CHAPTER VII

VEDĀNTIC THOUGHT IN MĀDHAVADEVĀ'S WORK
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Treatment of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa as the essence of Vedānta:

Throughout all their writings on bhakti Śaṅkaradeva and Madhavadeva were mainly influenced by the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The philosophical teachings of this purāṇa, as Farquhar points out, "stands nearer to Śaṅkara's system than to the theistic sāṅkhya which dominates earlier puranic works."¹ In interpreting the purāṇa Śaṅkaradeva and Madhavadeva almost invariably followed the Bhāgavata-bhāvārtha-dīpikā commentary of Śrīdhara Śvāmī (c. 1400). They considered the Bhāgavata-purāṇa as the essence of all the vedānta. Madhavadeva writes in his Namāghosa: "Śrī-Bhāgavata sāstra is the essence of all vedānta. Whoever drinks its nectar-like juice with pleasure, never feels any desire for other (juice)."²

In a few verses of the Namāghosa the Bhāgavata-purāṇa has been praised as the best among all the scriptures.

¹ R.L.I., p. 231
² v. 18 (Bhāgavata-purāṇa, X I. 15)
of one thousand verses of Namaghosa Madhavadeva had translated and incorporated sixty-one slokas from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. From no other single work has the saint incorporated renderings of such a large number of verses. This shows his deep faith and reverence for the purāṇa. He also used nine verses from the Bhāgavata-bhāvartha-dīpikā in his Namaghosa. Another notable work of his, Bhakti-ratnāvalī, is completely based on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Madhavadeva himself, too, declares it to be the 'essence of Bhāgavata'. This work covers topics like devotion and its nature, classification of devotion and devotees as contained in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. In Janma rahasya Madhavadeva is reported to have taken his materials from some works entitled Janma-purāṇa and Matsya-mādhava, (although the existence of such works seems to be doubtful as in no other place reference to these two works is available). Yet he included the Kṛṣṇa lore as available in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. He composed the Rājasūya-kāvya basing on the story of Bhāgavata, Skanda X. Among his genuine plays the Arjuna-bhañjana and the Bhojana-behār and among the plays attributed to him the Brahma-mohana are based on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

3. Bhakti-ratnāvalī, v. 30

1. KGC, p. 256
The Namaghosa:

Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva's conception of Brahman, jīva and the world is based on the Vedānta. Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva's religious systems are based on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa; which is recognised by them as the essence of the Vedānta. Mādhavadeva's Namaghosa, containing one thousand verses, is a rare combination of poetry, religion and philosophy. Here we find Mādhavadeva as a thinker, a devotee and a metaphysical poet as well.

Śaṅkaradeva begins his Kirtana with obeisance to 'sanatana (eternal) Brahman', who is the cause (kārana) of all the incarnations (avatāra). Mādhavadeva's Namaghosa accepts the same view and establishes Kṛṣṇa as both Brahman - the cause of incarnations and the Brahman incarnate. Both Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva hold the existence of formless (nirākāra), blissful (paramānanda), eternal (sanatana) and pure (suddha) Brahman as the cause of the manifested world. Brahman is the indwelling spirit of every material element and being the indwelling spirit affects the production of other things. The Namaghosa rightly calls Him the soul of the world. As He enters the senses and controls them, He is called Hrīśikesa (the

5. Bhakti-ratnakara, 36.18; Namaghosa, v. 13
6. Namaghosa, v. 156
7. ibid., vv. 61, 31
Lord of senses). He is also called the antaryāmī (inner controller). Though the Brahman possesses different names and forms, He is indeed formless and nonmanifest. In Namaghosa Mādhavadeva says, - 'How will you worship Lord Hari who is avyakta (non-manifest) ? Is there any visarjana (ceremony of sending away) of Him who is nirākara (formless) ? Purify your mind by chanting the name of Rāma. 

