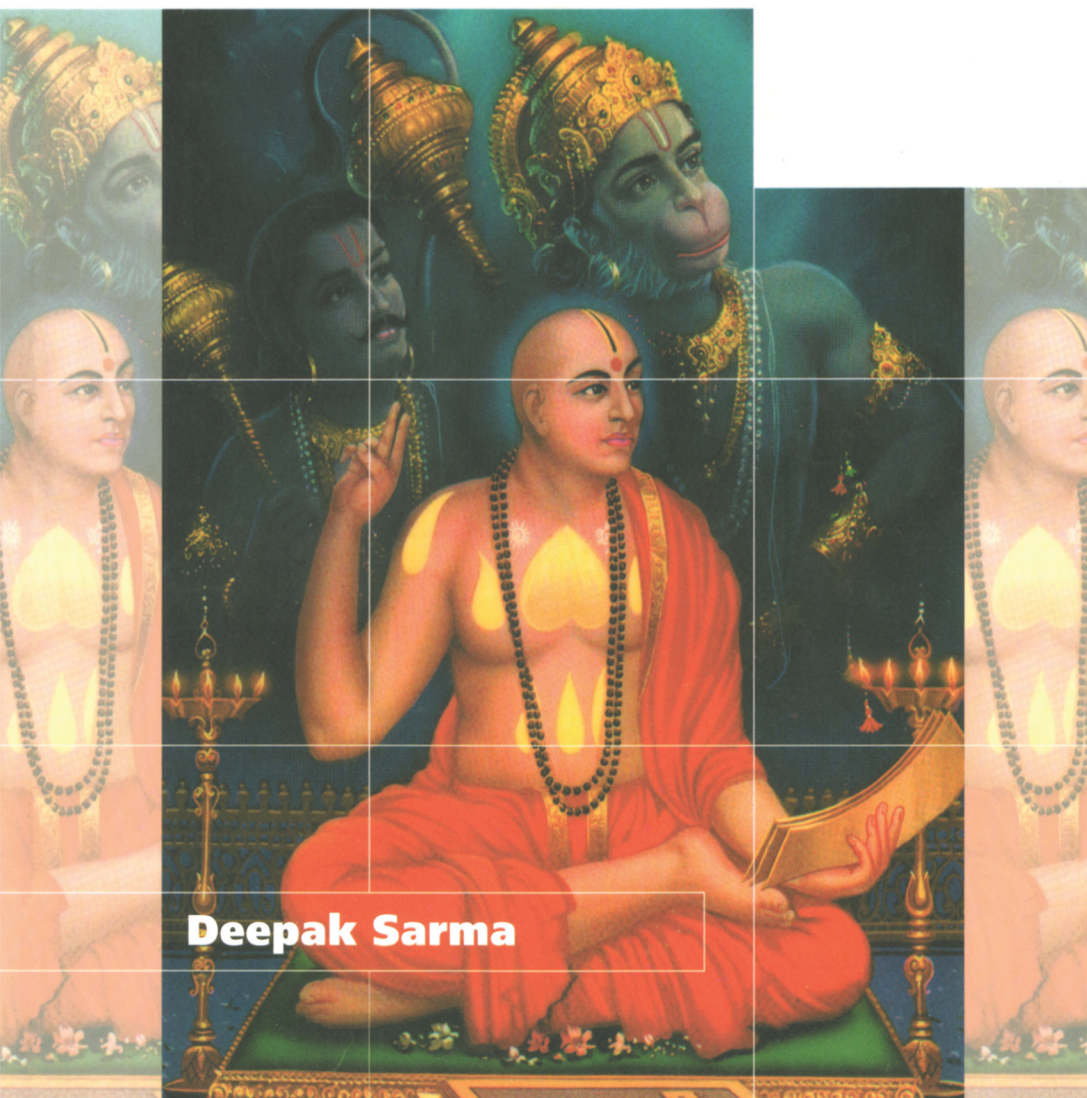


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An Introduction to Mādhva Vedānta



Deepak Sarma

AN INTRODUCTION TO MĀDHVA VEDĀNTA

This introduction to the Mādhva school of Vedānta is accessible to a wide audience with an interest in Hinduism, Indian thought and in the comparative philosophy of religion.

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An Introduction to Mādhva Vedānta

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Om
nārāyaṇo 'gaṇyagūṇanīyaikaṇīlayākṛtiḥ |
aśeṣadoṣarahitaḥ prīyatāṁ kamalālayaḥ |
Madhvācārya, Upādhikhaṇḍana, 1

namo 'mandanijānandasāndrasundaramūrtaye |
indirāpataye nityānandabhōjanadāyine |
Madhvācārya, Upādhikhaṇḍana, 19

In service of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Mādhva Saṁpradāya

Om
śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ



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Preface

Scholars of South Asia have largely ignored the Mādhva School of Vedānta. The result has been a false identification of Vedānta with either Advaita or Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and misperceptions and generalizations about the ways that Hindus think. ‘All Hindus are monists and want to merge with the divine,’ is the incorrect refrain that I often hear from teachers and students alike. Why has this stereotype persisted? Why has Mādhva Vedānta been eclipsed by its predecessors?

In part, the lack of scholarship and scholarly interest in Mādhva Vedānta in the West is due to the fact that the discipline is bereft of good introductory resources. The present volume is an attempt to fill that lacuna in the hopes that it will inspire further interest in this living tradition of Hinduism. Since my readers will gain a more complex understanding of Vedānta, my volume also constitutes an effort to destroy certain stereotypes about Hindus and Hinduism. As will become clear, some Hindus, namely Mādhvas, are theists and firmly believe that they are and will always remain different from God, that is, Viṣṇu. For Western scholars, then, this textbook will serve to shed light on a tradition that has long since been overshadowed and ideally will spark a new interest in it.

I am a member of the Mādhva tradition and I come from a family of Mādhva devotees whose forefathers were Mādhva priests and lay people. Consequently, my interest in writing this book emerges not simply from the need to address the deficiency in Western scholarship although doing so is important, but I also wish to provide a much-needed English textbook for lay Mādhvas. With its publication, this book becomes part of a lineage of Sanskrit textbooks on Mādhva Vedānta composed by Mādhva scholars for Mādhvas. Though these textbooks are taught today at *maṭhas*, monasteries, whose purpose includes training experts in Mādhva Vedānta, the number of traditional students is quickly declining. In fact, the number of lay Mādhvas who have little or no knowledge of Sanskrit and hence are unable to learn about Mādhva Vedānta, is growing rapidly. There is a generation of Mādhvas who know little or nothing about their own tradition. My book is for them and for the Mādhva *saṃpradāya*, community.

There are two ways to read this book: as an outsider and as an insider. One way is not any more valid or better than the other, nor is one kind

of reader. Because I assume such a diversity in my audience, I indulge both introductory and advanced analyses and present apparatus for both types of reader. For the introductory readers, I have incorporated figures which are visual representations of various components of Madhvācārya's epistemology and ontology and I have offered a glossary of all Sanskrit terms. For advanced readers with knowledge of Sanskrit, I have included transliterations of all passages cited as well as an index of their location in several editions of the published Mādhva corpus. I have supplemented four of my translations with the corresponding transliterated Sanskrit texts. All of these serve to make this book useful and more accessible for both introductory and advanced readers.

This text aims to be as comprehensive as any introduction can possibly manage to be. Yet, that stated, one must appreciate that Mādhva Vedānta is more than seven hundred years old and has a rich commentarial tradition. This introduction simply cannot take into account the growth and development of the tradition over such an enormous time span without alienating novice readers and thus defeating one of its purposes. Ideally, this work will give rise to more complex analyses that take into account these nuances, while creating an interest and awareness of Mādhva Vedānta.

Acknowledgments

This project originates from work that I began on Madhvācārya as an undergraduate in 1990 at Reed College with Professor Edwin Gerow and in Uḍupi with Śrī Bananje Govindācārya. Since then I have dedicated my research, published papers, dissertation and talks to Mādhva Vedānta. All of this would have been impossible without the support of the Mādhva *saṃpradāya*. Above all, the scholars of the Pūrṇaprajña Saṃśodhana Mandiram (PPSM) under the auspices of the Pūrṇaprajña Vidyāpīṭham of the Pejāvara *maṭha* have helped me the most in my study of Mādhva Vedānta. Professors K.T. Paṇḍurangi and D. Prahlādācārya (now Vice-Chancellor, Rashtriya Samskrta Vidyapeetha, Tirupati) have given me invaluable assistance about Mādhva doctrine since 1996. Professors A.V. Nāgasampige (PPSM Director), Haridāsa Bhat, Srinivāsa, and Śrī Thirumala Kulkarni have been especially helpful with this manuscript and I thank them for their close readings, editorial suggestions and lively *saṃvādas*. Professor Varakhedi read and edited a large portion of the manuscript and has been an ideal colleague, friend, and *bhakta*. Others at the Vidyāpīṭham who have assisted me over the years include Śrī Viṣṇumūrti Mañjuthaya and Śrī Veṅkatrāmana Upādhyāya. I have been fortunate to receive the blessings of two *svāmijis* of the Mādhva *aṣṭamaṭhas*, namely Śrī Vibhudeśa Tīrtha of the Adamār *maṭha* and Śrī Viśveṣa Tīrtha of the Pejāvar *maṭha*. Śrī Vibhudeśa Tīrtha's willingness to speak and debate with me and Śrī Viśveṣa Tīrtha's willingness to allow me to work with scholars at the PPSM have made this project possible. I am indebted to them both. One of the climaxes of my work in Bangalore at the Vidyāpīṭham and PPSM occurred in August 2002. After having the *taptamudhra* ceremony performed for me by Śrī Viśveṣa Tīrtha where images of the *śaṅkha* and *cakra*, both symbols of Kṛṣṇa, are stamped on the body with heated brands, Professor Nāgasampige, the Director of the PPSM, asked me to consider myself part of the faculty at the PPSM and bestowed upon me the title Research Professor of the PPSM. I am beholden to the PPSM for granting me this affiliation. Still, this manuscript is not an official publication of the PPSM. Errors that remain in this text are entirely my own responsibility. If any are found I beg your forgiveness and hope that they inspire you to further study Mādhva Vedānta!

My work on the Mādhva tradition was assisted by many others in addition to those already mentioned. Professor Sīta Nambiar, who is also my *dodumma*, has been a *pakka-guruji*. To her I am forever grateful. I appreciate the advice from Professors Francis X. Clooney, Andrew O. Fort and Paul J. Griffiths whose encouragement and sagacity have been invaluable. Thanks to Professor Larry McCrea for reading the *Kathālakṣaṇa* with me and offering his own *āpta*, authoritative, commentary. My thanks to all of my relatives and friends in India, far too many to be listed here, who have helped and supported me since I began my study of Mādhva Vedānta. Thanks to my wife, Keri Elizabeth Ames, for reading and editing a portion of this manuscript and for helping me to develop a voice that is my own. Her *kleos* as an editor and writer is unsurpassed and her ability to endure me is heroic.

My deepest gratitude is to my parents who have supported my work on Mādhva Vedānta since my Reed College days. Without them, in fact, I would not be a Mādhva.

Abbreviations and translations

Abbreviations

AB	Aṇubhāṣya
AV	Anuvyākhyāna
BS	Brahma Sūtras
BSB	Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya
KL	Kathālakṣaṇa
MBhTN	Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya
MV	Madhvavijaya
MVK	Māyāvādakhaṇḍana
PL	Pramāṇalakṣaṇa
PP	Pramāṇapaddhati
TS	Tattvasaṃkhyāna
TV	Tattvaviveka
UK	Upādhikhaṇḍana
VTV	Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya

For precise locations of passages cited from these texts, refer to Appendix D.

Translations

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. I have used brackets in the translations to indicate that the enclosed text is not part of the original.



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Madhvācārya and the Mādhva tradition

Madhvācārya (1238–1317 CE) was born of Śivalī Brahmin parents in the village of Pājakakṣetra near modern-day Uḍupi in the Tuḷunāḍu area of southern Karṇāṭaka.¹ Southern Karṇāṭaka was filled with a diversity of theologies and people, making it an exciting place within which to develop a new religious tradition. This pluralistic environment had a significant effect on Madhvācārya. His innovations, as I will show, included strategies for maintaining religious identity as well as ways to maintain the existing social system that he felt was being threatened. Madhvācārya's school of Vedānta is, in part, a reaction, against the multiplicity of theologies and social structures in 13th and 14th-century Karṇāṭaka.

There is very little information about Madhvācārya's life in medieval Tuḷunāḍu. Aside from relevant colophons found in Madhvācārya's own works, his biographical data derives from the *Madhvavijaya*, *The Triumph of Madhvācārya* (hereafter MV), a hagiography composed by his devotee and follower, Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya, and from inscriptional evidence and records found in Uḍupi *maṭhas*, monasteries.² These and other sources help to answer questions about the prevailing theological environment as well as the intellectual and religious growth and development of Madhvācārya. Before learning about Madhvācārya's life, however, it is essential to know what were the basic theological issues that he faced and what were the primary concerns of medieval South Asian theologies.

Basic theological issues

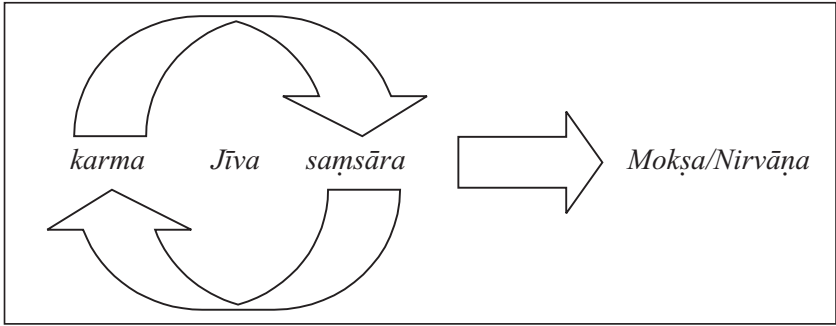
The philosophical and religious traditions extant in medieval South Asia other than Abrahamic ones, all shared a belief in circular time. The universe was held to be governed by this circularity as it is perpetually

¹ For further information about the establishment of the dates of Madhvācārya see Sharma, *History*, 77–79 and Sharma, 'The Question of the Date of Madhvacharya.'

² For further information regarding inscriptional and other biographical evidence refer to Sharma, *History*, 75–89.

born and destroyed. This exhibited itself on the microcosmic level as the cycle of rebirth and the mechanism of *karma*, that one's actions in earlier lives affected both the rebirth and events that are to occur in one's future lives. The entity which was reborn is the *jīva*, enduring self, also known as the *ātman*. One accumulates some combination of *puṇya*, meritorious *karma*, or *pāpa*, demeritorious *karma*, popularly rendered in the West as 'good' and 'bad' *karma*, and is born again and again in *saṃsāra*, worldly existence. Though many are tempted to equate the two, *pāpa* in Hinduism and sin in Christianity are based on, and refer to, significantly different concepts and theologies.

One manifests one's *prārabdha*, latent, *karma*. That is, the accumulated *karma* manifests itself until it is depleted or until more is accrued. Though the traditions differed widely on the origins and precise function of these mechanisms of *karma* and *saṃsāra*, they all agreed that they existed. They also all shared an interest in ending this seemingly endless cycle and this desire was their *raison d'être*. The state that sentient beings enter after being liberated from the cycle is called *nirvāṇa* in Buddhism and Jainism, and *mokṣa* among the Hindu traditions. The ontological status and characteristics of *nirvāṇa* and *mokṣa* differ vastly and each tradition of thought offered methods by which adherents could break the cycle and attain the desired end (see Fig. 1.1).



1.1 Cycle of birth and rebirth

This required the development of elaborate ontologies and epistemologies that were juxtaposed to eschatologies and soteriologies.

Learning one of these systems of thought is believed to be the first step on the path to breaking the cycle of birth and rebirth. Competition between the traditions involved showing that one's own system

was more coherent, convincing and easier to follow, than others, and converting potential adherents. In addition to disputing the claims of rival schools, the Mādhva school of Vedānta was developed to offer another method to attain *mokṣa*, liberation. As I will show below, the diverse religious environment of medieval Kārṇāṭaka made the stakes of intra and inter-religious dialogue very high indeed!

Sources

Much of the data about Madhvācārya's life derives from biographies written by Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya. He was the son of Trivikrama Paṇḍitācārya, who was one of the direct disciples of Madhvācārya. Paṇḍitācārya, a Śivalī Tuḷu-speaking Brahmin belonging to the same regional subcaste as Madhvācārya, was born and raised in the Tuḷunāḍu district. Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya was also a younger contemporary of Madhvācārya. This gives his MV, the metrical biography that he composed, some social and historical accuracy. Further, the Mādhva community views Paṇḍitācārya's hagiographies as accurate. In fact, students at the Pūrṇaprajña Vidyāpīṭham, a monastic institution under the auspices of Śrī Viśveṣa Tīrtha, the *svāmiji*, esteemed religious leader, of the Pejāvar *maṭha* devoted to the training of Mādhva priests and scholars in Bangalore, India, respects his work so highly that it requires its third, fourth and fifth-year students to memorize and pass examinations on the MV.

Paṇḍitācārya composed several hagiographies of Madhvācārya in addition to the MV. The *Aṇu-Madhvavijaya* is an outline of the MV, while the focus of the *Madhvavijaya Bhāvaṇaprakāśika* is portions of the MV. His *Maṇimañjarī* differs from the hagiographies and is a mythological account of the rise of Mādhva Vedānta. For the purposes of this brief summary I rely exclusively on the MV.

These biographies are not the only resources available. The *aṣṭamaṭhas*, the eight monasteries, of Uḍupi are the second source for biographical records about Madhvācārya. Madhvācārya began the institution of the eight *maṭhas*, monasteries, before he disappeared. According to the MV, Madhvācārya disappeared rather than died. These *aṣṭamaṭhas* preserve the doctrines, practices and history of the Mādhva tradition and are the centers for teaching and practicing Mādhva methods to obtain *mokṣa*. These *maṭhas* have kept genealogical and inscriptional records regarding the *parampara*, lineage, of the *svāmis*, esteemed religious leaders, of each of the eight *maṭhas*, funding and

land ownership and other economic and political matters.³ Madhvācārya himself ordained the first *svāmi* of each of the eight *maṭhas*.

Though the validity of these sources can be challenged, just as the hagiographies of Jesus of Nazareth, I accept them as true for the purposes of this volume. After all, it behoves readers to know the history of the Mādhva School according to Mādhvas! Still, the history presented here is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, it is intended to provide a basic understanding of the context within which Madhvācārya propounded his doctrine and the theologies and social changes that he confronted.

Education

Aside from popular accounts, these two sources are the bases for knowledge about Madhvācārya's historical background. There is even less information about his education, and much of it must be surmised from rather limited data. Madhvācārya was, of course, familiar with the literature of the schools of Vedānta, proven by the 292 texts that he mentions by name in his works.⁴ The schools of Vedānta are commentarial traditions whose focus are the methods for obtaining *mokṣa* as described in the *Vedas* and other canonical texts. According to the MV, Madhvācārya studied the *Vedas* and other relevant texts with a teacher who was of the Pūgavana family. He then studied aspects of the Advaita School of Vedānta founded by Śaṅkarācārya in the 8th century CE.⁵ This school was to become his greatest rival. Madhvācārya, an inquisitive student, was still not satisfied, with what he had learned so he next sought a new teacher in order to be granted *saṁnyāsa*, ascetic, status. Madhvācārya met Acyutaprekṣa, an ascetic who was also dissatisfied with the tenets of Advaita Vedānta, and underwent the prescribed *saṁnyāsa* rites.⁶ According to Paṇḍitācārya's hagiography, Acyutaprekṣa then changed Madhvācārya's name to Pūrṇaprajña,

³ For more about the accuracy of these genealogical records, see Sharma, *History*, 200.

⁴ For a detailed list of the texts that Madhvācārya mentions and/or cites, see Mesquita.

⁵ For more detailed analyses of the history of Advaita Vedānta see Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. 1, Potter, *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and His Pupils*, and Deutsch, *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*.

⁶ MV 4.4–30; MV 4.49–54.

‘The One Whose Knowledge is Complete.’⁷ According to the hagiographic evidence, Madhvācārya did not have much luck with his new teacher due to their vehement disagreements. Even the name given to Madhvācārya did not last as Madhvācārya refers to himself as Ānandatīrtha, ‘The Teacher of Bliss/*brahman*,’ in colophons. Although Madhvācārya has several names, including Pūrṇaprajña, Pūrṇabodha, ‘The One Whose Realization is Complete,’ Vāsudeva ‘The Descendent of Viṣṇu,’ among others, I hereafter refer to him only as Madhvācārya. The word ‘Madhvācārya’ is actually comprised of ‘Madhva,’ and ‘ācārya.’ The suffix ‘ācārya’ means ‘teacher’ and is used both descriptively and as an honorific. Madhvācārya studied with several teachers and his experiences with them may be why he advises students in his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya* (hereafter BSB) that they can opt to change teachers if the new one is superior!⁸

After becoming a *saṃnyāsi*, he studied Vimuktātman’s *Iṣṭasiddhi* (9th century CE), an Advaita text. This is the only mention of an Advaita text in the MV, which is somewhat surprising since he devoted much of his life to refuting their doctrines.⁹ After again disagreeing with his teacher, Madhvācārya was installed as the head of the *maṭha* by Acyutaprekṣa in deference to his student’s superior abilities.¹⁰ Madhvācārya’s education ended when he rose from the ranks of students to become the head of an educational institution and was able to teach his own methods for obtaining *mokṣa*!

It was a standard practice among the intellectual elite in medieval Tuḷunāḍu to travel and to participate in public debates. After completing his studies, Madhvācārya traveled around South Asia in order to argue his new Vedānta position with other scholars.¹¹ His exposure to, and interaction with, other schools of philosophy, both Vedānta and non-Vedānta, is evident in his hagiographies, his works and the broader

⁷ For further reading on the etymological origins of several of these names, including ‘Madhva,’ see Siauve, *La Doctrine de Madhva*, 1–2.

⁸ *na ca pūrvaprāpta eva gurur iti niyamaḥ* | BSB 3.3.46–47.

⁹ MV 4.45. According to Sharma, Madhvācārya also directly cites and/or summarizes passages from Sarvajñātmamuni’s *Samkṣepa Śārīraka* in his *Anuvyākhyāna* and *Tattvodyota*. I have not been able to locate such passages. Sharma, *History*, 123, 145, ft. 4. Sarvajñātmamuni was a contemporary of Vimuktātman as well as a direct disciple of Śaṅkarācārya. Veezhinathan, 5.

¹⁰ MV 5.1.

¹¹ According to C.R. Krishna Rao, Madhvācārya came into contact with Vidyāśaṅkara, the *svāmi* of the Sṛṅgeri *maṭha*, a monastery founded by Śaṅkarācārya himself. Rao, 6–8, 23–27. This meeting is not mentioned in the MV. More on debate in Chapter 5.

issues that he addresses. For example, Paṇḍitācārya mentions that Madhvācārya refuted the six systems, indicating that he must have been familiar with them.¹² It is unclear as to which six systems he is supposed to have refuted, though it is likely to be some combination of the Buddhist, Cārvāka, Jaina, Nyāya, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Uttara Mīmāṃsā and Yoga traditions.¹³ Madhvācārya shows his knowledge of these traditions in his examination and refutation of their doctrines in a section of his *bhāṣya*, commentary, on the *Brahma Sūtras*. This section is known as *Samayavirodha*, the Contradictions [in Other] Doctrines.¹⁴ Again, though such an exposure is not unusual, it helps to establish the range of interlocutors that Madhvācārya confronted.

Madhvācārya's travels took him to Mahābadarikāśrama, the home of Vyāsa, and author of the *Brahma Sūtras*, to meet the founder of the Vedānta tradition himself. Vyāsa is believed to be an *avatāra*, incarnation, of Lord Viṣṇu, the deity around which the Mādhva Vedānta is centered.¹⁵ Above all, Mādhva Vedānta is a Vaiṣṇava, Viṣṇu-oriented, tradition. Under the guidance of Vyāsa, Madhvācārya is said to have composed his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, a commentary on Vyāsa's *Brahma Sūtras*.¹⁶ Having the author of the text on which one is commenting serve as an editor and be an *avatāra* of God Himself certainly gives one a great deal of epistemic authority!

Madhvācārya also has an unusual background as he proclaims himself to be the third *avatāra* of Vāyu, the wind God, who is also the son of Viṣṇu.¹⁷ He is preceded by the first and second who are found in the two epics of Hinduism, namely Hanumān, the monkey deity in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Bhīma, one of the Paṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata*. Vāyu, namely Madhvācārya, is a guide for *bhaktas*, devotees, on their journey towards Viṣṇu and has a dynamic position as a mediator between devotees and Viṣṇu. This self-identification is unusual in the history of South Asian hagiographies.

Data taken from colophons, along with genealogical and chronological data found in the *maṭhas*, lead non-Mādhva scholars to conclude that Madhvācārya died in 1317 CE.¹⁸ Paṇḍitācārya records that

¹² *ṣaṭ ca tatra samayānakhaṇḍayat* | MV 9.15.

¹³ See Dasgupta's *History* for detailed introductions to each of these traditions.

¹⁴ BSB 2.2.

¹⁵ *evamvidhāni sūtraṇi kṛtvā vyāso mahāyaśāḥ | brahmarūdrādideveṣu manuṣyapitṛpakṣiṣu | jñānaṃ saṃsthāpya bhagavānkṛdānte puruṣottamaḥ* | BSB 0.

¹⁶ For further reading about the link between Madhvācārya and Vyāsa, see Sheridan's 'Vyāsa as Madhva's Guru.'

¹⁷ *vāyuṃ hareḥ sutaṃ ... | Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣa* 3.15.1.

¹⁸ Sharma, *History*, 77–78.

Madhvācārya disappeared and was immediately honored with a shower of flowers from the deities.¹⁹ According to the Mādhva tradition, then, he did not die and is considered to be alive and residing in Mahābadarikāśrama in the Himālayas with his teacher and father Vyāsa-Viṣṇu.

Political environment and patronage

One may wonder how Madhvācārya was able to fund his education and subsequent tour of South Asia. Who funded him? Did he have the support of the local government to help him to propagate his tenets? Were there any political impediments?

Paṇḍitācārya states in several places in his MV that Madhvācārya came into contact with local kings, though only one, Jayasiṃha, is named.²⁰ Historical data does not show that Madhvācārya was supported financially by any of them. In the MV, Madhvācārya is said to have been on good terms with a king who may have been a Muslim. It is not explicitly stated in the MV that the king was a Muslim, yet contemporary biographers of Madhvācārya refer to the king as a Muslim in their translations and accounts.²¹ Having impressed the king both with his ability to walk on water and with his language skills, the monarch is said to have given half his kingdom to Madhvācārya.²² This meeting and exchange is not mentioned in histories of Tuḷunāḍu, Kaṇṇāṭaka and South India.²³ Although the granting of half the kingdom does seem a bit fantastic, it is not unlikely that Madhvācārya came into contact with Muslim rulers, given their invasions at the beginning of the 14th century CE. Still, there is no evidence, inscriptional or otherwise, that any Muslim king gave additional land grants or monetary gifts to Madhvācārya.

Paṇḍitācārya reports that Madhvācārya interacted with King Jayasiṃha on several occasions. A popular account that is also found

¹⁹ MV 16.58.

²⁰ See MV 15.1–141.

²¹ For further details see Govindācārya, *Madhvācārya (Life and Teachings)*, 10, Padmanabhacharya, *Life and Teachings of Sri Madhvacharya*, 59, Rau, *Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya's Śrī Madhva Vijaya*, 125.

²² *gāṃbhīryaṃ dhṛtim uruvīryam āryabhāvaṃ tejobhyaṃ giram api deśakālayuktām | rājāśya sphuṭam upalabhya vismito 'smai rājyārdhaṃ sapadi samarpayām babhūva |* MV 10.18.

²³ See Bhatt, *Studies in Tuḷuva History and Culture*, Chopra, *History of South India*, Diwakar, *Karnataka Through the Ages*, and Sastri, *A History of South India*.

in the MV involving Jayasiṃha describes the loss of Madhvācārya's extensive library to the thievery of a local philosopher who was, not surprisingly, a follower of the Advaita School. Without his library, Madhvācārya was unable to teach his students how to refute the positions of his Advaita contemporaries. Fortunately, he was reported to have recovered the library with the help of the local king, Jayasiṃha, who may have also supported him during his stay in the village of Pāḍikuḍel.²⁴ There is no clear indication that local kings and rulers funded Madhvācārya. Nevertheless one may surmise that he received some assistance, financial and otherwise. What other concerns, besides monetary needs and political endorsements, may have affected Madhvācārya? Were there many other religions with which he interacted?

Religious context

The 13th and early 14th centuries CE were periods of religious excitement in southern Kaṇṇāṭaka, given the presence of *āstika*, philosophical traditions based on the *Vedas*, *nāstika*, philosophical traditions not based on the *Vedas*, and tribal and indigenous traditions.²⁵ Adherents to Vedānta, both Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, along with Jains and Vīraśaivites, populated Tuḷunāḍu and propagated vastly differing solutions to end the cycle of birth and rebirth.²⁶ These literati traditions were juxtaposed with tribal and other indigenously based traditions, including Śaivism, *bhūtārādhana*, worship of apparitions, worship of *śakti*, female power and worship of *nāgas*, snakes, among others, each with less systematized solutions to the problem of birth and rebirth. With so many different beliefs and practices in such a small area, it would be impossible for Madhvācārya not to have encountered their doctrines and adherents.

The Hoysala kings, who considered themselves supporters and protectors of the various traditions that existed in Tuḷunāḍu, permitted this religious pluralism.²⁷ The rulers may not have had much of a choice but to allow pluralism, given that coastal Kaṇṇāṭaka was a center for

²⁴ See MV 15.1–141.

²⁵ I am reliant upon Bhatt, *Studies in Tuḷuva History and Culture* for many of the details with regard to Tuḷuva religion, culture, etc.

²⁶ For a brief overview see Hanumantha Rao, 'Religious Toleration in Karnatak,' 312–319. See Dasgupta's *History* for introductions to each of these traditions.

²⁷ Diwakar, 443. Jain rulers, for example, funded non-Jain institutions. Bhatt, 441.

trade with both South Asian and non-South Asian communities.²⁸ It may be that the diversity encouraged the rise of a cosmopolitan society wherein religious heterogeneity prevailed. Economic conditions may have also indirectly affected prevailing religious attitudes. It is thus likely that this variegated setting had a dramatic effect upon the development of Madhvācārya's school of Vedānta.²⁹

Āstika traditions: Vedānta

In the philosophical and religious realm, Mādhva Vedānta competed with Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, among other schools. As already mentioned, the schools of Vedānta are commentarial traditions. Each school makes differing claims about the meaning of canonical texts and, therefore, the method by which one can obtain *mokṣa*. Each links the entirety of its doctrinal system to these interpretations. Each claims to have the polemical and apologetic capacity to ward off and defeat deftly the other two schools.

Both the Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita Schools of Vedānta had many followers in the area, making medieval southern Kaṇṇāṭaka a ferment of philosophical dispute. In fact, Rāmānujācārya, founder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita School of Vedānta who lived in the 12th century CE, is known for converting Viṣṇuvardhana (1110–52 CE), a Hoysala king, from Jainism to Vaiṣṇavism in 1093 CE.³⁰ This conversion may have helped to hinder the growth of Jainism and other non-Vaiṣṇava traditions. The heart of Viśiṣṭādvaita activity, moreover, lay in nearby Melkōṭe. Temples, which were officiated by priests who followed ritual and other worship texts found in the Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita canons, were built in the area, as were affiliated *maṭhas*, monasteries. According to the *Śaṃkaradigvijaya*, a hagiography of the founder of Advaita Vedānta, Śaṃkarācārya visited southern Kaṇṇāṭaka in the 9th century and disputed with scholars of local traditions.³¹ One of the four *maṭhas* established by Śaṃkarācārya himself was located in Sṛṅgeri, only about

²⁸ See Bhatt, 220–225 for further details regarding overseas trade.

²⁹ Govindācārya, *Madhvācārya*, 10. For example, Zydenbos has argued that Madhvācārya's epistemology draws from Jain epistemology. See his 'On the Jaina Background of Dvaitavedānta' and Sharma's 'Jaina Background of Dvaita Vedānta – A Farfetched Theory.'

³⁰ Diwakar, 420.

³¹ See the *Padmapādatīrthayatrāvarṇam* and related chapters of Mādhva's *Śaṃkaradigvijaya*. These chapters are descriptions of religious pilgrimages and travels undertaken by Śaṃkarācārya.

50 km, from Uḍupi.³² These two cities, Melkōte and Sṛṅgeri, were (and continue to be) centers for Vedānta studies in Kaṛṇāṭaka.

The *āstika* Vedānta traditions were well established in southern Kaṛṇāṭaka and may have competed with one another for political support and for adherents. Aside from disputes about philosophical themes, there are no accounts of disagreements about land, patronage, or other political issues between the Mādhva School and these two Vedānta traditions.

Two non-Vedānta traditions: Vīraśaivism and Jainism

Vīraśaivism and Jainism, two non-Vedic, non-Brahmanical traditions, were prevalent in the Tuḷunāḍu.³³ Buddhism also had some historical significance in Tuḷunāḍu. But by medieval times Jainism and the Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita Schools displaced it. There were still vestiges of Buddhism in medieval Tuḷunāḍu in the form of images and monuments even though there was no longer a community of adherents. Buddhism, Jainism and Vīraśaivism conflicted with the orthodox Vedānta traditions and were oriented toward making their doctrines accessible to the masses. In contrast, maintaining the integrity of *varṇa*, class, and *jāti*, caste, was and is essential to Mādhva Vedānta. Use of the vernacular, Kannaḍa, for example, instead of Sanskrit, in conjunction with appeals to the teachings of contemporary mystic saints, helped to spread interest in Vīraśaivism among non-Brahmins. Vīraśaivas, in fact, not only granted equal status to women but loosened the rigidity of the *varṇa* system in their tradition.³⁴ *Śūdras*, who occupied the lowest position in the class system, for example, were given status in worship and other religious practices.³⁵ The methods for obtaining *mokṣa* were not restricted according to class as they were in the schools of Vedānta. None of these non-Vedānta traditions, moreover, were interested in the kinds of debates about texts that concerned Vedānta. Although Vīraśaivism and Jainism were commentarial traditions, their canon was completely different from those of the schools of Vedānta. Their social program, as well as their interest in philosophical speculation outside of the Vedānta canon, made them considerable adversaries to the *āstika* traditions and social system.

³² Siauve, *La Doctrine*, 10.

³³ Bhatt, 370–373. Vīraśaivism is also known as Liṅgāyat. For more on these traditions see Chekki, *Religion and Social System of the Virasaiva Community* and Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*.

³⁴ Bhatt, 444–448. Ishwaran, 43, 115–121.

³⁵ Bhatt, 448.

Some of these non-orthodox traditions even enjoyed the patronage of local rulers. Local rulers such as Narasiṃha III supported the Jain institutions as is evidenced by the large numbers of inscriptions and documents that pertain to the funding of Jain institutions.³⁶ The most important Jain *maṭha* in South India was also located in southern Karṇāṭaka at Śrāvaṇa Belgōḷa. In fact, the majority of feudal states in Tuḷunāḍu were Jain.³⁷ For these reasons, Jain activities in Tuḷunāḍu far outweighed those of the Vedānta traditions.

Non-Vedic *nāstika* traditions, which were opposed to Vedānta, were prevalent in Tuḷunāḍu in the 13th and 14th centuries CE and competed with one another, and especially with Vedānta. Their rejection of *varṇa* and *jāti* opposes the social systems expounded by the Vedānta traditions. Such egalitarian tenets undoubtedly helped to foster religious and theological excitement at the time. The cosmopolitan nature of the area surrounding medieval Uḍupi sparked interest among both literati and lay people in these egalitarian traditions, in addition to inciting interest in the schools of Vedānta and propelling their scholars into action.

Tribal and other indigenous traditions

These exegetical traditions, Vedānta, Vīraśaivism and Jainism, were juxtaposed with tribal and other indigenous traditions, which did not place any value on commentarial activity and did not systematize their theological positions. These traditions were often localized and more popular among the lower two *varṇas* such as the *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*. Many fostered methods to *mokṣa* via *bhakti*, devotion, and did not encourage the study of esoteric texts or rituals. Though they were insignificant in the development of Mādhva doctrines, Mādhvas incorporated some of their practices and rituals.

Worship of Śiva stands foremost among these traditions and was the prevalent religion in Tuḷunāḍu. Most temples in pre-Mādhva Tuḷunāḍu are Śaiva. Interestingly, the Uḍupi Śrī Kṛṣṇa temple founded by Madhvācārya in the 13th century CE and the *aṣṭamaṭhas* form a circle, within which is enclosed the Śrī Ananteśvara temple. The Śrī Ananteśvara temple, built in the 8th or 9th century CE, has a *līṅga*, an aniconic form of Śiva, as its centerpiece.³⁸ Although the Śaiva tradition

³⁶ Bhatt, 453. For further reading, see Bhatt, 426–451.

³⁷ Bhatt, 441.

³⁸ Bhatt, 282. According to Professor Varakhedi, Mādhvas believe that this *līṅga* actually represents Viṣṇu thereby making the Śrī Ananteśvara a Vaiṣṇava and not a Śaiva temple.

was extant in Tuḷunāḍu prior to the influence of Śaṅkarācārya, it may be that the Advaita School played a role in popularizing Śiva. According to Advaita cosmology, Śiva is held to be the highest among the gods. It is likely that the Vīraśaiva communities also helped to increase the importance of the Śiva temples, given the centrality of Śiva to their religious practices. Madhvācārya's Vaiṣṇava tradition was thus developed in a Śaiva-dominated context.

Śiva temples were often found in the vicinity of those devoted to Śakti, female power.³⁹ The Śakti traditions were also dominant in Tuḷunāḍu. Worshipped as Devī, Durgā and, more often, as a local female deity, they were sometimes linked to male counterparts who were worshipped by the *āstika* traditions.⁴⁰ For example, Mūkāmbikā, a 15th-century CE form of the Goddess, was absorbed into the Mādhva tradition. Vādirāja, the 15th-century CE *svāmi* of the Sōde *maṭha* in Uḍupi, invoked Mūkāmbikā in his *Tīrthaprabhanda*.⁴¹ More recently, the Mahākālī temple in Ambalpadi Uḍupi, a temple devoted to the worship of the goddess Kālī, was made a part of the Janārdana temple, a Mādhva temple devoted to an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. These local and indigenous traditions cannot be discounted. The Śaiva and Śakti traditions may have been the most dominant traditions in Tuḷunāḍu. Madhvācārya's Viṣṇu-based theology was in stark contrast to the prevailing and principal traditions.

