

SRI MADHWA FOR CHILDREN

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DHARMAPRAKASH PRESS, MADRAS-7, 1970

Sri Madhwacharya and the Interpretation of Sacred Literature

The world of philosophical knowledge which got clouded by the misinterpretation of vediclore, owes Sri Madhwacharya a deep debt of gratitude for his most illuminating interpretation of the sacred literature. While the leaders of various faiths tried to pick out quotations from sacred literature that suited them, to support their own viewpoints, conveniently ignoring those which did not favor, their interpretation, Sri Madhwacharya & he alone, gave the meanings of the sacred literature completely & most consistently. He picked out the clear statements from the sacred lore and in the light of their meaning explained from the sacred lore the more difficult texts. He compiled the meanings of the sacred literature with quotations and interpretations taken from the sacred literature itself, thus giving no cause for any doubts whatsoever.

Sri Vadiraja Swamiji pays Sri Madhwa the following rare tribute, bringing for comparison his crossing of the ocean in his avatar as Hanuman. While in the Hanuman avatar he crossed the ocean of hundreds of miles, in his avatar as Sri Madhwa, he has crossed the ocean of Vedas covering crores of miles. Sri Madhwa has thus constructed his unshakable system on the ever standing edifice of the Vedas and has thus proved his point that God is knowable only through the knowledge imparted by the Vedas.

Sri Sumadhwa Vijaya

Canto I

Sri Narayana Panditacharya has placed the Madhwa public in a great debt of gratitude by writing the life of Sri Madhwacharya. Having invoked the blessings of Lord Sri Narayana for the successful completion of the contemplated work, he pays his respects to the Vishwaguru Sri Madhwacharya and to his own father Sri Trivikrama Panditacharya. The lives of great devotees purify the hearts of devotees. That the life of Sri Hanuman, the foremost among God's devotees could cleanse the heart of all its impurities, need we have doubt?

Sri Maha Vishnu took the avatar of Rama to get rid the world of demons who were giving trouble to saints. On command from the Lord, God Vayu was born as the son of Kesari & Anjana. He was born with all the auspicious qualities. He was praised even by the gods for his superhuman deeds. His friendship was sought by the king of monkeys, Sugreeva. As Rama was wandering in the forest in search of Site, Hanuman met Him. Because Hanuman was associated with Sugreeva, Rama lent his help to Sugreeva in his fight with Vali, slew him and made Sugreeva the king of Kishkinda. On receiving the command from Rama, Hanuman searched for Sita and found her at last, by His Grace in the Ashoka Vana in Lanka. He assisted Rama in building a bridge across the sea and in his conquest of the demons led by Ravana. When Lakshmana fell unconscious in the battle field, Hanuman rushed and brought the Mruta Sanjivini herb to revive him. Battle over; he accompanied Rama and Sita back to Ayodhya. There he dedicated himself to the service of his Lord Sri Rama.

It is said that there was no person greater than Hanuman in Rama's kingdom, and there was nothing that Rama would not have done for Hanuman, if he had only asked for it. But the renunciation of Hanuman was such that he asked for only the joy of service at his master's feet. Appreciating Sri Rama conferred on him, the future post of Brahma. As Rama avatar came to a close, Rama left a part of himself behind for worship by Hanuman.

This very Hanuman, took the avatar of Bhima in the Dvapara Yuga. He took birth as the son of Kunti, wife of King Pandu. His fame even as a child was as strong that as he slipped from his mother's held and fell on the mountain Satasranga, the mountain gave way and reduced to pieces. It was Bhima's strength that was constantly dreaded by the Kaurava Princes. This Jealousy made them give poison to Bhima, which he digested to their utter dismay. This over, the Kauravas tried to burn the Pandavas in a palace made of wax. It was Bhima again who saved the Pandavas. He married Hidambi, on the advice of Sri Vedavyasa and begot a son Ghatotkaca. Proceeding further, the Pandavas won the hand of Draupadi, the Panchala Princess in a Swayamvara. Having lost the game of dice to Kauravas, they proceeded to the forest and underwent untold sufferings, but with the Grace of Lord Sri Krishna protecting them, came out successfully in the ordeal of having had to spend twelve years in forest and one more year incognito. During this time, they destroyed many wicked people, who were playing havoc with good men. In the great Bharata War, the Kauravas were defeated and killed. Bhima assisted his brothers in establishing a righteous kingdom in India and at the end of Dwapara Yuga, proceeded to heaven, having discharged his allotted task in that avatar.

Now the demons that were destroyed in Dwapara, took birth again in this Kali Yuga, and to wreak vengeance on Vayu, distorted the interpretations of the Vedic lore, thus misleading the good people from knowing the right knowledge.

Canto II

Owing to the influence of Kali Yuga, the right knowledge got obscured. Good people began to doubt the existence of God. True to his saying that when wickedness pervades and goodness is clouded, He will come down to set goodness in its place, Lord ordered Sri Vayu to take another avatar and interpret the Vedic lore for the benefit of the good people.

Sri Madhwa's birth was thus preordained and he took birth in the family of Madhyageha Bhatta as his first son. He was named as Vasudeva. The child performed many miracles even when young and was the pride of the devoted parents. A wicked ghost, once attacked the members of the party proceeding in a forest, but could not do much harm due to the presence of the divine child. At another time when the mother had gone out leaving the child in the care of a young girl, she could not console the child when it started weeping in hunger. So she gave a basket full of horse gram, boiled and kept ready for feeding the working bulls. It had no ill effect on the child and the mother was astonished when she heard the incident.

