

# Dvaita Philosophy

Course on Classical Indian & Western Philosophy: Unit 1 & 2

Madhva

Bheda

Dvaita

✓ Jam Kava - Abheda

✓ Ramanujan - Aparthok Siddhi

Dvaita : Rejection of nirguṇa brahmaṇ and māya, bheda and sāksi, bhakti.



# Realist

Dvaita is one of the **living systems of Vedantic thought in India**, having its own well-defined community of followers, **religious institutions and extensive philosophical literature in Sanskrit**, and a substantial body of **devotional literature in Kannada**. Dvaita system has been **the chief rival in thought to the Advaita of Sankara**, in the history of Indian Philosophy.

It stood up for **realism in Indian thought against all forces of idealism and acosmism**. The followers of **Madhva**, especially **Jayatirtha** and **Vyasatirtha**, present the **logical skill and depth of acute dialectic thinking almost unrivalled in the whole range of Indian thought**.

Madhva derives his philosophical **tenets** from the **three authoritative prasthanas (the upanisads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahma sutras)**, from the **puranas and Mahabharata**. The quintessence of Madhva's philosophy is that **Visnu (Hari) is the supreme God, the world is real and the difference between God and soul does actually exist**.

All the living beings are **dependent upon Visnu**, and they are **divided into higher and lower classes**; **liberation consists in the enjoyment of bliss** that is **inherent in oneself**; pure devotion is the means of attaining it.



## **MADHVACARYA: LIFE AND WORKS**

Madhvacarya of 12th Century AD is the founder of the Dvaita Vedanta. Traditionally he is also known as Anandatirtha and Purnaprajna. His birthplace is said to be the village of Pajaka near Udupi in Karnataka. Madhva proclaims himself as the third incarnation of Vayu after Hanuman and Bhima. Madhva was a many-sided personality. He had a stupendous memory and he was a splendid debater.

Although he accepted Sannyasa at the hands of Acyutapreksacarya, a renowned Advaita teacher he opposed sankara's monistic tenets and interpretations. He was convinced that the sacred texts don't propagate the mayavada, but the realistic theism.



Madhvacarya installed the idol of Lord Krsna at Udupi which has become a centre of the Dvaita Vedanta with the tradition of ashtamaths, with his eight disciples. Madhva is a prolific writer in Sanskrit both in prose and in verse. He quotes profusely from Vedic, Buddhist, Jaina and other systems of philosophy and religion of India. **In short he was scholar, saint, philosopher and mystic. The works of Madhva are thirty-seven in number.**

Some of his major works are his commentaries on **Prasthanatraya** (Gita, Brahmasutra and Upanishads), **commentaries on Vedas, Epics and puranas, and his Ten prakarnas (other writings)**. In his tradition, there have been commentaries (tikkas) on Madhva's works written by **Jayatirtha and Vyasatirtha**.



## Madhavacharya: Dvaitvada

2 Reality

Dvaita also known as **Bheda-vada**, **Tattva-vada** and **Bimba-pratibimba-vada** is a school of Vedanta founded by **Shri Madhvacharya**.

Dvaita stresses a **strict distinction between God—the Supreme-Soul and the individual souls jivatma**. According to Madhvacharya, the **individual souls of beings are not “created” by God but do, nonetheless, depend on Him for their existence**.

Dvaita Vedanta (**dualistic conclusions of the Vedas**) espouses **dualism by theorizing the existence of two separate realities**. Madhavacharya was the **champion of unqualified dualism**.

Independent god  
↓  
Jivatma → not created by god



Mani  
↑

The first and the more important reality is that of **Vishnu or Brahman**. Vishnu is the **supreme Self, God, the absolute truth of the universe, the independent reality**. The second reality is that of **dependent but equally real universe that exists with its own separate essence**. Everything that is **composed of the second reality, such as individual soul (Jiva), matter, etc. exists with their own separate reality**.

