

Prathamo HanumAnnAmA dvitlyo BhIma eva cha

PURNaprAGYa tR^itlyastu bhagavatkAya.rsAdhakaH



BrahmAntA guravaH sAkshAdishhTaM daivaM shriyaH patiH.

AchAryAH shrlmadAchAryAH sa.ntu me janma janmani

A Brief Sketch of the Life and Teachings Of Sri Madhwacharya

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INTRODUCTION

In this article an attempt has been made to give a brief description of the life and doctrine of Sri Madhwacharya, the great founder of Dwaita Philosophy. An attempt to give a glimpse of many sided personality of Sri Madhvacharya.

One becomes conscious and aware , however dimly , of the presence of a higher power than ourselves in this vast and mysterious universe. Science, no doubt, reduced much of the inscrutable mysteries of nature. But there are still many things in nature which defy scientific explanation and understanding. Science may not be able to prove the existence of God. What is more to the point is that it cannot, also disprove His existence. Metaphysics steps in where science halts baffled.

The richness and diversity of the universe is a fact of experience. But the rules constituting this universe are not in a chaotic mess. There is order , regulation, mutual adjustment and harmony in life. This shows that there is no unrestricted independence to all to act as they please. But the very principle of dependence presupposes an Independent central principle which explains, controls and interrelates the dependents into a 'Universe'.

The aim of philosophy, according to Madhwa, should be not merely to realize the distinction between the appearance and reality , but to understand and realize the 'dependent realities'. He is not an uncritical realist who takes everything to be real. He is not also a sentimental idealist who denies all but one reality. He is a rational realist who admits whatsoever is established on the uncontradicted evidence of Pramanas, the senses, the mind and Sakshi in addition to reason and Revelation.

His main aim was to make everyone realize the **Hari Sarvothvamatva**.

It is believed that Sri Hanuma, Bheema and Madhwa are the three incarnations of the Wind God, Vayu. Smruthis , Sruthis and Puranas entol this. In the name of Hanuman he served Sri Rama, as Bheema served Sri Krishna and again as desired by God he chose to serve Lord Vedavyasa in the name of Madhwa. Sri Madhwa himself has openly declared in about ten of his thirty seven works that he is such.

Sri Madhwas life and work were authentically written by Sri Narayana Panditachrya, a contemporary to Sri Madhwa in his book “Sri Sumadhwa Vijaya” It has been acclaimed as an authoritative work and accepted by one and all.

Madhwas parents and history of Pajaka and Udupi Kshetra.

.The parents of Sri Madhwa belonged to the sect of Bhagavata Sampradaya Brahmins. His father was Madhyageha Bhatta (otherwise known as Naddantillaya) and mother Vedavathi. He was a pious Brahmin well versed in Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas and well versed in Bhagavata and Mahabharatha. He spent his time giving discourses to large audiences. He believed in Smrities and Puranas and cordially adhered to the duties of a house holder.



Sri Anantapadmanabha Temple.



As he had no son, everyday for twelve years he used to walk from his village Pajaka to Ananteshwara Temple at Udupi Praying for an esteemed son endowed with divine qualities . Pajaka Kshetra was a holy place. The vanity of hill known as Vimanagiri lent this village a great importance. On this hill is situated an ancient temple dedicated to Godess Durga. This temple is traced to Lord Parasurama himself.



Vimanagiri - Durga Temple

Besides the Durga temple, the four theerthas of Parasurama, known as Parasu Theertha, Dhanus Theertha, Gadaa Threertha and Bana Threertha, are within the radius of a mile or two. These are ponds of sanctity largely resorted to by Pilgrims



Gada Theertha



Parashu Theertha



Bana Theertha



Dhanus Theertha

These names are derived from the deities of the two ancient temples in this town -temple of Chandra Mouleeswara and Ananteswara. In Sanskrit 'udu' means stars and 'pa' means husband , Lord etc. Udupa means Moon – Chandra .It is said that Chandra did penance at this place to please Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva gave darshan to Chandra at this place. So the deity is known as Chandra Mouleeshwara. Udupi was also known as Sivalli. In the temple of Ananteshwara, it is believed that Lord Vishnu is in the form of Linga, seated on a pedestal of silver, popularly called Siva-belli, the Silver Siva. The name Sivalli must have originated from this. Hence the town is known as Rajata Peetapura-Rajata means silver and peeta is seat. Tradition says that it is Lord Parasurama himself took his seat on the silver pedestal. The Tulu speaking Brahmins of this place were worshippers of both Siva and Vishnu.

‘Ananta’ means the serpent Shesha. Esha means Lord . Ananteshwara means Lord of Shesha , that is Narayana reclining on the serpent Shasha. Ananta is also another name of Lord Vishnu. Ananteshwara temple is supposed to be a Vishnu temple, though the image is a lingam. There were many temples with Sivalingam, but in some of them the Lingam was considered Vishnu, as in Ananteshwara temple. Both Vishnu and Siva Sahasranamams were chanted in these temples. The Deity in some temples was called Shankaranarayana, and in some others Hari- Hara. Thus it was a place of fusion of Saivism, Vaisnavism and Advaita.

There is a special tradition that pilgrims must first visit Chandramouleshwara, then Anateshwara and from there must proceed to seek darshan of Lord Krishna. Even now the Udupi Ashta Matha swamijis visit the temple in this order before they ceremoniously take charge of the management of Sri Krishna Matha during the Paryaya function.

Birth and childhood

Madhyageha Bhatta's prayers were answered and by Lords grace he got a son, who became the great Acharya. It was Mukhyaprana who entered the body of Madhyagehas wife and she delivered a beautiful infant with large eyes and a moon like face. The father named him Vasudeva to indicate that he was born to give the correct knowledge to the world and that he would ever be devoted to Lord Narayana. In Sanskrit Va means Knowledge Asu means Prana-wind and Deva means God.

Sri Madhwa was born in 1238 on the Vijayadashami day at a place called Pajaka near Udupi, otherwise known as Rajata Peetapuram.



