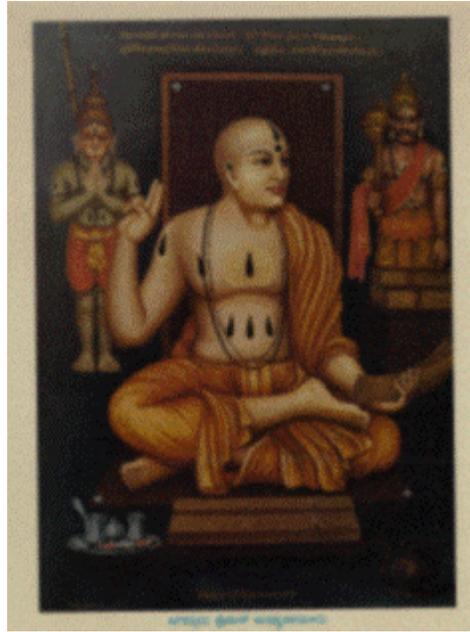


Beginner's Guide to
Sri MadhvAcharya's
Life and Philosophy



Published By:
Vishwa Madhva Sangha
©1999

Beginner's Guide to Sri MadhvAchArya's Life and Philosophy

(in Q & A format)

Vishwa Madhva Sangha

www.vishwamAdhvasangha.org

mAdhva@bigfoot.com

©1999 Vishwa Madhva Sangha,
11413, Potomac Oaks Drive,
Rockville MD 20850

All rights reserved. Book may be freely published and distributed while acknowledging publishers.

Table of Contents

<i>PUBLISHER'S NOTE</i>	4
<i>FOREWORD</i>	5
<i>CHAPTER 1: SHRI MADHVACHARYA – INTRODUCTION</i>	6
<i>CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND</i>	8
<i>CHAPTER 3: MADHVACHARYA'S CHILDHOOD</i>	9
<i>CHAPTER 4 -- EARLY YEARS OF SANYASA</i>	14
<i>CHAPTER 5: LATER YEARS OF SANYASA</i>	18
<i>CHAPTER 6: SHRI MADHVACHARYA'S PHILOSOPHY</i>	23
<i>CHAPTER 7: SHRI MADHVACHARYA'S WORKS</i>	24
<i>APPENDIX A: UDUPI KRISHNA TEMPLE AND THE EIGHT MATHAS</i>	33

Publisher's Note

This booklet is intended to provide an introduction to the life and works of shrI madhvAchArya. The intended audience is teenage children and laymen interested in knowing more about shrI madhvAchArya and dvaita, the philosophy propounded by him. A Q & A format has been used in order to answer some of the basic questions that people beginning this journey of enquiry may have. The objective is to provide information in a simple and easy to understand manner. We want to whet the appetites of these inquisitive minds so that they can proceed to study these concepts in a more formal fashion.

This booklet has been produced by the amateur volunteers of VMS. We have drawn freely from the books of famous scholars of dvaita philosophy such as Dr. BNK Sharma, Dr. KT Pandurangi and others. We want to thank them for permitting us to use their material. This booklet is intended to be the first one in a series on important mAdhva personalities.

We want to thank the contributors shrI Raghavendra Rachuri, shrI Sudhindra Yapalparvi, shrI Srinivasa Bhat, Dr. Kurudi Muralidhar, Miss Samhitha Muralidhar, shrI Sathyanarayana, shrI Hunsur Sriprasad, shrI Jayakrishna and Dr. Hebbar for their tireless efforts in producing this booklet. We thank shrI Bannur for providing some material from his dvaita list postings. May shrI Hari and vAyu bless all the contributors, volunteers and readers of this book.

The ITRANS notation has been used for Sanskrit and Indian words. ITRANS is an Indian language TRANSliteration scheme popular on the Internet.

Please give any feedback by using addresses given in this book.

VishNu preraNaya, vishNu prIthartham,

Directors of VMS.

FOREWORD

There are some philosophies which are honored without being read while some other philosophies are ignored without being read. Sri Madhvacharya's philosophy and religion belongs to the second category.

There are more people who have misunderstood and misinterpreted Srimadacharya and his philosophy than the people who have understood him. Sri madhvacharya's philosophy is like a cane of sugar which has all the juice hidden under a tough surface.

Sri madhvAcharya's philosophy did not come to mislead people by spurious attractions but came to give the essence of vedas to the people who have been misled. It is the tattvavaada of the right knowledge.

Sri madhvAcharya's philosophy does not mislead innocent people with colorful explanations. It gives a clear and coherent explanation to the universal principles.

Sri madhvAcharya says "Illusion may be very attractive but it is not good for the people". His words are "mithyOpaasaahi anarthadaa" and "worship of the wrong principles leads to destruction". Truth may be hard to swallow but not difficult.

Even though Sri madhvAcharya's philosophy is difficult, it is a philosophy that is suitable for debate, serious thinking and introspection. It is important to learn about such philosophy, its creator and the historical tradition of that philosophy.

This booklet which gives information about sri madhvacharya in an unique question and answer format serves a very useful purpose.

We are very happy that Vishwa mAdhva Sangha (VMS), which was founded by us, has taken the publication of such an important work. We wish that this activity continues for a long time and wish that VMS fulfills the aspirations of the mAdhva world.

We pray to sri pAnDuranga viTTala that His blessings be showered on all the volunteers who have worked hard to bring out this booklet.

It gives great pleasure to release this booklet during the first ever celebration in North America of a great scholar sri Jayatheertha who was the major contributor to mAdhva philosophy through his works like sri Nyayasudha.

**sri 1008 sri suguNendra theertha swamiji,
Sri jagadguru sri madhvAcharya mula mahA samsthAnam,
sri upendra theetha pITham,
Sri puthige maTha, uDupi.**

Dated: Jul 31st, 1999.

Chapter 1: shrI MadhvAcharya – Introduction

Q1: Who is shrI MadhvAcharya?

shrI MadhvAcharya is the founder of the dvaita school of Philosophy and religion. Students of Indian philosophy know him as the founder of a major school of vedanta¹, like shrI SankarAcharya and shrI RamanujAcharya. He is regarded as the third avatAra of vAyu or Mukhya PraaNa (the god of life), the other two being: shrI Hanuman in tretA yuga, and shrI bhImasena in dvApara yuga. His name and advent are mentioned in the [BaLitthA SUkta](#) of the Rg VEda². shrI MadhvAcharya himself acknowledges this in one of his works.³

shrI MadhvAcharya was born on Vijayadashami (10th day of the bright half of the lunar month of Ashwayuja - September and October) in the year 1238 AD(CE⁴) in the village of Pajaka near Udupi, Karnataka, India. He took up sanyAsa at the age of ten from shrI achyutapreksha, with the ashrama of (the name that a new ascetic should take) pUrNapraj~na.

shrI achyutapreksha who belonged to the Advaita (monistic) school of VEdanta, had a hard time convincing his student on the monistic interpretation of the Hindu spiritual classics such as the Upanisads, the BhagavadgIta etc. pUrNapraj~na impressed his teacher by interpreting Hindu Scriptures along dualistic and theistic lines, and arguing resourcefully with anyone who challenged his ideas.

Subsequently, pUrNapraj~na toured Southern India; debating with monistic scholars wherever he encountered them. Upon his return to Udupi, his guru, gave him the title of “Madhva”. Madhva wrote the first of his 40 works, i.e. the commentary on the GIta.

shrI MadhvAcharya undertook two major tours of Northern India; winning several monistic scholars over to his dualistic view point. Ultimately, he managed to convert his teacher as well. He met shrI vedavyasa and shrI bAdarAyaNa (both are forms of shrI viShNu) during his two tours of North India.

One significant incident in the life of shrI madhvAcharya was the miraculous obtaining of a Krishna icon on the seashore close to Udupi. He brought it to his monastery and duly consecrated it in Udupi. He personally worshipped the icon for 20 years.

shrI madhvAcharya debated with many scholars and won them to his school of thought. The veteran scholar of Andhra region, Shobhana bhatta (who later became his disciple, shrI padmanAbha tIrtha), and a well-known panDit in the Tulu region, trivikrama panDitAcharya were among the prominent ones. shrI nArayaNa panDitAcharya, the son of trivikrama panDitAcharya, composed shrI sumadhva vijaya, a contemporary biography of shrI madhvAcharya.

Then in 1298 CE, he ordained 8 young boys and appointed them as pontiffs of 8 apostolic institutions (maThAs). Madhva asked the 8 pontiffs to undertake the worship of the Krishna icon by a system of rotation, which lasted two months each (In 1532 CE, this term was extended from two months to two years and continues to be so even to this day). Madhva disappeared from mortal sight on the 9th day of the bright half of the month of Magha in the Hindu cyclic year of Pingala (1317 CE) while lecturing on the Aitareyopanisad, to the first eight pontiffs of Udupi.

¹ VEdanta literally means the end of the vedas. VEdanta refers to the philosophical systems that are based on the vedanta sUtras or BramhasUtras of shrI bAdarAyaNa. These sUtras were done to systematize the teachings of the vedas and the upanishads.

² yadImanupradivO madhva AdhavE guhasantham.h maatarishvaa mathaayatI - Rig VEda I.141. 1-5

³ Mahabharata tatparya nirNaya – yasya theenyuditAni veda vachane -

⁴ In academic circles, it is common to use CE (Common Era) instead of AD(Anno Domini-in the year of our Lord). CE is more secular connotation.

Further sections of this booklet, give more details about his life and his works.

Note: The biographical details of his life are from the authoritative biography of shrI madhvAchArya called shrI sumadhvavijaya.

Q2: What are his contributions to Indian Philosophy and religion?

shrI madhvAchArya made several important contributions to Indian Philosophy.

