

A Hermeneutical
Investigation of Super-
Primary Meaning
in the Dvaita Vedānta
of Madhva

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By

Ivan D'Souza

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The 32-foot-tall monolithic statue of Śrī Madhvācārya erected on Śrī Durga Hills, Kuñjārugiri, near Pājaka Kṣetra (his birthplace) in Uḍupi-Karnatka (India) on 8th May, 2017

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FOREWORD

It gives me immense happiness at seeing the doctoral thesis of Fr Ivan D'Souza being published as a book. I heartily congratulate the author for the significant work he has undertaken in the *Dvaita Vedānta* of Madhva with a special focus on the hermeneutical tool known as *parama-mukhya-vṛtti* (super-primary meaning). I was very pleased as a guide to see the passion, perseverance and precision in his scholarly work.

Fr Ivan has chosen a complex field of hermeneutics. He has shown great skill in highlighting the crucial role of the *parama-mukhya-vṛtti* in Madhva's project of establishing the sovereignty of the Lord Viṣṇu. Further, the author has ably brought out the contemporary significance of an important hermeneutical device. The work also includes comparisons with the relevant western philosophical ideas.

Despite the limitations of adequately entering into the primary works, Fr Ivan's work shows a mastery of the skills needed to work in the Indological field: the ability to summarize and critique various sources, a meticulous execution of transliteration, the presentation of the views of others with a great degree of objectivity, and the provision of important appendices.

I foresee a great future for the author. May he bring to light many more works in the field of *Dvaita Vedānta* studies in particular and Indology in general. I wish him well on all his intellectual ventures.

***Śivāste Panthānaḥ Santu* (May your paths be auspicious)**

Dr Henry D'Almeida, SJ

PREFACE

Dvaita Vedānta is one of the great *Vedāntic* schools. Chronologically it comes after *Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. Madhva, the proponent of the *Dvaita* system, was a 12th century Hindu philosopher belonging to the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition. He emphatically establishes that Viṣṇu alone is the semantic referent of the entire Vedic writings by employing an unparalleled hermeneutical technique known as *paramamukhyavṛtti*, the super-primary meaning, in all his writings. This work is an attempt to unearth this singular concept with the help of Madhva's commentaries and related *Dvaita* literature. It is a unique work and contribution to the field of Indian hermeneutics. It opens up wide horizons by providing a new methodology to interpret the sacred texts of any religious tradition.

This work is an updated version of my doctoral dissertation submitted to the faculty of Philosophy, Jnana-Deepa (Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune), defended on January 24th, 2018 for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy (PhD).

A Sanskrit verse states, “*na hīkṣulehanenaiva jñāta iṣuraso bhavet na ceṣṭudaṇḍam niṣpiḍya labdho nekṣurasobhavet*”. It means, “By merely licking the outer surface of sugarcane, one can't taste and enjoy its sweetness; without squeezing it between the teeth, one cannot enjoy the flavour of the sugarcane” (Vyāsatīrtha's *Ślokatātparyacandrikā*, 29). One can only savour the sweetness and experience the depth and width of *Mādhvavedānta* with perseverance and passion; it does not come without a challenge. My heart pumps with joy and gratefulness as I accomplish this research journey in *Dvaita Vedānta*. I am indebted to all those who have made my journey “a successful expedition”.

First of all, I offer my solemn salutations to the *paramamukhyārtha* of my life, God the Almighty for being the centre and focus of my life. My obeisance to Him.

And there are a large number of mentors, colleagues and friends who have generously contributed to the completion of this project. I must keep on record the copious guidance, sharp critical acumen (combined with erudition), valuable suggestions, and immense inspiration of my special and never-failing preceptor (*niyata guru*) and guide Dr Henry D'Almeida, SJ. It is he who facilitated my anchoring into the study of Indology and assisted me to proceed with the chosen problematic with a critical outlook and

cohesive insights. No doubt, he has been a fellow traveller in my new and challenging venture. His helpful comments on the manuscript furthered my reflection and steadied my thought process.

I am thankful to Jnana-Deepa (JD), its president Dr Selvarathinam, SJ, and the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy Dr Kuruvilla Pandikattu, SJ, whose availability was of paramount significance. I extend my gratitude to Dr Nishant A. Irudayadason for all the assistance and encouragement rendered to me during the course of my study as a Chair Person for the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy.

