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# **Madhvacharya**

## **- poems -**

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# Madhvacharya(1238–1317 CE)

Madhvacharya (Tulu: ?????????????, Kannada: ?????????????, Sanskrit: ????????????? Sri Madhvacarya?), also known as Purna Prajna and Ananda Tirtha, was the chief proponent of Tattvavada "Philosophy of Reality", popularly known as the Dvaita (dualism) school of Hindu philosophy. It is one of the three most influential Vedanta philosophies. Madhvacarya was one of the important philosophers during the Bhakti movement. He was a pioneer in many ways, going against standard conventions and norms. According to tradition, Madhvacarya is believed to be the third incarnation of Vayu (Mukhyapra?a).

## <b>Birth and Childhood</b>

Madhvacarya was born on the auspicious day of Vijaya-dasami (Dussehra) in 1238 CE (AD) at Pajaka, a tiny hamlet near U?upi. <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/narayana-panditacharya/">Naraya?a Pa??itacarya</a> who later wrote Madhvacarya's biography has not recorded his parents' names. Traditionally it is believed that Nadillaya Naraya?a Bha??a as name of the father and Vedavati as Madhvacarya's mother. They named him Vasudeva at birth. Later he became famous by the names Pur?a-prajña, Ananda-tirtha and Madhvacarya.

Before the birth of Madhva, when his parents had gone for a purchase in the market, a beggar climbed a dhvaja stambha (flag-post in front of a temple) and announced: "Bhagavan (Lord) Vayu deva is going to take birth for the revival of Vedic dharma in Pajaka k?etra to a couple." The prediction made by the beggar was discussed by the parents of Madhva till they reached home.

Even as a child, Vasudeva exhibited precocious talent for grasping all things spiritual. As an incarnation of Mukhyaprana this was not new for him. He was drawn to the path of renunciation and even as a boy of eleven years, he chose initiation into the monastic order from Acyuta-Prajña (also called Acyuta Prek?a), a reputed ascetic of the time, near U?upi, in the year Saumya (1249 CE). The preceptor Acyuta Prek?a gave the boy Vasudeva the name of Pur?aprajña at the time of his initiation into sannyasa (renounced order).

A little over a month later, little Pur?aprajña is said to have defeated a group of expert scholars of Tarka (logic) headed by Vasudeva-pa??ita. Overjoyed at his precocious talent, Acyuta Prek?a consecrated him as the head of the empire of Vedanta and conferred upon him the title of Ananda Tirtha (saint of immaculate bliss).

Thus Purāṇa-prajña is Madhva's name given to him at the time of sannyasa (renunciation). The name conferred on him at the time of consecration as the Master of Vedānta is "Ananda Tirtha". Madhva, a name traceable to the Vedas (Bṛhad-suktam), was the nom de plume assumed by the Ācārya to author all his works. Madhvacārya showed that Vedas talk about him as "Madhva" and used that name for himself. However, he used Ananda Tirtha or Sukha Tirtha also to author his works. Madhvacārya was the name by which he was to later be revered as the founder of Tattva-vāda or Dvaita-māta.

### <b>Geography</b>

The country lying to the south of the Western Ghats from beyond Bombay to Cape Comorin comprised the ancient kingdoms of Konkana, Canara, and Kerala. The Konkana abutted on Maharashtra country, whose capital was Daulatabad. The language which the Konkani people speak even now is a dialect of Marathi. Canara consisted of the modern North Canara and South Canara, the former being included in the present Bombay Presidency, and the latter in the Presidency of Madras. Kerala was the southernmost strip, including the modern British Malabar and the Native States of Cochin and Travancore. South Canara is the district with which we are most concerned as the native land of Sri Madhva. In this district, the taluq of Udupi is, for the same reason, a holy region for every person professing the Madhva faith. The province of Canara seems to have been under the sway of Vishnu Vardhana, the great Vaishnava King who was converted by Sri Ramanuja. This king broke the power of Chalukyan rulers in this part of Southern India. The Baisa Wodeyars of Mysore held sway in 1250 A.D. and flourished till 1336 A.D., when their kingdom became merged in the rising Empire of Vijayanagar, the state that Robert Sewell refers to as 'a forgotten Empire' and Suryanarayana Rao as 'the never-to-be-forgotten Empire' of this peninsula. The Chandragiri river that runs between Bekal and Kasaragod in South Canara, was the southern boundary of the ancient Tuluva Kingdom. It is a magnificent stream in the rainy season. Tradition forbids Nair women of Kasaragod, crossing this river.