On another occasion, the child followed the domestic bull, in its wanderings for pasture for a whole day and returned along with the bull in the evening to the utter astonishment of the parents, who had

given him up as lost after a thorough search, in the meanwhile. Yet another time, the child playfully gave a bowl full of tamarind seeds to a creditor of his father's, and the person who gladly accepted the tamarind seeds in devotion, was astonished to see them turn into gold, thereby gaining more than he had ever lent to the child's father.

These childish pranks of the divine child pleased everybody around and he was the most beloved child in the locality.

Canto III

The child Vasudeva once started all by himself and proceeded unnoticed by his mother. On the way, he cleverly laughed away the queries from strangers as to where he was going. He visited many temples of Lord Vishnu and proceeded to Udupi. When his parents went in search of him as to how he proceeded all alone. He replied them saying that he was throughout accompanied by God. On an auspicious day, he was taught the first alphabets. The next day when the father wanted him to repeat writing the letters taught to him on the previous day, young Vasudeva asked his father as to why he was taking the trouble of writing the letters he had learnt already. The father was immediately pleased with the quick grasp of the child.

Once he accompanied his mother to hear the Purana being narrated at a place nearby. As the lecture was progressing, young Vasudeva interrupted the speaker and asked as to why he was misinterpreting the texts. When the child was asked to give the correct meanings, he astonished the assembly with his precise rendering of the meanings. When the father heard of this, his joy knew no bounds. On another

occasion, when his father during the course of his narrating the Purana, bypassed a word, 'Likuca' without explaining its meaning, Vasudeva, interrupted the proceedings and gave the meaning of the word himself. When he was barely eight years old, the parents performed the thread ceremony and the initiation to Vedic learning started soon after. He not only concentrated on his studies, but took keen interest in extra circular activities like swimming, wrestling and playing games. His teacher mistaking his interest in games for lack of interest in studies took him to task. Vasudeva replied that he did not enjoy repeating what has been already told once. To this the teacher asked him to repeat the portion not taught in Vedas, and the pupil repeated it without any blemish. This surprised the teacher who never more questioned him.

On one occasion, he blew air through the ear of his teacher's son and cured him of his ailment in the head. He explained the meanings of Narayanopanishad to his teacher and kindled in him the reverence for Lord Vishnu. This in fact became the gurudakshina he paid to his teacher.

Canto IV

He soon came out of gurukula and decide the challenge the misinterpretation offered by contemporary scholars. To do this he decided to take to Sanyasa. He prayed to Lord Narayana and proceeded to Achyutaprekshacharya, who was the foremost swamiji in his time. He was a devotee of Lord Ananthasana at Udupi. One day the Swamiji had an indication that he will learn the true meaning of Shastras from a renowned disciple. So he was on the lookout for the distinguished disciple. Just then Vasudeva came and prostrated before him. On

learning that Vasudeva had decided to renounce the world, the parents rushed to Achyutaprekshacharya and prayed him to spare their son. In the process, they went round young Vasudeva and prostrated to him to entreat him not to leave them in the lurch. To this Vasudeva replied in a dignified manner, saying that the very acting of going around him and prostrating to him, has made him to renounce the world, for they whom he should have bowed down to, had now bowed to him. This in itself is the permission, god sent, for now parent would bow down to their own son, unless he is a Sanyasi. Madhyageha Bhatta was truly non-plussed. He entreated his son not to forsake him and enter the holy order. The boy was however firm in his resolving. Yet the father would not give up in his persuasion and pleaded that the aged parents needed his help. To this, he promised that another son will be born in the family and that he should be given the permission to enter the holy order then. Yet the mother did not relent. To this Vasudeva countered that if she ever wished to see him alive, she should give him the permission to enter the holy order. The mother unwillingly yielded.

Vasudeva now returned to his guru Achyutaprekshacharya, whom he won by his winsome qualities. Having won his approval, he entered the holy order, and started the repetition of the Omkara mantra. The guru pleased with the devotion of the disciple, named him as 'Purna prajna'. The young yati did all that he was taught and the guru was pleased beyond measured to see such a willing disciple.

During this time, Lord Ananthasana came in the person of a devotee and held the hand of Achyutaprekshacharya and told him that Purna Prajna was the disciple, he had been asked to look for, from whom he would get the true knowledge of the higher aspirations.

Once Purnaprajna decided to go to Varanasi for a holy dip in the Ganges and sought the permission for the decision from his guru. The guru, unable to bear the separation of his disciple, prayed to God for guidance. God came in the person of a devotee and told that Ganges will be visiting the tank of the temple, three days from that day and so there was no necessity for Purna Prajna to go to Varanasi. As specified, on the third day, all devotees along with Purna Prajna had dip in the holy Ganges. To this day Ganges visits the Madhwa Sarovar in Udupi, once in twelve years.

On the fourteenth day after taking the holy order, Purna Prajna was challenged by some pundits lead by one Vasudeva Pandiata, but were routed. Achyutaprekshacharya now started lessons on 'Istasiddhi'. Even in the very first verse, Purna Prajna pointed out as many as 32 mistakes, to which the guru could not give satisfactory reply. Those assembled began to doubt the strength of Advaita. They requested Purna Prajna to explain to them the principles of Advaita. Purna Prajna explained to them threadbare the principles of Advaita and also told them that was not the true import of the sacred lore.