I sincerely express my gratitude to Bishop Emeritus Most Rev. Dr Aloysius Paul D'Souza and Most Rev. Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, the Bishop of the Diocese of Mangaluru. I have experienced their fatherly love, encouragement, generosity and understanding especially during the years of my research. I also thank the Rector Dr Ronald Serrao, Dean of Studies Dr Joseph Martis, the administrator Dr Leo Lasrado and the staff of St Joseph's Seminary, Mangaluru, for their help, guidance and company.

Special mention must be made of the cordial stay I enjoyed at the Post-graduate Block (PG) of JD. Fr Vincent Crasta, SJ, the moderator of JD PG Block and also the registrar of JD, Fr Alex G., SJ, the administrator of JD, and Dr Francis Ezhakunnel, SJ, the former moderator of PG Block, are fondly remembered for making such a stay possible.

I remain grateful to JD, to the professors and teachers (*aniyata guru*) at the institute for their immense contribution to my intellectual formation, and to the librarians Dr Thomas Reddy, SJ, Fr Biju Joseph, SJ and the other library staff. Thanks to JD for the research-friendly ambience.

Special mention must also be made to Dr Victor Ferrao for spending his precious time with me and enlightening me with his insights which helped me change the complexion of my book. I thank Dr. William D'Silva, the late Sri Bannanje Govindacharya, Sri Srinivasa Rao, Sri Pradeep Hegde, Dr Anandateertha, Dr Devadattta Kamath, SJ and Sri Veerananarayana Pandurangi.

My mind is overwhelmed with memories and thankfulness for the help I received from Dr Raju Crasta, Fr Vincent Saldanha, SJ, Dr Naveen Rebello, SVD, Dr Jason V.T. OFM Cap., Dr Joby, OP, Dr Gnanadhas, Fr Andrew, OFM Cap., Fr Stephen, OFM Cap., Fr Jose P.M., CMI, Peter Noronha, Fr Heston Ferrao, Mrs Anita Angelina Veigas and others for carefully and patiently going through my manuscript. I keep on record Mr James Brittain for minutely doing the proofreading of my work. Thank you for the methodological, technical, and linguistic suggestions and assistance. Dr Milton Jacob richly deserves my gratitude for drawing and designing the image for front cover of the book.

The financial concerns during the period of my study have been looked after by *Missio Aachen* and I must truly appreciate their goodwill and generosity. I also remember with gratitude the members of my family and my friends for their understanding and patience towards me. Their support was integral to the completion of this research. My heart ascends to you, dear ones, in thanksgiving.

Once again, I offer my *pranāma* to my God for providing me with both intellectually and spiritually enriching, edifying and elevating experience. Thanks in plenty to all. I request you accept this research work in the spirit of *haṃsa-kṣīra nyāya* (according to the Indian poetical convention the swan has the power to separate milk from water and drink only the milk).

Ivan D'Souza
St Joseph's Seminary, Mangaluru

ABBREVIATIONS

AĀ Bh	Aitareya Āraṇyaka Bhāṣya
AĀ	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
Ai Br	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
An Bh	Aṇubhāṣyaṁ
AU Bh	Aitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya
AU	Aitareyopaniṣad
AV	Anuvyākhyāna
BCE	Before Common Era
BG	Bhagavadgītā
BP	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
BS	Brahmasūtras
BSB	Brahmasūtrabhāṣya of Madhva
BSD	Brahmasūtradīpikā of Jagannathatīrtha
BSSBh	Brahmasūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣya
BTN	Bhāgavata-Tātparya-Nirṇaya
BU Bh	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya
BU	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad
CE	Common Era
CU Bh	Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya
CU	Chāndogyopaniṣad
GB	Gītābhāṣya
GT	Gītātātparya
IU	Īśavāsyopaniṣad
IU Bh	Īśavāsyopaniṣadbhāṣya
KaU Bh	Kāthopaniṣadbhāṣya
KaU	Kāthopaniṣad (Kāthakopaniṣad)
KeU Bh	Kenopaniṣadbhāṣya
KeU	Kenopaniṣad
KL	Kathālakṣaṇa
KM	Kṛṣṇāmṛta Mahārṇava
KN	Karmanirṇaya
MaU Bh	Māṇḍukyopaniṣadbhāṣya
MaU	Māṇḍukyopaniṣad
MB	Mahābhārata
MBTN	Mahābhārata-Tātparya-Nirṇaya

