Chapter V

Estimate

(i) Introductory:

We have seen in the preceding pages, the contents and evaluation of the works of GO. A question may naturally be raised as to what was the contribution of GO to the S'uddhadvaita School of Philosophy and Religion. We shall try in the following few pages, to draw an estimate of his teachings and show his contribution. In Sanskrita, he wrote only the comm on the works of VL and VT and tracts on some of the lines of GB, BG and Sub. Except the Vijñapti, he has not produced any important original work. It may appear surprizing that he did not produce any original work, which is purely philosophical. In this context, it is to be said that the S'uddhadvaita doctrine was fully propounded by VL and VT with all its theological and philosophical content. Hence, GO saw his duty to explain what they said in their works. His field lay in elucidating and interpreting the works of VL & VT.

1. In this connection, we may look to the work put in by Acarya A.B. Dhruva in Gujarati literature. He took certain quotations from different poets and philosophers and commented on them freely, but that does not minimise the importance of his articles.
mostly religious and ethical, and preaching the practical side of religion. The philosophical part of the S'uddhadvaita view was well drawn out and GO took on himself the burden of explaining how the doctrine can be translated into practice. Of course, this was done to a certain extent by VT, but GO did it in greater details. As Udyotakara is to Gotaśa and Vatsyāyana, in the school of Nyāya, GO is to VL & VT.

(ii) Use of the popular dialect:

We noticed that GO's works are found in two languages: Sanskrita and Vrajabhāsā. The first was understood by a few persons. Most of the followers of the Pustimārga were either illiterate or had a little education. Naturally, such followers could not read the works of VL and VT, which were in Sanskrita, and if they could not read them, their understanding and practice of religion would not be backed by conviction, and unless there is conviction, practice of religion would result into blind faith. GO, therefore, preached the doctrine in the popular tongue and that too, with illustrations, anecdotes and allegories, so that the religious principles could be well inculcated in the minds of the followers. What Tuśidīśa did in the field of Rāmakathā and Kabir in the field of Nīrakāra Bhaktimārga, GO did in the field of Pustimārga. Not
only that; he gave a spiritual interpretation of all
the ceremonies and rituals and the materials used for
the performance of the Lord's worship. The Vārtās and
the Bhāvanās are very much important, and are his
great contributions, from this point of view. They are
just like the Purāṇas of the Sanātana Hinduism. Every
religion or every Sampradāya requires such type of
literature and GO filled the gap. His religious
discourses (Vac) brought home to the devotees the
principles \textcolor{red}{\textit{ārthika}} of ethics and the Pustimarga in
a very interesting way. It would be no exaggeration
to say that this literature of GO has influenced the
Pustimargiyas more \textit{\textcolor{red}{\emph{se}}x} than anything else and that the
Vārtās have become instrumental in its propagation.

His usual practice of sitting at noon and
night with the followers and talking about things
religious and spiritual, is perhaps responsible for
the system of the 'Bethāka' \textsuperscript{3} in the Pustimargiya

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bājārī}} बाजारी} द्वारा \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{क्लीने}}} तदानीमुत्त्याःपिते \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{परिप्रेयण}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{पुढ़स्वयणेन}}}.

\textit{- Krsnaraya's Gokules'as'yanastaka St.4.}

\textsuperscript{3} Some of the followers gather at night in the temples
(or in the house of some devotee) and sing the stotras,
read the Vārtās and other scriptures and sometimes
discuss religious problems. Such a meeting is called
'bethāka' or 'satsāṅga' or 'bhagavad Ṣandali'.
temples. Go always emphasized that one should always be in contact with the 'bhagavadiyas' and seek their grace; for it is through them that the secret of the bhaktimarga can be learnt. He equated them even with the Gosvāmīs, in this respect. VL said that the learned are the protectors of the right path⁴; in the eyes of GO, the bhagavadiyas, too, are the protectors of the Path of Bhakti.

(iii) GO's Views and Teachings:

GO's teachings are in line with VL and VT. The difference lies in his method and the degree of emphasis. He laid emphasis on the worship of the Lord and pondering over the sports of Kṛṣṇa, particularly the Rāsa-krīḍā, for the svarūpa of the Rāsa-krīḍā is the pure Puruṣottama. He, therefore, advocated the reading of the BG, particularly the 'phala-prakāraṇa' (BG X-25 to 32).

There are two methods of exposition, in philosophy: epistemology (प्रमाणवाद or ज्ञानप्रक्रिया) and ontology (प्रयथ्याय or वैज्ञानिक). GO laid emphasis on the second method and characterised the Pustimarga as 'the path beyond the means of proof'.

