shapely arms, He excelled the bamboos that were like the arms of that emerald mountain, and by His beautiful legs, He cast aside the splendor of the trees constituting its legs” (SB 3.8.24).⁴

“दोर्दण्डसहस्रशाखम्” (भा० ३।८।२९) इति “किरीटसाहस्रहिरण्यशृङ्गम्” (भा० ३।८।३०) इति च ।

Also, in SB 3.8.29, “With His pair of stout arms adorned with precious armlets and gems,”⁵ and in SB 3.8.30, “The thousands of crowns that adorned the hoods of Bhagavān Śeṣa appeared like peaks of gold.”⁶

तथा नवमस्य चतुर्दशे श्रीशुकेन (भा० ९।१४।२) —

Additionally, in the 14th chapter of the Ninth Canto, Śrī Śuka said (SB 9.14.2):

सहस्रशिरसः पुंसो नाभिहृदसरुरुहात् ।
जातस्यासीत् सुतो धातुरत्रिः पितृसमो गुणैः ॥ १५ ॥ इति ॥

² *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā*

³ *bhaktir evainam nayati bhaktir evainam darśayati*

⁴ *venu-bhujāṅghripāṅghreḥ*

⁵ *dor-daṇḍa-sahasra-śākhām*

⁶ *kiriṭa-sāhasra-hiranya-śṛṅgam*

Atri, who was equal to his father in qualities, was the son of Brahmā, who took birth from the lotus sprouted from the navel lake of the thousand-headed Puruṣa.⁷

Commentary

IN VERSE 1.3.1, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī described the domain and function of the first Puruṣa, Mahāviṣṇu or Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. In the next two verses he explained the function and sphere of action of the second Puruṣa, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Now in the present verse, he describes Viṣṇu’s form. The question arises, “Which of the Viṣṇu forms is being portrayed? Is it that of the first or the second Puruṣa?” Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī addresses this question in the present *anuccheda*.

He replies that the form of both the Puruṣas is the same; there is no difference. The form of the first Puruṣa was discussed in *Paramātma Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 2). There the specific reference was made to *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.10-12). In the section beginning with, “The Puruṣa, having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand legs” (5.11), it is stated:

He is Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, a portion of Saṅkarṣaṇa [the second member of the Vaikuṅṭha quadruple manifestation]. From Him, the eternal Person (*sanātānāt*), appeared a vastitude of water known as the Causal Ocean (*kāraṇārṇava*). The great Bhagavān Himself, who has thousands of forms [and also called Saṅkarṣaṇa], entered the “yogic sleep” of supraconscious being (*yoga-nidrā*) on that water. In the pores of His body the seeds of Saṅkarṣaṇa [previously embedded within the matrix of His creative potency] appeared as universes in the form of golden eggs, covered by the material elements. (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.12-13)⁸

⁷ *sahasra-śirasaḥ puṁso nābhi-hrada-saroruhāt
jātasyāsīt suto dhātur atriḥ pitṛ-samo guṇaiḥ*

⁸ *nārāyaṇaḥ sa bhagavān āpas tasmāt sanātānāt
āvīrasīt kāraṇārṇonidhiṁ saṅkarṣaṇātmakaḥ
yoga-nidrām gatas tasmīn sahasrāṁśaḥ svayaṁ mahān
tad-roma-bila-jāleṣu bijaṁ saṅkarṣaṇasya ca
haimāny aṇḍāni jātāni mahā-bhūtāvṛtāni tu*

This description is unmistakably that of the first Puruṣa, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, because it is He alone who reposes on the Causal Ocean. In the main verse (SB 1.3.4) of the present *anuccheda*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies that the pronoun *adaḥ* (“that”) refers to the form of the Puruṣa. This must correspond to the second Puruṣa, outlined in the previous two verses, because the pronoun “that” can relate back only to its antecedent mentioned therein. The description of the form of the Puruṣa given in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, however, matches perfectly that found in SB 1.3.4. The conclusion is that the two Puruṣas are identical in form. This is further corroborated by the verse from the Ninth Canto, which makes reference to the second Puruṣa, who is said to possess a thousand heads.