Eight miles north of Kasaragod is the ancient town of Kumbla, now a railway station, close to the sea on a peninsula. It was a place of great importance at this time, though it is now much decayed. It was the headquarters of a chieftain whose descendants are now in receipt of a small government pension under the titular name of 11 Kumbla Rajahs. Udupi and Mangalore were probably under the immediate rule of this chieftain, Mangalore being only about 22 miles north of Kumbla. At the time, one Jayasimha was the Kumbla ruler. He came into contact with Sri Madhva in the latter part of the saint's life and was evidently a great admirer of the teacher. Among the communities that played a great part in the

history of the times, the Jains seem to have been very prominent. Their Battis, Bettoos, and Stambbas furnish eloquent testimony to the vast influence they wielded. The Karkal statue of imposing height and weight, said to be 41 feet high and 50 tons in weight, is a striking item of proof. The Mudbdri temple is a magnificent monument of their architectural skill. The high pillar at Hale Angadi is a remarkable specimen of the kind, unsurpassed for delicacy of workmanship. Similar statues of colossal height and weight speak volumes for the dominating influence that this community possessed in Sri Madhva's time and for some centuries later.

The Brahmin communities of the West Coast are generally classed as Konkans, Saraswats, and Shivalli sects. The Shivallies are Tulu-speaking Brahmins, and it is with these that we are most concerned, in the present narrative. Shivalli is an alias for Udupi otherwise known as Rajata Peetapuram. These names are derived from the deities of the two ancient temples in this town. The temples of Chandra Mouleeswara and Ananteswara both face the east, one in front of the other. These were the most prominent features of old Udupi before Sri Krishna's temple came into existence in Sri Madhva's time. Udupi is a short designation for Chandra Mouleeswara, udupa being the Sanskrit word for the moon. In the temple of Ananteswara, the deity is seated on a pedestal of silver. Hence the town is known as Rajata Peetapura. Shivalli is a corrupt form of the Canarese expression Siva Belli, the silver of Siva, in allusion to the silver pedestal aforesaid.

### <b>Tour of South India</b>

The Acharya set out on a tour of South India even in his teens. He visited prominent places of pilgrimage like Anantashayana, Kanyakumari, Rameshvara and Shriranga. Wherever he went, he delivered discourses and preached the message of his Tattvavada or religious truth to the people. This initiated a new discussion among scholars all over India. The Acharya refuted in clear terms a few age-old beliefs. He stated that spirituality should not be mixed up with superstitions. As a result, there was hot opposition to him from some orthodox extremists. But the Acharya braved it all with courage, without yielding to any mean threats.

The urge which was deeply surging in the heart of the Acharya for long turned into a firm resolve as a result of this tour. 'The superstitions in the way of this path of philosophical truth should be wiped out! My whole life should be dedicated to the spread of ultimate truth.'

The first task accomplished by the Acharya as soon as he returned to Udupi, after adopting this firm resolve, was the writing of a commentary (bhasya) on the

### <b>Visit to Badari</b>

In course of time, the Acharya desired to tour North India and to spread the message of vedic religion far and wide. The holy center of Badari beckoned him irresistibly. Fired by the wish to visit holy places like Vyasa's hermitage, the penance-grove of Nara-Narayana etc., and to present his commentary on the Gita as a tribute to sage Vyasa, the Acharya moved straight to Badari. There he observed a vow of strict silence for 48 days, bathing in the holy Ganga. And then he set out alone towards Vyasa-Badari, his cherished destination.

After his return from there, the task of writing a commentary on the Bramha-sutras came to be undertaken by the Acharya. The Acharya never wrote any work of his by hand. It was his practice to dictate continuously to his disciples who would take them down. His composition of works was as facile as his discourse. A disciple of the Acharya, Satya-tirtha by name, reduced to writing in palmleaves, what ever was dictated by the Acharya.

In the meantime, the Acharya's influence had spread far and wide throughout the country. Scholars all over India were stunned by his extraordinary genius, never seen or heard of before. The circle of his disciples grew bigger and bigger. Some ascetics got initiation from him and were admitted into the order of samnyasa.

Once, while returning from Badari, the Acharya was camping en-route in a holy place on the banks of the Godavari. Here he was accosted by an eminent pundit, Sobhana-bhatta by name. This person was well known in that region as a peerless scholar. This visit changed the entire career of the man. Seeing the extraordinary personality of the Acharya, and listening to his wonderful discourses, he was so much overwhelmed that he became the Acharya's disciple and joined his retinue.

Achyuta Prajna's cup of happiness was full on seeing Acharya Madhva back home after his resounding victory in all parts of the country and on his rich retinue of disciples hailing from different places. Though in the beginning he too had his own doubts about the Acharya's view of ultimate reality (Tattvavada), now he became a whole-hearted adherent of the Acharya's new philosophy.

