

*Dvaita Vedanta*  
**Madhva's Vaisnava Theism**

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**Dedicated to the  
Being of Sri Sathya Sai  
TAT Embodied**

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## Preface

Dualism, as understood in western philosophy, is a ‘theory which admits two independent and mutually irreducible substances’. Samkhya Dualism answers to this definition. But Madhva’s *Dvaita*, Dualism admits two mutually irreducible principles as constituting Reality as a whole, but regards only one of them, God as independent, *svatantra* and the other as dependent, *paratantra*. God, the Supreme Being is the One and Only Independent Principle, and all finite reality comprising the *prakrti*, *purusas*, *kala*, *karma*, *svabhava*, etc is dependent, *paratantra*. This concept of two orders of reality, tattvas, that is, *svatantra* and *paratantra* is the keynote of the philosophy of Madhva. This is the highest metaphysical and ontological classification in Madhva’s *Dvaita* Vedanta. Madhva insists on a difference in status between the two principles, and makes one of them finite, *paratantra* dependent completely on the other, *svatantra* for its being and becoming.

In Indian thought, *Dvaita* signifies a system of philosophy which posits more than one fundamental metaphysical principle or category to explain the cosmos, or a fundamental distinction between the human souls and the Supreme Being, for all time. *Dvaita* recognizes the states of bondage and release as real states or experiences pertaining to the atman. Madhva is categorical that our finite experiences of embodied existence and our efforts to achieve freedom from bondage have both a real value and validity of their own, and are not mere bubbles of avidya.

God, the Supreme Being is the *Svatantra*, the One and Only Independent Substance and all else is dependent, *paratantra*. This dependence is metaphysical and fundamental to the very being and becoming of the finite which can never outgrow it. The dependent reals exist from eternity, but they do so, not in their own right, but on sufferance of the Supreme. They are not despite of the Lord, but because of Him. They owe their very existence, knowledge, activity, etc to Him. The Only Independent Real exists in Its own right and in the highest sense of the term. The Supreme may well be and is, at times, referred to in the scriptures as the One without a second, without any prejudice to the reality and subordinate existence of the finite selves such as Prakrti. The finite selves are 'naught as it were'. Jayatirtha states that 'scriptures depict the Brahman in diverse ways and from different standpoints, all converging towards the one purpose, mahataptarya of expounding the transcendent and immanent majesty of God Himself in the atman and in the world'. The unity, sovereignty and independence of God are consistent with the claims of reason and demands of metaphysics.

The English term Dualism does not adequately express the full content and depth of meaning that Madhva has put into that term *Dvaita*. Even the Sanskrit term *Dvaita* does not literally express more than the number of fundamental principles accepted. B.N.K.Sharma suggests *Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahmavada* may be an appropriate designation for Madhva's system to convey directly the highest reach of its thought and its metaphysical ideology. The only internal distinctions that are logically conceivable in the Brahman are those of attributes. The adjunct *svatantra* serves to emphasize the transcendence of the Supreme over the other reals, and Its immanence in them. It also lays

emphasis on the primacy of the Supreme as the *para-siddhanta* of Madhva's thought, and the teachings about the finite as constituting the *apara-siddhanta*, subsidiary truths. This distinguishes from the *Nirvisesadvaita* of Samkara and the *Visistadvaita* of Ramanuja.

According to Madhva, God is the creator, preserver, etc of the entire world of matter and souls. World-experience is real. Souls are many and are dependent forever on the Supreme. They are delivered from bondage by His grace. Salvation is a state of active enjoyment of supreme felicity. Madhva quotes extensively the related Vedic hymns that support these points of view.

Visnu is Madhva's equivalent of the 'God of religion', the Brahman of the Vedanta and the One Supreme Real, *Ekam Sat* of the Veda. He correlates the various descriptions of Vedic gods in cosmic terms as the *sarvanamavan*, the Being who is diversely sung by different names. He equates the *Sarvanamavan* with Visnu, in the etymological sense of the term as the Being which is unlimited by time, space and auspicious attributes, *vyapta*. He establishes, on the basis of Vedic hymns, that monotheism of Visnu is the true faith of Vedic saints

Madhavacharya (Vidyaranya) designates the philosophy of Madhva as *Purnaprajnadarsana* in his *Sarvadarsanasamgraha*.

## 1. *Dvaita* System of Vedanta

The *Dvaita* system is designated tattva-vada as opposed to maya-vada. It argues for the reality of the world. For it, the external world, the world of objects and situations that the human mind experiences is real and objective. This tendency in philosophical thought is characterized with realism. It champions the realistic standpoint in philosophy. Madhva holds that realism taking the waking world as real is just commonsense. It is a natural bent of the human mind and is intrinsically valid in the notion of *svatah-pramanya*. It has an empirical basis, too. Our perceptual consciousness and all the superstructure of thought built on that basis present the world as real. Bosanquet and G.E.Moore arrive at the same conclusion of realism of the world.

Pluralism is its dominant constituent. The *Dvaita* system (Dualism) derives its name from its antagonism to the *Advaita* system (Non-dualism). It stands for recognition of the distinction between the finite self and the Supreme Being. The extension of this principle is the assertion of similar distinction between the finite self and the nature on one hand, and that between nature and the Supreme Being on the other. Similarly, the selves are to be distinguished among themselves, and objects constitutive of nature are to be considered a plurality. This five-fold difference, panca-bheda is a fundamental verity. It is held to be the meaning of the term *pra-panca* signifying the universe as a whole. Madhva's pluralism relates to inalienable uniqueness as a basic characteristic of all that exists in the realms of nature and beyond.

Epistemologically, pluralism rests on empiricism. In perceptual cognition, difference gets apprehended. All difference is of some entity or substance that differs from others. This entity must be apprehended prior to the apprehension of its difference from all that it differs from.

The positive fundament has to furnish the ground for subsequent differentiation from the connected correlatives. But the initial apprehension alone is perceptual, and the subsequent acts of thought are just retrospective constructions or imaginations. Madhva holds that the initial perception apprehension is of the unique essence of the object concerned, not undifferentiated but differentiated in a synoptic way from all else. The so-called later differentiation is just confirmation of this primary differentiation, in relation to specific correlatives needing such classification. As a million lights may be noticed as a single light from a distance, the entire realm of correlatives is noted as a totality in the primary cognition. The fundament is a unique factor containing within itself all the potentiality for subsequent discrimination.

In philosophical motivation, theism is the central doctrine of *Dvaita*. Madhva argues that if the external world is the framework of illusion, and the distinction between the Supreme Spirit and the finite selves is unreal, the affirmation of God stands jeopardized. He would then be the bearer of illusions, as He is the ultimate percipient without a second, and His identity with the finite self would forfeit all claims to infinitude of perfections. For him, the realism and pluralism are supplements to the unqualified assertion of God. His splendour is the ultimate metaphysical concern, and it requires the reality of the cosmos and the fact of God transcending the finite self. Madhva builds up his theism through a systematic refutation of anti-theistic schools of Indian philosophy. For him, the anti-theistic philosophical thinking can produce no satisfactory account of reality.

The theism of *Dvaita* is based on scriptural revelation. Madhva declares that the God he adores is to be known only through sound scriptural authority, *sadaagama*. For him, the sound scriptures are

‘the Vedas beginning with the Rigveda, the Mahabharata, the whole of Pancaratra Agama, the original Ramayana, the Puranas in accord with these, and all other sacred works in conformity to them’. Of these, only the Vedas are considered impersonal and eternal. The rest are personal compositions of divine personalities in augmentation of their teachings. Madhva holds that the above scriptures are venerable authorities in their entirety. The Ramayana mentioned in the list is original Ramayana by Valmiki. Jayatirtha includes even Manu-dharma-sastra among the later conforming texts. This body of revelation-literature is considered in the *Dvaita* system as furnishing sound theism which is the ultimate philosophy.

*Dvaita* system considers that the Vedic revelation is about Vaisnavism, identifying the supreme Reality propounded in the Veda as Visnu, Vaasudeva or Narayana. It is true that the Veda sakhas contain adoration of many deities but, for him, they leave us in no doubt as to which deity is the God of gods, the supreme divine Reality according to them. Madhva quotes a significant passage from the Rigveda, among others, wherein it is stated that the other gods derive their limited prowess from the worship of Visnu. It is interesting to note that Sayana explains the passage in almost the same spirit. Among the Upanisads, the fourth chapter of the Taittiriya abounds in the glorification of Narayana as the supreme God in the section called Narayana-anuvaka. Madhva also quotes from Harivamsa that enunciates the pervasive Vaisnavism of the Vedic literature.

The Vedic literature speaks nowhere of the non-existence of Visnu before creation, as it does in reference to other gods. Nowhere are any deficiencies ascribed to Him as is done with regard to other gods. The names of all gods are applied to Visnu Himself indicative of

His omnipresence in and through all gods. Madhva argues that a detailed scrutiny of the Vedic literature reveals the supremacy of Visnu among the Vedic gods, and not to accept it would be against evidence.

There is a textual compulsiveness about the conclusion. The terms Visnu, Vaasudeva and Narayana are not mere sectarian labels of Godhead, but carry profound philosophical connotations as the term Brahman. Karma-mimamsa, Daiva-mimamsa and Brahma-mimamsa, the three branches of Mimamsa, deal respectively with the conduct and rituals advocated, the gods adored and the philosophical enquiry into the Brahman. Of these, Daiva-mimamsa concludes with the proposition that Visnu is the supreme God and it is of Him that the Brahmasutras conduct investigation under the designation of the Brahman. This Mimamsa is referred to both by Sankara and Ramanuja. Sankara in his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita (15th chapter) identifies the Nirguna-Brahman with Narayana.

Thus the *Dvaita* system is realism and pluralism supplementing a grand theism, founded on Vedic revelation, elucidated through Vaisnavism in character.

## 2. Cognition

### Introduction

Truth-seeking is the basic impetus behind the cognitive process. Knowledge is something that a knower seeks to gain a true apprehension of reality, something that takes place between a subject that knows, and an object that is known. This subject-object implication of knowledge is fundamental. No knowing is possible without a self that knows, and there can be no knowing which is not a knowing of something. They are two aspects of the same spiritual entity, distinguishable but not really two in reality. Knowing, and its object have a unique relation, *visaya-visayebhava*, a fundamental fact of the situation. This is what is called *svatah-pramanya*.

In *Dvaita* system, perception is not apprehension of being as such with differentiation to be superimposed later, but of unique entities whose uniqueness is explicated in the course of later experience. There is no relation of 'before' and 'after', between cognizing an entity and cognizing its uniqueness. There is only a single cognizing in the situation.

*Dvaita* claims that there are only three modes of knowing - *pratyaksa*, sense perception; *anumana*, inference; and *sabda*, word testimony. It asserts that they are mutually irreducible, having distinct spheres of operation. The extra sources of knowledge posited by some other schools can legitimately be subsumed under these three in so far as they are veridical. Madhva asserts that the summit of wisdom lies in a synthesis of these three ways of knowing.

## ***Pratyaksa*, Sense Perception**

*Pratyaksa* is perceptual cognition. Its characteristic is that it is immediate and direct. The instrumentality of the sensory mechanism secures this immediacy. This is direct realism. This source of knowledge is the base to the entire structure of knowledge with no vitiating subjectivity.

Madhva states that perception can be corrected only by an enlarged and enhanced perception. No reasoning or scripture can cancel the deliverance of perception for it subsists on it. Perception is the *upajivya-pramana* for reasoning or scripture.

*Dvaita* considers the indeterminate perception, nirvikalpa-pratyaksa advocated by *Advaita* and other schools to be a psychological fiction. All perception is determinate, and discovers the real, characterized by determinate attributes. There is no perceptual revelation of substances and qualities in mutual disconnection.

The sensory mechanism that makes perception is of three layers. The outermost layer consists of the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling by touch. They furnish information about particular data of experience in their severalty. The layer beneath it is mind, manas. This coordinates the functioning of the outer senses and their data. It prepares the messages for acting upon, on the part of the agent. Besides, it has its own special function. It is the inner sense that brings about memory or recollection. It is a specific recollection of a past event as past, and there is no contradiction between the time of recollecting and the time recollected. It is a genuine

recollection, a mode of objectively valid experience. *Dvaita* similarly admits the objectivity of memory. This is only a recovery of the kevala-pramana of the past, but not an additional category of knowing.

The innermost layer of the perceptual apparatus is the knowing self in its capacity as knower. In its absence, no knowledge can arise through the senses and the mind. The mind presents the messages of the senses to the self's cognizance. The self in this aspect of the knower or witness is called the *saksin*. This concept is an innovation in *Dvaita* epistemology. It implies that the self in its intrinsic nature is a knower. This knower-ship in relation to the manifold, including the fleeting objects, is a metaphysical fact.

The term *saksin* has meaning in relation to the objective realm witnessed and, as such, carries dualistic implications. This dualism is a fact for *Dvaita*. As such, the *saksin* is a fundamental verity. It is an unmediated perceiver. Its experiencing is absolutely objective and true. The *saksin* has three fields of perception. It cognizes the external world through the senses as passed through the manas. It perceives the data presented by the manas by way of recollection. It has its own sphere of objects.

*Dvaita* enumerates the objects that the *saksin* perceives on its own. The self, by virtue of its character as *saksin*, cognizes itself immediately. Self-consciousness is the fundamental differentia of the self, and this is exercised through the *saksin*. While in action, the subject cannot be the same as the object. In the matter of awareness, jnapti, there is no contradiction involved in self-knowing. It is this knowing that lies at the basis of all

other knowing, and renders the self a 'self'. Some kind of self-consciousness is an inevitable character of the *atman*. This is generally signified by terms such as *svayam-prakasa*, *svatah-siddha* and *pratyak*. This self-knowing is unique.

The *saksin* cognizes whatever happens to the self by way of pain and pleasure, or their absence. According to *Dvaita*, the self is a *bhokta* experiencing this duality in its intrinsic nature. Even the Samkhya School considers the fact of *bhoktrva* as one of the proofs of the reality of the self. In other words, the self is conscious of its own *avidya*, made known by the *saksin*. *Avidya* is a phenomenal category. Its nature is that it exists only by way of presentation to a consciousness. The conditioned self is already within the hold of *avidya*. Therefore, *Dvaita* makes a frank admission of the finite self's awareness of its own deficiency.

As regards the physical world, *Dvaita* holds that the self, by virtue of its nature as *saksin*, perceives space and time as integrals. They are not forms of intuition, but are objects of primary intuition. When location in space and time is taken as the standard for physical reality, when space and time are fundamental facts in the experience of the self, realism with regard to the physical world is wrought into the basic structure of consciousness. The *saksin* thus makes the self a personal reality, as self-affirmation is the essence of personality. Similarly, it makes the world of space and time an indubitable reality as they form the basic datum of the self's primeval experience.

## ***Anumana*, Inference**

*Anumana* or *anu-pramana* is inference. Madhva relies for his logical theory on the ancient work *Brahmatarka*, now extinct. This work has bequeathed to him and his school the main elements of the science of Logic. *Dvaita* adopts, to a large extent, the logical theory of *Nyayasastra* as corrected by *Brahmatarka*.

## ***Sabda*, Word Testimony**

*Sabda* is verbal testimony. On the strength of *svatah-pramanya* principle and allied concepts, *Dvaita* considers that *sabda* is an indispensable source of knowledge. It also considers that this cannot be a sub-division of other modes of knowledge such as *anumana*.

The problems connected with the *pramana* of *sabda* relate to the general nature of linguistic communication, and comprehension of such communication. There are also some special problems in connection with the interpretation of sacred testimony such as the embodiment of ultimate wisdom in the Vedanta scriptures.

On the issue of what constitutes a word, *Dvaita* counters mysticism, *sabda-brahma-vada*, in line with the Nyaya and Mimamsa sastras. As for the meaning of a term, it may be conventional or etymologically derived, *rudhi* or *yoga*. *Dvaita* elaborates these two types of signification into several levels and their combinations. What the term signifies may be described as universal or particular or a combination of the two with emphasis on the universal or particular. *Dvaita* arrives at a conclusion, after detailed consideration, that the word meaning is a specific something characterized by universal contents. It may be that the term may have an abstract and generalized sense by itself. But when it participates in a significant complex of a statement, it acquires specificity of reference. *Dvaita* negates nihilistic approach to language.

As for the comprehension of a sentence, *Dvaita* subscribes to the view that the primary grasp of the meaning of the constituent words of the sentence itself involves the grasp of their interrelation, and there is only a single act of apprehension.

As for discovery of the final purport of a discourse or a passage with a single unit of thought, there seems to have been an established canon of clues and grounds accepted by all schools of Vedic exegesis, called *tatparya-lingas*. Madhva relies on the same canon. The opening and conclusion, frequent reiteration, uniqueness of an idea, the idea to which the promise of a reward is attached, commendatory legends and myths, etc and the actual grounds employed are among the grounds enumerated in the said canon. All these are well illustrated in the instruction of Uddalaka to Svetaketu in the Chandogya Upanisad. They furnish the rational basis for one's understanding of a text and constitute the logic of textual interpretation.

*Advaita* contends that the ultimate Reality taught in the Upanisads is the Brahman which has no distinctions of quality, and is in essence our essential self. The Upanisads also affirm that the ultimate reality is beyond words. Verbal testimony can only explain what is qualitative. Therefore, for *Advaita*, the method by which verbal testimony can indicate it is by indirect and secondary signification. Madhva does not admit that the Brahman is devoid of qualities. On the other hand, the Brahman abounds in qualities of the nature of perfections. For him, the Brahman is substantially identical with the self in man. When the Veda says that the Brahman is beyond words, it is only to convey Its uniqueness, immensity and stunning greatness. Even the mention in the Upanisads that the Brahman is beyond words

is a method of conveying Its unique majesty. When the verbal testimony in scripture is stretched to its full extent of natural meaning, it cannot signify anything but the Brahman. According to him, Visnu is, in reality, the ultimate denotation of all terms.

Madhva devotes a whole adhikarana in his Sutra-bhashya for establishing the accessibility of Visnu to words. He is very clear that Visnu's splendour exceeds our utmost powers of glorification. Even words normally significatory of what is imperfect and even evil, when properly elucidated, are transmuted into naming the supreme Godhead. As for secondary signification, nothing that is really beyond all words can ever be conveyed through secondary reference.

### 3. Metaphysical Categories

#### General

*Dvaita* makes two enunciations of the table of metaphysical categories in its epistemology of ontology, the theory of Reality. One is a table, rather a tree, of the categories presented by Madhva himself in his Tattva-samkhyana and Tattva-viveka. The other is the table adopted in the later stages of the tradition, enumerating ten categories, namely, substance, *dravya*; quality, *guna*; action, *karma*; universal, *samaanya*; speciality, *visesa*; similarity, *sadrsya*; power, *sakti*; the whole composed of parts, *amsa*; the qualified or distinguished, *visista*; and non-existence, *abhava*. The two lists cover the entire ground of *Dvaita* metaphysics. While the table adopted in the later stages of the tradition is modeled on the Nyaya-Vaisesika enumeration of categories, the table of Madhva brings out the characteristic metaphysical position of the School. The categories of the two tables can be fruitfully dealt with under the three main categories of Nature, Individual Soul and God.

## Nature

As regards Nature or the system of physical existence, two fundamental propositions fix its metaphysical status. The physical world is real and is not to be regarded as an illusion, or a projection of the subject. All illusions presuppose a substratum, another real entity to which it is similar. On the basis of this similarity, something totally non-existent is super-imposed on the substratum. If the world is to be unreal, there must be a real world and, on its analogy, the false world is to be imagined to exist in the place of the substratum. In other words, for the world to be illusory, there must be a real world as presupposition. A total world-illusion is an impossibility.

An illusory presentation is a derived phenomenon. Its capacity to delude depends on its claim to be a transcript of the real. Dream deludes, because of its posing as a waking experience. If there is no waking experience at all, there can be no dream experience as psychological fact, and it can have no deceptive power either. Madhva is of the firm view that neither matter nor spirit can be reduced to the other as declared in Anuvyakhya

According to *Dvaita* School, the first fundamental proposition is that the physical world is an irreducible ontological verity. The second is that it is not all that exists. In the first place, it does not generate the conscious spirits and does not hold the key to their philosophical explanation. Its own existence, functions and intelligibility depend upon the Supreme Spirit. It is sustained as what it is, through the power of the Brahman, in its static and dynamic aspects, and even its conceivability. This

dependence in respect of *satta-pravrtti-pramiti* is also an ultimate fact. This two-fold determination of the ontological status of the material world furnishes the background to the entire philosophy of Nature in the *Dvaita* system.

Time and space, together, constitute all that is physical. In fact, its location in them constitutes the mark of its reality. Space and time are realities testified in the experience of the *saksin*. The reality of all that occupies space, and occurs in time is linked to the reality of space and time. This derives from the *saksin's* primary experience.

*Dvaita* denies the unqualified Buddhist doctrine of mutability, *ksanika-vada*. *Dvaita* asserts that there is a measure of immutability of fundamental substance in Nature which admits of no absolute origination or destruction. In the process of change occurring in Nature, causation is what matters. *Dvaita's* theory of causation is *sadasatkarya-vada*. It rejects the extreme views of *pratityasamutpada-vada* and *vivarta-vada*. It attempts a combination of *arambha-vada* and *satkarya-vada*. It justifies the aspect of continuity of causal process, and the novelty of effects.

From the standpoint of *Dvaita*, the philosophy of Nature and the investigation of empirical sciences are distinct. Science discovers the 'how' and 'what' of a physical object, and philosophy discerns the divine principle at its foundation. Matter consists of the objects of external Nature and the allied factors that go to constitute man's living organism including life principle, sense organs, antahkarana, etc. According to *Dvaita*, the Brahman, Isvara is the ultimate source of the evolution of *Prakrti*,

Nature into the state of explicit activity. Isvara brings the world into being, actuates it in its operations and renders it understandable. He is the *hetu* of its *satta*, *pravrtti* and *pramiti*. Madhva considers that Isvara is only the *nimitta-karana* and not the *upadana-karana*. Madhva insists that the substratum, even in its causal state, is dependent on Isvara as wholly as the effect does. Its *satta*, *pravrtti* and *pramiti* are drawn from that single source of all being, power and intelligibility. There is no dualism of two independent causal principles.

The idea of the all-embracing dependence of the physical world on the Supreme Being, Visnu is the final message of Madhva's philosophy of Nature. Visnu comprehends the whole of external Nature as a field of existence permeated and sustained by His immanent presence in all its states, primordial as well as consequent. Though Nature is a reality, Isvara is all in all in it. In fact, Nature is reality through His *anugraha* to that effect.

## Individual Soul (*Jiva*)

In *Dvaita*, the philosophy of Nature leads to the consideration of the philosophy of *jivatman*, the finite self. The *jivatman* is an entity not derived or produced from Nature. *Dvaita* holds that the *jivatman*, self is an enduring and non-composite entity. It may undergo partial modifications in its career through the force of external factors. But its core remains abiding and unbroken. It is eternal and indissoluble. Secondly, it is no autonomous reality in total mastery of its being and destiny. It is *paratantra* owing to its *satta-pravrtti-pramiti*, existence, powers of action and cognizability, to the Supreme Spirit. It passes from state to state, in the cosmic cycle of creation, subsistence, dissolution, in the life sequence of birth, survival and death, and in the sequence of consciousness by way of sleep, dream and waking, owing to the operation of the *Paramatman* to that effect. When the origin of an individual *jiva* is spoken of, it is this change into a new state through the action of God that is signified. As such, it falls into the realm of effects issuing from that universal source. This dependence on God is as ultimate a fact as its un-derivability from, and irreducibility to, matter.

The distinguishing character of a self is its self-awareness which constitutes *aham*, ego. This ego is a metaphysical category, not connected with egoism or egotism characteristic of moral degeneration. In the cognitive situation, the notion of self-awareness is free from contradiction, and fundamental. The individual self is a self-aware ego or personality.

*Dvaita* characterizes the *jiva* as atomic and incapable of further division, and as an ultimate unit of existence. This is not to say that it is a particle. It is non-composite, a centre of consciousness, not possessing the material property of extension. It is not *vibhu*, all-pervasive, either, for the reason that it is finite. Only the Supreme Self is non-composite as well as infinite. The term *anu* combines in itself the double connotation of non-compositeness and finitude. Though the self is an atomic subject, its power of consciousness spreads beyond the centre, and its circumference can be the entire cosmos. This enables the *jiva* to know the extensive realm of existence, comprising God, other individual selves and Nature.

For *Dvaita*, the very essence of a *jiva* lies in its self-conscious relation, by way of consciousness, to the world of objects, be the material or spiritual. The *jivatman*, in its real nature, is a *jnata*, knower; *karta*, agent of actions; and *bhokta*, the experiencer of pleasures and pains. These aspects are combined in the self without breaking up its unity.

The next question is whether there is a plurality of selves or a single self. *Dvaita* considers that the diversity of experience belongs to the selves themselves and, as such, they are to be regarded as many in reality. Madhva argues that the plurality of the finite selves must be admitted as a metaphysical fact.

Another question is whether the finite self is one, in substance, with the Absolute Self, or it is a different entity altogether. *Dvaita* holds that the essence of the *jiva* is no pure consciousness devoid of its individualizing self-experience in terms of finitude in matters such as knowledge and joy. The *jivatman*

is fundamentally other than the *Paramatman*. The continuance of this difference between the *jivatman* and *Paramatman* is both in the states of *samsara* and *moksa*.

In addition to the insurmountable differences of selves among themselves and their difference from the Brahman, they form a natural hierarchy based on gradations of worth, inherent in their basic nature. The gradation persists in the state of *moksa*, release, too. *Dvaita* holds that, at the bottom of the hierarchy, there are two classes of souls that are evil beyond remedy, one condemned by nature to perpetual transmigration and the other predestined by nature for eternal damnation. This doctrine of souls inherently incapable of emancipation is not special to *Dvaita* alone. It is so asserted in certain sects of Christianity, Jainism, etc. *Dvaita* considers this view as *taratamya-vada*.

The crowning point in the philosophy of the finite self is that the self is differentiated from the Supreme Being, though one with It. The reconciling proposition is that the self is a part, *amsa* of God. The concept of *amsa* is applied to the *jiva* in several *sruti* texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Brahma-Sutras. Madhva accepts the concept of *amsa*, part. The *jiva* is different from the Supreme, but is entirely dependent on It and bears towards It various relationships of dependence. The *jiva* shares with the Supreme the attributes such as knowledge and joy, though in its own infinitesimal measure as conferred by It. This is what is called *vibhinnaamsa* which provides for absolute numerical difference between the *jiva* and the Brahman, but provides utter dependence and partial likeness of nature for the *jiva* to the Brahman. The *jiva* is thus an *amsa* of the Brahman. The appropriate metaphor to bring out this three-fold significance is

that of an image of reflection, *pratibimba*. For, an image is different from the original, is totally dependent on it, and bears resemblance to it. For Madhva, the term *pratibimba* is no unreality. The *jiva* is an eternal and absolutely real image of Visnu, and the only condition that brings about its character as an image is its own essential nature. He, therefore, calls it *svarupopadhika-pratibimba* or *nirupadhika-pratibimba*. The *pratibimba* truly carries an intimation of the original *bimba*. *Dvaita* infers that to reflect on the nature of *jiva* is to be irresistibly drawn to Isvara, who surpasses it immeasurably, who sustains it and imparts to it partial affinity of nature.