- The most important contribution was his approach in treating all the Hindu scriptures as an integral entity. Unlike other commentators who treat differentiate between VEdas and Upanishads, treating the former as "lower knowledge" (apara vidya), he treated both of them as an integral entity. He may be regarded as the greatest "SamanvayAcharya" of Indian Philosophy. (SamanvayAcharya: a person who gives coherent and wholesome interpretation while keeping in mind the pretext and context of a series of passages in a particular scriptural text).
- He was the first philosopher to formulate an Adhyatmic (philosophical) interpretation of the Rg. veda. To illustrate his point, he interpreted forty suktas as an example. Recent philosophers like shrI arabindo have continued on this path.⁵
- He gave a fresh doctrine of the validity of knowledge with special reference to the principle of "sAkshi". Though sakshi concept can be traced to earlier sources, it was shrImadacharya who developed the concepts and used them in the right places in his philosophy.
- He introduced the concept of "vishesha", in the relationship between a substance and its attributes.
- There are several other concepts like svatantra-paratantra, bimba-pratibimba bhAva (relation between Jivas and brahman) which he developed and used in his works.
- He also influenced the bhakti movement in India. He wrote dvAdasha stotra, a devotional poem having his "amkita" or signature. This was a precursor to the famous "Haridasa" movement of Karnataka, which has enriched the devotional literature of the entire country.

Q3: What are shrI madhva's influences on other schools of thought?

Post-madhva vaishNava schools of shrI nimbarka, shrI vallabha, and shrI chaitanya have come under the influence of shrI madhva. They have used concepts proposed by him, with slight changes in semantics. Nimbarka's concept of bheda and abheda comes very close to that of madhvAchArya's, with slight changes in terminology. Vallabha uses concepts similar to Ananda taratamya (gradation in bliss of souls in salvation). In the Chaitanya School, madhvA's influence can be seen in the works of rupa goswami, jiva goswami and to a great extent in the works of shrI baladeva vidyaAbhUshaNa.

Summary:

We can say that shrI madhvAchArya is one of the giants of Indian philosophy and religion. Even though the number of his followers is numerically smaller than those of other schools, they are second to none in creative ideas, vision and richness of thought.

Note: Several important philosophical concepts proposed by shrI madhvAchArya have been mentioned in passing. One needs to study his philosophy in greater detail to understand these concepts better. There will be a future booklet devoted to this philosophy.

⁵ shrI madhva's teachings in his own words- p.18 - shrI B.N.K. Sharma- Bharatiya vidya Bhavan

Chapter 2: Background

Q1: What was the state of Hinduism and Indian Philosophy at his birth?

The thirteenth century was a time of great turbulence in India's political and religious history; Hindu kingdoms were in a state of disunity and disarray. Portions of India were on the verge of losing their political and religious freedoms.

On the philosophical front, Buddhism and Jainism had taken birth as a backlash to excessive ritualism of the vedas. shrI Sankara's Advaita (monism) propounded the concepts of mAyavada (Theory of illusion). mAyavAda claims that the whole world is unreal and there is only one real substance called Atman or Brahman. Brahman is supposed to be nirguNa (without any attributes). shrI Sankara's theory was the dominant philosophy at that time. There are several versions of shrI Sankara's theory which compete with each other, claiming to be the correct monistic interpretation.

People who wanted a Theistic and realistic philosophy that recognized the reality of the world and was based on the concept of a personal and saguNa God (one with auspicious attributes) did not have any philosophy they could claim as their own. shrI Ramanujacharya did give a good theistic rebuttal to shrI Sankara's philosophy, but it was not complete. Among other things, shrI Ramanujacharya did not comment on all the ten upanishads. Since shrI sankara's advaita philosophy was based on the mahAvAkyas of the upanishads as its foundation shrI Ramanujacharya's response was not considered as a complete rebuttal of shrI Sankaracharya. In addition, Saivism was also on the rise in parts of Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

With this being the state of Indian Philosophy and religion, time was ripe for a vigorous and rigorous rebuttal of the mAyAvAda and for a theistic and realistic vedantic philosophy. **Time was ripe for the birth of shrI madhvAchArya.**⁶

⁶ **Note:** This represents a really brief description of the state of the Indian Philosophy at that time. More details are in 1. History of dvaita school of VEdanta and its Literature- shrI BNK Sharma 2. dvaita Philosophy as expounded by shrI madhvacharya- shrI Aroor shrInivasa Rao endowment lectures- University of Madras.

Chapter 3: MadhvAchArya's childhood

Q1. Who were shrI MadhvAchArya's parents?

An eminent brahmin named nArAyaNa NaDDillAya was tremendously devoted to Lord Vishnu. He had a very devout and chaste wife named VEdavatI. The couple aspired for a son who would be the embodiment of knowledge. With immense devotion, they incessantly served Lord Ananteshvara ⁷, the giver of cherished gifts, and observed a variety of vows for 12 years and prayed Lord Ananteshvara to grant them such a son. Finally, their prayers were answered and Lord Ananteshvara ordered his chief aide, mukhyaprANa a.k.a vAyudeva ⁸ to be born to them as MadhvAchArya.

Q2. Where is the birth place of shrI madhvAchArya?

shrI madhvAchArya was born in the village of Pajaka⁹ near uDupi, Karnataka, India.



House where sri madhvAcharya was born in pAjaka near Udupi

Q3. What was the name given to him by his parents?

NaDDillAya and his wife were very ecstatic to have this child who was full of auspicious qualities. During the naming ceremony, they called their son **vAsudeva**. This name connotes sound knowledge and deep devotion to supreme Lord, a befitting name applauded even by the gods.

Q4. Why was vAsudeva special?

vAsudeva was unlike other kids of his age. True to his name, he was overflowing with deep devotion to the supreme Lord. He used to see God everywhere and used to bow before Him. He was extraordinary in every

⁷ Ananteshvara was the spiritual deity of their community. The Ananteshvara Temple at UDupi used to be the spiritual center of the community until the KRSn.a Temple was established in 1278 CE

⁸ Mukhyaprana, the god of life is hailed in sacred texts as the chief aide of Lord Narayana.

⁹ The house where Madhvacharya was born still exists in PAjaka Village.

respect, and repeatedly astounded his teachers, and performed several miracles. He showed his extraordinary mental abilities and spiritual bent of mind on several occasions.

Q5. What miracles did vAsudeva perform?

- Once, when VAsudeva was less than a year old, his mother left him in the care of his sister and went out on some work. The baby started crying for food soon after his mother left him. Not knowing what to do, his sister fed him well boiled horse-gram (which was meant for the bullocks) by mistake. VAsudeva ate quite a large quantity of this with great relish. VAsudeva's mother returned home thinking that the baby would be crying for milk. She was surprised to see him quite playful and cheerful, instead of crying for food. When she learnt that he had been fed boiled horse-gram, which is difficult even for adults to eat and digest, she was very worried about what would happen to him. But he was cheerful and healthy and showed no signs of discomfort. The extraordinary digestive power of the child surprised everybody.
- Once VAsudeva, a year old, accompanied his father's bullock, to the fields in the morning. He followed the bullock, holding on to the tip of its tail. His parents searched for him in vain throughout the day. In the evening, the bullock returned with the child to the surprise of everyone. Even though the child had not eaten anything from dawn to dusk, and had walked a great deal, there was no sign of fatigue on its face. The extraordinary endurance of the child convinced all that he was no ordinary mortal, but was divine with superhuman powers.
- Once, VAsudEva returned from play and requested his father to dine with him. His father told him that he could not do so as he was prevented from moving out by the person, who had lent him money to buy the bullock. Thereupon VAsudEva, with his hands full of tamarind seeds, came to the lender and gave him the seeds in lieu of the money due to him. The quantity of the tamarind seeds, was found to be equal to the amount of money due. The child's innocence and charming personality made a deep impression on the lender. He considered the tamarind seeds given by the child to be more valuable than the loan amount. He accepted the seeds with faith, love and devotion, from the hands of the handsome child and went away satisfied. At a later day, when vAsudeva's father went to the lender to repay the loan, he was told that the amount had already been repaid by his son. The faith the lender had shown in vAsudEva did not go unrewarded; in due course, he became a devotee of God and attained salvation. Such was the effect of reposing faith in Lord MukhyapraNa in the form of vAsudeva.



Tamarind tree near vAsudeva's house



Sri madhAcharya giving tamarind seeds to the lender

- Even before he was eight, vAsudEva exhibited supernatural powers and performed several daring feats of physical power. Once, he was playing on a hillock called durgabETTa, when his mother called him; he immediately jumped from the top of the hillock and landed near his house! On another occasion, he replanted a dry plant and made it sprout !
- vAsudEva's friend, the son of his Guru, had chronic headache since birth, which had defied all treatments and medicines. Once when they were together in a forest, vAsudEva noticed his friend suffer from a sudden onset of pain. He blew air into his ears and cured him of his headache
- Once, a devil known as *Manimantha* took the form of a deadly serpent and bit vAsudeva, However, vAsudEva was not affected, he jumped on its hood and pressed it down to earth. It was a miracle that the deadly snake's poison did not harm him in any way. The place where this incident took place is near pAjaka kSetra and has been preserved by putting up a small enclosure round the place. The place can be seen even now.

Q6. What are examples of vAsudeva's extra-ordinary knowledge and strength?

vAsudeva was such a brilliant child that he used to grasp everything at once. When his father repeated the previous day's lesson, little vAsudeva immediately complained, "Father! Why are you teaching me what was taught yesterday?" His father rejoiced on seeing his son's brilliance. vAsudeva was once sitting in the class and was contemplating on god. His teacher ToTTintillAya, noticed that vAsudeva was not paying attention to what was being taught in the class. He scolded vAsudeva for his negligence. vAsudeva replied back, "Guruji! I don't like learning by rote VEdic hymns, part by part". This angered the teacher who then ordered vAsudeva to recite any hymn that had not been taught till then. vAsudeva obliged and recited the whole hymn. vAsudeva's recital was flawless, with an immaculate pronunciation of VEdic words¹⁰. It could be used as a model for learning VEdic intonations and won the appreciation of not only his teacher, but also that of the gods in heaven. vAsudeva was also very skilled in sports and was the reigning champion in swimming, wrestling and weight lifting. In wrestling matches, he could easily take on several of his strong friends at the same time and defeat them with great ease. People who witnessed his strength could not help exclaiming in wonder, "Indeed he is BhImasena!"

Q7. Why did vAsudeva decide to take up sanyAsa?

From his childhood, vAsudeva was completely devoted to the feet of shrI ViShNu. He was not at all interested in superficial objects. After attending gurukula, vAsudeva returned home and pondered on the difficulty faced by good people who wanted to acquire correct knowledge of God. He observed that there was utter confusion in the minds of even scholars on account of apparently contradicting versions appearing in the different parts of the holy scriptures. He thought it was necessary to reveal the real hidden meanings of holy scriptures and establish the unrivalled and unequalled supremacy of God. He decided that the only way he could do so was by embracing sanyAsa Asharama and becoming a sanyAsi to propogate the true philosophy enshrined in the holy scriptures to the world. Thus, at the age of eight, he announced to his parents his intention to take up *sanyAsa*.

