CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF VEDĀNTA DEŚIKA’S WORKS

1.1 Introduction

Vedānta Deśika, one of the greatest Ācāryas of Vaishnavism was instrumental in reinforcing, propagating and popularising the teachings of Śrī RāmānujaŚcārya. He was a master of poetry, ardent devotee, practitioner of vedānta and a humanist. He laid great emphasis on the moral and spiritual values. He underlined the importance of ethical principles and practices, leading to human emancipation.

Vedānta Deśika led a simple, austere and spiritual life. He strictly adhered to the injunctions, commandments and rituals of the Vedic scriptures. He was a master of all arts and subjects. He was an ideal preceptor by all rigid standards. He created so much influence in the society that he had a very large number of ardent disciples who strictly followed his teachings and vision.

Vedānta Deśika was greatly respected by scholars of various schools of thought. He was held in high esteem even by his opponents. He produced masterpieces both in Sanskrit and Tamil, which have withstood the tests of time. He led an illustrious, glorious and long life which was pure, blemishless and worthy of emulation even by the great masters.
1.2 *Vedānta Deśika*’s Life History

*Sri Venkata Natha* (popularly known as *Vedānta Deśika*) was born in 1261 A.D. in Tūppul near Kāñcipuram by the divine grace of Lord *Venkateswara* of Tirumala. He is believed to be the incarnation of the divine Bell of Lord *Venkateswara*. His father was *Ananta Sūri* and his mother was *Totārāmba*. He belonged to the *viśvāmitra gotra*.

All ordained *samskāras* like *jātakarma, nāmakarma, anna prāṣana* and *Caula* were done to *Vedānta Deśika* at the appointed times. His maternal uncle and *Ācārya Appullar* took keen interest in bringing him up. He had his *upanayana* ceremony at the age of seven. Under the guidance of *Appullar, Vedānta Deśika* learnt the *Vedas* and its six auxiliaries comprising the following:

- *Sikṣā* (phonetics)
- *Chandas* (Prosody)
- *Vyakarana* (grammar)
- *Nirukta* (etymology)
- *Jyotīṣa* (astronomy)
- *Kalpa* (rituals/ceremonies).
Vedānta Deśika was a practical philosopher par excellence. He mastered the following systems of philosophy:

- **Tarka** (doctrine founded on reasoning)
- **Mīmāṃsā** (philosophy based on investigation and examination of *vedic* text)
- **Sānkhyā** (philosophy as propounded by Kapila)
- **Yoga** (system of philosophy propounded by Patanjali)
- **Dvaita** (Dualism)
- **Advaita** (Non-dualism)
- **Viśiṣṭādvaita** (Qualified Monism)
- **Bhāskara** (Philosophy of Bhāskarācārya)
- **Pāśupata** (Doctrine of Pāśupata)
- **Bauddha** (Buddhism)
- **Jaina** (Jainism)

He possessed creative poetic skills and excelled in prosody and grammar. He had exemplary mastery over *purāṇas, āgamas* and astrology.

He married Kanakavalli and performed the duties and austerities of *grhaustāśrama.* He led a very simple and pious life of a householder in Kāṇci with total detachment to worldly pleasures. He lived on voluntary alms accepting only what was considered essential for existence. He was blessed with a son by name *Varadārya* in
1317 A.D. He taught the scriptures to his son besides numerous disciples. He composed a number of works in Sanskrit, Tamil and *manipravāla*.

It is believed that the divine Bell of Hari was born as *Vedānta Deśika*.

*Utpreṣyate budha janairupapatti bhūmnā*

*Ghantā hareb samajanista yadātmaneti* ¹

His erudite scholarship and profound knowledge earned him the title “*kavitārikasimha*”. He had all-round skills. He built a well, carved an icon and overpowered a snake charmer. His versatility is beyond comparison. He gave great importance to dignity of labour. His social concerns have been genuine and immense. He was always kind and compassionate. He performed miracles using his spiritual power for the benefit of the needy who approached him for help. He had mastery over numerous arts and crafts.

