An Early Modern Account of the Views of the Miśras

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Abstract In a doxography of views called the Śaṭṭantrīṣāra, 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 doctiness 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 As the Śaṭṭantrīṣāra is unpublished to date, a preliminary edition of those portions that concern the Miśras is presented here, together with a translation, notes, and some further discussion.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 · Vanamālī Miśra · Doxography · Advaita · Astrology · Hell · Madhva · Abrahamic religions
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The purpose of the following paper is to present those passages of an unpublished seventeenth century north Indian Sanskrit doxographical text which describe the doctrines of a group whom the author refers to as the Miśras.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 Vanamālīdāsa 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 Śaṭṭantrīṣāra of Nīlakanṭha Caturdhara

The text is called the Śaṭṭantrīṣāra—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

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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 Nīlakanṭha’s Śaṭṭantrīṣāra 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.\footnote{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.}

In fact there are two texts called the Śaṭṭaṇṭrīśāra. One is by Nīlakaṇṭha 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 Nīlakaṇṭha’s, for it mentions the sixteenth century figure, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. This Śaṭṭaṇṭrīśāra is the work of another Advaitin and appears to have some relationship with Nīlakaṇṭha’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.\footnote{This is not a work by Haribhadra Sūri, 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.} The four other known manuscripts, as well as the two that were seen in the nineteenth century by Hall and Kielhorn, attribute authorship to Nīlakaṇṭha, and are therefore copies of the work under discussion here.

The Śaṭṭaṇṭrīśāra by Nīlakaṇṭha 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.\footnote{Kathmandu—14ff.; Harvard—16ff.; Jodhpur—9ff.; Banaras—13ff.; Kielhorn—10ff.} The verses of the text are composed in long, syllabic kāvya metres: Śikharinī (vs. 1), Sragdhara (vss. 2–6 and 8), Śārdūlavikṛīḍita (vs. 7), and Vibhūsaṅā (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 Śaṭṭaṇṭrīśāra 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.\footnote{evaṃ sarvapurāṇāikaṃ karmaiṇa sarvatantraikāmatyena sarvasṛutyaikaṃ karmaiṇa śivādīvātaviśayam pra-sādhyā dvītyāparichedādau vedānteṣy apy upanyastānāṃ matabhedānāṃ sarvatantrabahirbhūtathvam} The text attempts to do so by
comparing across several metaphysical and soteriological topics the viewpoints it enumerates.

The six systems in Nilakantha’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 - Mimāṃsā, Tarka, Vedānta, and three classified as heterodox or nāstika - Čārvāka, Sugata, that is, Buddhist, and Ārhaṭa, that is, Jaina. Tarka is then further subdivided into four - Sāmkhya, Pāṭaṅjala, Vaiśeṣika, and Naiyāyika, while the Buddhist view is subdivided into four as well: Saṅrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Yogācāra, and Mādhyamika. Thus there are twelve doctrines or vañādas enumerated in the text, while preserving the traditional preference for a set of six. 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 Miśras. Nilakantha 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. miśraśisyāḥ, tacchisyāḥ, miśrānusārināḥ, 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 Miśras, with some depicted as holding views not held by others (tadekadesimatam). Though in the end Nilakantha does not accept the Miśras’ 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 Śaṭṭantrīśāra has some structural similarities with Nilakantha’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 Nilakantha did. This Śaṭṭantrīśāra does not mention the Miśras.

The anonymous Śaṭṭantrīśāra provides some description of the Pāñcarātras and Pāśupatās, though they are not included in its formal enumeration. It refers specifically to the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakās, if not to the Prābākaras. 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 Nilakantha’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

8 Nilakantha’s Śaṭṭantrīśāra 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 vedāntasya kaiś cid bhedaparatayā, kaiś cid bhedādheparatayā, kaiś cid viśiṣṭadvairaparatayā, kaiś cid viśuddhādheparatayā vāykhāyēṣu tātparyabhṛamo jāyate. tat katham eṣām anyatamaparatvam niścetum śakyata ity āśaṅkya K f. 12v.
Nilakanṭha Caturdhara was a Deccani Brahmin who moved to Banaras and was active as an author there in the middle of the seventeenth century. 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 Ṣaṭṭantrisāra’s opening statement, Nilakanṭha refers to a larger work into which the Ṣaṭṭantrisāra fits, which, he says, argues that the purāṇas, the systematic philosophies, and the śrutis are uniform in proclaiming the nondualism of Śiva. This is a surprising project for Nilakanṭha to undertake, given what we know of him. In his extant works, Nilakanṭha is not a Śivađvaitin as that term is usually understood. In fact, the largest independent work that Nilakanṭha wrote was the Vedāntakataka, whose first two parts are mostly dedicated to a critique of Appayya Dīkṣita’s Śaṭrūṭaṭīṣṭhāntaleśasamgraha and his Nyāyarāksāmini, because of the infiltration, as Nilakanṭha sees it, of Appayya’s Śivađvaitin views into his Advaitin works. 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.

While the sections of the Vedāntakataka are called paricchedas, the same term that Nilakanṭha uses here, and while three paricchedas of the Vedāntakataka are known to survive, they do not obviously amount to a Śivađvaitin project of the sort Nilakanṭha appears to describe here. Indeed, in his commentary on the Mahābhārata, Nilakanṭha speaks out against the partisan sectarian use of canonical texts both by Śaivas and by Vaiśṇavas. Unless other works of Nilakanṭha’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 ‘śivādīvaita’ here in some other, perhaps etymological or even inverted sense. Nilakanṭha’s criticism of Appayya extended beyond his Advaitin and into his Śaiva works. He wrote two texts, the Śivađvaitanirṇaya and the Ratnatrayaprīkṣā, whose titles echo those of Appayya’s works, but which maintain a non-Śaiva, mainstream Brahminical and Advaitin position. Thus Nilakanṭha could well be redescribing ‘śivādīvaita’ as ‘(viśu)dhādīvaita,’ Nilakanṭha’s preferred term for the nondualism of the pure, undifferentiated brahman.

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9 I have written a number of articles on Nilakantha. For the most recent profile see Minkowski, “Nilakantha Caturdhara’s Advaita Vedānta” (2017).
10 see note 7.
11 On Śivādīvaita see now Duquette, “Reception” (2017).
12 Minkowski, “Appayya’s Vedānta” (2016).
13 Minkowski, “The Vedastuti” (2004).
14 See Nilakantha on MBh I.1.23 in the vulgate version (Kimjavađekara) cited below in note 168.
15 See Minkowski, “Nilakantha Caturdhara’s Advaita Vedānta” (2017).
16 The Vedāntaśāstraṇivedana of Govinda, Nilakantha’s son, is often a guide to understanding the thinking of his father. There Govinda treats the term ‘śivasama’ as it appears in the Vāyuvyāsahītā (muktaḥ śivasamo bhavet—Śivasama 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 tattpurusa, meaning the same as, i.e. nondifferent from, the nirguṇa brahman: tanat ca śīvavasaṃśādabhradābhyaṃ muktaṣya pūrvokte nir<ś><p>ṛdhīkasopāṣadhihitrāpue ucy<ś>te, iti phalito rithaḥ. tulyaparyāyahagrahoṇe ‘pi śivaśabdenātra nirguṇasya
Nilakanṭha presents his doxography as intending to establish a conformity of views (aikamātya), 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.

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 Śaṭṭantrīsāra texts do. 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 Sāmkhya vs. Baudhāya, Cārvāka, and Ārāhata. 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 Prabhākara, and four under Vedānta. Sāmkhya is then broken down into Sāmkhya and Yoga, both theist and...
nontheist. In his enumeration of views on a scale of validity, Mādhava begins with Vaiśeṣika, (but includes Jaina views there unexpectedly,) then Nyāya, Mimāṁsā, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, Cārvāka, Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Yogācāra, Mādhyaṃsa, and Vedānta.

