

## CHAPTER – I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction :**

Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, the Great *Vaiṣṇava* Saint of Assam will be remembered in all times to come as a unique personality, whose actions were strange and unbelievable. His ever restless mind and thoughts, which not only enraptured and captivated the imaginations of people, but he became their dream of life. He became their thoughts, a mentor whose guidance helped them to take steps to better their life. A study of Śaṅkaradeva's life and works have shown that the man himself did not remain a mere spectator to the acts of society, but he made sure that whatever he did, evoked the inner longings of people, so that they in turn would get the inspiration to change their own life. Whatever he did emitted the light of his inner strength which gave people courage and hope.<sup>1</sup>

Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, one of the pioneer of the *bhakti* cult in the 15th-16th centuries in the country, was a great philosopher, social reformer, writer and artist. He is also social scientist, who knew how to bring peace to the warring minds, which is relevant in today's world.

Vaiṣṇavite Renaissance of 15th-16th centuries witnessed a number of reformers throughout the country. The works of Kabīr, Guru Nānak, Vallabhācārya, Nāmdeva,

---

1. Darbari, Janice (1998): *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva – The Living Legend*; Pp. 143-144

Rāmānanda and Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva heralded Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in the sphere of religion and their literary works marked Renaissance in the social history of India.

Śaṅkaradeva was not only the greatest personality of the social and cultural history of Assam, but is the guidance spirit of Assamese society. He is the greatest literary figure, founder of the theatre movement in Assam.

His exposition of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma* has capped his devotional excellences mounted on the Bhaktivedāntism. Śaṅkaradeva left a finished product of chiselled artistry churning out the classes of the orient.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 Meaning of Philosophy :

The term “philosophy” literally means “love of wisdom”. Philosophy is an inquiry into the nature, meaning, purpose, origin and destiny of human life. For the Indian thinkers, philosophy is the direct vision of the “Absolute Truth”. It is an intellectual attempt to interpret the universe in the light of our intuitive experience of reality. Philosophy deals with the supersensible objects like God, Soul, *Brahman*, Absolute, Devotion etc.

Man believes that the ultimate reality behind the world of appearance is an all comprehensive, perfect experience of the personal type, which is an object of worship. This ultimate reality becomes God of religion. The concept of God is essential to every form of religion. The notion ‘God’ has taken various forms in different religious faith. But the fundamental notion of God is that there exists some superhuman power that is supremely good and wise, Who demands from man an attitude of worship. The belief in one God is the deepest conviction of human mind.

---

2. Ibid. PP. vii-viii

In Indian philosophy, the concept of “Self” or “Soul” is the knower, agent and the enjoyer. We have consciousness; we are conscious individuals. “I know”, “I feel” and “I will”. Besides this fact, though my experience vary, “I” somehow remains “same”. This unchanging “I” is called the “self”.

So, it is a form of *karma*. But disinterested action is not possible without knowledge. Hence, devotion or *bhakti* can be performed only by a true *jñānī*, who can completely resign himself to the “Lord”. The object of devotion is the personal God, the *Puruṣottama* on whose mercy, the devotee has to throw himself utterly. Absolute dependence and utter faith are very necessary for devotion.

## 1.2: Śaṅkaradeva’s Philosophical Thought :

While going to study a philosopher, one should try to understand what is the basic concern in his philosophy. Śaṅkaradeva has not constructed a complete system of absolute idealism because he has not been interested in philosophic enquiry. Philosophic enquiry always needs critical thinking. Instead of critical thinking, Śaṅkaradeva takes interest in real concerns of human life.

