

A Case Study of the Personification of God on Earth

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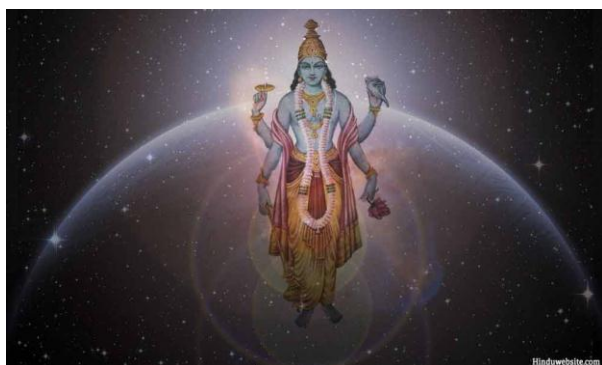
Abstract – The Personification of Christ is a central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, assumed a human nature, and became a man in the form of Jesus, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. Personification literally means embodied in flesh or taking on flesh. It refers to the conception and birth of a sentient being who is the material manifestation of an entity, god or force whose original nature is immaterial. In its religious context the word is used to mean the descent from Heaven of a god, deity, or divine being in human/animal form on Earth.

Keywords: Personification, God, Earth, Son of God

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INTRODUCTION

Since the time immemorial Hindu religion Sanatan Dharma had been grassed and inspired to worship Gods mainly Lord Bramha who is the creator of the universe , the second God Lord Bishnu who sustain and protect the Universe in various ways by incarnating on the Earth and the last Lord Siva who saves the world from destructions of the evil's hand which was described in the fundamental Primary Hindu Sastra like The Vedas, the Upanishads comprise of hindu philosophy , ethics, Itihas, The Ramayan, The Mahavarat puran and Srimad Bhagabad Gita and other religious scriptures.



Yug a yug a many many avatars sears, rishis, mahaprovus, Saints had appeared to sustain the hindu Dharma for example – Lord Krishna had been incarnated on the Earth as many as about 9 times as avatar to save the saints from all type of evils as mentioned in chapter 4 , verse 7 & 8 of the Bhagavat Gita . He appeared as

(a) Matsa Avatar and this thought was supported by Matsa Puran (1-11-35).

- (b) Kurma Avatar—Skanda Puran (95.1.44)
- (c) Varaha Avatar -
- (d) Nrusinha Avatar -
- (e) Baman Avatar
- (f) Parsuram Avatar
- (g) Maryada Purusottam Rama (Itihas)
- (h) Bhagwan Krishna (Itihas)

Lord Buddha was the celebrated avatars in Hinduism specially for Vaishnavas regarding the manifestation of Gods in Rik Veda (1.162.163 stated 'EKAM SAT VIPRABA BABUDHA VADANTI') God is one but wise Mahaprabu gives many names.

Maryada Purushottama Rama was the king of Ayodhya and incarnated avatar of Lord Bishnu in Treta Yug over more than 5000 years and lord Krishna was also incarnated on the Earth and king of Dwarka in Dwapar Yug over 3500 years (The Astronomical works confirmed).

There are many many historical evidences of Ayodhya's Rama Avatar in Treta yug like Sri Lanka the Ravana's kingdom and Asoke Ban where Sita Devi, wife of Sri Rama Chandra was confined by Ravana. Even there is a site of Rama Setu between Sri Lanka (Jaffna) and Rameswaram (Dhanuskutti) on the sea bed of Bay of Bengal (The Archaeological findings works commumaque) for cross over the sea on war against the Ravana for his cruel work of Sita-haran.

Similarly Dwarka was the Srikrishna's kingdom and his birth place Mathura, his play ground with Goppies (Many loving milk women-devotees) at Vrindavan are also existence at present.

The original Dwarka , where Lord Krishna's karmabhumi (kingdom) has given a prove of at about 30ft deep on the Arab Sagar bed in the form of destroyed palace which must have been washed away due to natural calamities (Archaeological file, Govt. of India).

Lord Buddha appeared on the Earth at about 600 B.C.(535 or 585 BC) at Kapilabastu called Lumbini in India at present it is in Nepal. Though there are two thoughts in his appearance era but whatever may be his deep philosophy on the basis of suffering (Dukha) in the world. The cause of suffering (Dukha samandhaya), the possible to avoid suffering (Dukha Nirodtha) and the path for removal of all about (Dukha Nirodha Marga) were the main doctrine.