Halbfass consulted Mādhava’s work as well as the anonymous Sarvatamasamgraha, which Mejor has shown must be later than 1700 AD. This text initially juxtaposes Vedic (vaidika) and nonVedic (avaidika) triads: Mā&māsā, Tarka, and Sāṃkhya vs. Bauddha, Ārhatya, and Lokāyatika. On its scale of validity this text begins with the nonVedic, passing through Cārvāka, Kṣaṇaṇaka (i.e. Jaina), and Sugata, and further subdividing the Buddhists into four—Mādhyaṃsā, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika, presented as chronologically arranged from older to younger. For the Vedic schools it begins with Kaṇāda (i.e. Vaiśeśika), then Gautama (i.e. Nyāya), here mentioning a subgroup (ekadesín); then it lists Sāṃkhya and Yoga, each in both theist and nontheist forms. Finally come Mā&māsā, both Prabhākara and Bhāṭṭa, and the brahmavādins, those based on the Upaniṣads, and those based on the Purāṇas.

For both of these texts, the delineation of a heterodox trio that expands into six is in accordance with what is found in the Śaṭṭantṛśāra 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 Śaṭṭantṛśāra 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 Śaṭṭantṛśāra 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 Sarvadarśanakaumudi 1938, p. 4.
22 Mejor, “Sarvatamasamgraha” (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. Ganapatiśāstrī, however, does not attribute the text to Rāghavānanda, saying instead that the author is unknown (Sarvatamasamgraha 1918, Preface). All its known manuscripts are Keralan—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 Keralan author, Melputtur Nārāyaṇa Bhāṭṭa (Mejor, “Sarvatamasamgraha” p. 260, Sarvatamasamgraha 1977. Note that the NCC, (vol. 38, p. 144) has conflated the two publications of the Sarvatamasamgraha. Unni Madhavan is in fact the editor of the 1977 edition of Nārāyaṇabhāṭṭa’s work). There may be a third text with this name, composed by Nārāyaṇa Bhāṭṭa’s father, Māṭrāṭṭa (NCC vol. 23, p. 218 ; NCC vol. 38, p. 144). There is a manuscript of a Sarvatamasamgraha that is attributed to a Māṭrāṭṭa (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), Trav. Cur. V 82 and 83 (both 550 granthas). Thus while the anonymous Sarvatamasamgraha was composed too late for Nīlakanṭha 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 sāgunaabrahman is ultimate—Rāmānuja and so on, and those for whom the nirgunaabrahman is ultimate—Śaṅkara 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 Čārvākas and Vaibhāsikas 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 Vidyāraṇyā in the Sarvadarśanasamgraha, who does mention Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas as contemporary schools of thought. Vidyāraṇyā there describes the views of the Mādhvas, as the purṇaprajñādarśana. 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 Ṣaṭṭantrīsāra, 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 Miśras. 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 Miśras whose views do not coincide with those of other Miśras (tadekadeśimamat). In the seventh he takes up a critique of Miśra views (dūṣana). In the eighth verse Nīlakaṇṭha further distinguishes the Miśras 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 Viśiṣṭadvaitin, Dvaitin, and other readings of the Upaniṣads that differ from the Advaitin one. Here the Miśras are not mentioned.

Thus although the Miśras are a supernumerary addition to Nīlakaṇṭha’s doxography, more than half of the Ṣaṭṭantrīsāra is taken up with considering their doctrines. The Miśras 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 Rgveda, 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 Ṣaddarśana-, Ṣaddarśanī-, 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 Ṣaṭṭantrī-

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 Nīlakanṭha in what he is doing.

Passages of the Śaṭṭantrīsāra About the Miśras

The passages of the Śaṭṭantrīsāra that describe the doctrines of the Miśras 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

Nīlakanṭha’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

Nīlakanṭha lays out this classification in the first verse, where the Miśras 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 Miśras.

cidaikyaṁ28 vedāntāḥ suragurukanādākṣacaranaṁ
jādaikyaṁ te nānety api kapilayogārhatabhaṭāḥ
vimiśre 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 visargās, missing –c before ch-, and so on. Only the folio turns for the Kathmandu manuscript are indicated, with chevrons.

27 sarvāṇa etāni jñāṇaiñeyayor dvayor eva padārthayor jñānaikāntatkāntaiñeyaikāntatobhayaprthaktvobh-
avaisāṃśyabhedat caturṣy eva mateṣy antarbhavanity āsāyenaḥ. N f.1v, H f.1v, J f.2r.

28 N f.1v, H f.1v-2r, J f.2v.
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 Mīras 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 Mīras 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, Nīlakanṭha comes to the Mīras by way of a citation from the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad (1.2).

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. By destiny is meant here the unseen force (adrṣṭa). Chance means the absence of a regular order. (The author, i.e. Nīlakanṭha) 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 atmve. The text is disturbed in all manuscripts.
32 N, H -ānusārinā. J -ānusārinām.
33 In Nīlakanṭha’s reading, yonih is the predicate of the other six. That is, time and so on are the cause of vyavahāra.
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 Miśras. 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 Miśras 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 Miśras that are mentioned in this passage reappear later.
The use of the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad as a doxographic framework will return in the
third verse.

The Miśras did not appear in the initial enumeration of views that preceded the
verse. The citation of the Śvetāsvatara 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 Miśras.

The distinctive view about yogic perception that is attributed to the Miśras
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.

Nīlakanṭha makes a distinction between those Miśras 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 Nīlakanṭha 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 Miśras come last again, and are excluded from a conformity of view that
Nīlakanṭha finds in the others.

atha34 sarvesāṁ miśrād anyeśāṁ muktāva uikamatyaṁ āha.
cinmātram sāmkhyayogāh śrutiśikharavidāh karmiṇaś cāniśedhāj
jainā nityordhvagam taj jaḍam iva kaṇabhug gautamaś ca tribauddhī |
nirjñeyayajñānadārām svaviraham avadān śūnyadehātmabhājau
mokṣaṁ te śmin vikalpā nirahami bhavavaddvaitabhānām tu miśrāḥ || 2
(Sragdhāra)

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

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 Mādhymakas 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 Miśras, 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 Miśras.

\[
\text{miśrās}\quad \text{tu saṃsāra iva mokṣe ‘pi pañcadhābhedamānam icchanti. 2}
\]

The Miśras, 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 pañcabhedas is a core doctrine of the Mādhvas, 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 Śrutiśiddhāntaprabhā.\(^{37}\) 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 Miśra 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 Miśras are united in their view of freedom, he asserts no such uniformity on this new question.

\[
evam\quad \text{eṣāṃ muktāv aikamatyam uktvā vyavahāre bhedam āha.}
\]

---

35 N f.5r, H f.5v, J f.3v.  
36 See e.g. Mesquita’s citation of Madhva’s *Aitareyopaniṣaddbhāṣya* where he refers to a passage of the *Bhavisyatparvan*. Mesquita, *Viṣṇuuttvanirṇaya* (2000, p. 192) n.396.  
37 The second section ends: iti bhedapañcakar pratyakṣam. ŠSP p. 10.  
38 *VSS* 1.34.  
39 *VSS* 1.101-43.  
40 N f.5r, H f.5v, J f.3v-4r.
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 (Śvetāsvatara 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 Vaibhāsikas and Sautrāntikas say it is the ones other than the first (i.e. the elements, inherent nature, and cognition.) The Mīras say that God, time, and the elements are the cause. The Mīmasāsakas add adṛṣṭa (to the Mīras’s list, understanding puruṣa only as the individual soul). The Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas (add puruṣa in the form of) the Lord, while the Śaṅkhya 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 Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad that was cited in the commentary on the first verse forms the framework of explanation for this section. On Nīlakanṭha’s reading, Śvetāsvatara 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 Nīlakanṭha 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 sūtra accept all six. Others, seeking a shortcut, limit themselves to a smaller number, not realizing that this contradicts experience.
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 Nīlakanṭha’s synthesis in the first verse, the term ‘puruṣa’ is understood variously as the ātman, the jīva, the vijnāna, the paramesvara, and Spirit. Our concern here is with the doctrine of the Mīrasa, 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, Nīlakanṭha comes to the Mīrasa after treating Vedānta, Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Carvāka, the other two Buddhist schools, and the Jainas, in that order. The Mīrasa do not come last here so that they can be grouped with several other schools.

