

An Early Modern Account of the Views of the Miśras

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Published online: 22 August 2018
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Abstract In a doxography of views called the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*, a seventeenth century commentator and Advaitin, Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, describes the doctrines of a group he calls the Miśras. Nīlakaṇṭha represents the doctrines of the Miśras as in most ways distinct from those of the canonical positions that usually appear in such doxographies, both āstika and nāstika. And indeed, some of the doctrines he describes resemble those of the Abrahamic faiths, concerning the creator, a permanent afterlife in heaven or hell, and the unique births of souls. Other doctrines are difficult to associate with any known South Asian religion, for example the emphasis placed on astrological determinism in the moral economy of the creation. As the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is unpublished to date, a preliminary edition of those portions that concern the Miśras is presented here, together with a translation, notes, and some further discussion. Though the identification is not certain, it seems most likely that the views Nīlakaṇṭha describes in this text belonged to Vanamālī Miśra, a North Indian Mādhva who had lived in the Ganges-Yamuna doab in the mid to late seventeenth century. Even if that identification turns out to be correct, many questions remain.

Keywords Miśra · Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara · Vanamālīmiśra · Doxography · Advaita · Astrology · Hell · Madhva · Abrahamic religions

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Introduction

The purpose of the following paper is to present those passages of an unpublished seventeenth century north Indian Sanskrit doxographical text which describe the doctrines of a group whom the author refers to as the *Miśras*. The passages appear in an enumeration of well-known Indian views that is otherwise relatively routine. In several ways, the author marks the *Miśras*' doctrines as unusual, that is, as lying outside a wide ambit of Sanskrit-based thought that includes materialists, Buddhists, and Jains. The description of their views in this doxographical text is unusual enough to warrant making them available in a preliminary form, based on three manuscripts, in advance of a thorough edition of the entire text to be published later.¹

Among the doctrines of the *Miśras* are included some—the permanence of heaven and hell for individual souls whether the world exists or not, the rejection of karma as the governing explanation of life's moral justice, and so on—that might belong to a school of thought strongly influenced by Ānandatīrtha, or Madhvācārya, the thirteenth century south Indian proponent of Vaiṣṇava realism. The most likely figure appears to be Vanamālidāsa Miśra or Vanamālimiśra, who was active as a theologian and polemicist in the Ganges–Yamuna doab in the mid to late seventeenth century. Some of the more peculiar doctrines attributed to the *Miśras* cannot however be confirmed in the published writings of Vanamālimiśra, nor in those of Madhva and Jayatīrtha, for that matter.

In what follows I describe the text and its author, briefly sketch the context of Indic doxography in which the text appears, and then present those passages of the text that feature the *Miśras*, with translation and some annotation. At the end I discuss the possible identity of the *Miśras* and the nature of their treatment in this text, and collect some of the salient doctrines and their unexpected peculiarities.

The Text and the Author: The *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* of Nīlakaṅṭha Caturdhara

The text is called the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*—the 'Essence of the Sextet of Systems.' The *New Catalogus Catalogorum* lists six manuscripts of a text with this title, held in Kathmandu, Harvard, Jodhpur, Benares, Pune, and Vrindavan.² Two other manuscripts were seen in the nineteenth century, one by Fitzedward Hall in Banaras, and the other by Kielhorn in a private library in Sagar, during his tour of what were then the Central Provinces.³ The version of the text presented here is

¹ A version of this paper was presented at the 227th meeting of the American Oriental Society in Los Angeles in March, 2017. There I identified the *Miśras* as exponents of Abrahamic views. See the Conclusion below for further discussion of this point. Some features of Nīlakaṅṭha's *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* were first presented at a conference on 'Discipline, Sect, Lineage and Community: Scholar Intellectuals in India, c. 1500–1800' in Oxford in 2013.

² NCC vol. 36 p. 231. National Archives, Kathmandu, 4–153; Harvard 1571 (Poleman 3509); RORI Jodhpur 15, 5 (i) 307 = 32424; Sarasvati Bhavan 51722; BORI 730 of 1887–91; Vrindavan RI 14525.

³ Hall p. 165, no. 305; Kielhorn CP p. 250. The manuscript that Kielhorn saw belonged to Viṣṇuśāstrī Āṭhale. That manuscript cannot be the same as any of those later belonging to public collections, for it

based on the manuscript held in the National Archives in Kathmandu, thanks to the efforts of the Nepal-German microfilms project, with some improvements based on the Harvard manuscript and the Jodhpur manuscript.⁴

In fact there are two texts called the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*. One is by Nīlakaṅṭha Caturdhara, a seventeenth century Advaitin author. That text is the subject of the current study. But there is another text with this title. It must be roughly contemporary with Nīlakaṅṭha's, for it mentions the sixteenth century figure, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. This *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is the work of another Advaitin and appears to have some relationship with Nīlakaṅṭha's text. That is, one author probably knew the other's work. Which text is older remains to be determined. The manuscript in the Bhandarkar Institute is a copy of this anonymous text. It is incomplete, lacking its ending. Thus it has no colophon; nor is there any other attribution of author, scribe, sponsor, or place. The manuscript held in the Vrindavan Research Institute is also a copy of this text, and is closely related to the manuscript in the Bhandarkar Institute.⁵ The four other known manuscripts, as well as the two that were seen in the nineteenth century by Hall and Kielhorn, attribute authorship to Nīlakaṅṭha, and are therefore copies of the work under discussion here.

The *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* by Nīlakaṅṭha is a short text. It consists of ten verses together with an auto-commentary. All known manuscripts of the complete text comprise between nine and sixteen leaves.⁶ The verses of the text are composed in long, syllabic *kāvya* metres: Śikhariṇī (vs. 1), Sragdharā (vss. 2–6 and 8), Śārdūlavikrīḍita (vs. 7), and Vibhūṣaṇā (vss. 9–10).

The text is introduced as the continuation of a longer work not identified by name, which consists in at least four parts. According to that introduction, the burden of the second and third parts of this longer work is to establish that all the *purāṇas*, all the systematic philosophies (*tantra*), and all the śruti texts uniformly expound the nonduality of Śiva. The *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is then announced as the fourth part, in which the aim is to show that any differences of view, even those expressed in the Upaniṣads, are alien to all systematic thought.⁷ The text attempts to do so by

Footnote 3 continued

was reported to be complete in ten folios with twelve lines per side, which does not match the description of any other known manuscript. Hall might have looked at the Sarasvatī Bhavan manuscript. He does not give enough information to judge.

⁴ My thanks to Anand Venkatkrishnan for acquiring images of the Harvard manuscript, and to the Houghton Library for allowing these images to be made. My thanks to Jason Birch for making images of the Jodhpur manuscript, and to the Jodhpur Oriental Research Institute for allowing these images to be made.

⁵ This is not a work by Haribhadra Sūtri, who was active in the eighth century, *pace* the VRI's descriptive catalogue. This undated MS, which has a more modern version of the Devanagari script, breaks off at the same point where the BORI MS does. It shares many distinctive readings with the BORI MS, though occasionally preserving better ones. Thanks to Jack Hawley for photographing the manuscript at the VRI, and thanks to the VRI for allowing him to do so.

⁶ Kathmandu—14ff.; Harvard—16ff.; Jodhpur—9ff.; Banaras—13ff.; Kielhorn—10ff.

⁷ *evaṃ sarvapūrāṇaikamatyena sarvatāntraikamatyena sarvaśrutyāikamatyena śivādvaitaviṣayam prāsādhya dviṭyaparichedātau vedānteṣv apy upanyastānāṃ matabhedānāṃ sarvatāntrabahirbhūtatvam*

comparing across several metaphysical and soteriological topics the viewpoints it enumerates.

The six systems in Nīlakaṇṭha's list are not the ones we know from the enumeration that eventually became standard. Here there are three schools classified as orthodox or *āstika* - Mīmāṃsā, Tarka, Vedānta, and three classified as heterodox or *nāstika* - Cārvāka, Sugata, that is, Buddhist, and Ārḥata, that is, Jaina. Tarka is then further subdivided into four - Sāṃkhya, Pātañjala, Vaiśeṣika, and Naiyāyika, while the Buddhist view is subdivided into four as well: Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Yogācāra, and Mādhyamika. Thus there are twelve doctrines or vādas enumerated in the text, while preserving the traditional preference for a set of six.⁸ The text's style of presentation is simple and concise throughout, which is not unusual for the doxographic genre.

The interest of this text, and the reason for presenting it here, is that it then adds a supernumerary group, who are called the Mīśras. Nīlakaṇṭha refers to them both in the singular and in the plural, (e.g. *miśrās tu, miśrais, miśro, miśrasya*, and so on). He also refers to their pupils or followers, (e.g. *miśraśiṣyaḥ, tacchiṣyaḥ, miśrānusāriṇaḥ*, and so on), and uses the stem form in many other compounds, (e.g. *miśramataṃ, miśrādayaḥ* and so on). As we shall see, he makes a distinction among the Mīśras, with some depicted as holding views not held by others (*tadekadeśimatam*). Though in the end Nīlakaṇṭha does not accept the Mīśras' views, and indeed criticizes them more than he does the views of other non-Advaitin systems of thought, he does offer a more or less serious and sustained engagement with them, filtered through the intellectual idiom of Advaita.

The other, anonymous *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* has some structural similarities with Nīlakaṇṭha's text. It too is composed in kāvya verses, (Sragdharā in this case,) accompanied by the author's own commentary. It enumerates the same six standpoints, divided three by three (*nāstika / āstika*), which are then expanded into the same twelve, by subdividing both Tarka and Bauddha in the same way that Nīlakaṇṭha did. This *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* does not mention the Mīśras.

The anonymous *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* provides some description of the Pāñcarātras and Pāśupatas, though they are not included in its formal enumeration. It refers specifically to the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, if not to the Prābhākaras. Its account of each standpoint is lengthier and more detailed, and includes citations from the canonical works of the respective schools. The two known manuscripts of the text break off toward the end of the commentary on the second verse, unfortunately. Thus we have only a limited picture of the overall scope of this text. Unlike Nīlakaṇṭha's text, it makes no programmatic statement about a higher-order conformity of views (*aikamatya*) at the outset or elsewhere in its extant portion.

Footnote 7 continued

āpādayitum ṣaṭtantrīsārākhyam caturthaparichedam ārabhate. National Archives, Kathmandu, 4–153 (Henceforth K) f. 1v.

⁸ Nīlakaṇṭha's *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* does mention various forms of Vedānta in the introduction to its final pair of verses, but these varieties are not counted in his formal enumeration; nor are they described in his general discussion elsewhere: *nanu vedānteṣv eva kaiś cid bhedaparatayā, kaiś cid bhedābhedaparatayā, kaiś cid viśiṣṭādvaitaparatayā, kaiś cid viśuddhādvaitaparatayā vyākhyāteṣu tātparyabhramo jāyate. tat katham eṣāṃ anyatamaparatvaṃ niścetum śakyata ity āśaikya* K f. 12v.

Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara was a Deccanī Brahmin who moved to Banaras and was active as an author there in the middle of the seventeenth century.⁹ He wrote about a dozen works that survive, but is most remembered for his Advaitin commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāratabhāvadīpa*. As has been noticed earlier, in the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*'s opening statement, Nīlakaṇṭha refers to a larger work into which the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* fits, which, he says, argues that the purāṇas, the systematic philosophies, and the śrūtis are uniform in proclaiming the nondualism of Śīva.¹⁰ This is a surprising project for Nīlakaṇṭha to undertake, given what we know of him. In his extant works, Nīlakaṇṭha is not a Śīvādvaitin as that term is usually understood.¹¹ In fact, the largest independent work that Nīlakaṇṭha wrote was the *Vedāntakataka*, whose first two parts are mostly dedicated to a critique of Appayya Dīkṣita's *Śāstrasiddhāntaleśasamgraha* and his *Nyāyarakṣāmaṇi*, because of the infiltration, as Nīlakaṇṭha sees it, of Appayya's Śīvādvaitin views into his Advaitin works.¹² The third part of the *Vedāntakataka* consists in a commentary on the *Vedastuti* chapter of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (10.87), reading it largely as a Vedic nondualist text, not a bhakti one.¹³

While the sections of the *Vedāntakataka* are called paricchedas, the same term that Nīlakaṇṭha uses here, and while three paricchedas of the *Vedāntakataka* are known to survive, they do not obviously amount to a Śīvādvaitin project of the sort Nīlakaṇṭha appears to describe here. Indeed, in his commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, Nīlakaṇṭha speaks out against the partisan sectarian use of canonical texts both by Śaivas and by Vaiṣṇavas.¹⁴ Unless other works of Nīlakaṇṭha's come to light, and assuming that the reading of the Kathmandu manuscript is confirmed, we might be advised to understand the use of the term 'śīvādvaita' here in some other, perhaps etymological or even inverted sense. Nīlakaṇṭha's criticism of Appayya extended beyond his Advaitin and into his Śaiva works. He wrote two texts, the *Śīvādvaitanirṇaya* and the *Ratnatrayaparīkṣā*, whose titles echo those of Appayya's works, but which maintain a non-Śaiva, mainstream Brahminical and Advaitin position.¹⁵ Thus Nīlakaṇṭha could well be redescribing 'śīvādvaita' as '(vi)śuddhādvaita,' Nīlakaṇṭha's preferred term for the nondualism of the pure, undifferentiated *brahman*.¹⁶

⁹ I have written a number of articles on Nīlakaṇṭha. For the most recent profile see Minkowski, "Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara's Advaita Vedānta" 2017.

¹⁰ see note 7.

¹¹ On Śīvādvaita see now Duquette, "Reception" 2017.

¹² Minkowski, "Appayya's Vedānta" 2016.

¹³ Minkowski, "The Vedastuti" (2004).

¹⁴ See Nīlakaṇṭha on *MBh* I.1.23 in the vulgate version (Kimjvaḍekara) cited below in note 168.

¹⁵ See Minkowski, "Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara's Advaita Vedānta" (2017).

¹⁶ The *Vedāntatātparyanivedana* of Govinda, Nīlakaṇṭha's son, is often a guide to understanding the thinking of his father. There Govinda treats the term 'śīvasama' as it appears in the *Vāyavyāsamhitā* of the *Śīvapurāṇa* (muktaḥ śīvasamo bhavet—*Śīvapurāṇa* 7.1.3.39cd-40, and passim) as a karmadhāraya, meaning both undifferentiated *brahman* and the totality of creation (adducing passages to show that *sarva* = *sama*), or as an instrumental *tatpuruṣa*, meaning the same as, i.e. nondifferent from, the *nirguṇa brahman*: *tataś ca śi<va>samaśabd<ā>bhyāṃ muktasya pūrvokte nir<u>pā<dhi>kasopādhikarūpe ucy<e>te, iti phalito 'rthaḥ. tulyaparyāyagrahaṇe 'pi śīvaśabdenātra nirguṇasya*

The Doxographic Context of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*

Nīlakaṇṭha presents his doxography as intending to establish a conformity of views (*aikamatyā*), not to identify erroneous positions in order to quarrel with them. That brings us to the doxographic context, which I shall touch on only briefly. By ‘doxography’ is meant here an enumeration of points of view that is intended as comprehensive in some way, that is arranged into a scheme, and that has only such an account as its purpose. The standard work on the subject remains Wilhelm Halbfass’ chapter on Sanskrit doxographies in his monograph, *India and Europe*.¹⁷

Halbfass’ interest in doxography is broader than my definition, taking in other varieties of what he calls confrontation and engagement, but in discussing the narrower phenomenon he draws on nine texts, and mentions a tenth, modern ‘curiosity’ (350–351). Sketching older patterns of description and survey that serve as his historical backdrop, and warning that these doxographies are not in themselves very impressive intellectual productions (355), Halbfass makes the general claim that such Sanskrit doxographies are nonhistorical and schematic, and present knowledge as essentially complete (349). The points relevant here are that enumerating schools of thought was a preoccupation of Jainas and Advaitins especially (351); that Jaina enumerations tended to be unranked and perspectivist, while Advaitin enumerations tended to be hierarchical and subsuming (351); and that for the Advaitins the emphasis lay on depicting the schools as contextual and mutually constituted, and on arranging them within a larger pattern of harmony in which even the heterodox or *nāstika* positions occupied a place (355–359).

