Chapter V

Historical Importance of S. M.

History is considered to be an account of events. It is nothing but the narration of events connected with great men. For, great men create history while others follow it. Great philosopher-saint M. created history with his deeds and doctrines which has been beautifully and faithfully recorded by N. P. Let us now examine some of the historical aspects of the poem, S M.

History of Krṣṇa-worship:

The fifteenth verse¹ in the second canto of the poem mentions that Madhyageha Bhaṭṭa had been entertaining people of his neighbourhood with the narration of stories of Lord Nārāyana. This verse is an indication of the fact that Lord Viṣṇu had been held in high esteem in Tulunadu. This point is very important because of the misconception of the historians and the commoner as well, regarding the worship of Lord Viṣṇu in Tulunadu.

It is generally believed that due to the influence of Sankaracarya, Lord Viṣṇu had no place and Lord Śiva was the only deity being worshipped at the time. M propagated with conviction Lord Viṣṇu to be the Supreme Deity substantiating his view-point with voluminous scriptural evidences. It was he who installed the idol of Lord Krṣṇa at Udupi.
We may consider the spread of the Kṛṣṇa-worship in India as a whole and its advent to Karnatak and Tulunadu.

The Kṛṣṇa-worship must have been prevailing even prior to the 8th Cent. B. C. The great grammarian Pāṇini, in one of his sūtras mentions the name of Vāsudeva which is explained by Patañjali as the name of a god. He meant it as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. This shows that Kṛṣṇa-worship was prevalent in India prior to or at least since the times of Pāṇini.

Let us now go through the Gazetteer of India to study what it has to say in the matter.¹

A sūtra in Pāṇini's Āstādhyāyī refers to the worshippers of Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) whom epic and purānic traditions describe as the hero of the Sattvata-race. The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad speaks of Kṛṣṇa the son of Devakī, a pupil of sage Ghora Angirasa, who was a sun-worshipping priest. Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa appears to have played the most dynamic role in the great Kurukṣetra war and helped in the establishment of righteousness after the destruction of impiety. He was idealised by his followers during his life-time and apotheosised afterwards. The large number of people who worshipped him exclusively as their personal god were at first known as Bhāgavatas. The Vāsudeva-Bhāgavata cult was a steadily growing religious movement absorbing within its fold other Vedic and Brāhmanic divinities like Viṣṇu (primarily an aspect of the Sun) and Nārāyana (a cosmic god). It is a fact that the devotional aspect of the cult developed in the early centuries of the Christian era, when one of the names given to it was Pāṇcarātra. But shortly afterwards from the late Gupta period, the name mostly used to designate this Bhakti cult was Vaishnava indicating the predominance of the Vedic Viṣṇu-element in it with emphasis on the doctrine of incarnations.
But this Viṣṇu or Krśṇa penetrated deep into the folk-cults of Nāga worship and influenced them too. The Gazetteer of India states that the worship of Yakṣas and Nāgas and other folk-deities constituted the most important part of primitive religious beliefs in which Bhakti had very conspicuous part to play. It also opines that the popular story of Krśṇa's Kāliya-mardana is nothing but the overthrow of the Nāga-cult in Mathura region. It is worth quoting the relevant passage from p. 157-

"The Puranic story of Krśṇa's subjugation of Nāga-kāliya really indicates the overthrow of the Nāga-cult prevalent in the Mathura region through the growth of "Vāsudeva-Krśna"-cult there. The folk-cults centred on the Nāgas and Yakṣas however appear to have survived in the orthodox Brahmanical fold in the garb of worship of elephant-headed deity, Ganeśa, whose hybrid figure was an amalgam of the pot-bellied (Tundila), Yakṣa and the elephantine Nāga (the word "Nāga" meant both a 'snake' and an 'elephant'). The original importance of folk-element in religion is also apparent in the fact that the first place was assigned to this God as "the remover of obstacles" in the list of five principal puranic deities (Gaṇeśādi Paṇcavedavatā Ganeśa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti and Śūrya). If the statements of Śaṅkarācārya's biographers are to be believed the six sub-divisions of the sect of the Gaṇāpatyas existed even from pre-Śaṅkara times . . ."

Thus with a fair knowledge of Krśṇa-worship in India, we can now proceed towards the region of Karnataka. Many edicts found in this region prove that many of the rulers here were worshippers of Lord Viṣṇu. Tulunadu being a part of Karnataka was no doubt under the influence of Vaiṣṇavism practised here. The oldest Kannada epigraph i.e. Halmidi epigraph of about 450 A.D. begins with the invocation of Śrī Hari i.e. Lord Viṣṇu.
Dr. M. Chidanandamurthy writes that some copper plates of Kadambas begin with the invocation of Lord Visnu. He quotes a verse that was found in one of the edicts of 866 A. D. and also another one in an edict of 876 A. D.⁵

We can also find Visnu-worship in the form of a boar (Varāha) in many edicts. A common verse with the idea and imagination of Varāha holding goddess Earth on its teeth can be found in many edicts. This verse⁶ is found in the "Raygarh Copper plates." The Kalasa edict also begins with the same verse. The inscription as described in the verse can be found in the cave-inscription at Badami belonging to the sixth cent. A D. One more verse⁷ though not so popular is found in the edicts now and then. The edicts of Hoysala era have given equal importance to Śiva and Viṣṇu.⁸ The Calukya king Mangalesa (A. D 596-609) constructed in the 6th cent. A. D. the cave temple of Badami, which is a Vaiṣṇava temple. The edict of Lakkundi of Attimabbe calls the citizens of Lakkundi in Kannada as "Vaiṣṇava Gīti Manoharar," meaning thereby that they were Visnu-worshippers.