Śaṅkaradeva is not a philosopher in the strict sense of the term. But when one takes philosophy in the sense of *darśana*, which means intuitive perception, then he might be regarded as a philosopher. Intuitive perception means supersensuous perception or vision. This perception is self-evident (*svataḥ-pramāṇita*). This is a type of holistic or integral experience. To know reality in its essence, such an experience is required.<sup>3</sup>

---

3. Baruah, Girish. (2014). *Śaṅkaradeva –A Critical Appraisal of His Philosophy And Religion*. P.66.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, philosophy is not simply an intellectual exercise. He studied philosophy as being related to the existential problems. Again, Śaṅkaradeva studied and formulated it for the redemption of human condition. Therefore, he has concerned himself with the problem of God, the soul, the devotion and salvation. His speculations have been guided by the truths, revealed in the Vedāntic and Vaiṣṇavite scriptures. It may be regarded that Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy is philosophy about realisation of God . His philosophy is mainly a religious philosophy, because religion is his main concern. A religious philosophy shows the way to ascend to God.

Śaṅkaradeva never claims to be a philosopher in the technical sense. But his writings are full of rich philosophical insights. These philosophical insights are full of mystic connotation. All his writings are full of this mystic connotation.<sup>4</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy is based on his own logic. His *Bhaktiratnākara* is rich in philosophical doctrines held by him. It is said that this book comes nearest to a philosophical system as he has culled verses of philosophical importance that bear his sanction. The philosophical method is to question, analyze and examine before acceptance of a concept. This is a critical method. Śaṅkaradeva has not undertaken such a method while accepting *bhakti* to be a means of attaining God. He has taken *bhakti* for granted and accepted it without any question. So, Śaṅkaradeva cannot be taken as a philosopher in the critical sense of the term.

In Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy, there may not be metaphysical subtlety; but in his writings, the aesthetic sensitivity and devotional intensity cannot be denied. Śaṅkaradeva is not interested in discursive thinking. He is interested in the narratives

---

4. Ibid. P. 70.

about the manifestations of God; he thinks that there are merits of listening to the glorious actions of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>5</sup>

The ideal of Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy is the Vedānta philosophy. According to him, Vedānta surpasses beyond idealism, realism and materialism. The problems, he has dealt with have grown on a particular psychological soil which has an antecedent past. Yet, his philosophy has a sufficient vitality to influence the current situations of society.

### 1.3. : Śaṅkaradeva's Neo-Vaiṣṇavism :

Vaiṣṇavism is one of the oldest religions of India. In this religion, *Viṣṇu* is worshipped as Supreme God, Who is also known as *Puruṣottama*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Hari* etc. The Supreme God of this faith is termed *Bhagavān*. In course of time, it assumed a sectarian complexion in the form of the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, which was a natural outcome of a reaction against the sacrifice – ridden religion of the Brāhmaṇic period.

It is very difficult to determine the origin of Vaiṣṇavism in Assam. It must have been prevalent here at a time when the Brāhmaṇical culture made considerable progress. It is argued that the *Vāsudeva* Cult was prevalent in Assam long before Śaṅkaradeva and it received royal recognition in the time of Dharmapāla.<sup>6</sup> Śaṅkaradeva devoted himself to put Vaiṣṇavism on a permanent footing in Assam. He gives a new shape to Vaiṣṇavism in Assam, which subsequently came to be referred to as - Neo-Vaiṣṇavism. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Assam presented heterogeneous shades and grades of culture, religion, race and political status. In the sphere of religion, the

---

5. Ibid. P. 71.

6. Choudhury, P. (2013). *The Concepts of Puruṣa, Prakṛti and Līlā in Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy*. P.59.

period distinguished itself from the esoteric practices of “Tāntricism”, which combined many elements of primitive superstitions, as well as ingenious but fanciful speculations. Moreover, there was no social solidarity because of the beneficial effects of the caste system. The society was covered with the darkness of unsocial activities and practices. It was amidst such conditions that Śaṅkaradeva was born to lead a crusade against such practices and to establish the kingdom of God on earth, that is the movement of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism, which is also called *Nāma-Dharma*. Śaṅkaradeva’s Neo-Vaiṣṇavism speaks of a personal relationship with God through devotion. In devotion, all the people are of equal rank as devotee. This is the special characteristic of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism.<sup>7</sup>

#### **1.4 : The Concept of God in Śaṅkaradeva’s Thought :**

Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophy has a perennial value. The importance of his philosophy and teaching become more and more relevant in today’s world. Being a religious person in particular, Śaṅkaradeva initiated his own form of Vaiṣṇava faith, known as *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. This indicates his religious position as a pure monotheistic and this leads to his philosophical position of being a monist of non-dualist. As a monotheist, Śaṅkaradeva accepts Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme God. Though the immediate base of his philosophy is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ultimately his base is the Vedānta philosophy in its theistic line.

