

CHAPTER I

DATE, LIFE AND WORKS OF VEṆKAṬANĀTHA

Veṅkaṭanātha *alias* Vedānta Deśika, a saint-philosopher who became very famous after Rāmānuja, (1017-1137 A.D.) by offering multi-faced contribution to the world of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and its literature, has authored an allegorical work - *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*. He is regarded as the unique and towering personality, for, we find in him a rare combination of the talents of a Poet, a Dramatist and a Philosopher. His scholasticity may be well witnessed by his epithets like Vedāntācārya, Karvitārkikasimha, Sarvatantrasvatantra etc.

The generally accepted date of Veṅkaṭanātha, as far as ascertainable, would be 1268 to 1369 A.D. However, there are different opinions in this connection. The date of Veṅkaṭanātha's birth is Kali 4371, Śaka 1190 (1268 A.D.) as has been recorded in Vaḍagalai Guruparamparā.¹ This date has another support of an inscription of Chola Vijayagaṇḍa Gopāla Deva of Kāñcīpuram dated Śaka 1207 (1285 A.D.) found in Candramaulīśvara temple at Kāñcīpuram² which belongs to 1268 A.D. But, the date 1268 A.D. has not been accepted by Dr.Hultsch³ as the date of Veṅkaṭanātha. Because he is said to have lived as centenarian; then it means, he should have died during 1369 A.D. Dasgupta opines that Veṅkaṭanātha died during 1371 A.D.⁴ In his introduction to

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1. Dr. Satyavrata Singh, *Vedānta Deśika - His Life, Works and Philosophy – A Study*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1958, p.3.
 2. *Epigraphica Indica* Vol.XIII, p.195.
 3. *Epigraphica Indica* Vol.VI, p.323.
 4. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.III, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1975, p.120.

Saṅkalpasūryodaya, Dr. Veera Raghavacharya says that Veṅkaṭanātha flourished during 1268 to 1370.⁵

During the time of Veṅkaṭanātha, there persisted political instability and religious crisis (1327 A.D.). Mohammadans marching towards south, captured many South Indian kingdoms and destroyed religious places of worship. Along with the invasion, came the dreadful imposition of their religion on the local people. At the same time, there was utter confusion in the Hindu religion itself. Though Advaita Philosophy was very popular in many parts, there were other systems of Philosophy like Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika and Pāśupata which started becoming popular. This led to religious fights and conflicts between the leaders. They started preaching their own religion with provocation and declaration of their religion as the supreme. Even in Viśiṣṭādvaita itself which was all along powerful, were two branches, one of which is, Vaḍagalai; while the other branch is called Teṅgalai. Great scholars like Śrīrāma Miśrā, Viṣṇucitta, Vātsya - Varadācārya, Sudarśanācārya and Ātreya Rāmānuja, all these teachers of Vaḍagalai branch gave more importance to Rāmānuja's Philosophy. On the other side, Parāśarabhaṭṭa, Nanjīya Periyavācchan Pillai, Vadakku Tiruvidhi Pillai and Pillai Locācārya gave more importance to Dravida literature contributed by Āḷvārs. The former branch believed in continuing the old traditions, while the latter one believed in progress and reformation of the religion.

Hence a need to unite both the groups and to maintain peace was very much felt in the Śrīvaiṣṇavaite society itself. It was Vedānta Deśika who contributed to the successful unification and tolerance.

Veṅkaṭanātha *alias* Vedānta Deśika is considered to be a divine incarnation. He lived as a Parama Bhāgavata, promoting the Rāmānuja Philosophy.

Veṅkaṭanātha himself gives the details of his lineage. To quote his words :

5. Dr. Veera Raghavacharya, *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*, Sri Rama Press, Bangalore, 1954, p.1.

अस्ति खलु समस्तलोकसंभावनीयस्य विश्वातिशायिनो विश्वामित्रगोत्र-
 मूषणस्य विशुद्धविद्यविहार पुण्डरीकस्य पुण्डरीकाक्षसोमसुत्संभवस्या-
 नन्तगुणशेवधेरनन्तसूरेरात्मसंभवः श्रीरङ्गराजदिव्याङ्गालब्धवेदान्ताचार्य-
 पदः कवितार्किकसिंह इति प्रख्यातगुणसमारव्यः छात्रजननिबद्धजैत्रध्वज-
 प्रसाधितदशदिशासौधः सर्वतन्त्रसंकटप्रशमनविशङ्कटमतिः श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथो
 नाम कविः ॥ ६

Veṅkaṭanātha was born to Anantasūri, a great scholar and Totārammā or Totādryambā. Anantasūri was the son of Ācārya Puṇḍarikākṣa, the son of Ananta Somayājīn. Anantasūri was one of the three chief Ācāryas of Śrīvaiṣṇavism and an immediate successor of Rāmānujācārya to the pontifical throne. His mother was the sister of Ātreya Rāmānuja, the author of Nyāyakulīśa and the immediate successor of Vātsya Varadācārya to the pontifical throne, instituted by the great Rāmānujācārya. They belonged to the Viśvāmītra Gotra and led a spiritual and pious life in Tuppil, a suburb of Kāñcīpuram.

In all probability, the birth place of Veṅkaṭanātha was Himavanam⁷ near Kāñcīpuram. But he has not given any proof for his mention.

Regarding his life,⁸ it is interesting to note that his birth is associated with the bell and its sound. His birth symbolizes the herald of a new age; as such, in the later period, Veṅkaṭanātha founded a new sect of Vaḍagalai doctrine in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Like a bell, Veṅkaṭanātha proclaimed the Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita in attending to the divine cause. Before the birth of Veṅkaṭanātha,

6. Krisnamacharya V., *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*, Adyar Library, Madras, 1948, p.37.

7. Srinivasachari S.M., *Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Asia Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, p. 6

8. Biographical details of Veṅkaṭanātha given here, are mainly based on some original works published. They are :

(1) सप्ततिरात्रोत्सवचम्पू of Bhayankaram Annan.

(2) वैभवप्रकाशिका of Doddayacarya Swami.