*Nayanācārya, the son of Vedānta Deśika* was a great scholar who authored two poems “*kokila sandeśa*” and “*śuka sandeśa*”

*Vedānta Deśika* finds the profound meaning of the four *Vedas* in the works of *Sri Rāmānujacārya*.

*Vedānta Deśika* deifies *Nammalvār* who composed immortal and devotional poems in Tamil in praise of the Supreme Lord *Viṣṇu*.

¹ Sankalpa Suryodayam i-14
Niyatam manipāduke dadhānab
Sa muniste śatkopa ityabhikhyām.²

Vedānta Deśika went on a pilgrimage to Tirumala and from there to various holy cities of north India including Kaśi, Pūrī, Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Avanti, Badari, Brindāvan, Dvāraka, Trīveni and Gayā. He later visited Srīrangam and stayed there for many years. Immensely happy with his tireless teachings, Vedic knowledge and devotion, Lord Ranganātha Himself blessed him the title “Vedāntācārya”. Pleased with his deep sense of devotion and religious service, Goddess Ranganāyakī, the divine consort of Lord Ranganātha, conferred upon him the title “Sarva tantra Svatantra.”

During invasion by Malikaufier in 1327 A.D., he left Srīrangam and reached Satyakalam, a serene village in Karnataka. After some years of stay there, he went to Tirunārāyanapuram (Melkote of Mysore). Having stayed there for several years, he returned to Srīrangam after the muslim invaders were driven way by the chieftain Goppanārya. He lived for 100 fulfilling years preaching and practising the doctrine of Viṣistadvaita besides continuing the unceasing worship of the Lord with pure devotion, dedication and detachment. His long life was one marked by austerity, simplicity, jnāna, bhakti and vairāgya.

¹ Paduka Sahasram 23
Sri Doddācārya authored the biography of Vedānta Deśika in his work titled “Vaibhava Prakāśika” while his disciple Periappangār wrote a commentary on the same.

Pratīvādibhayankaram Aṉṉan composed seventy verses in praise of Vedānta Deśika titled “Saptatiratnamālika.”

Maṉṇappangār wrote hundred verses in tamil deifying Vedānta Deśika.

Vedānta Deśika stands as an unparalled sacred and sublime repository of the highest order. His illustrious life is marked by intellectual vigour, spiritual fervour and ceaseless devotion.

In Vedānta Deśika’s memory and honour the following taniyans (separate verses) are being recited by the Srivaisnavaites before and after rending any of his divine works:

Srimān venkatanāthāryabh kavitārkika kesarī !

Vedāntācārya varyome sannidhattām sadā hṛdi !!

Kavitārkika simhāya kalyāṇa guṇa sāline !

Srīmate venkatesāya vedānta gurave namabh !!
1.3 Vedanta Desika’s contributions

Vedanta Desika was a great philosopher belonging to the Viśistādvaīta school popularised and practised by Śrī Ramanujācārya. He revisited and strengthened Śrī Ramanujācārya’s philosophy and teachings and effectively made up for the passage of time. He authored masterly treatises incorporating the logic, epistemology and metaphysics of the Viśistādvaīta school. He popularized the stotra literature with his imagery and prosodic skills. He was a versatile and prolific writer.

Vedanta Desika made significant contribution to the proper understanding of the original writings of Śrī Yamunācārya and Śrī Ramanujācārya through his lucid and powerful commentaries on their immortal works. He untiringly reinforced, defended and propagated the philosophy of Viśistādvaīta. Vedanta Desika’s contribution to the ontological doctrine needs a special mention. He expounded the profound truths of the Viśistādvaīta school with clarity and conviction. He firmly established this philosophy after a careful examination and refutation of the viewpoints of other schools of thought. He reviewed various schools of philosophy and established the supremacy of Viśistādvaīta based on the authority of the Vedas, āthāyas, purāṇas and sound logic. He articulated the technical details of the Viśistādvaīta school with matchless clarity, deep insight and irrefutable authenticity.
*Vedānta Deśika* lived a simple life devoid of any material possessions and attachments. Though he had miraculous powers, he used them only for the benefit of others who truly deserved it. He was an epitome of *vairāgya*. He did not earn any material wealth nor had he inherited any. For him, God alone is the ancestral wealth.

