

КУЛЬТУРА И РЕЛИГИЯ

Notes on the Mādhvas' Pilgrimage

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Գրառումներ մադհվաների ուխտագնացության վերաբերյալ

Ղարիբյան Վահե Կ.

Ասպիրանտ, Արևելագիտության ինստիտուտ, Հայ-Ռուսական (Սլավոնական) համալսարան (Երևան, ՀՀ)

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Ամփոփագիր. Հանդիսանալով վայշնավական ավանդույթի անբաժանելի մաս՝ ուխտագնացությունը, կարևոր դեր ունի վայշնավների կրոնական կյանքում, այդ թվում նաև *մադհվաների* համար: *Մադհվաները* հինդուիստական բրահմանական համայնքներ են, ովքեր հետևում են Մադհվաչարայի Դվաիտա Վեդանտա դպրոցին (նաև հայտնի է որպես Տատվավադա): Նրանց կրոնական կյանքում ուխտագնացությունը նշանավորվում է որպես առանցքային հոգևոր պրակտիկա, որին հետևում են բոլոր *մադհվաները* անկախ իրենց կրոնական աստիճանից և կարգավիճակից: Մեծ կրոնական տոների ժամանակ առավելապես ընդգծվում է ուխտագնացության նշանակությունը, քանի որ դրանք բացառիկ հնարավորություն են *մադհվաների* և հինդուիզմի մյուս հետևորդների համար այցելել սուրբ վայրեր, ձեռք բերել նոր հոգևոր գիտելիքներ, կատարել սահմանված ծեսերը և շփվել հոգևոր դասի հետ: Պարայա ծիսակատարությունից առաջ *սվամիները* (*մադհվաների* կրոնական առաջնորդները) կատարում են ուխտագնացություն այնպիսի սուրբ վայրեր, ինչպիսիք են Դվարական, Մաթուրա-Վրինդավանը, Հարիդվարը, Ռիշիկեշը, Բադրինաթը, Տիրուպատին և այլն: *Մադհվա* բրահմանները իրենց կրոնական ծառայությունը և երկրպագությունը կատարում են տարբեր հինդուիստական տաճարներում, որոնցից ամենհայտնին Ուդուպիի Շրի Կրիշնայի տաճարն է: *Մադհվաների* կրոնական ավանդույթում ձևակերպված ուխտագնացության մշակույթը ժամանակի ընթացում դարձել է վայշնավական ավանդույթի նշանակալի բաղկացուցիչներից մեկը: Այս աշխատանքում վերլուծվում է ուխտագնացության դերը և նշանակությունը *մադհվաների* ավանդույթում:

Հանգուցաբառեր՝ վայշնավականություն, մադհվաներ, ուխտագնացություն, Ուդուպի, Շրի Կրիշնայի տաճար, պուջա:

Заметки о паломничестве мадхвов

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Аннотация: Будучи важным элементом традиции вайшнавизма, паломничество является неотъемлемой частью религиозной жизни вайшнавов и одним из важнейших сегментов их религиозной практики. Для *мадхвов*, общин индуистских браминов-последователей школы *Двайта Веданты* (также известной как Таттвавада) Мадхвачарьи, важность паломничества подчеркивается как писаниями, так и устной религиозной традицией. Религиозные праздники предполагают различные виды паломничества, каждое из которых имеет свои особенности. Так, например, перед праздником *Парьяя, свами* (религиозные лидеры) *мадхвов* посещают такие святые места, как Дварака, Матхура-Вриндаван, Харидвар, Ришикеш, Бадринатх, Тирупати и др. Помимо исполнения соответствующих ритуалов как способ получения духовных знаний, паломники используют возможность встретиться с известными духовными учителями и аскетами. В рамках паломничества *мадхва-брамины* завершают ритуальную часть в различных индуистских храмах (храм Шри Кришны в Удупи является одним из наиболее популярным). Особый формат паломничества, возникший в рамках религиозной традиции *мадхвов*, стал важной частью вайшнавизма в целом. В данной работе анализируются ниша и роль паломничества в традиции *мадхвов*, его особенности и специфические черты в современных сообществах.

Ключевые слова: вайшнавизм, мадхвы, паломничество, Удупи, храм Шри Кришны, пуджа.

The role of *pilgrimage* (Sanskrit: तीर्थयात्रा, *tīrtha-yātrā*) is very significant in all the Hindu communities, and in the communities of the *Mādhvas* in particular. The *Mādhvas*, a specific community of the Hindu brahmins, follow the

Dvaita Vedanta school (also known as Tattvavāda) of Madhvacharya [5]. The religious center of *Mādhvas* is Udupi, where Astha Mathas of Udupi (eight monastery centers) are located. The religious

traditions and spiritual practices of the Mādhvas constitute an important part of Vaishnavism in general.