Q8. How did vAsudeva convince his parents?

vAsudeva's parents were very distressed on hearing this news. They were worried that there would be no one to take care of them in their old age. On seeing their distress, vAsudeva promised to wait until another son was born to them. He won over his father by quoting the VEdas that "the moment one renounces all worldly attachments and completely immerses in contemplation of God, he should become a monk". His father, being a great scholar himself, saw the logic in vAsudeva's argument. However, he declined to give his permission, stating that even if he could bear his parting, his mother would never be able to do so. vAsudeva assured his father that he would get his mother's permission later but insisted that his father agree to it first. NaDDillAya had to agree with great difficulty.

When another baby was born to his parents, vAsudeva sought his mother's permission. She had made up her mind to deny him permission. On hearing her decision, vAsudeva declared that he would run away from home if he was not allowed to become a monk. His mother was caught in a dilemma. Finally, she thought, "Never to be seen again is as good as being no more", and agreed to his request

Q9. Whom did vAsudeva choose as his guru?

Though VEdavyAsa was his real guru, vAsudeva chose shrI achyutaprekSha tIrtha, a great ascetic, to be the guru who would take him into the ascetic order. shrI achyutaprekSha belonged to the Advaita (non-dualistic) school of VEdanta. He had his maTha in the Ananteshvara shrine, and was the spiritual leader of the community at that time. He was well known for his purity in thought, word and deed. He had studied the existing systems of philosophy and was conscious of their limitations. He was offering prayers to Lord Ananteshwara to bless him with true knowledge. Lord Ananteshwara, pleased with his devotion, informed

¹⁰ Madhvacharya is known to have once chanted a Rig VEdic hymn and made green grams sprout, leaf, fruit and grain in order in his hands. Such was the power of his chanting!

him through the medium of a person, that he would soon get a disciple who would lead him on the correct path of knowledge and wisdom. VAsudeva approached shrI achyutaprekSha and requested him to take him as his disciple. achyutaprekSha, who was eagerly waiting for this moment, immediately agreed.

Q10. How did he get the title 'pUrNaprajn~a'?

His preceptor shrI achyutaprekSha tIrtha named him pUrNaprajn~a after his induction into monkhood. pUrNaprajn~a astounded achyutaprekSha by his knowledge. On one occasion, his guru tried to teach him the noted Advaita text iStasiddhi (a tough work on the Advaita theory of knowledge). pUrNaprajn~a pointed out, to achyutaprekSha tIrtha's amazement, 32 errors in the very first line of that work, where its author vimuktAtman had paid obeisance to himself by saying something like: "The only truth is the soul's empirical knowledge. In the presence of this truth the world appears to be an illusory play. The essential soul manifests itself as I, you and everything..." It was this profound knowledge of all subjects that earned him the title of "PurNa-prajñ~a" which meant "one whose knowledge is complete." The greatly pleased achyutaprekSha tIrtha gave up trying to educate his pupil. He later converted himself to dvaita, with the name puruSottama TIrtha.

Q11. How did he come to be known as 'Ananda tIrtha'?

achyutaprekSha TIrtha appointed PurNa-prajñ~a as his successor, to become the head of his maTha. In those days, the ordination (upasampadA) was given by the preceptor only after the disciple reached a certain age and accomplishment. The name given to him at the time of the upasampadA was Ananda TIrtha when he was formally admitted into the "TIrtha", order of the Ekadan.DI sannyAsins by his guru achyutaprekSha TIrtha¹¹.

Q12. Why is he more popularly known as MadhvAchArya?

The words AnandatIrtha and MadhvAchArya are synonymous. The word 'Madhva' comes from 'Madhu+A' ('honey bringer'), a title given to him by achyutaprekSha after AnandatIrtha wrote a commentary on the BrahmasUtras along theistic lines. As Madhva is also a name that occurs in the BaLittha Sukta¹² of the Rigveda for the third avatAra of MukhyaprANa, he became famous as MadhvAchArya.

¹¹ A lineage of monks keep a honorific title denoting the lineage. All the mAdhva monks have the title "tIrtha". EkadanDi refers to the order having one sceptre that is the symbol of monks.

¹² BaLittha tadvapushe dhayidarshatam... (Rig VEda I.141. 1-5)

Chapter 4 -- Early Years of Sanyasa

Q1. How did shrI MadhvachArya come to present a new philosophy?

shrI MadhvAchArya's guru was shrI achyutaprekSha. Lord shrI AnantheSwara Himself told shrI achyutaprekSha that he would obtain right knowledge from shrI madhvAchArya, his own student. Ever since he took sanyAsa at the age of ten, shrI MadvAchArya taught others the right meaning of VEdas and how this meaning could be assimilated by praying to Lord shrI Hari. He knew this because he was in essence shrI VAyu himself and had learnt the right knowledge directly from Lord shrI NArAyaNa.

Forty days after taking sanyAsa, shrI MadvachArya skillfully debated a famous Advaita scholar, VAsudeva panDita and defeated him. shrI achyutaprekSha was totally impressed by his pupil's victory, and wanted him to get even better at debating. So, he then started teaching him isTasiddhi, an Advaita philosopher's work. Immediately, shrI MadhvAchArya pointed out that there were 32 incorrect items in the very first sentence. shrI achyutaprekSha asked him to show the incorrect items and told everyone that he would not teach anymore. From then on, shrI MadvAchArya started his teachings on dvaita philosophy. He also undertook a south Indian tour and visited Trivandrum, KanyAkumAri, shrIrangam and rAmeshwara to spread his ideas around. He had vigorous debates with scholars from other traditions. This tour of South India convinced shrI madhvAchArya that he needed to give his new sidhhAnta or philosophy a formal basis. He started writing his first work, a commentary on GIta, soon after his return from the tour.

He taught that Lord shrI Hari is Supreme (Hari Sarvottama), the world is real (Jagat Satya) and not an illusion (mAya), there is a five-fold difference between God, living things, and non-living things. This five-fold difference is called pancha Bedha and includes the following elements:

- between God and living things,
- between God and non-living things,
- between living and non-living things,
- amongst living things themselves,
- amongst non-living things.

He used three main methods of proof (pramANa) to present his philosophy. They are – personal experience (pratyakSa), scriptures (agamas), and inference (anumana).

Q2. How did he propagate his philosophy?

shrI madvAchArya started propagating his philosophy, dvaita meaning two different things, referring to difference between God and us. Initially, the only way of propagating his philosophy was to take on scholars belonging to other schools of thought and debating with them. In the course of the debate, the scholars would learn how mistaken they were in misinterpreting Vedas, concluding that their knowledge about God, World, and Living things was grossly incorrect. More often than not, they would then surrender and implore shrI madvAchArya to accept them as his disciples and impart correct knowledge to them.

In addition to his melodious chanting of the VEdas and his concise way of communicating ideas, shrI madvAchArya was a charismatic person and a natural leader. He toured North and South India, giving discourses and debating and winning over scholars from other traditions. He debated and converted Shobhana Bhatta, a scholar in the GodAvari province, who became a disciple of madhva under the ascetic name of shrI padmanAbha tIrtha. He also converted narahari tIrtha, who was a scholar in the Orissa region.

He used many down-to-earth examples to illustrate his arguments. His incisive logic and enormous learning helped him win over all his opponents. His ability to defeat anybody in debate made him very popular. He was fearless, and many times argued with groups of scholars and still was able to come on top, efficiently promoting his philosophy. He converted many of them and made them his followers.

Q3. What did he do while traveling?

When shrI MadhvAchArya traveled, he visited temples, sacred rivers, and met scholars from other schools. He engaged them in intellectual debates and proved to them the error of their ways. He defeated Buddhisaagara and Vadisimha, both Buddhists, with very concise one-sentence responses to their arguments. They ran away overnight accepting defeat. Similarly, he argued against Sankara Bhasya saying that the world is real, not an illusion, God is supreme and different from living and non-living beings.

On one occasion, during his travel through south india (1256-1259 CE) he halted at a place called Vishnumangala (Kerala). In order to test shrI MadhvAchArya, one person gave him hundreds of bananas after lunch. shrI MadhvAchArya ate all of them without any difficulty. This act resembled that of shrI bhIma in his previous incarnation where he ate a lot of food meant for a demon called Bakasura and then killed him. He then went to Kerala and halted near river Payasvini. He reminded everybody that shrI Durga (sister of Lord shrI Krishna) would reincarnate here. Then he visited the shrI Ananta Padmanabha temple in Trivandrum. He addressed many people in the temple and presented his dvaita philosophy. Here, he challenged Kudipusturu, a leading advaita scholar, and defeated him. In order to establish his philosophy on a sound footing he decided to write commentaries on holy scriptures.

shrI MadhvAchArya then went to Kanyakumari and Rameshwara, and remembered shrI Hanuman's incarnation. In Rameshwara he camped for four months during Chaturmasa. Many scholars from other disciplines also camped there to try and defeat him. Many of them, including Kudipusturu formed a team, to defeat him, but none of them prevailed. Somebody challenged his statement that every name in Vishnu Sahasranama has 100 meanings. He agreed to list out the meanings, provided the audience was able to remember them. He began with the first name – "Vishvam" and started listing its meanings. After he crossed 50, his audience requested him to stop since they were unable to keep up with him. He also addressed another group of scholars and won their heart by using logic, Vedas, and mImamsa. He finally returned back to Udupi. So wherever he went, he propagated his philosophy and defeated scholars with incorrect knowledge.

Q4. How did he meet shrI Vedavyasa ?

shrI MadhvAchArya decided that to protect Vedic traditions he would have to refute existing wrong commentaries on the Brahmasutra. In order to do so, he would have to write a commentary that brought out the true meaning of the sutras, along with the true import of the Vedas. He decided to go to Badari to meet shrI Vedavyasa and get His blessings before writing the commentary. To make sure that his guru shrI achyutapreksha did not object to his long journey, he wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. This kept his guru busy and he accorded his permission for the trip.