The **distinguishing factor of this philosophy as opposed to Advaita Vedanta (monistic conclusion of Vedas)** is that God **takes on a personal role** and is seen as a real eternal entity that **governs and controls the universe**.

**Dvaita Vedanta is not similar to Western dualism which posits the existence of two independent realities or principles**. Madhva's Dualism also **acknowledges two principles**; however, it **holds one of them (the sentient) as being rigorously and eternally dependent on the other (Vishnu/Brahman)**.



Because the existence of individuals is grounded in the divine, they are depicted as reflections, images or even shadows of the divine, but never in any way identical with the divine. Liberation therefore is described as the realization that all finite reality is essentially dependent on the supreme.

Brahman  
Nari



The cardinal doctrines of Madhvacharya Dvaita Vedanta have been summed up as:

1. In all respects Lord Vishnu alone is supreme and the highest;
2. This entire universe is truly and ultimately real;
3. The five-fold difference is fundamental;
4. The manifold embodied souls are all dependent on Lord Vishnu;
5. Liberation is enjoining the bliss befitting to one's original form;
6. The means to secure Liberation is pure devotion to Lord Vishnu;
7. Lord Vishnu alone is made known by the entire mass of scriptures.
8. The embodied souls are inherently graded as higher and lower (mainly threefold);
9. The means of valid knowledge are only three, viz., perception, inference and verbal testimony;



## Ontology

① Reality → Material  
② Independence → God/Mani

Madhva's ontology is characterized by **two principal ideas of being - reality and independence**. Reality is related to this material world and souls; while independence is characteristic of the Lord alone.

Shankara says that the real must necessarily be eternal. On the other hand, the **Buddhists affirm that it has to be necessarily momentary (kshanika)**. The Madhva conception of **Reality is in between these two concepts**. Existence, then is a test of reality.

For him, **satyam may be the existence at some place and time**, and not necessarily for all time and throughout space. **Actual existence at some time and place is sufficient to distinguish the real from the unreal**. The second test of reality is "practical efficiency".

Samkara → Eternal is True

Madhva → Existence is True.



✓ Unlike the classical definition of Dualism by Samkhya philosophy — “a theory which admits two independent and mutually irreducible substances” -, the Dualism of **Madhva**, while admitting two mutually irreducible principles as constituting Reality as a whole, regards only one of them, viz. God, as the One and only independent principle (svatantra) and the other, viz. all finite reality comprising the prakriti, purushas, kala, karma, svabhava, etc, as dependent (paratantra).

This concept of two orders of reality (**tattvas**), viz. **svatantra** and **paratantra**, is the key note of Madhva's philosophy.



→ Mani / D

Sri Madhva's philosophy is realistic, pluralistic and theistic in its **Character**. In the analysis of the philosophical categories he trails for the unique path. He **does not classify reality into seven categories as the Nyaya School**; nor into two as the Samkhya, nor reduce all categories to one Brahma as the Advaitins. He classifies reality broadly into two categories-