House where Sri Madhwa was born

Miraculous events occurred centering on Vasudeva even from infancy. Mandhyageha Bhatta, the father, took the infant one day to the temple of Anateshwara at Udupi and dedicated him to the Lord. His path lay through forests inhabited by man-eating wild animals, but having the divine boy in his hand, the father could pass through these regions without any danger.

Vasudeva grew day by day a veritable picture of glowing health and cheer. Once Vasudeva's parents left him with his elder sister to attend an urgent duty. Infant Vasudeva began to cry. All efforts to calm him proved of no avail. She thought that the child must be hungry and fed him boiled horse gram meant for cows. Child ate until the whole quantity was exhausted., the infant's health was not in the least affected.

In another incident, one year old Vasudeva suddenly disappeared from home. Parents were naturally worried and went about searching. Their quest was fruitless for hours. At last they met the child coming along merrily, hanging from the tail of a bull. Bull is an indication of Dharma. By this Sri Madhwa showed that he has come to follow Dharma and will never at any stage leave Dharma. He will always walk in the path of Dharma.

Once Madhyageha Bhatta happened to be entangled in difficulty by not being able to repay a debt of a bullock bought from a debtor. The debtor sat at the door and refused to move until the debt was repaid. Vasudeva realizing the situation, promptly made up his mind how to act. He went round the house and beckoned to the debtor to go with him. Vasudeva picked up a few tamarind seeds and gave it to him. To his surprise, it had turned out to be coins amounting to full discharge of the dues.



Tamarind tree

The debtor returned to Madhyageha Bhatta and told him that he was free , because the boy had repaid the debt.Actually Vasudeva satisfied the debtor of his father by giving him only tamarind seeds, creating in him the feeling that, through the seeds, what was bestowed on him was the great consummation, Moksha.

Once when Vasudeva was three years old, his parents took him along to attend a function at a place called Nidiyur. In the midst of the function Vasudeva suddenly disappeared.Vasudeva went into a neighbouring forest. Though warned by travellers on the way about the dangers there, he proceeded and performed worship to Lord Narayana in a temple in the forest of Kaduvoor



and stayed at another temple of Siva at Bannanje. From there he went to Udipi and Worshipped at the shrine of Ananteshwara.Tearful parents began vigorous search .Some said they saw a child at Kodavor, some said they saw him at Bannanje temple they could not find Vasudeva.They came to Udupi and arrived at Anantshwara temple. Vasudeva was standing before Ananteshwara with folded hands. When questioned as to who protected him in all these dangerous regions, he replied “Why? Shankara-Narayana escorted me to Bannanje. Sri Hari of that temple guided my steps to the east temple of Udupi and that deity brought me hither. I travelled not alone and unescorted”. He was a child to show the divine path to the people. We see that Sri Madhwa told the same thing to the Muslim King in his thirties.

When the child completed three years, his father initiated his educational lessons – Aksharabhyasa.



Place where Sri Madhwa learnt his alphabets.

There was no need to teach him. The ocean of intelligence that he was, he knew the alphabets already. The capacity to learn off anything new without effort, was soon manifest. He allowed himself to be taught only once and no more. He tolerated no repetition or revision for, that was superfluous. Father was surprised and happy and was wonder struck by the child's grasping power.

Once when Vasudeva was five, while attending a discourse with his mother at Neyampalli, he boldly found fault in the rendering and corrected him and gained the applause of the audience. He did the same kind of correction when his father during a discourse could not remember the meaning of a word and avoided that word. Vasudeva stood out and gave the correct exposition himself. By this he showed that wrong things should be pointed out and corrected and must not remain a silent spectator.

Upanayana and studies.

When Vasudeva was five his father performed his Upanayana . He was sent to study Nyaya, Vedas and Classics, Vedangas etc to a Teacher Poogavana (pooga means beetel nut, vana means garden - Thotamthillaya in the vernacular) descent a respected Vedic scholar of that period. He was very quick in mastering what he was taught, so quick that his grasp puzzled his master and led him to believe that he did not pay sufficient attention to his lessons. He would appear only at the time of the lessons and would spend rest of the time in play field. In the field his strength and agility were matchless. Whether running, swimming, wrestling , jumping or any other game he would come first. Even when attacked by a group of his classmates he would humble them with terrific blows.

Acharya Madhwa attached much importance to good physique. If the body is weak, the growth of intellect too will be weak. One should take care to be strong not in body alone but also in mind too was his message. Sri Madhwa proved his strength even in his forties. Once he overheard his disciples discussing about their physical strength. He called fifteen of them who were around twenty years of age for wrestling with him. Acharya warded off his disciples with a single blow . All of them fell to the ground. In wrestling his grip was so tight and strong that there was no escape or release , unless he chose to give up. But no body could hold Vasudeva even for a while. By this he showed that no body can hold him except God. He has come to show a way out from the miseries of the world and is not here to be bound by any worldly matters. No boulder of rock was too heavy for him. In short he showed Bheemas strength and courage in sports.

Vasudeva used to spend a lot of time at the Durga temple near his house. Once he was attacked by a snake on the way to the hilltop. It is believed that the Asura known as Maniman in Mahabharatha dwelt in the woods as a snake. The onslaught was both quick and fierce. But Vasudeva was cool and courageous and crushed the serpents hood with his toe.



Spot where Sri Madhwa killed the snake.

Whole village was bestirred by this and could hardly believe their eyes , but the plain truth was there, beyond any controversy. As Vasudeva did not return home in the usual time, his mother anxious at his prolonged absence called Vasudeva loudly by his name. Sure enough he appeared in a twinkling. In order to effect his purpose they say that Vasudeva took a long jump from where he was to the front of his house and presented in front of his mother. He began the days proceedings by performing a feat of Bheemasena by crushing a great Rakshasa and ended with the miracle by a wonderful jump as only Hanuman could have accomplished. This can be seen even today at Pajaka. By this we must understand that anything poisonous should be destroyed. Poisonous not only to the body but also to the mind which leads us away from our goal to realize God.

