Indian Philosophy has to tell a long tale of at least three thousand years during which it witnessed many vicissitudes and survived them all. The six systems of Indian Philosophy, more popularly known as the "Sañ-darśanas" are by themselves the glaring example of the long process of harmonious synthesis of the doctrinal differences and ideological incompatibilities prevailing in the cultures of the then native and foreign peoples. At times the clash might have accentuated. Still, Indian people, proverbially known for their broad, tolerant, flexible and synthetic outlook, have shown a wonderful capacity of adjustment and readjustment throughout the long and chequered history of their culture and country. This is the secret of the tremendous vitality which gave their culture resilience to withstand all ferocious attempts to break its continuity. The real test of its mettle began with the menacing inroads of Musalmans from the tenth century A.D. onwards. The advent of Islam has worked as an effective factor in practically every aspect of life during that period of Indian history, better known as the Middle Ages or Sultanate period. There is no denying the fact that it was 'a new peril facing the Hindu Society', which would have suffered utter ruin by a slight negligence. 'The same process of conflict and synthesis, but intensified a thousand times, occurred' But it would be more proper to say that 'the aggressive attitude of this new (Muslim) element in the population led to the religious, cultural and psychological resistance on the part of the people(Hindus)'. There were 'some periods of serious threats to the very existence of Hinduism'. They were to be answered with undaunted spirit of resistance accompanied by caution and sagacity.

During this period, the medieval mystics in the North as well as the South and all great Vaishnava Acaryas came one after the other. Before we reach from Sri Sri Sadaracarya (S) to Sri Vallabhacarya (V), the last but not the least great Vaishnava Acarya, it becomes absolutely necessary to have a bird's eye view.
view of the historical, political, social, religious and philosophical backgrounds which heralded the advent of the great Vaisnava Acarya.

(1): **Historical and Political background**

**A) The North India:**

After the Arab conquest of Sind, the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni and the invasions of Muhammad Ghori so affected the historical and political conditions of the country that the reins of power went into the hands of Muslims for about six centuries. The surging waves of the invading Muslims incessantly dashed against and blazed the dissident Hindu rulers, engaged in internecine wars. Apart from some individual cases, the Rajput rulers neither realised the imminent danger nor joined hands to overthrow the foreign invaders. The solitary example of Prithviraj Chauhan, bravely waging war against Muhammad Ghori, shows the lack of unity among the native rulers. Moreover, it was unwise on their part to stick to the lofty ideals of chivalry and war with the wily deadly enemies who never shrank playing fraud or treachery in the most faithless manner. Anyhow the Rajputs fell an easy prey to them and paid in terms of their precious life for their own folly.

The Muslim rulers founded their Sultanate in Delhi. Attracted by the valuable booty and plunder, the new rulers began to dream of converting the whole of India to Islam according to the canons of their Holy Quran. They tried to set up a type of Muslim state known in the then Islamic world. Thus it became a theocracy, an empire of the faithful. The Qasim served as the political advisors of the Sultans and encouraged their Islamic zeal and bigotry in the name of Holy Quran. All this inspired the rulers with the fanatic enthusiasm to its extreme. So the state was mostly existing on continuous and predatory warfare. There was no stability in the administration as such and the whole state looked like a ‘military and nomadic’ campaign. The Sultan was the absolute and all-powerful autocrat and the commander of the faithful.
This gave rise to patricidal and fratricidal activities for obtaining the throne.

(B) The South India:

It is a historical fact that the South India had come into Muslim contact much earlier than the North, but it did not suffer much at the hands of Muslims till the thirteenth century A.D. when Malik Kafur, the enthusiastic commander in the army of Ala-ud-din Khalji, led a surprise raid on the southernmost part of India. The Hindus had upper hand here as against their utter helplessness and political inferiority in the North. The shock inflicted on them roused their spirit of resistance and they gird up their loins to fight out their deadly enemy under the single banner of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar. Simultaneously there was founded a Muslim dynasty at Gulbarga just nearby. Constant enmity and feud went on between these two empires. But the Hindu rulers came out successful in shouldering the heavy responsibility of the conservation of the Hindus and their religion, which were to be defended with vigilance and wisdom against the impending dissolution from threatening from many directions. The South Indian Hindu empire flourished at its zenith as against the Muslim rule which was unpleasant and beset with murder, bloodshed, debauchery and drink. It should be noted that the political status accorded to the Hindus as well as the followers of any other religion, whether it was Jainism or Buddhism or even Islam, did not differ in the least. This brought a sort of political and social stability in that empire, even though many wars were fought between the Hindu rulers and their Muslim enemies.

(C) Political status of the people:

As noted above, the Muslim Sultans on the throne of Delhi wanted to establish an empire of the faithful for which purpose they drew their legal strength from the fundamental principles of law as laid down by the Holy Quran. So "theoretically, and often in practice also, the Hindus or infidels could scarcely expect to be treated on a level with the Muslims in the eyes of the Law." It is expressly stated by the then Muslim chroniclers themselves that the non-Muslims
non-Muslims or infidels were to be strictly curbed and if possible exterminated totally." The Quran (IX.29) calls upon the Muslims to fight those who do not profess the true faith, till they pay 'jizya' with the hand in humility (ham saekhirum). Politically the Hindus were contemptuously called as 'khiraj-gusar' and 'zimms' which explicitly indicate their political inferiority and utter helplessness. The Hindus were not only not given any high post in the state but were also subjected to all sorts of harassment arising from the fanatic barbarity and wanton cruelty of the rulers. The blood-thirsty and bigoted Sultans like Ala-a-din Khilji, Firuz Tughluq, Sikander Iodi and many more kept the high ideal of waging Holy War against the infidel Hindus. This led to the sad and shocking tale of rackless orgies resulting in large-scale massacre and marauding, gruesome pillage and rapine, inflicted upon the Hindus. Apart from the exceptional cases of less fanatic Sultans, this condition was prevalent in almost all Muslim states at that time. As against this the Hindu rulers were never seen to wax show such fanaticism. They appointed Muslims even on the key-posts. The empire of Vijayanagar set an ideal of equality of all people regardless of their creed.

(D) Conclusion :-

This brief sketch of the historical and political condition of the country as a whole and its inhabitants makes it quite clear that the Hindus and their religion were passing through a serious crisis. They were to be defended and uplifted. The North and the South did this in their own ways. The religious renaissance during this period, brought about by the medieval mystics was the indirect result of the overall historical and political condition. Politically it was rather difficult to restore Hindu religion and culture to their previous position through the Hindu rulers, even though the Vijayanagar empire tried its utmost to fulfil this mission to a considerable extent. So the only alternative was to get this herculean task done through the religious teachers. They did it so successfully that the Hindu religion and culture were once again saved from the merciless onslaughts of their deadly enemies.
(2) Social background:

In a way the social condition is the direct reflection of the historical and political environments. This has become more strikingly true during the period under consideration.

(A) Hindu Society:

As noted above the Muslim rulers and their advisers, Qasim, kept the cherished ideal of Holy War against the non-Muslims and their total subjugation by way of mass enslavement and such drastic measures like large-scale massacre and forcible proselytizing to Islam. In order to guard themselves against their deadly and uncompromising enemy in form of militant Islam, the Hindu teachers of religious literature began to create a coat-of-mail by way of tightening their social rules. The age old caste-system was made more rigid by sharpening the edge of social ostracism. Among the famous four major castes, the Brahmins still enjoyed special privileges for which they proved their worth on occasions. Still, there arose a definite protest against their traditional superiority. The outcastes and untouchables were doomed for ever to menial labour and were treated in the most inhuman way. The position of women also was equally pitiable. The old doctrine of perpetual subjugation of women as well as their life-long tutelage under their male relations at successive stages of their lives was followed most enthusiastically. The women were segregated and early and child marriages came into vogue. The custom of Suttee or willing self-immolation by the Hindu widows was encouraged to a great extent for preserving the chastity of women. The Hindu kings used to marry many wives and there was no dearth of courtesans employed as emissaries by the kings. The Devadasis or dancing girls in temples were the speciality of the day. Again slavery was a regular custom duly sanctioned by the kings. The majority of the people lived in villages and depended on farming. There were landowners and labourers of whom the latter suffered a lot at the hands of the former. Still, people were generally happy and prosperous. This was the condition of all, Hindus and non-Hindus in the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and other Hindu states.
In the Muslim states Hindus were subject to all possible harassments. They were never appointed as high officials. The Sultans, strictly following the canons of Islam, condemned them as 'khuraj-guzar' and 'zimmis'. They were allowed to live because they paid 'jizya' and served as the menial labourers. The Muslim kings like Ala-ud-din Khalji are said to be "particularly suspicious of the wealthy Hindus and made their laws in such a manner that no Hindu would be able to ride a horse, to carry arms, to wear rich clothes or to enjoy any luxuries of life." In short, the Muslim sultans turned out as bandits for the Hindus who underwent endless miseries. The Hindus had to live in perpetual dread of the religious bigotry and intolerance of the Muslims during the rule of even the so-called most enlightened and liberal-minded Sultans. This brought pressure upon the Hindus either to embrace Islam and enjoy all advantages due to Muslims or fall prey to the blood-thirsty sword of Islam. The Muslims delighted most in capturing Hindu women as slaves. They were forced to serve as dancing girls in their courts.

(B) Muslim Society

Being the conquerors the Muslims naturally took up pride for their high status and looked down the Hindus with contempt. Their social customs were different from and at times poles apart from those of the Hindus. The Sultan was the despotic autocrat possessing infinite powers. He was guided and advised by the Qazis and Maulavis in legal, administrative and religious and social matters. The Umers and Ulamas came after him in dignity. The royal slaves enjoyed a privileged state and being the favourites of the Sultan, they could influence upon him. The Muslims of the lower strata lived in poverty and squalor. There was complete equality among all Muslims in the eyes of Islam. But this high ideal was limited up to their brother-in-faith only and they never showed any liberality towards the Hindus. They had their own conceptions of physical purity, customs of marriage, widow remarriage,
Hindu-Muslim relations and their effects:

Because of the fundamental difference about the cardinal doctrines between the Hindus and the Muslims it is idle to seek for some common meeting ground for them. Yet it is equally true that the constant relations between them have brought about some influence on each other. But this has been confined to a fringe, external element of life.

The Hindus are famous for their liberal spirit of toleration and reverence for all religions. But the Muslims were not at all affected by these ideals otherwise even an inkling of such spirit would have been visible at some time. On the contrary they fostered aggressive attitude towards the Hindus. The primary antagonism due to religious differences resulted in communal clashes which accentuated at times. A Chinese wall of communal bitterness arose between them.

It is said that the medieval mystics like Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and many more arose as result of this communal dissension and tried to wipe out the bigoted sectarian tendencies. But the effect was short-lived. The Hindu religion had to find out its own way for the survival.

The injustice and inequality of rights experienced by the Hindus raised the feelings of sullen bitterness and resentment in their hearts. The rigidity of caste-system and intensification of social exclusiveness in matters of food and marriage among different sections of the people increased very much. The tremendous shocks to the Hindu society given by Islam through its proselytising activities led to the hardening of the Hindu orthodoxy which became identified with the only repository of Hinduism. Thus the Hindus overcame the greatest problem of their survival and escaped from total extinction.
The Dharma-dōstra literature of the time supported and encouraged such behaviour. The Hindu society as a whole underwent many changes.

The Muslims were so much influenced that they introduced a sort of caste-system, customs of marriage and worship of idol following the Hindus. All this shows that the Muslim society was fast becoming Indianized and the effects were quite visible. As regards dress, food, art, architecture, and other luxuries of life mutual influence was perceptible. Yet the Islam was more eager to eschew Hinduism rather than allow it to co-exist in compromise.

The Hinduisms is said to have fostered ascetic and other-worldly attitude which was challenged by the non-ascetic, this-worldly, vital and social attitude of Islam. The whole structure of Hindu society appeared to have been shaken to the very foundation. Keeping in view the contradictory characteristics of the two communities, the medieval mystics tried to exercise their influence on both and bring them nearer. In any case, they failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of the Hindu society to any appreciable extent.

(B) Conclusion:

The overall impact of Islam on the Hindu society demanded an intrinsic and lasting change from within. The social order of the Hindus required purification by way of eradication of evils in religious ideas and social practices. The history was repeating itself under new circumstances as it happened previously and was to happen after the attack of Christianity also. Hindu society and culture, if they were to prove their unparalleled capacity of adaptability and readjustment, had to change sufficiently according to the new circumstances. The doctors of social laws and religious teachings realised this. What was impossible politically was brought about socially and religiously.