\[ kālō bhūtāṇi paramesvaraś ceti tribhir eva miśrāḥ sarvanirvāham icchanti. \]
\[ yad apy eteṣāṃ sukhadūkhādīvaicitrye hetur niyāthi svabhāvo vā nāsti, tathāpi jyotiḥśastra-prāmāṇyāt kāla eva taddhetur ity āgraḥah. \]

The Mīrasa 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 Mīrasa here. According to Nīlakanṭha, 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. Nīlakanṭha will have more to say on this below under verse 4.

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

\[ atra miśrādayas catvāro yadṛchchāśabditaṃ kāryasyānirvācaḥ nilaktuvaṃ anabhyupagamya tanniruktāb abhimānaṃ dhārayanta ākare eva nirākrutāb. ñev \]

49 N f.6v, H f.7v, J f.5r.
50 N, H sarvanirvāham, J sarvanirvāham.
51 N, H jyotiḥśastra-prāmāṇyāt, J jyotiḥśastra-prāmāṇyāt.
52 N, f.7r, H f.8r, J f.5v.
53 N ākare. H, J ākare.
Among these views, the four (in the preceding discussion) that begin with the Miśras 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 Miśras) 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 Miśras, 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:
Niñakantha has grouped the Miśras with the Mīmāmsakas, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, and Śāṅkhyā (and Yoga), because none of these schools accepts chance, and Niñakantha can criticize this absence collectively. He singles out the Miśras 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 Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad. In Niñakantha’s magnum opus, the Vedāntakataka, he does reject several forms of satkāryavāda, concluding that the source of the world is inexplicable māyā.

Verse 4: The View of the Miśras

After the presentation of the first three verses, Niñakantha has made clear that the views of the Miśras are different from those of everyone else. In the fourth verse, Niñakantha provides a summary of their views, for two reasons: because they have
come up as a topic, and because they are unknown to Nilakantha’s audience. This verse and its commentary are accordingly presented in full here.

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.

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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 cijjadātā. H, J cijjadātmā.
61 N, J bhavadur. H bhavadur.
62 N, J yuktā. H yuktā, corrected to yūka, in a diff. hand.
63 N, J svarbhakta. H svarbhakta corrected to svarbhaktah, in a diff. hand.
64 N, J yāty anīśas tamānte. H. yānītyaśās tamānte, corrected in a diff. hand to yāty anīśas tamontae.
*karmaṇya-muktah* ‘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 bhaktah in the next line: either segmented as karman amuktah, not stinting from religious activity, though the use of a locative would be odd, or else as a tatpurusa, 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 rūpādhihīnāt īṣabījavad*65 vicitrānantaśakteḥ. sve mahima<ni?>

pratiṣṭhitāc66 cetanācetanātmāyaṁ67 saṃsāraśvastaparītyajjē jīvadehād īva yūkācikurān ādvaḍ eva ca svopādāne na ṭiyate yato yogigamyah. vyākhyaḥ

‘yaṁ hetuḥ. atāḥ puṃyākayor īva īṣaṁjyayoh svasvopādhyoh kadācid āpy anivṛttṛ ghaṭamaṭhākāśayor īva nābhedasāṁbhāvanāpy āsti.

‘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 īṣadvijavad should be read as īṣabījavad, 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 Nīlakanṭha’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 Vanamāḷi maps easily onto this assertion of Nīlakanṭha’s. The Madhva school does, however, accord the highest epistemic status to perception among the pramaṇas.69

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65 N, H Īṣadvitjavad.

66 N mahimapratiṣṭhitān, H mahimapratiṣṭhitil, J mahimapratiṣṭhitāc.

67 N, H cetanācetanācetanātmāyaṁ. J cetanācetanātmāyaṁ.

68 The Ayurvedic text, the *Carakasāṃhitā* (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). Vanamāḷi accepts this view in *ŚS* 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{71} Madhva asserts in the Pramāṇalakṣana that yogic perception takes in all things completely other than God, and is beginningless and eternal.\textsuperscript{72} If the Miśras are indeed Mādhvas, Nīlakanṭha 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.

\textit{na caiva pūrvajamābhāvād akṛtābhīgamaḥ syād ity āśāntyāha, kāla iti. jātakatājākādiṣṭastrastraprāmāṇyāt śubhāśubhaḥ\textsuperscript{73} grahanirīkṣitāyā niṣekotpatti\textsuperscript{74} vaṃsāsadinapraveśa\textsuperscript{75} velāyā eva dehināṃ bhogavaicitryaḥ etutve sambhavati prākjanmanas taddhe<8r>tutalkalpanānarthikety arthāḥ.}

There could be an objection to the Miśras’ 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 Miśras address this objection,) he says (in the verse,) ‘Time.’

When according to the authority of the astrological sciences—genethliology, 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 evam suggests that because the soul and God are ever distinct, on the Miśras’ view, therefore there is no moral continuity of action. But there are dualists who accept the existence of sāṃsāric karma; certainly Madhva did. Nīlakanṭha appears here to be extending the point made in the third verse, that the Miśras do not accept destiny or chance as a sufficient explanation of the justice of life. In the third verse Nīlakanṭha brought out the importance of svabhāva, inherent nature, for the Miśras. 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.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{70} Sharma, Philosophy (1986, p. 51).
\textsuperscript{71} Sharma, Philosophy (1986, p. 143).
\textsuperscript{72} Mesquita, Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya (2000, pp. 240–245).
\textsuperscript{73} N, H śubhāśubhāśubha. J śubhāśubha.
\textsuperscript{74} N, H niṣekotpattir.
\textsuperscript{75} N, H varṣamāsadinapraveśe, J varṣamāsadiradivapravesā.
\textsuperscript{76} Sharma, Philosophy (1986, pp. 281–288). Cf. Vanamāli’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.\textsuperscript{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 jyotihāṣṭāstra, the astral sciences, as a way to explain the variety of experience anywhere in the writings of Vanamālī Miśra or of Madhva or Jayatīrtha. If the Miśras were indeed to be identified as Mādhvas, this attribution would remain unexplained.

\textit{ata aihikasukhandhkaprāptiparīhārtham na yatatvam śubhāśubhakāla-prāpitasyāparīhārtyatvāt.}\textsuperscript{78} āmuṣmika\textsuperscript{79} sukhadūkhkaprāptiparīhāropāyau tu śāstryāv anuṣṭheyāv eva. iśājnārūpasya vidhini śāstrasasyānuul-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 ‘karmanāyamuktah,’ independent of personal effort.\textsuperscript{80}

\textit{ata}\textsuperscript{81} eveśasyaikāntabhaktaḥ svahśabditaṃ niratiśayanirdūhkhasukhabhogayaṃ apunarāvṛttisthanāṃ yānti. ye tv akarmaṇaḥ paśvādayo drumādayaś ca, te ‘pi iha luptaśarīrā iśājnākārībhīḥ svargād adhastaniḥ śad bhogabhumīḥ praveśyaṃ tatravyaśānasyopahogārthaṃ.

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 (akarmaṇaḥ), 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.