Thus the fact about Vaiṣṇavism is that it is a very old cult and was practised since ancient times in Karnataka too.

Coming to the subject of 'Krṣṇa or Viṣṇu worship in coastal Karnataka', we have an interesting account of the same. K. V. Ramesh opines in the early stage, the Saivism appears to have been influenced by the cults of Śiva as Paśupati i.e. the lord of beasts.⁹ The Śiva-worship no doubt must have been older than Viṣṇu worship in Tulunadu. But prior to Madhvācārya itself the worship of Viṣṇu or Krṣṇa in Tulunadu had taken deep roots⁴. Let us consider Śaṅkarācārya himself. He advocated Pancaiyatana worship which
allows the worship of Viṣṇu also. An interesting fact stands mentioned by Dr. P. Gururaja Bhat with regard to Vaisnnavism on the west coast Hastāmalaka, a disciple of Śaṅkarācārya had said to have argued with his preceptor on the supremacy of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa. After receiving the spiritual injunction from Śaṅkarācārya, Hastāmalaka seems to have visited Udupi and installed the image of Lord Kṛṣṇa spreading the Vaiṣṇava cult in conformity with the 'Paṇcāyatana' principles. This Kṛṣṇa is known as "Tail Kṛṣṇa" now.

Dr. P. Gururaja Bhat quotes the relevant portion of the poem Śaṅkaravijaya written by Anandagiri in support of the above. Dr. Bhat says "This icon of Venugopālakṛṣṇa is a relief figure and should be accepted as the earliest of its kind in South India." Also he writes there may not be any doubt that this image of Venugopālakṛṣṇa has got the merit of being one of the earliest Kṛṣṇa images in Karnataka." Some more inferences of Dr. Bhat give us a clear idea about Kṛṣṇa-worship in Tulunadu.

The image of Janārdana from the Viṣṇumurti temple, Kakkunje Sivalli being one of the earliest of its kinds in Karnataka, could suggest the final settlement of brahmins in Sivalli area. He argues with the fact that on epigraphical evidence, it may not be possible to assign "Viṣṇu worship" to a date anterior to the eleventh cent. A.D. But he is of the opinion, basing on the architecture and sculpture, that at least from the seventh or eighth cent. A.D. the Vaiṣṇava cult must have been popular.

Hence we may conveniently conclude that Tulunadu was having Kṛṣṇa-worship prior to M who made it popular and spread far and wide.
The Date of Madhvacarya

Tradition believes that the year of birth of M. is 1199 A. D. The traditional date is arrived at on the basis of a passage in M.'s Mahābhārata-tatparya-nirmaya. The relevant passage No. 121 of Chapter 32 gives the date of his birth as Kali 4300.

S. N. Dasgupta while quoting Bhandarkar says that the Kali age 4300 corresponds to the year 1199 A. D. This is arrived at by Bhandarkar depending on Bhāskaracārya's opinion that the Kali age begins with the year 3101 B.C.

According to Dasgupta the date 1199 A.D.corresponds to Śaka 1121. The proposed date of the Acarya in the geneo-chronological table of the Uttarādi and other Maths is Śaka 1040-1120. The list of Maths also proposes that the Acarya had lived for seventy-nine years. There is no controversy regarding the number of years he lived. But Śaka 1119 (say 1120) considered to be the year of his disappearance by the Maths stands emphatically refuted by scholars like Bhandarkar who consider it as the year of birth or of M.'s arrival in this human world.

Bhandarkar had arrived at 1119 Śaka as the year of M.'s birth. He refers to the inscription of Śrī Kūrmā The inscription in the Kumāresvara temple at Śrī Kurman of the Ganjam district mentions the name of Naraharitīrtha. In the inscription, Naraharitīrtha is said to have the temple constructed and placed an idol of Lord Narasimha in it. The inscription is dated Śaka 1203 Naraharitīrtha was a disciple of M.

There is a mention about Naraharitīrtha and the date of M. in the book "History and Culture of Indian people". He received his initiation
from Acyutapreksācārya otherwise called Puruṣottamaitrīṣa and went on pil-
grimage to Badarikāśrama from where he brought the image of Digvijayarāma and Vedavyāsa. Later he travelled in different parts of the country to establish his own doctrines against other schools, including the followers of Śaṅkara. His pupils were Padmanābhaṭīrtha, Naraharitīrtha, Mādhavatīrtha and Aksobhyatīrtha. Of these Naraharitīrtha was sent to Jagannāthaksetra (Puri) in Orissa to bring the idols of Rāma and Sītā. Naraharitīrtha became the preceptor of the Ganga king Narasimha II (A. D. 1279-1306) and is known from several inscriptions with dates ranging between Saka 1186 (A. D. 1264) and 1212 (1290 A. D.). There is little doubt therefore that his guru, Madhva flourished in the thirteenth century. Bhandarkar suggested that Madhva was born in Saka 1199 (A. D. 1276)....."17