*Nāsti pitrārjītam kincinna mayā kincidārjītam
Asti me hastiśailāgre vastu paitāmaham dhanam*

*Vedānta Deśika* proved that there is no dichotomy between *pūrva mīmāṃsa* and *uttara mīmāṃsa*. He succinctly established that both are complementary and are not contradictory. According to his works “*mīmāṃsa pādukā*, “*śeśvara mīmāṃsa*”, they are in sync with each other. “*Nyāya Pariśuddhi*” focuses on the syncretism between *Nyāya* and *Vedānta*.

*Vedānta Deśika* played a significant part in the arena of religion and theology. He had a crucial role in establishing beyond doubt the authority and relevance of *pāncarātra āgama*. He consolidated the religious rituals, principles and practices through his two works, viz., *pāncarātra rakṣā* and *saccaritra rakṣā*. Through *nikṣepa rakṣā*, he strongly defended and established the importance of *prapatti*.

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3 Vairagya Pancakam 6
Vedānta Deśika held the drāvida veda (nālāyira divya prabandha) in high esteem and propagated the same. He considered them sacrosanct which even enables one to clearly understand the intricacies of the Vedic lore. His Sanskrit verses titled “dravidopaniṣat tātparya ratnāvali” and “dravidopaniṣatsāra” are expositions of the matchless hymns of the Ālvars constituting the nālāyira divya prabandha.

Vedānta Deśika made great contribution to the development of manipravāla literature. He authored 32 rahasya granthas in manipravāla style. Rahasayatraya sāra is his masterpiece containing the subtle details and intricacies of Viṣistadvaita philosophy.

1.4 Vedānta Deśika’s works

Vedānta Deśika has written both in Sanskrit and Tamil. He is the undisputed Lion among poets and logicians. He is a dramatist par excellence. His poems focus primarily on religio-philosophical themes. He is a versatile poet with refreshing creativity. His profound social thoughts intersperse beautifully in his works, which enhance their value to the society at large.

1.4.1 Sankalpa sūryodayam

Sankalpa sūryodayam (the dawn of the divine will) is an allegorical drama presented in 10 acts. It introduces abstract qualities like virtues, vices, aspirations, sufferings of mankind instead of sheer men and women characters.
The main objective of the play is to lucidly explain the process of getting rid of the repeated cycles of births and deaths and attaining eternal bliss through salvation (mokṣa). The main rasa (sentiment) of this play is śanta (serene contemplation). This drama portraits the hidden truths of philosophy.

The tenets of Viśistādvaita are clearly expressed in this allegoric drama. The summary of contents of the play is presented in Table 1.1

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<th>S.No</th>
<th>Act</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Refutation of other doctrines</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Kāma, krodha, lobha, triṣṇa</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>V</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Meditation, Viveka</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Meditation on sātvic viṣṇu</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Victory of viveka over mahāmoha</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Attainment of Samādhi</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Attainment of supreme bliss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4.2 Yādavābhuyudayam

Yādavābhuyudayam is a mahākāvyya in 24 cantos. With lofty conception and artistic presentation, it gives a fascinating account of the youthful sportive activities of Lord Krṣṇa. It vividly and refreshingly portrays the divine life of Sri Krṣṇa.

Appayya dikṣitar lauded this monumental and immortal work of Vedānta Deśika. According to him, “bhāvās santi pade pade kavitārkikasimhasya kāvyesu lalitēs vapi.”

Yādavābhuyudayam deals with the following aspects with special reference to the glory of Lord Krṣṇa:

- Kāvyārāmbham, bhūmi prārthana, deva stuti, bhagavad darśanam, bhāṣanam
- Devaki varṇanam, Krṣṇāvatara varṇanam
- Sarva loka santoṣam, vāsudevastuti, gokula gamanam
- Sri Krṣṇavatāra bālya cestitam, nila pariṇayam, kāliya mardanam
- Indra pūjārāmbham
- Govardhana pūjyopadeśam, Govardhana mahimā varṇanam
- Caila devārcanam, Indra kopa, Krṣṇa upasarpanam, Govinda pattābhiṣeka
- Venu gānam, rāsa krida, Akrūra presāṇam
- Akrūra manoratha vistitāḥ
- Kamsa vadhab, vāsudeva kṛṣṭa stuti
- Dvarakā nirmāṇam
- Dvarakā prādubhavi varṇanam
- Rukmini Pariṇayam
1.4.3 Hamsa sandeśam

_Hamsa sandeśam_ was composed by _Vedānta Deśika_ on the lines of _Megha sandeśam_. In this artistic literary work, _Sri Rāma_ sends a swan as a messenger to _Sri Sītā_ held captive by _Rāvana_ in _Lanka_ to offer comfort and consolation to her.

