

Excerpts from the Caritas

দিবজ ৰামানন্দৰ চৰিত্ৰৰ পৰা উদ্ধৃত

[From *Sri Guru Carita*, Ramananda Dvija, 17th Century, Maheswar Neog ed.]

শংকৰ-মাধৱ বাদানুবাদ

Madhavadeva's Great Debate with Sankaradeva

Ramananda Dvija

Tr. by Arunava Gupta

ATributeToSankaradeva.org presents the first (complete) English translation of the Great Debate between Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva - the event of epoch-making significance in the history of Assam. This dialogue is important for several reasons, not the least because it also brings out all aspects of the religious system of Sankaradeva.

We are grateful to the translator for sending us this invaluable passage (with notes) along with the original excerpt in Assamese - *editor*

[For a brief background, see http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/Madhava_guru_bio_3.htm; for the HTML page (with transliteration), click [here](#)]

[Translation follows after excerpt]

শংকৰ-মাধৱ বাদানুবাদ

শ্ৰীমাধৱদেৱ শাক্ত আছিল। তেখেতৰ বৈন্যক ৰামদাসে দেৱী পূজা কৰিবলৈ ছাগলি কিনি নানি শ্ৰীমন্ত শংকৰদেৱৰ কথা কোৱাত তেখেতৰ খং উঠিল আৰু পিচ দিনা শ্ৰীমন্ত শংকৰদেৱৰ লগত বাদ কৰিবলৈ গ'ল। ৰামদাসে শ্ৰীমাধৱদেৱৰ পৰিচয় দি কথাতো জনালে। তাৰ পাচত:-

শংকৰে বোলন্ত জানিলো তোমাৰ
নাহি শাস্ত্ৰ-পৰিচয়।
মহামুৰ্খ লোকে শাস্ত্ৰক নজানি
অন্য দেৱ উপাসয় ॥
শাস্ত্ৰ-জ্ঞান ভৈলে কিয় নজানিবা
কোন দেৱ শ্ৰেষ্ঠতৰ।
ৰামদাসে বোলে এহন্তে পণ্ডিত
শাস্ত্ৰক জানে বিস্তৰ ॥ [৪৫৮]

শুনীয়া মাধৰে শ্লোকক পঢ়িলা
কৰি আতি খৰতৰ ।
মহামায়া দেৱী পৰম ঈশ্বৰী
পূজে তাংক চৰাচৰ ॥
ব্ৰহ্মা, ৰুদ্ৰ, ইন্দ্ৰ চন্দ্ৰেও অচ্চিছা
আনো দেৱ নিৰন্তৰে ।
শত পদম দিয়া বিস্তাৰ অচ্চিছে
অণু স্ৰজিবাক তৰে ॥ [৪৫৯]
প্ৰকৃতিৰ অংশ দুৰ্গা গোসানীক
পূজা কৰি সৰ্বজন ।
গৃহস্থ-ধৰ্মত থাকি বলি দিলে
দোষ বোলা কি কাৰণ ॥
শংকৰে বোলন্ত শুনীয়ো মাধৱ
কথা কহো পূৰ্বাপৰ ।
প্ৰকৃতিও জানা ঈশ্বৰ-স্ৰজনা
ইটো কথা সাৰোত্তৰ ॥ [৪৬০]
অনাৰি অনন্ত নিত্য নিৰঞ্জন
সনাতন দেৱ হৰি ।
হেন প্ৰকৃতিক কোটি কোটি শত
স্ৰজন্ত উপসংহৰি ॥
কোটি কোটি মায়া স্ৰজন্ত পালন্ত
যাৰ আজ্ঞা শিৰে ধৰি ।
তিনি গুণ-দ্বাৰে স্ৰিষ্টি প্ৰবৰ্ত্তন্ত
নানান বিনোদ কৰি ॥ [৪৬১]
ঈশ্বৰত কৰি কৈলা মায়া শ্ৰেষ্ঠ
ইটো কথা বামানয় ।
পুৰাণ ভাৰতে গীতা ভাগৱতে
আক পুনু নকহয় ॥
মাধৰে বোলন্ত ঘৃতৰ প্ৰদীপ
দেই বলি সমস্ত ।
যত ডালি লোম পোৰে ততকাল
থাকিৰে লাগে স্ৰৰ্গত ॥ [৪৬২]
শংকৰে বোলন্ত ৰিষ্কু-ভক্ত সৰে
স্ৰৰ্গ-সুখ নবাঙ্কয় ।
অমৃত ভোজন কৰা লোকে যেন