S. N. Dasgupta describes that according to Bhandarkar the person mentioned first in the inscription dated 1283 Saka is Puruṣottamaitrīṣa, then his pupil Ānandatīrtha and then Naraharitīrtha. Bhandarkar also opines that this Naraharitīrtha was the same as Narasimha, the ruler of the Taluk from Saka 1191 to 1225. "He is mentioned in the inscriptions at Śrī Kurman bearing the date Saka 1215, which is represented as the eighteenth year of the king’s reign. He was Narasimha II who was panegyrised in the Ekavali. From other inscriptions, we get Narahari’s date as between 1186 and 1212 Saka. These records confirm the tradition that Naraharitīrtha was sent to Orissa by Ānandatīrtha. Now Naraharitīrtha’s actual period ranged between 1186 to 1215. His teacher, Madhva could not have died in Saka 1119 i. e. 67 years before him. Bhandarkar therefore takes 1119 (as mentioned in the Math list) as the date of birth of Madhva, not as the date of his death. This date of Madhva’s birth, Saka 1119 or A D. 1199 has been accepted by Grierson and Krishnaswami Aiyar, and has not so far been challenged."18
But the argument of Dr. B. N. K. Sharma is more convincing. "The evidence of these (Sri Kurmam) inscriptions show that Narahari was in Kalinga between 1264 and 1293 A.D. It appears that he was regent of the state between 1291-1293 A.D." According to Maths, Madhva was succeeded by Padmanābhatirtha. He was on the Pīṭha for seven years and was succeeded by Naraharitirtha who was there for nine years.

Dr. Sharma opines that on the basis of the inscriptions Naraharitirtha was in Kalinga in the year 1289, 1291, 1293. Hence it is not possible that he had come to the Pīṭha till 1293. If Math- lists are to be believed or relied upon, his demise occurred in the year Śrīmukha which falls in the year 1333. Going backwards, Pīṅgala is the year in which Madhvācārya disappeared from the mortal eyes.

Believing the tradition of assigning Madhvācārya a life of 79 years, we arrive at 1238 A.D. as the year of his birth. Hence Dr. B. N. K. Sharma puts period of the Ācārya as 1238-1317 A.D.19

Let us now see whether the above date can be corroborated with some other data available elsewhere.

S M. (XIII-21) refers to King Jayasimha of Kumbla. Among the Kumbla rulers, we have two Jayasimhas, Jayasimha I and Jayasimha II.

Dr. Gururaja Bhat writes that an epigraph, discovered at Talangere, Kasargod taluk of about 10th C. A. D. refers to one king: Jayasimha. To quote Dr. Bhat: " ............... If we were to examine more closely, we may reasonably say that the Talangere Jayasimha could be taken as one of the earliest of the Kumbla family, who at this period may not have been so powerful as
to assume high-sounding titles .......

“... that during the time of Sri Madhvachārya (A. D. 1238-1317), we hear about another Jayasimharāja as evidenced by the references in the Sumadhāvavijaya. This ruler may be considered as Jayasimha II. The period between Jayasimha I and Jayasimha II is virtually blank, so far as the source material for acquainting with the history of this dynasty is concerned.”

Dr. Bhat places Jayasimha I and Jayasimha II in the 10th and 13th C. A. D. respectively. M., there is no doubt, was in flesh and blood in the 13th C. A. D. i. e. during the rule of Jayasimha II

The evidence of solar eclipse

Manjeshwar Govind Pai refers to the year of occurrence of a solar eclipse mentioned by our poet N. P. in S M during a caturmasya of M. V. N. Kudva states that according to Manjeshwar Govind Pai, the solar eclipse referred to in the poem must have been the solar eclipse of either 5th July 1293 A. D. or of 15th August 1300 A. D.

M. Govind Pai has with reasons stated that M.'s date is 1238 AD-1317/18 AD. He has made it clear in another article also. With all these evidences, the date of M. stands settled as 1238-1317/18 AD.

The Historical Evidences and their importance in historic-biographical poem.

While going through the minute aspects of M.'s biography it is not irrelevant to suggest the critical study of the poem without prejudice whatsoever. This aspect requires some comment as this requires an open mind.

The poem S M besides being a work of poetical excellence, is primarily a biography. It has narrated almost all important incidents in the life
of the great Ācārya. Though some poetical exaggerations in the poem cannot be ruled out, the authenticity with which the poet has recorded the life-sketch of the great Ācārya is unquestionable.

It has many privileges over the biographies of other religious leaders. One of the points is that N. P. was the son of Trivikrama Paṇḍita, one of M.'s direct disciples. Hence N. P. must have seen the Ācārya in flesh and blood. It may be inferred that N. P. was in his teens when the Ācārya had left for his divine abode. Thus the author's father was a contemporary of the Ācārya and the author was a junior contemporary. These two facts add to the historical and biographical value of the poem.

Other biographies like the Sāṅkara-Vijayas won't stand on par with S M., as they were written centuries after their hero's departure from this mortal world. Moreover other biographies must have been the result of inspiration from this poem.

An attempt is here made to critically review the poem as a biography as well as a history. In other words, the veracity or truthfulness of the incidents is the subject of the study.

When we are to go deep into the truth, we have to look at the incidents with an X-ray eye and should be able to consider the historical, religious, philosophical and biographical importance of such incidents. Though the poem is considered to be a biography, if any one is under the impression that every line of the poem is literally and historically true, it is nothing but doing injustice to the poetical genius of the poet.

With all reverence and respect to the poet, we have to accept that he was not without prides and prejudices though not to the extent of
giving a distorted view of the incidents. Hence this biography of M. written by N. P. includes in it the truth which appears before us when the poetical cover is pulled off.

However great a person may be, he is a human being with natural limitations. Even Śri Rāma, the Lord-incarnate did suffer for wearing a human body. Great men’s biographies should blaze the trail for us and help us make our lives sublime.

