

॥ ശ്രീ ॥

॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ श्रीः ॥



Achyuta Bhakti
DEETS

श्री नारायणाय नमः ।

13 December 2024

Addressing the One-Sided Allegations against Maadhvas over Mani Manjari and other Works

Over the last few centuries, there have been multiple instances of rivalry and controversial granthas written by Smaartas and Maadhvas as a by-product of conflicts. During recent times, these have been ignored and forgotten, with both being on cordial terms with each other, until certain Smaartas recently started attacking Maadhvas with one-sided claims. One such person is Mr. Subrahmanian Vaidyanathan, owner of a popular Advaitin blog, Adbhutam (<https://adbhutam.wordpress.com>), who has written a long article (<https://adbhutam.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/instance-samples-of-shankaracharya-and-advaiti-nindaa-in-madhwa-books.pdf>) alleging that Maadhvas are spreading hatred against Smaartas, while quoting granthas such as Mani Manjari.

While we Maadhvas strongly discourage igniting conflicts among Hindus of diverse sampradaayas, we have been unfairly targeted by certain fanatics, including the likes of Mr. Subrahmanian, with one-sided and misleading claims. Due to the recurring attacks and misconceptions being peddled by certain Smaartas, we have been forced to retaliate and write this article.

Mani Manjari, written by Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya, is one of the prime granthas used as an excuse by the e-Smaartas to claim that Maadhvas harbour hatred against Shri Aadi Shankaracharya, consider him an asura, etc. What is ignored is that Smaartas too have written similar granthas abusing Shri Madhvacharya with baseless allegations, such as Maanikya Manjari. Ironically, several statements in Mani Manjari can be shown to be in accordance with Shri Shankaracharya's biographies themselves. The first four chapters of Mani Manjari describe the glories of Bhagavaan Vishnu's avataaras, as Raama and Krshna. The subsequent chapters describe the struggles of Vaishnavas and other Hindus, in the past centuries, before the appearance of Shri Madhvacharya. These mention several incidents about Shri Aadi Shankaracharya, some of which being controversial, are ignored in today's times and never taught at Maadhva Mathas. Unfortunately, despite this, Mr. Subrahmanian

© Copyrights 2022-24 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

and others have made one-sided allegations against Maadhvas, while also attempting to defame our esteemed Purvaachaaryas with baseless allegations, and deliberately ignoring equal contribution from the side of Smaartas in these controversies. The fact is that we Maadhvas have been trying our best to stop igniting more controversies in this regard, but Smaarta fanatics of today have spared no chance to intentionally provoke fights regarding these issues, to justify their fanaticism and hatred against Vaishnavas.

Mr. Subrahmanian's statements from his article shall be written in green.

Our response shall be written in blue.

Mani Manjari is a work of Narayana Pandita, a contemporary of Madhvacharya and author of the Madhva vijaya. Here are select portions which denigrate Shankaracharya in most unprintable language:

The 6th and 7th Sarga of this work is what relates to Shankaracharya. You can read the translations of these sargas here:

6.6

***Tameva samayam daityo Manimanapyajayata
Manorathena mahata brahmanyam jaratah khalat***

At the same time, Maniman thought that his ambition could be achieved immediately, and was born to a widow through adultery.

6.7

***Utpannah sankaratmayam sarvakarmabahiskrtah
Ityuktah svajanairmata sankaretyajuhava tam***

As his nature was rubbish as sweepings or his nature was to mix castes, creeds etc, and as he was born to an adultress he was prohibited from all Vedic karmas by his own relations; his mother called him 'Sankara'....

..In all their books, both Sanskrit and Kannada, they refer to Shankaracharya as 'sankara', meaning, someone who was born of mixed illegitimate connection.