(3) परकालविजय चम्पू of कृष्णम्भ परकालस्वामि

once his parents saw two separate dreams. In it, his father had a holy vision of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, the deity of Tirupati Temple. He received an advise that, if he worships the Lord at Tirupati, the Lord would bless him with a son. His mother too had a holy vision of Goddess Padmāvati in dream and received similar advise. Being filled with joy, both of them visited Tirupati where Totārammā in a dream saw Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara standing before her in guise of a child. The Lord presented her with a bell and asked her to swallow it, and blessed her with a son. She felt that she had swallowed the bell according to Lord's desire. Next morning, people in the temple found the bell disappeared. Yet they had firm faith that the bell itself is an incarnate of Veṅkaṭanātha.⁹ It is recorded in the *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*.¹⁰ Thus, Veṅkaṭanātha himself clearly informs about his incarnation. Therefore, the child was named as Veṅkaṭanātha to commemorate this event.

Education and Spiritual Attainments:

Veṅkaṭanātha received his education under great scholars like Ātreya Rāmānuja, his maternal uncle and Anantasūri Somayājin his father, and also by Vatsyavaradācārya. Possessing inborn lustre of knowledge by the grace of Lord Veṅkaṭeśa, Veṅkaṭanātha held an ambition of teaching and propagating Rāmānuja's Philosophy.

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9. भाद्रपदमासगत विष्णु विमलक्षर्ये
वेकटमहीधरपति तीर्थ दिनभूते ।
प्रादुरभवजगति दैत्यरिपु घण्टा
हन्त कवितार्किक मृगेन्द्र गुरुमूर्त्या ॥

Saptatiratnamālikā of Bhayankaram Annan, D. Krishayyengar, Śrī Vedānta Deśikaru, Bangalore, 1964, p.21.

10. चित्रासिनी विबुधवैशिवरुथिनीनां
पद्माराधनेन परिवारयोगो पयुक्ता ।
उत्प्रेक्षयते बुधजनैरुपपत्तिमूम्ना
घण्टा हरेः समजनिष्ट यदात्मनेति ॥

V. Krishnamacarya, *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*, 1-14, p.40.

In early age of his life, he became well-versed in all branches like *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Alaṅkāra*, *Vedānta*, etc. Veṅkaṭanātha's works like *Nyāya-pariśuddhi* *Seśvaramīmāṃsā* etc. testify his deep insight and height of knowledge in different schools of Indian Philosophy.

Under the able guidance of his preceptor, Veṅkaṭanātha studied all works on the Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita school, like the *Nyāyatattva* of Nāthamuni, the *Siddhitraya* of Yāmuna, the *Tattvaratnākara* of Parāśarabhaṭṭāraka, the *Tattvasāra* of Vātsyavaradācārya, the *Nyāyakulīśa* of Ātreya and the works of Rāmānuja Nārāyaṇārya and of Varadaviṣṇumiśra.

Veṅkaṭanātha was not only a Philosopher but a Poet too. On par with Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*, he wrote a poetic work entitled *Haṁsa-sandeśa* depicting Rāma's message to Sītā through a Haṁsa, with all sublimity.

He used to sing mystic songs of Saint Nammālvār written in Tamil. He has summarised the Tamil Veda in his *Drāmiḍopaniṣatsāra* and *Drāmiḍopaniṣadratnāvalī*. Veṅkaṭanātha had also mastered the difficult *Mahāvidyā* – syllogisms of Kulārka, and was well acquainted with *Mahāvidyā* refutations of the Tārkkikas such as Vādīndra (1225 A.D.) and so on.¹¹

Veṅkaṭanātha as a House-holder :

After completing his education, Veṅkaṭanātha married Tirumangai, belonging to a respected family. He had a son by name Kumāra-Varadanātha. He became a great scholar and a pioneer of his father's works. Veṅkaṭanātha was bestowed with the Garuḍa *Mantropadeśam*¹² by his preceptor, Ātreya Rāmānuja passed away in 1295 A.D. Then Veṅkaṭanātha was crowned on the pontifical throne at Kāñcīpuram.

11. Vedānta Deśika, *Tattvamuktākalāpa*, IV. 46-48, 9.

12. नमः पन्नगनद्धाय वैकुण्ठवशवर्तिने ।
श्रुति सिन्धु सुधोत्पाद मन्दराय गरुत्मते ॥

D.Krishnayangar, *Śrī Vedānta Deśikaru* (Kannada), Bangalore, 1964, p.31.

Sojourn at Kāñcīpuram and Tiruvahindrapuram :

After having been crowned on the pontifical throne, Veñkaṭanātha thought to execute his duties. He then started teaching *Śrībhāṣya* and propounded Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and its ethics to the public at large. In course of time, he became very famous. His popularity led to jealousy in the heart of the Teñgalais. Therefore, Veñkaṭanātha left his residence at Kāñcīpuram, for Tiruvahindrapuram which was known as a quiet place. Here also, he started preaching the Philosophy of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. During his stay for fifteen years, Veñkaṭanātha composed devotional hymns and poems in Sanskrit and Tamil. Seeing the height of his knowledge in all Śāstras, the people of Tiruvahīndrapuram conferred upon Veñkaṭanātha the titles *Vedāntācārya* and *Sarvatantrasvatantra*.

In course of time, at the request of the people of Kāñcīpuram, Veñkaṭanātha came back to Kāñcīpuram, and adorned the pontifical throne. Staying there, he wrote many a work on Vedānta including the commentaries on the *Śrībhāṣya* etc. Because of Veñkaṭanātha's ceaseless religious activities, Kāñcīpuram turned into a centre for education and religious activities.

He is said to have travelled both in northern and southern parts of India to propagate Rāmānuja's philosophy and religion.¹³ During the course of his visits to different holy places, he had debates with the opponents and shone like Dhruva star in the field of philosophical schools. Such events gave him much force to write polemical and non-polemical works on the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta.

Veñkaṭanātha has been known as the most versatile and the most prolific writer in the field of Śrīvaiṣṇava literature. He had commanding intelligence in wielding his pen with equal felicity in the languages like Sanskrit, Tamil and in Mañipravāḷa (Tamil cum Sanskrit). Such works of Veñkaṭanātha are classified under the following six heads :

13. For details - Dr. Satyavrata Singh, *Vedānta Deśika - His Life, Works and Philosophy - A Study*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1958, p.18-22.

- I. *Manuals of Śrīvaiṣṇava Religion and Esotericism,*
- II. *Theses on Śrīvaiṣṇava Theology and Ritualism,*
- III. *Devotional and Didactic Poetry,*
- IV. *Literary Works,*
- V. *Original Philosophical Treatises,*
- VI. *Commentaries.*

The works of Veṅkaṭanātha coming under these heads are more than one hundred in number. An attempt is made here to give in brief, the outlines of these works.¹⁴

I. Manuals of Śrīvaiṣṇava Religion and Esotericism :

Veṅkaṭanātha's manuals are marked with two objectives – spreading the ideas and ideals of Śrīvaiṣṇavism and preservation of Religion and Philosophy of the Ālvārs and the Ācāryas.