Śaṅkaradeva believes in one primordial entity – one reality as the ground of the whole universe from which the universe has emerged. The term ‘God’ has been treated in his philosophy as the Ultimate Being, which signifies the *Paramapuruṣa*,

---

7. Baruah, Girish. (2014). *Śaṅkaradeva –A Critical Appraisal of His Philosophy And Religion*. P.149.

*Paramātmā* etc. Śaṅkaradeva places Lord Kṛṣṇa at the highest position. So, in his philosophy “God” is identical with “Lord Kṛṣṇa”, *Puruṣottama*, *Nārāyaṇa*, etc. Who is the central Reality of all and nothing can exist without Him. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it in his *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*tumi paramātmā jagatara īśa eka /*  
*eko vastu nāhike tomāta vyatireka //*<sup>8</sup>

It means – (God is the Supreme Self, the only Lord of the universe, there is no other thing except Him).

Śaṅkaradeva firmly believes that there exists only one Absolute Being. He is pure consciousness and the rest are all in a way material in character (*jaḍa*). Śaṅkaradeva accepts three kinds of substances. These are matter (*acit*), soul (*cit*) and God (*Īśvara*). According to him, the subtle *jīvas* and the subtle material powers of the universe emanate from *Paramātmā* – Lord Kṛṣṇa, from Whom both the conscious and the unconscious parts of the universe spring forth.<sup>9</sup>

In Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophy the God is formless or *nirākāra*. It is the Absolute soul and ever shining. He is the controller of all individual souls. The interpretation of the various descriptions of the Lord are all meant to describe the Absolute in positive term. The God is one, the first cause which gives reality to all modification. It is also the soul of the universe, which is the object of worship. It cannot be described by any human language. To Śaṅkaradeva, God is both transcendent and immanent. From the point of view of the devotee, the Absolute becomes a kind and loving God. This

---

8. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*. Haraṁohana. verse- 520.

9. Choudhury, P. (2013): *The Concepts of Puruṣa, Prakṛti and Līlā in Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophy*. p,71.

infinite, indescribable Absolute one is viewed differently by different people. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* as follows –

*tomākeṣe bolai jñāni brahma niraṅkuṣa /*  
*sāṃkhya mate bolai tumi prakṛti puruṣa //*  
*bhakatara mate tumi parama īśvara /*  
*matibhede tomākeṣe pāyoi nirantara //*<sup>10</sup>

It means – (The wise call God is unconditional Absolute. According to *Sāṃkhya*, God is *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. To the devotee, God is the Great Lord; different minds worship God in diverse ways).

Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy is mainly influenced by the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* and the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. So, the concept of reality or the *Brahman* or the God, maintained by him is the same as is found in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* and the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. Śaṅkaradeva uses the word “God” in place of *Brahman* also, because for him, God is the presiding Lord of the whole universe. He is the supreme self and is the material as well as the operative cause of the universe. In fine, God is the substratum of all things is Śaṅkaradeva's thought.