Subrahmanian alleges that Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya has abused Shri Shankaracharya baselessly by stating that he was born to a widow, but we shall simply take a look at the story of Shankaracharya's birth from his own biography, Purushottama Bhaاراتi's Shankara Vijaya, which goes as follows:

There was a widow in Kaladi (Kerala state). When she went for a bath in the river, she meets a saint, who is none other than Parameshwara in disguise. He said that He would manifest there shortly and gave her a seed of pumpkin asking her to sow it near a plant and protect the seedling by watering. She should not pluck the flower or the fruit. When the fruit would become ripe, it would fall on the ground itself. So

saying, he disappeared. She did so. In usual course, a pumpkin fell on the ground from the plant and a child emerged from it. When the child started crying, the neighbours questioned her in surprise as to how she got the child, she being a widow. She narrated all the facts but no one believed her and scolded her harshly and went away – that child was named Sankara.

Aanandagiri's Shankara Vijaya states:

There was a Braahmana in Chidambaram by the name Sarvajna. He had a daughter Vishishta. He gave his daughter in marriage to a Braahmana named Vishvajit. Although she was very obedient to her husband, he left her and went to the forest. When she was offering prayers to Chidambareshvara, Shiva entered her body in one form, due to which she became pregnant and gave birth to a baby – Shankara.

Shrimaan Narayana Rao, the translator of Mani Manjari, stated as follows:

Mani Manjari was written around 700 years ago by an eminent scholar – Sri Narayana Panditacharya who was a son of more eminent scholar and highly learned Sri Trivikrama Panditacharya – the best exponent of advaita philosophy at that time. He had incessant discussions with Sri Madhvacharya for fifteen days and got convinced himself that the Dvaita philosophy was the only solace for salvation. He surrendered to Him and became one of his principal disciples. The birth of Sankaracharya as narrated in the above stanza was a traditional version and it was established by the author, supported by Skanda Purana, Udupi Mahatmya, Srimusna Mahatmya etc. The readers should remember that when this work was written, there were eminent scholars in all communities and they would not spare him for false narrations. In fact, as there are different versions in many Shankara Vijayas, one can conclude that the stories are concocted and none can be taken as genuine. Too many cooks have spoiled the broth.

As regards the name Sankara instead of Shankara (Query by AR – “I really don't understand this distinction, and hope learned readers will clarify this. I think this has more to do with changes in Sanskrit letters - a sort of punning.”), it makes no difference in colloquial usage. Secondly, if a rare child is born, many of us name it peculiarly as 'Tippa' 'Kuppu,' 'Kalla,' 'Gunda,' etc., meaning – sweepings, dust, stone, sound, waste, etc., which would be 'Sankara' when translated into Sanskrit. The poet must have used the word in that sense.

As regards the ex-communication from all Vedic karmas, the fact that no one came forward to dispose off the dead body of his mother and that he himself, though being a sanyasi, cremated her body in the backyard of his house, is a very strong evidence.

Laghu Vayu Stuti composed in Kannada by Vadiraja Tirtha, Sonda, Karnataka. It is in extremely bad taste: select shlokas from there:

The fact is that the Laghu Vaayu Stuti of Shri Vaadiraaja Teertha is an inauthentic work falsely attributed to him. In fact, it doesn't even mention the ankita (signatory line) of Shri Vaadiraajaru, which is vital for all Maadhvas and to indicate that it has been originally authored by that person! Shri Purandara Daasa himself criticizes those granthas which do not contain any ankita:

ಅನ್ನಿತವಿಲ್ಲದ ದೇಹ ನಿಷೇಧ ಅನ್ನಿತವಿಲ್ಲದ ಕಾವ್ಯ ಶೋಭಿಸದು

“A body without symbols (of Bhagavaan) is forbidden. A poem without an ankita is not to be respected.”

As a matter of fact, the concerned Stuti doesn't even match the poetic style of Shri Vaadiraajaru's authentic compositions, which is more than enough for anyone unbiased to know how much water this argument holds.

These books/stotras are studied, taught in their gurukula to young boys and the seed of hatred towards Shankaracharya and Advaitins is sown and nurtured daily.