থাৰ-পানী নখায় ॥

মাধৰে বোলন্ত কামৰূপে থাকি
অম্বিকা দেৱী পূজিব ।

অন্তকালে সিটো দেৱীৰ প্ৰসাদে
অক্ষয় স্বৰ্গ লভিব ॥ [৪৬৩]

শংকৰে বোলন্ত হিংসা-ধৰ্ম কৰি
স্বৰ্গসুখ নপায় ।

ৰৈক্ষৰী পূজাক কৰি যদি পাৰে
নুগুচে যাতনা ভয় ॥

কেতিক্ষণে সিটো পাৰ হও আৰ
মনে শংকা নুগুচয় ।

পথত যাহন্তে বলিগণে পায়
মুচৰি ঘাড় চিংগয় ॥ [৪৬৪]

অন্তকালে গৈয়া অধোমুখ হুইয়া
পৰে ঘোৰ নৰকত ।

যমদূতে তাক ভুঞ্জাৰে যাতনা
কহিবোহো কথা কত ॥

মাধৰে বোলন্ত বলি-ৰিশ্বদেৱ
ধৰ্ম ইটো গৃহস্থৰ ।

পঞ্চ-যজ্ঞ নিতে কৰিবাক লাগে
বিহিত ইটো শাস্ত্ৰৰ ॥ [৪৬৫]

পঞ্চ-ঋণ ইটো নুশুভয় যিটো
তাত পৰে পাপী নাই ।

বেদৰ বিহিত কৰ্ম ত্যাগ কৰি
মৰি নৰকক যাই ॥

শংকৰে বোলন্ত ঈশ্বৰ কৃষ্ণত
যি লৈলে এক-শৰণ ।

কায়-বাক্য-মনে সুদৃঢ় বিশ্বাসে
ভজিয়া কৃষ্ণ চৰণ ॥ [৪৬৬]

কাৰো আৰু সিটো কিংকৰ নুহিকে
একো ঋণে নপায় ।

অন্ত-কালে গৈয়া পায় অপ্রয়াসে
ৰিষু-লোক অনাময় ॥

মাধৰে বোলন্ত ইটো সৰ কথা
নিবৃত্তি পৰ লোকৰ ।

গৃহবাস তেজি ইন্দ্রিয়ক দমি
সংগ লৈবে বিৰক্তৰ ॥ [৪৬৭]
যেই মিলে তাক আহাৰ কৰিব
নকৰি একো আয়াস ।
চিত্ত-শুদ্ধি অৰ্থে তীৰ্থত ভ্ৰমিব
কৰিয়া বহু প্ৰয়াস ॥
জন্মান্তৰে পাচে সংসংগ লভিয়া
কৰিয়া হৰি-ভকতি ।
কোনো বিচক্ষণ মহা যত্ন কৰি
তেরেসে লভিবে গতি ॥ [৪৬৮]
কাম-ক্ৰোধ-লোভ যুক্ত লোক যত
ভাৰ্য্যা পুত্ৰে আসকতি ।
বলি-বিশ্বদেৱ তেজি কৰ্ম ধৰ্ম
যাইবে সিটো অধোগতি ॥
শংকৰে বোলন্ত ধৰিবে পাৰিলে
বিষয়ীৰো আছে গতি ।
একান্ত-শৰণ সমস্তৰে ধৰ্ম
কহিছন্ত যদুপতি ॥ [৪৬৯]
গীতাৰ অন্তত কন্ত অৰ্জুনত
আপুনি নন্দ-নন্দন ।
সৰ্ব ধৰ্ম ত্যাগ কৰি মোত মাত্ৰ
যি লৈলে এক-শৰণ ॥
সৰ্ব পাতকত হন্তে তাৰো তাক
কৰোক মাত্ৰ নিশ্চয় ।
কৈলো সৰ্বসাৰ তোমাৰ আগত
নাহিকে আত সংশয় ॥ [৪৭০]
নামধৰ্ম যেন মহামহৌষধি
শুনা থিৰ কৰি চিত্ত ।
পদ্ম-পুৰানত আপুনি কৰন্ত
ৰুদ্ৰদেৱে পাৰ্বতীত ॥
এক দেৱতাক উপাসনা কৰে
সমস্তে ভোগ কৰয় ।
স্ব-বিষয়ক বিৰোধ কৰন্ত
জলক তাপ দিৱয় ॥ [৪৭১]
বৈৰাগ্যত জ্ঞান একো নাহিকয়