On another occasion, when Achyutaprekshacharya was giving discourse on Baghavata, people approached him with different manuscript versions of the Purana. Purna Prajna glanced through them and decided as to which the correct edition was. He explained to those assembled that once particular version, as acceptable to Sri Veda Vyasa and explained the meaning as requested by the audience. When they told Purna Prajna that these lessons had not taken place for him in this birth, Purna Prajna replied saying that he had learnt them in his previous births. His fame spread far and wide.

Canto V

Achyutapreskshacharya gave Purna Prajna another name “Ananda Tirtha”, in recognition of his ability to bring happiness to all those assembled to listen to his discourses. Soon he was challenged by Vadi Simha, Buddhi Sagara and other scholars. Ananad Tirtha routed all in the debate to the supreme happiness of his admirers. On another occasion, dealing with the Sutra Bhashya of Sankara on Brahmasutras, Ananda Tirtha, explained the disconnection between the main Sutras and their interpretations. The Advaita scholars assembled could not defend the interpretations, but requested Ananda Tirtha to explain the true import and were happy to learn the true knowledge.

Sometime after this when the guru and sishya were engaged in the discussion on the Brahmasutras. Ananda Tirtha’s fater came there and was struck by the effulgence radiating from the face of his learned son. He was immensely pleased with the discourses rendered so fluently, effortlessly and cogently so as to be clear even to the uninitiated. When Ananda Tirtha pointed out the mistakes in the Sutra Bhashya compiled by Sankara, Achyutaprekshacharya asked Ananda Tirtha to compile the Bhashya himself, if he knew better. Ananda Tirtha took this as a direction from his guru to proceed with the mighty work and having explained the true meanings of the Sutras, decided to compile the Sutra Bhashya on his own.

Having decided to meet the scholars in South, he accompanied his guru in his pilgrimage to the Southern Shrines. At Vishnumangala in Guruvayur, a Brahmin offering Bhiksha to these two yatis, offered two hundred plantains to Ananda Tirtha, after he had his Bhiksha. He partook them without effort and digested them without any ill effects.

He not only reminded others of his previous Bhimavatar, when he had consumed all the food prepared for Bakasura but told in confidence to his guru that the jataragni or the digestive essence in him was millions of times more than that in a normal human being. This jataragni is capable of reducing the world to ashes.

Proceeding further he debated with the scholars of various faiths on the banks of river Payasvini. He went to Anantasayanam and began his discourses on the supremacy of Sri Vishnu. -- That He is full of auspicious qualities, blemishless and at all times different from the souls. He also decided to write the Sutra Bhashya for the benefit of his disciples.

After passing through Kanyakumari, he came to Rameshwaram. He defeated the scholars of the area in a debate and performed Chaturmasya in this sacred place. Then he proceeded to Srirangam and here too he defeated the scholars who challenged him for a debate. The disciples as well as god men were all happy at the success of Ananda Tirtha.

Canto VI

At Srirangam, a scholar repeated a hymn from Aithareya Upanishad and wanted Anand Tirtha to explain its meaning. Though Ananda Tirtha gave the correct meaning, the scholar gave another meaning and held that the meaning rendered by him as correct. Ananda Tirtha said that the Vedas have three meanings; each sloka of Bharata was capable of ten different meanings, and each word of Shasra Nama of Vishnu, was capable of hundred meanings. When challenged to enumerate the

hundred meanings for each word of Vishnusahasranama, Ananda Tirtha, insisted that they should repeat what he had said when he told them. Ananda Tirtha started to explain the meaning of word “Vishwam” in its hundred different aspects and the scholars unable to keep pace with him gave up. They prostrated before him and acknowledged his greatness.

Proceeding further, he arrived in Kerala. He too he accepted many challenges and defeated all those who dared to challenge him. He was now renowned as “Sarvajnacharya”. He returned to Udipi and dedicated himself to writing the Bhashya of Gita and dedicated this to his guru. With this permission, he proceeded on his North Indian tour. Having visited various shrines, he arrived at Badari.

Here, he dedicated his work on Gita, to Lord Narayana. Lord Narayana applied a correction in the very first sloka itself, which said that Ananda Tirtha had compiled his work according to his ability. Lord Narayana explained that Ananda Tirtha was capable of explaining much further than what he has done but had restricted the explanation to the limit of people’s understanding, which was a trifle changed to ‘leshatah’. This in fact was the seal applied by Lord Narayana on the work of a Sri Madhwacharya, that his Gita Bhashya was acceptable to Him.

He began his discourses to his disciples here too. He took bath in the ice cold waters of the Mandakini River and observed the vow of silence for 48 days and meditated on Lord Narayana. Sri Vedavyasa appeared before him and asked him to proceed to Vedavyasarama above Badari and inaccessible to human beings. He left word with this disciples in writing that he was proceeding to Vedavyasarama and asked them not to follow him. Here he described the place Badari as the best shrine,

the cool waters, Lord Vishnu as the supreme Lord and the words uttered by him as the most beneficial. The disciples could bear the separation with difficulty. But one, Satya Tirtha who was very much attached to Ananda Tirtha could not brook separation and so followed him without the knowledge of the Acharya. But he could not follow him for long, for the Acharya was going at a pace reminding one of his previous avatar as Hanuman, and when the Acharya came to know of the predicament of his favorite disciple, he waved his hand and Satya Tirtha was bodily lifted and placed at the spot from where they had started on their journey to Vedavyasarama. Ananda Tirtha proceeded on his lonely journey to the abode of Lord Narayana.