There is every possibility to argue against and criticise the ways adopted by the then social law-givers and religious teachers. But the peculiar adverse environments through which the whole society was passing are enough to justify them. The medieval mystics were, in a way, the products of the new social need. The religious teachers of the path of devotion fixed their minds on the
the adoption of total surrender to the Lord for protection. The Hindu reformers paid all attention to the survival of their society. The series of great Ācāryas, preaching the path of devotion, is a concrete example of the way in which the Hindu society tackled this problem.

(3): Religious background:—

The proper perspective of the religious background is absolutely necessary for the right understanding of the major movements and developments clearly perceptible in the time just following the advent of Islam.

(A) Hinduism:—

During this period the ritualistic religion of the Vedic period still exercised its influence on practically the whole of India. Buddhism was in a way ousted from India, while Jainism was becoming weaker. Once again the orthodox Brahmanism reigned supreme though it had ceased to be a homogeneous sect. But the one great peculiarity of Indian culture as a whole was clearly visible that it adds to, but seldom altogether supersedes, the old institutions, and faithfully preserves, as far as possible, all relics of the past.  

History stands witness to the fact that the Hinduism has absorbed and assimilated all the religious peculiarities of the invading people. They were so much so Indinised that their original form was practically impossible to recognise. Hence it has been remarked that 'the Indian religions tell the same story of unity and uniformity; and that 'India, like ancient Egypt is a land saturated with religion.' Religion has served as a life-breath of the propagation and preservation of the Indian culture and has proved as one of the most important and dominant factors that moulded the lives of the Hindus. Hinduism survived because of its peculiar concepts of God, soul, karma and rebirth. Though polytheistic in outward nature it has reached the heights of pure monotheism. So Dr. Radhakrishnan has remarked: "Hinduism is not a sect, but a fellowship of all who accept the law of
The Hinduism that was gaining a new mould was later on seen as Vaishnavism of the mystic saints and Acaryas on one hand and Saivism with its different schools on the other. Shakti or devotion to the Lord became predominant as time went on. The temples of Lord Vishnu and Siva played a very important part and served as a meeting place for the devotees of all castes. The religion confined to the higher strata of society up till now was coming to the doors of the common people. The idols were worshipped in all temples with pomp and colat. The temples of South India were conspicuous by the presence of the Devadasis or dancing girls. Vaishnavism, patronised by the Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar, waxed stronger. Other sects, orthodox or heterodox and even the Islam were given full freedom in that empire. With all respect to the orthodox rigidity of caste system and other social customs, the religion was undergoing a new revival in the sense that it was becoming slowly but surely the religion of the masses. The common people engaged themselves in celebrating festivals. A sort of religious suicide had become prevalent to some extent.

(B) Islam:

It has already been noted that the Muslims had come with their own religion which was 'equally well-formulated and definite' as the Hinduism. Again they wanted to bring the whole country under the single sway of Islam by winning teeming millions for their religion. They strictly followed the commands of Quran for curbing and exterminating the Hindus by way of sword and by on mass proselytising. Keeping this in view, the advent of Islam has been regarded as an effective factor in the religious history of India. Islam was 'a fiercely monotheistic religion. It cannot allow any compromise with polytheism or admit a plurality of deities. It gave a really great shock to the Hindu religion in particular. The followers of Islam, believing themselves as the true and rightful adherents of the only true faith on the surface of the earth, ruthlessly inflicted gruesome orgies upon the Hindus, demolished their temples, mercilessly massacred thousands of Hindu saints and Buddhist monks and burnt their valuable books to ashes.
All the followers of Islam were regarded as brothers-in-faith. Thus there was equality of all the Muslims in the eyes of Islam, but they did not show any liberality towards the non-Muslims. They were deadly enemies of idolatry. So their iconoclastic zeal led to the demolition of almost all Hindu temples. Islam was declared as the state religion and enjoyed all the special privileges. Islamic theocracy accepted an ideal that under it their can be only one faith and one people and no place for non-believers. The doctors of true Islam allowed no other alternative but death or Islam. The Muslims fought Holy Wars or Jehads in the name of Islam. Thus the militant Islam always remained fanatic and intolerant towards the non-Muslims.

(c) Hinduism versus Islam: a two-way traffic:

The meeting of two cultures always gives rise to a two-way traffic in all aspects of life. Similarly Hinduism and Islam influenced each other when they came into close contact. For Hinduism the adversities aggravated and the situation became so grave that at one time the problem of its survival proved difficult to solve. The merciless onslaughts of Islam were incessant. So Hinduism had to offer a solution which would resist the enemies on their own grounds and consolidate itself.

The plurality of deities was justified on the ground that they were but different capacities of one and the same God who was the all-powerful Almighty. Of course, this was neither new nor along the lines of Islamic ideology. The Vedas and the Upanishads taught this high ideal of monotheism. The impact of Islam merely served as an impetus to the already known ideal which was somehow thrown in the background temporarily.

The dangerous movement of forcible proselytising adopted by Islam opened the eyes of the Hindus who thereafter tried more to make Hinduism as the religion of the masses rather than that of the classes. The language of the people was adopted as the medium for religious purposes and propaganda.
Thus the religion became easy to understand. The importance given to Bhakti in preference to Jñāna and Karma appealed the common people most.

To wipe out the blemish of untouchability and out-casteism, the Hindu revivalists allowed all, irrespective of caste, colour or sex, to the new mode of worship. Thus equality in the eyes of religion was getting an upper-hand. Of course, there was considerable rigidity prevalent among the upper classes. But the new outlook and tendency could not be suppressed so easily. At the same time it should not be forgotten that the Hindu religion had endeavoured in this direction long before the advent of Islam. Still the impact of Islam cannot be overlooked altogether.

As the Hindus were denied all freedom of performing any religious rites in public, they resorted to building temples and such religious places at a place removed from the eyes of Islam and kept them as the private property of the religious teacher concerned.

Being well-known for their toleration and reverence for all religions, the Hindus tried to bring about compromise with the Islam by presenting some of the concepts of Islam in the new garb of Hinduism. The Allopaniṣad written in the reign of Akbar is one of the glaring examples of this process.

The Islam in its turn was also influenced by Hinduism. The path of devotion exercised profound influence on the Muslims and there arose the 'sāliyan' or spiritual saints. Some of the religious ceremonies were the results of this influence. The religion of Islam underwent substantial change. The Sufism was profoundly influenced by Hinduism. The majority of Muslims generally lived a religious life, scrupulously following the moral standards of Islam. Thus there is hardly any doubt about the fact that a class of Muslim thinkers was influenced by the rich heritage of thought in India. The Muslims in a way accepted a sort of idolatry and plurality of the objects of worship.
..... worship under the influence of Hinduism. The Fira, their miraculous legends and the celebrations of their birth-dates are to compete the Hindus on their own grounds.

(D): The medieval mystics :-

The most characteristic feature of the religious evolution of this period is the prominence of a number of devotees, generally known as saints or mystics. It has been remarked that the series of great religious personalities is a result of the impact of Islam on Hinduism. There is some grain of truth in it. But the influence was both ways. There are some discernible common characteristics among the reformist saints. They were non-sectarian in the sense that they were not related to any particular sect and did not desire to establish a separate sect of their own. Being free from the bondage of any creed, they had no blind faith in any sacred scriptures. So they did not observe any rituals or ceremonies. They believed in one God and declared the unity of God invoked by various religious sects under different names as Rama, Krishna, Siva, Allah, etc. So they condemned polytheism and severely denounced idolatry. They preached Bhakti as the only means of Moksa. Bhakti meant for them single-minded, uninterrupted and extreme devotion to God without any ultimate motive, growing gradually into an intense love, akin to one's love for the dear and near ones. According to them Brahman or Ultimate Reality, called by different names, was the source of eternal bliss. It can be realized after rigorous purification of body and mind from all sins. A spiritual teacher or Guru was absolutely necessary for this purpose. But even he cannot procure Moksa which was solely dependent on the grace of God.

Generally they accepted vernacular as the medium of preaching because they wanted to uplift the masses. So their essential principles were put in simple parables and maxims which easily brought home to even ordinary uneducated rustic mass the universal truths.
A brief survey of the religious and reformatory activities of these saints will be useful here.

The comprehensive sect of Ramananda of Kashi is regarded as the first result of the conflict between Hinduism and Islam. His radical reform is his attempt to remove the difference between the Brahmins and the Sudras and to make them dine together if they were devoted to one God. Besides the use of vernacular, his most important reform is the introduction of the purer and more chaste worship of Rama and Sita instead of Krishna and Radha.

Kabir was his worthy disciple who spread this movement to a great extent. He held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all. Being fearless and out-spoken he severely criticized the narrow-minded fanaticism and unscrupulous orthodoxy of the Hindus and Muslims. He was an earnest attempt to bring Hindus and Muslims nearer. But it did not survive long after him. Dada followed him in principles.

Nanak, the famous Sikh Guru, was more successful in his attempt to remove communal bitterness and dissensions. He holds a unique and high place in the socio-religious history of India. He laid more stress on the role of a Guru and the grace of God. He insisted that a real spiritual seeker must possess purity of character and conduct and follow a high ethical code.

Gautama alias Gauranga was one of the greatest saints in medieval India. He belonged to Nadia. Being a veritably God-intoxicated devotee, he always remained wrapped in mystic and emotional experience and uttered the name of Krishna. He started a new mode of religious life by giving sole importance to the emotional and devotional songs. He preached the path of Bhakti conspicuous by passionate love for the Lord Krishna. He insisted on universal love and brotherhood which gave him popularity. His movement gave a new turn to Vaishnavism which flourished more afterwards. Similar was the mode of Bhakti accepted by Mirabai of Mewar.
The names of Tulsidas, Surdas and Warsinh Mehta should not be forgotten. Each one of them preached Bhakti in his own way. But Warsinh Mehta combined in him the qualities of a Nārāyni and a Bhakti which made him the most popular saint of Gujarat. The religious activities of Jnanadēva, Namadeva, Tulārām and Ramdas made Maharashtra bubble with a more sober and refined cult of Bhakti of Lord Viṣṇu. They also tried to remove untouchability and establish the equality of all in the eyes of God.

The southern-most parts of India gave us many saints and sects who promulgated a new type of Bhakti. It was different from the calm, dignified devotion of the Bhāgavatas of North. They gave importance to a fervid emotional surrender to God. Śiva and Viṣṇu were made the main objects of intense emotional Bhakti and their devotees moved all over the country to establish their superiority under the leadership of one gifted saint. This great wave of religious enthusiasm became strong when there arose many mystical saints, popularly known as Ṣāivas. Their Bhakti was gentle, simple and free from a sectarian outlook. Their hymns describe mystical union with Lord Viṣṇu and are replete with allusions to Śrīpaśṭa-stories. All persons, irrespective of their caste or sex, were openly admitted to this cult. The Saivismata also produced many saints. But it degenerated when its different schools like Kapālīka, Kālāmukha, etc., admitted licentious orgies and gruesome and repellant tenets and practices.

The Islam saw such devotional and emotional activities gaining an upper-hand in Sufism. The Sufis were eclectic Muslims who showed traces of deep influence of the pantheistic ideas of Hinduism. This cult was meant for the learned and devout minds in Islam and not for all people. It was essentially a faith—an intellectual emotional enjoyment, reserved for the philosophers, and mystics free from bigotry. So many Sufis had to part with their lives at the hands of fanatical Muslim rulers.
In light of the above discussion, it can be safely concluded that during this period there were many attempts at bringing about some happy compromise between Hinduism and Islam. But they were either nipped in the bud or frustrated in the middle by the antagonistic fanatic activities of the Muslims, who never moderated their bigotry. The impact of Islam demanded of the Hindus that they should find out their own way to save their age-old religion which was the very basis of their culture and keynote of life. There is no denying the fact that there were some common characteristics between the two rival religions. But they were superficial and did not touch the deeper chord of their lives. There was a two-way traffic which was visible in the religious activities of this period. But it will be idle to trace the roots of some of the cardinal doctrines of Hinduism like the Bhakti-movement and monothelism to the direct impact of Islam. It is only to a limited extent that the Islam can be regarded as giving impulse to these activities which were lying dormant. The rise of non-sectarian mystics and the Sufis should be attributed to the conflict of the two religions. But the strenuous efforts of the former did not survive then, whereas the latter suffered much at the hands of their co-religionists. Still, it can be remarked that at a time, when religious ideas tended to become dry, lifeless and static and rituals and ceremonials took the place of spiritual enlightenment, the teachings and personalities of the saints galvanized the inert masses. 