1.4.4 Pāduka sahasram

It is a garland of poem in 1008 _ślokas_ in praise of the sandals of _Sri Ranganātha_ of _Srīrangam_. These are truly identified with the _Pādukās_ of _Sri Rāma_ worshipped by Bharata.

_Pādukā sahasram_ consists of 24 _paddhatīs_ as highlighted in Table 1.3
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<thead>
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<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Samākhya paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Naming of padukā as śatāri or śatakopam</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Prabhāva paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Greatness of padukā</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Samarpana paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Pledging of padukā as surety to Bharata for Rāma's return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pratiprasṭhāna paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Return of padukā along with Bharata to Ayodhya</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adhikāra paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Assumption of kingly power</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Abhiṣeka paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Coronation of padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Niryātanā paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Re-instatement at Sṛi Rāma's lotus feet</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Vaitalika paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Songs in praise of padukā</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Śṛṅgāra paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Loveplay between padukā and Sṛi Rāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sancāra paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>God’s strolls with padukā</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Puśpa paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Flower oblations</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Parāga paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Power of padukā’s dust</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nāda paddhatīḥ</td>
<td>Melody of padukā</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Ratnasāmānyā paddhatī</td>
<td>Distant View of gems</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Bahuratna paddhatī</td>
<td>Near view of gems</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Padmarāga paddhatī</td>
<td>Ruby padukā</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Muktā paddhatī</td>
<td>Pearls padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Marataka paddhatī</td>
<td>Emerald padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Indranila paddhatī</td>
<td>Sapphire padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Bimba pratibimba paddhatī</td>
<td>Reflection of objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kāncana paddhatī</td>
<td>Gold padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>śeṣa paddhatī</td>
<td>Subservient padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Dvandva paddhatī</td>
<td>Dual padukā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sanniveṣa paddhatī</td>
<td>Beauty of padukā</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Yantrīkā paddhatī</td>
<td>Knob in padukā</td>
</tr>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Rekha paddhatī</td>
<td>Streaks on padukā</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Subhāṣīta paddhatī</td>
<td>Code of conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Prakīrṇa paddhatī</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Citra paddhatī</td>
<td>A special prosody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Nirveda paddhatī</td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Phala paddhatī</td>
<td>Rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following ślokas in praise of the Pāduka of Śrī Ranganātha are some select examples to demonstrate the masterly skills of Vedanta Deśika in meaningful prosody:

- PādapaPādapaPādapaPādapa PādapaPādapaPādapaPādapa
  PādapaPādapaPādapaPādapaPādapaPādapaPādapaPādapa!! ⁴

- YaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYa
  YaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYaYa ⁵

- Tattattāttatattata tattatetetetatitut !
  Tattattāttatattata tattatetetetatutat !! ⁶

1.4.5 Subhāṣita Nīvī

This is a treatise on good and evil aspects of life. It is a didactic poem in 144 verses in 12 sections interspersed with wit and humour. It serves as a reference guide for moral and ethical well-being for upliftment of humanity.

This work prescribes everlasting value systems for social peace and harmony with focus on individual perfection and purity. It has 12 sections of 12 verses each. The first 5 sections deal with undesirable social elements while the balance 7 sections

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⁴ Paduka Sahasram 939
⁵ ibid 936
⁶ ibid 935
speak about virtuous persons. It serves as a comprehensive code of conduct for all times.