### **1.5 : The Concept of the Individual Self or *Jīva* in Śaṅkaradeva's Thought:**

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the individual self or *jīvātman* is unchanging, all pervading, blissfull and is not different from the supreme self; but being enveloped in false knowledge, it does not know itself as such. Śaṅkaradeva holds that the Supreme

---

10. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; Part-X; verse- 1830



self or *Brahman* and the individual self or *jīvātman* are essentially identical. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* as follows –

*dehāte achāhā mātra tumi dehahīna /*  
*yena agni thākante kāṣṭhato kari bhina //*  
*yena ghaṭa bhāṅgi gaile ghaṭara ākāśa /*  
*ākāśate līna hovai nāhi tāra nāśa //*<sup>11</sup>

It means – (Only God, without form, is in the body of the *jīva*, as fire residing in the fire wood is different from the latter, as the space in a pot is not lost, it mingles with the wider space when the pot is broken).

Śaṅkaradeva clearly shows in his *Bhakti Ratnāṭkara* that there is the distinction between the *jīva* and the *Īśvara* or the *Paramātman*. The apparent difference between these two is due to *māyā* or *avidyā*. According to him, God is the Lord to Whom *māyā* is subservient and He is extremely blissful. But the individual self of *jīvātman* is that, who is under the suppression of *māyā*, and also under the control of the three *guṇas* as so subject to the defective vision. In order to experience the *saṁsāra*, the individual self or the *jīvātman* comes in association with the mind. The individual self or *jīva* indulges in various enjoyments of the empirical world. In this way, the transcendental self loses its pristine glory and mingles with the empirical self.<sup>12</sup>

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the soul or *jīva* is a small part of the *Brahman*. So, it wants to go back to its original source. By knowing and by love and devotion to that source, the *jīva* can make it out of the earthly bondage of the life. So, Śaṅkaradeva

---

11. Ibid. Part –XII. verse -205.

12. Mahanta, Nirupama. (2015). *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*. P. 107.

advised his followers to be non-attached to the worldly life. They should fill their heart with love and devotion to God or *Brahman* Who is manifested in the form of Kṛṣṇa. Śaṅkaradeva describes *Brahman* as monistic and real; and the universe is unreal; but he does not subscribe the view of Śaṅkaracārya, who does not recognize the visible world to be the manifestation of the *Brahman*.<sup>13</sup>

The individual self or *jīvātman* is existing as *prāṇa* in the living bodies. There are changes of the sense organs as the result of that, in which which the *jīvas* have to take birth repeatedly. The body basically passes through three stages; viz; childhood, youth and old age; but the *prāṇa* remains the same in the body. The question is, for what reason, even after the realisation of the soul, the *jīvas* return to the world? In the answer of this question, Śaṅkaradeva said that even at that time, the *jīvas* cannot get rid of *avidyā*; and so the *jīvas* are reborn in this world. The individual self or *jīvātmā* attains complete freedom only after the destruction of the *liṅgadeha*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, to destroy this *liṅgadeha*, the individual self or *jīva* should listen the glories of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, by listening to the glories of Kṛṣṇa, the faults of action will be eliminated from the mind. Then the mind will be pure and the result will be the knowledge of the self. In this way, the supreme knowledge arises and is possible to get rid of the world.<sup>14</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva cannot be called a subscriber of the interpretation neither of Śaṅkarācārya nor of Rāmānuja. His Philosophical base is Vedānta itself and he based

---

13. Tamuly, D. N. (ed.) (2013). *The Blessed Island*. P.136.

14. Mahanta, Nirupama. (2015). *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*. P. 107-16.

on the teachings of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, where Kṛṣṇa describes himself to be the *Brahman*. Śaṅkaradeva's philosophical base for his religion is the philosophy found in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*.