When the studies were approaching completion, teacher started teaching the great Aitareya Upanishad. This is the first among Upanishads given by Mahidasa. This is the work of which Vasudeva was particularly fond. His great liking for this Upanishad continued through out his life. When the teacher began an exposition of this work on the old beaten lines Vasudeva took him apart and expounded the verses impressively, in his own way, in strict accordance with well known canons of interpretation, basing his views on the accepted works of authority. The teacher was convinced with the result, that a genuine Bhakthi for Govinda was imparted in his heart. This was the fitting Guru Dakshina for the teacher. It was Gurus good fortune, that he stumbled once in a way on such a gem of a pupil, and his reward was a priceless Bhakthi, which ensured eternal salvation. With tears of joy and gratitude, the guru dismissed Vasudeva invoking Gods choicest blessings on his head. While bidding him good bye, he charged him with the great mission of instructing the world in the paths of devotional worship, and creating among people, a school of true Bhakthi towards the Lord Sri Krishna.

Sanyasa

Vasudeva fell to serious meditation and made up his mind to the course of action he should adopt. He knew his mission. He knew that he was not born to marry, multiply and make an exit. He realized that his duty to God, to himself and his fellowmen summoned him to the war-path , to battle with false knowledge, overthrow the sovereignty of ignorance and re-establish truth on its throne.. He was convinced that the best mode of achieving this end was by an early renunciation of worldly life and family ties and to enter the order of sannyasi. Without apprising his father of his resolution , he came to a monastery in Karey, a village near Udupi where a sanyasi Achyutapreksha, a sincere, genuine man of great piety was the head. The headquarters of this ascetic was the Mutt of Bhandarkere which is a few miles north of Udupi. . Achyuthapreksha was a learned man who had faithfully studied Adwaita under his guru. He apparently belonged to a line of ascetics whose faith in Monism was not very ardent. Vasudeva was at once accepted as a secular novice to undergo a term of probation, preliminary to enrolment in the sacred order.



Meanwhile Madhyageha Bhatta on discovering his lads intentions, was almost heart broken. He begged and tried his best to change Vasudevas mind but in vain. He returned home and conveyed the news to his wife. Both felt a void which was impossible to fulfill. Madhyageha Bhatta set out again to try again to change his sons mind.

Conversation between the two heated up and at one stage threatened to put an end to himself , if his son should have his way. The son tore up a piece of cloth , put it on as a sanyasins ‘Koupina’ and challenged his father to carry out the threat. Temper cooled. Vasudeva was their only son . Vasudeva promised not to enter the sacred order until a younger brother (who was to become the famous Vishnu Theertha , the head of Sode Mutt.)was born. At last a son was born. On hearing this, Vasudeva paid a flying visit to home to speak to his mother. He told her that he must have her permission to enter the holy order, and that if it was refused , she might be sure that she could never look at his face again and will be lost in the wide world for ever. The maternal love reconciled arguing that it was better to have her son before her eyes, sanyasi as he might be, than to lose him out of sight for ever.

With the permission of Vasudevas parents, he was initiated into Sanyasa by Achyutapreksha under the name **POORNAPRAJNA** ,-Purna means , full, complete and Prajna means knowledge (sarvajna). Soon after Poornaprajna expressed a desire to go to Ganga for a holy bath. In response to the earnest prayers of the guru, Mother Ganga came gurgling up in their Mutts pond for all to bathe in her holy waters. This helped to retail Poornaprajna at the Math for a while. Poornaprajna began to receive instructions in the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta, but difference of opinion between Guru and the disciple began to crop up soon. Poornaprajnas deep study of scriptures was unparalleled and had convinced him of the uselessness of the Advaita interpretation of Vedanta. He carefully studied the Vedanta commentaries of different Acharyas. Soon his expertise in scriptural argument and his determination to establish personal theism as the conclusion of Vedanta grew to the point where he could defeat his Guru in argument. When Bhagavata recitals were taking place, Poornaprajna amended the renderings of the passages that were recited. On scrutinizing several texts , it was found that Poornaprajna was correct. The astonished Guru asked him how he could know the whole Bhagavata so thoroughly, the pupil replied that he had known all that in previous births.Recognizing Poornaprajnas superior scholarship , his powers of exposition and divine inspiration of Poornaprajna Achyuthapreksha made him the Head of the Math and awarded the title **ANANDATHEERTHA** , “Ananda” means bliss and “Theertha” means doctrine ,scriptures (Shastra, Siddhantha).The expression compliments the Master as the maker or exponent of blissful scriptures. **MADHWA**, the name by which he is generally known is only a synonym of his real name -the doctrine which gives most desirable Moksha.

FIRST SOUTH INDIAN TOUR.

For some years from now, Sri Madhwa spent his time confronting arrogant scholars who came to challenge him. The first of these were Buddhisagara and Vadasimha who, being defeated in debate, had to bolt away at night unknown to any. He first undertook a tour up to Kanyakumari accompanied by his Guru. At that time Vijayanagara was fairly prosperous kingdom. To the south of Vijayanagara kingdom comprised Mysore and the west coast was under the rule of descendants of King Vishnuvardhana whom Sri Ramanuja had converted to Vaishnavism in the twelfth century. . Wherever he went the influence of Islam was spreading, Christianity too was making headway. The country was facing a piquant situation under these alien religious influences. Besides, the Indian people themselves were helpless spectators to squabbles among their own religious sects, various castes and creeds etc. Acharya toured the country at such a time of disturbed philosophical situation and brought reassurance to the people. They were impressed with the saint and listened to his discourses with devout attention. His following steadily grew.

After starting from Udupi traveling South, in due course reached Vishnumangalam, a favorite place of Sri Acharya.



Maha Vishnu - Vishnumangala

It is said here he chose to exhibit an extraordinary feat of digestion, by consuming two hundred bananas after meal as per the request of Brahmins of rival school, which

appeared an impossibility. After visiting Anantasayana, he proceeded to Calicut and Cochin. Sri Madhwa moved much in the strip of country lying between Kumaradhara and Netravati. After a stay of four months at Rameshwaram, he visited Sri Ranganatha temple at Sri Rangam.

The chronicle of Sri Mushnam (famous Bhoo Varaha temple) contains a reference to Sri Madhwas visit to the place. It mentions a holy pond known as Danda Theertha as sanctified and created by Sri Madhwas Danda.