He traveled north (1263-1271 CE) with several disciples towards Lower Badari. The travel was very pleasant, with a symbolic cool breeze because shrI MadhvAchArya (shrI Vayu himself) was leading the entourage. He reached Badari and offered his salutations to shrI Narayana. He sent his disciples away and presented his commentary on the gita to God. He told God that he had created this commentary to the best of his capability. To this God replied, "Not really, you have more capability but have written only a little, you could do even more¹³". On the same night, God woke shrI MadhvAchArya and asked him to present his commentary again. This shows Lord shrI Narayana was completely happy with his work and wanted to listen to it many times.

Then shrI MadhvAchArya made preparations to meet shrI Vedavyasa (Reincarnation of Lord shrI Hari) who was living in Upper Badari. Travel to Upper Badari is difficult even today and could take 48 days. He took an oath not to talk and eat until he met shrI Vedavyasa. He did this in order to keep his mind focused

¹³ Under the instruction of shrI narayana, shrI madhvacharya changed a verse in gita tatparya to say "vakshyami leshataH" (I will tell a little bit) from "vaskshyami shaktitaH" (I will tell according to my ability).

on prayers to shrI VEdavyAsa and ward away distractions. He asked his disciples to stay back and proceeded towards Upper Badari. Everyone stayed back except one disciple, shrI Sathya tIrtha who was determined to follow his master. However, after a while he became so tired that he could neither keep up with shrI MadhvAchArya nor go back to lower back. shrI MadhvAchArya looked back and waved at him signaling him to go back. This wave created a fierce wind that carried shrI Sathya tIrtha back to the lower Badari camp.

shrI MadhvAchArya proceeded towards upper Badari and went to shrI VEdavyAsa's Ashrama (hermitage). This was a beautiful forest with many trees, birds, and animals. There were many saints praising God and getting lessons from shrI VEdavyAsa himself. Those saints saw a well-built and charismatic shrI MadhvAchArya coming towards them and were curious to know who he was. Then shrI MadhvAchArya saw shrI VEdavyAsa sitting in the middle of a stage. This beautiful sight moved him and he started praying to him. He looked at shrI VEdavyAsa's beautiful face, hands, body, and legs. shrI VEdavyAsa's eyes were very bright and he had a melodious voice. Then shrI MadhvAchArya went near shrI VEdavyAsa and did namaskaras to him. shrI VEdavyAsa was very happy to see him and greeted him effusively. This meeting with shrI vedavyAsa was only possible because shrI MadhvAchArya was a reincarnation of shrI VAyu, supreme among jIvas (VAyu jIvottama).

Then shrI VEdavyAsa taught VEdas and BhAgavata to shrI MadhvAchArya. As vAyU he had already been imparted knowledge of the scriptures by NARAYANA, however, he learnt them again from shrI VEdavyAsa for several reasons. Foremost among them was his obvious pleasure in learning something from his Lord and Master. Second, he wanted to emphasize that true knowledge has to be learnt from a guru. Third, he wanted to show the world that his knowledge of scriptures was flawless because this had been imparted to him by the Lord shrI Hari Himself.

Q5. How was his mental personality?

shrI MadhvAchArya had complete and correct knowledge of VEdas. Once, he demonstrated the power of VEdic chants in front of a skeptic by sprouting a seed into a plant and then into tree with flowers and fruits.

He was able to articulate his knowledge of the vEdas in a clear and concise manner to help others understand their true import - Lord shrI Hari is supreme (Hari Sarvottama), the world is real (Jagat Satya), and there is difference between God, Living, and non-Living things (pancha bedha).

Expounding the remarkable philosophy of dvaita and constructing 40 works that laid the foundation for the philosophy also shows shrI madhvAchArya's remarkable intellect. Acharyas of other vedAntic schools had a person who had laid out the basic principles of their philosophy before them. shrI sankarAcharya had shrI Gaudapada before him who had come up the basic principles of advaita. shrI sankarAcharya gave the philosophy, a formal basis with commentaries on brahmasUtras, upanishads and the gIta. shrI madhvAchArya did not have the benefit of a precursor. He had to build all of his philosophical underpinnings and the building blocks himself. This shows his amazing intellect.

Once when shrI achyutaprekSha was teaching bhAgavata, shrI MadhvAchArya took one of the prints in the class and said this is the only correct print. When asked how he knew, shrI MadhvAchArya replied, this is how shrI VEdavyAsa has written BhAgavata and hence this print is the only correct print. His guru asked him to prove his point by reciting the most difficult part of bhAgavata, the fifth chapter. shrI madhva immediately obliged, without looking at the text at all. The other students verified the fact that his recitation exactly matched the version that he had identified as the authoritative one. shrI achyutapreksha was amazed and exclaimed that he could not have learnt this in this lifetime. shrI madhvAchArya replied that he had indeed learnt the text in his previous life. This episode clearly shows shrI madhvAchArya's superhuman mental abilities.

He was a visionary who knew what was going to come. Once while giving the correct meaning to a word ApAla (beautiful girl) he predicted that a scholar would visit the man seeking the meaning in exactly two days and would give him the same meaning. Voila!! It happened. He feared no one because he knew that his knowledge was right and Lord shrI Hari was inside him all the time carrying out his actions. He knew

several languages fluently without attending any school. He was taught directly by shrI NArAyaNa and shrI VEdavyAsa. These remarkable features made shrI MadhvAchArya pUrNa praj.na.

Q6. How was his physical personality?

shrI MadhvAchArya was very well built, over 6 feet, handsome with grace, and with superhuman capabilities. He was able to eat a lot of food, hundreds of bananas at once or fast for several days without exhaustion. He once carried a large boulder (over 300 tons) in one hand and put it aside to clear the way for others¹⁴. Many strong men challenged him in wresting and were unable to move even a toe of his leg when he held pressed on the floor. But on another occasion he became so light that he could be carried on the shoulder of a small boy.

He also saw a pregnant woman carrying water from the tank to the house in ShrImuShn.a (Kerala State). Immediately, he struck the ground with his danDa (scepter carried by an ascetic) and brought out a fountain of water for that woman. Even today this is called danDa tIrtha.

Once, when he was travelling in north India with a group of his disciples, they had to cross a rising river. He crossed the river by walking on river. He then met the king on the opposite shore and arranged a boat for the disciples to cross the river. This proved that shrI MadhvAchArya was the incarnation of Lord shrI VAYu himself. Lord shrI VAYu is the commander of all our organs in our body and thus shrI MadhvAchArya exhibited superhuman qualities.

¹⁴ This boulder still exists with the inscription on it reading “Sri MadhvAcAryen.a ekahastEna stApita shila”.

Chapter 5: Later Years of Sanyasa

Q1. What were the main highlights of the second North Indian tour?

shrIMadhvAchArya visited Badari, HastinApura (near Delhi), KurukshEtra, Varanasi (KAsi), Hrishikesh, Ishupata Kshetra, and several other holy places in North India during his second North Indian Tour (1280-1290 CE). The main highlights of this tour were:

- Meeting Lord BADarayana at Badari, and receiving eight Saligramas from Him (these are said to be presents made by Vyasa to his favorite pupil). Incidentally, these sAligrAmAs are called Vyasa Mushtis.
- Writing of shrIman MahAbhArata Tatparya Nirnaya, the great epitome of MahAbhArata.
- Conducting tapas (meditation) under a tree near GangA river for four months.
- Crossing the river GangA, defying physical and political limitations.
- Converting the mind of King MahAdEva of Maharastra to do hard labor, alongside with the people whom he was forcing to do real hard labor.
- Drawing attention of his disciples to some of the key incidents of the Mahabharata war, showing the armaments and himself depicting as Lord BhIma, during his tour of KurukshEtra.
- Conversing with Ghyasuddin Balban (1266-1286 CE) and getting half of his province as a jaghir (gift).

Q2. Who were the main scholars that he won over during that time?

While coming back from his first North Indian tour, ShrI madhvAchArya participated in a vidvat sabha was being held at RAjamahendri on the banks on the GodAvari river in the Andhra county. The sabha was organized by two erudite scholars, Shobhana BhaTTa (the prime minister of the kAkatiya kings at Warangal) and SvAmI ShAstrI (the prime minister of the Gajapati kings of kaLinga). Both were staunch Advaitins. Both of them were thoroughly mesmerized by ShrI madhvAchArya at the RAjamahendri sabha. They not only converted to dvAita, but asked to be given holy orders. After resigning their privileged positions, Shobana BhaTTa and SvAmI ShAstrI were ordained as PadmanAbha and Narahari Tirthas respectively.

Q3. How did he cross the river GangA?

On their way to badari, shrI MadhvAchArya and his disciples had to cross the river gangA. It was impossible to cross the river without boats but none were available since the muslim ruler of that province had prohibited people from crossing the river. shrI MadhvAchArya's disciples were in a quandry, and did not know what to do. However, ShrI madhvAcharya was not perturbed; he asked his disciples to hold on to him and form a chain. Together, they easily swam across the river to the great amazement of everybody, including the soldiers guarding the other side of the river. They tried to prevent him from crossing the river, but could not do so. They surrounded him and tried to capture him, but he was unstoppable. He confidently marched ahead with his disciples.

Q4. Did he meet the muslim rulers in North India?

He met many Muslim rulers like Ghyasuddin Balban in North India. To great astonishment, he conversed with them in their native tongue. His charm and scholarly approach bowled them over and gained their respect.

Q5. How did ShrI madhvAchArya impress the Muslim King Ghyasuddin Balban?

When the King questioned shrI madhvAchArya about how he crossed the river and passed his security, AchArya responded, "I could do all of this by the grace of the Supreme God, who is the controller of you, me and the entire Universe". He immediately understood the greatness of shrI madhvAchArya and offered

a part of his kingdom as jaghir if AchArya would stay in that kingdom. AchArya did not accept his offer. He asked the king to allow them to peacefully pass through his kingdom and continued on his journey towards Badari.

Q6. What was the highlight in winning over and converting scholars in the western Karanataka (tuLu) region?