This nirākara Brahman pervades the whole creation. Every creature is a part of that Eternal and Spotless soul. He alone is the truth. He creates the world and the world (which is appearance) is manifested in Him. Sānkaradeva, in one of his lyrics writes:

Yata jīva jaṅgama kīṭa pataṅgama
aga naga jaga terikāya.

(All the creatures and the moveables - the insects and flies - the ocean and mountains and the world are but the body of Thee). The jīva and the world are by no means different from Brahman, it is only avidyā (nescience) that gives rise to a feeling of difference. The Brahman alone is the conscious power in the apparently unconsciuos world - which is a composition of his power - māyā (illusion). The apparently unconscious world exists only for those, who are under the influence of avidyā. When one comes out of

8. Nāmaṃghosā, vv. 175, 61, 63
9. ibid., v. 8
10. ibid., v. 83
avidyā the existence of the world becomes meaningless and one finds Brahman alone covering the whole existence including oneself. The Namaghosa says: "Kṛṣṇa, who the Supreme Soul, is always directly experienced. He is not experienced in a state of nescience. When nescience is destroyed one finds Kṛṣṇa like an ornament attached to the neck."  

Freedom from illusion is the state of final release. It means freedom from ignorance, doubt, misery, fear, egoism, passions, desires, attachments, etc., - the irrational existence of which make a person move in the circle of rebirth. To conquer illusion, the grace of the Lord is necessary, as He is the Master of time and illusion.  

It is viewed in the Namaghosa that no fortune is better than vairāgya (detachment from worldly objects and passions), no happiness is greater than probodha (consolation), no enemy is greater than worldly life and there is no saviour other than Hari.

Bargīts and other works:

Madhavadeva's deep knowledge of Vedānta finds its expression even in his sweet and beautiful bargīt lyrics.

11. Namaghosa, v. 41
12. ibid., v. 586
13. ibid., v. 306
Among these lyrics of his, a good number is about the childlike pranks and a prettily appealing playfulness of Krsna, the child God. Throughout all his lyrics the poet devotee never for a moment forgets the divine self of that small child. Again and again he realises that he is the Lord Hari whose glory is expounded in all the four Vedas, the Purānas, the Mahābhārata, the Gītā and the Bhāgavata, and whose name is chanted by gods and saints alike, knowing it to be the essence of all Vedic scriptures. Even the principal gods cannot realise the nature of Narāvana's mayā, - the power due to which all transitory things look like eternal. People lose their judgement of true and false. They treat the body as the soul and forget that the Supersoul is Hari alone. Self-surrender at His feet, as being the only Saviour of jīvas, is what is expounded by the Vedas. These scriptures are not easy of access to all persons. It is easier for them to identify the little cowherd in the milkmaid's house as the Master of the Brahmanas, who out of this nature of submission to His devotees allows Himself to be tied down by Yaśodā, even though Brahma and other gods are not free from the noose of His mayā. Under the refulgent appearance of a cowherd boy, He is the endless

15. ibid., No. 6
16. ibid., No. 26
17. ibid., No. 37
and beginningless, True, Eternal and Spotless Deva. He is the Supersoul, beloved and well-wisher of devotees, worship at whose feet removes the fear of rebirth. The everblissful Lord takes the incarnation of Krsna only to save His devotees who are charmed by the power of ignorance and nescience. It is said in one lyric - Govinda plays in glee with Yaśodā to show His human character. That great Lord, Who is the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, whose divine sport is known to nobody, appears and plays as a cowherd lad just in order to save people. The merciful god of all gods, service to whom is superior to final beatitude, is playing in different ways. Mādhava says, child Gopāla is the only refuge.