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⁴ Cf. विद्वद्भ: लोको धार्मिक्ति तिस वान्यागर्भकामः।

⁵ Cf. प्रमाणातिरितीय विषयमार्गः। GB (ed. M.G. Shastri) P.1.
Prameya is the Highest Lord, Krsna, and His will is the law. There is no any other law more sacred than God's will. According to this view, God is the 'Sādāna' (means) and God is the 'phala' (fruit). So, even though, he (GO) accepted the four pramanas, he quoted more from the Gita and the BG. He maintained that even if there is no knowledge of God, but if there is love for God, it leads to realization.

Worship of the Lord with pure, unadulterated and disinterested love is the supreme duty of the devoted soul and love knows no law; everything is subservient to love for the Lord. According to his view, the soul has to have no will and has not to depend on his power, but he has to merge his will into God's will and depend on His grace. "There's not to reason why, there's but to do and die," is the law of love. GO practised the preached this way of Pure Pusti.

If all the rituals are performed completely, but if they are not inspired by love for the Lord, it is no worship. When love reigns supreme, rules and regulations are of little importance. The story of Vāgājī Rajāpūta in the Bhās is an instance in

6. Cf. बलीकि के भगवानेश भागनृथृः।
   - Sub. 10 - 61 - 4.
True love involves selfless devotion and complete surrender. GO, therefore, laid much stress on the principle of 'ananyata or anyasya raya' (seeking refuge in Kṛṣṇa only) and abandonment of unoffered food and drink. That has been illustrated in some of the Vṛtās. He even showed minutely how the fault of 'anyasya raya' occurs. There are different svarūpas of the different sports of the Lord and if a devotee concentrates on one of the līlāsvārūpas, he should not concentrate on another svarūpa; and if he does so, he commits the fault of 'anyasya raya'.

7. The principle of 'asamarpita - tyaga' is very useful from the hygienic point of view. When there has been no restraint on food and drink in our lives and no cleanliness or purity is observed in day to day affairs, the importance of the principle need not be overemphasized.

8. Vide Chapter IV, Footnote No.10. (वीडिया स्वरूपः एतत्)
the Pustimarga is बोध वैदार्थ (beyond the Vedic and worldly rules and traditions) and showed in his tract on the stanza श्रवणस्तु मूलत्व: and other comm that what is considered a fault in the 'maryadā- marga' (the way of convention) is a virtue in the Pustimarga. Thus, he has made clear the svarūpa of the Pustimarga.

He did not attach much importance to traditions. Traditions may be followed, he says, but if there is conflict between a Vedic tradition and the Sevāmarga, the Vedic tradition may be shelved. He crossed the river Sarasvati for the cause of religion. He has in one case, allowed initiation of a person, even for a second time and have even approved of initiation by a letter of a Gosvāmī or by a dream and even by a bhagavatīya. 'Ātmadharma' is more important than the 'dehadharma'. He does not discard the rules of the Varnaśrama, but on the occasion of conflict between a tradition of the Varnaśrama and that of the Bhaktimarga, he would attach importance to the latter later.

As regards the knowledge of the greatness of the Lord (mahatmājñāna), he has rightly stated that it is necessary to be immune from faults, but when supreme love for the Lord downs and takes
footing in the heart, it is not necessary. He advocated that life must be lived in full, but it must be lived in God and for God. The devotee has to attend to the comforts of the Lord, rather than his happiness. So, there is scope for enjoyment in the life of a devotee, but it is with restraint and with offered things. The theory of self-renunciation and self-destruction, as preached by some other sects, is not approved of in the Pustimarga. Life can have its full thrill in the worship of God. (That is why, Vaisnavism spread in the medieval times.) Go advocated this type of approach to life.

According to Go, Brahman is rasatmaka (blissful). The 'rasa' is शार (which is twofold: संयोग (union) and विसंयोग (separation). He emphasized that great bliss lay in experiencing the feeling of separation. He said that experiencing deep pangs of separation from the Lord is the only means of realizing Bliss and that the Pustimarga is the pathway of experiencing 'tapa' (agony) and 'klesa' (pain). We know that even in literary

criticism and in life, नृत्य (sentiment of love) is given a high place. GO makes use of the same content and paraphernalia in describing the relation between the soul and the Lord, and also in describing the Nikunj, the abode of the Lord viz., Rages's S'rīKṛṣṇa. Svāminī or Rādhā is not here the 'Śakti' only, but a beloved, who also becomes instrumental in leading the soul to Supreme Bliss. GO is, therefore, called by his followers, the propagator of the 'rasamarga' - the path of Divine Flavour or Bliss.

As regards a devotee's conduct in the world, he has said in the '32 Lakṣānas' and the '24 Vac', how he must behave. He should realize that the world is a form of the Lord and should perform his duty, in the world with equanimity, he should not be unjust to anyone and be generous and merciful to all beings. He emphasized that our life is regulated by Divine Force, by God's will, and so we should not feel miserable for any loss or failure. Not only that, he says that a devotee should not ask for anything from the Lord, lest it should cause discomfort to Him. Prayer (prarthanā) is, therefore, forbidden in the Puṣṭimarga, for the Lord is antaryāmī and knows what is good for the soul. GO says that God
does not make a true devotee's life, easy and comfortable, for that would make him engrossed in worldly enjoyments.

