

## Madhavadeva's Nam-Ghosa : A Critical Analysis

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### Abstract

Nam-Ghosa is the best writing by Madhavadeva. It contains thousand (according to some books of collections thousand and one) verses. Nam-Ghosa has made a remarkable contribution in the context of propagation and spreading of the New Vaishnavism or Ek Sarana Nam Dharma. Nam-Ghosa can be divided into three parts as the gospel of Nam-Dharma or the New Vaishnavism, poetic expression of detached devotional feelings and the appreciation of the qualities of Lord Vishnu and his various names. Madhavadeva got true savour of devotion by the grace of his preceptor Sankardeva. Madhavadeva has offered his honour and devote to Sankardeva for several times in Nam-Ghosa. In this book Madhavadeva has suggested easy way to offer devotion to Lord Krishna or Vishnu. The main philosophy of Nam-Ghosa is based on Vedanta Philosophy. According to Nam-Ghosa people should be devoted to Lord Krishna only when he can be able to come out from selfishness and after that he can be able to reach Krishna Dham - the final destination of a soul.

**Keywords:** Madhavadeva, Nam-Ghosa, Devotion, Guru, God, Philosophy.

### INTRODUCTION:

Madhavadeva was an ardent disciple of his preceptor Sankardeva. Sankardeva introduced the new vaishnavism in the 15th century in Assam. For spreading the religion Madhavadeva worked very hard to help his preceptor and he became as a shadow of Sankardeva. Both of them were so intensely involved with one another that sometimes it's seems impossible to evaluate their personalities separating one from another.

Madhavadeva was born in 1489 at Narayanpur of Lakhimpur. His father was Harisinga Bora and mother was Manorama. At first, he was a follower of Shaktism. But later on he became a heartedly a vaishnava in 1522 after coming in contact with Sankardeva at Dhowahat in Belguri.

Madhavadeva had versatile qualities like his giude Sankardeva. He had presence of mind, leadership and poetic quality and good singing capacity. After Sankardeva, he took the major responsibility (1568 to 1596) preaching the gospels of Sankardeva at Ganak Kuchi and Sundaridiya respectively. At Sundaridiya he established the Barpeta Satra. Madhavadeva died in 1596 at Bhela Madhupur Satra at the age of 107.

He created a number of poems, songs, dramas theological writings. All the writings of Madhavadeva can be divided into the following categories -

Poerty : (a) Rajsurya Kavya, (b) Adikanda Ramayana (Translation).

Theological Writings : (a) Nam-Ghosa, (b) Bhakti Ratnawali, (c) Janma Rahasya, (d) Nam-Malika.

Drama or Jhumura : (a) Arjun Bhanjan, (b) Chor Dhara, (c) Bhoomi Lutuwa, (d) Bhoojan Behar.

Songs : (a) Borgeet (Total 157 nos.), (b) Bhatima ( Total 9 nos.).

Edited Books : (a) Kirtan-Ghosa, (b) Ramayana.

### **OBJECTIVES :**

The objective of the study as follows :

- (a) To find out the devotion and honour of Madhavadeva to his preceptor Sankardeva.
- (b) To find out the self smallness of Madhavadeva.
- (c) To find out the devotion of Madhavadeva to Lord Krishna or Vishnu.
- (d) To find out the reflection of Vedanta Philosophy in the Nam-Ghosa.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY :**

The literatures that makes their place in the heart of man beyond the time and place are called great literature. Good writing influences human behavior. It might not make us better, but it has the power to change the way of behave. The Nam-Ghosa is one of such good writing. By destroying all the evils of human society such as greed, attachment, pride, jealousy, lust, anger etc., the Nam-Ghosa gives the way to province of God. Nowadays most of the people are become consumerist. Consumerism worst human equilibrium and inspire to immortal act. Therefore a skillful, learned and competent guide who can be able to see the right way is very much needed. Sankardeva

and Madhavadeva were such two great personalities who played a major role for the Assamese Society. Now they are not among us, but their ideologies and great works are. Such a great work is the Nam-Ghosa. In the Nam-Ghosa, Madhavadeva describes with solutions that through the selfless devotion to Lord Krishna or Vishnu how a man can proceed to salvation from this world.