\textsuperscript{77} Pingree, “Tājika” (1997); Gansten, “Authorities” (2012).
\textsuperscript{78} H, N prāpitasya tasyāparīhārtyatvāt. J prāpitasyāparīhārtyatvāt.
\textsuperscript{79} N āmuṣmika-. H, J āmuṣmika-
\textsuperscript{80} On what constitutes good and bad action, see VŚS 1.12–13; on worldly pleasures VŚS 6.1–10.
\textsuperscript{81} N atta. H, J ata.
Vanamāḷī certainly endorses bhakti as the path to a permanent heaven in which there is pleasure (sukha) but no pain, and no return to earth.  

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 Jambūdīvīpa, and to the other parts of the Jambūdīvīpa aside from Bhārata, which is the karmabhūmi. They are places where one experiences the results of actions done in Bhārata, the karmabhūmi. The Jainas make a similar horizontal geographical distinction between karmabhūmi and bhogabhūmi, in the regions of their huge earth.

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. Vanamāḷī makes no mention of sentient creatures innocent of karma. For him, even plants are reincarnated beings.

The people located there are discussed in the next passage.

ye tu seśvarā api pāpakṛtas te mṛtāḥ nirayadvāri sthitā narakoṣmaṇā pāpānurūpaṁ mydu īvraṁ īvrataraṁ pāpacyamānā yātanāṁ anubhavanti. te kalpāvasāne vinispāpā īśājñāvaśāl labdhapūrvadehā adhastanir bhogabhūmīr āvisya karmānurūpam 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 Miśras 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 Miśras 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.
Vanamāḷī, the body and world of God is permanent. Vanamāḷī describes hells that consist in burning heat, e.g. a sandy land in the hot sun. 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.

ye tv aham eveśvaro na matto 'nya īśvaro 'sīti manyante, te narakadvāri sūkṣmadehena yātānām labdhvā punaḥ kalpante sthūladehair yojitā ākṣayye narake tamaḥsaṁjñe 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. The Mādhvas also have a lowest hell called Tamas.

tataḥ svarganarakayor dvārapidhāne saṁvṛte <8v> na ko'pi svargād adhāḥ patati nāpy evaṃ. narakād bahir niḥsaraṅgī kalpauḥ 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 Vanamāḷī to gates that are shut at the end of the age, however.

Verse 5: The Basis in śruti for the Miśras’ Views

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

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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). Vanamāḷī predicts hell for the nondualists, who think that they are brahman VSS 6.137–38.
91 N, H, J etām.
times, and once from the *Brhadāranyaka, Taittirīya, Muṇḍaka, and Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣads*, as well as from the *Vāyupurāṇa*.\(^{92}\) As has been mentioned above, it is not that Nilakanṭha thinks the Miśras explicitly refer to these passages, but that these passages represent in Vedaṅga terms the grounding for the positions that the Miśras hold, and enable Nilakanṭha 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 Miśras, 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 (upāsanā) the Self. Nilakanṭha’s dummy-Miśra 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 *Brhadāranyaka 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 *Śvetāsvatara 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.\(^{99}\)

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92 The passages appear in the notes below.
93 अत्मावेशा महायया अत्म परिकर्या अत्मनं एवं अत्मनं परिकर्या उभयं लोकाः प्राप्तायं आदि च. Chāndogya Up. 8.8.4.
94 ये तो 'किन्तु पुरुषो द्रष्यते एशा अत्मो होवाः. Chāndogya Up. 8.7.4.
95 अथा ये 'यम भगवो 'पसु परिक्षय̄ते याश कायम आदि तात्क्ये कात्म एशा. Chāndogya Up. 8.7.4.
96 The Udaśāraśāstraśāstraṇa, Chāndogya Up. 8.8.1ff.
97 ये एवायां अपसु रुषसं एताम्य स्राव्यां प्राप्तायां एताम्य स्राव्यां उर्मिलाः. Chāndogya Up. 8.8.1ff.
98 विशुद्धसत्वां कामयैं एवं कामां तम तम लोकां जयते तांश कामां. Muṇḍaka Up. 3.1.10. b-d. prātiṣeṣa jñāna satyātma pañcaatmaka yogaguṇe pravṛttvam na tasya rogo na jāra na mṛtyuḥ prāptasya yogāni mayānayaśārām. Śvetāsvatara Up. 2.1.2.
99 सर्वम वै ते 'नम अण्वुवं ते 'नम ह्रामोपास. Taittirīya Up. 2.2.1.
100 दाशा मवंतराशी तिष्ठतिन्द्रियाचातकाः. bhaṅkās tu śatam pūrṇam sahasram <tv az>bhimānikāh. bauḍhā daśasahasrāni tiṣṭhanti vigatājvarāḥ. Nilakanṭha is probably citing these verses from Vācaspati
Nīlakanṭha 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.\textsuperscript{100}

Thus Nīlakanṭha’s Vedic basis for the Miśras’ 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 Miśras. It begins with a return to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*’s eighth chapter, and Prajāpati’s instruction of Indra and Virocana.

\begin{quote}
yadyapi\textsuperscript{101} praṇāpateḥ pratibimbopāsanam atra na vivakṣitam, tathāpindra\textsuperscript{102} virocanābhyyaṁ vidyārthibhyāṁ dvātrimśadvarṣaparyantāṁ brahmacaryaṁ\textsuperscript{103} caritvā bhrāntyā prajāpativākya<sya?> pratibimbopāstav eva tātparaṁ griñṭham, imau\textsuperscript{104} dehariṇapratikopāsakau krama\textsuperscript{105} muktisthānapṛptya-narhau pravrajantau abhi\textsuperscript{106} laksyoktaṁ prajāpatinā\textsuperscript{107} yatara\textsuperscript{108} etaduṇiṣado bhavisyanti devā vāsūrā vā te parābhavisyanti ti\textsuperscript{109}. tac cendraḥ śvājñānam ardhapatikramaṁ brahmacaryam\textsuperscript{103} punah prajāpatiṁ cājīgāma\textsuperscript{111}.

danesas tv abodhān na nivṛttah svīyebhyaś caṇṭad evovāceti tatraiva prasiddhaṁ idam eva muktadehalokayor nityatvam āśritya miśrāṁ svatantre sarvakāryanītyatvam uktam, taṭasthasya cēsvarasas oppāsyatvam uktam. anyad api kiṁ cīt svamatānugṛṇaṁ kalpitam ity āśīrṇaṁ tāvat.
\end{quote}

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
Miśra’s *Tattvavāisāraṇā†*, on *Yogasūtra* 1.19, where Vācaspati attributes the verses to the *Vāyupurāṇa*. Vācaspati cites these verses in the *Tattvakaumudī* on *Śāmkhyakārikā* 44 as well. The verses are not preserved in extant versions of this Purāṇa. See Śrīnivāsan, *Tattvakaumudī* 1967, p. 205.

\textsuperscript{101} N f.9v, H ff.10r-11v, J f.7v.
\textsuperscript{102} N, H –īndra-. J –īndra-.
\textsuperscript{103} N brahmaryam. H brahmacaryaṃ. J brahmacarya.
\textsuperscript{104} N griñṭham ramau. H, J griñṭham imau.
\textsuperscript{105} N, H krama-. J krama-
\textsuperscript{106} N ābhi-. H abhi-. J abhi-
\textsuperscript{107} N prajāpatimā. H, J prajāpatinaṁ.
\textsuperscript{108} N, H yata. J yatara.
\textsuperscript{109} *Chāndogya Up*. 8.8.4.
\textsuperscript{110} N, H buddhā. J buddhvā.
\textsuperscript{111} N, H cājīgāma, J ājīgāma.
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 Miśras, 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)(tattastha). And they have also fancifully made up whatever other thing suits their own view. Let that be what it is.