Canto VII

Ananda Tirtha crossed the Himalayas and arrived at Uttara Badarikasrama. This place was full of sages, all meditating and partaking in the discussions on higher knowledge. This asrama resembled Vaikunta the abode of Lord Vishnu. Sage Vedavyasa, Himself presided over the affairs here, and Sukacharya gave discourses on Vaishnava Siddhanta. The sages were surprised at the arrival of Ananda Tirtha, who resembled Brahma. Anand Tirtha saw Sri Veda Vyasa seated under a tree, surrounded by sages. He praised Vedavyasa's grace which enabled him to arrive at this asrama, which was beyond the human reach. He prostrated before the venerable sage and sought His blessings. Vedavyasa lifted him up and embraced him. The other sages were surprised at the unique welcome given to Ananda Tirtha. They immediately arranged for a seat for Ananda Tirtha. Vyasa made him sit on the seat and then told the assemble of sages that Ananda Tirtha was

none other than Vayu, who had taken his incarnation to interpret the meanings of sacred literature for the benefit of mankind. The other sages considered themselves singularly fortunate to have been in the assembly to hear the conversation between Vedavyasa and Ananda Tirtha.

Canto VIII

Having spent a few days in Vedavyasasrama, Ananda Tirtha desiring to know more about the sacred lore direct from Vedavyasa prostrated to Him and requested Him to bestow His favor on him. Vyasa too knowing well that Ananda Tirtha was the right person for knowing the true import of the higher knowledge, explained to him the real meanings. The sages were pleased beyond measure at the sight of the ideal – Guru and Sishya.

One day Vedavyasa took Ananda Tirtha to another Asrama, presided over by Lord Narayana Himself. Though he was the end of all sought knowledge, here, He Himself was in contemplation. He has taken an avatar as the son of Lord Yama. On seeing Him, Ananda Tirtha meditated on Him as follows:

“Lord Narayana, the Lord of all the fourteen worlds, has taken the avatar as the son of Lord Yama. It is He, who has created all the worlds and all those who directs its affairs, including Brahma and other Gods. He being their Lord at all times, and being in them directs each soul in its path towards progress according to its intrinsic essence (Jeeva Swarupa). To enable His devotees to attain the highest goal, He has taken many avatars and established Dharma. In his avatar as a Matysa

(Fish), he killed the demon Madhu, who had stolen the Vedas. As Hayagreeva, He has killed the demon named Hayagreevasura. As the great Boar, Varaha, he has killed the demon Hiranyaksha. As Kurma (Tortoise), He has supported the great Mandara Mountain, while the milky ocean was being churned for the precious gifts. As Narasimha, He has killed the demon Hiranyakashipu, and protected his great devotee Prahlada. Having heard the cry of Gajendra, He had rushed to his aid, setting aside His consorts, to kill the Crocodile torturing the elephant king. As Vamana, He has vanquished the redoubtable Bali, and sent him to the nether world. As Buddha, He has misled the demons with false knowledge. As Parsurama, son of Jamadagni, He has vanquished the Kshatriya Princes, after circling the world twenty one times.

As Rama, son of Dasharatha, He has killed Ravana. In that avatar, He had three brothers, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrugna. One day, when He was still in His teens, Sage Vishwamitra sought the permission of King Dasaratha, to take Rama for the protection of his sacrifices. Rama slayed demons Tataka & Subahu, who were obstructing yajnas of sages like Vishwamitra. He accompanied Vishwamitra to the city of Mithila and broke the great bow of Lord Siva, to win the hand of Sita. As He was returning to Ayodhya, He met Parasurama, His own previous avatar and in the act of defeating Him, took over from Him, the work of establishing Dharma on the land. To please his step mother, Kaikeyi, Rama proceeded to the forest along with Sita and Lakshmana. He killed, various demons inhabiting in the forest areas. On being requested Sita, to capture the golden deer, He went after it, and killed the demon who had taken this form to lure Sita. Ravana who had utilized this opportunity to carry away Sita, was next killed by Rama, with the assistance of King Sugreeva and Hanuman. Earlier He also killed Vali,

and gave back the Kishkinda kingdom to Sugreeva. Having completed the purpose of that avatar, Rama returned to His abode, Vaikunta.

In Dwapara, Lord Narayana took the avatar of Sri Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki. He killed the demoness Putana, who had come to suckle Him with poisonous milk on instructions from Kamsa. He next killed two demons Keshi and Arishta. He enjoyed sport in the company of His devotees – the gopis. Krishna went to Mathura along with this brother Balarama and there he killed Kamsa. He learnt lessons at the feet of Guru Sandipini. He won the hand of princesses Raukmini and settled down in Dwarka. He then killed Narakasura & Murasura. He vanquished Indra, the lord of heaven who had become haughty and returned to Dwaraka with the sacred flower-Parijata, to please His consort Satyabhama. He assisted Pandavas, in their righteous war with Kauravas, who had put the Pandavas to innumerable difficulties. He established Dharmaraja on the throne of Hastinavati, and after fulfilling the mission of this avatar, returned to Vaikunta.