The finite self's dependence on God is the bottom-line of *Dvaita* Vedanta. The finite self's being, *satta*; activity, *pravrtti*; and intelligibility, *pramiti* flow from Him. The Brahmasutra Bashya of Madhva states that God's cosmic activity is eight-fold, namely creation, maintenance, dissolution, regulation, obscuration of knowledge, illumination, bondage and emancipation. Of these, the first four functions are to be interpreted in relation to the individual self suitably, for they do not apply to it in the manner they do to insentient matter. The second four functions apply only to the self. God casts the souls in the ignorance of samsara, and brings them illumination when they deserve it. He is the causal power behind their bondage by virtue of their blemishes of deed and thought. He liberates them graciously in response to their efforts in that direction. In the later four functions, God's righteous might as well as mercy is operative. All that is good and up-lifting and all that carries the joy of self-fulfillment flow from His grace alone. His grace is the paramount source of all blessedness. The Brahmasutra Bhashya

states that Visnu is the giver of knowledge to those who are ignorant; He is the giver of liberation to the enlightened; and He, the same Janardana, imparts *ananda* to the liberated. Both knowledge, which is the means of liberation, and the end which is liberation, are His gracious gifts. Even in liberation, it is His grace that fills the *jiva* with the abundance of joyous life. The finite self lives, moves and has its being in God only owing to His divine grace.

## God

*Dvaita* metaphysics considers the Supreme Reality, the Brahman, Visnu is self-distinguishing absolute self. As such, He is eminently personal. The Bhagavad-Gita describes Him as *Purusottama*.

Popular consciousness does not pose the distinction between God and the individual self for the reason that God is not a matter of empirical certainty. His existence is, therefore, to be proved on the basis of scripture. In almost all his works, Madhva presents what he regards the pervasive and supreme theme of the Vedic scripture. He calls it *mahatatparya*, meaning the essence of the theme or subject matter. It is an explication of the Upanisadic term *maha-jneyam*. For Madhva, the *mahatatparya* is Visnu. Visnu is the encompassing concern of the entire body of Vedic revelation. In Harivamsa, it is glorified that Hari is the beginning, the centre and the conclusion; Hari is the Being glorified in the Veda, Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Purana. Madhva's work Visnu Tattva Nirnaya adds another point. It is not merely that Visnu is spoken of everywhere. His all-surpassing eminence or majesty, *sarvotkarsa* is spoken of everywhere. The *mahatatparya* of the revelation is, therefore, the supremacy of Visnu. The essence of sacred texts in their totality is the *mahatmya* of Visnu. For Madhva, this thesis is presented in the Gita itself in the twin declarations '*Vedaih sarvah aham eva vedyah*' and '*Uttamah purusatvanyah paramatmetyudahrtah*'. The single theme of Vedanta, affirmed in different ways, is this transcendent supremacy of Visnu, the Brahman.

The Brahman, and His infinite eminence, is the supreme import of the Vedic revelation. He is not knowable through the other sources of knowledge. Sense-perception is confined to material entities and cannot reach to the height of revealing Him. Inference only clarifies and coordinates what is presented by the other sources of knowledge. It cannot reveal anything by itself. Reason is useful only when it is instrumental to other pramanas, but not on its own. This is because of the demonstrable limitations of reason. Hence revelation, constituting the Vedantic scriptures, can be the soul guide for knowing the highest metaphysical truth.

The Upanisads declare the Brahman as *Advaitam paramarthatah*. Madhva interprets it to mean that it is unsurpassed and not even equaled by any other entity. It is absolutely supreme, totally incomparable. He states that the Supreme Being is described as infinite, *ananta* precisely on account of Its immensity of glorious and real *gunas*, excellences - *Mahadgunatvat yamanta mahuhu, Bhagavan anantahananta gunarnavah*. The Brahman has *gunas*, but unlike the *gunas* of *Prakrti*, and the imperfections of the *jiva* engendered by the same *gunas*.

The Taittiriya Upanisad defines the Brahman thus: 'The Brahman is real, knowledge and infinite'. This definition has several parallels in other Upanisads. Here the substantive, the subject being defined, is the Brahman. To it three predicates 'real, knowledge and infinite' are applied by the defining proposition. How are we to understand the proposition? It is the same, identical subject that is being defined. Its unity is a paramount consideration. If the proposition is taken as discerning in it or ascribing to it three attributes conveyed by the three

predicates, its unity is broken. The definition then splits up the integral unity of its subject. It reads into it internal qualitative distinctions. The purpose of the definition is verily defeated.

To overcome the difficulty, the *Advaita* philosophy considers that the predicates must be understood negatively. 'Real' means 'other than the unreal'; 'knowledge' means 'other than insentience'; 'infinite' means 'other than the finite'. It is this negative demarcation that the definition accomplishes. Nothing is read into the subject, but only three possible misconceptions about it are eliminated. On the other hand, the *Dvaita* philosophy considers the whole dialectical exercise of *Advaita* as misconceived. The fear of breaking up the integral unity of the subject, by the fact of attributing to it one or more features, proceeds from the failure to grasp the principle of *Visesa*. The exclusions proposed of what are opposed to the 'real, knowledge and infinite' cannot serve to define the Brahman, unless they belong to It qualitatively. *Dvaita*, therefore, argues that there is no escape from admitting the qualitative characterization of the subject in the proposition.

The Vedantic scriptures contain a good deal of the Brahman-jiva dualistic teachings conceiving of the Brahman and the *jiva* as fundamentally different. They are clear texts of *Dvaita* import. Madhva makes great contribution in his classic work *Visnu Tattva Nirnaya* with masterly discussion of the duality of the Brahman and the *jiva*. The work *Visnu Tattva Nirnaya* splits the problem into two sections; it takes up the estimate of the dualistic texts first and then attends to the monistic texts supposed to cancel them.

Jayatirtha in his work *Sudha* gives an idea of these several ways of affirmation. Each way enumerated brings out the style and direction of countless illustrative Vedantic texts. They together comprehend all the principal modes of revelation. A few of them commented upon by Jayatirtha are recorded hereunder.

'*Sarvajnatva-sarvesvaratva-sarvantaryamitva-soundarya-audarya-guna-visistataya*'. These predicates proclaim that the Brahman is possessed of excellences such as omniscience, over-lordship, overall-existence, all embracing immanence, beauty and bountifulness. The Brahman is infinite intelligence, infinite in sovereign power, infinitely present everywhere and through all eternity and in all things ruling them within, and infinite beauty and infinite compassion. The bulk of *saguna-sruti* is comprised herein.

'*Apahatapapmatva-nirdukkhatva-prakrta-bhautika-vigraharahitavadi-dosabhava visistataya*'. These predicates deny the Brahman of sin, affliction, materiality and such other imperfections. The texts portraying the Brahman as *nirguna* are stated in this description. The limitations and blemishes characteristic of the finite self and matter are negated of the Brahman. This freedom from the infirmities of the *jiva* and the *jagat* is itself an excellence of the Brahman. This is Its negative excellence. All these predicates jointly establish the transcendent perfection of the Supreme.

'*Atigahanata-jnanapanaya-vagmanasagocaratva-karena*'. These predicates denote the unfathomable mystery and profundity of the Brahman. The Brahman cannot be reached by the mind and word. This is explanatory of the mystic's confession

of the ineffability of his experience. This is what is ‘expounded through speechlessness’. It is no mere speechlessness, but speechlessness that proclaims the deepest mystery of the infinite presence exercising boundless fascination.

‘*Sarvaparityagena-tasyaiva-upadanaya-advitiatvena*’. These predicates do not mean the ontological non-dualism of the Brahman, but only denote that the Brahman is the axiological absolute, the sole object of human endeavour and aspiration, with the renunciation of every other interest. The Mandukya passage *Advaitam paramarthatah* brings out, without any ambiguity, the perspective of value, the ideal to be pursued. The attainment of the Brahman is not an objective among others. All else is to be discarded, and the quest for the Brahman must be the only passion. What is preached in these texts is the singularity of the final goal of man’s life.

‘*Sarvasatta-pratiti-pravrtili-nimitta-pratipatyartham-sarvatmatvena*’. These five predicates constitute *pancabheda* in *Dvaita* literature as repeatedly referred to by Jayatirtha. These predicates subsume the entire heritage of Vedantic revelation. According to Jayatirtha, the five-fold exposition of the Brahman is the *pancaprakara-pratipadana* of the *Paramatman*. These five types are not parallel modes but converge in presenting a single thesis. That thesis is: ‘*Sarvavyapi Vedanta-vakyani, asankhyeya-kalyana-gunakaram, sakala-dosa-gandhavidhuram, eka rupam eva brahma narayanakhyam pratipadayanti*’ meaning that the Brahman is of one nature only and is the same as Narayana. Narayana is the ocean of infinite perfections and has no trace of any evil or imperfection. According to Jayatirtha, this is the fundamental and all-comprehensive teaching of the

Vedantic revelation, and the five modes described converge to proclaim the single truth of the Brahman as Narayana.

*Dvaita* considers the determination of relations between the substantive being of God and His attributes. It states that there are four wrong views on this issue. The first is that the Brahman has no attributes. The second is that It has attributes, but the attributes are entirely different from the *svarupa*, substantive essence. The third is that the relation between the Brahman and the attributes is one of identity-cum-difference. The fourth is that there are two types of attributes, inner and outer, the first set identical with the *svarupa*, and the other set external to it and different from it. *Dvaita* refutes all these four views. Its position is that there are attributes, that they are identical with the substantive nature, *svarupa*, and still admits of conceptual and verbal distinction by virtue of the principle of *visesa*. *Visesa* is, therefore, that category which explains the possibility of distinction between a substance and its attributes in discourse, without importing into the integral unity of the entity the difference between the substance and attributes, and also that among the attributes themselves. This principle of *visesa* does not cover the relation between the Brahman and *jiva* for, according to *Dvaita*, the Brahman with Its perfections and the *jiva* with its undeniable limitations are inherently opposed in nature.

This principle of *visesa* is explanatory of not merely the Brahman and Its attributes, but also all cases of substances with inalienable attributes. It is a universal and pervasive metaphysical principle. This is used to explain the relation of the primordial Brahman to Its incarnations and diverse forms, and also the relation between It and Its external form, *akara* glorified in Vaisnavism.

The attributes of the Brahman are truly infinite. Even the highest among the *jivas* can only apprehend them, and cannot comprehend them. It is this inexhaustibility of attributes that is meant in the Upanisads when they say that the Brahman is beyond thought and words.

Some kind of classification of attributes is possible. Infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinity itself in relation to time and space are metaphysical attributes. Creation itself constitutes the compassionate and gracious attributes. These attributes are real and ultimate. In this aspect ‘love’ comes in. Madhva refers to the relation of love he enjoys with his God in each of his works. This is not a humanization of the Almighty, but the discernment of love in the most divine of human beings, although in an infinitesimal manner. Madhva adores the love aspect of God. He is a great devotee of Bhagavatha, a saga of transcendent love. In his Gita Bhashya, Madhva says that God sets aside His self-dependence and majesty, as it were, and subordinates Himself to His devotee. This only reflects Madhva’s passionate attachment to his God of love and grace.

Madhva considers that God is infinite beauty, too. His form is blissful beyond expression. It is no material adjunct. It is wholly spiritual. In It is concentrated absolute beauty. His work Dvadasastotra extols this aspect.

While Madhva considers that the above attributes of the Brahman are real, but spiritual, he emphasizes that an exhaustive cognition is impossible for the finite intellect. But, for purposes of meditation, it is necessary to capture the most defining attributes. He, therefore, lists four aspects of the Brahman—*sat*, absolute reality; *cit*, absolute consciousness; *ananda*, absolute

bliss; and *atmattva*, absolute self of all, as the essential minimum for practising meditation on the Supreme Being. Beyond this minimum, the *jivas* can go to the extent their natural capacity and the level of spiritual advancement permit. The range their vision can command constitutes their status in the hierarchy of finite spirits.

This *gunotkarsa*, qualitative magnificence of God is what makes Him transcend matter, the finite spirits in both their states of bondage and liberation, and even Laksmi designated *Aksara*. He is not merely transcendent, but immanent in the cosmos of matter and finite selves, through His cosmic activity.

Madhva states that this activity of God, the Brahman is because of His being the Bhuman. The concept of the Bhuman presents an absolute Being that is creatively dynamic and active from abundance of attainment. The perfect Spirit is boundlessly dynamic and creative, while the finite selves, who are to overcome their imperfections, are limited in proportion to their antecedent imperfections.

For Madhva, the cosmic activity of God is eightfold. First is *srsti*, creation of the world. Creation does not mean bringing anything into being out of absolute non-being. What exists previously is brought into a new configuration. In the case of the world, it is bringing it into explicitness in terms of manifold names and forms. Madhva insists that creation is not of the nature of self-transformation of the Brahman. The material cause which it transforms into the effect is not an autonomous substance existing in its own right in its causal state. It is all His being in all creation.

The second aspect is the maintenance of the world so created. The world is God's, after creation, too. He sustains it in actuality. His hold on it is co-terminus with its continuance.

The third aspect is the withdrawal of the world into its condition of non-manifestation and, mere potentiality, waiting for His causal touch to spring into manifestation.

The fourth aspect is regulation, inward control. The term *antaryamin* of the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad signifies this aspect.

The fifth aspect relates to the living and conscious jivas in creation. It consists in covering them with *avidya*, a positive force, not mere absence of knowledge. This has two aspects. *Avidya* conceals the *jiva's* own nature from its understanding, and conceals the nature of the Supreme Being. This infliction of ignorance is not an arbitrary act of God, but is the result of the *jiva's* antecedent deformities of deed and thought. It is in the nature of a just carrying out of the consequences of the *jiva's* own *karma*. The sixth aspect is the gift of enlightenment that does not accrue independent of divine grace. Grace is to be worked for through spiritual aspiration and effort. Enlightenment is in two levels. One may be mediate and intellectual understanding of the nature of the *jiva* and the Lord through the devout study of scriptures. The other is the higher level of enlightenment by way of the intuitive vision of Reality. Both these are gifts of grace in answer to the aspirant's sustained effort.

The seventh aspect is bondage meaning the soul's imprisonment in matter, and the suppression of its own essential blissful nature, and the non-attainment of God by way of

experience. This is the consequence of the antecedent spiritual failure of the *jiva*. The wrath of God always descends by way of invitation, as it were. There is an unfailing adjustment of grace to its invocation by the individual through his life.

The eighth and the last aspect is the gift of liberation, and the *jiva* is to be worthy of it. Liberation is a gift, and must be deserved through appropriate devotion founded on exact knowledge of the glory of the Supreme. The consummation crowns the life of the most ardent devotee, *parama-bhakta* by the final grace, *parama-prasada*. Liberation frees the devotee from his captivity in matter, releases his suppressed potentialities of the nature of knowing and rejoicing, and renders the blissful reality of God a perpetual presence to his wakeful consciousness.

Madhva realizes the impossibility of doing full justice to the majesty of God. He, therefore, sums up four cardinal points as the unerring and conclusive judgment of God, *samyag-vinirnaya*. They are that Visnu abounds in all excellences; He is free from all blemishes; everything depends upon Him, while He is absolutely self-dependent; and He is different from all else, otherwise His freedom from blemishes cannot be true.

## 4. *Purusartha*, Human Goal

### *Purusartha*, Human Goal

*Purusartha* is the supreme value or ideal to be pursued and realized by the finite self. *Dvaita* conceives of *moksa*, liberation as the ultimate perfection of life, the final goal to be attained. It advocates the renunciation of lower ends such as *kama*, *artha* and even *dharma*. *Moksa* signifies emancipation from all the afflictions of life.

*Dvaita* upholds the continuance of conscious individuality as necessary for the attainment of supreme self-consummation that *moksa* is. According to it, *moksa* must be the fulfillment of conscious individuality in the attainment of the positive experience of eternal joy. All the schools of Vedanta contend that joy, infinite and eternal, is to be found only in the Brahman. To make possible this positive aspect of *moksa*, the finite self must integrate with the Brahman, the sole repository of bliss. In a way this integration is there as an eternal metaphysical fact, but the finite self must attune itself in its consciousness and life to the Brahman. What is required is integration in consciousness.

For *Dvaita*, the integration cannot mean the merger of the individual self into the universal self, shedding its specific personality. It can only mean its absorption in the experience of the Brahman with full recognition of its utter dependence on that Soul of souls. It is union without self-extinction, by way of experience, conformity in will and a life of blissful sub-ordination. Ultimate surrender to the Supreme is the highest exultation and

the pinnacle of joy. It is an enfoldment of the inherent nature of the individual in the commanding presence of God, and that constitutes the *ananda* of the *summum bonum*.

The main aspects of *moksa*, the state of its attainment is *mukti*, are, therefore, a total and final cessation of afflictions; an emancipation from the blending and binding imprisonment in matter brought about by *karma*; an enfoldment of what constitutes the essence of the individual self, a self-finding rather than self-annihilation; an enfoldment in and through the joyful presence and vision of God; and a rapturous exercise of the rightful role of dependence and subservience to Him. These aspects are common to all theistic and *bhakti* schools of Vedanta including *Dvaita*.

Madhva recognizes the four kinds of *mukti*, namely, *salokya*, *sarupya*, *samipya* and *sayujya*. Madhva uses this classification of attaining *mukti* as one of the many arguments in favor of his thesis of gradation of intrinsic bliss, *anandataratamya* among souls in *moksa*.

As *Dvaita* conforms to the doctrine of inherent hierarchy of souls corresponding to different grades of natural capacity, it contends that their fulfillment of the means of *moksa* is bound to be of varied levels. As such, the end attained by them in *moksa* by way of comprehension and joy is bound to be of corresponding grades and levels. There is a natural continuity and consistency between intrinsic competence and spiritual endeavour on the one hand, and between that endeavour and attainment on the other. There is no violation at any stage of the system of hierarchy. The evils of inequality in the earthly life are not to be found in the Kingdom of God. There pure spirits rejoice in the guidance

and benediction from their spiritual superiors, and bestow their guidance on their inferiors. There is a divine harmony in and through this very inequality. This is the doctrine of *ananda-taratamya*. Madhva holds that this doctrine has its basis in the scriptures. According to him, the connected doctrine of the natural hierarchy of souls and the existence of souls predestined for perpetual *samsara* at the final damnation of spiritual darkness has also its basis in scriptures.

## ***Sadhana, Means of Attainment***

*Dvaita* outlines the means, *sadhana* for realization of the supreme end, *moksa*. *Sadhana* is a progressive endeavour and it mobilizes all the resources of personality. Madhva assimilates into his scheme of *sadhana* the entire heritage of the Upanisadic thought, the *bhakti* literature such as the *puranas*, the *agamas*, and the *epics* including the Bhagavad-Gita.

The ultimate factor that brings about man's liberation, attainment of *moksa*, is the grace, *prasada* of Narayana. 'Without Narayana's *prasada*, *moksa* is not possible' says Madhva. There are several levels of grace that confers this boon. 'The grace that responds to *karma* is the lowest, that, which is in answer to disciplines such as *sravana*, is of the middle level, and that which rewards the precious possession of knowledge is the highest'. This *prasada* is an ever-existent reality. All that is required of human effort is to actuate it towards the granting of *moksa*. It is ultimately God Himself through His grace, which is indistinguishable from His essence, because of the principle of *visesa* that effectuates the *summum-bonum* of man, moved towards that end, by the spiritual endeavour of the aspirant.

The works of grace of Narayana are manifold. The Visnu Tattva Nirnaya lays down that 'Visnu grants knowledge to the ignorant, grants liberation to the man of knowledge, and grants *ananda* to the liberated individual.' Grace is a continuously operative factor in spiritual life, and does not cease to be required even when the goal is accomplished.

What brings grace to operational manifestation is *bhakti* of the aspirant. *Dvaita* tradition defines *bhakti* thus: *Mahatmya-jnana pursvastu sudrdhah sarvatodhikah; Sneho bhaktriti proktahtaya muktih nacanyatha*. The two constituents of *bhakti* are knowledge of the greatness of God and love towards Him. This love must be steadfast and surpass in its intensity all other love including self-love. It is that height of *bhakti* that could invoke the necessary grace of Narayana for the purpose of *moksa*. There are different levels of *bhakti*, four levels stated in the Gita. Only the highest *bhakti* is what brings about the *prasada* for *moksa*.

Madhva is one of the greatest philosophers of *bhakti*. For him, *bhakti* is omnipresent, as it were, in spiritual life. His work *Anuvyakhyana* records thus: '*Bhakti* generates knowledge; knowledge, in its turn, generates *bhakti*, which, in its turn, generates the direct perception of God. This perception generates *bhakti*, which brings about *mukti*, liberation.' It is the first means, and the constituent of the last end itself. Jayatirtha says that *parama-bhakti* is the level of *bhakti* that brings about the final liberating grace of God.

*Bhakti* is to spring from knowledge, not mere emotion. Madhva characterizes it as a particular form of knowledge *gnanasya visesa*. Its character and qualitative level depend upon the knowledge on which it is founded. The highest *bhakti* can spring from only the highest level of knowledge. Therefore, this *bhakti* must ensue from the immediate, direct and perceptual or intuitive apprehension of God. Madhva calls it *aparoksa-jnana*. This cannot be mere meditative imagination. Madhva insists that this *bhakti* must exceed the imaginative immediacy as stated

in *Brahmasutra Bhashya*. Only the love engendered by the direct communion with the object of love can have the appropriate height and intensity. Hence, *aparoksa-jnana* is a necessity.

The means prescribed to achieve perceptual experience of God is *upasana* or *nididhyasana*. This is meditative contemplation of God with love and longing for the vision. It paves the way for the direct experience of God through the invariable means of grace. The meditation should not be mixed with fear or animosity. It must be of the nature of ardent seeking. The intellectual understanding of God derived from revelation and philosophical investigation can be converted into direct experience only through loving meditation. *Aparoksa-jnana* is the final phase in the process of knowing God. To effect the transition from mediacy to immediacy, *upasana* is the essential means. Trivikrama Pandit explains it thus: 'The accumulated *karma*, which prevents the emergence of the vision of *Ananta*, cannot be eliminated except through uninterrupted contemplation.'

There are different levels of *upasana*, too. The unenlightened fix their thoughts on God in the sacred images. The ritualists worship Him in the sacred fire. The *yogins* meditate upon Him as dwelling in their own hearts. Some regard Him as residing in external nature. But the wise ones meditate upon Him as immanent in all. The right type of meditation is to dwell on God as *sat-cit-ananda-atma*, this being the basic defining characterization of Godhead.

Meditation is a determined process. For it to be possible, the aspirant must be free from doubts and uncertainties. He must be convinced, and be in absolute certainty of what he

meditates upon. For this, philosophical investigation carried to the point of conclusive establishment of the truth about God is necessary. In its absence, doubts confront the meditating devotee. Skeptical devotion carries the aspirant nowhere. Certainty of conviction is a prerequisite to steady and determined meditation. Hence, *brahma-jijnasa*, as embodied in the Brahma Sutras, is necessary for founding meditation upon. This is the *manana* stated in the Upanisads.

But *jijnasa*, philosophical enquiry is to be on the data of a *pramana*, and revelation is the only *pramana*. Therefore, as a presupposition of *jijnasa* or *manana*, *sravana*, the study of right scriptures is necessary. Madhva and Jayatirtha insist that the student must be steadfast, devout and earnest about comprehension. The scriptures reveal their inner import only to such an approach. On *sravana*, *manana* and *nidi-dhyasana*, Madhva says thus: ‘One must study the scriptures as long as there is ignorance, must reason as long as there is prima-facie unreasonableness in the contents of the scriptures, and must meditate until direct realization takes place.’

The concepts of *aparoksa-jnana* and *parama-bhakti* bring out the fundamental elements of *sadhana*, the two proximate means to the action of supreme *prasada*. These concepts duly harmonize the doctrine of the *bhakti* tradition as the saving factor, and the holding of *jnana* as the pathway to salvation, while the supreme factor of grace is assigned its ultimate role. The ethical aspect of *sadhana*, generally called *karma*, plays a subordinate role.

*Karma-yoga* of the Gita is an indispensable part of the scheme of *sadhana*. It has to be *yoga*, disinterested and performed in the spirit of worship. It has two-fold efficacy. One is that it produces the appropriate purity of spirit necessary for the emergence of *jnana*. The second is that, if performed after the emergence of *jnana*, it adds to the *ananda* that flows from *jnana*. Tradition does not advocate total renunciation of action, as action itself, and not merely the motive behind it, is the binding force.

Madhva interprets renunciation of action as *sattvic* renunciation, meaning simply the renunciation of the self-centred motivation in action. According to him, the legitimate *karma* is that done in the worship of Hari, *tatkarma haritosam yat*. Acts in adoration of God shall not be abandoned. Even in such acts, the external aspect of act is subordinate and has instrumental value in relation to the resulting vision which is the final element in *sadhana*. This establishes that knowledge only is the means to liberation. All this is in the high tradition of Vedanta assimilating into itself the essential *karma-yoga* of the Gita.

Besides the ethics of action, there is an ethics of self-culture relating to the development of spiritual temper or disposition. This is the inner ethics of personality. Jayatirtha, in his commentary on Visnu Tattva Nirnaya, lists four attitudes as making up this ethics. The first is discernment, *viveka* of what is abiding and transitory among the values open to man’s pursuit. The second is detachment towards the perishable trivialities of life, the outcome of discernment. This is *vairagya*. The third is the passionate desire for the highest value of life, *moksa*. This is also called *mumukshutva*. It is both self-negation in so far as the

self seeks the finite goods of earthly life, and self-affirmation in so far as the self seeks life eternal and life abundant. The fourth is cultivation of certain qualities five of which are listed in the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad – *sama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titiksa* and *samadhana*. Madhva interprets them as steadfastness in devotion to the Lord, subjugation of pride, dwelling with satisfaction on the Lord within one's own heart, equanimity in pleasure and pain, and contemplativeness respectively. The interpretation of *sama* and *uparati* is *bhakti* oriented, and is named *samadisampat*. These four attitudes, *viveka*, *vairagya*, *mumuksutva* and *samadisampat* constitute *sadhana-catustaya*, the basic dispositional preparation for the higher life of *sadhana*.