A. Tattva or reality is of two categories:

- 1) Svatantra or independent (Lord Vishnu alone)
- 2) Paratantra or dependent

B. Paratantra is of two kinds:

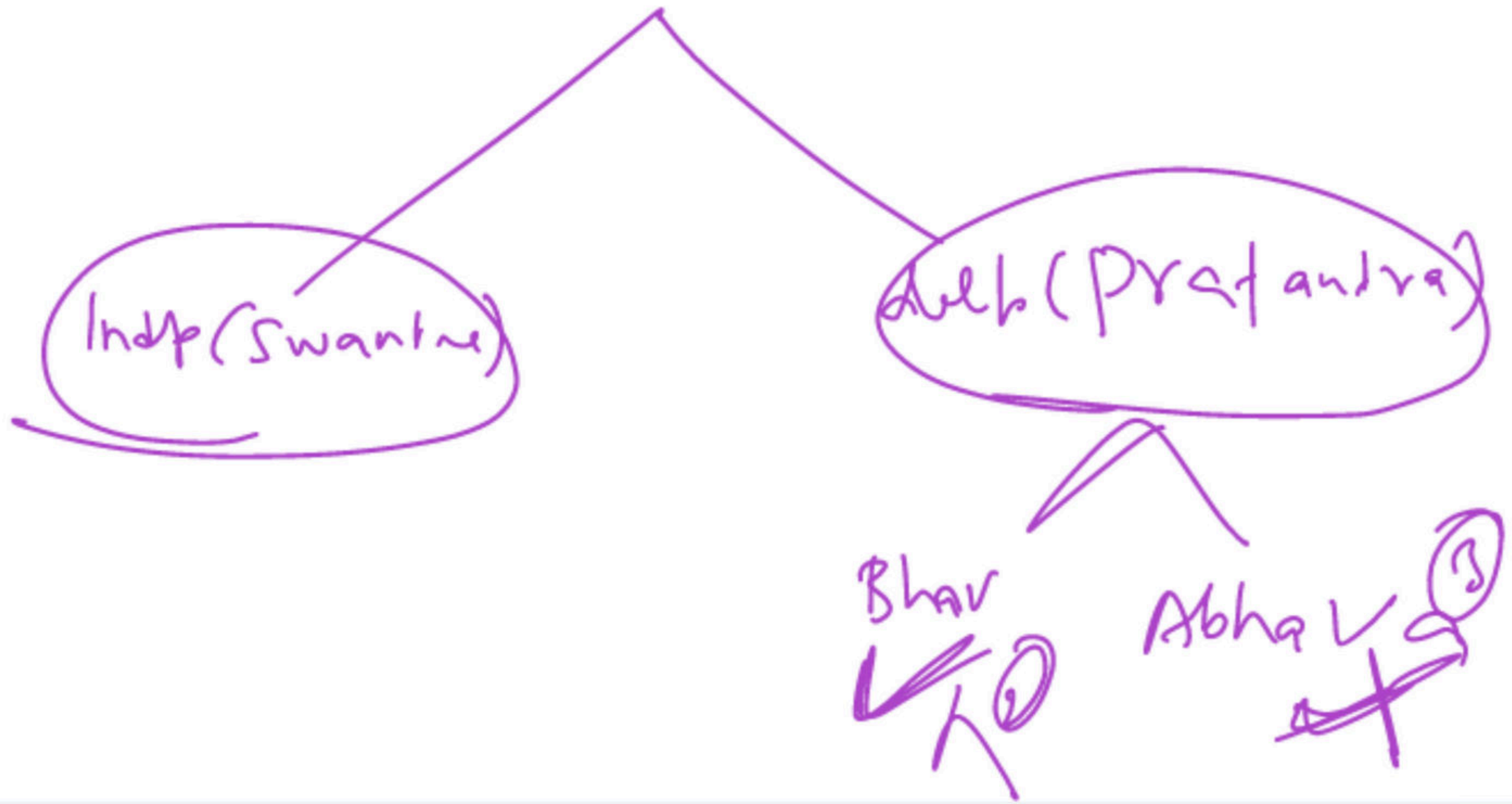
- 1) Bhava or existent
- 2) Abhava or non-existent: (The three of abhava are: prag-abhava or anterior, pradhvamsha bhava or posterior, and sadabhava or absolute negation).

C. Bhava or existent entities are of two broad types:

- 1) Cetana or conscious
- 2) Acetana or not conscious



Tattva / Reality



# The Concept of Visheshas

→ Particular.

i. A special feature of Madhva's philosophy is the category of Vishesha, which he introduces to explain the appearance of bheda, where there is none. The category distinguishes a quality from a substance and apart from the whole. Between a substance and its quality or between a whole and its parts there is no difference.

