

SVAYAM-RŪPA, TAD-EKĀTMA-RŪPA, ĀVEŚĀ-RŪPA, PRĀBHAVA, VAIBHAVA, PRĀBHAVA-VILĀSA; CATUR-VYŪHA!

☹️ AAHA! What's all this got to do with me?! ☹️ I'll never understand it! AAHA! ☹️

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī should very seriously engage in regulated worship of the Deity. The Deity is a particular incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa can present Himself before the worshiper in five different manifestations, namely His original form as Kṛṣṇa (para), His quadruple expansions (vyūha), His pastime incarnations (vaibhava), the Supersoul (antaryāmī) and the Deity (arcā). Within the Deity form (arcā) is the Supersoul, who in turn is included within the Lord's pastime forms (vaibhava). The Supreme Lord's vaibhava-prakāśa is an emanation from the caturvyūha. This quadruple expansion of the Lord is situated within the supreme truth, Vāsudeva, who Himself is situated within the svayam-prakāśa-tattva. This svayam-prakāśa consists of expansions of the ultimate svayam-rūpa-tattva, the original form of Kṛṣṇa within Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual sky. This hierarchy of the expansions of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world is realized even within the material world in terms of one's eagerness to render service to the Lord. A beginner in the lowest stage of devotional service should try to dedicate all his activities to the satisfaction of the Lord and cultivate the worship of Kṛṣṇa in the temple.

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, all the plenary expansions of the Supreme Lord mentioned above descend into this world and enter within the Deity, who exhibits the function of the Supersoul by accompanying the daily life of the Vaiṣṇava. Although the vaibhava, or pastime expansions, of the Lord incarnate at specific times (rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan [Bs. 5.39]), the Supersoul and Deity forms are constantly available for the spiritual advancement of the devotees in this world. As one comes to the madhyama-adhikārī platform, one is able to understand the expansions of the Supreme Lord, whereas the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī's entire knowledge of the Lord is limited to the Deity. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that to encourage even the lowest class of Vaiṣṇavas He condenses all of His various forms into the Deity so that by worshipping the Deity the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī devotee is worshipping all the forms of the Lord. As the devotee makes advancement, he can understand these forms as they appear in their own way, both within this world and in the spiritual sky.

— ŚB 11.2.47p

😊 My dear friend, just worship your Deities with care and affection and everything will be just fine...you'll come to understand! 😊... so says Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. 😊