

SERVILE DEVOTION IN THE NAMGHOSA

DR. MRINAL KUMAR BARUAH

Asst. Professor Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Centre for Studies in Performing Arts Dibrugarh University



ABSTRACT

The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement in Assam, propounded by Great Saint Srimanta Sankardeva, gained tremendous support from some of his contemporary scholars. Saint Madhavdeva was one of his followers, disciples, and associates who also enriched the movement by penning highly scholastic books and other things. The Namghosa was his lifetime achievement, which reflects a profound philosophy based on bhakti and also serves as the theoretical base of the movement. Servile devotion is one of the principal elements of Saint Sankardeva's Neo-Vaishnavite Movement, and this is strongly reflected in the Namghosa. In this study, we will primarily discuss the servile devotion as well as salvation propounded in the Namghosa in detail. The saint describes these artistically in the book, wherein they are also seen as a shadow of the Vedas and Upanishads and his conviction on life. In this study, we will also try to highlight and analyse these areas.

Keywords: Devotion, Namghosa

INTRODUCTION

Saint Madhavdeva was also an extraordinary scholar whose creations are remarkable, like those of Sankardeva. The Namghosa is his magnum opus. Servile devotion is one of the most remarkable features of the Namghosa. It bestows unique characteristics on the holy book. In fact, servile devotion denotes bhakti. It is among the nine forms of bhakti. Servile devotion occupies a significant place in the Neo-Vaishnavism propagated by Saint Sankardeva and his followers. This Neo-Vaishnavite religion is also known as the Mahapurushia cult of religion. There is an implicit reason for servile devotion and salvation becoming indispensable elements of Neo-Vaishnavism. In Neo-Vaishnavism, servile devotion denotes a humble submission to the Almighty. The followers have to sublimate themselves to the Almighty and discover the nothingness of life. In the course of this, they have to realise the supreme power of God and their helplessness in front of Him. This is called servile devotion. It also denotes full sublimation to the Almighty. Notably, Saint Madhavdeva's "Namghosa" fully and strongly reflects this, which became his motto of life. This also spirited and enriched his life.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Servile devotion is seen as the principal saying of the "Namghosa". This has superbly found a prominent place in the holy book. The saint describes it majestically, combining theories and "Rasa." This has demanded a unique approach to studying his realisation of servile devotion. In the book, the depiction of servile devotion is considered extraordinary. Hence, there is a need to study the uniqueness and beauty of this traditional bhakti element in the "Namghosa." To highlight and visualise this, we have decided to discuss the topic.

OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to elaborately discuss the flow of servile devotion in the "Namghosa." Many have discussed salvation and servile devotion in various references. But it needs to be studied elaborately and in detail. In this study, we are also trying to shed light on the philosophy of Saint Madhavdeva's life. In short, we are trying to discuss the flow of servile devotion in the "Namghosa" from a different angle.

In this study, analytical approach was used.

Study Area

In our study, we are covering different aspects, including the personality of Saint Madhavdeva, the nature and beauty of "Namghosa", the philosophy of salvation, servile devotion, and their importance in the religion.

Sources

Primary Data:

The primary data source for this study includes the "Namghosa" penned by Saint Madhavdeva.

Secondary Data

In this study, the secondary data includes various books.

NAMGHOSA

The "Namghosa" reflects the incomparable scholarly pursuit and humbleness of Saint Madhavdeva. After becoming a disciple of Saint Sankardeva, Madhavdeva's life saw a sea change. This is reflected in the "Namghosa." The "Namghosa" also reflects different aspects of the life of Saint Madhavdeva, including his devotion towards the guru, servile devotion, salvation, service to humanity, profound knowledge of holy books, scholarly pursuit, spirituality, conviction on life and art, indifference towards materialism, etc. Though the saint did not pen his autobiography, the "Namghosa" reflects different aspects and philosophies of his life. It covers all aspects of his life and philosophy. In clear terms, "Namghosa" is a portrait of his life. It vividly and beautifully sums up his knowledge of spirituality, his loyalty to the guru, his religiosity, and his understanding of holy books. He lucidly delineates these in the book. The book delineates many aspects of life, starting from mundane truths to the supreme. In the book, the saint also portrays the teachings of his guru, Saint Sankardeva, and his realisation of them. In other words, Saint Madhavdeva was a poet and a philosopher. "Namghosa" reflects these qualities in him. He describes the Hindu religious teachings out of his realisation, besides delineating the truths and philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads in a new vein. But in doing so, he did not alter their messages. His approach was formed under the guidance of Saint Sankardeva. Saint Madhavdeva was also an artist. His "Namghosa" reflects this. He was gifted with a unique sense of art.