1. Nyāsadaśakam : This is a short poem consisting of ten significant verses in *Anuṣṭub* metre dealing with the doctrine of *Prapatti* or self-surrender unto the Supreme Deity, Varadarāja of Kāñcī.

2. Nyāsaviṃśati : This is another work on *Nyāsa* or *Prapatti* which is a means to God realisation. It runs into twenty verses touching one after the other, upon pre-requisites, the essentials and the consummation of *Nyāsa* or *Prapatti*. This work is commented upon by himself, and Śrīnivāsa too. Another commentary upon it by Naḍādur Veṅkaṭarāmācārya in *Maṅipravala* language is available.

3. Vairāgyapañcakam : As the title of the work itself indicates, this work speaks of five kinds of complete indifference to the worldly objects. The five

14. Note : The details of each of the works have been taken from Satyavrata Singh's *Work, Vedānta Deśika : His Life Works and Philosophy - A Study*.

stanzas embodying this work give reply to the royal invitation from the Vijayanagara Court. Although lucid in expression, this poem is full of significance for Śrīvaiṣṇavism. An exposition of these five verses in Tamil by Veer Rāghavācārya is available.

4. Haridinatilakam : This work of seventeen *Sragdharā* verses discusses the performance of *Ekādaśī* by Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

5. Yajñopavītapraṭiṣṭhā : This small work of nine verses in *Sragdharā* metre explains the rituals of wearing the *Yajñopavīta* and the esotericism of the mantras accompanying it.

6. Vaiśvadevakārika : Its nine *Sragdharā* verses represent the observance of the *Vaiśvadevayajña* in the scheme of the Śrīvaiṣṇava ethics of the *Pañcakāla-kṛtya*.

7. Śrīvaiṣṇavadīnakārya : It is a work of ten verses written in Tamil. It summarises the details regarding daily religious duties of Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the spirit of the *Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās*.

8. Arthapañcakam : This is a popular Tamil work in eleven verses. The author emphasizes here five spiritual disciplines of Śrīvaiṣṇava religion. Those are :

- i. the nature of Supreme Brahman,
- ii. nature of *jīva*,
- iii. the means of spiritual attainment,
- iv. the results of spiritual attainment, and
- v. obstacles in the way of attaining the goal.

9. Pannirunāmam : Consisting of thirteen verses, it discusses the significance of the twelve *puṇḍras* and the *nāma* on the body of a Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

10. Āhāranīyamam : As the very title indicates, in twenty one Tamil verses, this work prescribes the types of food for a Śrīvaiṣṇava, suitable for leading a life of religious discipline.

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| <p>11. Tirumantracurukku</p> <p>12. Dvayacurukku</p> <p>13. Caramaślokacurukku</p> | } | <p>These small hand-books in Tamil, describe Śrīvaiṣṇava spiritualism, bringing out the significance of <i>Prapatti</i>.</p> |
| <p>14. Tattvanavanītaṁ</p> <p>15. Rahasyanavanītaṁ</p> | } | <p>These two works are composed in <i>Maṇipravāḷa</i> style to expound important tenets of the Rāmānuja philosophy.</p> |

16. Upakāra-saṅgrahaṁ: Written in Tamil, it explains the manifestations of Divine Providence in the life of man.

17. Sāra-saṅgrahaṁ: It expounds the principles of Śrīvaiṣṇava ethics in Tamil verses.

18. Munivāhanabhogaṁ: It is written in *Maṇipravāḷa* style. It is commented upon by Tiruppāṇālvārs, Amalanāḍippirān, expressing the mystic experiences of the ancient Tamil sage.

19. Madhurakavihṛdyaṁ: This work in *Maṇipravāḷa* style, is a commentary on Madhurakavi's *Kaṇṇinumśiruttambu*. It is not available at present.

20. Tattvatrayaculukāṁ and **21. Rahasyatrayaculukāṁ** or **Sārasaṅkśepa**: These are the short Tamil treatises written on the truths of Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and the ideals of Śrīvaiṣṇava religion respectively.

22. Sāradīpaṁ or **Rahasyatraya-sāradīpaṁ**: It is a Tamil work. It seems that it is a summary of the *Rahasya-traya-sāraṁ* as referred to by Mahācārya.

23. Nigamaparimaḷaṁ and **24. Stheya Virodhaṁ**: These are the great expositions on the *prabandhas* but they are not available now.

25. Guruparaṁparāsāraṁ: This is written in Tamil. It propagates the cult of the worship of the propounders of the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion.

26. Virodhaparihāraṁ : It is a rejoinder to the points of controversy arising in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* of Vedānta Deśika.

27–34. Tattvaśikhāmaṇi, Mummaṇikovai, Navaratnamālai, Punduppā, Kajalpā, Ammānepā, Uśalpā, Eśalpā : These works are not available now, yet they have been referred to by Mahācārya in his *Vaibhava-prakāśikā*. Hence these works are believed to be composed by Vedānta Deśika.

35. Adaikālapaṭṭu : This is a devotional Tamil poem on *Prapatti* in eleven verses.

36. Tiruchinnamālai : This is written in Tamil. It is on the bugle-song glorifying the Varadarāja procession at Kāñcī during the *Brahmotsava* festival.

37. Añjalivaibhava : It is a *Śaraṇāgati* song in Tamil.

38. Rahasya-śikhāmaṇi : This again is a work expounding the Śrīvaiṣṇava ideals of *Prapatti* in Maṇipravāḷa style.

39. Abhayapradānasāraṁ : This expounds the Śrīvaiṣṇava concept of Divine Providence.

40. Sārāsāraṁ : This work in Tamil embodies the principles of Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy.

41. Pradhānaśatakam : This is a Tamil work on Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

42–45. Rahasyaratnāvalī-hṛdayam, Rahasyaratnāvalī, Tattvaratnāvalī-pratipādyasaṅgraham : These are Tamil treatises on Śrīvaiṣṇava esotericism and mysticism.

46–48. Rahasya-sandēśa-vivaraṇam, Rahasya-sandēśam and Tattva-sandēśam : These are the three of the four famous treatises of Vedānta Deśika written with a view to initiating the prince, Sarvajña Singappa into the idealism of the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion.