Danda Theertha

Wherever he went he debated the prominent scholars of the impersonal school smashing their interpretations of Vedanta with his brilliant advocacy of dualistic theism. He was met with stiff opposition , but no one could overcome him in spiritual argument or logical debate.Challenged by scholars to explain the scriptures at one meeting ,Sri Ananda Theertha demonstrated that each Vedic Sukta had three meanings, the Mahabharatha ten meanings, and Vishnu Sahastranama a hundred meanings. It is said that Acharya was challenged by an eminent scholar of Sri Shankara, to write his own commentary on Vedanta. Acharya disagreed with Sri Ramanujams Vishistadwaita-vada.

This further added to the young Madhwacharyas determination to compose his own commentary incorporating his own unique interpretation. After establishing his reputation among the scholars of southern regions, he returned to Udupi. The confrontation with scholars of various schools like Shankara and Ramanuja , made him convinced of the need for founding a new school of thought.

PILGRIMAGE TO BADARI

After seven years of stay at Udupi , he started with the permission of his teacher Achyutapreksha on his first pilgrimage to North India. and Himalayas, in order to achieve the benedictions of Vedavyasa , for it is said that Vyasa, being immortal still lives in Badarikashram. A small but devoted band of followers accompanied him. Of these , Satya Theertha was the most prominent (and ultimately inherited the succession and continued the line of the Bhandarkere and Bheemanakatte Mutts) Before taking final leave of his Guru, Madhwa offered a copy of his Bhagavad Gita as some recompense for the impending separation.

He passed through many holy spots and sacred streams until he reached Anandamatha at Badari sacred to Lord Narayana. His daily programme was to bathe in the early hours of the dawn in ice-cold stream of Ganges, do tapas for the rest of the day on a secluded boulder or rock, or within the premises of the temple and send away all his followers and spend hours in the solitude of the divine presence . On one of the occasions when it was night he opened the newly composed Gita commentary and read the opening lines. “My prostrations to the Supreme Lord Narayana, full of perfect attributes and free from any flaw: my prostrations like wise to Badarayana, my Guru. I proceed to construe and interpret the Gita, a little.” A voice of approval was heard in the solemn silence emanating from the Deity of the temple. Lord Narayana, approved of the commentary and acknowledged its merits. The day dawned. After oblations and daily pooja he gathered his pupils and expounded Bhagavat-Gita to them according to the commentary.

It was Sri Madhwas desire to go to Upper Badari and to visit the inaccessible hermitage of Vedavyasa known as the true Badari. It is believed that sage Vyasa dwells therewith chosen disciples even now teaching and leading a life of indescribable holiness. Sri Madhwa longed to sit at his feet and learn and obtain his divine sanction for the

propagation of Dwaita as the true import of all works, Meemamsa, Bharata, Bhagavata and the Puranas

As a preparation he spent his time fasting and prayer. He took kashta mouna for forty eight days and observed a vow of speechless meditation during the whole period. One night he had a call from the Lord to visit upper Badari. From a mortal point of view, the intended journey was not only long and arduous, but a positively dangerous one. When the day dawned he summoned his pupils and wrote as he was still under speechlessness “this place is holy. Vishnu is supreme. My word is meant for good of all. I leave to pay respects to Sri Vyasa. I may or may not return. May God bless you.” One Satya Theertha who was devotedly attached to him tried to follow, but could not keep pace with Sri Madhwa. In the evening Sri Madhwa turned and waved his hand to Satya Theertha to go back. An unseen power seemed to carry him back to his camp.

At last Sri Madhwa stood face to face with his Deity of worship, Sri Vedavyasa. Vedavyasa embraced him and gave him a seat among the sages.



Sri Vedavyasa – Sri Madhwacharya –Upper Badari

During the course of his stay in his abode, Vedavyasa taught him the true meaning of the Vedas, the Brahma-sutras, the Mahabharata, and the Pancaratra, all of which established the glory of Narayana. Within a short time Sri Madhwa made a remarkable progress in his studies and learned all that the sage meant he should be equipped with the purpose of his mission. Sri Madhwa undertook to interpret the aphorisms in their limelight. Sri Madhwa had the vision of Lord Narayana and heard the voice of Narayana that he Poornaprajna could alone complete the work begun by Vyasa. He departed on his behest in his mind, regarding the most solemn duty of his life to obey and carry it out.

By the time he reached lower Badari, Ananda Mutt his Sootra Bhashya was ready. This is a veritable masterpiece. It is an essence of the Vedanta distilled from the vast range of Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas and the Epics. There were already twentyone commentaries which purported to be authoritative interpretations. Of the Brahma Meemamsa. Devout Satya Theertha copied out Sri Madhwas Sootra Bhashya. A copy was sent to Udupi for the perusal of Achyutapreksha.

On his way back preaching, It was at Ganjama banks of Godavari, that Sri Madhwa made his first conversion by convincing the greatest pandits. Pandits belonging to other systems crumbled at the touch of Sri Madhwas logic and proofs. It is here he met two prominent Advaita scholars who were well versed in all the important scriptures, Sobhana Bhatta and Sami Shastri. After long debate Sobhana Bhatta accepted his defeat and resolved to give up his old faith and became a follower of the new creed. It required no ordinary strength of mind to translate his conviction into action and be converted into an alien faith.



Sobhana Bhatta, Sami Shastri

Another great man Sami Shastri (He became Sri Madwas shisya and entered the holy order by name Narahari Theertha and wanted to follow Sri Madhwa renouncing his position as Chief Minister. But Sri Madhwa predicted the future and wanted Sami Sastri to stay back for a few years. As predicted, he was regent for the Infant heir of Royalty of Kalinga Nagara, capital of Gajapathi Country by the unanimous choice of the governing ministry. He was Prime Minister of Kalinga from 1271 to 1293. At the end of the spiritual reign he obtained the idols of Sri Rama and Sita which was in the treasury of the Palace, at the request of the Acharya. Acharya knew the history behind the idols. Those idols were worshipped by Rama and Sita and were given to a devotee by Sri Rama himself. Devotee before breathing his last gave it to Hanuman. Hanuman gave it to Bheema when he met Bheema in Dwaparayuga at Gandhamadana region. It remained in the Royal Palace till the extinction of the dynasty in king Kshema Kanta. The idols then passed on in some manner to the possession of the Gajapathy Kings of Orissa where they were in worship for a time and remained simply deposited in the treasury. The idols are called Moola Rama and Sita because they were anterior to Sri Ramas incarnation itself.)