### <b>Installation of Krishna and second visit to Badari</b>

The Acharya who stayed in the environs of Udipi for some more time wrote his bhashyas or authoritative commentaries on all the ten Upanisads. He composed

glosses on forty hymns of the Rigveda, opening up for the first time its vista of spiritual significance. He also wrote the treatise Bhagavata-tatparya highlighting the essential teachings of the Puranas. Many topical handbooks were also authored by him to suit different occasions. A large number of devotional songs too were composed by him which could be sung by his disciples, while moving with him in groups.

It was during this period that the Acharya installed the image of Krishna which he found in the western ocean near the Udupi sea-coast. After sometime, he left some disciples behind for performing Krishna's worship and undertook his second tour to Badari.

Once the Acharya had to cross river Ganga. The other bank was under Muslim rule. Although stopped by the Muslim soldiers on the other side, the Acharya boldly crossed the river and reached the other bank. He was taken before the Muslim ruler who was filled with wonder by the boldness of the ascetic. The Acharya said, "I worship that Father who illumines the entire universe; and so do you. Why should I fear then either your soldiers or you?".

Hearing such words for the first time from the mouth of a Hindu monk, the Muslim king was astounded. He was filled with reverence for this unique monk. He begged the Acharya to stay permanently in his kingdom and offered gifts of several jagirs. But the Acharya who was free from wordily cravings, rejected the offer and walked on to Badri, with the monk's staff in his hand.

Once, when his party, was attacked by a band of robbers on the difficult road to the Himalayas The Acharya made his pupil Upendra-tirtha silence them after a fierce fight. He used to say: "One should cultivate strength of body even like strength of mind; it is impossible for a weak body to house a strong mind". Accordingly he had made his disciples achieve strength in their body as well as in their Vedantic pursuit.

To the people of that time, the Acharya's physical strength itself was something miraculous, because his body was strong and adamant. Even to this day, the huge rock-boulder lifted up and placed in the river Bhadra by the Acharya, near Kalasa bears witness to his herculean strength. This incident is confirmed by the sentence inscribed on that stone.

The Acharya had darshan once again of Lord Narayana and of sage Vyasa. On his return home thereafter, he wrote the treatise Mahabharata-tatparya-nirnaya. On his way home, he visited Kashi. There he held a philosophical debate with an elderly Advaita ascetic, Amarendra Puri. Sri Puri had to go away silently, humbled by the dazzling genius of the Acharya.

Then came Kurukshetra. Here occurred a strange episode. The Acharya got a mound there, excavated and demonstrated to his disciples the buried mace of (the epic hero) Bhima therein; and once again had it buried under the ground.

Later on, the Acharya arrived in Goa on his way back to Udupi. With his sweet music there he enthralled the audience. The Acharya's musical genius also was as unique as his perfect physique and brilliant intellect. Writers contemporaneous with the Acharya have acclaimed rapturously the Acharya's musical expertise as well as his rich melody of voice.

### <b>Last Days</b>

After returning home from his second tour, the Acharya took to initiating social reforms in and around Udupi. A section of orthodoxy, however, was still active and opposed to his views. Pundarika-Puri, an advaita ascetic, was also humbled by the Acharya in a debate. It was around this time that Padmatirtha, a monk envious of Madhvacharya's erudition and popularity, arranged to have his works stolen from the custody of Pejattaya Shankara Pandita in Kasaragod.

Madhvacharya now traveled to Kasargod and defeated Padma-tirtha in a philosophical debate. The essence of this debate was reduced to writing by his disciples and published as the Vada or Tattvodyota. The stolen works were eventually returned to Madhvacharya in a felicitation ceremony arranged by Jayasimha of Kumbla, the king of southern Tulu Nadu.

The Acharya also had an intense debate for about 15 days with Pejattaya Trivikrama Panditacharya, the royal preceptor, and emerged victorious. Trivikrama Panditacharya eventually became a disciple himself and went on to write a commentary called Tattva-dipika on the Acharya's Brahma-sutra-bhashya and thus paid his tribute to the guru.

The Acharya too was equally fond of Trivikrama pandita. In deference to the request of the devoted pupil, he wrote an extensive commentary in verse: Anu-vyakhyana on the Brahma-sutras. The Acharya was dictating this work to four disciples simultaneously, on each of the four chapters, without any break. At the same time, the composition of the work Nyayavivarana was also completed. Nearing his seventies now, Madhvacharya initiated his brother into the monastic order. He was to be known as Sri Vishnutirtha, the first pontiff of the present day Sodhe Matha and Subramanya Matha. About the same time, Sobhana-bhatta received initiation into sanyasa from the Acharya. He later came to be known as Padmanabha Tirtha.