In reality, out of respect for Shankaracharya and Smaartas, to forget the old conflicts of the past, traditional Maadhvas only teach the first four chapters of Mani Manjari, which have nothing to do with Aadi Shankaracharya at all and talk about the leelas of Bhagavaan Raama and Krshna. Unfortunately, people with vested interests couldn't stay quiet and restarted the controversy by themselves quoting and sharing the other controversial sections of Mani Manjari!

Tactfully, our opponents repeatedly highlight Mani Manjari, but hide the fact that their own sampradaaya has equal contributions in defaming Shri Madhvacharya, in books like Manikya Manjari. Ironically, Mr. Subrahmanian himself speaks about it in [the following email!](#) (Here, he also quoted an interpolated section from Shri Madhvacharya's Geeta bhaashya allegedly abusing Shankaracharya, which in reality, is absent in all ancient manuscripts till the 15th century, similar to the case of the Laghu Vaayu Stuti)

>>
>> I am proud to say that in spite of such grave provocations, the Advaitins
>> did not loose their cool and they behaved majestically all these centuries.
>>
>
> One Raghunatha Suri wrote a book in retaliation 'mANikya manjari'
> describing the 'birth' of Sri Madhwacharya, which has been refuted by a
> scholar of the Madhwa school.
>
> Regards,
> subrahmanian.v
>

The crazier part? Several controversial statements from Mani Manjari are found in Shankaracharya's own biographies, as shown previously, while works like

Maanikyamanjari are mere hateful responses by Smaartas, with baseless comments on Shri Madhvacharya.

Despite this, we Maadhvas have tried our best to curb these controversies altogether, but unfortunately, we cannot be at peace with a Taamasika-minded opponent unless we show that we have a bigger stick than him!

See what, as a sample, Satyatma Tirtha said on Advaita:

<https://youtu.be/svH6Csy69jY> Listen from 18 minutes approx here. In Kannada the Swami says: Advaitins denied god and are Deva drohi-s. In a recent talk in Malakheda, last week, however, he said 'Advaitins are Astikas, they accept the Veda, etc.' But this is only contextual. In their regular pravachanas they demonize Shankaracharya and advaitins.

Now, tactfully, he shares a pravachana of criticism of Advaita by Shri Satyaatma Teertha Shripaadagalu and labels it "demonization of Advaitins." However, to remind certain facts, it is true that all Aachaaryas use strong language while criticizing their rivals, such as:

- 'Madhva-Tantra Mukha Mardana' (Killing the face of the Madhva philosophy) of Shri Appayya Deekshita
- 'Appayya Kapola Chapetika' (A tight slap on the face of Appayya Deekshita) of Shri Vijayeendra Teertha
- तत्त्ववादी वराकः ("Tattvavaadis are miserably wretched") – a statement of Shri Madhusudana Sarasvati, in Advaita Siddhi

From this, it should be clear that it is natural for all Aachaaryas to use strong language while criticizing their rivals, ironically despite Mr. Subrahmanian being one who is well-versed with many Shaastras and granthas of various darshanas. Yet, he is either unable to comprehend this or intentionally sharing partial information.

Madhvacharya was the one who started all this. In the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, a work he has composed, he said 'Bhima killed many asuras in the Saugandhika Vana, a garden of Kuber. Those killed wanted to take revenge on Bhima and came in Kaliyuga as Mayavadins, advaitins, Shankara and others (without naming them). Shankara is the incarnation of Maniman, a demon, killed by Bhima. And Madhvacharya incarnated as the third form of Vayu (first is Hanuman, second Bhima) to oppose Advaita and establish Dvaita.

Once again, the fanatics have shown their true colours with their baseless allegations against Shri Madhvacharya. Shri Madhvacharya, who seldom mentioned anything about Shankaracharya in even a single one of his granthas, who is one of the Trayaachaaryas and has been praised by multiple other philosophers including Shri Vedaanta Deshika, for his intellectual excellence, is being accused of spreading hatred! Ironically, it is his darshana which even agrees that all Saattvika people, regardless of varna and status in

society, are eligible to learn the Shaastras, become scholars and even obtain moksha. It was Shri Madhvacharya alone who even stated in Anuvyaakhyaana that all darshanas are eternal, unlike our opponents who are trying to prove that all Hindus must follow only their philosophy.