Next He took the avatar of Mahidasa, as the son of Itara Devi, and established sacrificial knowledge for prosperity. As the son of Vishnuyashas, He took the avatar of Kalki, won back the world from chaos and established order. He took the avatar of Yajna, son of Prajapati and Akuti. He took the avatars of sage Kapila, Danvantari and Mohini. Thus, he took many avatars with the sole purpose of putting down disorder and establishing order in society, so that good people could live without let of hindrance.

Ananda Tirtha contemplated on Lord Narayana thus and offered his salutations with devotion.

Lord Narayana appearing before him said “The work that I am now allotting to you is that of Gods. Complete this task and fulfill the purpose of your third incarnation. The sacred knowledge has been buried deep due to misinterpretations. Therefore destroy this false knowledge and establish the true knowledge by interpreting the sacred Brahmasutras, and other sacred literature”.

Ananda Tirtha realizing that his was an order for physical separation from the holy presence of Vyasa and Narayana pleaded with them to let him stay in their presence always. But Lord Narayana was particular that Ananda Tirtha should interpret the sacred lore for the benefit of good people, who have lost their way. The meeting of Vyasa, Narayana and Madhwa was full of rare effulgence.

Canto IX

Sri Madhwacharya took leave of Lord Narayana unwillingly and came to Vyasasrama. There he meditated on Lord Veda Vyasa for guidance. Madhwa then come down from Himalayas and returned to Anantha Mutt, where he had left his disciples. The disciples were glad beyond measure to see their guru return with added glow. Then Madhwacharya began his great work of writing the commentary on Brahmasutras, after pointing out the blemishes in no less than twenty one commentaries of this work, done previously by various scholars.

He arrived at the banks of the river Godavari. Many scholars had thronged to get their doubts cleared on the interpretation of certain portion in the Vedas. Sri Madhwacharya pointed out the mistakes in previous interpretations offered by various scholars and then offered

the correct interpretations. One particular scholar Shobana Bhatta was particularly overtaken by devotion, and sought the permission of the Acharya, to remain with him and learn the shastras at his feet. To those who came for debate, he gave satisfactory replies.

Value of Madhwa's teachings can be narrated by this analogy. A person at sea shore once got a rare conch (Balamuri Shanka). With-out understanding the value of it, he burnt it to obtain lime from it. As he could not get it after burning, he threw it away. The second person who was passing by took it and sold it to King knowing its rarity. The King, who purchased it, placed it in the palace temple for daily worship. Even though the second person got the reward, the king who worshipped got the richest reward.

The case with the works of Sri Madhwacharya is of similar in nature. Only those who learn it with devotion will reap its eternal benefits. Others are like those people who threw conch without knowing its value.

Sri Madhwa started for Udupi, and on the way gave many discourses for the benefit of good people. He arrived at Udupi, and offered prayers to Lord Ananthasana and to his guru, Achyutaprekshacharya. Though his guru liked his new interpretations, his longing was with Advaita. Then Madhwa discussed the issues threadbare with his guru convinced him in to his views.

One day during this time, Sri Madhwa had the premonition of the arrival of Lord Sri Krishna to Udupi. He went to sea shore and sighted a ship at distress. He waved his hand and the wind subsided. The captain of the ship tried offering all the treasures of the Sri Madhwa, but acharya took three lumps of earth called "Gopichandana" in which

were concealed Lord Sri Krishna's idol. The idol was immersed in water with the help of four people. But to remove it from water it was difficult, even for thirty people. Then Sri Madhwa himself, lifted the idol and installed in Udupi, with all due rites being performed according to shastras. For those who desire liberation, even performance of rituals without the expectation of rewards, contributes towards the ultimate object of liberation. Having installed Lord Sri Krishna at Udupi and having made all arrangements for the worship, he proceeded on further tours. He crossed the Godavari and after few days arrived at Badarikasrama and paid his respects to Lord Vedavyasa and Lord Narayana. On their command he returned to Udupi to teach his disciples.

Canto X

Sri Madhwa now concentrated on training disciples to spread his teachings to people. The good people around desired to hear the first account of Sri Madhwa's yatra to Badari. Then one of the disciples narrated few incidents:

“Once on their way, Sri Madhwa was asked by a king name Iswara Deva to dig the earth. Sri Madhwa replied that he was new to this job and wanted the king to show him as to how he should do it. The king who took up the shovel could not give it up but went on digging until the job was over.

On another occasion, the Ganges was flowing full and the boatmen had runaway leaving their boats. Sri Madhwa asked his disciples to hold him firmly and he crossed the Ganges. As they were crossing, the Muslim

king who had seeing this incident, ordered his men to prevent Sri Madhwa from crossing the river. Sri Madhwa told them in their language that he was proceeding to meet their king and that as their number was small no harm could possibly come to them from them. The king wanted to know how Sri Madhwa manages to forge his way ahead, when all instructions were to prevent him from doing so. Sri Madhwa replied that Lord Narayana, who was in the Sun-god, inspired him. They were just pilgrims proceeding to the north. The king was immensely pleased with the reply and gave rich presents.

On another occasion, on their way, some robbers obstructed them. Sri Madhwa threw a bundle made from the saffron robes. Robbers fought themselves to possess the bundle & killed themselves by fighting with each other. On another occasion when many robbers attacked them, one of the disciples inspired from his guru took the sword from the robber and fought with them single handedly. At another time, when some robbers wanted to attack them, Sri Madhwa & his disciples appeared to them as stones. Then robbers noticed this miracle, they all prostrated before the Acharya. Once in Himalayan slopes a demon took the form of tiger and attacked Sri Madhwa's disciples. Then Sri Madhwa threw the tiger away to its doom.