Notes:
Nīlakanṭha groups the views of the Miśras with Virocana’s understanding of Indra’s teaching. The point is probably not that the Miśras 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. Vanamāli believes in the former (see above), but not in the latter.112

While Vanamāli 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 Miśras

In the sixth verse, Nīlakaṇṭha describes the views of some among the Miśras 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 ‘Miśras.’ The divergences of two of these three from the main group are described here.

\[
\begin{align*}
evaṃ & \text{ miśratasya mūlāṃ pradarśya} <10r> \text{ tadekadeśimatam āha, yogī.} \\
yogi & \text{ pratyakṣataḥ prāgjanur api janiman nityatāvat prasiddham} \\
svāt & \text{ sūkṣmasthūlabhūtodbhavam amṛtamṛtam kāryam evaṃ dvirūpam} \\
avyaktaṃ & \text{ naiva cetaḥpratham avataratīty asti mūrto 'py adhīśo} \\
yam & \text{ dhyātvā tasya lokaṃ dhruvam} 115 \text{ abhayam ayūr dhvāntavātātmā} 116 \text{jāhyāḥ} 117 \\
\end{align*}
\]

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 dhuvam. J dhruvam.
116 N, H, J -ātya-
117 H, J –khyāh. N –khyāh.
Having shown in this way the (Vedic) basis of the doctrine of the Miśras, 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 Miśras 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.

niyataśvat—I take the –vat as the possessive suffix, lit. ‘possessed of eternality.’

prāgjanur janiman, the ‘birth before birth’ is glossed as aśṭājanman- in the commentary. janus is an old word which appears only in the Rgveda and Atharvaveda. Nilakanṭha 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 Yogāśāstra that is cited below.

That there are some Miśras 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 amrtamṛtam should be read as anrtam ṛtaṃ. This would cause trouble for the text of the commentary that follows, however.

In the manuscripts, dhvāntavātmajākhyāḥ could also be read dhvāntavātm-tajākhyāḥ. 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. Vanamāli honours him as such in the maṅgala to some of his works.120

118 He was probably an Āśvalāyanī. Minkowski, “Mantrakāśikhaṇḍa,” (2002).
119 Sharma, Philosophy (1986, pp. 222–232). Cf. VSS 3.64; 4.3–5.
120 e.g. Brahmasūtrasiddhāntamuktāvali vs. 2: marudamśam.
121 Pāṇiṅgālayogaśāstra 3.18. Nilakantha’s rendering is a paraphrase, not a direct citation. The relevant text is given below in note 127.
122 N, H ābaddhajaigīsavyasamvāde. J āvaddhajaigīsavyasamvāde.
123 N, H –janmanāmam. J janmanām.
124 H anṛtam. N amṛtam. J anityam.
ävatyajaigīṣavasyasāṃvāde\textsuperscript{122} ṛtakāryāṇāṁ ivātītajanmanāṁ\textsuperscript{123} api yo-
gipratyakṣata eva siddhe. tena sthūlabhūtamayaṁ kāryaṁ mṛtmaṁ
anityaṁ\textsuperscript{124} sūkṣmabhūtamayaṁ kāryaṁ anṛtmaṁ\textsuperscript{125} nityaṁ\textsuperscript{126}. tena muktade-
halokādikaṁ sūkṣmabhūtodbhavaṁ nityaṁ. baddhadehalokādikaṁ tu
sthūlabhūtodbhavaṁ anityaṁ.

That which the Miśras 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 Āvataya 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 Pāṇījalayogaśāstra 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 Āvataya,
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.\textsuperscript{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 Miśras that was described in the fourth

\textsuperscript{122} H anṛtma. N, J amṛtma.
\textsuperscript{123} N, H nityaṁ. J nityaṁ.
\textsuperscript{127} daśasu mahāsārgoṇu bhavyatvād anabhībhubhūtabhūtabhisattvena mayā narakatiryagbhavam duḥkham
sampasyātā devamunusyeṣu punah punar utpadyamāṇena yat kimciṣ anubhūtaṁ tat sarvaṁ duḥkham eva
pratyavaiṁi.
verse, where we are told that those in unending hell and those in the enjoyment-worlds are rejoined with their previous bodies.

\[
tathāvyaktam īśvararūpaṁ na buddhāv āropayitum śakyam iti vyaktam apiśvararūpaṁ asty eva. na ca vyatiriktatvena tasya kāryatvam, vyaktānām api taddehalokānām anāditvābhyyupagamāt.
\]

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

\[
tad evaṃ miśrādīmatatraye jīvēsavor bhedah. īśopātisādhyā jīvasya muktatā, upātīś ca dāsabhāvena ahamgrahavādinām andhatamah<10v>-praveśasmaranat. upāstyaṅgaṁ jānām na svapradhānam. īśvaralokaprāptīr muktiḥ pañcavidhabhedabhānavatī, na tv ātmapiśvāṁśarūpā jāḍāvastheti samānam eva.
\]

prāptyālambanāni 132 taṭasthāḥ api ādyasayāvyakteśvararūpaṁ madhyamasaya dehapratibimbarūpaṁ antvasya mūrtimadīśvararūpaṁ iti bhedah.

sarve ‘pi śrautam aśaṁratālakṣanāṁ pūrvoktadvādaśāvīśisampratipannāṁ mokṣaṁ bādhante, mokṣe saṁsaṁratāṁ cābhīnineśapūrvakāṁ samarthayaṁ. 6

In summary, here is what is held in common among the triad of views, those of the Miśras 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

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128 Sharma, Philosophy (1986, p. 412).
129 Sharma, Philosophy (1986, pp. 415–416). Cf. ŚSD 99–101, VSS 166.
130 N eva. H, J evam.
131 N, H dāsabhāvena. J dāsabhāvena.
132 N, H prāptyālambanāti. J prāptyāvalambanāti.
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 (tatāstha). 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 ‘Miśras’ appears in two senses, one more inclusive and one less so. Initially all of these views were characterized as those of the Miśras. Here one group has differed from the Miśras, 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 Miśras in the inclusive sense.

How many names are there in the final compound in the verse, dhvāntavātma-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 Miśras 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 (vāṭa), 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 Vāṭātmaja. 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 (dehapratibimba). 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 Isa Up. 9—ye ‘vidyām upāsate, 12—ye ‘saṁbhūtim upāsate.
andhatamahpraveśanāṃ: The wording echoes the Īṣa Upaniṣad, where the phrase andhaṁ tamāḥ praviśānti 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.

pancavidhabhedabhānavatī: 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 Mādhvas.

abhiniveśapūrvakāṃ: abhiniveśapūrvakāṃ 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 sāsarīrataṁ, it would mean something else: liberation, preceded by determined devotion.

Verse 7: The Refutation of the Miśras’ Views

In the seventh verse Nilakaṇṭha offers his critique of the views of the Miśras. As no new doctrines are described in this section—Nilakaṇṭha’s critique operates in an oblique way—and as the Miśras 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 Nilakaṇṭha provided in the sixth verse: for all Miśras, 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.

Nilakaṇṭha 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 Nilakaṇṭha 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, Nilakaṇṭha has the Miśras 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 (saṃkṣalpa).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 Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad supports this informal

133 Īṣa Up. 9—ye ‘vidyāṁ upāsate, 12—ye ‘saṃbhūtim upāsate.
134 ime satyāḥ kāmā antṛpidānāḥ. Chāndogya Up. 8.3.1.
135 sa yadi piṭṛkāmo bhavati, saṃkalpād evāśya pitaraḥ 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.

\[ \text{tasmān}^{137} \text{ manomātrāḥ kāmāḥ}^{138} \text{ manasaḥ sāvatvenaiva satyāḥ na svarūpene-} \]
\[ \text{neti siddhamanasaś cāvirbhāvatirodbhāvasvabhāvasya yad upādānam avidyākhyam asacchabditam tasya vidyayā nāśośtīti na punar āvirbhāvasamb-} \]
\[ \text{havo 'sūttī siddham amanaskatākhyakaivalyam. tathā ca śrutih, 'aprāno hy} \]
\[ \text{amanāḥ subhrah' iti}^{139} \text{ kevalātmanī}^{140} \text{ manāḥsambandham vārayati.} \]
\[ \text{tasmān na härdākāśāśritāḥ kāmāḥ paramārthasatyāḥ nāpi tatkāraṇakā bāhyā} \]
\[ \text{iti teśāṁ sāvatvavacanām}^{141} \text{ miśrāpralapitam eveti siddham.} \]

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 Miśras.