একো ধৰ্ম নাচৰয় ।
এক নাম মাত্ৰ গায়া মহাসুখে
সিসৰ গতি পাৰয় ॥
সকলো ধৰ্মক আচৰণ কৰি
নপায় কৈলো সম্প্ৰতি ।
নাম-ধৰ্ম শ্ৰেষ্ঠ সৱাতো কৰিয়া
জানিবা তুমি পাৰ্বতী ॥ [৪৭২]
মাধৰে বোলন্ত পূজা নকৰিলে
দেৱ সৰে বিঘ্নি কৰে ।
এক শৰণীয়া হুইবাৰ দেখিলে
স্বী-সম্পত্তিক হৰে ॥
ধন জন যত বিভৱ আছয়
ক্ষীণ হুয়া লোক যত ।
খাইবে খুটিবেক একো নথাকয়
আসুখ মিলে মনত ॥ [৪৭৩]
শংকৰে বোলন্ত ৱিষ্ণু-ভক্ত সৰে
বিঘিনিক নগণয় ।
সংসাৰৰ সুখে নশ্বৰ জানিয়া
একো খেদ নকৰয় ॥
দেৱ সৰে বিঘ্নি কৰিবে নপাৰে
ভজিলে কৃষ্ণ দেৱক ।
কৰয় সাদৰ দেৱতাসকলে
ভক্তিমন্ত পুৰুষক ॥ [৪৭৪]
হৰি-দাস সৰে ঈশ্বৰত বিনে
একো দেৱ নভজয় ।
কৃষ্ণত শৰণ লৈলে প্ৰাণান্তিকো
অন্য দেৱ নুপূজয় ॥
মাধৰে বোলন্ত ঈশ্বৰৰ মূৰ্ত্তি
যতেক দেৱতাচয় ।
দেৱতা সৱক পূজা কৰিলন্তে
একো দোষ নিসিজয় ॥ [৪৭৫]
কহিছে শাস্ত্ৰত ঈশ্বৰৰ তনু
যতেক দেৱতাগণ ।
বিৰাট মূৰ্ত্তিৰ অংগ হেন জানি
কৰিবে লাগে পূজন ॥

চক্ষু বুলি জানা সূৰ্য্যকপূজিব
চন্দ্ৰক বুলিয়া মন ।
কৰ্ণ বুলি জানা অৰ্চিব বায়ুক
মুখক যে হুতাশন ॥ [৪৭৬]
অশ্বিনীকুমাৰ নাসিকা বুলিয়া
জিহ্বা বুলি বৰুণক ।
ঈশ্বৰৰ বাহু বুলিয়া পূজিব
দেৱৰাজ বাসবক ॥
হেন শূনি হাসি শংকৰে বোলন্ত
শুনियो মাধৱ কথা ।
কৰ্ম-যোগ ভক্তি যিটো জনে কৰে
তাহাৰ হেন অৱস্থা ॥ [৪৭৭]
ভাগৱতী ভক্তি যি জনে কৰয়
শুনियो তাৰ নিৰ্ণয় ।
একে কৃষ্ণকৈছে কৰে মাত্ৰ পূজা
কৰিয়া দৃঢ় নিশ্চয় ॥
হৰিক পূজিলে দেৱতা সৰুৰ
পৰম সন্তোষ হয় ।
এহি কথা জানি মহন্ত সকলে
কৃষ্ণক মাত্ৰ পূজয় ॥ [৪৭৮]
কৃষ্ণক পূজিলে যতেক দেৱৰ
তৃপ্তি হন্ত মনত ।
বৃক্ষ মূলে যেন জল দান দিলে
তুষ্ট হয় শাখা যত ॥
ডাল, পুষ্প, পত্ৰে পানী দিলে যেন
সন্তোষ নাই বৃক্ষৰ ।
তেনমতে জানা পৃথকে পূজিলে
সন্তোষ নাই দেৱৰ ॥ [৪৭৯]
কোন এক জন পুৰুষৰ ক্ষুধা
লাগি আছে অন্তৰত ।
বস্ত্ৰ অলংকাৰ পুষ্প চন্দনক
পিন্ধায় বাহিৰত ॥
বস্ত্ৰ অলংকাৰ পিন্ধাইলাতো একো
সুখ নাই ইন্দ্ৰিয়ৰ ।
যাৱত ভোজন নকৰয় মানে