Hinduism flourished more in the South which served as a stronghold of Hinduism. Many great saints like the Alvars and the religio-philosophical Acaryas came one after the other and made rigorous attempts to save Hinduism from the ruthless onslaughts of Islam. Their credit lies in the fact that by their precepts and more by their examples, they placed the doctrine of Bhakti on a high pedestal above all rituals and ceremonies and emphasized the role of intense, uninterrupted and unmotivated love of God as the sole means of salvation.
Thus at the time before the advent of Sri Vallabhacarya
the whole country was passing through a great crisis in all
walks of life the people at large were in need of a soothing
balm which could relieve them of their heart-rending pain
which had arisen because of their feelings being wounded by
the iconoclastic zeal and anti-infidel fanaticism of Islam.
The religion had to appeal the heart rather then the head and
the hand and to give consolation to the people by establishing
utmost importance of total self-surrender to the Lord who was
the only saviour. They were to be assured of His unfailing
succour to the needy and distressed who sought His shelter
with unflinching faith. The regions writings of pre-Vallabha
saints and Acaryas all over India are replete with this attitude.

(4) Philosophical background :

Philosophy and religion are not strictly separated
in India. Philosophy, called Darśana, was regarded as giving a
comprehensive and close realization of the Ultimate Reality. Out
of the six philosophical systems Vedānta has been regarded as the
Darśana par excellence. It is the highest exposition of Indian
philosophy in its theoretical and practical aspects. The Vedānta-
sūtras of Bādarāyana, identified with Vyāsa, are, by common
consent, regarded as the best manual of Vedānta. They are un-
rivalled for metaphysical profundity and organic unity. But being
cryptic and concise in form, they have given rise to many
diametrically opposite interpretations. There were many comment-
ators before Śrī Śaṅkarācārya whose Bhāṣya is the oldest extant
commentary on this work. Between him and Śrī Vallabhācārya fall
the great Vedāntic Vaisnava Acaryas like Śrī Rāmānujaścārya, Śrī
Nimbarkācārya, Śrī Madhavācārya and others who tried to bring out
the purport of the Vedānta-sūtras in their own ways. All those
later Acaryas refuted the doctrines of Ś. This shows that the
philosophy needed during the middle ages of Indian history did
not go well with the Kevālavaita of Ś. His doctrines of absolute
monism, the theory of Mēyō, the path of knowledge as the sole
...... solo means of Moksa, etc. that have proved competent enough to defeat all heterodox systems in the past, became the objects of severe criticism. In order to have the proper perspective of the Suddhādvaita school of Vedānta, promulgated by V., it becomes necessary to have a bird’s eye view of the philosophical schools prevalent in the pre-Vallabha period. For this purpose, a fresh summary of the principal doctrines of the Vedāntic schools of the four great Acaryas viz. S., R., N., and M., is given below.

(A) Kevādvaita or the absolute non-dualism of S. :-

(i) Brahman :— According to S., there is only one Supreme Reality, called Brahman or Paramātman. It is one, eternal, homogeneous consciousness in its essential nature. It is non-dual, undifferenced, unconditioned and indeterminate universal consciousness. Being 'absolutely destitute of qualities' and formless, is beyond the reach of all empirical proofs. It is possible to describe it in negative terms only. Still, the scriptures declare it as being of the nature of Sat or existence, Cit or intelligence and Ānanda or bliss and also as truth, knowledge and infinitude. It is throughout nothing but intelligence, which is its exclusive nature and not its property. It is both the material as well as the efficient cause of the whole creation. Yet its essential nature is unaffected by the process of creation, so it is said to be immutable and impartite. It is the cause from which proceeds the origin, subsistence and dissolution of this world which is extended in names and forms, which includes many agents and enjoyers. It is both Śiva or the positive and Sat or the existent entity.

(ii) Jīva :— The so-called Jīva is non-different from the Absolute. The atomicity, agency and being a part are not the Jīva’s real nature, but its nature as a Sāṃśārin (transmigrating soul) and that in reality it is all-pervasive and identical with Brahman. The finite souls have come out from
..... from the Absolute spirit directly like the sparks from the fire.\textsuperscript{55} So each individual soul is in essence the supreme reality, unchanging and unmodified. Intrinsically, they are but one, for each is alike the supreme reality.\textsuperscript{56} Though there is no ontological difference between the \textit{jīva} and \textit{Brahman}, the former becomes as it were different from the latter due to \textit{Avidyā} or nescience. Thus the \textit{jīva} becomes related to the adjuncts of the body, the sense-organs, \textit{manas}, \textit{buddhi} and \textit{ahāraṇa} which make him limited in extent, knowledge and power. This is how he becomes an agent and享受er.

(iii) \textit{Jagat} :- The appearance of this entire world is due to the association of \textit{Brahman} with a certain power called \textit{Māyā} or \textit{Avidyā}, which is the undefinable cause.\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Isvara} or the determinate lower \textit{Brahman}, in association with the said \textit{Māyā}, brings about the creation, subsistence and dissolution of this phenomenal world-appearance. The \textit{Jagat} is said to be \textit{Mithyā} or illusory in the sense that it has only practical importance and empirical or relative reality. It appears to be real because it is superimposed on \textit{Brahman} which is its real basis. The \textit{Māyā} is 'anirvacanīyā' or indescribable and inexplicable in the sense that it cannot be described as existent or non-existent (\textit{sadasadvikalpamā}).\textsuperscript{58} It is a \textit{Bhāva} or positive something, but is not \textit{Sat} or existent in reality.\textsuperscript{59} Thus the doctrine of \textit{Māyā} is 'a riddle impervious to all attempts at probing into its nature'.\textsuperscript{60} In the words of Bertrand Russell, 'A completely rational explanation of the world is not within the scope of man's intellect'. But the world-appearance is not \textit{Sat} however so illusory as the perception of silver in the conch-shell.\textsuperscript{61} The \textit{Jagat} is said to be a \textit{Vivarta} or perversion of \textit{Brahman} and so it is called \textit{Mithyā} since it is sublated by true knowledge. This is how S.'s theory of \textit{Vivarta} or causation without transformation is posited. In all probability the \textit{Jagat} is not a mere contraction of human mind as the followers of pure idealism would have it or is not absolutely real as the realists would have it.

(iv) \textit{Mokṣa} :- The highest goal for \textit{Jīvas} is the realization of his inherent nature of being absolutely non-different from \textit{Brahman}. 

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Brahman. The Jīva forgets his innate nature when he falls in the cycle of birth and death due to Avidyā. To get himself freed from Samsāra he has to acquire four pre-requisites or qualifications which are: the discriminative knowledge of what is eternal and non-eternal (nityānityavastuviveka), disinclination to the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world or the next (ikṣamutraphalabhogavirago), attainment of six qualities like tranquility, etc. (śamadāśāśādhanasamprat) and desire for release (mamukṣaṇa). Again it is said that Mokṣa is attained through the highest knowledge only. But this does not mean that it is either 'utpāda' (produced), or 'vikārya or saṁskārya'. It is an accomplished fact and already existent at all times. So it is merely the realisation of this state through the destruction of beginningless ignorance. The pure light of Brahman as the identity of pure intelligence, being and complete bliss shines forth in its unique glory and the Jīva begins to realise it directly. This is a permanent state from which there is not return to samsāra. Hence it is called nīdāreyas or the highest good. Here it is important to bear in mind that the attainment of Mukti by any individual soul does not lead to the total annihilation of the world. All that is involved in this is the displacement of false outlook by the true one and not the annihilation of the world.

S. gives proper impotence to the paths of karma, bhakti and yoga. Still he lays more stress on renunciation of the world and establishes the supremacy of Jñāna over all these paths. According to S. there is possibility of Mukti even in the embodied state. He accepts sadyo-mukti or immediate liberation and krama-mukti or gradual liberation.

(B) Visistadvaita or qualified non-dualism of R.:

It is true that S. freed Indian thought from the agnostic and nihilistic tendencies of Buddhistic idealism and enthroned the spirit of the Upaniṣads once again in the heart of Hinduism. But his absolute non-dualism made everything illusory except the Supreme Reality which was arid, motionless and devoid of all feelings. So it...
it is quite unable to respond to the heart-felt devotion and emotional prayers of devotees. Thus being more concerned with the head rather than the heart, S's philosophy did not prove attractive to the common people who were hankering after the most merciful and highest God who could save them from distress and despair. Consequently the post-Saṁkara Vedantic Rājāyas ruthlessly refuted S's doctrines and tried to reconcile the extremes of monism and pluralism, realism and idealism and religion and philosophy. R's ethical monism satisfied all these needs and set a new example in the philosophy of religion.

(i) Brahman:— According to R, the Supremo Reality or Brahman is called Viṣṇu or Narāyana and Pārama-purūsa or Puruṣottama. He is the same Iśvara who creates, sustains and destroys the world. He is both the material and the efficient cause of this world. He is endowed with all imaginable auspicious qualities and devoid of all evils. He is all-pervading, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-merciful, possessed of truth, knowledge and bliss. He contains all things in him. The matter (cāt) in all its various modifications and the individual souls (cit) of different classes and degrees are essential real constituents of Brahman's nature, and form his body. They are related to the Supreme as attributes to a substance, as parts to the whole, or as body to the soul which animates it. They are called prakāaras or modes, sāpas or accessories, niyānya or the controlled, while the God is the supporter, controller and the principal. Thus, the cāt and the cit are entirely dependent and subservient to the Lord who is their antaryāmin or inner-controller. The world and the souls are eternal and as real as God. All three form a complex whole and the Brahman is described as a unity. Thus, there is the non-dualism of the differences. This is the internal difference or svagata-bheda in the Brahman who is otherwise devoid of all homogeneous or heterogeneous differences. He is one because he is the innermost of all. The same Brahman qualified by the body in form of cit and cāt is the cause when he is in subtle state,
state while the same becomes the effect in the gross state. God himself, by his volition, develops into effect but does not undergo any change in his essential nature. So he is called immutable and inconceivable.

From the religious standpoint, God is said to manifest himself in five forms which are as follows:

(a)Para or the highest Brahma is called Visnu or Narayana. He resides in Vaikuntha and is described in a picturesque manner. His consorts Lokan, Bhū and Līlā accompany him. The nitya or eternally liberated souls and other liberated souls enjoy his company and serve him in all possible ways.

(b) Vyūhas or modes are the forms assumed by the Lord for the purpose of worship, creation, etc. They are four in number inclusive of Vasudeva who is the highest of all. The other three modes are Saikarṣeṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.

(c) Vībhavas are the different avatāras taken by the Lord.

(d) Antaryāmin: He dwells in the heart and is seen by the yogins. He accompanies the souls in their passage even to heaven or hell.

(e) Aśavatāra is found in holy idols in temples.

All this shows that God resides everywhere, but does not change or get polluted in the least. His very essence consists of nitya-vibhūti which always remains pure and untainted.

(ii) Jīva: As shown above Jīva forms the body of Brahma. He is created, controlled, preserved and governed by the Lord. He is real, eternal, endowed with intelligence and self-consciousness, without parts, unchanging, imperceptible and atomic in size. He is a knower, an active agent and an enjoyer. He is not mere consciousness but possesses consciousness. He is distinct from the world and the Brahma and retains his individuality for ever. Though monadic in substance he is infinite in intelligence, His consciousness is vibhu or all-pervasive and infinite. But when he is in saṁsāra his Jīna becomes contracted (saṅkrucita) by Avidyā-karma. It is in association
association with acit that the pure self becomes subject to ignorance and selfish desires. The body, sense-organs, etc. with which the Jīva becomes associated are different from him. But he thinks himself identical with them due to ignorance. He possesses dharma-bhūta-jñāna or essential attributive knowledge which becomes contracted when he is in saṁsāra and again becomes expanded when he becomes free from its bondage. Though he is dependent upon Brahman, the Jīva has free-will to perform all works which give him pleasure or pain.

