PART III

OBSERVATIONS

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

(A) GENERAL

The topics dealt with in Vedāntakalpalatikā were closely examined and systematically arranged in the second part of the present thesis. Now it is proper to make observations evolved out of a critical analysis of the textual material. The conclusions arrived at during the course of the study also have to be enumerated. No doubt, Vedāntakalpalatikā is one of the first original works of
Madhusūdana Sarasvati. Vedāntakalpalatikā and Siddhāntabindu constitute the strong basis for Advaitasiddhi, the Magnum opus of the author. The fundamental tenets of Advaita Vedānta find a faithful exposition in Vedāntakalpalatikā. The work is particularly significant since it gives an original interpretation of the concept of mokṣa, postulated in the Advaita-Vedānta system of philosophy. The method followed in the treatment of the subject appears to be realistic. The book inspires the interested students of philosophy to go into the details of Indian philosophic wisdom.

The position of Vedāntakalpalatikā among the works of Madhusūdana

Vedāntakalpalatikā embraces all important topics relating to Vedānta philosophy.1 Siddhāntabindu

a remarkable commentary on Daśaśloki of Śaṅkara also describes the basic standpoints of Advaita Vedānta. What makes Vedāntakalpalatikā distinct from Siddhāntabindu is its independent position.

Subtle arguments are put forward in Vedāntakalpalatikā by Madhusūdana to refute rival theories. He concentrates not only on the refutation of the opponents' views but also in the establishment of his own standpoints.

Though Vedāntakalpalatikā is his earliest work, all the essentials of Madhusūdana's philosophy are effectively presented in it. Advaitasiddhī, his master-piece, stands as an elevated landmark in the field of Advaita Vedānta. In it he has successfully defended the doctrine of Advaita from the merciless attack initiated by the dvaitins, represented by Vyāsa-tīrtha, the author of Nyāyāmṛta. Vedantakalpalatikā
is referred to in Advaitasiddhi. References of Vedantakalpalatika are also found in Advaitaratnaraksana, another important work of the author. Besides, Vedantakalpalatika is mentioned in Bhaktirasayana, his treatise on bhakti. At the same time, Siddhanta-bindu is referred to in Vedantakalpalatika. Positively the first original work of Madhusudana is Vedantakalpalatika. But some scholars consider Samksepa-
SarIrakasasaramgraha as the maiden work of the author. The nature and style of the composition of Samksepa-
SarIrakasasaramgraha have given rise to such an opinion.

Vedantakalpalatika and Siddhantabindu are considered

2. AS, Nirnayasagar Edn., p.678.
5. VKL, (Poona, ed.), p.87.
Advaitasiddhi is definitely his later work. Both Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa and Guḍhārthadīpīka mention it. Even if these views are accepted, it can be concluded for certain that the first original work of Madhusūdana is Vedāntakalpalatikā.

Propriety of the title Vedāntakalpalatikā

The term Vedānta in Vedāntakalpalatikā is used in the sense of the system of Vedānta. It goes without saying that what is intended by the term Vedānta is the Advaita school of Vedānta. In the titles of works like Vedāntasāra of Sadananda, Vedāntaparibhāṣā of Venkaṭadhvarin, the word Vedānta is used in the sense of Advaita Vedānta.

The term Vedānta is derived from the root vid-to know. Veda means knowledge or information that

7. Ibid.
helps man win the support of Gods. It also means a book of knowledge or any one of the four Vedas, the first literary record of mankind. Veda is considered as a common reservoir of Indian thought. Besides Vedas are the outpourings of the Aryans as they streamed into the rich land of India.

The term anta denotes the concluding portion. The literal meaning of the term Vedānta shows that it is the concluding portion appended to the Vedas i.e., the Upanisads. Each Veda has four parts - the Samhītā, Brahmāṇa, Ārānyaka and Upanisad. Since the Upanisads form the last part, they are denoted by the term Vedānta. Advaita Vedāntic thought itself is based on the Upanisads and Brahmasūtras. The term anta also denotes nīrnaya or determination. So Vedānta

means the determination of the correct knowledge leading to salvation. Nevertheless the term Vedanta applies only to the Uttaramimamsa and the various schools it comprises. There are solid reasons for the restricted application of the term. No other school makes as much use of the Upanisads as does Uttaramimamsa. Every small item of its doctrine must be based upon and fully illustrated by the passages from the Upanisads. The most important reason is that Sruti or revelation is regarded as the highest authority, the only means of arriving at right knowledge. It is in Vedanta human speculation reached its acme of perfection.

The term Vedanta meaning Upanisadic teachings occurs in the Upanisads themselves. But while it means only the final portion of the Vedas, it has come to

12. Vedasya jñanasya antah nirnayaḥ vedāntah
signify the settled conclusions of the Vedas taken as a whole. Accordingly, Vedanta, in its later forms, stands for the teachings not only of the Upaniṣads together with the earlier portion of the Veda, but also of the other parts of the sacred literature such as Bhagavadgītā, which is regarded as reiterating and amplifying the Upaniṣadic doctrine. Thus it combines in one harmonious whole the results attained by all previous orthodox thinkers and is, therefore, looked upon as the most perfect expression of Indian thought. Even then, the Vedanta philosophy is mainly based on the Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā. But it is more indebted to the Upaniṣads than the other two. The Upaniṣads are occupied with the question of ultimate goal and destiny of man's life. They are instinct with a spirit of enquiry of mental adventure and of a passion for finding out the truth.

about things. The search for this truth is, of course, not by objective methods of modern science; yet there is an element of scientific method in their approach. Certainly the time-tested wisdom of Vedānta requires a scientific approach, particularly of Psychology to have insights in the modern context.

The word Kalpalatikā or Kalpalatā is to be understood on a par with Kalpavrksa or a wish-yeilding tree. Kalpavrksa is a mythological tree believed to exist in the heaven. It was obtained while churning the milky ocean. The term amṛtalatā which is a common medicinal plant is also used in the same sense. Its botanical name is Tinospara Cordifolia. This medicinal creeper is capable of curing several diseases. Mythology says that these creepers were sprouted on earth out of the drops of nectar fallen on earth accidently while

churning the milky ocean. It is also believed that the eternal youthfulness can be obtained by drinking amṛta. No death awaits a man who has tasted it. The word Kalpalata is related to Amṛta which is yearned for by all.

Historically speaking it was not correct even at the time of Madhusudana Sarasvati to use the term Vedānta in the limited sense of Advaita Vedānta. If it were at the time of Gaudapada or even Śaṅkara it would have been proper to use the term Vedānta in the sense of Advaita Vedānta, because then there was only one school namely Advaita Vedānta. But after the origin of Viśiṣṭadvaita and Dvaita as two other principal schools of Vedāntic thought, Vedānta could mean any one or all of the three. However, Advaitins continued to use the term Vedānta in the place of Advaita Vedānta as if they were having some special

right to do so. This might have been one of the reasons for igniting fury among the rival schools of Vedānta especially Dvaita towards Advaita. Following Sadananda and Dharmarajādhvarindra, Madhusudana also used the term Vedānta to denote Advaita Vedānta. Sadananda's Vedāntasāra is actually Advaitavedāntasāra and Dharmarajādhvarindra's Vedāntaparibhāṣā is Advaitavedāntaparibhāṣā. Similarly Madhusudana's Vedāntakalpalatikā is really, Advaitavedāntakalpalatikā.

The compound Vedāntakalpalatikā means a wish-yielding tree of Vedānta. As far as those who want to know the principal tenets of Advaita Vedānta, Madhusudana's Vedāntakalpalatikā is a wish-yielding tree in the literal sense of the term. Thus the title Vedāntakalpalatikā is quite apt and befitting to the work. It deals with all cardinal doctrines of Advaita Vedānta propounded by Gauḍapāda through his Karikas on Māṇḍukyopanisad, and later logically established by Śaṅkara,
through his monumental commentaries on the triple
texts; the Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā
Vedāntakalpalatikā provides a concise and easily under-
standable account of the principles of Advaita -
Vedānta. It sums up all important topics, particu-
larly the concept of liberation relating to Advaita
Vedānta philosophy.21 Kalpalatā cures several physi-
cal diseases of man. Vedānta itself is a Kalpalatā
which relieves mankind from all sorrows, and sufferings
of the empirical world. So the title Vedāntakalpa-
latikā is quite suitable to the work in all respects.