Once, shrI Madhva was visiting ViShNumangaLam, near Kumbbla River (located in the present day Kasargod District of Kerala State). He was giving a sermon in the ViShNumangaLam temple's biggest mantapam. Many learned people were present in the congregation. shrI Pan.DitAchArya Trivikrama PejattAya, a prominent scholar, was one of them. Though he was looking for an opportunity to challenge shrI Madhva's VedAnta, he could not find a suitable opportunity as shrI Madhva's Siddhantha was flawless. Later, in the village of AmarAlaya (KuDilu), shrI Pan.DitAchArya Trivikrama PejattAya challenged shrI Madhva for a discussion. This discussion continued for fifteen days and ended with surrender and conversion of shrIPan.DitAchArya Trivikrama PejattAya to dvaita VedAnta. Without any ill will, he became a convert and became a strong disciple of shrI Madhva. trivikrama's brother, Shankara PejattAya, was already a disciple of shrI Madhva. He was shrI Madhva's librarian. Later shrI Pan.DitAchArya trivikrama PejattAya wrote TattvapradiPikA, a commentary on SUtra BhAsya, as assigned by shrI Madhva. He also convinced shrI Madhva to write An.uvyAkhyAna, a commentary to explain the dvaita VedAnta fully and freely, at depth, for the benefit of his disciples. He composed the famous Hari-vAyu sthuthi, a sanskrit poem consisting of 41 verses. In this poem, he describes Madhva as the avatAra (incarnation) of shrI vAyu and sings of his greatness and glory as Hanuman, bhImasEna and madhvAchArya. It is extremely popular among mAdhvAs and it is believed that a recitation of it with devotion is enough to keep one from harm and shower happiness and peace.



sri madhvAcharya debating sri trivikrama panDitAcharya

Q7. Who was his main biographer?

NArAyaNa panDitAchArya, the son of shrI Trivikrama panDitAchArya, wrote shrI MadhvA's biography, "sumadhva Vijaya". He was a contemporary of Shri Madhva. He was a great poet. He narrated the life and achievements of Sri MadhvAchArya in a fairly full, reliable and accurate way.

Q8. What is different about this biography compared with that of other AchAryas ?

Sumadhva Vijaya, is written in the form of a poem and has sixteen chapters in various meters. This describes the great AchArya's life and doings. Their contemporaries wrote none of the extant biographies of shankara and rAmAnuja. There are several biographies with conflicting details in the case of shrI sankarAchArya. shrimadAchArya's biography was written by a junior contemporary of his. Sumadhva vijaya is the only biography accepted by all the segments of the mAdhva society.

Q9. How did he establish the Krishna temple in Udupi?

Once, shrI MadhvA noticed from the shores of Malpe (a coastal village near Udupi), a ship, which had lost its direction in the Arabian Sea. shrI MadhvA used his saffron colored overcloth to direct the ship to the shores. The thankful captain of the ship offered shrI MadhvA any thing he wanted from the ship. Being a SanyAsi with no materialistic desires, shrI MadhvA picked up a small mound of Gopi Chandana from the

ship. When he broke that Gopi Chandana, he saw a statue of shrI Krishna. He established Udupi shrI Krishna Temple, for this idol of shrI Krishna.



Udupi Shri Krishna

Q10. Did he perform any miracles during this time?

shrI madhvAchArya performed many miracles during this period.

- The famous one is “Walking on water”. While returning from Badari, AchArya and his disciples had to once again cross the river GangA. It was impossible to cross the river without boats, but none were available. AchArya left behind all his disciples and walked into the GangA River. He disappeared from the sight of his disciples and reached the other end. The Muslim King was surprised to see him crossing the river without a boat. His clothes were also not wet. The king recognized the greatness of AchArya. He immediately arranged for boats to get AchArya’s disciples from the other end of the river.
- Once AchArya was travelling through the Goa region. A brahmaNa named Shankara invited him to his place. He wanted to test him, so he offered 4000 banana fruits to him which were first offered to God. AchArya ate all of them and later drank 30 vessels full of milk. The super human abilities of AchArya impressed the King of that place. Seeing the special powers of AchArya, He tried to force him to stay in his kingdom. When AchArya refused to stay, he even tried to lock him in the village temple. AchArya became invisible to the king and his soldiers and left the place with his disciples.
- Some thieves once tried to rob AchArya and his entourage. Observing them from a distance, he asked all his disciples to remain standstill. When the thieves arrived, AchArya and his disciples looked like stones to them. When they passed the place, AchArya and disciples resumed their journey without any problems. The thieves looked back and saw him and his disciples walking. They were stunned by his yogic power. They fell at his feet and asked for forgiveness.

Q11. How and when did he leave from the view of people? How long did shrI MadhvAchArya live?

shrI MadhvAchArya lived for seventy nine years, from the Vijaya Dashami day of Vilambi Samvatsara (year) to the Navami of Shukla Paksha in the Month of Magha of Pingala Samvatsara. For some months prior to his disappearance from earthly environments, he stayed on the banks of Kanwa tIrtha. It is said that shrI madhvAchArya is currently present at Uttarabadari with shrI vedavyAsa.



Place from where shrI MadhvAchArya disappeared

Chapter 6: shrI MadhvAchArya's Philosophy

Q1. What is shrI MadhvAchArya's philosophy?

shrI vyaasa thirtha has beautifully captured the essence of shrI MadhvAchArya's philosophy in this verse (which has been quoted by Baladeva Vidyabhushana at the end of his work 'Prameya Ratnavali') :

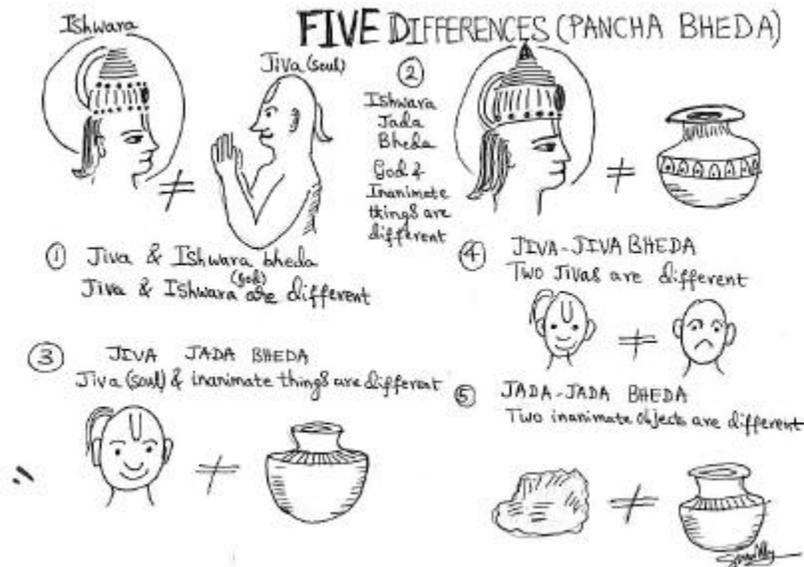
*shrIman Madhva Mate harih paratarah Satyam Jagat Tattvato
bhinno jeeva ganaah, hareh anucharAh, nichochha bhavam
gatAh MuktiH Naija sukhAnubhUtiramala bhaktishcha tat
saadhanam Hi Aksyaadi tritayam pramaanam akhilaM Annaayaika
vedyo harih*

Q2. Can you translate the above verse, in simple words?

A very simple translation of the above verse is:

The philosophy of Madhva is that

- ViShNu is the highest God,
- the world is real,
- the five-fold difference between God, living and non-living beings is an eternal fact,
- all living beings are dependent upon ViShNu for their existence
- there is a hierarchy amongst living beings, that is eternal (without beginning or end)
- salvation lies in the soul experiencing its intrinsic joy,
- salvation can be attained only through pure and unsullied love of God (combined with knowledge of His greatness)
- means of knowledge are sensory perception, inference and holy scriptures
- ViShNu is to be perceived in His nature through the holy scriptures and only through them.



Pancha bhedas or five fold differences in dvaita philosophy

Chapter 7: shrI MadhvAchArya's Works

Q1. Can you give a brief introduction to shrI MadhvAchArya's works?

Forty works of shrI MadhvAchArya have so far been discovered. Of these, thirty seven are very commonly known. These thirty seven works put together are very popularly known as the Sarva Mula Granthas.

Q2. How was shrI MadhvAchArya's approach different from those of other philosophers?

There is one striking difference between shrI MadhvAchArya's compositions and those of other vEdanta philosophers.

When one goes through the works of shrI MadhvAchArya the thing that immediately stands out is the remarkable consistency of approach and clarity of thought. There is one central theme that runs through all of his works – the supremacy of ViShNu and the dependence of other entities on Him for sustenance. Everything else is woven around this theme and flows from it. One does not find this kind of consistent, coherent thinking in the works of any other vedanta philosophers.

For style of writing shrI MadhvAchArya follows the sUtras as insisted by the VEdic thinking. His interpretation of the VEdic texts show great astuteness and originality. Also notable is that his works are thoroughly VEdic. His style of writing is very precise and to the point; he manages his language with great efficiency. He puts down long chains of thoughts in very precise and terse sentences. Another feature is that he rarely makes statements which he does not support with quotations from scriptures.

P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar in his book "Outlines of Indian Philosophy" says about shrI MadhvAchArya's Brahma Sutra Bhasya:

"By comparing Sankara and Ramanuja's Bhasyas Sutra by Sutra, a comparative study of their common points and divergence can be made. But Madhva's Bhasya strikes such original lines, that therein is visible most plainly how the traditional interpretations of the Sutras having become lost, the Bhasyakaras, commentators were untrammelled and could make out whatever they wanted from the Sutras."

Q3. What are the works shrI MadhvAchArya has authored?

shrI MadhvAchArya's works fall into two groups: the commentaries dedicated to the explanation of holy scriptures and independent treatises.