49–50. Rahasyamāṭṛkā and Tattvamāṭṛkā : These are short Tamil manuals of the Śrīvaiṣṇava *sādhana* of spiritualism.

51–52. Rahasyapadavī and Tattvapadavī : These two are written in Tamil to propagate the religion of Rāmānuja.

53. Saṁpradāyapariśuddhi : It is written in Maṇipravāḷa. This deals with the ideas and the ideals of *Munitraya-saṁpradāya*.

54. Ārādhanakārikā : As the very title indicates, in two simple verses it describes the method of worshipping the God.

55. Prabandhasāraṁ : In eighteen Tamil verses, it is in praise of twelve Āḷvārs the great seers of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

56. Hastigirimāhātmyaṁ : Written in Maṇipravāḷa, it describes the history of Kāñcīpuram in the style of the Purāṇic texts. Lord Varadarāja of Kāñcī has been glorified herein.

57. Paramapadasopānam : Written in Maṇipravāḷa, it establishes the Śrīvaiṣṇava *sādhana* of *Prapatti* to the exclusion of the other means of the realisation of the Divine.

II. Theses on Śrīvaiṣṇava Theology and Ritualism :

These traditional works characterise Vedānta Deśika as a teacher and a successor to the *Saṁpradāyapravartana* - seat of Rāmānuja, and hence aims at propounding the religion and philosophy of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. These works are:

1. Nikṣeparakṣā : This is a thesis on *Nikṣepa* or *Prapatti* giving utmost importance to the cause of love and devotion to God. This work is considered to be Vedānta Deśika's literary effort at revealing the supreme secret of love for God, man and Nature.

2. Pāñcarātrarakṣā : It discusses at length, the self validity of the Pāñcarātra-saṁhitas and the universality of the Pāñcarātra religion and morality.

It presupposes other works of its type like Āgama-prāmānya of Yāmunācārya and the works of Parāśarabhaṭṭāraka, Kṛṣṇamuni and so on.

3. Saccāritrarakṣā : This is another work of Vedānta Deśika explaining the ritualism of initiation into Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

4. Dramiḍopaniṣatsāra : It is one of major works of Vedānta Deśika, written in the *Sragdharā* and the *Śikharinī* metres. The *Dramiḍopaniṣatsāra* expounds the majesty and the grace of the Supreme God. This is a Sanskrit version of the Gāthās or the Tamil songs of the saint Nammālvār.

5. Dramiḍopaniṣattātparya-ratnāvalī : It runs in one hundred and thirty *Sragdharā* verses divided into ten sub-sections. All these verses are based on the songs of the great Nammālvār and contain the essence of the doctrine of self-surrender.

6. Rahasyatraya-sāraṁ : It is magnum opus of Vedānta Deśika. It embodies the secrets of Śrīvaiṣṇava esotericism. It is considered to be the great *Prapatti śāstra* of the Vaḍagalai Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

7. Bhūgola-nirṇaya : Running into nine verses, it aims at describing all parts of the globe following the Purāṇas.

8. Silpārthasāra : This is said to have been written by Vedānta Deśika on the art of sculpture with special reference to Iconography. It contains the 'Ācārya Mudrā' executed by him. This can be seen in the Deśika shrine at Tiruvahīndrapuram even today.

III. Devotional and Didactic Poetry :

A good number of devotional and didactic poems is credited to the academic genius of Vedānta Deśika. Poetic faculty and religious spirit of Vedānta Deśika are clearly reflected in his poems. Being inspired by the songs of the Ālvārs, he wrote these poems which are as below :

1. Hayagrīvastotra : It is a small poem containing thirty two verses in the *Upajāti* metre. It is written on Lord Hayagrīva, the Śrīvaiṣṇava deity of light and learning. This is sung by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas of Tiruvahīndrapuram during the Brahmotsavam festivals. The Vaḍagalai Śrīvaiṣṇavas have reverential regard for this hymn as they take it to be the poetic idealisation of the esotericism of Hayagrīva *mantra*. This poem is commented upon in Sanskrit by Velāmur Śrīnivāsācārya and Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya. And Kurichi Gopāla Tātācharya and Gārgya Veṅkatācārya interpreted this poem in Tamil.

2. Daśavatārastotra : This hymn describes all images of the incarnations of Śrī Viṣṇu. It contains thirteen verses in the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre. Most of the stanzas of this stotra have been repeated in Act VII of his drama, the *Sankalpa-sūryodaya*. It has three commentaries, of which, one in Sanskrit by Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya; and two in Tamil, by Kurichi Gopāla Tatācārya and by Gārgya Veṅkatācārya.

3. Bhagavaddhyānasopāna : This devotional poem containing twelve *Mandākrānta* verses, speaks of poet's heart melting in Divine love. Describing the limbs of the images of Raṅganātha, this poem presents the sublime sense of *Prapatti*. It echoes forth the lofty ideas of the Tamil songs of Muni Vāhana, a great Tamil saint. This hymn is commented upon by –

- i. Anvil Veṅkaṭa Gopāladāsa,
- ii. Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya,
- iii. Śrīśaila Vedānta Rāmānuja,
- iv. Śrīśaila Sinnamu Raṅganathācārya (in Tamil) and
- v. Gārgya Veṅkatācārya (in Tamil).

4. Gopālavimśati: Written in a variety of metres, this hymn containing twenty one verses deals with the faith and philosophical idealisation concerning Lord Kṛṣṇa. Some of fine stanzas are incorporated in the XV canto of the *Yādavābhyudaya*. Appayya Dikṣita though a Advaita scholar, has appreciated Vedānta Deśika as the great Kṛṣṇa bhakta, capable of the highest flights of Kṛṣṇa-

poetry. It has two commentaries, one in Sanskrit by Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya and second in Tamil by Śrīśaila Sinnamu Raṅganāthācārya.

5. Śrīstuti : Consisting of twenty six verses in the *Maṅdākrānta* metre, this hymn describes the glory of Goddess Lakṣmī. The *Śrīstuti* of Yāmunācārya is its main source of inspiration. This hymn is much honoured by Mahācārya, the celebrated commentator of the *Śatadūṣaṇi*. It has commentaries, one by Ātreya Varadācārya in Sanskrit and second by Kurichi Gopāla Tātācārya in Tamil.

6. Abhīstava : Consisting of twenty nine verses, this hymn expresses author's devotion on Śrī Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam. It gives some autobiographical touches and a clue to the chronological order of the works of Vedānta Deśika. It is commented upon by Śrīśaila Sinnamu Raṅganāthācārya in Tamil.