The Śakti traditions were also affiliated with *tantric* rituals and worship regimens. These *tantric* texts and practices were very different from those of the prevailing Vedic tradition. Further, though *tantric* worship often entailed initiation rites, these rites were not restricted to literati or other elite groups. They thus allowed all devotees to engage in and lead worship practices. Such traditions were widespread among the lower social classes. It is likely that such *tantric* traditions were intellectual and social challenges for the *āstika* literati, who attempted to defend and uphold Vedic orthodoxy and class restrictions. Some *tantric* rituals were even included in Mādhva practices.

Perhaps the most well-known indigenous religious tradition of Tuḷunāḍu is the *bhūtārādhana*, apparition worship, also known as *dayivagaḷu* in Tuḷu.⁴² Considered to be an indigenous Dravidian form, it

³⁹ Bhatt, 283.

⁴⁰ Bhatt, 302.

⁴¹ Vādirāja, *Tīrthaprabandha*, 56–58. Bhatt, 301–302.

⁴² For further reading on *bhūtārādhana* see Nambiar, *The Ritual Art of Teyyam and Bhūtārādhane: Theatrical Performance with Spirit Mediumship*.

is directly opposed to the *āstika* and *nāstika* traditions.⁴³ The practice of *bhūta*, apparition, worship was fully accepted by the majority of the population and outweighed the importance of Śiva and Viṣṇu for most.⁴⁴ The worship of apparitions often centered on Śakti and was integrated into both later Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism.⁴⁵ *Bhūtārādhana*, for example, is central to the worship at the Mahākālī temple, which, as mentioned above, is part of the Janārdhana temple. The tradition may not have had a noticeable effect on the doctrines of the Mādhva school of Vedānta or the other schools. Nevertheless, it indicates the presence of traditions that predated many of the *āstika*, *nāstika* and related traditions and were in total variance with them.

The religious world at the time when Madhvācārya first developed his school of Vedānta was challenging, given the diverse and disparate traditions that existed. There were many competing theologies and methods for obtaining *mokṣa*. These traditions were not isolated but were part of a dynamic world of conversion and conversation, of dialogue and debate. It is likely that the cosmopolitan atmosphere allowed more interaction between adherents and more appropriation of philosophical doctrines and religious practices. It is likely that this atmosphere of plurality also affected Madhvācārya and made him aware of the boundaries between religious worlds and the ways to maintain those boundaries. It may also have helped him to recognize the centrality of the social system and one's place in it, which, as will become clear, is an integral component of his system.

Madhvācārya's theology is thus founded on the importance of *tāratamya*, hierarchy, as evidenced in the prevailing systems of *varṇa* and *jāti*. The centrality of social structure for Madhvācārya and maintenance of the *status quo* may be a reaction to the diversity and menace of rival *nāstika* traditions in medieval Karṇāṭaka. This *tāratamya* structure prevails in Madhvācārya's epistemology, ontology and soteriology and, aside from the centrality of Viṣṇu, may be the key that holds together the entire Mādhva philosophy of religion.

The Mādhva *saṃpradāya*, community and institutions

In addition to composing treatises on Vedānta matters, Madhvācārya founded the Mādhva *saṃpradāya* in Uḍupi. According to traditional

⁴³ Bhatt, 360.

⁴⁴ Bhatt, 359.

⁴⁵ Nambiar, 19.

accounts, Madhvācārya discovered an idol of the god Kṛṣṇa, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, encased in mud in the ocean and installed it at a temple in Uḍupi. The idol is still worshipped in Uḍupi today.

After ordaining eight monks, Hṛṣikeśa, Narasiṃha, Janārdana, Upendra, Vāmana, Viṣṇu and Adhokṣaja, Madhvācārya established each of them as *svāmi* of a *maṭha* thereby establishing the *aṣṭamaṭhas*, eight monasteries, as an institutional tradition.⁴⁶ These are the Palimār, Adamār, Kṛṣṇāpūr, Putige, Sirūr, Sōde, Kāṇūr and Pejāvar *maṭhas*. Viṣṇutīrtha, Madhvācārya's younger brother, who is included among the eight *svāmis*, was ordained as head of the Sōde *maṭha*. Madhvācārya placed the *maṭhas* of his disciples under his tutelage. The *aṣṭamaṭhas* still exist today and are loci for studying both doctrines and rituals and for the training of virtuosos.⁴⁷ Madhvācārya may have developed *pariyāya*, a rotating system of leadership that would begin after his disappearance.⁴⁸ It is not altogether clear that the *pariyāya* system existed immediately after Madhvācārya's disappearance or if it was a later development. There is some inscriptional evidence, however, which indicates that it took effect immediately after he disappeared. In this system of governing, *pariyāya*, the *svāmis* of each of the eight *maṭhas* is proclaimed to be leader every two years.

Although the community established by Madhvācārya has spread to different parts of India, it is still centered in Karṇāṭaka state and, most importantly, in Uḍupi. The Uttarādi, Vyāsarāya, Rāyara, Śrīpādarāya, Rāghavendra and Kukke-Subramanya *maṭhas* among others, are also central to the contemporary Mādhva *saṃpradāya*.⁴⁹

The contemporary Mādhva community

The community and institutions that Madhvācārya founded in the 13th and 14th centuries has grown far outside the boundaries of the southern Karṇāṭaka. Like many other communities in South Asia, British colonization and later diasporic migration has led Mādhvas to move within India as well as to leave the subcontinent. The end result has been a wide dissemination of members of the Mādhva community. In recent times, Mādhvas have maintained their community by establishing a

⁴⁶ MV 15.128–129.

⁴⁷ For a brief analysis of contemporary issues facing Mādhva *maṭhas*, see Rao's 'The Uḍupi Madhva matha.'

⁴⁸ See Sharma, *History*, 192–194 for further details about this controversy.

⁴⁹ This list of *maṭhas* is not comprehensive.

directory of Mādhvas in the United States and developing burgeoning Websites and automated mailing lists.⁵⁰ Though such globalization is likely to conflict with traditional modes of instruction and transmission, it has been embraced by the *svāmis* of the *aṣṭamathas*, some of whom are now even journeying outside of India. Only time will tell just how much the tradition will change given these new transformations and incarnations.

Madhvācārya's works: the *Sarvamūlagranthāḥ*, *Compendium of All the Fundamentals*

Madhvācārya wrote a total of 37 treatises, together known as the *Sarvamūlagranthāḥ*, *Compendium of All the Fundamentals*.⁵¹ First, there are commentaries on the *prasthānatraya*, three-fold systems. The *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Brahma Sūtras* and ten *Upaniṣads* (the *Aitareya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Īśāvāsyā*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Śatpbraṣṇa*, *Taittiriya*), comprise the *prasthānatraya* and each has a commentary. The *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, a commentary on Vyāsa's *Brahma Sūtras*, is, perhaps, Madhvācārya's most important work and is, indirectly, a summary of the essence of the Mādhva position. Madhvācārya wrote three other commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtras*, including the *Aṇubhāṣya*, *The Brief Commentary* (also known as the *Sarvaśāstrārthasamgrahaḥ*, *Compendium of the Meaning of all the Śāstras*), the *Anuvyākhyāna*, *An Explanation of the Sūtras*, and, finally, the *Nyāyavivaraṇa*, *An Exposition on Logic*. This large number of commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtras* is unusual in comparison to founders and followers of rival schools of Vedānta. Śaṅkarācārya, for example, composed only one *bhāṣya*, commentary, on the *Brahma Sūtras*.

The second category consists of the *daśaprakaraṇa*, ten-fold treatises on specific topics. In these short treatises, Madhvācārya presents arguments concerning epistemology and ontology. His most well-known works in the area of ratiocination are his *Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya*, *The Complete Ascertainment of the Nature of Viṣṇu* and his *Khaṇḍanatraya*, *A Trio of Refutations*. The *Khaṇḍanatraya* is composed

⁵⁰ See <www.dvaita.net>, <www.madhva.net>, and Rao, *Udupi and Dakshina Kannada Dravida Braahmans Directory* [sic].

⁵¹ For detailed analyses of the contents of each of these texts see Sharma, *History*, 90–187 and for a smaller number see Nagaraja Sarma's *Reign of Realism in Indian Philosophy*.

of the *Upādhikhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Upādhi Position*, the *Māyāvādaḥṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Māyā Position*, and the *Prapañcamithyātvānumānakhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Inference of the Illusoriness of Phenomenal Reality*. The *Māyāvādaḥṇḍana* is, in part, a reaction to arguments found in Śrīharṣa's (the 12th-century CE Advaita scholar) *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhāḍya*.

The third set, the *purāṇaprasthāna*, systems of *Purāṇa* texts, addresses philosophical matters exemplified in commentaries on mythological, epic and historical-literary works. Madhvācārya has composed commentaries on the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. His commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, the *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*, *The Complete Ascertainment of the Meaning of the Mahābhārata*, is known among contemporary scholars as '*un passage étonnat de modernisme*' because it is an early text wherein the author mentions that he has critically edited a text on which he is commenting.⁵² In his commentary, Madhvācārya mentions the problems with multiple, corrupt and conflicting manuscripts:

In some places they put new [passages into the text. In some places] they deleted [texts] and in some places [there are] changes. In other cases they made changes by mistake. The texts that are not destroyed are entirely confused. For the most part, [there are only] corrupt texts. A fraction of the millions [of texts] is not even found. So the texts are corrupted. [In this way,] even for the gods the meaning is difficult to understand. So, in this perplexing time, ordered by Hari, by His grace, having studied all of the *śāstra* and the Vedānta, inspired by Hari, having seen the different copies of the text from different regions, I speak the correct purport [of the *Mahābhārata*].⁵³

Madhvācārya also includes commentary on the *Mūlarāmāyāṇa* in his *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*. Given that the main figures of the *Mūlarāmāyāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are both *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, and, therefore, inextricably linked with one another, the enclosure of the former in the latter is not unusual. The *R̥g Veda* and, therefore,

⁵² Siauve, *La Doctrine*, 23.

⁵³ *kvacid granthān prakṣipanti kvacid antaritān api | kuryuḥ kvacic ca vyatyāsaṃ pramādāt kvacid anyathā | anutsannā api granthā vyākulā iti sarvaśaḥ | utsannāḥ prāyaśassarve koṭyaṃśo 'pi na vartate | grantho 'py evaṃ vilulitāḥ kim vārtho devadurgamaḥ | kalāvevaṃ vyākulite nirṇayāya pracoditāḥ | hariṇā nirṇayān vacmi vijānamstaprasādataḥ | śāstrāntarāṇi sañjānan vedāntāṃś cāśya prasādataḥ | deśe deśe tathā granthān dr̥ṣṭvā caiva pṛthagvidhān | Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya, 2.3–2.8. (hereafter MBhTN).*

Madhvācārya's *Rg Bhāṣya*, is also included among the *purāṇapraśthāna* by contemporary scholars of Mādhva Vedānta.

The fourth set of Madhvācārya's works is minor treatises on practical doctrines. These works still play a role in the contemporary practice of Mādhva Vedānta. The *Tantrasārasaṃgraha*, *The Compendium of the Essential Parts of the Practical Doctrines*, and *Sadācārasmṛti, Tradition of Correct Practices*, concerns Vaiṣṇava rituals and worship frameworks. This fourth set also includes poetic texts such as the *Dvādaśa Stotra*, *The Twelve Hymns*, which can be set to music and may have helped to give rise to musical traditions in South Karnaṭaka.⁵⁴

Other relevant Mādhva works

Although there are a large number of followers of Mādhva Vedānta who composed commentaries on texts in Madhvācārya's *Sarvamūlagraṇthāḥ* and independent treatises on Mādhva doctrine, two are especially noteworthy. These two scholars are Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, both of whom, along with Madhvācārya, are known as the *munitrayam*, the three major thinkers, of Mādhva Vedānta. The two commentators, Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha, composed works that changed the trajectory of Mādhva Vedānta, both in terms of Mādhva ratiocinative method and due to the sustained damage of their arguments against competing schools.

Jayatīrtha (1365–88 CE) is best known for codifying the doctrines of Mādhva Vedānta. Jayatīrtha earned the title *ṭīkācārya*, author of commentaries, with his two well-known commentaries on Madhvācārya's commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtras*. His *Nyāya Sudhā*, *Nectar of Logic*, is a commentary on Madhvācārya's *Anuvyakhyāna* and primarily consists of refutations of the tenets of rival schools. His *Tattvaprakāśika*, *Explanation of Reality*, is a commentary on Madhvācārya's *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*. Jayatīrtha's *Pramāṇapaddhati*, *Way of Proof*, is one of his independent works and became a standard textbook on Mādhva logic and epistemology.

Vyāsatīrtha (1460–1539 CE) is best known for three of his works, called the *Vyāsatrāyam*, *The Trio of Vyāsatīrtha's Works*, by later Mādhvas. His *Nyāyāmṛta*, *The Ambrosia of Logic*, which presents arguments against Advaita metaphysics, inspired a lengthy series of debates between the two schools of Vedānta. For example, Madhusūdhana Sarasvatī, the 16th-century scholar of Advaita Vedānta,

⁵⁴ Sharma, *History*, 187–188. Vaiṣṇavacaran, v.

wrote his *Advaitasiddhi* in response to Vyāsatīrtha's criticisms. Vyāsatīrtha's *Tātparyacandrikā* was a further systematization of Madhvācārya's position on the *Brahma Sūtras*. The third member of the texts classified as *Vyāsatrayam* is Vyāsatīrtha's *Tarka Tāṇḍava*, *The Dance of Logic*. The *Tarka Tāṇḍava* is a refutation of fundamental Navya Nyāya principles and, indirectly, of several Pūrva Mīmāṃsā positions.

Theory and practice

The life and history of Madhvācārya and Mādhva Vedānta offered here should help readers to view the tradition as a living one and not as simply a set of doctrines lacking practitioners. When one immerses oneself in epistemological and other more theoretical issues, one often forgets that the beliefs in question cannot, and do not, stand apart from their practice. It must not be forgotten that the ultimate goal of the Mādhva tradition was to offer a convincing solution to the problem of birth and rebirth and an efficient and correct path to *mokṣa*. Their solution, moreover, could not stand apart from the texts that they commented upon. This brief foray into the life and history of Madhvācārya and Mādhva Vedānta serves to remind readers of this link between theory and practice. With this context in mind, I now turn to the core of the Mādhva position, namely epistemology.

Mādhva epistemology

A means of valid knowledge is that which reveals an object [of knowledge] as it is.¹

Madhvācārya begins his *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, *Characterization of the Means of Valid Knowledge*, with this rather bold statement revealing the foundation of his philosophy of realism: that it is possible to have knowledge of an object that is free from sublation. Such a position is not surprising, given that Mādhva philosophy is in part a reaction against Advaita Vedānta. Scholars of the Advaita School hold that objects that we see in *vyāvahārika*, our everyday experience, are not as they appear. Instead, objects are no more than superimpositions onto *brahman*, divinity.² For this reason, in Advaita Vedānta anything that one perceives can be sublated, is not real and one's perceptions are not entirely valid. It is not possible to know an object as it really is. For the Advaita School, means of valid knowledge are not *yathārtha* as Madhvācārya defines it and, in fact, do not reveal the true nature of the objects of cognition. The status of all knowledge, perceptual and otherwise, is thus problematized in the Advaita epistemology.

Madhvācārya's epistemology of realism is in direct opposition to Advaita Vedānta. *Sat*, real, objects for Madhvācārya certainly are neither mere superimpositions, nor products of our imagination or of a Cartesian evil genius.³ In contrast to the Advaita position, valid and true knowledge is knowledge that is not superimposed and cannot be sublated.

In order to justify his epistemology of realism, Madhvācārya relies on a variety of cognitive apparatus and mechanisms. His account includes unavoidable presuppositions that also correlate with his ontology, soteriology and eschatology. In this chapter, I introduce readers to this system, which includes his theories about valid knowledge, the instruments of valid knowledge via logical discourse and the tools by which we construct cognitions.

It is all too easy to forget that Mādhva epistemological reflection was never an end in itself. Instead, it was always in the service of soteriology. A proper understanding of the mechanisms of the universe,

¹ *yathārthaṃ pramāṇam | Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*.

² See Chapter 3 for more on the term *brahman*.

³ See Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 1.

including epistemological ones and, most importantly, complete and correct knowledge of *brahman*, is essential to being granted *mokṣa*. An incorrect understanding of *brahman* is the reason why sentient beings are reborn.⁴ Such knowledge combined with *bhakti*, devotion, and other practices eventually can break the cycle. Although I address these issues of practice in Chapter 4, it is vital that readers keep them in mind and do not artificially separate the theoretical from the practical.

I am dependent upon several texts from the Mādhva corpus for my analysis, including Madhvācārya's *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, *Characterization of the Means of Valid Knowledge* (hereafter PL). The *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, a *prakaraṇa*, minor philosophical tract, is a handbook of his epistemology. It is comprised of fifty *granthas*, unmeasured thirty-two-syllable verses. It also contains arguments against epistemological positions held by a number of schools including the Advaita School of Vedānta. Although this text has inspired many commentaries I rely only on Jayatīrtha's *Pramāṇapaddhati*, *The Path Towards the Means of Valid Knowledge*, (hereafter PP) an independent treatise of 750 *granthas* modeled after the PL. These two texts, combined with references to Mādhva epistemology found in his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, *Commentary on the Brahma Sūtras*, *Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya* (hereafter VTV), *The Complete Ascertainment of the Nature of Viṣṇu*, and *Anuvyakhyāna* (hereafter AV), *An Explanation of the Sūtras*, are sufficient for the purposes of this introduction. The *Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya*, also a *prakaraṇa*, is a detailed refutation of Advaita positions. It contains arguments against Advaita epistemology as well as criticisms of Advaita interpretations of controversial passages from *śruti*, the revealed texts of the Vedic canon, and is comprised of 540 *granthas*. Both the *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya* and *Anuvyakhyāna* are commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtras*.

***Pramāṇa*, the means of valid knowledge**

One primary concern of the schools of South Asia philosophy is to characterize what constitutes a *pramāṇa*, means of valid knowledge. There are debates among all of the schools concerning the definitions and components of *pramāṇa*. Buddhists, for example, do not hold the sacred texts of the Hindus, such as the *Vedas*, to be unquestionably true. Their theories about what constitutes a *pramāṇa* would surely conflict with the schools of Vedānta. Given the centrality of *pramāṇas* and

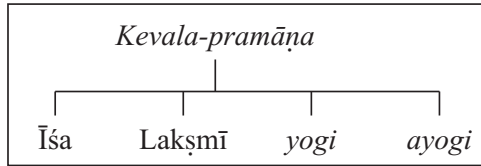
⁴ *nāvedadinmanute taṃ bṛhantaṃ sarvānubhūtmānaṃ sāmparāye* | BSB 1.1.3.

epistemic theory, students of the schools of philosophy in South Asia were required to learn the intricacies of their own epistemologies and those of rivals. For this reason, I begin my characterization of the doctrines of Mādhva Vedānta with epistemic theories.

Pramāṇas, according to Madhvācārya, are of two varieties, *kevala* and *anu*.⁵ *Kevala-pramāṇa* is direct knowledge of an object as it is, while *anu-pramāṇa*, indirect knowledge, is the instrument that gives rise to direct knowledge.⁶ I will first examine the components of *kevala-pramāṇa* and then the three components of *anu-pramāṇa*, namely *pratyakṣa*, perception, *anumāna*, reasoning, and *āgama*, scriptural authority and verbal testimony.

***Kevala-pramāṇa*, direct knowledge of an object as it is**

For Madhvācārya, all aspects of the universe, including knowledge, are qualitatively and hierarchically arranged. Consequently, *kevala-pramāṇa*, direct knowledge, must have distinct components that can be arranged hierarchically. *Kevala-pramāṇa* is an innate self-reflective knowledge and immediate intuition of objects that is possessed by all sentient beings, including Lord Viṣṇu. The intuitive knowledge of Viṣṇu, though, must be qualitatively better than any other sentient being. Hence Madhvācārya divides the *kevala-pramāṇas* into four types, namely Īśa (Lord Viṣṇu), Lakṣmī, *yogi*, and *ayogi* (see Fig. 2.1).⁷



2.1 *Kevala-pramāṇa*

According to Madhvācārya, the difference between them consists of a difference in clarity, where Lord Viṣṇu's knowledge has the greatest clarity and the knowledge of the *ayogi* has the least.⁸

⁵ *tad dvividham | kevalam anupramāṇam ca | PL.*

⁶ *yathārthajñānam kevalam | tatsāadhanam anupramāṇam | PL.*

⁷ *kevalam caturvidham | īśalakṣmīyogyayogibhedena | PL.*

⁸ *spāṣṭhatve bhedaḥ | PL.*

In his PP, Jayatīrtha further separates the intuitive knowledge of Lord Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī, *yogi*, and *ayogi* into two types: *svarūpa-jñāna* and *manovṛtti-jñāna*.⁹ Madhvācārya defines *svarūpa-jñāna* in his VTV as knowledge that is inherent to, or part of, the very nature of the cognizer.¹⁰ *Manovṛtti-jñāna*, on the other hand, refers to experiential knowledge, an external knowledge dependent on the *vṛtti*, modifications, or operations of the *manas*, mind.¹¹ Such knowledge, as I will explain below, can only be experiential knowledge obtained via the physical sense organs, via the *anu-pramāṇa* such as *pratyakṣa*, perception. *Svarūpa-jñāna* is more valid than *manovṛtti-jñāna*, since it is never linked to the imperfect, external sense organs.

Already the way in which difference and hierarchy is an intrinsic part of Mādhva Vedānta, even in its epistemic categories, emerges. True knowledge can be categorized in terms of degrees. Lord Viṣṇu is omniscient and has knowledge that is comprehensive, without beginning or end, eternal and independent. His knowledge has all things everywhere as its scope and is part of His own nature.¹² Lakṣmī's knowledge is like Viṣṇu's and is dependent on Viṣṇu and His knowledge. Its scope is everything except for Lord Viṣṇu, so its clarity is less distinct than His.¹³ For this reason, Lakṣmī's knowledge must be inferior. Neither Lord Viṣṇu nor Lakṣmī need to rely on *manovṛtti-jñāna*, external knowledge. After all, their knowledge is entirely *svarūpa-jñāna*, part of their nature, and is not linked to flawed *pratyakṣa*, perception.

Madhvācārya holds that *yogi-jñāna* is the knowledge obtained by *yogis*, contemplative ascetics, after meditating on Viṣṇu. There are three types of *yogic* knowledge obtained via meditation and contemplative practices. These are *ṛjuyogins*, *yogins* whose knowledge is straightforward, *tattvika-yogins*, *yogins* whose knowledge is true, and *ayogins*, the knowledge of those who are not *yogins* (see Fig. 2.2).¹⁴

⁹ *tad [īśalakṣmījñānaca] dvividham | svarūpaṃ manovṛttirūpaṃ ceti* | PP 18.

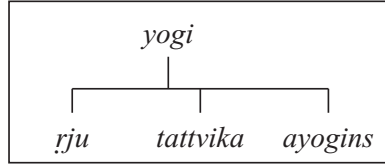
¹⁰ *akṣāṇi ca svarūpāṇi nityajñānātmakāni ca | viṣṇoḥ śrīyastathaivaoktānyany eṣāṃ dvividhāni tu | svarūpāṇi ca bhinnāni bhinnāni trividhāni ca* | VTV.

¹¹ Rao, *Epistemology of Dvaita Vedānta*, 22.

¹² *svātantryapāratantryābhyāṃ tadviśeṣaḥ | pūrvaṃ svaparagatākhilaviśeṣaviśayam* | PL. I will hereafter capitalize the pronoun 'his' when it is in reference to Viṣṇu.

¹³ *dvitīyam īśo 'nyebhyo 'dhikam | asārvatrikam | anyatra sarvaviśayam* | PL.

¹⁴ *yogijñānam ṛjūnām anādinityam | īśo jīvebhyo 'dhikamanyatrālocane sarvaviśayam* | PL.



2.2 Types of *yogic* knowledge

The *rjuyogins* have knowledge that is eternal and without beginning but increases with their meditative effort. This knowledge becomes static after the knower obtains *mokṣa*, liberation.¹⁵ The *tattvika-yogins* have incomplete knowledge of both Īśvara and other objects but still have self-conscious knowledge of reality.¹⁶ Jayatīrtha states that there are also *atattvika-yogins* who are the other deities.¹⁷ The knowledge of the *atattvika-yogins* is partial. Those remaining are the *ayogins* who have partial knowledge of both Īśvara and objects other than the Lord. Jayatīrtha correlates the knowledge of the *ayogins* with Mādhva soteriology, separating them into three types: the *mukṭi-yogyas*, those fit for release, the *nitya-saṃsārins*, those bound to the cycle of birth and rebirth, and *tamo-yogyas*, those who are fit only for darkness.¹⁸ The *svārūpa-jñāna* of the *mukṭi-yogyas* is valid, while that of the *nitya-saṃsārins* is comprised of both invalid and valid knowledge. Though the *svārūpa-jñāna* of the *tamo-yogyas* is entirely invalid, the *manovrtti-jñāna* of all three is only occasionally invalid.¹⁹

These different categories of *kevala-pramāṇa* correlate with the hierarchical world that Madhvācārya envisioned. In the realm of epistemology, this vision becomes apparent in terms of distinctions in clarity and scope of knowledge. As one proceeds down the category system, one moves further and further away from complete and unsurpassable knowledge, which only Viṣṇu has. Though it is possible to advance in knowledge, one can only asymptotically approach the level of complete knowledge held by Viṣṇu. As one advances in the epistemic hierarchy, one becomes more aware of the nature of *brahman*

¹⁵ *krameṇa vardhamānam | āmukteḥ tato 'vyayam* | PL.

¹⁶ Nagaraja Rao states that these beings are actually deities who govern the twenty-five *tattvas*, categories described in Madhvācārya's *Tantrasārasaṃgraha*. Rao, 24–25.

¹⁷ *tadvyatirikṭāḥ devādayaḥ yoginaḥ atattvikāḥ* | PP 18.

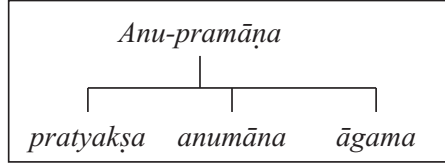
¹⁸ *ayoginaḥ api trividhāḥ | mukṭiyogyāḥ nityasaṃsārīṇāḥ tamoyogyāś ca iti* | PP 19. More on the doctrine of predestination, *svārūpatraividhya*, in Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁹ *tatra mukṭiyogyānāṃ svārūpajñānaṃ yathārtham eva | nityasaṃsārīṇāṃ tu miśram | anyeṣāṃ ayathārtham eva* | PP 19.

and the universe and its components. I will address the ways to ascend in the hierarchy, in order to gain more complete knowledge of Viṣṇu, in Chapter 4.

***Anu-pramāṇa*, indirect knowledge**

Kevala-pramāṇa, direct knowledge, stands in contrast to *anu-pramāṇa*, indirect knowledge, which is the instruments of valid knowledge. There are three instruments. These are via *pratyakṣa*, perception, *anumāna*, logical inference and reasoning, and *āgama*, scriptural authority and verbal testimony (see Fig. 2.3). They are all defined as being without defects. *Pratyakṣa*, perception, is defined as defectless contact of the sense organ with an object. *Anumāna* is defined as defectless inference, and *āgama* as defectless sentences and/or texts.²⁰



2.3 Components of *anu-pramāṇa*

These three instruments are loci for error. What are these defects and how are they to be avoided? What mistakes make *anumāna*, inference, unreasonable? What causes error? What are the components of cognition?

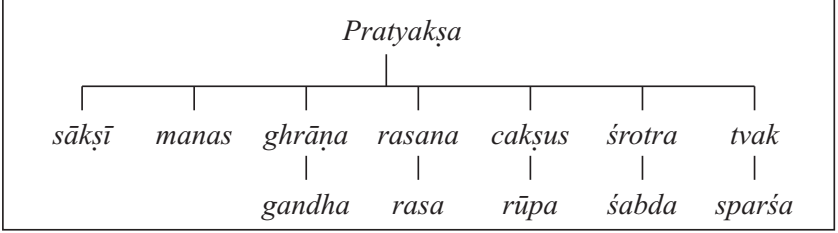
Anu-pramāṇas: *pratyakṣa*, *perception*

Madhvācārya states that *pratyakṣa*, perception, is comprised of two types of cognitive apparatus: the *indriyas*, six physical sense organs, and the *sākṣī*, the internal witness.²¹ The six physical sense organs are *manas*, mind, *ghrāṇa*, smell, *rasana*, taste, *cakṣus*, sight, *śrotra*,

²⁰ *anupramāṇaṃ trividham | pratyakṣam anumānam āgama iti | nirdoṣo 'rthendriya sannikarṣaḥ pratyakṣam | nirdoṣopapattir anumā | nirdoṣaḥ śabda āgamaḥ | PL.*

²¹ *pratyakṣam saptavidham | sākṣiśaṇḍindriyabhedena | PL.*

hearing, and *tvak*, touch.²² This list is not unusual in the history of South Asian thought and has its origins in the Sāṃkhya tradition which preceded Mādhva Vedānta.²³ The objects of the five sense organs are *gandha*, smell, *rasa*, taste, *rūpa*, color, *śabda*, sound, and *sparsa*, feeling (see Fig. 2.4).²⁴ These five sense organs are the primary loci for error. If one's eyes are defective then they can give rise to defective knowledge. Jayatīrtha characterizes these errors as those produced by a cataract, jaundice and the like.²⁵ Similarly, if one's ears are filled with wax or damaged, then sounds, which ought to be audible, may not be heard or are heard in a distorted way. When addressing visual error in his PP Jayatīrtha states that if an object is too far away, too near, too small, obstructed, or even mixed with similar things, then it will give rise to incorrect knowledge.²⁶



2.4 Components of *pratyakṣa*

The five sense organs send their data (corrupt or otherwise) to the *manas*, mind, which serves to organize them. Though the *manas* is a sense organ, it gets and coordinates information from the other five. The *manas* lies in the middle of the cognitive hierarchy and in turn, the knowledge it generates is the object of the *sākṣī*, internal witness. The end result of the observation of the knowledge deriving from the physical sense organs by the *sākṣī* via the *manas* is *pratyakṣa*, perceptual cognition as is illustrated in Fig. 2.5.

²² *prākṛtam śaḍvidham | ghrāṇarasanacakṣustvakśrotramanobhedāt* | PP 25.

²³ See Larson's *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*.

²⁴ PP 25. More on the ontology of these components in Chapter 3.

²⁵ *eteṣāṃ pañcānāṃ mano 'nadhiṣṭitvaṃ kācakāmalādayaś ca doṣāḥ* | PP 25.

²⁶ *teṣāṃ doṣāḥ atidūratvaṃ atisāmīpyaṃ sauḥmyaṃ vyavadhānaṃ samāndravyābhigātāḥ* | PP 23.



2.5 Perceptual cognition

The *manas*, mind, is as an intermediary between the senses and the *sākṣī*. The *manas* is not unlike a processor chip in a computer whose purpose is to organize all of the incoming data before relaying it via the monitor to the user, which, as I will explain below, can be likened to the *sākṣī*.

Given that the *manas* is a sense organ, it too cannot be expected to be perfect and can sometimes convey defective knowledge to the *sākṣī*. Defects of the *manas* include anger, passions and the like.²⁷ When these *doṣas*, fallacies, afflict the *manas*, then the data deriving from the inaccurate senses are further contaminated.

These components of *pratyakṣa*, presented in Madhvācārya's PL, seem to be internally coherent. But Madhvācārya presents a different analysis of *pratyakṣa* in his VTV. In this text, he separates *pratyakṣa* into three types, which seems to conflict with the seven outlined in his PL. These are *Īśvara-pratyakṣa*, *yogi-pratyakṣa*, and *ayogi-pratyakṣa*. All three types of perception originate from the senses. Jayatīrtha adds *Lakṣmī-pratyakṣa* to this group.²⁸ The perception that derives from the senses of Viṣṇu and Śrī (Lakṣmī) are eternal and inherent to their nature.²⁹ The senses that give rise to *yogi-pratyakṣa* and *ayogi-pratyakṣa* are of two kinds: inherent to the nature of the cognizer and not part of the nature of the cognizer, namely their physical sense organs. *Ayogi-pratyakṣa* is threefold, *daiva*, divine, *āśura*, and *madhya*, middling.³⁰ According to Jayatīrtha, *daiva* is the most valid, *asura* is the least valid and *madhya* is partly valid and partly invalid.³¹ It is

²⁷ *tasya doṣāḥ rāgādayaḥ* | PP 25.

²⁸ *pratyakṣam trividham jñeyamaiśvaram yaugikaṁ tathā | ayaugiakam ceti tathā sarvam akṣātmakaṁ matam* | VTV.

caturvidham pratyakṣam | īśvarapratyakṣam lakṣmīpratyakṣam yogipratyakṣam ayogipratyakṣam ceti | PP 27. See also Zydenbos for more on these possible inconsistencies, 258.

²⁹ *akṣāṇi ca svarūpāṇi nityajñānātmakāni ca* | VTV.

³⁰ *devāsurāṇi madhyānītyetatpratyakṣamīritam* | VTV.

³¹ *bāhyendriyaṁ trividham | daivam āśuram madhyamam iti | tatra yathārthajñānapracuraṁ daivam | ayathārthajñānapracuraṁ āśuram | samajñānasāadhanantu madhyamam* | PP 28.

not clear how these fit into the seven-fold classification outlined in Madhvācārya's *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*. Subsequent Mādhva commentators such as Rāghavendratīrtha and Śrīnivāsatīrtha attempted to resolve this confusion.³² Contemporary scholars of the Mādhva school hold that the longer list is merely an elaboration of the shorter one.

Smṛti, memory

Scholars both in South Asia as well as in the West have long speculated about the epistemological status of memory. What determines the validity of memories? Can memory be categorized as its own sense organ? How are memories generated? Where are they located? Madhvācārya offers answers to these questions by proposing that *smṛti*, memory, is a product of the *manas*.³³ Memory is thus characterized as a *pramāṇa*. In fact, Madhvācārya argues that memory must be considered to be valid. Proof that we even had a past experience is dependent on the validity of *smṛti*.³⁴ If it were not valid, moreover, then the knowledge of syllogisms produced by *anumāna*, logical inference and reasoning, would be impossible.³⁵ For example, the knowledge that 'where there is smoke, there is fire,' necessitates the validity of the memory of the relationship between smoke and fire. If *smṛti* had no validity, then one could never conclude from seeing smoke that there was fire!

The validity of *smṛti* is necessary for the integrity of the *āgama-pramāṇa* as well as *anumāna*. If it were not valid then the *āgama* classified as *smṛti*, traditional human-authored texts, would also be invalid. In fact, any kind of knowledge that is transmitted by oral recitation and memorization, such as *śruti*, the revealed texts of the Vedic canon, would be invalid if memory was invalid. The *āgamas* must be included as a *pramāṇa* and *smṛti* must be a valid form of knowledge. For these reasons, in his *Anuvyākhyāna*, Madhvācārya states that *manas* is a valid form of knowledge which is *yathārtha*, reveals an object of knowledge as it is.³⁶

Remember that Madhvācārya is a realist and that therefore the objects of our valid cognitions, including memory, must be *sat*, real. If memory were not admitted as a valid cognition or one that could be sublated, then Madhvācārya would have to permit other kinds of seemingly valid

³² I am reliant on Zydenbos for this information. Zydenbos, 259.

³³ *mānasapratyakṣajā smṛtiḥ* | PL.

³⁴ *pūrvānubhūte kiṃ mānam ity ukte syāt kim uttaram* | AV 2.1.58.

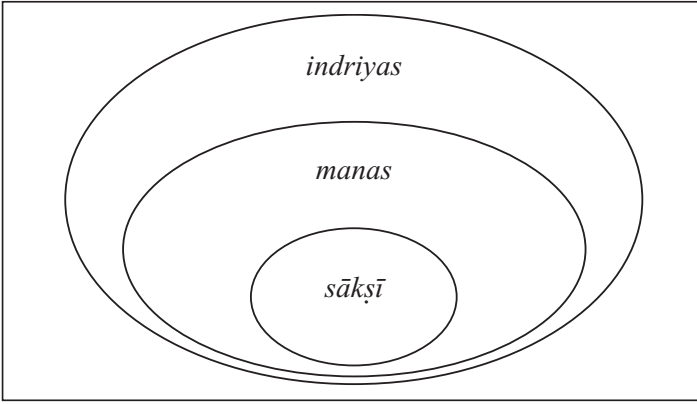
³⁵ More on *anumāna* below.

³⁶ *prāmāṇyam nānūvādasya smṛter api vihiyate yāthārthyam eva prāmāṇyaśabdārtho yadvivakṣitaḥ* | AV 2.1.24.

cognitions to be sublated. He must avoid this at all costs, otherwise he might affirm the position of his rivals, the Advaita school of Vedānta.

The sākṣī

The *sākṣī*, internal witness, is the most important component of Madhvācārya's epistemology.³⁷ Perceptual cognition has several layers and the *sākṣī* is the innermost one. The *indriyas* are at the outermost layer, the *manas* is in the middle and the *sākṣī* is at the core (see Fig. 2.6). In fact, it refers to the basic level of reflective consciousness, experience and awareness that every sentient being possesses. A parallel concept in Western philosophy can be found in Descartes's *Meditations*. Descartes suggests that, though there is little certainty in our knowledge, it is nonetheless possible to be certain of one's own existence. After all, according to Descartes, self-reflection and thought, at the very least, proves that there is a knower. Hence his famous dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I am'.³⁸



2.6 Cognition

The *sākṣī* serves an identical purpose in Madhvācārya's epistemology as the experience and source of absolute certainty and awareness that there is a knower.

³⁷ I am reliant upon B.A. Krishnaswamy Rao's lucid presentation of *sākṣī* in his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Sri Madhwacharya* and conversations with Professor Varakhedi for much of this discussion.

³⁸ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 1.