MNU	Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad
MSS	Madhvasiddhāntasāra
MU Bh	Muṇḍakopaniṣadbhāṣya
MuU	Muṇḍakopaniṣad
NS	Nyāya-Sudhā
NT	New Testament
NV	Nyāyavivaraṇa
OT	Old Testament
PC	Pramāṇacandrikā
PL	Pramāṇalakṣaṇā
PMS	Pūrvamīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini
PP	Pramāṇapaddhati
PU	Praśnopaniṣad
RB	Ṛgbhāṣya
RV	Ṛgveda
SMV	Sumadhva Vijaya
STC	Ślokatātparyacandrikā
TĀ	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TC	Tātparyacandrikā
TK	Tarka Kaumudī
TM	Tattvamañjarī of Rāghavendratīrtha
TP	Tattvapraśāśikā
Trans.	Translation
TS	Tattvasaṅkhyāna
TT	Tarkatāṇḍava of Vyāsatīrtha
TU Bh	Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya
TU	Taittirīyopaniṣad
TV	Tattvaviveka
VTV	Viṣṇutattvavinirṇaya
YM	Yuktimallikā
YPK	Yatipraṇavakalpa

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The “What”

Every text has a focus, theme, centre, an issue to address. The *Bhagavadgītā* (BG) tells, “All the Vedas proclaim me, I have compiled the *Vedānta* through Vedavyāsa. I am the knower of the Vedas”.¹ Madhva emphatically establishes that Viṣṇu alone is the focal point of the entire Vedic writings. Heidegger says, “Every thinker thinks one only thought... The thinker needs one thought only”.² There is a “single idea” running through every text which tells us the purpose of its composition. *Dvaita* tradition, which chronologically comes after *Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, is one of the great *Vedāntic* schools. It established the doctrine of *Dvaita* through commentaries on sacred writings with strong dialectics and pedagogy. Madhva, the first proponent of the *Dvaita* system, was a profound thinker, scriptural theologian and a great philosopher. He wrote commentaries on three foundational texts (*prasthānatrayī*) of Hinduism—the *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtras* and *Bhagavadgītā*—along with many other commentaries on Vedic writings and independent works. He digs deep into them through proper exegesis and interpretation and arrives at their central point. According to him, the hub of all Scriptures is Viṣṇu. But how does he arrive at the core of a text? He employs an unparalleled hermeneutical technique known as *paramamukhyavṛtti*, the super-primary meaning. The present work is an attempt to unearth this singular concept with the help of Madhva’s commentaries and the related *Dvaita* literature.

After an initial reading of Madhva’s philosophy I came to an understanding that Viṣṇu is the semantic referent of *Dvaita* canonical texts. But there were many unanswered questions: How does Madhva establish Viṣṇu as the primary referent? What is the hermeneutical or linguistic tool

¹ “*vedaiśca sarvaiḥ ahameva vedyo vedānta kṛdvedavideva cāham*” (BG 15.15). All the quotations of the BG, GB and GT are taken from Śrī Ānandatīrtha, *Sarvamūlagranthāḥ: Gītābhāṣyam and Gītātātparyam*, ed. K.T. Pandurangi, vol. 1, 4 vols. (Bangalore: Dvaita Vedanta Studies and Research Foundation, 1993). The translation is mine.

² Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 50.

he employs in the commentaries? How is it so unique and different from other methods of hermeneutics? What is its role and significance? Does it have any bearing on other traditions? Can it be applied to other sacred texts as well?

These questions led me to plunge into the unique technique of Madhva, *paramamukhyavṛtti*, to show Viṣṇu as the primary meaning of the sacred texts. The technique establishes that all words convey Viṣṇu by their power of denotation. Words are polysemous and they contain multiple layers of meanings. Hence, Madhva shows the primary layer of meaning of any word as Brahman. So, our problematic is framed as: “A Hermeneutical Investigation of Super-Primary Meaning (*Paramamukhyavṛtti*) in the *Dvaita Vedānta* of Madhva”.

The “Why”

There have been several works written on the text of Madhva, but exegetico-hermeneutics is missing in most of them. The exegeses on different commentaries of Madhva are done well, especially by B.N.K. Sharma and Pandurangi. They have to be taken forward with proper hermeneutical application by making them relevant to readers. When I was studying Madhva’s commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* (BS), I was struck by its unique style of presentation. I began to analyse and investigate the first chapter of the BS and found out that there is a new hermeneutical device which has not yet been explored fully. For this I had to study the whole philosophy and focus of Madhva and get acquainted with his overall hermeneutical approach towards sacred writings. With this background I thought of venturing into the hermeneutical tool, i.e., *paramamukhyavṛtti* of Madhva, in the first chapter of the BS.