Halbfass also points out that while both Jaina and Advaitin doxographic traditions enumerated sets of six systems, they were not necessarily the same six. Some of the Advaitin sources did set three *nāstika* positions off against three *āstika* ones, and then further subdivided them, but none have done so in quite the way that the two *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* texts do.¹⁸ The published text that comes the closest is the sixteenth century *Sarvadarśanakaumudī* of Mādhava Sarasvatī.

The *Sarvadarśanakaumudī* begins by juxtaposing Vedic (*vaidika*) and nonVedic (*avaidika*) triads: Tarka, Tantra, and Sāṃkhya vs. Bauddha, Cārvāka, and Ārḥata.¹⁹ The Buddhists are subdivided into Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika. On the Vedic side, Tarka is subdivided into Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya, Tantra into Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṃsā, those two then further subdivided into twelve—eight under Mīmāṃsā, both Bhāṭṭa and Prābhākara, and four under Vedānta.²⁰ Sāṃkhya is then broken down into Sāṃkhya and Yoga, both theist and

Footnote 16 continued

rūpasyaiv<o>pakramādīparyālocanayā ‘<dhi>gatavāt tena samatvam atyant<ā>bhedarūpam bhavati na tu gauṇaṃ. SB MS f. 63r. (Chevrons mark corrections and emendations.)

¹⁷ Halbfass, “Doxographies” (1988).

¹⁸ Halbfass, “Doxographies” (1988, pp. 352–353).

¹⁹ *Sarvadarśanakaumudī* 1938. Mādhava Sarasvatī identifies himself as the author in the colophons to the *Ṣarvadarśanakaumudī*, locating himself in Gokarna Mahabaleshwar on the Karnataka coast.

²⁰ These further subvarieties are not named or specified. They appear to be based on differences over doctrines, though no doctrines are listed beyond mentioning the example of the Mīmāṃsakas’ divergences over whether the gods have bodies *Sarvadarśanakaumudī* 1938, p. 4.

nontheist.²¹ In his enumeration of views on a scale of validity, Mādhava begins with Vaiśeṣika, (but includes Jaina views there unexpectedly,) then Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, Cārvāka, Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Yogācāra, Mādhyamika, and Vedānta.

Halbfass consulted Mādhava's work as well as the anonymous *Sarvamatasaṃgraha*, which Mejer has shown must be later than 1700 AD.²² This text initially juxtaposes Vedic (*vaidika*) and nonVedic (*avaidika*) triads: Mīmāṃsā, Tarka, and Sāṃkhya vs. Bauddha, Ārhata, and Lokāyatika. On its scale of validity this text begins with the nonVedic, passing through Cārvāka, Kṣapaṇaka (i.e. Jaina), and Sugata, and further subdividing the Buddhists into four—Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika, presented as chronologically arranged from older to younger. For the Vedic schools it begins with Kaṇāda (i.e. Vaiśeṣika), then Gautama (i.e. Nyāya), here mentioning a subgroup (*ekadeśin*); then it lists Sāṃkhya and Yoga, each in both theist and nontheist forms. Finally come Mīmāṃsā, both Prābhākara and Bhaṭṭa, and the brahmavādins, those based on the Upaniṣads, and those based on the Purāṇas.²³

For both of these texts, the delineation of a heterodox trio that expands into six is in accordance with what is found in the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* texts, though the specific order of listing and the names vary; on the orthodox side there is much greater difference. Thus one could say that the two *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* texts are following a general pattern of Advaitin doxographies: they are organized in a hierarchy with Advaitin nondualism at the top, in an enumeration that moves from least valid to most, and that points out the error of lesser positions. Advaitin doxographies do allow for minor subdivisions that are off the books, so to speak, and for add-ons, and the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* texts are not unusual in having them. As for their articulation of how three orthodox and three heterodox positions become six and six, this is

²¹ *Sarvadarśanakaumudī* 1938, p. 4.

²² Mejer, "Sarvamatasaṃgraha" (2007, p. 260). Potter, *Encyclopedia* (1983, p. 570), attributes the text to an undated Rāghavānanda, without reference to secondary sources. So does the NCC (vol. 23, p. 218; vol. 38, p. 144). Both refer to the edition published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series in 1918. The editor, T. Gaṇapatiśāstrī, however, does not attribute the text to Rāghavānanda, saying instead that the author is unknown (*Sarvamatasaṃgraha* 1918, Preface). All its known manuscripts are Kerala—Cranganore and Trivandrum—and are written in the Malayalam script. The text appears to follow an earlier work with the same name composed by the sixteenth century Kerala author, Melputtur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (Mejer, "Sarvamatasaṃgraha" p. 260, *Sarvamatasaṃgraha* 1977. Note that the NCC, (vol. 38, p. 144) has conflated the two publications of the *Sarvamatasaṃgraha*. Unni Madhavan is in fact the editor of the 1977 edition of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's work). There may be a third text with this name, composed by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's father, Mātrdatta (NCC vol. 23, p. 218 ; NCC vol. 38, p. 144). There is a manuscript of a *Sarvamatasaṃgraha* that is attributed to a Mātrdatta (Trav. Uni. 1028-G—Alph. Index vol. IV p. 9). This manuscript, though complete, is considerably shorter (200 granthas) than manuscripts of the unattributed text, at least those where a length is given in the description—Trav. Uni. C-2310 (Alph. Index vol. IV p. 9) (650 granthas incomplete), Triv. Cur. V 82 and 83 (both 550 granthas). Thus while the anonymous *Sarvamatasaṃgraha* was composed too late for Nīlakaṇṭha to see, it emerges from a tradition of works that predates him.

²³ There are two overlapping organizational schemes here. The operative distinction is doctrinal, between those for whom the saguṇabrahman is ultimate—Rāmānuja and so on, and those for whom the nirguṇabrahman is ultimate—Śāṅkara for the Upaniṣadic side, and the Paurāṇikas for the other.

unprecedented, in its specifics, in earlier works, or at least, this articulation is not found in other published doxographies.²⁴

The other takeaway for what follows is the general conservatism of the genre. In the seventeenth century Advaitin śāstrins are still including Cārvākas and Vaibhāṣikas in their topography of thought, while not necessarily mentioning their contemporary rivals, that is, the spokesmen of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas. The only notable exception is Vidyāraṇya in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, who does mention Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas as contemporary schools of thought. Vidyāraṇya there describes the views of the Mādhvas, as the *purnaprajñadarśana*. In doing so he is unique among Advaitin doxographers, so far as I have been able to find.²⁵

The Structure of the Text

Let us now turn to the text. As this paper will present only selected passages of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*, its overall structure is given here for convenient reference.

In the first three verses, the text goes through each of the thirteen systems with respect to three questions. First, what really exists and how, in terms of the subject of experience and the object (*jñāna* and *jñeya*)? Nīlakaṇṭha poses the question this way in order to allow for those positions that doubt the reality of the subject or of the object. Second, in liberation, what of all this is there? The question is answered from the point of view of the liberated subject or soul. Third, what explains the world of ordinary existence (*vyavahāra*) as it is? That is, what gives rise to and continues it, and what makes its operation comprehensible? In the fourth verse, the text turns aside from the collective survey to describe the views of the Mīśras. The fifth verse then cites the Upaniṣadic passages that Nīlakaṇṭha considers to lie behind those views. In the sixth verse Nīlakaṇṭha describes some subgroup of Mīśras whose views do not coincide with those of other Mīśras (*tadekadeśimatam*). In the seventh he takes up a critique of Mīśra views (*dūṣaṇa*). In the eighth verse Nīlakaṇṭha further distinguishes the Mīśras from the other twelve views, which conform in their explanation of liberation, and further criticizes them. In the ninth and tenth verses Nīlakaṇṭha moves to Vedānta, ruling out the validity of Viśiṣṭādvaitin, Dvaitin, and other readings of the Upaniṣads that differ from the Advaitin one. Here the Mīśras are not mentioned.

Thus although the Mīśras are a supernumerary addition to Nīlakaṇṭha's doxography, more than half of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is taken up with considering their doctrines. The Mīśras appear in all of the first eight verses, and dominate the fourth through the eighth.

In the fifth verse and elsewhere in the text, Nīlakaṇṭha cites passages from the Upaniṣads, and even from the *R̥gveda*, in order to give the terms of reference for the philosophical systems he is enumerating. It is not that Nīlakaṇṭha claims the various positions, even the heterodox ones, explicitly cite or depend on these passages of śruti, but rather that these passages orient Nīlakaṇṭha's explanation of them in their

²⁴ There are dozens more texts whose titles begin with *Ṣaḍdarśana-*, *Ṣaḍdarśanī-*, *Sarvadarśana-*, *Sarvamata-*, and *Sarvasiddhānta-* (NCC vol. 36 pp. 269–274; vol. 38 pp. 118–120, 144, 162–164). Almost all are unpublished. Meanwhile it is worth noting that there are no other texts listed in the NCC with the title *Ṣaṭtantrī-*

²⁵ Halbfass, "Doxographies" (Halbfass 1988, p. 353).

mutual constitution. There is something else implied here: that the Veda itself has presented a doxography of possible views, which guides Nīlakaṇṭha in what he is doing.

Passages of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* About the Mīśras

The passages of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* that describe the doctrines of the Mīśras are now presented in the order in which they appear in the text, together with translation, annotation, and relevant contextual information. Many of the passages are short. Longer passages, i.e. those that fall under the third, fourth, sixth, and eighth verses, are broken into manageable parts.

The text presented is intended only as an initial draft of an edition. It is based primarily on the manuscript in the National Archives Kathmandu (N), but readings from the Harvard manuscript (H) and the Jodhpur manuscript (J) are used when they solve problems in the primary source.²⁶ Where the constituted text differs from all manuscripts, that is noted.

Verse 1: On What Really Exists and How

Nīlakaṇṭha's introduction to the text sets out his formulation of the twelve systems of thought described above. He then begins with the topic of what exists and how, expressed in terms of the subject and the object (jñāna and jñeya). He asserts that all twelve doctrines fall under four headings: those that believe only in the subject, those that believe only in the object, those that believe in both as essentially distinct, and those that believe in both as intermixed.²⁷

Nīlakaṇṭha lays out this classification in the first verse, where the Mīśras are mentioned for the first time. As with most of the verses, this one is very compressed in its exposition. For this and the following verses, I provide a paraphrase which, guided by the commentary, fills in ellipses. Only the last part of the last line of this verse pertains directly to the Mīśras.

*cidaikyam*²⁸ *vedāntāḥ suragurukaṇādāksacaranā*
jaḍaikyam te nānety api kapilayogārhatatāḥ
vimīśre te prāhur makhisugatamiśrā jaḍam asat

²⁶ The Harvard manuscript has a close affiliation to the Kathmandu manuscript. In places they share the same peculiar errors, unfortunately. The Jodhpur manuscript has more superficial errors than the other two, but is more independent of the other two in places. I shall not show all of the minor scribal errors that are found in the manuscripts, especially not in the Harvard manuscripts, only those variants that make a difference to the meaning of the text. Where the constituted text differs from both manuscripts, the variants are recorded. The representation of anusvāras and nasals, of internal sandhi, and of punctuation has been standardized without comment. The edition also regularizes missing or oversupplied anusvāras and visargas, missing –c before ch-, and so on. Only the folio turns for the Kathmandu manuscript are indicated, with chevrons.

²⁷ *sarvāny etāni jñānajñeyayor dvayor eva padārthayor jñānaikāntatājñeyaikāntatobhayaprthaktvobhayaivaiśiṣṭyabhedāt caturṣv eva mateṣv antarbhavanṭīy āsāyenaḥa*. N f.1v, H f.1v, J f.2r.

²⁸ N f.1v, H f.1v-2r, J f.2v.

tadutthā cit kāryam kṣayi na ca sadā yogikalitaṃ || 1 (Śikhariṇī)

The Upaniṣads maintain the oneness of the subject. The Cārvākas, Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas maintain the oneness of the object. The stalwart exponents of Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the view of the Jains declare that the two are essentially distinct. The Mīmāṃsakas, Buddhists, and Mīśras hold that they are intermixed. (Some) Buddhists hold that the objective world is not real, (or) that produced things are impermanent. The Mīmāṃsakas hold that the subject arises from (the insentient objective world). Some Mīśras say that the created world is impermanent in part; others that none of it is impermanent, because it is observed at all times by the yogis.

At the end of the commentary to this verse, by far the longest comment on any of the verses, Nīlakaṇṭha comes to the Mīśras by way of a citation from the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (1.2).

*eteṣāṃ*²⁹ *dvādaśānām api matānām mūlaṃ śvetāśvataropaniṣadi dr̥ṣyate. 'kālaḥ svabhāvo niyatir yadr̥cchā bhūtāni yoniḥ puruṣasya iti cintyam' iti.*³⁰ *Tatra niyatir adr̥ṣṭam. yadr̥cchā tv aniyamaḥ. sarvāṇy apy etāni vyāvahārikāṇi jagatkāraṇānīti vakṣyati.*
tatra cidaikyavādinām cinmā<4v>*traṃ jaḍaikyavādinām jaḍamātraṃ pṛthak-tvamīśratvavādayor api kāryatvena dr̥ṣyatvena vābhipretasyāhamamśasya kṣayitvāc cinmātraṃ mokṣe śiṣyate; tad idam uktaṃ, kāryam kṣayīti. matāntaram āha na ceti. kāryam na kṣayi, yataḥ sarvaṃ sarvadā sarvāvastham tadyogibhir dr̥ṣyate iti miśramataṃ. cakārād amśa eva*³¹ <?> *kṣayi ceti jñeyam. tathā hi, ke cin miśrānusāriṇām*³² *muktadehalokādi nityam bad-dhalokādikaṃ tv anityam iti manyante. 1*

The source for these twelve systems of thought is found in the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, 'One should consider the cause (to be) time, inherent nature, destiny, chance, the elements, and the Person'³³ By destiny is meant here the unseen force (*adr̥ṣṭa*). Chance means the absence of a regular order. (The author, i.e. Nīlakaṇṭha) will later say that all of these are taken (by various schools) to be the causes of the world of ordinary experience and activity. Among these doctrines, for those who maintain there is only subject, only the subject remains in liberation; for those who maintain there is only object, only the object remains; for those who maintain the inherent separateness of the two and for those who maintain the inherent intermixture of the two, because the fragment of 'I', understood either as a created thing or as something available to experience, (because that fragment of 'I') is impermanent, mere

²⁹ N f.4r, H f.4v-5r, J f.3r.

³⁰ *Śvetāsvatara Up.* 1.2.

³¹ N, H, J amśe ve. The text is disturbed in all manuscripts.

³² N, H -ānusāriṇā. J -ānusāriṇām.

³³ In Nīlakaṇṭha's reading, *yoniḥ* is the predicate of the other six. That is, time and so on are the cause of *vyāvahāra*.

subject remains in liberation, and this is said (with) ‘the created world is impermanent.’

He states another view (with) ‘or not’. Because all things are always and in every condition beheld by the yogis, the created world is not subject to decay; this is the view of the Mīśras. Since the verse has an ‘and’ here, we should understand an alternative view among them, that it is subject to decay in part. For some followers among the Mīśras think that the bodies and the world of the freed are permanent, while the world and other things of the enslaved are impermanent.

Notes:

Several things about the Mīśras that are mentioned in this passage reappear later. The use of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* as a doxographic framework will return in the third verse.

The Mīśras did not appear in the initial enumeration of views that preceded the verse. The citation of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, and the return at this point in the commentary to a synthetic discussion after treatment of individual systems, is as close as the text comes to an introduction to the Mīśras.

The distinctive view about yogic perception that is attributed to the Mīśras returns in the fourth verse. Here it appears to be a sort of Berkeleyan validation of the reality of the world because it is always beheld by inerrant minds which, in an echo of the Sarvāstivādin view, can perceive things in their past, present, and future states.

Nilakaṇṭha makes a distinction between those Mīśras who believe that both heaven and earth are permanent, and those who believe that only the world and bodies of the freed are permanent. The content of this distinction as well as the fact of it, return in the sixth verse.

