

KrushNastu BhagavAn Svayam

SrI:

SrImatE SrI Lakshmi Nrusimha Para BrahmaNE namaha

SrImatE rAmAnujAya namaH

namO nArAyaNa !

This posting is regarding the validity of the teaching of Gaudiya VaishnavAs (GVs) that "KrishNa is the original Personality of Godhead and Lord nArAyaNa , other avatArams/forms are His expansions". They quote the following verse from Srimad BhAgavatham to uphold their theory :

" ete cha amSa-kalAH pumsaH krushNastu bhagavAn svayam |
indra-ari vyaakulam lokam mruDayanti yuge yuge || "[1.3.28]

Translation by Sri A.C.BhaktivEdAnta swAmi :

"All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord srI KrishNa is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists."

Please note that the person nArAyaNa is not the form of nArAyaNa. Lord's divine body is made of the tattva named "Suddha Sattva". It has its own characteristics. Lord as such is a chEtana, different from Suddha-sattva. Whenever God/ParamAtma/BhagavAn etc is referred, it refers to the DivyAtma SwarooPa which as a chEtana has all other things like divine form etc as its attributes. Thus, Lord nArAyaNa is not someone who is restricted to 4 hands.

Qtn 1: By the above Srimad BhAgavatham (SB) verse can one come to the conclusion that KrishNa is the actual God and nArAyaNa is secondary ("expansion ?") to Him ?

Whenever GV's say "nArAyaNa", they refer to the four handed form of PerumAL.

This verse doesn't even mention about nArAyaNa. Usage of "KrishNa" here can _atbest_ be considered in "comparison" with other vibhava avatArams (incarnations).

The verse simply says that in comparison with the above mentioned avatArams , KrishNa is actually bhagavAn (bhagavAn svayam) whereas others are amSAs of Lord. This doesn't (even in the remotest sense) imply that nArAyaNa(either as a person or as a form) is an amSA of KrishNa or something like that .

Even if one makes the extrapolation of the greatest order & gives an interpretation which cannot be derived from this verse like "nArAyaNa is also an amSA (someone inferior) of KrishNA" it contradicts many pramAnams from VedAs

(including Upanishads), IthihAsa-purANas, pAncarAtrA etc. So, such type of claim is obviously not supported by Scriptures.

For instance, MahOpanishad (1.1) says " yekO ha vai nArAyaNa aasIt" { "Only nArAyaNA existed (in the beginning ie. during praLayam) }". This means that, the "person" nArAyaNA (who has _inseparable_ attributes viz. chit <which is eternal ie. can't be destructed > and achit <which is eternal>, which were in their sookshma state during the praLayam, was the only one existing).

Qtn 2 : What does the "above mentioned avatArams" ("ete") stand for ?

The whole issue of understanding this verse lies in the interpretation given to the word "ete" (ie. "above mentioned").

In the previous two verses (1.3.26-27), sUtar says that the number of incarnations of SrIman nArAyaNa (Hari) are innumerable like thousands of rivulets flowing from a river & goes on to say that RishIs & devas (demigods), Manus & prajApatis are all amsAs of Lord Hari.

Now the question arises as to whether, all these incarnations (rishis, manus and others) are actually "svayam bhagavAn" ie. nArAyaNa Himself. To clarify that, sUtar is telling in the verse 1.3.28 that rishIs, anya dEvatAs (dEvAs), manus and others (" above mentioned avatArams") are not "svayam bhagavAn" (not " nArAyaNA Himself), but KrishNa is bhagavAn Himself. So, obviously, sUtar wants to reiterate that rishis and others are only amsAvatArAs (ie. They are not same as nArAyaNa) and are different from PerumAL's svayam avatArams (like KrishNa).

In svayam avatArams like nrusimha, rAma, krishNa, it is the same person(nArAyaNA) who is taking different forms. But, in amsAvatArams, nArAyaNa simply bestows extraordinary powers to a jIvAtma to achieve certain things (but, this is also counted as a type of "avatAram", though it is not PerumAL who is directly taking the avatAram, as in the case of svayam avatArams).

