

" S T A T E M E N T "

The popularity, enjoyed by the Puṣṭimārgīya Vaiṣṇavism in Gujarat and other parts of Western India, naturally attracts the attention of a student to attempt a complete study of the doctrines of this particular school of the Vedānta. Vallabha is however very brief in his writing, to the extent that it is difficult to understand his works without the help of a commentary. His son Viṭṭhalanātha, though a man of genius and ability, appears to have been concerned with the propagation of the Sampradāya more than a thorough explanation of the theories propounded by his father. Looking to the long line of the Gosvāmīs who followed them, one can see that Puruṣottama was the most prolific writer in the school. He gave us voluminous works in a fairly large number and essayed to explain the fundamentals of the philosophy of his school. After Puruṣottama many works, critical and explanatory, were written by the followers of the school, but before him, the Ācāryas of the Sampradāya like Gokulanātha and Harirāya were more or less concerned with the teaching and propagation of the path of devotion to the masses. Thus Puruṣottama occupies a unique place in the history of the Sampradāya. If one studies the works of Puruṣottama, then alone one can fully understand the

Suddhādvaita. If again some light is thrown on the life and times of Puruṣottama, it will be very helpful from the point of view of the history of the Sampradāya as a whole. Hence the thesis, "Puruṣottamjī- A Study."

To a student of history, mediaeval India presents a very hazy picture full of thousand figures. There was a large number of saints and teachers and paṇḍitās belonging to various schools of thought, some established their own schools also. There were also many Princes and Kings. A halo of myths and legends was woven round the names of great teachers and scholars. This being the position, it is very difficult to give an exact account of the life of any teacher. Puruṣottama is no exception to this. Puruṣottama's life is described by Shri. M.T. Telivale in an article in the Puṣṭibhaktisudhā. Vol.V.No.3 and by Shri. H.O. Shastri in his Hindi Introduction to the Avatāravādāvalī and in a Gujarati work, 'Puruṣottamjī Mahārājanun caritra'. I examined these sources in the light of whatever other information I could gather from various other sources and I have tried to give as much information as possible, with a view to be as near to the truth as I could. I have also recorded as many traditions as I came to know.

Another difficulty was in securing his works. Thanks

however, to the help and guidance of my teacher Prof. G.H. Bhatt and the co-operation of His Holiness Shri.Vrajratnalalji maharaj and Shri. C.H.Shastrī of Surat, that I could secure most of his works. Puruṣottama is said to have written so much that one can never be definite as to the exact number of works, written by him. The lists given by Shri.Telivale and Shri. H.O.Shastrī may or may not be conclusive. Some of the works, listed there, could not be found by me. Some works are again said to have been fathered upon others by himself. I had therefore to satisfy myself with as many as works as I could get. Some of them had to be examined from the point of view of authorship also. I had also to bear in mind the traditional view-point regarding some of them. I should also make it clear that I did not examine the works from the textual point of view. As Puruṣottama is a recent author, the question of inter^lpolations and all that does not arise to a very great extent.

I studied the works of Puruṣottama from three points of view as follows:-

As I found Puruṣottama to be a very good argumentator in the Sampradāya, I tried to study his Vādepāddhati. His method

of carefully analysing the theories of his own school, comparing them with those of other schools and criticising the latter, is worthy of a critical study.

Secondly Puruṣottama is mainly an interpreter. It is therefore necessary to see how he interpreted the works, he has commented upon. The Ācāryas of various schools of the Vedānta raised their systems of thought on the basis of the Prasthānas viz. the Śrutis, the Gītā, the Brahmasūtras and the Bhāgavata Purāṇas, the last being included in the list by Vallabha. It is thus a topic of study as to how the Ācāryas have interpreted the Prasthānas. In the Thesis I have tried to examine some of the interpretation of Vallabha in the light of what Puruṣottama has said with regard to them. Here ofcourse I have mainly discussed the interpretations of the Śrutis and the Sūtras.

Thirdly Puruṣottama is a very capable exponent of the Śuddhādvaita system of philosophy. Vallabha's theories have been explained in various works. Thus for instance Prin. S. N. Dasgupta has devoted one chapter to it in his 'History of Indian Philosophy' Vol. IV. In Gujarati, perhaps the best explanation of the Śuddhādvaita theories is given by Prof. M. G. Shastri in his 'Śuddhādvaita-Siddhānta-Pradīpa'. I have however followed

Puruṣottama's exposition of the 'Suddhādvaita and have tried to show where his analysis leads us, after comparing the doctrines of this school with those of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja and others also whenever necessary.

At the end I have tried to give an evaluation of Puruṣottama, especially his place in the Sampradāya and in the history of Indian thought. What did Puruṣottama think of the conditions prevailing in the Sampradāya at that time? What did he do for it? How was he understood and appreciated by others? How could he influence the Sampradāya? All these questions, I have tried to answer on the basis of his works and the hearsays about him.

The life and works of Puruṣottama have not been studied so far, and thus the Thesis contains my humble contribution to the knowledge of Sanskrit Literature and Philosophy.