**Paramaikāntis’ Svastivācanam**

(Sri U.Ve. Villur Nadadur Karunakarachariar Swamy, Chennai)

I said, “We cannot say that Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar did not interpret the verse starting with ‘arāyi kāṇe’ as referring to Tiruvġṅkaṭamudaiyān owing to the policy of not interpreting Veda mantras to signify divyadeśams. He himself has interpreted the fourth verse in the same anuvākā as referring to the holy place of Puri”.

My friend nodded in agreement.

“Can we say that he did not know the verse from Purāṇā, which is the upabṛhmaṇam and on that basis explaining the mantra as praising the glory of Tiruvġṅkaṭam? He is a sarvajñar (one who knows all). There is no doubt that he had the complete knowledge of evidences (pramāṇās)”, I continued.

My friend again nodded.

“Then why did he hide this interpretation?”.

My friend interrupted, “That was exactly my question”.

“To understand this, we need to know the background of Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar. He had accepted the philosophy of Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar. viz., Nirviśeṣādvaitam. In later days, he had accepted the responsibility of heading one of the Advaitic institutions. Due to this, he was famously known as Śrī Vidyāraṇya Śaṅkarācāryar.

According to the Nirviśeṣādvaitam philosophy, expounded by Śrī Śankarar, the only truth is the knowledge indicated by various terminologies such as saṁvit, sat, ātmā, anubhūti and brahmam. The world and the terms paramātmā (supreme soul) and jīvātmā (ordinary soul) which are in vogue are the blemishes of that knowledge, i.e., just an imagination. The salvation is nothing but the realization of this fact. However, it is not easy to realize and attain salvation. Before one realizes this, if one follows the lower step of accepting a God with lot of good attributes (saguṇabrahmam) and the concept of jīvās who worship Him (this is also an imagination) and follow the conduct as ordained by Vedas, one will attain a higher world (this is also an imagination) where he can progress towards salvation.

Caution! This salvation is also an imagination, i.e., one which is accepted for common understanding. The knowledge, which is devoid of understanding any differences including the knowledge which is used to know something, is nirviśeṣabrahmam. All the other things are blemishes on the brahmam. This realization comes over a period of time and the same is called salvation.

People say that the hero in the Tamil movie ‘daśāvatāram’, utters a dialog in the end, ‘Though in reality God doesn’t exist, accepting the presence of God gives peace of mind’. That dialog can be held us one of the manifestations of Nirviśeṣādvaitam.

Who is this saguṇa brahmam?

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭādhri says in Nārāyaṇīyam in the following ślokā:

श्रीशङ्करोऽपिभगवान् सकलेषु तावत् त्वामेव मानयति यो हि न पक्षपाती।

त्वन्निष्ठमेव स हि नामसहस्रकादि व्याख्यत् भवत्स्तुतिपरश्च गतिं गतोऽन्ते॥

śrīśaṅkaro'pibhagavān sakaleṣu tāvat

tvāmeva mānayati yo hi na pakṣapātī |

tvanniṣṭhameva sa hi nāmasahasrakādi

vyākhyat bhavatstutiparaśca gatiṁ gato'nte ||

“Oh! Guruvāyūrappā! Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar, who is without any prejudice, thought of you as the saguṇa brahmam. Hence he wrote commentary on your sahasranāmam and worshipped you to attain salvation”

Various commentators who tried to explain Vedanta towed this line and differed only on whether the philosophy is advaitā in which there is no difference between ordinary soul and supreme soul or dvaitā in which both are different.

Hence, according to them, they either understood Nārāyaṇā as Śivā and Bhramā according to advaitā or treated the three as different entities in accordance with dvaitā.