Table 1.4 presents an overview of the scope and coverage of *Subhāṣita Nīvī*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>The ways of the unlettered</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>The ways of the arrogant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>The ways of the wicked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>The ways of the ill-mannered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>The ways of the unworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>The Path of the noble</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>The path of the equanimous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>The path of the accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>The path of the righteous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The path of the generous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>The path of the virtuous poets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>The path of the arbiters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4.6 Stotras (religious lyrics)

Vedānta Deśika has composed 28 stotras in praise of various deities. His stotras eulogise the gods and goddesses worshipped by him in many shrines. His works include stotras on garuda and Yatirāja (Sri Rāmānujācārya). These portray a vivid picture of his deep sense of devotion, religious feelings and philosophical doctrines.

A list of his stotras is given below:

- Gopālavimśatīḥ
- Varadarāja pañcāsati
- Dayā satakam
- Yatirāja saptati
- Abhīti Stavabhū
- Acuta śatakam
- AṣṭaBhuja Aṣṭakam
- Bhagavad Dhyāna Sopānam
- BhūStutiḥ
- Daśāvatāra Stotram
- Dehaleśa stutiḥ
- Sri Devanāyaka Pañcāsati
- Garuda dandakam
1.4.6a Gopālavināśatiḥ

Gopālavināśati excels in diction, style, cadence and imagination. In this, Vedānta Deśika portrays Sri Kṛṣṇa as gopāla (cowherd). It has 21 verses singing the divine glory of lord gopāla. Kṛṣṇa’s pranks are beautifully described in this work.
Vedānta Deśika  touchingly  prays for the vision of the Lord playing the fife  even at the last stage of  leaving his mortal body.

1.4.6b Varadarāja pañcāśat

Vedānta Deśika  sings the great glories of Sri Varadarāja of kāñcī to whom he is specially drawn. He is spell-bound  by the wondrous form of the Lord who confers boons like the kalpaka vṛkṣa. According to him, anjali  is the anti-dote to Lord’s nigraha.

1.4.6c dayā śatakam

This is a poem  in 100 (plus8) verses par excellence  in praise of  the greatest quality of dayā  (divine mercy) of Lord Śrīnivāsa  of  Tirumala.

The following variety of metres are used gracefully in this Work:

- Anuṣṭup
- Āryā
- Aupachandāsīka
- Mālini
- Mandākrānta
- Natkulakam
- śikarine
- Vārine
- Prthve
- Vasanta tilakā
- Sārdūla vikriditam

1.4.6d Yatirāja saptatīḥ

This is a poetic tribute to Yatirāja (King of ascetics) whom Vedānta Deśika greatly respects and admires. He was fascinated by Sri Bhāṣya, the masterpiece of Sri Rāmānuja and by his commendable commentary on Bhagavat Gitā.

1.4.6e Abhīti Stavaḥ

This consists of 29 verses praying Lord Ranganātha to remove all worldly fears and grant devotion, knowledge and happiness.

1.4.6f Acuta śatakam

This is a poetic marvel in Prakrit language in 101 verses in praise of Acuta (Lord Devanātha)

1.4.6g AṣṭaBhuja Aṣṭakam

This has 8 (plus 2) verses in praise of Lord with eight arms in Kāñci.
1.4.6h Bhagavad Dhyāna Sopānam

This has 12 verses describing the steps in the meditation of Bhagavan Sri Ranganātha of Srirangam.

1.4.6i Bhū Stutiḥ

This has 33 verses eulogising Bhūmi Devī. The mother earth is praised as the divine consort of Bhagavān.

1.4.6j Daśāvatāra Stotram

This consists of 13 verses in praise of the following 10 divine incarnations (avatāras) of Lord Viṣṇu:

> Matsya
> Kurma
> Varāha
> Nṛsimha
> Vāmana
> Paraśurāma
> Rāma
> Balarāma
> Krṣṇa
> Kalki
1.4.6k Dehaleśa stutiḥ

This contains 28 verses on Lord Trivikrama of Tirukovilūr.

1.4.6l Śrī Devanāyaka Pañcāsat

This has 50 (plus3) verses on Śrī Devanāyaka (popularly known as Devanātha) of Tiruvahindrapuram.