For the Mādhvas, pilgrimage is an essential element of the religious life. Through the whole history of the community, the Mādhva spiritual leaders have made pilgrimages to various holy centers of India.

The biography of Sri Madhvacharya “Madhva Vijaya” (“The story of the victory of Madhva”) written by Sri Narayana Panditacharya, the son of Trivikrama Panditacharya (a direct disciple of Madhvacharya), tells about Acharya's pilgrimage to Badrinath [5, p. 612].

The tradition has preserved information about pilgrimages of some prominent Madhva leaders, such as Padmanabha Tirtha, Vadiraja Tirtha, Ragavendra Tirtha, to various shrines and temples of India. The Tirtha Prabhandha, one of the main Sanskrit works by the 16th century Dvaita philosopher and saint Sri Vadiraja Swamy, mentions the Hindu temples and shrines visited by Vadiraja Tirtha (c.1480–c.1600), a Dvaita philosopher, poet, traveller and mystic, during his grand tour through India [5, p. 430].

Ragavendra Tirtha (c.1595 – 23 July 1671), a Hindu scholar, theologian and saint, made a pilgrimage tour to several holy places including Rameshwaram, Ramnad, Srirangam and Mathura. [5, pp. 483-484].

Padmanabha Tirtha, a 14-century Dvaita philosopher, scholar and the disciple of Madhvacharya made pilgrimages to Tirupati, Trivandrum, Manjeshvar, Udupi, Basrur, Bhatkal, Gokarna [5, p. 606].

Nowadays, the tradition of pilgrimage is strictly observed among the *swamins*¹ (*sannyasins*² of Ashtha Mathas), especially during the period of the *Paryaya*, a religious ritual which takes place every alternate year, the worship ceremony being performed in *Sri Krishna Matha* of Udupi. Approximately four to five months before the *Paryaya* ceremony, the *swamin*, who is going to become the next “*paryaya swamiji*”³ makes a pilgrimage tour to various shrines and holy cities all over India. This process is called “*Paryaya purva sancharaya*” (“the pilgrimage before the *Paryaya*”) [4, pp. 33-36].

The *swami* visits the following holy centers: Dvaraka, Mathura-Vrindavan, Haridvar, Hrshikesh, Badrinath, Prayagaya, Kashi, Gaya, Puri, Tirupat [3, pp. 259-260].

The tradition of pilgrimage in the Mādhvas religious life is inherited from the medieval period and

transferred as an essential part of their community and family life. Having been practiced through centuries, the Mādhva tradition of pilgrimage has been organically integrated into the general Vaishnava tradition, mostly because the Mādhvas represent one of the main schools of the Vaishnava branch within the Hinduism.

The practice of pilgrimage has various important components for all the devotees of Vaishnavism and approached as opportunity to obtain good *karma* (*punya*)⁴, among those components are various worship rituals (*puja*), Vedic sacrifice rite (*yajna*), and communication with spiritual leaders and temple servants.

The daily worship ritual or *puja* is particularly important for all the Mādhvas, especially for the brahmins. The *puja* rituals dedicated to Sri Vishnu, aim at the demonstration the supremacy of Sri Vishnu and the hierarchical essence of the universe. The practice of *puja* is supposed to bring the merits of *karma* or *punya* for performers [7, p. 38].

Pilgrimage, too, is seen as a way of obtaining good *karma* and various spiritual benefits, as well as achieving the *moksha* (liberation), the idea of the latter as the main goal of spiritual life, has been extensively discussed in the Madhva's philosophy (see in detail 6).

During the pilgrimage, the *pandits*⁵ help pilgrims by performing various rituals, thus giving them an opportunity to be integrated into the religious procedures. The role of the *pandits*, which has been considered as crucial since the Vedic times, is now particularly emphasized in the religious community of the Mādhvas of Udupi. Apart from performing relevant rituals, the *pandits* of the Mādhva community are in constant contact with their followers and disciples and guide them giving special religious assignments.

Pilgrimage to holy rivers is another important element marking the devotees of all the Vaishnava schools and traditions. Expressing their devotion to Vishnu, the Mādhva pilgrims go to the rivers of Narmada, Yamuna, Ganges, Krishna, Kaveri [3, p. 260].

The city of Udupi, Karnataka, the home to the main Mādhva community, is naturally considered the principal center of pilgrimage for all the Mādhvas as well as other Vaishnavas living all over India. The three famous temples of Udupi Sri Krishna (see pic. 1), Sri Chandramouleshwara (see pic. 2) and Sri Ananteshwara and eight monastic centers next to them (Ashtha Mathas of Udupi) are considered the main goals of the pilgrimage to the city.