সন্তোষ নাহি প্ৰাণৰ ॥ [৪৮০]
অন্ন ভুঞ্জিলাত সৰে তুষ্ট হোৱে
প্ৰাণ মন ইন্দ্ৰিয়ৰ ।
সেহিমতে জানা হৰিক পূজিলে
তুষ্ট দেৱ নিৰন্তৰ ॥
শুনা সৰ্বজন কথা বিতোপন
সভাসদ নিৰন্তৰে ।
মাধৱ শংকৰে কৰিলা বিনোদ
জীৱ তাৰিবাৰ তৰে ॥ [৪৮১]
মাধৱে ৰাখন্ত প্ৰবৃত্তি-মাৰ্গক
শংকৰে কৰে খণ্ডন ।
শ্লোকে শ্লোকে কন্ত দুহানে বুজন্ত
চাহি আছে সৰ্বজন ॥
ছয় সাত শ্লোক মাধৱে পঢ়ন্ত
আতি খৰতৰ কৰি ।
এক শ্লোক পঢ়ি শ্ৰীমন্ত শংকৰে
সৱাকো নেন্ত সংহৰি ॥ [৪৮২]
এহিমতে দুয়ো- জনে শ্লোকে বাদ
কৰিয়া এক প্ৰহৰ ।
বাদে নোৱাৰিলা মাধৱ ৰহিলা
নিদিয়া একো উত্তৰ ॥
শংকৰে সমোখি দুনাই বুলিলন্ত
শুনা কথা সাৰোত্তৰ ।
দৈৱকী-নন্দন বিনে আন দেৱ
নাহি নাহি শ্ৰেষ্ঠতৰ ॥ [৪৮৩]
নাম বিনে একো ধৰ্ম নাহি কয়
কহিলো কৰি নিশ্চয় ।
শুনি মাধৱৰ পুলকিত তনু
দ্ৰৱিত ভৈলা হৃদয় ॥
সিদ্ধান্ত লভিয়া আনন্দে মাধৱে
সন্তোষ লভি মনত ।
হুয়া অৱনত পৰি প্ৰণামিলা
শংকৰৰ চৰনত ॥ [৪৮৪]
শংকৰে বোলন্ত কেনে প্ৰণামিলা
কহিয়ো আৰ কাৰণ ।

মাধৰে দুনাই গদ গদ বাক্যে
বুলিবে লৈলা বচন ॥
ঝাত ঝাত কৰি শৰীৰ শিহৰে
সন্তোষ আতি মনত ।
কৃতাজ্জলি কৰি বুলিবে লাগিলা
হুয়া আতি অৱনত ॥ [৪৮৫]
অসম্ভাৱনাক আদি কৰি আনো
যতেক অজ্ঞানচয় ।
অনেক জন্মৰ যত দুৰ্বাসনা
আনো গ্ৰন্থি সমস্তয় ॥
তোমাৰ চৰণে পশিলো শৰণে
আজি ধৰি কৃপাময় ।
তযু বাক্যে মোৰ সমস্তে গুছিলা
ভৈলো আতি নিঃসংশয় ॥ [৪৮৬]
মাধৱৰ ভাৱ দেখি আনন্দিত
মন ভৈলা শংকৰৰ ।
অনেক শাস্ত্ৰৰ যুক্তি আনি আৰো
কহিলা কথা বিস্তৰ ॥
অনন্তৰে পাচে মাধৰে উঠিয়া
প্ৰণামিয়া শংকৰক ।
ৰামদাস সমে আনন্দিত মনে
চলিয়া গৈল গৃহক ॥ [৪৮৭]
শংকৰ মাধৰে কৰিলা বিনোদ
জীৱ তাৰিবাক প্ৰতি ।
জানি বা নজানি পদে নিবন্ধিলো
ৰামানন্দ হীনমতি ॥
শংকৰ স্বৰূপে আসিলা ঈশ্বৰ
জীৱ তাৰিবাৰ তৰে ।
তান পন্থা ধৰি বোলা হৰি হৰি
সভাসদ নিৰন্তৰে ॥ [৪৮৮]