Verse 2: On What There is in Liberation

In the second verse Nilakaṇṭha surveys the systems of thought concerning what of the world there is for the subject once freed, from the point of view of that subject. The Mīśras come last again, and are excluded from a conformity of view that Nilakaṇṭha finds in the others.

*atha*³⁴ *sarveṣāṃ miśrād anyeṣāṃ muktāv aikamatyam āha.*

*cinmātraṃ sām̐khyayogaḥ śrutiśikharavidāḥ karṁiṇaś cāṇiṣedhāj
jainā nityordhvagaṃ taj jaḍam iva kaṇabhug gautamaś ca tribauddhī |
nirjñeyajñānadhārāṃ svaviraham avadan śūnyadehāt̐mabhājau
mokṣaṃ te 'smin vikalpā nirahami bhavavaddvaitabhānaṃ tu miśrāḥ || 2
(Sragdharā)*

Now (the author) states the unity of opinion about liberation among all (systems of thought) other than the Mīśras.

³⁴ N f.4v, H f.5r, J f.3r-3v.

The Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools and the Vedāntins have said that liberation is pure subject. So have the Mīmāṃsakas, since they don't deny the agent of ritual action. The Jainas say that the freed subject goes upward forever. The Vaiśeṣikas and the Naiyāyikas say that the subject is as it were insentient. Three of the Bauddha schools: Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, and Yogācāra, say that it is a stream of cognition that has no object of cognition. The Mādhyamakas and Cārvākas say it is the absence of self, and that the various conceptions of liberation do not come near this state, from which the sense of 'I' has been removed. The Mīśras, meanwhile, say that there is experience of multiplicity in the state of freedom, as there is during ordinary existence.

At the end of the relatively brief commentary on this verse, Nīlakaṇṭha discusses the Mīśras.

mīśrās³⁵ tu saṃsāra iva mokṣe 'pi pañcadhābhedamānam icchanti. 2

The Mīśras, meanwhile, would have it that there is warrant for asserting that the five-fold difference continues in salvation, just as in ordinary life.

Notes:

The five-fold difference for the saved souls returns in verses 4 and 6. The *pañcabheda* is a core doctrine of the Mādhyas, asserted frequently already by the founder.³⁶ I do not find an explicit articulation of the five-fold difference (between God and soul, God and creation, soul and creation, among souls, among things in creation) in Vanamālī's writings, though he clearly assumes it, for example in the *Śrutisiddhāntaparakāśa*.³⁷ Vanamālī does insist that the liberated are embodied and have fun in the Vaikuṇṭha heaven and elsewhere.³⁸ He criticizes the liberation doctrine of the Jainas, of the four kinds of Buddhists, and of the proponents of the Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika.³⁹ If indeed Vanamālī is the Mīśra that Nīlakaṇṭha is referring to, his views on liberation do confirm Nīlakaṇṭha's separation of him from other schools of thought.

Verse 3: On What Explains Ordinary Existence

In the third verse Nīlakaṇṭha takes up the question of ordinary worldly existence (vyavahāra), and what explains it according to the various systems of thought. While he has claimed in the previous verse that all of the systems aside from the Mīśras are united in their view of freedom, he asserts no such uniformity on this new question.

evam⁴⁰ eṣāṃ muktāv aikamatyam uktvā vyavahāre bhedaṃ āha.

³⁵ N f.5r. H f.5v. J f.3v.

³⁶ See e.g. Mesquita's citation of Madhva's *Aitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya* where he refers to a passage of the *Bhaviṣyatparvan*. Mesquita, *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* (2000, p. 192) n.396.

³⁷ The second section ends: iti bhedapañcake pratyakṣam. *ŚSP* p. 10.

³⁸ *VSS* 1.34.

³⁹ *VSS* 1.101-43.

⁴⁰ N f.5r. H f.5v. J f.3v-4r.

*śrūyante ye nayāḥ ṣaṭ⁴¹ jagadudayalaye⁴² śūnyavādī yadṛcchām
nagno⁴³ bhūtasvabhāvau⁴⁴ puruṣam api gurur madhyamau prāha yoniṃ
eko 'ntyam dvāv anādyān sugatabaṭṣu puṃkālabhūtāni mīśro
yajvā<5v>drṣṭam ca kartā patim api kapilaḥ puṃpradhānasvabhāvān ||⁴⁵ 3
(Sragdharā)*

Having stated the unity of opinion among these (systems), (the author) now describes (their) differences when it comes to ordinary existence.

Of the six explanations given in the śruti passage (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.2) concerning the origin and dissolution of the world, (the Vedāntins declare all six to be the cause. Among these causes,) the Mādhyamika assert only chance. The Jainas say that chance as well as the elements, inherent nature, and the soul are the cause. The Cārvākas say only the middle two (of these four). Yogācāra says it is only the last, (i.e. cognition.) The Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas say it is the ones other than the first (i.e. the elements, inherent nature, and cognition.) The Mīśras say that God, time, and the elements are the cause. The Mīmāṃsakas add adṛṣṭa (to the Mīśras's list, understanding puruṣa only as the individual soul). The Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas (add puruṣa in the form of) the Lord, while the Sāṃkhya says that Spirit, Matter, and inherent nature are the causes.

Notes:

The transmission of the text of this verse is disturbed, perhaps because of its compression and the intricate sequencing that makes its meaning opaque. Here we must rely on the commentary even more than elsewhere.

The passage from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* that was cited in the commentary on the first verse forms the framework of explanation for this section.⁴⁶ On Nīlakaṇṭha's reading, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 1.2 lists six factors that explain why ordinary existence comes into being and ceases to be, and why it is the way that it is. Using this passage enables Nīlakaṇṭha to frame the metaphysical question so as to show the explanatory deficiency of all non-Vedāntin systems, with the backing of the Veda in saying so. The Vedāntins, he says in the commentary, as followers of the śruti accept all six.⁴⁷ Others, seeking a shortcut, limit themselves to a smaller number, not realizing that this contradicts experience.⁴⁸

⁴¹ N, H, J dviṣaṭ. This reading would make the line hypermetric.

⁴² N –laya. H, J –laye.

⁴³ N naśno. H nagno. J nagnā.

⁴⁴ N –svabhāvī. H –svabhāvo. J –svabhāvau.

⁴⁵ After yajvādrṣṭam and before kapilaḥ: N yanikartā ca mapi māya. H patikartā ca ma{6r} māya. H has a faint correction of māya to mapi in a different hand. J pratikartā ca mapi māpa.

⁴⁶ Again, the six explanations listed in the Upaniṣad are kāla, svabhāva, niyati, yadṛcchā, bhūtāni, and puruṣa.

⁴⁷ 'kālaḥ svabhāva' iti mantrē proktāni ṣaḍ api kālādīni kāraṇāni jagadudayākārāṇīti vedāntāḥ. N. f.5v, H. f.6r, J f.4r.

⁴⁸ tatra lāghavapriyā vādināḥ katipayair evaitaiḥ kāryotpattim upapādayanto vyavahāravirodham na paśyanti. N. f.5v, H. f.6r, J f.4r.

The use of ‘api’ in the verse indicates an addition has been made to the causes listed for the preceding doctrine. Thus the Jainas’ acceptance of the elements, inherent nature, and the soul is to be understood as in addition to accepting chance, which was the only cause accepted by the Mādhyamikas, but now understood as the uncertainty that is entailed by the Jainas’ syādvāda. Note also that, in keeping with Nīlakaṇṭha’s synthesis in the first verse, the term ‘puruṣa’ is understood variously as the ātman, the jīva, the vijñāna, the parameśvara, and Spirit. Our concern here is with the doctrine of the Mīśras, for whom all is explained by time, God, and the elements, with no need to call on fate, chance, or inherent nature.

In the commentary to this verse, Nīlakaṇṭha comes to the Mīśras after treating Vedānta, Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Cārvāka, the other two Buddhist schools, and the Jainas, in that order. The Mīśras do not come last here so that they can be grouped with several other schools.

*kālo*⁴⁹ *bhūtāni parameśvaraś ceti tribhīr eva miśrāḥ sarvanirvāham*⁵⁰ *icchanti. yad apy eteṣāṃ sukhaduḥkhādivaicitrye hetur niyatīḥ svabhāvo vā nāsti, tathāpi jyotiḥśāstraprāmāṇyāt*⁵¹ *kāla eva taddhetur ity āgrahaḥ.*

The Mīśras prefer to think that the accomplishment of everything in the world is brought about by time, the elements, and the supreme Lord. Although on their view neither fate nor inherent nature can be the cause of the variety of experiences (that souls have), such as their happiness and sadness, nevertheless they boldly maintain that the cause of life’s variety is time alone, relying on the authority of the astral science.

Notes:

A second distinctive and peculiar doctrine is attributed to the Mīśras here. According to Nīlakaṇṭha, the reason they think that time is a cause sufficient to explain why individual experiences in life vary is because of the validity of astrological prediction. That is, astrology correctly predicts changes in the fortunes of a life, based on changes in the patterns of time. Nīlakaṇṭha will have more to say on this below under verse 4.

I pass over the treatment of the Mīmāṃsakas, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and Sāṃkhya that follows, (and presumably Yoga, though not mentioned). For the purposes of this study it suffices to review the factors that Nīlakaṇṭha allots to them: Mīmāṃsakas—kāla, bhūtāni, puruṣa, (understanding puruṣa as the jīva), and adṛṣṭa; Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika—kāla, bhūtāni, puruṣa, (both as jīva and as īśvara), and adṛṣṭa; Sāṃkhya—(Yoga?)—puruṣa as spirit, bhūtāni as prakṛti, and svabhāva.

*atra*⁵² *miśrādayas catvāro yadṛcchāśabditaṃ kāryasyānirvacanīyatvam anabhūpagaṃya tanniruktāv abhimānaṃ dhārayanta ākare*⁵³ *eva nirākṛtāḥ. teṣu*

⁴⁹ N f.6v, H f.7v, J f.5r.

⁵⁰ N, H sarvanirvanirvāham, J sarvanirvāham.

⁵¹ N, H jyotiḥśāstraprāmāṇyāt, J jyotiḥśāstraprāmāṇyāt.

⁵² N. f.7r, H f.8r, J f.5v.

⁵³ N ākāre. H, J ākāre.

eva ye svabhāvaṃ necchanti teṣāṃ bījāntarād⁵⁴ āṅkurāntarotpattir⁵⁵ durvārā. prakārāntareṇa tadupapādane vyavahāravirodhaḥ. evaṃ mīśrasya niyatim anicchato 'kṛtābhyāgamo durvārah. tasmāt kālasvabhāvaniyatīyadr̥cchābhūtapuruṣaiḥ ṣaḍbhir api⁵⁶ jagaj-janmādayo nirvartyanta⁵⁷ ity aupaniṣadam eva mataṃ vijayatetarām. 3

Among these views, the four (in the preceding discussion) that begin with the Mīśras do not accept that what arises is inexplicable, dependent on chance in the (śruti's) terms. They are confident that it can be explained. But they are refuted just in the source text itself. Those among the four (including the Mīśras) who don't wish to accept the inherent nature of things as the cause for the behaviour of those things have a difficulty in avoiding the undesirable entailment that the sprout of one species could arise from the seed of another. And if they were to explain it in another way, that would contradict the common experience of how the world is. In the same way, for the Mīśras, who do not accept the idea of Fate, it is hard to avoid the entailment of (punishments or rewards for someone who has) not done (the action that morally occasions those punishments and rewards.)

Therefore, the beginning (and end) of the world and (other developments of ordinary existence) are brought about by all six factors: time, inherent nature, destiny, chance, the elements, and the Person. Thus the Upaniṣadic view is triumphant.

Notes:

Nīlakaṇṭha has grouped the Mīśras with the Mīmāṃsakas, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, and Sāṃkhya (and Yoga), because none of these schools accepts chance, and Nīlakaṇṭha can criticize this absence collectively. He singles out the Mīśras for not accepting fate, even though in his scheme several other schools do not accept it either.

“ākara” here refers to the source text or to some more compendious treatment of the subject. There is no obvious return to accident and indescribability elsewhere in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. In Nīlakaṇṭha's magnum opus, the *Vedāntakataka*, he does reject several forms of satkāryavāda, concluding that the source of the world is inexplicable māyā.⁵⁸

Verse 4: The View of the Mīśras

After the presentation of the first three verses, Nīlakaṇṭha has made clear that the views of the Mīśras are different from those of everyone else. In the fourth verse, Nīlakaṇṭha provides a summary of their views, for two reasons: because they have

⁵⁴ N, H bījāntarā. J bījāntarād.

⁵⁵ N, J omit final –r. H reads.

⁵⁶ N ṣaḍbhi pi. H, J ṣaḍbhir api.

⁵⁷ N, H, J nivartyanta.

⁵⁸ *tasmād anirvacanīyeyaṃ citiśaktiś cidbhāsyatvād acidrūpā citpratibimbagarbhā satī māyā 'vyākṛtam avyaktaṃ devāmasaktir ityādiśabdair vedānteṣu gīyate— Vedāntakataka SB 27520 f.6v.*

come up as a topic, and because they are unknown to Nīlakaṇṭha's audience. This verse and its commentary are accordingly presented in full here.

*evam⁵⁹ miśrād anyeṣāṃ dvādaśānāṃ vādināṃ mukte<7v>r aikarūpyaṃ
vyavahāropapādane prakārabhedam ca vyākhyāya prasaṅgād asmadīyeṣv
aprasiddhatvāc ca miśramataṃ saṃkṣipya darśayati, avyaktād iti.
avyaktād īśabijāt svamahimavidhṛtāt cijjaḍātmā⁶⁰ bhavadrur⁶¹
jajñe puṃsīva yūkā⁶² cikuram iha layaṃ naity asau yogigamaḥ |
kālo vaiṣamyahetur bhuji kuṇapayujām atra karmaṇyamuktaḥ
svar bhaktaḥ⁶³ kaṃ tv akarmā kumatir aghahatau yāty anīśas tamo'nte⁶⁴ || 4
(Sragdharā)*

Thus having explained that, apart from the Miśras, the twelve schools of thought are in accord concerning liberation, but have different approaches to accounting for the world of ordinary activity, (the author) now gives a concise description of the doctrine of the Miśras, since it is not known among us and since it is connected with what he has been discussing (prasaṅgāt).

The tree of existence, consisting of both matter and spirit, arose from a seed of God that was unmanifest, established separately in His own greatness. Just as a lock of hair with lice (does not return) into the man (from which it sprang) so does this world never dissolve into its source, for it is always perceptible to the yogis (as existent). Time, independent of personal effort, is the cause of the (apparent) unfairness in this world, in the lived experience of those who are conjoined with mortal bodies. The devotee goes to heaven. Those that are innocent, (animals and plants and so on,) reach the world of enjoyment, and so do those (faithful) with confused minds once their sin has been expiated. But the godless go into the Hell called Darkness at the end.

Notes:

This mention of the Miśras' being 'unknown among us' is significant in determining who they are. There will be more discussion in the final section. It is also possible that 'aprasiddha' simply means not accepted.

The commentary has something to say about most of the claims made in the verse, and we will reserve discussion until we reach those comments.

The 'seed' of the Lord is the source, the metaphorical counterpart to the tree (dru) of worldly existence. It is glossed in the commentary as the Lord's unlimited and manifold power.

The usage of the term yūkācikura in the verse suggests that it is to be taken as a compound.

⁵⁹ The full text of vs. 4 and commentary extends over N ff.7r-8v, H ff.8r-9v, J ff.5v-6v.

⁶⁰ N cijjaḍālā. H, J cijjaḍātmā.

⁶¹ N, J bhavadur. H bhavadrur.

⁶² N, J yukā. H yukā, corrected to yūka, in a diff. hand.

⁶³ N, J svarbhakta. H svarbhakta corrected to svarbhaktaḥ, in a diff. hand.

⁶⁴ N, J yāty anīśas tamānte. H. yānītyaśās tamānte, corrected in a diff. hand to yāty anīśas tamante.

karmaṇya-muktaḥ ‘independent of personal effort,’ is taken here as a description of time or *kāla* at the beginning of the line. It could also be construed with the *bhaktaḥ* in the next line: either segmented as *karmaṇy amuktaḥ*, not stinting from religious activity, though the use of a locative would be odd, or else as a *tatpuruṣa*, i.e. ‘liberated through diligence.’