As the conclusive adjudicator, the *sākṣī* cannot err. Not only must the *sākṣī* exist, but it must also follow that it is without *doṣa*, defect. Any defect would make the *sākṣī* as erroneous as the six-fold *indriyas* and the *manas*, thereby requiring another epistemic apparatus to serve as final judge of the truth. To avoid this problem, Madhvācārya holds that the *sākṣī* is *sva-prakāśa*, self-luminous and self-validating.³⁹ If it were not, then it too would require a mechanism by which it is validated, which I will call V1. This ground for validity, V1, would itself require another validation, namely V2, which requires V3 and so forth. Infinite regressions such as this one are deemed *doṣas*, flaws, in *tarka* and to be avoided at all costs. Madhvācārya posits the *sākṣī*, internal witness, to avoid this epistemic problem. The existence of the *sākṣī* means that the experience of the *sākṣī* can never be sublated or replaced at any time.⁴⁰ The *sākṣī* is thus the final judge of the truth about the self.⁴¹

What does the *sākṣī* experience directly? The *sākṣī* experiences itself, pain, pleasure, *manovṛtti-jñāna*, the modifications of the *manas* via the senses, *kāla*, time, and *ākāśa*, space. These are qualities of the self and are a matter of self-awareness and do not involve extrinsic data or experiences external to the *sākṣī*. Furthermore, the intuitive capability of the *sākṣī* is required to explain certain kinds of experiences and awareness that cannot be derived by any other means. For example, the *sākṣī* serves the purpose of establishing generalizations.⁴² The *manas* does not have this reflective function, since it is merely the channel or conduit for particular, and not general, knowledge. When one has the perception ‘this is X,’ for example, one distinguishes X from all else. The *manas* cannot generate such knowledge, so there must be some organ that can. This organ is the *sākṣī*.

Why is the *sākṣī* the organ that experiences *kāla*, time? According to Madhvācārya, the perception of time and space is never sublated and hence it can occur only through a defectless sense organ, namely the *sākṣī*. Madhvācārya contends that the ability to perceive time during sleep is evidence that it is an object of the *sākṣī*.⁴³ None of the sense organs, including the *manas*, function during sleep. Still, when one

³⁹ *sākṣīnaḥ svaprakāśatvam anavasthā tato na hi* | AV 3.2.56. More on these *doṣas* below.

⁴⁰ *sākṣīsiddhasya na kvāpi bādhyatvaṃ tadadoṣataḥ sarvakaleṣvabādhyatvaṃ sākṣīṇaiva pratīyate* | AV 1.4.98.

⁴¹ *sākṣipratyakṣato hy eva mānānām mānateyate* | AV 3.2.55.

⁴² *ataḥ sarvapadārthāś ca sāmānyāt sākṣigocarāḥ* | *sarvam ity eva vijñānaṃ sarveṣāṃ katham anyathā* | AV 3.2.83.

⁴³ *kālo hi sākṣipratyakṣaḥ suṣuptau ca pratītiḥ* | *atītānāgatau kālāvapi nāsākṣigocarau* | AV 1.4.99.

awakes from dreamless sleep one recognizes that some time has passed. Consequently there must be some perceiver of time and that perceiver can only be the *sākṣī*.

If the *sākṣī* is infallible, then why are there errors? The *sākṣī* suspends its judgment when the *manas* provides defective data. The result is *saṁśaya*, doubt. As already mentioned, the *manas* can be effected by passions and the like, and misperceptions can result. When such a situation arises, then the outcome is doubt. On the other hand, defectless data conveyed by the *manas* to the *sākṣī* and experiences that are available only to the *sākṣī* (time and so on) result in cognitive certainty.

As evidenced by its unusual capabilities, the *sākṣī* is the foundation of Madhvācārya's epistemology. Not only does it permit intuitive knowledge, but also it acts as a final adjudicator due to its innate ability to determine validity. Without *sākṣī*, the Mādhva realism would be indefensible. As for its defensibility, it is equally problematic as Descartes's *cogito*, which can be viewed as eminently compelling, or radically flawed.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, accepting the truth of Madhvācārya's system necessitates accepting the unquestionable validity of the *sākṣī*.

Anu-pramāṇas: anumāna, *defectless inference*

Madhvācārya defines *anumāna* as the instrument of defectless inference.⁴⁵ It is an inferential cognition, moreover, that is dependent upon the other *anu-pramāṇas*, namely *pratyakṣa*, defectless perception, and *āgama*, defectless sentences and/or texts. One example already mentioned, 'where there is smoke, there is fire,' illustrates why logical inferences are impossible without perception. If one cannot perceive the elements of the inference then one cannot infer! As already mentioned, one must be able to see the smoke and fire to connect the two!

All of the schools of South Asian philosophy present analyses of the components of the syllogism and explanations of how they can be relied on collectively as authoritative sources of knowledge. Madhvācārya's analysis is dependent on the presentation of the logic of the syllogism that is posited by the Nyāya School of philosophy. To explain Madhvācārya's modification, I will first present the Nyāya position. Though the position changed in the development of the Nyāya School, the one that I present is commonly accepted as foundational.

⁴⁴ For criticism of Descartes, see Cottingham, *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*.

⁴⁵ *nirḍoṣopapattir anumā* | PL.

The structure of the inference according to the Nyāya School

One standard form of the inference that is found among the schools of South Asian philosophy has five components.⁴⁶ The classical example that has been used to illustrate the components of the inference is the conclusion that there is fire on the mountain if smoke is observed. Here is how Gautama breaks it down in the *Nyāya Sūtras*:

- 1 *pratijñā*, proposition: This mountain has fire.
- 2 *hetu*, reason: Because it has smoke.
- 3 *udāharaṇa*, example: Wherever there is smoke, there is fire, just as in a kitchen.
- 4 *upanaya*, application: This mountain is smoky.
- 5 *nigamanāni*, conclusion: Therefore, this mountain has fire.⁴⁷

Here are the four components of the inference:

- 1 The mountain is the *pakṣa*, the minor term, the subject, the *probandum*.
- 2 ‘Fire possessing’ is the *sādhya*, thing to be proven, the major term.
- 3 ‘Smoke-possessing’ is the *hetu* (different than the use above).
- 4 The kitchen is the *sapakṣa*, a similar instance confirming the concomitance.

The *vyāpti* is the universal concomitance between the *hetu*, the middle term, and the *sādhya*, major term. That is, there is a universal concomitance between fire and smoke. The *vyāpti* is the relation of class-inclusion, where there is a pervasion of one by another, where the *hetu* is pervaded by the *sādhya*, where smoke is pervaded by fire. *Vyāpti* thus concerns relationships that are necessary.

Not surprisingly, debates have arisen about the indispensability of these components and their exact definitions. Buddhist (most notably the logician Dinnāga), Jain and Hindu scholars have contributed enormously to these debates.⁴⁸ Madhvācārya’s analysis of *anumāna* should properly be contextualized within the history of debate between the schools of thought in South Asia. Later Mādhyas, above all Jayatīrtha in his *Pramāṇapaddhati* and Vyāsatīrtha in his *Tarka*

⁴⁶ See Matilal, *The Character of Indian Logic*, King, *Indian Philosophy*, and Potter, *Presuppositions* for more introductory materials on these and related topics.

⁴⁷ *Nyāya Sūtras* 1.1.32.

⁴⁸ See Wayman, *A Millennium of Buddhist Logic* and King.

Taṇḍava, expended an enormous amount of intellectual energy to produce detailed explanations of the nuances of Madhvācārya's position. Although these are useful for study of the history of *anumāna* in South Asian philosophy, an in-depth analysis would digress too far from the matters at hand.⁴⁹

Madhvācārya's analysis of defectless inference

According to Madhvācārya, *vyāpti* is the indispensable component of an inference. In fact, the foundation and only essential component of *anumāna*, defectless inference, is the *vyāpti*, the invariable concomitance between the *hetu*, the middle term, and the *sādhya*, the major term.⁵⁰ It is the concomitance between smoke and fire that is the essential component of the inference. The remaining ones are superfluous, since all the others are founded on the *vyāpti*. In a straightforward interpretation of *anumāna*, Madhvācārya concedes that only the *vyāpti* is necessary.⁵¹

The syllogism has only practical utility as a method of proof and, depending on the situation, does not require that all five members be enunciated. It is a means to ends and not ends in and of itself. There is no need to posit components in addition to those mentioned. While others hold them as independent *pramāṇas*, Madhvācārya places *arthāpatti*, presumption, and *upamā*, analogy, under the scope of *anumāna*. Both, according to Madhvācārya can be reduced to inferences and thus they cannot be considered independent *pramāṇas*.⁵² Given its peripheral nature, I will not offer detailed analyses of the justifications for Madhvācārya's theory of *anumāna*.

Tarka-doṣas, logical errors

Madhvācārya lists a number of logical errors in his PL. These are *anumāna* that can be used to show *doṣas* in opponent's positions. The schools of South Asian philosophy each provide accounts of these errors in their manuals and many agree on them. After all, if they did not, then philosophical dialogue would become impossible, pointless, or both!

These are *ātmānyonyāśraya*, mutual dependence, *cakrakā*, circularity, *anavasthā*, infinite regress, *kalpanāgaurava*, complexity (Ockham's

⁴⁹ Interested readers should consult Matilal, King, and Potter.

⁵⁰ *vyāptir upapattimūlam* | PL.

⁵¹ See Sharma, *Philosophy of Śrī Madhvācārya* and N. Rao, *Epistemology* for more on this topic. Sharma, 133–134. Rao, 69.

⁵² *arthāpattiyupame anumāviśeṣaḥ* | PL.

Razor), *śrutadr̥ṣṭahā*, destruction of what is seen by what is heard, among others.⁵³ More detailed descriptions of these and other fallacies can be found in Potter's *Presuppositions on Indian Philosophies*. Though detailed analyses of these *doṣas* and a plethora of others are found in Madhvācārya's *Pramāṇa Lakṣaṇa* and Jayatīrtha's *Pramāṇapaddhati*, they are not relevant for our purposes.⁵⁴

Anu-pramāṇas: āgama, defectless sentences and/or texts

Āgama is defectless sentences and/or texts.⁵⁵ The schools of Vedānta are, above all, commentarial traditions, so the authority of words has significant consequences. In fact, the schools are defined by their relationship to the *Vedas* and auxiliary texts. The term *vedānta*, a *tatpuruṣa* determinative compound comprised of the two terms *veda* and *anta*, means 'the culminating sections of the *Vedas*.' The epistemological foundations of schools are inextricably linked to the *śruti*, the revealed texts of the Vedic canon.

Each, in theory, founds its entire system on the validity of *āgama*, defectless sentences and/or texts. Of course the question arises as to whether the philosophical positions of each respective school derive from the *āgamas*, or if their interpretations of passages from the *āgamas* derive from independent philosophical positions. The end result is a chicken-or-egg debate (or in vegetarian Vedānta, a seed-and-tree debate!), which often pits the schools of Vedānta against one another. Regardless, the importance of the *āgamas* as a central component in Vedānta cannot be underestimated. *Āgamas* serve as the backdrops for debate, as the lexicon for deliberation.

According to Madhvācārya, the content of the *āgamas* is information about Viṣṇu, his consort Lakṣmī, *dharma*, law and doctrine, and other matters unseen or unavailable by any other means. Drawing from explanations given by his Mīmāṃsā predecessors, Madhvācārya holds that knowledge of *dharma* and *adharma* is beyond the scope of human capability.⁵⁶ After all, he argues, humans are ignorant and deceptive and cannot derive such truths independently.⁵⁷ All of the schools of Vedānta believe that the *āgamas* are to be studied. Any claim that they ought not

⁵³ *ātmānyonyāśrayatācakraṇānavasthākālpānāgauravaśrutadr̥ṣṭahānādayo dūṣaṇānumāḥ* | PL.

⁵⁴ See N. Rao, *Epistemology*, 70–97 for more on *doṣas*.

⁵⁵ *nir-doṣaḥ śabda āgamaḥ* | PL.

⁵⁶ See Jha's *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā in its Sources* for more on the Mīmāṃsā view.

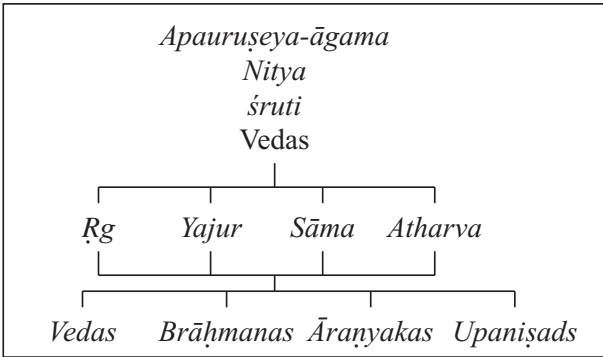
⁵⁷ *na ca pauraṣeṇa vākyena tatsiddhiḥ ajñānavipralambhayoḥ prāpteḥ* | VTV. More on the relationships between *anumāna*, *pratyakṣa*, and *āgama* below.

to be the object of study or that they are irrelevant is held to be ludicrous. That they are efficacious and necessary is an unquestionable truth and part and parcel of the commentarial tradition that is Vedānta.

According to Madhvācārya, *āgamas* are two-fold: *apauruṣeya*, sentences and/or texts not having human authorship, and *pauruṣeya*, those having human authorship. First I offer a summary of *apauruṣeya-āgama* and then of *pauruṣeya-āgama*. I then examine, in brief, an unusual set of texts that, though excluded from the canon, are an integral part of Mādhva mythology.

Apauruṣeya-āgama, sentences and texts not having human authorship

Apauruṣeya-āgama are *nitya*, eternal, while the *pauruṣeya-āgama* are *anitya*, not eternal.⁵⁸ *Apauruṣeya* texts, also known as *śruti*, heard texts, are comprised of the *Vedas*. They are *śruti*, heard texts, because, according to the myths and history of their origins, they were revealed to humans and were transmitted orally. Since no author of the *Vedas* is established, Madhvācārya concludes that they are authorless.⁵⁹ All schools of Vedānta categorize the four *Vedas*, the *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva Vedas* as *śruti* and, therefore, *āgama*. The relevant summaries on the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmanas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* are also included in what is deemed the *śruti* and, therefore, *apauruṣeya* (see Fig. 2.7).⁶⁰



2.7 *Apauruṣeya-āgama*

⁵⁸ *śrutir vāva nityānityā vāva smṛtayo yāścānyā vācaḥ iti paiṅgīśrutiḥ* | VTV.

⁵⁹ *apauruṣeyatvaṃ ca svata eva siddhaṃ | vedakartuaprasiddheḥ* | VTV.

⁶⁰ The *Brāhmanas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, and the *Upaniṣads* are works that comprise each of the four *Vedas*.

These texts are regarded as *śruti* by all of the schools of Vedānta and by their immediate predecessors, the Mīmāṃsās. But what is the relationship between Viṣṇu and these texts?

The atheist Mīmāṃsā School is based on belief that the *Vedas* are completely independent and eternal and did not require a divine power to be created or manifested. In contrast, Madhvācārya's theism requires him to associate with and subordinate these eternal texts to Viṣṇu. He offers an explanation of this relationship in his VTV. According to Madhvācārya, the *Vedas* existed in Viṣṇu's mind before they were revealed. In each creation, they are revealed in exactly the same form and their word order and phonemes do not change.⁶¹ Viṣṇu, moreover, chose sages to be the recipients of a portion of the *Vedas*.⁶² The texts held to be *śruti* are the portions that have been preserved since they were first revealed. Given that the *Vedas* are eternal, it follows that they were still not even created by Lord Viṣṇu.⁶³ The *varṇas*, phonemes, themselves are eternal and without a creator.⁶⁴ Viṣṇu is not the author of the texts, for if he were, then they would be created and not eternal.⁶⁵

Once again, drawing from their Mīmāṃsā predecessors, Madhvācārya proposes that the *Vedas* are *svataḥ-prāmāṇa*, self-valid. That is, their validity cannot be derived from an outside authority. If one tries to, according to the Mādhva position, then one evokes the fallacy of *anavasthā*, infinite regress, mentioned earlier in the characterization of the *sākṣī* and *doṣas*, fallacies, in *anumāna*: the first authority, A1, itself requires an authority, namely, A2, which requires A3 ... *ad infinitum*. To escape this conundrum, the *Vedas* must be regarded as self-validating.⁶⁶

⁶¹ As already mentioned in Chapter 1, for Hindus time is cyclical. The universe perpetually is born, develops, and is destroyed. More on the divisions of time below in Chapter 4.

⁶² *nityā vedāḥ samastās ca śāśvatā viṣṇubudhigāḥ | sarge sarge 'munaivaita udgīryante tathaiva ca | tatkrameṇaiva tair varṇaiataiḥ svarair eva nānyathā | ataḥ śrutitvam etāsāṃ śrutā eva yato 'khilaiḥ | janmānatāre śrutāstāstu vāsudevaprasādataḥ | munināṃ patibhāsyanti bhāgenaiva na sarvaśaḥ | yatastā hariṇā dṛṣṭāḥ śrutā evāparair janaiḥ | śrutayo dṛṣṭayaś ceti tenocyante purātanaḥ | VTV.*

⁶³ *viññeyam paraṃ brahma jñāpikā paramā śrutiḥ | anāḍianityā sā tac ca vinā tām sa gamyate iti kātyāyanaśruti | VTV.*

⁶⁴ *na coccāraṇakāla eva varṇānām utpattir iti vācyam | VTV.* The term *varṇa* has a broad semantic range that includes both 'class' and 'phoneme.'

⁶⁵ *tadutpattivacaś caiva bhved yuktīm apekṣya tu | cetanasya janair yadvaducyate sarvalaukikāḥ | VTV.*

⁶⁶ *prāmāṇyam ca svata eva | anyathānavasthānāt | VTV. tatprāmāṇyam ca svata eva siddham | VTV.* See this and subsequent passages for more arguments. Also *ṛgādyāś ca catvāraḥ pañcarātramica bhāratam | mūlarāmāyaṇam brahmasūtram mānam svataḥ ... | MBhTN 1.30–31.*

The status they have as a *pramāṇa*, means of valid knowledge, cannot be questioned.

These *śruti* texts, which are accepted to be indisputably true, are the foundations of *āgama-pramāṇa*. As already mentioned, the meaning and interpretation of these texts are the root of heated debates between the traditions of Vedānta. They are pivotal for these commentarial traditions. It should come as no surprise that the validity of the commentaries and other secondary literature, which have their inspiration in the *śruti*, needs to be established. These texts are known as *smṛti*, traditional human-authored texts. What characterizes them? How do they gain epistemic authority? Who can produce them?

Pauruṣeya-āgama, sentences and texts having human authorship

Smṛti, tradition, refers to a wide variety of humanly composed sentences and texts. These range from *bhāṣyas*, commentarial works, to *dharma-sāstras*, treatises on law, from the utterances of *āpta*, authoritative, people to Purāṇic parables. In contrast to *śruti*, the *pauruṣeya-āgama* are believed by Madhvācārya to be *anitya*, not eternal.⁶⁷ They are reconstituted each time the universe is destroyed and recreated. When they are reconstituted, their word order may change even though their meaning remains the same and so they are deemed to be *anitya*.⁶⁸ On the other hand, since *smṛti* must agree with *śruti* and the meaning of *śruti* is eternal, it follows that the meaning of *smṛti* also is eternal. Given that their meaning is dependent on *śruti*, authentic *smṛti* are texts that do not conflict with *śruti*.⁶⁹ In this sense, *smṛti* can be understood to be *nityānitya*, both eternal and non-eternal.

Smṛti are not taken to be unquestionably true as are their *śruti* counterparts. They are humanly made and can suffer human errors. They have a lower degree of epistemic authority in comparison to *śruti*. In fact, the primary point of dispute between schools of Vedānta regarding the epistemic authority of the *āgamas* does not concern the validity and epistemic authority of the *Vedas*. Instead, the point of contention concerns the inclusion and, therefore, reliability, of controversial *smṛti*. There is a need to argue for the *āptatva*, reliability, of *pauruṣeya smṛti*, traditional texts having a human origin, and,

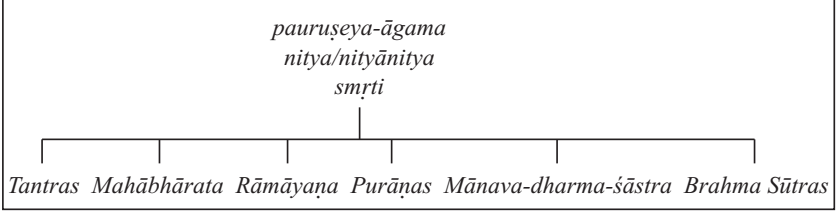
⁶⁷ *purāṇānām apy anythā śabdaracanam evānityatvam* | VTV.

⁶⁸ *purāṇāni tadarthāni sarge sarge 'anyathaiva tu | kriyante 'tastvanityāni tadarthāḥ pūrvasargavat* | VTV.

⁶⁹ ... *smṛtam | aviruddham tu yat tv asya pramāṇam tac ca nānyathā | etad viruddham yat tu syāna tanmānam kathaṇcana* | MBhTN 1.30–31.

indirectly, for the reliability of the statements of teachers such as Madhvācārya. The delineation of the boundaries of the canon are an integral part of the debate between the schools of Vedānta.

Madhvācārya proposes that a number of texts, including the *Tantras*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Purāṇas* and *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*, *Manu's Treatise on Law*, are *smṛti* (see Fig. 2.8).⁷⁰



2.8 Some of the *pauruṣeya-āgamas*

Madhvācārya does not discuss the character of the *Tantras*. In his *Tattvapraṇāśika*, *The Elucidation of the True Nature [of Viṣṇu]*, a commentary on Madhvācārya's BSB, however, Jayatīrtha glosses *tantra* as *pañcarātra*.⁷¹ Madhvācārya includes the *Pañcarātrāgamas* as *smṛti* and thus expands the class of texts held to be *smṛti* by rival schools of Vedānta, most notably, Advaita. The *Pañcarātrāgamas* are theistic and sectarian texts that contain prescriptions for ritual behavior, construction of temples and the like, with an underlying philosophical foundation. They were affiliated with the god Nārāyaṇa and pietistic devotion towards him. Nārāyaṇa is identified with Viṣṇu by Vaiṣṇavas. The reliance upon the *Pañcarātrāgamas* is found only among the Vaiṣṇava schools of Vedānta, namely Viśiṣṭādvaita and Mādhva Vedānta. In defense of his inclusion of the sectarian text as *smṛti*, Madhvācārya states:

Nārāyaṇa himself is the speaker of the entire *Pañcarātrāgama*. Oh Rājendra, [the knowledge of the *Pañcarātrāgama*] is superior to the knowledge [located] in all of these [texts and schools, namely], the Sāṃkhya, Pāśupata and the like.⁷²

⁷⁰ vaiṣṇavāṇi purāṇāṇi pañcarātrātmakatvataḥ | pramāṇāṇy eva manvāḍyāḥ smṛtayopy anukūlataḥ | MBhTN 1.32.

⁷¹ tantraṃ pañcarātrādi | Tattvapraṇāśika 1.1.1.

⁷² pañcarātrasya kṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam | sarveṣv eteṣu rājendra jñāneṣv etad viśiṣyate | jñāneṣv eteṣu rājendra sāmkyapāśupatādiṣu | MBhTN 2.107–108.

Although the authorship of the *Pañcarātrāgama* is ascribed to Nārāyaṇa and Nārāyaṇa is further equated with Viṣṇu, the text is nonetheless classified as *pauruṣeya*. Despite its equivalence with the *Vedas*, it nonetheless remains *smṛti*. In another passage, Madhvācārya again repeats that the *Vedas* and the *Pañcarātrāgamas* are identical:

In the passage [found in] the Mokṣadharmā [section of the *Mahābhārata*] beginning with ‘Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Paśupata, the *Vedāraṇyakas* ...’, the authority of the *Pañcarātra* is declared because of the similarity of the intended meaning of both the *Vedas* and the *Pañcarātra*.⁷³

By including these texts and expanding the boundaries of the canon, Madhvācārya incorporates data that can be used to buttress his own position and, of course, to attack those of his interlocutors. The *Pañcarātras* are unusual, though, because, despite being *smṛti*, their author is the infallible Viṣṇu. This makes them identical in epistemic authority to the *Vedas* while remaining *anitya*, non-eternal. The bivalent nature of these texts justifies their unusual status among the texts held to be *āgama*.

The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are Hindu epics. They are held to be narrative histories and are called *itihāsas*. They include stories about the *avatāras*, incarnations, of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa in the former and Rāma in the latter texts. These two epics are accepted by all of the schools of Vedānta and Mādhva Vedānta is no exception.

At the beginning of his BSB, Madhvācārya maintains that, in the form of the sage Vyāsa, Viṣṇu composed the *Brahma Sūtras*. The *Brahma Sūtras* are a *smṛti* which provides the most comprehensive commentary on and analysis of the *Vedas* by the schools of Vedānta. Madhvācārya states: ‘He [Vyāsa] composed the *Brahma Sūtras* for the sake of the ascertainment of the purport [of the *Vedas*].’⁷⁴ This text originates from Viṣṇu himself. Despite having divine origins, the *Brahma Sūtras* are not *śruti*. They are still composed by a human author, even though the author is an *avatāra*, incarnation, of Viṣṇu.

The list of texts included as *smṛti* by Madhvācārya is a matter of great debate. Aside from the debates concerning the inclusion of some texts and the exclusion of others, other debates about the authenticity of a number of the texts referred to by Madhvācārya have arisen. For

⁷³ *sāṃkhyāṃ yogāḥ pāśupatam vedāraṇyakam eva ca | ity ārabhya vedapañcarātryor aikyābhiprāyeṇa pañcarātrasyaiva prāmāṇyam uktam itareṣāṃ bhinnam atattvaṃ pradarśya mokṣadharmeṣv api | BSB 1.1.3.*

⁷⁴ *tadathanirṇayāya brahmasūtrāṇi cakāra | BSB 1.1.1.*

example, Madhvācārya often cites passages from the *Brahma Tarka*, which has yet to be recovered and is not mentioned by name by any other Vedānta philosopher.⁷⁵ The putative existence of these texts became a matter of some debate between Mādhva and other Vedānta schools. Nārāyaṇācārya, a 17th-century Mādhva, for example, attempted to defend Madhvācārya's use of untraceable texts in his *Advaitakālānala* against the Advaita scholar Appayya Dikṣita (16th century CE).⁷⁶

Madhvācārya's commentaries and writings are, naturally, considered to be *smṛti* by the Mādhva community. He is considered to be *āpta*, an authority. What kinds of people and what kinds of statements are supposed to be reliable and *āpta*? Is *āptatva*, reliability, a goal that anyone could achieve?⁷⁷

Madhvācārya's definition of *āptavākya*, authoritative statement, is found in his *Anuvyākhyāna*: '[There is reliability in statements where] there is suitability of the context, of the teacher and of the pupil.'⁷⁸ An *āptavākya* is generated in a pedagogical setting by sincerely committed students and teachers. These criteria need to be fulfilled for a statement to be regarded as reliable. First, the statement must have the *Vedas* as its source. Second, if the source of the statement is *smṛti*, then the speaker must be reliable. Reliability of the speaker is indexed to pedagogical environments and to physical characteristics. If an assertion meets these requirements, then it can be regarded as reliable and, more importantly, it may be located in Madhvācārya's canon.

Recall that *āgama*, verbal testimony, is knowledge from defectless words.⁷⁹ *Āgama* that is *smṛti* must be produced by *āpta* speakers. *Āpta* speakers must have defectless *anu-pramāṇas*. That is, their *pratyakṣa*, perception, and, therefore, their *indriyas*, senses, must be without flaws. *Āptatva*, reliability, is thus indexed to physical parameters. In his commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, the *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*,

⁷⁵ See Sharma, *History*, 88 and Siauve, *La Doctrine*, 26–32 for brief discussions of (and arguments regarding) the putative existence of the *Brahma Tarka*. See also Rao's *Madhva and Brahma Tarka*. For an in-depth analysis, see Mesquita, *Madhva Und Seine Unbekannten Literarischen Quellen*. Mesquita's claims have elicited a Mādhva reply which can be found in Sharma, 'Brahmatarka and Other Unknown Source Books of Madhva.'

⁷⁶ Sharma, *History*, 437. See also von Glasenapp, 24–28.

⁷⁷ See Sarma, 'Madhva Virtue Ethics and the *Ātaguru*, Reliable Teacher' for a detailed analysis of *āptatva*, reliability, in Mādhva Vedānta.

⁷⁸ *vaktṛśrotṛprasaktīnām yadāptir anukūlatā | āptavākyaṭayā tena śrūtmūlatayā tathā | AV 1.1.5.*

⁷⁹ *nirdoṣaḥ śabda āgamaḥ | PL.*

Madhvācārya describes the physical characteristics of the god Brahmā whom he believes to be the perfect teacher:

‘The *guru* [whose height is] ninety-six *āṅgulas*, whose circumference is one arm’s length, is seven units height by feet length, is four units by forearm length, is endowed with the thirty-two characteristic marks, has no doubts and is a clearer of doubt.’ [This] is spoken of by the wise. Therefore, at all times Brahmā is the preeminent teacher for all. Others who are superior to oneself are also teachers according to [their] rank. They are said [to be] lacking [some] characteristics according to their rank. Humans are middling and are rightly [endowed with] good and bad characteristics in equal amounts. Kali is filled with bad characteristics.⁸⁰

Madhvācārya must have been a bearer of these thirty-two physical characteristics and intellectual abilities. Descriptions of the perfect body having thirty-two characteristic marks is a common trope in the context of Southern Asian hagiographical literature. These thirty-two characteristics are often referenced in descriptions of the Buddha and the Jina in Jainism.⁸¹ In this case such perfection meant that Madhvācārya’s cognitive abilities and cognitions were flawless. For this reason, his testimony is *āpta*, *smṛti* and a *pramāṇa*.

One may wonder, though, if the holder of the thirty-two characteristics could himself be a conveyor of the *Vedas*. Can there be new Vedic seers who emit *śruti*? Madhvācārya addresses this possibility in his VTV, citing from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*: ‘If he who possesses not less than twenty [out of thirty-two] characteristics, who is practicing penances [and] knowing many *Vedas*, perceives through intuition a *Veda*, then that is a *Veda*.’⁸² Such people, though, are not the authors of the *Vedas*. They merely intuit the *Vedas* which are, as mentioned above, *apauruṣeya*, not having human authorship. In these unusual cases there are *āpta*, reliable, human beings who can transmit *Vedas*! I have not encountered any references in the Mādhva corpus to humans other

⁸⁰ *ṣaṇṇavatyāṅgulo yastu nyagrodhaparimaṇḍalaḥ | saptapādaś catur hasto dvātriṃśallakṣaṇair yutaḥ | asaṃśayaḥ saṃśayaccid gurur ukto maṇiṣibhiḥ | MBhTN 1.120. tasmād brahmā gurur mukhyassarveṣāṃ eva sarvadā | anye ‘pi svātmano mukyāḥ kramād gurava īritaḥ | MBhTN 1.121. kramāllakṣaṇahīnāś ca lakṣaṇālakṣanaissamāḥ | mānuṣā madhyamāssamyak durlakṣaṇayutaḥ kaliḥ | MBhTN 1.122. In MBhTN 1.126, Madhvācārya mentions that these details are taken, in part, from the *Pañcarātra*: *ity etat pañcarātroktaṃ | MBhTN 1.126.**

⁸¹ See, for example, Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 97–101 and Wayman’s ‘Contributions Regarding the Thirty-Two Characteristics of the Great Person.’

⁸² *uktaṃ ca brahmāṇḍe viṃśallakṣaṇato ‘nūnaḥ tapasvī bahivedavit | veda ityeva yaṃ paśyet sa vedo jñānadarśanāt | VTV.*

than the first Vedic seers who have exhibited this power. Nonetheless, Madhvācārya permits such a possibility, thereby making his analysis all the more comprehensive.

Mohaśāstra, the confusing texts

This exclusion of texts from the Mādhva canon is also an important part of Mādhva theology and is linked to (and therefore included in) Madhvācārya's theodicy. Madhvācārya explains that texts which seem to conflict with his perspective do not truly conflict with Viṣṇu's plans. Here the word '*śāstra*,' teachings, is used interchangeably with '*āgamas*.' Madhvācārya states:

The *śāstras* whose meaning is confusing are made by those [who are] ignorant of Hari. Because these [texts] have been described as unacceptable [they] guide the *asuras*, demons, to Hell. As these texts are composed by Śiva and others by the order of Viṣṇu, they would not be contrary to what is spoken of [in the *Vedas*]. Thus, they are not to be hindered.⁸³

In a subsequent passage he again refers to the *śāstra*, teachings. He states that Viṣṇu is responsible for these *mohaśāstra*, confusing teachings:

'I emit this confusion which will confuse people. You, Oh Rudra, Oh Strong Armed One, cause the confusing *śāstra* to be composed. Show those false [*śāstra*], Oh Powerful One. Make [your] Self renowned and conceal me.' This is stated in the words of the *Vārāha Purāṇa* and, similarly, in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*.⁸⁴

Madhvācārya states that there are *śāstras*, teachings, that are excluded from the Mādhva canon. These *mohaśāstra*, confusing teachings, expound positions that conflict with Mādhva ones. They are nevertheless characterized as *śāstra* and, indirectly, can be classified as *smṛti*! They are still given some status as important texts intended for *tamo-yogyas*, those who are fit only for darkness, despite being

⁸³ *mohārthāṇy anyāśāstrāṇi kṛtāny evājñayā hareḥ | atasteṣūktam agrāhyam asurāṇāṃ tamogataḥ | yasmāt kṛtāni tānīha viṣṇunoktaiḥ śivādibhiḥ | eṣāṃ yan na virodhi syāt tatroktaṃ tan na vāryate* | MBhTN 1.34.

⁸⁴ *eṣa moham śṛjāmyāśu yo janān mohyiṣyati | tvaṃ ca rudra mahābāho mohaśāstrāṇi kāraya | atathyāṇi vitathyāṇi darśayasva mahābhujā | prakāśaṃ kuru cātmānam aprakāśaṃ ca mām kuru | iti vārāhacanaṃ brahmāṇḍoktaṃ tathā param* | MBhTN 1.48–50. This same passage is found also in BSB 1.1.1.

confusing. Even texts that conflict with Mādhva tenets, then, serve an important purpose in the Mādhva theology.⁸⁵ Not only were they ‘emitted’ by Viṣṇu, an inherently *āpta*, reliable, being, but they also help to confirm the unusual Mādhva position regarding predestination and assume an important role in Mādhva philosophy.

Pratyakṣa vs. āgama vs. anumāna

As already mentioned, each school of Vedānta claims that its position is upheld by passages from the *śruti* and *smṛti*. How relevant is *śruti*? What happens if it conflicts with *pratyakṣa*? Are the three *pramāṇas* also hierarchically arranged? Which *pramāṇa* is *upajīvyā*, foundational, and which is *upajīvaka*, dependent?⁸⁶ It is crucial to the persuasiveness of his doctrine for Madhvācārya to answer these questions and to offer a coherent interpretive strategy.

Madhvācārya gives greater importance to both *pratyakṣa*, perception, and *āgama*, scriptural authority or verbal testimony, than to *anumāna*, logical inference. Not only are all constituents of *anumāna* dependent on either *pratyakṣa* or *āgama*, but *anumāna* is a means to an end, not an end. Reasoning is not permitted outside of the *śruti* canon and is therefore subservient. This rule is found in *sūtra* 1.1.18 of the *Brahma Sūtras* itself: ‘And the requirement for an inference is not [simply] from the desire [to prove something].’⁸⁷ Madhvācārya’s commentary further clarifies this point:

It is possible to make an inference [to prove whatever] one desires. Therefore, in connection with the truth, a distinct inference is not required. In the *Skanda* [*Purāṇa*, the following] is said: ‘As inference can be used to prove what is desired, therefore, consistent inferences are desired for the sake of [removing] contradiction in preceding and succeeding [passages] of the *śruti*. There is no other [use for inference].’⁸⁸

Madhvācārya contends that *anumāna* itself is problematic when used for purposes other than interpreting *śruti*. It is *upajīvaka*, dependent, on

⁸⁵ *amohāya guṇā viṣṇorākāraś ciccrīratā | nirdoṣatvaṃ tāratamyaṃ muktānām api cocyate | etadvirudhaṃ yat sarvaṃ tanmohāyeti nirṇayaḥ* | MBhTN 1.50–51.

⁸⁶ See Sharma’s *Philosophy*, Chapter 17, for more on this topic.

⁸⁷ *kāmāc ca nānumānāpekṣā* | BSB 1.1.18.

⁸⁸ *yathākāmaṃ hy anumātuṃ śakyate | ato na tattve prthag anumānam apekṣyate | uktaṃ ca skānde | yathākāmānumā yasmāt tasmāt sānapagā śruteḥ | pūrvāparāvirodhāya ceṣyate nānyathā kvacit iti* | BSB 1.1.18.

āgama-pramāṇa. Madhvācārya, for example, cites a passage from the *Kūrma Purāṇa* in order to explain this emphasis on the supremacy of *āgama*:

‘And there is no definite authority of inference. Without the assistance of *śruti*, inference would certainly not accomplish [its] goal. The other *pramāṇa* [perception] when accompanied by *śruti* and *smṛti* is the best *pramāṇa* and [therefore] gets the status of *pramāṇa*. [In this way,] no [further] discussion ought to be undertaken. This [is an example of] reasoning [that] is [good] logic: “What meaning should be assented to here [given] the non-contradictions of the preceding and subsequent [in *śāstra*]?” Empty logic should be avoided.’ [This passage is from] the *Kūrma Purāṇa*.⁸⁹

By giving a lower status to *anumāna*, Madhvācārya directly contradicts the positions of the Advaita school of Vedānta. Śaṅkarācārya, as I show below, purports that *anumāna* is more authoritative than *pratyakṣa*, thereby permitting him to reject perceptual evidence that all is not *brahman*. Perception cannot be supplanted by reason alone. Placing a primacy on *pratyakṣa* clashes with the foundations of the chief rivals of the Mādhva school. Passages such as this one taken from the *Kūrma Purāṇa* also remind readers that philosophical speculation is not an end in itself, that it always occurs in conjunction with properly interpreting the *śāstra* and that epistemic reflection is always in service of obtaining *mokṣa*. Logic is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

Given the centrality of hierarchy in Madhvācārya’s philosophical theology, one might expect either *pratyakṣa* or *āgama* to be supreme. Although both are held to have supremacy relative to their respective scope, it appears that *pratyakṣa* has preeminence. That is, each has internal supremacy in a limited range, while *āgama* is supreme in matters of *dharma* and knowledge of Viṣṇu and *pratyakṣa* is supreme in matters of mundane reality, the foundation of all *pramāṇas* remains the *sākṣī*.⁹⁰ Recall that the *sākṣī* is the final judge of the truth of the

⁸⁹ *na ca anumānasya niyatapramāṇyam | śrutisāhāyyarahitam anumānam na kutra cit | niścayāt sādhyed arthaṁ pramāṇāntaram eva ca | śrutismṛtisahāyam yat pramāṇāntaram uttamam | pramāṇapadaviṁ gacchen nātra kāryā vicāraṇā | pūrvottarāvirodhena ko ‘trārtho ‘bhīmato bhavet | ity ādyaṁ ūhanam tarkaḥ śuṣkātarkaṁ tu varjayet ity ādi kaurme |* BSB 1.1.3.