### 1.6: The Concept of Devotion or *Bhakti* in the Thought of Śaṅkaradeva :

According to Śaṅkaradeva, devotion or *bhakti* is the best way of salvation or *mukti*. For him, *bhakti* is the crown of the spiritual *sādhana*. It is the only way to realise God. In the *bhakti-dharma* preached by Śaṅkaradeva, *bhakti* occupies the most important role. It takes the *bhaktiyoga* of *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* and applies it to the personal God or *Īśvara* of the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*, Who is the highest Divinity, the full incarnation of Viṣṇu. According to Śaṅkaradeva, God is not a detached spectator of the world process. He is to be reached by *bhakti*.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the company of holy persons is most essential to pursue *bhakti*. They are designated as *bhakta*, *sādhū*, *mahanta* etc. and the necessity of *satsaṅga* is frequently cited. It is expressed in Śaṅkaradeva's *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*bhakata janese mora hṛdaya /*  
*matibhede tomākesa pāyai nirantara //*<sup>15</sup>

In the same context, the characteristics of a true *bhakta* are explained by Śaṅkaradeva as follows -

*tomāra pāvata laile yijane śaraṇa /*  
*tayu guṇa-nāma kare śravaṇa-kīrtana //*<sup>16</sup>

---

15. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*, *Prahlād Caritra*. verse- 53.

16. Ibid. ch. 4; verse- 261.

It means, – Those, who seek refuge at the feet of Lord, chant and listen to His glory and name.

In *Bhakti-Ratnākara*, Śaṅkaradeva has shown *bhakti* as superior to *mukti* and it is stated further that the bliss of emancipation is inherent in *bhakti*.

There are nine kinds of *bhakti*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, among these nine kinds, *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* are the best ways of *bhakti*.

Śaṅkaradeva's concepts of God, Individual self and Devotion or *bhakti* will be discussed briefly in the latter chapters.

### **1.7 : Significance of the Study :**

The research topic undertaken is entitled as, — “ **A Study on the Concept of God, Self and Devotion in the Philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva**”. This topic happens to be a subject not much researched about. So, this study will make an endeavour to highlight the philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva regarding the concepts of the God or *Īśvara*, the individual self or *jīvātman* and devotion or *bhakti*.

The concepts of God, self etc. are all intriguing subjects. The more one studies, the more remains to be studied. All great philosophers have at first unraveled the mystery of the self and then moved on to the complex and unique nature of this world. The concept of self and Identity was similarly of paramount interest in Śaṅkaradeva's life as well. The basic philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva is non-dualism or *advaitavāda*. Śaṅkaradeva maintains that “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” is the one and only non-dual reality devoid of all types of differences. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” is the only reality, who is Absolute *Brahman*, *Parama-Īśvara*, the Supreme God and *Paramātman*; i.e., “The Supreme Self”. He is considered as *Puruṣottama*, *Mahāpuruṣa*, *Bhagavāna* etc. In *Anādi-Pātana*,

Śaṅkaradeva says, *Brahman*, the God without a beginning is all purity. He is all knowledge, all delight and is everlasting. According to Śaṅkaradeva, God is not formless (*nirākāra*); but his shape is unlimited, eternal and immeasurable. It is not limited by time and space. In Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy, Divine Being (God) is *Nārāyaṇa* and *Nirañjana*. God is eternal and salvation from sin lies in Him. He is worshipped by all. In his philosophy, all the Universe is one — all the living creatures, all individual selves are parts of the same ultimate one, i.e., *Paramātmā*. All the moving, non-moving, inscets, living creatures — all are of the one — only one Reality, that is Kṛṣṇa – the *Parama-Brahman*.

The ultimate aim of the *bhaktimārga* as propagated by Śaṅkaradeva is attainment of *Nirguṇa* Kṛṣṇa through *nirguṇa bhakti*. *Mokṣa* or liberation is not the aim of a true devotee, but absolute devotion (*bhakti*) is the ultimate aim of *sādhana* in *bhaktimārga* in contrast to the meditation in *jñāna mārga*. Thus, in the philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva, it is clearly declared that the path of devotion or *bhakti* is the best way of life for all people.

Many scholars deeply studied Śaṅkaradeva; but still it is not clearly established whether Śaṅkaradeva was an *Advaitavādin* like Śaṅkarācārya or *Viśiṣṭādvaitavādin* like Rāmānuja.