Both before and after the initiation of these two, several disciples from various regions of the country got their initiation into sanyasa from the Acharya. Among them, the names of eight disciples who chose to stay on in Udupi as pontiffs of different mathas are, in order of their initiation:

Hrisikesa-tirtha (Palimaru matha)  
Narasimha-tirtha (Adamaru-matha)  
Janardana-tirtha (Krsnapura-matha)  
Upendra-tirtha (Puttige-matha)  
Vamana-tirtha (Sirur-matha)  
Vishnu-tirtha (Sode-matha)  
Srirama-tirtha (Kaniyuru-matha)  
Adhoksaja-tirtha (Pejavara-matha)

The other two celebrated sanyasin-disciples of the Acharya are Padmanabha-tirtha and Narahari-tirtha.

When Padmanabha-tirtha was initiated into sanyasa is not definitely known. There were several who had got initiation before him. It appears that he should have been initiated into the order some time between the dates when these eight pontiffs were initiated.

After initiating several into the monastic order and installing pontiffs to the mathas, he toured the district and engaged himself in educating the general public. He also composed the literary work "Krsnamrtamaharnava". His discourse to Brahmins at Ujire, where he delved upon the spiritual aspect of ritualism, came to be published under the title of Khandartha-nimaya (Karmanimaya). Next he visited Panchalingesvara temple at Paranti, which he found in a dilapidated condition, without any worship or festivity. He made arrangements for the resumption of proper worship there according to the rituals prescribed by the ancient scriptures (agamas).

In the 79th year of his life, he decided to take leave of his disciples and proceeded to assign to them the responsibility of carrying on the tradition of his Tattvavada. Having done that, on the ninth day of the bright half of the month of Magha in the Kali year 4418 (1317 CE), he betook himself alone to Badari. The day on which he proceeded to Badri is celebrated as Madhvanavami to this day.

<b>Tradition</b>

The disciples of the Acharya, both pontifical and lay, continued his tradition with devout zeal. Hundreds of dialectical treatises came to be written. Among the



writers belonging to this school we may roughly classify some outstanding ones in the following chronological order: Vishnu Tirtha, Padmanabha-tirtha, Narahari-tirtha, Trivikrama-panditacharya, Narayana Panditacharya, Vamana-Panditacharya, (Traivikramaryadasa), Jayatirtha (Tikacharya), Vijayadhvaja-tirtha, Visnudasacharya, Vyasatirtha, Vadiraja, Vijayindra-tirtha, Raghavendra Swami, Yadupati-acharya, etc.

His philosophy Tattva-vada eventually inspired the Haridasa cult who heralded the Bhakti movement for centuries to come. Seminal contributions were made by the Haridasas in fields of music and literature. Narahari Tirtha, one of the direct disciples, is responsible for the resurgence of Yakshagana and other forms such as Kuchipudi. Raghavendra Swami of Mantralayam was a saint in this tradition who lived in the 16th CE and is revered and worshiped to this day. Several Dvaita mathas and Raghavendra mathas in particular, continue to be established all over India and in some places in the US, UK and other countries. All these Madhva mathas continue to further the propagation of Vedic studies and are also involved in social and charitable activities.

Madhva, commenting on the Vedanta-sutra (2.1.6), quotes the Bhaviya Puraṇa as follows:

"The Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda, Mahabharata [which includes the Bhagavad-gita], Pañcaratra, and the original Ramayana are all considered Vedic literature.... The Vaiṣṇava supplements, the Puraṇas, are also Vedic literature."

We may also include corollary literatures like the Saṃhitas, as well as the commentaries of the great teachers who have guided the course of Vedic thought for centuries.

### **Dharmic Establishments**

The Acharya did not earn any huge establishment or property for his matha (monastery). All the property that he left as legacy to his disciple-pontiffs was just a casket for keeping the deities of daily worship, a staff and a piece of cloth hanging from shoulders like a bag to receive alms (joliḡe). Later, the mathas took better shape as the number of their devout adherents became more and more. Below is a broad sketch of the Madhva-mathas now existing. The main icon of Lord Krishna at Udupi was established by Madhvacharya. The number of mathas (monasteries) which came into being in Udupi itself, yoked to the responsibility of Krishna-worship is eight (Ashta Mathas). They are Krishnapura, Pejavara, Puttige, Sodhe (Sondhe), Kaniyooru, Adamaru, Shirur and Palimaru. He also gave icons of deities to all his disciples for daily worship. The ones in Ashta Mathas are in brackets. Other Mathas too have idols worshipped by

Acharya himself.