⁹⁰ *pratyakṣam upajīvyam syāt prāyo yuktir api kvacit | āgamaikapramaṇeṣu tasyaiva hy upajīvyatā |* AV 2.1.19. Generally, perception would be the foundation and sometimes it is inference. In the case of testimonial evidence, it is the foundation.

pramāṇas.⁹¹ The *śruti* that conflicts with *pratyakṣa* must be reinterpreted such that they do not. The *pramāṇa* that is *upajīvaka*, foundational, must not conflict with the *upajīvyā*, dependent. If an *āgama* concerns anything experiential, then it must agree with *pratyakṣa*. This hermeneutic allows Madhvācārya to reinterpret and reevaluate *śruti* which, at first glance, seems to agree with the Advaita position. In this way, Madhvācārya is able to establish his philosophy of realism.

Khyāti-vādas, theories of false cognition

South Asian traditions are primarily concerned with *khyāti-vāda*, theories of false cognition. How does one account for false cognitions in one's everyday activity? How could one mistakenly see an object when one is not present or see an *abheda*, identity, where there was none? Are the objects of one's perception actually there? Each school of philosophy must offer satisfying answers to these questions. There are two standard examples for false cognitions that are commonly utilized as heuristic devices by the schools of South Asian thought. One is incorrectly seeing a rope as a snake. The other often plagues treasure seekers at the beach who see a moistened piece of shell and think that it is silver. How and why do these false cognitions occur? How is this epistemic conundrum connected to *sat*, real, entities?

Madhvācārya provides a different sort of account of error than his Advaita opponents and Nyāya predecessors. It will be useful to examine briefly both theories before explaining Madhvācārya's own.

Anirvācanīya-khyāti, the theory that the ontological status of the object of a false cognition is indescribable

The Advaita theory is comprehensive, applying to the microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic level.⁹² The errors that we make in seeing individual things on the level of microcosm is the same kind of error that occurs when we see anything at all on the level of macrocosm. All perceptions, in some sense, can be sublated. The Advaita position has been compared to Berkeley, the English idealist philosopher.⁹³

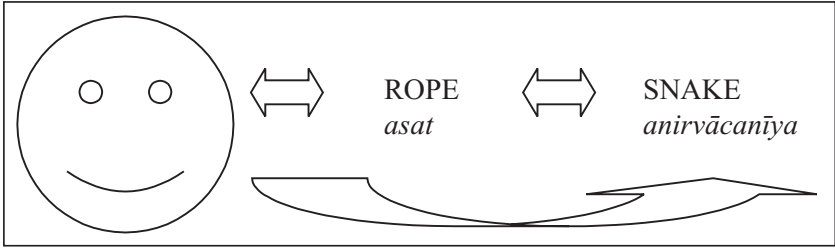
⁹¹ *sākṣīpratyakṣato hy eva mānānām mānateyate* | AV 3.2.55.

⁹² There are a number of excellent introductions to the epistemology of Advaita Vedānta. See Deutsch, *Advaita Vedānta*; and Potter, *Advaita Vedānta*. Many thanks to Vrajaprana Brahmaprana for reading this section.

⁹³ See Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*.

According to the Advaita position, things are never what they seem. Such a global cognitive confusion requires that they posit several concepts and mechanisms.

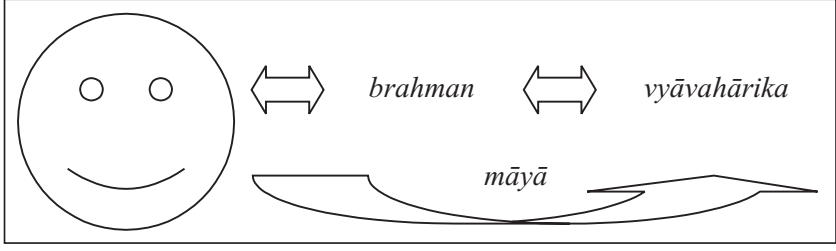
Perceiving a snake as a rope, for example, involves the mechanism of *adhyāsa*, superimposition. A careful householder circumambulating her house before retiring may superimpose a snake on a rope. A putatively *sat*, real, rope is thus mistaken for a snake. After a flashlight is obtained and shined on the snake, the superimposition is lifted and the *sat*, real, rope is perceived. But what is the ontological status of the snake? Is it *sat*, real? Or *asat*, unreal? It cannot be *sat*, real, as it was denied by the rope. According to the Advaita school, it also cannot be *asat*, unreal, as it was the object of a perceptual cognition. For this reason, it is held to be *anirvācanīya*, indescribable, neither *sat*, real, or *asat*, unreal (see Fig. 2.9).⁹⁴



2.9 *Anirvācanīya-khyāti-vāda*

According to the Advaita perspective, a parallel error occurs on the macrocosmic level as well. The rope in the above example, like the snake, is superimposed on something else. The rope and, in fact, all empirical perceptions in *vyāvahārika*, everyday experience, are superimposed on *brahman*. All conventional perceptions, this book, your thumb holding the page and the tea you are about to spill as you read, are superimposed on *brahman*. And why does this superimposition occur? Scholars of the Advaita school conjecture that *avidyā*, ignorance, is responsible for false perceptions on the microcosmic level. On the macrocosmic level this cosmic ignorance is known as *māyā*, the means to illusion as is illustrated in Fig. 2.10.

⁹⁴ See the *Brahmasiddhi* of the 7th-century Advaita scholar, Maṇḍana Miśra.



2.10 Superimposing *vyāvahārika* on *brahman*

As with the snake, the ontological status of the objects in our illusory world is *anirvācanīya*, indescribable, neither *sat*, real, or *asat*, unreal. This paradox inspires Śaṅkarācārya's theory to be called the *anirvācanīya-khyāti-vāda*, The Theory that the Ontological Status of the Object of False Cognitions is Indescribable.

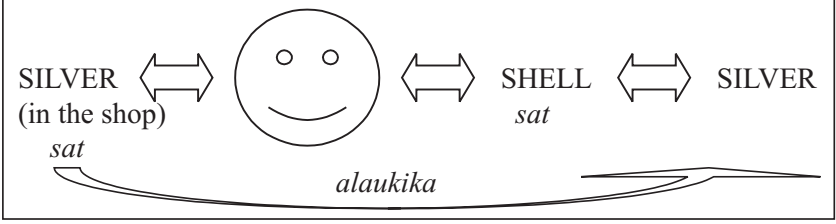
This brief summary is not meant to be comprehensive but to provide a foil for the Madhvācārya's *abhinava-anyathākhyāti-vāda*, the New Theory that the False Cognition is Knowing [Something] as Otherwise. I examine Madhvācārya's refutation of the Advaita position below in Chapter 5.

Anyathā-khyāti, the theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise

Madhvācārya's theory is called *abhinava*, new, because it is a modification of an earlier one proposed by the Nyāya School, *anyathā-khyāti*, The Theory that False Cognition is Knowing [Something] as Otherwise.⁹⁵ The Nyāya School holds that, when one sees a shell as silver then one has contact with a *sat*, real, piece of silver perceived at an earlier time and in an earlier place, for example in a shop, and then confuses them. The error is seeing an *abheda*, identity, of the *sat* silver and the *sat* shell as *sat*, real, when it is *asat*. But how could such a connection between the silver and the shell occur in the first place? After all, it is the shell, not the silver, that is immediately in front of the cognizer! According to the Naiyāyikas, the connection occurs through *alaukika*, a super-normal sense relation, fostered by a recollection of the previously perceived silver that existed elsewhere (see Fig. 2.11). There is a connection with the earlier perception of the *sat*, real, silver despite it

⁹⁵ See Mohanty's *Classical Indian Philosophy* and Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* for more on this school.

not being present. There is confusion between the two, the *sat*, real, shell and the *sat*, real, silver from the shop or wherever it was originally perceived. The result is the cognition, ‘This is silver.’ The error is negated when the perceiver realizes that the *abheda*, identity, alone is *asat*, unreal.



2.11 Anyathā-khyāti

Mādhvas such as Jayatīrtha, were unhappy with the Nyāya position. If the realization that ‘this is not silver’ is founded on the negation of the *abheda*, identity, between the silver and the shell (that is, *abheda* is correctly perceived as *asat* rather than *sat*), then why cannot the same error apply to the silver. That is, cannot *asat* silver be incorrectly perceived as *sat*? Why is there a need to connect one’s perception to silver perceived elsewhere?⁹⁶ Mādhvas thus question the necessity to posit the connection that occurs through *alaukika*, a super-normal sense relation. It is for this reason that Madhvācārya modifies the Nyāya theory and derives his *abhinava-anyathā-khyāti*, the New Theory that False Cognition is Knowing [Something] as Otherwise.

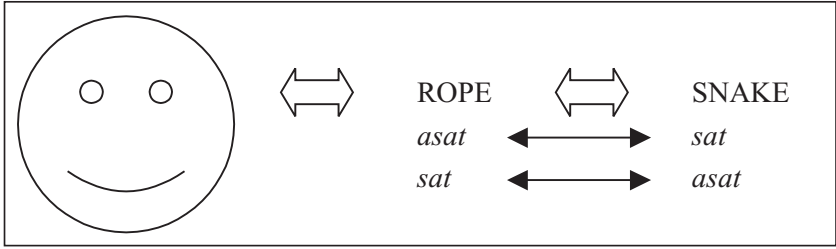
Madhvācārya’s abhinava-anyathā-khyāti, the new theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise

Madhvācārya believes that error is apprehending *sat*, real, as *asat*, unreal, and the *asat*, unreal, as *sat*, real.⁹⁷ It is thus possible to cognize

⁹⁶ *yathāhuḥekadeśāpavādena kalpyamāne ca bādhaḥ | na sarvabādhanaṃ yuktim iti nyāyavidaḥ sthitāḥ iti | kiṃca rajatasyātyantāsattve pratibhāso nopapadyate | sthite caivaṃ sattve bādhasamaye puro ‘darśanād deśāntare sattvamāsthīyate | doṣaduṣitaṃ cakṣuḥ śuktiśaktiśakalamātrasannikṛṣṭam api viprakṛṣṭarajatāmanā tadā darśayati it ko doṣa iti | Nyāya Sūdhā 1.1.1. Thanks to Professor Haridāsa Bhat for this reference.*

⁹⁷ *asataḥ sattvapratītaḥ sato ‘sattvapratītir ity anyathāpratīter eva bhrantitvāta |* Madhvācārya, VTV. I am indebted to Professor Haridāsa Bhat for this characterization.

the *asat*, unreal. Error, then, is apprehending something as different than itself, apprehending a shell, for example, as a piece of silver. Madhvācārya does not believe that it is necessary to evoke silver in the shop in order to explain false cognitions as do his Nyāya predecessors. Madhvācārya holds that the error occurs when one apprehends a *sat*, real, shell as *asat*, unreal, and the *asat*, unreal, silver, as *sat*, real, as illustrated in Fig. 2.12. There is a denial of the actual existence of the object of the illusion, the *asat*, unreal, silver, while there is an affirmation of the existence of the *sat*, real, shell which is the locus of the false cognition.



2.12 Abhinava-anyathā-khyāti

The *caṅṣus*, eye, for example comes into contact with the shell and then, due to some *saṃskāra*, impression in the memory or defect in the *caṅṣus*, the *sat*, real, shell is incorrectly perceived as *asat*, unreal, silver. When the beachgoer realizes the error, the beachgoer experiences the realization ‘Silver, which was *asat*, unreal, appeared to be real, *sat*.’⁹⁸ There is no need to stipulate that there is a *sat*, real, silver in a shop that the *caṅṣus*, eye, contacts. But, how does this theory explain the confusion between two objects that are similar? According to Madhvācārya, false cognition is a result of seeing a *sat*, real, *abheda*, identity, when it is, in fact, *asat*. For example, if one confuses George Bush senior with his son, George Bush junior, it is because the *sat*, real, *bheda*, difference between the two, is falsely cognized as *asat*, unreal and the *asat*, unreal, *abheda*, identity, is falsely cognized as *sat*, real.

Madhvācārya’s position is distinguished from others as he holds that *asat*, unreal, things can be cognized. It is for this reason that Madhvācārya modifies the Nyāya theory and derives his *abhinava-*

⁹⁸ *asad eva rajataṃ pratyabhā* | VTV.

anyathā-khyāti, the New Theory that False Cognition is Knowing [Something] as Otherwise.

Mādhva realism

Madhvācārya's epistemology undeniably is the foundation for his extreme realism. Positing *sākṣī* enables the existence of a subtle predominance of experiential knowledge over both *śruti* and *anumāna*. Though Madhvācārya never states that experience has such importance, it certainly seems to follow that it does.

Like all else in the Mādhva universe, the components of his realist epistemology are arranged hierarchically. Some components have more authority than others. Some sentients are destined to have increased capabilities over others.

Madhvācārya's realism necessitates a rich and developed ontology that is also hierarchical. As long as the universe is real, as are our perceptions of it, describing its components is a crucial and unavoidable task. To begin to accomplish this I will turn to an analysis of Mādhva ontology, to the machinery and ingredients of the universe.

Mādhva ontology

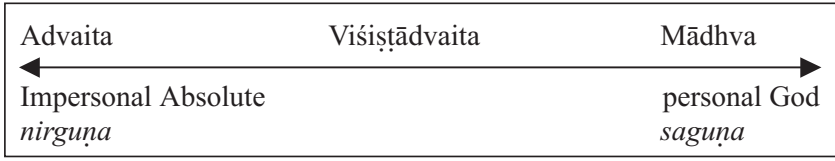
As stated in the *Parama Śruti*: ‘... The wise [recognize] that [the universe] is known and protected by Viṣṇu. Therefore it, [the universe,] is proclaimed to be real. But Hari [that is, Viṣṇu] alone is supreme.’¹

This passage, taken from Madhvācārya’s VTV, strikes at the heart of his ontology. For Madhvācārya, the universe is unquestionably real, as are its components. Viṣṇu, who is the pinnacle of the Mādhva system, moreover, governs real things. To explain these relationships, Madhvācārya offers what he believes to be a comprehensive analysis and classification system of all the items that one could possibly encounter. Such an account is not to be trivialized, for correct knowledge of Viṣṇu and the nature and function of the universe is essential in order to progress on the path to *mokṣa*, liberation.

Like the elements of his epistemology, those of his rich ontology are also arranged hierarchically. Viṣṇu, the central deity in the Mādhva pantheon, plays the most important role in the Mādhva universe. He is the facilitator of all entities and possible events. He not only acts in the universe; in fact, the entire universe is manifested due to His activity. As I point out in Chapter 4, knowledge of this hierarchy and acting in accordance to one’s place in it, results in *mokṣa*, liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The importance of hierarchy in the Mādhva world becomes undeniable where Madhvācārya’s soteriology is concerned.

Madhvācārya’s personal, interactive and existent God directly contrasts with the impersonal divinity found in the school of Advaita Vedānta. Madhvācārya’s conception of God differs from the quasi-idealism-realism of the Viśiṣṭādvaita School founded by the Vaiṣṇavite Rāmānujācārya. If one were to plot the traditions on a continuum, Śaṅkarācārya’s impersonal absolute of the Advaita School would be found at one end, Rāmānuja’s immanent-yet-transcendent, qualified monotheism slightly right of center and Madhvācārya’s mitigated monotheism at the other end, as illustrated in Fig. 3.1.

¹ *matam hi jñānināmetasmitam trātam ca viṣṇunā | tasmāt satyam iti proktaṃ paramo harir eva tu iti paramaśrutiḥ | VTV.*



3.1 Schools of Vedānta

The schools can also be distinguished according to the significance they give to hierarchy. For the Advaita School there is no deity at the top of an ontological hierarchy, while such a gradation has eminent importance in the Mādhva school.

To map out this hierarchy, Madhvācārya offers a number of different categories within which to classify all of the constituent parts of the universe. Given the various ontologies to which he was exposed, it comes as no surprise that his taxonomical language is dependent on those of his predecessors. His categories are reminiscent of the Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya schools and may be modifications of their respective concepts.²

I reply upon several texts for my analysis of the components of Mādhva ontology. These include Madhvācārya's *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*, *The Enumeration of Reality* (hereafter TS) and *Tattvaviveka*, *The Delineation of Reality* (hereafter TV). The TS has only eleven *granthas* while the TV has thirteen. These brief texts are part of Madhvācārya's *daśaprakaraṇa*, ten minor philosophical texts, and they concern ontology.

Later Mādhvas have offered more detailed accounts of the categories that Madhvācārya first described. Some are responses to criticisms of their taxonomy by the two rival schools of Vedānta and others attend to lacunae in Madhvācārya's original classifications. Most notably, Vedagarbha Padmanābhācārya composed an independent treatise on Mādhva ontology called the *Madhvasiddhāntasāra*, *The Compendium of Established Truths of Mādhva [Vedānta]* (also known as the *Padārthasaṃgraha*, *The Compendium of [Taxonomical] Categories*) in the 18th century. Although other English introductions to Madhva Vedānta use Padmanābhācārya's template, I do not, however, include his or other analyses, commentaries and taxonomies in my account because they explore debates about the extant concepts and are intended

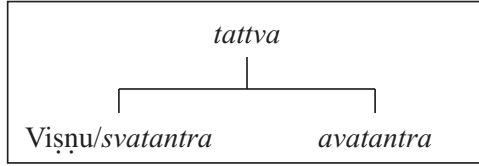
² See Gough, *Vaiśeṣika Aphorisms of Kaṇāda* and Bahadur, *The Wisdom of Vaiśeṣika* for more on the Vaiśeṣika tradition. See Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya* for more on the Sāṃkhya tradition.

for advanced students rather than introductory ones. The TS and TV are sufficient for this introduction.

Given the centrality of Viṣṇu to the Mādhva ontology, I begin my summary at the bottom of the hierarchy. Leaving the most important for last, I first examine *asvatantram*, dependent entities, and then I turn to Viṣṇu, the only *svatantra*, independent entity.

***Asvatantram*, dependent entities**

Madhvācārya separates, *tattva*, all of reality, into *svatantra*, independent, and *asvatantra*, dependent, entities. The only independent entity is Viṣṇu. All other entities are *asvatantra*, dependent.³ According to Professor B.N.K. Sharma, the Mādhva school of Vedānta has been known as the ‘Dvaita,’ dualist, school because of the magnitude of this split between *svatantra*, independent, and *paratantra*, dependent entities (see Fig. 3.2).⁴



3.2 Dvaita

What makes entities dependent? On what or on whom are they dependent? Are they dependent on Viṣṇu for their creation? It is not surprising that Madhvācārya holds that all entities are dependent on Viṣṇu. Not only do they require Viṣṇu for their existence but also, as I show, they require Him for their operation. Dependency is their nature, although many ignorant sentients are deluded and see themselves as independent.

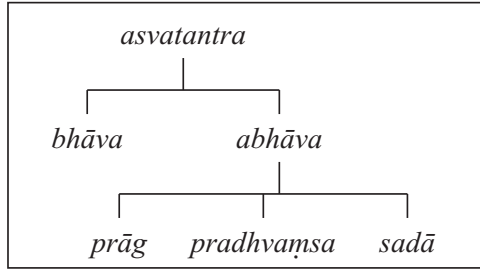
³ *svatantram asvatantram ca dvididham tattvam iṣyate | svatanthro bhagavān viṣṇur |* TS 1. In his TV, Madhvācārya refers to these *asvatantra* as *paratantra*, dependent on another. The difference between the two is only nominal. *dvididham paratantram ca bhāvo 'bhāva iṭṛitaḥ |* TV 2.

⁴ Sharma, *Philosophy*, 323. I use the term ‘Mādhva’ rather than ‘Dvaita’ because the latter is often misunderstood as referring to the number of items recognized in the Mādhva universe, namely Viṣṇu and the *jīvas*. To avoid this misinterpretation I use ‘Mādhva.’

God did not create the material stuff of the universe *ex nihilo*, yet the material stuff is nonetheless dependent on Him. God is the efficient or instrumental cause, while *prakṛti*, material stuff, is the material cause. In this way, the universe is dependent upon God who impels its development. Hence God is understood to be the only independent entity while all else is necessarily dependent. Dependency characterizes the relationship of all entities, sentient, eternal, or otherwise, with Viṣṇu and is the foundation of Mādhva ontology and, as I show in Chapter 4, soteriology.

Abhāva, non-existent entities

Dependent entities are two-fold: *bhāva*, existent, and *abhāva*, non-existent entities.⁵ Madhvācārya further subdivides *abhāva*, non-existent things, into three categories: *prāg*, prior, *pradhvaṃsa*, posterior, and *sadā*, always non-existent things (see Fig. 3.3).⁶



3.3 Asvatantra

Prāgabdhāva, prior non-existence, is the non-existence of a substance before it comes into being. There is a *prāgabdhāva*, an antecedent non-existence, of this sentence before I type it. *Pradhvaṃsābhāva*, posterior non-existence, is the non-existence of a substance after it is destroyed. The mug that shattered after you dropped it on the kitchen floor yesterday has been replaced by a *pradhvaṃsābhāva*. Things that are *sadābhāva*, always non-existent, are entities like square circles, or the two examples used in South Asian philosophy, *śaśaśṛṅga*, the horn of a hare, and *vandhyāputra*, the son of a barren woman.

⁵ ... *bhāvābhavau dvidhetarat* | TS 1.

⁶ *prākpradhvaṃsasadātvena trividho 'bhāva iṣyate* | TS 2.

These are impossible entities and are sometimes called *atyāntābhava*, permanently non-existent.

What does Madhvācārya gain by this category? The cognition ‘The container is not there’ is actually ‘The non-existence of the container is there.’ Or, the cognition ‘This container has not water’ is actually two cognitions: ‘This container is there’ and ‘The absence of water is there.’ In this way, *abhāva* explains the experience of negation.

Bhāva, *existent entities*

Madhvācārya separates *bhāva*, existent entities, into those that are *cetana*, sentient and *acetana*, those that are not sentient.⁷ Entities either think or are incapable of thinking. Following the order in which Madhvācārya analyzes them, I address the sentient and then the non-sentient components of his ontology. As per the Mādhva worldview, they are arranged hierarchically.

Cetanas, *sentient beings*

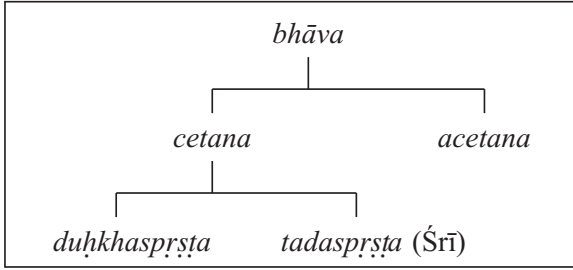
There are several types of *cetanas*, sentient beings, in the Mādhva universe. Their position in the ontological hierarchy is determined by their ability, or lack thereof, to obtain *mokṣa*, liberation, the ultimate and implicit goal to which all adherents aspire. Ontological components are directly linked to eschatological and soteriological matters. Just as a classroom has different kinds of students who can be divided according to their individual abilities and potentials, so too can the sentient denizens of the universe be divided. Given the importance of hierarchy in the Mādhva universe, it should come as no surprise that *cetanas* are also hierarchically arranged. In fact, as I show in Chapter 4, status in *mokṣa* is also graded, since some sentient beings experience more *ānanada*, bliss, in *mokṣa* than others. These gradations, moreover, are inscribed in the fabric of the universe and are immutable.

The taxonomy of sentient beings found in the TS is neither an *a posteriori* classification nor an arbitrary organization of data obtained by mere observation. Rank also cannot be altered in the way that students in remedial classes, through effort and merit, are able to change their status when they are enrolled in more advanced classes. Instead, the latent capabilities of sentient beings are determined *a priori*, cannot be altered and are part of the nature of the universe. This hierarchy strictly correlates a fixed ontology with an equally fixed eschatology

⁷ *cetanācetanatvena bhāvo 'pi dvividho mataḥ* | TS 2.

and soteriology. The ability, or lack thereof, to attain *mokṣa*, liberation, for all sentient beings is part of the predetermined nature of the Mādhva universe. Knowing one's place in the hierarchy is a central component in the path to *mokṣa*.

Sentient beings are two-fold: *duḥkhasprṣta*, those who are connected with suffering, and *tadasprṣta*, those who are not. *Ramā* is the only *tadasprṣta jīva* and is *nityāduḥkha*, eternally without suffering (see Fig. 3.4).⁸



3.4 Components of *bhāva*

Ramā is also known as *Lakṣmī* and as *Śrī*. She is *Viṣṇu*'s consort and, as indicated above in Chapter 2, she is awarded special epistemological and ontological status.⁹ Despite having such an exalted status in the Mādhva pantheon, *Śrī* is nonetheless dependent upon *Viṣṇu*. *Madhvācārya* devoted a portion of the seventh canto of his *Dvādaśa Stotra* to salutations and praise of *Śrī* and in his *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, he states that, despite being insignificant in comparison to *Viṣṇu*, the immortal goddess *Śrī* is the object of great love.¹⁰ Though *Madhvācārya* makes *tadasprṣta* part of his classification system, the category of sentient beings without suffering is comprised of only one member, namely *Śrī*, *Viṣṇu*'s consort.

Sentient beings who are *sprṣta-duḥkhas*, connected with suffering, are two-fold: *duḥkha-saṁsthas*, those whose state of being is suffering, and *vimuktas*, those who are already liberated from suffering.¹¹ *Vimuktas*

⁸ *duḥkhasprṣtam tadasprṣtam iti dvedhaiva cetanam | nityāduḥkhā ramā 'nye tu sprṣtaduḥkhāssamastasaḥ | TS 3.*

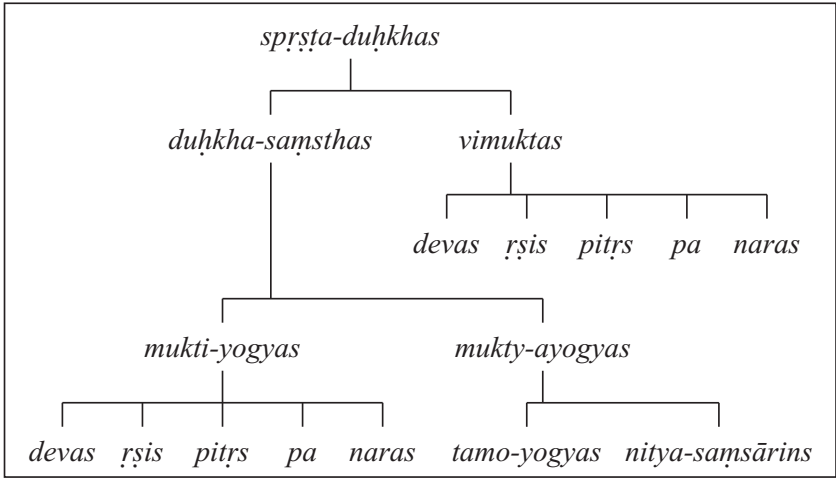
⁹ See Kumar's *The Goddess Lakṣmī* for further reading on *Śrī*.

¹⁰ *alpāpi hy amṛta devī śrīḥ pūrṇātīpriyatvataḥ iti ca | Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, 7.26. Thanks to Siauue for this reference. Siauue, 343, nt. 2.

¹¹ *sprṣtaduḥkhā vimuktāś ca duḥkhasaṁsthā iti dvidhā | TS 4.*

are five-fold: *devas*, gods, *ṛṣis*, seers, *pitṛs*, ancestors, *pa*, protectors of the world, and *naras*, the highest among men. The *duḥkha-saṁsthas* are two-fold: the *mukti-yogyas*, those qualified for release who can be liberated from suffering and are comprised of the same five groups as the *vimuktas*, and the *mukty-ayogyas*, those who cannot be liberated from suffering. Only the *mukti-yogyas* are fit to be liberated from suffering and to achieve *mokṣa*.¹² How does one obtain liberation from suffering? If *cetanas* are predestined to obtain *mokṣa*, can they act however they wish? Do *jīvas* have an agency? I answer these and other questions in Chapter 4.

According to Madhvācārya, there are *mukty-ayogyas*, sentient beings that can never change their status and are eternally predestined to suffer. These sentient beings neither can be released from suffering, nor can they achieve *mokṣa*. The *mukty-ayogyas* are also subdivided into *tamo-yogyas*, those who are fit only for darkness, and *nitya-saṁsārins*, (literally, ‘those who remain in the journey’) those who are eternally caught in the cycle of birth and rebirth (see Fig. 3.5).¹³

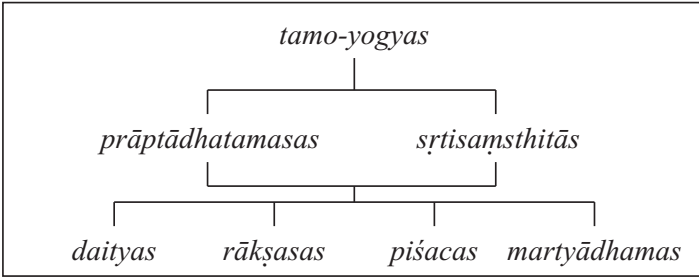


3.5 *Sprṣṭa-duḥkhas*

¹² *devarṣipitṛpanarā iti muktās tu pañcadhā | evaṁ vimuktīyogyāś ...* | TS 5.

¹³ ... *ca tamogāḥ sṛtisaṁsthitāḥ* | TS, 5. The terms *tamoyogyāḥ* and *nityasaṁsārins* were first used by Jayatīrtha in his PP: *ayoginaḥ api trividhāḥ | muktiyogyāḥ nityasaṁsārīṇiḥ tamoyogyāś ca iti* | PP 19.

Tamo-yogyas, those fit for darkness, are proclaimed to be four-fold: the *daityas*, demons, the *rākṣasas*, orcs, the *piśacas*, ghastly lurkers, and the *martyādhmas*, vilest of the mortals.¹⁴ *Tamo-yogyas* are two-fold: *prāptādhataṃśas*, those who suffer in complete darkness, and *śṛtiṣaṃsthitās*, those whose way to darkness is through *saṃsāra* (see Fig. 3.6).¹⁵ Some are thus born in a place of suffering and some eventually are reborn in such places. Madhvācārya thus proposes a time frame for some of these vile to exhibit their vile behavior and, in due course, to suffer in darkness!



3.6 *Tamo-yogyas*

The *tamo-yogyas* are either immediately born or after some time eventually reborn in a place called *tamas*, Hell. In South Asian cosmologies, it is typically the case that sentient beings temporarily go to Hell to work through their individual *karma* and manifest their *prārabdha*, latent, *karma*. Hell is generally considered to be a place of provisional residence, except for its governor Yama and his wife Yami.¹⁶ Madhvācārya's characterization of Hell as a place of permanent residence is thus different from the typical South Asian cosmology. He states: '... wicked [and stupid], they descend from there into Hell. And they, moreover, never rise up [out of it]. That [place] they call the pit.'¹⁷ The two deepest Hells he labels *Mahā Tamas*, Great Hell, and *Pañcakaṣṭha*, the [Place] of Five Miseries. He explains:

¹⁴ *iti dvidhā muktyayogyā daityarakṣaḥpiśācākāḥ | martyādhmāś caturdhaiva tamoyogyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ* | TS 6. Many thanks to Alf Hiltebeitel for an explanation of the differences between these creatures.

¹⁵ *te ca prāptādhataṃśaḥ śṛtiṣaṃsthitā itī dvidhā* | TS 6.

¹⁶ see *Rg Veda* 10.14 for a hymn invoking Yama.

¹⁷ ... *śaṭhā mūrkhā itī te vai tato 'varuḥya tamasi prapanti naivaita uttiṣṭhante* 'pi karhicid vavram vā etad ity āhur atha | BSB 3.1.14.

For those who sink down to the *Mahā Tamas*, Great Hell, there is never a rising up [out of it] ... Everywhere else there is an alternation between pleasure and pain, but, in the *Pañcakaṣṭa*, the [Place] of Five Miseries, there is restriction to that unending [pain] ...¹⁸

There are other Hells in addition to these. *Raurava*, [Place of] Terror, *Mahāraurava*, [Place of] Great Terror, *Vahni*, [Place of] Fire, [Place of the] *Vaitaraṇi* [River], and *Kumbipāka*, the Pottery [Kiln] are temporary places for *jīvas* to fulfill their *prārabdha*, latent, *karma*. *Tāmisra*, [Place of] Darkness, and *Andhatāmisro*, [Place of] Complete Darkness, are permanent places and are for the *tamo-yogyas*. Madhvācārya arranged these places according to dreadfulness.¹⁹

This tripartite distinction, *jīva-traividhya*, three-fold classification of *jīvas* into the *ucca*, highest, *madhya*, middling, and *nīcā*, lowest, is Madhvācārya's doctrine of predestination, *svaṛūpatraividhya*, three-fold classification of natural kinds.²⁰ This unusual link between ontology to eschatology is not found in many other traditions of thought in South Asia. The earlier Pāñcarātrika thinkers have a similar doctrine of predestination. Their three-fold scheme is comprised of *mukti-yogyāḥ*, *nityabaddha*, the eternally bound, and *tamo-yogyāḥ*.²¹ Rāmānuja also holds that there are *nityasūris* who are never subject to birth and rebirth while the Jains separate *jīvas* into those who possess *bhavyatva*, the capability to achieve *nirvāṇa*, and *abhavya*, those who do not.²²

This doctrine may remind readers of similar features in Calvinist theology, where some chosen souls are saved and others damned. This and other similarities have led some scholars such as G.A. Grierson to claim that Christianity influenced Madhvācārya.²³ Although Madhvācārya's doctrine certainly made itself vulnerable to such claims

¹⁸ *mahātamasī magnānām na teṣām uthitiḥ kvacit | ... sukhasyānantaram duḥkhaṁ duḥkhasyānantaram sukham | iti sarvatra niyamaḥ pañcakaṣṭe tu tatsadā ity ādi |* BSB 3.1.15.

¹⁹ *rauravo 'tha mahāṁścaiva vahnīrvaitaraṇī tathā | kumbipāka iti proktāny anityanarakāṇi tu | tāmisraścāndhatāmisro dvau nityau samprakīrtitau | iti sapta pradhānāni balīyastūttarottaram |* BSB 3.1.16. According to Āpte, *Kumbipāka* is 'a particular hell in which the wicked are baked like potter's vessels ...'. Āpte, 585.

²⁰ *amukrāstrividhās tatra nīcamadhyoccabhedataḥ |* TV 6.

²¹ Schrader, 86.

²² Srinivasachari, 241. Jaini, 139–140.

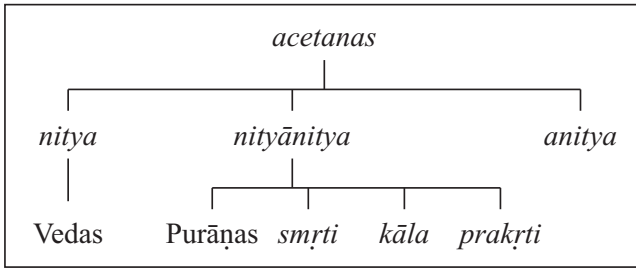
²³ Grierson, 'Mādhvas, Madhvācārīs,' 234, nt. 3, 235, nt. 1. Grierson summarizes a debate whose origins lay in earlier speculations of A. Burnell and Collins, who addressed the same topic in *The Indian Antiquary* beginning in 1873.

and there certainly is a similarity at first glance, the influence on Christianity upon Madhvācārya remains unlikely.²⁴

Acentanas, *non-sentient entities*

Non-sentient entities are known to be three-fold: *nitya*, eternal, *anitya*, non-eternal, and *nityānitya*, both eternal and non-eternal.²⁵ The only eternal non-sentient entity is the *Vedas*. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, Lord Viṣṇu did not create the *Vedas*. If they had been, they would be created at some time and would not be eternal. Despite being eternal they are nevertheless dependent on Viṣṇu to be revealed. For this reason they are still classified as *paratantra*, dependent upon another, and not *svatantra*, independent.

In contrast to the eternal *Vedas*, Madhvācārya holds that the *Purāṇas* and the other *smṛti*, *kāla*, time, and *prakṛti*, material cause, are both eternal and non-eternal (see Fig. 3.7).



3.7 Acentanas

As mentioned in Chapter 2, *smṛti* such as the *Purāṇas*, *Tantras* and *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*, are humanly created. Given the flaws inherent in most human beings, these texts are not reproduced perfectly in each *yuga*, age, and so they are subject to change. This makes them *anitya*, non-eternal. Still, the purport of these texts is *nitya*, eternal. Therefore Madhvācārya categorizes *smṛti* as *nityānitya*, both eternal and non-eternal.

Much of Madhvācārya's conception of time is based on the *Purāṇas*. The universe proceeds through a cycle of four *yugas*, ages. These *yugas*,

²⁴ See Sarma, 'Is Jesus a Hindu? S.C. Vasu and Multiple Mādhva Misrepresentations' for more on this topic see also Kamath, *Christian Influence on Madhvācārya: A Myth Exploded* and Glasenapp, 34.

²⁵ *nityānityavibhāgena tridhaivācetanam matam* | TS 7.

namely *kr̥ta*, the first, *tretā*, second, *dvāpara*, third, and *kali*, fourth age, are distinguished by the degree to which the sentient beings of the universe adhere to *dharma*, law or proper behavior.²⁶ In *kr̥ta-yuga*, *dharma* is upheld, while in *kali-yuga*, it is ignored. The names of the ages refer to throws in a game of dice. *Kr̥ta-yuga* is the throw showing four points and is considered to be the luckiest. *Tretā-yuga* shows three points and is less lucky. Even less lucky is *dvāpara-yuga*, the roll of the die resulting in only two points. *Kali-yuga*, the last *yuga*, is the side of the die marked with only one point and is not lucky. In the introduction to his BSB, Madhvācārya cites a passage from the *Skanda Purāṇa* when he describes the degeneration of *dharma*.²⁷ According to Madhvācārya, the *Brahma Sūtras* themselves were composed when Brahmā, Rudra and other deities requested Viṣṇu's assistance during *dvāpara-yuga*.²⁸ At the end of *kali-yuga* when the universe is chaotic and filled with *adharma*, unlawful activities, Viṣṇu will return in his *avatāra*, incarnation, as Kalki who will destroy the universe and begin the cycle anew with the *kr̥ta-yuga*. This periodic dissolution of the universe is called *pralaya*. One cycle is called a *manvantara*, age of a Manu, which is a portion of a *kalpa*, one day in the life of the god Brahmā. Brahmā, as I show, is in an integral part of the evolution of the universe.