The work aims to show how the non-advaitic
doctrines fail to give a true evaluation of the Ultimate
Reality which must be admitted to be nirvīseṣa and nirdh-
armaka if one is to do proper justice to both Śruti
and Tarka.

Though the major doctrines of Advaita Vedānta find fine exposition in Vedāntakalpalatikā, the concept of liberation is given prime importance in it. The philosophy of liberation, and the means to attain it are effectively presented here. The final goal of human life according to Advaita-Vedānta should be to know and realise the truth about oneself. Since the various accompaniments of the Self are all false, and the identification of the Self with them is erroneous, the means of getting rid of them is right knowledge. Mokṣa is the attainment of Brahmanhood which is defined as sat, cit and ānanda. This eternal bliss relieves humanity from all sorts of miseries. This ānanda will never be lost. Ultimate peace could be attained by becoming an integral part of Brahman. The net result of consuming Vedāntakalpalatikā is the attainment of supreme bliss. In this respect too the title Vedāntakalpalatikā is fully justified.

In the 16th century, Bengal witnessed the dawn of renaissance in India. Born and bred in Bengal, Madhusudana appears as a true representative of this epoch. He freely drew upon the rich heritage of the past as he imbibed the treasure of the period, including the new devotionalism initiated by Caitanya. Madhusudana states in Vedāntakalpalatikā that liberation can be achieved through the grace of the Lord of the Nila mountain.

Madhusudana started his career as a logician. He was a master of the Nyāyadarsāna and later changed himself as a strong stalwart of Advaita Vedānta. He belonged to the Naradvīpa school of Navya-Nyāya. His deep knowledge in the Nyāyadarsāna helped him a lot in his polemical writings. The genuine touch of a

24. Sanjukta Gupta, Dr., SPMS, (Calcutta, 1966), forward
25. VKL, p. 123
naiyayika is to be seen at times in Vedantakalpalatika also.

In refuting the rival theories and establishing the monistic thinking, Madhusūdana has faithfully followed the views of Śaṅkara and his followers such as Maṇḍanamīśra, Suresvara Prakāṣātmayatti, Vacaspatimiśra, Śarvajñātmamuni, Śrīharṣa and others. His leniency towards vartikas of Suresvara is evident in Vedantakalpalatika.²⁶ He quotes vartikas profusely in support of his views. Vivaraṇa is also utilised then and there to shatter the views of his opponents. He borrows several ideas of Vivaraṇa such as Bimbapratibimbavāda etc. Samkṣepaśārīraka of Sarvajanaṁatmaṁuni is also often quoted in his works.²⁷ He adopts many theories propounded by Sarvajanaṁta. The idea that Brahman is both the āśraya and viṣaya of avidyā is borrowed from Sarvajanaṁta.²⁸ Madhusūdana’s Ekajīva vāda is also greatly influenced by him.

²⁶ VKL, p. 52, 54 etc.
²⁷ VKL, p. 186
²⁸ Āśrayatva viṣayatva bhāginī Nirvibhāga-citireva Kevalā.
Though a great logician and an advaitin, Madhusūdana, under the influence of the theistic sentiments of the epoch, stood for the combination of absolute monism and devotionalism. However, he did not deviate from the main-stream of Advaita Vedānta. And for the same reason it can be said that Madhusūdana Sarasvati's tradition is none other than that of the great Vedāntins. However, Madhusūdana blazed a trail by inviting a new path in Vedānta which can be named as jñāna-bhakti samuccaya. This aspect will be dealt with in detail in this chapter later. In one sense, the old and the new combined in Madhusūdana, even though Vedāntakalpalatikā has only implicit evidences for the same.

Antagonists of Madhusūdana

As a learned scholar in the Nyāyadarsana, Madhusūdana had mastered all the classics of the great
naiyāyikas beginning from Udayana and reaching to Gangesa. It is said:

Navadvipam samāyate Madhusūdana vākpaṭau
cakampe tarkavagīsāḥ kātaro abhūt gadādharaḥ.

When Madhusūdana entered into the Navadvīpa school of Nyāya, Gadādhara and other pundits in the Nyāya-darsana were very much frightened. This couplet fully reveals his authority in the Nyayādarsana.

Later, Madhusūdana became a great champion of Advaita Vedānta. He lived in a period when Vyāsatīrtha, the author of Nyāyamrta had almost shattered the basic propositions of Advaita into pieces. Madhusūdana took up the call of the epoch to resist the onslaught raised by Vyāsatīrtha. Before refuting the arguments of the opponents, Madhusūdana first of all, brings to light his own stand-points on Advaita. Vedāntakalpatālatikā and Siddhāntabindu are written to present the

29. Maheswaran Nair, K., ASCS (Delhi, 1990), p.198.
30. AS, p.11.
basic tenets of Advaita, so as to prepare the ground for the theoretical warfare. In Advaitasiddhi, he directs his attack mainly towards the Dvaitins.

Madhusūdana, as a born genius had deep knowledge in all darṣanas, both āstika and nāstika. His penetrating insight into the different systems of philosophy makes him a reliable authority in matters of philosophical disputation. That is why Emperor Akbar and the pundits of his Court praised him for his scholarship thus: Madhusūdana Sarasvati knows the bonds of knowledge, the Goddess of learning alone knows the bonds of Madhusūdana. Since every minute detail of all the sāstras is at his tongue he is at home to interpret them in the correct perspective.

In order to establish the advaitic standpoints, Madhusudana first of all tries to disprove the arguments of the opponents. Since Vedāntakalpalatikā is written centering round the concept of liberation, he introduces

31. Vettiparam Sarasvatyāḥ Madhusūdana Sarasvati
Madhusūdana Sarasvatyāḥ pāram vetti Sarasvati.
the different views of his rivals on mokṣa and refutes them logically and convincingly.

The views on mokṣa upheld by Jaimini, Patanjali, Gautama, Kanāda, Kapila, Śiva, Prabhākara, Kumarilabhaṭṭa, Paśupati and Sankara are presented in the beginning of Vedāntakalpalatika.32 Madhusūdana fervently salutes Sāṅkara who, in his opinion, has correctly interpreted the Upaniṣads. Next he shows how the views of Miṃśadārśana are unfounded. Vyāsa-tīrtha, the great champion of Dvaita-Vedānta of his time, is subjected to severe criticism. With a keen sense of reasoning, Madhusūdana has successfully resisted the attack of Dvaitins on Advaita. His Advaitasiddhi is fully devoted to establish the doctrine of Advaita after having resisted the attack of the Dvaita school. Advaitasiddhi is a verbatim reply to Nyāyamṛtam of Vyāsa-tīrtha.