It is this approach and emphasis and also interpretation of the Pustimarga, that is contributed by GO to the S'uddhadvaita school. VL and to a certain extent VT, too, were laconic in their works and it was necessary to explain fully the S'uddhadvaita mode of worship and approach to life, and it should be observed that GO did it well.

(iv) The cult of Guru and GO.

The cult of Guru in the Sampradaya was started by VT, by writing the SS and the Vallabha-staka etc. GO gave a momentum to it by writing comm on both the works and endorsing what his father had said. In this connection, it should also be noted that he held an original view. He did ask the followers to worship VL and VT, but did not put all the descendents of VL on par with them. VT said that VL transferred his greatness to his descendents, but GO held the view that VL transferred his greatness to VT only. He perhaps saw and foresaw a state of degeneration of the Sampradaya and warned the Gosvamis, in his tract on the stanza 'Asmat Kulam', that they should not be

10. Cf. SS St. 22.
self-complacent and that their family is spotless only when the Lord accepts them as His own and that spotlessness can be achieved by the true worship of the Lord Only. He attached importance to their execution of spiritual attitude in life rather than the hierarchy of the Gosvāmīs.

(v) GO, the saviour of the S'uddhādvaīta School:

The sampradāya saw a great challenge in Gidrūpa, who had prepared himself to wipe the S'uddhādvaīta School out of existence. GO stood the challenge, faced the political authorities, suffered great hardships and proved the correctness of the stand of the S'uddhādvaīta view. GO was, thus, instrumental in setting the sampradāya on a firm footing.

(vi) GO's influence

As stated in the previous chapter, many men and women were drawn towards GO and some of his followers began to look upon him as the Highest Lord. He proved to be so powerful a personality and his influence was so great, that he became the subject of poetic compositions. Harirāyajī, Krsnaraya, Gopālās, K. Bhāṭṭa and others, have written a great deal about him. He has proved himself a distinct personality in the S'uddhādvaīta School and is remembered along with VL and VT as a great acārya, although he never called himself an acārya. Truely, he was the third
śārya of the school. His influence is clearly seen in Harirāyaśī. The great writers of this school are VL, VT, GO, Harirāyaśī, and P. Purusottamaśī, and GO occupies a high place as a writer and a true exponent of the Puṣṭimārga. He has also left an indelible impression in the school as a great teacher (guru).

(vii) GO’s contribution

Recapitulating what is said, we may evaluate GO’s contribution in a few lines in this way: Even though he wrote in Śāmkara mainly on the works of VL and VT, the ‘purvaśuris’, and did not produce, in Śāmkara, any original work on pure philosophy, he has done a great service by his comm. and Vrajaśās literature. His long comm on the SS, his comm on the Gadyāmantra and the Guptarasa and his tracts on the GB and ‘asmat Kula’ are really great contributions to the Suddhādvaita School, and so is his Vrajaśās literature. It is he who attached spiritual significance to the rituals and materials used in the worship of the Lord VL and VT propounded what the Hightest Truth

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11. Cf. वीणाकुलनाथ प्रस्तुत किची नारक कहान था।
- Paramanandaśa in one of his pada.

Cf. also नाभदेशी केमु गुप्तरस गीकुलनाथ मति।
- Nabhādeśa’s Bhaktamala (Lucknow edition) F. 783.
is and GO explained clearly the path of realizing that Highest Truth. He sifted out what was 'launik ka and vaidika' and propounded the pure Bhaktimarga, depending on the Lord alone, the Highest Prameya. 

VL propounded the doctrine of grace and instituted the school, VT finished what was left unfinished by his father, established the 'church' and gave an esoteric touch to it. GO followed the footsteps of his father. He protected and consolidated the sampradāya. He developed and explained the esotericism of the system. Harirāyajī rightly calls him the propagator of the religion. Thus his contribution is twofold: as the consolidater and as the interpreter and propagator of the Suddhādvaita school of Philosophy and Religion. According to the words of a non-sectarian writer, 'Gokulanath - being more eminent ...., however, gave the new cult and religion wide currency and popularity throughout the country of Rajasthan and Gujarat.'


We would like to wind up the Chapter with a verse which is written by VT in an eulogy of VL, but which is also applicable to GO:

स्थानिकोपितम् सैन्य निगमगतिः सापि यदि न
विषय तथा सापि स्थानिक त्य हरिमण्डू परित्वम्।
विद्य स्थानोपिनि की इन्कितकिनिः स्विनिः -
पुष्पश्चयं जो वा नििन्दित निन्दा वल्लभक्ष्मू।।

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