The elements and stages that constitute the pathway of *sadhana* in the ascending order are, therefore, the four-fold equipment, *sadhana-catustaya*; *karma-yoga*, the pathway of action; *sravana*, the study of revelation; *manana*, the philosophical investigation into the revelation producing conviction; *nidhidyasana* or *upasana*, devout meditation; *aparoksa-jnana*, direct apprehension of the Supreme; *parama-bhakti*, supreme love; and *parama-prasada*, the supreme grace. *Bhakti* and *prasada* are operative throughout in various levels. *Jnana* is a matter of several levels interspersed between *prasada* and *bhakti*. The final word in the progression is *prasada*. For Madhva, it is Narayana's *prasada* which is the ultimate redemptive power. His ecstasy of adoration is directed to that height. All philosophical explorations and all scriptures point to the necessity for perpetual devotion to the Highest. To allow any interruption to such devotion only leads to ruination.

## 5. Evolution of *Dvaita* Thought

Dualism, as understood in western philosophy, is a 'theory which admits two independent and mutually irreducible substances'. Samkhya Dualism answers to this definition. But Madhva's *Dvaita*, Dualism admits two mutually irreducible principles as constituting Reality as a whole, but regards only one of them, God as independent, *svatantra* and the other as dependent, *paratantra*. God, the Supreme Being is the One and Only Independent Principle, and all finite reality comprising the *prakrti*, *purusas*, *kala*, *karma*, *svabhava*, etc is dependent, *paratantra*. This concept of two orders of reality, *tattvas*, that is, *svatantra* and *paratantra* is the keynote of the philosophy of Madhva. This is the highest metaphysical and ontological classification in Madhva's *Dvaita* Vedanta. Madhva insists on a difference in status between the two principles, and makes one of them finite, *paratantra* dependent completely on the other, *svatantra* for its being and becoming.

In Indian thought, *Dvaita* signifies a system of philosophy which posits more than one fundamental metaphysical principle or category to explain the cosmos, or a fundamental distinction between the human souls and the Supreme Being, for all time. *Dvaita* recognizes the states of bondage and release as real states or experiences pertaining to the *atman*. Madhva is categorical that our finite experiences of embodied existence and our efforts to achieve freedom from bondage have both a real value and validity of their own, and are not mere bubbles of *avidya*.

God, the Supreme Being is the *Svatantra*, the One and Only Independent Substance and all else is dependent, *paratantra*. This dependence is metaphysical and fundamental to the very being and becoming of the finite which can never outgrow it. The dependent reals exist from eternity, but they do so, not in their own right, but on sufferance of the Supreme. They are not despite of the Lord, but because of Him. They owe their very existence, knowledge, activity, etc to Him. The Only Independent Real exists in Its own right and in the highest sense of the term. The Supreme may well be and is, at times, referred to in the scriptures as the One without a second, without any prejudice to the reality and subordinate existence of the finite selves such as *prakrti*. The finite selves are 'naught as it were'. Jayatirtha states that 'scriptures depict the Brahman in diverse ways and from different standpoints, all converging towards the one purpose, *mahatatparya* of expounding the transcendent and immanent majesty of God Himself in the *atman* and in the world'. The unity, sovereignty and independence of God are consistent with the claims of reason and demands of metaphysics.

The English term 'Dualism' does not adequately express the full content and depth of meaning that Madhva has put into that term *Dvaita*. Even the Sanskrit term *Dvaita* does not literally express more than the number of fundamental principles accepted. B.N.K.Sharma suggests 'Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahmavada' may be an appropriate designation for Madhva's system to convey directly the highest reach of its thought and its metaphysical ideology. The only internal distinctions that are logically conceivable in the Brahman are those of attributes. The adjunct *svatantra* serves to emphasize the transcendence of the Supreme over the other reals, and Its immanence in them. It also lays

emphasis on the primacy of the Supreme as the *para-siddhanta* of Madhva's thought, and the teachings about the finite as constituting the *apara-siddhanta*, subsidiary truths. This distinguishes from the *Nirvisesadvaita* of Samkara and the *Visistadvaita* of Ramanuja.

According to Madhva, God is the creator, preserver, etc of the entire world of matter and souls. World-experience is real. Souls are many and are dependent forever on the Supreme. They are delivered from bondage by His grace. Salvation is a state of active enjoyment of supreme felicity. Madhva quotes extensively the related Vedic hymns that support these points of view.

Visnu is Madhva's equivalent of the God of religion, the Brahman of the Vedanta and the One Supreme Real, *Ekam Sat* of the Veda. He correlates the various descriptions of Vedic gods in cosmic terms as the *sarvanamavan*, the Being who is diversely sung by different names. He equates the *Sarvanamavan* with Visnu, in the etymological sense of the term as the Being which is unlimited by time, space and auspicious attributes, *vyapta*. He establishes, on the basis of Vedic hymns, that monotheism of Visnu is the true faith of Vedic saints

The doctrine of *sarvanamavan* does not do away with the other gods. They are not banished. They are simply brought into a position of subordinate relation to the One Supreme, as created by the One, as 'sharers in one life or as obedient subjects or as ministers of One Lord'. Belief in the *sarvanamavada* is consistent with admission of the existence of 'minor' gods, by agreeing to a dual application of names, *vrtti-dvaya* in their

primary and secondary senses. However, there is no systematic hierarchy of the gods worked out in the Vedic hymns. Madhva, therefore, seeks *devatataratamya* in the Ekayana and Pancaratra texts. In the Pancaratrika view, there is no distinction of substance and attributes in God or among His various manifestations. Madhva explains this view as *svagatabhedabhava*, absence of internal distinctions or *savisesabheda*, colourful identity of attributes.

The metaphysics of Pancaratra is essentially theistic. Samkara himself accepts its tenets in the main, except those relating to the creation of the *jivas*. He states that the Pancaratrikas consider Vasudeva to be the Supreme Being with all auspicious attributes. The Paramasamhita establishes that the metaphysics of the Pancaratra is realistic, recognizing an eternal matter, *prakrti* and equally coexistent souls. The individual soul transmigrates on account of beginningless *karma* associated with *vasanas*, at the will of God. For removal of these *vasanas*, a certain power emanates from the Brahman and, impelled by His will, it so works within the inner microcosm of man that the *jiva* is ultimately freed from bondage, and his personality and innate bliss are revealed in full.

What the Pancaratra texts convey, says Madhva, is that in the state of *samsara*, the *jivas* suffer from estrangement and discord with the Brahman the Supreme, and attain complete harmony with the Lord in *moksa*. On the practical side, the Pancaratra establishes the cult of *naiskarmya*. As Pancaratra lays emphasis on rituals and worship, its *naiskarmya* is radically different from the cult of 'no-action'. That such action and worship are not confined to any particular state, but may be

continued even after *siddhi* or *moksa*, is the keynote of the Pancaratra. The cult of *naiskarmya* is not from turning away from action, but from the forbidden fruit. The emphasis is on change from *karmatyaga* to *phalatyaga*, *nivrtti-marga*. Madhva states, on the authority of the Brahmavaivarta Purana, that the Bhagavad-Gita is, in fact, a summary of the teachings of the Pancaratra.

The Gita defines *naiskarmya*, not as abstention from *karma*, but disinterested performance. All desires are not bad. The desire for righteousness is divine. The Gita repudiates the view that the world is untrue. It does not assert anywhere that the Brahman is the only reality, and all else that appears is false and unreal. The word *maya* is used in three passages in the Gita. But its meaning differs from the interpretation of the word by Samkara. *Maya* is described in the Gita as being of the nature of *gunas*. The Gita does not subscribe to the view that the world may be regarded as the manifestation of *maya* in the sense of illusion. 'The eternality and plurality of *purusas* is assumed in it'. The teaching of the Gita about the triple *purusas* – *ksara*, *aksara* and *purusottama* – makes the distinction 'within the world of experience', and in the scriptures. This is considered to be the 'most precious secret, *guhyaatamam sastram*'. Even Samkara concedes that it is the very essence 'not only of the Gita, but also of the entire Veda'.

Dasgupta says, 'I am myself inclined to believe that the dualistic interpretations were probably more faithful to the Sutras than those of Samkara'. S. Radhakrishnan says, 'there is strong support for the view that Badarayana looks upon the difference between the Brahman and the souls as ultimate, something that

persists even when the soul is released'. Samkara and his commentators have expressly admitted that the language and the thought of the *sutras* are, for the most part, dualistic. There are not more than a couple of *sutras* which can be said to be unquestionably monistic in tenor. Even these *sutras* do not admit of the kind of identity interpreted by Samkara of the Brahman, and the *jiva*. The commentary of Bhaskara on the *sutras* looks upon the world of matter and souls as a direct transformation of the Brahman and, therefore, quite as real as the Brahman Itself, but perishable.

S.Radhakrishnan argues that the *nirguna* and the *saguna*, the *nirvisesa* and the *savisesa* aspects of the Brahman, are valid forms of the same Reality. Isvara is the creative dynamic aspect of the Brahman. He is not the Brahman falsely regarded, due to ignorance, as the cause and controller of the universe. *Maya* is the real creative energy of Isvara. Creation is a losing forth of what is already contained in the nature of the Brahman. The individual is a ray of spiritual light and so obviously real. It is not separate from the Brahman. It is not also an unreal reflection of the Brahman in *maya*. Not only is the individual self real, but it keeps its distinctive individuality in release. This kind of philosophical interpretation is not consistent with the *Nirvisesadvaita* and the *mithyatva* of Samkara, but reinforces the *Dvaita* thought.

## 6. Madhva Hagiology

Madhva states in one of his works that his system traces its origin in the ancient monotheism of the Bhagavatas. For all practical purposes, Madhva himself is the first historical founder and exponent of the system of philosophy associated with his name. Manimanjari and the Mutt Lists name some predecessors such as Srihamsa (Narayana), Brahma, etc with Acyutaprajna alias Purusottamatirtha preceding Anandatirtha alias Madhvacarya. The last in the line is Purusottamatirtha also called Acyutapreksha who was the *sannyasa-guru* of Madhva. The theistic philosophy preached by Madhva has a long and continuous history behind it and goes back to the original and basic literature of *Sanatana-dharma*, the Vedasastra. But there is no evidence of previous literary activity of individual writers connecting the works of Madhva with these original sources of his system, unlike Samkara and Ramanuja. Incidentally, Madhva bypasses his predecessors including Acyutaprajna and claims to have received his inspiration directly from Badarayana-Vyasa. Throughout his works, he acknowledges no teachers other than Vyasa. The history of *Dvaita* literature proper, thus, begins with Madhva.

1238 - 1318 A.D. appears to be the most acceptable spell of life of Madhva. The Madhva Vijaya of Narayana Panditacarya is the earliest biography of Madhva. He was born of Tulu Brahmin parents in the village Pajaka near Udipi in the present Karnataka state. His original name is Vasudeva. The call of the spirit took him to Acyutaprajna who initiated him as a monk under the name of Purnaprajna. Soon, he became well versed in Vedantic classics. He was then made the head of the Mutt of

Acyutapreksha under the name of Anandatirtha. Later he assumed the name Madhva, by which he is more widely known, being synonymous with his claim to be an *avatar* of Vayu. He travelled widely in India and acquired several disciples in the process. After the death of his parents, his brother and several other Taulava disciples were ordained monks who became the founders of what later came to be known as the Asta-Mutts of Udipi.

His message to the world had been delivered, and he had the satisfaction of seeing it well received. He was honoured in his own native region and beyond. His works had been placed on an enduring basis. He had gathered round him a band of ardent disciples who carried the light of his teachings all over the country. Charging his disciples with his last message in the closing words of the Aitareya Upanisad 'not to sit still but to go forth, and preach and spread the truth among the deserving', Madhva disappeared from view on Bahula Navami of Magha in Pingala 1318 A.D.

Madhva had set up the Krsna Mutt in Udipi and, towards the close of his life, had ordained eight monks for the conduct of worship of Krsna at his Krsna Mutt. These monks established lines of their own in due course, and these lines of ascetics became the precursors of the Ashta Mutts of later times. The Swamis of the Ashta Mutts hold office as High Priests of the Krsna Mutt by turns, for two years each. At the Krsna Mutt in Udipi and the Ashta Mutts, thus, a unique and well organized system of religious worship has been established. The Ashta Mutts are stated to be Palimar Mutt, Adamar Mutt, Krsnapur Mutt, Puttige Mutt, Sirur Mutt, Sode Mutt, Kanur Mutt and Pejavar Mutt, named after their original location, but later moved to Udipi itself.

While the Vedanta systems of philosophy of Samkara and Ramunaja are known as *Advaita* and *Visistadvaita* with no association of their names, the *Dvaita* system of philosophy, *Siddhanta* has been associated with the name of Madhva. His followers are known to this day as Madhvas, essentially following Madhva's theism. The ascetics associated with Madhva Mutts are titled Tirthas.

Madhavacharya (Vidyaranya) designates the philosophy of Madhva as *Purnaprajnadarsana* in his Sarvadarsanasamgraha.

## 7. Works of Madhva-Sarvamula

### An Outline

The works of Madhva are thirty seven, collectively called Sarvamula. They constitute the very basis of the *Dvaita* Vedanta also called as Madhva *Siddhanta* (System of Philosophy), Madhvaism. They may be classified as Commentaries on Prasthanatraya; Dasa-Prakaranas (ten short monographs); Commentaries on Bhagavatapurana and Mahabharata, and Adhyatmic interpretation of the first three Adhyayas of Rigveda; and Stotras, and Works on Worship and Rituals.

The commentaries on Prasthanatraya consist of two commentaries on the Gita, four works on the Sutras, and Bhashyas on ten Upanisads. The Dasa-Prakaranas elucidate the basic principles of his system, its logic, ontology, theory of knowledge, etc. They also render dialectic refutations of certain fundamental theories of Monism. One of them, Karma Nirnaya is a constructive exposition of Madhva's theory of Vedic exegesis in its higher aspects touching the *adhyatmic* interpretation of the *Karma-kanda* with reference to the Aitareya Brahmana. The Visnu Tattva Nirnaya and Tattvoddyota are brilliant expositions of his *Siddhanta*, and powerful critiques of *Advaita*.

In the third category are placed his short commentary on Bhagavata Purana, his metrical epitome of Mahabharata from a new theosophical angle and his original monotheistic and adhyatmic interpretation of the first three Adhyayas of Rigveda.

In the fourth category are placed Stotras, and Works on Worship and Rituals.

Madhva's works are characterized by brevity of expression and directness, devoid of all literary flourish and bombast. He explains his texts only where such explanations are absolutely necessary, and to avoid a possible misconstruction. He expands the ideas of the original texts with apt and ample quotations from a variety of sources of the sacred literature, extant and other. He does not comment on texts whose *anvaya*, purport and philosophical significance are obvious.

Madhva skips some links in argument occasionally in the swift march of his thought. There is, however, a touch of deliberate archaism and eccentricity in his grammar and diction. These eccentricities are not ignorant lapses, but deliberate departures from the norm, which could be legitimized with reference to special *vyakarana-sutras* and sanctions. But they are a few and far between. All of them have been suitably vindicated by his main commentator Jayatirtha on the authority and sanctions of Panini, the Mahabhashya and other sources. But for the illuminating commentaries of Jayatirtha on Madhva's works, in the 14th century A.D., it would have been difficult for the philosophy of Madhva to have risen to that position of importance as a vital limb of the Vedanta, which it did, in the succeeding centuries.

Every point of view and detail of doctrine in Madhva's works is supported and amplified by him in the light of quotations drawn from a large body of ancillary literature of both Vedic and post-Vedic periods. Many of these sources are now inaccessible.

There is difficulty of tracing many of the quotations in the available sources, too. This raises a problem as to the genuineness of these passages, and the degree and extent of their reliability, and the acceptability of the new line of interpretation of the Vedanta, based on them.

In fairness to Madhva, it is to be stated that while the foundations of his theistic system and its general and main outlines are well supported by the available literature of the Vedic and post-Vedic periods, its logical and philosophical superstructure is built upon independent philosophical cogitation and analysis of concepts. They bear examination independently of textual authority. The appeal to texts occurs only in respect of purely theological issues and interpretations of disputed texts, but this does not affect the metaphysical bases of his thought, or his ontology and theory of knowledge. Though most of the works quoted by Madhva in the course of his interpretation are now not extant, the possibility of their still representing an old and distinctive line of theistic interpretation on the philosophy of the Prasthanatraya cannot be over-looked. There is nothing in the extant works that is overtly hostile to his line of interpretation.

There is no linguistic or philosophical ground to discredit these non-traceable quotations as fabrications of an individual commentator, however clever he might have been. The quotations disclose a natural orderliness of thought, internal variation of style, peculiarities of idiom, syntax and vocabulary in common with the genre of works to which they pertain, and many other indications of genuineness. The large number of works so named in the variety of topics with which they deal, the natural ease and flow of the quotations, the varying lengths of passages cited,

some in isolation as single verses, the unfaltering precision of references to particular context from which the passages are taken, and allusions even to the names of certain interlocutors in some contexts, and the general agreement of language and idiom of the citations, etc are sufficient reasons to establish the bona-fides of the quotations. They, therefore, carry due weight and recognition in estimating the value and importance of Madhva's line of interpretation, and the systematization of theistic thought propounded by him.

It is significant that the genuineness of these sources does not appear to have ever been called in question by any of his critics in his own days. When alive, he had to encounter serious opposition to his views from the leading *vedantins* of the day. But there is no trace of opposition to, or distrust of, the sources on which he propounded his views, and version of Vedanta, in any of the writings of the older *vedantins*, of the period of Madhva or his immediate disciples including Jayatirtha. The Sarvadarsanasamgraha of Madhva gives an honourable place to the philosophy of Madhva in the history of Indian thought. It would not have done so, had its textual bona-fides been open to doubt in those days. Nor do the works of Jayatirtha and Vyasa-tirtha disclose the least sign of such an opinion having been entertained in any quarter. This is significant as Jayatirtha is alive to the criticisms on the Bhashya and other works of Madhva, including objections taken to the ungrammatical *prayogas* there, and addresses himself to the task of meeting them. He would not have ignored if there had been any comment in that period as to the spuriousness of these quotations.

It is known that the erstwhile champions of *Advaita* like Padmanabhatirtha and Trivikrama Panditacarya argued with Madhva and afterwards accepted his system. They would not have been convinced by a heap of fabricated texts, if that was all Madhva had to show in his support. Nor would they have tamely submitted to them. The attempt to discredit the sources of Madhva is of much later origin, from the days of Ayyappa Diksita. He was the first to raise the cry which was taken up by others like Bhattoji and Venkatanatha. The criticism of the genuineness of the sources of Madhva apparently suffers from sectarian prejudice. It is also the failure to take note of the enormous loss of original texts in many branches of learning in Sanskrit literature owing to Muslim vandalism and similar causes.

Madhva draws heavily upon the vast literature of the Samhitas and Pancaratra. A good many of these rare works are still fortunately preserved in various libraries awaiting publication and exploration. A careful investigation of the available Pancaratra literature vindicates the bona-fides of Madhva's sources to a great extent. It is certainly preposterous to dismiss all untraceable texts of Madhva as forgeries and fabrications, without due research. Some of the non-extant sources mentioned by Madhva were known to other writers, too, both earlier and later. The charge of fabrication is, thus, too sweeping and uncharitable.

Some important works like the Brahmatarka, not cited in his first work Gita Bhashya, are found quoted in subsequent works, ranking as his important authorities. This shows they were secured by him at a later stage. The works of Advaitananada bear testimony to this specific possibility. Madhva states very clearly in his Mahabharata Tatparya that he was a patient collector

of manuscripts from all parts of the country, and possessed a unique collection of manuscripts.

It is very relevant to conclude that there must have been sufficient basis for these sources utilized by Madhva. Many causes might have conspired to throw them into oblivion, including the ascendancy of *Advaita* for some centuries before him. Having been largely utilized only by him, they had not evidently found a wider circle of acceptance, and remained unfamiliar to or ignored, suppressed or tampered with by others indifferent or hostile to his view point. Madhva himself says in his Mahabharata Tatparya how the textual traditions had suffered and were suffering interference, interpolation, overwriting, mutilation and tampering with.

## Gita Bhashya

Madhva wrote two commentaries on the Gita - a Bhashya and a Tatparya. The Gita Bhashya is the earliest work he made his debut in the philosophical world. This opens with salutations to Visnu and Vyasa. This work is a revolution in thought and method, and is as brief and precise as possible. He makes up for the brevity of his comments by quotations from numerous rare sources, not utilized by those who had gone before him. His style is peculiar to himself, terse and somewhat truncated. He does not indulge in long explanations, but puts down notes and comments on important points of interpretation of key words and phrases, or parts of phrases. He does not comment on all the verses of the texts, but only a few of them which need critical comment or elucidation. His Bhashya, thus, marks a new departure in the field.

At the outset, Madhva describes in the Gita Bhashya the great epic Mahabharata as *Mahabharataparijatamadhuhuta*. The Bhashya is in three *satkas*. The first one comprising six chapters deals with performance of *karma* in the true spirit of *karmayoga*. The next *satka* deals with the majesty of God, His manifestations, *vibhutis*, *viswarupa*, etc. The last *satka* deals with nature of beliefs and practices not conducive to spiritual uplift. The work concludes with an insistence on *bhakti* as the innermost means of achieving *moksa*.

An outstanding contribution of Madhva to Gita-thought is his interpretation of its theory of *Karmayoga*. He defines its status vis-à-vis the *nishtas* of Samkhya and Yoga. He repudiates

the view of Samkara that such *karma* is essentially applicable to *avidyavastha* alone. He stresses that even this *nishkama karma* is of less importance than *jnana*, being only a step to it. According to Madhva, the final view of Gita is not *jnanakarmasamuccaya*, not even *jnanakarmasadhya-bhaktiyoga*, but pure *aparoksa-jnana* alone, brought about by *bhaktinishkamakarma*. He emphasizes that the *aparoksa-jnana* helps in cleansing the mind and helping the emergence of *bhakti* and *jnana*. When practiced after the attainment of *aparoksa jnana*, it is conducive to the manifestation of fresh aspects of bliss in *moksa*.

*Aparoksa-jnana*, direct vision of God, is, for Madhva, the ultimate means of *moksa*. This is attained in two ways, by a life of complete renunciation and meditation, or by gradual attainment of *jnana* through an active life of *karma* enjoined by the Sastras, according to one's station. While the first way is open to a very few highly evolved souls like Sanaka, the rest of humanity has to work its way up through *karma*. There is nothing to be ashamed of in an active life on earth provided it is nobly lived. *Karmayoga* points the way to such a life. The path of *karmayoga* is in the discharge of one's *karma* – *nitya*, *naimittika* and *kamyā* – without the least desire for fruit thereof, and eschewing all notions of 'I' and 'mine'. The true *karma-yogin* looks upon himself as a mere *pratibimba* of God, whose every wish and activity is derived from and dependent on that of the Supreme, *Bimbadinakriyavan*. God is the real independent doer and enjoyer in all cases. It is the performance of one's duties with this consciousness that constitutes true '*naiskarmya*', not mere abstention from *karma*. *Naiskarmya* raises the soul from selfishness to God-consciousness. It makes the aspirant see God everywhere, and everything is God. It trains him to look

on himself as no more than an instrument of divine dispensation. It thus prepares him for *aparoksa-jnana* through mental and spiritual cleansing.

Madhva develops the theory, may be peculiar, that is never the intention of *karma-kanda* to stop with the mere fleeting rewards of heaven and make for a never-ending transmigration. Such narrow view of the Veda is *Veda-vada* as decried by Sri Aurobindo. Madhva stresses that the results promised in connection with the performance of sacrifices like *dyotistoma* are not to be interpreted too literally. They are to be viewed as so many inducements to attract the attention of average humanity which is always impressed with the promise of rewards, *puspita-vak*. He finds support for this view in the passages of the Bhagavata, Gita, Vedic texts, etc. He looks upon the greatness and majesty of God as the central thesis of the Gita, indeed of all Sastra. This is a new and far-reaching interpretation of the practical philosophy of the Gita. It appears from Samkara's commentary on the Gita that an identical view had been held by certain commentators that preceded Samkara himself. Credit is, therefore, due to Madhva for having revived the old view and presented it in such a striking manner.

Madhva identifies the true *karmayoga* of the Lord with the *nivrtti-marga*, and the narrow hedonism of the Mimamsakas with *pravrtti-marga*. He quotes the authority of Vyasa-smṛti (not extant), for this interpretation. He does not confine *karmayoga* to *avidyavasta* of Samkara, but looks upon it as the right kind of wisdom and action. Even the great *jnanins* like Janaka and Priyavrata (Bhagavata) are shown to have taken to *niskama-karma*, at the bidding of God, to set an example to

others. This is a new orientation of the practical philosophy of the Gita, more than anticipating the 'energism' of the Gita, according to Tilak's *Gitarahasya*.

## Gita Tatparya

Madhva's Gita Tatparya (*Nirnaya*) is a later and more discursive prose commentary on the Gita. It seeks to maintain the soundness of the Bhashya interpretations with fresh arguments and quotations from the Brahmataarka and other works, not utilized earlier. While the Gita Bhashya comments on select verses of the Gita citing *pratikas*, the Gita Tatparya merely brings out the gist of the verses and expands it with extraneous quotations. The Gita Tatparya augments the interpretations of the former with new and additional ones. While the Gita Bhashya rarely and impliedly notices the interpretations of other schools, the Gita Tatparya pays greater attention to the refutation of rival interpretations, mainly of Samkara and Bhaskara.

The Gita Tatparya emphasizes the *mahatatparya*, the central thought through the twin principles of theism – the immanence and transcendence of God, both vividly explained in it. It states that the Visvarupadhyaya and the Purusottama-yoga emphasize the transcendental aspect while Chapters VII and X of the Gita elucidate God's immanence in the cosmos. The metaphysical dependence of the *jivas* on God is the basis on which Madhva interprets the second chapter of the Gita, and he resolves its many seeming contradictions of thought between activism and absorption. He vigorously repudiates the idea that a *karmi* can do without *jnana*, or a *jnani* without *karma*. There is an element of the one in the other. Efficiency implies wisdom. Accordingly Madhva defines *karmayoga* as *karma-pracuro-yogah*. Krishna declares in the Gita that one who is efficient in either reaps the benefits of both. Madhva stresses that this is not

possible unless both are intertwined, and not mutually exclusive, as Samkara would have it. The *jnani*, too, has his share of *karma*, though it is mostly inward.

Madhva establishes *nivrtti-karma* to be a life of healthy participation in *karma* dedicated to God. This is the exclusive contribution of Madhva. He quotes from Vyasasmṛti to establish the true and original nature of *nivrtti-marga* and *naiskarmya* to be identical with *niskama-karma*.

The Gita Tatparya is a powerful critique of the doctrine of Monism that all experience is illusory. Madhva contends that our sufferings and enjoyments in life are quite real and vivid. There is no justification for dismissing them as illusory. All immediate illusions in experience proceed from the body towards external reality. But the self and its inmost experiences are not subject to such illusions. No one doubts 'am I myself or not', or mistakes oneself for someone else. An experience can be rejected as illusory only when there is clear proof to that effect. The experiences of pleasure and pain are subjective, intensely personal and are intuited by the *saksi*.