We shall later discuss in this posting as to why "KrishNa" was chosen here by sUtar for the clarification.

Please note that, previously , KrishNA was also listed as one of the incarnation of Hari (nArAyaNa) by Sage sUtar. Actually the sages request Sage sUtar to describe various incarnations of Lord Hari (SB 1.1.13 & 1.1.18). So, the _best "extrapolation"_ from this verse that one can obtain is that, of all the incarnations (avatArams) that so far has been listed by Sage sUtar , KrishNa is the perfect

avatAram (ie. Poorna avatAram ie. Svayam) of nArAyaNa & all other avatArams are only amsAs of nArAyaNa, ie. KrishNa is non-different from nArAyaNa since KrishNa is svayam bhagavAn & all other avatArams are not same as nArAyaNa since they are only His amsAs.

This leads to the following question :

Qtn 3: If the word "ete" ("above mentioned") is interpreted to mean all the incarnations that has been enlisted so far from the beginning by Sage SUTar(instead of referring it to only the avatArams like manus, rishis and others enlisted in the previous verse 1.3.27) it leads to a conclusion that KrishNa is the only poorna avatAram of nArAyaNa & all other avatArams like nrusimha , rAma (which were also listed previously to verse 1.3.28) are only His amsAvatArAs.

This obviously contradicts numerous pramAnams.
Still, Can a sensible interpretation be given, if "ete" can be interpreted this way ?

The answer to the question lies in the "chatri nyAyam" used in sanskrit, as commented so rightly by Sri VlrarAghavAchArya.

It is described as follows for those who don't know Sanskrit:
"chatriO gacchanti" => a group of people having umbrellAs are going. Actually, not everyone in that group needs to hold an umbrella. This usage, though addresses the group as a whole, it doesn't convey that everyone in that group has an umbrella. Thus, according to "chatri nyAyam", eventhough the adressing be done to the whole group, asif everyone has the same characteristic (eg: holding the umbrella), still, it needn't convey that everyone in that group has that characteristic ie. the intention is to just refer to those who actually posses that characteristic (holding an umbrella), though adressing is done to the whole group as such.

Lets see how "chatri nyAyam" is employed in this verse (1.3.28).
All avatArams of the type Nrusimha , RAma are Poorna avatArams only, since they are taken by the same person nArAyaNa.
Eventhough all the poorna avatArms (no umbrella) seems to be grouped with that of many other avatArams (anupavesa / amsAvatAra etc; with umbrella) by the word "ete", its actual import from the application of "chatri nyAyam" is that the word "ete" refers only to the amsa avatArams (with umbrella). So, the comparison of KrishNAvatAram is strictly not with all the avatArams that has been listed before, but only with other amsa avatArams. The word "ete", though addresses the whole group of avatArams that has been listed so far, the intention is to refer to only those avatArams that are amsAvatArams (with umbrella). If one fails to recognize the "chatri nyAyam " employed, it leads him/her into a contradiction .

The next issue is to whether his can be further explained in the light of the "context" in which Sage sUtar uttered this verse ?

Actually , the sages were very eager to know about many things . First of all , they payed their salutations to Sage sUtar who was a great rishi having immense knowledge and the fruit of that knowledge viz. ardent devotion unto SrIman nArAyaNa. Sage sUtar was in such a position because he did lot of kAinkaryams to his achArya and got his blessings (in form of kAlakshebams etc). Since the katAkshA of a sadAchAryA fell unto Sage sUtar , he could understand all the imports of the vedAs correctly and easily (All these things are in a way told by the sages themselves to Sage sUtar while glorifying him)

Sages told Sage sUtar that , since the kali yuga will be filled with people who have mandha buddhi (lack of spiritual knowledge) & short life, lack of aisvarya etc & will be immersed in samsAra (materialistic pleasures) , the upadesam of the sAram (essence) of scriptures needs to be done (ie. Kali yuga people have mandha buddhi => perform lot of speculations instead of understanding the tattvA properly under the guidance of a "sadAchArya " => they can't understand the essence of vedAs). They wanted to know the things which would be of ultimate benefit to all the jIvAtmAs , acts that needs to be followed by jIvAtmAs so that it will please bhagavAn , _about the incarnation of bhagavAn as son of Devaki_, leelAs performed by bhagavAn in various incarnations, glories of nAma sankeertanam, glories of parama bhAgavathOthamAs whose mere katAksha will sanctify a person .