32. Supre, Chap.III.
Protoganists of Madhusūdana

After becoming an advaitin, Madhusūdana followed the ideals and philosophic principles of Śaṅkara. He pays rich tribute to the wonderful Śaṅkara in the benedictory verse. According to Madhusūdana, Śaṅkara is really a saviour of the Upaniṣads which were in danger by the attack of the opponents. Śaṅkara has protected the Upaniṣads with his marvellous commentary on the Prasthānatraya. His interpretations are as life-saving as nectar. Though Upaniṣads were commented upon by several scholars, the most faithful and learned commentary is the one offered by Śaṅkara. A large number of illustrious writers followed the path of Śaṅkara. The greatest merit of Śaṅkara's system is his most successful attempt to reconcile the mutually contradictory texts of the Upaniṣads. In otherwords, he has reconciled bold idealism

33. VKL, p.1.
33a. Supra. Chap.III.
which is the result of introspection with realism, which ruthlessly insists on forcing itself upon us from outside.\textsuperscript{34}

Madhusudana has profound respect towards Vyāsa who is also called Bādarāyaṇa. It is Bādarāyaṇa who had first made a successful attempt to systematise the various teachings of the Upaniṣads into a harmonious whole. Brahmasūtras of Bādarāyaṇa form the second great authority of the Vedāntic schools of thought. Saṅkara also utilised the Brahmasūtras to establish Advaita Vedānta. Madhusūdana sometimes quotes Brahmasūtras as authority to prove his propositions.\textsuperscript{35}

Sureśvara, the author of Naिषkarmyasiddhi had done a lot to reaffirm the advaitic doctrines propounded by Vyāsa and others. Madhusūdana sometimes seeks the help of Naिषkarmyasiddhi for establishing

\textsuperscript{35} VKL, p.12; p.152; p.160.
his views. Though he has mentioned Vyāsa, Śaṅkara and Suresvara as his predecessors in the introductory verses, he follows almost all the renowned writers on Advaita upto his time. He utilises the philo-

philosophic ideas of Brahmasiddhi of Maṇdanamiśra, Bhāmati of Vācaspatimiśra, Saṁksepaśārīraka of Sarvijñātman, Khandanakhaṇḍakhādyā of Sriharsa, Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda, Pañcapādikā vivarāṇa of Prakāśatman and Istaśiddhi of Vimuktātman. In the delineation of monism Madhusūdana has most faithfully followed the views of his predecessors.

Madhusūdana quotes the vartikas of Suresvara profusely in Vedāntakalpalatikā in support of his views. In his other works also the vārtikas of Suresvara are oft quoted.

Though Madhusūdana follows Śaṅkara in principle, he does not give up his identity as an

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36. VKL, p.24
37. Ibid., p.23,48,158.
original thinker. He gives his own interpretations to certain Upaniṣadic passages and Brahmāsūtras differing from Śaṅkara. Keeping always his indebtedness to Śaṅkara, he sometimes interprets Gītā in a new light. This does not mean that Madhusudana has drifted away from the main-stream of the Advaita school. However, his favourite authors are Sureśvara, Prakaśātma and Sarvajñātma muni.

Vivarāṇa is also frequently quoted by Madhusūdana and he borrows several ideas from it. Bimba-pratibimbavādā, the view that ajñāna is one etc. are a few borrowed from Vivaraṇa. Madhusūdana also believes that though ajñāna is one there are yet many avasthājñānās coming out of that premordial ajñāna.

Madhusūdana's another esteemed philosopher is Sarvanjñātma muni. He not only commented upon Saṅk-sepaśārīraka of Sarvanjñātma, but also has adopted many

39. Br.Su.,II.2-28,29
40. AS, p.846
41. Supra,Chap.VI.
42. AS, pp.486-87
theories propounded by him. He quotes Saṅkṣepa-sārīrakā in Vedāntakalpalatikā in support of his views. The view that Brahman is both the āśraya and visaya of avidyā is established by Madhusūdana exactly in the words of Sarvanjatma. He follows the style of Sarvanjatman in his exposition on the construction of Mahāvākyas, depicting the akhandārtha. Even Madhusūdana’s Ekājīvavāda is greatly influenced by him.

Srihārśa, Ānandabodha and Citsukha also exerted great influence on Madhusūdana. In his Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa he has virtually adopted the very method of argument followed by Srihārśa. Though Madhusūdana did not quote any stanza from Srihārśa in Vedāntakalpalatikā, he carried on the Advaita Vedānta dialectics

43. VKL, p.94.
44. Āśrayatva visayatva bhāginī Nirvibhāga citireva Kevalā
45. SB, pp.9-14.
to the Zenith of its glory. Sriharsa in his Khandanakhandakhādyā has successfully resisted the attacks made by the Dvaitins on Advaita.

Anandabodha and Citsukha are also highly respected by Madhusūdana. He mainly follows Nyāya-dīpāvalī of Anandabodha in the formulation of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Citsukha is also oft quoted.

In fact, the tradition of Sriharsa, Anandabodha and Citsukha finds its culmination in Madhusūdana. These three authors made a group by themselves by disarming the aggressive dualists with dialectical works. Thus Madhusūdana, the worthy successor of the glorious heritage of the past, has successfully carried out the mission of reaffirming the Advaita Vedānta school of thought.

Pancapādika of Padmapāda, Sāmkhyakārika of Īsvarakṛṣṇa, are also held in high esteem by

47. Pañcapādikā is quoted in VKL, p.
48. Samkhyakarika is quoted in VKL, p.144,155,156
Madhusūdana. Relevant portions from these works are adopted and incorporated in Vedāntakalpalatikā in support of his views.

Madhusūdana's attitude towards nāstikas

**Dārśana** is a term used to denote a system of Indian philosophy. Traditionally dārśanas are classified under two heads - āstika (orthodox) and nāstika (heterodox) systems. The āstika or nāstika character of a system does not depend upon its positive or negative conclusions regarding the nature of the Supreme Spirit, but on the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas. According to Manu, a nāstika is one who despises the Veda. While the āstika dārśanas consider the Vedas as impersonal eternal and infallible, the nāstika dārśanas logically refute the infallibility of them. A sense of materialism pervades

49. nāstiko vedanindakah (Manu, II-ii)
in the nastika daršanas such as Čārvāka, Jaina and Baudhā systems. A proper analysis will show that the traditional classification of the daršanas into orthodox and heterodox is not fully convincing. Therefore, a classification of daršanas into spiritual and material may be wise, delinking vedic authority.

Fully equipped with logical reasoning Madhusūdana succeeds, to a great extent, in disarming his opponents in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Even though he refutes Naiyāyikas and other āstika daršanas, he has a soft heart towards them. But he has less regard towards the heterodox systems. Without any sense of mercy he tries to shatter into pieces the well-built theories of the nastika daršanas. He calls the nastikas as Vañcakas. In another context he addresses them as asuddhabuddhayah. His contempt for them is fully

50. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Indian Philosophy (Trivandrum, 1968), pp.62-64.
51. VKL, p.3.
51(a). Supra. Chap. III.
exposed in the above expressions. As an idealist, it is proper on his part to refute the materialistic systems. But as a born genius he should have examined those darsanas and arrived at his own conclusions. Instead, he considers the views of his predecessors taken for granted.

In Vedāntakalpalatikā Madhusūdana refutes all darsanas excepting Advaita Vedānta. Among them he gives top priority to the Carvāka darsana or Lokāyata darsana. Having refuted their theories, he addresses them as those following the views of the men in the street. From the very internal evidences it is clear that the Carvāka darsana was one of the most popular and renowned systems of philosophy even during his time. The Carvāka system enjoyed great popularity among great scholars and ordinary people alike as revealed from the very name; Lokāyata

52. Prākritalokānusārināh, p.3.
meaning widely spread among the ordinary people.

The orthodox Brahmanism could not tolerate Lokāyata. Its attempts to root out the materialistic system have resulted in endless conflicts between both sects. Thus Indian Philosophy has developed through a series of conflicts between materialism and spirituality.\(^5\) But later on, the orthodox Brahmanism with the help of the intellectual supremacy and political power, has prevented further development of materialism. Probably much of the literature of the Carvākas has been deliberately destroyed by the priests and other believers of Hinduism.\(^5\) The popularity of Lokāyata darśana is further attested by Sarvadarsanasamgraha, wherein Madhavācārya describes Carvāka darśana as the first among the sixteen schools of thought. In short, there can be no doubt, however, that the materialistic philosophy was prevalent in

India for several centuries. In the famous Arthashastraṣāstras of Kaṭalya (4th century B.C.) it is mentioned as one of the major philosophies of India.

Though Madhusūdana has little regard for Cārvāka darśana, he cannot ignore it. He expresses his hatred by calling them Vancakas, asuddhabuddhayāḥ and Prāktalokānusārinah. Though he refutes other systems, he never addresses them with such harsh terms.