In Badarikasrama, Sri Madhwa got many idols of Lord Narayana in His various avatars. Sri Vyasa ordered Sri Madhwa to write a commentary on Mahabharata, which he wrote and called it "Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya".

Then on the advice of Vyasa, Sri Madhwa returned to Ganges. It was evening and there were not boats to cross the river. Sri Madhwa leaving his disciples behind went to the other shore. The people on the

other bank noticed Sri Madhwa was not even wet. Then this information went to the local king who then ordered boats to their service.

Sri Madhwa then went to Hastinapura and performed Chaturmasya vrata. There Ganges came to see Sri Madhwa to offer its service. On completion of Chaturmasya, Sri Madhwa proceeds to Banares and defeated fifteen wrestlers and taught them humility. He went from place to place defeating scholars in discussion & established the knowledge of supremacy of Sri Lord Vishnu. He then came to Kurukshetra and exposed the false monk who is to become Maricha in future. Sri Madhwa also dug up the earth and showed the mace he had used in his previous avatar as Bhima. At Hrishikesh, Lord Siva appeared before Sri Madhwa and invited him for Bhiksha at a disciple's house. Proceeding further he arrived at Ishupatakshetra, where he accepted and consumed thousand full grown plantains. On his return he arrived at Goa, where he accepted from a devotee four thousand plantains & 30 pots of milk. The king who was stuck with wonder at this superhuman feat, wanted to retain the Acharya in his kingdom, and so he ordered his men to prevent Acharya from leaving his kingdom. Even as the men were looking on Acharya disappeared from their sight and arrived at a village called Pashupa. Here as per the desire of the people, Sri Madhwa made the Arecanut trees, bear flowers and fruits through music. Thus Sri Madhwa captured the hearts of many good people.

Canto XI

Once when Sri Madhwa was holding classes to his disciples at Udupi, Sesa and Sanska sages visited the place, heard the discourse and went

away. When Sanaka asked Sesha to explain the significance and greatness of the interpretation of the higher knowledge by Sri Madhwa, Sri Sesha said:

“For concentration and hearing of Madhwa’s interpretation the main objective of liberation is itself is the goal and fruit. Sri Madhwa is none other than Sri Mukhyaprana, in his third incarnation. What he has propounded is the gist of the knowledge contained in all the sacred lore. For the devotees of Vishnu, who hear this with devotion, Lord Vishnu will offer liberation at Vaikunta. This place Vaikunta, the abode of Sri Lord Vishnu is unsurpassed in beauty and grandeur. There is no other place akin to it anywhere else. The houses & floors are covered with precious green stones. The entire place is pervaded by the visible divine presence of Lord Narayana and His consort Sri Lakshmi. Liberated souls, led by Brahma are living here from timeless beginning. Lord Narayana is present here and visible to all liberated souls. Goddess Lakshmi, though assisted by innumerable servants, performs the worship of Lord Narayana, herself. Lord Narayana reclining over the serpent Lord Sesha plays with Goddess Lakshmi. He shines with the light of a thousand suns. He wears the divine yellow robe and is decorated with auspicious ornaments with a smile on face. He is adorned with conch, chakra, mace & the lotus. All the liberated souls meditate upon Him, in this form. He is full of auspicious qualities and I am unable to describe Him in all His aspects. Even Gods lead by Brahma and others derive their happiness from seeing Lord Narayana all the time. The liberated souls in the presence of Lord Narayana are always happy and do not have any miseries or whatsoever. There are four classes of liberated souls present in Vaikunta. Even though there is gradation in happiness, which is intrinsic with the nature of the

liberated souls, there is absolutely no ill-will between the liberated souls. These liberated souls worship & praise Lord Narayana all the time. The greatest privilege is the physical sight of Lord Narayana, whose every sight fills the liberated souls with unbounded happiness.

Lord Narayana is adorned with crown, tilaka, locks of curly hair and ear rings. His chest is adorned with the jewel Kaustubha. He is holding chakra, mace, conch and lotus in his four hands. Goddess Lakshmi resides in his heart. Lord Brahma seated on his lotus praises the qualities of Lord Narayana. The entire creation and the fourteen worlds take shelter in his stomach. His body consists of knowledge and bliss which is blemishless. There is no trace of any fault or whatsoever. He reveals Himself to His devotees to the extent they are capable of realizing Him. He is not known completely by anybody including Brahma. All this grandeur is reflected only in Sri Madhwa's works and hence they are true and real. By dedicated learning, meditation and discussion of these aspects, devotees attain liberation.