[Translation follows on the next page]

Madhavadeva's Great Debate with Sankaradeva

Madhavadeva, previously, was a Sakta. When Ramadasa [see [background](#)] refused to buy the pair of goats he intended to offer as votive offerings to the Devi (goddess) and told him about Srimanta Sankaradeva instead, he was angry. And the very next day, he, along with Ramadasa, went to Sankaradeva's place to engage in debate with him. Giving Madhava's introduction before Sankaradeva, Ramadasa explained to the Saint the purpose of his coming. Then:-

Sankaradeva said, "I can gather that you
do not have any acquaintance with the
sastras
for it is only the greatly foolish ones who,
not knowing the sastras, go to worship
other gods.
If indeed you had any knowledge of the
sastras, then why would you not know
which deity is supreme?
And Ramadasa here is telling that he is a
pandita; he knows the scriptures in
detail!" [458]
Hearing this, Madhava began to cite
slokas
extremely rapidly,
"Mahamaya Devi, supreme goddess,
worshiped by the entire creation.
Even Brahma, Rudra, Indra and Candra
have done obeisance to her,
along with other gods, all along.
Offering to her lotuses, all the gods have
worshiped her at great length, for the
purpose of creating the cosmic egg (anda).
[459]
Prakriti's amsa (part, manifestation) is
Durga gosani - worshiped by one and all.
Offering of bali (sacrifice)
in grihastha dharma (householder's life) to
such a goddess,
for what reason you term as fault?"
Sankaradeva replied, "Madhava, Listen!
I tell you the fact, primeval.
*Even Prakriti (material nature) is God's
creation,*

know this as Truth, Essential. [460]
Anadi (Beginningless), Ananta (Infinite),
Nitya (Everlasting), Niranjana
(Unstained)

and Sanatana (Eternal) is Lord Hariⁱ.

Hundreds of crores of times, He
materializes and dissolves such a prakriti.
Obeying Whose command, crores and
crores of mayas create [the material
world] and Who, employing the three
modes of material nature, maintains the
entire creation indulging in various sports.
[461]

You are postulating that maya (nescience;
illusion) is superior to [such a] God! Now
this view surely is vamanaya (heterodox,
opposed to the Vedas)ⁱⁱ.

Further, the [chief] scriptures such as the
Gita and the Bhagavata, the Purana and
the Bharata, do not say anything like
this.”

Madhava said, “One lights lamps of ghee
on the balis (sacrificed animals);
as many strands of their fur are burnt, so
many years one gets to enjoy heaven.”
[462]

Sankaradeva said, “The Bhaktas
(Devotees) of Visnu do not wish for the
‘happiness’ of heaven,
just as the ones partaking of the nectarean
meal do not drink the water in which fish
has been washed.”

Madhava said, “Staying in Kamarupa, one
will perform the worship of Ambika
(goddess) and, at life’s end, by the Devi’s
grace, that one will obtain
inexhaustible [happiness of] heaven.”
[463]

Sankara said, “Doing himsa-dharma, one
does not obtain happiness of heaven.
Even if, somehow, doing ‘Vaisnavi puja’,
one obtains it, then also, the fear of torture
is not removed.

‘What moment that fate befalls me’, such
anxiety is not removed from mind.
On the way [to heaven], the balis pounce

on him and wring his neck. [464]
And at the end of it all, he has the
downward fall and lands up in terrible
hell.