Method of presentation

Madhusūdana, an effective defender of the monistic thinking initiated by Śaṅkara, has systematically presented his views on mokṣa in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Sometimes very subtle arguments are introduced by him to refute those of his opponents. He has adopted the dialectical method in the composition of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Besides he has exploited all the possibilities of the Navya-Nyāya methodology in

55. VKL, p.55.
the delineation of the subject. Trained as a logician Madhusūdana is at home to utilise the neo-logic dialectical method. It is wisely said: 'The system expounded by Kanāda and the system of grammar introduced by Pāṇini are helpful for the proper understanding of all śāstras. The dialectical method enables him to go deep into the subject and to refute the opponents' views at the very root itself.

The dialectical method was used at large in theoretical debates in olden days. Almost all philosophers got benefited by this method. Thus the employment of the Navya-Nyāya dialectical method has contributed much to the theoretical perfection of all schools of thought. The whole text of Vedāntakalpatr̥ti is an illustration of the effective use of dialectical method.

Navya-Nyāya reaches its culmination in the

56. Kānādam Pāṇiniyam ca Sarvaśastropakarakam

57. Maheswaran Nair, K., ASCS, (Delhi, 1990), p.177.
works of Gangesopādhyāya. His famous work Tattva-cintāmony concentrates mainly on the Navya-Nyāya logic and epistemology. Navya-Nyāya schools of Mithila and Navadvīpa are famous for their methodological perfection. Madhusudana belonged to the Navadvīpa school.

Vedāntakalpalatikā bears marks of the skillful employment of the above method. Navya-Nyāya terminology such as avacchedakata, Pratiyogita, Viṣayatva, Viṣayitva, Prakaratva etc. are met with in plenty in Vedāntakalpalatikā.

It was Sriharsa who first introduced the Neo-dialectics into Vedānta for the refutation of Dvaita metaphysics. Later, Citsukha went ahead in this line through his Tattvapradīpikā.
Vedāntakalpalatikā is not divided into chapters or Paricchedas. The whole matter is put in one stabaka. The work concludes with a statement: "Here ends the bunch named 'Scrutiny of mokṣa along with the means thereof'. 58 Such an arrangement is suitable to the present work since the major topic of discussion is one and the same throughout. Some manuscripts describe Vedāntakalpalatikā as a stabaka of the Kalpalatā, a grand scheme in Advaita to be composed later; but the work is obviously complete in itself, and no manuscript describes any of his other works as a stabaka. However, the method of presentation employed in Vedāntakalpalatikā suits the topic of discussion very well.

The Concept of bhakti in Madhusūdana

The influence of the concept of bhakti is so deep-rooted in all realms that an advaitin like

58. VKL, p.176.
Madhusūdana also assumed bhakti as a means to liberation. He tried to forge a reconciliation between the views of jñāna and bhakti.

Śāndilya Bhaktisūtras define bhakti as Paramurakti or divine love for Iśvara. But Nārada Bhaktisūtras define bhakti as Paramapremam. Both the definitions are more or less the same. Bhāgavata defines bhakti as a flow of the mind or Manogati towards Almighty or Purushottama. Just as water of the Ganges flows uninterruptedly and invariably towards the ocean so the mind flows towards the Almighty. Madhusūdana follows the definition given to bhakti by Bhāgavata. He considers that monistic metaphysics and devotionalism can go hand-in-hand in search of perfection and the achievement of unlimited bliss.

In Vedāntakalpalatikā he states that avidyā

59. Śāndilya Sūtras, 1-1-2.
60. Nārada Sūtras, 276.
61. Bhāgavata, 3-29.11.
can be removed by the grace of the Lord of the Nila mountain. It is a clear indication of Madhusūdana's inclination towards the bhakti movement.

Advaita-Vedānta upholds the path of knowledge as the means to attain salvation. Ultimate peace or mokṣa can be obtained by becoming an integral part of Brahman through knowledge. Śaṅkara vehemently discards not only the Karmamarga but also the synthesis of knowledge and karma or jñānakarmasamuccayā.

But Ramanuja (12th C.) and Madhva (13th C) propagated the path of devotion as the means to attain salvation with great vigour. The bhaktimārga became very popular among the masses. So, in order to keep up the theory of Śaṅkara intact, Madhusūdana (16th C.) was forced to incorporate devotionalism within Advaita-Vedānta. Thus

64. Bhagavadgītā bhāṣya, Chap.II.
Madhusudana had saved Absolute monism from a grave philosophical crisis. Monism and devotionalism are not contradictory but complementary to each other in Madhusudana. Madhusudana's unique contribution to Indian Philosophy is the attempt of visualising a unity between absolute monism and devotionalism. In fact, Madhusudana could strengthen the position of Advaita theoretically and practically a lot by adopting the cult of devotion within the framework of Advaita. Modern Indian philosophers such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Narayanaguru, Balagangadara Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and others have attested the jnana bhakti synthesis.

Madhusudana was so honest that he did not introduce the element of bhakti in his works dealing with the theoretical aspect of Advaita, like Vedanta-kalpalatika, Siddhantabindu and Advaitasiddhi. He

65. Sanjuktagupta, (Dr.), SPMS, (Calcutta, 1966), Intro.
had composed separate books such as Bhaktirasayana to highlight the jñāna-bhakti synthesis. Vedānta-kalpalatikā, his initial work, was written when he was an ardent follower of Śaṅkara. The change in his outlook took place only very late.

However, it is not proper to proceed without making any reference about the change in Madhusūdana's outlook in philosophy in a study of one of his works.

Style in general

The style adopted in the composition of Vedāntakalpalatikā, is quite suitable to the content and its presentation. Usually the style employed in philosophic works differs to a great extent from the one followed in literary works. The style or Riti used in literary works such as Vaidarbhi etc. cannot be resorted to in philosophical works. Bānabhaṭṭa's
style used in Kadambari and Harṣacarita cannot be applied in polemical works like Vedāntakalpalatikā of a high standard.

In polemical literature linguistic precision of a high order is inevitable for the successful presentation of the facts. Madhusūdana has maintained throughout Vedāntakalpalatikā a style which is a matter of fact. He has tried to express what is intended with minimum number of words.\(^{66}\) Aphoristic style in the name of brevity is also deliberately avoided. In this matter Madhusūdana has expressed exemplary skill. Highly scholastic style is also resorted to wherever necessary.\(^{67}\) A general reader may, at first, find it difficult to understand his writings. But once caught, a reader will be at home to proceed without much difficulty. In theoretical debates, particularly

\(^{66}\) VKL, p.79.
\(^{67}\) VKL, p.147.
dealing with philosophical matters, such a grand style alone can be used. But care has been taken to avoid ambiguity as far as possible. The employment of the Navya-Nyāya terminology helps him a lot in the elucidation of the philosophical problems. His deep knowledge and logical approach make the subject of discussion crystal clear. His great command over words turns his style into nalikerapaka.68

Madhusūdana is not a rough and dry philosopher. Even while dealing with philosophic matters, he does not give up the sense of humour. He refutes the opponents views logically. Sometimes concludes his series of arguments with sarcastic comments such as the capital itself is defrauded of one who was hankering after the interest.69 Sometimes he makes use of popular maxims to establish his theories. In order to refute an argument that sabda produces indirect knowledge first,

68. Supra.Ch.VI.
and only then produces direct knowledge through the help of particular associates - Madhusūdana utilises the maxim of the half old woman.\(^{70}\)

**Vedāntakalpalatikā and Siddhāntabindu**

Vedāntakalpalatikā and Siddhāntabindu are the two early works of Madhusūdana. While the former is an independent work conveying Vedāntic views on mokṣa, the latter is an elaborate commentary on the ten stanzas called Dāsaslokī composed by Śaṅkara. In the course of his commentary he refutes the opponents' views logically and establishes those of Advaita-Vedānta. He offers new interpretations to the Upaniṣadic passages also. Thus he appears not only as a commentator but also as an original writer.