Notes:
That desires are real, satya, means that they come true and are fulfilled. The heavenly world and the salvation of the Miśras 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.

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

\[ ^{136} \text{Bṛhadāranyaka Up. 1.5.3.} \]
\[ ^{137} \text{N f.11v, H f.13r, J f.9r.} \]
\[ ^{138} \text{N, H, J manomātrān kāmān.} \]
\[ ^{139} \text{Mundaka Up. 2.1.2.} \]
\[ ^{140} \text{N, H kevalātsani. J kevalātmani.} \]
\[ ^{141} \text{N, H satya-. J sāvatva-} \]
Of the scriptural passages cited here, only *RV* 2.24.12 (vīśvam satyāṃ) turns up in the works of Vanamāli (*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 Nīlakanṭha offers some further characterization and criticism of the Miśras’ 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 Miśras, who maintain that God is to be worshipped as embodied or incarnate (mūrtimad).

\[\text{svamatām}^{143} \text{ upasaṃharaṇaḥ paramataṃstham darśayati, ity evam iti.}\]

\[\text{ity eva}^{144} \text{ dvādaśāṃ vyavahṛti}^{145} \text{ viṣaye bhinnamārgāśrayānām} \]
\[\text{tantrānām aikamatyaṃ nirahāra galita}^{146} \text{ dvaitabhāne vimokṣe} | \]
\[\text{devam yaḥ svānyabudhyāḥ smarati surapaśuḥ sa pratikopasevī} \]
\[\text{na brāhmaṇaṃ lokam eti kva punar apabhavyaṃ nirdvayaṃ miśraśisyah ||} \]

<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 Miśra, 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:**

*paramataṃstham* 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 Nīlakanṭha specifies the devotion of the later view, that is, of the last group of Miśras described in the sixth verse, those who worship an embodied form of the deity.

Though mention of the śīṣya of the Miśra in the verse might be for metric or alliterative reasons, the compound is glossed in the commentary as ‘the Miśra or his pupil,’ which suggests a return to the variety among the Miśras. The principle at stake for Nīlakanṭha is bheda or ontological difference.

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

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142 See also *ŚSP* p. 82, p. 119.
143 N ff.11v–12v, H ff.13r–14r, J ff.9r–10r.
144 N avam. H, J evaṃ.
145 N vyavaruti-. H, J vyavahṛti-
146 N, H, J galitam.
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:
Vanamāli explains the passage from Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad in defence of understanding ontological difference between worshipper and deity. As he reads

154 N, H apratīkā-. J apratīka.
155 N, H bādarāyaṇa ‘ iti. J nyāyenābrahmākṛtatvān.
156 N, H na sa.
157 BrSu 4.3. 15. apratīkālambanān nayatīti bādarāyaṇa ubhayathā doṣāt tatkratuṣa ca.
158 N, H –ākutattvām. J –ākratvān.
159 N na. H, J na sa.
it, whoever worships a deity other than Nārāyaṇa is a fool, a creature of the gods.\footnote{VSS 6.142. The same verse also appears as ŚSD 74. Cf. ŚŚP p. 25.}

–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 Miśras deprives them of the world of Brahma.

iyam atra vyavasthā: yah pratīkaṃ brahmadrṣṭyopāste sa pratīkopāsako na brahmopāsakah, tasyām upāsanāyāṁ pratīkasya mukhyatvāt, brahmabhāvasyāhārayatvāc ca. yas tu vaiśvānarādirūpaṇ brahma ahamgra-

henopāste sa brahmakratuh, na jīvakratuh, tatrāpi pūrvavat brahmaṇo mukhyatvāj jīvakabhāvasyāhārayatvāc ca.

tatraivaṃ sati karmopāsti\footnote{N prāptyarthābhi. H, J prāptyarthāni.} jñānakāṇḍātmake vede karmāṇi svargā-
dyarthāni, upāsanāni kramamuktasthānaprāptyarthān\footnote{N, H yathā iha. J athēha.} jñānaṃ sadyaṅkaivalyaprāpakam iti prayojanatrayam uktam. tatra jñānakāṇḍārtham atyantam apalapyopāsanākāṇḍasya pratīkopāstīrūpe karmāṇī tāparyāṃ varnayātā karmakāṇḍa evaikāh śeṣito bhavati.

tathā svargasya nityatvām ca ‘tad yatthea\footnote{Chāndogya Up. 8.1.6.} karmajīto lokāḥ kṣiyata evam evāmutra punyajīto lokāḥ kṣiyata’ iti\footnote{N, H kṛtaṃ kāḥ ānityām’ ity été anumāṇaṅghītaśrutiviruddham cetv evamādi bahuviiruddham tadarūḍham ity a\footnote{Nyāyabindu of Dharmakīrti 3.11.} 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 Miśras) 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 Miśras’ 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...
by the inference that any manufactured thing is impermanent. (The Miśras’)
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 pratiṣkās.\textsuperscript{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.

\textbf{Verses 9 and 10: Nondualism as the Teaching of the Upaniṣads}

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

Nilakantha rules out the validity of interpretations of the Upaniṣads that do not
maintain brahman to be one and real.\textsuperscript{167} He does this in an unexpected way, by
appeal to Vātsyāyana’s commentary on the \textit{Nyāyasūtra}.\textsuperscript{168} He draws on a section of
the \textit{Nyāyasūtra} that offers refutations of other schools of thought. The sūtra in
question is about those who believe only in number (sāmkhyaikāntavādāḥ). Here
Vātsyāyana mentions a group who believe that all is one, because it is without
distinction from the existent (sarvam ekam sadaviśeṣāt).\textsuperscript{169} The refutations then
follow, but Nilakanṭha’s point, following Vācaspati Miśra’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, Nilakanṭha 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, Nilakanṭha turns to the portions of two verses of the
Ṛgvedic creation hymn, the \textit{Nāsadiya}, in support of his doxographic view as a

\textsuperscript{166} Sharma, \textit{Philosophy} 1986, 410-14.
\textsuperscript{167} Part of the text of the introduction to this section was cited above. See note 8.
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Nyāyasūtra} 4.1.41.
\textsuperscript{169} Given the commentary, it appears that Nilakanṭha understands four independent words, with sad and
aviśeṣāt as uncompounded. Otherwise Vācaspati.
The first verse, násad āsīd nó sād āsīd tadānīm. násīd rájo nó vyōmā parō yāt, rules out as the fundamental principle the emptiness (āsat) of the Mādhyamikas before creation, the stream-reality/mental stuff (sāt) of the Yogācārins, Sautrāntikas, and Vaibhāṣikas, and the primordial element or atoms (rājas) of the Sāṅkhya, Yogins, Naiyāyikas and Vaiṣeṣikas. In the same way this verse rules out the existent as mixed with māyā (parō vyōmā). Passages of the third verse, ‘tāma āsīt tāmasā gūlhām āgre’ and ‘tuchyēnābhvāpihitam’ show that the fundamental principle cannot be both real and unreal. From this Nīlakanṭha concludes that the Rgveda itself maintains that the existent is one and uncombined.

Conclusion

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

Who were the Miśras?