However, there was no difference of opinion among them, that, it is contradictory to Vedas to say that ‘Nārāyaṇā is a lower deity than Bhramā and Śivā’ or ‘there is a higher entity than Nārāyaṇā which is capable of granting salvation’. This point has been blessed by Śrī Naḍādūr Ammāḻ while concluding the Paśupadyadhikaraṇam of Śrī Bhāśyam as follows and the same has been documented in śrutaprakāśikā:

वेदान्त वाक्येषु द्वैताद्वैतयोर्हि वेदान्तीनां विप्रतिपत्तिः। नारायणस्य ब्रह्म शिवादीनां च द्वैतम् अद्वैतम् वा भवतु। सर्वदाऽपि नारायणास्यापरत्वं तस्मात् कस्यचित् तत्वस्य परत्वम् मोक्षप्रदत्वं च श्रुति विरुद्धमिति सर्वाविगीतम्॥

vedānta vākyeṣu dvaitādvaitayorhi vedāntīnāṁ vipratipattiḥ | nārāyaṇasya brahma śivādīnāṁ ca dvaitam advaitam vā bhavatu | sarvadā'pi nārāyaṇāsyāparatvaṁ tasmāt kasyacit tatvasya paratvam mokṣapradatvaṁ ca śruti viruddhamiti sarvāvigītam ||

The followers of Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar, who were thus Vaiṣṇavaites while doing saguṇopāsanam, started having multiple establishments over a period of time. These establishments needed the attention of various rulers. Some of these rulers were Śaivaites following Śivāgamās. For these people, Lord Śivā is the brahmam (supreme soul). Lord Śivā is the instrumental cause of this world. Nārāyaṇā, who is the subordinate entity of Śivā, is the material cause. They do not accept that brahmam is both material and instrumental cause for this world and do not accept brahmasūtrās. Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar himself has ascertained that these āgamās are contradictory to brahmasūtrās and hence, cannot be accepted. Similarly, there were rules that followed Śāktam (religion, where Goddess Śakti is the supreme deity). Very few were Vaiṣṇavaites. The preceptors, who were heading various institutions, required a lot of material assistance to sustain their institutions. Hence, they were forced to cooperate with various rulers and wealthy people.

Slowly, the following opinion got rooted within them: ’according to our philosophy, Śivā, Nārāyaṇā are all imaginations. They have been accepted in common practice. Hence, how does it matter whether Nārāyaṇā is the supreme being or Śivā is?’ Hence, they started proclaiming themselves as Śaivaites among the other Śaivaites and thus got various material assistances. They slowly started adorning vibhūti and became Śivādvaitis. They started wearing rudrākṣā. Slowly, they became Śaivaites and aligned with Śaivaites.

In the same way, few had become the followers of devī.

They tell Śrivaiṣṇavās that they are Vāsudevādvaitis and that they sign as ‘Nārāyaṇasmṛti in śrīmukhams and obtained respect from all sects of people. And, they are still doing that.

In Paramatha Bhaṅgam – praccanna bhauddha mada bhaṅgādikāram, talks about the growth in this nirviseṣādvaita saṁpradāyam in the period between Ammāḻ’s time and Svāmi Deśikan’s time

“Followers of this advaitam speak to please the people they say – brahmā-advaitam, śiva-advaitam, vāsudeva-advaitam, spoṭa advaitam, samvit-advaitam etc …”

Svāmi Deśikan says that followers of nirviseṣādvaita saṁpradāyam talk like those who entice the children saying, “If you drink this milk, your hair will grow very well”.

Thus, śaiva-s and nirviseṣādvaiti-s got together and formed a union.

śrī Sāyaṇācāryar is an ocean of knowledge. But, since there is this union of śaiva-s and nirviseṣādvaiti-s, if he confirms that arāyi kāṇe mantra points Tirumalai to Emperumān in whose heart Lakṣmī resides, then, it will be against the principle of the union and also deny that Tirumalai is a śivakṣetram. So, when he gave explanation of the mantra, he kept quiet; there was no discussion about Pūri in the union; so, he wrote his opinion about Pūri.

Even today, nirviseṣādvaita organization leaders do the following –

Writing articles in Dīpāvaḻi editions of well-known Tamizh mangazine saying that the Lord in Tirumalai is śankaranārāyaṇa mūrti and even āzhvār himself has sung about this by quoting the verse –

tāzh saḍaiyum nīḻ muḍiyum… tirumalai mġl endaikku iraṇḍuruvum onāi isaindu.

and give inappropriate meanings.