7. Varadarāja pañcāśat : Also called *Devarāja pañcāśat*, it is a hymn of fifty one stanzas on the deity Varadarāja of Kāñcīpuram describing the Brahmotsavam festivals and the glory of Varadarāja. It exposes the theology of Vaiṣṇavism with a special reference to the doctrine of *Prapatti*. Hence, it has been regarded as śāstra poem. It is commented upon by Karur Śrīśaila Śrīnivāsācārya.

8. Vegāsetustotram : It is a hymn of ten stanzas on the deity enshrined in the Yathoktakārin temple at Kāñcīpuram. A story behind this, is that, once Lord Brahmā began the Aśvamedha sacrifice at Kāñcī in the absence of his spouse Sarasvatī. Enraged at this, Sarasvatī changed herself in the form of a river, Vegāvati and started flowing towards the sacrificial field in order to extinguish the sacrificial fire. But, Viṣṇu the Yathoktakārin threw Himself across the stream and stopped the waters flowing towards the sacrificial altar. Since Yathoktakārin became the *Vegāsetu* or the *setu* to the Vegāvati river, hymn composed on him, is called *Vegāsetu-stotra*. It has two commentaries, one by T.Ch.N.R.Tatācārya in Sanskrit and second by Śrīśaila Sinnamu Raṅganāthācārya in Tamil.

9. Aṣṭabhujāṣṭaka-stotra : It is a hymn of ten verses on Viṣṇu or Gajendravarada with eight hands enshrined in the Aṣṭabhū temple adjacent to Yathoktakārin temple at Kāñcīpuram. This work is written by Vedānta Deśika during his early literary career.

10. Kāmāsikāṣṭaka : A hymn of nine stanzas on Viṣṇu in the form of Narasimha, enshrined in the Kāmāsikā temple at Kāñcīpuram, it describes the glory of Lord Narasimha.

11. Paramārtha stuti : It is a hymn of ten verses on Viṣṇu in the form of Rāma or Vijayarāghava or Samarapuṅgava installed in the shrine near Tiruppuṅḡuḷi. It is commented upon by I.R.Sheshadryacar in Sanskrit and by Agnihotram Chakrapani Pattararya Dasa in Tamil.

12. Saraṅāgati-dīpikā : It is a hymn of sixty verses on the deity Dīpa Prakāśa consecrated in the Dīpa Prakāśa shrine at Kāñcīpuram. It shines like a lamp showing to us the inner recesses on the heart of Vedānta Deśika, a śaraṅāgata. It also explains the tenets of Rāmānuja Philosophy and Religion. It has three commentaries, of which, the first and the second by Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya and by Gārgya Venkatārya are in Sanskrit and the third by K.M.Rajagopalācārya is in Tamil.

13. Devanāyaka-pañcāśat : A hymn of fifty-three verses in *Vasanta-tilakā* metre is dedicated to Devanāyaka, the deity of Tiruvahīndrapuram. The ideas of the songs of great Tamil saint Nāmmālvār are reflected in this poem. It is commented upon by Śrīśaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya in Sanskrit and by K.M.Rājagopālācārya in Tamil.

14. Acyutaśataka : It is a devotional poem in Prākṛit containing one hundred and one Gāthās on Devanāyaka or Acyuta. Being the quintessence of Rāmānuja Philosophy, this work shows each and every facet of the saint Nāmmālvār. It has five commentaries such as:

- i. by T.Ch.N.R. Tātācārya (in Sanskrit)
- ii. by T.V.Deśikācārya (Grammatical)
- iii. by Śrī Śaila Sinnamu Raṅganāthācārya (in Tamil)
- iv. by Taiylar Vangipuram Deśikācārya (in Tamil)
- v. by S.T.A.T. Kumāra Tātārya (in Sanskrit)

15. Dehalīsa-stuti : It is a devotional poem of twenty eight stanzas dedicated to Dehalīsa, the deity at Tirukkoilur. It consists of the story of the coming into being of Munitraya Sampradayā of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, to which Vedānta Deśika belongs. It has two Sanskrit commentaries one by T.Ch.N.R. Tātācārya and the other by Śrī Śaila Sinnamu Raṅganāthācārya. Also P.I. Lakṣmīnareshācārya wrote Tamil commentary on it.

16. Nyāsa-tilakam : It is a hymn of thirty two stanzas on Śrī Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam. As the name suggests this work deals with the *Nyāsa* or self-surrender. It has been commented upon in Sanskrit by Nainārācārya, our poet's own son and by Śrībhāṣyam Śrīnivāsācārya. A Tamil commentary also by Kurichi Gopāla Tātācārya is available.

17. Raghuvīragadya : It is a prose-poem on Śrī Rāma and closely resembles the *Raṅgagadya* of Rāmānuja. It is a beautiful poetic epitome of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.

18. Bhūstuti : It is a devotional poem of thirty three verses dedicated to Bhū or the Goddess Earth. It reads like a poem on the glory and the grandeur of Bharatavarṣa also. It suggests poet's mystic speculations on the earth, a mode of the Divine. It has been commented upon by Śrī Śaila Tirumalai Nāmbi Rāghavārya in Sanskrit and by K.M.Rājagopālācārya in Tamil.

19. Ṣoḍaśāyudha-stotra : It is a hymn of eighteen stanzas in *Anuṣṭub* metre on the sixteen weapons accompanying the Sudarśana of Śrī Viṣṇu installed in the Śrīraṅgam temple. It is written on the lines of the *Astrādhyāya* of Viṣṇupurāna. It is commented upon by Tenbarai Rajagopālācārya in Sanskrit and by Kurichi Gopālatātācārya in Tamil.

20. Sudarśanāṣṭaka : It is a hymn of eight verses on Sudarśana or Viṣṇu's disc. It has Sanskrit commentary by Tenbarai Rajagopālācārya and by Kurichi Gopāla Tātācārya in Tamil.

21. Garuḍa-daṇḍaka : It is a hymn on Garuḍa in the *Daṇḍaka* metre. The use of *Daṇḍaka* style is said to have been influenced by similar usage in the

Prabodhacandrodaya of Kṛṣṇa Miśra. Vedānta Deśika is said to have invoked Garuḍa with this *Daṇḍaka* and defeated the snake charmer who had challenged Vedānta Deśika to show that he was *Sarva-Tantra-Svatantra*. This work is incorporated in the X Act of his *Sankalpa-sūryodaya*. It has a Sanskrit commentary by Tenbarai Rajagopālācārya and Tamil one by K.M.Rajagopālācārya.