According to Śaṅkarācārya, *Brahman* is *nirguṇa* and *nirviśeṣa*. The cause of the bondage of the self is ignorance or *māyā*. On the other hand, according to Rāmānuja, *Brahman* is *saguṇa* and *saviśeṣa* and God is the controller of the world. Salvation of the self is based on *Īśvara* or God and devotion is the only way to attain salvation.

But in the philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva, it is seen that he neither followed the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya or Rāmānuja nor completely discarded these philosophies.

Śaṅkaradeva was basically *Advaitavādin* and advocated the ardent and unpolluted devotion; and at the same time, he was chiefly *Viśiṣṭadvaitavādin* like Rāmānuja. The present study will try to investigate it clearly.

### **1.8 : Statement of the Problem :**

The investigator chooses to take up the present problem entitled as “**A STUDY ON THE CONCEPTS OF GOD, SELF AND DEVOTION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚAṅKARADEVA.**” This study will express the status of the philosophical thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva regarding the concepts of God or *Paramātmā*, Self or *Jīvātman* and Devotion or *Bhakti*.

### **1.9 : Objectives of the Study :**

The study have been conducted with the following objectives —

1. To find out and explain the views of different Vedāntic philosophers regarding the concepts of God and self.
2. To discuss Śaṅkaradeva’s Neo-Vaiṣṇavism and explain his philosophical thoughts.
3. To find out and discuss Śaṅkaradeva’s views regarding the concepts of God and self.
4. To find out and discuss Śaṅkaradeva’s concept of Devotion or *Bhakti* and its different kinds.

### **1.10 : Research Methodology :**

Research methodology may be the understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In this study, the various steps or ways that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the

logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods, but also the methodology.<sup>17</sup>

All the research methods can be classified into three categories; viz. — (i) historical method, (ii) descriptive method and (iii) experimental method.<sup>18</sup>

The present study is carried out under “Descriptive Survey Method”. This is the most widely used research method. A descriptive research is carried out with specific objectives and hence, it results in definite conclusions. This research tries to describe the characteristics of the respondent in relation to a particular product or a practice of importance. To gather information and materials both primary and secondary sources will be applied.

### 1.11: Delimitation of The Study :

The study undertaken by the investigator has the following delimitations :

- i) The study is confined only to the Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam propagated by Śaṅkaradeva.
- ii) The study is confined to the philosophical thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva regarding the concepts of “God”, “Self” and “Devotion”.

### 1.12: Definition of Some Key Words :

Following are the definitions of some key words of the proposed research work :

- i) **Brahman** : From the objective side, the Ultimate Reality is called *Brahman*. This word is derived from the root *Brh*, which means to grow or to evolve. *Brahman* is the ultimate cause of the universe.

---

17. Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methodo and Techniques*. p. 8.

18. Koul, L. (1984). *Methodology Educational Research*. P.386. New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House Pvt.Ltd.

- ii) **Self** : The immaterial 'I', that possesses conscious experience, controls passion, desire and action and maintains a perfect identity from birth (or before) to death (or after). Its real nature is pure consciousness, self-shining and self-proved and always the same. It is called the ultimate witness or the *Sākṣī* and as such it is one with the Absolute.
- iii) **Devotion** : Devotion is the disinterested performance, true and pure love, worship and service to God.
- iv) **Advaita** : The doctrine of the Vedāntic School associated with Śaṅkarācārya. It asserts the identity of *Brahman* or "self". According to it, the self is entirely a manifestation of God.
- v) **Vedānta** : *Vedānta* means the ending portion of the Vedas, i.e., *Upaniṣad*. It is also one of the systems of Indian Philosophy, which is specially associated with Śaṅkarācārya.
- vi) **Vaiṣṇavism** : It is one of the major branches of Hinduism. In *Vaiṣṇavism*, *Viṣṇu* or Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only worshipful deity.
- vii) **Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma** : It is monotheistic concept of religion where the worship of only one God, that is, Lord Kṛṣṇa is allowed. *Eka-Śaraṇa* means self-surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa only.