It was the practice prevailed in India that new ideas forming a particular school of thought on a system of philosophy are introduced not through new

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\(^{70}\) Arthajaratī Nyāyapātāt, VKL, p.141.
original works but by attaching new commentaries on the basic texts of that discipline. Sometimes certain commentators express more originality than the original writer. Examples are many in this regard not only in the field of philosophy but also in the realm of poetics. Ānandavardhana had written a classical work on poetics called Dhvanyākoka. His commentator Abhinavagupta showed more originality in his commentary called 'Locana' attached to Dhvanyāloka. It is not out of place to regard Abhinavagupta more authoritative than Anandavardhana in the field of Dhvani.

Following the general tradition Madhusūdana also wrote commentaries on Daśaślokī, Bhagavadgītā, etc. But he is not satisfied with the composition of commentaries only. He finds that original treatises are more helpful to introduce his own thinking and to refute rival theories. Vedāntakalpalatikā is written
to establish his ideas on moksa, disproving the divergent views held by other systems of philosophy. It is probable that both the works might have been written at one and the same period. Siddhāntabindu refers Vedāntakalpalatikā twice and Vedāntakalpalatikā also makes mention of Siddhāntabindu. 71

Madhusūdana thinks highly of Vedāntakalpalatikā as it is clear from the ambitions title bestowed upon it. Its aim is to show how the non-advaitic doctrines fail to give a true evaluation of the Ultimate Reality which must be admitted to be nirviṣeṣā and nirdharmaka, according to both Śruti and Tarka.

Madhusūdana probably must have a grand scheme to compose a series of classical works highlighting Vedāntic ideals. That is why he calls his initial work as a stabaka of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Actually all

71. VKL, p.
works of Madhusūdana can be jointly considered as Vedāntakalpalatikā with many stabakas. So Vedāntakalpalatikā for the present work is really a misnomer. Both Vedāntakalpalatikā and Siddhāntabindu are intended to give the reader Madhusūdana’s ideas about AdvaitaVedānta in a nutshell. His other works such as Advaitasiddhi etc. are just expositions of those in greater detail. These two works taken together are complementary to each other.

Advaitasiddhi, the most matured work of Madhusūdana also makes references of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa, and Bhaktirasāyana bear references of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Thus Vedāntakalpalatikā and Siddhāntabindu are the two earlier works expounding the basic standpoints of Advaita Vedānta.

72. VKL, p.XIV.
73. AS, p.678, Nirnayasagar edn.
74. Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa, p.44.
75. Bhaktirasāyana, p.48.
Standard of Polemics in Vedāntakalpalatikā

Vedāntakalpalatikā is written in the polemical style in its strict sense. In it he does not introduce any new principle in Advaita but reaffirms its major tenets having logically rooted out the various arguments levelled against it. He pursues the method of Vādakathā in the refutation of the opposite views. Vāda is mentioned in Bhagavadgītā as the highest order in disputation. A high standard of polemics is maintained throughout Vedāntakalpalatikā. Madhusūdana produces several arguments to refute an objection raised by the objector.

Sometimes he concludes his arguments with these words: 'Enough of these stupid vapourings of an uncultured one'? In another occasion he satisfies,

76. Vādaḥ pravadatāmaham, BG, X-32.
77. Alamavyutpannavidambanayā, VKL, p.105.
himself by imparting a piece of advice: 'Thus the
dull-witted people, who have not properly learnt
under the preceptors, themselves not quite clear
in their minds, put forth this prima-facie view-
they have just to be pitied by the kind-hearted by
pointing out to them the proper method of understand-
ing. 78 He sometimes concludes, his arguments with a
statement such as: 'Enough of this killing a dead
person'. 79

Though he refutes his rival theories, he
is always careful to keep a friendly chord with his
opponents. Only a cultured and dispassionate person
can maintain such a high standard in his dealings.
The observations made by Madhusūdana are fully objective
not at all subjective. His approach is strictly logical
So he does not engage himself in beating about the
bush anywhere.

78. VKL, p.95.
79. Ḥtyalam mrtamāraṇena, VKL, p.36.
Madhusudana's School

In the course of the development of Advaita Vedanta there arose so many differences of opinion with regard to the minute details of philosophical principles. These doctrinal differences paved the way to the origin of different schools within the broad framework of theoretical Advaita. They are: Ekajiva or Drsti-srstitiva, Abhasavada, Pratibimba- biva, and Avacchedavada. Madhusudana subscribes to the first of these schools viz., Ekajiva. He deals in detail with it in Advaitasiddhi. In his Siddhanta-bindu also Madhusudana examines all the principal schools of thought within Advaita and concludes that Ekajiva is the final Advaita position.

81. SB, pp. 42-51.
While Madhusūdana is an ardent supporter of Ekajīvavāda he shows adherence to Suresvara who is supposed to be the propounder of Abhāsavāda and to Vācaspatimīśra who initiated Avaccedavāda. In fact, within each of the schools mentioned above, there arose further deviations later.

On a close examination of all his works pertaining to Advaita Vedānta one can legitimately state that Madhusūdana belongs to the vivarana school carried on by Padmapāda, Prakāśātman and Sarvajñātman. The synthesis of jñāna and bhakti within the theoretical Advaita, is indeed, an original contribution of Madhusūdana. It can be aptly said that he has introduced a branch of monistic theism within the school of vivarana in Advaita.82

Indebtedness to Prasthanātraya

Advaita Vedānta is erected on the strong edifice of the triple texts - Prasthānātraya viz., the Upanisads, Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā. Śaṅkara had mainly relied on the negative current of the Upanisads to formulate Advaita. Brahmasūtras make an earnest attempt to systamatisate the philosophical speculations, scattered all over the Upanisads. In the Celestial Song or Bhagavadgītā, the Upaniṣadic thoughts are presented in a fascinating manner. The Gītā is in one breath, a holy book, an ethical treatise, a historical record of India and a poem of haunting beauty. It deals with an intensely human problem of deep spiritual crisis, when man is called upon to summon up all his life's clans, to undergo a change. 83

Like Śaṅkara, Madhusūdana also relies mainly

as these triple texts. His depth of knowledge in the Upaniṣads makes him a reliable authority in the Upaniṣadic lore. Madhusūdana quotes profusely the Upaniṣadic passages in addition to logical arguments. His favourite Upaniṣads are Taittirīya, Chandogya, Katha and Brhadāraṇyaka. Mundaka, Māndūkya and Svetasvatara Upaniṣads are also quoted in Vedāntakaḷpalatika. Certain rare Upaniṣads are also sometimes quoted. It shows his great command over the Upaniṣads known and unknown. Brahmasūtras, the first systematic form of the Upaniṣadic thought are also often quoted. Bhagavadgītā is given an elevated position in the philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvati. In support of his arguments, stanzas from Bhagavadgītā are also quoted.

85. Ch.Up., p.186
86. K.Up., p.139.
88. Mu.Up., p.121.
91. BG, p.121.
In his other works like Gitāgūḍartha- dīpikā, Advaitasiddhi etc. Smṛtis and Purāṇas are quoted. Mahābhārata, Skandhapurāṇa, Yogavāsīśta, Rāmāyana, Mitākṣara, Viṣṇupurāṇa, Kurmapurāṇa, Manu- śmṛti, Harivamsa, Brahmanda-purāṇa, etc. are quoted wherever necessary. But Vedantakalpalatika, principally a philosophical work gives less importance to the authority of the Smṛtis. But Sāmkhyakārīka, Nyāyabhasya and Mīmāṁsābhāṣya are held authoritative in Vedāntakalpalatikā.