The messengers of death then make him
suffer torture;
of those [miseries], oh! what will I tellⁱⁱⁱ.”
Madhava said, “Bali-Visvadeva – it is the
dharma (rule) laid down for the
grihasthas.

The five-yajnas (sacrifices) one must
regularly perform; this is prescribed by
sastras. [465]

These five-debts (panca-rina), the one
who does not repay [through the
performance of prescribed rituals], there is
not a greater sinner than that one.

Forsaking the rites (karma) prescribed by
the Vedas, one goes to hell after death.”

Sankara said, “The one, who hath taken
Eka-Sarana in Lord Krishna, in body
(kaya), mind (mana) and speech (vakya)
and with unshakeable resolution, adoring
Krishna’s Feet, [466]

that one is subject to none, hath no debts
to repay and, in the end, effortlessly
attains to the happy Visnu-loka.”

Madhava said, “All those matters pertain
only to those persons who are inclined
towards nivritti (release). They should
renounce their householder’s life and,
subduing their senses, take the company
of the viraktas (the renunciants). [467]

They should eat whatever they get,
without doing any labor, and should, for
the sake of purifying their hearts, travel to
tirthas, undergoing many a hardship.

Only then, in a later birth, obtaining the
holy-association (sat-sanga) and doing
Hari-Bhakti, some skillful ones taking
great care may obtain liberation. [468]

But all those people who are with lust,
anger and avarice and who are greatly
attached to their wives and sons,
forsaking bali-visvadeva and karmas and
dharmas, they will proceed to their

doom.”

Sankaradeva said, “If they take to the path, there is redemption even for the materialists.

Ekanta-Sarana is *everybody's* dharma, so says the Lord of the Yadus^{iv}. [469]
‘Forsaking *all* dharmas, the one who takes Eka-Sarana (sole-refuge) in Me alone’, at the end of the Gita, the Son of Nanda Himself tells Arjuna,
‘I save that one from all sin, let him merely resolve [on Me]^v.

I have told you the essence of it all; do not harbor even an iota of doubt over this.’
[470]

How Nama-Dharma is the supreme antidote, listen steadying thy mind. In the Padma Purana, Rudra Deva himself says to Parvati,
“A man worshiping only one God; be he the enjoyer of all material comforts, be he antagonistic to his own people or be he the one who even warms up water –
[471]

he does not have even an iota of dispassion (vairagya) nor does he ever abide by any dharma.
But still, singing the Name *only once*, the state which that one obtains, happily; it is not obtained even by those practicing all dharmas, this I have told you, currently.

Know, O Parvati, that Nama-Dharma is the Supreme Religion above all^{vi}.” [472]
Madhava said, “The devas (gods), if they do not receive puja, cause troubles for men.

On finding that people have turned Eka-Saraniya they deprive them of their wealth and properties.

The person’s money and man-power, all are depleted and nothing remains for him. He does not have anything even to eat and sorrow engulfs his mind.” [473]

Sankara said, “The Visnu-Bhaktas count these ‘troubles’ for nothing.

Knowing the 'joys' of samsara to be transitory (nasvara), they never regret over anything.

Moreover, the devas cannot create any hurdles if one adores **Krishna Deva**. They always respect the persons endowed with devotion, the devatas. [474]

The servants of Hari do not adore any other deity apart from Isvara (God). On taking Sarana (sole-refuge) in Krishna, they do not worship other gods, even at the cost of their lives."

Madhava said, "But all the devatas (gods) are the manifestations of Isvara only. Therefore, worshiping the devatas, no fault accrues. [475]

It is laid down in the sastras that all the devatas constitute the body of Isvara [and therefore], considering them to be parts of the Lord's virat-murti (cosmic body), one should do worship to them. Know that Surya has to be worshiped as the Lord's eye and Candra as His mind; Similarly, one should worship Vayu as His ear and the fire-god as His mouth, [476] the Asvins as His nose and Varuna as the tongue.

And the king of the devas, Vasava, will be worshiped knowing him to be Isvara's arms."

Hearing this, Sankaradeva laughed and said,

"Listen to its answer, Madhava! such a plight is only of those who engage in the bhakti of karma-yoga. [477] But the one who does Bhagavati Bhakti, listen to the procedure determined for him.