The following are the titles of his works

I. Commentaries and Writings with explanatory notes:

a. On VEdic Hymns

1. Rg Bhasya
2. Karmanirnaya

b. On Upanishads

1. Aitareya Upanishad Bhasya
2. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Bhasya
3. Chandogya Upanishad Bhasya
4. Taittiriya Upanishad Bhasya
5. Isavasya Upanishad Bhasya
6. Kathaka Upanishad Bhasya

7. Atharvana [Mundaka] Upanishad Bhasya
8. Manduka Upanishad Bhasya
9. Satprasna Upanishad Bhasya
10. Talavakara [Kena] upanishad Bhasya

These ten works are together known as 'upanishad prasthAna'

c. On PurANAs

1. BhagavadgitA bhAshya
 2. BhagavadgitA tAtparya nirnaya
- These two works are together known as 'GitA prasthAna'
3. BhAgavata tAtparya nirnaya
 4. shrIman mahAbhArata tAtparya nirnaya

d. On VEDanta Sutras

1. BrahmasUtra - bhAshya
 2. BrahmasUtra - AnUbhAshya
 3. BrahmasUtra - AnuvyAkhyAna
 4. BrahmasUtra - NyAyavivarana
- These four works together are known as 'sUtra prasthAna'

II. Independent Writings

1. pramAnalakshna
 2. kathAlakshana
- These two works together are known as '**lakshna granthAs**'
3. upAdhi khandana
 4. mayAvada khandana
 5. mithyAtvAnumAnakhandana
- These three works together are known as '**khandana traya**'
6. tattvasankhyAna
 7. tattvavivEka
 8. tattvOdyOta
 9. vishnutattva(vi)nirnaya.
- These four works together are known as '**tattva granthAs**'
- The above nine works along with karma nirnaya are collectively known as '**dasaprakaranAs**'
10. dwadasa stotra
 11. nakhastuti
 12. sadAchArasmriti
 13. jayanti nirnaya
 14. krishnAmritamahArnava
 15. tantrasArasangraha
 16. yamakabhArata
 17. yatipranavakalpa

III. Other Works

1. kandukastuti
2. thithi nirnaya
3. nyasa paddati

Q4. Give a brief description of the works of shrI MadhvAchArya

RG BHASYA

shrI MadhvAchArya has stated that each statement in the VEdas has at least three meanings, the primary meaning being the praise of the Lord ViShNu. He has illustrated this by writing a commentary on forty

hymns (suktas) from the Rg veda, starting with 'AgnimeelE purOhitam... '. He explains how this Sukta is primarily a prayer to Lord ViShNu. As in the case of all his works, he has, in this commentary also, shown that the VEdas uphold the supremacy of Lord Vishnu, and the dependence of all the gods (devatas) on Him. He has explained the importance of "Rishi, Devata and Chandas" in reciting VEdas.

KARMANIRNAYA

This work is said to have been composed by shrI MadhvAchArya in reply to a remark by some people that he was only propagating 'Tattvajnana' but was not versed in the 'karmakanda' of the VEdas. Being Sarvajnacharya (the all-knowing preceptor), he has shown that even works dealing with karmas are actually hymns in praise of Lord ViShNu. He has illustrated aspect in this work. He has chosen a mantra in a 'chandas' (metre) called 'Mahanamni' which apparently praises Indra and explained its significance with reference to ViShNu. This work illustrates the profundity of his knowledge in VEdas. In fact, while Shankaracharya has stated that only a few VEdic statements are to be taken as stating real philosophy and the others are 'a-tattvedaka' (not having any philosophic meaning), shrI MadhvAchArya has upheld that all VEdic statements are basically stating the philosophic truth of the supremacy of Vishnu.

BHAGAVADGITA BHASHYA

This is said to be the first work of shrI MadhvAchArya . It is a commentary on the GIIta. He took it to Badari and recited it before the Lord. The benedictory verse 'devam NArAyAnam natvA' ended with the word 'shakitah', meaning that he has written the 'bhashya' according to his ability. But, he and his sishyas who had accompanied him heard a voice from the Lord's vigraha that he should change the word 'shakitah' to 'lesatah' indicating that he had the ability to give more interpretation of the 'GIIta' than what he had written . By this the Lord gave his approval of the Acharya's commentary.

In this Bhashya shrI MadhvAchArya has not commented on each sloka of the GIIta, but has given explanation to about 250 to 300 stanzas, starting with the 11th sloka of chapter 2. His sentences are pregnant with meanings which only masters like Jayatirtha, Vyasaraja, Raghavendraswamy, shrInivasatirtha could explain to ordinary sadhakas.

SRIMADBHAGAVATA TATPARYA NIRNAYA

shrI MadhvAchArya has identified the works that are to be treated as 'Shastras' (Agamas) - the four VEdas, MUlarAmAyaNa, MahAbhArata, PancharAtra; in addition, PurANas and other works which do not contradict basic principles stated in shAstras are also to be taken as 'pramANa'. Of the 'purANas', BhAgavata is considered to be fully authoritative. He has written a commentary on the BhAgavata called 'BhAgavata tatparya nirnaya'. In this work he has explained the meaning of several passages and the implications of several anecdotes. As usual, he has not commented on every single verse, but has chosen only those which have some philosophical import, profusely substantiating them with quotations. The BhAgavata Tatparyanirnaya gives us the right approach with which we should study a 'PurANa' or any other work, viz., we should look for 'ViShNusarvOttamatva' and treat anything opposed to it as false knowledge.

BHAGAVADGITA TATPARYA NIRNAYA

This supplements his gItA-bhAshya. In fact, this work by itself can give us the true import of the gIta. It supplements points given in the bhAshya and also gives some additional ones. The benedictory verse itself contains the main import of the gIta that NArAyaNa whose greatness is intended to be extolled in this work is full of auspicious qualities and does not have even an iota of a flaw. All other principles stated herein are subservient to this knowledge of the supreme Lord.

SRIMAN MAHABHARATA TATPARYA NIRNAYA

This is his biggest work in terms of size. It comprises of thirty two chapters spread over 5200 slokas. It encompasses the two itihAsas - RAmAyaNa and MahAbhArata; in the latter he has parallelly covered the story of shrI Krishna as in the BhAgavata. It is not just a narration of events but gives the correct

interpretation for some baffling actions of the Lord (Rama and Krishna), in cases like 'VALi vadha', 'pUtana vadha' etc.

In the first chapter he has established that NArAyaNa is the supreme Lord of this world, that He is full of auspicious qualities (gunaparipurna), without absolutely no blemish whatsoever (nirdosa). shrI MadhvAchArya has also quoted the BaLittha sUkta and identified the three avataras of VAyu, and given the gradation among other 'dEvatas' and almost all other tenets of the shastras.

SUTRA PRASTHANA

The BrahmasUtras were composed by shrI VEdavyAsa. The BrahmasUtras are a collection of 564 short phrases. These phrases are said to form the basis for interpreting the VEdas. The BrahmasUtras have been grouped into four chapters and each chapter has four sections. The four chapters are:

- Samanvaya adhyAya
- avirodha adhyAya
- sAdhana adhyAya
- phala adhyAya

BRAHMASUTRA BHASHYA

This work of shrI MadhvAchArya gives a detailed interpretation of each 'sUtra' and establishes the main tenets of his philosophy. According to it, the summary of each of the chapters of the BrahmasUtras is as follows:

Samanvaya adhyAya: This chapter explains that shrI NArAyaNa is ParaBrahma, and that all names (including names of other devatas etc.), all words, and even all sounds are primarily His names and so apply to Him primarily, and only secondarily apply to other persons or objects that they seem to indicate. shrI NArAyaNa is the controller of all functions in the universe as stated in 1 above.

Avirodha adhyAya: In this chapter shrI MadhvAchArya has shown that according to the Sutras there is no statement which contradicts the supremacy and the qualities of the Lord defined in the first chapter; and wherever any statement appears to contradict the same, it should be reconciled with this main principle by considering the statements prior to it and those following it (in philosophic parlance these are called upakrama and upasamhara). This chapter also deals with the errors in the interpretations given by others to the BrahmasUtras.

SAdhana adhyAya: The third chapter deals with the fact that the Lord will be pleased with us only by devotion to Him with the knowledge about Him as given in 1 above. shrI MadhvAchArya has defined 'bhakti' as devotion with right knowledge, and complete attachment to Him.

Phala AdhyAya: This chapter gives the result of such 'sadhana', namely freedom from the bondage of this world where we face a lot of misery and, the attainment of 'moksha' or liberation which is said to be a state of eternal bliss. The gradation of souls, commonly known as 'taratamya', is also dealt with here.

ANUBHASHYA

As the name itself indicates, this work is a summary of the BrahmasUtra bhAshya. It is said that shrI achyutapreksha, the Ashramaguru of shrI MadhvAchArya, was reciting the BrahmasUtra bhAshya daily before taking food, but was finding it difficult to do so on dvAdashi (when one has to eat very early in the day). When shrI MadhvAchArya heard about this, he promptly composed this work to help him out. This work follows a simple style and in only about 35 stanzas provides the gist of the brahmasUtra bhAshya.

NYAYA VIVARANA

This work also summarizes the brahmasUtra bhAshya, incorporating the points made out in anUvyAkhyAna. It highlights many of the arguments used in the brahmasUtra bhAshya.

ANUVYAKHYANA

The 'anuvyAkhyAna' was written in response to the request by shrI trivikrama panDitAchArya. It is said that shrI madhvAchArya dictated the four chapters of this work simultaneously to four of his shishyas. This work contains further explanation of the brahmasUtra bhAshya for many 'sUtras'. The implied meanings of several sUtras would have been not clear or obscure, but for this work. While the language of the original brahmasUtra Bhashya is terse, this work follows a simple style. However, in order to fully understand this work, it is necessary to study it along with its commentary by shrI Jayatirtha - 'shrImanNyayasudha'.

shrI madhvAchArya has grouped this work into 4 chapters or adhyAyas as follows:

Samanvayadhyaya: It discusses the first brahma sUtra ('aum athato brahma jignasa aum'), as also the question of why ,when and wherefore the study regarding 'brahma' should be undertaken; it also outlines the fallacy in the approach to the subject by other thinkers earlier to him. Then, the fact that NArAyaNa alone is referred to by the term 'brahma' and that He is represented by the letter 'aum' (incorporating eight syllables), denoting the 'gunaparipurnhen thatva', 'nirdoshatva' and other qualities of 'brahman' has been established. ShrI madhvAchArya has explained further that 'NArAyaNa' can be understood by 'Agamas' alone and not by any logic. However, statements of Rishis and devotees like Dhruva, illustrate the greatness of the Lord.

avirodha adhyaya: In this chapter he deals with all the systems of philosophy that were prevalent at that time and shows that each of them is inconsistent with what is stated in the VEdas, BrahmasUtras, BhagavadgIta, and all authoritative shastras like the BhAgavata. He has also concluded in this chapter that there is hardly any difference between Buddhism and Advaita except in the use of terms.

sadhana adhyaya: In this chapter he has stressed that bhakti combined with jnana and vairAgya is the only path for attaining Moksha or liberation. In fact he has said that one should first practice 'VairAgya' which leads to 'bhakti' which in turn leads to the desire for 'jnana'. Once this happens, jnana and bhakti go hand-in-hand leading us in the path of attaining His grace, which alone can grant us the ultimate goal of reaching His abode.

phala adhyaya: In this chapter the concept of Moksha or liberation is discussed in depth. He starts with how other systems like Jainism, Buddhism undertand Moksha and establishes how this understanding is flawed. He then points out the errors and inconsistencies in the concept of moksha as described in the Ramanuja system. Finally, the concept of Moksha as the one giving the Jiva (a sattvic jiva) his or her intrinsic 'ananda' has been detailed, at the same time giving in detail the 'taratamya' amongst the gods in Moksha ,and as a corollary the 'taratamya' among all jivas is established.