1. Palimaru matha (Sri Rama)
2. Adamaru matha (Sri Krishna)
3. Krishnapura matha (Sri Krishna)
4. Puttige matha (Sri Vitthala)
5. Shirur matha (Sri Vitthala)
6. Sodhe matha (Sri Varaha)
7. Kaniyooru matha (Sri Narasimha)
8. Pejavara matha (Sri Vitthala)

It is a local custom to call the mathas after the names of villages where the original gifted properties of the matha are situated. Thus the matha which had its property in the village Palimaru is now called Palimaru-matha. The older name of the Sode-matha was Kumbhasi-matha. Later on, in the time of Vadiraja, when the matha was established at Sode in North Kanara, it became famous as Sode-matha.

The mathas in Karnataka which were developed by Sri Padmanabha-tirtha, Narahari-tirtha, Madhav- tirtha and Aksobhya-tirtha are eight:

09. Uttaradi Matha
10. Sosale Vyasaraaya-matha
11. Kundapura-Vyasaraaya-matha
12. Raghavendra-matha
13. Mulubagilu-matha
14. Majjigehalli-matha
15. Kudli-matha
16. Balegaru (Banagara)-matha

For the first four mathas (9 to 12) the founder-pontiffs are common, viz from Padmanabha-tirtha to Aksobhya-tirtha. A traditional branch of Vyasaraaya-matha itself came to be established at Kundapura in the district of South kanara and came to be termed Kundapura-Vyasaraaya- matha.

A branch of the matha founded by Padmanabha-tirtha became Mulubagilu-matha. Sripadaraja (alias Srilakshminarayana-tirtha) who was one of the pioneers of dasa-literature and the preceptor of Vyasa-tirtha was one of the illustrious pontiffs who illumined the tradition of this matha.

Madhava-tirtha established a matha at Majjige-halli which developed into an independent branch. In the same way, two branches of Akshobhya-tirtha grew into independent mathas at Kudli and Balegaru.

Apart from these, there are four more mathas in the Tulu region:

17. Subramanya-matha
18. Bhandarkeri-matha
19. Bhimana-katte-matha
20. Chitrapura-matha

The Subramanya-matha has grown out of Vishnu-tirtha's line itself. It is said that the line of disciples under the pontiff Acyuta-prajna, who in turn was the guru to initiate the Acharya into samnyasa, branched into two lines, one at Bhandarkeri and the other at Bhimanakatte. Bhandarkeri is located some 20 km north of Udupi in Barakuru. Though Bhimana-katte (Bhima-setumunivrandu) is also a matha of Tulu region, its original sourcehead is a place called Bhimanakatte on the Tirthahalli-Shimoga road. According to folk-tradition, the Chitrapura-matha is only a branch of the Pejavara-matha. This matha is situated at Citrapura, some 35 km away from Udupi on the Udupi-Mangalore highway.

Two more mathas of Gauda Sarasvata Brahmanas who illuminated the Madhva school are quite famous:

21. Gokarna - Partagali - Jivottama Math
22. Kashi Math

The original locale of Gokarna-matha is Gokarna. Later, pontiffs of this line started a matha in Partagali (Madagaum - Mathagrama). After one of its celebrated pontiffs, Jivottama-tirtha, the matha also came to be called Jivottama-matha. According to the traditional list of pontiffs in this matha, its founder pontiff is reckoned as Sri Narayana-tirtha who had his initiation into samnyasa from Sri Ramachandra-tirtha, the tenth pontiff of palimaru-matha at Udupi.

Though there is a branch-centre of Kashi-matha in Kashi, it is originally a matha of the South only. A stalwart champion of Madhva's lineage Shri Vijayindra Tirtha is known to have accepted Gauda Sarasvata Brahmins as his disciples, thus establishing Kashi Matha. Gauda Sarasvata Brahmins of the north costal region stretching from Udupi up to Bombay are disciples of Gokarnamatha. The Gauda Sarasvatas from Udupi up to Kanyakumari in the south are disciples of Kashi-matha.

### **<b>Works of Madhvacharya</b>**

The Works of Madhvacharya are many in number and include commentaries on the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita and the Brahma Sutras. Sri Madhvacharya also composed many works on the philosophy of Tattvavada.

The Acharya has written four works on the Sutra-prasthanas (the Vedantic school of Brahma Sutra)

1. Brahmasutra-bhashya
2. Sarva-shastrartha-sangraha (Anubhashya)
3. Brahmasutra-anuvyakhyana
4. Brahmasutra-anuvyakhyana-vivarana (Nyaya-vivarana)

Two works are on the Gita-prasthanas (the Vedantic school of Bhagavadgita)

5. Bhagavadgita-bhashya
6. Bhagavadgita-tatparya-nirnaya

In the Upanishad-prasthanas (the Vedantic school of Upanishads), the Acharya has written bhashyas or authoritative commentaries on all the Principal Upanishads. But there is notable uniqueness in respect of these also. While all the others have commented only on three chapters of the Aitareya Upanishad, the Acharya's bhashya covers the entire Upanishad-kanda (of 9 chapters) of the Aitareya Aranyaka.