FLOW OF SERVILE DEVOTION IN THE NAMGHOSA

Saint Madhavdeva's life reflects that servile devotion was his motto. After he became a stout disciple of Saint Sankardeva, every walk of his life reflected servility, which finds a beautiful delineation in his "Namghosa." Saint Sankardeva greatly influenced him. The depiction of servility by Madhavdeva is strong. In the "Namghosa," he profusely praises Saint Sankardeva and expresses his gratitude to him. He addresses the saint as "Aamor Param Guru," meaning the sole and supreme guru for us. In the Kirtan-Ghosa, the sense of servility is expressed through the king Bali,

"Aisharaya-Janjal Nalage Ammar

Sinda Mor Pasha Kora Prabhu Daya Janme Janme Hobo

Tomar Dasoro Das" (Kirtan).

(Meaning: We do not aspire for material wealth and discard the craving for it. Hey, Lord, please show some mercy.) (We will remain slaves to you.)

Madhavdeva also depicts such servile devotion in his "Namghosa", while highlighting his identity. To express this, he uses words and terms like "Dasoro Daso (slave of the slave), Anath (orphan), Das (slave), Murukhmoti (fool), etc. In the opening of "Namghosa," he writes,

" Kimote Bhakati Koribo Tomate Hari Ae

Moiyno Murhamoti Najano

Taaro Upai Rama Rama."

(Meaning: I lack knowledge of worship. Thus, I do not know how to worship you.)

Towards the end of the above sloka or ghosa, he also writes,

" Bhakati Minoti Pranati Najano Hari Ae

"Mote Pore Gyanshunyaheen Moti Naai Rama Rama (790)"

(Meaning: Lord, I do not know how to worship you,

(I am so devoid of sense or knowledge that no other living being is found on the Earth like me.)

The above ghosa or sloka vividly reflects his servile devotion, as he calls himself devoid of knowledge or sense. Such a depiction of servile devotion is usually rare.

He also expresses the highest form of servile devotion in another ghosa in the same book:

" He Doyasheel Devo Damodar Ae

Tomar Sorone Boloho Kakuti Bani

Moko Nijo Daso Kori Loile Hari Ae

Kohio Kripal Tomaro ki hoyo haani. (890)

The kind of servile devotion expressed in the above ghosas is complete submission to the Almighty. In the portrayal of that, a poignant tone finds a place in them. The words and diction employed by him also express his devotion to the Almighty, or Lord Krishna. It is said that a devotee of the Almighty only aspires to become the latter's slave. Such devotees continuously pray to the Almighty to attain this state. In the "Namghosa", we have found such an incisive inclination among the devotees of the Almighty.

" Noho Jana Aami Sari Jati Sario Ashrami Noho Aati

Noho Dharmasheel Daan Broto Teertha Gaami.

Kintu Purnanada Samudra gopibharta Pada Komolor

Dasoro Dasor Tano Daso Bhoilo Aami."

The Stream of Sewa Rasa

The Sewa Rasa is the ultimate goal of the devotees' of God. Its expression in the "Namghosa" is profound and expanded. It is beautifully expressed through the poignant depiction of salvation in the "Namghosa". The stream of servile devotion also finds a place in the following ghosa of the "Namghosa":

" Tomaro Naamor Mahima Dekhiya Ae

Aano Yata Kaam Durote Tejia Thoilo,

Tojo Pada Sewa Rasak Aasha Ae

Tomar Ekanta Vityar Kinkar Bhoila". (807)