I take *kam* as a neuter noun meaning happiness. This would correspond with the enjoyment-worlds mentioned in the commentary.

avyaktād rūpādihīnāt īśabījavād⁶⁵ vicitrānantaśakteḥ. sve mahima<ni?> pratiṣṭhitāc⁶⁶ cetanācetanātmāyaṃ⁶⁷ saṃsāravṛkṣo jajñe jīvadehād iva yūkācīkuraṃ tadvad eva ca svopādāne na līyate yato yogigamyah. vyākhyāto 'yaṃ hetuḥ. ataḥ puṃyūkayor iva īśajīvayoh svasvopādhyoh kadācid apy anvīrtter ghaṭamaṭhākāśayor iva nābhedasambhāvanāpy asti.

‘From the unmanifest’ (in the verse means) from what is devoid of form and so on. From God’s manifold and unlimited power, which is like a seed. ‘Separated’ means established in His own greatness. This tree of continued existence, of both sentient and insentient nature, arose, as a lock of hair with lice (arises) from the body of an individual soul and does not dissolve back into that person. In the same way the (tree of existence) does not dissolve back into its own material cause, because it is perceptible to the yogis. This reason has been explained earlier. And therefore, because there is never a cessation of the delimiting characteristics of God and the individual soul, just as there is no cessation of what distinguishes human and louse, there is not even the possibility of imagining that the two are not different in the way that there is for the space enclosed by a pot and the space by a hermitage.

Note:

I have made the conjecture that *īśadvījavād* should be read as *īśabījavād*, which is plausible orthographically, and which makes more sense, given the wording of the verse.

The commentary on the louse-lock fills out the sense of this analogy. It appears to be based on an aetiology of head lice as spontaneously emerging not from other lice, but from the person, in the hair as it grows.⁶⁸ *puṃsi* is probably intended here both as the *Puruṣa* and as the lice-infested person. The point is that the louse is a living thing that emerges from the man, but that is separate from him and never returns into him. This is probably not the *Miśras*’ analogy but *Nīlakaṇṭha*’s unflattering one.

That the world is permanently real because it is perceptible to yogis in all times was already discussed in the first verse. No doctrine of *Madhva* or of *Vanamālī* maps easily onto this assertion of *Nīlakaṇṭha*’s. The *Mādhva* school does, however, accord the highest epistemic status to perception among the *pramāṇas*.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ N, H, J *īśadvījavād*.

⁶⁶ N *mahimapratiṣṭhitān*, H *mahimapratiṣṭhitān*, J *mahimapratiṣṭhitāc*.

⁶⁷ N, H *cetanācetanācetanātpṛāyaṃ*. J *cetanācetanātmāyaṃ*.

⁶⁸ The *Āyurvedic* text, the *Carakasamhitā* (3.7.10) attributes the cause of headlice to the host’s lack of cleanliness. My thanks to Dominik Wujastyk for this reference.

⁶⁹ Narain, *Outline* (1962, p. 49). *Vanamālī* accepts this view in *ŚSP* 7–10, pp. 71–79.

Furthermore, its criterion for determining whether something is real is that it has been perceived correctly and without later sublation, at some time and place.⁷⁰ What is more, memory is accepted as a *pramāṇa*, underpinned by the belief that yogic perception is unmediated, flawless knowledge of past, present, and future.⁷¹ Madhva asserts in the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa* that yogic perception takes in all things completely other than God, and is beginningless and eternal.⁷² If the Mīśras are indeed Mādhvas, Nīlakaṇṭha has imputed to them what appears to be an entailment of their views, that the world once created does not end, because yogic knowledge of the world does not end.

na caivaṃ pūrvajanmābhāvād akṛtābhyāgamaḥ syād ity āśankyāha, kāla iti. jātakatājakādīśāstrapramāṇyāt śubhāśubha⁷³ grahanirīkṣitāyā niṣekotpatti⁷⁴ varṣamāsadinapraveśa⁷⁵ velāyā eva dehinaṃ bhogavaicitryahetutve sambhavati prākjanmanas taddhe<8r>tutatkalpanānarthikety arthaḥ.

There could be an objection to the Mīśras' view that since there are no previous births, (i.e. since there is no karmic continuity between lives), there would be the (undesirable entailment) of someone undergoing (the results of deeds) that he hasn't done. (Describing how the Mīśras address this objection,) he says (in the verse,) 'Time.'

When according to the authority of the astrological sciences—genethiology, Persianate prorogation—and so on, the right moment, being aspected by auspicious and inauspicious planets at the onset of the day, month, and year of conception and birth, is the cause of the variety of life experiences, it is pointless to imagine that a previous birth is the cause of that (variety).

Notes:

The *evaṃ* suggests that because the soul and God are ever distinct, on the Mīśras' view, therefore there is no moral continuity of action. But there are dualists who accept the existence of *saṃsāric* karma; certainly Madhva did. Nīlakaṇṭha appears here to be extending the point made in the third verse, that the Mīśras do not accept destiny or chance as a sufficient explanation of the justice of life. In the third verse Nīlakaṇṭha brought out the importance of *svabhāva*, inherent nature, for the Mīśras. Madhva accorded a special importance to the inherent nature of individual souls. There is a threefold distinction among them: some will be reborn eternally; some will attain liberation; and some will be eternally damned. On this view, karma as an explanation is subordinate to the predestiny implicit in a soul's inherent nature.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, p. 51).

⁷¹ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, p. 143).

⁷² Mesquita, *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* (2000, pp. 240–245).

⁷³ N, H śubhāśubhāśubha. J śubhāśubha.

⁷⁴ N, H, J niṣekotpattir.

⁷⁵ N, H varṣamāsadinapraveśe, J varṣamāsatradivapraveśe.

⁷⁶ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, pp. 281–288). Cf. Vanamālī's *VSS* 1.22.

Tājika is a hybrid form of astrological horoscopy in Sanskrit that uses explicitly Arabo-Persianate forms of prorogation and so on.⁷⁷

According to the passage here, time explains the apparent unfairness of our lives, not fate or chance or karma. Astrology offers the warrant for the truth of this claim. This is a view and a reason that came up in the third verse. I find no appeal to jyotiḥśāstra, the astral sciences, as a way to explain the variety of experience anywhere in the writings of Vanamālī Mīśra or of Madhva or Jayatīrtha. If the Mīśras were indeed to be identified as Mādhvas, this attribution would remain unexplained.

ata aihikasukhaduḥkhaprāptiparihārārthaṃ na yatitavyaṃ śubhāśubhakāla-prāpitasyāparihāryatvāt.⁷⁸ āmuṣmika⁷⁹ sukhaduḥkhaprāptiparihāropāyau tu śāstrīyāv anuṣṭheyāv eva. tīśājñārūpasya vidhiniṣedhaśāstrasyānul-laṅghanīyatvāt.

That being so, there is no point in striving to find happiness in this world, or to avoid misery, because both are unavoidably brought on by time, whether auspicious or inauspicious. Instead one should seek happiness in the next world, and avoid misery there, by following the course laid down in the scriptures. For the commands of the Lord, which prescribe and forbid behaviours, are not to be transgressed.

Notes:

The first sentence of this section is the justification for the description of time in the verse as ‘karmaṇyamuktaḥ,’ independent of personal effort.⁸⁰

*ata⁸¹ eveśasyaikāntabhaktāḥ svaḥśabditaṃ niratīśayanirduḥkhasukhabhogayogyā apunarāvṛttisthānaṃ yānti.
ye tv akarmāṇaḥ paśvādayo drumādayaś ca, te ‘pi iha luptaśarīrā tīśājñākāribhiḥ svargād adhastanīḥ ṣaḍ bhogabhūmīḥ praveśyante tatratajanasyopabhogārthaṃ.*

Thereby are those who are devoted solely to God fit to enjoy a happiness unsurpassed and without sorrow. They go to a place called ‘heaven’ from which they do not return.

Meanwhile the innocent, that is, animals and trees and the like, who are not moral agents (akarmāṇaḥ), when they lose their (physical) bodies in the world the servants of God make them enter one of the six worlds of enjoyment that lie below heaven, where they serve for the experiences of the people there.

⁷⁷ Pingree, “Tājika” (1997); Gansten, “Authorities” (2012).

⁷⁸ H, N *prāpitasya tasyāparihāryatvāt*. J *prāpitasyāparihāryatvāt*.

⁷⁹ N *āsuṣmika-*. H, J *āmuṣmika-*

⁸⁰ On what constitutes good and bad action, see *VSS* 1.12–13; on worldly pleasures *VSS* 6.1–10.

⁸¹ N *atta*. H, J *ata*.

Notes:

Vanamālī certainly endorses bhakti as the path to a permanent heaven in which there is pleasure (sukha) but no pain, and no return to earth.⁸²

īśājñākāribhiḥ—Those who carry out the commands of God. These would be all of the other deities in Madhva's hierarchy of the sacred. What is worthy of note is that it is not the impersonal workings of karma but agents of God's will who bring about rewards and punishments.

The six worlds of enjoyment. bhogabhūmi usually refers in the Purāṇic cosmology to the other continents on earth aside from Jambūdvīpa, and to the other parts of the Jambūdvīpa aside from Bhārata, which is the karmabhūmi. They are places where one experiences the results of actions done in Bhārata, the karmabhūmi. The Jains make a similar horizontal geographical distinction between karmabhūmi and bhogabhūmi, in the regions of their huge earth.⁸³

Here the six enjoyment-worlds are described as below heaven. The use of bhūmi here suggests that they are arranged in levels. They appear to be between heaven and earth, therefore. They are specifically for those who have finished life on earth. The plants and animals are endowed with bodies made of some less concrete stuff. Vanamālī makes no mention of sentient creatures innocent of karma. For him, even plants are reincarnated beings.⁸⁴

The people located there are discussed in the next passage.

ye tu seśvarā api pāpakṛtas⁸⁵ te mṛtāḥ nirayadvāri sthitā narakoṣmaṇā pāpānurūpaṃ mṛdu tivrāṃ tivrataṃ pāpacyamānā yātanām anubhavanti. te kalpāvasāne viniṣpāpā īśājñāvaśāl labdhapūrvadehā adhastanīr bhogabhūmīr āviśya karmānurūpaṃ sukham anubhavanti.

As for those who are godly but yet sinners, when they die they end up at the gates of hell, where they are thoroughly roasted by hell's heat and thereby undergo a punishment, whether mild, intense, or very intense, that is in keeping with their sin. At the end of the Age of the World, when they are free from sin, they regain their old bodies at the command of God, and enter the worlds of enjoyment below heaven. There they enjoy happiness in keeping with their (good) deeds (on earth.)

Notes:

The Indian cosmological term 'kalpa' that is used here might be misleading. There is no suggestion in the doctrines of the Mīśras that there is a cycle of creation that begins again. Thus I have translated as the End of the Age. As has been mentioned in the first verse, some Mīśras think the mundane world never ends; others that it does. All apparently think that the heavenly world never does. For Madhva and for

⁸² VSS 2.72–82; 6.59–60.

⁸³ Kirfel, *Kosmographie* (1920, pp. 25, 58, 112, 314).

⁸⁴ VSS 1.50.

⁸⁵ N, H, J āpakṛtas.

⁸⁶ VSS 5.102–103; ŚSD 75.

Vanamālī, the body and world of God is permanent.⁸⁶ Vanamālī describes hells that consist in burning heat, e.g. a sandy land in the hot sun.⁸⁷ I find no mention of a gateway, however. The worlds of enjoyment might find a counterpart in the lower heavens through which those gradually liberated, the kramamuktas, pass.⁸⁸

ye tv aham eveśvaro na matto 'nya īśvaro 'stīti manyante, te narakadvāri sūkṣmadehena yātanām labdhvā punaḥ kalpānte sthūladehair yojitā akṣayye narake tamaḥsamjñe yānty ante.

Those on the other hand who think that there is no God but I, they (too) undergo punishment in their spiritual body at the gates of hell until the end of the Age of the World, when, reunited with their physical bodies, they are sent to the unending hell called Darkness.

Notes:

The godless, like the godly but sinning, are reunited with a physical body after they have completed their punishment. In these bodies they remain forever in a hell called Tamas. In some Jaina cosmologies there is a next lowest hell called Tamas, and a lowest hell called Tamastamas.⁸⁹ The Mādhvas also have a lowest hell called Tamas.⁹⁰

tataḥ svarganarakayor dvāravipidhāne samvṛte <8v> na ko 'pi svargād adhaḥ patati nāpy evaṃ⁹¹ narakād bahir niḥsaratīti kalpaḥ samāpyate. tasmān nityasukhārthī kalyāṇam evācared iti siddham. 4.

When the Age of the World comes to an end, the doors of the gates of heaven and hell are closed. Then no one can fall from heaven, nor similarly can they escape from hell. Therefore, one who wishes for eternal happiness should behave correctly.

Notes:

As mentioned above, the followers of Madhva do maintain a permanent heaven and hell for God and certain predestined souls. I find no reference in Vanamālī to gates that are shut at the end of the age, however.

Verse 5: The Basis in śruti for the Mīśras' Views

In the next verse, Nīlakaṇṭha provides what he sees as the Vedic scriptural basis for the views of the Mīśras. He singles out the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* for attention here. In his commentary on the fifth verse he cites from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* five

⁸⁷ VSS 1.55–58.

⁸⁸ VSS 2.52–56.

⁸⁹ Kirfel, *Kosmographie* (1920, pp. 315–325).

⁹⁰ On the permanence of hell for the lowest in nature, see Sarma, *Introduction* (2003, pp. 57–58). Vanamālī predicts hell for the nondualists, who think that they are brahman VSS 6.137–38.

⁹¹ N, H, J etaṃ.

times, and once from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Taittirīya*, *Muṇḍaka*, and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads*, as well as from the *Vāyupurāṇa*.⁹² As has been mentioned above, it is not that Nīlakaṇṭha thinks the Mīśras explicitly refer to these passages, but that these passages represent in Vedāntic terms the grounding for the positions that the Mīśras hold, and enable Nīlakaṇṭha to form a view of their position and to offer a criticism.

This verse and commentary present no additional doctrines that are attributed to the Mīśras, who are explicitly discussed only at the end. Only a summary of the argument of this section is presented here, in order to establish the context for that closing part.

The premise of the verse is based on a passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, to the effect that the Self is to be magnified (*mahayya*) and attended to (*paricarya*). The one who does so gains both this world and the next.⁹³ Therefore the one who wishes to gain both worlds should magnify and attend to the Self. This means worshipping (*pūjana*) and contemplating (*upāsana*) the Self. Nīlakaṇṭha's dummy-Mīśra understands both of these passages as Vedic injunctions (*vidhi*).

The Self in question is established by the context. It is the person seen reflected in the eye,⁹⁴ in a mirror, and in water.⁹⁵ Another passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* fortifies this conclusion.⁹⁶ Passages from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* confirm that the reflection (*pratibimba*) is what should be contemplated.⁹⁷

The worship of this Self-as-reflection is accomplished just by worshipping its prototype with garlands, sandalwood powder, and so on. But its contemplation involves intellectual inquiry and making the reflection the content of awareness in a continuous stream. When this has been done diligently for a long time without interruption, the aspirant conquers his mind, which means that he can fulfill all of his desires. He conquers the elements as well, and gets the body of a perfected being.

There are two śruti passages to this effect, in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, and in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.⁹⁸ A passage from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, too, supports the idea that the contemplation of the food-based body results in the fulfillment of all desires.⁹⁹

⁹² The passages appear in the notes below.