7. Mahaitareyopanishad-bhashya
8. Brhadaranyakopanishad-bhashya
9. Chandogyopanishad-bhashya
10. Taittiriyanopanishad-bhashya
11. Talavakopanishad-bhashya (Kenopanishad-bhashya)
12. Kathakopanishad-bhashya
13. Atharvanopanishad-bhashya (Mundakopanishad-bhashya)
14. Shatprashnopanishad-bhashya
15. Yajniya-mantropanishad-bhashya (Ishavasyaupanishad-bhashya)
16. Mandukyopanishad-bhashya

The verses occurring in the middle of the Mandukyopanishad are mistakenly held to be Gaudapada's karikas. But Acharya Ramanuja has accepted that these form original portions of the Upanishad itself. But Madhva has rejected the old wrong notion once for all by writing bhashya on these verses also. In this connection it is noteworthy how senior Advaita scholars too like Brahmananda accept that these are original Upanishadic verses.

The Acharya not only blazed a new pathway of spiritual interpretation of the Veda, by writing a commentary on 40 hymns of the Rig veda, but also showed the way leading to a synthesis of Samhita, Brahmana and Aranyaka texts by commenting upon some chapters of the Aitareya Brahmana and the Mahanamni-khanda of the same Aranyaka. These works are,

17. Rig-bhashya
18. Khandartha-nirnaya (Karma-nirnaya)

So also, there are three works of his that lay bare the heart of the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata in a bid to synthesize the teachings of Itihasas and Puranas:

19. Mahabharata-tatparya-nirnaya
20. Mahabharata-tatparya (Yamaka-bharata)
21. Bhagavata-tatparya-nirnaya

Nine topical treatises are concerned with determining epistemology and ontology:

22. Vishnu-tattva-nirnaya
23. Vada (tattvodyota)
24. Mayavada-dushana (Mayavada-khandana)
25. Upadhi-dushana (Upadhi-khandana Tattva-prakasika)
26. Mithyatvanumana-dushana (Mithyat-vanuniana-khandana)
27. Tattva-samkhyana
28. Tattva-viveka
29. Pramana-lakhsana
30. Vada-laksana (Katha-lakshana)

Seven works offer guidance regarding performance of ceremonials and rituals as laid down in law-books, regarding building architecture, mantra and tantra and duties and practices of householders and mendicants:

31. Krisnamrta-maharnava
32. Tantra-sara-sangraha
33. Sadacara-smrti
34. Jayanti-nirnaya
35. Om-Tat-Sat-Pranava-kalpa (Yati-pranavakalpa)
36. Nyasa-paddhati
37. Tithi-nirnaya

In the field of devotional literature, there are two works of his; one is a stotra or hymn of praise; the other is an anthology of compositions set to music and meant to be sung:

38. Narasimha-nakshastuti ( It was added to Vaayu stuthi at the beginning and at the end to show people always the supreme god is offered prayer prior to others)
39. Dvadasha-stotras (12 in number)

Further, there is a work which the Acharya is said to have composed in his boyhood while playing with a ball (and so it is called ball-hymn), it is a small work of 2 verses in a unique meter:

40. Kanduka-stuti

Of these, 38 had been published formerly. Two, viz. Nyasapaddhati, that explains

the daily routine duties of mendicants, and Tithinirnaya, that is a unique work on mathematics indicating precise formulae for the determination of each date's extent, are works which were first noticed by Shri Bannanje Govindacharya in the course of his research in Palm-leaf Manuscripts some years ago.

### <b>The Essence of Madhva's philosophy</b>

Acharya Madhva's line of thought gave a new turn to the tradition of Indian Philosophy. His philosophy has been called by the name 'tatva-vaada' in ancient works. In later times, when relationship between God and soul was the main point of conflict among the schools of philosophy, it came to be called the 'Dvaita-mata' or 'dualistic school'. But from the standpoint of true Vedic tradition, this is not a name that can be fully justified.

In the philosophical system of Acharya, tatvas or categories of reality are primarily two,

svatantra-tatva (Independent reality)

asvatantra-tatva (Dependent reality)

God who creates the universe is the Independent reality; the entire universe created by him is the dependent reality.

Lord Narayana alone is the Supreme Independent God-head. The entire Veda hymns only His praise by various epithets such as Agni, Indra and Varuna. Monotheism alone is thus the quintessence of Vedic literature and not polytheism.