Why is *kāla*, time, held to be *nityānitya*, both eternal and non-eternal? Time is eternal in the sense that it comprises past, present and future, and moreover the past and future continue infinitely. Even conceiving of a time before or after time necessitates a concept of time! Hence it must be infinite in both 'directions.' As a continuous chain of events, it is eternal. On the other hand, it is finite since there are instances and parts of time, such as the *yugas* described above and as individual units of time, second, millisecond, and the like, which are fleeting. Every second that passes exhibits the non-eternal aspect of time. These non-eternal aspects of *kāla*, time, is made possible by the *viśeṣa*, distinguishing property, which is described below. *Kāla*, time, is thus held to be *nityānitya*, both eternal and non-eternal.²⁹

Prakṛti, material cause, is also *nityānitya*, eternal and non-eternal. *Prakṛti* is the material stuff from which all other entities are evolved or created. It is categorized as both eternal and non-eternal, as it exists at all

²⁶ Descriptions of Purāṇic time can be found in any introduction to Hinduism such as Klostermaier's *Introduction to Hinduism*.

²⁷ *nārāyaṇādviniṣpannam jñānam kṛtayuge sthitam | kiṃcittadanyathā jātam tretāyām dvāpare 'khilam* | BSB 0.

²⁸ *dvāpare sarvatra jñāna ākulībhūte tannirṇayāya brahmarudrendrādibhirarthito bhagavanānnārāyaṇo ...* | BSB 0.

²⁹ For more on time see Puthiadam, 221–225 and Siauue, 154 and following.

times but its emanations are *anitya*, non-eternal. The events and entities that evolve from *prakṛti* change and dissolve and are not eternal. This is why *prakṛti* is held to be both eternal and non-eternal.

These two groups of non-sentient entities, the eternal ones and those that are simultaneously eternal and non-eternal, are both dependent on Viṣṇu. But Viṣṇu does not create them. This kind of monotheism is very different from other types, such as Christian ones, where God is the creator of all things, including the material stuff from which the universe is produced. The Mādhva god is like a ‘chef’ who uses eternally existent ‘ingredients,’ namely *prakṛti*, to ‘cook’ the universe. The Mādhva god is an instrumental, rather than material, cause. The degree of omnipotence ascribed to the Mādhva god is different from comparable Christian conceptions. I will examine Madhvācārya’s ‘mitigated monotheism’ in more detail below.

Madhvācārya holds that *anitya*, non-eternal, entities are separable into *saṃsṛṣṭa*, combined, and *asaṃsṛṣṭa*, not combined entities.³⁰ Entities that are not combined evolve from *prakṛti*. Though they originate from *prakṛti*, it is not an absolute, *ex nihilo*, origination. The idea that material entities evolved from *prakṛti* has its roots in the Sāṃkhya tradition, one of the oldest traditions of South Asian speculation. Though the mechanism of the evolution of *prakṛti* differs, Madhvācārya shares the belief that previously unmanifested *prakṛti* manifests itself and differentiates itself into worldly entities through the will of Viṣṇu. Unlike one version of the Sāṃkhya vision, the Mādhva process is not self-contained and requires that Viṣṇu impels the undifferentiated *prakṛti* to manifest and evolve. In his BSB, Madhvācārya explains that Viṣṇu enters into *prakṛti* to make it evolve and He abides in its emanations to guide their evolution.³¹ The universe could and would not develop without Viṣṇu’s initiative and impetus.

According to Madhvācārya, *prakṛti* has twenty-four emanations. Each of the twenty-four emanations in the Mādhva system can be connected with components of the epistemology outlined in Chapter 2. They are the *mahat*, the great principle, the *ahamkāra*, ‘I’-ness, the *buddhi*, intellect, the *manas*, mind, the ten *indriyas*, sense organs, the *pañca-tanmātras*, five subtle elements, and the *pañca-bhūtas*, the five elements.³² Aside from the *buddhi* which is not found in the Sāṃkhya

³⁰ *nityānityaṃ tridhā proktam anityaṃ dvividhaṃ matam* | TS 8.

³¹ *prakṛtāvanupraviśya tām pariṇāmya tatpariṇāmakatvena tatra sthityā ‘tmano bahudhākaraṇāt* | BSB 1.4.27.

³² *asaṃsṛṣṭaṃ ca saṃsṛṣṭaṃ asaṃsṛṣṭaṃ mahān aham | buddhir manaḥ khāni daśa mātṛā bhūtāni pañca ca* | TS 9.

system, each has correlates in Sāṃkhya.³³ Though Madhvācārya does not list each of the sub-categories of the twenty-four in either his TS or TV, it is safe to assume that he was familiar with those of his Sāṃkhya predecessors and expected his readers to have the same knowledge.

The *mahat* is the first emanation and the first thinking principle. It gives rise to the *ahaṃkāra* which is the organ that produces self-consciousness. From it arises the *buddhi*, the intellect, which gives rise to discrimination between objects. The *manas* evolves from the *buddhi* and, as already described in Chapter 2, it is the organizer of sensory data and intermediary between the senses and the *sākṣī*.

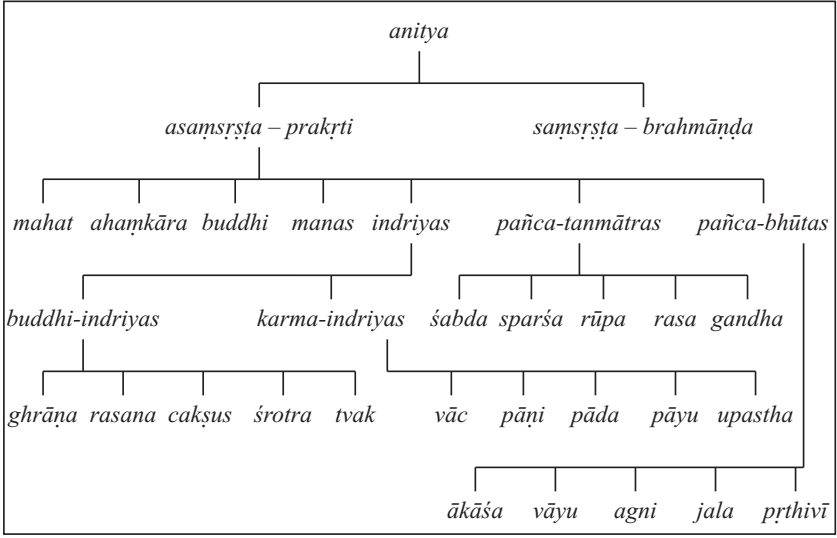
The ten *indriyas*, sense organs, are next in the manifestation of unmanifested *prakṛti*. These derive from the *ahaṃkāra* and are separable into the five *buddhi-indriyas*, senses, and five *karma-indriyas*, organs of action. The *buddhi-indriyas*, senses, are *ghrāṇa*, smell, *rasana*, taste, *cakṣus*, sight, *śrotra*, hearing, and *tvak*, touch. The *karma-indriyas*, organs of action, are *vāc*, speaking, *pāṇi*, grasping, *pāda*, going, *pāyu*, excreting, and *upastha*, procreation. The *pañca-tanmātras*, five subtle elements, also derive from the *ahaṃkāra*. These are the *mātras*, objects, of the *indriyas*, senses, namely, *śabda*, sound, *sparsa*, feeling, *rūpa*, color, *rasa*, taste, and *gandha*, smell. The last set of emanations to derive from the *ahaṃkāra* is the *pañca-bhūtas*, the five elements. These are the gross aspects of the *pañca-tanmātras*. They are *ākāśa*, ether, *vāyu*, air, *agni*, fire, *jala*, water, *pṛthivī*, earth. *Ākāśa* corresponds to *śabda*, *vāyū* to *sparsa*, and the like. The gross elements are the substrate of the subtle elements (see Fig. 3.8).

These non-eternal entities are not combined and, in theory, account for all non-sentient entities. They cannot be broken down into constituent parts, so other entities and events are all comprised of them. In contrast to these twenty-four, combined entities are proclaimed to be *brahmāṇḍa*, Brahmā's egg, and other entities found in it.³⁴ This primordial egg was the locus for the evolution of the *mahat* and the birthplace of the god Brahmā, as well as all other gods and goddesses. It is from this egg that the material universe is born. All events and combined entities are found within the *brahmāṇḍa*. It is the 'pot' within which is contained the primordial 'stew.'

Madhvācārya does not propose the existence of any other elements in the universe aside from these in either his TS or his TV. He believes

³³ See Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, 179–187 for more on these terms and concepts. See Sharma, *Philosophy*, 234–236, Siauue, 124–125, and von Glasenapp, pp. 125–127 for more on the Mādhva characterization of these twenty-four emanations.

³⁴ *saṃśṛṣṭaṃ aṇḍaṃ tadgaṃ ca samastam parikīrtitam* | TS 10.



3.8 Anitya

that all objects in the universe can be located in this taxonomy. As mentioned, later Mādhvas posit components in addition to the ones described here but their commentaries are beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

***Svatantra*, the only independent entity: Viṣṇu**

The Lord Viṣṇu is [the only] independent thing ...³⁵

Madhvācārya makes this strong claim in the first verse of his TS. This independence emerges as a result of being self-caused. In an argument reminiscent of Aquinas’s cosmological argument for the existence of God in his *Summa Theologica*,³⁶ Madhvācārya writes: ‘In the world, creation is seen [to occur] with the help of many [things which are] independent [of the putative] cause. This is not so for *brahman* [that is, Viṣṇu, who has no cause].’³⁷ Like Aquinas, Madhvācārya argues that things that at first seem to be self-caused are themselves caused. This leads both Aquinas and Madhvācārya to hold that God is the first cause

³⁵ *svatanthro bhagavān viṣṇur ...* | TS 1.

³⁶ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part One, Question Two, Article Three.

³⁷ *svatantrabahasādhanā sṛṣṭir loke dṛṣṭā | naivaṃ brahmaṇaḥ* | BSB 2.1.15

which is self-caused and does not necessitate another cause, thereby avoiding what they consider to be an undesirable *doṣa*, flaw, specifically an *anavasthā*, infinite regress.³⁸

As mentioned earlier, though Viṣṇu is independent and everything else is dependent, this does not mean that He creates the universe *ex nihilo*. Instead, Viṣṇu helps manifest the unmanifested *prakṛti*. But why is it vital for Madhvācārya to construe Viṣṇu as an efficient cause rather than a material cause? Madhvācārya holds to this position because it does not conflict with his belief that God is immutable. If Viṣṇu were the material cause of the universe, creating *prakṛti* and its emanations out of Himself, then He would change. Change is not a desirable attribute and would belie that Viṣṇu was imperfect. Since He is only the efficient cause, this imperfection does not afflict Viṣṇu. Madhvācārya can then correctly and unequivocally describe Viṣṇu as: ‘The eternal *ātman*, the eternal Hari, who is immutable, pure, whose power and wisdom are always the same, whose form is bliss, who is without change, who is imperishable ...’.³⁹

The *svātantrya*, independence, of Viṣṇu cannot be underestimated as the lynchpin that holds together Mādhva ontology. Not only does it serve as the ontological foundation, but, as I show in Chapter 4, realizing one’s dependence on Viṣṇu is the goal for all adherents who seek *mokṣa*.

Madhvācārya’s characterization of Viṣṇu reveals the influence of other Vaiṣṇava traditions that existed in medieval Karnaṭaka. These descriptions rely primarily on accounts found in the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Ramāyaṇa* which portray Viṣṇu as a personal God, in contrast to the accounts given by his Advaita counterparts. The Advaita tradition holds that *brahman*, divinity, is not a personal God, is *nirguṇa* and cannot be characterized. Madhvācārya holds the exact opposite position. For Madhvācārya God is real, *saguṇa*, is the object of *bhakti*, devotion, and is knowable to a certain extent.

In this section I offer a brief examination of the nature of Viṣṇu.⁴⁰ To this end, I first examine the sources for knowledge of Viṣṇu. I then turn to the attributes of Viṣṇu and His relationship with the universe. Next, I

³⁸ Despite the similarity, Madhvācārya does not actually offer a formal proof for the existence of God. In his BSB he doubts the utility of inference for ‘It is possible to make an inference [to prove whatever] one desires’, *yathākāmaṃ hy anumātuṃ śakyate* | BSB 1.1.18.

³⁹ *avikāraḥ sadā śuddho nitya ātmā sadā hariḥ | sadaikarūpavijñānabala ānandarūpakaḥ | nirvikāro ‘kṣaraḥ ...* | AV 1.4.59.

⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of Viṣṇu see Puthiadam. I am reliant upon his superb analysis for much of this discussion.

summarize His *vyūhas*, emanations, and *avatāras*, incarnations. Finally, I probe the possibility that Madhvācārya places limitations on Viṣṇu. Such limitations result in what I refer to as a ‘mitigated monotheism.’

Sadāgamaikavijñeyaṃ, *one who can be known only via the true āgamas*

According to Madhvācārya, Viṣṇu is to be worshipped, is the object of meditation and can be known, in part, after in-depth study. Proper knowledge of the nature of God and one’s dependence upon Him eventually leads to *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge, of Viṣṇu granted by Viṣṇu Himself. In his BSB, Madhvācārya writes that ‘And without the knowledge [of *brahman*, that is, Viṣṇu], there is no extraordinary grace [granted by *brahman*].’⁴¹ This divine knowledge is granted just prior to obtaining *mokṣa*. Obtaining a complete understanding of Viṣṇu, both in the realm of *parokṣa-jñāna*, mediated knowledge, found in texts and from *gurus*, teachers and in the realm of *aparokṣa-jñāna*, is thus the basis of Mādhva teleology. Where, then, is this essential knowledge to be found?

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, knowledge of Viṣṇu can be obtained only through the *āgamas*. Readers are reminded of this throughout Madhvācārya’s texts in *maṅgala-śloka*s, adulations, that are descriptive of Viṣṇu. In one such passage found in his VTV, Madhvācārya describes Him as ‘one who can be known only via the true *āgamas*.’⁴² The next passage in the VTV, a citation from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, makes an even stronger claim: ‘He cannot be known by mere reasoning, perception, or other means. He can only be known via the *āgamas* and by *bhaktas*, devotees, not in any other way.’⁴³ Madhvācārya completes this section in the VTV with four more citations from *āgama* in order to prove his claim. *Āgama* is regarded as a *pramāṇa*, though its scope and, therefore, validity is limited to concepts and phenomena outside of human perception, namely, Viṣṇu and *dharma*.

Is this knowledge from the *āgamas* complete? Is it sufficient for obtaining *mokṣa*? According to Madhvācārya, although Viṣṇu can be known via the *āgamas*, this knowledge is only partial. Remember, adherents must be granted *aparokṣa-jñāna* by Viṣṇu to have attained the most comprehensive understanding for which they are eligible, given

⁴¹ ... na ca jñānaṃ vinātyarthaprasādaḥ ... | BSB 1.1.1. For more see Chapter 4.

⁴² sadāgamaikavijñeyaṃ | VTV.

⁴³ na ca kevalatarkeṇa nākṣajena na kenacit | kevalāgamaivijñeyo bhaktair eva na cānyathā | iti brahmāṇḍe | VTV.

their individual capabilities. Not surprisingly, given the importance of gradation in the Mādhva world, the degree of comprehension is again hierarchically indexed, as I point out in Chapter 4.

Viṣṇu is brahman, divinity

If Viṣṇu is to be understood only by a thorough study of the *āgamas*, what happens when He does not appear to be their subject? At first glance, some of the references in the *āgamas* appear to be in praise of other gods and goddesses and not of Viṣṇu. These other deities are praised in ways that might make the uncertain and wavering *bhakta*, devotee, doubt the supremacy of Viṣṇu. Who are these other deities? Are they as powerful as Viṣṇu? Or even more confusing, how is one to interpret the first passage of the *Brahma Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, which begins with the following aphorism: ‘Then, therefore, the inquiry into *brahman*’?⁴⁴

Novice readers of Mādhva texts may wonder ‘What is *brahman*?’, ‘Is it different from Viṣṇu?’ and ‘Isn’t Viṣṇu, not *brahman*, the object of our Vedānta study and meditation?’ Madhvācārya’s answer is that all words in the *āgamas* refer to Viṣṇu. For example, the term ‘*brahman*’ is just another name of Viṣṇu.⁴⁵ First occurring in the *R̥g Veda*, ‘*brahman*’ was used periodically in the *Brāhmaṇas* and is found in high frequency in the *Upaniṣads*. Though all the schools of Vedānta agree that the term refers to a divine principle, they vehemently disagree about its character. Followers of the Advaita tradition believe that the term refers to the unitary divine principle that underlies all entities which is impersonal, without attributes and cannot be characterized. In contrast, Madhvācārya stipulates that *brahman* is identical with Viṣṇu and, in fact, that this appellation is preferable. In his *Aṇubhāṣya* (hereafter AB), for example, Madhvācārya prescribes that Viṣṇu must be eternally worshipped as ‘*brahman*’ even in times of crisis.⁴⁶ This unusual hermeneutic, based on linguistic and grammatical points, allows him to prove that all references to *brahman* in the *śruti* are, in fact, references to Viṣṇu.⁴⁷ But this linguistic identity does not end with the term *brahman*. According to Madhvācārya, all words, even those having a mundane

⁴⁴ *athāto brahmajijñāsā* | BSB 1.1.1.

⁴⁵ *brahmaśabdaś ca viṣṇāveva* | BSB 1.1.1.

⁴⁶ *viṣṇurbrahma tathādāte ty evaṃ nityam upāsanam* | AB 4.1. See also Siauve, *Les Noms Védiques de Viṣṇu*.

⁴⁷ For detailed examinations of several of these etymological derivations and subsequent identities, see Puthiadam, 91–101.

usage, refer to Viṣṇu.⁴⁸ This even includes concepts in Madhvācārya's philosophy! In his AB, Madhvācārya writes: 'The terms "antecedent cause" and "subordinate cause," and the terms "nature" and even "void," among others, signify [Him] preeminently.'⁴⁹ The strength of this hermeneutic cannot be underestimated. Not only can the references to other gods and goddesses be reinterpreted as reference to Viṣṇu, but references to *brahman* that seem to favor the Advaita position, if understood properly, confirm Madhvācārya's!

Viṣṇu is saguṇa, having attributes

Madhvācārya is very careful to inform readers that Viṣṇu has an infinite number of attributes. His care shows a rejection of the Advaita position that *brahman* is *nirguṇa*, without attributes. While the Advaita position of non-dualism cannot allow for any differentiation whatsoever, a supreme deity filled with attributes fits in nicely with Mādhva monotheism. Viṣṇu is praised as one who is *saguṇa*, filled with excellent attributes that are without defect, in the *maṅgala śloka*s, adulations, of many of his texts.⁵⁰ Madhvācārya also offers an interpretive strategy to explain why there are so many characterizations of *brahman* as *nirguṇa* in the *āgamas*.⁵¹ If the *āgamas* are read properly, then they confirm, rather than reject, Madhvācārya's interpretations!

Viṣṇu possesses attributes such as beauty, *ānanda*, bliss and intelligence.⁵² He is held to be all-pervading and to be one who devours everything. He lacks the defect of being perceptible. He possesses all characteristics, such as being immanent in the universe and in the individual selves and the like.⁵³ Lists of these and other attributes can be found in Madhvācārya's *Dvādaśa Stotra*, a text devoted almost exclusively to propitiating Viṣṇu. These attributes and descriptions are

⁴⁸ *mukhyataḥ sarvaśabdaiś ca vācya eko janārdanaḥ | avyaktaḥ karmavākyaiś ca vācya eko 'mitātmakaḥ | AB 1.7.*

⁴⁹ *avāntaraṃ kāraṇaṃ ca prakṛtiḥ śūnyam eva ca | ity ādyanyatranīyatair api mukhyatayoditāḥ | śabdair ato ... | AB 1.8.*

⁵⁰ Puthiadam first noted the frequency of these references. Puthiadam, 115. See: *nārāyaṇaṃ guṇaiḥ sarvaiḥ rudīrṇaṃ doṣavarjitaṃ | AB 1.1. nārāyaṇo 'gaṇyaguṇanītyaikaṇīlāyākṛtiḥ | UK 1. nārāyaṇaṃ sadā vande nirdoṣaśeṣasadguṇaṃ | Madhvācārya, VTV. nārāyaṇaṃ guṇaiḥ sarvaiḥ rudīrṇaṃ doṣavarjitaṃ | BSB 0.*

⁵¹ See Puthiadam for more on this hermeneutic. Puthiadam, 114–120.

⁵² *namo 'mandanijānandasāndrasundaramūrtaye | indirāpataye nityānanda-bhojanadāyine | UK 20.*

⁵³ *sarvago 'tta nīyāntā ca dṛṣyatvādyujjhitaḥ sadā | viśvajīvāntaratvādyair lingaiḥ sarvair yutaḥ sa hi | AB 1.4.*

not particularly unusual among monotheistic traditions, so I will not characterize them in detail here.⁵⁴

Viṣṇu's vyūhas, emanations, and avatāras, incarnations

The Vaiṣṇava traditions of South Asia share the belief that Viṣṇu has multiple manifestations though they differ on the relationship that Viṣṇu has with His manifestations. Accounts of their lives and activities are found in Purāṇic and epic āgamas, most notably the *Mahābhārata* and the *Ramāyaṇa*, which are well known by practicing Vaiṣṇavas. Whether these records gave rise to the philosophical characterization or *vice versa* is a matter of debate. The historical validity of these can be challenged in the same way that one can question the truth of Biblical parables. Many Mādhvas certainly hold them to be accurate. For the purposes of this volume, I accept them as true. Accuracy aside, Madhvācārya separates the manifestations into two groups: Viṣṇu's *vyūhas*, emanations, and His *avatāras*, incarnations.

The *vyūhas* have their bases in the *Pañcarātrāgamas* and are mechanisms by which the universe is ordered, was created and evolves.⁵⁵ According to Madhvācārya, Viṣṇu has either four or five *vyūhas*, emanations, named Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Nārāyaṇa.⁵⁶ The status of the fifth *vyūha*, Nārāyaṇa, is not clear and, in some passages he is not even mentioned.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the *vyūhas* function in the evolution of the *prakṛti* and are each attached to components of Mādhva ontology. Vāsudeva is associated with *mahat* and with granting *mokṣa*. Saṃkarṣaṇa is affiliated with *ahamkāra* and is believed by Madhvācārya to be the destroyer. Pradyumna helps to convey the *jīvas* during their rebirth. Aniruddha is associated with *manas* and functions to maintain the *status quo*.⁵⁸ The names of the first four are connected with the story of Kṛṣṇa, one of Viṣṇu's most

⁵⁴ See Puthiadam for more on Viṣṇu's attributes.

⁵⁵ For further reading see Schrader, *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnyā Saṃhitā*, 40–50, Glasenapp, 34–36 and Puthiadam, 138–140.

⁵⁶ In his AV Madhvācārya mentions the five: *eko nārāyaṇo devo ... vāsudevādirupeṇa caturmūrtiś ca sarvaśaḥ atahavā pañcamūrtiḥ sa prokto 'dhikaraṇaṃ* | AV 1.1.252. I owe this citation to Glasenapp. See Glasenapp, 35 nt. 3.

⁵⁷ *vāsudevavaḥ saṃkarṣaṇaḥ pradyumno 'niruddho 'haṃ* | BSB 2.3.48.

⁵⁸ *īthaṃ vicintya pramassa tu vāsudevanāmā babhūva nijamuktīpadapradātā* | MBhTN 1.6. *saṃkarṣaṇaś ca sa babhūva punassunityaḥ saṃhārakāraṇavapustadanujñayaiva* | MBhTN 1.7. *sthitvā svamūrtibhiramūbhiracintyaśaktiḥ pradyumnarūpaka imāṃś caramātmane 'dāt* | MBhTN 1.8. *sthitvai punaḥ sa bhagavānanirūddhanāmā* | MBhTN 1.8.

well-known *avatāras*, incarnations. Vāsudeva is another name for Kṛṣṇa and Pradyumna is Kṛṣṇa's son. Aniruddha is Pradyumna's son and Saṃkarṣaṇa is another name of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's older brother.

Viṣṇu also has *avatāras*, incarnations. In contrast to *vyūhas*, *avatāras* are manifestations of Viṣṇu that appear and act in the world. There are ten *avatāras* which are considered to be traditional: Matsya, 'the fish,' Kūrma, 'the tortoise,' Varāha, 'the boar,' Narasiṃha, 'the man-lion,' Vāmana, 'the dwarf,' Paraśurāma, 'Rāma with the axe,' Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. Although these ten are the most significant, Madhvācārya claims that the actual number is innumerable.⁵⁹ The *avatāras* need not be exclusively human because Viṣṇu assumes animal form as well. Parables chronicling their lives are very popular among Vaiṣṇava Hindus, are often chanted ritually and are part of temple iconography. Still, why does Viṣṇu have *avatāras*, incarnations, at all? Is one more important than others? What is the relationship between Viṣṇu and his *avatāras*?

Viṣṇu appears on the earth in order to defend *dharma* and His devotees as is established in Chapter 4 of the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

Oh Bhārat! Whenever there is a decline of *dharma* and an increase in *adharma*, then I [Viṣṇu] emit myself. I arise in every *yuga* for the protection of the good people, the destruction of those who do wicked things and for the establishment of *dharma*.⁶⁰

All Vaiṣṇavas believe this to be true and Madhvācārya is no exception. Madhvācārya's commentary on these passages addresses possible doubts of His *svātantrya*, independence. He explains that this passage from the *Bhagavad Gītā* should not be misunderstood to indicate that Viṣṇu was obligated to incarnate Himself.⁶¹ If He were, then He would no longer be *svatantra*, independent, and this cannot be the case. Instead, Viṣṇu incarnates Himself out of *līlā*, playful sport, which is an intrinsic part of His nature.⁶² Since the natures of the *jīvas* are unchangeable, Viṣṇu does not incarnate Himself to 'save' those wicked ones who have gone astray.

⁵⁹ ... aham matsyaḥ kūrmo varāho nārasimho vāmano rāmo rāmaḥ kṛṣṇo buddhaḥ kalkir ahaṃ śatadhā 'haṃ sahasradhā 'haṃ amito 'haṃ ananto 'haṃ ... | BSB 2.3.48.

⁶⁰ yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhvati bhārata | abhyutthānam adharmasya tadā 'tmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham | paritrāṇāya sādḥnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām | dharmasaṃsthāpanārthaya sambhavāmi yuge yuge | BGB 4.7–8. I am indebted to Puthiadam for these apropos citations. Puthiadam, 141–142. This passage is directly from the *Gītā*.

⁶¹ na janmanaiva paritrāṇādikaṃ kāryam iti niyamaḥ | BGB 4.8.

⁶² tathā 'pi līlayā svabhāvena ca yatheṣṭacarī | BGB 4.8.

Given the importance of Kṛṣṇa in Mādhva ritual, it would appear *prima facie* that He is the most important *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Not only do lay Mādhvas worship Kṛṣṇa above all other Viṣṇu *avatāras*, but the sacred geography of Mādhva Vedānta around Uḍupi seems totally dominated by Kṛṣṇa, beginning with the Uḍupi Śrī Kṛṣṇa temple built by Madhvācārya himself. Deeper study reveals that although Kṛṣṇa is important, He is only one among many *avatāras*, incarnations, of Viṣṇu, which are believed to be all equal to one another.⁶³ These *avatāras* are *svāmśas*, essential parts of the greater whole that is Viṣṇu. These *aṁśas*, divisions, moreover, are not different from the whole.⁶⁴ Therefore the *avatāras* are identical to Viṣṇu as well as with one another. Ultimately, Kṛṣṇa is not considered to be a higher-level deity in the Mādhva philosophical world. He is merely one *avatāra* among many.⁶⁵ Despite the fact that hierarchy pervades almost every facet of the Mādhva system, it is not (and cannot) be found among the *avatāras*.

Madhvācārya's mitigated monotheism

Madhvācārya's vision of monotheism is mitigated. Some have argued that limiting the power of God is inconsistent with certain kinds of monotheism.⁶⁶ It is true that the God of Madhvācārya is not a creator in the same way as the God of the Christians: Viṣṇu does not create the universe *ex nihilo* and He is an efficient or instrumental cause rather than a material one. Furthermore, there are even items and concepts in the Mādhva ontology that are as eternal as Viṣṇu, such as *kāla*, time, and *prakṛti*. Their eternality mitigates Madhvācārya's monotheism.

Though it is certainly possible to argue that characteristics and limitations 'cannot be brought together in a harmonious whole,'⁶⁷ Madhvācārya anticipated such criticisms. In his BSB he explains:

It is possible to make an inference [to prove whatever] one desires.
Therefore, in connection with the truth, a distinct inference is not

⁶³ *evamabedhenaiva | caśabdādanantarūpatvaṁ caike śākhinaḥ paṭhanti | amātro 'nantamātraś ca dvaitasyopaśamaḥ śivaḥ |* BSB 3.2.13. For more see Sarma's 'Madhvācārya on Kṛṣṇa.'

⁶⁴ *svāmśaścātho vibhinnāmśa iti dvedhām 'śa iṣyate | aṁśino yattu sāmartyaṁ yathāsthitiḥ |* BSB 2.3.47.

⁶⁵ Professor Varakhedi reasoned that Kṛṣṇa's appearance during Kali Yuga gave him greater proximity in time to devotees and that this may be why he is worshipped above other *avatāras*.

⁶⁶ See Yandell, 'God and Other Agents in Hindu Monotheism.'

⁶⁷ Yandell, 545.

required. In the *Skanda* [*Purāṇa*, the following] is said: ‘As inference can be used to prove what is desired, therefore, consistent inferences are desired for the sake of [removing] contradiction in preceding and succeeding [passages] of the *śruti*. There is no other [use for inference].’⁶⁸

In this way Madhvācārya feels that he is able to deflect some types of arguments.

What is solved if one accepts Madhvācārya’s mitigated monotheism? Theodicy, justifications for the presence of evil, no longer poses any problem. Why not? If, for example, God is both omni-benevolent and creates all things, then why is there evil in the universe? One answer offered by Christian thinkers comes from the doctrine of free will. By accepting such a doctrine, God is not held responsible for the presence of evil. Madhvācārya offers a different solution when he considers Viṣṇu to be only an instrumental, rather than a material, cause of the universe. All entities, including sentient beings, exist eternally and are not created by Viṣṇu (though they are dependent upon Him). Viṣṇu cannot be held accountable for the behavior of the wicked sentient beings in the universe.⁶⁹

Furthermore, if Viṣṇu is only the instrumental cause then He does not change when the universe evolves. Madhvācārya wishes to believe that immutability is a perfection held by Viṣṇu. He cannot also believe that Viṣṇu created the universe. If he did then Viṣṇu would change. Madhvācārya’s resolution also serves to explain Viṣṇu’s attributes.

In order to avoid these incompatible beliefs, ones that are sometimes acknowledged but more often ignored by most theisms, Madhvācārya offers his mitigated monotheism.

Subject and attribute

Madhvācārya’s ontology is based on the difference between entities in the universe, rather than their identity. If the universe is governed by difference and there is no identity, then one may wonder how to construe the relationship between Viṣṇu and His attributes. Are they identical with one another or entirely different? Given the Mādhva position, the former is clearly impossible. Besides, if they were identical, then why

⁶⁸ *yathākāmaṃ hy anumātuṃ śakyate | ato na tattve prthag anumānam apekṣyate | uktaṃ ca skānde | yathākāmānumā yasmāt tasmāt sānapagā śruteḥ | pūrvāparavirodhāya ceṣyate nānyathā kvacit iti* | BSB 1.1.18.

⁶⁹ More on agency and freewill in Mādhva Vedānta below in Chapter 4.

would two terms, substance and attribute, even be used? On the other hand, if they were entirely different, then their relationship would be so external that it would be odd to state that something is an attribute of Viṣṇu. Claiming that the relationship is *bhedābheda*, one of both identity and difference, is the most difficult to digest, since it requires the juxtaposition of mutually exclusive qualifiers, a position which, according to Madhvācārya, is logically impossible.

The problem is not limited to Viṣṇu and His attributes but is found in the relationships between all entities and their respective attributes. Are they the same or are they different from one another? Take, for example, the purple shirt that I wore when I typed this sentence. What is the relationship between the purple color and the shirt? Are they different from one another or identical? If they are different then how do they relate to one another? If they are one and the same, then why distinguish between ‘shirt’ and ‘purple-ness,’ between substance and attribute?

These questions can also be asked of ‘difference’ itself. How should one understand the ‘difference’ between any two entities? If ‘A’ is different from ‘B’ where does the attribute ‘difference’ (which I will call D1) between the two reside? Surely D1 must be different from A, its substrate. But if it were, then it would necessitate another ‘difference’, D2, between the D1 and A, the substrate and so on! Madhvācārya posits a new category to avoid these potential problems. This ontological category with epistemological import is the *viśeṣa*, distinguishing property.

Viśeṣas, distinguishing properties

Like the *sākṣī*, the *viśeṣa* is an integral part of the Mādhva system. Without it the Mādhva realism would be indefensible.⁷⁰ *Viśeṣa* finds its roots in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition of philosophy. To understand how Madhvācārya modifies their version, I first summarize his predecessor’s. According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition, a *viśeṣa* resides between an object and an attribute. The difference between two atoms lies in the *viśeṣa* that resides in each of the two. There is no explanation, however, of the relationship between *viśeṣa* and the substrate. Are they identical or different? Since they cannot be identical, they must be different. If they are different, then they would require another *viśeṣa*, which I will call V1. This *viśeṣa*, V1, would itself require another *viśeṣa*, namely V2, which requires V3 and so forth. The result is *anavasthā*, an infinite regress, a *doṣa*, flaw, to be avoided at all costs as

⁷⁰ For a detailed analysis of *viśeṣa*, see Sarma, *Bhedasādhnam*.

described earlier in Chapter 2. This problem with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika concept leads Madhvācārya to posit his revised version of the *viśeṣa*.

Madhvācārya's solution concerns the ability of the *viśeṣa* to establish difference without necessitating another *viśeṣa*. Given the logical problems of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika concept, *viśeṣa* must have this capacity. Madhvācārya explains that *viśeṣa* is *sva-nirvāhaka*, possessing self-sufficiency and thereby does not require another *viśeṣa*.⁷¹ By positing this capacity possessed by all substances, Madhvācārya is able to solve the problems of relating substances with their attributes as well as relating entities which are different from one another. In light of *viśeṣa*, it is possible for Viṣṇu to be related to His attributes via the *viśeṣa*. In fact, all objects are related to their attributes by means of the *viśeṣa*. This capability is intrinsic to all objects and is not itself an attribute.

***Bhedasādhanam*, establishing difference**

How is difference apprehended? Madhvācārya believes that difference constitutes the *svarūpa*, essence, of all objects. Difference is apprehended when the *svarūpa* of any object is apprehended. An immediate awareness of the difference of an object is an awareness of its uniqueness. Madhvācārya explains that, in general, the *svarūpa* of an object distinguishes it from all other objects.⁷² If the *svarūpa* were not constituted by difference, then the immediate comprehension of the general uniqueness of an object would not occur. If this basic understanding that 'this object is different' did not occur, then, Madhvācārya jokes, 'it would be [possible] to doubt [whether] oneself was a pot!'⁷³ One would not be able to see oneself as being unique and different from all other things! The difference is apprehended in the same way as the *viśeṣa* is apprehended: instantaneously.

For these reasons, Madhvācārya claims that the universe is governed by *pañcabheda*, five-fold difference:

The universe has five [intrinsic] differences: There is a difference between the *jīva* and Lord [Viṣṇu]. There is a difference between

⁷¹ *viśeṣo 'pi svarūpaṃ sa svanirvāhaka eva ca* | Madhvācārya, *Gītātātparyam* 11.9.

⁷² *bhedastu svarūpadarśana eva siddhaḥ | prāyaḥ sarvato vilakṣaṇaṃ hi padārthasvarūpaṃ dṛṣyate* | VTV.

⁷³ *yadi na svarūpaṃ bhedastadā padārthe dṛṣṭe prāyaḥ sarvato vilakṣaṇaṃ tasya na jñāyeta | ajñāte ca vilakṣaṇye ātmani ghaṭa ity api saṃśayaḥ syāt | na hi kaścit tathā saṃśayaṃ karoti* | VTV.

Lord [Viṣṇu] and *jaḍa*, non-sentient material entities. There is difference between the individual *jīvas*. There is a difference between *jīvas* and *jaḍas*, non-sentient material entities. There is a difference between one *jaḍa* and another. The [difference between these five] is real ...⁷⁴

These five differences are part of the fabric of the Mādhva universe. They also are the fundamental bases for arguments regarding ontological, epistemological and soteriological matters between the Mādhva school and all other schools of Vedānta.

Madhvācārya's realism asserts itself at every opportunity within his complicated ontology. Not only is the universe real, but it is governed by Viṣṇu, the only independent entity. The universe is a hierarchically arranged with Viṣṇu in the topmost position. Knowledge of Mādhva ontology and epistemology is one step on the path to *mokṣa*. What else is required of adherents? How does one obtain *mokṣa*? To answer these questions, I will now examine Madhvācārya's soteriology and eschatology.

