

Laghu - Bhāgavatāmṛta

Part-1

The Sweetness of Kṛṣṇa

Chapter-2

Description of the Puruṣāvatāras and
Guṇāvatāras

What are *Avataras*?

Among the avatāras described
is the svayaṁ-rūpa, avatārī &
the basis of all forms

What are Avataras?

Text-1

athāvatārāḥ kathyante
kṛṣṇo yeṣu ca puṣkalah

Among the avatāras described (athāvatārāḥ kathyante), Kṛṣṇa is svayaṁ-rūpa, the complete avatārī, the basis of all other forms (kṛṣṇo yeṣu ca puṣkalah).

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana

- By previously describing Kṛṣṇa as svayam, it is understood that Kṛṣṇa is the root of all the avatāras.
- Now begins a description of the avatāras.
- It may be objected that Kṛṣṇa is also glorified as one of the avatāras. This verse responds.
- Occasionally he is counted as an avatāra because of appearing in this world like the others.
- He however is puṣkala, svayam-rūpa.
- Haima says puṣkalas tu pūraṇe, śreṣṭhe: puṣkala means complete or best

What are Avataras?

If the svayam rūpa
tad-ekātma (or) ceteśa
in this world either directly
(or) through an agent → they
are called as avatāras

Text-2

tal-lakṣaṇam –
pūrvoktā viśva-kāryārtham
apūrvā iva cet svayam |
dvārāntareṇa vāviḥsyur
avatārās tadā smṛtāh

If the forms previously described (svayam-rūpa, tad-ekātma or āveśa) (pūrvoktā cet) appear in this world (āviḥ syuh) as ever-unique (apūrvā iva), either directly or through an agent (svayam vā dvārāntareṇa), for certain purposes in the material world (viśva-kāryārtham), they are known as avatāras (avatārās tadā smṛtāh).

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana

- If (cet) the forms previously described such as svayam-rūpa (pūrvoktā) appear (āvihsyuh) in this world directly (svayam) or through an agent (dvārāntarena) they are considered avatāras.
- The form that descends from the spiritual world to the material world is called an avatāra.
- Matsya and Haṁśa, who appeared directly (for) Brahmā, manifested forms without a visible source, according to Mahābhārata and other scriptures, whereas Garbhodakaśāyī-
viṣṇu appears from Kāranodakaśāyī-
viṣṇu.
- Kṛṣṇa appears from Vasudeva, and Rāma appears through Daśaratha.
- What is their purpose?

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana

- They appear to produce the universe or to perform activities within the universe (viśva-kāryārtham).
- That means they appear to produce mahat-tattva by agitating prakṛti (Mahāviṣṇu) or to satisfy the devatās by killing the sinful, to give bliss to the devotees longing to see the Lord by becoming visible to them, and to preach pure bhakti.
- Apūrvā iva means that they appear ever-unique, as if not having appeared before.
- Thus they are all remarkable.

What are Avataras?

agent can be:
a) tad-ekātma-rūpa →
Kav for Gov
b) devotee → Vasudeva

for (P)

Text-3

tac ca dvāram tad-ekātma-
rūpas tad-bhakta eva ca |
śeṣa-śāyy-ādiko yadvad
vasudevādiko 'pi ca

~~agent~~

The agent of the Lord's appearance (tac ca dvāram) may be a tad-ekātma-rūpa (the Lord) or a devotee (tad-ekātma-rūpas tad-bhakta eva ca). Mahāviṣṇu lying on Śeṣa is an example of the tad-ekātma-rūpa agent (cause of Garbhodakaśāyī-viṣṇu) (śeṣa-śāyy-ādiko yadvad) and Vasudeva (father of Kṛṣṇa) is an example of a devotee acting as agent (vasudevādiko 'pi ca).

- This verse explains the agents of the Lord's appearance. The term is explained fully.

Avatāras are 3 types
a) puruṣāvatāras
b) līlāvatāras
c) guṇāvatāras.

What are Avataras?

Text-4

puruṣākhyā guṇātmano
līlātmānaś ca te tridhā

There are three types of avatāra (te tridhā): puruṣāvatāras, guṇāvatāras and līlāvatāras (puruṣākhyā guṇātmano līlātmānaś ca).

- This verse classifies the avatāras.

Avatāras are generally
svāmīśa (or) āveśa.
↓
About svayam-rūpa being
avatāra will be described
later

What are Avataras?

Text-5

prāyah svāmśās tathāveśā
avatārā bhavanty amī |
atra yah syāt svayamrūpah
so 'gre vyaktībhaviṣyati

The avatāras are generally the svāmśa and āveśa forms (prāyah svāmśāh tathāveśā amī avatārā bhavanty). The appearance of the svayam-rūpa as avatāra (yah svayamrūpah atra vyaktībhaviṣyati) will be explained later (sah agre syāt).

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana

- Svāmśa refers to Saṅkarsana lying on Śeṣa and others. (Śeṣa here is the Lord not a jīva)
- Āveśa refers to Nārada, the Kumāras, Pṛthu and others.
- “Generally” means that sometimes the svayam-rūpa appears.
- Atra means “among the avatāras.”
- The description of the appearance of the svayam-rūpa will occur after the discussion of the Lord of Vaikuntha (in Chapter Five).