PRAMANALAKSHANA

This is a work of Epistemology. Nature and a number of PramANas are discussed. The shastraic meaning of the word 'PramANA' is a statement which supports or proves a theory proposed to be established. In traditional accounts of systems of Indian thought, it is usual to begin with a statement of the number and nature of Pramanas, ie sources or guarantors of correct knowledge, recognized by a given system.

Following this time-honored practice, shrI MadhvAchArya discusses the number of PramANAs accepted by him, their definitions, modes of functioning and the nature of reality described by them. At the end, it is stated that this work follows Brahmatarka of VEdaVyAsa which is now not in existence. shrI MadhvAchArya considers three Pramanas as fundamental : Pratyaksa (individual experience), Anumana (inference) and Agama (verbal testimony or Scriptures). The vindication of the status of Smrti as a valid experience is one of the distinctive and outstanding contributions of shrI MadhvAchArya to Indian thought.

KATHALAKSHANA

The philosophical debate is called Katha. Certain guidelines and rules have been laid down for philosophical debate in Indian tradition. shrI MadhvAchArya gives these guidelines and rules in this work. He has defined three types of 'katha'. They are 'vAda' (discussion between a teacher and a student),

'jalpa' (discussion between any two persons who have divergent views in the presence of an impartial judge) and 'vittanda' (similar to jalpa but the person involved resorts to talking without pramanas).

KHANDANATRAYA

KhanDanatraya is a collection of three treatises - MAyAvAda KhanDana, UpAdhi KhanDana and Prapanchamithyatvanumana KhanDana, that critically review the Advaita concepts of Mayavada, Upadhi, and Mithyatva.

In MAyAvAda KhanDana, consisting of 20 granthas, he shows that MAyAvAda, the identity of JIva and Brahman, the central thesis of Advaita, is riddled with contradictions and that the concept of Jiva Brahma Aikya is not the purport of the VEdas. Having condemning advaitic concepts, he then does 'svamata sthapanam' (establishing his philosophy) by quoting the last five verses of chapter 15 of the BhagavadGIta which state the 'supremacy of the Lord', and the principle of 'bheda'.

UpAdhi KhanDana is a short metrical work in 20 granthas. In this, he criticizes the concept of "UpAdhi", the pluralising factor, which is a central theme in the Advaita philosophy of shrI Sankara. The Advaitin believes that the world of plurality is the outcome of ignorance (Ajnana) playing upon the One Real. This ignorance is the cause of the bondage and its removal is Liberation. In this work shrI madhvAchArya points out that Ajnana cannot play the role of Upadhi. He refutes this Advaitic theme by examining the nature and role of the concept of UpAdhi.

Prapanchamithyatvanumana KhanDana is a work consisting of 29 lines. It analyses and refutes the well known Advaitic reasoning that the nature of world is illusory.

TATVASAMKHYANA and TATVAVIVEKA

Tatvasamkhyana has 11 granthas. Tatvaviveka has 13 granthas. Tatvasamkhyana and Tatvaviveka together form one unit. In this short work, shrI MadhvAchArya has given a complete description of all entities in the whole universe. Categories of reality are enumerated and are classified into independent (Svatantra) and dependant (Paratantra). This is the highest metaphysical and ontological classification in shrI Madhva's system, hence his system derives its name "dvaita". The Supreme God alone is Svatantra and all other categories are Paratantra. The Svatantra is defined as that which is independent by nature, functioning and the comprehension. The Supreme God alone is independent. All others are entirely dependent on Him.

Tatvaviveka has verses of a larger work of the same name composed by God Himself. Thirteen verses are quoted in this small work in support of Tatvasamkhyana. Therefore, it is not a repetition but an extract of a source work to support Tatvasamkhyana.

The last verse of Tatvasamkhyana enumerates concepts like creation, sustenance, destruction etc, eight states of the world caused by God and glorifies Him by giving His shrIstyadi astakartritva definition. The concluding verse of Tatvaviveka emphatically states that it is the knowledge that the entire world consisting of Chetana and Achetana entirely depends upon God that enables one to attain the Liberation.

TATTVODYOTA

This is one of the major works of shrI MadhvAchArya, both in volume and content. The circumstances leading to the writing of this work are very interesting. After listening to the BrahmasUtra Bhashya, many good thinking persons became shrI MadhvAchArya's pupils and his popularity rose tremendously. Some advaitic scholars could not tolerate. So, one of their leaders challenged the AchArya for a debate. However, when the debate started, this scholar could not start his arguments (poorvapaksha) at all. He sat in the 'sabha' spell bound and mute. Then, shrI MadhvAchArya, started the debate providing both the opening arguments of the opponent (pUrvapaksha) and the replies (siddhAnta) to these arguments. Before the debate could end, the scholar and his group ran away from the scene.

The main theme of this text is to point out the difference between Brahman and the Jivas even in the Liberated State and the fact that both the Jiva and Jagat are completely under the control of the Supreme

God and are regulated by him. This work strikes at the root of all the philosophic thought in 'advaita'. Their logic is that the entire world is an illusion just as one can mistake a shell to be silver. This argument is discussed threadbare and it is proved that this analogy cannot substantiate the claim that the world is 'unreal'. The concept of an 'akhanDa brahma' and his manifestation as this world due to 'avidya' is also shown to be invalid. The 'siddhanta' according to the 'Tattvavada' of shrI MadhvAchArya is placed on a sound footing with "paramata khandana' and 'svamata sthapana' in this work. The logical arguments in this work are highly sophisticated and in order to understand it fully one needs proper instructions from a qualified guru, who is well versed with the commentary of shrI Jayatirtha and the notes of shrI Raghavendra Swamy and others. After pointing out the similarity between Buddhism and Advaita, he then discusses the vEdic hymns that are quoted by advaitins in support of Advaita and shows that these actually contradict Advaita.

VISHNUTATTVA NIRNAYA

Vishnu-Tattva-Nirnaya is the biggest (540 granthas) and the most important amongst all Prakaranas and contains an exhaustive and brilliant refutation of Advaita vaada of Sankara. It is a neatly planned text.

Before establishing the central thesis of his thought that Brahman (NArAyaNa) is the highest subject-matter of the scriptures, shrI MadhvAchArya discusses the place and importance of Shabda among Pramanas and puts up a strong case for the infallibility and Apauruseyatva of the VEdas. He is the only VEdantin (after the mImamsakas) to have given this question serious attention. The VEdas are self-valid and cannot be ascribed to any known author, human or divine. The eternity of the VEdas rests on the eternity of Shabda. It is convincingly shown that no system of philosophy can do without some kind of Apauruseyavakya, for its ultimate validity.

The most important item discussed in ViShNutattvanirnaya is the interpretation of key vEdic passages. This is to show that the entire vEda supports ViShNusarvOttamatva and JivEshvarabhEda but not Jivabrahmaikya. This statement is illustrated by showing the correct reading and interpretation of the passage *Atat tvam asi*.

The central theme of ViShNutattvanirnaya is to proclaim the supremacy of Lord ViShNu. All other issues are subsidiary to this central doctrine. This theme has been emphasised more than once in this work. Several vedic and Itihasa, Purana passages are quoted to drive home this point.

TANTRASARASANGRAHA

This work contains information about several important procedures in the worship of the Lord. This work contains extracts from a larger work existing on the topics dealt with herein.

The important things dealt with in this work include:

1. The procedure for the 'upadesa' and practice of important 'mantras' like 'NArAyaNa AshtAkshara mantra, Krishna shadakshara mantra, VAsudEva dvdashakshara mantra, Shiva shadakshara mantra ' etc.(about 70 mantras are included).
2. Procedure for construction of Temples, sizes of icons of deities, characteristics of temple architecture, size of the 'garbha griha'etc.
3. Procedure for the construction of 'yagna kundas' etc. for purpose of conducting 'yagnas' .
4. While most books on 'tantra' include some discussion of the practice of sorcery etc., shrImadacharya has excluded them from his work, and stressed only on those aspects which please the Lord.

YAMAKABHARATA

This is a work of poetry. In a small work of only 75 to 80 shlokas, shrImadacharya has pleased 'Sattvikas' interested in good poetry full of 'alankaras',at the same time telling the story of shrI Krishna, as in the BhAgavata and his kindness towards the Pandavas (who represent all sattvic souls). It is like a condensed version of the tenth canto of the BhAgavata. One should read through it to enjoy its sweetness.

YATIPRANAVAKALPA

The procedure to be followed by a person taking up 'Sanyasa' is detailed in this work of about 30 shlokas. The 'karmas' to be performed prior to taking 'sanyasa', the 'upadesa' to be given by a senior pontiff, the oath to be taken for protection of 'vaishnava dharma' have clearly been explained for the guidance of those who would be placed as the protectors of the 'VEDic dharma'.

DVADASASTOTRA

'Dvadasastotra' is a set of twelve devotional stotras. One day while performing his morning rituals on the sea shore, he saw a ship that was sinking and saved it. He found shrI krishna vigraha in the gopi chandana lumps which he got from the ship. He composed these 12 stotras at this time. These stotras are a feast to the ears and mind when sung with devotion. The stotras are in praise of the Lord Hari, and His manifestations as the ten avatars. The stotras also incorporate important aspects of shrI MadhvAchArya's philosophy, such as the Lord's powers of creation, and sustenance of the world. The purport of the BhagavadGIta, doing one's duty as service to God without any desire for fruit is stated in the stotra 'kurubhunxva cha karma nijam niyatam..!'