⁹³ *ātmaiveha mahayya ātmā paricaryya ātmānam eveha mahayyann ātmānam paricarann ubhau lokāy āpnotīnam cāmuṇ ca. Chāndogya Up. 8.8.4.*

⁹⁴ *ya eṣo 'kṣiṇi puruṣo dṛśyata eṣa ātmeti hovāca. Chāndogya Up. 8.7.4.*

⁹⁵ *atha yo 'yam bhagavo 'psu parikhyāyate yaś cāyam ādarśe katama eṣaḥ. Chāndogya Up. 8.7.4.*

⁹⁶ The Udaśarāvabrahmaṇa, *Chāndogya Up. 8.8.1ff.*

⁹⁷ *ya evāyam apsu puruṣo etam evāhaṃ brahmopāse. ya evāyam puruṣa etam evāhaṃ brahmopāse. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. 2.1.8.*

⁹⁸ *viśuddhasattvaḥ kāmayate yāṃś ca kāmān taṃ taṃ lokam jayate tāṃś ca kāmān. Muṇḍaka Up. 3.1.10. b-d. pṛthivyaptejo 'nilakhe samutthite pañcātmake yogagune pravṛtte na tasya rogo na jarā na mṛtyuḥ prāptasya yogāgnimayaśarīram. Śvetāśvatara Up. 2.1.2.*

⁹⁹ *sarvaṃ vai te 'nnaṃ āpnuvanti ye 'nnaṃ brahmopāse. Taittirīya Up. 2.2.1.*

¹⁰⁰ *daśa manvantarāṇīha tiṣṭhanīndriyacintakāḥ. bhautikās tu śataṃ pūṇaṃ sahasraṃ < tv a > bhīmānikāḥ. bauddhā daśasahasrāṇi tiṣṭhanti vigatajvarāḥ. Nīlakaṇṭha is probably citing these verses from Vācaspati*

Nīlakaṇṭha then cites three lines from the *Vāyupurāṇa* to the effect that those who contemplate as their Self the physical body, senses, intellect, or ego can remain in heaven for only fixed amounts of time.¹⁰⁰

Thus Nīlakaṇṭha's Vedic basis for the Mīśras' views lies in Upaniṣadic passages that promote the worship of the material body as the Self. These passages are not read by nondualist readers as ultimate instructions, but only as preliminary views that are superseded by other statements. That brings us to the excerpt of this section that explicitly refers to the Mīśras. It begins with a return to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*'s eighth chapter, and Prajāpati's instruction of Indra and Virocana.

*yadyapi*¹⁰¹ *prajāpateḥ pratibimbopāsanam atra na vivakṣitam, tathāpīndra*¹⁰² *virocanābhyām vidyārthibhyām dvātriṁśadvarṣaparyantaṁ brahmacaryam*¹⁰³ *caritvā bhrāntyā prajāpativākya<sya?> pratibimbopāstāv eva tātparyam* *grhītam. imau*¹⁰⁴ *deharūpapratīkopāsakau krama*¹⁰⁵ *muktisthānaprāptya-* *narhau pravrajantau abhi*¹⁰⁶ *lakṣyoktaṁ prajāpatinā*¹⁰⁷ *'yatara*¹⁰⁸ *etadupaniṣado bhaviṣyanti devā vāsura vā te parābhaviṣyanti*¹⁰⁹ *. tac* *cendraḥ svājñānam ardhathe buddhvā*¹¹⁰ *punaḥ prajāpatiṁ cājagāma*¹¹¹ *. virocanas tv abodhān na nivṛttaḥ svīyebhyaś caitad evovāceti tatraiva* *prasiddhaṁ idam eva muktadehalokayor nityatvam āsṛitya mīśraiḥ svatantra* *sarvakāryanityatvam uktam, taśtathasya ceśvarasyopāśyatvam uktam. anyad* *api kiṁ cit svamatānugunaṁ kalpitam ity āstāṁ tāvat.*

Although in this passage Prajāpati did not intend to recommend the contemplation of the Self-as-reflection, nevertheless Indra and Virocana, who had lived as students for thirty-two years practising the life of the brahmacārin, erroneously understood Prajāpati's teaching as signifying that they should contemplate that reflection. Having in mind these two, who had left student life as worshippers of an image of the body, and who were therefore unworthy to enter into the world of those who will eventually be liberated (kramamuktisthāna), Prajāpati said, 'whichever of these two, whether god or asura, will take this teaching (of reflection-worship) as their

Footnote 100 continued

Mīśra's *Tattvavaiśārādī*, on *Yogasūtra* 1.19, where Vācaspati attributes the verses to the *Vāyupurāṇa*. Vācaspati cites these verses in the *Tattvakaumudī* on *Sāṁkhyakārikā* 44 as well. The verses are not preserved in extant versions of this Purāṇa. See Śrīnivāsan, *Tattvakaumudī* 1967, p. 205.

¹⁰¹ N f.9v, H ff.10r-11v, J f.7v.

¹⁰² N, H -īndre-. J -īndra-

¹⁰³ N brahmaryam. H brahmacaryam. J brahmacarya.

¹⁰⁴ N grhīntam ramau. H, J grhītam imau.

¹⁰⁵ N, H kramā-. J krama-

¹⁰⁶ N ābhi-. H abhi-. J abhi-

¹⁰⁷ N prajāpatimā. H, J prajāpatinā.

¹⁰⁸ N, H yata. J yatara.

¹⁰⁹ *Chāndogya Up.* 8.8.4.

¹¹⁰ N, H buddhā. J buddhvā.

¹¹¹ N, H cāgāma, J ājagāma.

instruction will be defeated.’ Indra realized his own misunderstanding halfway down the road home, and so returned to Prajāpati. But Virocana, because he did not realize (his mistake), did not turn back, and proclaimed this teaching to his own (i.e. the asuras).

Now the Mīśras, depending on just this teaching of the permanence of the world and the bodies of liberated souls which is established here (i.e. in the passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*), have said in their own doctrinal system that all created things are permanent. And based on this they have said that the Lord is to be worshipped as distinct and separate (from the Self)(*taṭastha*). And they have also fancifully made up whatever other thing suits their own view. Let that be what it is.

Notes:

Nīlakaṇṭha groups the views of the Mīśras with Virocana’s understanding of Indra’s teaching. The point is probably not that the Mīśras are to be classified as Asuras, but that they are making the same mistake as the Asuras are. The larger point is that their views can be meaningfully classified according to an Upaniṣadic scheme in which they do not come out well. It does not necessarily follow, however, that belief in the permanence of the world and body of the liberated entails belief in the body as the Self. Vanamālī believes in the former (see above), but not in the latter.¹¹²

While Vanamālī cites and explains many śruti passages in his published works, I do not find any discussion by him of the ten Upaniṣadic passages that Nīlakaṇṭha has mentioned in the commentary on this verse.

Verse 6: Alternative Views Among the Mīśras

In the sixth verse, Nīlakaṇṭha describes the views of some among the Mīśras who do not accept all of the doctrines listed in the fourth verse. As we shall see, there appear to be three groups in all that fall under the rubric of ‘Mīśras.’ The divergences of two of these three from the main group are described here.

*evaṃ*¹¹³ *mīśramatasya mūlaṃ pradarśya <10r> tadekadeśimatam āha, yogīti.*
*yogi*¹¹⁴ *pratyakṣataḥ prāgjanur api janiman nityatāvat prasiddhaṃ*
syāt sūkṣmashūlabhūto dbhavam amṛtamṛtam kāryaṃ evaṃ dvirūpam |
avyaktaṃ naiva cetaḥpratham avataraṭīty asti mūrto ‘py adhiśo
*yaṃ dhyātvā tasya lokaṃ dhruvam*¹¹⁵ *abhayam ayūr dhvāntavātātma*¹¹⁶ *jākyāḥ*¹¹⁷
 || 6 (Sragdharā)

¹¹² Cf. *VSS* 3.2-5.

¹¹³ H f. 9v–10v, H 11r–12r, J 7v–8v.

¹¹⁴ N, H, J yogī-

¹¹⁵ N, H dhruvaṃ. J dhruvam.

¹¹⁶ N, H, J -ātya-

¹¹⁷ H, J -khyāḥ. N -khyāḥ.

Having shown in this way the (Vedic) basis of the doctrine of the Mīśras, the author describes a view held by only some among them.

(Some say that) previous creations, which are established to be eternal by the direct perception of the yogis, are twofold (in their metaphysical status): what arises from the subtle elements is immortal; what arises from the crude physical elements is mortal. (Another group says that) God is embodied because the invisible (God) cannot descend into the mental range (of mortals). They who are called sons of the night wind went to His world, which is steady and without fear, having contemplated Him.

Notes:

It appears the first two lines are to be taken as representing a view that explicitly differs with the general group of Mīśras on a point of metaphysics. The last two lines are apparently to be taken as the view of a second group, who have their own theology of God's manifestation to mortals.

nityatāvat—I take the *-vat* as the possessive suffix, lit. 'possessed of eternity.' *prāgjanur janiman*, the 'birth before birth' is glossed as *atītanman-* in the commentary. *janus* is an old word which appears only in the *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Nīlakaṇṭha knows the *Rgveda* well.¹¹⁸ *janiman* must be the rare *jani* plus the possessive *-mant* suffix. The words seem to refer to creation more generally rather than to individual birth, given the passage from the *Yogaśāstra* that is cited below.

That there are some Mīśras who believe the heavenly world is eternal but the world of ordinary unsaved existence is not was mentioned in the first verse. This would appear to be the view of Madhva.¹¹⁹ The warrant of yogic experience appeared in both the first and the fourth verses.

Given the manuscript variants, it may be that *amṛtamṛtaṃ* should be read as *anṛtam ṛtaṃ*. This would cause trouble for the text of the commentary that follows, however.

In the manuscripts, *dhvāntavātātmaṅkhyāḥ* could also be read *dhvāntavātāṃtyajāṅkhyāḥ*. The name of a group is given here, or given the commentary, perhaps the names of two or even three groups. It is worth recalling here, however, that Madhva described himself as the third incarnation of the Wind deity, and was so described by his followers. Vanamālī honours him as such in the maṅgala to some of his works.¹²⁰

*yaḍ uktaṃ mīśraiḥ, sarvaṃ kāryaṃ yogipratyakṣato nityaṃ iti, tan na, "daśasu mahākālpeṣu parivartamānena maye"ty ādinā yogaśāstre*¹²¹

¹¹⁸ He was probably an Āśvalāyanī. Minkowski, "Mantrakāśīkhaṇḍa," (2002).

¹¹⁹ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, pp. 222–232). Cf. *VSS* 3.64; 4.3–5.

¹²⁰ e.g. *Brahmasūtrasiddhāntamuktāvali* vs. 2: *marudamśam*.

¹²¹ *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* 3.18. Nīlakaṇṭha's rendering is a paraphrase, not a direct citation. The relevant text is given below in note 127.

¹²² N, H ābaddhajaigīṣavyasaṃvāde. J āvaddhajaigīṣavyasaṃvāde.

¹²³ N, H *-janmanāmam*. J *janmanām*.

¹²⁴ H *anṛtaṃ*. N *amṛtaṃ*. J *anityam*.

*āvatyajaigīṣavyasamvāde*¹²² ‘tītakāryāṇām ivātītanmanām¹²³ api **yo-gipratyakṣata** eva siddheḥ. tena **sthūlabhūtamayaṃ kāryaṃ mṛtaṃ** anityam.¹²⁴ **sūkṣmabhūtamayaṃ kāryaṃ amṛtaṃ**¹²⁵ nityam¹²⁶. tena muktadehalokādikaṃ sūkṣmabhūtodbhavaṃ nityam. baddhadehalokādikaṃ tu sthūlabhūtodbhavaṃ anityam.

That which the Mīśras say, that all produced things are eternal because of the perception of the yogis, is not so, because all that is proved by yogic perception is that those lifetimes existed in the past as did other produced things. For consider the dialogue between Jaigīṣavya and Āvatya recounted in the *Yogaśāstra*, which begins with him saying that he passed through ten ages of the world. Therefore produced things made of the gross physical elements are mortal, viz. impermanent; produced things made of the subtle elements are immortal, viz. permanent. Thus the bodies and world of the liberated, and all that attends them, which are produced from the subtle elements, are permanent; the bodies and world of souls before their salvation, and all that attends them, are produced from the gross physical elements and impermanent.

Notes:

The first sectarian group is presented here. They differ from the general view, introduced in the first verse and described in the fourth, that all of the creation is eternal, i.e. real in past, present, and future, because of the warrant provided by yogic experience. This group also appears to accept the deliverances of yogic experience, but restricts the nature of the permanence they validate. The reference to the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* is to a passage in the commentary on 3.18, the sūtra about gaining knowledge of previous births. Here a story is told in order to explain why this knowledge would be desirable. In answering a question from Āvatya, Jaigīṣavya, an accomplished yogin, recounts that he has lived through ten ages of the world with the stuff of his intellect unobstructed by impediment because of its purity, observing the misery that arises in the hellish worlds and among animals, and taking birth again and again among gods and humans. From this he has learned that all experiences of embodied existence are miserable by comparison with the final singularity that yogins achieve.¹²⁷ The point appears to be that yogic knowledge proves only that past births have taken place, not that they are permanent or presently real. For Mādhvas, their once having been real means that they continue to be real in a specific sense. (See above under the fourth verse).

There is an explicit statement here that the bodies of the liberated are made of subtle, not crude physical elements. This is either a clarification to or a distinction from the metaphysics of the main body of Mīśras that was described in the fourth

¹²⁵ H anṛtaṃ. N, J amṛtaṃ.

¹²⁶ N, H nitvaṃ. J nityam.

¹²⁷ *daśasu mahāsargeṣu bhavyatvād anabhibhūtabuddhisattvena mayā narakatiryagbhavaṃ duḥkhaṃ sampaśyatā devamanuṣyeṣu punaḥ punar utpadyamānena yat kiñcid anubhūtaṃ tat sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ eva pratyavaimi.*

verse, where we are told that those in unending hell and those in the enjoyment-worlds are rejoined with their previous bodies.

tathāvyaktam īśvararūpaṃ na buddhāv āropayituṃ śakyam iti vyaktam apīśvararūpaṃ asty eva. na ca vyatiriktatvena tasya kāryatvaṃ, vyaktānām api taddehalokānām anādītvābhyupagamāt.

And (another group holds that) since it is not possible to bring the invisible form of God into the mind (of a mortal human,) there is a visible form of God as well. And (they think that) there is no logical problem in (this visible form's) being a produced (and hence impermanent) thing because it is distinct (from other forms,) since they accept that even the visible bodies and worlds of this (God) are beginningless.

Notes:

This appears to be a point of view distinct from the preceding, based on what immediately follows. That humans have only a limited capacity to conceive of brahman is stated frequently in Madhva's writings.¹²⁸ Madhva also maintains that the soul is a reflection (pratibimba) of God, in the sense of being dependent on God for existence and reality; and that souls vary in the form (mūrti) of the deity that they reflect in their hearts.¹²⁹

tad evaṃ¹³⁰ miśrādimatatrāye jīveśayor bhedaḥ. īśopāstisādhyā jīvasya muktatā, upāstis ca dāsabhāvena¹³¹ ahaṃgrahavādinām andhatamaḥ<10v>-praveśasmaraṇāt. upāstyāṅgaṃ jñānaṃ na svapradhānaṃ. īśvaralokaprāptir muktiḥ pañcavidhabhedabhānavatī, na tv ātmapradhvamsarūpā jaḍāvastheti samānaṃ eva.

prāptyālabhanāni¹³² tatasthāny api ādyasyāvyaakteśvararūpaṃ madhyamasya dehapratibimbarūpaṃ antyasya mūrtimadīśvararūpaṃ iti bhedaḥ.

sarve 'pi śrautam aśarīratālakṣaṇaṃ pūrvoktadvādaśavādisampratipannaṃ mokṣaṃ bādhanāte, mokṣe saśarīratāṃ cābhīniveśapūrvakaṃ samarthayante. 6

In summary, here is what is held in common among the triad of views, those of the Mīśras and of the other (two): There is an ontological difference between God and the individual soul. The salvation of the individual soul is brought about by the worship of God, and that worship is enacted with the feeling of being a servant of God, because it is recorded in scripture that those who are egotistical in their religious belief enter into blinding darkness. Knowledge is an appendage to worship, not a primary means (of being saved) in its own right. This liberation is one in which all the appearances (of the creation) with

¹²⁸ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, p. 412).

¹²⁹ Sharma, *Philosophy* (1986, pp. 415–416). Cf. *ŚSD* 99–101, *VSS* 166.

¹³⁰ N eva. H, J evaṃ.

¹³¹ N, H dāsabhāvena. J dāsabhāvena.