In the Janma-rahasya (secrets of incarnation) Narada prays to Kṛṣṇa, "I bow to Thee, O Narāyaṇa, the Primal and the endless Person, the Eternal, Spotless, Pūrṇa Brahman Bhagavat. Thou art other than Prakṛti, the embodiment of spiritual knowledge - I bow at Thy feet a crore of times. Thou makest the Prakṛti conscious with Thy glance, Thou createst, destroyest and protectest the universe as Thy divine sport. Thou hast created the

18. Bṛhayī, No. 44
19. ibid., Nos. 81, 82
20. ibid., No. 186
21. ibid., No. 139
universe as Brahma, supported it as Visnu and Thyself destroyest it as Rudra - yet Thou art above the qualities. With the power of Thy own yoga Thou makest māyā subordinate to Thee. Thou alone art truth, all others are only manifestations of Thee. All the different universes are nothing apart from Thee, but Thou Thyself transcendest all manifestations. As the existence of an earthen pot is impossible without clay, but the clay can exist without the pot, likewise the only Truth is Thyself, all other forms are transitory. As flowers and creepers appearing in a piece of tapestry are actually nothing but threads, likewise Thou art the only Reality in the three worlds." 22

The master of the three worlds enters into His creation as the inner controller and plays with vivid forms. 23 He alone is the master of illusion (māyā); all others are subordinate to and charmed by it. In parts as individual selves the Lord enters into each body. But the individuals are tied by this illusion. 24 The Lord is free from all limitations, is the splendid soul pervading all the universes. Eternal, conscious and blissful is He, untramelled by the qualities of the universe. He controls the jīva as the inner controller and māyā is submissive 10

22. vv. 31-36
23. Ādikanda, v. 369
24. Bhāvartha-dīpīka, v. 87-19-20
Illusion and nescience generally charm the minds of the jīvas; therefore, they (the jīvas) do not realise the Lord in them. They feel a deep attachment for their bodies which is so very transitory.

In Arjuna-bhañjana the sons of Kuvera pray to Krsna as extremely blissful, Supreme Person and the primary cause of the universe. He is recognised as the only truth of the illusory universe. It is only for His divine sport (līlā) that He appeared as a cowherd boy. The Lord of the universe is free from birth and death. Yet He has been born as a cowherd boy and did so many pleasure activities only to fulfil His own pleasure.

Māyā, Avidyā and Prakṛti: Māyāvāda:

Māyā is the chief characteristics of the Advaita system. Madhavadeva in all of his works, specially in his Nāmagnosā, uses properly the terms māyā, avidyā and prakṛti. Māyā is the power of the Brahman with which He creates and conducts the universe. There is no māyā in the Brahman. Māyā evolves a variety of names and forms, which in their...
totality is the jagat or the universe. It also conceal
the eternal Brahman under this aggregate of names and forms. Mayā has the properties of avarana or concealment of the
truth and vikṣepa or misrepresenting it. With these
properties it represents the false world as the real and
conceals the Brahman which is the source of the universe.
By means of it the Supreme Lord creates the world.
Mādhavadeva says: Thou only, O Kṛṣṇa, art eternal con-
csciousness in reality. Thou art Truth and pure infinite
knowledge, all else are only Thy attractive forms, the
universe being conjured up by mayā.\textsuperscript{31}

Since mayā is deceptive in character, it is
called avidyā or false knowledge.\textsuperscript{32} It is not mere absence of apprehension but positive error. When this activity is
attributed to Brahman, the latter becomes Īśvara. Īśvara is
the creative power of the eternal God and is, therefore,
eternal. Mayā has no separate dwelling-place. It is in
Īśvara as heat is in fire. Mayā is identified with the
names and forms which, in their unevolved condition, in
Īśvara, and in their developed state constitute the
world. In this sense it is synonymous with prakṛti.\textsuperscript{33} Īśvara
or prakṛti becomes in the puruṣa the loving consort of
Īśvara and the principal instrument in the act of creation.