The Concept of Jīvanmukti

Vedāntakalpatikā, though deals mainly with the concept of mokṣa, does not make any reference about Jīvanmukti. Advaitins accept two types of mukti

92. Sa.Ka., p.152,153
93. MB, p.20,67.
94. MB, p.129,130.
Jīvanmukti and Videhamukti.

The individual, according to the vedantic concept, is potentially divine. He can realize his divinity here on this earth while living in the phenomenal order of existence. All philosophical thinkers of India, both orthodox and heterodox, uphold the doctrine of jīvanmukti. This doctrine maintains that the aspirant can attain and enjoy the state of spiritual fulfillment here and now while still subject to the vicissitudes of the embodied existence. It also affirms faith in the capacity of man to attain salvation by his own efforts. In as much as the Vedānta identifies the individual self with the ultimate spiritual principle, it provides for the possibility of the attainment of liberation-in-life or jīvanmukti without dependence on any agency, external, to man. Obviously these strands in Advaita Vedāntic thought contribute to an essentially humanistic outlook on life. 95

A jīvanmukta is certainly a God on earth. His attainment of spiritual enlightenment enables him to do devoted and selfless service to the people. It is with the same view that Śaṅkara says that the jīvanmuktas are reincarnated to save the world. It is for the same reason that Appayya Dīksita states that all jīvanmuktas attain the status of Īśvara. He seems to say that jīvanmuktas attain liberation in order to do good to humanity.96

The concept of jīvanmukti, the precious possession of Indian Philosophy, attaches a practical relevance to Advaita-Vedānta. Bhagavadgītā calls a jīvanmukta a sthitaprajña.97 In Vivekacūḍāmāṇya Śaṅkara also describes in detail the virtues of a jīvanmukta.

Unfortunately, Madhusūdana does not make any

96. Ibid., p.7.
97. BG, Chap.II.
reference of a Jīvamukta in Vedāntakalpalatikā, which is a principal treatise on mokṣa. Sometimes he might have thought to take up the concept of jīvanmukti in another work. Vedāntakalpalatikā would have been complete in itself if the aspect of jīvanmukti was also given adequate treatment. However, this does not mar the importance of Vedāntakalpalatikā in any way.

(b) METAPHYSICAL

Advaita-Vedānta has its own metaphysics that comprises its whole schematism. Brahman is placed at the head of the Vedāntic schematism, which is cleverly interwoven into the text of Vedāntakalpalatikā. The schemata of Advaita-Vedānta as well as Vedāntakalpalatikā can be summed up in six heads, viz., Brahman, ignorance, superimposition, jīvesvara -vibhāgavyavasthā and mānameyapratikarmavyavasthā and liberation. Most
of these topics find detailed analysis in Vedāntakalpalatikā.

The author deals with Brahman with all its subtleties in Vedāntakalpalatikā. According to Advaita and Vedāntakalpalatikā, Brahman is sat, cit and ananda. It is the material and efficient cause of the world. Brahman alone has supreme reality while all other objects are merely superimposed on it. Brahman is beyond the reach of all Sabdavṛttis.\(^{98}\) Vedānta passages alone are competent to express Brahman. Mokṣa is nothing but the realization of Brahman.

The concept of ignorance is subject to a detailed and critical analysis in Vedāntakalpalatikā.\(^{99}\) Though mokṣa is Siddha, it is not manifested due to the veil of ajñāna or avidyā. It is the root-cause

\(^{98}\) Supra., Ch.VI.

\(^{99}\) Supra, Ch.V.
of all dualities. It is not merely negative; but it has a positive reality. It is described as anirvacaniya. It can be eradicated only with the knowledge of Brahman.

Superimposition or adhyāsa works through ajñāna. The falsity of the world can be established, only with the help of avidyā. Pure cit is the abode of and object of ajñāna. The existence of the empirical world can be substantiated by adhyāsa whose root cause is ignorance.

Since Vedāntakalpalatikā is mainly intended to unveil the concept of mokṣa upheld by advaitins, the scope for dealing with the details of metaphysics is limited. Mānameyapratikarmavyāvasthā and Jīveśvara-vibhagavyāvasthā also mentioned occasionally, though not fully explained.

100. VKL, p.25
101. Ibid., p.175.
(c) EPISTEMOLOGICAL

The theory of knowledge, postulated by Advaita Vedānta has been skillfully employed in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Perception, Inference, Analogy, Šabda Presumption and Non-cognition are the six pramāṇas accepted by Vedāntins. But supreme validity is assigned only to the Šabda pramāṇa. The others are competent to reveal the truth of the worldly objects only. The theory of knowledge is revelant in Advaita Vedānta since it holds that all worldly objects are real till the realization of Brahman. All the apparent differences are explained convincingly by accepting Sattātrayam.102 However, Šabda is superior to perception, which is not independent.

(d) LOGICAL

Madhusūdana has established his theory on

102. Supta. Chap. VI.
liberation, having refuted the rival theories logically, in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Since the work is written in the style of Purvapakṣa and Siddhānta, the method of presentation can be termed as dialectical. In the modern sense, dialectics is a science of the general laws governing the development of nature, society and thought. But the dialectics of Advaita Vedānta is directed against the reality of the world absolutely. Madhusūdana's approach is dialectical with regard to the methodology and not to the content. The views of the opponents are refuted by arguments cumbressed with logical reasoning.

(e) ETHICAL

Advaita Vedānta aims at attaining mokṣa, the paramapuruṣārtha. Supreme reality is assigned only to Brahman. In the strict philosophic sense, everything else other than Brahman is false. But no

103. Supra. Ch. IV.
advaitin can write off the mundane world as illusory nothing. The world and all worldly objects are real for all practical purposes. So ethics has a place in the scheme of Advaita Vedānta also. Bhagavadgītā comprises the science of ethics. That is why, great authority is attached to the celestial song by advaitins. Madhusūdana also quotes Bhagavadgītā as an authority in support of his suppositions. 104

Advaita prescribes Sādhana-catuṣṭayasaṁpat as the basic requirement to initiate the study of Brahmanīḍyā. Śama envisages the control over the five sense organs. Dama concentrates on the restraintment of the mind. The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation. So Advaita assigns great importance to the control of the sense both external and internal. 105

Mokṣa can be attained by the realization of Brahman which can be achieved through Śravaṇa.

104. VKL, p.123.
105. Ibid., p.171.
manana and nididhyāsāna. Śravana or hearing also points to the ethical aspects of Advaita. In the case of mundane knowledge also the process laid down in hearing etc. can be employed. These aspects are treated in Vedantakalpalatika with great importance. Listening to the sacred scriptures is called śravaṇa. Critical thinking on what has been heard or read is called manana. Nididhyāsana is the intense meditation on the conclusion arrived at by making ourselves non-different from what is meditated on. This leads one to an experimental knowledge.

Understanding of the Vedāntic philosophy leads one to the wisdom of living a life of purity and sincerity. The Vedāntic wisdom provides a norm to decide what is good and what is evil. The activity which ensures one's own happiness and the happiness of all others is good. What ensures happiness to one and causes sufferings to others has to be considered
evil. Vedānta gives stress to this modern ideals of equality, fraternity and freedom. The outlook of the Vedāntic wisdom in any field of human interest will be of such a nature that it takes into account humanity as a whole, as one unity.106

Madhusudana accepts the ethical aspects of Advaita Vedānta fully. His introduction of the bhakti element within the scheme of Advaita is important in the ethical view point.

A Jīvanmukta is intended to work for the welfare of his fellow-beings without any sense of selfishness. His motto is Karmapyevadhikāraste or selfless action. This theory of selfless action has a bearing in Advaita ethics.

Résumé

The realistic approach in the treatment of

the concept of mokṣa dealt with in Vedāntakalpalatikā arouses a genuine interest in Advaita Vedānta philosophy.

Madhusudana has established the theory of mokṣa postulated by advaitins having refuted the rival theories. He thinks highly of Vedāntakalpalatikā, his first work and it is referred to in his other works such as Siddhāntabindu, Advaitasiddhi etc. Vedāntakalpalatikā is designed as a single stābaka named Sasādhanāpavarga nirūpaṇam.

Though started as a logician, Madhusudana later became a staunch disciple of Śaṅkara and carried out his mission successfully. But he was bold enough to incorporate the element of bhakti within Advaita metaphysics. In him the Vedāntic tradition of Śaṅkara is fused with the devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.
In the title the word Vedānta stands for the concluding portion of this Vedic literature as well as the determination of the correct knowledge. Kalpalatikā is believed to be a mythological wishyielding creeper supposed to be in the heaven. The title Vedāntakalpalatikā is significant as it relieves the entire mankind from sorrows and sufferings of the empirical world.