The Jīvas are classified into three types which are as follows:

(a) Nitya: These are eternal souls who never fall in the cycle of birth and death. So they are also called nitya-muktas or ever-liberated. Ananta, Garuda, etc., are such souls. They constantly enjoy the company of the Lord Nārāyaṇa. They always attend upon Him and act according to His will.

(b) Mukta: The souls who become liberated from saṁsāra and attain Vaikuntha. They also enjoy the blissful company of the Lord along with the nitya souls after they have been duly received by the other liberated souls and the Lord.

(c) Baddha: The souls who are actually under the spell of saṁsāra are called the baddha or bound ones. They are further divided into three or four classes. Some crave for the pleasures of this world. Some try to get heaven. There are still others who desire for Kāivalya or the highest knowledge. While there are other souls who pine for the eternal bliss of mukti. They are regarded as superior to all others.

(iii) Jagat: The acit or non-sentient matter stands for Jagat. It is real and eternal like the Jīvas and Brahman. It forms the body of Brahman as do the souls. It has been noted that the one Brahman transforms itself into the world and the souls. Thus they are its particular states or parts. The world solely depends upon Brahman for its existence. The universe is regarded as the Viśv-vibhūti of the Lord. The acit becomes gross and visible from its
... its subtle state by the volition of the Lord. It is needless to say that the Brahman It-self manifests or evolves as the creation. When it dissolves into causal state the world becomes destroyed.

The act is divided into free kinds: pure or sūdhā sattva, mixed sattva and devoid of sattva. The sūdhā sattva is called nitya-vibhūti. It is eternal, characterised by jhūma and ānanda, without rājas and tamas and very wonderful. It constitutes the material of the bodies of God and liberated souls. The mixed sattva is the same as prakṛti or the māyā possessed of three guṇas. It is unconscious mutable matter. It is likened to the Sākhyan prakṛti. But unlike it, the mixed sattva does not begin of creation of its own accord. The kūla is the third type devoid of sattva. It is eternal and aids in sport.

According to R., the Jayat is the real effect of the real cause. He believes in sat-kāryavāda or para-mānavāda. So he refutes the view that the world is illusory and there are perceptions of illusory kind. This is his sat-kārya or yathārtha-kārya. He says that all perceptions are real and determinate. In illusions also the real thing is perceived because of the process of panĉākaraṇa or quintuplication.

(iv) Mokṣa: According to R., Mokṣa consists in freedom from samsāra, attainment of supe-rmundane sphere and enjoyment of the highest bliss in the presence of the Lord. By the grace of Lord the jīva cognizes and meditates on him and reaches at his death everlasting blissful existence from which there is no return into samsāra.66) The liberated souls possess all glorious qualities and power's similar to those of Brahman. But they do not get ability to create or to sustain the world. Their consciousness expands to infinity and they become svārāt or autonomous. It is because of this expansion of their knowledge that the Jīva's are sometimes said to be identical with Brahman. As a matter of fact they are inferior to and dependent on Brahman. They remain atomic and distinct from him. They attain aprakṛta or supernatural bodies consisting of sūdhā sattva.

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They go to Vaikuntha, the highest abode of the Lord and are
accordingly received by the other liberated souls who are already
there and by the Lord Himself. Thus the multas attain vicinity
of God and enjoy his supreme bliss. According to R., multa is
 numérique or sameness of nature with God. It is not absolute
identity or absorption of the individuality of the soul. But it
is visista-saiva or qualified similarity. The Jīva experiences
the supreme and unsurpassable bliss of Brahmanubhava or direct
realisation of God. Thus the liberated souls attain eternal
communion with God who imparts His nature and modes to them and
infinitizes their intelligence. Yet they retain their atomic size
and individuality.

R. accepts the importance of Karnayoga or path of action,
followed in a disinterested manner, Śāhayoga or the path of know-
ledge, characterised by the true knowledge of the essential nature
of the self as different from soul, and Bhaktiyoga which is the
same as uninterrupted meditation. meditation. This scheme of three
yogas marks the different stages in the progressive realisation of
nuliti. Here, karma and Jhāna are regarded as accessory to bhakti.
The prescribed obligatory karmas are helpful for the purification
of mind and inner-organ. They give rise to Jhāna. But they are not
to be given up even after the rise of Jhāna. The Jhāna raises
vairūgya or detachment from saṃsāra. Of all, lays utmost stress
on bhakti which is in a way a particular kind of knowledge. It is
sober and steady meditation upon God. It is 'salvation in becoming'
as Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it. By the grace of God bhakti becomes
intense, R. quotes from Boddhaya's vr̥tti the seven means to bhakti
which are: (1) vivarža or purification of the body, (2) vinoda or
freedom from the cycle of passion and anger, (3) abhyāsa or constant
thinking of the presence of God, for kriyā or performance of the
five mahāyajñas, (5) kalyāṇa or practice of virtues like satya, etc.
..... satya, etc. (6) anavasāda or freedom from dejection; and (7) amudābha or absence of elation. R. has emphasized upon the complete self-surrender or Prapatti and Saranāgati, which implies (1) svarūpa-samarppa or the conviction that one belongs to the Lord, (2) phala-samarppa or the submission of all fruits to God and (3) bhuma-saran rampa or the transfer of all responsibility for mokṣa to God. Again there are six constituents of Prapatti which are: (1) ātmānandasya sāmkalpam or a resolution to yield, (2) prātikālāsya varjanam or the avoidance of opposition, (3) rakkṣa-sayātītī visvāsā or a faith that God will protect, (4) gopika-prasa-varam or acceptance of God as savour, (5) ātmas-ātmapāla or throwing one's whole soul upon him and (6) kāmpāṣa or a sense of helplessness. There are five items which the devotees has to pursue daily. They are: abhisēmā or approach to the temple, upādāna or collection of articles of worship, ījya or service to God, svādhyāya or study or recital of holy hymns and yoga or concentration of mind on God. The devotees following this path are of four kinds: Ṛṣta or one who is in trouble, jīmān or one who is desirous of knowledge, arthāthi or one who aspires for prosperity and worldly objects and jñānī or one who possesses true knowledge. Out of these, the prapatti of an Ṛṣta-bhakta is regarded as the best of all.

(6) Dvaita-dvaita or dualism and non-dualism of an N.:

Just as R. criticized S., similarly N. refuted the doctrines of S., Sri Bhāskarācārya, and R. His theory of unity-in-difference is also called dualistic monism.

(1) Brahman:—The supreme reality is a personal God who is called Sri Kṛṣṇa or Hari or Purusottama. He is Gopī-Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Rādhā. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, possessed of infinite qualities and powers, all-pervading and eternal being. He is the ultimate cause and support of the world and the souls. He is both the material and efficient cause of the
of the world, Brahmâna is the material cause because it transforms itself into the form of the world. Again it is also the efficient cause, because it is its own self which transforms itself into the form of the world. God does not undergo any essential change by this transformation. It is only its cit-sakti and acit-sakti that it transforms into conscious and unconscious entities respectively. It is God's nature to create and not that there is any want of perfection in him that he creates. He is self-complete and ever-perfect, and He creates the universe out of the fullness of his nature, out of the abundance of his bliss. N. further adds that the Lord does not need any external material for the creation of the world. Being all-powerful, he is able to create by his mere will. Thus his sakti forms the material cause of the world. The relation between Brahmâna and the world as well as the souls is that of difference from and non-difference or identity at the same time. This is known as bhedâbheda or to put it more clearly svabhâvika-bhedâbheda. Here both bhedâ and abheda are equally real. Brahmâna is the creator, preserver and the destroyer of the creation. He enjoys absolute freedom in all his activities. So he is free to extend his grace and mercy to any soul and give him freedom. Though not bound by the law of karma, he actually abides by it and gives freedom to the deserving only. In his pure and transcendent nature, God is beyond his three natures as souls, the world and even as God. He is the unity of pure being, bliss and consciousness. He realises his infinite joy through the infinite number of souls who are his constituent parts or aliases. He is the indwelling spirit and inner-controller of the souls. He is both transcendent and immanent. God is self-luminous, self-sufficient, self-determined, inconceivable and immutable.

N. accepts twelve other râjâ vyûhas like Kesava, etc., along with the famous four vyûhas. There are three avatâras or incarnations: (1) Gupavatâra or incarnation according to the three gupas, viz., Brahmâ, etc., (2) Purusavatâra or the antaryana in the world and the individuals, and (3) Kâlavatâra or the incarnation for the
... for the sport, like Matsya, etc. There are further divisions of avatāras as the āvesavatāra and the svarpavatāra. Radha, accompanied by her friends (sakhīs), stands on the left side of Kṛṣṇa.

(ii) Jīva:- The Brahman manifests itself through the numberless souls whose very existence and movement and all activities depend upon it. The Jīvas are eternal parts of Brahman, atomic in nature and limited in powers. Being associated with beginningless chain of karma, they suffer from the ignorance which differentiates them from Brahman. But they are under the complete control of God who grants them pleasure and pain according to their deserts. The Jīva is the knower, an active agent and an enjoyer for all time. He is of the nature of pure consciousness yet he should also be regarded as the real knower. He continues as distinct from Brahman both during the state of bondage and emancipation. Though partless and atomic in size, the Jīva pervades through the body through his consciousness. The supreme soul completely pervades him through his all-pervading nature. Thus the Jīvas are in one sense different from (bheda) God and in another sense but constituent parts of him. This is how there is unity and difference between God and the souls. The Jīvas are apt to forget their aspects of unity with God when they are in saṁsāra and feel themselves independent. They apparently suffer from birth and death and pleasure and pain, but in their essential nature they are identity of sat, cit and ānanda. Ānanda pertains to the Jīva in all his states. The Jīva is unborn, unchangeable and intrinsically pure. He is different from the Brahman as he is the worshipper, the knower, and the controlled whereas the Brahman is the worshipped, the object to be known and the controller, but the difference is not absolute because the Jīva as a part of Brahman is identical in essence with it.

There are three types of Jīvas: the baddha or bound, the baddha-sūktas or the liberated from the bondage and the sūktas or the eternally liberated. The baddhas are of two kinds:
...kinds: (1) the bhuhuksus or those who make effort to attain future good and those who remain permanently in the sanās and (2) the ām māmukus or those who desire for the noku in form of the attainment of Bhagavad-bhūvā and those who aspire for attaining the very svarūpa of the Lord.70)

(iii) Śāj Jāgot:— As noted above the acit or non-sentient or unmatter is the manifestation of the acit-sakti or non-conscious power of the Lord. So the world along with its modifications is real. It solely depends upon the Lord for its existence. So it is said to be non-different from the Lord and his part. Similarly it is different from him because its nature is different. Brahman is its material as well as the efficient cause. It is by God's will that his sakti manifests as the world. The world is pre-existent in Brahman in an implicit condition, and becomes explicit after creation. Thus being a real transformation of the power of God, it is identical with Brahman and depends on him for its becoming and its power to act, yet it is distinct from Brahman. Thus there is svabhāvika-bhedābheda between the world and Brahman.

The inanimate world is co-eternal with Brahman and different from acit. It has three principal categories (tattvas), which are: (1) aprākṛta or what is not derived from the primordial prakṛti, such as the stuff of the divine body aiding to R.‘s buddha-sattva, which is the basis of mitya-vibhūti of God and serves as the means and object of enjoyment for the free self in paramapada, (2) prākṛta or what is derived from the prakṛti with its three gases and serves as the place, means and object of enjoyment for the bound self, and (3) kāla or time! Thus prakṛti and kāla are the basic principles of cosmic existence. These three categories are real and eternal like the Jīvas. N. accepts satkhyāti.

(iv) Moha:— According to N. mohana is the realisation of the essential similarity with God by the Jīva. He abnegates all actions, desires and motives and feels himself to be one with and constituent of God. The individual soul abides in the Lord as a part of his energy. As all unripe (aprārabdha) karmas are destroyed,
destroyed, the Jiva is likely to attain release. But N. believes that there is no possibility of multi until the ripe or prehabhdo karmas are completely exhausted through their enjoyment. During this period the Jiva has to perform the prescribed nitya-karmas.

The released souls live in and enjoy eternal bliss. They become one with God. But there is no total annihilation of their individuality even in the state of multi. The difference between Brahma and the Jivās is natural, real and eternal. So it persists in mokṣa also. Similarly, the liberated souls retain their atomicity. At the most the karmas attain full development of their real nature which is similar to and not absolutely identical with Brahman, for they are devoid of omnipresence (being atomic in size) and omnipotence (having the powers of creation etc. and being absolutely under the control of Brahman). There is Brahmis-Haiva or sāya in multi and not avasāntlyā or self-identity, nor vidistāntlyā or organic inseparability.