After realising immoral temporary human life and that too suffering while living he discovered the path of ultimate freedom by nonviolence –Dharma, Karma, Moksha (Attain, liberation – Nirban) . The great emperor Asoka of India was adopted the Budha religion and thereafter Buddhism was preached from India to Tibet, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, China, Japan and Thailand.

On the thought of Personification of God on Earth in Yuge Yuge

- a) Srimalad Bhagabad Gita 4/7&8 said whenever righteousness declined to prevail the righteousness from the evil's hand lord manifest self
- b) Sri Sri Swaminarayan further explained why Paramatna (Avatar) should appear physically in the human form, being a so powerful God could do his task from his Dham (living place of God), because of Bhakta and Bhagwanki milan (God and Devotees togetherness, Satsang), to fulfil devotees' heartydevotional prayer and desire for divine bless so that physical appearance of God are more true. (Bachanamrit kariyani – 5 and godhada I-78 and III-38)
- c) From the reference of Madukya Upanishad (3/3) also stated regarding the God's rebirth on the Earth in human form for Dharma reestablishment from the unrighteousness.
- d) Sri Sukdev Goswami also stated regarding appearance of God on rebirth by referring (Sri Modhya 9-24-56).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Swamiji stated that there are three purposes for rebirth of God on Earth:

- I) God appeared on his goodness for the devotees on their divine desires
- II) God appears for Dharma re-establishment from the destruction
- III) God is only one supreme – no one is equal or superior than him.

The critical study, on this topic of incarnated avatars on earth time to time to protect the Hindu dharma (Righteousness) are taken into consideration from 1469 A.D. to till date on the basis of the following religious institutions:

- I) Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Sikh Guru Nanak Sampradaya 1469-1539 A.D.
- II) Sri Sri Chaityannya Mahaprovu Hare Krishna hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. Gaudiya Math Samprodaya 1486-1533 A.D.

This perhaps, may be the one of the unique topic of religious mile stone at Koliyug on the basis of Dharma, Bhakti, Bhabana and meditation of devotees for gradual transformation towards the supper consciousness will power.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४ ॥

Lord creates the world neither agencies not for the action, nor union with the fruits of action, but human of his own habits do acts as per nature.

The creational human have no rights of their fruits of their Karma (Gita 2/47) Now the question comes to the mind that what is the Dharma of God or Goddess !

Is it only for creation and sustained the Universe. Not the action of the creational human beings and do not have the right to claim the result of his good deed (Karma) ! Why the ill habits of the creational human beings were not corrected in time, being a so supreme powerful of God , so that the evil habits or unrighteousness would have not caused , there would have not any intolerance in the life of the people at large . Again the Mul Mantra (main theme) of the tolerance are, one can see or witness the sin or hear but be silence and no reaction. That could be the negative thinking one may think. But the respect the tolerance had come long over Indian core values of civilisation, one must follow the

established moral, ethical ideological values though there are diversity, plurality but the values have kept us together. Thus it has been necessitated to study and search on the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihās to support this paper. Beyond this to an extent the Deba Vhasha (Debanagari-Sanskrit) on religious culture are also enlightened on the second thought of this topic to establish the incarnated God on earth in human form.

AVATAR VERSUS PERSONIFICATION:

The translation of avatar as "Personification" has been questioned by Christian theologians, who state that an Personification is in flesh and imperfect, while avatar is mythical and perfect. The theological concept of Christ as an Personification, as found in Christology, presents the Christian concept of Personification. This, state Oduyoye and Vroom, is different from the Hindu concept of avatar because avatars in Hinduism are unreal and is similar to Docetism. Sheth disagrees and states that this claim is an incorrect understanding of the Hindu concept of avatar. Avatars are true embodiments of spiritual perfection, one driven by noble goals, in Hindu traditions such as Vaishnavism.