To quote Longfellow:

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time”

Our minds should be open to criticism. To consider M. or for that matter any great person as a bundle of miracles is to deprive the world of his great contribution to philosophy and literature. Till some time back, there was a wave and tendency to superhumanise all religious and philosophical personalities. Now the tendency is reversed. The wave is that nothing should be believed till it stands close scrutiny. Both are extreme views. Miracles do happen. The miracles are explained elsewhere in the thesis. But one should not be under the impression that only miracles make a man great.

M. whom I refer to is a miraculous personality. I firmly believe that he had performed some miracles but that alone has not brought him greatness. He is believed to be the third incarnation of god Vāyu, the first being Hanumān and the second Bhīma. This is a question of belief and beyond the scrutiny of any critic. Hindus believe every great soul to be an incarnation
of one or the other god. But in the case of M, there are several scriptural evidences which declare him to be the third incarnation of Vayudeva. [These evidences have been given in an Appendix.]

**Whether Madhvacārya was influenced by Christianity?**

There is the mention of an event of Lord Anantasana taking possession of a layman and announcing the birth of a great person in the near future.23 Also there is a story that Vayudeva was ordered by Lord Viṣṇu to incarnate on earth. These stories according to some scholars give rise to the doubt that M. was influenced by Christianity which had then begun its advent on the west coast of India. It is relevant here to discuss whether the Ācārya had been influenced by the Christian faith. We would first consider A. L. Basham's view. "...... An interesting feature of Madhva's theology is the important part played by the wind-god Vāyu, the son of Viṣṇu, who is his agent in the world and has some of the features of the Holy Ghost of Christian theology. The resemblances of Madhva's system to Christianity are so striking that influences, perhaps through the Syrian Christian of Malabar is almost certain. The sharp distinction between God and the soul, the doctrine of eternal damnation and the status of Vāyu are obvious points of similarity. In the legends about Madhva there are stories of miracles which must surely have been borrowed from the Gospels; as a boy he successfully disputed with learned brahmins in a temple; when he undertook asceticism a voice from heaven proclaimed his greatness; he fed multitudes with handfuls of food; he walked on water; he stilled the raging ocean with a glance."24

Let us also consider others' opinions which were critically examined by S. N. Dasgupta.
Grierson's arguments in his article on the Madhvacarita in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Vol. III) are:

1. Madhva's birth-place is very near to Kalyanapura, having the reputation as one of the earliest settlements of Christians in India. He says that those Christians were Nestorians. But Garbe considers Kallianpura as Kalyana in the north of Bombay.

2. The legends described in Narayana's Madhvavijaya resemble the legends of Christians.

3. There is great similarity between the bhakti doctrine of Madhva and the devotionalism of Christians.

Among the legends and miracles quoted by Grierson to support his views are:

a) The possession of a person by Lord Anantásana to proclaim the birth of a great person. b) The evil spirits, frightened by the presence of Madhva, while he was going through a forest, when he was a child, fleeing away. c) The child Madhva once found missing at the age of five who was later found prostrating before the Deity. d) During his northern tour, his walking over water without wetting his feet. And, e) pacifying the angry sea with a glance.

The necessity of god Vāyu as intermediary for getting salvation has been taken in favour of the above arguments.

S. N. Dasgupta considers the opinion of many others.25 Burnell in one of his papers opines26 that the Christian influence on Madhvaism is very far-fetched. But Burnell's view that Persians had settled at Manigrāma before the beginning of the ninth century stands contradicted by Collins.
The name Manigrāma according to Collins may have been derived from the name Manes (Mani). Grierson and Burnell both are of the view that this has some relevance to Manimāt, a character mentioned in the Manimāntyārī of N. P.

These opinions of the scholars when considered together force some conclusions to be drawn:

1) There is difference of opinion among scholars about the place “Kalyana” where Christians were said to have had a bishop. These places of the west coast are identified by different scholars differently viz., Kallianpura near Udupi, Kalyan in Thane district and Kallian (modern Cochin).

2) Even for argument’s sake, if we accept that it was Kallianpura near Udupi, the Christianity had not by that time acquired any importance to force an impact on M. There is no mention in S M about Christianity or M.’s encounter or discussion with Christians.

3. The element of devotionalism i.e Bhakti is very old and is an inseparable tenet of Hindus and can be traced back to the Upaniṣads, the Gītā and the Mahābhārata. It is as old as the Upaniṣads if not the Vedas.

4. The faith and the background in which M. was brought up were very orthodox and there is nothing to support the arguments that he had any access to Christian literature.

5. S. N. Dasgupta writes that though occasionally Vāyu is accepted as intermediary, to secure salvation, yet the main emphasis is on the grace of God, depending upon the knowledge about God.

6. The mention of miracles in Indian (Hindu) literature especially in the biographies of great men is a part and parcel of the lives of those great men and these have nothing to do with the influence of Christianity on M. and his doctrines.
Let us now consider C. M. Padmanabhaacarya’s views who has dealt with this topic in detail. He has concluded “that on many a point of doctrine there is similarity between our system and Christianity is not denied. Both are Dualists and theists, believing in a personal God, who creates, sustains and destroys the world. Both believe in Heaven and Hell. Both believe in the divine grace as the source of life and as the cause of liberation. Both are anti-monistic and both strongly believe in Bhakti and prayers.

“At the same time it must also be remembered that numerous are the points of disagreement too “Madhvaism” is purely Hindu in that it believes in transmigration and Karma, whereas the Christian will not listen to it for a moment. Sri Madhva riveted the bonds of castes and laid down very rigid rules for Varnas and Asramas. While the Christian considers that God created the world out of nothing, Sri Madhva upholds the Sankhya view that nothing can come out of nothing. He is purely Hindu in this respect. The theory of Bandha and Moksa as propounded by Sri Madhva rests on the authority of the Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas. It is needless to labour the point. No impartial student of the two theologies will confound them as copies of each other, having regard to the impress of Hindu individuality readable in every line of the Madhva writings.