All names (of God) are only epithets; God is the Ocean of all qualities or excellence. Hence any name is good enough to invoke God.

All names designate only God. Not only Vedic words, not only Sanskrit names, whatever the word may be, in any language wherever in the world, every name will designate Him alike. For, there is no sound or word, in any language of the world, which is not essentially a name of God.

God is one, divinities are many. These divinities are not God. They are only souls that have realized God and risen to a high state by acquiring siddhi or divine power. These siddhas or realized adepts can serve as gurus to guide the soul who is still a sadhaka or religious seeker.

If God is 'bimba' or the original substrate, souls are His pratibimbhas or images. The image is always dependent on the original substrate; it can never become

identical with it.

One original substrate can have many images. Even so the souls can be many. Each soul has its own distinct individuality, different from another. So many souls, as many varieties. Along with all these differential gradations, these souls are all entwined in the single thread of similarity to God in their knowledge-aspect.

Just as souls, the inanimate substances too that go into the creative apparatus of the universe are innumerable. Thus the soul, who is at the center in the triple categories of God-soul-inanimate world, becomes involved in the meshes of samsara or bondage when he leans towards one side; becomes liberated if he leans to the other side.

There is one important point to be noted here. Mukti or liberation does not mean any cessation of the World itself. It is not any disappearance of a World falsely held as real. Liberation means release from the bondage of the world.

The world does exist even after release; but there is no bondage. Earlier, the soul being unaware of its power of self-consciousness, was ignorant of the original substrate, (viz. God); and had become a tool in the hands of the inconscient, searching in vain for the original. But now (in release) he has conquered inconscient Nature; for he has now become conscious of God, who is his original and also the First Cause of the entire universe.

The inconscient world is five-faceted; five elements, five elemental essences, five sheaths, five sense-organs etc. That is why it is designated as "pra-pancha" or a 'perfect pentad'. In this pentad intermixed in a fivefold manner, the principle of prana or life is also a five-fold entity of prANa, apAna, vyAna, udAna and samAna. Moreover, it is being controlled all the time by God who also assumes five forms, viz: Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Samkarashana, Vasudeva and Narayana.

Thus one might distinguish a five-fold difference too in this world;

- 1) Difference between one inconscient and another inconscient;
- 2) Difference between inconscient and the soul;
- 3) Difference between the inconscient and God;
- 4) Difference between one soul and another;
- 5) Difference between soul and God.

This difference is neither temporary nor merely practical; it is an invariable and natural property of everything. For such is the law of nature: One is not two; two is not one.

Acharya effected a synthesis and integration between several self-contradictory notions which had accumulated by his time regarding God, devotion and the universe. We might refer here to some of the important ones among them: God is both endowed with forms and is formless; both qualified and unqualified.

- He is endowed with forms because He has a body of knowledge and Bliss.
- He is formless because he has no body within the reach of our finite thought.
- He is qualified because He possesses in perfection all good or auspicious attributes.
- He is unqualified also because He is devoid of all material adjuncts.

When viewed from the right standpoint, it will be realized that all modes of utterance express varied aspects of the only truth. The Vedic literature will not open out its secrets to one who is not having this synthetic vision.

The World is not a magic show improvised by any magician. It is ultimately true. From another standpoint, it is untrue also. But then the word 'untrue' does not mean 'false', it means 'dependent reality'. Its truth is restrained by God; hence it is untrue.

Similarly, there is no truth in the objection that the Vedic religion is tainted with idolatry or image-worship. For, it does not worship icons; it worships only God symbolized by the icons. Is not that all-existent God existing in the icon?

Among other significant contributions of Acharya's Tatvavada, vyakti-vishishtavada or unique individuality of every soul and svabhavada or theory of unalterable natural law governing humanity deserves notice. The following is a summary statement of it:

There is no object like another. There is no person or jiva like another. No man's nature is like that of another.

Underlying everything and every individual person, there is a unique individuality or specialty. The all-round and complete development of this special personality is indeed the goal of human life. Human life of bondage (samsara) is none other than a practical workshop that helps the individual soul to attain the perfect development of his personality in dependence upon God.

Mukti or release is only a state of perfection or enjoying the bliss of such a perfect development of one's own personality. Each one's attainment is commensurate with one's effort. Our development is in keeping with our personality.



The sea is full; the tank is full; even water-pots may be full (of water). But that fullness is not identical in all these. The volume varies according to the variation in size. Everything is full; yet it is full of variation also.

There are no two things in this creation which are identical. Even any two leaves of the same tree are not exactly identical. Hence the idea that all become one or all become identical ultimately, is only a sugar-coated sop. It is an idea opposed to scriptures. It is an idea going against the very law of Nature.