\textsuperscript{31} Namaghosa, v.
\textsuperscript{32} Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol. II, p. 572
\textsuperscript{33} ibid., p. 573
Mādhavadeva creates a myth when he calls māyā a devī, and Śankaradeva presents her as a beautiful goddess in his Anādi-pātana. Mādhavadeva, in all over of his Namaghusa, gives the picture of māyā as a mysterious power which gives sorrows and sufferings to individual selves. It is full of deceptive attributes. Mādhavadeva says: The māyā, o hari, has assumed deceptive attributes and bewitched me completely.

Māyā is jāda (inert) and, therefore, subordinate to the Lord. Those people are the subjects of māyā's influence who have no faith in the Supreme Soul. It is the Lord alone who can save people from the vagaries caused by māyā. Without His grace it is impossible to get rid of māyā's influence. In one of his ghosas Mādhavadeva prays: Again and again I bow to Thee. O Narayana! may Thou be pleased with me and lift the veil of māyā. Show forth Thy own glory and save mankind.

The concept of māyā is intimately related to that of avidyā. Avidyā is dissoluble by knowledge but māyā is coeternal with the Supreme personality. Īśvara, the

34. Namaghosā, v. 164
35. vv. 39-ff
36. Namaghosā, v. 73
37. ibid., v. 205
38. Janma-rahasya, v. 34
39. Namaghosā, v. 71
40. ibid., v. 701
omniscient, who controls his māyā, has no avidyā. The avidyā of the individual and prakṛti of the Brahman arise together. The appearance of Brahman as the world is due to the influence of avidyā. This ghosa of Mādhavadeva gives a clear picture of the influence of avidyā on the individual:

Hari! evil company is irresistible; evil desires are wicked; avidyā (nescience) is beginningless; I myself have been deluded by them. O Hari! I worship the soulless body as the soul, but the highest bliss lies in worshipping Thy feet; abandoing Thy worship I have been deprived of that joy. Horrible are the sufferings of the world which is full of māyā (illusion), thinking them to be real pleasures; my mind has plunged into them. ⁴¹

The ignorance caused by avidyā is compared by Mādhavadeva with the darkness caused by dark cloud.⁴² This darkness, he says, can be removed with the light of devotion to the Lord.⁴³ The Lord is above and beyond both prakṛti and purusa.⁴⁴ The Namaghosa establishes Him as the kāraṇa (cause) and niyanta (controller) of prakṛti and purusa.⁴⁵ He makes prakṛti conscious with His glance,⁴⁶ creates crores of universes and with His power of yogā

⁴¹ Namaghosa, vv. 751-753
⁴² ibid., v. 355
⁴³ ibid., v. 791
⁴⁴ Rāmāyana, Adi-kanda, v. 587; Rājasūya, v. 32
⁴⁵ Namaghosa, v. 405
⁴⁶ Rāmāyana, Adi-kanda, v. 569
creates Himself into Himself.\textsuperscript{47}

Brahman and Godhead:

The essence of the Bhāgavata philosophy is that Brahman or Ātman is the only absolute reality and that the whole universe, including body, mind and ego, is only an expression in name and form of this reality and as such has no independent existence of its own.\textsuperscript{48} Brahman is both the efficient and the material cause (nimitta, upādana kārana) of the universe. Just as modifications of clay, iron or gold are nothing different from clay, iron or gold, the universe is a mode of Him - that is of His real power and will have its end in Him.\textsuperscript{49} In the Janma-rahasya\textsuperscript{50} Nārada prays to Him, - "As the existence of an earthen-pot is impossible without the clay, but the clay can exist without the pot, likewise Thou alone art the truth, all other forms are unreal."