22. Garuḍa pañcāśat : A hymn written in *Sragdharā* metre is addressed to Garuḍa the presiding deity of wisdom and reason. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas regard it as the embodiment of the Garuḍa Mantra. This is included in the tenth Act of the *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*.

23. Yatirāja-saptati : A hymn of seventy four verses on Rāmānujācārya, the great founder of Śrīvaiṣṇava cult, expresses Vedānta Deśika's deep sense of devotion to his preceptor.

24. Dhāti-pañcaka : This is another work of five stanzas in honour of Rāmānujācārya. It glorifies the Ācārya as great conquerer of rival religionists and the rival schools of philosophy.

25. Divya-deśa-maṅgalāśāsana-pañcaka : It is a poem of five stanzas describing the holy places like Śrīraṅgam, Tirupati, Kāñcīpuram and Tirunārāyanapuram.

26. Pādukā-sahasra : It is a long hymn of one thousand and eight verses in thirty two *padyas* or sections on the Pādukās of the deity Raṅganatha of Śrīraṅgam. As depicted in the life sketch of Vedānta Deśika, this was written in a single night challenge to the Padakamala-sahasra of Teṅgalai scholar Aḷagiya Manavāḷa Perumaḷ Nainar. Since Vedānta Deśika won the competition, he was honoured with the title Kavitārkika-simha. The Advaitic scholar Appayya Dīkṣita also is said to have commented upon it. Both the Vaḍagalai and Teṅgalai Śrīvaiṣṇavas adore it for its poetry and philosophy.

27. Subhāśitānīvi : Vedānta Deśika is said to have composed this book of didactic poetry for Sarvajña Singappa Nāyaka of Rajmundry who sought moral and religious instruction from him. Some of the stanzas are found in the

Saṅkalpasūryodaya. A Sanskrit commentary viz., *Ranapeṭikā* by Śrīnivāsa, is available.

IV. LITERARY WORKS OF EPIC, DRAMA AND LYRIC TYPE

1. *Yādavābhyudaya* ¹⁵ :

This is a *Mahākāvya* describing the Yadu race, Kṛṣṇa's birth, his childhood and the Govardhana episode, Rāsālīla of Kṛṣṇa. Further, the scene of Kāmsavadha, Kṛṣṇa's marriage with Rukmiṇī, Śyamantakamaṇi story, his marriage with Satyabhāma, Śīsupālavadhā, Narakāsuravadhā, description of Nandana, Kṛṣṇa's aerial journey to Dvārakā, marriage of Aniruddha with Uṣā and Kṛṣṇa's conquest of Sonitapura, the incident of Gīta and Kṛṣṇa's harem scene - these details are well described in a variety of metres suggestive of a variety of ideas and imageries and emotions. This *Mahākāvya* is otherwise called *Yaduvamśa* or *Kṛṣṇābhyudaya*. From the introductory verses of Appayya Dīkṣita's excellent commentary (16th century A.D.) on the *Yādavābhyudaya*, readers come to know that, it was acclaimed as a *Mahākāvya* ¹⁶ even in the life time of the poet. A perusal of the 24 cantos of the *Mahākāvya* makes it emphatic that the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was the source of inspiration for Vedānta Deśika.

2. *Saṅkalpasūryodaya* :

It is an allegorical play dramatising the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion. It runs into ten long acts which are more poetic than

-
15. साहित्यगोष्ठीं सरसामातिष्ठन्नयमेकदा ।
यादवाभ्युदयं काव्यमश्रौषीद् विदुषां मुखात् ।
अव्याख्याततया पूर्वैरनभिव्यक्तभावकम् ।
अदृष्टभाव शिल्पज्ञैरभिजातं हरिन्मणिम् ॥

D. Krishna Iyengar : *Śrī Vedānta Deśikaru* (Kannada), Bangalore, 1964, p.127.

16. तदाकर्णतः सम्यक् समुदञ्चत्कुतूहलः विदुषां पुरतस्तस्य विवृतौ मां न्ययूयुजत् ॥

Yādavābhyudaya : Ed. by Veera Raghavacarya, Ubhaya Vedanta Granthamala, Madras, 1969, p.1.

dramatic. The play depicts the toils and tribulations of the human soul on its way to God's realisation. It shows the saving power of divine grace at each and every step of the progress of the soul on the way to the conquest of ignorance. The characters of the play are formless representations or personification of higher virtues and spiritual values of a religious system and also the vice and the wicked feelings of a human being. It describes a battle scene in which the characters *Viveka* and *Moha*, the Hero and the Villain fight against each other, and the victory goes to the former. The human soul reaches its climax of achievement and obtains the Divine Grace.

The details of this play and its criticism are presented in the forthcoming chapters.

3. *Haṁsa-sandēśa* :

It is a *Sandēśa Kāvya* written on the lines of the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa. It is divided into two parts and contains sixty stanzas in part I and fifty in part II.

The description of the lyric runs like this. After learning from Hanuman, Śrī Rāma sends message to Sītā through a Swan whom he meets accidentally. The Swan found in Padmakāsāra resembled Sītā's royal pace, the purity of her apparels, the swan-like-sound of her anklets. And hence, Śrī Rāma choose Swan to be his messenger. Rāma sends a message that Sītā should be alive till she is rescued by him.

The places over which the Swan has to fly like Tirupati, Kāñcīpuram, Śrīrangam, Madhura etc., have been described beautifully by the poet. It suggests the deep love of Rāma for Sītā or in other sense, the love of God for the human soul pinning away in separation from the Divine Lover and tortured by Rāvaṇa, representing the evil propensities of the mind. The description of the rivers that the Swan would see on the way, like Sarasvatī in Kāñcīpuram, Cauveri in Śrīrangam, Tāmraparṇī in the then Pāṇḍya Kingdom is very impressive. Śrī Rāma advises the Swan to take the blessings of Śrī Venkaṭeśa, Śrī Ranganātha and of

Śrī Varadarājaswāmy, the main deities of Tirupati, Śrīrangam and of Kāñcīpuram respectively. The Swan is instructed to stop Sītā under a Śimsupā tree amidst the security of Rāvaṇa. The swan tells Sītā that Śrī Rāma is keeping well and would come with the army, defeat Ravaṇa and take her back.