(2) Tirumalaiyappan has another name – ‘Bālāji’. Bālāmbikai got changed to Bālāji. Navarātri utsavams are being held in a grand manner. Tirumañjanam is done on Fridays; they offer saris. There are lion statues on the temple walls; so, the mūrti is Ambāḻ – these kinds of articles are being forced to be written through famous people.

(3) Mountain regions are called kuiñji lands. Tolkāppiyam points to Murugappirān as the god of kuiñji lands. So, Tirumaliyappan is Muruga, the Tamizh God – Tamizh scholars are instigated to write such essays.

Thus, in various ways, they confuse the people and maintain the union formed between śaiva-s and nirviseṣādvaiti-s.

When I said this, it looked like my friend was staring at me. So, I consoled him saying, “This is not just aḍiyġn’s research” and continued further.

In his vyākhyānam - Śrībhāṣyārtha darpaṇam – for Śrībhāṣyam, Śrīmadabhinavadeśika uttamūr svāmi says in the conclusion of Paśupadyadhikaraṇam bhāṣyam, “In the current times, followers of Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar’s saṁpradāyā have mostly become śaiva-s. This change is a part of the effects of kalikālam like the violent disturbances in varṇāśrama dharma.”

Starting with “atra ṭīkāsūktiravadānamarhati”, he quotes the one I talked about earlier, śrī śrutaprakāśikai divyasūkti and blesses – “advaitīnāṁ śaivaprāyatvam adyadve lakṣyamāṇam arvāk kālikaḥ kṣobaḥ varṇāśrama dharma viparyaya iva kalikṛtaḥ”; this makes it all clear.

“Just like the oases appearing in the desert region, there are some among us who belong to Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar’s saṁpradāyā wear ūrdhva puṇḍram and act like Vaiṣṇavās.

But, because of the union formed with śaiva-s prevented Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar to write that arāyi mantra points to Tirumalai. This is my guess.”

My friend asked, “Would even the great, learned Śrī Sāyaṇācāryar indulged in an act to preserve the śaiva union dharmam?”

“He is an elite scholar; he is to be extolled; that he acted like that is not a black mark for him. He has followed svadharmam for establishing the saṁpradāyā and siddhāntam he undertook and strived to carefully protect the same. From his outlook, what he did is right!”

My friend looked at me with disbelief in his eyes.

aḍiyġn continued, “There is no need to doubt here! ‘tasya yathā kapyāsam puṇḍarīkam evamakṣiṇī’ – for this Chāndogya upaniṣad statement, Śrī Yādhavaprakāśar interpreted the term ‘kapyāsam’ to mean eyes like the lotus which is red like monkey’s posterior part; he adamantly took ‘kapi’ to be monkey and based on that, he gave the explanation. It is the same description given in Śrī Śankara Bhagavadpādar in his commentary for Chāndogya upaniṣad.

Young Rāmānuja could not stand this disgusting interpretation and he showed that kapi can also mean the sun and the lotus stem also. So, the phrase kapyāsam puṇḍarīkam can be taken to mean lotus sitting on the stem or lotus made to blossom by the sun; thus, we can avoid the repulsive meaning ‘red like the monkey’s posterior region’.

kam = water; pibati = drinks; that is not just the reason why the sun is called kapi. Emperumānār points out that in vedic literature also, kapi denotes the sun; as a supporting proof of this, Śrī Naḍādūr Ammāḻ does vyākhyānam showing veda statement ‘kapirbabhasti tejanam’. Śrī Vedavyāsa Bhaṭṭar learned about this in a kālakṣepam and blessed about this in Śrī śrutaprakāśikā.

Śrī Naḍādūr Ammāḻ himself gives this a ślokā in śrītatvasāram,

kapistvādityaḥ kaṁ pibati kiraṇairityapi kapir

babhastītyāmnātas - sa kapiramunāstam yadi ha tat |

pradīmaḥ kapyāsam divasakara tejo vikhasitaḥ

sa padmaḥ śrīmaddvādakaṇi bhagavccakṣurupamā ||”

aḍiyġn has already informed about this shortly earlier.

(continued)