⁷⁴ *jīveśvarabhidā caiva jaḍeśvarabhidā tathā | jīvabhedo mithaś caiva jaḍajīvabhidā tathā | mithaś ca jaḍabhedo 'yaṃ prapañco bhedapañcakaḥ | so 'yaṃ satyo ... | VTV.*

Mādhva soteriology

Viṣṇu, the creator of all, is the origin of the sacred texts. He alone is to be known. He is the object of [the unmediated] vision [granted] in accordance [with the gradation of *jīvas*, enduring selves]. He is filled with bliss. He is inside [all things and is like the] ether.¹

The goal of all of the schools of Vedānta is to provide a correct analysis of *brahman*/Viṣṇu and the universe which, when understood and acted upon properly, will eventually lead adherents to *mokṣa*, liberation. Trapped in *saṃsāra*, a seemingly never-ending cycle of birth and rebirth, practitioners seek ways to end their bondage to living and dying and these schools of Vedānta offer possible means of escape. Their elaborate ontologies and epistemologies are integral parts of the solutions that they offer. These doctrinal systems cannot be separated from soteriologies and in this way, Mādhva soteriology is intimately tied to Mādhva ontology and epistemology. One may even make the argument that the more theoretical aspects of the tradition are in service to and do not stand independently of, the practical goals of being granted *mokṣa*. At the very least, it is easy to concede that theory and practice are inseparable.

Unlike Madhvācārya's ontology and epistemology, which are outlined in lucid detail in his PL and TS, his theories about soteriology are spread throughout his vast corpus. What follows is thus a codification of Mādhva soteriology drawing from a variety of sources, including Madhvācārya's BSB and VTV.

Before examining the elements on the path to *mokṣa*, it is essential to learn who and what is on the path. What is reborn in *saṃsāra*? What are the characteristics of the *jīva*, the enduring self, which is the intrinsic element of every *cetana*, sentient being? Why is the *jīva* ignorant and bound in the cycle of birth and rebirth? One must first have answers to these questions before learning how one may break the cycle.

¹ *viṣṇur eva vijijñāsyāḥ sarvakartā 'gamoditaḥ | samanvayādīkṣateś ca pūrṇānando 'ntaraḥ khavat |* AB1.2.

The *jīva*, enduring self

As stated in the *Parama Śruti*, ‘He who suffers and enjoys, who is bound [in *samsāra*] and [obtains] *mokṣa*, liberation, [from it and] who knows [himself] as ‘I am,’ he is the *jīva*,’ enduring self.²

One may wonder about what or who persists in the cycle of birth and rebirth, about what or who accumulates *karma* and, finally, about what or who obtains *mokṣa*. The schools of Vedānta hold that each *cetana*, sentient being, has both a *deha*, body, and a *jīva*, an enduring self, that persists in *samsāra*, worldly existence. Though the ontological status of the *deha*, body, is a matter of debate between the schools, all concur that the *deha* is finite, is born and dies and changes in each birth according to the accumulated *punya*, meritorious, and *pāpa*, demeritorious, *karma*.³ In contrast, the *jīva* is eternal, temporarily resides in a body and is partly responsible for the accumulation of *karma*. The *jīva*, also sometimes known as the *ātman*, self, suffers the bondage of rebirth but may eventually reap the benefits of *mokṣa*, liberation.⁴ Each school offers a new cognitive paradigm and accompanying path by which the *jīva* can escape. But, if this knowledge is available, why is the *jīva* ignorant? What is the cause of the *jīva*’s bondage?

Bandha, *bondage*

Madhvācārya believes that *jīvas* are bound in a beginningless cycle of birth and rebirth. *Bandha* refers to the relationship of the *jīva*, enduring self, with the *deha*, the external body. The *jīva* remains in *bandha* because of its *ajñāna*, ignorance, of *brahman* and of the universe. Its relationship with the *deha* ends only upon attaining *mokṣa*.

Despite being beginningless, *bandha* and its mechanisms depend on Viṣṇu to exist. In fact, they cannot be independent. After all, Viṣṇu is the only independent entity in the universe and *bandha* is no exception.⁵ In this way, Madhvācārya need not explain the details of the origins

² *ahamitīeva yo vedyah sa jīva iti kīrtitaḥ | sa duḥkhī sa sukhī caiva sa pātraṃ bandhamokṣayoḥ | iti ca paramaśrutiḥ* | VTV. In his commentary, Jayatīrtha explains that the *jīva* is the one that knows ‘I am a sufferer.’ *yaḥ sa duḥkhī | Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya-ṭika*, 698.

³ See Chapter 1, ‘Basic Theological Issues’. The Advaita school of Vedānta, for example, holds that *dehas* do not exist at the highest level of reality.

⁴ Though there are discussions about the difference between *jīva* and *ātman*, I will not address them here.

⁵ *bandhako bhavapāśena bhavapāśāc ca mocakaḥ* | VTV.

of *karma*, *bandha* and *ajñāna* yet can maintain the independence and omnipotence of Viṣṇu. But why does Viṣṇu create *bandha* in the first place?

Madhvācārya never explicitly explains why Viṣṇu created the universe and all of its elements. It may be that Viṣṇu created out of *līlā*, playful sport, though this explanation is functionally equivalent to the age-old assertion ‘God works in mysterious ways!’ and just as satisfying. One may also venture that Viṣṇu impels the evolution of *prakṛti* and, therefore, of the universe for the sake of the *jīvas*. Within this universe, *jīvas* can manifest their *prārabdha karma*, create new *karma* and either maintain or break, their existence in the cycle. The *jīvas* are bound by *puṇya* and *pāpa* both of which, like *bandha*, are without beginning.⁶ Viṣṇu is the actuator for the establishment of the universe, which is the location where *karma* can manifest, where suffering occurs and can end, and where *bandha* manifests and can cease.

Keep in mind, though, that birth and *bandha* do not guarantee liberation. This is Madhvācārya’s *svarūpatraividhya*, three-fold classification of natural kinds, outlined earlier in Chapter 3. Some *jīvas*, the *mukti-yogyas*, are destined to erase the *ajñāna*, to earn the *prasāda*, grace, of Viṣṇu, and to be granted *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge, of *brahman*, and *mokṣa*, while others are *nitya-saṃsārins*, destined to remain in the cycle, or *tamo-yogyas*, destined to reside for eternity in Hell.

Tamo-yogyas, unable to understand the true nature of the universe, namely, that Viṣṇu is the only independent entity and that the universe is governed by *pañcabheda*, five-fold difference, will remain in the cycle, while *mukti-yogyas* are destined to understand and will be released from their bonds and will be granted *mokṣa*.⁷ Difference occupies the core of Mādhva Vedānta. But does this difference also apply to the attributes that seem so to be shared by both *brahman* and the *jīva*? If the *jīva* is different from and dependent upon, Viṣṇu, then is their relationship somehow reflected in its attributes? Are *jīvas* imperfect reflections of the grandeur of Viṣṇu? How else does Madhvācārya characterize the *jīva*?

⁶ *atastasya so ‘nādinā puṇyena pāpena cānubadhaḥ* | BSB 2.3.29.

⁷ *vailakṣaṇyaṃ tayor jñātvā mucyate badhyate ...* | VTV. See subsequent passages for more examples of false beliefs possessed by those who are destined to remain bound.

Bimba-pratimba-vāda, theory of reflection

According to Madhvācārya, the essence of the *jīva* is knowledge, bliss and other attributes that are also possessed by *brahman*.⁸ Still, that the two share these attributes does not mean that the *jīva* and *brahman* are also identical as they are in the Advaita school. Instead, Madhvācārya understands this intersection to mean that the *jīva* is merely a reflection of *brahman*. This is called Madhvācārya's *bimba-pratibimba-vāda*, theory of reflection. The *jīva* is related to Viṣṇu as the *pratibimba*, reflection, is to the *bimba*, object of reflection. This metaphor must not be misunderstood to prove the position of the Advaita school, namely that the *jīva* and *brahman* are identical and that the object and its reflection are one and the same.⁹ Instead, this relationship merely illustrates the dependence of the *jīva* upon *brahman*, rather than their identity.

The relationship between the *jīva* and the *brahman* is eternal and cannot end. To distinguish between the eternal and the temporary ones, Madhvācārya holds that there are two types of reflections: *sopādhika*, having an *upādhī*, limiting adjunct, and *anupādhika*, not having one. In a *sopādhika* reflection some extrinsic object is necessary for the reflection to occur. For example, seeing a reflection of the sun on a mirror requires the existence of the mirror. If the mirror is removed, then there is no longer any reflection. The relationship between the *jīva* and the *brahman* is not *sopādhika*, since it is permanent. There is no metaphorical mirror that can be broken or removed. Mutability, moreover, would imply that the relationship between the *pratibimba* and the *bimba* is impermanent. On the other hand, reflections which are *anupādhika*, without a limiting adjunct, do not require anything extrinsic. Madhvācārya offers the example of the reflection of the sun through a rainbow as *anupādhika*, an unconditioned reflection.¹⁰ The seven colors of the rainbow are of the rainwater. The rainwater itself is considered to be the *upādhī*. This dependent and permanent relationship is intrinsic to the *jīva* and does not require an *upādhī* or any other kind of mediator.¹¹ As will become clear below, an awareness of the dependence upon *brahman* is essential for obtaining *mokṣa*.

⁸ *jñānāndādibrahmaguṇā evāsya yataḥ sārāḥ ...* | BSB 2.3.29.

⁹ *... pratibimbatvāc ca na sāmānyam* | BSB 2.3.50.

¹⁰ *sopādhīr anupādhīś ca pratibimbo dvidheyate | jīvaḥ parasyānupādhīrindrācāpo yathā raveḥ ...* | BSB 2.3.50 (from Govindācārya's edition).

¹¹ This is a matter of some debate among Mādhvas who hold that the *jīvas* itself is an *upādhī*. I am reliant on Professor Varakhedi for information about this controversy.

Kartṛtva, agency, svarūpatraividhya, predestination, and karma

It would seem that the individual *jīva* has no *kartṛtva*, agency, whatsoever, given Madhvācārya's theory of *svaṛūpatraividhya*, predestination. Does Madhvācārya actually propose such a strict determinism, or do *jīvas* have some free will? Madhvācārya addresses this question of whether or not the *jīva* has *kartṛtva*, agency, in his BSB and he concludes that ultimately the *jīva* is *paratantra*, dependent, and, has no absolute agency, that is, free will.

To prove why, he first appeals to the validity and utility of *āgama-pramāṇa*, scriptural authority, arguing that some agency is indicated by the very fact that there is *śruti*, whose sole purpose is to teach sentients about *dharma*, law and doctrine. If the status of the *jīva* were not changed by *jñāna*, deriving from *śruti*, then *śruti* and other *āgama* would be purposeless and irrelevant. Since all of the schools of Vedānta presuppose the unquestionable relevance of *śruti*, such an outcome would and could not be the case. Doubting the efficacy and relevance of the *āgama* is impossible for the schools of Vedānta. Besides, *jīvas* learn about *dharma* from these texts and are seen to change their behavior and beliefs thereby proving the efficacy and relevance of them.¹² *Jīvas*, moreover, are also known to seek ways that are conducive to being granted *mokṣa*.¹³ Madhvācārya holds that, given this awareness, it would appear that the *jīva* has agency, albeit limited. The *jīva* can and does act.

According to Madhvācārya, although the *jīva* seems to possess some agency, the agency is partial and not absolute. The *jīva* acts but does not have the freedom to act. Just as *jīvas*, for example, do not have the ability to know whatever they desire to know, similarly, they do not have absolute agency to act however they wish. Why is this the case? Madhvācārya's answer is that the *jīva*'s power is limited, while Viṣṇu's is not.¹⁴

Viṣṇu, moreover, grants the power of the *jīva*. Madhvācārya likens the *jīva* to a stone that is utterly dependent and cannot act on its own.¹⁵ Citing from the *Mahābhārata*, Madhvācārya draws another parallel between the *jīva* and a marionette operated by a puppeteer, where the puppeteer is, of course, Viṣṇu. Draupadi, the epic heroine explains:

¹² *jīvasya kartṛtvābhavā śāstrasyaṣṭāprajayakartṛtvaḥ jīvo 'pi kartā* | BSB 2.3.33.

¹³ *śādhanaḍyupādānapratīṣṭe ca* | BSB 2.3.35.

¹⁴ *yathā jñāna idaṃ jñāsyāmiṣṭy aniyamaḥ pratīyate evaṃ karmaṇyāpi jīvasya* | BSB 2.3.37. *alpaśaktitvā jīvasya* | BSB 2.3.38.

¹⁵ *cetanatve 'py aśmādivadasvatāntravāt svataḥ kartṛtvānupapattirjīvasya* | BSB 2.1.24. This passage is from the *Mahābhārata*, *āranyakaparvan* 3.31.22. Thanks to Arti Dhand for helping me to locate this passage.

‘Creatures are like marionettes [who are] manipulated [by puppeteers]. [Similarly,] He causes the limbs and the body to move.’¹⁶ The *jīva*, then, is not an independent agent at all.

Madhvācārya also compares the relationship between Viṣṇu and the individual *jīva* to the interaction between a master and a carpenter: ‘Just as the carpenter is caused to work [by] the master who [alone] has agency, so too with the *jīva*. And that power to act [held by the *jīva* derives] only from the Highest [One, that is, Viṣṇu] ...’¹⁷ Viṣṇu does not arbitrarily assign ‘work’ to *jīvas*. Though Lord Viṣṇu governs the actions of the individual *jīva*, He does so only according to the *yogyatā*, innate capabilities of each. Viṣṇu is like a master carpenter who does not assign difficult tasks to those who lack the capacity to do the work, but instead assigns projects based on the abilities of the laborer. Viṣṇu is aware of the limitations of the capacities and gifts of the individual *jīvas* and propels the *jīva* in accordance to its effort and previous deeds.¹⁸ The *jīva* can act, but, like a junior carpenter, can only perform prescribed activities.

Madhvācārya’s citation from the *Bhaviṣyat Parvan* is a concise summary of his position on *karṭṛtva*, agency:

Lord [Viṣṇu] makes [the *jīva*] do everything only in accordance with its previous actions, effort and capacity. That [action is known to be] the Lord’s own [action]. There is no flaw [in Viṣṇu] and there [remains without any complexity] the perfect power of Hari [that is, Viṣṇu] due to the beginninglessness of the [innate capacity in the *jīvas*].¹⁹

Madhvācārya thus posits that the *jīva* acts in a predetermined way.

Summing up, Madhvācārya offers a strict determinism. The *jīva* is predestined and unable to alter her or his *svarūpa*, natural capacities, and depends entirely on Viṣṇu to act at all.

¹⁶ *yathā dārūmayīm yoṣāṃ naraḥ stirasamāhitaḥ | iṅgatyāṅgamaṅgāni tathā rājannimāḥ prajāḥ iti bhārate* | BSB 2.1.24.

¹⁷ *yathā takṣṇaḥ kārayitṛṇiyatatvaṃ karṭṛtvaṃ ca vidyate evaṃ jīvasyāpi* | BSB 2.3.40.

¹⁸ *tato ‘prayojakatvaṃ śāstrasya nāpadyate | kṛtaprayatnāpekṣatvāttatprerakatvasya* | BSB 2.3.42.

¹⁹ *pūrvakarma prayatnaṃ ca saṃskāraṃ cāpy apekṣya tu | īśvaraḥ kārayetsarvaṃ tacceśvarakṛtaṃ svayam | anāditvādadoṣaś ca pūrṇasaktitvato hareḥ iti bhaviṣyatparvaṇi* | BSB 2.3.42.

Adhikāra, eligibility

According to Madhvācārya, everyone does not possess *adhikāra*, eligibility for acquiring knowledge of *brahman* and obtaining *mokṣa*.²⁰ Each and every *jīva* does not have full access to Mādhva doctrine, the source of the knowledge that is efficacious for learning about the nature of *brahman*, for obtaining *mokṣa*, release, and for learning the intricacies of Mādhva dialectics.²¹ Eligibility, like so much in the Mādhva universe, is stratified. Some *jīvas* are more eligible than others. Some have access to knowledge that speeds their attainment of *mokṣa*, while others are privy only to partial or incomplete knowledge. Who has *adhikāra*, eligibility, to learn about *brahman* and prepare herself or himself for *mokṣa*? Who has partial knowledge?²²

Madhvācārya directly addresses eligibility requirements in his gloss of the first *pada*, complete word, of the first *sūtra*, decree, of the *Brahma Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa: ‘Then, therefore, the inquiry into *brahman*.’²³ Taking Madhvācārya’s commentary into consideration, the expanded passage reads, ‘Therefore, after having met the requirements for eligibility, the inquiry into *brahman* is to be undertaken.’²⁴ Madhvācārya examines these issues in his BSB and thereby establishes rules and regulations as to who can and cannot study the nature of *brahman*.

Madhvācārya’s rich and complex ontology requires that he determine the eligibility for a wide variety of *cetanas*, sentient beings, both human and non-human. Not surprisingly, he restricts eligibility to a select group of sentient beings based on gender and *varṇa*, class. In the human realm, males of the highest three classes who have undergone the *upanayana* rite, also known as the *dvijas*, the twice born, namely the *brahmins*, priests, *kṣatriyas*, warriors, and *vaiśyas*, merchants, and a select group of women are eligible to access texts and doctrines.²⁵ The sacred initiation rite is, arguably, the most important eligibility prerequisite for

²⁰ *na sarveśām adhikāraḥ* | BSB 3.4.10.

²¹ See Sarma’s *Epistemologies and the Limitations of Philosophical Inquiry: Doctrine in Mādhva Vedānta* (forthcoming) for more on the extent to which Madhvācārya posited an insider epistemology.

²² For detailed analyses of these categories and issues see Sarma, *Exclusivist Strategies in Mādhva Vedānta*, Sarma, ‘Regulating Religious Reading: Access to Texts in Mādhva Vedānta’ and Sarma’s *Epistemologies*.

²³ *athāto brahmajijñāsā* | BS 1.1.1.

²⁴ *athaśabdo maṅgalārtho ‘dhikārānantaryārthaś ca | ataḥśabdo hetvarthaḥ* | BSB 1.1.1.

²⁵ *traivarnikānāṃ vedokte samyag bhatimatām harau | āhur apy uttamastrīṇām adhikāraṃ tu vaidike* | BSB 1.1.1. See Klostermaier, *Introduction to Hinduism*, and Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, for more on *varṇa* and *jāti*.

the majority of sentients who seek religious training. The *upanayana* ceremony, investiture with a sacred thread, is regarded as a second birth. Hence those who undergo the ceremony are described as *dvija*, twice born. Along with a number of women, *dvijas* are accorded the most complete knowledge necessary for attaining *mokṣa*.

Male members of the *śūdra*, serf, class and women from all classes only have limited access to summaries of Mādhva doctrine that are conveyed orally and summarily by *āpta-gurus*, authoritative teachers, and are unable to pursue a deep study of texts. Madhvācārya writes:

For women, *śūdras* and unworthy Brahmins, there is eligibility with regard to the knowledge [that is found] in the *tantras*. However, [they are eligible to hear only] a portion [of the text when it] is narrated [to them] and [they are] not [eligible] with regard to [direct] study from a [*śruti*] text.²⁶

What are the *tantras*? According to Jayatīrtha the term *tantra* refers to the *Pañcarātrāgamas* and other texts.²⁷ These contain different kinds of information about the nature of *brahman* than the restricted *śruti* texts. The members of this group thus require *āpta-gurus*, authoritative teachers, for only limited instruction of sections of the Mādhva canon.

Are these limitations eternal? If one cannot gain liberating knowledge in this lifetime, can one gain it in subsequent ones? Madhvācārya holds that these limitations may not exist for a *jīva* in subsequent births. Some *jīvas* may take more time to gain accessibility to *brahma-jñāna* than others and this depends upon their *sva rūpas*, innate abilities, and previous *karma*, actions. These abilities and *karma* can result in a birth as either male or female, in any of the four *varṇas*. A *śūdra*-woman, for example, who is a *mukti-yogya*, may eventually be reborn as a male *brahmin*, thereby joining the elite few who have access to *brahma-jñāna*, knowledge of *brahman*. On the other hand, a male *brahmin* who is a *tamo-yogya* and acts like a *brahmabandhu*, wicked *brahmin*, may eventually be reborn as a *śūdra*!²⁸

Still, the mobility described here is a matter of debate among contemporary Mādhva scholars who argue that the *jīva* itself has a

²⁶ *strīśūdrabrahmabandhūnām tantrajñāne 'dhikāritā | ekadeśe parokte tu na tu granthapurassare* | BSB 1.1.1.

²⁷ *tantram pañcarātrādi* | TP 1.1.1.

²⁸ See Sarma, 'When is a *brahmin* a *brahmabandhu*, Wicked Brahmin?' for more on this unusual and liminal status. See also Ananthamurthy's *Samśkāra* for a fictional account of the consternation and crisis the death of a *brahmabandhu* incites in a Mādhva community.

gender. Some argue that a male cannot have a female *jīva* while a female can have a male *jīva*. The example given above of a female *sūdra* will only be possible if her *jīva* is male.²⁹

If one is an *adhikāri* and can eventually be granted *mokṣa*, what must one do to accelerate advancement? Although one cannot be certain that one is a *mukti-yogya*, one can certainly choose to act as if one were. This is reminiscent of Pascal's Wager. Pascal argued that it was better to wage that God exists than not. If one bets and loses, then there is no loss. On the other hand, if one bets against the existence of God and loses there is a lot more at stake!³⁰ Similarly, acting as if one were a *mukti-yogya* is certainly more advantageous than acting as if one were not! What kinds of actions, dispositions and beliefs must one have? How do *mukti-yogyas* behave in their pursuit of *mokṣa*? Can one be granted this highest goal simply through performing the right rituals or by possessing the right knowledge?

The path to *mokṣa*, liberation

Mokṣa, liberation, is the highest among all human goals.³¹

Though it certainly seems obvious among the followers of Vedānta that *mokṣa* is the most desirable aim, all sentient beings may not realize that it is. Why must *mokṣa* be the goal of sentients? How does *mokṣa* rank in comparison to other goals? According to the *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*, *Manu's Treatises on Law*, there are three *puruṣārthas*, human goals, namely *dharma*, duty, *artha*, material things, and *kāma*, pleasure.³² Although Madhvācārya acknowledges them, he believes that they are impermanent and mixed with sorrow, while *mokṣa* is not and results in eternal happiness. Any intelligent man according to Madhvācārya would choose to pursue *mokṣa* above the other two.³³

The schools of Vedānta offer three methods by which one can be granted *mokṣa*: *karma-yoga*, the path to *mokṣa* via action and ritual, *jñāna-yoga*, the path via knowledge, and *bhakti-yoga*, the path via

²⁹ I am indebted to Professor Varakhedi for informing me about this debate. The issue, he explains, derives from a desire among scholars to account for gender in *mokṣa*.

³⁰ See *Pensées and other writings* by Blaise Pascal.

³¹ *mokṣo hi sarvapuruṣārthottamaḥ* | VTV.

³² See *Mānava-dharma-śāstra* 2.13.

³³ *dharmārthakāmāḥ sarve 'pi na nityā mokṣa eva hi | nityas tasmāt tadarthāya yateta matimānnaraḥ iti bhāllaveyaśruti | anityatvāt saduḥkhatvānna dharmadyāḥ paraṃ sukhāṃ | mokṣa eva parānandaḥ saṃsāre parivartatām iti ca bhārate* | VTV.

devotion. Each school of Vedānta holds that some combination of the three is more efficacious than others. Which path does Madhvācārya prescribe? Are they equally efficacious? Or is one method preferable over the others?

Karma-yoga, the path via action and ritual

Among the schools of Hindu philosophical theology, *karma-yoga* is the path to *mokṣa* via ritual action prescribed in the Vedas and other *āgamas*. These activities include *yajñas*, sacrifices, of varying degrees of complexity to *devas*, gods, and *devīs*, goddesses, of the Vedic pantheon and other *vidhis*, obligatory duties, that are prescribed according to *varṇa* and *āśrama*, stage in life. The four *āśramas* are *brahmacārya*, celibate studentship, *gṛhastha*, householder, *vānaprastha*, forest dweller, and *saṁnyāsa*, ascetic.³⁴ The Mīmāṃsā school of thought, the precursor to the schools of Vedānta, held that the way to *svarga*, heaven, was only via *karma-yoga*. Their sentiment was put forth in the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*: ‘He who desires *svarga*, heaven, must sacrifice.’³⁵ Their theory was changed significantly by all of the schools of Vedānta.³⁶ For example, in his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Madhvācārya agrees with his predecessors that *varṇāśrama-dharma*, obligatory duty according to class and stage, must be performed.³⁷ Lists of daily rituals that ought to be performed are also found in Madhvācārya’s *Sadācārasmṛti*.

Despite its importance, *karma-yoga* is still only the first step in the path to *mokṣa* because in some sense, acting in any way at all solidifies one’s existence in *saṁsāra* and in the cycle of birth and rebirth. Recall that although *jīvas* are predestined, their future births are determined by the *puṇya* and *pāpa karma* that they accumulate. All action, whether it is *puṇya* or *pāpa*, is fuel for the cycle of rebirth within which all are trapped. Madhvācārya cites from a *śruti* explaining that *jīvas* are reborn precisely because of action: ‘Then, [born] in the world with the residue [accumulated from previous actions], he performs actions and returns

³⁴ For more on the *āśrama* system see Klostermaier, Olivelle’s *Āśrama System*, and the *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*.

³⁵ *svargakāmo yajeta* | Jaimini’s *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* 6.1.1 and following. Although *svarga*, heaven, is not identical to *mokṣa*, both are the objectives of the respective systems.

³⁶ Madhvācārya’s arguments against the Mīmāṃsā view can be found in his *Karma Nirṇaya*.

³⁷ *ato niyataṁ varṇaśramocitaṁ karma kuru* | BGB 3.8.

again and again.³⁸ In fact, the accumulation of *karma* begins when one reaches fourteen years old: ‘From fourteen [onwards], he acts because of [his Vedic] obligations but [each of these] actions [causes] ten [more] births.’ Madhvācārya thus concludes that *karma* creates *karma*, rather than dissipates it and that *karma* alone is not the means by which one is granted *mokṣa*.³⁹

It would seem to follow that if one were able to find a way to avoid accumulating both *punya* and *pāpa karma*, then one could escape from the cycle. One may think that inaction is an obvious alternative, but it is impossible since the *Vedas* and other *āgama* are filled with rituals and other injunctions that must be performed. Besides, knowingly ignoring injunctions creates *pāpa*, demerit! This quandary is solved in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, a text in the Mādhva canon. In a conversation with the epic hero Arjuna, the god Kṛṣṇa states that *niṣkāma-karma*, acting without desire for the fruits of one’s actions, is the way to act in the world without accumulating any *karma*. Madhvācārya wholeheartedly agrees with this characterization, as is evident from his commentary: ‘[Reaching] the state of being free from bondage is [possible] by means of a lack of desire [for the fruits of one’s actions].’⁴⁰ He also cites from *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*: ‘[Actions performed] without desire for the fruits [they give] are called “complete-[actions].” Practicing complete [actions leads to] the eternality of *brahman* [that is, *mokṣa*].’⁴¹ *Karma-yoga* must be performed with a foundation of proper *jñāna* for it to be efficacious for obtaining *mokṣa*. Otherwise *karma-yoga* will have the opposite effect, namely helping to maintain one’s bondage in the cycle of birth and rebirth. Enlightened action is the first step towards *mokṣa*. *Karma-yoga* is subservient to *jñāna-yoga* and is not, by itself, an independent means to *mokṣa*. To prove this point, Madhvācārya cites from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.1.10: ‘Whatever one does with knowledge [and] with faith, that is more efficacious.’⁴²

Besides knowing that actions should be performed *niṣkāma*, without desire for their fruits, what else comprises *jñāna-yoga*? If *karma-yoga* is

³⁸ *tato śeṣeṇemaṃ lokamāyāti punaḥ karma kuuate punar gacchati puna rāgachatīti śruteḥ* | BSB 3.1.8.

³⁹ ... *ācaturdaśamādvarṣātkarmaṇi ... karotyeyam* | *ataḥ karmakṣayānmuktiḥ kuta eva bhaviṣyatītyādismṛteś ca* | BSB 3.1.8.

⁴⁰ *abandhakatvaṃ tvakāmenaiva bhavati* | BGB 3.4.

⁴¹ *niṣkāmaṃ jñānapūrvam tu nivṛttaṃ iti cocyate* | *nivṛttaṃ sevamānastu brahmābhyeti sanātanam* | BGB 3.4. This passage is taken from *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*, 12.89.

⁴² *yadeva vidyayā karoti śraddhayopaniṣadā tadeva vīryavattaraṃ bhavati ti śeṣatvaśruteḥ* | BSB 3.4.4.

insufficient, can *jñāna* alone lead to the destruction of the fetters of rebirth, to *mokṣa*?

Jñāna-yoga, the path via knowledge

Having heard, reflected and meditated, annihilating ignorance and misunderstanding and banishing doubt, one obtains the vision of *brahman*.⁴³

The path to *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge of *brahman*, and then to *mokṣa*, requires that the *jīva* study the *āgamas* to learn about *brahman*. These *āgamas* were transmitted orally, which is why Madhvācārya and other scholars of Vedānta refer to studying them as ‘hearing’ rather than ‘reading.’⁴⁴ As already mentioned, they are not available to all because one must have proper eligibility to access them. There are other precursors, such as appropriate disposition and temperament, necessary to qualify for proper *jñāna* besides class and gender requirements. For example, Madhvācārya holds that *brahma-jñāna*, knowledge of *brahman*, must be accompanied with the condition of tranquility and the restraint of the senses.⁴⁵ When one has satisfied these requirements one must seek a *guru*, teacher, since the *āgamas* cannot be studied without one. Madhvācārya enjoins: ‘He, whose goal is knowledge of Him, who holds a sacrificial stick for the sacred fire, approaches a *guru* who is [both] versed in the *Vedas* and devoted to *brahman*.’⁴⁶ This is a portion of the passage as it appears in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12. The passage in its entirety is informative of the required disposition and temperament:

Let the *brahmin* whose goal is knowledge of Him, who holds a sacrificial stick for the sacred fire, after having examined the worlds which are known through [ritual] action, [who is] indifferent to worldly objects, [realizing that] that which is not created [*mokṣa*, liberation] is not obtained by [ritual] action, for the

⁴³ *śrūtā matvā tathā dhyātvā tadajñānaviparayaṃ | saṃśayaṃ ca parāṇudyā labhate brahmadarśanam* | BSB 3.3.43.

⁴⁴ Contemporary times has led to the near destruction of the practice of orally transmitting the texts. Even the *maṭhas* rely on written transmissions and are now publishing them as books and on the Internet.

⁴⁵ *yady api jñānaiva mokṣo niyatatastathāpi jñānī śamadamādyupetaḥ syāt* | BSB 3.4.27.

⁴⁶ *tadvijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet samitpāṇiḥ śrotṛyaṃ brahmaṇiṣṭham* | BSB 1.1.1.

sake of understanding that, approach a *guru* who is [both] versed in the *Vedas* and devoted to *brahman*.⁴⁷

When the eager student has found an equally eager *guru*, the novice must hear, reflect and meditate on the teachings that have been imparted if he desires to obtain *mokṣa*.⁴⁸ These activities, moreover, must be repeated and do not suddenly lead to *mokṣa* after being performed only once.⁴⁹

The content of a student's reflection must be *brahman* and its *guṇas*. According to Madhvācārya, among Viṣṇu's *guṇas*, perfection is the most important since all others follow from it.⁵⁰ Aspirants can meditate on Viṣṇu according to their individual abilities. *Tāratamya*, gradation, again prevails. He is to be meditated on by men as 'the *ātman* [that is, Lord, of] being, intelligence and bliss,' by the lord of the gods as the one with many attributes in due order and by Brahmā as the one who possesses all of the attributes. *Jñāna-yoga* is also graded since Viṣṇu is to be known by all sentient beings to the best of their abilities. The differences in knowledge of Viṣṇu are in accordance with *tāratamya*, the gradation of *jīvas*.⁵¹

Thus, a proper understanding of His attributes can be obtained from the *āgamas* and must be conveyed by an *āpta-guru*, authoritative teacher. It is also learned via debate with scholars of rival schools. Such *jñāna*, knowledge, would also include Madhvācārya's commentaries on the *āgamas*, as well as his basic epistemology and ontology of Mādhva Vedānta, in addition to the *śruti* and *smṛti* texts upon which Madhvācārya's position is supposed to be based. Though *jñāna* is

⁴⁷ *parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirvedam āyān nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena | tadviññānārthaṃ sa gurum evābhigacchet samitpāṇiḥ śrotriyaṃ brahmaṇiṣṭhaṃ | Mundaka Upaniṣad, 1.2.12.*

⁴⁸ *nityaśaḥ śravaṇaṃ caiva mananaṃ dhyānam eva ca | kartavyam eva puruṣair brahmadarśanamicchubhiḥ iti brhattantre | BSB 4.1.2.* Madhvācārya quotes this passage from the *Brhat Tantra* which, according to contemporary Mādhva scholars, has been lost.

⁴⁹ *ātma vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ ityādīnāṃ nāgniṣṭomādivadekavāreṇaiva phalaprāptiḥ | BSB 4.1.1.* Part of this passage is taken from *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.5.*

⁵⁰ *nārāyaṇatantre ca | ādhivyādhinimittena vikṣiptamanaso 'pi tu | guṇānāṃ smaraṇāśaktau viṣṇor brahmatvam eva tu | smartavyaṃ satataṃ tattva na kadācītparityajet | atra sarvaguṇaṇaṃ ca matontarbhāva iṣyate | BSB 4.1.6.* This passage is cited from the *Nārāyaṇa Tantra*, another lost text.

⁵¹ *saccidānanda ātmeti mānuṣais tu sureśvaraiḥ | yathākramaṃ bahuguṇair brahmaṇā tvakhilair guṇaiḥ | AB 3.4. ... jñeyo viṣṇur viśeṣas tu jñāne syād uttarottaram | AB 3.5.*

necessary, is it sufficient for obtaining *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge, of *brahman* and *mokṣa*? Is *jñāna-yoga* enough?

Bhakti-yoga, the path via devotion

Bhakti, devotion, comes from knowledge of the greatness [of God] and is the strongest [in all circumstances when compared] to others. *Mokṣa* [is achieved] by this [*bhakti*] and in no other manner.⁵²

Madhvācārya holds that *bhakti-yoga*, that path via devotion, is the only way to achieve *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge of *brahman*, and, subsequently, *mokṣa*. Madhvācārya's emphasis on *bhakti* as the only method for obtaining *mokṣa* distinguishes his position from ones in which knowledge alone is sufficient.⁵³ *Bhakti* is the central component in Madhvācārya's soteriology. Not only is *bhakti-yoga*, the path via devotion, the sole method for obtaining *mokṣa*, but it also most accurately characterizes the experience of *mokṣa*. Fostering *bhakti* and becoming a *bhakta* is both the means and the ends of Mādhva Vedānta.

Given the importance of *bhakti*, all other activities serve to enhance it. For example, Madhvācārya states that behaviors that are integral to *karma-yoga*, such as giving alms, going on pilgrimages, ascetic practices and performing Vedic rituals, are merely aids to meditation and devotion.⁵⁴ *Karma-yoga* is not efficacious unless it is combined with the required devotional disposition, thereby leading to enlightened action. But how does one obtain the desired disposition? How does one learn to become a *bhakta*? If *jñāna*, knowledge, of the ontological and epistemological components of the universe, is necessary for *karma-yoga* to be efficacious, then how can one act with *bhakti* if one knows little or nothing about its object, namely Viṣṇu?

Karma-yoga requires *jñāna-yoga* to be complete. As already mentioned, *jñāna* alone is also insufficient. In fact, *jñāna* without *bhakti* is as useless as *bhakti* without *jñāna*. Knowing the intricacies of the Mādhva system without having devotion to Lord Viṣṇu does not result in *puṇya* and certainly does not lead to *aparokṣa-jñāna* and *mokṣa*. Similarly, devotion to Lord Viṣṇu without an awareness of His place in the hierarchy of the Mādhva ontology is also empty and ineffective. Madhvācārya states: 'Hari [that is, Viṣṇu] is the master of all for [all]

⁵² *māhātmyajñānapūrvastu suddṛṣṭasavato 'hidkaḥ | sneho bhaktir iti proktastayā muktir na cānyathā* | MBhTN 1.85.

⁵³ Some argue that the Advaita school holds that knowledge alone is sufficient.

⁵⁴ *dānatīrthatapoyajñāpūrvāḥ sarve 'pi sarvadā | aṅgāni harisevāyām bhaktistivekā vimuktaye | bhaviṣyatparvacanamityetadakhilam param* | MBhTN 1.98–100.

eternity. [All] are under the control [of the] Highest [One]. This *tāratamya* and the supremacy of Hari are to be known.”⁵⁵ Though *bhakti* is still more important than *jñāna*, proper *bhakti* has its roots in proper *jñāna* and *vice versa*. *Bhakti* must be accompanied by *jñāna*.⁵⁶ Devotees must possess the correct emotional state, namely an enlightened devotion, in order to be granted *mokṣa*.

Not surprisingly, the extent to which one is and can be devoted to Viṣṇu is part of the innate character of the individual *jīva*. Some *jīvas* possess a capacity to be more devoted than others. As I explain below, this gradation among the *bhaktas*, devotees, is replicated in *mokṣa*, which is itself a locus for gradation. Increased devotion in *samsāra* leads to increased bliss in *mokṣa*, all the while dependent on the capacity of the devotee.

It is easy to recognize the *bhakti* of those who have *adhikāra*, eligibility. Not only will they be performing the daily rituals as prescribed by Madhvācārya in his *Sadācārasmṛti* and in the *āgamas*, but they will also act and speak in ways that indicate their awareness of their *paratantratva*, dependence, on Viṣṇu and His supremacy. In contrast, determining the level of *bhakti* for those who are not *adhikāris*, such as women, is not so easy. Madhvācārya holds that beauty is the best indicator of a woman’s *bhakti* and other virtuous attributes. Even the most stupid observer, he playfully suggests, can recognize beauty! Therefore, it is a reliable indicator of devotion.⁵⁷ Still, natural beauty is misleading and must be observed along with the thirty-two characteristics for the bearer to be a true *bhakta*.⁵⁸ Madhvācārya warns that there are women who have beauty but do not possess the thirty-two characteristics. These may be *asurīs*, female demons, or even perfume wearers, who can trick the unaware observer into thinking that they are expressing *bhakti* for Lord Viṣṇu!⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *sarveṣāṃ ca harirṇityaṃ niyantā tadvaśāḥ pare | tāratmyaṃ tato jñeyaṃ sarvocatvaṃ harestatthā |* MBhTN 1.79.

⁵⁶ *jñānapūrvāḥ paraḥ sneho nityo bhaktir |* MBhTN 1.104. *Bhakti* is highest [form of] love [offered] uninterrupted [and] accompanied by *jñāna*, knowledge.