Canto XII

Sri Madhwa continued to train his disciples. As the true knowledge spread, the votaries of false knowledge out of their envy lead by Padma Tirtha and Pundarika from Chola country challenged him. Once of them said:

“Sri Sankara's Advaita is the essence of sacred knowledge handed over from time immemorial. That it is not clear is itself its strength. Without understanding this, it is not possible for any scholar to conclude that the world which appears, as different, as the same. Even if difference is

seen apparently, in reality this difference disappears. By following this many have attained the qualities of Brahman” and implored Pundarika to defend this system against Sri Madhwa. Then these scholars lead by one Kashta, resolved to give much trouble to Sri Madhwa and his followers. Pundarika challenged Sri Madhwa for a debate. Madhwa began his discourse on the Vedas. Many learned Brahmins and scholars hear the faultless exposition and were very happy. They then requested Pundarika to give his discourse on Vedas. He faltered even as he was beginning and was put to disgrace. In the meantime, Padma Tirtha stole Sri Madhwa’s manuscripts, which did not matter to Sri Madhwa. Then the good people around addressed the votaries of Mayavda and said:

“Sri Madhwa by his able defense of the auspicious form of Lord Sri Lord Narayana shines like a sun. The concept of Maya which is refugee of mislead, runs away from Sri Madhwa as does darkness from sun. So it is preferable for you to hide just like darkness in the presence of light or face the light and accept Sri Madhwa’s system”.

Sri Madhwacharya proceeded further and performed Chaturmasya at a place called Kotapadi.

Canto XIII

After completing the Chaturmasya Vrata at Kotapadi, Sri Madhwa visited Sahyadri at the invitation of his disciples. Here he invited by the king Jayasimha. He was met on entry to the capital and taken to Vishnumangala temple. Sri Madhwa arranged for the discourse of Sri Bhagavata by his disciple Hrishikesha Tirtha, while he himself explained the intricate meanings.

At a place not far from this place, there was a Brahmin named Subrahmanya Sharma. Many were the children born to him, but all of them died prematurely. So the couple was praying for a child with long life. A child was born to them and was named as Trivikrama. He was a born poet, and while still in his teens composed a beautiful kavya named 'Ushaharana'. He was brought up in Advaita philosophy and became a versatile scholar before long. One day, his father Subrahmanya Sharma advised his son, that meditation on a God without qualities was bound to be purposeless and impossible of realization. So he advised him to concentrate on the God of innumerable auspicious qualities -- Sri Krishna. On hearing this, Trivikrama went through all the known literature, to find out the way to liberation. He scanned all that Advaita Philosophy could offer, but was not satisfied. As he was deciding on the form of concentration on the God of auspicious qualities, the fame of Sri Madhwa reached him. His disciples implored him, redoubtable advaita scholar that he was, to debate with the disciples of Sri Madhwa. He discussed with the disciples various aspects of philosophy and on being unable to answer their points, made them speechless by his superior powers of argument, but without purpose. That night however, he had the commentaries of Sri Madhwa brought to him and read them threadbare, and was wonder struck at the cogency of the arguments. He discussed the points of disagreement with Sri Madhwa and through convinced that Sri Madhwa's views were right, did not give up advaita in hurry. After few days Trivikrama Pandita met Sri Madhwa again at Sri Vishnumangala temple.

Canto XIV

Sri Madhwa had continued to live in Vishnumangala temple as requested by King Jayasimha. The chief among the villagers now gave up hating Sri Madhwa and arranged for the return of manuscripts stolen by Padma Tirtha. This immensely pleased Trivikrama Pandita who was the court poet for the King. Sri Madhwa showed the correct daily routine for the men to worship & for a holy order. He would get up early in the morning and after the ablutions and bath, would meditate on Lord Narayana. His disciples rendered to him menial services. But whenever they did not get up in time, Sri Madhwa would go about his work without their assistance. Soon after the sunrise, he would start writing the commentaries and whenever anybody raised a doubt, he would immediately clear it.

At noon he would perform worship to his upasana saligrams, and take the (Tirtha) sacred water. Then he would partake of the food offered earlier to God, in the company of his disciples. After food, he would discuss various aspects of knowledge and learning with scholars and clear their doubts. Those who sat listening to him never knew how the time could pass off so fast. At the evening he would offer prayers to the God of his Upasana and later spend the night in teaching and discussing intricate points with his disciples. Thus did he from morning till midnight, dispel the darkness of ignorance from the minds of his disciples and good men who came to listen to him.

Canto XV

Sri Madhwa began explaining the Stotra Bhashya composed by him, to the devotees. Then Trivikrama took upon himself to oppose the stand taken by Madhwa and establish the stand of Advaita. Sri Madhwa established that Sri Hari was responsible for the creation of the world. He defended his statements on the strength of the authority of Vedas and Upanishads. His words were worthy of respect even to Lord Sriva. Sri Madhwa said that Lord Narayana is full of numberless auspicious qualities. He is the soul of the Vedas and is represented by the word Brahma. He is the creator. He established these truths on the strength of the Vedas. He smashed to smithereens the concepts of Nirishwara vada, samkhya, Carvaka, Bhatta and Prabhakara schools. Those who accept Vedas as the basis of knowledge have to accept the supremacy of Lord Narayana, His over lordship of Creation. He also pointed out the fallacy of the concepts of the schools of Pashupata, Ganapathya, Saura, Skanda and others. From correct reasoning and the Vedas, he established the Supremacy of Lord Narayana, His countless auspicious qualities. He equated the Buddhists to the Mayavadins and pointed out the fallacy in both their stands. Only by the Grace of Lord Narayana, devotees could realize the intrinsic nature (Swarupa) of their souls and enjoy the eternal bliss through that knowledge. He thus put forth and defended the truths propagated by Dwaita Vedanta.