*One Krishna only, one worships,
firmly resolving in mind^{vii}.*

When Hari is [thus] worshiped, the devatas also obtain great satisfaction. Knowing this fact only, all the Mahantas (great saints) worship only Krishna. [478] On worshiping Krishna, all devatas derive

satisfaction in mind,
just as, on watering the root of a tree,
all its branches and sub-branches are
nourished^{viii}.

Just as a tree does not obtain any
nourishment when water is poured on its
branches or flowers or leaves,
so also, know that, worshiping separately,
the devas are not satisfied^{ix}. [479]

Take the case of a hungry man whose
heart is craving for food.

If now that person wears rich garments
and decorates his exterior with ornaments
and flowers and cosmetics;
even after such decoration with clothes
and ornaments, there is no happiness for
his indriyas (senses).

As long as he does not take his meal,
there is no satisfying his prana (vital air).
[480]

On eating food, all are satisfied
(nourished) -
vital air, mind, the senses.

In that very manner, know that on
worshiping Hari,
all devas are satisfied, always.”

Listen, all people, to this tale exquisite,
O sabhasadas! uninterruptedly,
Madhava and Sankara are acting out this
drama for the purpose of saving lives
(jivas). [481]

Madhava retains the path of pravritti
(action; subsistence) [while] Sankara
demolishes it.

They speak in slokas [that] both of them
understand, [even as] all the people look
on.

Madhava recites six, seven slokas
in speed, terrific;
quoting only one sloka, Srimanta Sankara
takes away all his logic. [482]

In this manner, after both of them had
battled with slokas for an entire prahara^x,
Madhava could not succeed in debate. He
at last became silent, unable to argue any
more.

Addressing him again, Sankara said,
“Listen to this Supreme Fact,
There is no other, no other Supreme God
[483]

apart from the Son of Devaki,
and apart from **His Name**, there is no
other
religion, this I tell you certainly^{xi}.”
Hearing this, Madhava’s heart melted and
his mind was filled with joy.
Obtaining this verdict, Madhava, in great
joy, extremely satisfied in mind,
immediately fell down at Sankaradeva’s
Feet and saluted him with deep reverence.
[484]

Sankara asked, “Why do you salute, tell
the reason behind this.”

Madhava once again began to speak in
voice choked with emotion.

His whole body horripilates and, in his
mind, there is great satisfaction.

Prostrating before Sankaradeva and
joining together both his hands in prayer,
he began to speak, [485]

“Starting with false-pride, all other modes
of
ignorance that existed,
all doubts and hesitancies and all evil-
desires of countless births;
through Thy words, all are dispelled; I
have become of extremely doubtless
mind.

Therefore, from today, O Kripamaya
(Favorable One)! I have entered into the
shelter of Thy Feet^{xii}.” [486]

Seeing this attitude of Madhava, Sankara
was overjoyed.

Drawing forth the logic of many other
scriptures, He explained to him their
meaning at great length.

Afterwards, **Madhavadeva**, rising and
saluting Sankaradeva,
left for home with joyful mind, along with
Ramadasa. [487]

Sankara and Madhava have sported for
the sake of saving the jivas.

I, Ramananda^{xiii} of inferior intellect, have
rendered it into verse, knowingly or
unknowingly.
In the form of **Sankara** has come Isvara,
for redeeming the embodied lives;
holding His path, utter 'Hari Hari',
O Good People, continually. [488]

i These are the qualities appertaining *only* to God (Hari).

ii The dictionary meaning of the term 'vamanaya' is 'opposed to the Vedas, heretical' (*Hemkosha, Assamese to English Dictionary*).