1.4.6m Garuda daṇḍakam

This is in praise of Garuda, who is Veda incarnate and the divine Bird which carries on its shoulders the Supreme Lord Himself. By his powerful wings, Garuda enters pātāla loka and has the prowess to control it.

Daṇḍaka represents a poetical composition by observing certain rules regarding aksaras and gaṇas. Each pādam has 36 aksaras or 108 gaṇas.

Garuda daṇḍaka has four pādams, each one may be considered to be a complete verse itself. The attributes and glories of Garuda are described.

1.4.6n Garuda pañcāsat

This contains 50 verses eulogising Garuda, the divine Vāhana of Lord Viṣṇu. This has been composed in Śragdhara metre with 21 syllables in each quarter.

Table 1.6 highlights the five sections of Garuda pañcāsat
Table 1.6

Garuda pañcaśat

<table>
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<th>S.No</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<td>I</td>
<td><em>Para vyuha varṇakaḥ</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
<td><em>Amṛtaharaṇa varṇakaḥ</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td><em>Adhbuta varṇakaḥ</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The first section begins with the different forms of *Garuda*. It also deals with the mantra as well as the recitation and meditation.

The second section portrays as to how *Garuda* brings the pot of nectar from the Heaven.

The third section describes about the subjugation of the nagas in the *Nāgaloka*.

The fourth section explains how *garuda* adorns himself with the great serpents.

The last section presents a vivid picture about the various forms in which *garuda* serves the Lord.
The *stotra* explains the greatness of *garuda* and the efficacy of the *garuda mantra*. The *Ācārya* prays for protection in every śloka.

**1.4.60 Sri Godā Stutiḥ**

This devotional lyric has 29 verses in praise of *Sri Godā Devī* (popularly known as *Āndal*). She is the divine consort of *Sri Ranganātha* and the incarnation of *Bhū Devī*.

The *stotram* starts and ends with a reference to *Sri Ranganātha* of *Srīrangam*.

**1.4.6p Sri Hayagriva stotram**

This consists of 32 divine verses in praise of *Lord Hayagriva*, the Supreme Lord of Learning. This is the first of His lyrical compositions. This is the precious hymn on the Horse-faced Lord.

*Lord Hayagriva* is the foundation of all Knowledge.

\[ Jñānānanda mayam devam nirmalasphatikākṛtim \]
\[ Ādhāram sarva vidyānām hayagrivamupāsmahe \]

He prays to the Lord to take His seat on the throne representing the tip of his tongue.

\[ Viśeṣavit pāriṣadeṣu nātha vidhagdha ghoṣti samarānganeṣu \]

---

7 Hayagriva Stotram 1

24
Gītāsato me kavitārikendrān jiḥyāgra simhāsanamabhyupeyaḥ

The penultimate śloka presents a vivid picture of Lord Hayagrīva.

In the last śloka, Vedānta Deśika gives the clarion call to all to recite this stotra for attaining mastery over the art of speech.

1.4.6q Kāmāsikaṣṭakam

This has eight (plus one) verses singing the glory of Lord Narasimha.

Vedānta Deśika prays that Lord Narasimha should fulfill all the righteous desires of his devotees.

Lord Narasimha is described as the Lord of Protection who is endowed with the three fires of Sun, Moon and fire to ward of the tāpatrayas causing problems to mankind. He offers instant and complete remedy.

1.4.6r Nyāsa daśakam

This is the devotional doctrine of self-surrender in 10 verses at the lotus feet of Lord Varadarāja of Kāñci.

The ten verses explain all aspects of prapatti in a comprehensive manner including the following:

- Five auxiliaries representing the angas
- Selfless dedication to the Lord
- Sincere prayer for attaining salvation

\[\text{ibid } 28\]
Continuous service to the Supreme after Prapatti
Protection from Sins.

1.4.6s Nyāsa Tilakam

This consists of 32 verses highlighting the salient aspects of Self- surrender.

The Stotra starts with saranagati at the lotus feet of Goddess Lakhṣmi and then at the feet of the Divya dāmpati of Srīrangam.

It deals with the following salient aspects of śaranāgati:

- Mahaviśvāsa representing intense faith
- Other four angas of prapatti
- The exalted role of ācārya
- Non-seeking of help from mortals.