There is only videha-multi or liberation after death and not jīva-multi or liberation in the state of living.

N. prescribes five means to mokṣa. They are kama or action, jñāna or knowledge, bhakti or worship, prayātatti or complete self-surrender and guru-paṇḍita or self-surrender to the spiritual teacher. The karmas are to be performed in a disinterested manner. They are not the direct means. Yet they purify mind and lead to the rise of knowledge which is necessary for mokṣa. Knowledge means the understanding of the reality of Brahman and the self. N. gives importance to upṣa as another essential means to mokṣa. It is of three kinds: (1) meditation on Brahman as one's own self, i.e., inner-controller, (2) meditation on Brahman as the inner-controller of the Jagat and (3) meditation on Brahman as different from the Jiva and the Jagat. Prapatti is a special śūkṣma to mokṣa. Like R. N. also accepts the six factors of self-surrender to God, viz., a resolution to yield, etc. N. insists on the knowledge of the
of the following five things: (1) the nature of the Supreme soul, (2) the nature of the individual soul, (3) the fruit of God's grace or moksa, (4) the feeling of enjoyment consequent to bhakti and (5) the nature of the obstacles in the way of the attainment of God. In self-surrender to the Guru the soul has not to worry about anything, for the teacher himself does everything for the moksa of the Jiva. There is also the mention of sravana, manana and nididhyesana, but it is quite clear that N. lays more stress on bhakti and prapatti. Here love and devotion to God, springing from the conviction of helplessness and unworthiness on the part of Jiva and the bestowal of grace by the Lord are the only means to moksa.

(D) Dvaita or dualism of N.:

N. too criticises the philosophical doctrines of his predecessors, viz. S., R., and others. But his main attack is on the pure monism of S. His doctrine is generally known as Dvaita-vada because he wants to show the inadmissibility of absolute non-dualism of S. N. accepts two reals, independent (svatantra) and dependent (paratanta). Yet he regards only one of them, viz., God, the supreme being, as the one and only independent principle and all other finite reality as dependent. This shows that the word 'dualism' is inadequate to express the full content and depth of meaning that N. has put into the term 'dvaita'. Some modern Vedanta-ites venture to suggest 'svatantravadityabrahma-vada' as an alternative designation for N.'s system.

(i) Brahman: - The Supreme Reality is personal and is known as Lord Vigna who is also called para, parama, sarvottama, etc. He is the one only independent transcendent reality. He is full of all attributes and completely free from all imperfections. According to N., God is pure infinite unmixed bliss. He possesses infinite and all-embracing knowledge and innumerable powers. He is unborn, eternal creator, preserver and
... and destroyer of the world and the Jivas. Being the all-doer and the giver of reality to all, Lord Visnu is to be regarded as bringing about the world as the expression of his paramesvaraya or supreme lordliness which is identified with his avatantrechoha or independent will. He is only the efficient cause of the world which has prakriti as its material cause. He is regarded as the author of the eight functions, viz., creation, maintenance, destruction, control, knowledge, bondage, salvation and hiding (kāraṇa) (śrińā). This shows that the Lord is omniscient, omnipotent, inconceivable and super-excellent. He is different from all material objects, souls and prakriti. His body is universal, all-pervading, spiritual and constituting consciousness and bliss. He possesses six qualities of lordship: infinite rulership, vigour, glory, strength, power and knowledge. God and his qualities are non-different. By his extraordinary and inconceivable powers the Lord is able to control and impel men in activities. He permeates the living and non-living. He alone is the cause of all bondage, as well as of all liberation. All knowledge that arises in all individual souls and the instruments employed have God as their one common ultimate cause. He is the prameyā or goal of attainment, the jñeya or the object to be known and the gnyya or attainable. He is partless, extremely subtle and immutable. God assumes various super-natural vyūhas for his manifestation and takes avatāras or incarnations. Lord Visnu is accompanied by his female counterpart in the form of Lakṣmī, who is identified with God's creative energy or Maya.

(ii) Jīva:— The individual souls are infinite in number and atomic in size. Yet they can pervade their bodies by intelligence which is all-pervading. The Jīva is knower, enjoyer and doer. He is partless, eternal and unchangeable in his essential nature. He is apparently seen to be connected with birth and death because of his connection with or departure from the gross body. He becomes subject to pleasure and pain because of his superimposition of the doership on himself. His perfect jñāna and bliss
bliss are obscured by the influence of his own merits and
demerits. They become manifest by the grace of God. Though dependent
on God, the Jīvas is yet an active agent free to adapt means to
mokṣa. Of course, he is never absolutely free as his free activity
is controlled by God. M. accepts that there is real difference
between God and the Jīvas and it lasts eternally. God is the master
worshipped by the Jīvas who are like his servants, and are possessed
with finite knowledge, limited power and absolute dependence on him.
The souls can, at the most, be said to be similar to God because
they possess some qualities similar to Brahman in essence. M. even
gives a new conception of pratibimba (reflection). It means that the
Jīvas are mere reflections of God in jāta or inanimate prakṛti
which serves as a mirror. Again it shows that the Jīvas cannot have
any existence apart from the existence of God and cannot behave in
any way independent of his will. Being conscious entities with will
and feeling, they are essentially similar to God. Though reflections
the Jīvas are not at all destructible. When it is said that the
individual souls are parts of God it simply means that they are
similar to God in certain aspects and are at the same time much
inferior to him.

There is another concept of a self-luminous sākṣi
associated with each individual soul. He helps the Jīvas to cognise
all things distant or near.

The souls are divided into three kinds which are as
follows:–

1) Sattvika souls are those who are devoid of all
impeffiences and are full of knowledge and goodness. They are also
called the nitya or eternally free souls. Lakaśmi, etc. come under
this class.

2) Bhūta souls are those who become liberated from
the bondage of saṃsara. The Gods, the pījas, the pītas or gandhas, the
pā or king and the naras or men come under this category.

3) Baddha souls are those who are bound in the cycle
of birth and death. Some of them are multi-yogyas or fit to be
The world has divided as its material cause. It is
identified with maya or purva which is God's will or eternal
word, the concept of Lord Visnu. It manifested as the
residuary deity of the infinistic propensities. It manifested as the
various forms as brahma, sattva, etc., yet she is real and eternal, she
possesses a non-material body which consists of knowledge and bliss.

She is ever-luminated, faultless and subtlest except God. According
to him only.

The doctrine of the five real differences between God and souls,
which is positionable a substance (dhatu) body which survives death
and helps the next birth and a swarupa body which is conscious-
ness itself.

The world of plurality is a real
manifestation (vritti) of God who is the real cause. The creation
in a divine sport which is the expression of God's overflowing
mercy. The state of the five real differences between God and souls,
which is positionable a substance (dhatu) body which survives death
and helps the next birth and a swarupa body which is conscious-
ness itself.

Each one of these souls in different from every other
soul and even if conditioned the souls differ from one another
in their respective purities, qualifications, or conditioned.
It is only in its system that there is the doctrine of eternal
damnation as Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it.

The souls are said to possess a gross (sthula) body which survives death
and helps the next birth and a swarupa body which is conscious-
ness itself.

The doctrine of the five real differences between God and souls,
which is positionable a substance (dhatu) body which survives death
and helps the next birth and a swarupa body which is conscious-
ness itself.

The world has divided as its material cause. It is
identified with maya or purva which is God's will or eternal
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She is ever-luminated, faultless and subtlest except God. According
to him only.
pure (saddha) āraṇī, dependent (parādhina) āraṇī, mixed (midra) āraṇī and absolute (kevala) āraṇī. He believes in satkarya-vāda as well as asatkarya-vāda in a limited sense. His concept of prakṛti is similar to that of the Śāṅkhyā in so far as he accepts the three guṇas: sattva, rajas and tamas. But it is different in other respects. Prakṛti is a substance (dravya) which is impure, non-sentient (jada), evolving (parināmi) and under the control of God. It forms the stuff of the subtle bodies (linga-saṃkāra) of all living beings. The creation starts by God's will after the equilibrium of the prakṛti is disturbed and the three guṇas are separated. The different categories of matter, etc., and their presiding deities are created after this. Kāla is a direct product of prakṛti. There is one avyakta bhūta or unmanifested space which is quite different from the elemental sky; for it is eternal and remains the same in creation and destruction. Time is coexistent with it.

He accepts ten categories, viz., substance (dravya), quality (guna), action (karma), class-character (sāmya), particularity (visēga), qualified (visīṣṭa), whole (aṣṭi), power (sakti), similarity (samājaya) and negation (abhaṭva). The dravyas are twenty and include Paramātmaya, Lokaṇi, souls, avyaktakāsa, prakṛti, its evolutes, avidyā, varpa, anhaṭa, vāsanā, kāla and reflection.

(iv) Mokṣa:—According to M., Mokṣa is the realisation of the real nature of soul and its immediate perception. The liberated souls retain their atomicity and difference from the Lord. They attain some qualities similar to those of God. Yet they are completely under the control of God. Again it is peculiar to M. alone that there are gradations in the enjoyment of the muktas according to their capacity and qualifications. The enjoyment of muktas is of four kinds: (i) sālokya-mokṣa or residence in heaven and being there with God to experience satisfaction and enjoyment by the continual sight of him; (ii) saṁyukta-mokṣa or continuous residence near God, such as is enjoyed by the sages;
..... sages; (iii) sārūpya-mokṣa or the enjoyment, limited only to the attendants of God, of outward forms similar to that which God possesses, and (iv) sāyujya-mokṣa or the entrance of the jīva into the body of God and his identification of himself with the enjoyment of God in His own body. Sārūpya-mokṣa is but a species of this mokṣa and means the enjoyment of the same powers that God possesses. This can only be done by entering into the body of God and by identifying oneself with the particular powers of God. The deities only deserve it; for they can come out of the Lord and remain separate from Him. It is said that the bhaktas have direct perception of Vāsudeva in Svetadvīpa while the muktas enjoy sārūpya, etc., in Vaikuntha.

In short, the muktas enjoy God's company and His bliss through the body consisting of suddha sattva. Though the released soul is svakīya or His own he is a step below God.

According to M., the proper understanding of the five real and eternal differences is one of the important means to mokṣa. Karma as such is not a sādhana, for it arises from superimposing doership on the jīva who is dependent and hence non-doer. But it is insisted that jñāna precedes karma which is its result. It is said that niskṛṣa karma or disinterested action always purifies the mind and helps the rise of bhakti and jñāna. Bhakti and dhyāna are independent of jñāna which is in the form of freedom from all preconceptions and is vairāgya. Vairāgya consists in realising the worldly objects including Loksā as anitya or non-eternal and asāra or insignificant. The devotion to Viṣṇu is the result of vairāgya. The desire to know Brahman requires such disposition and the grace of Lord Viṣṇu as indispensable. The inquiry into Brahman is a process of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana and expresses itself in two forms: 1. svadhyāya or study of the Vedas and pravacana or preaching which is the superior of the two and pleases Viṣṇu. M. insists on the rise of direct realisation which
which is brought about by bhakti and makes a person enjoy philosophy of Brahman according to its intensity. This is release in this life.\textsuperscript{84} In this stage the jīva realises Visnu as the all-doer and himself as solely dependent on Him. He experiences ekatva or oneness and becomes free from delusion and misery. M. says that jñāna destroys avidyā and aprārabdhas and not the prārabdhas which are exhausted by bhoga only. Meditation or often and intense absorption in the glory of God leads to direct knowledge. For this the grace of God is absolutely necessary but it is noteworthy that it is showered in proportion to the intensity of devotion and faith of the bhakta.\textsuperscript{85} This means that the jīva has to work hard for the grace of God who makes him deserve it by making him follow necessary śādhanas. M. refers to nitya or permanent and anitya or impermanent gurus where the former are superior to the latter.

Lastly, it is worth noting that M. has most strongly urged the fasting on the Ekādasas, marking the forehead with the black vertical line, etc. Constant prayer of Visnu, singing of His names and performance of the karmas without any desire for fruits are said to lead to moksa.