Speaking of Manimaan, anyone who has read the Mahaabhaarata would be knowing that the Vana Parva explicitly mentions Bheema killing Manimaan and Puraanas like the Bhaagavata Puraana too refer to him as one of the Shiva ganas. If Madhvacharya mentioning the same incident in his summary of the Mahaabhaarata itself makes our opponents think that it is a criticism of Shankaracharya, they really deserve an ovation!

Raghavendra Swami of Mantralaya, in a commentary work says: Shiva will get Jnana by the grace of the paada reNu of Madhwacharya. Madhvas place Shiva much below Vayu and consider Shiva a jiva.

Perhaps one of the most ridiculous arguments given by Mr. Subrahmanian so far, we can make out that his agenda is simply to condescend to all Vaishnavas and non-Smaartas in general. It is a well-known fact that Maadhvas are Pancharaatikas, Vaishnavas, who follow the philosophy of Pancharaatra, one of the major darshanas of Sanaatana Dharma. The root of Vaishnava Dharma is the Vaishnava Aagamas, Pancharaatra, which is propagated by Shri Vishnu Himself and has been praised in the Shaastras numerous times, especially the Mahaabhaarata and Puraanas.

The Pancharaatra texts state that Shiva, Brahmaa and all other Devatas are jeevas, subordinate to Vishnu, with Sankarshana being Shiva's Antaryaami and Brahmaa being superior to Shiva, as Shiva is the Devata of Manas-Tattva and Brahmaa is the Devata of Mahat-Tattva. Mukhya Praana Deva, also known as 'Vaayu', is Brahmaa Deva's equal. The same is repeated in the Mahaabhaarata, Bhaagavata Puraana and Vishnu Puraana multiple times, as we have quoted in our previous articles and YouTube videos. Obviously, any Vaishnava who doesn't accept the tenets of Vaishnava Dharma would be unfit to be considered a Vaishnava!

Ironically, Mr. Subrahmanian is even hand-in-glove with Shaivas who consider Shri Vishnu a jeeva and supports them when they propagate their beliefs, while he has a one-sided hypocrisy of alleging that it is a mistake for us Vaishnavas to follow and propagate our philosophy, which has been propagated by the Rshis since thousands of years!

रुद्रं समाश्रिता देवा रुद्रो ब्रह्माणमाश्रितः ॥ ३७ ॥
ब्रह्मा मामाश्रितो राजन्नाहं कंचिदुपाश्रितः ।
ममाश्रयो न कश्चित्तु सर्वेषामाश्रयो ह्यहम् ॥ ३८ ॥

(Shri Naaraayana said): "All Devas take refuge in Rudra, Rudra takes refuge in Brahmaa, Brahmaa takes refuge in Me and I don't take refuge in anyone, for, O Bharata, I am the One who is Independent."

© Copyrights 2022-24 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

—Mahaabhaarata, Ashvamedha Parva, Adhyaaya 118, Shlokas 37–38 (Quoted by Shripaada Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparyya Nirnnaya, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 117; Shri Vedaanta Deshika, in Rahasyatraya Saara, Chapter 6, page 76)

पुरुषाः कीर्तिताः पूर्वे ब्रह्मा गो विष्णुरित्यपि ।
तत्रापि तत्सत्वृत्त्या जगतां चापि रक्षणात् ॥ ९४ ॥

अपवर्गतरत्वाच्च विष्णुरेव विशिष्यते ।
सर्वेषां पुरुषाणां तु यस्मादेवं विशिष्यते ॥ ९५ ॥

“The Purushas are said to be Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Among them, due to His Saattivika actions, protection of the universe and capacity to bestow the highest bliss (moksha), Vishnu alone is considered Supreme. In this way, He is distinguished as the best.”