### **AREA OF STUDY :**

The study will conducted in the philosophy, devoted to Lord Krishna, devoted to Sankardeva and the self smallness of Madhavadeva that inherent in the Nam-Ghosa. The study will also conducted in the importance of the Nam-Ghosa in human society. The study area is selected purposively. Purposive selection of the area is due to the fact that no studies have been conducted in this area on this topic.

### **METHODOLOGY :**

The study will be done by in an analytical and descriptive way with the help of primary and secondary data. As primary data we have chosen Madhavadeva's Nam-Ghosa and as secondary data we have chosen related books, journals, articles, soft copies included web pages, pdf files downloaded from websites. The study is fully based on the primary data and the secondary data also used whenever needed.

### **DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS :**

Nam-Ghosa is a vaishnavite scripture of verses in praise of Lord Krishna or Vishnu. It is written by Madhavadeva in Assamese. It contains thousand (according to some books of collection are thousand and

one) verses. So it is also called 'Hejari Ghosa'. The six hundred verses have been translated from Gita, Upanishada, Bhagavat Purana etc. and remaining verses are from his spontaneous overflow of his spiritual experience. Madhavadeva wrote this book in his last days of life. The title of the book is very meaningful. The 'Nam' means the names of Lord Krishna or Vishnu and the 'Ghosa' means to sing loudly. The Nam-Ghosa can be divided into three parts as the gospel of Nan-Dharma or the New Vaishnavism, poetic expression of detached devotional feelings and the appreciation of the qualities of Lord Vishnu and his various names. According to Dr. Banikanta Kakati, there are three main emotions flow unceasingly towards the great ocean of bliss. These are - the memory of the virtuous character Sankardeva, self smallness of Madhavadeva and divine power of devotion to Lord Krishna. Now, we are going to analysis this three points in details.

**The memory of the virtuous character Sankardeva :** Earlier, Madhavadeva was a devotee of Shaktism (worshipper of God and Goddess for power). After his contracted to Sankardeva, Madhavadeva transformed himself to pure Vaishnavas (worshipper of Lord Krishna or Vishnu). He is able to gain the real devotion by the grace of Sankardeva. In the very beginning of Nam-Ghosa, Madhavadeva has written as follows :  
Muktita nisprha yito sehi bhakataka namo  
Rasamai māgoho bhakati Samasta mastaka  
maninija bhakatarā basya, Bhajo sena deva  
yadupati. (verse : 1)

It is a profound verse. Through this verse, Madhavadeva wants to express that

the devotee, who have never appetency in liberation or salvation and lustless is the real devotee. Only he is the capable who can provide the way to true devotion. He is the crown-gem of the universe and the God also became a servant for such devotees. Madhavadeva wants to serve and pray such a devotee and wishes to get true devotion from him. According to him, such devotee is the visible God in this earth.

Now a question may be arise in the mind that who is the devotee whom Madhavadeva worshiped before the Lord in Nam-Ghosa? The answer is clear. He is none but his preceptor Sankardeva. In the view of a true devotee Guru is supreme power.

"Guru Brahmā Guru  
Vishnu Guru Devā Maheswaraha  
Guru sākshāt Para:Brahma  
tasmai Sri Guruve namo".

For Madhavadeva, Sankardeva was like God. The number of times the wave of devotion rises in Madhavadeva's heart, the more times his mind becomes fascinated by the pride and memory of his Guru Sankardeva. According to Madhavadeva :  
Sankarehe suddhamata iswara bhaktira  
tattva Pracârilâ sâstra sâra jâni Tâhânka  
nâjâni mudhe jivikâra arthe fure  
Aponâra mahattva bakhâni. (verse : 53)

That means, only the opinion of Sankardeva is correct. He preached the Krishna Bhakti (devotion to God) by fully understanding the scriptural knowledge. Without knowing this, foolish people celebrate their own importance for their livelihood. In an another verse he has written as : Sankare sansaya chedi sâstrara tattvaka  
bhedi Pracârilâ Krsnara Bhakati Tânka eri ki

kârane ânaka bolaya Guru Kino loka mahâmudha mati. (verse : 54)

It means, after understood the whole elements of the scriptures, Sankardeva destroying the doubts of common people and preached the Krishna Bhakti. Then why do people consider others as Guru except Sankardeva ?