Philosophically, these lines are highly significant. While space does not permit us to enter into a detailed discussion (touching upon the nature of Godhead in the Vedanta, for instance), we may simply state that they may also account for why in Sankaradeva's theological system, there is no worship of any female element. Madhavadeva also says in his Nama-Ghosa, 'Whatever there may be, *maya and the rest*, all the world are gross. Only **Krishna** is the Spirit, the Pure Consciousness. How bewitched and deluded are the people who leave aside Krishna the Consciousness and die worshipping the gross.' [[Nama-Ghosa](#), 47]

iii Sankaradeva's magnanimous debating style is reflected here. He is willing to give a fair chance to his opponent. In this case, he is prepared to come down to the ideological level of Madhavadeva and then point out the flaw in his argument. He demonstrates how animal-sacrifice is pointless *even from the orthodox point of view*.

iv Some orthodox quarters even within Assam Vaisnavism seek to argue that Eka-Sarana implying the complete relinquishment of all dharmas including even the nitya-naimittikas is only for the renunciant who has detached himself from family, etc. And consequently, these proponents, sometimes even misinterpreting certain lines from the scriptures of canonical authority in Sankaradeva's system, go on to advocate two sets of standards, one for the 'detached' (virakta) and the other for the 'non-detached' (a-virakta) ! That this kind of a dichotomy with regard to Eka-Sarana (Sole-Refuge) is not only untenable but also in direct opposition to Lord Krishna's Teachings, is conclusively proved in these lines uttered by Sankaradeva,

"Ekanta-Sarana is *everybody's* dharma,
so says the Lord of the Yadus"

"Gitara antata | *kanta Arjunata*";

Sankaradeva is alerting us all to the fact that the receptor of the Lord's message of Eka-Sarana in the **Gita** is *Arjuna* who is neither renunciant nor recluse, but the ordinary, struggling individual who feels the burden and mystery of the world. In the **Bhagavata** also, the Lord instructs **Uddhava** to give the teaching of Eka-Sarana to all, including the women and the sudras [ref:- Bhagavata, Canto XI, Sankaradeva]

Therefore, there can be no two sets of standards in Eka-Sarana. This extract from the carita serves to reinforce this point excellently.

Madhavadeva also, in the *Nama-Ghosa*, has written that rituals like nitya-naimittikas are performed only by those whose minds have not been imbued with love for the narration of the Lord's Name and Glories. For the one whose mind is resolved on the Lord's Name and Glory – the Eka-Saraniya – such nitya-naimittikas are removed from the time of Sarana (initiation) onwards. For a discussion on this, see <http://eka-sarana.blogspot.com/>

v This has reference to the Bhagavad Gita, 18.66, the Supreme Sloka of the Gita:-

*sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
mokshayisyami ma sucah*

vi This has reference to the Padma-Purana (Uttara Khanda?)

vii This again is of immense importance. In Sankaradeva's system, God is not worshiped through finite (*paricchinna*) determinations, but rather, God is worshiped as God alone. Certain (disguised) proponents of the doctrine of activism (karma) are often found arguing that as the demi-gods are the manifestations of God, no harm would be done if they are so worshiped (i.e. considering them to be parts of God). That such a stand is totally contrary to the procedure laid down for Bhagavati Bhakti is made unambiguously clear in these lines of the carita passage.

viii This was the clincher.

ix This has reference to the Bhagavata, 4th Skandha, 31st Adhyaya:-

*yathaa tarormula niseceanena tripyanti tatskandhabhujopasaakhaa
praanopahaaraasca yathendriyaanaam tathaiva sarvaarhanam acyutejyaa*

x One prahara=about 4 hours.

xi This was the verdict (siddhanta).

xii These lines of Madhava may be compared with the utterance of Arjuna, at the conclusion of the Lord's Teaching in the **Bhagavad Gita**:-

“Trouble and ignorance are gone! the Light
Hath come unto me, by Thy favour, Lord!
Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!
According to Thy word, so will I do!”

[The Bhagavad-Gita, Conclusion of the 18th Chapter, tr. by Edwin Arnold,
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/gita/bg18.htm>]

xiii Ramananda Dvija, the writer (caritakara) of this carita. According to Dr. Maheswar Neog, he wrote the carita in the early part of the latter half of the 17th century. See Neog, *Early History of the Neo Vaishnavite Faith and Movement in Assam : Sankaradeva and His Times*.

[Although we have tried our best to faithfully adhere to the original, we admit that it is impossible to convey the spirit of the original in the case of writings of this stature. As such, our translation is most imperfect and we seek forgiveness from all, including the author, for any lapse on our part – *translator*]

[For a brief background, see http://www.atributetosankaradeva.org/Madhava_guru_bio_3.htm;
for the HTML page (with transliteration), click [here](#)]

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