The difference appears on account of Vishesha. We do not perceive any difference between the cloth and its whiteness, but we perceive the vishesha (particularity) of the cloth. In the case of God, the principle of vishesha is employed to reconcile his unity with the plurality of his qualities and powers, and the plurality of His divine body, divine dress, divine abode, and the like.

ii. The concept of vishesha is used to accommodate the two conflicting types of texts in the Upanishads - those which speak of Brahman as nirvishesha and the savishesha texts by which Madhvacharya tries to reconcile the concept of monism with that of plurality.



# Madhva's Doctrine of "Difference" Panchvidbheda

According to Madhvacharya, the **uniqueness of a particular be it a person or thing, is to be understood in terms of difference from all else.** Difference is not merely a component part of a reality, related from outside, but constitutes the very essence (dharma-svarupa) of an object.

There are three types of differences:

1. **sajatiya** or difference of things of same category
2. **vijatiya** or difference of things of different categories.
3. **svagata** or internal distinctions within an organic whole (this type is not admitted by Madhva in its absolute sense).

Madhvacharya insists on five **absolute and eternal distinctions between Brahman (Ishvara), jiva and jada, or the inanimate world.**

Samkara → Jiva → Brahman

Ramanuja → Svayam  
Heterogeneous  
Heterogeneous



He advocates the reality of fivefold difference known as Panchvidbheda. This difference is real and beginning-less. If it had the origin it would have perished, But it does not perish, not is it imagined through illusion. If it had been imagined it would have terminated but it does not terminate. These are:

1. God and soul difference God

Jiv

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ <u>Soul</u> God is all-pervasive and is beyond <u>bondage</u> and <u>liberation</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ Soul is atomic and is subject to bondage and liberation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ God is omniscient and omnipotent. God is the <u>object of worship</u> and is full of <u>grace</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ Power and knowledge of soul are <u>limited</u>. Soul is <u>worshipper</u> and seeks God's grace.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ Soul is devoid of such mighty powers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ God is the object of knowledge for <u>soul</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ <u>Soul is known by God</u>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ God is the <u>target</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ <u>Soul is the arrow</u>.</li> </ul>

## 2. God and matter difference God

↓ <del>Matter</del> God is independent of matter.	↓ Matter is dependent on God.
↓ God is beyond all the three gunas such as sattva, rajas and tamas.	↓ Matter has all the three qualities. <u>SRT</u>
↓ God is pure consciousness and bliss.	↓ Matter is neither conscious nor blissful.
↓ God is the efficient cause of this world.	↓ Matter is the material cause of this world.
↓ Lakshi is subservient to God.	↓ Matter is subservient to Lakshi.

Nitya Mukta.



### 3. Soul and matter difference

Jiva

Atit

<p>↓ <del>Soul matter</del> Soul is <u>conscious</u> and <u>subject to pleasure and pain.</u></p>	<p>↓ Matter is unconscious and does not experience <u>pleasure and pain.</u></p>
<p>↓ Soul falls <u>in bondage and seeks liberation.</u> It is associated with the gross and subtle material bodies during creation. Soul identifies itself with <u>matter due to ignorance</u> and is <u>essentially different</u> from it.</p>	<p>↓ Matter has nothing to do with bondage and liberation.</p>



#### 4. Soul and soul difference

a. The philosophy of pure difference of Madhavacharya differentiates between souls.  
**Souls possess two types of differences:**

1. **Extrinsic difference.** It refers to the difference in gross and subtle bodies of different souls which influence the souls in bondage, but are withered away after liberation.

2. **Intrinsic difference.** It refers to the differences with regard to knowledge, power and bliss. **Different souls possess different degrees of knowledge, power and bliss. Hence, are different in their intrinsic connotation.** Since these intrinsic are eternal essence of soul, they remain in the soul, even in the state of liberation. Hence, the degree of bliss in the state of liberation is different for different souls, thereby accepting not only quantitative difference but also qualitative difference. In that sense, Madhavacharya is the only Indian thinker to differentiate between the liberated souls.