Sobhana Bhatta and Sami Shastri became renowned and important followers of Sri Madhwa. . They became famous as Sri Padmanabha Theertha and Sri Narahari Theertha and regarded as principle Acharyas of the Madhwa school after Madhwa himself. Narahari Theertha is famous for his commentaries on Madwas Gita-Bhashya and Karma-nirnaya. Padmanabha Theertha wrote commentaries on many of Madhwas works, including Madhwas Brahma Sutra Bhashya, his Anuvyakhya and his Dasa-Prakaranas. He was the first commentator on the major works of Acharya. On his return to Udupi, Madhwa interpreted his new Commentary on Brahma Sutra to all, including his Guru. He succeeded in converting his Guru, and the Guru became the disciple of the illustrious disciple.

The holy spot where Sri Madhwa sat and taught his pupils day after day during his stay at Udupi can be seen even today. It is a space of three cubits, within the precincts of Ananteshwara temple. There is no image or statue on the spot. It would appear that Sri Vadiraja Swami tried to install a statue on the spot. , but the Master appeared overnight in a dream and prohibited it. In those days , this site was in the outermost part of the temple

buildings, fully exposed to light and air. With additions to the temple the spot is in a shade and darkness.

FOUNDING KRISHNA TEMPLE AT UDUPI.



Sri Krishna Temple - Udupi



Sri Krishna – Udupi

The most outstanding event of Madhwas life during this period of stay at Udupi was the founding of the Sri Krishna temple. When he stayed in Udupi , it was Madhwas regular habit to bathe in the ocean. It was on one of these occasions, that a remarkable incident happened. One day as he started for the ocean bath in the wee hours of the morning, it occurred to him, that he might himself compose a short book of Sonnets capable of being set to music. He began at once. As he walked to the sea shore which is three miles from

Udupi he composed at ease five chapters of about forty-six verses- which is the famous “**Dwadasha Stotra**”. All this was obviously the result of a pre-sentiment. When the idea of composing the stotram occurred to him , he was intently thinking of Sri Krishna.

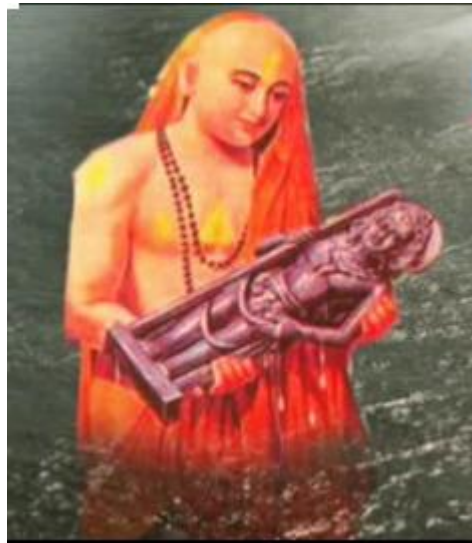


It flashed to him that Sri Krishna was on his way to Udupi to settle down, for the benefit of his bhaktas. This prevision elated his spirits, and facilitated the flow of prayerful music. He danced mentally to the tune of divine music and sang on absentmindedly , during all the ablutions.

At last he went to the sands and sat down for further meditation. While thus engaged, he opened his eyes suddenly and they lighted upon a ship in distress bound for Dwaraka. Taking up his handkerchief, he waved it at the ship and sure enough the ship did float safely to the shore. The master of the ship approached Acharya and begged him to accept some return. Madhwacharya accepted a large chunk of ‘Gopichandanam’ (a paste with a kind of earth) Chapters six to twelve were completed in the course of the day. The clod was taken to Udupi and washed at Madhwa Sarovara .



Sri Madhwa sarovara



There stood the magnificent image of Bala Krishna holding a churning rod in one hand and churning rope in the other. The idol was originally carved by Vishvakarma and given to Rukmini Devi, Krishna's consort in Dwaraka to worship. After cleaning and pooja performed by Acharya, even thirty persons could not carry it to the Math as the presence of Sri Krishna was infused into it by the sacred touch of Acharya. But Madhwa who was all-powerful Vayu incarnated, could carry it easily and installed it at the temple in Udipi where it remains today. Sri Madhwa regulated the method and formulae

of worship. He codified the procedure in minutest details, and led the way by conducting the ritual of worship in person. Nine times in the day an elaborate programme of worship and prayers was followed by Sri Madhwa.. He reformed the ways of sacrificial rites, and included them in devotional disciplines, especially for householders. He introduced the use of animal forms made of a paste of black gram powder and ghee in place of animals in the sacrifices. .

SECOND PILGRIMAGE TO BADARI

Madhwa had made a long stay at Udupi. He went on another tour to North India upto Badarikashrama., crossing mountains and rivers on the way. Once they had to cross Ganges and no boats were available. Madhwa told his followers to hold one another by hand , and descend boldly into the current and led the party into surging gulf. The Muslim guards of the King placed entire camp under arrest. Madhwa spoke in Persian to the King Sultan Jalal-uddin-khilji. The king was mighty pleased and offered a part of his Kingdom if Sri Madhwa agreed to stay. But Madhwa refused and continued his journey. Many a times he saved himself and the rest from grave situations.

He met Vyasa again at Badarikashrama.



Madhwa conceived the idea of epitomizing Mahabharatha into a handy volume, so that characters and the moral, might impress themselves upon the reader in their true significance. He consulted Vyasa and with permission , he condensed the essence of the

epic and wrote out the purport in 32 chapters , known as Mahabharatha Tatparya Nirnaya, which is a must book for all Madhwas to study. Vyasa presented eight Saligramas of rare value to Sri Madhwa.(Saligramas in India are worshipped as stones of peculiar merit, as the special abode of Vishnu). These are found in Worship in four places. One each at Udupi, Subramanya, Madhyatala (Sode Mutt) and the remaining five at Uttaradi Mutt. On his way back to Udupi he travelled extensively –Delhi, Kurukshetra, Benaras, Goa etc and performed miracles many a times.