The work elucidates Madhva's conception of causality and refutes the *Anirvacaniya* theory. It explains causation with reference to the existence of something in some form. This does not involve the possibility of causation of absolutely non-existent things like the hare's horn. Causation is meaningless and impossible without a cause-stuff, *upadanadravya*. To that extent, it is *sat-karanavada*. But the effect is not preexistent in the cause, *qua* effect, *karyatmana*. It is a novelty, and has come in there de novo. To this extent, it is *asat-karya*. The cause and

the effect are thus different-cum-identical, *bhinna-abhinna*, as both kinds of relation are experienced.

The refutation of the *anirvacaniya* theory leads to a critique of the *Nirvisesa-Brahman*. What is said to be devoid of all characteristics cannot be shown to exist in any sense of the term. Its existence must be referred to in words, or indirectly suggested. Even such expressivity, or even suggestibility, constitutes characterization. If they do not amount to characterization, propositions such as ‘The Brahman Is’ will be redundant. We cannot establish the *Nirvisesa-Brahman* by suggestion. It is logically impossible to suggest what is absolutely inexpressible. It is not possible to contend that such an inexpressible thing is, however, established by right of self-evidence. Even self-evidence has to be established on the basis of actual proof. If self-evidence is something different from the thing itself, there is the admission of some characteristic, and the ‘thing’ is no longer devoid of traits. If it is the same as the thing itself, it must be equally open to proof. If no proof of its ‘self-evidence’ is available, and if all that is meant by being ‘self-evident’ is the negation of extraneous proof, self-luminosity is tantamount to absence of luminosity. If self-luminosity were to be established by means of *arthapatti*, it must be either a logical sequent, or by means of other independent proof. In either case, self-luminosity must be knowable by the self. But this is against the concept of *Advaita* that the subject of all experience cannot itself be experienced. Madhva emphasizes that knowledge is never experienced or intuited without reference to a knower and a ‘known’ or ‘knowable’. Knowledge that is devoid of both a subject and an object is utter void.

## Sutra-Prasthanana

### General

Madhva’s commentary on the Brahmasutras is a new departure in the history of the Vedantic thought and interpretation. It is written in a plain style, devoid of all ornament and flourish. It is a departure from the commentaries of Samkara, Bhaskara and Ramanuja. His approach is that the readers are to take a comprehensive view of the Sutras by themselves and then decide upon the line of interpretation that would do justice to their plan, purpose and wording.

Madhva holds the Sutras in the highest esteem. He identifies them with the *para-vidya* of the Upanisads, and assigns to them a place and importance altogether unique. He regards them as *nirnayaka sastra* and, as such, of more decisive authority than the rest of the sacred literature which is *nirneya sastra*. Madhva has written four works on the Sutras – Brahmasutra Bhashya (BSB), Nyaya Vivarana (NV), Anu Vyakhyana (AV) and Anu Bhashya (AB).

Madhva records his own interpretation and critical examination of the works of his predecessors in these four separate works. The fact that he had not only to present his own views, but to refute convincingly powerful commentators such as Samkara, Ramanuja, Bhaskara induced him to distribute his critical, constructive and expository contributions to the interpretations of the Sutras over the above first three well planned works of definite scope and proportion. The BSB, AV and NV

stand together to give a complete and proper idea of his interpretation of the Vedanta, and to realize his importance as a commentator on the Sutras. The Anu Vyakhyana discusses, amplifies and critically examines the interpretations of his Bhashya, without which no proper estimate of his work as an interpreter of the Sutras is possible. The Brahma Sutra Bhashya is written in a terse style and is designed to be supplemented by the Anuvyakhyana.

### **Brahmasutra Bhashya**

Madhva's commentary on the Sutras differs widely from all those of his predecessors, twenty one mentioned by Narayana Panditacarya, including Samkara, Bhaskara and Ramanuja, both in the general drift of interpretation and in the nature of topics raised for discussion under the various adhikaranas. The sources from which these topics are chosen for discussion cover a wide range of literature embracing the Samhitas, Aaranyakas, Khilas and Puranas. He differs from his predecessors on many vital and crucial points of doctrine and interpretation. A few instances are cited hereunder.

i) Madhva extends the sense of 'adi' to include five other important cosmic functions of the Supreme, namely, *niyamana*, *jnana*, *ajnana*, *bandha* and *moksa*. This is an innovation as these are clearly given in the Prastanatraya as specific cosmic attributes of the Brahman. Any elucidation and complete interpretation of *adi* must include and take notice of them. For a seeker, *moksahetutva* is a more important characteristic of the Brahman than the creation or destruction. This marks Madhva's greater philosophical vision than others.

ii) In the fifth adhikarana, Madhva establishes that the Brahman is directly denoted and expressed, *vacya* by the entire Sastra. He quotes other texts, too, which teach that the Brahman is directly expressed by the entire Sastra. He argues that the Brahman, being *aupanisada*, knowable only through scripture, there can be no other way of approach to knowing the Brahman except through words, *sabda*. *Laksanavrthti*, secondary application, is impossible in the event of a given thing being inexpressible by any word. All *laksanavrthti* is basically connected with *vacatva*. A reality that is essentially and absolutely inexpressible, *avacya* can never be brought within the range of *laksana*. For this reason, he deals with the logical and philosophical objections to *samanvaya* at this stage itself, and treats the first five adhikaranas in the beginning as introductory, *adhyayapadapitha*. He explains the whole *iksatyadhikarana* from the point of view of *vacatyatvasamarthama* of the Brahman. The different sutras fall into their proper place in the argument.

Madhva states that the Brahman cannot be regarded as *asabdam*, but must be accepted as *saravasabdamukhyavacyam*, on account of Its being the object of knowledge of all Sastras. The *iksaniyatva* in the concerned sutra pertains to the Supreme Being alone and not to any other, being associated with the three *gunas*, the *Sabala-Brahman* or the *jivatman*. The word *atman* primarily denotes the Supreme Brahman and cannot be *gauna*, associated with the three *gunas*. The Supreme Brahman alone should be sought by the seeker eschewing all other values. This means that the *a-gauna* Atman is the ultimate object of knowledge of all the Sastras, *vacya* and *muktaprapya*. Another sutra specifically refers to one characteristic of the Supreme 'One that emerges from and merges into oneself'. Madhva stresses on the

Infinite (*Purna*) coming out of itself and going back into itself, and always remaining the same Infinite right through. Another sutra affirms that there is *gatisamanya*, complete agreement in the teaching of the scripture about the *a-gouna* alone being the *mukhyavacya*, *jneya* and *muktagamya*, and that there is no dissent to this view anywhere in the scripture. The last sutra of the *adhikarana* supports *vacyatva* of the Brahman, that it is 'heard'. Thus, according to Madhva's line of interpretation, the entire exposition of the *iksatyadhikarana* has inner consistency, and is free from logical and contextual objections.

Madhva's interpretation of the Sutras establishes that the Brahman is not merely the ultimate and primary cause of the evolutionary series. He is the proximate cause as well at every stage of the evolutionary series. He is, therefore, entitled to be designated by such terms as *akasa*, *vayu*, *agni*, etc. This brings about appropriate *samanvaya* of terms and marks relating to the Brahman.

Dasgupta states that the Vayu-purana and the Ahirbudhnya apply 'epithets like *prakrti*, *pradhana*, *prasuti*, *yonis*, *ksetra*, *aksara* and *avyakta* to the Brahman'. This establishes that Madhva's interpretation of the *prakrtyadhikarana* of the Sutras faithfully represents 'the oldest traditional outlook of the philosophy of the Upanisads and the Brahmasutras preserved in the Puranic tradition'. Madhva's approach is integral to the interpretation of the *samanvayadhyaya*, and of all its *padas*, without any exception, in terms of direct *samanvaya* of names and epithets. Madhva's interpretation of the reality of dream experiences and the role of *bhakti* in regard to relevant sutras is a substantial contribution to correct understanding of the Sutras.

Madhva brings the entire Veda-sastra, not only the earlier Upanisads, under the purview of the Sutras. A text from the Skanda cited by Madhva asserts that the Brahmasutras are meant to be decisive of the purport of the entire sacred literature. This must be the significance of the term *visvatomukh* applied to the Brahmasutras. The true sense is that a sutra should be able to explain the largest number of concurrent data that could be brought under a single aphorism. The *jijnasa-sutra*, for instance, should cover all texts emphasizing the need for enquiry into the Brahman, wherever they might be found in the Veda, Upanisads or Puranas. Madhva's reference to the Samhitas of the Rigveda and other sources is, therefore, no offence to known interpretational canon. On the other hand, it enriches the thought-content of the Sutras and widens their scope. Madhva speaks of the loss of '*arsa*' tradition of Vedic interpretation. This is echoed by the modern mystic interpreter of the Rigveda, Sri Aurobindo, and amply supported by Prof Maryla Falk. D.T.Tatacarya asserts that 'we cannot escape the conclusion that this Veda (Rigveda) is as much concerned with the Brahman as the Upanisads'.

Madhva emphasizes that the conclusion (*anta*) of the Vedas and the Upanisads being the same, the Brahman must be understood in the light of the true teachings of the whole Sastra embracing all the Vedas (Samhitas), Upanisads, etc. A merely literal or superficial understanding of either the Vedas or the Upanisads will not represent the true *nirnaya* of the texts on the nature of the Brahman. He holds that the correct *nirnaya* of the entire sacred lore can only be obtained with the help, *itikarana* of the Brahmasutras which furnish the master-key to unlocking the hidden truths of the Sastra. Without the use of this key, neither the Vedas nor the Upanisads would yield their true

*siddhanta*. He insists that ‘the Samhitas are as important to his doctrine as the Upanisads’. It is certainly not because ‘it is very difficult for him to find in the Upanisads, a support for his doctrine’. The Upanisadic texts cited by Madhva clearly show that he has not ruled out the Upanisads from being treated as Vedanta.

Madhva interprets the Brahmasutras as laying down that the Brahman is the one Independent Cause in creation and all the other factors like *prakrti*, *purusa*, *kala*, etc being metaphysically dependent accessories. The proposition is purposely put in a double negative form, *tad-ananyatvam*. The Independent Cause is not different from or other than the Brahman, because of the word *arambhana* and other grounds. This emphasizes the point that the Brahman alone is the Independent Cause and that the rest are, by implication, metaphysically dependent on It. There is no specific affirmation of the Brahman being the only Independent Cause, earlier. This affirmation is necessary to dispose of an objection which presupposes and involves the existence of other pre-existing or co-existent causes, independent of the producer, on the analogy of production in general. The affirmation through negation of the contrary that the Brahman alone is the Independent Cause clinches the matter beyond doubt.

Madhva visualizes the sublime heights of unity in the Supreme for the entire world of matter and souls in virtue of its deriving its very existence, know-ability, activity, etc from the One Supreme, the source of all existence, knowledge and activity. This concept has the merit of not doing any violence with the pramanas which establish and ratify the validity and reality of

world experience and its values. It does not deny the world of matter and souls as unreality and a myth, in order to achieve an abstract, artificial unity with the Supreme. It is a living sense of unity born of the full realization of the world’s metaphysical dependence on the Brahman. This concept harmonizes the reality of the universe, and of the souls, with the transcendence and immanence of the Brahman. It is a practical solution of recognizing the absolute majesty and independence of the Supreme and bringing the world of matter and souls to a realization of its metaphysical dependence on the Supreme.

The Sutrakara uses the ideas of *amsa* and *abhasa* to define the relation between the *jiva* and the Brahman. He is said to define *amsa* ‘in such a way as to make room for both difference and identity’. It is certainly not in the sense of difference and identity, being both equally true, in the literal sense, and in an equal measure. Madhva states that difference and identity cannot both be accepted in their primary sense equally. Difference must be accepted as essential, and identity as figurative, based on intimacy of relation due to resemblance, primacy and independence. An equal and literal emphasis on both difference and identity could never be laid, without logical inconsistency, between two distinct reals such as the Brahman and the *jiva*. The concept advocated by Madhva involves no logical interdependence and other defects.

Madhva accepts ‘difference’ as a natural and primary fact of experience of the *saksi* and not merely of the senses, and interprets the ‘identity’ in conformity with the scriptural texts that teach the difference between God and the souls. He also defines *saksi-pratyaksa* of difference, which is inviolable as a

primary condition of all certitude, in terms of 'amsatva'. Madhva introduces the idea of amsa to rationalize the scriptural references to 'identity' with the basic fact of their foundational difference established by experience, reason and revelation. *Amsatva* is not a substitute for both, but of 'identity' alone. He makes it clear that *amsatva* stands for a peculiar relation of metaphysical dependence, similarity and 'belonging to' God.

### Anu Vyakhyana

The Anu Vyakhyana is both a dissertation on the Sutras, and a critical commentary and supplement to the Brahmasutra Bhashya. It is a classic in its own way, being an interpretation and a criticism. Each line and phrase of the work is a veritable seed of ideas. It is unique for its meteoric swiftness of thought and variety of ideas. It has logic, dialectic fire, unity, eloquence and a certain stately music of words. Criticism and constructive exposition are its twin features.

Madhva deals with all shades of Advaitic thought and interpretation in this work only to refute each one of them. He refutes in detail both the theories of *ekajivajnana* and *bahujivajnana*. He also refutes the fundamental theories of the *Advaita-Vedanta* such as the identity of the *jiva* and the Brahman, the concept of *anirvacaniya*, the theory of Error, the falsity of the world, and the concept of the untrustworthiness of empirical means of proof, etc.

As for the doctrine of Identity, Madhva draws a sharp contrast between the miserable life of man on earth and the perfect eternal peace and freedom of God. It is sheer blasphemy for a

creature like man to think of identity with God. Each moment of life, man is aware of his imperfections and limitations. These experiences can never be dismissed as illusory. They are felt to be real and true by the innermost self of man, the *saksi*, and are never proved to be false within one's own conscious experience. He says typically in Bhamati that a hundred texts cannot make a crow white. Any number of texts which appear to declare the Brahman and the *jiva* to be one cannot be accepted at their face value. The consolidated human experience attests to this difference, and no philosophy can flout it with impunity.

The conviction that the *jiva* is other than the Brahman is not merely an ordinary experience, *pratyaksadrsti*, but one derived from the scripture itself, *sastradrsti*. Scripture, when and where it speaks of the Brahman and reveals its existence, does so *ex hypothesi* as all knowing, all powerful controller of the universe. The 'identity-texts' can operate, if at all, only after the existence of the Brahman is first established. And there is no other way of establishing it except through Sastra. The texts establishing the nature of the Brahman omniscient, etc are more powerful than the texts that support the identity of the Brahman and the *jiva*, for the reason that the Brahman is the basis of the existence of the *jiva*. The twin principles of agreement with *upajivyasruti* and *saksi-pratyaksa* are the cornerstone of Madhva's interpretation of *Advaita* srutis and their reconciliation with the *bheda-srutis* (and experience). They are his unique contribution to the problem of harmonizing the two sets of Srutis.

As for the attributes, *visesas* of the Brahman, Madhva opposes the idea of the Brahman as devoid of all attributes. The Sutrakara ascribes to the Brahman negative attributes. Madhva

argues that if negative attributes can be admitted and raised to the rank of attributes, *gunas*, there is no reason why positive ones cannot be admitted, for, every negation implies an affirmation. An attribute is an adjective that serves to mark off a given thing from all others. In such event, there is no difference in function between positive and negative attributes. The ascription of negative attributes to the Brahman will, therefore, leave It qualified, *sa-visesa*, if not *sa-dvitiya*. Besides the negative attributes, the Srutis predicate positive ones such as *satyam*, reality; *jnanam*, knowledge; and *anantam*, infinitude. There is no reason, prima facie, to reject the positive attributes, directly. If acceptance of the plurality of positive attributes shatters the unity of the Brahman, the solution lies not in denying the characteristics to the Brahman but in trying to find ways of conserving the attributes and their reality, without prejudice to the homogeneity of the Brahman. This is, in effect, the essence of Madhva's doctrine of *Savisesabheda* of substance and attributes.

The Sutras define the Brahman making It the author of the universe, its protection, etc. There is room neither for negative attributes, nor for *nirguna*. The concept of *nirguna* is relative to *gunas*. One cannot think of the Brahman as *nirguna*, without the aid of *gunas*.

We cannot have knowledge of the Brahman except through scripture. If the scripture should ascribe attributes to It, we cannot reject them. If what is taught by scripture is considered untrue in this respect, what assurance is there that the thesis of identity, said to be taught by it, may not be equally untrue? The explanation of attributes as being due to a superimposition does not stand scrutiny, as superimposition itself presupposes some general

characteristics. What is claimed to be wholly and utterly devoid of any sort of characteristics can never become the subject of superimposition.

The Anuvyakhyana supplements the Brahma Sutra Bhashya in several places. The former supports the equation of the Brahman with Visnu in two sutras from the Daivi-Mimamsa or Samkarsana-Kanda as it is called. Madhva seems to be the earliest to cite these sutras and make use of them. The Visistadvaitic literary tradition also vouches for them.

A passage from Bhagavata, cited by Madhva, settles the definition of the Brahman proposed by Sutrakara as intimate, *svarupa*; not accidental, *tatasta*. Another passage from the Vadhulasakha identifies the five forms of *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya* as the Brahman. The Anu Vyakhyana makes a full statement of the textual evidence in favour of the sastraic validity of *prakrti* as a metaphysical category. Madhva discusses some of his own metaphysical doctrines in the work, and their logical and ontological bearings. For instance, he discusses his doctrine of *visesa*, difference as fundamental to things; *saksi*, natural gradation of souls; and *anandataratamya* in release.

There are two interesting references to Saivaite views in the Anu Vyakhyana. But neither is traceable in Srikantha's Bhashya. One refers to the way in which the Saiva philosopher seeks to establish the validity of his Agamas by a process of inference from one portion of it which is fruitful. The other refers to the interpretation of the Tapaniya Sruti on the basis of which the Saivite seeks to identify the Brahman with Siva.

Madhva seeks to imply that Rudra is subordinate to Visnu, the Brahman.

### **Nyaya Vivarana**

The Nyaya Vivarana is a small prose tract giving the gist of the leading *adhikaranas* of the Brahmasutras, and explaining their *purvapaksa* and *siddhanta-yuktis*. It deals with the technical formalities of interpretation. It is later than the Brahma Sutra Bhashya and the Anu Vyakhyana. It is a clear outline of Madhva's interpretation of crucial *adhikaranas* of Brahmasutras in a direct and telling manner.

### **Anu Bhashya**

The Anu Bhashya is a short metrical summary of the *adhikaranas* of the Brahmasutras in thirty four *anustubhs*, stated to have been composed to meet a special need of Acyutaprajna. It is divided into four *adhyayas*, each being the summary of one full chapter of the Sutras. The first chapter refers to the Supreme Being lauded in various names like *prana*,  *jyotih*, etc. The second chapter resolves the conflict of scripture with historical systems and their doctrines, and the contradictions of the scriptures themselves, in the statements of the order of creation, dissolution, etc. The third chapter deals with the majesty of God, and the ways of worship and realization. The last chapter summarizes the views on *laya*, and the nature of 'released state'. The Anu Bhashya may be described as an index to the *Dvaita* interpretation of the Sutras. The Tatvamanjari of Raghavendrathirtha is the best known commentary on this text.

## **Bhagavata Tatparya**

The Bhagavata Purana is one of the gospels of Vaisnavism and, as such, has been held in high esteem by all Vaisnava thinkers in India. Madhva's Bhagavata Tatparya is a selective commentary. Of a total of about 18,000 verses of the Purana, Madhva has commented only on about 1,600. His comments are brief and to the point, augmented by quotations from a variety of sources, particularly the Samhitas of the Pancaratra and their subsidiary literature. His object is to reconcile the seeming contradictions of the text, and bring out the essentially theistic and transcendental realism of the Purana. He is, therefore, selective in the choice of verses of the Purana for commentary based on the tatparya, purport of such crucial passages.

The contradictions in the text of the Purana are perhaps due to an undercurrent of 'implicit monism' running through it, emphasizing the transcendent majesty of God to the exclusion of all else. Simultaneously, the text runs through its basic philosophy of *sesvara-samkhya* thought, emphasizing the reality of the created world and its values, and preaching the ethics of *niskama-karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* as means of salvation. Madhva reconciles all the contradictions with the help of his ideology of *Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahmavada*.

Madhva directs his attention mainly to Skandas X and XI of the Purana, which strike a strong note of transcendentalism, verging in monism. The verses on Krsna-Uddhava Samvada (XI) are tinged with monistic phraseology and ideas. Madhva tones down these passages in line with his transcendental theism of *Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahmavada*, quoting a large number of

texts from the unexplored Pancaratra literature such as the Brahmatarka, Tantra-Bhagavata, Mayavaibhava, Padmatantra, Tattvaviveka, Sattattva, Pravrtta, etc.

Madhva's commentary / philosophy is based on two important teachings. One is the eternal dependence of *nityapadarthas* like *prakrti*, *jivas*, time, etc on the Brahman and their very existence, eternity and other characteristics being metaphysically dependent on the Divine Will. He conceives of the Brahman as the One Independent Reality. The other teaching is the reconciliation of identity texts with the reality of the world. Madhva quotes several passages that distinctly recognize the existence of *prakrti* as a distinctive material principle, energized by God. Madhva quotes these passages to rebut the charge of *asabdatvam* brought against *prakrti* by other commentators on Brahmasutras. The texts quoted by him clearly recognize the view that *bheda-jnana*, realization of difference between God, souls and the world, constitutes 'saving-knowledge'. The texts quoted are: 'All sacred texts declare the Brahman to be *saguna*, and infinite in Its attributes..... *Bhakti* is the means of redemption..... There is gradation, *taratamya* in *bhakti* and *moksa*..... *Moksa* is the realization of innate bliss of selfhood..... Personality persists in *moksa*..... The Supreme is Visnu.....'

In this work Madhva quotes about 195 scriptural texts, including several not well known works. Depending on the occasion, he raises fundamental questions of religion and philosophy and discusses them with reference to the said texts.

## Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya

The epic Mahabharata is called the fifth Veda. In this work, Madhva claims the epic contains esoteric truths not to be found even in the Veda. He reads an esoteric and allegorical meaning into it to bring out an important bearing on the theology of his system. His epitome of the epic is an encyclopedia of the religious and philosophical tenets of the *Dvaita* system and its theology. He regards the epic as furnishing the key to the correct interpretation of the theosophy of the Vedasastra. It is an illustrative commentary on Vedic philosophy and religion.

In the guise of a historical narrative, the epic gives a vivid allegory of the incessant conflict between the forces of theism and atheism in life, and the ultimate triumph of theism and morality. To Madhva, as a Vedantin, the reality of conflict is made keener by the said forces not merely symbolized by the gods and their enemies presiding over these forces, but by their being actually worked out by them, in and through their own lives. The persons are participators in the drama of life, thereby shaping their own destinies, and evolving themselves to their fullest stature, as units in the cosmic evolution, and serving as models of good and bad to human beings.

In the prolegomena to his epitome, Madhva elaborates his methodology of a three-fold interpretation of the epic - historical, allegorical and metaphysical. The historical, *astika* interpretation is the one normally associated with the actual epic setting. The allegorical, *manvadi* interpretation sees in the internecine warfare of the Kurus and Pandavas the eternal conflict between the forces of good and bad on the moral plane. The

metaphysical, *upari-cara* interpretation attempts at an adhyatmic attunement of the text, drawing its inspiration mainly from those contexts that elaborate the nature of the Supreme.

This work runs into 32 chapters. The first two provide the necessary theosophical background to Madhva's exposition of the philosophy of the epic. The next seven chapters are devoted to a critical summary of the Ramayana. All the other chapters deal with the story of the Mahabharata. This work is the biggest metrical work of Madhva. He handles in it a variety of metres with remarkable skill and consistency. It is a *kavya* in a much larger sense than the conventional.

The work opens with a brief account of primeval creation, and emphasizes the supremacy of Visnu. It discusses the relative validity of texts and methods of their harmonized interpretation. It explains the reasons to set aside the Saiva Puranas when they contradict the Vedasastra. It contains the three-fold classification of souls accepted by Madhva. The hierarchical system he has evolved makes room for varying standards of spiritual fitness and efficiency, as well as means and ends, *sadhanas* such as *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti*, and their fruit. *Dana*, *tirtha*, *tapas* and *yajna* are declared to be inferior *sadhanas*. Unalloyed devotion alone qualifies for salvation. As for *bhakti*, it makes a classical definition of what it is and what it is not. As for *sadhanas*, Brahma alone, as the highest of the souls, can concentrate on all the infinite attributes of Godhead. Human beings cannot concentrate on more than four fundamental attributes of Divinity, *sat*, *cit*, *ananda* and *atman*. The Devas can concentrate on a few more according to their capacity.

Madhva has thus a difficult task to reconcile the ways of gods to man, with ideas of godliness itself. It is a problem of 'ethicizing' the behaviour of gods and the dealings of the Avatars. To overcome this problem, Madhva develops a network of theological technique to solve the contradictions between the actual and ideal nature of the deities, between the theory and practical behaviour of the *avatars* of God, celebrated in the epics and puranas. With this technique, he maintains a satisfactory and balanced conception of the Deity. He appears to be the only Indian thinker who has devoted special attention to this important problem of theology and shown the necessary resourcefulness in tackling it. The solutions he proposes rest mostly on textual sanctions and theodicy.

The historical value of this work lies in its being the earliest datable running commentary on the Mahabharata epic in Sanskrit. It is not, of course, a commentary in the strict sense of the term. It traverses the entire course of the history of the Kuru-Pandavas, without omitting any major incidents. Madhva, on his own admission, traversed the entire length and breadth of the country to collect manuscripts containing various recessions of the text, and then fixed the standard text for him to follow and comment upon. He was aware that the texts of the epic he had accessed, in most cases, had been mutilated beyond recognition or restoration; that numerous interpolations had crept in; and that, therefore, he had to take all necessary care and guidance in establishing the correct and genuine text.

The first two chapters of this work elucidate the main principles of his interpretation, and the theological sanctions upon which his ideology rests. The most important tenet is, of course,

the transcendent majesty of God. He is unique. There is no one like Him among all gods, or any equal to Him. As equality itself is an impossible idea, any identity of the human self with the Divine is out of question. God is the lord of all. The world of matter and souls is, for ever, dependent on Him, and is distinct for ever from Him. He is the perfect Being, endowed with all the auspicious attributes. But this theoretical perfection of the Divine is often belied by the weaknesses and imperfections betrayed by the *avatars* of the Divine in their earthly careers undertaken for redemption of humanity.

In the chapters relating to Ramayana, Madhva upholds the supremacy of Rama as Visnu and the divinity of Sita zealously. He reorients many 'compromising situations' with profuse reference to authorities and fictions of theodicy. For instance, in the encounter with Parasurama, Madhva introduces the demon Atula. He explains the encounter of Rama with Parasurama and the defeat of the latter skillfully. Ravana is made to carry away not the real Sita, but a *pratikrti* into which life had been breathed. Rama is aware of the fact all along, but 'pretends' to go through all the suffering and privation like a human husband. Madhva relies on Bhagavata, too, in this regard.