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 2, Shlokas 94-95

The fact that Mr. Subrahmanian is trying to show that merely following the tenets of Vaishnava Dharma makes someone “anti-Smaarta,” shows how open-minded these pseudo-Smaarta fanatics are and that they cannot even respect the co-existence of other darshanas!

Like all darshanas, we obviously have numerous pramaanas from the Shaastras to substantiate our stance and it should be obvious that reputed philosophers like Shri Madhvacharya, Shri Ramanujacharya, etc., have proven their Siddhaantas and won debates against numerous scholars in order to gain such recognition, just like all ancient philosophers have. It makes no sense that thousands of people would blindly follow anything baseless told by them and accept them as Jagat-Gurus, when numerous opponents even wanted to use crooked methods to stop their rise to fame!

We respect Smaartas and their beliefs, since they follow Hari-Hara abheda and Aadi Shankaracharya partly rejected the tenets of Pancharaatra, since we are Dvaitins and believe that all jeevas are different and are open minded to diversity in opinions and beliefs. After all, Shri Madhvacharya himself stated in Anuvyaakhyaana:

दर्शनानां प्रवृत्तत्वान्मन्दः आशङ्कते पुनः ।
अनादिकालतो वृत्ताः समया हि प्रवाहतः ॥

“All philosophies have been existing since eternity. Sometimes, one becomes more popular or less popular. But none perishes.”

—Anuvyaakhyaana, Adhyaaya 2, Paada 2

But we do not see the likes of Mr. Subrahmanian ready to reciprocate the same open-mindedness at all. In all their articles, they only like to cherry-pick and share criticisms of Advaitins, playing victim card, while ignoring the fact that their sampradaaya has had an equal contribution, if not greater, in such conflicts.

It is well known that Smaartas believe in Hari-Hara abheda, Vaishnavas consider Vishnu superior to all other Devatas and vice versa in case of Shaivas. But rather than learning to respect and co-exist with bhaktas of other sampradaayas, the main agenda of the fanatical-minded individuals' is to disrespect the beliefs of others and behave as if not accepting the non-difference of Shiva and Vishnu makes one an adharmi. By this logic, Vaishampaayana Rshi, Devarshi Naarada, Naaraayana Rshi (Bhagavaan Himself) and all other reputed Pancharaatrikas mentioned in the Shaastras would be adharmis!

Advaitins feel extremely pained, hurt, by this which happens day in and day out. Many Advaitins/Smartas do not even know these things. But those who hear these have to inform others. Even scholars are not aware of this. Why should we honor those who demonize Shankaracharya and Advaitins?

But to remind our opponents, it is the Smaarta fanatics themselves who instigated us unprovoked and intentionally highlighted Mani Manjari. To return the favour and show that we Maadhvas aren't solely responsible for these issues and definitely not for restarting them during today's times, we shall share some additional gems from the works of Smaartas.

Firstly, we would like to quote a two page blog article of Mr. Subrahmanian (<https://adbhutam.wordpress.com/2017/01/30/1108/>), where he criticizes certain Shri Vaishnava bloggers for claiming that Shri Aadi Shankaracharya was a Vaishnava, and to answer them, Mr. Subrahmanian quotes statements of Shri Ramanujacharya and Shri Vedaanta Deshika criticizing Advaita. In other words, Mr. Subrahmanian wants all non-Smaartas to abuse Shankaracharya and cannot stand the idea of them trying to praise Shankaracharya! Yet, ironically, he accuses Vaishnavas of spreading hatred!