STAY AT UDUPI

Acharya made Udupi his headquarters and was engaged in philosophical pursuits. He immersed himself in prolific literary. He wrote commentaries on ten major Upanishads, Dasa-Prakaranas and Anu-Vyakhyana a summary on Mahabharatha called the Mokshadharma, and commented on Srimad-Bhagavatam. He however had to face considerable opposition. When people could not confront him successfully on the spiritual texts, some took to shameful and petty ways. Attempts were made to break his Danda, to kill him with the help of Kodinjadi brothers (wrestlers) etc. A smear campaign also took place. But the opponents had to suffer failure. By this time Acharya had a priceless collection of books. During his travels he had collected many rare texts for his philosophical research. A sanyasin Padma Theertha and a Pandit Pundarika Puri who were defeated while arguing, stole the priceless books of Acharya. They thought that spread of Dwaita Philosophy can be arrested thereby. But they were soon recovered and handed over to Acharya by Raja Jayasimha of Kumbhanadu.

Pandit Trivikrama, Court pandit of King Jayasimha, a born genius , was foremost authority on Advaita Philosophy. He attended Acharyas discourses in Vishnumangala. When Acharya moved to a temple in a village of Padikudel and gave wonderful discourses, Trivikrama who was in the audience entered into disputation with Acharya and it lasted for fifteen days. At the end Pandita, his intellect spent, his doubts destroyed prostrated at the feet of Acharya recognizing Acharya as his Guru. Sri Madhwa accepted him as his disciple. A full account of this is given by the Pandits son Sri Narayana Panditacharya, whose well known “Madhwa Vijaya” is the most popular treatise on Sri Madhwas life. Sri Madhwa assigned him the duty and privilege of writing a commentary

of his Sootra Bhashya and soon produced the famous work, “Tattva Pradeepika”. Trivikrama panditacharyas “Sri HariVayu Stuti” hymn describing Sri Madhwa as Avatara of Vayu- Hanuma , Bheema and Madhwa is recited by all Madhwas. Sri Madhwa himself wrote two slokas on Lord Narasimha to be recited in the beginning and end of the hymn. The contribution of Trivikrama Panditachrya, his son Sri Narayana Panditacharya and brother Shankaracharya is priceless to Madhwa community.

After Sri Madhwas parents demise, his brother joined Sri Madhwa Mutt. He was accepted into the Sanyasin under the designation of Vishnu Theertha, who became the mathadhipati of Sode.

ASHTAMATA AT UDUPI.

The ordination of Vishnu Theertha and other seven persons took place near Kanva Theertha



Kanva Theertha

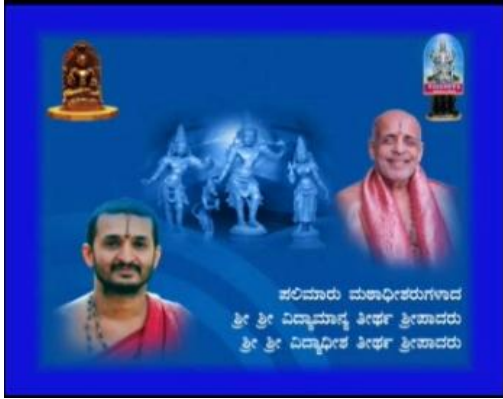
about eleven miles from Mangalore to the South. They sat on a platform of the Aswatha tree and received the initiation at the hands of the Master. These spots are still remembered and pointed out to the pilgrims.

These eight persons were the first ascetics of the eight monasteries of Udipi whose line has continued to this day. They are the eight monks that took charge of the shrine of Sri Krishna from the Master. Sri Madhwa presented each of them an icon ,which is being worshipped even today. Their names and Mutt are

- 1) **Hrishikesha Theertha** ----- **Palimar Mutt.**
- 2) **Narasimha Theertha** ----- **Adamar Mutt.**
- 3) **Janardana Theertha** - ----- **Krishnapura Mutt**
- 4) **Upendra Theertha** ----- **Puttige Mutt**
- 5) **Vamana Theertha** ----- **Kanoor Mutt**
- 6) **Vishnu Theertha** ----- **Sode Mutt**
- 7) **Rama Theertha** ----- **Seeror Mutt**
- 8) **Akshobya Theertha** ----- **Pejawar Mutt**

At this holy spot, there is even now, a Mutt belonging to Pejawar Mutt.

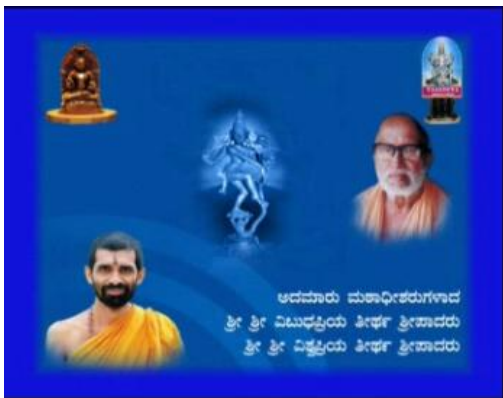
Apart from the eight ascetics, other ascetics were also ordained by the Master. Chief among these was Padmanabha Theertha (Sobhana Bhatta) . Padmanabha Theertha perpetuated the line which, later on, branched into Mutts now known as Uttaradi Mutt, Vyasraya Mutt, Sumateendra Mutt and Mulubagal Mutt. Sri Madhwa evidently felt a great regard for this pupil of his, for he chose him for the pontifical seat in succession to himself, an honor that could not have been dreamt of by any one who did not truly deserve the same. Some others , Narahari Theertha, Madhava Theertha, are some of the well known names. These were the successors of Padmanabha Theertha to the Headship of the Mutt one after other.



Palimaru Mathadheesharu
 Sri Sri Vidyamanya Theertha Sripadaru
 Sri Sri Vidyadheesha Theertha Sripadaru .