⁵⁷ *yatra rūpaṃ tatra guṇāḥ bhaktyādyāḥ strīṣu nityaśaḥ | rūpaṃ hi stūladṛṣṭināṃ dṛśyaṃ vyaktaṃ tato hi tat |* MBhTN 2.36.

⁵⁸ *tac ca naisargikaṃ rūpaṃ dvātriṃśallakṣaṇairiyutam |* MBhTN 2.38. These are the same ones described in Chapter 2 that were possessed by the *āpta-guru*, reliable teacher.

⁵⁹ *nālakṣaṇaṃ vapumātraṃ guṇahetuḥ kathaṇcana | āsurīṇāṃ varādestu vapumātraṃ bhaviṣyati | na lakṣaṇānyatastāsāṃ naiva bhaktiḥ kathaṇcana |* MBhTN 2.38–39.

Is *karma-yoga*, along with *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*, what is needed to obtain *aparokṣa-jñāna*, the precursor to *mokṣa*? Aren't these enough?

Prasāda, grace

It would seem these paths to *mokṣa* are clearly defined and that interested adherents need only show their devotion in all of their enlightened actions. At first glance, it even appears that the *bhakta* has some control over how or when he is granted *mokṣa*. This, of course, could not be the case, given *tāratamya* and the hierarchical nature of the Mādhva universe and the dependent nature of the *jīva*. In fact, the *bhakta* requires the *prasāda*, grace, of both his *guru*, teacher, and Viṣṇu in order to obtain *mokṣa*. If neither is present, achieving *mokṣa* is impossible. Knowing one's place in the hierarchy of the universe is both the method and the objective of the Mādhva system. Acknowledging and understanding one's position within the hierarchy of the universe is at the center of Mādhva ontology, epistemology and soteriology. It is the only way to obtain *prasāda*, the intangible reward which is essential to acquiring *mokṣa*.

What is the character of *guru-prasāda*, the grace of the *guru*? What is the mechanism of cause of Viṣṇu-*prasāda*, the grace of Viṣṇu? How do these assist the *bhakta* in his attempt to escape the cycle of birth and rebirth?

Guru-prasāda, grace of the teacher

The grace of the *guru* is powerful. No other is more powerful. Thus, for the sake of obtaining *mokṣa*, one must hear, [reflect on and meditate on the teachings of the *guru*].⁶⁰

Madhvācārya's position requires *bhaktas* to seek a *guru* and to learn the nature of *brahman* within an institutional setting. *Bhaktas* are thus discouraged from learning about *brahman* on their own. Even if students were to study on their own, their knowledge would not assist them in obtaining *mokṣa*. Granting such importance to *guru-prasāda* also prevents students who do not possess (or lose) the prescribed disposition from obtaining *mokṣa*. One simply cannot obtain *mokṣa* by

⁶⁰ *guruprasādo balān na tasmādbalavattaram | tathā 'pi śravaṇādiśca kartavyo mokṣasiddhaye |* BSB 3.3.45.

unauthorized means. Even if one half-heartedly studies with a *guru*, if one does not have *guru-prasāda*, then the *guru* may not impart all of the required knowledge! For this reason, the student must respect and honor the *guru*, to whom he is completely indebted and upon whom he is completely dependent.⁶¹

Obtaining *guru-prasāda* is yet another place in Mādhva Vedānta where the *bhakta* is compelled to recognize hierarchy and the centrality of *tāratamya*. Such a recognition leads to a desired disposition and to enlightened action, without which it is impossible for the *bhakta* to proceed towards *mokṣa*. But, *guru-prasāda* is not enough. *Bhaktas* must obtain the assistance of Madhvācārya himself before obtaining Viṣṇu-*prasāda*. But how did Madhvācārya become an *āpta-guru* and gain the ability to gain the true understanding of the nature of *brahman*?

Madhvācārya-Vāyu as guru

Figures in the history of religions, such as the Buddha, earned their insights into the nature of the universe on their own after prolonged study and meditation or, like Mohammed, had such truths revealed to them by God. Such explanations (or justifications) of the authority of a religious figure are often found in hagiographical literature produced after her or his death. In contrast to these figures, Madhvācārya boldly informs his readers in colophons and elsewhere in his own texts that he is the third *avatāra* of Vāyu, the wind God, the son of Viṣṇu and Śrī.⁶² His knowledge of the universe is not derived or learned. Rather, it is part of his *svarūpa*, self-nature.

In fact, Vāyu incarnated himself two times before he appeared as Madhvācārya. Hanumān, the monkey deity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic and Bhīma, one of the Paṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata* epic, are the first and second incarnations. According to the stories found in these two *āgamas*, both assist Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, two *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, in defeating *rākṣasas*, demons, and others who threaten the stability of *dharma*.⁶³ Many more passages extolling the glories of Madhvācārya-Vāyu can be found in Paṇḍitācārya's *Madhvavijaya*.

⁶¹ *samyag lakṣaṇasampanno yaddadyāt suprasannadhīḥ | śiṣyāya satyaṃ bhavati tatsarvaṃ nātra saṃśayaḥ | agamyatvāt haristasminnāviṣṭo muktido bhavet | nātiprasannahrdayo yaddadyāt gururapyasau | na tatsatyaṃ bhavettasmādarcanīyo gurussadā* | MBhTN 1.123–125.

⁶² *vāyuṃ hareḥ sutam ...* | *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, 3.15.1.

⁶³ *tasmād balapravṛttasya rāmakṛṣṇnātmano hareḥ | antaraṅgaṃ hanumāṃś ca bhīmastatkāryasādhakau* | MBhTN 2.34–35.

According to Madhvācārya, Vāyu has a dynamic position as a mediator between devotees and Viṣṇu. In addition to guiding *jīvas* who are about to achieve *mokṣa*, he guides some to their next *deha* in *samsāra*.⁶⁴ Indeed, all, *mukti-yogya* devotees must thus rely on Vāyu to reach *brahman*.⁶⁵

Madhvācārya's most informative autobiographical statement occurs at the end of his BSB:

Vāyu, whose three forms are described in the *Vedas*, who has the great radiance of a god, who is bestowed upon [us] and, in this way, visible [to us], whose first manifestation was as a messenger to Rāma, whose second was as [Bhīma,] the destroyer [of the Kaurava army] and whose third incarnation is Madhva by whom this *bhāṣya*, commentary, is made for the sake of [establishing the supremacy of] Hari [that is, Viṣṇu].⁶⁶

Vāyu, also known as Madhvācārya, is the intermediary lying between the *jīva* and *brahman*. Without his assistance, achieving *mokṣa* is completely impossible. Believing himself to be an *avatāra*, Madhvācārya places himself in the penultimate position in his hierarchy. But even his assistance is insufficient. The *bhakta* still requires Viṣṇu-*prasāda* in order to obtain *mokṣa*.

Viṣṇu-prasāda, grace of Viṣṇu

Direct realization of the highest Lord [comes] only from grace and not [from] the efforts of the *jīva*.⁶⁷

The *jīva* is utterly dependent upon Lord Viṣṇu and this dependence is made most obvious in the need for Viṣṇu-*prasāda*. The reward of Viṣṇu-*prasāda* is a natural outcome of *bhakti-yoga*. When *bhaktas* show their awareness of the hierarchy of the universe, namely the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu, then they are awarded for their submission.

Madhvācārya believes that, just as there are different degrees of *bhakti*, there is a corresponding difference in the type of *prasāda*.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁴ *yadā ha vai puruṣo 'smāllokātpraitī sa vāyumāgacchatī vāyoḥ* | BSB 4.3.1. This is a citation from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 7.10.1.

⁶⁵ ... *vāyumupagamyā tenaiva brahma gacchati* ... | BSB 4.3.5.

⁶⁶ *yasya trīṇyudītāni vedavacane rūpaṇi divyānyalaṃ baṭ tadr̥ṣatamitham eva nihitāṃ devasya bhargo mahat* | *vāyo rāmavaconayaṃ prathamakam prkṣo dvitīyaṃ vapurmadvho yattu trītyakam kṛtamidaṃ bhāṣyaṃ harau tena hi* | BSB 4.4.23.

⁶⁷ *paramātmāparokṣyaṃ ca tatprasādād eva na jīvaśaktyeti* ... | BSB 3.2.22.

⁶⁸ *tasya ca bhaktijñānādervṛddhihrāsabhāktvaṃ vidyēt* | BSB 3.2.20.

third and lowest level is *karma-yoga*. The *prasāda* that is earned by this *bhakta* is birth in *svarga*, heaven.⁶⁹ The second and middling level is *jñāna-yoga*. Following this path leads to birth in *janaloka*, a place of temporary residence even more desirable than *svarga*. The first and highest level is *bhakti-yoga* and leads to the highest degree of Viṣṇu-*prasāda*, namely *mokṣa*.⁷⁰

Madhvācārya holds that both the power of the *guru* and Viṣṇu are integral parts of the path to *mokṣa*. After all, according to Madhvācārya, the Lord is attainable to whom He chooses. It is only by His grace, that He reveals His nature to *bhaktas*.⁷¹ What are the characteristics of this moment of divine revelation? How does it differ from *brahma-jñāna* obtained from *āgamas*?

***Aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge, of Viṣṇu**

Madhvācārya believes that one must be granted *aparokṣa-jñāna*, unmediated knowledge, of Viṣṇu, in order to obtain *mokṣa*. With this new knowledge, the level of *bhakti* is enhanced in ways otherwise impossible and it leads directly to *mokṣa*.

It is impossible to skip this penultimate stage in the Mādhva soteriology. *Aparokṣa-jñāna* is to be contrasted with *parokṣa-jñāna*, mediated knowledge. The latter derives from the deep study of the *āgamas*, reflection and mediation, all practiced with the assistance and *prasāda* of an *āpta-guru*. Though this knowledge is necessary for fostering and maintaining proper *bhakti*, it is still different, incomplete and diluted. *Brahma-jñāna* obtained from the *āgamas*, though essential, is merely a means by which one is awarded His grace and then *aparokṣa-jñāna*. Just as the bliss of *brahman* is different from that of the *jīva*, He is different from the image that occurs amidst deep meditation.⁷² The image in meditation is merely a reflection of the Lord. The practitioner of meditation falsely thinks that the image is the *bimba* form

⁶⁹ Although it is the final goal for the Mīmāṃsā school, *svarga* is believed by Madhvācārya to be a place of temporary residence, albeit a pleasant one, *en route* to *mokṣa*.

⁷⁰ *karmanā tvadhamah proktaḥ prasādaḥ śravaṇādibhiḥ | madhyamo jñānasampattyā prasādastūtataṃ mataḥ | prasādāttvadhamādvīṣṇoḥ svargalokaḥ prakīrtitaḥ | madhyamājjanalokādiruttamastveva muktidaḥ* | BSB 1.1.1.

⁷¹ *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena [labhyas tasyaiṣātmā vivṛṇute tanūṃ svām]* | BSB 1.1.1. Cited from the *Katha Upaniṣad*, 2.23.

⁷² *yathā jīvānadāderanyadbrahma tathopāsākr̥tād api* | BSB 3.2.37.

of Viṣṇu.⁷³ After being graced with *aparokṣa-jñāna*, the true nature of *brahman* is revealed and the adherent has increased *bhakti*.

The divine vision includes perceiving *brahman* in His *bimba* form. As already explained, the *jīva* is a *pratibimba*, reflection, of Viṣṇu, the *bimba*, reflected. This is Madhvācārya's *bimba-pratibimba-vāda*. The deserving *jīva* will see Viṣṇu as He is, rather than as an imperfect reflection. Upon getting *darśan*, vision, of Viṣṇu, the *pāpa*, demeritorious, *karma* will be eliminated and those created by future activities will not be accumulated. The mechanism of *karma* and subsequent birth in *saṁsāra* will be impeded and the *jīva* is guaranteed to be granted *mokṣa*.⁷⁴ In the meanwhile, the *prārabdha*, latent, *karma* of the *jīva* will evolve and eventually dissipate.

According to Madhvācārya, this vision is the climax of intellectual life of all *bhaktas* in *saṁsāra*, worldly experience. *Mokṣa*, of course, is the most desired experience but it is outside of *saṁsāra*. It is the last stage for the devotee who has shown near-complete knowledge of the Mādhva hierarchy and a total submission to the supremacy of Viṣṇu. How does Madhvācārya characterize *mokṣa*? Do all adherents enjoy the same experience of *mokṣa*? How do *jīvas* in *mokṣa* behave?

***Mokṣa*, liberation**

Those whose bodies are [of the nature of] consciousness and bliss enjoy [liberation according to their] desire. And they lack the great power of emitting and creating the universe as well as other powers. And they are powerful according to their desire which is attributed to their excellent inherent natures. They are under no one's control [as they are in *saṁsāra* other than Viṣṇu] and are free from increase and decrease [of the body]. They are free from suffering and other [imperfections and] delight [in] pleasure eternally [and] continually.⁷⁵

⁷³ *paśyanti param brahma citte yatpratibimbatam | brahmaiva pratibimbe yadateṣāṃ phalapradam | tadupāsanaṃ ca bhavati pratimopāsanaṃ yathā | dṛṣyate tvaparokṣeṇa jñānenaiva param padam | upāsanā tvāparokṣyaṃ gamayettatprasādataḥ iti ca brahmatarke |* BSB 3.2.37.

⁷⁴ *yadā muktprasādānāya svayogyam paśyati dhruvam | rūpaṃ harestadā tasya sarvapāpāni bhasmasāt | yānti pūrvānyuttarāṇi na śleṣaṃ yānti kānicit | mokṣaś ca niyatāstasmāt svayogyaharidarśane |* MBhTN 1.128–131.

⁷⁵ *yathā sankalpabhogāś ca cidānanda śarīriṇaḥ | jagatsṛṣṭyādiviṣaye mādḥsāmarthyam apy rte | yatheṣṭa śaktimantaś ca vinā svābhāvikottamān | ananyavaśagāś caiva vṛddhihrāsavivarjitāḥ duḥkhādirahitā nityaṃ modante 'virataṃ sukham |* AB 4.6–7.

Mokṣa is an experience overflowing with *ānanda*, bliss, that inspires *bhakti* and is also filled with *bhakti*. Once the *jīva* has achieved *mokṣa*, the pain and suffering which is an intrinsic part of life in *saṃsāra* is a thing of the past. Like all else in the Mādhva universe, the experience of *mokṣa* differs for each *bhakta* and is dependent upon the amount and degree of *jñāna* and *bhakti*. There is *tāratamya* in *mokṣa* because of the gradation in the devotion towards Him.⁷⁶ This is known as Madhvācārya's *ānanda-tāratamya-vāda*, theory of a gradation in *ānanda*, bliss.⁷⁷

Madhvācārya holds that the gradation in *mokṣa* is not simply a difference in degree of bliss, but that it is manifested in terms of where one resides. Those with more *bhakti* reside nearer to Viṣṇu while those who have less are further away. Some who meditate on Viṣṇu attain release and remain in the lower levels of *mokṣa*. Others experience *mokṣa* in *Anatrickṣa-loka*, the Intermediate Region, in *Svarga*, Heaven, in *Mahar-loka*, the Great Region, in *Jana-loka*, the Region of Creatures, in *Tapo-loka*, the Region of Austerities and others still, in *Satya-loka*, the Region of Truth. Others who have great knowledge reside in *Kṣīrasagare*, the Ocean of Milk. These sites are ordered by the degree of knowledge held by their residents and this is further linked to their proximity to Viṣṇu.⁷⁸

Just as there is a hierarchy with each *varṇa* in Hinduism, namely by *jāti*, caste, there is a gradation within each one of these regions in *mokṣa*. In *Kṣīrasagare*, the Ocean of Milk, there are four grades of devotees; *sālokya*, those simply in the region, *sarūpa*, those similar to Viṣṇu, *sāmīpya*, those close to Him, and *yoga*, those joined with Him.⁷⁹ Though each of these *bhaktas* are in *mokṣa*, their experience of bliss differs in light of their level of *bhakti* and *jñāna*. These *jīvas* are made up of every kind of sentient creature including people, gods such as Brahmā and Rudra and still others.⁸⁰

Though diverse, they can be arranged in a hierarchy with the one ahead possessing *bhakti* and bliss one hundred times the previous. In *mokṣa*, the hierarchy itself is worshipped and is the object of *bhakti*. Those lower on the scale worship those higher up and all worship the

⁷⁶ ... *tāratamyaṃ vimuktigam* | AB 3.3.

⁷⁷ *yathā yathā 'dhikāro viśiṣyate evaṃ muktāvānando viśiṣyate* | BSB 3.3.33.

⁷⁸ *ātmety eva paraṃ devamūpāsya harimavyayam | kecidatiraiva mucyante notkrāmānti kadācana | atrauva ca sthitisteṣāmantarikṣe tu kecana | kecitvarsge maharloke jane tapasi cāpare | kecitsatye mahājñānā gacchanti kṣīrasāgaram | tatrāpi kramayogena jñānādhikyātsamīpagāḥ* | BSB 4.4.19.

⁷⁹ *sālokyaṃ ca sarūpatvaṃ sāmīpyaṃ yogam eva ca* | BSB 4.4.19.

⁸⁰ See BSB 4.4.19 for a list of these denizens.

four-faced god Brahmā.⁸¹ All are lower than Viṣṇu, towards which all are devoted. One may wonder if these gradations lead to jealousy and envy but Madhvācārya believes that they do not because *jīvas* would not have come to know *brahman* and attained *mokṣa* if they were affected by such mundane defects.⁸²

What do *jīvas* do in *mokṣa*? Madhvācārya believes that *jīvas* wander around, eat, play and ride chariots as well as frolic with women and liberated or newly liberated *jīvas* such as themselves. Some may also sing chants from the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Gāyatri* and other *āgamas*.⁸³ None of these activities are obligations since they are *mokṣa*, liberated. Instead, they are activities that are followed by those who have obtained Viṣṇu-*prasāda*, *aparokṣa-jñāna* and *mokṣa* and who wish to increase their *ānanda*, bliss. Activity is thus a matter of choice and not duty. *Jīvas* are not bound to anything in *mokṣa* or do they incur any *pāpa* when they choose not to act.⁸⁴

Having been granted *mokṣa*, the *jīvas* are able to bask in the glory and supremacy of Viṣṇu, fully aware of their location in the hierarchical universe.

⁸¹ *caivottamottamāḥ | nityānande ca bhoge ca jñanaiśvaryagūṇeṣu ca | sarve śataguṇodriktāḥ pūrvasmāddutarottaram | pūjyante cāvaraiste tu sarvapūjyaścaturmukhaḥ |* BSB 4.4.19.

⁸² *na cāsamatvena virodho bhavati | brahmadhītṛvāddoṣābhāvasāmyāduttamebhyo 'nyeṣāṃ bhāvāc ca |* BSB 3.3.34.

⁸³ *sa tatra paryeti jakṣan kṛḍan ramamāṇaḥ strībhirvā yānairvā jñātibhirvā ajñātibhirvā |* VTV. *etat sāmāgāyannāste | ṛcām tvaḥ poṣamāste pupuṣvān | gāyatraṃ tvo gayati śakvarīṣu |* VTV.

⁸⁴ *svecchyaivetyaṅgikartavyam | muktasya tīrṇatvāt |* BSB 3.3.28 *svecchya kurvanti na vā | bandhapratyavāyayorabhāvāt |* BSB 3.3.29.

Samvāda, discussion and debate

Mādhvas are well known for polemics against their rivals. In fact debate and argument with other schools is an integral part of being and becoming a proper citizen of the Mādhva world, preparing for Viṣṇu-*prasāda* and eventually being graced with *mokṣa*. In his AV, Madhvācārya describes the activities of the ideal devotee: ‘Therefore, devotees who cherish the Lord, whose understanding [is] pure, [and] who understand the *āgamas*, they would always [strive to] destroy the darkness [of ignorance].’¹

Madhvācārya, of course, was not the first to propose that discussion and debate was so important. Such an instruction is found in the *Brahma Sūtras* in the section known as *Samayavirodha*, The Contradictions [In Other] Doctrines. It contains arguments against the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Cārvāka, Buddhist, Jaina, Śaiva and the Śākta schools. But why did Vyāsa include such materials in his BS anyway? Madhvācārya explains: ‘Then, [Vyāsa, who is] the Lord of knowledge, composed refutations of [rival] doctrines for [his] own devotees in order to sharpen their intellect.’² Sharpening the intellect helps devotees not only to learn their own tradition but also to defend it against others.

Debate, then, is not an activity solely of the Mādhva traditions. It also does not occur in a vacuum, but is the primary mode of interaction between scholars and adherents of the different schools of South Asian philosophy. In fact, Mādhva disputations are part of a much larger institution that has its origins in the development of Buddhism and Jainism, the first traditions considered heretical by Hindus. What are these debates like?

Inter-religious and intra-religious debates were formal events occurring in the presence or under the auspices of royalty. Such events were also governed by a *sabhāpati*, judge (lit. ‘Lord of the meeting’), who would objectively determine the validity or success of arguments. Madhvācārya characterizes these *prāśnikas*, arbitrators of the dispute, as wise, all-knowing and with neither hate nor anger.³ The *prāśnika*’s

¹ *tathāpi śuddhabuddhīnām īśānugrahayoginām | suyuktayas tamo hanyur āgamānugatāḥ sadā* | AV 2.2.8. *tamaḥ ajñānam* | Jayatīrtha, *Nyāya Sudhā*, 2.2.8.

² *iti vidyāpatiḥ samyaksamayānām nirākṛtim | cakāra nijabhaktānām buddhiśānatvasiddhaye* | AV 2.2.9.

³ *rāgadveṣavihīnāstu sarvavidyāviśārādāḥ | prāśnikā iti ...* | KL 5.

knowledge would include the *āgamas* and *tarka-doṣas* such as the ones described earlier in Chapter 2. When one participant was unable to respond to a criticism, then loss might be declared by the *prāśnika*. Defeat has several outcomes including censure and even conversion! Many of the South Asian traditions grew when rivals lost in debate and had to convert.

Consequently, much time and effort was involved in constructing arguments against rival traditions and preparing students to partake in debates, between students in the confines of the *maṭha* and eventually with other experts. *Maṭhas* of each of the schools of Vedānta are still places where debating is encouraged and formal and informal debates take place. Viśveṣa Tīrtha, the *svāmiji* of the Pejāvara *maṭha*, for example, allocates some of his time to lively arguments with students and visitors. There, debates still occur today though less frequently than they did in medieval South Asia.

Mādhva Vedānta and its rivals

As already mentioned, Madhvācārya accounts for the existence of *mohaśāstras*, confusing texts, by attributing them to Viṣṇu. Madhvācārya explains that, at Viṣṇu's request, Rudra created them to 'guide the *asuras*, demons, to Hell.'⁴ Madhvācārya first states reasons as to why these doctrines exist:

Those adhering to the belief that the world is false, [do so] out of ignorance, because of their lack of understanding, because of the abundance of those having little knowledge, [and] because of their ceaseless hatred for the Highest Reality [that is, Viṣṇu] and for the knowledge of the real [nature of things].⁵

He next locates the upholders of these rival doctrines in his *jīva-traividhya*, three-fold classification of *jīvas*: 'The doctrines are maintained as a result of the endless *vāsanās*, *karmic* impressions, of many *asuras* due to their being caught [in the cycle of] foolishness.'⁶

⁴ *asurāṇāṃ tamogataḥ | yasmāt kṛtāni tāṇiḥ viṣṇunoktyaḥ śivādibhiḥ | eṣāṃ yan na virodhi syāt tatroktaṃ tan na vāryate* | MBhTN 1.34.

⁵ *daurlabhyāc cchuddhabudhīnām bāhulyād alpavedinām* | AV 2.2.5. *tāmasatvāc ca lokasya mithyājñānaprasaktiḥ | vidveṣātprame tattve tattvavediṣu cānīṣam* | AV 2.2.6.

⁶ *anādivāsanāyogādāsurāṇāṃ bahutvataḥ | durāgrahagrhitatvād vartante samayāḥ sadā* | AV 2.2.7.

The doctrines are kept alive by those who are predestined to keep them alive and whose *vāsanās*, mental impressions formed by previous activities, dictate their behavior. Their existence as well as the effort of devotees to show their incoherence are both essential parts of the Mādhva universe.

Texts

Madhvācārya's corpus is filled with polemics against rival schools. Before plunging directly into the arguments, I first examine Madhvācārya's *Kathālakṣaṇa*, a handbook on rhetoric and the three kinds of debate. Though there are no arguments against other schools in this text, it offers an excellent description of the way that debates should be conducted. I then turn to three sets of arguments presented by Madhvācārya in his *dasaprakaraṇa*; the *Upādhikhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Upādhi Position*, the *Māyāvādakhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Māyā Position*, and the *Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya*, *The Complete Ascertainment of the Nature of Viṣṇu*.

Kathālakṣaṇa, The Characterization of Dispute

The *Kathālakṣaṇa*, also known as the *Vādalakṣaṇa*, is a brief text of thirty-five *anuṣṭubhs* in which Madhvācārya defines the types of debates and the context within which they take place.⁷ Such manuals on rhetoric were not uncommon among the schools of South Asian philosophy and Mādhva Vedānta is no exception. This treatise on polemics is useful as a dialectical handbook for adherents who wish to debate and wish to learn about the type of arguments that one can use.

Madhvācārya holds that there are three kinds of debate *vāda*, *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*. *Vāda* is a debate whose purpose is the pursuit of truth. *Jalpa* is a debate whose purpose is to bring fame and glory to the competitive victor. The third kind of debate, *vitaṇḍā*, is when one participant seeks only to destroy the position of the other, yet does not reveal any position whatsoever. This form of debate is a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* when victory is achieved only by showing the incoherence of the position of one's opponent and neither presenting nor exposing one's own position for judgment.

What follows are directions on how to proceed in a debate. The debates that are described here are not about abstract philosophical

⁷ An *anuṣṭubh* is a class of meter consisting of thirty-two syllables.

issues. Instead, debate is rooted entirely in the *āgamas* and concerns interpretations of particular passages. Debating means criticizing the interpretation or the evidence offered by one's opponent and then offering one's own interpretation or even better evidence. Each of the texts translated in this chapter, aside from the VTV, has a *maṅgala-śloka* at the beginning and end. Not only are Madhvācārya's texts about the *āgamas*, but they are all in service of Viṣṇu.

1 After bowing to Nṛsiṃha, who is [like] the warm sun which [removes] all of the darkness of ignorance, I accurately explain the definition of dispute.

2–3 There are three varieties [of] scholarly dispute: *vāda*, *jalpa* and *vitāṇḍā*. *Vāda*, is the discussion [between] the teacher and the student and also with other good people who only [seek to] ascertain the truth completely. Or [it is for] the benefit of a [public] assembly. It is said that *jalpa*, wrangling, is also a discussion with good people [who seek] fame and the like or [desire] competition.

4 *Vitāṇḍā*, captious objection, is with good people and others [who are not good]. [When the debate is] among these others [who are not good], then one's own truth is hidden. In *vāda* one should decide the truth on one's own or by means of a *prāśnika*, arbitrator.

5 The *prāśnikas*, arbitrators [of the dispute], are said to be skilled in all systems of thought and to be without biases. There can be one [*prāśnika*] or just an uneven number.

6 If there is only one *prāśnika*, arbitrator, then he should be known as a remover of all doubts, should be without doubts [himself], noble minded and free of all the *doṣas*, imperfections.

7 Whether the arbitrator is [just] one or [there are] many he should always be engaged in the devotion of Viṣṇu. For the chief characteristic of all [people] whose qualities are good is devotion to Viṣṇu.

8 In the beginning [of any debate], when questioned [by an opponent,] the [relevant passage from the] *āgama* is to be cited in order to establish what is to be proven. [This position is found in] the *śruti* [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.9]: 'This knowledge can neither be obtained nor destroyed through *tarka*, argument.' [In response], the opponent should offer another interpretation of that *āgama*.

9 The *R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva Vedas*, the [*Mahā*]bhāratam, the *Pañcarātras* and the *Mūlarāmāyaṇa* are declared to be correct *āgamas*.

10 Texts that agree [with the correct *āgamas*] are [also] said to be correct *āgamas*. Other [texts which conflict with the correct *āgamas*] are bad *āgamas*. [They are bad since] by them one cannot establish what is to be proven.

11 The respondent should state his own view as well as the [supporting passage from the] *āgamas*. In order to establish his own position [and counter the opponent's], the proponent should prove [that there is] another interpretation of that [same passage from the *āgamas*].

12 The other interpretation of one's own [*āgama*] should be rejected in light of a definitive [interpretation] of the *āgama*. Here is an opportunity for reasoning to be admitted.

13 When the meaning of the *āgama* of the proponent is determined then the [meaning of the *āgama* of the] opponent should be determined later with friends. After that [is done] the determination [of the respective meanings] will be complete.

14 When, in the question, the meaning is established by *pratyakṣa*, perception [such as via the eyes, ears, and the like], there is a need to state a perceptual authority and a direct knowledge [such as the *sākṣī*]. One should not state an *anumāna*, inference, in the beginning [of the debate].

15 If there are two people [each disputing] and both say something that pleases [that is, satisfies] one another, that alone is known as the *āgama*. Satisfaction for the opponent is the goal of that [debate].

16 Thus, in the *vāda* many people are occupied for a long time with the conclusion. And in a *jalpa* it continues until there is a victory over the opponent.

17 In *vāda*, opposition to the determination of the truth is a defect. In the dialogue [when there is opposition] there should be praise and respect given to the other [person] who won.

18 Or [in a *vāda*] when the argument comes to a conclusion then there would be either censure or punishment of the loser. In the *jalpa* victory

one would be conquered by contradiction, incongruity, omission of evidence, superfluity and silence.

19 The rule [for determining the victor] in *viṭaṇḍā*, the captious objection [type of a disputation], is said to be in the style of a *jalpa*. When there is a discussion [of the *jalpa* and *viṭaṇḍā* variety] there should be no punishment, only defeat.

20 Or, otherwise there should be censure or punishment. In the *jalpa*, the lack of restatement is not considered a fault.

21–22 If the *vādins*, disputants, [show] the signs of having no knowledge, there will be an immediate failure. There are no other reasons for defeat other than the six [namely, contradiction, incongruity, omission of evidence, superfluity, silence and having no knowledge]. There are no others [as all] are included in these [six]. In *jalpa* and *viṭaṇḍā* the activity is preceded by an investigation of the knowledge [of the disputants].

23 If there is only a stumbling then there is no defect. This is the faultless characterization of the *vāda*, *jalpa* and *viṭaṇḍā*.

24 In accordance with the *Brahma Tarka*, the *Kathālakṣaṇa*, *The Characterization of Disputation*, by Ānandatīrtha is said to please Him, who is the possessor of the Śārṅga [that is, Viṣṇu's bow].

25 Narasiṃha, who is the most beloved [and] the Supreme Person, who drives away of the heart's darkness with the flow of knowledge [which, like the sun,] is always arisen, let Him be pleased!

The Māyāvādakhaṇḍana: The Refutation of the Māyā Position

The MVK is part of Madhvācārya's *Khaṇḍanatraya*, *A Trio of Refutations*, which includes the *Upādhikhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Upādhi Position*, and the *Prapañcamithyātvānumānakhaṇḍana*, *The Refutation of the Inference of the Illusoriness of Phenomenal Reality*. These three texts are pointed criticisms of positions that are essential to Advaita epistemology. As already mentioned, the MVK is partly a reaction to arguments found in the 12th-century CE Advaita scholar

Śrīharṣa's *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*. Given the scope of the present work, it is not necessary to present a summary of Śrīharṣa's arguments.⁸

Not surprisingly, the arguments in the MVK cannot be removed from the fundamental component of the schools of Vedānta, namely the *śāstra*.⁹ Not only do arguments in Vedānta center around the interpretation of the *āgamas* but they are often attempts to show that the opponent is not acknowledging the centrality of those texts. To address this issue of centrality, the schools of Vedānta hold that *śāstra* has four elements, each of which must exist and be satisfied. If one can show that the position of the opponent does not include or excludes one of these four, then victory is guaranteed. If a school of Vedānta does not uphold the importance of the *śāstra*, then it is no longer a commentarial tradition! For each school, then, it follows that:

- 1 *adhikāri*: there must be devotees who are eligible to study the *śāstra* and have a desire to study them.
- 2 *viśaya*: there must be a defined subject matter of *śāstra*. Does *śāstra* teach that there is difference or identity? It cannot teach both and must be consistent.
- 3 *prayojana*: there must be an aim or purpose for *śāstra*. It cannot stand apart from the practical concern of being granted *mokṣa*.
- 4 *saṃbandha*: there must be a relationship between the *adhikāri*, *viśaya* and *prayojana*. If one were to make either of the others irrelevant then there would be no *saṃbandha*.

In his MVK, Madhvācārya shows that each of these prerequisites cannot be satisfied if one adheres to the Advaita position. To do so he attacks their position that there is an *aikyam* identity, between the *brahman* and the *jīva*, using it as the starting point. Madhvācārya's contentions are in service of a proper understanding of the *śāstras* and do not stand independently of that goal. For this reason, the MVK is a superb example of Mādhva polemics.

1 Narasiṃha, who, [as] the sun [destroys] darkness, [destroys] the opinions [deriving from ignorance], who is the boundless ocean, unsurpassed bliss and [His] immeasurable power, [He] is pre-eminent.

⁸ See Granoff's *Philosophy and Argument in Late Vedānta* which is a translation of the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* for more.

⁹ I am indebted to Professors Prahādācārya and Bhat for their lucid introductions to this text. See Prahādacharya, iv–xv and Bhat, *Khaṇḍana Trayam*.

2 That dubious [*śāstra*] need not be studied for it imparts false [knowledge about the universe]. Whatever [gives false knowledge] in this manner, is [like] that [and should not be studied]. Similarly, [the *śāstra*] assented to [by the Advaita school that proclaims the identity of the *brahman* and the *jīva* imparts false knowledge and should not be studied].

3 [According to the Advaita school,] the *aikyam*, identity [between] *brahman* [and the *jīva*] is definitely not real. [If it were real, then there would be a] difference [of the *aikyam*, identity from *brahman*'s] own nature [and there would be more than one entity that was real. Both *aikyam* and *brahman* would be real]. [This would lead to] the abandoning of the *advaita*, non-dualism [position since there would be two real entities, namely *brahman* and *aikyam*, identity].

4 [If *aikyam*, identity,] is not different [from *brahman* but is its very] nature, then [since *brahman*] is self-luminous, [*aikyam* would also be self-luminous]. [Therefore *aikyam* would already] possess the means for establishing itself [and would not require *śāstra* to be known. Therefore, the *śāstras* would be superfluous].

5 [Being without difference,] the *ātman* [that is, *brahman*] has no characteristics. [Since] the characteristics are [already] known [then there is no need to study the *śāstras* to learn more about *brahman*].

6 [If] the nature [of *brahman*] is [already] known and there are no characteristics [of *brahman* to be known, then] ignorance conceals [nothing and studying *śāstra*, which is known to destroy ignorance, would have no *viśaya* and would be superfluous].

7 It is known [that the Advaita school and the Bhāṭṭa School of Mīmāṃsā hold that] *pramāṇa*, the means of valid knowledge, is that which leads to a meaning that was not already known. [From this, it follows that, for the Advaita School, *śāstra* would not be a *pramāṇa* since *brahman* would already be known.]

8 Given that [*brahman* and *jīva* are identical and that *brahman* has no ignorance] it is impossible [that the *jīva* is] ignorant and it follows that the entirety of their [that is, the Advaita School's] theories are malicious.

9 If the *aikyam*, identity, [between *brahman* and the *jīva*] is false, then the *āgamas* [that is, the *śāstras* which the Advaita school believes to prove this purported identity] would be proclaiming fallacies [and would not buttress the Advaita position.]

10 And, [if the Advaita position of *aikyam*, identity, between *brahman* and the *jīva* is false, then] the difference [between the two] is true.

11 [If *aikyam*, identity, were true] then *mokṣa* would already be established [for the *jīva*, given its] nature [as identical with *brahman*]. There would [then] be a destruction of the utility [of the *śāstras* which, according to the Advaita school, is a prerequisite for *mokṣa*.]

12 As ignorance is impossible [and the Advaita position untenable, then], the fourth category [neither *real*, or *asat*, unreal] is [also] absent. [If there is no fourth category, then] there is a destruction of the fifth category [*anirvacanīya*, indescribability].

13 Since there is neither a *viśaya* [for *śāstra*] nor a *prayojana*, there is [also] no *adhikāri*, one eligible for studying the *śāstra*. In light of these absences, there is also no *saṃbandha*, [between the *viśaya*, *prayojana* and the *adhikāri*].

14 [Consider these passages from the *Bhagavad Gītā* 15.16–20:] ‘There are two entities in the world, perishable and imperishable. All beings are perishable. The one occupying the highest place [that is, *brahman*] is called the imperishable. And the highest entity [that] is different [from the perishable entities] is called the Supreme Self, who, pervading the three worlds, supports them [that is, the three worlds]. Since I transcend the perishable and am higher than the imperishable, I am in the world and in the *Veda* and am known as the Highest Among Beings! Oh Descendent of Bharata [that is, Arjuna], he who knows Me as the Highest Among Beings [and is] without delusion, he knows all and worships Me with his entire being. Thus, this preeminently secret *śāstra* is professed by Me. Oh Descendent of Bharata, having awakened to this [secret], one should be enlightened, fulfilling all duties.’

15 [And this passage from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 3.10–11:] ‘Higher than the *indriyas*, senses, are their objects. Higher than sense objects is the *manas*, mind. Higher than the *manas* is the *buddhi*, intellect. Higher than the *buddhi* is the Highest Being. Higher than the Highest Being is the unmanifest. Higher than the unmanifest is the *puruṣa*, Person. Higher

than the *puruṣa*, Person, there is nothing at all. That is the goal, that is the highest state.¹⁰

16 [*Brahma Sūtra* 3.3.59 indicates this:] Importance [is given to meditation] on the Supreme Being as is the [centrality of] sacrifice. This is shown [by the *śāstra*].

17 The superiority of Viṣṇu is declared by all of the *śruti* and by the Lord and [that] alone is the purpose of the *śāstra*.

18 There is a destruction of the darkness of the entire *māyā* position by the all-knowing sage [that is, Madhvācārya] by means of [his] *tattva-vāda*, position of reality. [And this is] to dispel the doubts of good men.

20 There is nothing equal to Nārāyaṇa [that is, Viṣṇu/*brahman*], nor was there, nor will there be. With these true statements, I conclude [my refutation of the *māyā* position].