One can easily see their complete divergence from Ramanuja's assessment of Shankara and Advaita, dealing a severe slap on Ramanuja's face:

While Ramanuja did not even give the fundamental 'āstika' status to Shankara/Advaita, here are his 'humble' followers bountifully granting 'vaiṣṇava-darśana' status to Advaita, 'just like other Vedāntic schools'. Compare this with Ramanuja/Vedanta Deśika charging Shankara as a nāstika - 'pracchanna bauddha', 'veda-vāda chadma', deluder of the world, etc. !! Can a Vaiṣṇava-darśana ever delude the world? If yes, is that not a mockery of vaiṣṇavism? He who was labeled a 'pseudo vedāntin, Buddhist-in-disguise' is converted to the glorious status of a 'Vedantin', 'Vaiṣṇava'! One can easily see the apology on the part of his 'humble' followers to somehow extricate Ramanuja from the grave error he committed in assessing Shankara. As everyone today, the 'humble' followers of Ramanuja have realized that if only Ramanuja had correctly understood Shankara and Advaita, he would not have ventured to commence a new school.

If only Ramanuja had recognized the 'vaiṣṇavatva' of Shankara, why would he go to accuse him of 'तदिदमौपनिषदपरमपुरुषवरणीयताहेतुगुणविशेषविरहिणां..' ['who is bereft of the specific qualities that would endear one to the Lord']?

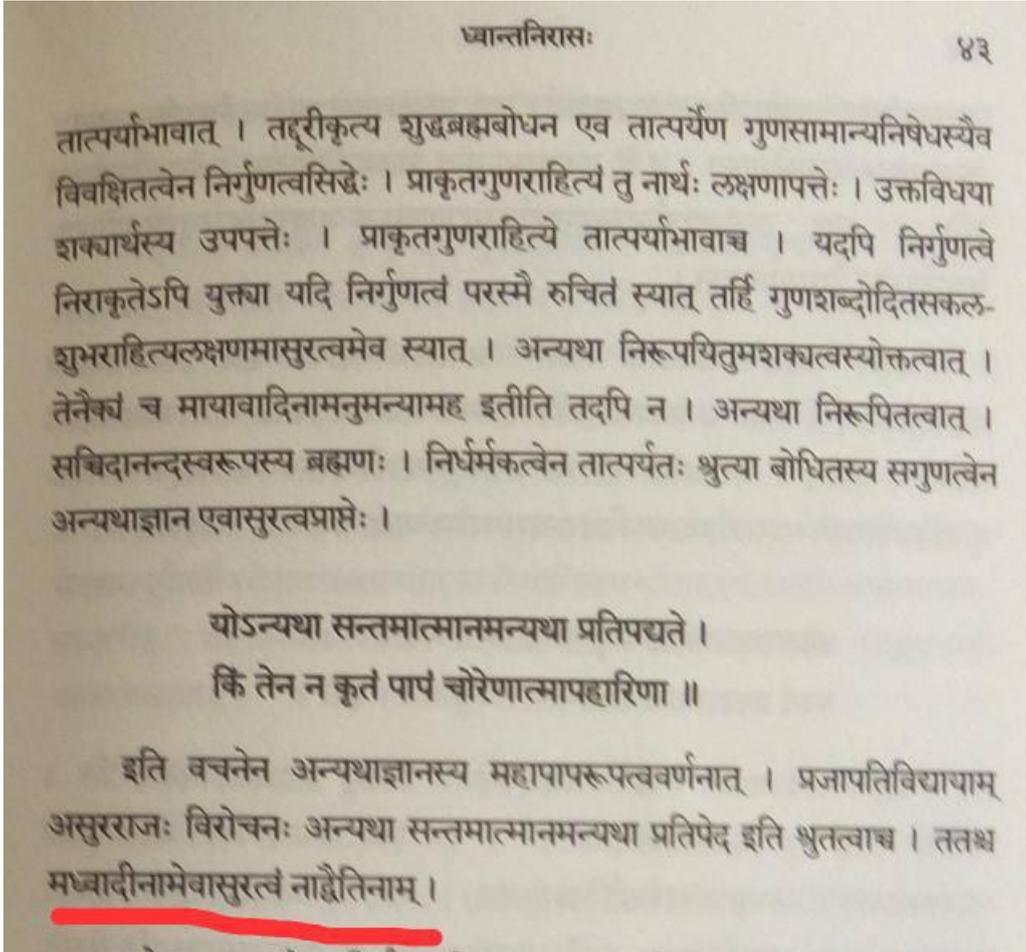
As said previously, all Aachaaryas have used strong language while criticizing their opponents, though not making personal attacks on any specific personality.