Vedānta Deśika’s son and disciple nainár Ācārya has written a commentary only for this Stotra.

1.4.6t Nyāsa Vimaṭih

This is a divine doctrine of self-surrender in 20(plus two) verses.

The following aspects are lucidly covered in this Stotram:

- Ācārya
- śiṣya
- Advice of the preceptor to the disciple
- Qualification for prapatti and its importance
- Intense faith
Code of conduct for a prapanna

Angas of prapatti

While *Vedānta Deśika*'s *Tatva mukta kalāpa* is meant for the *tatva* (reals), *nyāsa vimśati* is focussed on the *Upāyas* (means).

1.4.6u Paramārtha Stutiḥ

This contains 10 verses singing the glory of Lord *Vijayarāgāhava* of *Tirupputkuzhi* near Kānci.

According to *Vedānta Deśika*, where a devotee keeps away from the four-fold *puruṣartha* of *dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa* and concentrates solely on the service of the Lord, he enjoys all the desirable fruits.

1.4.6v RaguVīra Gadyam

This *stotra* in elegant prose form describes the story of *Sri Rāma*, the Supreme hero of the *Raghu* dynasty. The 95 addresses in this *Gadya* eloquently picturise the valour of *Sri Rāma* and present the story of the following seven *kāndas* of *Srimad Rāmāyaṇa*:

- Bāla kāṇḍa
- Ayodhyā kāṇḍa
- Āraṇya kāṇḍa
- Kīškindhā kāṇḍa
Sundara kānda

Yuddha kānda

Uttara kānda

1.4.6v śaraṇāgati dipikā

This śloka in 59 verses presents the doctrine of self-surrender, which is based on the Vedas, Pāncarātra āgama, vaikhānas āgama, iṭhāsas, purāṇas, divine songs of the Ālwars and the expositions of the Ācāryas.

This masterpiece describes the jiva as the eternal bride and the Supreme paramātma as the eternal bridegroom. The divine wedding gets consummated when the Ācārya offers the bride to the groom.

1.4.6x sōdaśa Ayudha Stotram

This stotra is in praise of the following 16 divine weapons of the Lord. The stotra seeks the protection of these divya āyudhas. These include 8 on the right side and 8 on the left side of the Supreme.

The divine Weapons on the right side of the Lord are as follows:

- Cakra- Discus
- Paraśu- Battle axe
- Kunta- Spear
- *Danda*- Club
- *Ankuśa*- Goad
- *Agni*- Fire
- *Nistrimsa*- Sword

The divine weapons on the left side of the Supreme are as under:

- *Pañcajanya*- Conch
- *Śārnga*- Bow
- *Pāśa*- Noose
- *Sira*- Plough
- *Vajra*- Thunderbolt
- *Gada*- Mace
- *Musala*- Pestle
- *Trisula*- Trident

### 1.4 by Śrī Stutiḥ

This consists of 25 verses eulogising the divine glory of Śrī Lakhṣmī, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. She is the consort of the Supreme Lord and the symbol of auspiciousness.
1.4.6z Sudarśanāstakam

This sings in 8 verses the glory of Sudarśana, the divine discus always in the right hand of the Lord. It hails the victory to Sri Sudarśana. It sings the greatness and glory of Sudarśana who protects and sustains the whole Universe. He removes all sins and helps his devotees to overcome samsāra.

1.4.6aa Vairāgya Pañcakam

This has 5 (plus one) verses explaining Sri Vedānta Deśika's state of absolute detachment and his unflinching devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

1.4.6ab Vegā Setu Stotram

This contains 10 verses in praise of the Lord of Tiruvelhā near Kānci. He is the divine dam across the Vegā river, who helps the devotees to cross samsāra.

1.4.7 Science and technology in Vedānta Deśika's works

In the works of Vedānta Deśika, one can find references regarding certain scientific and technological aspects.

1.4.7a Aeroplane

The speedy navigation of the aeroplane.

Rabhasa gati

---

9 Raghuvira Gadyam
The broad plane of the *devás*.

*Viyat payodhim varatām viśālam vimānadiptena garutmata nabh* ¹⁰

1.4.7b Cloud

The watery clouds pour as rains with air and lightning.