Devotion to Krishna leads to gain the theological knowledge. Madhavadeva has told about the path which we should be followed in Krishna Bhakti.

Hari bhakti rāj mārge guru  
Sruti janānira pada pantha anusari  
Furo huva āmi ānandita skhalana  
nāhike kadācita

Mahā jana sava jānibā niscaya. (verse : 623)

Hari Bhakti is called the highway is Vaishnavism. Highways are superior in various paths. In this way, Hari Bhakti is excellent to get a place in Krishna Dham – the final destination of a soul (according to Hinduism). It is necessary to follow certain rules to walk in highways. In the same way, it is also necessary to follow some rules in Hari Bhakti. The advices and the knowledge given by the Guru are very important in Hari Bhakti. Apart from this, it is also very important to pay attention to the rules of Vedas. There is no fear of any ejaculation by following the rules of the Vedas.

Madhavadeva's inner soul was shivering because of his Guru Sankardeva's death. He has written as :

Srimanta Sankara Hari Bhakatara Jānā yena kalpataru Tāhānta bināy nāi nāi nāi  
Āmāra Parama Guru. (verse : 375)

Sankardeva was like the Kalpataru (a wish-fulfilling divine tree in Hinduism) for devotees. Without him, we don't have any other supreme Guru. In this way, Madhavadeva has told about the importance of Guru Sankardeva in a wide range of Nam-Ghosa.

**Self smallness of Madhavadeva :** Self smallness of Madhavadeva is an expression to showing respect for his Guru Sankardeva as a ardent disciple. Madhavadeva offers himself as a sinner before Krishna or Vishnu.  
pada nakha candra prakashita

Mai anāthaka dāyā karahu paramānanda

Dāsa buli dhariyā manata

Thaiyo nija bhrtyara sangata

Āngoli mukhata karo dānte trna tuli dharo

Kesha cindi deyu caranata. (verse : 70)

Madhavadeva considered himself a slave of God or the father of the orphan. He wished to stay with the servants of God. He just wanted to serve God.

In devotion, people of slavery are not egoistic. Even Madhavadeva has any kind of arrogance or ego in his mind, he has prayed to God to get rid of him.

Hey prāna bandhu Kṛṣṇa kṛpāra sāgara hari

Kṛpā drsti cāhiyuka muka sahaja bāsanā rupa sarana diyuka nātha mura ahamkāra dura hauka. (verse : 62)

According to hinduism, Lord Krishna or Vishnu is the master of all living and non living beings of the universe. He is the creator, maintainer or preserver and destroyer or transformer of all things. He

does not want anything bad to happen with his devotees. He treats his devotees like his friends or his own children. So, Madhavadeva requested Krishna as a friend to look at him kindly so that he can overcome his ego and all other bad habits.

Hey prāna bhagavanta itu samsārata yata

Āche pāpi tāra mai simā

Carane thāpiya muka patita pāvana nija

Dekhiyuka nāmara mahimā. (verse : 66)

Mura sama pāpi luka nāhike i tini luka

Tumi sama nāhi pāpahāri jāni Govinda muka  
yena yuvai kariyuka

Tuva pade karo ho gohāri. (verse : 136)

Sahasra sahasra āti aparādha dine rāti

Karu mai mahāmudha jana

Āmi prabhu tayu dāsa āke jāni jagavāsa

Kshamiyuka SriMadhusudana. (verse : 137)

In these verses, Madhavadeva has described that there is not a great sinner like him in this world. He thinks that he is above all sinners. He feels that he is an ignorant. So he makes thousands of mistakes every day and night.

These verses are the key examples of self smallness of Madhavadeva. Finally he has begged for a place in the Lord's refuse. He has written as :

Mai durācāra kevale tumāra

Aparādhi Nārāyana

Kshamiyuka hari laiyu dāsa kari

Pasilu herā harana. (verse : 183)

Hey Hari muka durācāra buli

Nakaribā parihāra Tumi bine mahā- patita  
pāvana

Kuna deva āche āra. (verse : 307)

In these verses, Madhavadeva has reflected himself as a criminal, as a misdemeanor or as a sinner before God. So, he requested God to forgive him as a slave of God. He also requested him not to let him alone. Because, without Lord Krishna, there is no other protector in the world.