As a strong statwart of Advaita Madhusūdana effectively checked the attack of Dvaitins on Saṅkara's philosophy. His Advaitasiddhi is a verbatim reply to Vyāsatīrtha and his Nyāyāmṛta. With remarkable skill he has disproved the rival theories of all other systems of philosophy. He followed the foot-prints of Vyāsa, Saṅkara, and Sureśwara. He has made use of the views put forward by other later advaitins such as Prakāśatman, Vācaspatimiśra, Srihāra, Maṇḍanamiśra, Paḍmapāda
Sarvajñātma and Vimuktātma. While following the philosophy of his predecessors he does not give up his identity as an original thinker. His philosophy is fully based on the Prasthānātraya i.e., the Upanisads, Brahma-sūtras and Bhagavadgītā.

Madhusūdana as an idealistic philosopher does not have any sympathy towards the nāstikas, particularly lekāyatas. While refuting the materialistic theories, he calls the Carvākas, Vancakas, aśudhabuddhayāḥ and Prākṛtalokānusārināḥ.

The dialectical method of presentation, based on Navya-Nyāya methodology employed in Vedānta-kalpalatikā quite suits this subject matter. Madhusūdana does not give up the theistic influence exerted on him by Caitanya and others. He has cautiously worked out a synthesis of jñāna and bhakti, within Advaita. Thus he satisfied the theistic sentiments of the
followers of Advaita. The introduction of the bhakti element within Advaita was later attested by modern philosophers like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sreenarayanaguru and others.

Madhusūdana has kept a high standard in his polemical warfare with dvaitins. Brevity of a considerable order is also maintained in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Madhusūdana introduced a new branch of monistic theism within the school of vivaraṇa in Advaita.

The concept of Jīvanmukti is not given proper consideration in Vedāntakalpalatikā.

The schematism of Advaita-Vedānta is fully observed in the composition of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Topics like Brahman, avidyā, liberation etc. are subjected to detailed analysis in it. The Epistemology followed by the advaitins is also employed in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Brahman can be realised only through Śabda or Verbal Testimony. The observance of Śāma etc. by one desirous of salvation points to the ethical concepts of Madhusudana.
Vedāntic philosophy, especially Advaita-Vedanta commands great popularity in India and abroad alike in the present day philosophical context. The glorious tradition of the monistic thinking is being enriched even today by many illustrious writers. Madhusūdana Sarasvati (16th c.) is an advaitin of considerable calibre and has contributed a lot to the treasure of Indian philosophical literature.

Madhusūdana Sarasvati is the author of Vedantakalpalatikā. Through a series of philosophical writings, he has effectively defended the Advaitic doctrine from the attack of the rival systems. He has
risen to the occasion and raised the philosophical warfare between dvaitins and advaitins to an elevated position.

_Vedāntakalpalatikā_ is the first original work of Madhusūdana Sarasvati. It is attested by the colophon given at the end of this work. His other works such as Siddhāntabindu, Advaitasiddhi and Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa make mention of Vedāntakalpalatikā. In the Catalogus Catalogorum, Aufrecht assigns the authorship of Vedāntakalpalatikā to Madhusūdana Sarasvati. The style employed in Vedāntakalpalatikā is similar to that of his other works. No controversy exists in the case of the authorship of Vedāntakalpalatikā. Based on internal and external evidences the authorship of Vedāntakalpalatikā can be safely assigned to Madhusūdana Sarasvati.

Relying on external evidences Rajendra ghose and others have fixed the date of Madhusūdana as
as 16th century A.D. Nahane A. Sulochana assigns A.D.1717 as the date of the composition of Vedānta-kalpalatikā. According to AIN-I-AKBARI written in 1597, Madhusūdana was a member of the court of AKBAR. It can be safely concluded that Madhusūdana lived between the 2nd half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries.

Madhusūdana Sarasvati belonged to the Faridpur District of Bengal. His family geneology reconstructed by Divanji,P.C. reveals that Kamalanayana, the son of Purandara, became an ascetic and changed his name into Madhusūdana Sarasvati. He mastered all śāstras and specialised in Nyāya. Later, he was attracted to monism propagated by Śaṅkara. In due course he was greatly influenced by the bhakti cult introduced by Caitanya. He passed away at Haridvar, at the age of 105.

Aufrecht enlists 22 works of Madhusūdana
Sarasvati, Vedāntakalpalatikā, Siddhāntabindu, Advaitasiddhi are included in his list. Dasgupta, S.N. enumerates only 18 books. Divanji, P.C. considers only 10 works of Madhusūdana. Vedāntakalpalatikā, his first work, embraces all the principal tenets of Advaita-Vedānta.

In Vedāntakalpalatikā, Madhusūdana has exploited the possibilities of both Vāda and adhikaraṇa prasthānas. The whole work is designed as a single stabaka called Sasādhanāpāyarganirūpaṇam. Madhusūdana reproduces the diverse views on mokṣa and establishes that of Advaita Vedānta. The nature of ajñāna, its removal, Šabdajñāna and Šabdavṛttis are discussed in detail. The concept of Brahman is subjected to careful examination. A faithful and intelligent exposition of the advaitic concept of mokṣa is effectively presented in Vedāntakalpalatikā.
Since Vedāntakalpalatikā deals with liberation, the Paramapurūṣārtha, the work carries an ever-lasting significance. Though Śaṅkara advocates jñāna as the only means to attain liberation, Madhusūdana takes into account the importance of bhakti and tries to work out a synthesis of jñāna and bhakti. Indian culture and philosophy always stood for synthesis. Moreover, this synthetic approach is particularly relevant in India, as she is facing an unprecedented crisis in the ideological and practical realms.

The first printed edition of Vedāntakalpalatikā was brought to light in 1920 by J.N. Jha and Gopinath Kaviraja. Karmarkar, R.D. published Vedāntakalpalatikā with an English translation in 1962 from Poona. No commentary is seen attached to it.

Madhusūdana pays a high tribute to Śaṅkara in salutation. The author has a three-fold intention in the composition of Vedāntakalpalatikā, the correct interpretation of the Śāstras, refutation of the wrong
views of the opponents and the establishment of the Upaniṣadīc views on mokṣa. The views on mokṣa upheld by Lokāyata, Baudhā, Jainā, Vaiṣeṣika, Naiyāyika, Mīmāṃsaka, Sāmkhya, Yoga, Tridandin, Pasupata, Vaiṣṇava and Aupaniṣada are introduced faithfully.

The Čārvākas do not admit the very concept of mokṣa, since there is no Caitanya apart from the body in their system. Vijnānavādi Baudhās consider momentary vijnāna - aggregate as Ātman. The Jains speak of mokṣa as the constantly going - high up or not going to the Lokākāśa (the region meant for the unliberated beings) on the part of the Ātman, when he is freed from the eight-fold bondage and eight-fold karman by means of the penance prescribed in the Ārhaṭa śāstras.

According to the Vaiṣeṣikas the realization of the Ātman, freed from the special qualities is salvation. The Naiyāyikas consider mokṣa to be the total freedom from the twenty-one-fold division of dukha by the
correct appraisal of the twelve-fold Prameyas. Prabhakaras hold that moksa, characterised by the total annihilation of Karman, associated with the body, is to be attained by performing the vedic rites accompanied by the knowledge of the Atman. Bhāṭṭas see mokṣa as the manifestation of bliss that can be attained by the combination of knowledge and karman. The obstruction of the three-fold misery is mokṣa according to Sāmkhya philosophy. The Yogins uphold mokṣa as arising out of the deep concentration called Dharmamegha which is to be attained by controlling the five-fold mental tendencies. The tridandins state that the merging of jīva into Brahman by constant practice is salvation. Proximity with Paśupati is considered mokṣa by Paśupatas. Going to the world of Viṣṇu through Bhakti is mokṣa, according to Vaiṣṇavites.

The followers of the Upaniṣads hold that mokṣa
is Ātman itself characterised by limitless bliss and enlightenment and marked by the cessation of avidyā.