¹ **Swami** (Sanskrit स्वामी svāmī, “master”) – a religious ascetic or holy person (see the relevant article in [13.1]).

² **Sannyasi** – in Hinduism, a religious ascetic who has renounced the world by performing his own funeral and abandoning all claims to social or family standing (see the relevant article in [13.2]).

³ *Paryaya swamiji* is the religious leader of the *matha* (monastic center), who is in charge of worship and administration of *Shri Krishna Matha* (Krishna temple) [4, pp. 33-36].

⁴ **Karma** (lit. “action, work, deed”) – in Hinduism, the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences. *Punya* (lit. “that which purifies”) refers to the fruit of any good or meritorious action (see the relevant article in [14]).

⁵ **Pandit**, Hindu Priest (see the relevant article in [15]).



pic. 1, Sri Krishna temple, Udupi [9]



pic. 2, Sri Ananteshwara temple, Udupi [10]



pic. 3, pilgrims taking prasada in Sri Krishna temple [11]

Sri Ananteshwara temple is the oldest and well-known center of pilgrimage, spirituality and philosophy in the region [2, p. 12]

Every day numerous pilgrims visit Sri Krishna's *darshan*⁶, in order to perform the *pujas*

⁶ **Darshan(a)** (Sanskrit: दर्शन *Darśana* “viewing”) – in Indian philosophy and religion, particularly in Hinduism, the beholding

and other worshipping rituals, as well as to meet famous *ascetics, pandits*.

Taking *prasada*⁷ is another significant element in the religious life of the *Mādhvas* (see pic. 3).

Public feeding is the responsibility of the present *paraya swami* who is in charge of *Krishna matha* [4, p. 64]. I particularly paid attention to the rituals of taking *prasada* in the above mentioned three temples of Udupi during my fieldwork. A huge number of people visit a special big hall, where the *prasada* is served to them. The *prasada* food is cooked in abundance, so that the pilgrims had the opportunity to eat it as much as they want. In the big hall near Sri Krishna temple the *swamis* and eminent *pandits* read a sermon and deliver lectures for pilgrims and devotees gathered there. The main topics of the lectures are commentaries of religious texts, such as Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, the Puranas and the commentaries of Madhvacharya's works. In Udupi, temples can be accessed by anyone following internal regulations, especially on religious holidays when men need to wear the *dhoti*⁸.

The Paryaya festival is the most convenient period for pilgrims to visit Udupi and participate in all the celebrations taking place in temples and streets of the city (see pic. 4); the festival, being a great occasion for all the Hindus, demonstrates the living spiritual tradition of the *Mādhvas* [see 1].

Among other religious festivals celebrated by the *Mādhvas* in Udupi are the following: *Narasimha Jayanti*⁹, *Maha Shivaratri*¹⁰, *Dipavali*¹¹, *Navaratri*¹² etc.[3, pp 221-252].

The Paryaya festival of 2022 was celebrated by the *Mādhvas* in a very magnificent way [8]. Today the devotees and tourists can be informed about the details of the spiritual and ritualistic life in Udupi through the Ashtha Matha's social media pages [17; 18; 19] what proves that the *Mādhva* community is becoming more open. The *Mādhva* festivals attract more participants every year, including those from

of a deity (especially in image form), revered person, or sacred object (see the relevant article in [13.3]).

⁷ **Prasada** (Sanskrit: प्रसाद *Prasāda* “favour” or “grace”) – in Hinduism, food and water offered to a deity during a worship rite (*puja*) (see the relevant article in [13.4]).

⁸ **Dhoti** – long loincloth traditionally worn in southern Asia by Hindu men (see the relevant article in [13.5]).

⁹ **Narasimha Jayanti** – the Incarnation day of the Lord (Vishnu) as Narasimha, the fourth of the *daśāvatāras* [3, p. 223].

¹⁰ **Maha Shivaratri** – an important Hindu festival celebrated in honour of god Shiva, (see the relevant article in [16]).

¹¹ **Dipavali** (Diwali) – one of the major religious festivals in Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, (see the relevant article in [13.6]).

¹² **Navaratri**, an annual Hindu festival observed throughout India celebrated over nine days in September-October, (see the relevant article in [13.7]).

other religious traditions and cultures who are interested in the Vedic culture.

The pilgrimage tradition, which has been developed among the Mādhvas for centuries, will definitely preserve its niche and remain one of the most significant elements for the Mādhvas' spiritual life, despite all the changes in the modern Indian society.



pic. 4, Paryaya celebrations in Udupi, pilgrims gathering [12]

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