

The twelve forms that begin with Kesava are other forms derived from the *vyūhas*. (Bhagavan also manifests Himself as *vibhavas*.) These *vibhavas* are thirty odd forms like Padmanabha. Among them Avatars like Matsya and Kurma are specified in relation to some specific purpose. In these *vibhavas* or *avatārs*, Iswara conceals those attributes of His which He wants to conceal and reveals those attributes which He wants to reveal to suit the special mission which He has undertaken in them. Among them, there are varied manifestations which are countless. So has it been said, "The forms of Krishna are innumerable". Other forms similarly derived from the *vibhavas* can also be seen in the *sāstras*. Sometimes the Lord enters into some *jīvas* with His own specific form and into others with His energy (*śakti*) and accomplishes wonderful things. These belong to another class of *vibhavas*. The forms of the Supreme Vasudeva (*Para*), the *Vyūhas* and the *Vibhavas* assume the forms of the images and enter into the shapes of images (installed in temples), for the sake of devotees as desired by them. This is *archāvatāra*: The Lord is (also) present in a subtle form in the hearts of all *jīvas*. This form is called *Antaryāmi Avatāra*, as meditation on this form has been prescribed as the means which enables those who wish to enter into the meditation of the *Antaryāmin* or the divine all-pervading *svarūpa* of the Lord. It has been said of this meditation:— "Those who have attained success in *Ashtānga yoga* and who are desirous of worshipping the One who dwells in the heart are fit to meditate on the one (i. e.) the form in which He dwells in the hearts of all." Therefore this One (*Hārda*) is spoken as *Antaryāmi*.

All these forms of incarnation are constituted of the substance called *suddhasatvam* and have no connection with *karma* or its fruits. They are therefore called *pure creation* (*suddha srishti*).

24. Pancharatra

25. Satvata samhita 6-22

This is stated in the following passage: "He assumes a form similar to that of the image, enters into it, and remains there".

26. Satvata samhita: 2-7-8

These *avatārs* (*vibhava*, *archā* and *Hārda*) are all real; in them there is no contraction or abridgement of *jnāna* and the other attributes of Iswara; the bodies of these *avatārs* are made of *suddha-satvam*; the reason for these *avatārs* is only the Lord's will; their time of manifestation is the time when *dharma* has to be safe-guarded; their purpose is the protection of the good and the like; those who meditate on these *avatārs* with clear knowledge may attain *moksha* at the end of this very life without any future birth, by their successful adoption of the right means suited to their competency and capacity. All these truths have been explained by the *Gītāchārya* in five *slokas* beginning with:—

“*Bahūni me* ^{26A}*vyatītāni etc.*” Many are the births that I have gone through, just like you.

This meditation on the *vibhavas* (or *avatārs*) creates supreme faith or confidence (*mahāvisvāsa*) in the mind of the seeker after salvation who seeks *prapatti* as an independent means or *upāya*, by affording him a knowledge of the great qualities of the Lord who is sought as the refuge and this at the moment when he adopts *prapatti* as the means. So also the worship of *Archāvātāra* (the image) will lead easily to *moksha*. Bhagavan Sounaka has said:— ²⁷“Having shaped a beautiful image of Vishnu with a lovely face and lovely eyes, out of gold, silver and the like in a manner that would be pleasing, one should adore it, bow to it, sacrifice to it and meditate on it. By doing so, one would enter into that form which is none other than Brahman and will have all one's sins dispelled.” The Alwars, too, very largely dwelt on this secret doctrine about the Lord's *avatārs* and the distinctive excellence of the *avatārs* in the form of *archū* or consecrated images and considered the Supreme Self (in *Vaikuṅṭa*) as their original cause.

Iswara, who is in these varied forms, creates, maintains and destroys all, is also the giver of *moksha* and has such other acti-

26. Satvata Samhita 2-7-8

27. Vishnudharma: 103-16

26A. Bhagavad Gita IV5.