*Soudāmanyā saha kamalayā sahyajā vṛddhi hetubh*

*Kāle kāle carati karunāvarṣukabh kṛṣnameghaḥ* ¹¹

1.4.8 Philosophical works

*Vedānta Deśika* has no comparison in philosophic discussions and *vedāntic* writings. He greatly succeeded in subduing other *vedāntic* philosophies and established the supremacy of *Viśistādvaita* on a sound footing. His twin objectives in philosophical writings are:

➢ *Paramata nirasana* (refutation of views of rival schools of thought)
➢ *Sva siddhānta sthāpana* (establishing the views of his school of thought)

His philosophical writings can be grouped under the following two types:

➢ Commentaries
➢ Independent treatises.

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¹⁰ Yadavabhadrayam xviii-18
¹¹ Paduka Sahasram 311
1.4.8a Philosophical commentaries

The philosophical commentaries of *Vedānta Deśika* includes the following:

- *Tatva Tīkā* – (commentary of *Sṛi Bhāṣya*)
- *Tātparya candrikā* – (commentary on *Sṛi Bhagavat Gītā*)
- Commentary on *Isāvāsyā Upaniṣad*
- Commentary on *catuṣ śloki*
- Commentary on *Stotra ratna*
- Commentary on *śaranāgati gadya* of *Sṛi Rāmānuja*
- Commentary on *Sṛi Ranga gadya* of *Sṛi Rāmānuja*
- Commentary on *Sṛi Vaikuntha gadya* of *Sṛi Rāmānuja*

1.4.8b Independent philosophical treatises

The following are the independent philosophical treatises of *Vedānta Deśika*:

- *Tatva Mukta kalāpa* with his own commentary *sarvārtha siddhi* (for establishing *Viśistādvaita* philosophy after logically refuting rival schools of thought).
- *Nyāya siddhānjana* (to establish the *viśistādvaita*)
- *Nyāya pariśuddhi* (for reconstructing *Nyāya* on vedantic lines based on epistemology and logic).
➢ **Adhikarana sārāvali** (explaining the *Brahma Sūtra* on the lines of Sri Rāmānuja’s *Viśiṣṭādvaita*).

➢ **śeswara Mimāmsa** (to prove that Jaimini in his *Pūrva Mimāmsa* truly believed in God).

➢ **Rahasya Traya Sāra** (written in *manipravāla* style in highly sanskritised Tamil explaining the quintessence of *viśiṣṭādvaita* on the basis of *Vedānta*, *Divya Prabandha* and *mantric* lore).

➢ **Sillarai Rahasya** (written in *manipravāla* style in highly sanskritised Tamil oriented towards *Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophy and *vaiṣṇava sampradāya*).

➢ **Deśika Prabandha** (select tamil verses)

➢ **Nyāya vimśati, Nikṣepa Rakṣā, Nyāsa Tilaka, śaraṇāgati-dipikā, Nyāsa Daśaka, Adaikalapattu, Abhaya pradhāna sāra.** (For stressing the importance of **surrender** (*Prapatti*) to the Lord).

### 1.4.9 Tamil works

The following is the list of works of *Vedānta Deśika* in tamil which include both rahasya works and poems:

#### 1.4.9a Rahasya Books

- **Amirtaranjani**
- **Amirtasvādhini**
- **Adhikāra sangraham**
- Paramapada sopānam
- Hastigiri māhātmyam
- Paramata bhngam

1.4.9b Poems
- Pandhupā*
- Kazhalpā*
- Ammanaiipā*
- Oosalpā*
- Yesalpā*

*- These work are believed to be lost and hence not available

1.4.10 Miscellaneous works

The following are the miscellaneous works of *Vedānta Deśika:*

- Bhūgola Nirnayam
- Silpārtha sāram*
- Tirumudi Adai vu*
- Stheyavirodham*
- Chakara Samarthanam*
- Vaiśvadeva kārika
- Guru paramparā sāram
- Dathi pañcakam
- Yamakaratnakaram
- Daśadipaka nighantu
- Vedārtha sangraha vyakhyanam

*- These work are believed to be lost and hence are not available*