The foregoing discussion shows that the historical, political, social, religious and philosophical backgrounds heralded the advent of one of the greatest ācāryas of this sacred land who have exercised great and deep impression on the moulding of the whole life of the people. Being practically the last, though not the least, V. has as if given a finishing touch to the philosophical thinking to bring it in consonance with the teachings of Badarāyana. In religious matters V. had one great advantage over his predecessors as he was practically the last great ācārya. He tested the interpretations of the B.S. of the previous ācāryas on the anvil of eternal authority of scriptures and improved upon them by revising and enlarging many a religious and philosophical matter. All this
... this has been dealt with in Part I and Part II. Here a brief sketch of the life, the works, etc., of V. is given in order to understand his religious and philosophical views.

His parents: V. was born in samvat 1535 (1479 A.D.) on the eleventh day of the dark half of the month of Castra (Vraja-Vaisākha) in Cempāranya near Codanagar in the Central Provinces under very peculiar circumstances. His father Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa and mother Yallamagaru were speeding towards the south to escape the so-called raid of Muslims on Kāśi, when V. was born. The parents were utterly dejected to find their prematurely born child as still-born. Leaving it in the cavity of a Sāmali tree, the parents began their onward march. But a miracle is said to have happened according to which the husband and wife hurried up to the original place where they found, to their utmost joy, that their newly-born child was alive and was playing in the midst of fire! Overpowered by motherly love, Yallamagaru rushed on to her dear baby and hugged it to her breast. This incident has induced the Śaṅkara Bhaṭṭas to regard V. as the incarnation of Vaisvāmara or Fire-God who is said to be the very mouth of the Lord V. himself was quite conscious of this fact and hence called himself as 'Agni.' This is not unusual because the other acaryas, S., R., N., and M. are said to be the incarnations of Lord Saṅkara, Śiva, Sudarsana and Marut respectively. Anyway, such feeling always inspires the Śaṅkara to perform some great work for the humanity at large and the religion and philosophy in particular.

It may be noted here that the ancestors of V. were the inhabitants of a great city, Kāncharavad, on the south of the river Kṛma, near mount Vyomastambha in Andhra. He belonged to a Telugu Brahmana family famous as Vellanat or Valam ṇā which belonged to the Bhāradwāja Gotra and followed the Taittiriya school of Kṛma-Yajurveda. From the fifth ancestor, Yājña Yajñiva Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa down to Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa they performed hundred Soma rajñās which are traditionally said to make Lord Viṣṇu incarnate as a son in
in such a family. The worship of the avara idol of Bala-Krsna, now in the seventh pitha, is being carried out since then.

Childhood and Education: Even as a child V. showed his extraordinarily sharp and penetrating intellect and prodigious and encyclopaedic memory which earned him the titles, Vikrpati or the master of speech and Balasarasvatī or baby form of the goddess of learning. Being initiated at the age of seven, V. was put under the able guidance of Vilasa Bhātta (elsewhere called Madhavananda or Vijnucitta). V. equipped himself with the ancient lore and learning and became well-versed in the orthodox and heterodox systems of Indian Philosophy. After the death of his father V. went to his maternal uncle in Vidyanagara in the south where he fully acquainted himself with the Vaisnava and Saiva systems. All this convinced him of the inadmissibility of the interpretations of the B.S. by all his predecessors.

His travels: V. is said to have travelled thrice throughout the length and breadth of India. During this he could get the first hand knowledge of the then political, social and religious condition of the whole country. He used to propound and preach his new doctrines of Brhamavāda and Purāminya on the authority of the four sacred scriptures, viz., the Vedas, the B.S., the Gītā and the Bhāgavata. He came across persons of varied interest and religious bigotry whom he won over and convinced of the truth on his side. Still there were not a few occasions when his life was threatened at the hands of the fanatic followers of rival schools. It is traditionally believed that the idol of Sri Nāshajī manifested itself on mount Govardhana in Vraja and V. was miraculously informed of it. He went there immediately and got a small shrine erected which was afterwards renovated as a massive and magnificent temple by one Purnamalla Kṣatriya, a devout disciple of V.

Out of the various feats of V., the one that brought him laurels of praise and India-wide fame as the great acarya and Mahā-
... Mahaprabhu is his uncommon victory over the Śāṅkara scholars in the religious debate held at the court of King Nārapādeva of Vidyānagara. It is reasonable to regard this incident as having taken place when V. was of thirty. Overpowered with joy at this incident and entranced by the charming personality, graceful and humble manners and above all the profound learning and deep thinking, the King celebrated this unforgettable occasion with royal pomp and dignity. This is known as 'Kanakaśhīkēśa' or declaring him as an ācārya by weighing him with gold, the highest honour that can be conferred on an ācārya. But V. showed non-attachment of a very high order by getting the amount distributed among the Brāhmaṇas. Similarly, he showed exemplary modesty by humbly refusing the offer of the pontifical seat by the then Madhava ācārya, Vyāsatīrtha.

On his tour in the east V. visited Jagannātha Puri where he is said to have been successful in summing up a hot religious debate by giving the word of decision that the Gītā (lit. that which is sung by the son of Devaki) is the only scripture, the son of Devaki (Krṣṇa) is the only God. His names are the only mantra (sacred formula) and His worship or service (seva) is the only religious work. He used to recite the Bhāgavata wherever he went. People gathered around him and many became his disciples after undergoing the famous sacred ceremony called 'Brahmasaṁcārya'. This won for him a worthy disciple in Śrī Madhava Bhātta from Kesava Kāṁśritra, the famous ācārya of the school of N. V.'s exposition of the Bhāgavata was peculiarly new and revealing and led to the religious and spiritual revival in the Hindu society. V. is reported to have met Śrī Kṛṣṇacitānaya, a very great Vaiṣṇava ācārya of the Bengal.

It becomes clear from his writings that V. was much worried about the then condition of the Hindu society. He became very sceptical and nervous when he actually saw the pitiable condition of the Hindu society and Hindu religion. His TDN and Kṛṣṇacitānaya furnish the graphic picture of such gloomy condition. It is stated that all religious paths were destroyed in the sinful age of Kali and people were more addicted to the hypocritical religious life. The
...The Mlecchas ransacked the country and rendered it into a veritable place of sins. The good and religious people were tortured and tyrannised. The holy places like the river Ganges, etc., were abounding in wicked persons and all the gods had left them. Even the gods were under the influence of Buddha, an incarnation of Hari. They took various incarnations as Brähmanas and deluded all by spreading diverse doctrines and dissuading people from the worship of Kṛṣṇa. The twice-born were dull-witted and unable even to recite the mantras correctly. The Vedas, etc., were dishonoured and people followed immoral ways of life. Being mentally perverted and deluded, they addicted to the taste of tongue and sensual pleasures. The different religious sects like that of Siva, Śakti, and others were getting prominence.

This amply supports the discussion of the religious and other conditions that have already been dealt with. V. devoted much anxious thought to this burning problem and declared according to the need of the day that the agency of God alone can save people from total destruction. So he preached the path of absolute self-surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa as the only shelter. Viewed in this light V.'s teaching of the path of divine grace or pusti seems to be the reasonable solution offered to the people.

Settled at Adel:- Though V. went on touring for about two decades he made the holy land of Vraja and Kāśi as his centre of activities. Vraja had natural attraction for him because it was the holy land of the divine disports of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His childhood. The same Lord manifested as Devadāmana whose shrine was erected by V. as noted above. He often visited Vraja and stayed there during the four months of rainy season. But Kāśi, the famous seat of learning, had equal attraction for him because he could meet with his rivals there and propagate his new doctrine of Śuddhādvaita or pure monism. While living in Caraṇādri near Kāśi, V. severely criticised māyāvāda of S. which created a great
great upheaval in the Śaṅkara scholars who came into direct conflict with him. The incessant visits of scholars for philosophical discussions unduly interrupted V.'s daily performance of the seva of Śrī Thākurajī. So he wrote a small treatise, called Patrāvalambara, to silence his opponents and attached it on the entrance of the temple of Kāśi Vāsavesvara. This aroused the jealousy of some fanatic rivals and endangered V.'s life. So he perforce left Kāśi, of course, for the good of the philosophical thought at large with his own, as he could write all his important works after he settled at Ādel near Prayāga.

Just before this V. had married one Mahālakṣānī alias Akṣajī, a daughter of Devānā Bhata of his own community. He got two sons, Gopīnātha (sāvat 1567) and Vīthalānātha (sāvat 1572), later on known as Gūṣṭānjī and Mahāprabhuji, V. made his third tour after his marriage. He visited Saurāstra, particularly Dwāraka, twice.

Communion with Lord Kṛṣṇa—The path of Puṣṭi preached by V. was not his own invention as he himself declared in the very beginning of Śiddhāntarāhasya. He says that once while in Vraja, he had divine communion with the Lord who manifested before him on the bright half of the month of Śrāvaṇa. That was the eleventh day of that month. The Lord asked him to preach the new path of bhakti which was to be followed after undergoing the ceremony called Brahma-samjñānābandha which destroyed the five dohas or impurities known as saṣājā, desakaloṭṭha, saṃyogaja, sāpuraja and lokavedanirūpita. Here all worldly possessions are to be dedicated to the Lord through total self-surrender. The first man initiated in this path was Damodarādas. Afterwards many were initiated in this path irrespective of their caste, colour, sex or nationality. V. has declared at many places that the path of Puṣṭibhakti was meant for all including the women, the śudras and other outcastes. Even the Muslims were allowed to embrace this path as the examples of Alikhan and Taj Bibi show.

Last days—V. has noted that the Lord commanded him twice to leave this world before he actually left it. During that
... that period he hurried to finish the various works at hand. He wanted particularly to complete his commentary on the Bhāgavata called Subodhini. So after finishing the first three skandhas he began his commentary on the tenth skanda. But he could not go beyond a few adhyāyas of the eleventh skanda.

As he has described in his Sannyāsanirnaya, V. began to feel the intensity of unbearable pangs of separation from the Lord. He found that the house and relatives were hindrances to the fulfilment of his bhakti. So at the age of fifty-two he adopted Tridanda sannyāsa, about two months before his actual passing away. He renounced his house and lived in a small hut on the bank of the Ganges. He observed the vow of silence and abstained from taking food before a week to his death. On the second day of the bright half of Asadha of samvat 1587 (1551 A.D.) he prepared to leave this world. His two sons, other relatives and devout disciples surrounded him and requested him to enlighten them as regards their duties. As he observed naun, V. wrote some three verses and a half in Sanskrit on the ground. They are the noblest teaching of the acārya and are known as Siksāsārdhatrayaslokā.

The last message:— The small message referred to above, is enough to give the clear picture of the grand ideal and high moral standard that V. always kept before himself. Here the message means that the devotees should not turn away from the Lord under any circumstances; otherwise they will be ruined as their bodies and mind will fall prey to the vices of the sinful age of Kali. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not to be looked upon as an ordinary master of the world but is to be resorted to as the only shelter and saviour. The devotees should completely devote themselves to Him, and turn their minds from the objects of worldly enjoyment. They should worship Him with all heart and soul and He will manage all things for them.

All were choked with heart-rending grief at the mere idea of the imminent departure of their beloved acārya and were
... wore sobbing. But the departure was inevitable. The acarya entered the waters of the Ganges and became invisible for ever. It is traditionally said that he arose in the form of a brilliant divine light which ascended to the heaven. Further it is said that the Lord Himself manifested and consoled the bereaved family and others who were still mourning.

**His personality:** The portrait of V., by Monahar, the famous painter of Sikander Lodi, has been preserved in Krishnagad. Therein V. is shown teaching his three disciples. The broad forehead and eyes full of compassion are the index of V.'s being a profound thinker and a great humanitarian. The lovable and wellset chin and even nose are eloquent of the harmonious synthesis of the three paths of karma, jñāna and bhakti. His sitting in jñānamudrā shows that he had superb eloquence, matchless reasoning and persuading power. In short, V. was one of the greatest acaryas who was the outcome of the highest ideals cherished by the then Hindu society. It is not mere sectarian exaggeration when Gadadhara says that V. combined in him the amsas or parts of Agni, Vyasa, Narada, Rudra and Śrī Kṛṣṇa who represent the five qualities, viz. uncommon eloquence, maturity of knowledge, supreme devotion, inclination for renunciation and all-powerfulness. Having born prematurely in the midst of jungle in a stillborn state, V. really possessed steel-nerved and sound physique and iron will, which enabled him to withstand unusually extreme heat and cold of this subcontinent while he travelled through its nook and corner. Though he combined in him the extraordinary and rare gift of sharp intellect and sound reasoning, V. was primarily the promulgator of the path of devotion of the highest order. His was a fully integrated personality where the ideals of his teaching were harmoniously put into practice in a successful manner. His personal life set a concrete example of the ideal life of simplicity, modesty and unassuming nature. Bearing sound and spotless moral character he was a great lover of the beauties of nature which becopo to him of the melodious divine music of his Lord Kṛṣṇa. The halting places, beṭhakas, and his permanent residence
.... residence are the glaring examples of this. But above all
he considered the seva of Lord Krsna as all in all of his life.
So he called himself Sri Krsnadasa or the servant of Lord Krsna.
The humility before God made him offer and do everything in His
name which generated the sense of non-attachment towards worldly
possessions.