As for the chapters relating to Mahabharata, Madhva relates the story in elaborate detail, following the epic narrative, with critical comments wherever considered necessary. Madhva elucidates the *adhyatmic* allegory of the epic with remarkable critical imagination. According to him, the cosmic purpose of God – the deliverance of the gods and the damnation of the *asuras* – is signified in the beginning of the epic. He holds that the epic provides a final opportunity for the gods participating in

it and the earlier Ramayana, commented upon in this work, in the cosmic purpose of God, to have their own individual accounts of *sadhana* balanced.

To him, Bhima is the chosen instrument of this divine purpose. He idealizes the character of Bhima to the best advantage, over all the epic characters, next only to Krsna. Madhva cites valuable interesting evidence of the tributes paid to Bhima by Krsna, Yudhisthira and Duryodhana in the epic. He considers that Bhima is to be regarded as the central hero of the epic and the chosen instrument of the Lord to carry out His purpose. Accordingly, he softens incidents like Bhima drinking the blood of Dussasana, the hitting of Duryodhana below the belt in the *gadayuddha*, and the falling of the body of Bhima in the Mahaprasthanaparva. Madhva considers that the epic is a theistic document in essence, as it is called therein. The story as such is but the outer vesture. The central theme is the supremacy of God Visnu, Krsna who is the conductor of the cosmic drama.

The work concludes with an account of the rise of the Buddhist and Jain schools, the rise of *Mayavada* in the *Kali* age, and the advent of Madhva himself for rehabilitation of theism.

## Dasa-Prakaranas

### Pramanalaksana

It is a time-honoured practice in the systems of Indian thought to begin with a statement of the number and nature of *pramanas*, that is, sources of correct knowledge recognized by the given system. Following this practice, Madhva indicates in this work the number of *pramanas* admitted by him, their definitions, modes of functioning and the nature of reality apprehended by them. At the end of the work, it is said that the exposition follows the Brahmataarka of Vyasa, which does not now exist.

As ordinarily understood, a *pramana* is a means or guarantor of valid knowledge. It embraces, in its fold, truth or true knowledge, and the means of such knowledge. But to Madhva, it has a wider denotation, the core of reality itself. True knowledge, per se, is *kevala-pramana*. What leads to it is *anupramana*. Sense-perception, *pratyaksa*; inference, *anumana*; and verbal-testimony, *agama* come under the category of *anupramana*. Madhva accepts these three *pramanas* as fundamental. He subsumes the additional *pramanas* such as *upamana*, *arthapatti*, *sambhava* and *parisesa* under inference, *anupalabdhi* partly under inference and partly under sense-perception. The scheme of *pramanas* is thus considerably simplified, and reduced to the barest limits of logical necessity.

On similar lines, Madhva treats the subject of fallacies. He cuts down the *avayavas*, the members indispensable for an adequate statement of syllogism to the barest minimum. Even a

bare proposition implying a *hetu* will do, or even a proposition involving the middle term. Similarly he treats the subject of *nigrahasthanas*, points for closure of a debate.

Madhva refutes the Nyaya definition of *pramana*, and maintains resolutely the validity of *smrti*, recollection. He underscores that the very edifice of experience collapses if the validity of our recollection is impugned. To try to establish the validity of our past experience through inference involves needless strain, and violence to experience. He deals with the domain of *prameyas* exhaustively.

### Kathalaksana

This work is a metrical monograph. It is devoted to the subject of debate, and the rules and regulations governing its conduct. This is said to follow the Brahmataarka.

Madhva's object in writing this work must have been to train his disciples adept in the art of debate and be able to overcome their opponents. He recognizes three types of debate – *vada*, *jalpa* and *vitanda*. *Vada* is the purest form of debate carried solely for the ascertainment of truth. *Jalpa* is a less exalted form indulged in either as a test of ability or for victory. *Vitanda* is an independent kind of disputation where an honest soul is confronted with a vicious or pervert opponent. In this type of debate, the scholar merely adopts a destructive attitude demolishing the arguments of his adversary without, in any way, disclosing his own view. *Vitanda* is the honest man's offence against hypocrisy and falsehood pretending to be goodness and truth. It is a safeguard against unscrupulous argument.

## Upadhi Khandana

This is a short metrical tract. It criticizes the concept of *upadhi*, pluralizing agency which plays a large part in the *brahmajnanavada* of Samkara. The *brahmajnanavada* contends that the world of plurality is the outcome of ignorance playing upon the One Real. The oneness of existence is the truth of things and all plurality is to be ascribed to this ignorance, nescience. Madhva, in this work, attacks the very concept of the *brahmajnanavada* and refutes the very idea of such nescience descending upon the Brahman as unthinkable, unaccountable and impossible. He argues that if the Brahman is the only thing that is, whence and where ignorance can come in. If ignorance is rendered possible because of this *upadhi*, he questions how this *upadhi* arises and is to be conceived of. The concept of *upadhi* is, according to him, the very antithesis of Monism. On the other hand, the *Dvaita* system propounded by him has no such difficulty. According to it, a spiritual aspirant is not identical with the Brahman and is fit to undertake metaphysical quest as laid down in the Sastras.

## Prapanca–Mithyatva-Anumana Khandana

The purpose of this Prakarana is to refute the concept of the unreality of the world, of Non-dualism. Madhva contends in this Prakarana that the concept of *anirvacaniya* of Non-dualism is irrational, and no inference can be based on it. He urges that criticism be based on the points of view of both formal and inductive logic

## Mayavada Khandana

In this Prakarana, Madhva contends that Monism does not satisfactorily make out the four-fold traditional requisites of system-building such as *adhikari*, *visaya*, etc. He questions the central theme of *Advaita*, the identity of the Brahman and the jiva. This identity is riddled with contradictions. One can raise the question if the identity, preached by Monism, is real or fictitious. If it is real, the impossibility of ignorance, nescience affecting the Brahman, vitiates the whole of Monistic metaphysics. Also there can be no real *adhikari* entitled to philosophize or undergo spiritual discipline. For this reason, moksa cannot be the goal of metaphysics, for, according to *Advaita*, everybody is free, here and now, and release is not a state to be attained hereafter. He argues that these contradictions and pitfalls force a spiritual aspirant to Dualism.

## Tattva Samkhyana

This Prakarana enumerates the two categories Madhva recognizes. The categories are *svatantra*, independent and *paratantra*, dependent. This is the highest metaphysical and ontological classification in Madhva's system. This is whence his system derives its name *Dvaita*. God, Visnu is the One (Highest) Independent Real. All else is dependent on Him, including the goddess Lakshmi, the presiding deity of *prakrti*, *acit*. Dependence does not mean unreality. The finite creation is always dependent on God, yet real, as He Is. He explains that difference and disparity are found everywhere among finite selves in their constitution and equipment. This points to a hierarchy, *taratamya* among gods, demons and men. He details a cosmic

scheme from the Supreme Being to inanimate creation. Of the souls now in bondage, he makes three categories – *muktiyogyas*, *tamoyogyas* and *nityasamsarins*. *Muktiyogyas* are those eligible for salvation on effort. *Tamoyogyas* are those that eventually qualify themselves for eternal perdition. *Nityasamsarins* are those that will always be subject to transmigration. Those who want release from bondage must learn to look upon God as the One Being who is responsible in various ways for the preservation, control, absorption, enlightenment, etc of the world of matter and souls.

### **Tattva Viveka**

This Prakarana covers the same ground as Tattva Samkhya with some additional points regarding the logical and ontological relations between substance and attributes, etc.

### **Tattvodyota**

In this work, Madhva discusses and refutes the leading doctrines and fundamental concepts of *Advaita* Vedanta. At the outset, he maintains that difference, *bhed* is the fundamental concomitant of nature. It persists even in *moksa* between the Brahman and the freed souls and among the latter. In *samsaravasta*, it is all the more true. It is not a projection of mind. The facts of life or the force of logic do not warrant the concept of *anirvacaniya*. Madhva denies that there is any basis for the concept of *anirvacaniya* in the Nasadiya-sukta.

He stresses that the syllogisms advanced by the Monist in support of the unreality of phenomena are full of fallacies and contradictions. He refutes in great detail the grounds of inductive generalization. Our own consolidated experience establishes the

reality of the world. The verdict of experience can only be set aside on the strength of a more powerful and subsequent experience. No such experience is ever had in regard to the unreality of the world.

Madhva makes the charge of ‘crypto-Buddhism’ to *Advaita* stating that it bore a very strong family resemblance to Buddhism. For all practical purposes, *Advaita* was but a restatement of Buddhist ideals in Upanisadic and Vedantic phraseology. He quotes extensively from the standard Buddhist works current in his days, and from well known Advaitic works like the *Sampeksha-Sariraka*. He contends that the attribute-less Brahman of *Advaita* can hardly be distinguished from the *Sunya* of Buddhist Nihilism. Both are beyond thought and word, and can only be expressed through negatives. The so-called *vyavaharikasatya* of the Advaitin is nothing but the *samvrtisatya* of the Buddhist, writ larger. The ideal of *nirvana* and the goal of *brahmabhava* were nearly the same. In view of so much striking affinity of *prameyas*, basic doctrines, Madhva asserts that *Advaita* is indeed Buddhism. The Advaitin’s belief in the Veda is but a deception, as he dismisses the entire *karmakanda*, and large content of the Upanisads which teach dualistic views, as ‘not-truth-declaring’. Madhva, therefore, protests such highhanded treatment to the Veda, which is worse than the Buddhists’ open abjuration. He winds up with the observation that the refutation of the Buddhist idealism and nihilism in the Brahmasutras is thus tantamount to a refutation of Advaitism itself.

There is a constructive side, too. Madhva quotes passages to show that theism is the only philosophy accepted by the Sastras. He reinterprets passages such as *tat-tvam-asi* in conformity with

theism. The work concludes with a brief criticism of *ekajivajnanavada*.

The last seven verses of the work do not belong to Madhva. They are in the nature of tributes paid to him by the admiring witnesses of his debate with Pundarika Puri incorporated into the body of this work, at the request of his disciples.

### **Visnu Tattva Nirnaya**

This is the biggest Prakarana, and is the most important of Madhva's Dasa-Prakaranas. It is an exhaustive refutation of *Advaita*, a brilliant criticism of Advaitic interpretation of Srutis, and an equally impressive exposition of their interpretation on new lines and masterly vindication of the concept of Difference. It has three chapters, *paricchadas*. The central thesis of this work is that the Brahman, Narayana is the highest subject-matter of the Vedasastra.

Madhva discusses the place and importance of *sabda* among *pramanas*, and argues a strong case for the infallibility, *apauruseyatva* of the Vedas. He is the only Vedantin, after the Mimamsakas, to have given this question serious attention. The Veda is self-valid and cannot be ascribed to any known author, human or divine. The eternity of the Veda rests on the eternity of *sabda*. Madhva establishes convincingly that no system of philosophy can be without some kind of *apauruseya-vakya* for its ultimate validity. Even the Buddhists and the Carvakas are forced to admit some kind of *sabda-pramana*, which is incapable of being ascribed to any author.

Madhva argues that explaining the ineradicable difference between God and man is the purport of the Sastras. This difference is a corollary of the supremacy of the Brahman. He repudiates the Advaitic view that all the scriptural texts which speak of 'difference' are to be looked upon as being merely *anuvadak*, repetitive in spirit. Our knowledge of the existence of God is derived solely from scripture. Such being the case, the scripture will not cut its ground under its own feet. The monistic texts are against the consolidated experience of humanity, and the inference based on it, in regard to non-difference between God and *jiva*. Though, *agama*, as a rule, has precedence over other means of proof, it cannot be considered valid when it goes against its very prop and support. He concludes that scriptural texts which, on a superficial view, favour an identity of the Brahman and the *jiva* are shown, on closer scrutiny, to emphasize the unutterable majesty of the Brahman, and the complete metaphysical dependence of all else on It.

Madhva makes a brilliant analysis of the texts such as *tat-tvam-asi* and *vacarambhana*. He lays bare the defects in their Advaitic interpretation. He raises new points not earlier noticed, which deserve careful attention. He argues that an implicit and ineradicable Dualism underlies all the well-known Upanisadic texts quoted by him.

Several scriptural texts teach the reality of the world of difference. An Advaitin admits this reality, but considers that it is of a lower order. Madhva quotes passages to show that the 'difference' persists even in *moksa*. Individual consciousness is inalienable and indestructible in release.

In this work, Madhva develops the best classical exposition of the concept of *Bheda*, Difference. A pluralistic universe is grounded on the reality of difference. The concept of ‘difference’ is fundamental to all reality of the world. It is the foundation on which his Theistic Realism rests. Madhva argues that ‘difference’ is not cognized by itself, but only in relation to its terms either as qualifying them or being qualified by them. In any case, unless the terms are previously grasped, their difference from each other cannot be grasped. This difference may be either attributive or is bound up with the cognition of the correlate and the counter-correlate. But, then, the cognition of the terms is dependent on that of the difference referred to. There is, thus, mutual interdependence in any attempt to define the concept of Difference. Madhva states that ‘difference’ is not an attribute of both correlates, but only of one of them, signalized by the other. This difference is of the nature of the object itself. To know an object is to know its difference from another. Madhva states that the ‘thing in itself’ may be perceived independently, but its difference from another may yet be cognizable only mediately through the *relata*. There is nothing illogical in this approach.

A question arises that if the ‘thing’ and its difference are one and the same, they must always be cognized together. Madhva explains, in terms of the concept of *visesa*, that an object can be perceived without involving a ‘specific perception’ of its difference from another. Difference is only *savisesabhinna* from its *dharmi*. When an object is cognized, its difference from other things is also cognized in a ‘general way and for the most part’. Otherwise, one may even mistake one’s own self for any one of the numerous objects around him. None ever commits such error. It, therefore, follows that difference is cognized

simultaneously with perception of the object. If it were so, a question arises as to why doubts and imperfect cognitions arise, and whether such imperfect cognitions can be part and parcel of the ‘thing in itself’. Madhva answers this issue by saying that ‘difference’ (doubt or imperfect cognition) is only one in a given thing. The given thing has innumerable shades such as that of being the counter correlate of X, Y or Z. Where, in a particular case, this ‘particular shade’ of difference is missed with reference to a particular or counter correlate, on account of such factors as resemblance, doubts arise. The particular doubt, however, does not mean that ‘difference’ in general has not been grasped at all.

It is contended that if ‘difference’ were of the nature of the object, it would, in effect, abolish its own self, or the object. Or, it may mean that ‘difference’ is synonymous with the object itself. Madhva develops the concept of *Dharmisvarupa*, the colourful identity between the objects and ‘difference’, to counter the contention. The ‘identity’, *abheda* prevents the possibility of such mutual interdependence in perception. The *visesa* guarantees the existence and reality of both the object and the difference. *Visesa* is just the representative of ‘difference’, not difference by itself. It stands to reason that *visesa* be recognized in all objects commonly regarded as undifferentiated.

Madhva enunciates the doctrine that ‘Difference is *dharmisvarupa*’, part of the ‘thing in itself’. It is perceived simultaneously with the perception of an object, a relation or a concept. In one and the same act of perception, the object and its individuality, which is the same as its difference from all else, are both perceived in a flash as it were. If it were not so, the question may have to be answered why and where that

individuality had been lurking, and how it comes to be apprehended later. Madhva says that, because of this flash-like simultaneity of apprehension, there is hardly anytime, at the moment, to frame linguistic expression for the adequate expression of experience of individuality. When we know a thing, we know it as distinct from everything else, in a general way. Closer thought and ratiocination reveal further items of difference, light and shade. Otherwise, one may expect to mistake the perceiving self to be something other than itself.

It makes no difference to the question of overlapping whether the Brahman is regarded as expressible by words or as merely suggestible. For, in any case of elimination, there is no point in resorting to more than one elimination, if the object thus marked off from its opposite attributes does not gain or assume a new aspect or additional significance, every time a fresh elimination is sought to be brought about. This argument of Madhva is quite sound, and hard to rebut.

Further, when difference is presented to cognition, it cannot be denied altogether on the ground of interdependence. Interdependence, even if it is admitted, cannot annul the reality of things so inter-depending. One has to explain the process of perception of difference. But failure or inability to do so cannot mean that the thing itself is unreal. There is, of course, no cause for inter-dependence, if difference is recognized as *dharmisvarupi*, but yet *svavisesabhinna* from it.

Madhva denies that there is any proof for the assumption that *adhyasa* is double-edged. The *atman* has never been mistaken for the not-self, even in the wildest of our *adhyasas*. Illusions

are as impossible without the reality of the prototype, *aropya* as without that of an *adhistana*. On all occasions of normally constituted perceptions, the subject and the object are grasped distinctly. Madhva concludes the first chapter of the work with a criticism of *ekajiva* and *bahujiva-jnana vadas*.

In the next two chapters, Madhva deals with the concept of Godhead. The second chapter emphasizes the lordship of Visnu over *ksara* (souls) and *aksara* beings. In the third chapter, God is said to be absolutely free from all taint and imperfections. He is full of an infinite number of infinite attributes. Madhva explains the limitations to divinity seen in the *avatars*, on the basis of certain widely accepted theological and Puranic fictions, and conventions of theodicy.

The question of the exact relation between the personality of God and His moral and metaphysical attributes has always been a challenge to Theists the world over. It is an intriguing problem of philosophy, too. Madhva is one that has successfully tackled the problem of the Divine Personality, its nature and constitution. God, in theism, is unlimited by time, space and attributes. He is One, but unlimited are His attributes. The question arises as to how far God is homogeneous in constitution. Is God different from His attributes? If not, what is the basis of the mutual distinction among His various attributes? If there is no such distinction, how is the multiplicity of the attributes to be established? By what law of harmony are these attributes equally poised and manifested at different types? How does God manage to retain His unity amidst infinite attributes? Madhva answers all these questions, in his own way, with the help of his peculiar theory of *visesas* developed in this work.

For Madhva, *visesa* is a distinct thought-category, ontological principle that is entirely self-sufficient and wholly self-determined and self-determining. It comes in handy in many metaphysical exigencies. It is what bridges the gulf between substance, *kriya* and attributes, *kriyavat*. It connects God with His infinite attributes, and the attributes mutually. But it is not different from the nature of God Himself, or distinct from His personality. It is a representative of difference, *bhedpratinidhi*, but not *bhed* itself. In short, it is an intrinsic nuance. It acts as an internal relation capable of working both ways. It is capable of connecting substance and attributes without being external to either. There is no distinction between God and His attributes, activity and will. There is absolute identity among the attributes themselves. Thus, according to Madhva, there is no semblance of differentiation, no element of heterogeneity in the Deity. Whoever sets up barriers between God and His attributes is sure to face the horrors of hell-fire. This doctrine of Madhva is known as *savisesabheda* or *acintyabheda*.

Madhva states that it is impossible to do justice to such texts as *satyam*, *jnanam*, *anantam*, *brahma*, etc without the help of the said *visesas*. It is, in short, a *sarvatantrasiddhanta*. He cites passages from Brahmatarka, Paramopanisad (Pancaratrika) elucidating *visesas*. Apart from the authorities quoted, the concept of *visesa* itself ranks among the most important contributions of Madhva to Indian philosophic thought.

## Karma Nirnaya

The work Karma Nirnaya is only next to Visnu Tattva Nirnaya in its extent. This demonstrates the mastery of Madhva in the ritualistic portions of the Vedas and their exegesis. It is evidently the last of Madhva's works. The object of the work is to work out and illustrate the attunement of the *karmakanda* with the Brahman. Therefore, it deals with the higher interpretation of certain abstruse and complicated sacrificial hymns such as the Mahanamni verses to be recited in connection with the Prstha Stotra of the Naiskevalya Sastra. This Sastra contains some verses of Aitareya Brahmana and some Rks used in the Sodasa Sastra, etc.

Madhva shows himself fully conversant with the genius of the Vedic language and its idiom. His interpretations have a ring of confidence and originality. He insists on interpreting the whole of the scripture including the *karmakanda* directly, as a glorification of the Supreme Being.

As a preliminary to such higher interpretation, Madhva vigorously attacks the theory of *nirguna* Brahman in the opening section of the work. He cites various passages ascribing attributes to the Brahman. There is good reason to suppose that an intelligent creator like the Brahman must indeed be *saguna*, as stated in Bhagavata. The denial of attributes to the Brahman in some passages of the scripture must be interpreted in terms of purely *prkritic* attributes.

He refutes the concept of *nirvisesa* dialectically. According to him, the predication of *nirvisesatva* involves a contradiction.

It cannot also be a negative elimination. The Veda, by its very nature, stands for the achievement of happiness eternal, by man. Such eternal happiness is obviously and admittedly beyond the power of *karma*. He contends that *karma* can never be regarded as the end of the scripture. *Karma*, rituals have to be performed in a spirit of devotion, discrimination and detachment. He concludes the work with an indication of texts to support his contentions.

## Upanisad Bhashyas

### General

Madhva interprets the Upanisads, earlier commented by Samkara and others from the point of view of Monism, in conformity with the requirements of genuine theism. He draws attention to the full measure of support that the Upanisads give to theistic religion. He reinterprets some texts consistent with their underlining theism. He makes considerable use of linguistic analysis, grammatical and etymological sanctions, and a large body of interpretative literature. He resorts to logical argumentation, too.

The merit of his line of interpretation of the Upanisads lies in the foundations of his realistic metaphysics, which go to the depths of the intuitional experiences of the *saksi*, and the consequent logico-philosophical necessity for a proper reconciliation of Upanisadic monism with findings of such *upajivya-pramana*. It also lies in the abiding values of his comprehensive metaphysical ideology of *svatantra*, which is indeed the apex of his thought. He attaches no value to literalism or mere speculative flights of philosophical imagination and its glamour.

### Isavasya Upanisad Bhashya

Madhva interprets this Upanisad as a valuable document of theism. The very first verse conceives of the twin-principles of theism – the immanence and the transcendence of the Deity. The Upanisad squarely affirms the reality of creation and records

the doctrine of disinterested performance of one's *svadharma*. It foreshadows the need for divine grace in realizing the highest truth.

Madhva's commentary of this Upanisad is original in many respects. He explains *sa paryagat* as referring to the human soul placing itself under the protection of the Supreme and thereby calling off all misery, in support of the *Dvaita* system. There is a strong fervour behind his bold and interesting explanation: 'Those who are content to revel in ignorance go to perdition. Into greater hell do they sink that rest content in their own knowledge, without taking the trouble to denounce false teaching and propagate the true.' The aggressive attitude that characterizes Madhva commentators is probably due to this interpretation. He explains *aham* and *asmi* in this Upanisad as the two secret, esoteric names of God. He construes: 'That Supreme Being (*Asau*) which indwells *Asu* (the Chief *Prana*) is I AM'.

### **Kena or Talavakara Upanisad Bhashya**

This Upanisad seeks to demonstrate the supremacy of the Brahman over all presiding deities of phenomenal forces of Nature as well as microcosm. It relates an interesting parable of the gods and the Yaksha. The sovereignty of God has two aspects – *adhidaiva*, celestial and *adhyatma*, physical. The so-called 'spiritual agnosticism' of this Upanisad is nothing more than a plea for the spirit of prayerful devotion to God that is to spring from inner humility of self. While it remains true that no human being can ever know God in all His fullness and glory, the Upanisad does not negative the possibility of knowing Him at all, each one according to one's capacity. Madhva comments, 'this *jiva*, who

is near to the body, is not that Supreme Self'. This is in line with his contention that 'Kena wants to fight against the doctrine of the identity of the world-soul and the individual soul'.

### **Katha Upanisad Bhashya**

According to Madhva, the theme of this Upanisad is whether the sovereignty of God over His creatures is limited upto the stage of release, or it continues beyond it. Madhva, as a mystic philosopher, emphasizes that the sovereignty of God extends beyond release. Further, he attributes the activities of the *jiva* in the waking and dream planes, too, to God. The idea that the human soul is dependent at all stages and states of its existence on the guidance and control of a Higher Power runs through every line and chapter of the Upanisad. The Upanisad makes a strong plea for the subordination of the individual to such Power. The gods, no less than the forces of Nature, obey the commands of God. The Upanisad makes the difference between God and the soul distinct. It also formulates the doctrine of Grace stressed by Madhva – 'God must choose the devotee before the latter can hope to attain Him'.

### **Mundaka Upanisad Bhashya**

This work is made up of quotations from authoritative sources. In this work, Madhva repudiates the 'invidious distinction' between the *para* (higher) and the *apara* (lower) *vidyas* in the sense in which these terms are interpreted by Samkara. Madhva opines that the distinction between the four Vedas and that by which the Imperishable is known is one of outlook, not of status or parts. It is a matter of intellectual

approach rather than one of material classification. He staunchly believes in the supreme authority of the entire Sastra as a whole to reveal the Supreme. He does not, therefore, subscribe to the view that the pre-Upanisadic literature is *apara-vidya*. He gives a new orientation to the concept of *para* and *apara vidya* by which the four Vedas and their connected literature will be designated as *para* and *apara* according as they are correlated or not correlated to the Supreme Being. He bases this interpretation on a text from the Parama Samhita of the Pancaratra. In the light of this interpretation, the conflict between ritualism and the path of knowledge, which this Upanisad is stated to focus, gets synthesized by shifting emphasis, as explained in his Gita Bhashya.

This Upanisad affirms 'Realism', both physical and psychical. Madhva, the Realist, states that all good acts performed by an enlightened soul from the moment of his realization, *aparoksa* of God-vision, are not destroyed, but credited, so to say, to his account in release. As *karma* is not destroyed in release, the souls together with their *jnanottara-karma* are bound up in the Lord with their different potentialities intact.

### **Prasna Upanisad Bhashya**

This Upanisad, in four sections, is made up of the answers to the six questions put to sage Pippalada. The first section refers to the twin-principles of *rayi* and *prana* to be the sources of creation. Madhva equates these two with Vayu and Bharati of his theosophy. He explains that this divine couple presides over the various principles of life in different capacities, and carries on the work of creation. The next two sections plead for the supremacy of *prana* over the psychic and the physical world.

Madhva's theology gives unique place to *prana*, calling it *prana-vidya*.

The fourth section of the Upanisad makes an analysis of dreams, ascribing the endless activity thereof to the powers of the individual. But Madhva ascribes the endless activity of dreams to the Supreme Being. The Upanisad states that the knower loses himself in the infinite light of the Deity, like rivers into the ocean. The emphasis is on the annihilation of name and form of the individual. But Madhva interprets it stating that the names and forms are not destroyed, but only differ from one another, like after the rivers mingling into the sea, in a hundred ways. On the analogy of the setting sun, he argues that the dissolution of the rivers into the sea can only legitimately imply their invisibility to the naked eye thereafter. He strives to interpret the Upanisad in the light of his *Dvaita siddhanta*.