We have operated under the assumption that the Miśras 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 samsāra; 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 (upaśīr daśabhaṇeṇa), 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 Miśras’ strangeness, (the Mādhvas having distinctive doctrines of both, though not exactly the ones that Nīlakanṭha describes); and that there might be a figure referred to as the son of the wind (vaṭātmaja), a well-known epithet of Madhvācārya himself.

Further circumstantial evidence in favour of the identification can be found in Nīlakanṭha’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 Nīlakanṭha’s commentary on the

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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 pramāṇabhaṅgaḥ.
Mahābhārata, when he tackles the first properly philosophical verses of the epic (1.1.22–25 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). Nīlakanṭha 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, Nīlakanṭha 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, Nīlakanṭha thinks, is ignorant of the tradition of practice of meditation which dissolves the mind entirely into the pure brahman. It goes against a Brahmāsūtra (4.4.16) and a passage of the Brhadāranyaka 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 Śūtasamhitā, 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. Nīlakanṭha’s criticism here echoes the criticism of the Miśras that we see in the Śaṭṭantrīśāra.

Reasons to Think that the Miśras Might Not Be Mādhwas

As we went along I noted the points where Nīlakanṭha’s account of the Miśras did not reflect the doctrines of the Mādhwas 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 Miśras’ theodicy, and the apparent downplaying of reincarnation or karma; the doctrine that innocent beings (akarma adhā) such as animals and plants are reborn in the enjoyment worlds to support the experience of the eventually liberated

\[172\]

ke cit tu pūrvoktamanahpranidhānātmakadhyānasampradāyāṇabhijñā etalokaprāptir eva muktr, ayam evaśvara na maśyākhyo ‘nā śvaro stīti vadanti, te sarvaśāstrprasiddhaṃ muktau dvaitādarsanāṃ bādhāmānah “svāpyayasampattyor” (BrŚū 4.4.16) ityādīnāyena “na hi draṣṭur drṣṭer viparīlpopo vidyate ‘vinśātvān na tu tad dvitiyam asti tato ‘nyad ad vibhaktam paśyed” (BrĀrūp 4.3.23) iti suptikaivalyayor avishiśeṣā dvaitādārśanāṃvāsaranena ca vīruḥhyante, anayaiva ca śrutā dvitiyābhāvād eva dvaitādārśanāṃ na tu dvigopād iti vādantā dvaitasya indrajālalatyatvam darśitam. tena “viṣṇuḥ sarvottamo śīvo jīvāh, śīvah sarvottamo śīvo jīva” iti upāsakānāṃ āgraho viṣṇuvyākta apratipādakāri viṣṇuva vās anāṃvāsavravāvacanair dūṣanām ca śāstrāmādānāvabodhamālam eva, “vikalpo ‘viṣṇuphalatvād” (BrŚū 3.3.59) iti nyāyena aikāmye citātavārāḥṃ yasya kasya cid ayya aṣāryālaṃbhāvātāḥ. Kīmjavadekā 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 Miśras seem only indirectly connected to their Mādha va 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 Mādha va 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 Miśras’ 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 Vanamāli, many of which remain unpublished.

Why Not Call Them Mādha vas?

And yet, if these doctrines belong to Madhva’s school of thought, why does Nīlakaṇṭha call them Miśras? Why not just call them Mādha vas? There is evidence in Nīlakaṇṭha’s other works to show that he does know of Mādha va ācārya. He is mentioned in two summarizing verses in the Vedāntakātaka, Nīlakaṇṭha’s early independent work. 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. At the conclusion of the second part, the anticommentary to Appayya Dīkṣita’s Nyāyarakṣāmani, 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 Nṛśimhāśrama from the gang of bandits of illogic—Madhva and others, and that had to be protected by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

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 Vyāsatīrtha’s Nyāyāmṛta. The defence is represented in the works of Advaitin authors that Nīlakaṇṭha demonstrably knew: Nṛśimhāśrama’s Bhedad-hikkāra and Madhusūdana’s Advaitasiddhi. Beyond this strictly philosophical controversy, it is possible that the religious doctrines of Madhva, a south Indian,

173 Cf. Minkowski, “Vedāntakātaka” (2016).
174 rāmānujaḥ sarvajanopahāsyā mādhvi kathā naiva budheṣu śasyā. VK paribhāṣā, SB 27520 f. 16v.
175 yan madhāvikutarkataskaraṇāt śrīmanntṛśimhāśramair, āchinnam madhusūdanamuninā saṃrakṣitaṃ cādarāt. VK samanvaya SB 27519 f. 58r.
might not have penetrated into the north until relatively late. That might explain why Nilakantha speaks of the Miśras as “unknown among us” (asmādiyasy aprasiddha).\(^{176}\)

### Why Call Them Miśras?

Why call them Miśras, again? We appear to be confronted with several possibilities. It is possible that Nilakantha understood the Miśras to be northern representatives of the Mādhva tradition with some distinctive ideas of their own; or that he understood the Miśras 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 Vanamālī would probably not be the Miśra in question.

I have proposed an identification with Vanamālī for largely incidental reasons, assuming the first of these possibilities, that Nilakantha was describing the views of a follower of Madhvācārya who was a Miśra Brahmīn. The similarities in doctrine between Vanamālī’s works and Nilakantha’s Miśras have been pointed out in the notes to the translation above. Among prominent authors of works in the Mādhva tradition, the only one called Miśra is Vanamāla Miśra or Vanamālī Miśra. From the colophons of his works we know that Vanamālī Miśra 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 Nilakantha was active.\(^{178}\)

### Why Not Think it is Vanamālī

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that Nilakantha does not elsewhere use the term ‘Miśra’ in the sense in which it is used in the Śaṭṭantrīśāra. The only usage of ‘Miśra’ to identify an author or thinker that I have been able to locate in Nilakantha’s other writings occurs in the first part of the Vedāntakataka. There it refers to a statement made by Vācaspati Miśra in his Bhāmatī commentary on Śankarācārya’s Brahmatītrabhadhya.\(^{179}\) One might explain this absence of the Miśras elsewhere in Nilakantha’s works as a sign that the Śaṭṭantrīśāra is a late

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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); Varke’s Sanskrit introduction to his 1936 edition of Vanamālī’s Madhva-mukhāṅkāra, where he speaks of contemporary ignorance of the existence of northern Mādhvas, p. 2. cittarakṣānaṃ kṣat kṣat tattvādbhārata dvaitasiddhāntasya nāśīt pracāra iti bhram me vigalītaḥ.

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

178 There was at least one other figure of the period called Vanamālī Mišra, a pupil of Bhatṭoji Dīkṣita in Banaras. See Gode, ‘Pupil of Bhatṭoji Dīkṣita’ (1947). Given the consistency of the colophons in ‘our’ Vanamālī’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, “Śrutīsiddhāntapraṇāśa” (1970).

179 misras tu svena rūpenābhinispadayo param jyoti upasampadaya it vyācakhyuh “mukham vyādāya svapiti”tvaiva ca kṛtvāpratayopapattim prāhuḥ. VK paribhāṣā SB 27520 f. 27r. Cf Bhāmatī on BrŚū 4.4.3 yat sampadya nispadyata iti tan, mukham vyādāya svapitītāvat. tasmāj jyoti 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 Gurucandrīkā, which is usually assigned to the late seventeenth century. We know independently that Nilakanṭha 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 Miśras, from Nilakanṭha’s point of view, are not prominent in Vanamālī’s works, at least not in the terms in which Nilakanṭha describes them, such as yogic perception and time, and the fivefold difference. Vanamālī was classified by Dasgupta as a Nimbārkī, that is, not as a bhedavādin but as a bhedābhedavādin. Potter has labeled some of his works Dvaita and others Dvaitādvaita. That Vanamālīmiśra has been difficult for modern scholars to classify might explain why Nilakanṭha would speak of him as something other than a Mādhva.