The development of an individual takes place strictly in accordance with his inner nature. The environmental factors only help manifest what is already rooted in one's inner nature.

Thus inner nature is the spontaneous way of life for a Jiva. It is an innate characteristic rooted firmly in the jiva from time immemorial. No amount of effort can alter its course.

A sattvika or pure-hearted man cannot become a tamasa or evil minded one. Nor can a tamasa turn into a sattvika.

One's attainment of perfection is nothing but a complete manifestation of one's unique individual nature.

The idea of chaturvarnya or "four colors" in the Gita vindicates this view only. The Gita idea of "four colors" is quite distinct from the idea of "four castes" prevalent today. It is an idea that relates only to the soul's inmost nature or personality-trait. The true color of the soul needs to be discovered. That indeed is a right social order.

In such a social order, the son of a low-born (shudra) may be a nobleman (brahmana); on the contrary, a bramana's son may also be a shudra. For, varna of 'color' is not something which is transmitted hereditarily; it is something quite personal; something which is determined by the individual's own personality traits.

Only one who knows God can know the secret of the universe. It is impossible to know the universe completely by scientific research into matter. Hence one should know God Himself. It is only by knowing the root that one can tackle a tree. This indeed is the pathway of knowledge (Jnanayoga).

The principle that unites the soul to God like a thread is called prana-tattva or the "vital principle". It is the one principle that embodies all souls and is also

termed "jivottama-tattva" or the "principle of perfect jiva-hood". Acharya says about himself that it is an aspect of this supreme principle that incarnated itself in human form as Madhva in order to lay bare the Supreme Truth.

The pathway of Jnana-yoga or knowledge supreme is not opposed to Karma or action. The very dichotomy that the pathway of action is for the ignorant, while that of knowledge is for the adept, is absurd.

Knowledge without action is an impractical intellectual exercise. Action without knowledge is but blind orthodoxy. Knowledge is necessary; knowledge-full action too is necessary. At the same time, an understanding of God's infinite glory is equally necessary.

Having understood God's greatness, it is necessary to love him devotedly. The world also deserves to be lived, since the wonderful universe is just His creation in sport (lila)".

Denying the world is as good as denying God's own infinite greatness. We should all dedicate ourselves to our duty in the following spirit: "We are all subjects in the kingdom of God; rendering assistance to those who are in distress is the tax we owe to God Himself, our king".

Such an integral synthesis of the pathways of knowledge, action and devotion becomes a perfect pathway for one's life.

The physical eye is not enough for the development of knowledge. The inner eye has to be opened; one has to turn inward.

There are only two ways in which that goal can be realized; one is direct personal experience; and the other is the word of wisdom bequeathed to us by sages who were "seers" of the Veda. Their word is a torch to illumine our way. In the light of that torch and along that way alone we should walk on and discover Truth.

Thus when both the word of scripture and our own immediate experience coincide, it becomes the highest criterion confirming our conviction.

In order to achieve it, a continuous process of hearing, cogitating and realization of the scriptures is called for. Not even scriptural statement is to be accepted if it is against one's own conscience.

An awakened conscience can discover the integral unity underlying all Vedic statements. It is in order to demonstrate this synthetic essence of the Vedas that the Brahmasutras, Bharata, Pancharatra and Puranas have been written. These alone are primary authorities.

Texts of smṛti (moral code), written by sages like Manu, are acceptable as authorities only when they are in conformity with the essential message of the Veda. They are not ultimate authorities.

Another means of valid knowledge besides perception and scripture is inference or reasoning. Although it is an instrument of valid knowledge, it is not an independent instrument. Hence it is spoken of only as "anu-mana" (anusaari pramana) or 'ancillary instrument of knowledge'; it can be developed only as a supplementary instrument to the other two, i.e., perception and scripture. It is important to note that in supra-sensory matters, nothing can be established by inference or reasoning independently. For, anything one desires can be established by reasoning. Those who do not possess this awareness can establish nothing by the strength of their reasoning. Therefore in regard to supra-sensory facts and especially, in regard to God, there is no use in one's surrendering oneself to reasoning.

One should surrender oneself only to God. One should surrender oneself to the voice of hoary sages and wise men who realized God; that is to say, to the Vedic words. One should know through word of sages, and having known, one should experience it; having experienced, one should see; having seen, one should succeed; having succeeded, one should gain.

And for that, one should surrender oneself to God; one should know through surrender; and knowing, one should again surrender.

This awareness is the key to bliss.

This is broadly the sum and substance of Acharya's spiritual viewpoint.

# Yamak Bharat- 1 Shloka

Madhvacharya