Unfortunately, according to Mr. Subrahmanian, mere collective criticisms of Advaitins as

© Copyrights 2022-24 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

“asuras” or “prachanna-Bauddhas” imply that Vaishnavas have to maintain some hatred against Advaitins and not treat them as fellow Hindus. Yet, he himself plays the victim card while accusing us Maadhvas of spreading hatred and regrets why many Smaartas are on cordial terms with us!

A 2016 book of Mani Dravid Shastri (a popular Advaitin scholar who is even extensively felicitated by Maadhvas) published by the Shringeri Matha, tries to elaborate on the ‘asuratva’ of Shri Madhvacharya:



Another “reputed Advaitin scholar” composed the following shloka:

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके कलौ मध्वमहम्मदौ ।
तयोरेकः श्रुतेर्हन्ता गोहन्ता च तथापरे ॥

“There are two kinds of people on earth in the age of Kali, namely Madhva and Mohammed. One of those is the killer of the Vedas and the other is the killer of cows.”

Now, isn't this off the limits? When we Maadhvas weren't even heeding to old controversies, the question naturally raised would be who is actually responsible for the conflicts taking place today? Was it our mistake that we stayed quiet entirely about the whole issue of criticisms of Shankaracharya, that we did not share more controversial

material from Mani Manjari and show its presence in his own biographies? The irony is that the e-Smaartas have been throwing stones at us, while they themselves reside in houses made of glass! Should it really be a doubt as to whether we Maadhvas are responsible for the conflicts with Smaartas, when they were the ones who themselves started cherry-picking partial information from our granthas?

Selections from Madhvamruta Maharnava as found in Sri G.R.Patil's 'Sri Vidyaranya Vishayaka Akshepa Nirasa':

Moving on, Mr. Subrahmanian quotes select portions of "Madhvaamrta Mahaarnava," an alleged book of Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya, which abuses multiple non-Maadhvas. The fact is that the authorship of this grantha itself is falsely attributed to Naaraayana Panditaachaarya and has been deemed an inauthentic work by almost all reputed Maadhva Vidvaans! The earliest manuscripts of this book available are themselves from the 16th century, indicating that it was simply authored by some unknown person during inter-sampradaayic conflicts and was obviously not even approved by a single reputed Maadhva Vidvaan even during those times.

Mr. Subrahmanian shares parts from Madhvaamrta Mahaarnava abusing Shri Ramanujacharya and Shri Vaishnavas in general and elsewhere too has claimed that Maadhvas despise and insult Shri Vaishnavas, but ignores the fact that since the time of Shri Vedaanta Deshika alone, the cordial relationship between Maadhvas and Shri Vaishnavas has been well-known. Shri Vedaanta Deshika himself praises Shri Madhvacharya multiple times in his works, such as the Shatadushani and elsewhere referring to him as 'तत्त्ववादिवृद्ध'. The rest of the article by Mr. Subrahmanian contains irrelevant material and simply shares the so-called controversial Maadhva granthas.

At the end of the day, we would like to remind our readers that hypocrisy and dishonesty are natural lakshanas of Taamasikas and such people will obviously be found in all sampradaayas. It is not worth taking the claims of these pseudo-Smaartas seriously, especially considering the fact that present-day Maadhva and Smaarta sanyaasis are on cordial terms, since taamasikas would any day not want to see unity among Hindus and open-mindedness, with their sole focus only being to prove the superiority of "my darshana," "my Guru," "my Ishta Deva," etc., not respecting the right of others to hold similar opinions with respect to their Ishta Deva and Gurus.

Regards,
Hari Kumaara

© Copyrights 2022-24 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

श्री हरये नमः ।

श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ॥

© Copyrights 2022-24 Achyuta Bhakti Deets