### **Divine power of devotion to Lord Krishna**

: Often remembering Krishna with solitude and deep devotion is called Krishna Bhakti. Krishna's greatness has been criticized in detail in Nam-Ghosa. It has been told in Nam-Ghosa that there is no other equivalent to Krishna Bhakti.

Samaste tapaka ācoraka paroka parbbate uthi  
yata

Tirthata bhramoka padhuka beda niscaya

Yajoka samaste yagnacaya yogaka jānoka  
samastaya

Haribine kadācito mrtyu nataraya. (verse :  
600)

No matter how much one have austerity, pilgrimage, worship and knowledge of Vedas; but salvation is never gain to anybody without the satisfaction of God.

Harika satate smarā prajā  
samasta dharmare ise rājā

Hari sumarane sijaya punya kimkara

Napāsaribā kadācīta  
sunā kathā ito biparita

Hari pāsarile sije pāpa nirantara.  
(verse : 603)

Madhavadeva has advised that we should always remember Hari. Because, Hari is the king of all religion. By remembering Hari the followers and the slaves also get able to salvation. Therefore we should not forget the God. In contrast, one who forgets or neglects the God, he become a big sinner.

Madhavadeva has mentioned about some easy methods to get salvation in Nam-Ghosa.

Bedāgama ādi kari yata bistara sāstrata nāhi  
kāja

Bistara tirthata nāhi kichu prayojana

Samsāra tarite khojā yeve āpon mokshara  
hetu teve

Govinda Govinda bekate bolā bacana. (verse  
: 605)

If anyone wants to attain salvation from this world, there's no need the knowledge of Vedas or religious books and no need of many pilgrimages. Salvation is attained only by chanting the name of God.

Mahanta sabara sanga loiyā

Harika ekānta citta diyā

Parama ānande gāyo Hari Guna Nāma

Sahaje krpālu Deva Hari  
loibo āponāra dāsa kari

Hari dāsa hoile hoibā bhāi purnakāma.  
(verse : 677)

If you chanting the name of God in solitude with saints, the merciful God will fulfill your wish by accepting you as his devotee.

The basis of Vaishnavism is to propagate the importance of Lord Krishna or Vishnu, the Lord of the universe. Madhavadeva has described about the Dashavataras (virtual incarnations) of Nirguna (intangible) Vishnu in 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of Nam-Ghosa.

Yāra Rāma Krshna nāma nāve bhava sindhu  
tari

Pāve parampada pāpi yata

Sadānanda sanātana henaya Krshnaka sadā

Upāsā karoho hrdayata. (verse : 2)

By chanting the name of Lord Krishna, even a sinner can easily overcome the bondage of the world. Madhavadeva has prayed that eternal power by establishing in his inner soul.

In this way, the greatness of Lord Krishna has been highlighted in a wide range of Namghosa and those who do not have devotional feelings for Krishna are condemned.

**Phisophy in the Nam-Ghosa :** Earlier, we have mentioned that Madhavadeva has been translated six hundred verses of Nam-Ghosa from Gita, Bhagavat Purana, Upanishads etc.

and these are the sources of Vedanta philosophy. The word 'Vedanta' comes from two Sanskrit words 'Veda' (wisdom) and 'anta' (end), which means end of wisdom or supreme wisdom. Vedanta is also known as Uttar Mimansa. Vedanta reflects ideas that emerged from the speculations and philosophies contained in the Upanisadas, specifically, knowledge and liberation or salvation. The Upanisadas, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita together are called the 'Prasthanatrayi' and it is considered to be the basis of Vedanta Philosophy. Some of the better known sub-traditions of Vedanta includes Shankaracharya's Advaita Darsan, Ramanacharya's Vishishtadvaita Darsan, Madhavacharya's Dvaita Darsan, Nimbarkacharya's Dvaitadvait Darsan, Vallabhacharya's Shuddhadvaita Darsan etc. Madhavadeva has not consciously promoted any kind of philosophy in Naamghosa. But the philosophy in Nam-Ghosa is quite similar with Advaita Darsan of Shankaracharya.