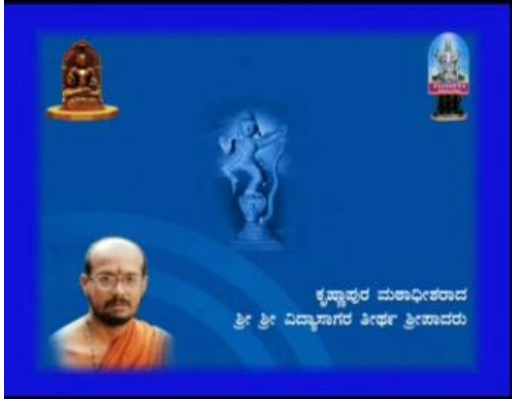
Kodanda Rama with Lakshmana and Sita



Sri Adamaru Mathadheesharu.
 Sri Sri Vibhudesha Theertha Sripadaru
 Sri Sri Vishwapriya Theertha Sripadaru



Kaaliyamardana Krishna with four arms



Sri Krishnapura Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Vidyaasaagara Theertha Sripadaru



Kaaliyamardana Krishna with two hands



Putti Sri ge Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Sugunendra Theertha Sripadaru.



Upendra Vittala with Sri Rukmini and Sri Satyabhama

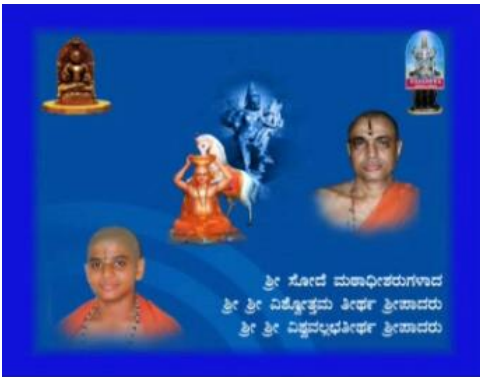


Sri Kaniyuru Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Vidyavallabha Theertha Sripadaru.



Yoga Narasimha with four arms seated on a Swastika Symbol .



Sri Sode Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Vishvavallabha Theertha Sripadaru.



Bhuvamaha Moorthy

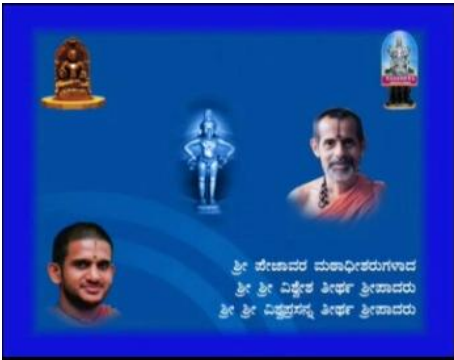


Sri Sheeruru Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Lakshmvivara Theertha Sripadaru.



Vittala



Sri Pejawara Mathadheesharu

Sri Sri Vishvesha Theertha Sripadaru.
Sri Sri Vishva Prasanna Theertha Sripadaru..



**Aja Vittala with Sri Sridevi and
Sri Bhoodevi.**

PARYAYA



Sarvagna Peeta.



Paryaya Swami occupying the Sarvagna Peeta.



Paryaya is the system in which the responsibility of worshipping Sri Krishna and management of His temple is undertaken in rotation by the eight Peetadhipathis of Udupi. The duration of this tenure is known as the 'paryaya period' and the handing over of the worship from one swamiji to another is known as the 'Paryaya' festival. Sri Acharya had stipulated two months period for each mutt. Later Sri Vadiraja Swami changed it to two year period. Each Mutt now has a period of two year Paryaya. Now 31st cycle is running.

A SERIES OF MIRACLES

Sri Madhwa travelled extensively and performed many miracles. To mention a few, Once a King, non believer in Vedas challenged the Acharya to prove the efficacy of the Vedic Mantras. The Acharya uttering the Vedic Sukta beginning with Ya osaduih Purvajata, etc., threw on the ground a handful of green gram which atonce sprouted, bore flowers and seed gram, a wrestler named Gandavata and his brother of great strength could not dislodge a toe of Sri Madhwa, they could not squeeze Achryas neck as Acharya kept on reciting Vedic hymns gloriously, exhausted by their effort they fell down. Once he caused a thin bachelor boy to lift and carry him on his shoulders round the four streets of a Narasimha temple, . At a village Paranti, where the village tank was dry for want of rain, he made a cluster of clouds rain and fill the tank with water.



At Ambuthertha where river Bhadra flows a huge block of stone –length of this stone is 6.1 meters, breadth 3.6 meters and height 10.98 meters – which a number of people together found impossible to move he lifted and placed in the proper place effortlessly. An inscription in Sanskrit , stating this, can be found on the stone. He did it to help people who were trying to build a bridge over the deep current. This is called by the name ‘Bheemana Kallu’, which can be seen even today. Many other incidents are narrated in Madhwa Vijaya.

All these are mentioned in Madhwa Vijaya probably to demonstrate that Acharya was a giant not only in spirituality and intellectual power, but also in the possession of unique psychic powers and even in physical strength.

THE LAST DAYS

In the final years of Madhwas life, he wrote further commentaries on the scriptures, including the Nyaya-Vivarna, the Karma-Nirnaya, Krishnamrutha –Maharnava and others. He had completed what he had set out to do. He had written original works of such profound character that they would continue to influence devotional theism well into the 20th century. It was as if Madhwa was only waiting for Narahari Theertha and the images before he could lay down his task. For some months before he chose to disappear from earthly environments, he evidently stayed on the banks of Kanwa Theertha. It must be during his sojourn in the camp, that Narahari Theertha turned up from Orissa with the images of Rama and Sita. When this purpose was fulfilled , nothing remained but to pass the mantle to the shoulders of Padmanabha Theertha.



Place from where Sri Madhwacharya disappeared.

On the verge of his eightieth birthday, to a vast gathering of pupils he was warmly expounding his favorite Upanishad Aitareya, when the curtain fell, with a shower of flowers from the hierarchy of Gods. Sri Madhwa disappeared body and soul from vision, on the ninth day of the full moon in the month of Magh (corresponding to January-February) in the year 1317. It is firmly believed that he is still at Upper Badari with Sri Vyasa . This day is observed as Madhwa –Navami when people pay homage to the great Acharya.