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## 5. Matter and matter difference

Acit

a. Different matters are also different from each other. Madhavacharya accepts satkaryavada theory of causation and held that different matters are direct effects of prakriti. The matter differs qualitatively due to mixture of the three gunas in different proportions.

Samtara

Ramanuja

Samanya

B.V.

BP

PT

Actual Trans

Pure diff



## Doctrine of Atman Essence of Selfhood

The jivas are the reflected counterparts (pratibimba-amsha) of Vishnu. The bodies of the jivas, eternally present in Vaikuntha are transcendental. Hence, they are called unconditioned-reflected counterparts. The bodies of, the jivas of the material world are material; therefore, they are called conditioned-reflected counterparts.

A question then arises: "What functions like a mirror (upadhi) in the bimbapratibimba-vada? Verily, without a mirror there cannot be any reflection. If the jiva is a reflection of Brahman there must be something to act the role of the mirror. What is that upadhi? Madhvacharya explains that the svarupa or the inherent nature of the jiva itself functions as the upadhi.

The state of the souls in moksha — they are not formless beings or colorless points but atomic individuals with their own specific forms and characteristics. They have spiritual bodies of their own with appropriate organs, and have names and forms which are beyond the knowledge of those still in bondage.

Radhit



## **BONDAGE AND LIBERATION**

Vallabhe

Madhva **accepts the reality of human misery and bondage**. Maya causes the individual to be unaware of the relationship of the soul with God. Ultimately it is God who makes maya cause bondage. Hence, he alone brings **liberation through his grace although there is self-effort on the part of the soul**.

The devotee, on his part, must prove himself worthy of it **by good works (karma), acquisition of right knowledge (Jnana-yoga) and single-minded devotion (bhaktiyoga)**. The **adikarins should work out his salvation by an ascetical striving – through the hearing of the scriptures (sravana), reflection (manana) and contemplation (nidithyasana)** under the guidance of a guru.

This will lead the person to **bimbopasana**, and further to the **immediate cognition (aparoksa-Jnana) of Visnu, and to mukti**.



In dvaita Vedanta understanding, **liberation is achieved through the knowledge of the greatness of God. Liberation is possible by devotion to God by sravana, manana and nididhyasana.**

Through **bhakti** combined with **meditation** one can dispose oneself to the **experience of God. Visnu's favour and grace (prasada) a human being** can be liberated from them and attain moksa or liberation.

Hence, **finally it is God's grace that removes maya and liberates the soul. Liberation consists in the realization of soul's innate bliss. Then according to his Yogyaata he will attain bliss and occupy a place reserved for him in the galaxy of the elect.** He will not be absorbed in the Absolute to the extent of losing his self-identity. And yet he will be **united with the Lord in knowledge and love, and with other emancipated Jivas in a family of intimacy.**



Madhva's philosophy is one of **dualism**. The thinkers of **Dvaita School** have made many **outstanding contributions to the problems of Philosophy**. The views propounded by Madhva on the nature of **Saksi, Visesa, Bheda, substance and attributes**, the universal, space and time are very much ahead of his times and remarkably suggestive.

The **devotional movement of the Haridasas of Karnataka** was a **spontaneous expression of Madhva's religious** thought in the regional language of the majority of its adherents and its appeal reached the common people.

Dvaita literature is very extensive; much of it still remains unpublished and unexplored. **Plurality of the reals is the basic doctrine of dvaita. According to Madhva, difference is the very nature of things.** He identifies five eternal levels of difference: Difference between God and the individual soul, God and matter, one individual soul and another, individual soul and matter, and one material thing and another.

He looks upon the world as real. For Dvaita God is the **highest Being, the most perfect Being, the only free Being, the ultimate goal and destiny of humans**; He is the giver of salvation / liberation through grace (**prasada**). The **path of bondage and liberation is also realistic.**