According to Advaita Darsan, Brahma is the basis of the world. Brahma is the all causes and effects. There is nothing truth without God. The world is meaningless without Him. We do not know the reality because of Maya (illusion). Only learned philosophers can achieve the the elements of Maya. God is a form of Brahma. God is consider as the creator and follower of the world. He is the main deer, consumer and knower. But Brahma is beyond this qualities. We do not understand him easily because of Maya.

Vedanta philosophy has given two types of liberation. One is Jivana Mukti

(liberation from life) and another is Bideha Mukti (liberation from physical body). Advaita Darsan has allowed both types of liberation.

If we noticed the philosophy in Nam-Ghosa in the based of Advaita Darsan, it is seems that Madhavadeva has accepted the Advaita Darsan in Nam-Ghosa. Because, according to Madhavadeva, Brahma is the supreme truth. He is the creator and the only reason of all facts. Madhavadeva has described :

Hey Krsna tumi mātra caitanya svarupa nitya

Satya shuddha jñāna akhandita āvāra yateka  
ito tumāra binoda rupa carācara māyāra  
kalpita. (verse : 73)

Only God is the source of all sensation and perception. He is the ultimate truth. He is also the source of the wisdom. Apart from this, everything is the world is just a reflection of Maya.

In an another verse Madhavadeva has said :

Brahmā ādi kari jiva yata  
Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma

Māyā shayyā mājē ācaya ghumati yāi

Tumihe caitanya sanātana  
Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma

Āmi acetana niyuka nātha jagāi. (verse : 660)

From Prajapati Brahma (according to Hinduism, Brahma or :Brahmā: is a form of God with four heads. He is the creator of the world and not same with Brahma – the

supreme power of universe) to all other creatures in this world have been tied in the bondage of Maya. Brahma – the supreme power of universe is beyond of this. Only Brahma is able to destroy the Maya. So, Madhavadeva has prayed to get rid him of Maya.

**Findings :**

1. Madhavadeva has got the true devotion from him Guru Sankardeva. As a Guru, the ideality of Sankardeva is very high level, respected and well cultured. He was the ideal Guru for Madhavadeva and other followers.
2. Madhavadeva has elaborated the importance of a Guru for his disciples or followers in Nam-Ghosa. Only a perfect and well-learned Guru can make the life of his disciples a complete success.
3. Due to the book written to spread Vaisnavism, Lord Krishna or Vishnu's greatness has been published in Nam-Ghosa. The basis of the world is God. He is the all causes and effects. There is nothing sensation and perception without God. This concept is quite similar with Advaita Darsan of Shankaracharya.
4. To gain the Guru Bhakti and the grace of God, everyone should be able to destroy his greed, deeds, anger, ego and all other bad habits. Only Guru shows us the right way to devotion and then this path gets paved. This is also noted at the present time. In order to get wisdom from the Guru and the learned and well cultured people, one should be

blow down in front of him without ego. Otherwise, he will not benefited from his acquiring knowledge.

5. In order to destroy man's ego, Madhavadeva has described self-guilty and self-condemnation in Nam-Ghosa. It's play a major role to keep the peace chain in the society.

**Conclusion and suggestions :** Nam-Ghosa can be termed as the store of Assamese Jatiya Sur (the national rhythm of Assamese). It is called the 'bee hive' of Eksarana Dharma or New Vaisnavism. Its literary value rests on the deep devotional savour. Intense feelings, simple language and musical rhythms of the words seen coming from the deep of Madhavadeva's heart. So, it can be regarded as the soul of Madhavadeva. Madhavadeva describes with solutions that through the selfless devotion to Lord Krishna or Vishnu how a man can proceed to salvation from this world. The glory of Madhavadeva is reflecting from very beginning to the end in Nam-Ghosa. We should try to destroy our greed, deeds, anger, ego and all other bad habits. Otherwise, we shall not be benefited to acquiring knowledge from our teachers or elders. Finally, the research done by us is not the only and completed research. "A Critical Review of Saint Madhavadeva's Nam-Ghosa" is a vast subject in research. There is every possibility of study in this subject in future also.

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