He is the Lord of srṣti (creation), sthiti (preservation) and pralaya (dissolution). He creates the universe out of 'Māyā; - His 'Sakti' and absorbs it again into Him at dissolution.\textsuperscript{51} He is nitya (ever-existing),

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Āponāte āponāka sraijah āpuni (Rāmāvana, Ādi-kānda, v. 580)
\item \textsuperscript{48} Cultural Heritage of India, p. 231
\item \textsuperscript{49} Bhāgavata-purāṇa, X. 87
\item \textsuperscript{50} v. 35
\item \textsuperscript{51} Rājasūya-kāvyā, v. 115
\end{enumerate}
Niranjana (unconcealed), śiva (the absolute good), sanatana (eternal), anādi (beginningless), ananta (endless), nirguna (above the qualities) and guṇa-niyanta (controller of qualities). The world is due to his saṃkalpa (will-to-be and will-to-power). All the universe is 'jada' (inert and passive) for Him including 'Māya'. As the only conscious power He lends consciousness and conducts the jada jāna. He pervades the whole universe, but is not affected by its merits and demerits. The Bhāgavata-purāṇa terms Him as the Father, the Preceptor and the Master of the world. the same tune Mādhavadeva says, - "O Hari, the ocean of grace, be merciful to me. I have taken Thee as my beloved Soul, friend and sole preceptor."

As the sarvasaṁkṣi (witness of all souls), he is the observer of jīvas' mind and intellect and is the master of their senses. As the inner controller, he makes the jīvas experience pleasure and pain, and also guides them and the world.

52. Namaghosa, v. 47
53. ibid., v. 205
54. ibid., v. 152
55. ibid., v. 153
56. Bhāg., XI.v.651; Rajasūya, v. 32
57. X. 27.6
58. Namaghosa, v. 306
59. ibid., v. 303
60. ibid., vv. 130, 132, 158, 175, 809
The nirākāra (formless) Brahman presents Himself in different forms of incarnations. Though He is formless and nirguna (transcendent in the sense of being above the qualities), He, for the sake of His devotees, assumes immanence in bodied forms (saguṇa) in degrees perfect or imperfect (i.e. through pūrṇa or aṃśa avatāra). He is aja (not subject to birth), but He incarnates for His līlā.

In the Ādikānda-Rāmāyana Mādhavadeva explains -

eka mūrti nānā mūrti nānāmūrti eka
tomāta jagata tumi tātā vyatireka
tumi praṇa mana mukha caksu karna nāsā
tomātase sakala jagate kare vāsā

One form (that is Thyself) becomes many forms (jīvas). The universe is in Thee; but Thou art beyond the world. Thou art the vital winds, mind, mouth, eye, ear and nose. All the universe lives in Thee. 62

He assumes incarnations only for the pleasure of his devotees and to fulfil His determination (saṃkalpa) to have divine play (līlā). The Brahman, which is full of its own bliss (nijānandapūrṇa) sportively incarnates in the form of man in the world, to save the bhaktas from the grasp of ignorance. 65 In one lyric of Mādhavadeva it

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61. Kīrτana, veda-stuti., v. 1662
62. vv. 581-582
63. Janma-rahasya, v. 133
64. Ādikānda Rāmāyana, vv. 575-578
65. Bargīt, No. 106
is stated, - "It is amazing to speak, while it sounds self-contradictory, brother, where did you hear of the sports that Brahman indulges in? Hari, of whom all the Vedic scriptures speak merely by deduction, plays with cowherd boys! Eternal, pure, free from falsehood, formless is the Brahman. It is pleasant to hear of its divine sports. Who is the inner controller and ever-present witness of the universe, He is adorned with sapphire, red ochre and peacock feathers. With whose brightness the universes are shining - behold that merciful one in the role of a cowherd nearabout. The divine sport of the Super Soul is something amazing to hear. Let the mind of Madhava be absorbed in the feet of Hari." 66

Final release of the individual soul:

The Namaghosa says, "By offering services to Isvara, the jīva becomes free from the errors caused by maya. Thus purified (suddha) the jīva is called the Bhrahman and Isvara is the Parama Brahman." 67

When maya leaves off a jīva and the jīva realises himself as Brahman, a part of the Parama Brahman as it were, then he enjoys the state of final release. It means union with the Brahman. This liberation is possible.