The last difficulty to mention here comes from the sixth verse of the Śaṭṭantrīśāra, where Nilakanṭha refers to three groups among the Miśras. In the eighth verse, furthermore, he refers to the pupil (śiṣya) of the Miśras. To date I have found no reference to a commentary on Vanamālī’s works. Who, then, were these subvarieties of Miśras, 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 Miśras were not Mādhvas at all, leaving Vanamālī out of the picture altogether? After reading the Śaṭṭantrīśāra I initially suspected that the Miśras 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 Nilakanṭha as being in keeping with what he saw as mainstream Indian thinking, and one can see why.

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

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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 Śaṭṭantrīśāra as the crucial doctrine of the Miśras. 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 Viṣṇutattvavāpakāsa and Vedāntādīpa Dvaita, VSS, ŚSP, ŚŚD 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 Ṣaṭtantrīśāra. As mentioned above, this anonymous text is twinned with Nīlakanṭha’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 Nīlakanṭha uses. At the end of this discussion, at the point where Nīlakanṭha introduces the Miśras, the anonymous author mentions the views of the Muslims. In an echo of what Nīlakanṭha says of the Miśras, the text brings in the Yavanopādhya, probably Muhammad, as saying that even in salvation there is perception of multiplicity. The author remarks that some of the Yavanopādhya’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, Vyāsatīrtha.186 And, in fact, Vanamāḷi offers a riposte to this verse in the closing verses of his Śrūtisiddhāntaprakāśa, 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 Krṣṇa, 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 Miśras were indeed followers of Abrahamic religions, that would raise more questions than it answered. How would one explain their being called Miśras? 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 Nīlakanṭha’s Ṣaṭtantrīśāra 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

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185 yavanopādhya yaśtu mukta eva dvaitadarśanaṁ asta eva. tadasūriṇaś ca ke cid arvācīnā api dṛṣyante. teṣāṁ upekaṇḍiyatvat āduḥ śrīmānmadhusūdanaśarasvatī-śaṅkaraḥ: iha kumātir atatvā tattvavādī varāhāḥ, pralapati yad akānte khaṇḍanābhāsam uccaiḥ, pratīcāvacyaṃ amūṣmaitasya ko vaktu vidvān, na hi rutam anuraṣṭi grāmasimhasya śimha iti. (Ṣaṭtantrīśāra, anonymous, BORI MS f.3r).

186 It occurs in the 2d paricheṣa of the Advaitasiddhi, at the end of the tattva-māyādīnaḥvākyāḥkhandārthopapatti, p. 709 in Anantakṛṣṇa Śāstṛ’s ed.

187 vedāntaiḥ pratipādaṁ munivirāṅ ghyeyam harer vaibhavam, yo ‘kānde pralapati atathyaṁ iti yad bauddhādhamo mādhava. vairam saṃsāradhād āśuro ‘khilasāme vaktum ca tasyottaraṁ, vidvān ko ‘rhati rauti kim mgapapātīt gamīyusabdānugah. ŠSP 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 Nīlakanṭha’s imaginative reworking of the doctrines of Christians and Muslims into a Sanskritic idiom. Or it could be that the Miśras 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

Miśras and Mādhvas in Advaitin Doxography

If the Miśras did turn out to be Muslims or Christians, the passage from Nīlakanṭha’s Mahābhārata commentary that was cited above, which echoes the criticisms of the Miśras 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 Ṣaṭṭantrīśāra invokes Madhusūdana’s verse about Vyāsatīrtha 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 Pāncarātras and Pāṣupatas, as well as the “sextet of nāstikas” that we have seen—Cārvākas, Jainas and the four schools of Buddhism. The Śrīvaśgavas (tridānīnāḥ) also appear in the scale of standpoints, but not the Mādhvas. Notwithstanding his Advaitasiddhi, dedicated to rejecting the Nyāyāmrta of Vyāsatīrtha, Madhusūdana does not include the Mādhvas in these synthetic discussions. This holds true for doxographic passages in other Advaitin texts, with the exception of Vidyāranya’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 “namu nāstikānām api prasthānāntarāṇi santi; tāṃ etev anantarbhāvāḥ prthag gaṇayītum uciśāni. tathā hi... (then follows the enumeration) ... evam mīlītvā nāstikāṇāṃ sat prasthānāni. tāṃ kasmān nocyaṃ? satyam; vedabhyatvāt teṣām mlecchādiprasṭhānāvat paramparayāpyā puruṣārthaṃpaṇavagītvād upeksaṇayātvaṃ eva. iha ca sākṣād v paramparayā v pumarthopayogīṇāṃ vedopakaranānāṃ eva prasthānānāṃ bhedo darśitah. tato na nyāṇatvāsaṅkāvākāśaḥ. 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 Nīlakanṭha’s works, in the construction of the doxography and in the scope of its inclusion. And yet in the Ţaṭṭantrīśāra Nīlakanṭha has departed from Madhusūdana and done something novel. Nor has he borrowed his coverage from Vidyāranya. The depiction of the Mādhvas in the Sarvadarśanasamgraha is quite different in approach. Whoever the Miśras were, whether Mādhvas, or followers of the God of Abraham, or of some unknown sage, they had not come in for this sort of coverage before.

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Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description |
|--------------|-------------|
| Adyar D      | K. Madhava Sarma et al., Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Adyar Library |
| BORI         | Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute |
| BrŚū         | Brahmasūtra |
| EIP          | Karl Potter, Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies |
| Hall         | Fitzedward Hall, A Contribution towards an Index to the Bibliography of the Indian Philosophical Systems |
| H            | Harvard = Harvard Manuscript 1571 of Ţaṭṭantrīśāra (Poleman 3509) |
| Kielhorn     | Franz Kielhorn, Report on the Search for Sanskrit Mss. in the Bombay Presidency, during the Year 1880-81 |
| CP           | RORI Jodhpur Manuscript 32424 |
| J            | Harvard = Harvard Manuscript 1571 of Ţaṭṭantrīśāra (Poleman 3509) |
| NAK          | National Archives Kathmandu, Rāṣṭrīyābhilekhālaya. See Vīra-Pustakālaya |
| NCC          | V. Raghavan et al., New Catalogus Catalogorum |
| Poleman      | H.I. Poleman, A Census of Indic Manuscripts in the United States and Canada |
| RORI         | Muni Jinavijaya, A Catalogue of Sanskrit and Prakrit Manuscripts in the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute |
| Jodhpur      | Śrutisiddhāntadīpikā of Vanamālīmiśra, eds. Khuperkar and Nipanikar |
| SSĐ          | Śrutisiddhāntaprakāśa of Vanamālīmiśra, eds. Khuperkar and Nipanikar |
SB Sarasvati Bhavan - Subhadra Jha, *Descriptive catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts ... in the Government Sanskrit College Library*

SB MS Sarasvati Bhavan Manuscript

Trav. Uni. S. Kunjan Pillai, *Alphabetical Index of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum*

Triv. Cur. T. Gaṇapatiśāstrī, *A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts collected by the Curator*

TCD Sāmbsāvaśāstrī et al., *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Curator’s Office Library, Trivandrum*

VK *Vedāntakataka* of Nilakanṭha Caturdhara, comprising the Samanvayaparicheda (SB MS 27519) and the Paribhāṣāparicheda (SB MS 27520)

Vrindavan VRI = M.L. Gupta et al., *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Vrindaban Research Institute*

VRI Vrindavan RI

VSS *Vedāntasiddhāntasamgraha* of Vanamālimiśra ed. Devīprasadāśarma Kavi

VTN *Vedāntatātparyanivedana* of Govinda Caturdhara, SB MS 27459

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