All this was sure to lead him to strive hard for the
uplift of the suffering multitudes. He gave a new interpretation
to the paths of karma, jhāna and bhakti by offering their harmo-
nious synthesis. His doctrine of divine grace is based on this
new outlook. The jīvas and the paths open to them were classified
accordingly. The pusti, maryāda and pravāha jīvas correspond
roughly to the followers of the paths of bhakti, jhāna and karma
respectively. Though believing in the eligibility of the persons born
in the first three castes, viz., Brāhmaṇa, Ksatriya and Vaiṣya, for
the study of the Vedas V. struck the new path of devotion where
all were welcomed irrespective of any barriers of caste, colour,
sex or nationality. This broad-based outlook won for him many
disciples who wanted to escape social injustice and religious
bigotry.

To save the Hindus suffering in all walks of life at
the hands of bigoted Muslim rulers, V. tried to find out some
feasible and reasonable solution. He could gauge that it was
practically impossible to overcome that difficulty either poli-
tically or socially or even religiously by adopting any offensive
measures. The only thing possible was to strengthen the religious
attitude of the people. As a true bhakta V. declared that Lord
Krsna was the only shelter. This sounds somewhat sceptical and
disappointing but it was the reasonable solution in that hour of
need according to V. The Vedic ritualism was outdated and the
undue emphasis on the path of knowledge made the people other-
worldly and indifferent to their daily affairs. The life of recluse
was made an object of disgrace by unqualified persons following it.
The water-tight compartments of caste-system proved harmful to the
... the solidarity of a healthy society. The outright outcasteism and disqualification of women for the pursuit of the Vedas were the social evils which were to be overcome immediately. Keeping all this in view, V. gave the Suddhādvaita doctrine as the philosophical solution and pustibhakti as the religious one. The former was from the theoretical side whereas the latter was from the practical one. All the details of the topics of this doctrine of pure monism and pustibhakti are fully given in Part II. Here it is in the fitness of things to say a few words about the impact of the political and other conditions which have directly or indirectly gone a long way to mould the ideas of V.

It has been already shown that the Hindus were forbidden to lead a peaceful and free social life. They suffered all sorts of torture and tyranny at the hands of bigoted Muslim rulers who were famous for their whimsical ways of granting a high post to anybody or subjecting an innocent person to the gallows. They lived most luxurious and pompous life and kept unusually large harems. All this has somehow been reflected in the graphic descriptions of the divine life and bliss enjoyed in the company of Purusottama in Gokul. All the arguments advanced in defence of the apparently sensual picture apart, it is an uncommon coincidence which cannot be set aside as a mere accident. It is neither unfair nor doing any injustice to the original thinking of the great acārya but is the acceptance of the hitherto unnoticed coincidence which gives us the right clue of the 'why' of the unusually sensual descriptions of the pustimukti and the Lilās of the Lord. Similarly the bestowal of fruits at the will of the Lord corresponds partially to the behaviour of the Muslim rulers. This gets support from the fact that the acārya and many of his followers have given the example of the king and his doings while dealing with this topic. Still it should be carefully borne in mind that the coincidental character should not be stretched too much to unfairly derogate this pure path of divine grace. It is but human that a person or two of the priestly class of this sect might have
have led immoral life which is, of course, not denied even by the staunch śāmpradāyika scholars like Mr. M.T. Telivala and Prof. G.H. Bhatt. But it is one thing to allege an individual for his personal immoral life and it is quite another thing to generalise on its basis. Anyway, it is accepted on all hands that the path promulgated, preached and propagated by V. and more by his second son Vīth, was completely based on concrete ideals of non-attachment and high morality as it is well-known from their writings.

V. has made one innovation in the famous concept of Prasthānatraya1 by adding the Bhāgavata as the fourth prasthāna which helped him in fully delineating the path of pusti and the Līlās of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His boyhood. Again he gave it the palm of superiority over the other three prasthānas in so far as it gives the solutions for all doubts arising in them. It specifically mentions that the women, the sūdras and such outcastes are qualified for this path which was just referred to in passing in the Gītā.

From the philosophical standpoint V. wrote commentary on the B.S. called A.B. whose special features are fully dealt with in Part I- Notes. It was written for the purpose of giving correct interpretation of the sūtras which, according to him, supported the doctrine of Suddhādvaita and pustibhakti. Judged impartially it aims at fulfilling the long-felt need of the day.

Before passing on to the literary activities of V. and some of his prominent descendants it may be said in the end that such was the exemplary and extraordinary, yet simple and straightforward life of one of the greatest ācāryas that India has ever seen. His life mission was really great and required team-spirit which necessitated the establishment of a new school of philosophy and religion. The long-standing and indelible influence exercised by V.'s personality and teachings required to be reviewed afresh which are preserved for ever in his works and more particularly in his immortal interpretations of the B.S., I mean the A.B., which are critically reviewed for the first time here.
His works, V. is said to have written about eighty-four works; big and small. There is doubt about the authorship of some of them. But the following are accepted on all hands as his genuine works. Some of them are written as commentary on other works, e.g., the A.E., while others are independent treatises presenting the gist of his doctrines, e.g., the TSN, &c.

(1) Pātrāvalambana:—This was in a way the first treatise of V. which was written with the sole purpose of silencing the adherents of rival schools, particularly those of Ś.'s school. Being in the form of loose papers that were attached on the entrance of the temple of ŚRI Kāli Vīṣeṣvara this work gets such name. Refuting the doctrine of Māyā of Ś, and the Bāttā-school of Mīmāṁśā, V. establishes the validity of his theory of Brahavaśa and accepts the Prabhākara-school of Mīmāṁśā.93 Here as elsewhere (TNN I) he has emphasised on the unity of purpose of the Purva and Uttara Kāṇḍas of the Vedaś and shown them to be supplementary to each other.95 This has earned for him the title 'Karmaṁgapravartaka' or the promulgator of the path of action.

(2) Tattvādadāribandhah:—Written in verses in three prakāranaś, called the Sastraṛtha, the Sarvanirmaya and the Bhagavatārtha, this work spreads on a very wide range as it attempts to summarise the doctrines given in the Gītā, the gist and decision of all other schools of philosophy and the Bhagavata resp'y. The first chapter mainly gives the cardinal doctrines of V. by refuting those of Ś. in due places. The second is about thrice the size of the first and gives in details the various doctrines of different schools and finally gives the decision of V. in each case. The third chapter is unique in so far as it aims at summarising the massive Bhagavata by adding explanatory remarks and showing the connected link of the flow of arguments. V. has written his own commentary, Prakasa, on them. But it is complete on the first two chapters and fragmentary on the third one. The Āvaranabhanga of Purusottamaji exposes Prakasa in all possible light.
(Furyamāṇasaabhāṣya and Furyā Karikās:- There are about forty karikās of V. on the Furyamāṇasa which are extant at present. They give us some hint about the way in which V. would have given the interpretation of Fury. But everything else is lost for ever.

Sodasagraṇthas:- There are sixteen small treatises of V. written with a view to present the various doctrines of his school in a nutshell. They are all in verse. Here some like Siddhāntarahaṣya are left incomplete. The reason generally adduced is the departure of the author. But as it is said in the case of the fragmentary form of the A.B., here too it would not be far from truth to say that the division of ancestral property between the widow of Śrī Gopinātha and Vith. was the convincing cause of the incomplete form of many a work of V. The works are as follows:-

(a) Yamanāstaka is a prayer and eulogy in nine verses of the most adorable river Yamunā who is regarded as the Śvāmi of the fourth yūtha(group) of the best of bhaktas. She has the power to destroy all sins of her devotees and bestow upon them a new celestial body which can help them enjoy all sorts of pleasures in the company of the Lord.

(b) Mishabodha contains nineteen verses the concept of the four purusārthas in this school. It gives in brief all the important doctrines as V. says in the first verse. It is important as it furnishes the way in which the jīvas can attain the highest goal, mokṣa.

(c) Siddhāntamuktavali has twenty-one verses which declare the hānasī-deva as the best of all means for focussing the mind on the Lord. Such deva results from the performance of tamujā and vittējā sevas. It declares the path of bhakti as superior to that of jñāna. Again the pustinārga is said to be controlled by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The highest ideal of following the Brahmagāna and adhering the Śrīkṛṣṇamārga(pustibhakti) are is noted here.

(d) Pustipraṃvahamāryaśāsna gives in 25 verses the cardinal doctrine of the division of the jīvas into pusti, pravāha and...
and maryāda. The pusti-jīvas are the best of all as they solely
depend upon the grace of God. While those engrossed in the pursuit
of worldly objects of enjoyment are the lowliest, called the pravaha-
jīvas. There is reference to the cross-mixtures of these three
classes. The work ends abruptly when the author proposes to dis-
cuss about the pravaha-jīvas.

(e) Siddhānterahasya, in its eight verses and a half,
is true to its name as it presents the very secret of the path of
pusti which, as the author himself declares in the very first verse
was revealed to him by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself on the bright eleventh
day of the bright half of the month of Śravaṇa. Through this divine
communion he came to know about the indispensability of the initia-
tion ceremony called Brahmasūnbandha which consists of the recital
of the Saranamantra at the time of Śravaṇagati and that of the Gadya-
mantra at the time of Atmanivedana. This destroys the five dosas
or impurities arising due to egoism, the time and place, the performance
of prohibited actions, bad company and touching impure things
and persons. This work is also left incomplete.

(f) Naveratna has nine verses which emphasise on total
self-surrender to the Lord and transfer of all responsibility to
Him. This makes one free from all anxiety of the fulfilment or other-
wise of his works; for the all-powerful Lord manages for them. It
has direct reference to the Saranamantra (Śrīkrṣṇah sarasvīc nama)
in the last verse(9ab).

(g) Antahkarana-prabodha gives advice in ten verses to
adopt meek submission to the Lord and seek His grace and mercy as
befits a true sevaka(servant). V. says that Kṛṣṇa is the highest
deity.

(h) Vivekādhyāyasastra urges in 17 verses to keep the
mind in equipoise without allowing it to get ruffled even though one’s
desires may not be fulfilled. It emphatically mentions that the
Lord is the only sarana(shelter). The jīva should not worry about
or pray for the fulfilment of any of his unfulfilled desire when he
he has dedicated all his possessions and himself to the Lord who will do everything according to His desire, so he should not allow any doubt to arise in his mind as regards the powers of the Lord.

(i) Sri Kṛṣṇaśrayastotra gives in eleven verses the sad and disappointing condition of the Hindu society and religion at the hands of bigoted Muslim rulers. According to V, there was no other alternative but to resort to Lord Kṛṣṇa as the saviour.

(j) Catubhālokā lays down in four verses the concept of the four goals of life in pūṣṭimārga. It is said that the Lord is all in all and is to be worshipped with full devotion.

(k) Bhaktiyardhini has eleven verses which describe the three stages of prema (affection), āsakti (attachment) and vyāsana (ardent desire) through which the seed of devotion goes on intensifying. In the last and highest state of vyāsana the bhakta is advised to renounce his house and live in the vicinity of the Lord in some holy temple in the company of devotees.

(l) Jalabheda contains twenty-one verses and describes on the analogy of water in different places the intensity of bhakti and the qualification of the jīva in its accordance. This difference gives rise to the difference in fruits.

(m) Pancapadyāni declares in five verses, as its name suggests, the three classes of hearers and says that the pustīsrotā is the best of all.

(n) Samyāsānimaya has 22 verses which discuss the necessity of renunciation. It says that sanyāsa should be adopted only when the devotee reaches the highest stage of vyāsana and finds the separation from the Lord as extremely unbearable. In the case of others it is likely to prove harmful and disgraceful.