4. Dayāśataka :

It is a reflective lyric highlighting the aspects of Divine Love and Divine Providence. It contains one hundred and eight stanzas in various metres. One can see the inspiration of Kālidāsa in this work also.

5. Godāstuti :

It is a lyric on Godā, the famous Āṇḍāl worshipped as a Goddess in the Śrīvaiṣṇava shrines. This *stuti* of twenty nine stanzas, suggests Vedānta Deśika's devotion to the Divine. It closely resembles the Tiruppāvai of Āṇḍāl. It is commented upon by Śrīsaila Tirumalai Rāghavācārya in Sanskrit and K.M.Rajagopalācārya in Tamil.

6. Yamaka-ratnākara :

It is a voluminous work abounding in 'Yamaka'. There is a dispute regarding its authorship of Vedānta Deśika. Nevertheless, the *Catalogus Catalogorum* mentions it as the work of Vedānta Deśika.¹⁷ Also the Catalogue of Sanskrit Mss. in Mysore and Coorg, Rice ascribes it to Vedānta Deśika. As Vedānta Deśika is an adept in *Yamaka* writing which is evident from his *Yādavābhyudaya*, it can be said that this work belongs to the authorship of Vedānta Deśika.

7. Samasyā-sāhasrī :

It is a collection of one thousand and odd *Samasyas*. After the composition of this work, Vedānta Deśika was given the title - Samasyā-sāhasrī, which Vedānta Deśika himself mentions this title in his *Stotra-ratnabhāṣya*.

17. Theodor Aufrecht, *Catalogus Catalogorum*, Part I, Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, Wiesbaden, 1962, p.472

V. ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES

Here, the most important philosophical works of Vedānta Deśika are taken note of. The originality of these works lies in their convincing presentation of the philosophical tenets of Rāmānuja. These are called Deśika Darśana or Deśika Tradition Works (Deśika Saṁpradāya Granṭhas) because these works show his profound knowledge, scholarship and the variety.

1. Nyāyapariśuddhi :

It is a successful attempt of Vedānta Deśika at the syncretisation of the ancient Nyāya-realism with Viśiṣṭādvaitic spiritualism and transcendentalism. As Vedānta Deśika himself suggests, his work was a great '*Paṇḍita-kṛtya*' meant to synthesize the divergent trends of the Nyāya with the Vedānta. This work is divided into five chapters. The **first chapter** introduces the *pramāṇas* accepted by Rāmānuja and outlines the types of knowledge and distinguishes right knowledge from wrong knowledge. The **second chapter** contains the exposition of Inference, and the **third chapter** has a discourse on Śabda-prāmāṇya. The **fourth chapter** points to present *Smṛti* as an independent means of knowledge. The **fifth chapter** deals with a *Prameya-vicāra* of Rāmānuja Philosophy. This work is commented upon by Śrīnivāsadāsa, under the title '*Nyāyasāra*', which is available upto *Śabdapramāṇa*.

2. Nyāyasiddhānjana :

This work, otherwise called *Tarka-siddhānjana* is the continuation of the *Nyāyapariśuddi*. This work runs into six chapters or paricchedas. The **first chapter** contains the exposition of *Jaḍa Dravya*. The **second chapter** discusses the nature of the *Jīva*. The **third chapter** presents Īśvara as the Viśiṣṭādvaitic Absolute and identifies it with Śrī Nārāyaṇa. The **fourth chapter** conceives of the Spiritual Matter and its evolution resulting in the Vaikuṅṭha. The **fifth chapter** deals with epistemology of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school, and the philosophy of *Dharmabhūtajñāna* subsisting with the *Jīva*. The **sixth chapter** defines and discusses ten *Ādravyas* or the *Guṇas* such as *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Śabda*,

Sparsā, Rūpa, Rasa, Gandha, Samyoga and *Śakti*. Its commentary by Ranga-Rāmānuja is an illuminating one.

3. Tattva-muktākalāpa :

It is meant to be a necklace of five hundred pearls of Sragdharā-verses, wreathed into five strings. It is one of the most important and authoritative works of Vedānta Deśika. Mādhavācārya, Vidyāraṇya has referred to this text in his *Sarva-darśana-sangraha*.¹⁸

The **First String** or the *Jaḍa-dravya-sara* shows that matter and the material evolute as the *Śarīra* of the Indwelling Divine. *Prakṛti* is discussed as the Divine organism.

The **Second String** or the *Jīva-sara* reveals the *Jīva* or the self in its real essence of subservience to the Great Self. Influenced by Rāmānuja and Nammālvār, Vedānta Deśika has presented the self psychology to lead to the conclusions of the self-philosophy.

The **Third String** or the *Nāyakasara* is the main string containing the essence of Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosophy. The God and Religion is equated, here, with the Absolute of philosophy, and the Kṛṣṇa of poetry is identified with the Śrīnivāsa of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

The **Fourth String** or the *Buddhi-sara* is meant for the presentation of the self-luminous consciousness as the inalienable adjunct of the finite self and the Supreme Self.

The **Fifth String** or the *Adravya-sara* is meant to show the 'Ādravyas' as the states or the attributes or the energies or the functions of the *Tattvas* or the substances.

18. तत्त्वमुक्ताकलापः श्री वेकटनाथदेशिकविरचितो
विशिष्टाद्वैतमतानुसारी पञ्चसारात्मकः प्रकरण ग्रन्थः ॥

Vasudevashastri Abhyankar, *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1978, p.104.

The comprehensive scheme of the *Tattvamuktākalāpa* entitles it to be the book of reference for Rāmānuja's philosophy. Its gloss called the *Ānanda-Dāyini* of Nṛsimha Deva (16th or 17th century) has been published, in part along with its companion, the *Bhāva-prakāśa* of Śrī Parakāla Swamin.

4. Sarvārtha-siddhi :

It is a gloss on the *Tattvamuktākalāpa* by Vedānta Deśika himself. It makes one understand *Tattvamuktākalāpa* easily. This work is a great suggestion of the vast study, of the critical faculty and of the poetic bent of mind of Vedānta Deśika, the philosopher.

5. Śatadūśaṇī :

It is a great dialectic work and attempts to refute the philosophy of Śaṅkara, Bhāskara and Yādava Prakāśa. The *Sapta-Vidhānupapattis* or the seven-fold incompatibilities or absurdities of the *Nirviśeṣādvaita* of Śaṅkara as pointed out by Rāmānuja have been amply magnified here. As its name suggests, it should contain one hundred and one refutations. But only sixty six refutations are available in the extant copy. Doḍḍayācārya has written a masterly commentary called the '*Caṇḍamāruta*'. He was called Mahācārya for this very commetary.