The realization of Ātman can be brought about by eradicating the four-fold impediments viz., Viṣayabhōgavāsanā, Pramāṇagatāsambhāvanā, Prameyagatāsambhāvanā, and Viparītabhāvanā. One desirous of salvation should practise Śama, and under the direction of a qualified preceptor, resolve upon the Vedāntic passages till the realization of the oneness of Brahman and Ātman otherwise called salvation is achieved.

Cārvāka darśana, purely materialistic in approach, does not tolerate any permanent, entity. The supposition of the Viśnunāvādi Bauddhas is also not tenable, because when the viśnāna is removed, the very Ātman is also destroyed. In the Śūnyavāda school
nothing is left behind to be yearned for. अलोककासागमणा etc. postulated by the Jains cannot be admitted since mokṣa, being the result of actions, is liable for destruction.

The existence of Brahman can be established with the help of Perception, Inference and śabda. According to Kaṇḍa, Gautama and Prabhākara, mokṣa is characterised by the cessation of the nine particular qualities of Brahman. Madhusūdana says that the removal of qualities of Brahman necessitates the destruction of his entity also. The dharma and dharmi disappear together. Since the existence of a permanent pleasure has not yet been established, the views of the Bhāṭṭas on mokṣa are discarded.

There exists no discrimination between salvation and Samsāra in the views of the Satkāryavādins. So the views of Sāṁkhya-Yogins fare no better. The
views of the Bhedaabhedavadins are rejected as they are opposed to all means of proof. If both bheda and abheda are true they would remain as such even in the state of salvation.

The desire for moksa can arise only through the views of Advaita, because though Atman is Siddha, the unlimited happiness of Brahman is not realized.

The concept of jñana and ajñana is subjected to detailed analysis in Vedantakalpalatikā. The nature of jñana cannot be sentiency because avidyā would always be removed since jñana has been ever present. Jñana can remove that ajñana only which has the same resort, same mode, and same object. Ordinary Sabda, produces indirect knowledge. But Vedāntic texts like 'tat tvam asi' produce direct knowledge which is identical with the knower himself.
Ajñāna is not an object of the means of proof because a pramāṇa cannot act as the remover of its own object. Ajñāna cannot be removed by itself. Neither Atman nor the mind can be the resort of ajñāna. Pure sentiency is to be regarded as its resort. Brahman and the mind are not its resort. Ajñāna is possessed of many wonderful powers. If one power is dropped it continues to work with another. Hence, the root of ajñāna is to be destroyed so as to ensure the non-return of the Atman. Pure cit is admitted as the resort of the objects of ajñāna also. It can be removed by jñāna by way of identifying of Caitanya and mind through superimposition. Thus there exists no contradiction in the existence of jñāna and ajñāna in a common abode i.e., Atman.

The knowledge of the Brahman brings about
the removal of ājnāna. Devotion to the Lord of the Nila mountain also ensures the removal of ājnāna by direct perception. Ājnāna is neither sat nor asat. It is subjected to destruction, being perceived, limited and non-sentient.

The mind perfected by thinking etc. produces direct knowledge. The generally accepted pramanās such as perception are not competent to reveal Brahman. In this connection Madhusūdana offers a detailed discussion on the function of a word.

Mukhyā and Jaghanyā are the two chief functions of a word. According to Tarkikas a word conveys its conventional meaning due to the will of God. If it is accepted, all words would have conveyed the same meaning. Anvitābhīdhanavādins hold that words in a sentence denote their object, being already grammatically connected with one another. But Abhihitānvaya-vādins state that the words are grammatically connected
after they have denoted their meaning. Rudhi and Yoga are the two branches of the denotative power of word. Yogarudhi is sometimes resorted to. Subordinate function has two divisions viz., lakṣaṇā and gauṇī.

No Sabdavṛtti can function in the case of Brahman which is devoid of all dharmas. The etymological method also fails to reveal Brahman. The term Brahman is derived from the root Brh meaning increase added by the termination 'maṇ' belonging to the unādi sūtras. Lakṣaṇā expresses its inability to point out Brahman. The division of Sapraṅkaraka and Nisprakāraka is also not admitted in the case of Brahman. No Nisprakāraka jñāṇa can remove ajñāṇa. Thus the realization of Brahman cannot be achieved with the help of Sabdavṛttis.
The mind cannot act as an instrument for the attainment of mokṣa. Since the mind is superimposed on the Atman, the attributes of the mind are also superimposed on Him.

Śabda cannot act like Indriyas made up of material elements. Though not a sense organ, Śabda can produce direct knowledge pointing out to the identity of 'para' with the 'tvam' entity. Vicāra uproots the impediments and paves the way to direct realization.

Madhusudana prescribes certain stages in the realization of mokṣa. The instructions about Brahmavidyā remove the Cittadoṣa that obstructs the Nityanityavastuviveka. The discrimination between the permanent and non-permanent entities brings about a sense of aversion towards worldly enjoyments. Viṣaya-vaitṛṣṇya enables one to attain Śama, dama etc. They destroy the wrong tendency of the mind to do improper
activity. The self-authoritative nature of the Vedāntic passages pointing out to the identity of Ātman and Brahman, through hearing etc. is ensured. Then the idea about the real purport of the Vedānta passages gets firmly rooted in the Citta which is cleansed of all blemishes and which drives away ajñāna and its effects.

Though Vicāra does not produce any positive result it removes all mental blemishes. Thus the self-authoritative nature of the Vedānta vākyas remains unaffected. Mokṣa is realized by identifying the oneness of Brahman and Ātman.

The fundamental tenets of Advaita Vedānta find a faithful exposition in Vedāntakalpalatikā. As a treatise on mokṣa Vedāntakalpalatikā is held in high esteem in the philosophical circles. The term Vedānta
in the title stands for Advaita Vedānta. It means the concluding portion of the vedic literature as well as the determination of the correct knowledge. Kalpalata is believed to be a wish-yeilding creeper supposed to be in the heaven. The compound word Vedānta-kalpalatikā indicates a wish-yeilding creeper of Vedānta giving everything to a true aspirant of mokṣa. Madhusūdana started his career as a logician and later became an ardent follower of Śaṅkara. He followed the philosophical views of Vyāsa, Śaṅkara, Suresvara Sriharṣa and others and continued the legacy with great originality. He had effectively defended the advaitic doctrine from the onslaught of the dvaitins and other rival creeds and refuted the opponents views logically. Madhusūdana had no sympathy towards the nāstikas particularly lokāyatikas.

Madhusūdana followed the dialectical method of presentation throughout the text. The possibilities
of the Neo-logic methodology had been skillfully employed in the work. He had tried to bring about a synthesis of bhakti and jñāna to satisfy the theistic sentiments of his followers and to resist the attack of the dvaitins. Though a deviation, the jñāna-bhakti synthesis had saved the philosophy of Śaṅkara from a great catastrophe. The theistic elements found in the later works of Madhusūdana had strengthened the theoretical and practical position of Advaita Vedānta.

The style adopted in Vedāntakalpalatikā is simple and refreshing, demanding no commentary. Madhusūdana maintains a high standard of polemics in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Madhusūdana has initiated a new branch of monistic thinking within the school of Vivaraṇa in Advaita. In formulating his philosophy Madhusūdana depends mainly on the Prasthānatraya viz., the Upaniṣads Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā. The concept of jīvanmukti
is not given an elaborate exposition in Vedānta-kalpalatikā.

The schemata of Advaita Vedānta such as Brahman, avidyā, liberation etc. are subjected to detailed analysis in Vedāntakalpalatikā. The theory of knowledge put forward by advaitins is also applied in Vedāntakalpalatikā. Brahman can be realized only through Verbal Testimony. The logical presentation based on the dialectical method makes Vedāntakalpalatikā more attractive. The observance of Śama etc., laid down for one desirous of salvation accounts for the ethical concept of Madhusūdana.

The changing situations of the modern world demand a re-assessment of the Vedantic wisdom contained in the philosophical works of ancient India. A close study on Vedāntakalpalatikā is done in the above line.