The *Dvaita Vedānta* of Madhva has not received due attention in academic circles, but it has a rich treasure of sacred commentaries. As I belong to the land of Madhva, I deem it my academic privilege and obligation to bring to the forefront the uniqueness enshrined in them. Such an endeavour also helps me to get acquainted with the philosophy of the local land. The in-depth textual approach to the hermeneutical agenda of Madhva in the present work will contribute new insights into Madhva studies. This research will open up wide horizons by providing a new methodology to interpret any sacred text(s). It can be a guide with which to approach the Scriptures of different religions with a holistic and integral mind, thereby making our societal living a peaceful and fraternal one. This will also trigger scholarly exchanges, discussions and deliberations. It will then give an impetus to initiating and/or continuing inter-religious dialogues

at the level of academic exchange. This is a humble attempt to make Madhva's philosophy available to a larger circle.

Paramamukhyavṛtti does not singularise the text but considers plurality as leading towards unity and harmony. If *paramamukhyavṛtti* becomes the model for our scriptural reading and societal thinking, it will have serious implications in our Indian multi-religious, cultural and linguistic context. This will build bridges between the messianic or prophetic and intuitive religions in the philosophical and axiological arena.³

There are many ways of reading Scripture. A Scripture can be read from the perspective of different classes of people, from the viewpoint of different traditions and religions or by applying different hermeneutical strategies. In the West, hermeneutical methods such as liberative reading, Marxist reading, feminist reading, deconstructive reading, structural reading, post-colonial reading, post-modern reading, psycho-analytical reading, and cross-cultural reading are used. In the past, methods such as reader-response criticism, narrative criticism, historical criticism, and textual criticism were used for Biblical exegesis and reading. Though there are sufficient hermeneutical techniques within Eastern traditions and religions, very few attempts have been made to implement them in reading sacred Scriptures. Even the *Vedāntic* tradition is not an exception. *Advaita* (non-dualistic) reading, *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified non-dualistic) reading and *Dvaita* reading of Scriptures can be new ways of looking at our scriptural texts. There have been some attempts to read them from an *Advaita* perspective. The present study can be a handy reference to commence a *Dvaita* reading of the Scriptures by using *paramamukhyavṛtti*.

The “How”

The “how” of this book explains the past and contemporary research related to our topic, the constraints of study, the approach, technicalities, conventions followed, and plan of the book.

Status Quaestionis

After doing some preliminary readings, findings, and discussions I have realised that most of the literature written on Madhva's philosophy tries to introduce his philosophy. It basically dwells on Metaphysics,

³ Judaism, Christianity and Islam are considered messianic or prophetic religions, whereas Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism are regarded as intuitive religions.

Epistemology, Soul, World, Liberation, etc. The works of B.N.K. Sharma, K.T. Pandurangi, D.N. Shanbhag, K. Narain, Ignatius Puthiadam, Helmuth von Glasenapp, Bannanje Govindacharya, Devadatta Kamath (unpublished thesis), Deepak Sarma, Dominic Vas, and others (their writings can be seen in the bibliography) give an excellent grounding in the overall philosophy of Madhva. Their main focus has been the thematic reading of Madhva. But there are very few works which deal with the hermeneutics of Madhva's writings. In *Dvaita* literature more generally the authors who have shown a hermeneutical bent in their writings in English are B.N.K. Sharma, K.T. Pandurangi, Raghavendran, Narain, S.K. Bhavani, Anant Sharan Tiwari and Raghavendra Katti. B.N.K. Sharma and K.T. Pandurangi have done enormous work in the field of *Dvaita* textual hermeneutics. There is also the unpublished thesis entitled "A Hermeneutical Approach to Śrī Madhvācārya's Interpretation of the Śrutis" by Henry D'Almeida. But since it is unpublished, it is not available for our reference. The Sanskrit hermeneutical research work of H. Satyanarayanacharya, *Dvaitavedānte Padavṛttisvarūpavicāraḥ* has not yet been translated into English. The Western authors who have hermeneutically approached Madhva, mostly through articles, include Roque Mesquita, Edwin Gerow, Valerie Stoker and Robert Zydenbos. Hence, the present study is a continuation with a diversion in its approach and content.