NARASIMHA NAKHA STUTI

When shrI MadhvAchArya saw the Vayu stuti composed by shrI Trivikrama panDitacharya, he said that the work only praised him and Lord Hari. To remedy this, he then wrote the Narasimha Nakha Stuti. This stotra is commonly recited at the beginning and end of a recitation of the 'VAYu stuti'. The stotra is in praise of the 'finger nails' of Lord Narasimha that killed the demon Hiranyakasipu and protected the Devatas (and Prahlada).

KANDUKA STUTI

This is a small and one of the lesser known works of shrI MadhvAchArya. It is said that he composed this stuti during his childhood days, while playing.

TITHI NIRNAYA

This is a very unique work with great mathematical importance. It has twenty eight shlokas and is a very useful work in determining the dates according to the Hindu calendar.

SADACHARASMRUTI

This work of thirty eight shlokas outlines the right procedures to be followed by a good Vaishnava in the course of a day. He should pray to Lord Vishnu as he rises, and at the close of the day, before retiring to bed. In between, he should observe austere practices. Basic procedures such as brushing the teeth, taking a bath etc., have been clearly stated in this work. Other practices like 'sandhyavandana', 'pooja', eating, study, etc., have also been clearly outlined.

KRISHNAMRITAMAHARNAVA

The title literally means "the ocean of nectar called shrI Krishna". When one of his followers asked him for 'upadEsha' (advice), shrI madhvAchArya wrote this work in response, as guidance for him and all other interested devotees. He has selected verses from various authoritative works (MahAbhArata, PurANAs etc.). There are two hundred twenty nine verses in it. The importance of devotion to the Lord is stressed. The superiority of shrI NArAyaNa over other gods is also pronounced. One highlight of this work is the emphasis on EkAdashi Vrata, with about about 70 shlokas (verses) devoted to this topic exclusively. Following this is the efficacy of 'saligrama tirtha', which, the Acharya states, is more gratifying than taking bath in all the sacred rivers. The work is devoted to extolling the greatness of the Lord who incarnated as Krishna, and whose praise is there in every breath Acharya. In this work, he is imploring us to take at least a drop in the ocean of "krishnamrita' by following the path he has shown.

JAYANTI NIRNAYA

This work asserts the procedure to be followed on shrI Krishna Jayanti (a.k.a. KrishnaAshTami, gokulAshTami, janmAshTami). It specifies the rituals to be followed on that day; it also gives information about bathing, puja, fasting, etc.

NYASA PADDATI

This is a small work of twelve shlokas. It is oriented towards sanyAsis and gives information about the daily rituals to be followed by yathis and sanyAsis.

Appendix A: Udupi krishNa temple and the eight maThAs

This appendix describes the krishNa temple in uDupi and the eight maThAs surrounding the temple. This appendix also describes the various pUjAs, practices and customs in the temple and the maThAs. Below is a picture of shrI KRsn.a MaTha.



shrI KRsn.a MaTha

Q1. What are ashTa maThAs?

In the SamskRata language, "Ashta" means eight. These are eight monasteries established by shrI MadhvAchArya in order to perform pooja and carry on the traditional services to Udupi shrI KRsn.a. The pIthAdhipatis are not just ordinary monks but pontiffs of their institutions, each of which, has a set of parishioners who owe traditional allegiance to it. The following are the eight maThAs and their first ascetics:

phaLimAr MaTha	hRSIksha TIrtha
adamAr MaTha	narasimha TIrtha
kRSNApura MaTha	janArdana TIrtha
puttige MaTha	upEndra TIrtha
kANiyUr MaTha	vAmana TIrtha
sode MaTha	ViShNu TIrtha
shIrUr MaTha	rAma TIrtha
pejAvar MaTha	adhOksaja TIrtha

Q2. Where are these ashta maThAs?

These MaThAs are in Udupi, which is in Udupi district of Karnataka. Udupi is about thirty miles north of Mangalore. These MaThAs are in the Ratha Bidi (Car Street) surrounding shrI AnantEshvara and shrI Chandra MouLIshvara Temples.

Initially these MaThAs were known by the name of their first yathis (pIthAdhipatis). For e.g. VishnuTIrtha MaTha, AdhOkshaja MaTha etc. Later, the names of MaThAs were changed to the names of the places where these great yathis stayed for long periods. For example, VAdiraja MaTha is called as Sode MaTha.

Incidentally, before the advent of shrI VadirAja, his maTha was known as KumbhAsi MaTha. Arasappa NAYaka (1555-1598 CE) was a devotee of shrI VADirAja tIrtha. He pleaded with shrI VADirAja tIrtha to settle down in Sode (Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka State) and made a land grant to the pontiff. ShrI VADirAja tIrtha agreed to his request and established the Trivikrama idol that he had brought with him from BadrinAtha at Sode on VaishAkha PUrn.imA day, CitrabhAnu Samvatsara, 1582 CE. Henceforth, his maTha became known as the Sode MaTha.

Q3. How does this arrangement function?

When this arrangement was made by shrI MadhvAchArya, each MaTha used to perform their duties for two months. So, each MaTha used to get its turn after sixteen months. This arrangement operated from 1317-1532 CE.

In 1532 CE, shrI VADirAja TIrtha changed the system so that each paryAya lasted for 2 years instead of 2 months. This means that each MaTha gets its turn once in sixteen years.

But during shrI VADirAja TIrtha's time (Sode MaTha), he arranged for each pIthAdhipatis to perform the service for two years and then hand over it to the next MaTha.

The ParyAyamahotsava takes place four days after the Makara shankrAnti festival of every even year. Each period of two years is called "ParyAya" and the next "ParyAya" starting from January 2000, will be managed by shrI PejAvara MaTha Swamiji (pIthAdhipati).

For each MaTha, shrI MadhvAchArya established the concept of "Dvandva MaTha". "Dvandva" means joint. The eight MaThAs are grouped into four groups and each group has two MaThAs. These are called "Dvandva" MaThAs. In case of an emergency, a MaTha helps its "Dvandva" MaTha. Probably this is the only place where one can find eight yathis doing pooja at one temple by turn without any conflict and has functioned for over seven hundred years.

Q4. When swamiji's are not in their "Paryaya", what do they do?

When they are not in their "ParyAya", these swamiji's have the responsibility to travel around India and spread the teachings of shrI MadhvAchArya. Apart from teaching and spreading shrI Madhva's philosophy, Swamijis have their own educational, charitable, cultural and religious projects. For example shrI PEjawar SwamIji is involved in Akhila BhArata Madhva MahAman.Dala (All India Madhva Association), ShrI PUrn.aprajn~a VidyApItha, and other such organizations. The Pontiff of the Sode MaTha runs an educational organization called "shrI Hayavadana Educational Trust" which manages schools and colleges, KAmadhenu GosamrakSn.a Kendra (a center for protecting non-productive cows). shrI AdmAr SwamIji runs a SamskRata College (PUrNa Prajna College), shrI PUrNa Prajna high school and other educational institutions. These are but a few examples of their projects. They support many students by providing them food and shelter during their school years.

Q5. Why does the shrI Krishna idol in the Udupi temple face West?

There are many stories related to this unusual situation. No one knows for sure, why and how this happened. One story goes like this: kanaka dAsa, a bhakta belonging to a lower caste, was not allowed to enter the temple from the front door. He stood outside the temple and prayed to the Lord. Pleased by his prayer, the Lord turned backward and provided him darshana,. Below is a snap shot of the temple.

Q6. Did shrI MadhvAchArya establish other MaThAs?

shrI Madhva ordained many other ascetics. Towards the tail-end of his life, ShrI madhvAchArya converted two SmArta scholars, ViShNu shAstrI and govinda shAstri. The latter was the Prime Minister of the chAlukya kings of bAdAmI. After conversion, they were ordained as MADhava and AkSobhya tIrthas respectively. The MajjigehaLLi MaTha is descended from MADhava TIrtha and the 3 premier institutions of the deshastha mAdhvas, i.e. the UttarAdi MaTha, the VyAsarAya (dakSiNAdi) maTha and the aryara (PUrvAdi) maTha are descended from akSobhya tIrtha as are also the kUDli and bAlegAru maThAs.

Q7. Where is madhva sarOvara?

Madhva sarOvara is a pond (sarOvara) on the north side of Udupi shrI Krishna temple. This is a holy tIrtha where the swamIjis, their staff and visitors to the temple take bath or sprinkle the holy water on their bodies before entering the temple.



Madhva sarOvara

Q8. What is bhOjana shAla?

BhOjana ShAla (dining hall) is a facility for serving visitors with prasada (food offered to shrI Krishna). Bhोजना ShAla is a part of Udupi shrI Krishna Temple. The paryAya swamIji, his entourage, visitors and others are served with the prasAda after the pUja in the afternoon and night. The prasAda is very famous for Udupi cooks' culinary skills.

Q9 What is gOshAla?

gOshala (cow shed) is a facility for cows, which belong to the Udupi shrI Krishna Temple. After visitors have finished eating in the Bhोजना Shala, these cows are let into the Bhोजना ShAla to eat the left over prasAda and the banana leaves. Then the Bhोजना Shala floor is cleaned with cow dung, which is considered as "pavitra (purifier)"

Q10. What is vasanta mantapa?

Vasanta Mantapa is an auditorium attached to shrI Krishna Temple. This facility is used for cultural events (music, dance, upanyasa (speech), discussion etc., by swamIjis, artists, and other visitors and dignitaries visiting the Temple.

Q11. What is kattige ratha?

“kattige” means wood and “ratha” means chariot. This is a chariot-like structure built with fire wood. It is located near the “bhOjana shAla” by the Matha which would take charge of the next paryAya. This fire wood is used to prepare the prasAda during the paryAya. Typically this is done about a year before the paryAya.

Q12. What is gIta bhavana?

gIta bhavana was established by shrI SuguNEndra tIrtha SwAmiji of Putthige Mutt during his paryAya in 1994. This is near Madhva sarOvara and is used for the study of the Bhagavad gIta.



Sri Vedavyasa Teaching Sri Madhva

For Information Contact:
Vishwa Madhva Sangha
www.vishwamadhvasangha.org
mAdhva@bigfoot.com