### **Mandukya Upanisad Bhashya**

This work is the most theistic contribution of Madhva. To the proper understanding of the Upanisad, Madhva identifies the four forms of the intuiting self with the four forms of the Deity presiding over the four stages of our psycho-physical and trans-mundane existence. The four stages are waking, *jagrat*; dream, *svapna*; deep sleep, *susupti*; and *moksa, turiya*. The identification of the four stages to the four forms of the Atman by Samkara and other scholars is a narrow interpretation, according to Madhva, and does not stand scrutiny in the context of the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, where the *taijasa* and *prajna* are sharply distinguished from the individual *purusa*.

Madhva takes pains to repudiate the monistic implications of such terms as *Advaita*, *prapancopasana*, *avyavahara* in the Upanisad. He establishes that the Upanisad, as dealing with the *Adhyatma*, in the sense of the immanent Supreme Being, is the true active principle behind all our psycho-physical existence and activities. This line of thought, Madhva argues, is the real bottom-line of this and other Upanisads.

The Mandukya Upanisad is divided into four short *khandas*. The text, as it has come down to us, is in 29 *slokas* (verses). This text finds place, as such, in Prakarana I of Advaita-Vedanta of Gaudapada, Samkara's *paramaguru*. Madhva comments on these 29 *slokas* considering them as constituting the Mandukya Upanisad.

Madhva considers that *slokas* 7 to 9 afford material for a theistic reconstruction. After review of various theories of creation, theistic and anti-theistic, he says that the Deity cannot be supposed to engage in world creation out of any desire to achieve any unfulfilled desire. Creation is a spontaneous activity, just a welling up of the divine ecstasy. It is difficult to reconcile such an exalted idea with a purely a-cosmic (monistic) idea which treats the universe as a huge fancy of beginning-less ignorance. He does not agree to the interpretation of the term *deva* as the individual soul.

Similarly, he argues that *slokas* 17 and 18 are to be interpreted in the same realistic spirit. On a casual reading, they may seem to be a wholesale repudiation of all realism. But a careful attention to the wording and drift of the argument posed by the *slokas* tends to the dualistic thought. He argues that these *slokas* are cast in syllogistic form of a

*viparyayaparyayavasana* argument. His argument runs thus: 'The world, were it a projection of the mind, would disappear sometime; it does not so disappear, therefore, it is not a projection of the mind (but a reality).' The point is that the Advaitin cannot afford to deny that there is any disappearance of phenomena, because it is *mithya*. Disappearance, *nivrtti* is the necessary presupposition of *mithyatva*. Hence, the acceptance of the *viparyayaparyayavasana*, '*na nivartate*' necessarily leads to the conclusion that the world is not a mental projection, but a reality.

He points out that there is no logical concomitance between existence, *vidyamanatva* and negation, *nivrtti*. The term *vidyeta* in the text is to be taken in the sense of *utpadyeta*, produced. He thus sees in the proposition here an argument for the beginning-less reality, *anadisatyatva* of the universe. He draws attention to the use of the term in the text meaning 'selective genitive' which implies the existence of other reals, *sa dvitiatva*. If the *turya* alone were meant to be real and all other *bhavas* unreal, the use of the words *nirdharana*, *sasti* (selective, genitive) would be out of place. He explains the term *mayamatram* in the text as 'created by God's will and sustained by it'. The term *matram* is made up of two roots, *maa* meaning to measure and *tra* meaning to protect. Similarly, he explains the reference to the Supreme in the text from the standpoint of his *Svatantra-Advitiya- Brahmavada*.

### Aitareya Upanisad Bhashya

The Aitareya Upanisad is generally restricted to Aitareya Aranyaka I. The second and the third parts of the Aranyaka (II and III) are together termed Mahaitareya Upanisad. The third Aranyaka as such is known as Samita Upanisad. Madhva's Bhashya

is commentary on all the three Aitareya Aranyaka parts, constituting Aitareya Upanisad.

When literally interpreted, much of the Upanisad appears to be unintelligible, grotesque and bizarre. But Madhva interprets it in a mystic and esoteric way. His interpretation of the text in terms of the Highest Brahman and Its worship and meditation, through all Its immanent aspects is unique and extraordinary. The intimate connection of this Upanisad with the Rigveda Samhita, in which mysticism and symbolism are very significant, lends credence to Madhva's line of explanation. There is no doubt that the general trend of Madhva's commentary on Part I of the Aranyaka favours some kind of an allegorical explanation of sacrifice. The text suggests that seekers acquire concentration of thought by meditating on the accessories of sacrifice. The second part of the Aranyaka enlarges on the doctrine of the Atman. The third part of the Aranyaka takes up the theories of world combination and permutation, with the mystic meaning of various forms of the Samhita text, its vowels, consonants, etc.

Madhva interprets the entire Upanisad in a mystic and 'Vaisnavite sense'. The hymn, *Utkha* is identified with the Brahman. The five-fold hymn is explained as the five forms of Visnu, Narayana, Samkarsa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. The meditation on the Samhita text and its constituent parts is similarly dealt with. Madhva is alive to the difficulties of such interpretations which involve 'loose and unscientific etymologizing'. The interpretations are rather 'weak, farfetched'. It may be that the general tone and wording of the Aranyaka is in favour of mystic interpretation of *karma*, but there can be no

logical connection with Visnu. The supremacy of *prana* as the central theme of the Veda is obvious, and also the equation of the *prana* with the Brahman. But Madhva's equation of *prana* with Visnu in the interpretation does not appeal to reason.

Madhva selects four passages from the Aranyaka as representing its quintessence and from which he draws his doctrine of *sarva-sabda-samanvaya* in the Brahman, Visnu. This doctrine is the master-key to his interpretation. He records that 'not only the names of the gods and rishis in the Veda, but even the very music of the spheres, the sounds of the ocean, the thunder of the clouds, and noise of the falling trees voice the majesty of God'. These are lofty sentiments of a devout theist to which any mystic may rise in moments of divine ecstasy. For Madhva, Visnu stands only for the Highest Being and hence is his equation of the Brahman with Visnu.

Madhva discusses in this Bhashya the points at issue between Dualism and Monism. He refutes the doctrine of identity between *jiva* and the Brahman in the dialogue between Indra and Visvamitra. Similarly he opposes the concept of the attribute-less Brahman, and seeks to establish in *moksa*, gradation and difference of various kinds, *taratamya*. He argues that the terms *aham* and *asmi* are used as secret names of God, explaining the entire passage as 'That which is called *Aham* is in the *Asu* (Chief Breath) and that which is in the *Asu* is *Aham*', that is, '*Aheya*'. He also explains that the term *atma*, preceding the text, is used in the sense of inner ruler or guiding principle, and not in the context of identity of the *jiva* and the Brahman.

## Taittiriya Upanisad Bhashya

Madhva adopts a mystic line of interpretation in this work. At the outset, in *siksavalli*, he refers to meditation on the Brahman in the six constitutive elements of letter, accent, quality, effort, modulation and combination. The Supreme, Visnu presides with His five forms over the five spheres of *loka*, *vyotisa*, *vidya*, *praja* and *atma*. The same Lord rules over the five sheaths and indwells them. He is, therefore, designated by the epithets *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, etc. Madhva regards all the five sheath-forms as the Brahman. Madhva's view is that all the forms of the Brahman are meant to be grasped as immanent in the different *kosas* and, therefore, designated by those very names for purposes of meditation. He thus helps the mystic and esoteric correlation of the working of the psychophysical world with the immanent activity of the Brahman. For Madhva, the real teaching of this Upanisad is that, in all the five states, it is the Brahman, nothing but the Brahman, clothed in esoteric phraseology, as the *antaryami* aspect. This interpretation places the teaching of this Upanisad in a new and edifying perspective, consistent with the principle of *samanvaya* of Vedantic texts in the Brahman.

According to Madhva, the crucial point in the last *valli* (*sloka*) is gradation of bliss in *moksa*, *anandataratamya*. He maintains that the gradation perceived here has reference to the highest state of release itself.

## Brhadaranyaka Upanisad Bhashya

This is the biggest of Madhva's Upanisad Bhashyas. He gives, as usual, an esoteric and theological explanation of the ritual sections of the Upanisad. He explains the 'Asvamedha Brahmana' in terms of the Brahman, and its meditation through nature symbolism.

Madhva refutes in detail the contents of monistic texts such as *vacarambhanam*. He discusses in full the thesis of *siddhanthe-vyutpattih* which establishes that the mechanism of speech has reference to an established order of reality. He also establishes the self-validity of the *agamas*, the characteristics of the three *pramanas*, the concept of *visesas*, etc. He refers to the example of the drum and the lute to emphasize the substantial dependence of everything on God. He refers to passages in the Upanisad that state that the human souls are subject to misery and have to look up to God, who is free from *arti*, imperfection for grace and redemption. The presence of evil and imperfection in the world is, for Madhva, proof of existence of omnipotent God.

At the end of this Bhashya, as at the end of ten other works, he claims to be an *avatar* of Vayu.

## Chandogya Upanisad Bhashya

This work is a detailed exposition of the *Dvaita* system, and launches a severe attack on the Monistic system. The opening sections of this Upanisad extol the cult of *mukhya-prana*, chief-breath. In Madhva's theology, it occupies a position similar to that of Christ in Christianity. *Mukhya-prana* is the 'Son of God', and is the highest medium through which the *Udgitha*, identified with Visnu as the Brahman, is to be worshipped, for He alone, among the gods, is free from sin, and finally leads the souls to *moksa*.

In this work, Madhva puts on the Monist the onus of proving the world to be false. He quotes from the Sruti extensively. He refers to the laudations of minor gods to Visnu as their Inner Ruler. His 'partiality' to Visnu is very consistent, and carries out his monotheistic attunement of the Upanisads. He refers to the term *tajjalan* in this Upanisad to give Vaisnavism a footing therein. He splits it into *tat* and *jalan*, *jalan* meaning the 'being' that breathes in the primeval waters. This signifies Visnu breathing in the primeval waters.

His interpretation of the sixth chapter of the Upanisad is quite significant. He states that the Advaitic interpretation of this chapter that knowledge of the One, Real produces the knowledge of 'all' is fallacious. For him, the Advaitin is least justified in speaking of 'the unknown becoming known; the unheard becoming heard'. He contends that the words actually used justify more his thesis than the interpretation of Samkara. His interpretation is that knowledge of the Brahman is the end and aim of all kinds of secular and religious learning. Without such

knowledge of the Supreme Being, even the most comprehensive secular knowledge is futile. He stresses the primacy of the knowledge of God over every other kind of knowledge. That, when acquired, confers the benefit of all else that is known, or worth-knowing. This becomes possible by effecting a proper correlation between secular knowledge and divine insight through the subsidiary and dependent character of all worldly knowledge. To know the Brahman as *sarvasattapratitipravrttinimittam* is to have derived the true benefit of knowing all that is worth-knowing in the world.

The idea is that the knowledge of the 'greater' includes that of the 'less'. By means of a similarity of form, the knowledge of the primary may make the knowledge of the secondary as good as known. Of God and the world, both being reals, the knowledge of God, the creator as *pradhana*, is sufficient to give knowledge of the world as created and sustained by Him, as depending on Him. Madhva argues that the knowledge of the father enables one to know the offspring by sight in virtue of similarity of features. He thus attempts in various ways to bring out the thesis of the pre-eminence of divine knowledge over empirical knowledge, as the teaching of the Upanisad.

As for the mahavakya *tat tvam asi* of this Upanisad, Madhva is the first Indian philosopher, and critic of Samkara's interpretations of this *mahavakya*, drawing attention to the inappropriateness of the illustrations used to the thesis of 'identity'. Monism argues that, like rivers joining the sea, totally losing themselves, the *jivas* return to their original abode in God after vicissitudes on earth. Madhva argues that, to all appearances, the rivers may get mixed up with the sea and be lost. But they

are there, all the same. Of course, there is no realization on the part of the rivers of their difference from the sea; but neither is there any realization on their part, of any identity with it. He dwells on the narration of Uddalaka in the Upanisad that the Brahman is the source, shelter and support of all creatures, a description which obviously suggests the dependence of all finite existence on an Unseen Power. He reorients the interpretation of the text in terms of the dependence of all finite reality on the One Supreme, an identity based on mystic perception of metaphysical dependence of all finite reality on the Brahman.

As for the text *ekam eva advitiam* of the Upanisad, Madhva interprets *advitiam* as without a peer or a superior. The denial of a 'second' has reference only to an equal or a rival, rather than to inferior reality. Sruti has several texts to confirm this line of interpretation. The last chapter of the Upanisad takes the view of *moksa* as a state of active enjoyment of bliss for the released souls. Madhva considers that the Upanisad vindicates the *Dvaita* system.

## Rigveda Bhashya

Madhva views the Rigveda (Sakala sakha), and for that matter, the whole Veda, as an essentially theosophical document.

He maintains the doctrine of three-fold interpretation of Veda. The Supreme Being is its highest subject matter. All scripture, primarily and in the first place, sings the glory of the Supreme. He opposes the popular view that the Veda only sings the praises of a plurality of gods, *devas* and are mostly made up of hymns to be addressed to them on the occasion of numerous sacrifices. While admitting that they do serve this purpose, he contends that they have a higher aim, to convey the knowledge of the One Supreme Being. This latter aim is the highest and the most fundamental object of the Veda without exception or distinction. The distinction of *karma* and *jnana kandas* is, thus, to a large extent, superficial and misleading. Even the *karma-kanda* is capable of being interpreted in terms of the highest wisdom of the Brahman, by the seeker. According to him, the popular distinction is one of convenience, and adopted for practical and schematic reasons. As all persons are not equally endowed with the highest spiritual light and capacity to rise to the highest sense of the scripture, the distinction of *karma* and *jnana kandas* has a place in the scheme of things in the ordinary working hypothesis. But it is, in truth, only a means to an end. True wisdom can be attained only when one rises to the level of direct attunement of the entire sacred literature with the Supreme Being, after purifying oneself by going through the disciplinary schemes laid down in the *karma-kanda* and discharging one's obligations, social and religious, which it entails on him, in a spirit of prayer, devotion and dedication to the Supreme. According to Madhva,

this is the theosophical teaching of the Rigveda and all the other Vedas.

At the outset of this work, Madhva makes interesting remarks on the evolution of the present text of the Vedas, the scheme of *risis*, deities and the metres of the hymns. He presupposes three redactions of the Samhita texts – the first stage of Mulaveda when the hymns were in a floating stage, the second stage of Upavedas or Protovedas when the floating materials came to be arranged into three groups, namely, the *proto-Rk*, the *proto-Yajus* and the *proto-Saman*, and the third stage of separating the texts into four groups of Samhitas representing the present texts, by Vyasa. Besides the three stages of Vedic redaction, Madhva also considers that some passages had actually been displaced from their original contexts at different stages of redaction, while a few had been lost. In this work, he cites examples of both kinds.

Madhva works out the details of his three-fold interpretation of the Rigveda in the opening section of this work. He observes that the *Rks* as lauding particular forms of the Supreme like *Agni*, *Mitra* are easily susceptible to higher attunement with the One, than other parts of the Vedic literature like the Brahmanas. He chooses some forty *suktas* of the first *mandala* to support his thesis.

Madhva has an elaborate scheme of *risis*, *devatas*, etc for the hymns, peculiar to himself. Visnu is the chief and the highest of all the *risis*. It is He that reveals the Veda to Brahma at the beginning of creation, as stated in the Svetasvatara Upanisad. Excluding Visnu, there are four other grades of *risis* – primary,

secondary, tertiary and the fourth grade. Brahma is the primary Seer of the whole Veda. Then, second, come Garuda and Sesa who are the Seers of the Veda and the Pancaratras. Among the tertiary *risis*, Indra is the Seer of *Rks*, Surya of *Yajus*, Soma of *Saman* and Agni of *Atharvan*. In the fourth grade are the individual Seers of various *Rks* and *suktas* whose names are given in the Anukramanika and other works. Some kind of unseen merit attaches to knowledge of the first three grades of Seers, and tangible results to the last. The ‘wives’ of the Seers take rank in the order of their husbands. They preside over some metres.

Similar is the case of *devatas* of hymns. Next to the Supreme Being, Sri is the *devata* (subject) of all those hymns except those specially applying to Visnu. The wives of gods, down to Indra, follow suit. Madhva gives numerous other details of like description quoting from works which are now not extant.

Madhva states that salvation can be obtained only by realizing the supremacy of the Brahman, Visnu and His lordship over the gods, and by attuning the entire scripture to Him. The Rigveda upholds Visnu, according to him, among the *adidaiva-tattvas*, as the Supreme Being that is free from all taint and imperfections. The other *devatas* like Brahma, Indra, etc are subject to various imperfections such as *duhkhaprapti*. Rudra has similar defects. Even the goddess Lakshmi is stated as inferior in many respects, while the other gods like Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Marut are stated as being under the control of Lakshmi. He cites passages from the Suparna and Bahvrca Srutis establishing a hierarchy of the gods. The Tura-Sruti makes Vayu superior to Indra, Soma, Agni, Surya, etc. The Rigveda Samhita vouches for the supremacy of Visnu over Indra. There is thus sufficient

evidence in the Veda, says Madhva, for the hierarchy of gods and for the suzerainty of Visnu over all the gods of the Vedic pantheon. The entire scripture refers to Visnu, and not to the individual gods who do not exist during pralaya. He argues that, at least to safeguard the eternal validity of the Sruti, which cannot be done in the absence of Bhashya, during the time of *avantarapralaya*, the higher attunement of scripture in the Brahman must be recognized. Otherwise, the Vedas would be bereft of *vacyartha* during *pralaya*, and thus lose their title to eternal validity.

It is for this reason also that Madhva emphasizes the scheme of three-fold interpretation of scripture from the historical, the mystic and the transcendental points of view. The historical interpretation is generally in line with that of Sayana and other Vedic commentators. The mystic interpretation is that by which a hymn or text in praise of a particular deity is made to refer to the particular form of the Brahman, Visnu presiding over the act for which the deity is known, and over the deity also in the same name. In this case, the names and epithets find their fullest etymological sense only as applied to the *antaryamin*. Madhva terms the mystic interpretation as one of 'yoga' or 'mahayoga' while the historical one is the 'rudhartha'. The mystic one is grounded on the doctrine of *sarvasabdamanvaya* in the Brahman. The third line of Vedic interpretation is the *adhyatmic*, pertaining to the metaphysical or philosophical relation between the *jiva* and the Brahman, and centres round it. Jayatirtha elucidates the three lines of interpretation in his learned commentary on the Rg Bhasya, based on grammatical and philological sanctions, thus: 'In the outward sacrifice, Fire is the first to be worshipped. The Supreme Being immanent in Fire is

next lauded under the same name of *Agni* (in its *yaugika* or *mahayoga* sense). Lastly, in the realm of the inward sacrifice of knowledge (*atmajnana*), the Supreme is praised as the author (hotr) of the right kind of rapprochement between the senses and the external environment, or as the immanent guide that controls (*agratvat agranitvat*) the consuming fire of external reality by the flame of intellect'.

Madhva's Bhashya mainly provides the details of the mystic line of interpretation and rarely of the other two. He passes over the historical explanation as being obvious. He elaborates with great skill here and there the *adhyatmic* interpretation such as the Indra-Vrtra episode. According to him, Vrtra represents the concentrated essence of *ajnana* or false teaching of *maya*, figuratively described as a cloud, a serpent (*ahi*) or a 'mountain' (*adri*). Indra is the enlightened soul or Supreme Lord who slays this demon of ignorance with his weapon of vajra or enlightenment, *samyajnana*. Ignorance falls vanquished, sundered of its hands and feet, that is to say, put out of action, by reason and revelation.

Madhva's approach in this work is designed for the satisfaction of the spiritual and mystic thought-needs of humanity. While it accommodates the purely historical explanations of Sayana and the modern scholars, it goes far beyond them in certain directions. Madhva does not expressly criticize the interpretations of earlier Vedic commentators though he differs from many of them, even in the interpretation of hymns. The three-fold interpretation of Vedic texts elaborated by Madhva has its parallel in the western tradition of scriptural interpretation. It is Origen who formulated the three-fold sense of scripture –

the literal, moral and mystical. This division corresponds to Plato's tripartite division of man into body, mind and spirit or soul.

Madhva's stand on the Rigveda has been vindicated by modern scholars. The scholar-mystic Sri Aurobindo, in his 'The Secret of the Veda' expounds the mystic thought of the Vedic hymns clothed in symbolic terminology. Prof. Maryla Falk writes that 'in a large group of hymns, a specific technical terminology and phraseology relating to a set of psycho-physiological and functional hypostases which constitutes the basic data of the earliest Yoga theory' is elaborated. An orthodox Visistadvaita scholar D.T. Tatacharya states thus: 'The Rigveda has the idea of the Brahman underlying it. If we apply, and I don't know why we should not apply, to the *Rks* and hymns of this Veda the principles of Upanisads, as meaning the Brahman, we cannot escape the conclusion that this Veda is as much concerned with the Brahman as Upanisads'. The Rigveda Samhita, with a new commentary, published by the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry pays handsome tributes to Madhva and his commentators for their pioneering work in bringing to light the mystic and symbolic meanings of Rigvedic hymns.

## Stotras and Works on Worship and Rituals

Madhva composed a few Stotras and other works of miscellaneous character dealing with religious worship, rituals, etc. These works, stated hereunder, reflect his deep religious spirit and devotional fervour.

### Yamaka Bharata

This is a short Yamaka-kavya in 81 verses, in different metres, dealing with the exploits of Krsna and his help to the Pandavas. He handles a variety of metres skillfully in the use of *yamakas* (rhymes), *prasa*, *anuprasa* (alliteration), etc. The work appears to have been composed in a gush of ecstatic devotion

### Nrsimha Nakha Stuti

This is a short eulogy of the nails of God Nrsimha in two *sragdhara* verses. According to tradition, Madhva composed these two verses, and had them prefixed to his disciple Trivikrama Panditacharya's Vayustuti, extolling Madhva. They are now recited as part of the Vayustuti, at the beginning and at the end.

### Dvadasa Stotra

This Stotra, in twelve short adhyayas, comprising 126 verses, in a variety of metres, handled with distinct musical effect, is believed to have been composed by Madhva at the time of his acquisition of the image of Sri Krsna which he installed in his Mutt at Udipi. The author has woven many beautiful and profound truths of religion and metaphysics in this Stotra. It is

said to have given the first impetus to the birth of the great devotional literature of the Haridasas. It occupies a preeminent position in *Dvaita* literature in Sanskrit.

### **Krsnamrtamaharnava**

This is an anthology of 242 verses, including five of benedictory nature in praise of Visnu, from various sources. Though it is mostly in *anustubh*, there are other metres, too. The verses are attributed to Siva, Narada, Pulastya, Dharma, Brahma, Markandeya, Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulaha, Atreya, Kausika, Agastya, Suta, Vyasa and Rukmangada. Two verses - 52 and 66 - of this anthology occur also in the Mukundamala of Kulasekhara.

The work emphasizes the need for and efficacy of fasts on *Ekadasi* days, indicates the way of determination of *Ekadasi* and *Dvadasi tithis*, the worship of *Saligramas*, the wearing of *Urdhva-pundras*, etc. Interestingly, verse 10 refers to the worship of Visnu with *bilva* leaves which is rather uncommon among Vaisnavas.

The work concludes with an exhortation to his followers to cultivate love and devotion to God at all times. From the fourteenth year of one's life, a man or woman does good or bad deeds which, at the very lowest calculation, cause not less than ten future births. Thus there is no hope of attaining freedom from transmigratory career by exhausting the effects of *karma*. *Bhakti* is the only way to release from the ills of *karma*.

### **Tantrasara Sangraha**

This work deals with a substantial element of *tantric* mysticism in Madhva worship, and rituals including *nyasas*, *mudras*, etc. This covers different Vaisnava modes of worship and initiation, *diksa* under the Tantras. This work claims to be an abridgement of a more detailed work by the author named Vyasa, vide verse 77. This work is metrical in form, and is divided into four chapters containing 442 verses.

The first chapter gives in detail the countless forms of the Lord presiding over the letters of the alphabet, their special characteristics and *mantras* together with the procedure of their meditation, chanting and *nyasa*. The second chapter deals with the auxiliaries of *homa* and *kalasapuja*. The third chapter deals with matters relating to iconography, temple architecture, consecration of idols, etc. It deals with the choice of proper material for the casting of images, their poses, standard measurements, the choice of proper sites for construction of temples, area required for the purpose, the nature of building materials, the construction of domes, *gopuras*, *prakaras*, etc for temples, the nature of court yards, mandapas, etc. It records the religious ceremonies connected with the *ankurarpana*, *palikapuja*, *bali* and other ceremonials. It records the way of actual installation of the idols after the ceremonies, their bathing in holy waters, *abhisheka* amidst recitation of Vedic *mantras*, and subsequent festivities connected with the feeding of guests, and the final bath, *avabratha* after the rites. It also touches on the subject of renovating temples fallen into ruins or disrepairs. The chapter ends with a reference to minor deities to be set up and worshipped

in a temple. The last chapter is a resume of the special *mantras* bearing on the entire subject in the original *Tantrasara* of Vyasa.

Madhva's exposition refers primarily to the worship of Visnu and consecration of *Vaisnava* temples. He refers to other kinds of *Tantras*, probably *Vaikhyanasa*, prescribing other modes of consecration. As for himself, he followed the *Pancaratra Agama*.

### **Sadacara Smrti**

This is a small compendium of codes governing a man's daily life and activities from a strictly orthodox point of view. It is in keeping with the ancient ideal of *varnasrama-dharma* and an ideal *brahminical* life. It touches upon the topics of *sandhya*, *brahmajnana*, *vaisvadeva*, duties of ascetics, etc. This work, in 41 verses, is said to be a short anthology of the precepts of Vyasa, on religious life. It is mostly in *anustubh*. This work is stated to have been commented upon by Viswanadha Vyasa of the 16th century AD.

### **Yati Pranava Kalpa**

This is a small handbook explaining the correct mode of adopting *sannyasa* and entering the fourth order of life. It deals with the method of initiating the disciple, *mantropadesa* and administering the oath of asceticism to him. The oath of loyalty to the Order administered to the new entrant is from the standpoint of Vaisnava Realism of Madhva. It runs thus: 'Never shall I forswear Visnu and the Vaisnavas. Never shall I deem Visnu to be on par or identical with other gods. Never shall I associate

with those who hold the doctrine of identity or equality of God or soul'. The initiated shall spend his time trying to improve his knowledge of the Sastras. He shall worship the Lord, and practise the *pranava-japa* regularly to realize God.

### **Krsna Jayanti Nirnaya**

This work deals with the *krisnajayanti vrata*, the birth anniversary ritual of Sri Krsna. Madhva attaches special importance to the worship of Krsna and hails His birth anniversary as a *vrata* for observance with devotion and austerity. He enjoins on his followers a complete fast that day, and this is followed by Vaisnavites to this day. Special worship is held at midnight when the incarnation is believed to have taken place on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of Sravana. *Arghya* is offered welcoming the Lord at that moment. The fast is broken the next morning.

### **Kanduka Stuti**

Kandukastuti, Krsnastuti or Krsnagadya as it is variously called is a *stotra*, in praise of Krsna, in two smart alliterative verses. The name *kandukastuti* means 'generally repeated by Hindu girls at the time of playing with a ball'. But the content of this work does not warrant any such surmise.