Islam: Mainstream Islam completely rejects the doctrine of the Personification of God in any form, as the concept is defined as shirk. In mainstream Islam God is one and "neither begets nor is begotten"

Judaism: Mainstream Judaism totally rejects any doctrine of an Personification of God and absolutely rejects any concept of an Personification of God in any form.[29] However, some Hasidim believe in a somewhat similar concept. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a prominent Hasidic leader, said that the Rebbe is God's essence itself put into a body of a tzadik.[30]

Serer religion: Serer religion rejects any notion of an Personification or manifestation of Roog (the supreme deity in Serer religion), called Kooxamong the Cangin. However, the rePersonification (ciid)[31] of the ancient Serer saints and ancestral spirits, called Pangool, is a well held principle in Serer religion. These Pangool (singular : Fangool) act as intermediaries between the living world and the Devine. When the Serers speak of Personification, it is these Pangool they refer to, who are themselves holy by virtue of their intercession with the Divine.

THE CONCEPT OF AVATAR AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN HINDUISM:

Thus, the idea of avatar is very much rooted in the secular and religious practices of Hinduism. In the philosophical or theological context an avatar means a manifestation of God upon earth in corporeal form, which can be that of a human being or any living being. As an Personification, God lives upon earth,

goes through the same lifecycle as other living beings to resolve some fundamental problems of existence. It is always to set things right, to resolve some problem, or destroy evil. In a way you may consider it an intervention or micromanagement when we collectively fail or when gods fail us to put our world in order.

It is not clear when the idea of Personification entered the Vedic belief system. The Vedas do mention a few Personifications of Brahma, which were later ascribed to Vishnu. In today's world, avatar is a very fundamental and popular belief of mainstream Hinduism. Originally, it was part of Vaishnavism. Followers of Vishnu believe that occasionally he incarnates upon earth in various forms as part of his obligatory duty to maintain the order and regularity of the worlds. Each time he manifests upon earth in a living form, it is known as an avatar, which can be either complete or partial.

However, the followers of Shiva do not believe that an Personification of God is necessary. According to them, God's intervention does not require a special Personification. There is no need for such an emergency measure since God is omniscient and knows in advance what is going to happen. Therefore, if necessary as part of his duties he may manifest as an aspect or emanation rather than an Personification. Hence, in Shaivism there are no Personifications for Shiva. His duties of preservation and concealment are carried out either directly or through his numerous aspects.

THE PERSONIFICATIONS OF VISHNU:

The Puranas describe ten main avatars or Personifications of Lord Vishnu, of which the last Personification is yet to manifest. The ten Personifications are briefly described below.'

Matsyavatar (The Personification as a fish): The purpose of this Personification was to save Manu (the first born) and the seven sages from a deluge that inundated the earth.'

Kurmavatar (The Personification as a tortoise): In this Personification Lord Vishnu held the mountain named Mandhara on the back of his body as a giant tortoise to enable the gods and demons to churn the ocean for Amrit or the elixir of life.

Varahavatar (The Personification as a boar): In this Personification he appeared as a giant boar to slay the demon called Hiranyakasipu and save the earth which was submerged under water due to a great flood.

Narasimhavatar (The Personification as part man and part lion): The purpose of this Personification was to slay Hiranyakasipu and rescue his son, Prahlad, who was an ardent devotee of Vishnu, from

the cruel torture to which he was subjected by his father.

Vamanavatar (Personification as a dwarf brahmin): The purpose was to assist and help Indra to retain his lordship over the heavens by eliminating his rival Bali, the famous demon king from the competition.

Parasurama: In this Personification, Vishnu appeared as a warrior sage or Brahmana to destroy the Kshatriya clans who became increasingly evil and disorderly and restore the order and regularity of the world.

Ramavatar: During this Personification, Vishnu appeared upon earth as Lord Rama, or a perfect human being, to exemplify human virtues and slay the demon king, Ravana, who became increasingly oppressive with the boons he obtained from Brahma and Shiva. He slew him with the help of his brother Laksmana, a huge army of monkeys and several great warriors including Hanuman, Sugriva and Angad.

Balarama: This Personification does not appear in some versions. In this Personification, Lord Vishnu manifested as the elder brother of Sri Krishna to kill the demon king Dhenuka and the ape Dvidida. With the help of a mighty plough, which was also his weapon, he changed the course of the River Yamuna to divert its waters to the parched lands and facilitate cultivation.

Srikrishna: This is one of the most popular and well-known Personifications of Lord Vishnu, which was made further popular by the epic Mahabharat and the Bhagavadgita. In this Personification he slew many demons including the notorious Kams. He also played an important role in the Mahabharata war by supporting the Pandavas. The war led to a great destruction. He was also a great philosopher and scholar. His teachings are now available to us in the Bhagavad-Gita, which is currently a great source of inspiration to millions of Hindus.