Sri Trivikrama heard this too & put forth power arguments in support of the advaita stand. Sri Madhwa pointed out the fallacy of Trivikrama's arguments. Thus did they both debate for 15 days. Trivikrama finally gave up & accepted the stand taken by Sri Madhwa, and wanted that he should be accepted as his disciple. Sri Madhwa was only too happy to win such a veritable scholar for the cause of Dwaita and ordered him

to write a commentary on the Sutra Bhashya composed by him. Trivikrama wrote a commentary on Sri Madhwa's Brahmasutra Bhashya and named it "Tattvapradeepa". Sri Trivikrama went through all the 37 works of Sri Madhwa and was full of devotional praise for their greatness.

After the passing away of Madhwa's parents, only his brother lived in their ancestral home at Pajaka Kshetra. He also became weary of the world in time and asked for initiation to higher knowledge through Sri Madhwa. Sri Madhwa accepted his brother's renunciation, and initiated him and named him as Vishnu Tirtha. By the grace of Sri Madhwa, he became a renowned scholar in course of time. He performed a strict penance on the Harischandra mountain taking only Panchagavya once in five days initially and then on only fallen bilva leaves and water. He returned to Udupi for a brief period to bless his two disciples Aniruddha Tirtha and Badarayam Tirtha and then finally retired to do penance in the Kumara Mountain.

Sri Madhwa won a large band of dedicated disciples. Padmanabha Tirtha from Godawari area was a renowned disciple. He wrote a commentary on Sri Madhwa's Anuvyakhyana and named it sannayaya Ratnavali. Among his disciples Hrishiksha Tirtha, Janardhana Tirtha, Narasimha Tirtha, Upendra Tirtha, Vamana Tirtha, Rama Tirtha and Adokshaja Tirtha were prominent. These disciples spread Sri Madhwa's message to all nooks and corners of India. Each one of them was given an idol of Sri Vishnu his various avatars for worship. Sri Madhwa's popularity and fame spread all over the land. Even householders became his disciples. Sri Trivikrama and his brother Sri Sankara became renowned defenders of Sri Madhwa's system. Sri Madhwa promised liberation to all who had faith in his system which accepts the

supremacy of Lord Sri Vishnu. Spreading his message in every village, he took chaturmasya vrata in a village called Tantya.

Canto XVI

In an assembly of learned good people, on e day, one of the disciples of Sri Madhwa began to describe the greatness of his master as follows:

“There was a king in the banks of river Gomati. He had scant respect for Vedas. He addressed Sri Madhwa saying that the Vedas proclaim the germination of fruits when recited. But now the seeds do not germinate when the concerned hymns are recited from the Vedas. Therefore Vedas are like fools prattle having no real significance. Sri Madhwa replied that the Vedic hymns yield the promised fruits if recited correctly and by those entitled to recite them. Then the king replied that there was no person of that caliber now. Sri Madhwa immediately called for green grams and holding them in the palm of his right hand, recited the concerned hymns from the Vedas. The seeds not only germinated, but grew into plants and bore flowers and yielded green grams. The king took back his words.”

On one night when the Acharya was teaching lessons to his disciples, the light went out. Sri Acharya continued the lessons with the light emanating from his toe.

Once when he was walking along the Bhadra River, he saw thousands of people struggling to life a big stone to be moved to site further away. Sri Madhwa lifted the stone all by him and placed it to the spot where the people wanted it to be placed. This stone is visible even to this day at Ambu Tirtha, in the Kalasa Village.

On another occasion, at the auspicious time of Solar eclipse Sri Madhwa and his disciples went for sea bath near Kanva Tirtha. The sea was very turbulent. Those who hated Sri Madhwa began to doubt the power of Sri Madhwa. But he did not mind this provocation, and looked at the sea. The sea remained as calm as a tank. Yet the wicked persisted in hating him. That is their (Swabhava) nature and none can redeem them.

One day some people desiring to test the strength of Sri Madhwa, requested Gandavata brothers to challenge Sri Madhwa. Sri Madhwa asked the brothers to use all their strength and strangle him at the neck. They tried their best and being unable they fell tired. Then Sri Madhwa asked them to lift a toe of his, placed firmly on the ground. They could not even do this however hard they tried. Such was his super human strength.

But on a different occasion, he sat on the shoulders of a young boy who carried him around the Narasimha temple without any effort. This showed that the Acharya had powers of being light or heavy as he desired.

Though he was the third incarnation of God Vayu, he lived and moved like a normal human being. He visited the village where he as Bhima had, in his previous avatar, installed the idols of Mahavishnu. This place had lost its sanctity as worship was neglected. He immediately ordered the villagers to contribute and set the temple working again. In response to a request to fill a dry tank with water, Sri Madhwa made rains pour down, for the benefit of the suffering people. These super human acts he performed for increasing the faith of the people in the super natural powers of devotees of Lord Sri Vishnu. But the wicked

always pry in the dark to do harm to these godly people. Sri Madhwa composed the song 'Krishnamruta Maharnava' and gave it to a devotee. Many scholars challenged him on the meaning of the portion known as Brahmanas in Vedas. Sri Madhwa not only explained the meaning lucidly, but wrote a book known as 'Karma Nirnaya' for the benefit of the devotees.

Sri Madhwa established the supremacy of Sri Vishnu among the good people of the land. His mission in the world being over, he decided to Lord Narayana's abode in the Himalayas and one day as he was giving discourse on his favorite Upanishad – the Aithareya Upanishad, the Gods showered flowers on him and he was completely covered by these flowers. And when the disciples removed the flowers, Sri Madhwa had disappeared from the scene of action.