6. Śeśvara-mīmāṃsā :

It is an exhaustive exposition of the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtras* of Jaimini with a view to suggesting inherent relationship between '*Karma*' and '*Jñāna*' or '*Bhakti*'.

Vedānta Deśika's attempt in his *Śeśvara-mīmāṃsā* is to equate the '*Apūrva*' (the power of action) to the '*Sankalpa*' or the will of God to save the Soul. The source of inspiration for Vedānta Deśika is the concept of *Pūrvottara-Mīmāṃsaikakāṇṭhya* of Rāmānuja.

7. Mīmāṃsā-pāḍuka:

It is of 173 stanzas in *Sṛagdhara* metre. Probably both *Mīmāṃsā-pāḍuka* and *Śeśvara-mīmāṃsā* were written from the inspiration that Vedānta Deśika got

from his great teacher Ātreya Rāmānuja. This work proves that *Dharma* itself is the Brāhman the Eternal Absolute Reality. This work appears to be incomplete.

8. Adhikaraṇa-sārāvalī :

This is a metrical exposition of the various sections of the *Brahmasūtras*. It is not only a metrical summary of the *Śrībhāṣya* of Rāmānuja, but an original philosophical contribution to the Rāmānuja Philosophy. Vedānta Deśika's mastery over the intricacies of the *Ṣṛagdhara* verse as seen in the *Tattvamuktākalāpa* reaches its climax in the *Adhikāraṇa-sārāvalī*.

Kumāra Vedantācārya, Vedānta Deśika's son and successor, has written a commentary called *Adhikāraṇa-cintāmaṇi*. *Adhikāraṇa-kalpataru* of Attipattu Śatakopa Rāmānuja is another commentary available.

9. Paramata-bhaṅga :

Written in *Maṇi-pravāḷa*, it has the same method of treatment as the *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha* of Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya. It critically sums up the Indian philosophical systems and points to the greatness of *Rāmānuja Darśana* as the only practical philosophy conducive to the life of man forming a stage in Life Divine.

10. Adhikaraṇa-darpaṇa :

It is written on the lines of the *Adhikaraṇa-sārāvalī* on the *Brahmasūtras*. It is not available now.

11. Vāditraya-khaṇḍana :

This work appears to have been a brief criticism of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara, Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa.

12. Cakāra-samarthana :

This is written by Vedānta Deśika with a view to proving the propriety of the occasional usages of 'च' in the *Śatadūṣaṇī*, which were probably charged with redundancy by his critics. It is not available now.

The Commentaries of Vedānta Deśika form an important contributions to Viśiṣṭādvaitic literature. These works are faithful to the texts and yet critical to the core.

VI. COMMENTARIES

1. Tattva-ṭikā : It is an exposition of the *Śrībhāṣya* of Rāmānuja, and it presents the outlines of the Viśiṣṭādvaitic metaphysics in all its details. It is the outcome of the twenty eight terms or sessions of the teachings on the *Śrībhāṣya* undertaken by Vedānta Deśika for the cause of the propagation and the preservation of the Rāmānuja Philosophy. It bares testimony on the vast scholarship and the versatile genius of the author. This commentary is decidedly the best of all commentaries on the *Śrībhāṣya*.

2. Tātparya-candrikā : It is a super commentary on the *Gīta-bhāṣya* of Rāmānuja. He has presented the view point of Rāmānuja on the highest philosophy of human life i.e. *Prapatti*. It is as much constructive as critical. The Caramaśloka :

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ (XVIII.66) is analysed to contain the quintessence of the *Gīta* which means deep, selfless love and devotion to God.

3. Gītārtha-saṅgraha-rakṣā : It is a commentary on the '*Gītārtha-saṅgraha*' of Yāmunācārya. It has eighteen chapters of the *Gīta*. It has made the *Gīta*, *Prapatti-śāstra* for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Vedānta Deśika has attempted a convincing synthesis of action and knowledge with love plus devotion. It is the momenclature for the eighteen chapters of the *Gīta*. For example, the first chapter is named as *Śravaṇādhikārin*, the second as *Śravaṇādhikāri-mohaśamanam*, etc.

5. Gītārtha-saṅgraha-pattu : It is a Tamil treatise on the philosophy of the *Gīta* as explained by Yāmunācārya in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*.

6. Catuśśloki-bhāṣya : It is a commentary on the '*Catuśśloki*' of Yāmunācārya. Here Vedānta Deśika presents his views on the significance of 'Śrī'

in the concept of 'Śrī Viṣṇu'. Five view-points of 'Śrī' are mentioned and discussed :

- i. 'Śrī' as Divine Nature,
- ii. 'Śrī' as Divine Essence or Energy,
- iii. 'Śrī' as Divine Bliss,
- iv. 'Śrī' as the 'Māyā' and
- v. 'Śrī' as the Supreme sense of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

7. Stotra-ratna-bhāṣya : It is an exhaustive exposition of the '*Stotra-ratna*' of Yamunācārya, which has sixty five stanzas and is replete with the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The *Stotra-ratna-bhāṣya* is similarly replete with the tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita as taught by Yāmunaācārya.

8. Rahasya-rakṣā or the Gadya-traya-bhāṣya : It is a fine commentary on the three *Gadyas* viz., the *Śaraṅāgati-gadya*, the *Śrīraṅga-gadya* and the *Vaikuṅṭha-gadya* of Rāmānuja. It was written by Vedānta Deśika because the Teṅṅalai teacher used to put their own interpretations on the **Gadyas**. Vedānta Deśika believes that the *Gadyas* of Rāmānuja contain the real essence of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Śrīvaiṣṇavism as the philosophy and religion of man.

According to Vedānta Deśika, the *Gadyas* are the text of the *prapatti-vidyā*, while the *Śrībhāṣya* is the text of the *Brahma-vidyā*.

9. Īsopaniṣad-bhāṣya : The *Īsopaniṣad* has been interpreted in accordance to the tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Thought. This *Upaniṣad* is considered to be in support of *Śaraṅāgati* doctrine of Rāmānuja.

Besides these works, there are other works too; but their authenticity is disputable. However, Vedānta Deśika's store-house of significant works speaks of his deep sense of duty to the Rāmānuja Philosophy, his great sense of satisfaction at the accomplishment of the duty and finally his God-intoxicated mind and heart.