“Professor Max Mullur takes a very sensible view of the matter and protests against the exaggerated importance given to supposed coincidence. He says at p. 218 of his “Thoughts on life and Religion” - “if comparative theology has taught us anything it has taught us that there is a common fund of truth in all religions derived from a revelation that was neither confined to one nation, nor miraculous in the usual sense of the word and that even minute coincidences between the doctrines, nay, between the eternal accessories of various religions, need not be accommodated for, at once, by disguised borrowings, but can be explained by other and more natural, causes.”
Hence it is very clear that M. and N. P. had no chance of coming under the influence of Christianity. The incidents mentioned in the poem and the philosophy propagated therein, hence, cannot be alleged to be the result of plagiarism. Hence there is no truth in the criticism that M. had been influenced by Christianity.

The Miracles performed by M.

It is not out of place to discuss about the description of miracles performed by M. N. P.’s minute account of M.’s life can be regarded as authentic. He might not have been that old to have any personal relationship with the Ācārya and hence we cannot presume that he himself had seen the miracles mentioned in the poem. But he authentically and emphatically states that the collection of data was from more than one sources and he did say that he had distinguished and preferred the more authentic sources in case of conflicts between the sources of information. He says that he has avoided heresay - accounts and mentioned only those incidents with corroborative proof. His sincerity in his attempt to give to the world at large a true account can be appreciated. Hence the poet requests the readers not to doubt the veracity or authenticity of the poem.\(^{28}\)

We may, now consider some of the miracles which are taken as a part of M.’s life.

1. Clearing the debt with tamarind seeds

An incident is recorded in the second canto of the poem. One day the little boy Vasudeva after finishing his play came to his father and requested him to take lunch with him. The father expressed his inability and whis-
pered into his ears that the creditor who had advanced money to him for pur-
chasing a bullock had been insisting payment immediately. Hearing this, the boy
picking up some tamarind seeds from a nearby heap gave them to the creditor
who not only accepted them but acknowledged to have received the debt back.29

At Pājaka, where the Ācārya was born, even today the spot is shown
where the miracle had happened. The popular belief is that M. transformed
the tamarind seeds into gold cleared away the debt. This incident of seeds
turning into gold has no basis as nothing is mentioned about such gold
by N. P. either in the poem or in the gloss.

The miracle here is of transforming the hard-hearted creditor to
accept even tamarind seeds. This has significance as an event of philosophical
touch. I firmly believe in miracles. But whether it was necessary for the Acarya
to convert the seeds into gold is the most important question. It is more
miraculous to change the mind of the hard-hearted creditor than change
the tamarind seeds. Perhaps while the child offered tamarind seeds for coins,
the creditor must have felt that in the world both tamarind seeds and gold
coins are having no value or are of equal value. Further, the N. P. himself
has stated that the creditor got salvation in the guise of seeds.30 And it was
really nothing but the deep devotion which made the creditor accept the seeds
offered by Vasudeva. He acknowledged the receipt of debt and was pleased to
receive the seeds. Pleased with the devotion, the Ācārya granted him salvation
Those seeds were the seeds of salvation.

Prof. G. V. Nadgouda observes:

"The ox-seller who accepted the tamarind seeds with high esteem
in fulfilment of his payment became the recipient of Vasudeva's favour, hard
to be attained. His was the divine touch that turned the tamarind seeds into
gold. Moved by his majesty that instilled deep devotion in him (ox-seller) (being a soul, noble by nature) and (gradually) with greater knowledge, he attained eternal release. Such is the munificence of Acharya's grace! This is the explanation handed down by tradition, so stated 'Sri Sri Vidyamanayatirtha Swamiji, Pontiff of Bhandarkeri and Phalimar Math.'

Hence, there is no need to imagine that the seeds were transformed into gold and thereby the creditor went back satisfied. If that were the case, N. P. or later gloss-writers would have definitely stated so.

2. Relieving the friend from chronic headache

There is the mention in the third canto that Vasudeva relieved his friend from a chronic headache by blowing the air through his ears. Here also we may presume that the divine boy was knowing some methods, peculiar but rarely used in treatment of such patients. It is a known fact that the ear contributes to some of the aches. Without considering it as a miracle we can consider it as one of the methods of curing the ache. Further this has a philosophical interpretation also. All eligible souls, for getting salvation, have to pass through the natural but unbearable headache of withstanding the difficulties of mundane life and rebirths. This headache can be removed with the help of listening to the scriptures taught by the Wind-god in the form of M. It is also stated that the Acarya enlightened him about his previous births also.

3. Other Miracles:

There is one more miracle mentioned to have been performed by M. On his way back from Badari, he came to Anantamath, where his disciples
were eagerly waiting for him. The Ācārya was in a hurry to leave. But one Agniśarman and five or six other brahmins were all eager to offer Bhikṣa on the same day separately. M. did not want to displease the devotees and consumed all that was brought to him. The poet says that for Him (Vāyu in the form of M.) who digests the whole universe during the Pralaya, it was not a miracle.34

The performance of this feat by M. though may be called a miracle by the pious, comes under the physical capacity of a person who can digest more than a common man. The Guinnese Book of Records stands as an irrefutable record that persons have been born from time to time with such superhuman capacities of possessing extra-ordinary digestion power.