¹³² N, H prāptyālabhanāni. J prāptyāvalambanāni.

its five elements are maintained. It is not a state of insentience, where the individual sense of 'I' disappears.

Where they differ is over the supports for reaching salvation, (i.e. over the forms for contemplating the deity), though these supports are not essential (*taṭastha*). These are, for the first group, an invisible form of god, for the middle group, a form that is a reflection of the body, (or a reflection in the body), and for the last group, a form of God that is incarnate.

All (three) reject the idea of liberation that is agreed by the twelve philosophical schools described above, where liberation is characterized by not being embodied, (a view that) is sanctioned by passages from the Veda. Instead (all three) argue for embodiedness in salvation with great insistence.

Notes:

This is the most intriguing of the verses-with-commentary in the text. It provokes many questions, especially this last passage. There is mention of a triad of views and of partisan subgroups, and there is a summary of what the three have in common in both doctrines and practice. All of it is maddeningly concise, given that the views were said earlier to be 'unknown to us.'

The term 'Mīśras' appears in two senses, one more inclusive and one less so. Initially all of these views were characterized as those of the Mīśras. Here one group has differed from the Mīśras, so called, over what is proved by the fact of yogic perception. Another has disagreed over whether God has a physical form. Since all three are distinguished from the twelve systems described earlier, we must take all of them as Mīśras in the inclusive sense.

How many names are there in the final compound in the verse, *dhvāntavātātma-jākhyaḥ*, which could also be read *dhvāntavātāntyajākhyaḥ*? (*antyasya* in the last portion of the commentary might support that reading.) Could there be three? Should we then take the three varieties of Mīśras to match up with these three 'names'? Those born of the night, the wind, and the Self or last, respectively? It is tempting to see in the three forms for worship an attempt at describing the Christian trinity, the invisible Father, the Holy Spirit reflected or present in the body, and called the wind (*vāta*), and the incarnate Son. On the other hand, it has been noted already that Madhva is known among his followers as an incarnation of the Wind god, hence *Vātātma*. I cannot explain *dhvānta*, darkness or night, in either case.

The form of God for the middle group is said to be a reflection of the body (*dehapatibimba*). A number questions arise: whose body, to begin with? Madhva maintains that the soul is a non-illusory reflection (*pratibimba*) of God. (See above note 129). On the other hand, perhaps the doctrine described here is something like that of the Jains, such that God is the same size as the worshipper's body. Perhaps it is an echo of the Biblical doctrine that man is made in God's image, and therefore, God is to be imagined as having the same shape as a human. Perhaps it is an allusion to the argument of the fifth verse, and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*'s provisional teaching that the Self as reflection of the body is to be worshipped. Or it could be a reflection of God within the worshipper's body, the Holy Spirit.

¹³³ *Iśa Up.* 9—ye 'vidyām upāsate, 12—ye 'sambhūtim upāsate.

andhatamaḥpraveśanaṃ: The wording echoes the Īśa Upaniṣad, where the phrase *andhaṃ tamaḥ praviśanti* appears twice, an entrance into darkness for those who worship ignorance, and for those who worship nonbecoming.¹³³ Neither of these practices is especially egotistical, though other Upaniṣadic passages reprove arrogance.

pañcavidhabhedabhānavatī: The doctrine that salvation is enjoyed in a fully differentiated and embodied way was introduced in the second verse. The use of the wording *pañcavidhabheda* is the clearest indication that these doctrines have to do with the Mādhyas.

abhiniveśapūrvakaṃ: *abhiniveśapūrvakaṃ* is also a possible reading, with emendation. As a neuter it would be taken as an adverb with the verb, as the translation offered here does. If it is adjectival, modifying *saśarīratāṃ*, it would mean something else: liberation, preceded by determined devotion.

Verse 7: The Refutation of the Mīśras' Views

In the seventh verse Nīlakaṇṭha offers his critique of the views of the Mīśras. As no new doctrines are described in this section—Nīlakaṇṭha's critique operates in an oblique way—and as the Mīśras are explicitly mentioned only at the end, I here provide only an epitome of the argument that culminates in that final passage.

The point of departure for his attack appears to be the summary that Nīlakaṇṭha provided in the sixth verse: for all Mīśras, the soul and God are ontologically distinct; liberation consists in reaching the world of God; it is a real world of multiplicity, like this world; there is no loss of the sense of 'I' for the saved, and no passage to a state of insensibility.

Nīlakaṇṭha diagnoses this view of liberation as having a basis in another passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*'s eighth chapter, the Hārdavidyā or teaching about the heart (8.1.1ff). *Chāndogya Up.* 8.3.1, which Nīlakaṇṭha cites, maintains that the desires in the heart are real.¹³⁴ One who enters into the Self located in the heart fulfills them. Other Vedic texts are brought in to support this belief in the reality of multiplicity for the saved, which maintain the reality even of the dream world (BAU 4.3.14) and of this world (RV 2.24.12). Given these scriptural supports for the reality of dream, of this world, and of the desires in the heart, Nīlakaṇṭha has the Mīśras say, one cannot rule out their actuality only because they are sublated in other states.

The refutation then begins with the same section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where it is declared that for the one who has reached the small space in the heart, desires come true based purely on wish or intention (*saṃkalpa*).¹³⁵ A verse from the *Bhagavad Gītā* (6.24) is invoked to this effect, as well as a *Nyāyasūtra* (4.2.2), in order to support the view that intention gives rise to fulfilled desire.

If desires are based on an intention, it follows that they are a form of mental activity. A passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* supports this informal

¹³³ *Īśa Up.* 9—ye 'vidyām upāsate, 12—ye 'saṃbhūtim upāsate.

¹³⁴ ime satyāḥ kāmā anṛtāpidhānāḥ. *Chāndogya Up.* 8.3.1.

¹³⁵ sa yadi pitṛkāmo bhavati, saṃkalpād evāsya pitarāḥ samuttīṣṭhanti, etc. *Chāndogya Up.* 8.3.1.

reasoning.¹³⁶ If intentions are mental then they are not inherently real, but only as real as the mind that intends them. They cannot be inherently real, furthermore, because in this metaphysics that would mean that they are permanently real, and so they could not be described as coming into being for the one who reaches the space in the heart when he wishes. They would have to be there already if they were inherently real. But that would contradict the Vedic passage that says they arise for the one who enters the heart (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.3.1, cited above). For they cannot arise if they are already in existence.

*tasmān*¹³⁷ *manomātrāḥ kāmāḥ*¹³⁸ *manasaḥ satyatvenaiva satyāḥ na svarūpe-
ṇeti siddhamanasaś cāvīrbhāvatirobhāvasvabhāvasya yad upādānam
avidyākhyam asacchaditam tasya vidyayā nāso 'stīti na punar āvirbhāvasamb-
havo 'stīti siddham amanaskatākhyakaivalyaṃ. tathā ca śrutiḥ, 'aprāṇo hy
amanāḥ śubhra' iti*¹³⁹ *kevalātmani*¹⁴⁰ *manaḥsambandham vārayati.
tasmān na hārdākāśāsritāḥ kāmāḥ paramārthasatyā nāpi tatkāraṇakā bāhyā
iti teṣāṃ satyatvavacanam*¹⁴¹ *miśrapralapitam eveti siddham. 7*

Therefore desires, which are merely mind, are real only by virtue of the mind's reality, not inherently. And so the material cause of the mind of a being who has gained perfection—a mind that has in its nature the ability to bring things into existence and to obscure them from existence—(that mind's material cause) which is termed ignorance, which is termed the unreal, is destroyed by knowledge, and as a result there is no possibility of its further arising. In this way is proved the state of total singularity (kaivalya) called no-mindedness. And there is a śruti passage that rules out any connection of the absolute Self (kevalātman) with the mind, 'without breath, without mind, brilliant.'

Therefore, it is established that the desires residing in the heart are not ultimately real, nor are the external things that are caused by them, and thus to say that they are real is mere idle chatter from the Mīśras.

Notes:

That desires are real, satya, means that they come true and are fulfilled. The heavenly world and the salvation of the Mīśras thus envision a perfected being who continues to exercise will and to fulfill desires. On Vanamālī's depiction of liberation as the heavenly world where one has fun and never suffers, see above, under note 38.

Nīlakaṇṭha insists on the liberation state as being without mind in response to the denial by the Mīśras of an inert state, as described above in the sixth verse.

¹³⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 1.5.3.

¹³⁷ N f.11v, H f.13r, J f.9r.

¹³⁸ N, H, J manomātrān kāmān.

¹³⁹ *Muṇḍaka Up.* 2.1.2.

¹⁴⁰ N, H kevalātsani. J kevalātmani.

¹⁴¹ N, H satya-. J satyatva-

Of the scriptural passages cited here, only *RV* 2.24.12 (vīśvaṃ satyām) turns up in the works of Vanamālī (*VSS* 6.210), where it is indeed used to prove the reality of the world.¹⁴²

Verse 8: Further Criticism of Their Views

In the eighth verse Nīlakaṇṭha offers some further characterization and criticism of the Mīśras' views. If the last verse was about the metaphysics of the world of the liberated, this verse is about religious practices, and appears to focus particularly on the last group of Mīśras, who maintain that God is to be worshipped as embodied or incarnate (mūrtimad).

*svamatam*¹⁴³ *upasaṃharan paramataniṣṭhām darśayati, ity evam iti.*

*ity evam*¹⁴⁴ *dvādaśānām vyavahṛti*¹⁴⁵ *viśaye bhinnamārgāśrayānām*
*tantrāṇām aikamatyaṃ nirahami galita*¹⁴⁶ *dvaitabhāne vimokṣe |*
devaṃ yaḥ svānyabudhyā smarati surapaśuḥ sa pratīkopasevī
na brāhmaṇa lokam eti kva punar apabhayaṃ nirdvayaṃ mīśraśiṣyaḥ ||
<12r> 8 (Sragdharā)

Summing up his own view, he depicts the positions of the other doctrines:

In this way the twelve systems of thought, which follow different paths when it comes to the subject of explaining ordinary reality, are united in their view concerning liberation, in which all appearance of duality is swallowed up in the state where there is no sense of 'I'. The Mīśra, or his pupil, who reflects on God thinking that he and God are different from one another, being a mere beast of the gods, an idol-worshipper, does not go to the world of Brahmā, much less to the nondual state which is without fear.

Notes:

paramataniṣṭhām There are a number of ways to render this compound. niṣṭhā could mean belief or devotion; para could mean later or antagonistic. Thus it is possible that Nīlakaṇṭha specifies the devotion of the later view, that is, of the last group of Mīśras described in the sixth verse, those who worship an embodied form of the deity.

Though mention of the śiṣya of the Mīśra in the verse might be for metric or alliterative reasons, the compound is glossed in the commentary as 'the Mīśra or his pupil,' which suggests a return to the variety among the Mīśras. The principle at stake for Nīlakaṇṭha is bheda or ontological difference.

The c pāda alludes to *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10, cited below in the commentary.

¹⁴² See also *ŚSP* p. 82, p. 119.

¹⁴³ N ff.11v–12v, H ff.13r–14r, J ff.9r–10r.

¹⁴⁴ N avaṃ. H, J evaṃ.

¹⁴⁵ N vyavaruti-. H, J vyavahṛti-

¹⁴⁶ N, H, J galitaṃ.

*sarveṣāṃ tāntrikāṇāṃ vyavahāre vaimatye 'pi ahaṃkārabhānaśūnyatvena nirmṛṣṭanikhiladvaitabhāne mokṣe aikamatyam astīti pratipāditam*¹⁴⁷.

*yas tu miśro vā tacchiṣyo vā devam īśvaraṃ svānyabuddhyā. anyo 'sau upāsyah, anyo 'ham upāsaka iti bhedabuddhyā upāste. saḥ. surapaśuḥ. atyantamūḍha*¹⁴⁸ *ity arthaḥ. tathā ca śrutiḥ*¹⁴⁹, 'atha yo 'nyāṃ'¹⁵⁰ *devatāṃ upāste 'nyo sāv anyo 'ham asmīti na sa*¹⁵¹ *veda yathā paśur evaṃ*¹⁵² *sa devānām' iti.*¹⁵³

*sa bāhyasyāntarasya vā vighrahādirūpasya pratīkasya sevakaḥ 'apratīkā*¹⁵⁴ *laṃbanān nayatīti*¹⁵⁵ *bādarāyaṇa' iti*¹⁵⁶ *nyāyenābrahmākṛtatvān*¹⁵⁷ *na sa*¹⁵⁸ *satyalokākhyam brāhmaṇam lokam. eti prāpnoti. apabhayaṃ*¹⁵⁹ *nirdvandvaṃ brahma tu tasya kva, na kvāpi, atyantam durlabham ity arthaḥ.*

Although all of the systems of thought have differences of opinion when it comes to the world of ordinary activity, on the subject of liberation there is unanimity in thinking that it is a state from which all duality has been rubbed away due to the sense of 'I' vanishing.

But as for the Miśra or for his pupil, who worships God with the thought of (ontological) difference - viz. 'He is the one to be worshipped, and I am the worshipper' - he is a beast of the gods, which is to say exceedingly foolish.

For there is a sacred text to that effect: 'Whoever worships a god as being other, thinking he is one thing and I am another, he does not really know. He is like a beast of burden to the gods.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10)

The servant of an image, whether external or internal, which has a bodily form or the like, because he has not contemplated brahman, does not go to the world of Brahmā, called the Satyaloka, according the maxim (*Brahmasūtra* 4.3.16): 'He leads those who do not rely on images (to the world of Brahmā).' Where, then, would brahman be for him, which is without duality and free from fear? It would be nowhere. It is extremely difficult for him to attain, is the sense.

Notes:

Vanamālī explains the passage from *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in defence of understanding ontological difference between worshipper and deity. As he reads

¹⁴⁷ N pratiprati-. H, J prati-

¹⁴⁸ N, H atyantamūḍham. J atyantamūḍha.

¹⁴⁹ N, H smṛtiḥ. J śrutiḥ.

¹⁵⁰ N, H -nyān. J anyāṃ.

¹⁵¹ N, H sa na. J na sa.

¹⁵² N, H eva. J evaṃ.

¹⁵³ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.10.

¹⁵⁴ N, H apratikā-. J apratīka.

¹⁵⁵ N nayatanīti. H napatatīti. J nayatīti.

¹⁵⁶ BrSū 4.3. 15. *apratīkālaṃbanān nayatīti bādarāyaṇa ubhayathā doṣāt tatkratuṣ ca.*

¹⁵⁷ N, H -ākutattvāṃ. J -ākṛtatvān.

¹⁵⁸ N na. H, J na sa.

¹⁵⁹ N, H, J abhayaṃ.

it, whoever worships a deity other than Nārāyaṇa is a fool, a creature of the gods.¹⁶⁰

–*ābrahmakṛtatvān* is a conjecture for what is represented in the two manuscripts as –*ābrahmakutattvām*. There is nothing specifically in the verse that this compound responds to. It appears to explain what in the practices of the Mīśras deprives them of the world of Brahmā.

iyam atra vyavasthā: yaḥ pratīkaṃ brahmadṛṣṭyopāste sa pratīkopāsako na brahmopāsakah, tasyām upāsanāyām pratīkasya mukhyatvāt, brahmabhāvasyāhāryatvāc ca. yas tu vaiśvānarādīrūpaṃ brahma ahaṃgrahēnopāste sa brahmakratuḥ, na jīvakratuḥ, tatrāpi pūrvavat brahmaṇo mukhyatvāj jīvabhāvasyāhāryatvāc ca.

tatraivaṃ sati karmopāsti<12v>jñānakāṇḍātmake vede karmāṇi svargādyarthāni, upāsanāni kramamuktasthānaprāptiyarthāni¹⁶¹, jñānaṃ sadyaḥkaivalyaprāpakam iti prayojanatrayam uktaṃ. tatra jñānakāṇḍārtham atyantam apalapyopāsanākāṇḍasya pratīkopāstīrūpe karmaṇi tātparyam varṇayatā karmakāṇḍa evaikah śeṣito bhavati.

tathā svargasya nityatvaṃ ca 'tad yatheha¹⁶² karmajito lokaḥ kṣīyata evam evāmutra puṇyajito lokaḥ kṣīyata' iti¹⁶³ 'yat kṛtakaṃ tad anityam' ity¹⁶⁴ anumānānugṛhītaśrutiviruddhaṃ cety evamādi bahuviruddhaṃ tadarūḍhaṃ ity a¹⁶⁵ numānam api śiṣṭānāṃ trapākaram iti uparamyate. 8

Here is the situation: whoever contemplates an image seeing it as brahman, he is an image-worshipper, not a contemplator of brahman, because the image is primary in his worship, and its being brahman is incidental. He on the other hand who contemplates brahman in the form of Agni Vaiśvānara or the like, thinking of it as himself, he meditates on brahman, not his own soul, because in this case too, as before, brahman is primary and its being his own jīva is incidental.