Two other minor works of Madhva, one on Jyotisa Sastra and another on Tithinirnaya, are stated to have been discovered.

## 8. Jayatirtha

### General

Jayatirtha makes a remarkable contribution to the *Dvaita* thought and its literature. He gives final shape and form to its concepts and categories, standardizes their definitions, and formulates new ones where Madhva had not formulated, in the light of contemporary logic and philosophy. He accomplishes this task by the power of his faith, his brilliant intellect, keen dialectical abilities, his insight into the unity of the doctrines of *Dvaita* philosophy, his philosophical analysis of problems, his extraordinary genius for amplification and clarification of details. He pays equal attention to the task of critical and constructive exposition of the Madhva *Siddhanta* and to dialectical refutation of the hostile views. He emphasizes the ultimate thesis of Madhva that the ‘reality of the world and other principles should be assigned no more than their proper place as a doctrine of lesser philosophical value and prominence, beside the highest truth of the independence and infinitude of the Supreme Reality’. He makes an impassioned statement of the grand synthesis of Upanisadic thought currents converging towards the ideology of the *Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahmavada*. For his contribution to the *Dvaita* system, he is honoured with the title ‘Tikacarya’ and constitutes, with Madhva and Vyasatirtha, the ‘Munitrayam’ of *Dvaita* Vedanta.

He is the author of clearcut definitions of such metaphysical conceptions as *tattvam*, *saksi*, *visesa*, *svatantra*, *paratantra*, etc. in *Dvaita* philosophy. He defines *tattvam*, reality as ‘*anaropitam parimitivisayah*’ and explains its significance so as to make it fool-proof against the criticisms of Sriharsa. He

elucidates, for the first time, the true nature of *visayavisayibhava*, relation between knowledge and its object, as acceptable to Madhvaism. Besides defining the concepts, he is the earliest to lay down the proper methodology for treatment of topics, *prakriya*.

## Works of Jayatirtha

Over 22 works have been ascribed to Jayatirtha. The salient features of his important works from the point of view of *Dvaita* philosophy are stated hereunder.

### Tattvasamkhyana Tika

It is a short commentary on the first of the ten Prakaranas of Madhva. Jayatirtha gives the definition of *tattva*, of great philosophical importance, in this work. He also gives the rationale of the classification of reality into *svatantra* and *paratantra* of Madhva's philosophy in his inimitable way.

**Tattvodyota** is a well-thought-out plea for the dualistic interpretation of *tattvamasi*.

**Visnu Tattva Vinirnaya** is the biggest of his commentaries on the Prakaranas of Madhva. In this work, he refers extensively to the earlier interpretations of Padmanabhatirtha and Naraharitirtha, and quotes extensively from the works of Citsukha only to repel his attacks on the concept of *bheda*, difference, in the Madhva thought.

**Mayavada Khandana Tika** quotes from Sriharsha and Anandabodha in regard to cessation of *avidya* which, according to Jayatirtha, belongs to a fifth order of predication.

In **Prapanca-Mithyatva-Anumana Khandana Tika**, he explains, at the outset, that it is incumbent on the Realist to expose

the un-tenability of the doctrine of the unreality of the world. As the Brahmasutra specifically states that the Brahman is author, etc of the world, it becomes a travesty unless the world is shown to be real.

In **Upadhi Khandana**, also known as **Tattvaprasika**, he says that the Advaitin must either give up the idea of 'ignorance' attaching to the Brahman, or else account for it in a rational way. It is foolish to take refuge in the *durghatattva* of *avidya*. In this work, a commentary on Madhva's Brahmasutra Bhashya, he supersedes the commentaries of other Madhva Pontiffs. This work of Jayatirtha has more than eleven commentaries written on it. He keeps strictly to the original, avoiding all digressions, and criticism of rival interpretations of the Sutras. Occasionally he refutes the interpretations of Samkara, alluded to in the Bhashya.

In **Kathalaksana Tika**, he gives a clear exposition of *katha*, dialectic disputation, and throws much historical light on various points. He refers to the three different classifications of *katha* adopted by Sastrakaras.

Jayatirtha's **Nyayasudha** is a classic, a superb controversial treatise and an illuminating commentary on the Anu Vyakhyana, all in one. It is familiarly known to Madhva scholars as *Sudha*. '*Sudha va pathaniya vasudha va palaniya*' is a saying attesting to the universal homage paid to it by traditional scholars.

This work quotes the views embodied in the Bhashyas of Samkara, Bhaskara, Ramanuja and Yadava Prakasa on the Sutras, and the commentaries of Vachaspati, Padmapada, Prakasatman

and Amalananda, as well as those of the Samkhyatattvakoumudi, Tattvabindu, Nyayakusumanjali, Khandanakhandakhyada, Citsukhi, Manamohanakara, Nyayalilavati, Nyayavartikatatparyatika, etc, and refutes them wherever necessary in the course of the work. Similarly, he reviews the doctrines of the Bhatta and Prabhakara Schools of Mimamsa, the philosophy of propositions, and various views of Nyaya-Vaisesika and Samkhya-Yoga realists as well as those of the Buddhists, Jains, Pasupatas, Saktas, and refutes them in proper contexts with wealth of details. He criticizes the doctrine of *sphota*. He eulogizes the passages of the Anu Vyakhyana to brilliant advantage by making them capable of meeting a variety of objections. In this context, Nyayasudha can be said to be a marvel at commentary-writing.

In the **Isa Upanisad Bhashya Tika**, he severely criticizes the *Advaitic* and *Visistadvaitic* interpretations of the text.

In the **Rgbhasya Tika**, he gives a lucid exposition of the original, not only in the light of the authorities cited by Madhva, but of other standard works as those of Yaksa. He discusses the grammatical derivation of many Vedic words in the original in the light of Paninian grammar. The work shows his mastery of Vedic grammar in all its intricacies. He criticizes the interpretations of other commentators on Rg Veda, and explains the details of the *adhyatma* interpretation of the hymns.

In the **Gitabhashya Prameya Dipika**, he draws attention to the interpretations of Samkara and Bhaskara, and criticizes them. These references are valuable not only for Gita interpretation, but also for text-criticism and solving problems connected with authorship and genuineness of the commentaries

attributed to these two writers. This work is also valuable to a proper understanding of the hidden depths of thought, and suggestiveness of the original Bhashya of Madhva. He displays a soul of wit, and a formidable array of details. He gives suitable explanation to the grammatical lapses of Madhva in his Bhashya. He refers twice to the commentary of Narahariritirtha.

Jayatirtha has to his credit some independent original works. Of them, **Vadavali** is important. It is also designated **Vadamala**. It is a dialectic refutation of the illusionistic hypothesis with all its logical and metaphysical reasoning. He challenges the theory of Monism that our senses always deceive us, being merely appearance-interpreting. He vindicates the fitness of sense-knowledge to reveal objects as they are. In this work, he deals with all important aspects of *pramanas*, *avidya*, *mithya*, *bheda*, *visesas*, dream-cognitions, etc. While quoting the views expressed in the Tattvapradipika of Citsukha, the Vivarana, Nyayakandali, etc he criticizes them. The Vadavali is thus the earliest polemical tract of the post-Madhva period, acting, in many ways, as the forerunner of the Nyayamrta of Vyasatirtha.

His **Pramana Paddhati** is his biggest independent work. It is the standard work on *Dvaita* logic and epistemology, and all issues of metaphysics. It deals with the nature, scope and definition of *pramanas*, their ways of functioning, theories of Truth and Error, the nature and validity of knowledge, etc. It is modelled on the Pramanalaksana, but reviews additionally the epistemological theories in the six systems of Indian thought, both orthodox and heretical. It is divided into three chapters – *pratyaksa*, *anumana* and *sabda*.

His minor independent works include **Padyamala**, a work on daily worship. It is indeed a summary of the method of worship enunciated in **Tantrasara Samgraha** of Madhva. Another work **Sataparaadha Stotra** is a stotra praying for forgiveness of a hundred sins a man commits every day.

Jayatirtha's contribution to the concepts of *Mithyatva* (falsity of the world), *Anirvacaniyatva* and 'Difference' is quite remarkable. He contends that it is not possible to formulate a satisfactory definition of falsity. It cannot be viewed as *anirvacaniya*, indefinable, or as non-existence. For him, a Dvaitin, the world is a reality and is ipso facto not the locus of non-existence. He does not accept the third order of predication between the poles of reality and unreality, existence and non-existence. The objects of illusions could be legitimately treated as 'unreals' appearing as 'reals'. He contends that a dispassionate examination of the data of illusions, and the verdict of sublating cognition could establish that the object presented in illusions is adjudged to be absolutely non-existent. After all, experience is what establishes what is possible and what is not possible.

As for the concept of Difference, he devotes considerable attention to an exposition of the category of Difference in Madhva's philosophy. According to him, the perception of difference is a *fait accompli*. Unless difference is conceded within the limits of perception, it cannot be logically refuted. Difference is a settled fact of life and experience, and cannot be allowed to be dismissed, as the presence of difference is a *fait accompli*. As such any repudiation of the category of Difference is unacceptable. The perception of difference is possible without involving interdependence of correlates. Jayatirtha explains the view of

Difference in Vadavali thus: 'Difference is not the attribute of both the correlates, but of only one of them, signalized by the other. The use of the singular in cases like *anayor bhedah* should therefore be understood in a collective sense (*samudayartha*) as in *anayos svarupam*, where, surely, two things cannot share the same *svarupa*. The very idea of *svarupa* is limited to individuality, even so, in the case of difference. This difference should, however, be accepted as the nature of things, revealed along with the perception of objects. If it were not so, anything known by us would be known as identical with all others, and one would have to fall into frequent doubts, even when one's own personality is perceived, whether one is oneself or someone else! That such wild doubts do not arise is due to the simple fact that the difference of an object from all others is revealed in a general way, in the very act of its perception. Such general awareness of an object as differentiated from the rest of the objective sphere is not to be confused with omniscience! But, it cannot be denied that, in knowing a given thing, the *saksi* has a general awareness of difference from all others. Without the recognition of such general awareness of difference, no conviction of the invariable and universal concomitance of *hetus* and *sadhya*s could be established. Without such conviction, no inference is possible. This does not suggest specific knowledge of each and every other thing in the universe for the perception of difference *per se*, without reference to specific counter-correlates. This is not necessary either. Doubts about the nature of objects are due, however, to the perception of an object, as such distinguished, from other things, coupled with the obscuration of its distinction for certain other objects that bear a close resemblance to it. Unless some such explanation is adopted, our doubts would be all embracing, instead of being

limited, as they generally are, to two or three alternatives only, in normal experience.’

In as much as most of his works are in the form of commentaries on the works of Madhva, Jayatirtha is prevented from devoting full and unrestricted attention to dialectical treatment of topics, as he is limited to the exigencies of the texts of Madhva. But within the limits of the opportunities afforded by the subject matter of the original texts, he has risen to great heights in dialectics. Jayatirtha is, therefore, rightly called the father of the dialectical movement in *Dvaita* thought.

## 9. Visnudasa

Visnudasa, the successor of Jayatirtha, elaborates in his *Vadaratnavali* the topics dealt with by the latter in his *Vadavali* and other works. He harnesses the principles of interpretation of the *Mimamsa* and *Vyakarana* Sastras for constructive exposition of the *Dvaita* siddhanta. He quotes from the *Sutras* of Jaimini and the works of *Mimamsakas* like Kumarila, Bhavanatha and Varadaraja. He defends Madhva’s interpretation of important identity texts like *tat-tvam-asi*, *ekam-eva-advitiam*, *nehananasti-kimcina*, etc. Quoting from the *Mahabhashya*, Kaiyata, Padamanjari and other works, he has worked out 20 different explanations of *tat-tvam-asi* and seven of *ekam-eva-advitiam* in support of the reality of difference between the *jiva* and the Brahman, and the reality of the world. He deals exhaustively on the concepts of Difference, *Bhavarupajnana*, *Mithyatva*, etc. This work is in the nature of a philosophical treatise on *Dvaita* Vedanta as a precursor to the works of Vyasa-tirtha.

In the first chapter, eleven possible definitions of falsity are reviewed including those made by Pancapalika and Citsukha. They are analyzed and refuted. Some other syllogisms on the falsity of difference on the premises of the *bhedatvam* and *mayatvam* are set at rest. It also deals with the issue of *drsyasambandhanupapatti* raised in the *Istasiddhi* and other works. This part of the work follows the *Mayavada Khandana Tika* of Jayatirtha.

The work then discusses the issue of *mithyatvam* and the connected issues. He argues that inference is, by its nature and

constitution, dependent on perception and cannot go against its grain, *upajivya virodha*. Our perceptions are quite capable of grasping the un-contradicted and un-contradictable reality of experience, even though they are limited to the present. But according to Advaitins, ‘contradiction’ is not merely the cessation of a thing after sometime, but a denial of its existence in the past, the present and the future. Such a denial is not, obviously, possible with regard to things that do exist at a given time and place, though liable to destruction later, and not existing before production. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the un-contradicted reality of a thing is established by perception itself which is admittedly self-valid, to the satisfaction of the *saksi*, whose convictions are indisputable. The reality established by *saksi* is of the same order as that posited of the Brahman, that is, absolute, *traikalikabadhabhavalaksanam*. The plea of provisional validity of the world advanced by Advaitins is not acceptable as the doctrine of degrees of reality has been disproved in the Vivaranavidambana. He argues convincingly that there is no reason to doubt the reality of objects established by perception.

In the second chapter, Visnudasa establishes the *jivas* to be radically different from the Brahman and from one another. He cites a number of references from the Upanisads to emphasize the persistence of their difference in the state of release. He argues that the difference existing in the Brahman from *jiva* is not open to ordinary perception or inference for the reason that the Brahman is cognizable only through scriptures, and the scriptures proclaim such a difference. He stresses that the Sruti texts speak of the reality of the world of matter, and of the difference between the *jivas* and the Brahman, the mainstay of *Dvaita Vedanta*. Besides, he attacks the *Advaitic* interpretation

of the identity of *jiva* and the Brahman in the face of *tat* and *tvam* signifying two different beings with conflicting attributes. He quotes from the scriptures that the attributes of plurality, dependence and limitation of the *jivas* are their permanent characteristics even in the state of release, *moksa*. Further, for him, the distinction of souls from one another is more easily established on the basis of the uniqueness of the individual experience of pleasure and pain. This uniqueness of experience called *vyavastha* is an irrefutable fact of experience. It is suicidal to deny its presence or persistence in the world. According to him, both laymen and philosophers have to account for it. He emphasizes that, even for an *Advaitin*, difference is a necessary concept, if the Brahman is to be defined as something that is absolutely distinguished from all that is material, unreal and limited.

The third chapter is a refutation of the doctrine of *Advaita* relating to nescience enveloping the Brahman. Visnudasa argues that the only ignorance is that present in the *jiva* in regard to the Supreme Being and this is to be destroyed by the knowledge of the Supreme. According to him, there is no proof of the existence of universal ignorance enveloping the Brahman. His contention stands to reason on the realistic view of difference.

The fourth chapter is a refutation of the doctrine of *Nirguna-Brahman* and establishes the view of the Brahman as *saguna*. The Sruti texts *neha nanasti* and *evam dharman prthak pasyan*, taken together, are shown to deny four possible views regarding the nature of the attributes of the Brahman and their relation to the Brahman, held respectively by the Mayavadins, Naiyayikas, Bhaskara and Ramanuja. This chapter reaffirms Madhva’s metaphysics designated *visesas* affirming the attributes

of the Brahman, simultaneously negating their separateness. It also seeks to establish the superiority of *sagunavidya* to the *nirguna* doctrine based on the principles of Mimamsa and Vyakarana sastras, and that there is no irreconcilable conflict between texts like *yas sarvajnah* and *kevalo nirgunasca*. What Visnudasa points out is that the *nirguna* texts are general in scope, and cannot negative special attributes of the Brahman expressly stated in the Sruti. According to him, the *saguna* texts are logically self-consistent while the *nirguna* ones bristle with contradictions. The Brahman is inconceivable without the attribute of omniscience. The text like *satyam, jnanam, anantam, brahma* posits certain attributes to the Brahman, and they should be taken in their explicit sense. There is thus no doubt, according to Visnudasa, that the Brahman is determinate and qualified, *savisesa*. The Brahman is full of auspicious attributes that are eternal and natural, and not due to superimposition of *maya*. They are countless and unlimited.

In the fifth chapter, Visnudasa attempts to meet the objections against the concept of the Qualified Brahman, the Brahman conceived as *savisesa* being, particularly the logical difficulties in defining the relation between substance and attributes, in terms of identity, difference, etc. This is a question of great interest in the philosophy of 'Substance' in relation to its attributes. Madhva philosophers have a distinct contribution to make to these theories.

If the 'qualities' are identical with the Brahman, the Brahman would be pluralized and lose Its integrity. When the Brahman is One Whole, the qualities themselves lose their plurality and turn out to be distinctions without a difference. They,

therefore, become synonymous in effect. If there is to be a relation, there is to be a subject and its attributes. A subject cannot become qualified by itself, and without such attributes.

Visnudasa reasons that the relation of identity is to be distinguished into two kinds - colourless, *nirvisesabheda* and colourful, *savisesabheda*. For example, an absolute and colourless identity exists between the terms '*dhvani*' and '*dhvana*'. Therefore, they are synonymous. But in respect of clay and pot, the relation is a colourful identity. The two terms are, therefore, not synonymous. The principle of *visesa* then operates as a representative of difference. It does duty for 'difference' without actually bringing in difference into the bargain. It sustains the plurality of attributes and their distinction of difference. Also it renders possible the adjectival relation of the attributes to the substance and explains how it is possible for one or more attributes to remain unknown, or unnoticed, or uncharacterized while the subject itself is partially known and characterized. It is self-governing like the *samanvaya*, and contains within itself the advantages of both difference and *samanvaya* without the demerits of either taken alone. Simultaneously it connects the substance and attributes, and explains their connection. He argues that adjustments to the demands of physical, logical, scientific and metaphysical needs are grounded in *Visesas*, which are just the power and potency inherent in objects, and which alone can bridge the gap between identity and difference. Indeed, this discovery, establishment and logical demonstration of the necessity of this ubiquitous logico-philosophical category and its enthronement in philosophy are the most significant contributions of Madhva thought to Indian philosophy.

In the last (sixth) chapter, he establishes the validity of the Vedas and their *apauruseyatva*, and makes a brief exposition of the doctrine of self-validity of 'Knowledge', and the validity of *saksi*, as the highest instrument of its ascertainment.

## 10. Vyasatirtha

### General

Vyasatirtha, Vyasaraaya or Vyasaraaja Svamin, as he is variously known, was born in 1478 and passed away in 1539. His birth name is Yatiraja. He was given the name of Vyasatirtha by his guru Brahmanyatirtha at the time of his ordination as a monk. The complete and reliable account of Vyasatirtha's life and career is recorded in the biographical account of Somanatha, titled Vyasayogicarita.

Vyasatirtha was almost the second founder of the system of Madhvaism. In him, the secular and philosophical prestige of Madhva's system reached its zenith of recognition. That the system is a living and flourishing faith in South India as a whole today is due to the strength he infused into it. His three works - Nyayamrta, Tatparya Chandrika and Tarka Tandava are considered to uphold the philosophy of Madhvaism in the fields of logic and metaphysics, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Vyakarana and Vedanta. His religion of service, sympathy and effort is a direct corollary of his philosophy. He was no inciter of hatred against Siva though personally a staunch Vaisnava himself. He composed a stotra in praise of Siva and, to this day, a special service is held in the Vyasaraaja Mutt at Sosale on the Mahasivaratri day, when the Sivalinga installed by Vyasatirtha there is worshipped.

His mission is two-pronged-religious and philosophical. In both the areas, he eminently succeeded. Among his disciples were Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa both of whom are among

the greatest poet-saints of India hailing from Karnataka. Both of them are part of the *Dasakuta* which has evoked popular enthusiasm for the philosophy of Vaisnavism in Karnataka. Its influence on the ethical uplift of the masses is well known. Even the Chaitnya Movement in Bengal flourished wholly in the lifetime of Vyasatirtha, and owed a great deal of its inspiration to the philosophy of Madhva as expositioned by Vyasatirtha. Chaitanya's biographer Kavikarnapur speaks reverentially of the great three works of Vyasatirtha as the Visnu-samhita.

## Works of Vyasatirtha

### Nyayamrta

Nyayamrta, the *magnum opus* of Vyasatirtha, undertakes a complete vindication of the philosophical power and prestige of the realistic metaphysics of Madhva, Anandatirtha. The first chapter discusses the central idea of 'idealism', the unreality of phenomenal world, and refutes the doctrines of *Advaita* in all their manifestations. The second chapter refutes the doctrine of Akhandartha and its application to Upanisadic texts. He shows that 'difference' is real, cognizable and characterizable with the help of *visesas*. He establishes that Madhva's scheme of five-fold difference has the sanction and support of the three *pramanas*. The chapter ends with a discourse of the *Dvaita* view as to the atomicity of the soul. The third chapter critically examines the place and significance to be assigned to the scriptural injunctions regarding the various means of realization such as *sravana*, *manana*, religious instructions, self-discipline, etc in expediting God-realization. The fourth chapter elucidates the doctrine of *mukti* as understood by Madhva. It maintains that gradation obtains in *moksa*, and must do so in view of certain logical necessities and scriptural admissions.

In this work, Vyasatirtha details various topics to refute dialectically the interpretations of *Advaita*. He expands on the works of Jayatirtha and Visnudasa, disputing the explanations of eminent Advaitins up to his time. He discusses several doctrines of *Advaita* Vedanta, not noticed by his predecessors, particularly Visnudasa, and deals with new definitions of concepts such as

falsity. His contribution to Madhva thought is thus new and original. He is not only the founder of the dialectic of the Madhva School, but also the fountainhead of the entire controversial literature of the *Dvaita-Advaita* schools subsequent to him. 'It is Vyasa-tirtha, who, for the first time, took special pains to collect together, from the vast range of Advaitic literature, all the crucial points for discussion and arrange them on a novel, yet thoroughly scientific and systematic plan'.

This work of Vyasa-tirtha is not a mere summary or adaptation of the works of his predecessors. It is the most stimulating philosophical examination of the premises and conclusions, the basis and superstructures of the *Dvaita* and *Advaita* systems from a dialectical angle, and giving the final verdict, after due examination, in favour of realistic metaphysics. It represents the highest achievement of the dialectical genius of the Madhva School. In the true spirit of a philosopher, he goes through a long and arduous process of thought-dissection to show that the thesis of Monism cannot be proved and that there is no philosophical justification for rejecting the reality of the world and its experiences established by all known means of proof and knowledge. This work is a great contribution to all analytical thinking in Vedanta and, according to Dasgupta, 'Vyasa-tirtha stands almost unrivalled in the whole field of Indian thought'.

Vyasa-tirtha begins his *Nyayamrta* with a demolition of the foundations of *mithyatva*, and builds his system of realistic metaphysics on the firm foundations of the validity of experience grounded in the verdict of flawless sense-perception, *pratyaksa* certified by *saksi*. He adopts a very rationalistic approach to the problem of philosophy. He stresses that the world is real in the

sense in which the Brahman is held to be real, in a manner comprehended by the senses, *pratyaksa yogya sattvanirukti*, and in terms which necessarily veto the unreality of the world. He adds that if the reality of the Brahman is essentially indefinable, so is the case with the world, too. The Brahman is, indeed, claimed to be somehow real even though its reality may not admit of any kind of logical definition. He argues that there is nothing illogical if the *dvaitin* chooses to regard the world as real by virtue of its essential and inalienable reality, even though such reality may not be logically definable. He further adds that if the reality of the Brahman stands for something more than a distinction from unreality, or for unconditioned existence, such a definition is to apply to the world, too. The reality of the world may be claimed to be revealed by the *saksi-pratyaksa*. It is revealed by the first and primary perception of the *saksi*. The world of perception has a right to be regarded as real by virtue of the same kind of reality that is attributed to the Brahman, and conveyed by the expression 'real' which, when applied to it, suffices to repudiate its falsity.

Vyasa-tirtha expounds the concept of *visesas* bridging the gap between substance and attributes, and bringing them together into an integrated whole, rationalizing their mutual relationship. He defines precisely the relation between substance and attributes in terms of identity-in-difference. The relation is best known as *savisesabheda*. The difference of a thing from another, and from any of its attributes, is colourful identity, *sa-visesabhinna*. This basic identity precludes the possibility of regress of logical relations, while it recognizes *visesa* as a peculiar potency of the thing in question. It operates as a 'representative' of difference and helps to distinguish the attributes effectively from each other

and from the substance, without prejudice to the integrity of the whole. As such, it obviates the flaw of synonymy of expression, *paryayatva*. *Visesa* is thus, by definition, a peculiar characteristic of a thing which enables inseparable whole to keep intact its richness of content from being lost in the underlying unity of essence, and preserve variety of aspects and attributes in their rightful places without overlapping of any kind, or from usurping or invading each other's place or jurisdiction or function. It holds the master-key to the mystery of substance and attributes. He analyses Upanisadic texts such as *vijnanam anandam brahma* to establish the acceptance of *visesas* which help in detecting difference-in-identity and diversity in unity. *Visesa* is to be accepted as a *sarvatantra-siddhanta*.

*Visesas* are to be admitted only in cases of proven identity where, nevertheless, a difference is permitted. It does not give any right to outlaw all difference, and explain differentiation everywhere in normal experience, as in respect of any two objects like a pot, and a piece of cloth, on the basis of *visesas*. *Visesas* are just meant to function as a representative of difference where actual and absolute difference is not recognized to exist.

Vyasatirtha handles the concept of *visesas* in a purely philosophical perspective. He, therefore, devotes considerable attention to the establishment of *saksi* as the highest basis of all *pramanas*, and the ultimate source and guarantor of all proof. Sense-perception, as tested by the *saksi*, and ratified by it, acquires absolute and infallible certainty. The reality of human experience such as pleasure and pain, gradation and diversity, is all grounded upon the verdict of *saksi* and ratified by it. As such it is *ipso facto* entitled to the highest validity. He asserts, like

Madhva, that, if any scriptural texts deny the validity of world and human experience, such texts need reinterpretation in accordance with the verdict of the *saksi*, in favour of the reality of the world experience. It is for this reason that Madhva and his commentators emphasize the primacy of *pratyaksa* over other means of proof, and the supreme significance of *saksi-pratyaksa* as a support of all other *pramanas*, *upajivya*. They are ardent champions of the view of the philosophical Realism that our senses are essentially capable of, and competent to, revealing objective reality as it is, and are not merely appearance-interpreting.

Vyasatirtha argues that experience shows that the *jivas* are limited creatures differing immeasurably from the universal consciousness of the Brahman. The Brahman is established by scripture as an omniscient, all-powerful Being. There is an insurmountable barrier in the proposition of identity between them. The very proof of their existence is the proof of their being endowed with such mutually incompatible attributes. In the face of such odds, the proposition of identity between the Brahman and the *jiva* is not acceptable.