PHILOSOPHY AND WORKS OF SRI MADHWACHRAYA

The philosophy of Sri Madhwa is known as “Dwaita Vedanta” Sri Madhwas works can be divided into different classes; ten Upanishds, two works on Gita, four works on Brahma Sutras, ten independent philosophical tracts, a work on Mahabharata and one on Bhagavata, one on daily rites. The rest seven are hymns (stotras) in praise of God. The one Dwadasha Stotra is in twelve little chapters. They all total up to 37 in number which are called “Sarvamoola Grantha”

Bhagavad Geeta is an universally acclaimed eternal classic. There is no other spiritual work in this world which has such mega thoughts packed in such a mini compass. Srimadachrya recognized the preeminent position Mahabharata and Geeta occupy and

their vital role in shaping the mind of the human being. “Geeta Bhashya” was the very first work of Sri Madhwa. This is clearly brought out in ‘Anumadhavijaya’ and ‘Granthamaalika Stotra’. Sri Madhwa was the first to recognize the spiritual wealth of Mahabharatha and establish that it is essentially a spiritual work of profound depth. He composed ‘Mahabharatha Tatparya Nirnaya’ as per the directive of Sri Vedavyasa , when he went to Badari the second time. It explains both Mahabharatha and Ramayana in 32 chapters with more than five thousand slokas.

Vedas and Upanishads by the virtue of the Apaurusheyatva (the unique attribute of not having been authored by any one) are considered incontrovertible Shhst6ras. Veda itself proclaims that Itihasa, Puranas are the fifth Veda. This would confirm emphatically that they are also Sacchastras. Mahabharatha, Ramayana and Pancharatra come under Itihaasa, while Bhagavata and other Granthas from Purana group. For a correct understanding of the Vedas, knowledge of Itihaasa Puranas are a must says Mahabharatha.

To the causal reader of Bhagavata it would appear that even Hari dweshis like Kamsa, Shishupala, Putana and others attain deliverance. This would delude some, into thinking, that just as Hari Bhakthi, Hari Dwesha is also a tool for Mukti. Nothing can be farther from truth. In all such cases, both Vishnu Bhakta and Vishnu Dweshi reside in the one body and when the body dies Vishnu Bhaktha gets deliverance and Dweshi goes only to Tamas. The only route to salvation is Hari Bhakthi and nor Hari Dwesha. This Acharya has clarified with full validation.

Sri Madwas philosophy is unique and is based on the authority of the Vedas, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Pancharatra Agamas. The unique feature of his interpretation is, he harmonizes all the passages in the light of a single principle that they adore and glorify the infinite auspicious qualities of Lord Narayana who is the Supreme Reality. In old texts , Acharyas philosophy is described as ‘Tattwa Vada’. He maintained “This world is not an illusion. It is real. God is not a magician. He signifies duty of truth. This world should be considered as a school to understand Gods greatness.”

His philosophy is based on the idea of distinctions and these are five in number-Pancha Bhedha.

- 1) God is distinct from individual souls. Deva-Jeeva_bhedha.
- 2) God is distinct from non-living matter. Deva-Jada-bhedha.
- 3) One individual soul is distinct from non-living matter. Jeeva-Jada-bhedha.
- 4) Individual souls are distinct from one another. Jeeva-Jeeva-bhedha.
- 5) Distinction between one piece of matter and another . Jada-Jada-bhedha.

An important doctrine of Sri Madhwa is that the world is real. It is the creation of God. It is not created by man. If man has created it , why are they not perfectly happy? He insists on Bhakthi as the method to attain the Lord. It is supreme attachment to the Lord which transcends all kinds of love.

According to Sri Madhwa , God is alone independent t Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. Souls are born into this world in a state of bondage divided into three categories.

- 1) Moral and devoted to God.
- 2) Experiencing happiness and misery life after life.
- 3) Eternally damned for reviling God and his devotees.

Even among liberated souls , gradation (Taratamya) exists.

The worship of Vishnu consists in 1) Ankana, making the body with his symbols.2) Namakarana, giving the names of the Lord to children . 3) Bhajana, singing His glories. Sri Madhwa laid much stress on constant practice of the remembrance of God (smarana). He says “Form a strong habit of remembering God, then only it will be easy for you to remember Him at the moment of Death.”.

Renunciation, devotion and direct cognition of the Lord through meditation lead to the attainment of salvation. The aspirant should equip himself with the study of the Vedas, Shastras, Itihasas and Puranas, control the senses, dispassion and perfect self surrender, if he wants to have the vision of the Lord.

Sri Vyasa Raya , the most noted exponent of Madhwas doctrine, summarizes it as “In the religion of Sri Madhwa, Hari is the Supreme Being. The world of multiplicity is an ultimate reality. The Jivas are different from these and among themselves. They are the servants of Hari, and there are distinctions of high and low among them. Liberation consists in the enjoyment of the bliss that is inherent in oneself. Pure devotion is the means of attaining it. There are three Pramanas, (criteria for determining what is true) namely perception, inference and revealed scripture. The sole purport of the entire Vedic revelation is Hari”

Acharya says “Bhakthi is that continuous flow of the heart that has been liquefied by love towards God, which is preceded by a deep understanding of the majesty, Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Independent Entity on whom all the universe depends and has its being, which is unshakably rooted in the object of love, and which cherishes Him as the most supreme value.”

“By devotion mediate knowledge is gained. That helps the growth of Bhakthi further, resulting in enlightenment. Enlightenment gives very ripe devotion. From that one gets liberation and then one attains to the consummation of devotion, which is an end in itself, conferring absolute bliss.”





HARI SARVOTTHAMA VAYU JEEVOTTHAMA.

SRI KRISHNARPANAMASTU.

Excerpts

Shri Madhwas Philosophy By Dr.H.G.Raghavendracharya.

Life and Teachings of Sri Madhwacharya By C.M.Padmanabhachar B.A.,B.L.,

Sri Madhwacharya By Svami Tapasyananda.

Sri Narayanapanditacharyara Sumadhwavijaya -
By Dr. Vysanakere Prabhandanacharya.