(o) Nirodhalaksana contains 20 verses and deals with nirodha which is regarded as the highest stage of the intensity of bhakti when the devotee becomes totally forgetful of his worldly
... worldly relations and solely devotes his mind to the worship of the Lord. He performs sravāṇa, kīrtana, and sevā and stays in the company of good persons for enhancing his nirodha.

(p) Sevāphalas seven verses and a half which deal with the obstacles in the sevā of Ārī Kṛṣṇa and its fruit. The alaukika-sāmarthya, sāyujya and sevopayogīdēha are the three fruits of sevā due to the bhaktas of different varieties of bhaktas.

(5) Subodhini:—It is a commentary on the Bhāgavata. But it is incomplete. It is available at present on the first three skandhas, the tenth skandha and some four adhyāyas of the eleventh skandha. V. has given the highest honour as the pranāpā to the Bhāgavata which is, according to him, explanatory of the Vedas, the B.S. and the Gītā. It is the very essence and secret of all scriptures. Particularly the samādhībhāṣā or the speech delivered in contemplation is held in great respect. V.'s doctrine of puṣṭi is solely based on the Bhāgavata where it finds full exposition. The interpretation of all the disports of Kṛṣṇa given by V., is important in so far as it helps refute the allegations of carnal pleasures of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs as being described in the Līlās. V. wrote another commentary on the Bhāgavata called Sūkṣmatīkā which is also available in fragments only. Still the doctrine of V. does not remain vague.

V. wrote other small treatises like Madhurāstaka, Puruṣottamaśasāvṛtā, etc., where he deals with the Lord in one way or the other. V. has not written any commentary on either the Upaniṣads or the Gītā which was regarded as necessary for becoming an ācārya.

(6) Adbhāṣya:—This is V.'s commentary on the famous sūtras of Bādarāyana. Though the bāṣya is available in a complete form it is unanimously accepted to be the work of the joint authorship of V. and his second son Vīthī. The bāṣya of V. is upto B.S. III.11. 53. So the A.B. from III.11.34 upto the end is from the pen of Vīthī. The present thesis aims at the detailed comparative, critical and textual study of the bāṣya itself where the arguments for and against are mostly given in the words of the author himself. Some
Some scholars like the late Mr. M.T. Telivala and Prof. G.H. Bhatt have pleaded for the 'Eradhbhāgya' or the great commentary of V. on the B.S. as against the 'Aṇubhāgya' or the small commentary. In the absence of other solid proofs the question remains still open and not finally settled. Similarly the contention of the scholars like Dr. Bhandarkar and Dr. S. Radhakrishna that V. follows the doctrine of one Vīsnuśvarmin is not tenable as Prof. G.H. Bhatt and Dr. Dac Gupta have shown. It is found that M. wrote one 'Aṇubhāgya' as a summary of his original commentary on the B.S. So it seems somewhat likely that V. might have followed in his footsteps. But there is nothing more than the similarity of name.

The following is a brief survey of the literary activities of the descendants of V. Here only the important works are referred to.

Vīthi wrote commentaries on the sixteen treatises, and Ītipani on Subodhinī. He completed the A.B. But his more famous work is Vīdvanmandana which refutes the doctrines of S. while establishing the doctrines of pūṣṭi and the eternity of Viṣṇu that go on eternally in Gokula. Bhaktihemaka and Bhaktihotamagrāya are small but substantial treatises on the concept of bhakti and its types like sādhana-bhāpā and phalarkāpā. Both of them declare the pūṣṭibhakti as the best type of all. In Ṣrīpānarasamandana he gives graphic descriptions of the love sports of Viṣṇu and Gopis. They are said to be far beyond worldly sensuality. Apart from his literary achievement, Vīthi showed wonderful capacity of arranging the whole sect and put into force the sevāpaddhati which is followed even today.

Puruṣottamajī was the most learned and prolific writer of this school. His commentary on A.B. called Mahāyaapraakāsa is really a rare combination of the critical, comparative and traditional method of arriving at the purport of a book. His commentaries on TDN (Āvarṇa-bhāgana, Subodhinī (Prakāsa), the sixteen treatises and Vīdvanmandana (Śūrpaśūtra) are the glaring examples of his deep learning and broad thinking. Vodāntadhikarāpanaśāstra is the adhi-vice summary of the whole A.B. with due remarks at several places.

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Prasthānāratnākara is an incomplete work on logic. Avatāravādāvali contains the refutation of the contentions of Appayyadāsīta in Śivatattvaviveka. Purusottamajī is said to have written forty-five works in all. Out of the remaining works Bheḍabhāsavarūpānirnaya, Khyātivāda, Jīvapratiibhāvatvakhandanavāda, Āvirbhāvatirobhāvavāda, and Bhaktyutkaranavāda deserve mention.

Kramaśendrājī wrote Bhāvaprakāśikā which is a running summary of the whole A.B. with the addition of explanatory remarks where necessary. It is perfect in its own way in giving a correct exposition of the bhāṣya.

Rasmi of Yogi Gopēśvarajī is an elaborate commentary on Prakāsa of Purusottamajī.

Giridhārajī has written a commentary, Vivaraṇa, on A.B. It is along the lines of Prakāsa and Rasmi but the author has dealt with some problems of variant readings in doing which he has not spared even the author of Prakāsa. This bespeaks of his impartial attitude. His Suddhādvaitamārtanda gives the gist of Brahmaśāstra. The author has briefly referred to the views of previous śārīras of rival schools and examined their admissibility or otherwise. Prapañcavāda is another small work of his.

Harirīya is famous for his Bṛhatṣikṣapatra and about fifty small treatises which are of much help in understanding the Pustimārgiya doctrines. His Brahmaśāstra gives the gist of this school.

Prameyaratnārṇava of Bālākṛṣṇa alias Lālūbhātta is a small but important treatise as it deals with the main topics of this school in a connected way. His views are mostly based on the works of V. and Vith. In Khyātiviveka he has refuted the unreality of Jagat by giving the true nature of perception and error.

Bhaktimārtanda of Gopēśvarajī contains four chapters on Pramāṇa, Prameya, Śādhaṇa and Phala. It establishes the superiority of pure puṣṭi-bhakti which is the only means to the attainment
... attainment of the enjoyment of all celestial objects in Gokula in the company of the Lord and the tasting of the supreme bliss of Bhajanānanda. According to him all sāstras deal with this topic only. His discussion on the acceptance of Bhaktirāsa is interesting and unique.

Pṛdīpa of Icchārāma Bhatta is a commentary on A.B. and is useful in understanding several vague sentences in the bhasya itself. While Narīcikā of Vrajanāth Bhatta is a very brief summary of the bhasya. There were other commentaries on A.B. but they are available up to Trisūtrī only.

There are many more works like Adhikaranasamgraha of Nirbhayarāma Bhatta, Sudhādvaitaparīkṣārā of Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhatta and others which are important in their own ways.

Before coming to the mention of the content and method adopted in the present thesis it would be in the fitness of things to say a few words about the original sūtras of Bādarāyana and the commentaries written prior to A.B.

The original work called the Drahmasūtras, Vedāntasūtras, Uttarāmānasa, etc. is traditionally accepted to have been written by Bādarāyana Vyāsa who attempted at reconciling and deducing a coherent system from the apparently contradictory passages in the Upaniṣads as many of his predecessors like Audulomi, Āsamarātha and others had done. This shows that the work was bound to contain different lines of arguments which, if interpreted with some bias, were sure to give rise to mutually contradictory doctrines. This is what has actually happened from the times of S. and even before him. It is because of this that the major bhaṣyakaras before V. concluded that there was pure non-dualism or absolute non-dualism or qualified non-dualism or dualism and non-dualism or dualism only. The philosophical peculiarities of all this doctrines have been dealt with above. It is needless to repeat the peculiarities of the sūtra-style and the limitations that are to be tackled by the
...the commentator while trying to arrive at the purport of the sūtras. V. had the great advantage of having all the major bhāṣyas before him for comparative and synthetic study. He realised the root-cause of the diversity of views. So he called his doctrine 'suddhādvaita' or 'brahmavāda' which indicated that the Brahman accepted by the sūtrakāra, according to V., was pure and uncontaminated by māyā as S. held it and non-qualified as opposed to the view of R. Similarly the doctrine oscillating between dualism and non-dualism or that of absolute dualism is not acceptable here as V. thinks.

In order to arrive at the exact decision about the fact as to which of the bhāṣyakāras truly represents the views of the sūtrakāra a detailed study of their bhāṣyas was necessary. Scholars like Max Müller, Deussen, Gough, Kokileeswara Sastrī and others favoured the views of S. While Dr. Thibaut and Jacob were more inclined to support R. Dr. Ghate had soft corner for N. and Prof. Karmarkar supported Kesava Kanmārin. The Madhvaites like Subba Rao, Rāghavendrachari and others declared M. as superior to all. Whereas Mr. M.T. Polevala, Prof. M.G. Sastrī and others gave the palm of superiority to V. All this means that there was a great upheaval as regards the true representation of the views of the sūtrakāra. But somehow or other the A.B. of V. did not receive the attention it deserved. The present thesis aims at fulfilling the long-felt need of the critical study of the text of the A.B. itself—a work not attempted so far by any scholar. Attempt has been made to explore and exhaust all possible material that has direct or indirect bearing upon the A.B. It presents a critical, comparative and textual study of the whole A.B. in a systematic, coherent and comprehensive manner which was not done so far by any scholar.

The present work devotes a fairly big part to the critical and comparative textual study in Part I. In order to furnish the means to understand the drift of the bhāṣya the summaries of all adhi's are given in the order of the text itself.
The chief arguments for and against in each adhi are mostly given in the words of the author for this reason only. The "Notes" given just after the summary of each adhi are the most significant, original feature of this thesis. They contain the textual, critical and comparative remarks on each adhi. The questions regarding the variants of the sutras, their arrangement into different adhi's by the different bhasyakars and the various readings in the text of the bhasya itself have been dealt with in them. Again the scattered tenets of the Suddhadvaita school have been put together in a coherent way in due places in the 'Notes'. For the sake of convenience the references are given in brackets in the body of the thesis in Part I. It is also to be noted that the name of Vith has been given in the discussion on the Part I from A.B. III,ii,34 up to the end. This is because of the fact that the present text of A.B. is the work of joint authorship of V. and Vith. Still I can assure that the son has proved worthy of the fairly correct representation of the doctrines of his father.

The Part II that follows gives in a systematic and connected way the views of V. on various Vedanta topics such as Brahman, Jiva, Jagat, and other such topics peculiar to V., viz. Purusottama, Aksara, Pustibhakti, Bhaktirasa, Lilä, Avikrtaparintamavada, Avirbhavatirohbha. etc. A short note on the style of V. (and Vith.) is given in the end for the first time. In preparing this division care has been taken to interpret all the above topics in the light of the detailed study of the text itself given in Part I. Again all the original Sanskrit works of this school, mentioned in the detailed bibliography, have been drawn upon to make the details of the new findings perfect and up-to-date. Here the references are given in the end of each topic.

The 'Conclusion' forms the last division of this thesis. It contains the mention for the first time of the original contribution of V. to the Vedanta thought in general and the interpretation of the B.S. in a comprehensive, synthetic and comparative way in
... in particular. Attention is also drawn to the author's critical acumen, comparative outlook and depth of original thinking and penetrative insight which he discloses frequently. Yet I have not hesitated to criticise his conscious or unconscious errors whenever they have been found to be contrary to the concepts derived from modern critical and comparative methods of textual interpretation.

The detailed 'Bibliography' is given in the end. It has been classified into four sections, viz. Works on the Pustimarga, Sanskrita works on Vedanta in general, Works in English by Indian and foreign oriental scholars and List of pamphlets, articles, etc. The abbreviations are given in the beginning and the method of transliteration adopted here is that of the Royal Asiatic Society of London.

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88. Cf. Śrīdēvastra devakīputrasyātesvako devakīputra eva,

Eko mantrasastasya naśāni yāni karmaśeṣakāi tasya devasya sevā.

89. Cf. Śāntānugrahāra by Śāntakaraṇa.


91. Cf. TDN. L.51-53, II.25, 67-68, 212-214, 279-281 and Vidvan-

mandana, p.60.

92. Cf. Kṛṣṇarāja - 'Kṛna eva gatiṁmana'.


94. Cf. pp.67-70 Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Insti-


Also, 'Tada bahirmukha...1-31'.

95. Ibid. verses 3, 35cd and 37cd.

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