The works of B.N.K. Sharma, Pandurangi and Raghavendra Katti exegetically discuss the method of *paramamukhyavṛtti* adopted by Madhva in the BS. However, they presuppose that the readers are aware of the linguistic nuances and hermeneutical rules and strategies. Anant Sharan Tiwari's work, *Vedic Myth, Ritual and Philosophy: A Study of Dvaita Interpretation of Veda by Madhva* is a wonderful exposition of Madhva's Hermeneutics in *Rgveda*. The Western author Valerie Stoker in her article "Vedic Language and Vaiṣṇava Theology" explains the main purport and subordinate purport in relation to *paramamukhyavṛtti*. The device of *paramamukhyavṛtti* employed in the BS is important because according to Madhva, it has the highest authority (*sarvottama* or *nirṇāyaka-śāstra*) in the hierarchy of the Scriptures. Hence, from the common reader's viewpoint, any study on *paramamukhyavṛtti* employed in the BS has not yet been elaborately and systematically done. This study would be entirely new of its kind in *Mādhvavedānta*.

Any research is a starting point of serious academic endeavour. An exegetic and interpretative study enables us to grapple with a text. Most of the Madhva writings are brief, terse and loaded with meaning. They also demand that the researcher go into innumerable *Śruti* and *Smṛti* texts. In order to understand the original works of Madhva, dependence on different

commentaries of his followers is inevitable. But lack of their availability (translations) is also a matter of concern in this work. The reading of Madhva's texts has to be objective, critical and integral. One has to be tuned to the author and the text, while making it relevant to our times. Due attention was given to this aspect in this work. Indian philosophy combines both philosophy and theology whereas in the West, philosophy and theology are treated as separate disciplines. Madhva's hermeneutics is more a faith exercise than a linguistic exercise. Hence, a Western reader may find theological overlapping in this work. In the last part of my work, I will introduce Christian methods of interpreting the Bible. This is not to highlight the theology of Christianity, but to establish a dialogical bridge between Hindu and Christian hermeneutical traditions.

Methodology

In this book we will employ what I call an 'exegetico-interpretative' method. Through exegesis our attempt is to focus Madhva's original text and through interpretation, we will show the relevance of his hermeneutics, particularly the notion of *paramamukhyavṛtti*. The work will also include descriptive, analytical and critical accounts. Basically, it is a "text" centred hermeneutics, a methodology from within.

The material for this research work is drawn from Sanskrit, Kannaḍa and English works. The original works of Madhva are in Sanskrit. There are very few English translations. However, most of his works have been translated into Kannaḍa. In this investigation we will be dealing with primary sources for our study. The research will also depend on secondary sources—books, articles and electronic sources. The bibliography and the first appendix at the end of this work will open to us the world of primary sources of *Dvaita* literature, as well as secondary commentaries, translations and sources of Madhva thought. The technical terms which occur frequently are included in the glossary. An index of important quotations is given to help the reader to trace their sources. The book also contains an index of words, helping them to be located easily in the work. Some of the appendices will help us to construct a mind-map concerning the doctrines of *Dvaita*. The non-English words are transcribed with diacritical marks for their proper articulation. They are all italicised, save those pertaining to the names of persons and places.

The Structure of the Book

The book is broadly divided into five chapters. We will be approaching the topic of *paramamukhyavṛtti* according to the following plan of chapterisation:

First, we will situate Madhva historically and try to understand his life, works and philosophy in depth. Hence, in the first chapter, we will focus on presenting the metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, anthropology and soteriology of Madhva. We will also look into his unique concepts and contributions.

In the second chapter, we will consider the role of *pramāṇas*, the divisions of *śruti* statements, the rules and strategies of hermeneutics, Madhva's method of hermeneutics, the exegetical patterns in his texts, and a broad outline of different denotations of key words, among other things. We shall see the similarities and differences in the classifications of "the word and meaning relationship" between different schools like *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

The third chapter will focus on the first chapter of the BS and Madhva's application of *paramamukhyavṛtti*. It will dwell on the overall plan of the BS and on its structure. The method of harmonisation of sacred texts and the division of words in the four sections of the first chapter of the BS will also be examined. It will be shown that the central point of arrival is Viṣṇu who is the *paramamukhyārtha* of Vedic lore.