Similar performance of M. is described in the tenth canto. He ate four thousand bananas and drank thirty vessels of milk.35

There are two more instances where the Ācārya hypnotised dacoits who were about to pounce upon him and protected the disciples accompanying him. (X. 20-21)

The incidents which can really be considered as miracles are many. But only a few are explicable as the knowledge and experiences of such miracles in the present days are almost absent.

One of the miracles mentioned in the S M is that M. had spoken to the king in Urdu or Hindustani during his tour to the north.

It can be considered a miracle since M. had no chance of learning Urdu or Hindustani in the south. Even there is no mention of his learning other languages by the poet who should have mentioned had the Ācārya studied any other languages.
We may authentically consider the incident as a miracle performed by the Acārya. Speaking in a language totally unknown to a person is not new. It is there in many biographies of great persons. And to substantiate that such incidents happen, I hereby quote from a book called “World of Strange Powers” by John Fairley and Simon Welfare:

“Back in 1902, a Scottish doctor, Henry Freeborn, had been treating a 70 year-old patient with pneumonia. In delirium she suddenly broke into Hindustani, apparently conversing with her ayah and asking to be taken to the bazaar to buy sweets. It was more than 6 years since she had left India where she had been born and had been looked after by a native servant. She was not aware of ever having been able to speak the language.

“In a comment on the case in The Lancet of June in June 1902, Dr. C. A. Mercier wrote” It is to be noted that it was not the forgotten language alone whose memory was so strongly revived. Her whole personality was transported back. She spoke to friends and relatives of her girlhood and asked that she might be taken to the bazaar.” Coleridge, Mr. Mercier recalled, described a case in which an illiterate maid servant, when delirious, had recited for hours in Greek and Hebrew apparently acquired from a person from whom she had worked years before and who had been in the habit of reading Greek and Hebrew books aloud to himself in her hearing.

“This power of the mind to recall things of which there is conscious memory - Cryptomnesia - may be the key to many past-times produced in hypnotic regressions.”

Many such cases may be mentioned which are beyond the perview of this thesis. But a case given here as an example shows that if a commoner
can recall a forgotten language of the past or of past lives, during delirium, why cannot an ascetic and Yogic personality like M. speak consciously in Urdu or Hindustani?

Further in one more incident, the Acarya had said to have crossed Ganges without becoming wet. Either it is a case of a spiritual art of swimming through the waters i.e. swimming under water or a case of levitation or raising oneself above the ground or water level and travelling the distances. The art of levitation is not new in history. No doubt it is a miracle because one in a crore may be able to do it.

Here again to support my belief that the Acarya might have crossed the river with the help of 'levitation', I quote from John Failery and Simon Welfare again, about the famous "Daniel Home" of America.

"But the main target for sceptical researchers has been what Home's supporters claimed as his most remarkable feat ever. On Sunday 13th December 1868 in the presence of their eye-witnesses, Home appeared to float out of a window on the third floor of Ashley House, in London's Belgrevia 85' above street level. He then flew back through another window."37

The case of Daniel Home is a famous one and many researchers and authors have written about him.

It is one of the eight siddhis called 'Laghima' i.e. becoming lighter and for M. it must have been as natural as other routines.

Hence we can say with confidence that N. P. has mentioned these incidents authentically which were within the mysterious powers of M.

This much is enough about miracles. The examples given above are to substantiate the happening of miracles. We can conclude that M was capable
of performing miracles and had performed some which have authentically been recorded by N. P.

**The eight Maths and their presiding deities:**

N. P. writes that M. chose eight celibates who were endowed with all auspicious features of asceticism and who were scholars with least interest in the material world, as eight pontiffs for his eight Maths. The eight pontiffs with whom the eight Maths were started by M. are Hṛṣikeśatīrtha, Janārdanatīrtha, Narasimhatīrtha, Upendratīrtha, Vāmanatīrtha, Rāmatīrtha, Adhoksajatīrtha and Viṣṇutīrtha.

The poetic beauty of the two verses explaining the characteristics of eight pontiffs, besides mentioning their names, is inexplicable. The disciples of M. were innumerable hailing from different parts of the country. Visvapati explains

These pontiffs had controlled their sense (Hṛṣīkeśa). They had overcome the cycle of birth and death (Janārdana). They had the lotus feet of Narasimha as their shelter (Narasimhapadādāra). They had their names representing Lord Kṛṣṇa (Upendra). Further they had not too long names (Vāmana). They had been worshipping Lord Rāma (Śrīramapadāśraya). And they had qualities which could not be sensed by senses (Adhoksaja). Regarding Viṣṇutīrtha, a detailed description is given in the fifteenth canto and hence his name is not there in the above verse. The seven names of the seven pontiffs are nothing but the adjectives applicable to all the pontiffs. The eight pontiffs were given the eight different icons of different deities which are nothing but different forms of Lord Viṣṇu. The description is given in the *Sampradāya-Paddhati*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Original pontiff</th>
<th>Deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Palimar Math</td>
<td>Hṛṣīkeśatīrtha</td>
<td>Śri Rāma with Sītā &amp; Lākṣmāna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adamar Math</td>
<td>Narasimhatīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Kāliyānanda Kṛṣṇa (four-handed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kṛṣnapur Math</td>
<td>Janārdanatīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Bhujaṛgamarāṇa Kṛṣṇa (two-handed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Puttige Math</td>
<td>Upendratīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Viṭṭhala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sirur Math</td>
<td>Vāmanatīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Viṭṭhala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sode Math</td>
<td>Viṣṇutīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Bhuvaśāha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kaniyur Math</td>
<td>Rāmatīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pejavar Math</td>
<td>Adhokṣajatīrtha</td>
<td>Śrī Viṭṭhala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the establishment of these Maths many pontiffs have occupied the headship of these Maths and served the Lord, contributing their mite to the propagation of M.'s philosophy.