Kalki: This Personification is expected to take place in future at the end of the current epoch known as Kaliyuga. It is said that at that time he would manifest as Kalki (a fierce form of Death), riding upon a white horse. He would destroy all the evil people and save the world from their sinful excesses. In the end, he would usher in a new age of Truth and herald the beginning of a new cycle of creation.

PERSONIFICATIONS OF BRAHMA AND SHIVA:

As stated before, the popular tradition does not ascribe any Personifications of Brahma or Shiva. It is because of the three gods only Lord Vishnu is responsible for the preservation and continuation of the worlds and beings, which at times requires his direct intervention and necessary corrective action.

Both Brahma and Shiva credited with many manifestations, but they are not considered Personifications but only aspects or emanations. Indeed, most Hindu gods have numerous manifestations. For example, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Lakshmi, Saraswathi each has at least a thousand names and each name is a form, manifestation or relational aspect of the respective deities.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONIFICATION IN HUMAN LIFE:

We can draw many conclusions from the Personifications of Lord Vishnu. They are briefly stated below:

1. Although God is impartial, indifferent and without attachments, he is not a mere passive witness, but an active and dynamic force who keeps a firm hold upon his creation. As the lord and controller of the universe (Isvara) he promptly responds to situations which undermine the order and regularity of the world and challenge his duties.
2. An Personification of God exemplifies the importance of obligatory duties and the need for karma yoga or the yoga of selfless and desireless actions. Although God has no purpose or desire, he still engages in actions and if necessary incarnates upon earth to restore order.
3. An Personification of God also points to the need to remain on guard in the mortal world and stay free from evil. We cannot live irresponsibly or let the evil increase in our minds and bodies. We have to vigorously fight to keep ourselves pure and serve God as his devotees by doing our part in preserving the order and regularity of the world and upholding Dharma.
4. An Personification gives us the hope that we are not alone in the world, and we will not be deserted by God at any time. He is our lord and protector who keeps a watch over us. In dire situations he manifests in our lives in various guises to help and protect us from adversity, evil and chaos.
5. Just as there are Personifications of the Cosmic Being in the macrocosm, there can be Personifications of God within the microcosm of a living entity. At times, God may descend directly into our dreams or our consciousness to deliver a message, cleanse our minds and bodies, bestow his grace or grant liberation. Many devotees whose minds are absorbed in the contemplation of God and who devote their

lives to him experience his direct intervention in their lives.

6. An Personification serves as a role model for the humans. Through his life and deeds he exemplifies virtues such as purity, nonviolence, detachment, truthfulness, non-covetousness, self-control, austerity, humility and so on, and suggests how humans should live upon earth, uphold Dharma, cultivate divine qualities and regulate their lives with righteous conduct.
7. The Personifications of God also point to the significance of mortal life in the battle between the good and the evil forces and the how the earth plays an important role in the destiny of the worlds. Just as the earth, the mortal body is also considered the Field (kshetra) in which the divine and demonic entities wage a continuous war with God as the witness and Nature as his force. In this battle human beings have a huge responsibility to lead the world in the right direction and help the gods in their fight against the evil forces.

CONCLUSION:

The concept of Avatar is unique to Hinduism. It is closely linked to the idea that the source of Hinduism, which is otherwise known as Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Duty), is God himself. In other words, Hinduism was founded by none other than God himself who is known in Hinduism as Brahman or Isvara. The divine knowledge of eternal duties which are enshrined in the Vedas and other sacred texts arises from God only. Since he is the source of Hinduism, he is also responsible for its preservation and continuation, which he does either directly or indirectly through various means. An Personification is one of them. In the following discussion we will discuss the meaning and significance of the Personification of God in Hinduism. Avatar in Sanskrit means appearance, manifestation, descent, materialization, or outgrowth. An associated word is avataram, which means descent or descending into water for bathing, coming down, crossing, translation or metamorphosis. It is also a reference to a holy place, or a place where God or an aspect of him is manifested. A short prayer or invocation which is addressed to God or a deity and which causes him to descend upon earth is known as avataram. The introduction, preface of a text or a book is avataram. Figuratively speaking, avatar means a shooting star or the descent of a star (ava + tara) into the earth atmosphere.

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