66. Bargaśīt, No. 103
67. v. 175
only when one becomes free from the accounts of past virtues and vices (prarabdha karma) and is no longer subject to the social laws (vidhira kinka) according to Nāmaghősā. Until the bondage of karma is destroyed - the jīva has to move restlessly in the circle of rebirth under the influence of māyā and avidyā. When the jīva with the help of vidyā (knowledge) becomes desireless for all types of happiness (mixed with sorrows), brought about by avidyā, and sees the Brahmān pervading the world, then he attains to liberation. In this case liberation is possible even in the mundane body, which is called jīvanmukti (release in life). The other type of release is vikṣera-mukti (release after the dissolution of the body). After Kṛṣṇa was called jīvanmukta after Kṛṣṇa had passed away.

Mukti is classified into five kinds. They are: sālokya, sāmipya, sārūpya, sarsti and sāyujya. Sālokya means the state in which there is the opportunity to live in the celestial abode (Vaikuntha) of the Lord. Through singleness of love and devotion one can attain to it. Sārūpya means having the same form with the Lord. with

68. Nāmaghősā,
69. ibid., v. 137
70. A critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, p. 253
71. Bhakti-ratnāvalī, v. 474
72. Bhakti-ratnāvalī, vv. 286-287
sincere meditation (meditation) one can achieve it. Sāmīpa is that kind of liberation, in which the jīvatma lives near Paramatman. Sarṣṭi means having equal wealths (aīśvarya) with the Lord. The last type, that is, saṃjñā means the merging into the Lord. It is said that, one, who meditates on Mādhava, enters Visnu just as butter melts into fire. Mādhavadeva says, "O Lord, Thou art above the qualities (nirguṇa); but there is no end to your qualities. The individual selves sing of these qualities and themselves becomes qualityless (i.e., indeterminate and above the qualities)."

Though mukti is called the highest goal of life, a sincere devotee seeks nothing other than devotion. He even regards release as of secondary importance. He does not specially hanker after saṃjñā or līnamukti on the ground that it hampers his service to God. It is said, "The opportunity to serve the feet of Hari is not found in final release. (Therefore) A devotee of Hari should abstain from it."

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73. moke mātra anuksane cintiyā thākaya, mohora svarūpa pāve siṭo mahāśāya (Bhakti-ratnāvalī, v. 934)
74. Bhakti-ratnāvalī, v. 1137
75. Kīrtana-ghosa, v. 2201
76. Bārīṣīt, No. 36
77. Cultural Heritage of India, p. 295
78. Nāmāghosa, v. 238
79. Bhakti-ratnakara, v. 1025
It is further explained that the real devotee seeks nothing other than the pleasure of serving Hari's feet. Therefore, he does not accept final beatitude. He realises his actual form by the influence of devotion and from that station he offers his service to Hari. The Namaghosa in its opening verse praises the devotees, who do not desire salvation. In fact, that detachment to mukti as well as bhukti or bhoga is a chief trait of bhakti.

The greatest help to the attainment of final release is the grace (prasāda) of the Lord. Loving devotion is the highest means for salvation, and without His grace devotion does not flourish in the ātma's heart.

The person with a pure mind, believes Hari as the well-wisher and takes refuge in Him, overcomes all the hurdles with the grace of Hari and dances by singing the glories of Hari.

Among the paths of jñana, karma and bhakti (knowledge, observance of duties, devotion) to attain liberation bhakti is superiormost. Even the most wretched person gets liberation with the help of bhakti. Krishna advises Arjuna, - "Fix your mind on Me, cultivate devotion.