The sages being ardent devotees of KrishNAvatAram , which got winded up quite recently , they eagerly asked Sage sUtar to especially describe that avatAram in detail in which bhagavAn as KrishNa alongwith BalarAma did various super human acts. They also wanted to know the person unto whom dharma has taken shelter off after the departure of KrishNa to Sri VaikuNTham. Also, Parikshit, to whom Sage Suka narrated SB, is none other than the grandson of Arjuna, a close associate of Lord KrishNa; Hence Parikshi was also highly interested to know about Lord KrishNa, which Sage Suka explained.

So , among all the vibhava avatArams , their __focus__ is on KrishNAvatAram , though they wanted to know about all the avatArams of bhagavAn SrIman nArAyaNa.

Sage sUtar after briefly explaining about nArAyaNA's divyAtma svaroopam , He being antaryAmi of chit & achit, etc, starts enlisting various avatArams of SrIman nArAyaNa viz. Yoga nidra form , Brahma , 4 kumArAs, Narada , Nara NArAyaNa , Kapila , DattAtreya , ya~jna (son of sage ruchi & his wife Ahuti), King rushaba, King pruthu , matsyavatAram , koormAvatAram ,

Dhanvantari, Mohini, Nrusimha, vAmana, parasurAma, VyAsa, rAma, BalarAma, KrishNa, Buddha & Kalki.

Then Suta pourAnikar continued that the number of incarnations of Sriman nArAyaNa (Hari) are innumerable like thousands of rivulets flowing from a river & goes on to say that RishIs & devAs (demigods), Manus & prajApatIs are all amsAs of Lord Hari (1.3.26-27).

Now the stage is set for the verse 1.3.28 in our discussion. Note that there were innumerable amsAvatArAs that has been enlisted in comparison with the svayam avatArAs.

If the word "ete" is interpreted to refer to the amsAvatArAs of the verse 1.3.27, then, it makes proper sense.

Even if the word "ete" be interpreted to apply to all the incarnations enlisted so far, then by "chatri nyAyam" we can understand the actual implication of the word "ete" (ie. it refers only to the amsAvatArAs listed so far).

Now, a good representative from the list of poorna avatArAs has to be chosen in order to differentiate from the amsAvatArAs. The question is to why was "KrishNa" selected here and said as "krishNastu bhagavAn svayam" and not "rAma is bhagavAn svayam" OR "nrusimha is bhagavAn svayam", etc, though krishNa, rAma, nrusimha are all the same nArAyaNa (poorna avatArAs ; svayam bhagavAn; not amsAvatArAs) ??

SUtar chose "KrishNa" because all the sages were very much eager to know a lot about KrishNA ie. the focus of their questions was with that avatAram. Also, KrishNA is well known for the shadguna paripoornam. Also, the sages being KrishNA's ardent devotees (ie. who wishes to relish the pastimes KrishNA ; pretty obvious from their questions to sUtar), should be doubly assured that their darling KrishNa is nevertheless "svayam bhagavAn" Sriman nArAyaNa and is not a amsAvatAra (namba krishnan svayam bhagavAn; manu, rishi, pruthu ...avAlalAm pOla amsAvatAram illai). So, Suta pourAnikar chose to use "Krishna" in the verse 1.3.28 instead of other svayam avatArAs like rAma and nrusimha.

aDiyEn rAmAnuja dAsan
anantapadmanAbhan.
krishNArpaNam