This being so, when it comes to the Veda, which has sections on ritual, contemplation, and knowledge, a threefold purpose is set out: rituals are for the sake of heaven and the like, contemplations are for the sake of reaching the place where one gains liberation in due course, knowledge is for getting one to final singularity directly. Here (the Mīśras) dismiss entirely the purpose of the section on knowledge, and explain the intention of the section on contemplation as rituals that take the form of worshipping images, leaving only the section on rituals to stand.

And furthermore (the Mīśras' doctrine) that heaven is permanent contradicts the śruti passage (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.1.6) which says that just as whatever has been won by actions in this world wastes away, so in the next world does whatever has been won by merit wastes away. This śruti passage is supported

¹⁶⁰ VSS 6.142. The same verse also appears as ŚSD 74. Cf. ŚŚP p. 25.

¹⁶¹ N prāptiyarthābhi. H, J prāptiyarthāni.

¹⁶² N, H yathā iha. J atheha.

¹⁶³ *Chāndogya Up.* 8.1.6.

¹⁶⁴ *Nyāyabindu* of Dharmakīrti 3.11.

¹⁶⁵ N tadarūḍhaddha-, H -tarūḍhadya-?, J tadarūḍhatya-

by the inference that any manufactured thing is impermanent. (The Mīśras') inference, which is not mounted up on that (śruti), is contradicted by that śruti, and contradicted in many ways. It is a matter of embarrassment to the learned, and so I leave off.

Notes:

Madhva disagrees with the Advaitins over the contemplation of symbols of brahman or pratīkas.¹⁶⁶

There is something troubled in the text of the final paragraph, as it is represented in the two manuscripts. There are two *ca* particles whose force is unclear. I take the first with the initial *tathā* of the section, and the second as linking the śruti passage and the inference about what is manufactured.

Verses 9 and 10: Nondualism as the Teaching of the Upaniṣads

In the ninth and tenth verses Nīlakaṇṭha moves away from the Mīśras to the significance of the Upaniṣads and their systematic treatment in the Vedānta. Since the Mīśras are not discussed here explicitly or implicitly, only a summary is provided.

Nīlakaṇṭha rules out the validity of interpretations of the Upaniṣads that do not maintain brahman to be one and real.¹⁶⁷ He does this in an unexpected way, by appeal to Vātsyāyana's commentary on the *Nyāyasūtra*.¹⁶⁸ He draws on a section of the *Nyāyasūtra* that offers refutations of other schools of thought. The sūtra in question is about those who believe only in number (*saṃkhyāikāntavādāḥ*). Here Vātsyāyana mentions a group who believe that all is one, because it is without distinction from the existent (*sarvam ekaṃ sadaviśeṣāt*).¹⁶⁹ The refutations then follow, but Nīlakaṇṭha's point, following Vācaspati Mīśra's subcommentary, is that what Vātsyāyana is discussing here is the position of the nondualists. From this he concludes, not entirely fairly, that even the Naiyāyikas think the Vedāntins maintain nondifference. Even though for the Naiyāyikas the Vedāntins are not logical in their thinking, the fact of their characterization stills shows that nondualism—the doctrine that brahman is one and real—is generally understood to be the view of Vedānta, Nīlakaṇṭha argues. Therefore there is no need to be confused by schools of Upaniṣadic interpretation which propose that brahman is ontologically different from other things, or that it is both different and non-different, or that some qualified form of brahman is non-different.

By way of conclusion, Nīlakaṇṭha turns to the portions of two verses of the R̥gvedic creation hymn, the *Nāsadiya*, in support of his doxographic view as a

¹⁶⁶ Sharma, *Philosophy* 1986, 410-14.

¹⁶⁷ Part of the text of the introduction to this section was cited above. See note 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Nyāyasūtra* 4.1.41.

¹⁶⁹ Given the commentary, it appears that Nīlakaṇṭha understands four independent words, with *sad* and *aviśeṣāt* as uncompounded. Otherwise Vācaspati.

whole.¹⁷⁰ The first verse, *nāśad āsīd nó sād āsīd tadānīm. nāśīd rájo nó vyòṃā paró yát*, rules out as the fundamental principle the emptiness (ásat) of the Mādhymikas before creation, the stream-reality/mental stuff (sát) of the Yogācārin, Sautrāntikas, and Vaibhāṣikas, and the primordial element or atoms (rájas) of the Sāṃkhyas, Yogins, Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas. In the same way this verse rules out the existent as mixed with māyā (paró vyòṃā). Passages of the third verse, ‘*tāma āsīt tāmasā gūlham āgre*’ and ‘*tuchyēnābhvāpihitam*’ show that the fundamental principle cannot be both real and unreal. From this Nīlakaṇṭha concludes that the R̥gveda itself maintains that the existent is one and uncombined.¹⁷¹

Conclusion

These, then, are the passages that constitute Nīlakaṇṭha’s treatment of the Mīśras in his *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*. As a way of concluding let us consider how the Mīśras should be identified, and what the implications are for the history of Advaitin doxography, given their treatment in Nīlakaṇṭha’s text.

Who were the Mīśras?

We have operated under the assumption that the Mīśras were probably followers of Madhva, based on doctrinal similarities that have been noted and discussed *ad loc.* The most telling among these similarities include: the doctrine that the world is real and diverse, and ontologically distinct from God and from the souls, all of which are distinct from one another (pañcabhedavāda); the doctrine that liberation consists in reaching the world of God (muktir īśvaralokaprāptiḥ), which is a fully differentiated world where the saved enjoy themselves as embodied beings who never suffer and do not return to saṃsāra; the doctrine that both the worlds of the liberated and of the damned are eternal (svargasya nityatā), and that God and the liberated are embodied forever in heaven, the damned in a hell called Tamas; the doctrine that the path to God lies in being God’s servant (upāstir dāśabhāvena), with the feeling that God is someone different, not someone in whom to see oneself; the doctrine that punishment for misdeeds in hell is followed by reward for good deeds in worlds of enjoyment for those who are liberated in stages (yātanā, bhogabhūmi); that both yogic perception and time have been picked out as markers of the Mīśras’ strangeness, (the Mādhvas having distinctive doctrines of both, though not exactly the ones that Nīlakaṇṭha describes); and that there might be a figure referred to as the son of the wind (vātātmaja), a well-known epithet of Madhvācārya himself.

Further circumstantial evidence in favour of the identification can be found in Nīlakaṇṭha’s critique, elsewhere in his writings, of doctrines that are similar to the ones he attributes to this group, though they are identified there only as sectarian fanatics. One such critique is found in Nīlakaṇṭha’s commentary on the

¹⁷⁰ RV 10.129.1ab, 3a, 3c.

¹⁷¹ Note that Vanamālī has a fairly extended discussion of the meaning of these verses of RV 10.129 at the end of his section rejecting brahman’s indescribability—*anirvācyatve pramāṇabhaṅgah*.

Mahābhārata, when he tackles the first properly philosophical verses of the epic (I.1.22–25 in the Vulgate). The passage constitutes one of the first scholastic *tours de force* in the commentary, a justification of the expansion of nondualist ontology to include five states of brahman, (the added one being Viṣṇu as embodied deity). Nīlakaṇṭha there provides an extended discussion of the nature of God’s form and its significance for worship. He mentions the beliefs of sectarian theists concerning the permanence of heaven, God’s embodiedness, and the forms that contemplation of brahman may take.

At one point in this passage, Nīlakaṇṭha mentions the doctrine that just being in the world of God constitutes liberation, (what Madhva and Vanamālī, following the Pañcarātra, would call *sālokya*), and that the Lord of this world is the only God. Such a view, Nīlakaṇṭha thinks, is ignorant of the tradition of practice of meditation which dissolves the mind entirely into the pure brahman. It goes against a *Brahmasūtra* (4.4.16) and a passage of the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.23). This Upaniṣadic passage says that there is no experience of multiplicity in liberation because there is no other thing to see then, and thus duality (or actually multiplicitous reality) is just a mirage. To insist (as Madhva and Vanamālī do) that Viṣṇu is the supreme, while Śiva is just an individual soul, or to insist the opposite, and to criticize other movements by saying that texts such as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or the *Sūtasamhitā*, which propound the excellence of either Viṣṇu or some other deity (at the expense of others), are not really authored by Vyāsa or other sages, or are in fact demonic, is based on an insufficient grasp of the customary and established practice of reading these texts.¹⁷² Nīlakaṇṭha’s criticism here echoes the criticism of the Mīśras that we see in the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*.

Reasons to Think that the Mīśras Might Not Be Mādhyas

As we went along I noted the points where Nīlakaṇṭha’s account of the Mīśras did not reflect the doctrines of the Mādhyas in general or of Vanamālī in particular. These included the repeated reference to astrology as the basis for believing that the unequal fortunes we see in the world are comprehensible; the importance of time in the Mīśras’ theodicy, and the apparent downplaying of reincarnation or karma; the doctrine that innocent beings (akarmāṇaḥ) such as animals and plants are reborn in the enjoyment worlds to support the experience of the eventually liberated

¹⁷² *ke cit tu pūrvoktamanahpranidhānātmakadhyanasampradāyānabhijñā etallokaprāptir eva muktir; ayam eveśvaro na samaṣṭyākhyo ‘nya īśvaro ‘sūti vadanti. te sarvaśāstraprasiddham muktau dvaitādarśanam bādhamānāḥ ‘svāpyayasampattyor’ (BrSū 4.4.16) ityādīnyāyena ‘na hi draṣṭur drṣṭer viparīlopo vidyate ‘vināśitvān na tu tad dvīṭyam asti tato ‘nyad yad vibhaktam paśyed’ (BrĀrUp 4.3.23) iti sūptikaivalyayor aviśeśād dvaitādarśanaśravaṇena ca virudhyante. anayaiva ca śrutyā dvīṭyābhāvād eva dvaitādarśanam na tu dr̥glopād iti vadantya dvaitasya indrajālatulyatvam darśitam. tena ‘viṣṇuḥ sarvottamo śivo jīvaḥ. śivaḥ sarvottamo śivo jīva’ ity upāsakānām āgraho viṣṇvādyutkarṣapratipādakaśrībhāgavatasūtasamhitādīnām anārṣatvāsuratvādivacanair dūṣaṇam ca śāstramaryādānavabodhamūlam eva, ‘vikalpo ‘viśiṣṭaphalatvād’ (BrSū 3.3.59) iti nyāyena aikātmye cittāvatārārthaṁ yasya kasya cid apy ākāraśyālambanīyatvāt. Kimjavadekar Mahābhārata 1929, I. 7. On customary textual practice see Minkowski, “Maryādām” (2016). On denunciation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Minkowski, “Guide to Argument” (2010).*

(kramamuktas); and the mention of the gates of hell, which are open during the world's age and closed at its end.

Some doctrines, furthermore, which are presented as belonging to the Mīśras seem only indirectly connected to their Mādhva counterparts: yogic perception as proof of the reality of the world, or time as superseding karma in explaining the world's justice. The latter should more properly be inherent nature (svabhāva), to be in keeping with Mādhva doctrine, something that is only indirectly acknowledged by Nīlakaṇṭha. Nīlakaṇṭha's account of the nature of the embodiment of souls after death is not maintained consistently throughout. The damned and the eventually saved are rejoined with their earthly bodies, while the nature of the bodies of the innocent after death is not specified, and the liberated have bodies made of subtle material.

Of course it is possible that Nīlakaṇṭha is simply not getting some parts of the Mīśras' doctrines right; or that I have not found the specific passages in Madhva, Jayatīrtha, or others that confirm the identification, especially in the works of Vanamālī, many of which remain unpublished.

Why Not Call Them Mādhvas?

And yet, if these doctrines belong to Madhva's school of thought, why does Nīlakaṇṭha call them Mīśras? Why not just call them Mādhvas? There is evidence in Nīlakaṇṭha's other works to show that he does know of Madhvācārya. He is mentioned in two summarizing verses in the *Vedāntakataka*, Nīlakaṇṭha's early independent work.¹⁷³ In the introductory or paribhāṣā section of this text, Nīlakaṇṭha makes reference to the followers of Rāmānuja, who are worthy of ridicule by all people, and to Madhva, even talking of whom is not approved of by the intelligent.¹⁷⁴ At the conclusion of the second part, the anticommentary to Appayya Dīkṣita's *Nyāyaraṣṣamaṇi*, Madhva is mentioned in the context of an argument between nondualists and realists. Nīlakaṇṭha represents himself as doing his bit to restore the understanding of the Upaniṣads' uniformity in propounding nondualism, a truth that had to be wrested by Nṛsiṃhāśrama from the gang of bandits of illogic—Madhva and others, and that had to be protected by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.¹⁷⁵

That said, there are not many other passages in Nīlakaṇṭha's works that name Madhva or his followers. Nīlakaṇṭha is much more preoccupied with what he sees as rogue Advaitins. It may be that he knew of Madhva only in the context of the defence of Advaitin philosophical claims from the technical criticisms that appeared in works like Vyāsātīrtha's *Nyāyāmṛta*. The defence is represented in the works of Advaitin authors that Nīlakaṇṭha demonstrably knew: Nṛsiṃhāśrama's *Bhedadhikkāra* and Madhusūdana's *Advaitasiddhi*. Beyond this strictly philosophical controversy, it is possible that the religious doctrines of Madhva, a south Indian,

¹⁷³ Cf. Minkowski, "Vedāntakataka" (2016).

¹⁷⁴ *rāmānujāḥ sarvaḥjanopahāsyā mādhvī kathā naiva budheṣu śasyā. VK paribhāṣā*, SB 27520 f. 16v.

¹⁷⁵ *yan madhvādikutarkataskaragaṇāt śṛīmannṛsiṃhāśramair; āchinnaṃ madhusūdanena muninā samrakṣitaṃ cādarāt. VK samanvaya* SB 27519 f. 58r.

might not have penetrated into the north until relatively late. That might explain why Nīlakaṇṭha speaks of the Mīśras as “unknown among us” (asmadīyeṣv aprasiddha).¹⁷⁶

Why Call Them Mīśras?

Why call them Mīśras, again? We appear to be confronted with several possibilities. It is possible that Nīlakaṇṭha understood the Mīśras to be northern representatives of the Mādhva tradition with some distinctive ideas of their own; or that he understood the Mīśras to be something mostly different from the Mādhvas; or that he did not recognize them as Mādhvas at all, though they were; or that he did not think of them as Mādhvas, because they were not at all, in which case Vanamālimiśra would probably not be the Mīśra in question.

I have proposed an identification with Vanamālimiśra for largely incidental reasons, assuming the first of these possibilities, that Nīlakaṇṭha was describing the views of a follower of Madhvācārya who was a Mīśra Brahmin. The similarities in doctrine between Vanamāli’s works and Nīlakaṇṭha’s Mīśras have been pointed out in the notes to the translation above. Among prominent authors of works in the Mādhva tradition, the only one called Mīśra is Vanamālidāsa Mīśra or Vanamālimiśra. From the colophons of his works we know that Vanamālimiśra was born near Vrindavan to a Vaiṣṇava family, and that he was a follower of Madhva and a worshipper of Hayagrīva.¹⁷⁷ He was active in the middle of the seventeenth century, the same era in which Nīlakaṇṭha was active.¹⁷⁸

Why Not Think it is Vanamāli

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that Nīlakaṇṭha does not elsewhere use the term ‘Mīśra’ in the sense in which it is used in the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*. The only usage of ‘Mīśra’ to identify an author or thinker that I have been able to locate in Nīlakaṇṭha’s other writings occurs in the first part of the *Vedāntakataka*. There it refers to a statement made by Vācaspati Mīśra in his *Bhāmatī* commentary on Śaṅkarācārya’s *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*.¹⁷⁹ One might explain this absence of the Mīśras elsewhere in Nīlakaṇṭha’s works as a sign that the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is a late

¹⁷⁶ There were centres of Madhva thought and belief in Banaras in the seventeenth century, however, though this appears to have been forgotten later. Cf. O’Hanlon, “Letters Home” (2010, p. 11); Deshpande, “Winner” (2011); Varkhedkar’s Sanskrit introduction to his 1936 edition of Vanamāli’s *Madhva-mukhālankāra*, where he speaks of contemporary ignorance of the existence of northern Mādhvas, p. 2. *taddarśanaḥṣaṇa eva uttarabhārate dvaitasiddhāntasya nāsīt pracāra iti bhramo me vikalitaḥ*.