The Icon of Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Udupi and its installation

Lord Kṛṣṇa of Udupi is famous with the story of coming out of a ball of Gopīcandana S M does not mention any such incident. The four verses (40-43) of the ninth canto mention that the idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa was installed by M. after bringing it from the sacred pond. The relevant verses mean as below:

"M. once wished that he should protect the good people from all sins. He felt pity for the good people. After taking a bath he got washed the
idol of Sri Kṛṣṇa who is the most affectionate of Gopīkās and the Lord of Goddess Lākṣmī. His three or four disciples helped in washing the idol. The idol which was very heavy due to the presence of God Kṛṣṇa due to the sacred touch of M., could not be lifted even by thirty mighty persons. But M. easily lifted the same to the Sanctum Sanctorum. The image was having a beautiful face and gentle smile."

Here there is no mention of any story of Gopicandana. Let us now go deep into the matter by referring to various other sources.

Vādīrāja in his Tīrtha-prabandha says that Lord Kṛṣṇa left Dvārākā which was full of prosperity and happiness, for Rajatapīthapura i.e. Udupi. There at Dvārākā, He was being worshipped by Gopīkās.44 This gives us a clue that the icon might have been prepared at Dvārākā or nearby and it is a very old icon. The well-known story of the installation of Lord Kṛṣṇa is given by Chalari Śesācarya in his commentary on Ś M. It clearly mentions a popular story which is as follows:

"M. who knows the past, the present and the future once had gone to the sea-shore. He had an intention of installing the idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Udupi. He was performing Japa after bathing in the sea. At that time a ship was seen in the sea which came to be stuck to the sea-bottom. It did not move even a little. Nor could it come to the shore. The crew on board cried for help with the help of a cloth, by waving it in the air, could bring the ship to the shore. The crew which was pleased gave the Ācārya a ball of Gopicandana. It had the idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa inside. The same was brought to Udupi and got washed by the disciples before installation".45

Satyatīrtha in his Madhva Vīlāsa states the anecdote similarly.46 The Skanda-Purāṇa also supports the story of Gopicandana.
Sri Vyasanakere Prabhanjanacarya in his edition of S. M gives many quotations from various works in support of the above.\textsuperscript{47}

\textit{S M} is silent about the story of \textit{Gopicandana}. It cannot be concluded authentically whether the story has any historic basis. At the same time we cannot overlook the authors like Vādirāja, Satyatirtha and others to turn down the story as baseless. Under the circumstances, the silence of \textit{S M} may be construed as supporting the story which may have been left out by the poet for brevity. However, without entering into the controversy, it may safely be presumed that the story mentioned by the great personalities like Vādirāja, Satyatirtha and others is not unauthentic. There is nothing so authentic in support of denial of the popular story. As such the popular story is to be considered as true.

\textbf{M. - The incarnation of Wind-god-1}

\textit{The miracle of lifting a big rock and keeping it in the river to lesson the force of the river}

M. was on a pilgrimage to one of the holy places. He reached river Bhadrā in the present Chikmagalur District. of Kaṭakā. There he saw a huge rock lying on the river-bank. On enquiry he came to know that the rock had been brought to be kept in the river itself; but it was left in the middle. When they were asked by the Ācārya as to why they had stopped the attempt, they explained that even Bhīma would not have been able to lift the stone, had he tried to do so. M. then lifted the stone like a flower with his hand and brought it to the place where they wanted to keep it. This performance of M. was similar to that of his bringing Gandhamadana mountain in the \textit{Rāmāyana} during his another incarnation as Hanumān.\textsuperscript{48}
This performance enumerated in S M gives scope for discussion on two important points. One is that of the stone which is known as Bhimanakallu and another is that M. was the incarnation of the Wind-god.

**Bhimanakallu**

The rock which is popularly known as Bhimanakallu has an inscription in Sanskrit that the same was brought with one hand by M. It has "Dandu, Kamandalu" inscribed on it. This rock is there at the Ambatirtha in the Mudigere Taluk of the Chikmagalur District in the Bhadra river. Dr. D. N. Shanbhag observes: "The doubting Thomases about the supreme might of Sri Madhvacarya have been silenced by Sri Madhvācārya’s ‘Rock Memorial’ existing even today under the name of ’Bheemanakallu’ (Bheema’s rock) at the Ambatīrtha in the Mudigere Taluk of the Chikmaglur District. This is what Mr. R L. Rice, the great archeologist writes about this rock.

"..............going through Malangadi and keeping on to river a sacred place Ambatirtha is reached where the stream rushes very deep between some water-worn rocks. At one point is a large boulder, a big square shaped stone placed horizontally on another. On the former is an inscription in Sanskrit stating that ‘Madhvacarya brought and placed with one hand’ (Mysore Gazetteer Vol. II PP.399-400)

"In Vol. VI Page 27 of the Epigraphica Karnatica published in 1901, Mr. Rice continues: "It is an inscription on the top of a big boulder called the Bheemanakallu at the Ambatirtha in the Tunga river. It states that the rock was brought there and set up with one hand by Madhvacarya. He was the reformer of the 13th century A. D., who was the exponent of the system of Dvaita or
Dualism and founder of the sect of Madhva Brahmans. The circumstances under which he brought the stone here are thus related in the Sumadhvavijaya. Maheksha (Acharya Madhva) saw a big rock capable of supporting the fall of water from a height which had been brought by a thousand men for some Thirtha and abandoned through utter inability. "Why was the rock not conveyed to its destination for the good of the people?" - He enquired, when the crowd at the place replied that there were no men able to convey it there and that even if Bhima were to try, it was doubtful whether he could do it or not. Whereupon, he (Madhvacharya) bore up the rock easily with one hand as in the form of Hanuman he had borne up the mountain (Gandhamadana) and placed it at the destined spot and this rock in the Tunga even now bears witness to his deed."\[50\]

This rock is an irrefutable witness of great Acarya's miraculous powers. Having discussed about Bhimankallu, let us now consider for discussion the Acarya as the third incarnation of the Wind-god.