### **Tatparya Candrika**

The Tatparya Candrika, familiarly known as Candrika, is a discursive commentary on Jayatirtha's Tattva-Prakasika, and pertains to the Sutra-Prasthanas of the *Dvaita* Vedanta. It is a great contribution to the philosophy of the Brahmasutras in the form of a close, critical and comparative study of the Bhashyas of Samkara, Ramanuja and Madhva. It also makes a comparative study of the commentaries of Bhamati, Pancapadika, Vivarana

and Kalpataru of the *Advaita* School, the Sutraprakasa and the Adhikaranasaravali of the Ramanuja School, and the Tattvaprakasika and the Nyayasudha of the *Dvaita* School.

There are two aspects to this work. One is constructive exposition of Siddhanta interpretations of the *Dvaita* School, and the other is logical examination and criticism of the interpretations of the other two Schools. This work is a very remarkable commentary of the *Dvaita* School applying the dialectic machinery with great brilliance to the purely interpretive literature on the Sutras. Vyasa-tirtha terminates the work with the Adhyasa II of the Sutras. It is completed by his later successor Raghunadhatirtha. Vyasa-tirtha's Candrika is the earliest commentary on the Tattvaprakasika, and still remains its most authoritative, critical and constructive exposition. It is rather the last word on the Sutra-Prasthanas of Madhva.

### **Tarka Tandava**

In this work, Vyasa-tirtha undertakes a thorough examination of the issues relating to categories and thought-measuring devices between his School and the Nyaya-Vaisesika. This work criticizes the views expressed in standard treatises of Nyaya such as Kusumanjali, Tattvacintamani, etc. It is divided into three chapters corresponding to the three *pramanas* recognized in the Madhva system. The *pramana* 'Anumana' is dealt with in the last chapter, though it is considered the second one in the Madhva School.

Vyasa-tirtha goes into the inner ramifications and technical details of the various topics as formulated by leading writers of

the Nyaya, Mimamsa and Vyakarana Schools. He demonstrates their practical and theoretical limitations. He emphasizes the comparative superiority and compactness of his school in relation to them.

His **other works** include *Mandaramanjari*s such as Mayavada-Khandana-Mandaramanjari, Upadhi-Khandana-Mandaramanjari, Prapanca-Mithyatva-Anumana-Khandana-Mandaramanjari; Bhedojjivana, etc. The bottom-line of the work Bhedojjivana is that the reality of 'difference' is established by all the three *pramanas* - sense-perception, reason and revelation. Of this work, Dr. Nagaraja Sarma states thus: 'Within a short compass, Vyasa-tirtha has covered the ground of the entire monistic literature pushed into contemporary prominence, and argued an unexpurgated case for the Realism of Madhva'.

Dasgupta says that 'the logical skill and depth of acute dialectical thinking shown by Vyasa-tirtha stands almost unrivalled in the whole of Indian thought'. His defense and reinforcement of the Madhva interpretation of the Sutras, with the help of the rich technical and exegetical resources of the Nyaya, Vyakarana and Purva-Mimamsa systems and other ancillary literature, are monumental achievements in the history of Indian thought. He carries his dialectics into the realm of pure thought. His work Tarka Tandava stands testimony to his criticism of the logical concepts, categories and doctrines of the Nyaya-Vaisesika system hostile to or inconsistent with the principles of Madhva theism.

His role in *Dvaita* Vedanta and its literature is that of an interpreter. He is the highest authority on the technicalities of the system and its most redoubtable champion. His three works

– Nyayamruta, Candrika and Tarka Tandava are known as ‘Vyasatraya’, the three eyes of the man-lion of Madhva-siddhanta. He establishes that the system of Madhva is not a mere revival of the Bhakti-cult, but a mighty philosophical movement of thought. By eschewing from his works theological issues such as the supremacy of Visnu over Siva, the *sastraic* sanction for *taptamudradharana*, he establishes himself to be a philosopher. At the same time, he provides ample scope for expression for the religious and emotional life of the followers of Madhva by giving a new impetus to the *Dasakuta* movement. He inspired saintly souls like Purandara Dasa, Kanaka Dasa and others while laying the foundations of the great system of Karnatak Sangita. He made a great impact on the followers of Caitanya in Bengal as the illustrious exponent of pure Vaisnavism of Madhva, paving the way for the ultimate affiliation of Bengal Vaisnavism to Madhvaism through the spiritual lineage of Vyasatirtha himself. Incidentally, he enjoyed the highest esteem of the greatest Hindu Emperor of South India – Sri Krsnadevaraya.

The contribution of Vyasatirtha also lies in the application of the principles of Purva-Mimamsa and Vyakarana in the exposition of Madhva-Siddhanta in his works. He represents a new phase of development in *Dvaita* Vedanta, and its literature. He demonstrates a remarkable command in the intricacies of the Mimamsa Sastra and its literature. From Vyasatirtha onwards, the appeal to Purva-Mimamsa is a regular feature in *Dvaita* literature. Vyasatirtha has been accredited, with Madhva and Jayatirtha, as one of the Munitrayam of Madhva-Siddhanta, the *Dvaita* School.

## 11. Other Madhva Pontiffs

### Vijayendratirtha

Vijayindratirtha is an important follower of Madhva faith in particular, and guardian saint of Vaisnavism in general, in the religious history of Tamil Nadu. He vindicates the power and prestige of the philosophical system of Madhva, and his interpretation of the Sutras stems the Siva-advaita movement then reigning in the South, and holds the *Dvaita* doctrine and interpretations against the attacks of Visistadvaitic critics. A prolific writer of the *Dvaita* School, he is a doughty champion of the reign of Realism in Indian philosophy in the post-Vyasatirtha period. Besides, he is a *yogi*, with proficiency in all the sixty-four *kalas*, arts.

In defense of the *Dvaita* School, Vijayindratirtha states that quotations from unknown and untraceable sources in Madhva literature is not peculiar to Madhva alone, but is common in the Bhashyas of Samkara, Ramanuja, Srikanta, etc, and even in the texts of Kalpasutras. Madhva is a philosopher who thought for himself, and spoke out his convictions without fear or favour. Difference in method and outlook is what distinguishes Madhva’s system from others. Vijayindratirtha repulses the attack on seeming indifference of Madhva to Purva-Mimamsa, and establishes its un-tenability. As for *avatars*, he says succinctly that either one believes in them, or not. It is not a matter for argument. As for the style and linguistic embellishments of Madhva, they are a matter of taste, and not the test of the soundness or rationale of one’s metaphysical views.

## Vadirajatirtha

Vadirajatirtha is an eminent successor of Vyasa-tirtha. Tradition states that he was a disciple of Vyasa-tirtha along with Vijayindrati-rtha. Yuktimalika, in 5379 *slokas*, is his magnum opus. His work marks a new phase in the history of *Dvaita* literature and breathes the spirit of a new age which produced popular exponents of Madhva-Siddhanta both in Sanskrit and in Kannada. He professes great admiration for Madhva, and pays him homage a number of times in Yuktimalika.

Yuktimalika is divided into five chapters called *Sourabhas* - *Guna*, *Suddhi*, *Bheda*, *Visva* and *Phala*. Chapters I and II establish the twin-principles of Madhva's theism that the Brahman is ever full of attributes, and free of any kind of imperfection. Chapter III establishes that the *jiva* and the Brahman can never be identical. Chapter IV establishes the reality of the cosmos, refuting incidentally the doctrine of *Maya*. The last Chapter is the essence of the Chapters III and IV relating to the Brahmasutras as interpreted by Madhva. It is significant for the fullness of theological information about the *Dvaitins'* view of *moksa*, its treatment of Madhva being an avatar of *Vayu*, and its vindication of the *sastraic* character of branding the body with the symbols sacred to Vaisnavism, *taptamudrankana*. In essence, Yuktimalika is an elaboration of the thesis of the Brahmasutras as deduced by Madhva. Vadirajatirtha gives a complete rationalistic view to his treatment of the subject, and deserves credit for many original arguments and interpretations not found elsewhere in the works of the *Siddhantha*.

The outstanding feature of Vadirajatirtha's work is his 'commonsense approach' to philosophy. He claims to adopt a purely rationalistic approach in judging the relative merits of the *Advaita* and *Dvaita* systems, and casts himself in favour of the *Dvaita* system. He is the earliest to realize the opening line of the Aitereya Brahmana favouring the doctrine of Gradation of gods stated by Madhva. While accepting the gradation of Madhva, he states that the same text disposes of the identity of Brahma, Visnu and Siva, preached by some, on the authority of certain Puranas. He seeks to establish Visnu as the Supreme Brahman and cites several texts from the Bhagavata and other Puranas not quoted by his predecessors. As for the philosophical issues, Vadirajatirtha attacks the concept of Nirguna Brahman as impossible and *un-sastraic*. The Bhagavata and other texts attribute infinitude, *anantya* to the Saguna Brahman. He argues that if the Saguna Brahman were unlimited in time and space, where could the Nirguna Brahman be. Banished from all time and space, the Nirguna Brahman could be like the proverbial hare's horn. He further argues that the monistic texts in the Sutras have to be figuratively interpreted, in a manner compatible with experience. It is ridiculous for man, who calls piteously to heaven's aid in illness and misery, to arrogate divinity to himself in moments of elation and ease.

He questions why the Advaitin does not assert the identity of the Brahman with insentient matter, if the teaching of the scriptures is to be accepted without any demur. The Advaitin stops with *Jiva-Isvara aikya* concept without moving to *Jada-Isvara aikya*. The identity of pure consciousness postulated by an Advaitin is only an artificial identity with no support whatsoever.

At the same time, a bare identity of pure consciousness is in no way opposed to the reality, or persistence of difference.

In this work, he explains the eternity of the *jiva*, the main plank of the *Dvaita* system, in its body and *moksa* thus: ‘When the mind is inwardly directed, as in *moksa*, there is no possibility of our paying attention to external objects of the world. When the attention is concentrated on a particular subject, it is not possible to think of another. A gamester lost in the game of dice, hears not even the tidings of the death of his own mother! A village belly, absorbed in filling her pail of water at the village well, hardly notices the hungry looks of the passer-by, at her. The dancer balancing the pot on her head, and her thought concentrated on it, looks not at her admirers in the hall whose eyes are riveted on her graceful movements and contours. All of us in life are *dvitas* in the sense of having two gateways of knowledge, the material and the spiritual. The physical body connected with these *dvitas* is *Dvaita*. It is possible for us, human selves, to contact external reality only through the physical frame. But there is no physical body in release. The released soul has no body or sense organs that can be distinguished from its essence. In these circumstances, there is no possibility of their having knowledge of external reality and reacting to the stimuli through external senses. Whatever sense organs the released souls have are thus spiritually constituted and hence part and parcel of their being. They have no body or sense organs in the physical sense of the term in which we use them. They are ‘bodies’ only in a very special sense. The nearest example is the so-called heavenly voice, *asarira vak* referred to in the Puranas. It is in this sense that Sruti denies sensory knowledge to the released.’

In another work, Nyayaratnavali, Vadirajatirtha draws a vivid contrast between the limited self of man and the infinite Lord of all creation, and asks how the two can ever be identical. He further points out that no identification is possible unless there are two things to be identified and such duality is necessarily opposed to Monism. Vadirajatirtha is the first Madhva scholar to have written a regular commentary on the entire epic Mahabharata, from the point of view of Madhvaism. Among the stotras written by Vadirajatirtha, the most popular is the Dasavatara Stotra, celebrating the ten *avatars* of Visnu.

### **Narayanacarya**

Narayanacarya is a fiery champion of the *Dvaita* School as against the *Advaita* system. His main works are Advaitakalanala, Madhvamantrarathamajari and Visnutattvaviveka. Satyanatha Yati is another fiery champion of the *Dvaita* School, who was contemporary to Narayanacarya.

### **Vidyadhirajatirtha**

Vidyadhirajatirtha was the immediate disciple and successor of Jayatirtha. His important works are Chandogya-Bhashya-Tika, Gita-Nivrti and Visnu-Sahasranama-Bhashya. The Visnu-Sahasranama-Bhashya is important on the consideration that Visnusahasranama is held in very high esteem in Madhva system, and that Vidyadhirajatirtha happens to be the earliest *Dvaita* commentator on it. The work opens with an invocation to Visnu, Vyasa and Madhva, Sarasvati and the preceptors of the author. He repeats the well known observation of Madhva that each of the thousand names is capable of a hundred explanations.

But he contents himself indicating as many explanations as can conveniently be attempted at a time. His explanations are only illustrative, and not exhaustive. He leaves it to the ingenuity of the learned to work out for themselves more explanations on the same lines. Its important feature is that it brings together a variety of explanations of epithets of the Lord lying scattered in the works of Madhva. He gives a dozen derivations of the first holy name *Visvam*.

### **Vyasatirtha**

Vyasatirtha is the earlier one than the one of the same name that flourished in the days of the Vijayanagar period, and one of the Munitrayam of Madhva philosophy. The earlier Vyasatirtha is the first Madhva regular commentator on the ten Upanisads in full, for the ten Upanisad Bhashyas of Madhva were only partial commentaries on the originals. Madhva did not give 'word for word' meaning of the passages. Vyasatirtha accomplishes this task while commenting on the Bhashyas of Madhva. His commentaries on the Upanisads are considered authentic expositions of the *Dvaita* School.

### **Vijayadhvajathirtha**

Vijayadhvajathirtha is best known for his work Padaratnavali, a voluminous commentary on Bhagavatapurana. It is the earliest, complete and standard commentary of the *Dvaita* School on the Bhagavata. It is as luminous as it is voluminous. It is considered one of the distinguished contributions of the Udipi Mutt to the *Dvaita* literature. It is a word for word commentary on the entire Bhagavata.

### **Sudhindratirtha**

Sudhindratirtha is known for his great contribution to *kavya*, *alamkara* and *nataka* systems, besides Madhva theology and metaphysics. His works include commentaries on Tarka Tandava, and Skandhas II and XI of the Bhagavata. His original works include Alamkara-Manjari, Alamkara-Nikasa, Sahitya-Samrajya, Subhadra-Dhananjaya (drama), Vyasaraajabhyudaya (life of Vyasatirtha), Amrtaharana (drama), etc.

### **Vidyadhisatirtha**

Vidyadhisatirtha's life is accounted in the Vidyadhisa-Vijaya of Janardana Suri. Ten works are attributed to him, the most important being the gloss on the first five adhikaranas of the Nyayasudha. It is a critical and scholarly exposition of the original. Vidyadhisatirtha professes great respect for Vyasatirtha, and quotes often from his Candrika. He is very knowledgeable in Mimamsa and grammatical subtleties

### **Visvesvaratirtha**

Visvesvaratirtha is the author of a commentary on the Aitareya Bhashya of Madhva. He does not refer to any earlier commentaries on the Aitareya Bhashya. His style is quite forceful, and his explanations are to the point.

### **Raghavendrathirtha**

Raghavendrathirtha is one of the memorable saints of the Madhva Order. He is one of the most influential commentators

and authoritative exponents of the School of Madhvacarya. To this day, his memory is loved and cherished with deep reverence by the followers of Madhva to whichever Mutt they belong. The work Raghavendra Vijaya by Narayanacarya, the nephew of Raghavendrathirtha, gives a full and contemporary account of the life and career of the later. The work Gurugunastava by Vadindra throws light on the contemporaries of Raghavendrathirtha in regard to literary activities. The works of Raghavendrathirtha himself carry considerable information on the writers of other schools. He seems to have spent the major part of his life at Tanjore and Kumbhakonam, and moved, in the later part of his life, to the village Mantralaya, on the bank of Tungabhadra, now in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, which he is stated to have received rent-free from an officer of the then Governor of Adoni. The Raghavendraswami Mutt, Mantralaya assigns to him the period 1624-71.

Over 40 works have been attributed to Raghavendrathirtha. Most of these are commentaries on the works of Madhva, Jayathirtha and Vyasathirtha. There are a few original works and direct commentaries on the Upanisads. The general title of a majority of his works is 'Bhavadipa'. His works are remarkable for clarity of thought, simplicity of expression and compactness. His commentaries are unassuming. He is a non-polemical commentator of the *Dvaita* School. His output is voluminous.

His glosses on six out of the ten Prakaranas of Madhva, excluding the four already commented upon by Vyasathirtha, elucidate the respective commentaries of Jayathirtha. There are six works on the Sutrasthana. One of them is Nyayamuktavali, a brief exposition of the adhikaranasaras of the Brahmasutras.

Another is Tantradipika, a learned *vrtti* on the Sutras bringing together the explanations of earlier works, and commentaries like Nyayasudha, Candrika, Tattvadipika, Nayacandrika and a few others. Another work is Bhavadipa which refers to both the Tantradipika and the commentary on Candrika. The scope of this work is both critical and expository. Another work is Prakasa, a commentary on the Tatparyacandrika of Vyasathirtha. His Tattvamanjari is a detailed exposition of the Anubhasya. It does not mention any earlier commentaries on the original. One of his most popular and substantial commentaries on Nyayasudha is Nyayasudha-Parimala. This work has conferred on him the epithet of Parimalacarya. His Mantramanjari is a commentary on the first three Adhyayas of the Rigveda, the same portion covered by Madhva. He has written commentaries on nine out of the ten Upanisads commented upon by Madhva, excepting the Aitareya Upanisad. His commentaries on the Upanisads are evidently the reactions from the *Dvaita* School to the Upanisad Vyakhyas of Rangaramanuja.

There are three works of Raghavendrathirtha on the Gita Prasthana, besides Gitarthamanjari. His Gitarthasangraha, popularly known as Gita-Vivrti, is a lucid original commentary. Its apt and convincing explanations are admired.

His other works include commentaries on the Pramana-Paddhati, Vadavali, Tarka Tandava of Vyasathirtha, Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, etc. His commentary on the entire Mimamsa Sutras of Jaimini, titled Bhattasamgraha, is complete and fascinating. It is the most illuminating commentary on the original, diving deep into logical subtleties with admirable ease and felicity. This work is based on a critical study of Sabarabhashya, the

works of Kumarila and others. This work gives a brief, clear and compact interpretation of each of the Jaimini Sutras. It explains the details of each *sutra* such as their *sangati*, *visaya*, doubt, *purvapaksa*-its arguments and vantage, and the *siddhanta*-its arguments and vantage. Raghavendra's handling of the subject is clear, precise and authentic. Besides, tradition speaks of a few minor stotras of his, such as Ramamrutamanjari, Krsnacaritamanjari, and Pratassamkalpagadya

### **Brahmanyatirtha and Others**

Brahmanyatirtha, Sripadarajatirtha alias Lakshminarayanatirtha, Somanathakavitirtha, Raghuttamatirtha, Yadupati Acaryatirtha and Kambala Ramacandratirtha are among the other great Madhva ascetics that have enriched Madhva thought and theology. There are several other Heads (Pontiffs) of the Mutts originating from Madhva, contributing to the exposition of the Madhva thought and theology, mostly in the nature of commentaries on the works of the earlier Tirthas.

## **12. Haridasakuta**

Tradition regards that Naraharitirtha is the forerunner of the Vaisnava devotional movement of the Haridasakuta in the area now called Karnataka, resulting from the Vaisnava revival brought about by Madhva and his followers. The movement flourished for a couple of centuries after Naraharitirtha, mainly across the whole of Karnataka. The Order of the *Dasas* is a result of the spread of the realistic philosophy of Vedanta propounded by Madhva, and it continues to flourish to date, mainly in rural Karnataka.

The Order of the *Dasas* has been composed of a regular band of saintly souls who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord. Singing the praises of Hari, they have wandered from one end of the country to the other. The saints of this Order have centered their affection on Vithala of Pandharpur as their patron deity. There is reason to believe that Karnataka held cultural sway over Pandharpur and its neighbourhood in the period of Naraharitirtha, and in the following centuries. Even in the days of Jnaneswar, Vithala of Pandharpur was still spoken of as 'the deity beloved of the *Kannadigas*, enshrined in Karnataka'.

The saints of Karnataka were thus the first to develop the cult of devotion to Vithala, and made it a living faith and a powerful instrument of mass uplift through the medium of soul-stirring music and bhajans in the language of the people. They have laid emphasis on true devotion to God, and the relative unimportance of social caste barriers in spiritual advancement.

The *Dasas* have exercised a powerful influence on the mass consciousness. They did for the ordinary Kannadigas, women and the lower strata of society not acquainted with Sanskrit, what the great scholars of the Vedanta had done for the higher strata of society. Their compositions are in easy spoken language capturing the soul and imagination of the people at large. They extol the virtues of *jnana* and *bhakti*, and give wholesome advice to people in religion and ethics. By the power of *padas*, set to music in different *ragas*, they have roused the conscience of the masses in devotion to the Lord. Each *Dasa* has a specific *mudrika*.

Many *Dasas* are proficient in Sanskrit and in philosophical learning. They have put the doctrines of Madhva in simple and easily intelligible people's language. As ardent followers of Madhva, the *Dasas* have tried to show how much more satisfying, intellectually and emotionally, the system of Madhva is than other systems, particularly Samkara's *Advaita*. Though they have viewed the world as impermanent and full of misery and, therefore, counseled *bhakti* and *vairagya*, they are zealous advocates of reform, and denounced pseudo-religiosity. They have exhorted the people to be truthful in thought, word and deed. They preach an austere form of devotion with no trace of erotic association. The earlier *Dasas* such as Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, Sripadarajadasa had preached the general code of ethics and devotion applicable to all. But the later *Dasas* such as Vijayadasa and Jagannathadasa wrote particularly for promotion of Madhva thesim. The following are among the most well known *Dasas*.

### **Naraharitirtha**

Naraharitirtha is the earliest known *Dasa*, who has three songs to his credit. His *mudrika* is 'Narahari' or 'Narahari Raghupati'. Tradition in Andhra Pradesh traces to him the impetus given to the performance of *Kuchipudi* dances in temples.

### **Sripadaraja**

His songs are very sublime, and blend rhythm and meaning. His sincerity and passionate devotion are evident in his songs Bhramaragita, Venugita, Gopigita, etc. They demonstrate musical excellence and literary grace. His *mudrika* is Ranga-Vitthala. His songs carry personality element and are most touching. A true mystic, he analyses the defects and mental agonies of man, and lays them bare, before the Lord, praying for light and vision, impersonally, on behalf of the struggling souls.

### **Vyasatirtha**

Vyasatirtha was the disciple of Sripadaraja, and is one of the *Munitrayam* of Madhvaism. He rendered yomen service as *Dasa*. His *mudrika* is 'Sri Krsna' and its variants. He gave to the *Dasakuta* Order the three greatest *Dasas* - Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vadirajadasa, who were all his disciples. His songs are marvelous for musical effect, and he was the author of many *Padas*, *Suladis*, *Ugabhogas*, etc. (The *Padas* are composed by a *Dasa* before and after Good-vision. *Suladis* are composed containing doctrinal issues after a *Dasa* attains *aporaksa - jnana*. *Ugabhogas* are the out-pouring of his experiences of ecstatic meditation.) Vyasatirtha is known for the catholicity of his

outlook, breadth of vision, and moral courage. His admission of Kanakadasa, belonging to the lower strata in the caste structure of the then society, to the Order of *Dasas* was a great reform of his time.

### **Purandara Dasa**

Purandaradasa is the best known *Dasa*. His songs are full of music, alliteration and harmony. They range from the most homely to the most sublime topics. He made several improvements to the system of Karnatak music, and was one of its greatest exponents and systematizers. He illustrated each *raga* with a song. He is credited with the authorship of 4,75,000 songs, may be words, each word being regarded as a *bhagvannama*, in the true sense of *namopasana* and *nadopasana*.

The songs of Purandara Dasa are believed to include a large number of Lakshana-Gitas none of which is now extant. They include Lakshya-Gitas a few of which have been handed down to posterity. Tulajendra, one of the scholarly rulers of Tanjavur, refers to numerous *Suladis* of Purandaradasa, now extinct. He standardized Karnatak Music originally shaped by his Gurus like Vyasatirtha and Sripadaraja. It is an established fact that Tyagaraja (1767-1847) himself was greatly inspired by Purandaradasa. There is a close affinity in the style and thought of the two.

Purandaradasa was not merely a *Dasa*, in the limited sense of the term. He was an authority on music, and systematized the *sangita-paddhati* of his times. He introduced *malavagaula* scale as the basis of musical instruction.

### **Kanakadasa**

Kanakadasa was a contemporary of Purandaradasa. He believed to have been a shepherd or Kuruba by caste, and a chieftain. He calls himself an unlettered man, but his works reveal a perfect mastery of Sanskrit and Kannada languages. He styles himself Kanakadasottama. He is a free-thinker. In his opinion, caste and creed are no barriers to *moksa*. Though he was persecuted for his extreme views by the orthodox followers of Vyasatirtha, Vyasatirtha revealed the greatness and devotion of Kanakadasa to his other disciples. Even to this day, *Kanakana Khindi* (Kanakas' window) at the temple of Sri Krsna at Udipi bears testimony to his devotion to God. As a *Dasa*, he took *taptamudrankana*. His main works include Mohanatarangini, a metrical *kavya*, Haribhaktasara, Ramadhyana Carite, and Nala Carite. His works reveal his inimitable perfection of art.

### **Vadiraja**

He was a *Dasa* of outstanding merit. His works include Ramagadya, Vainkunthavarnane and Lakshmisobhanehadu. His *mudrika* is Hayavadana. There are a number of songs of other *Dasas* stating his having been a disciple of Vyasatirtha.

### **Vijayadasa**

Vijayadasa is considered to have been a disciple of Purandaradasa, but there is a gap of about 150 years between them. His *mudrika* is Vijaya-Vithala. His works reveal his thorough grasp of the Sastras.

## **Jagannathadasa**

Jagannathadasa is said to have been miraculously converted to the Order of the *Dasakuta*, after a cruel illness, by Vijayadasa, his *guru*. Jagannathadasa is known for his scholarship in Sanskrit. A very enthusiastic follower of the Madhva philosophy, his works teem with details of *bhakti*, *mukti*, *taratamya*, *aparoksa-jnana*, etc. His magnum opus is *Harikathamrtasara*, a mine of information on Madhva theology.

The *Dasakuta* is, to this day, a living force in Karnataka. Many *Dasas* are keeping up the hoary traditions of their Order. The *Dasakuta* in Karnataka has been a great force in the *bhakti* movement of the common people across the State.

## **Caitanya**

Caitanya is one of the foremost saint-devotees from Bengal. According to the Vaisnava traditions of Bengal, the religion of Caitanya is an offshoot of the Madhva faith. Caitanya had his ordination as a monk from Kesava Bharathi, an *advaitin*, but is said to have inherited his 'Vaisnava Diksa' from Isvara Puri who is said to have belonged to the 'Order of Bhaktas' founded by Vayasatirtha. Baladeva Vidyabhushana, a follower of Caitanya, of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, expressly states in his works that Caitanya belongs to the Madhva-Sampradaya.