In the fourth chapter, we will examine some commentaries and independent works of Madhva and discuss the hermeneutical issues apparent within them. We will look into the writings of the *Rgbhāṣyam*, *Upaniṣad Bhāṣyas*, and *Smṛti* and explain their basic doctrines in connection with our topic of discussion. The great saying "*tattvamasi*" (thou art that) will be exegetically elaborated and its different interpretations will be noted. We will also compare and contrast the understanding of *tattvamasi* with the approach of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja.

The final chapter of the book is important to carry forward the project of Madhva and to see its relevance in the future. Hence, it will consider different religious traditions in order to apply *paramamukhyavṛtti* to their sacred texts. Many Western continental thinkers who vibrate with the thinking of Madhva will be taken into account. We shall also suggest steps to apply *paramamukhyavṛtti* to different religious texts. Finally, we need to make a critical appraisal of Madhva's thought with questions and clarifications.

In the above outline the research problem is not expounded in the first chapter itself. The first chapter lays the foundation for the problematic

of our study. The overall philosophy of Madhva discussed in the first chapter is not a mere repetition of his general and basic philosophy. It has to be seen as a starting point for our study, because the philosophy of Madhva has many unique doctrines which have no parallels with other schools. We gradually enter into the problematic from the second chapter. As we begin our study from a wider horizon of the overall philosophy of Madhva, our path becomes narrower from the second chapter onwards. Furthermore, in the third chapter we zero in on our topic and finally proceed to the wider context by taking a universal perspective. It is like an eagle which flies in the sky, coming down to catch its prey and again taking off into the vast sky, or like, on the highway, when one enters into a tunnel and comes out on the other side.

CHAPTER ONE

SITUATING MADHVA IN THE *VIṢṆU* *SAMPRADĀYA* AND AN OVERVIEW OF *MĀDHVAVEDĀNTA*

Introduction

This chapter situates (*sitz im leben*) and contextualises the period, focus, and factors of Madhva in the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition (*sampradāya*). It explores the life, works, and philosophy of *Dvaita* highlighting its metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology and other doctrines. This will enable our discussions to have a proper foundation. Though there is plenty of literature available concerning the philosophy of Madhva, this chapter will explain the basic tenets in a nutshell.

1.1 The Context of *Dvaitavedānta*, and the Life and Works of Madhva

Acquaintance with the historical and cultural background of Madhva and his texts is indispensable to interpret his philosophy with objectivity.

1.1.1 The Historical and Religious Context of Karnataka during the Period of Madhva

Buddhism did not spread in Karnataka till the 10th century because of the prevalence of Jainism, which had its strong roots in Karnataka up to that point. The *Kevalādvaita* (non-dualism alone) system of Śaṅkara which began in the 8th century flourished for four centuries. In the 12th century, the *Vīraśaiva* movement (*līṅgāyatism*), an egalitarian “Hindu” movement, reached its climax in Karnataka. It rejected the authority of the Vedas and denied the class (*varṇa*) and caste (*jāti*) system of Hinduism. It focused on social transformation and gave an equal status to women. The *Advaita*

doctrines such as Brahman alone is real and the world is unreal were not fully challenged by Rāmānuja or Bhāskara. Hence, the *Dvaita* system arose as a reaction to Jainism, *Śaivism* and especially to counter *Advaitavedānta*. Madhva became the champion of *Vedāntic* theism and *Vaiṣṇava* realism.¹ He focused on both the transcendental and personal aspects in his system.

The Hoysaḷas (11th to 14th century) ruled in Dvārasamudra (present-day Halebeedu in Hassan District) from 1000 CE to 1343 CE. Madhva was born in Karnataka during this period. The Hoysaḷa kings supported religious pluralism because the coastal region of Tuḷunādu² was a site of trading activity. The Tuḷu region—which is spread over two coastal districts, Udupi and South Canara—was reportedly ruled for almost 1000 years from the 4th to the 14th century CE by the local dynasty of the Aḷupas. This Jaina dynasty had its capital at Barkur, only a few miles away from Madhva's birthplace.³ Many of the feudal states in Tuḷunādu had a Jain background. There were local and indigenous practices such as the worship of spirits (*bhūtārādhane* or *kola*),⁴ worship of snakes (*nagārādhane*), and the worship of Śiva. There were *Śaiva* temples during the pre-Madhva times in Tuḷunādu. Even *Śakti* traditions were widespread in the area. The local female deities such as Devī, Durgā, and Kālī were worshipped.⁵