80. Bhakti-ratnākara, v. 1097
81. v. 1
82. Namaghosa, v. 6
83. ibid., v. 405
for Me, worship Me, and make salutations to Me. If you dedicate yourself to Me in this manner, you shall attain Me."\(^{34}\)

Mādhavadeva establishes Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of Time (kāla) and Illusion (māyā), \(^{35}\) the only pure shelter of the devotees \(^{36}\) and the only saviour of jīvas from the fears of rebirth. \(^{37}\)

A form of advaitavāda:

The neo-Vaiṣṇava bhakti cult of Assam believes in the non-dualistic concept of God. Among the four main commentators of Brahma-sūtra (Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānuja, Mādhva and Vallava), Śaṅkarācārya was the founder of the non-dualistic doctrine (advaitavāda). A reflection of his thought is distinct in the works of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva. Śaṅkaradeva cites the authority of Śaṅkarācārya in his Bhakti-ratnākara, \(^{38}\) where the (Viṣṇu) bhūja-prāyāta hymn is attributed to him, Mādhavadeva, too, in many places of his works, lays stress on advaita. The principal idea emanating from all literary works of

\(^{34}\) Bhāgavata-purāṇa, 6-2-18; Nāmaghoṣā, v. 612

\(^{35}\) Bhāgavadvītā, 5-34; Nāmaghoṣā, v. 610

\(^{36}\) Nāmaghoṣā, v. 783

\(^{37}\) ibid., v. 224

\(^{38}\) vv. 134-136
Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva is -

tomāra advaita rūpa parama ānanda pala
ṭāte more magna hauka cita

(LET MY MIND BE ABSORBED IN THE SUPER-BLISSFUL NON-DUALISTIC ASPECT OF THEE).

Though Madhavadeva mentions the Lord’s vivid incarnations and offers worship to His saguna (qualified) aspects, he considers Brahman as nirguna (non-qualified) in the final analysis. Worship of saguna Isvara leads to the Ultimate Reality - the nirguna Brahman. There is nothing real except it. It is satya (truth), śuddha (pure), akhandita jñāna (integral knowledge), nitya (eternal), ca caītanya svarūpa (consciousness itself). This Brahman is identified with Kṛṣṇa as he is full of extreme Bliss.

It is Viṣṇu, as It pervades the universe, and the universe lives in It. It is called Viṣṇu, as It enters the universe as its Soul. All the universes are born of It and depend upon It. As the soul of all devotees, It naturally lives in everybody’s heart.

89. Kīrtana, veda-stuti, v. 21
90. Nāmagnosā, v. 84
91. Bārīt, No. 36
92. Nāmagnosā, v. 84
93. ibid., v. 181
94. ibid., v. 156
95. ibid., v. 181
96. Bhakti-ratnavālī, v. 139
only reality is explained like this - "All the world including māya, is inert by itself; Hari is the ultimate truth ascertainable." 99. It is announced in the speech of the Lord to Arjuna that "The universe flows out of Me and exists in one for all time. The sage, who knows this, O Arjuna! possesses proper discrimination, is devoted in mind to Me and worship Me only, singing and hearing My name and praises." 99

Śaṅkara-cārya, in his theory of non-dualism explains Brahman as pure consciousness (jnāna-svarūpa), devoid of any guṇa or attribute (nirguṇa) and of every trace of particularity (nirviśes). It is incomparable or everfree, indivisible and absolute. 99 There is no difference between Brahman and jīvas, it is only due to māya's influence that jīvas believe themselves to be independent entities and take the worthless body for the soul. 100

A keen scholar like his guru, Madhavadeva was very much successful in bringing the hard philosophy of Vedānta within the grasp of the common man. His treatment of passages from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa was attractive and popular because of the simple and lucid style of presentation. In those days, when the sacred Sanskrit lore

97. Namaghosā, v. 205
98. ibid., v. 615
99. Viveka-cūḍāmani, v. 381
100. Namaghosā, v. 753
including the Purāṇa was regarded as the property of the brāhmaṇas alone, Madhavadeva, throughout his sweet lyrics and entertaining playlets made matters of the Purāṇa the property of all. He delivered his philosophical thought through his verses, particularly the couplets of the Nāmaghosa, which presents the celebrated poet as a Vedāntic par excellence.