¹⁷⁷ Gode, “Mārutamaṇḍana” (1946); Narahari, “Mārutamaṇḍana” (1948).

¹⁷⁸ There was at least one other figure of the period called Vanamālimiśra, a pupil of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita in Banaras. See Gode, “Pupil of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita” (1947). Given the consistency of the colophons in ‘our’ Vanamāli’s Vaiṣṇava works, however, and given how different the colophons found in the works of the grammarian are, these two were probably different people. Cf. Tagore, “Śrutisiddhāntaprakāśa” (1970).

¹⁷⁹ miśrās tu svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadya paraṃ jyotir upasampadyata it vyācakyuh. “mukhaṃ vyādāya svapitī”tivac ca kvāpratrayayopattim prāhuḥ. *VK paribhāṣā* SB 27520 f. 27r. Cf *Bhāmatī* on *BrSū* 4.4.3 yat sampadya niṣpadyata iti tan, mukhaṃ vyādāya svapitīvat. tasmāḥ jyotir upasampanno mukta iti sūktam. Bakre’s edition, pp. 1006–1007.

work, perhaps written only after Vanamālī came to prominence. Vanamālī wrote a critique of Brahmānanda Sarasvatī's defence of the *Advaitasiddhi*, the *Gurucandrikā*, which is usually assigned to the late seventeenth century.¹⁸⁰ We know independently that Nīlakaṇṭha was still active in the 1690s, if nearing the end of his career then.

It must be conceded, however, that some of the most salient doctrines of the Mīśras, from Nīlakaṇṭha's point of view, are not prominent in Vanamālī's works, at least not in the terms in which Nīlakaṇṭha describes them, such as yogic perception and time, and the fivefold difference.¹⁸¹ Vanamālī was classified by Dasgupta as a Nimbārki, that is, not as a bhedavādin but as a bhedābhedavādin.¹⁸² Potter has labeled some of his works Dvaita and others Dvaitādvaita.¹⁸³ That Vanamālīmīśra has been difficult for modern scholars to classify might explain why Nīlakaṇṭha would speak of him as something other than a Mādhva.

The last difficulty to mention here comes from the sixth verse of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*, where Nīlakaṇṭha refers to three groups among the Mīśras. In the eighth verse, furthermore, he refers to the pupil (*śiṣya*) of the Mīśras. To date I have found no reference to a commentary on Vanamālī's works. Who, then, were these subvarieties of Mīśras, if we identify Vanamālī as our starting point? Who was the pupil?

Abrahamic Religions?

What if we were to opt for the last possibility, viz. that the Mīśras were not Mādhvas at all, leaving Vanamālī out of the picture altogether? After reading the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* I initially suspected that the Mīśras were exponents of the Abrahamic religions. The reasons for this suspicion have been mentioned earlier: their doctrines of a permanent heaven and hell, of salvation as attending God in heaven; of karma simply as moral behaviour in this life, which is requited in the next without fail or delay; of God as someone whose laws are to be followed with servile obedience, whose minions oversee the reward and punishment of deeds; of hellish punishments in burning heat; and of the gates of hell. None of these struck Nīlakaṇṭha as being in keeping with what he saw as mainstream Indian thinking, and one can see why.¹⁸⁴

On this view, the term Mīśra is a larger category that would include both Muslims and Christians. The sixth verse of the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*, which describes the subsets of Mīśras would then be about Christians and Muslims more specifically.

¹⁸⁰ Vanamālī's text is called the *Taraṅginīsaurabha*. Khuperkar, *ŚSD* Introduction p. xxii.

¹⁸¹ The reality of difference between the soul and God has been insisted on throughout the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* as the crucial doctrine of the Mīśras. On this point there is clear confirmation in Vanamālī's works. It is, rather, the insistence on five-fold difference that is more difficult to locate.

¹⁸² Dasgupta *History* 3. 440–44, based on the *VSS*.

¹⁸³ Potter, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Bibliography*. The online version labels the unpublished *Viṣṇutattvapraśāsa* and *Vedāntadīpa* Dvaita, *VSS*, *ŚSP*, *ŚSD* Dvaitādvaita. The second, earlier edition of the bibliography (1983) listed all works as Dvaita. An excerpt of the *VSS* is summarized in the Dvaitādvaita volume (15) of the *EIP* (Agrawal and Potter 2013, pp. 555–583).

¹⁸⁴ I am not the first to make this mistake. See e.g. Grierson, "Mādhvas, Madhvāchārīs" (1916), for early suggestions that the Mādhvas had been influenced by Abrahamic religions.

There we get the idea that God has three forms: an unmanifest one, a sort of reflection possibly in the body of the worshipper, and a entirely embodied form, perhaps in an attempt at describing the Trinity.

There might be some additional evidence in favour of this identification, implied by the placement of a passage in the other *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra*. As mentioned above, this anonymous text is twinned with Nīlakaṇṭha's in its organization and conception. In the commentary on the first verse of the anonymous text, the author goes through the views of the twelve schools (with some additions) concerning subject and object (*jñāna* and *jñeya*), more or less sorted into the same categories of separated, mixed, and so on that Nīlakaṇṭha uses. At the end of this discussion, at the point where Nīlakaṇṭha introduces the *Mīśras*, the anonymous author mentions the views of the Muslims. In an echo of what Nīlakaṇṭha says of the *Mīśras*, the text brings in the *Yavanopādhyāya*, probably Muhammad, as saying that even in salvation there is perception of multiplicity. The author remarks that some of the *Yavanopādhyāya*'s contemporary followers are seen among us. He then refers to an epigrammatic verse of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī which dismisses them as not worth bothering over: "What knowledgeable person would give answer to the mere semblance of criticism that this addled pathetic 'philosopher' of untruth baselessly bloviates aloud? The lion does not roar back every time the cat in the village meows."¹⁸⁵

To add to the confusion, it should be noted that Madhusūdana penned this verse with a *Mādhva* in mind, *Vyāsātīrtha*.¹⁸⁶ And, in fact, *Vanamālī* offers a riposte to this verse in the closing verses of his *Śrutisiddhāntaparakāśa*, echoing the language of Madhusūdana's epigram: "The magnificence of Hari is propounded in the *Upaniṣads*. It is to be contemplated by the best of sages. A demonic man, lower than a Buddhist, bloviates baselessly that this is not so, offering hostility to Kṛṣṇa, who is the same as the All. What knowledgeable person would undertake to answer him? Does the lion roar back at the howl of the jackal?"¹⁸⁷

Why Not Abrahamic Religions

If the *Mīśras* were indeed followers of Abrahamic religions, that would raise more questions than it answered. How would one explain their being called *Mīśras*? Why have they not been 'othered' as *Yavanas* or *Mlecchas*, as so much of the contemporary discourse of the period would expect? And why that name in particular? The stated purpose of Nīlakaṇṭha's *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* is to show that the *Upaniṣads* have a unified and correct interpretation, and to exclude certain views from a canonical scheme. Why bother over 'alien' religions that did not participate

¹⁸⁵ *yavanopādhyāyas tu muktāv api dvaitadarśanam asty eva. tadanusāriṇaś ca ke cid arvācīnā api dṛśyante. teṣāṃ upekṣaṇīyatvam āhuḥ śrīmanmadhusūdanasarasvatī-carāṇāḥ: iha kumatir atattve tattvavādī varākaḥ, pralapati yad akāṇḍe khaṇḍanābhāsam uccaiḥ. pratīvacanam amuṣmai tasya ko vaktu vidvān, na hi rutam anurauti grāmasiṃhasya siṃha iti. (Ṣaṭtantrīsāra, anonymous, BORI MS E.3r).*

¹⁸⁶ It occurs in the 2d paricheda of the *Advaitasiddhi*, at the end of the *tattvamasyādīmahāvākyaḥkhaṇḍārthopapatti*, p. 709 in Anantakṛṣṇa Śāstrī's ed.

¹⁸⁷ *vedāntaiḥ pratīpāditaṃ munivarair dhyeyaṃ harer vaibhavaṃ, yo 'kāṇḍe pralapaty atathyam iti yad bauddhādhamo mādhava. vairam saṃdadhad āsuro 'khalasame vaktum ca tasyottaram, vidvān ko 'rhauti kim mrgapatir gomāyūśabdānugaḥ. ŚSP 4.6.9. There appears to be no vs. 8, however.*

even in the assumptions of this conversation, when no one had done so before? How, moreover, would one explain the claims about yogic perception, the apparent reliance on Upaniṣadic passages, and the reference to many other items of Brahminical thought such as kalpas, karma, and so on. It is possible of course that this is all part of Nīlakaṇṭha's imaginative reworking of the doctrines of Christians and Muslims into a Sanskrit idiom. Or it could be that the Mīśras were Brahmin converts who had carried out this reworking themselves. The reliance on astrology might in fact be the least surprising aspect of this identification, given the importance of historical astrology in the Islamicate knowledge traditions.¹⁸⁸

Mīśras and Mādhvas in Advaitin Doxography

If the Mīśras did turn out to be Muslims or Christians, the passage from Nīlakaṇṭha's *Mahābhārata* commentary that was cited above, which echoes the criticisms of the Mīśras but is directed at sectarian Hindu worshippers, would suggest that they occupied a similar place in the nondualist topography of thought in his era. And indeed, Advaitin doxographies can be said to converge in their treatment of Mādhvas and of Mlecchas, or really in their omission of treatment. As we have seen, the author of the anonymous *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* invokes Madhusūdana's verse about Vyāsaśrīrtha to justify cutting off discussion of the Yavanas.¹⁸⁹

Madhusūdana seems to have taken his own advice. In the *Prasthānabheda* he demotes the heterodox schools to the status of foreign religions, i.e. as undeserving of description, because they do not conduce to understanding the Vedas or to fulfilling the ends of man any more than barbarians do.¹⁹⁰ The Mādhvas, meanwhile, are not mentioned at all. Nor do they appear in such other short works as the *Vedāntakalpalatikā* and the *Siddhāntabindu*, where Madhusūdana surveys the available schools of thought. In the *Siddhāntabindu*, for example, Madhusūdana includes in his enumeration of views the Pāñcarātras and Pāśupatas, as well as the "sextet of nāstikas" that we have seen—Cārvākas, Jainas and the four schools of Buddhism. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas (tridaṇḍinaḥ) also appear in the scale of standpoints, but not the Mādhvas. Notwithstanding his *Advaitasiddhi*, dedicated to rejecting the *Nyāyāmṛta* of Vyāsaśrīrtha, Madhusūdana does not include the Mādhvas in these synthetic discussions. This holds true for doxographic passages in other Advaitin texts, with the exception of Vidyāraṇya's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*. Elsewhere, the views of the Yavanas, when they are mentioned at all, are brought up only to rule out their relevance.

¹⁸⁸ See e.g. Pingree, *Thousands* (1968).

¹⁸⁹ Vanamālī, as we saw, replied to Madhusūdana with his own verses. This insistence on ignoring the other has a touch of irony to it in either case, given the energy with which both Madhusūdana and Vanamālī worked at refutations of their opponents.

¹⁹⁰ "nanu nāstikānāṃ api prasthānāntarāṇi santi; tāny eṭṣv anantarbhāvāt pṛthag gaṇayitum ucitāni. tathā hi... (then follows the enumeration) ... evaṃ militvā nāstikānāṃ ṣaṭ prasthānāni. tāni kasmān nocyante? satyam; vedabāhyatvāt teṣāṃ mlecchādiprasthānavat paramparayāpi puruṣārthānupayogitvād upekṣāṇīyatvam eva. iha ca sāḥśād vā paramparayā vā pumarthopayoginām vedopakaraṇānām eva prasthānānām bhedo darśitāḥ. tato na nyūnatvaśaṅkāvakāśaḥ. *Prasthānabheda*, Vanivilas ed. p. 2. The *Prasthānabheda* is in fact an excerpt of Madhusūdana's comm. on the *Śivamahimastotra*, vs. 7.

Madhusūdana appears to have greatly influenced the formulation of the doxographic passages of Nīlakaṇṭha's works, in the construction of the doxography and in the scope of its inclusion. And yet in the *Ṣaṭtantrīsāra* Nīlakaṇṭha has departed from Madhusūdana and done something novel. Nor has he borrowed his coverage from Vidyāraṇya. The depiction of the Mādhyas in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* is quite different in approach. Whoever the Mīśras were, whether Mādhyas, or followers of the God of Abraham, or of some unknown sage, they had not come in for this sort of coverage before.

Acknowledgements Thanks to Diwakar Acharya, Jason Birch, Jack Hawley, Fabrizio Speziale, Anand Venkatkrishnan, and Dominik Wujastyk for help in the preparation of this article.

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Abbreviations

Adyar D	<i>K. Madhava Sarma et al., Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Adyar Library</i>
BORI	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
BrSū	<i>Brahmasūtra</i>
EIP	Karl Potter, <i>Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies</i>
Hall	Fitzedward Hall, <i>A Contribution towards an Index to the Bibliography of the Indian Philosophical Systems</i>
H	Harvard = Harvard Manuscript 1571 of <i>Ṣaṭtantrīsāra</i> (Poleman 3509)
Harvard	H
Kielhorn	Franz Kielhorn, <i>Report on the Search for Sanskrit Mss. in the Bombay Presidency, during the Year 1880-81</i>
CP	
J	RORI Jodhpur Manuscript 32424
N	Nepal Manuscript of <i>Ṣaṭtantrīsāra</i> , Vīra-Pustakālaya. <i>Nepālarājakīya-Vīrapustakālayastha-hastalikhita-pustakānām Bṛhatsūcīpatram</i> 4-153
NAK	National Archives Kathmandu, Rāṣṭrīyābhilekhālaya. See Vīra-Pustakālaya
NCC	V. Raghavan et al., <i>New Catalogus Catalogorum</i>
Poleman	H.I. Poleman, <i>A Census of Indic Manuscripts in the United States and Canada</i>
RORI	Muni Jinavijaya, <i>A Catalogue of Sanskrit and Prakrit Manuscripts in the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute</i>
Jodhpur	
ŚSD	<i>Śrutisiddhāntadīpikā</i> of Vanamālimiśra, eds. Khuperkar and Nipanikar
ŚŚP	<i>Śrutisiddhāntaprakāśa</i> of Vanamālimiśra, eds. Khuperkar and Nipanikar

SB	Sarasvati Bhavan - Subhadra Jha, <i>Descriptive catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts ... in the Government Sanskrit College Library</i>
SB MS	Sarasvati Bhavan Manuscript
Trav. Uni.	S. Kunjan Pillai, <i>Alphabetical Index of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum</i>
Triv. Cur.	T. Gaṇapatiśāstrī, <i>A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts collected by the Curator</i>
TCD	Sāmbaśivaśāstri et al., <i>A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Curator's Office Library, Trivandrum</i>
VK	<i>Vedāntakataka</i> of Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, comprising the <i>Samanvayaparicheda</i> (SB MS 27519) and the <i>Paribhāṣāparicheda</i> (SB MS 27520)
Vrindavan RI	VRI = M.L. Gupta et al., <i>Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Vrindaban Research Institute</i>
VRI	Vrindavan RI
VSS	<i>Vedāntasiddhāntasaṃgraha</i> of Vanamālimiśra ed. Devīprasādaśarma Kavi
VTN	<i>Vedāntatātparyanivedana</i> of Govinda Caturdhara, SB MS 27459

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