**M. as the incarnation of Wind-god-2**

The second canto, at the beginning elaborates the background of the incarnation of the Wind-god as M. It is at the orders of Lord Viśnu that the Wind-god took incarnation as M. to protect the Vedas being misinterpreted and also to protect the good people from being misled. The gloss writer Visvapati also supports this contention quoting from the *Rgveda*. In support of the poet's belief that M. was an incarnation of the Wind-god, we may quote the Acarya himself. In many of his works we come across a verse stating about the authorship of the work. The verse 'Yasya Trinyuditàm\[51\] etc means-
"The three divine forms of Wind-god have been mentioned in the Balittha-hymn of the Rgveda. His original form is constituted of prowess (Bat) and knowledge (Darsatam). It is the support and movement (Bhargah) of the universe and is highly adorable (Mahat). It was ordained (Nih tam) to manifest itself in three incarnations by God Himself. In the first incarnation as Hanumān, he carried Rāma’s message to Sīta; in the second one as Bhīma he destroyed the army of Kauravas and the third incarnation is that of Madhva by whom this work was composed to declare the supremacy of Lord Viśnu."

Shri Vyasanakere Prabhanjanacharya has collected all the scriptural evidences declaring M to be the incarnation of Wind-god in his edition of S M published by Aitareya Prakashan, Vyasanakere (pp. 215 - 221). In the words of Dr. B. A. Saletore, the great historian of Karnataka, "Madhvacārya was the embodiment of prodigious physical, intellectual and spiritual strength. He has been rightly considered as the very incarnation of God Vāyu. (emphasis added)" A few instances will suffice to show what superb qualities the great Ācārya possessed. While returning to Tuluva at the end of his second North Indian tour, he and his retinue were waylaid by robbers. But he was more than a match for them. He not only routed them single-handed but transformed his trimorous disciple, Upendratīrtha, into a man of supernatural strength, and pitched him against the robbers, who ultimately forsook their evil ways and begged pardon of the Ācārya. On another occasion, when passing through a forest, a tiger sprang on Satyatīrtha, one of his disciples who was carrying the puja-box on his shoulders. The Ācārya killed the tiger himself. At Kāśi (Banaras) the great Ācārya showed his wonderful physical strength by defeating single-handed fifty persons in a wrestling match!
"In Tuluva he had to face the impudence of two sturdy brothers, who were bullies. The elder of them was called Kodanjadi Gantavala. This fellow challenged the Acarya to lift the huge flag-staff of the god Kantadeva (at Kantavara). The Acarya did it with ease but the bully, when asked to do so, could not do it!

"A more interesting example of the Acarya's physical prowess refers to a locality in the Kadur District of the Mysore State. Here at Ambatirtha through which the river Tunga flows in the village of Mavinkere, Mudugere taluka, in the course of one of his sojourns, he saw a huge rock which had been abandoned through utter inability. "Why was the rock not conveyed to its destination for the good of the people?" asked the Acarya of the people of the locality. They said that even if Bhima were to try, it was doubtful if he would succeed. Thereupon the Acarya bore the huge rock on one hand, and placed it at the destined spot to the great relief and rejoicing of the people. And in silent testimony of this feat of extraordinary physical strength, there the rock stands even today in the river Tunga with the following statement inscribed on it: Sri Madhvācāryaiaḥ ekahastenānīya sthāpitā śilā (The rock brought [here] and set up with one hand by Sri Madhvacarya). The late Mr. Lewis Rice, who had discovered this rock inscription had assigned it to about the year 1240, but, for reasons stated in my work on Tuluva, I should be inclined to assign it to 1280.

"If the above incidents bear witness to the Acarya’s uncommon physical energy, the following will testify to his extraordinary intellectual and spiritual strength. While his guru Acyutapreksa Acarya was one day reading a work called Īstasiddhi, his disciple Pūrṇaprajna, then only in his teens found out thirty-two mistakes in that work which, when pointed out to his teacher, secured for him the title of Anandatirtha at the hands of Acyutapreksa Acarya. I shall
not mention the names of the many religious disputants whom the young Acarya vanquished.

"Special mention must be made of his intellectual daring which he revealed in the new interpretation he gave to our philosophy. Challenging the great Śankarācārya's theory of māyā or Illusion, Madhvacārya ushered in the theory of bhakti or Love of God which could be followed by all, without distinction of creed, caste, or religion. He therefore liberalized our philosophy as no previous religious teacher had done. In this he forestalled by about four centuries the preachings of the illustrious Vaiṣṇava saints, who also made bhakti the corner stone of their teachings. When the great Acarya dwelt only on Viṣṇu, and gave no place in his concept of God to the Vyūhas, Vasudeva and others, he had relegated the traditional Vasudevism to the background and made room for the general type of Vaiṣṇavism. This was indeed a reformation of the first magnitude which was to have the most profound effect on the spread of the bhakti movement of the later time."53