Some scholars assert that the concept of the wind-god *Vāyu*, the son of Viṣṇu, in Madhva's theology is due to the influence of Christianity.⁶ Though the metaphysics of *Dvaita* is unique, the pattern of its tenets resembles the mould of the *Sāṅkhya* and *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* systems of philosophy. Therefore, their influences on *Dvaita* cannot be denied altogether. Western scholars such as Mesquita and Zydenbos affirm the influences of Jainism in the thought of Madhva concerning his pluralistic metaphysics and realist epistemology. Zydenbos sees a Jain background in epistemological notions such as *kevala pramāṇa* (valid knowledge) and *anu*

¹ Realism asserts that objects exist independently of our knowledge.

² It is also known as *Tuḷurājya* where the Tuḷu language is spoken by majority of the people. Tuḷu is one of the Draviḍian languages.

³ Daniel P. Sheridan, *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2012), s.v. "Madhva".

⁴ *Bhūtārādhane* or the spirit worship is a religious and cultural ritual practised in the coastal regions of Karnataka (Karāvaḷi). Basically, it is a practice of worshipping departed mythological, historical and familial personalities, in various modes. The spirits or deities are believed to be the guardians of the village. There are many types of *bhūtārādhane* such as *kola*, *nema*, *bali*, *tambila*, and *maime*.

⁵ For a detailed explanation see Gururaja Bhatt, *Studies in Tuḷuva History and Culture* (Manipal: Manipal Power Press, 1975).

⁶ A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963), 336.

pramāṇa (means of knowledge), *sākṣin* (the witness-self), and *saviśeṣabheda* (identity-in-difference), to name just a few.⁷ Mesquita upholds the possibility of influence of *anekāntavāda* (relative pluralism) on the doctrine of *viśeṣa* (particularity). The Jaina teacher Bhāskaranandin was a contemporary of Madhva.⁸ It is immaterial whether Jainism and *Dvaita* influenced each other in their philosophy. What is more important is to look at the distinct points of arrival and departure in their respective world-views.

1.1.2 The *Sad-Vaiṣṇavism* of Madhva

The *Vaiṣṇavism* of *Dvaita* is the revival of the *Pañcarātra* religion.⁹ *Vaiṣṇavism* for Madhva was the religion of *Rgveda* (RV) itself. His *Vaiṣṇavism* is called *Sad-Vaiṣṇavism* (the real system of Viṣṇu). The theory of *avatāra* (divine descent) caused the spread and growth of the *Vaiṣṇava* movement, as opposed to *Śaivism* in which the doctrine of *avatāra* is absent.¹⁰ It is not the reading of the BS that made Madhva a dualist, but the devotional cult of Viṣṇu known as *Bhāgavata-sampradāya* (the tradition of the *Vaiṣṇava* sect).¹¹

1.1.3 A Biographical Sketch of Madhva

The life of Madhva is dealt with in *Sumadhvavijaya* and *Maṇimañjari* by Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, son of Trivikrama Paṇḍita (1258–1320 CE). *Sumadhvavijaya* is a hagiography of Madhva written in an orthodox or traditional style. It contains the extraordinary events which took place in the life of Madhva. There is not enough evidence to show that the events mentioned in this account are historical facts. Madhva was believed to have been born as the third incarnation of *Vāyu* (wind-god) or *Mukhyapṛāṇa*

⁷ See Robert J. Zydenbos, “On the Jaina Background of the Dvaita Vedānta”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 19, no. 3 (September 1991).

⁸ Roque Mesquita, *Madhva's Unknown Literary Sources* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000), 97.

⁹ It is a religion based on the *Vaiṣṇava* Sanskrit *Āgamic* texts. *Pañcarātra* texts include the authoritative source-books which are attributed to Lord Viṣṇu.

¹⁰ B.N.K. Sharma, *Śrī Madhva's Teachings in His Own Words* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1961), 25.

¹¹ Devadatta Kamath, “The Doctrine of Jīvātman in the Works of Madhvācārya” (PhD diss., Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1972), 200. The term *sampradāya* means, “Tradition, traditional doctrine or knowledge, traditional handing down of instructions, a religious doctrine inculcating the worship of one peculiar deity”. *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 2011, s.v. “sampradāyah”.