Madhvācārya's Upādhikhaṇḍanam, The Refutation of the [Concept of] the Limiting Adjunct

This treatise, like the MVK, is an attack at the heart of the Advaita position. Here, Madhvācārya shows that there are problems with the concept of *upādhi*, limiting adjunct. The *upādhi* creates differences that did not exist before. It is applied to *brahman* and the result is that what is unity is incorrectly perceived as multiplicity. All that is perceived, for example, is an *upādhi* of *brahman*. The Advaita school contends that *bheda*, difference, that is perceived is not real, that it is an *upādhi* of *brahman* and that the only real entity is *brahman*. Madhvācārya questions the ontology of the *upādhi* and then the locus of *ajñāna*, ignorance.¹¹ Towards the end of the UK he employs a similar strategy as he did in the MVK and argues that, if one were to accept the Advaita position, there will be problems with the *adhikāri*, *viśaya*, *prayojana* and with *sambandha*. He again shows that one can neither uphold *śāstra* nor read it properly if one follows the Advaita position.

1 May [Lord] Nārāyaṇa [Viṣṇu], whose form alone is permanent [and filled with] countless qualities, who is free from all faults, [and] who is the abode of Kamalā [that is, Lakṣmī], be pleased. [If the Advaita

¹⁰ I owe this translation in its entirety to Olivelle. Olivelle, 239.

¹¹ For more see Ingalls's 'Saṃkara on the question: Whose Avidya?'.

School is correct and *brahman* is identical with the *jīva* and the *jīva* is ignorant, then, it follows, that *brahman* must be ignorant! Attributing] ignorance to the One Who Knows All is absolutely not proper.

2 If [you] hold that [this ignorance is] possible because of the difference [caused by] the limiting adjunct, then either it [that is, the *upādhi*] is [part] of the self-nature [of *brahman*] or it is [caused by] ignorance. If it is intrinsic [to *brahman*], then dualism is [established as] true [since both *brahman* and *upādhi* are real].

3 When the cause [of the limiting adjunct] is [held to be] ignorance, then [there is the fallacy of] infinite regress [as the first limiting adjunct, which I will call U1 will be caused by ignorance, which I will call I1. This ignorance, I1, would itself require another *upādhi*, namely U2, which requires I2 and so forth.] Or [there is the fallacy of] reciprocal dependence [as U1 requires I1 and *vice versa*]. Or [there is the] calamity of circularity [as U1, I1, requires U2, I2, and these require U3, I3, and this last set requires U1, I2]. And, [moreover,] how can difference [be caused by] the limiting adjunct?

4 In all cases previously seen, [the limiting adjunct] is the indicator of a difference [that already] exists. [It does not] create new [differences]. When it, [the limiting adjunct, differentiates] portions from other portions it indicates a difference [that already] exists. [The limiting adjunct] is [proposed merely] for the contemplation of those who are stupid!

5 If not, then is there a relation of the limiting adjunct with one part [of the space] or with the whole? [If it were the first], with one part, then there would be an infinite regress [that is, if there are parts then difference already exists. If difference already exists then it would require an *upādhi ad infinitum*]. [If it were the second], with the whole, then there is no difference [that is created, and the *upādhi* is useless].

6 And if one [*ātman*] is identical [with another, then] there would be no difference [between their individual] experience of pleasure and pain. Despite the difference [caused by] the limiting adjunct such as the hands, feet, etc. [they are not experienced as different from the one who experiences them].

7 There is also the case of [accounts from the *āgama* about] the *yogi* who investigates the experiences of different bodies. If [the bodies were]

not [different from one another], then how can the *yogi*'s desire to investigate the experiences [of different bodies be understood]?

8 [It may be argued that] possessing various bodies [is possible] without the plan [to investigate the experiences of different bodies]. [If so, then] how is the *yogi* [able to choose] particular [bodies]?

9 If it were argued that [the difference in limiting adjuncts] is due to the difference in *karma*, then there would also be a difference in the limiting adjuncts. And, if [this were the case], then [the limiting adjunct will require a difference in *karma* and *vice versa* and] there would be [the fallacy of] reciprocal dependence.

10 [There is] no fallacy [if there is] an intrinsic difference [between each individual] *ātman*. And [the position that they are all identical] is entirely inconsistent with perception and other [*pramāṇas*]. And this position [that there is identity] is incontrovertibly false.

11 By [observing] the characteristic behavior of other bodies, one concludes that [they each possess] an *ātman*. From this, [one concludes that] the individual *ātman* are different [from one's own *ātman*]. This is perceived by all.

12 [The qualities of the individual *ātman* such as] ignorance, insignificant power, suffering and insignificant agency, are opposed to the qualities [of *brahman*] such as omniscience and the like. [Everyone] perceives [this except for those, such as the scholars of the Advaita school, who hold that *brahman* is *nirguṇa*].

13 Viṣṇu's qualities such as omniscience etc. are established in *śruti* [like *Rg Veda* 8.3.4: 'He, with his might enhanced by *ṛṣis* thousand-fold, has spread out like an ocean.] His greatness is [praised as] true [at solemn rites and his powers where holy singers rule]' and others. From [such] statements, [the aforementioned qualities ascribed to *brahman*] cannot be false.

14 There is no reliable authority [which holds that] there is a fallacy in *Vedic* utterances. And even [if there were such an authority] it is not authoritative. [If omniscient *brahman* were identical with all *ātman* and] the identity theory [were held to be true], then there would be no ignorance that arises and, [consequently] no [need for] *adhikāra* [to study the *Vedas*].

15 [If the identity theory were true] then the phrase ‘ignorance’ is not [possible. That is, if *brahman* is identical with the *jīvas* and *brahman* is not ignorant, then the *jīvas* must also not be ignorant]. And [if this were the case, then] there is no *viṣaya* to be explained [by the *Vedas*] nor *prayojana*. From there being no emergence of ignorance, who [would get the] fruit [of *Vedic* study]? The *saṃbandha* [between the *viṣaya* to be explained, the *prayojana* and the *adhikāra* of the student would be *sadābhāva*, like the self-contradiction] of the hare’s horn.

16 [If] the difficulty [in explaining the location of ignorance and the limiting adjunct] is [to be considered intellectual] ornamentation then the *Ātman*, [that is, *brahman*] would be ignorant! Complete darkness [that is, ignorance] would be [His] ornamentation, [and] eternal suffering [His] crest-jewel!

17 Therefore, [the position that *brahman* and *ātman* are different] is illustrated in *śruti* passages [such as *Rg Veda* 7.99.1: ‘They are not able to reach your majesty when you expanded] beyond all limits.’ [And *brahman*] is seen as different from the *ātman* by *śruti* passages [such as *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.2: ‘Stuck on the very same tree, one person grieves, deluded by her who is not the Lord. But when he sees] the other, contented Lord [and his majesty, his grief disappears.]’ [And, in] *śruti* passages [such as *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.3:] ‘When [the seer sees that *puruṣa*, Person, the gold-colored, the creator, the Lord, as the womb of *brahman*. Then shaking off the good and the bad, the wise man becomes spotless and attains the highest identity],’ the [mere] similarity [of the individual *ātman*] to the *Ātman* [that is, *brahman*] always [indicates] difference.

18 In order to eternally please the Lord of Śrī [that is, Lakṣmī], discerning reality [as it is], the sun of omniscience illuminated the world, which is pervaded by the darkness of the position of illusion.

19. I bow to that Lord of Indirā [that is, of Lakṣmī], whose form is lovely and who is [characterized by] abundant bliss and innate intelligence and who grants the experience of eternal bliss [to his devotees].

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya, The Complete Ascertainment of the Nature of Viṣṇu: ekajīvavāda, *the view that there is only one [jīva]*

The VTV contains a variety of refutations of Advaita positions. Comprised of 540 *granthas* it is much longer than either the MVK or the

UK. It is divided into three sections. The first section concerns the epistemology of the *āgamas* while the second is centered on the proper interpretation of select passages from the *āgamas*. The third section is a reaction against the Advaita position that *brahman* is *nirguṇa* and demonstrates that *brahman* is *saguṇa*.

The passages below are from the first section of the VTV and are refutations of *ekajīvavāda*, the Advaita position that all of reality is the product of one *jīva*, namely *brahman*. Madhvācārya correlates *ekajīvavāda* with the belief that the universe is the product of one person's dream. Note that the argument is focused on the practical implications of the Advaita position for the teacher, the students and for the goal of Vedānta, namely to obtain *mokṣa*.

1 *Ekajīvavāda*, the view that there is only one *jīva* [namely *brahman*] is incoherent.

2 When the imagination is [produced] from only one [*jīva*'s] *ajñāna*, ignorance, then [that *jīva*,] knowing 'everything is [merely] imagination' cannot endeavor to enlighten [imaginary] students.

3 [Why?] Recognizing 'this is [all] in a dream' one does not labor to [give away one's] monetary inheritance to the dream-son. [Similarly, why would one bother to teach one's students when they are merely products of one's own imagination?]

4 But, unaware of being in a dream, he may labor [in this way] in the dream itself.

5 Given that many [people] are seen [and they all might be dreaming], it is not possible to have a firm conviction as to whose dream it is.

6 But in dream[s,] it is certain [that] after awaking, [only] one [person, namely the dreamer,] remains.

7 Here, [in this case,] it is not possible [to be certain about who is the dreamer and who is being dreamed].

8 It is also impossible that reality is to be conceived of as imaginary by each [individual *jīva*]. These alternatives cannot arise [as possibilities] [One can only conclude that] there would be no imagination in reality.

9 Moreover, there is no *pramāṇa*, means for valid knowledge, [showing] that it [that is, reality] is to be conceived [of as imagination by each and every *jīva*].

10 [If] the imagination [derives from] the ignorance of the student, then when [the student] becomes a teacher, he himself [becomes the product of] imagination! Learning properly [from] the books [that is, sacred texts] would be disastrous!

11 No one would be able to attain *mokṣa*. When one learns the texts, then one [becomes a teacher and] suffers [becoming the product] of the student's imagination!

12 If one *jīva* was a *bhedavādin*, one who follows the view [that there is a] difference [between the *jīva* and *brahman*], then there is a confirmation of it [that is, difference]. There is never an elimination of difference and, [therefore,] no one would attain *mokṣa*.

13 By this [reasoning], whatever is imagined [by this one *jīva*], that is [reality]. When those following *ekajīvavāda*, the view that there is only one [*jīva*], are imagined to be in eternal Hell, then this would be so!

14 [From these arguments, it follows that] there is no proof whatsoever that everything is a [product] of the imagination of one *jīva*.

Other debates

The arguments found in these texts are a fraction of a vast corpus of texts. Most are only available in Sanskrit but there are a few that have been translated into English and are readily available. These include Gerow's translation of Viṣṇudāsācārya's *Vādaratnāvalī*, Betty's translation of Vādirāja's *Nyāyaratnāvalī* and Sarma's translation of portions of Vyāsaśrītha's *Tātparyacandrikā*.

APPENDIX A

Pramāṇas, tattva and anitya – tables

Pramāṇas

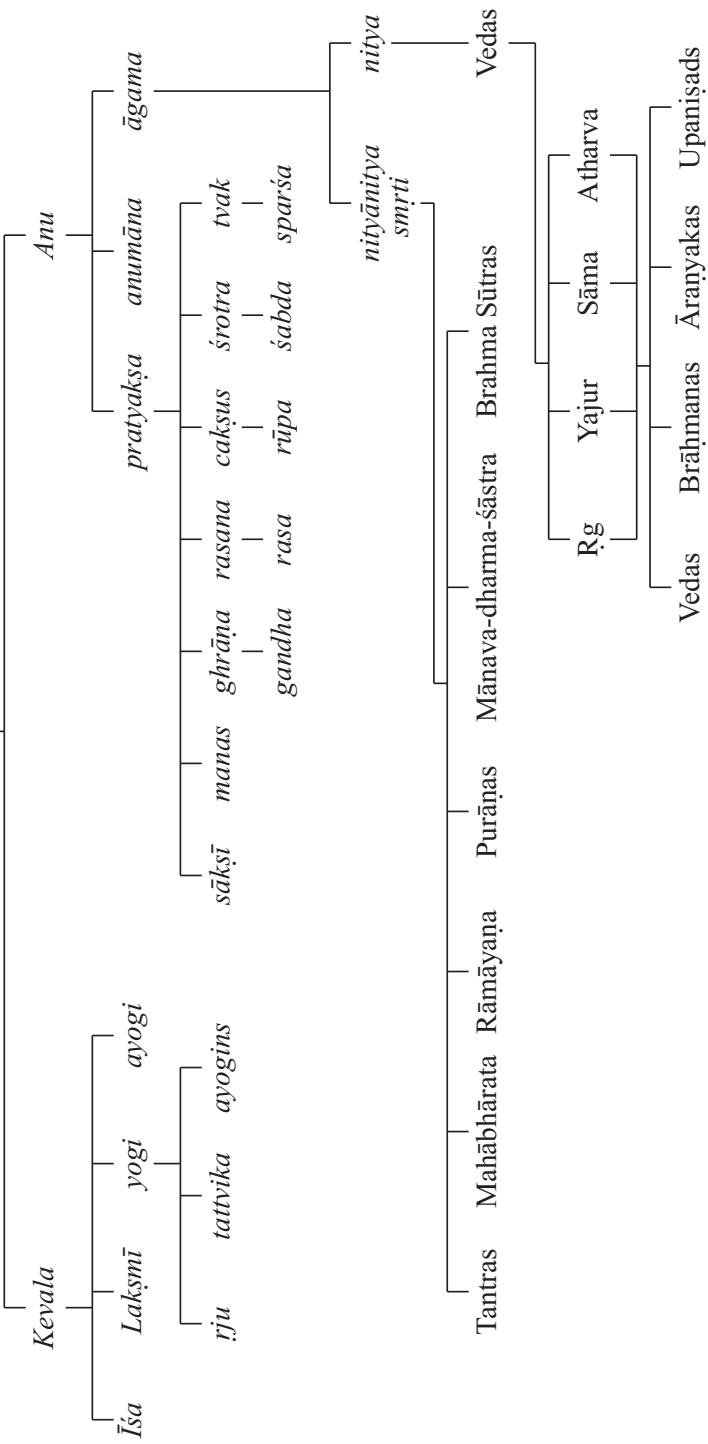
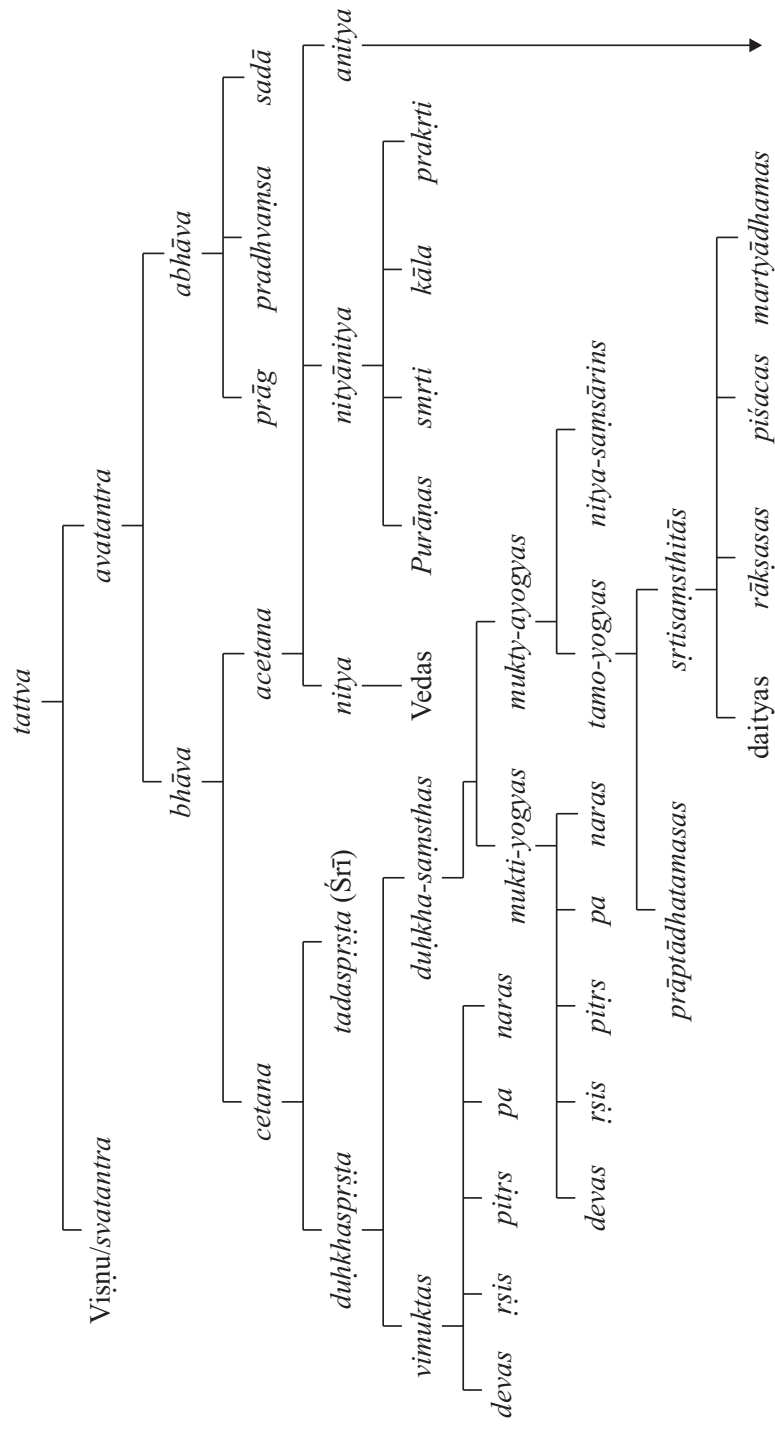


Table A.1 *Pramāṇas*

Table A.2 *Tattva*

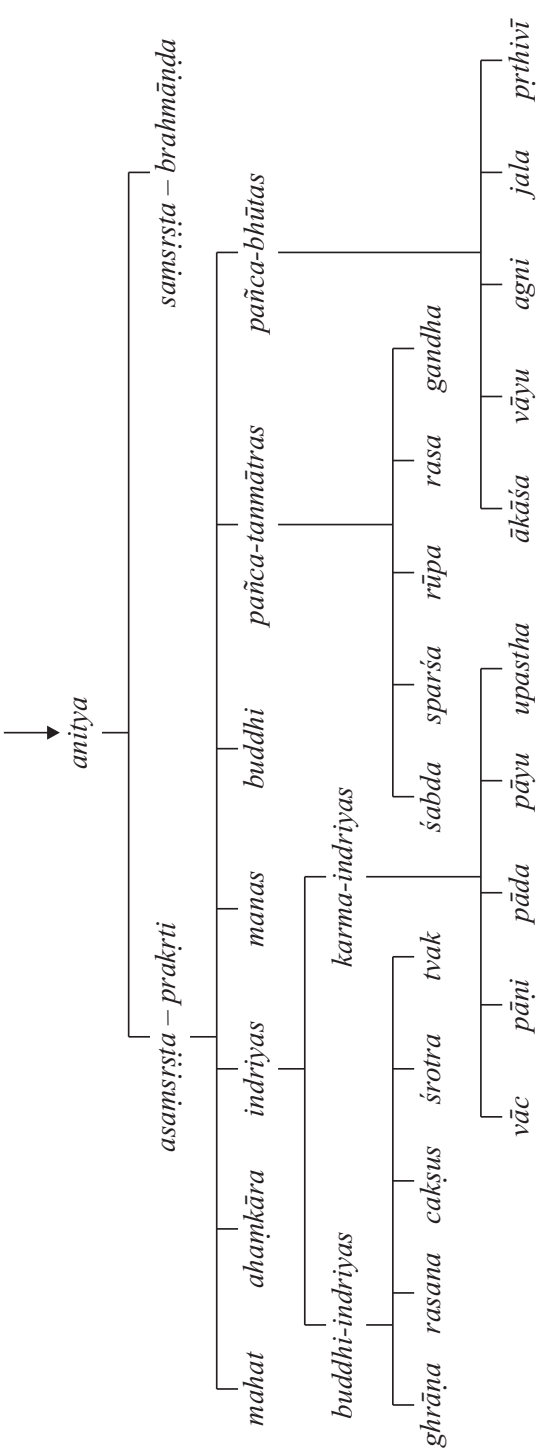


Table A.3 *Anīya*

Detailed outline of contents

Chapter One: Madhvācārya and the Mādhva tradition

Basic theological issues

Sources

Education

Political environment and patronage

Religious context

Āstika traditions: Vedānta

 Two non-Vedānta traditions: Vīraśaivism and Jainism

 Tribal and other indigenous traditions

The Mādhva *saṃpradāya*, community and institutions

The contemporary Mādhva community

Madhvācārya's works: the *Sarvamūlagranthāḥ*, *Compendium of All the Fundamentals*

Other relevant Mādhva works

Theory and practice

Chapter Two: Mādhva epistemology

Pramāṇa, the means of valid knowledge

Kevala-pramāṇa, direct knowledge of an object as it is

Anu-pramāṇa, indirect knowledge

Anu-pramāṇas: *pratyakṣa*, perception

Smṛti, memory

 The *sākṣī*

Anu-pramāṇas: *anumāna*, defectless inference

 The structure of the inference according to the Nyāya School

 Madhvācārya's analysis of defectless inference

Tarka-doṣas, logical errors

Anu-pramāṇas: *āgama*, defectless sentences and/or texts

Apauruṣeya-āgama, sentences and texts not having human authorship

Pauruṣeya-āgama, sentences and texts having human authorship

Mohaśāstra, the confusing texts

Pratyakṣa vs. *āgama* vs. *anumāna*

Khyāti-vādas, theories of false cognition

Anirvācanīya-khyāti, the theory that the ontological status of the object of a false cognition is indescribable

Anyathā-khyāti, the theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise

Madhvācārya's *abhinava-anyathā-khyāti*, the new theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise

Mādhva realism

Chapter Three: Mādhva ontology

Asvatantram, dependent entities

Abhāva, non-existent entities

Bhāva, existent entities

Cetanas, sentient beings

Acentanas, non-sentient entities

Svatantra, the only independent entity: Viṣṇu

Sadāgamaikavijñeyam, one who can be known only via the true āgamas

Viṣṇu is *brahman*, divinity

Viṣṇu is *saguṇa*, having attributes

Viṣṇu's *vyūhas*, emanations, and *avatāras*, incarnations

Madhvācārya's mitigated monotheism

Subject and attribute

Viśeṣas, distinguishing properties

Bhedasāadhanam, establishing difference

Chapter Four: Mādhva soteriology

The *jīva*, enduring self

Bandha, bondage

Bimba-pratimba-vāda, theory of reflection

Karṭṛtva, agency, *svarūpatraividhya*, predestination, and *karma*

Adhikāra, eligibility

The path to *mokṣa*, liberation

Karma-yoga, the path via action and ritual

Jñāna-yoga, the path via knowledge

Bhakti-yoga, the path via devotion

Prasāda, grace

Guru-prasāda, grace of the teacher

Madhvācārya-Vāyu as *guru*
 Viṣṇu-*prasāda*, grace of Viṣṇu
Aparokṣa-jñāna, unmediated knowledge, of Viṣṇu
Mokṣa, liberation

Chapter Five: *Samvāda*, discussion and debate

Mādhva Vedānta and its rivals

Texts

Kathālakṣaṇa, *The Characterization of Dispute*

The *Māyāvādakhaṇḍana*: *The Refutation of the Māyā Position*

Madhvācārya's *Upādhikhaṇḍanam*, *The Refutation of the [Concept of] the Limiting Adjunct*

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya, *The Complete Ascertainment of the Nature of Viṣṇu*: *ekajīvavāda*, the view that there is only one [*jīva*]

Other debates

Glossary

- abhāva*: non-existent entities, there are three types: *prāg*, *pradhvaṃsa* and *sadā*
- abhavya*: those *jīvas*, according to the Jains, lacking the capability to achieve *nirvāṇa*
- abheda*: non-different, identical
- abhinava-anyathā-khyāti-vāda*: Madhvācārya's new theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise
- ācārya*: teacher
- acetana*: non-sentient entities, there are three types: *nitya*, *anitya* and *nityānitya*
- adharma*: against duty, the order and law of the universe, unlawful activities
- adhika*: superfluity, a reason for defeat in a debate
- adhikāra*: eligibility
- adhikāri*: one who is eligible, a qualified aspirant
- Advaita Vedānta: non-dualism, the name of a school of Vedānta founded by Śaṅkarācārya
- āgama*: scriptural authority and verbal testimony
- agni*: fire, one of the *pañca-bhūtas*
- Agni: the god of fire
- ahaṃkāra*: 'I'-ness, egotism, the organ that produces self-consciousness
- ajñāna*: ignorance
- ākāśa*: ether, one of the *pañca-bhūtas*
- alaukika*: super-normal sense relation intrinsic to Nyāya *khyāti-vāda*
- aṃśas*: divisions
- ānanda*: bliss
- ānanda-tāratamya-vāda*: Madhvācārya's view that there are degrees of bliss in *mokṣa*
- Anatrickṣa-loka*: the Intermediate Region, a place in *mokṣa*
- anavasthā*: an infinite regress, a *tarka-doṣa*
- Andhatāmiso*: [Place of] Complete Darkness, one of the Hells
- aṅgula*: a measure that is the breadth of one finger
- Aniruddha: son of Pradyumna and grandson of Kṛṣṇa, one of the *vyūhas*
- anirvācanīya*: indescribable, a component of Advaita *khyāti-vāda*
- anirvācanya-khyāti-vāda*: the Advaita theory that the ontological status of the object of false cognitions is indescribable

anitya: non-eternal, finite, an *acetana*, there are two: *saṁsṛṣṭa* and *asaṁsṛṣṭa*

anumāna: reasoning

anupādhika: not having a limiting adjunct, part of Madhvācārya's *pratibimba-vāda*

anu-pramāṇa: indirect knowledge, there are three: *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *āgama*

anuṣṭubh: a class of meter with four segments of eight syllables each, totaling thirty-two syllables

anyātha-khyāti-vāda: the Nyāya theory that false cognition is knowing [something] as otherwise

aparokṣa-jñāna: unmediated knowledge, of *brahman*

apauruṣeya: sentences and/or texts not having human authorship, *śruti*, the *Vedas*

a posteriori: reasoning proceeding from the effects to the causes

a priori: reasoning proceeding from causes to the effects

āpta: authoritative, reliable

āptaguru: authoritative teacher

āptatva: authority, the state of being authoritative

āptavākya: authoritative statements

Arjuna: name of the hero of the *Mahābhārata*/*Bhagavad Gītā*, one of the Paṇḍava brothers

artha: material things, one of the *puruṣārthas*

arthāpatti: presumption, under the scope of *anumāna*

asaṁgati: incongruity or irrelevance, a reason for defeat in a debate

asaṁsṛṣṭa: not combined entities: *mahat*, *ahaṁkāra*, *buddhi*, *manas*, *indriyas*, *pañca-tanmātras* and the *pañca-bhūtas*

asat: unreal, a component of Madhvācārya's *khyāti-vāda*

āśrama: stage in life, there are four: *brahmacārya*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *saṁnyāsa*

aṣṭamaṭhas: the institution of the eight monasteries founded by Madhvācārya

āstika: philosophical traditions based on the *Vedas*

asura: a type of demon

asurīs: female demons

asvatantram: dependent things, all things other than Viṣṇu

ātman: the enduring self

Ātman: the Self, another name for *brahman*

ātmānyonyāśraya: mutual dependence, a *tarka-doṣa*

atyantābhava: permanently non-existent, sometimes called *sadābhāva*, for example, the son of a barren woman

avatāra: incarnation, Viṣṇu has ten, including Kṛṣṇa

avidyā: ignorance, a component of Advaita *khyāti-vāda*

ayogi-jñāna: one of the four types of *kevala-pramāṇa*

Balarāma: Kṛṣṇa's older brother, another name for Saṃkarṣaṇa

bandha: bondage

Bhagavad Gītā: lit. 'The Song of the Lord,' a section of the

Mahābhārata containing a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna

Bhīma: name of the hero of the *Mahābhārata*/*Bhagavad Gītā*, one of the

Pāṇḍava brothers, *avatāra* of Vāyu/Madhvācārya

bhakta: devotee

bhakti: devotion

bhakti-yoga: the path to *mokṣa* via *bhakti*

bhāṣya: commentary

bhāva: existent entities, there are two: *cetana* and *acetana*

bhavyatva: the capability to achieve *nirvāṇa* held by some *jīvas* according to the Jains

bheda: different

bhedābheda: different and non-different

bhedasādhana: establishing difference

bhūta: apparitions

bhūtārādhana: worship of apparitions

bimba: object of reflection

bimba-pratibimba-vāda: Madhvācārya's theory of reflection

Brahmā: a God in the Vedic and Vaiṣṇava pantheon

brahmāṇḍa: Brahmā's egg, the locus for the evolution of the universe, a *saṃśṛṣṭa* entity

brahmanandhu: a wicked and non-practicing *brahmin*

brahmacari: a celibate student

brahmacārya: the first stage in the *āśrama* system, the life of a celibate student

brahma-jñāna: knowledge of *brahman*

brahman: the divine principle, in Mādhva Vedānta, *brahman* is Viṣṇu

Brahma Sūtras: by Vyāsa/Viṣṇu, the central texts to all schools of Vedānta

brahmin: the priestly class, one of the four *varṇas*

Buddha: the awakened one, founder of the tradition of Buddhism, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

buddhi: the intellect, one of the twenty-four emanations of *prakṛti*

buddhi-indriyas: the sense organs: *ghrāṇa*, *rasana*, *cakṣus*, *śrotra*, *tvak*

cakra: discuss, a symbol and weapon of Kṛṣṇa

cakrakā: circularity, a *tarka-doṣa*

cakṣus: eye, a *buddhi-indriya*

cetanas: sentient entities

daityas: demons, one of the *tamo-yogyas*

darśan: vision

daśaprakaraṇas: Madhvācārya's ten short treatises on specific topics

dayivagaḷu: worship of apparitions (in Tuḷu)

deha: body

Devī: the Goddess

dharma: law, order, duty, religion, etc.

dharma-śāstra: a treatise on *dharma*

dodumma: a Tuḷu and Kannaḍa word for a grandmother, aunt, or any older female relative

doṣas: fallacy, defect

Draupadi: the epic heroine of the *Mahābhārata* and wife of the Paṇḍava brothers

duḥkha-saṁsthas: *jīvas* whose state of being is suffering

duḥkhasprṣṭa: *cetanas* who are connected with suffering

Durgā: a goddess

dvāpara-yuga: the third age

dvijas: twice born, in reference to a second birth following the *upanayana* initiation rite. Limited only to the first three *varṇas*.

epistemology: the theory of knowledge

eschatology: theories about death and the final goals of a philosophy or theology

gandha: that which is detected by the olfactory organ, a *pañca-tanmatra*

ghrāṇa: the olfactory organ, one of the six *indriyas*

granthas: unmetred thirty-two syllable verses

ghrastha: the second stage in the *āśrama* system, the life of a married householder

guṇas: attributes

guru: teacher

guru-prasāda: the grace of the *guru*, required for *aparokṣa-jñāna*

hagiography: biography of a religious figure

Hanumān: name of the monkey God of the *Rāmayaṇa*, an *avatāra* of Vāyu/Madhvācārya

Hari: a name of Viṣṇu and his *avatāras*

hetu: the reason, one of the components of *anumāna*

indriyas: six physical sense organs; *manas*, *ghrāṇa*, *rasana*, *caṅṣus*, *śrotra* and *tvak*

Īśa-jñāna: one of the four types of *kevala-pramāṇa*

itihāsa: narrative history, lit. 'so it has been'

jaḍa: non-sentient material entities

jala: water, a *pañca-bhūta*

- jalpa*: wrangling, a debate whose purpose is to bring fame and glory to the competitive victor
- janaloka*: a place of temporary residence for *jīvas* between lives
- Jana-loka*: the Region of Creatures, a place in *mokṣa*
- Janardhana*: a name for Viṣṇu
- jāti*: caste, a subdivision of *varṇa*
- jīva*: the enduring self, also known as the *ātman*
- jīva-traividhya*: three-fold classification of *jīvas*
- jñāna*: knowledge
- jñāna-yoga*: the path to *mokṣa* via *jñāna*
- kāla*: time, a *nityānitya* entity
- kali-yuga*: the fourth age
- Kalki: an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu appearing at the end of *kali-yuga*
- kalpa*: one day in the life of the god Brahmā
- kalpanāgaaurava*: complexity (Ockham's Razor), a *tarka-doṣa*
- kāma*: pleasure, one of the *puruṣārthas*
- karma*: actions and rituals having an impact on this life and future lives, *puṇya* and *pāpa*
- karma-indriyas*: the organs of action: *vāc*, *pāṇi*, *pāda*, *pāyu* and *upastha*
- karma-yoga*: the path to *mokṣa* via action and ritual
- karṭṛva*: agency
- kevala-pramāṇa*: direct knowledge of an object as it is: Īśa, Lakṣmī, *yogi* and *ayogi-jñāna*
- khyāti-vada*: theory of false cognition
- Kṛṣṇa: an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, the god-hero of the *Mahābhārata*/*Bhagavad Gītā*
- kṛta-yuga*: the first age
- kṣatriya*: the warrior class, one of the four *varṇas*
- Kṣīrasagare*, the Ocean of Milk, a place in *mokṣa*
- Kumbipāka*: the Pottery [Kiln], one of the Hells
- Kūrma: the tortoise, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu
- Lakṣmī: a goddess, known as Śrī and Ramā, Viṣṇu's consort
- Lakṣmī-jñāna: one of the four types of *kevala-pramāṇa*
- līlā*: playful sport, usually in reference to the activities of the divine
- liṅga*: an aniconic form of the god Śiva
- Mādhva: pertaining to Madhvācārya and his school of Vedānta, a follower of Madhvācārya
- madhya*: middling *jīvas*, a classification of *svarūpatraividhya*
- Mahābhārata*: the Hindu epic of the war between the Paṇḍavas and Kauravas, held to be an *āgama* by Madhvācārya, composed by Vyāsa
- Mahāraurava*: [Place of] Great Terror, one of the Hells
- Mahar-loka*, the Great Region, a place in *mokṣa*

mahat: the great principle, one of the twenty-four emanations of *prakṛti*

Mahā Tamas: the Great Hell, one of the two deepest Hells

manas: the mind, an *indriya*

*maṅgala-śloka*s: adulations found in texts

manovṛtti-jñāna: experiential knowledge, a *vṛtti*, of the *manas*

Manu: the ancestor of all humans

manvantara: an age of a Manu, one cycle of the *yugas* and *pralaya*

*martyādhama*s: vilest of the mortal *jīvas*, one of the *tamo-yogyas*

maṭha: monastery

mātras: objects, see *pañca-tanmātras*

Matsya: the fish, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

māyā: the means to illusion, a central component of Advaita epistemology

mohaśāstras: confusing teachings created intentionally by Viṣṇu

mokṣa: liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth

mukti-yogyas: *jīvas* qualified for release who can be liberated from suffering

mukty-ayogyas: *jīvas* who cannot be liberated from suffering

munitrayam: the three major thinkers in Mādhva Vedānta: Madhvācārya, Jayatīrtha and Vyāsātīrtha

nāgas: snakes

naras: the highest among men, one of the *vimuktas*

Narasimha, the man-lion, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

Nārāyaṇa: a name of Viṣṇu

nāstika: philosophical traditions not based on the *Vedas*

nīcā: lowest *jīvas*, a classification of *svarūpatraividhya*

nirguṇa: without attributes

nirvāṇa: the Buddhist and Jain term for liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth

niṣkāma-karma: acting without desire for the fruits of one's actions, a concept found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*

nitya: eternal, infinite, one of the three *acetanas*

nityabaddhas: those held by the Pāñcarātrikas to be eternally bound to the cycle of birth and rebirth, part of the Pāñcarātrika doctrine of predestination

nityāduḥkha: eternally without suffering, Śrī

nityānitya: both eternal and non-eternal, one of the three *acetanas*

nitya-saṁsārin: *jīvas* who are eternally caught in the cycle of birth and rebirth

nityasūris: *jīvas* who, according to Rāmānuja, are never subject to birth and rebirth

nyāya: logic

Nyāya: a school of South Asian philosophy

nyūna: omission of evidence, a reason for defeat in a debate

ontology: theories about the nature of being and what exists and does not exist

pa: protectors of the world, one of the *vimuktas*

pada: complete word

pāda: going, a *karma-indriya*

pakka-guruji: fully developed and esteemed teacher

pakṣa: the minor term, the subject, the *probandum*, a component of the *anumāna*

pañca-bhūtas: the five elements: *ākāśa*, *vāyū*, *agni*, *jala* and *pṛthivī*

pañcabheda: five-fold difference; between *jīva* and Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu and *jaḍa*, individual *jīvas*, *jīvas* and *jaḍas*, and individual *jaḍas*

Pañcakaṣṭha: the [Place] of Five Miseries, one of the two deepest Hells

Pañcarātrāgamas: a body of texts that are held to be *āgamas* by Madhvācārya

pañca-tanmatras: five subtle elements deriving from the *ahamkāra*, the *mātras* of the *indriyas*; *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha*.

Paṇḍavas: five brothers and epic heroes of the *Mahābhārata*: Yudhiṣṭira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva

pāṇi: grasping, a *karma-indriya*

pāpa: demeritorious *karma*

parampara: lineage

Paraśurāma: Rāma with the axe, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

paratantra: entities that are dependent on another

paratantratva: dependence, the state of being *paratantra*

parokṣa-jñāna: mediated knowledge of *brahman*

pauruṣeya: sentences and/or texts having human authorship, *śruti*

pāyu: excreting, a *karma-indriyas*

piśacas: ghastly lurkers, one of the *tamo-yogyas*

pitrs: ancestors, one of the *vimuktas*

[Place of the] *Vaitaraṇi* [river]: one of the Hells

pradhvaṃsābhāva: posterior non-existence, the non-existence of a substance after it is destroyed, one of the three *abhāvas*

Pradyumna: father of Aniruddha, and son of Kṛṣṇa, one of the *vyūhas*

prāgabhāva: prior non-existence, the non-existence of a substance before it comes into being, one of the three *abhāvas*

prakaraṇa: minor philosophical tract

prakṛti: material cause, a *nityānitya* entity

pralaya: the destruction of the universe

pramāṇa: the means of valid knowledge, there are two types: *anu* and *kevala-pramāṇa*

prāptādhataamasas: *tamo-yogyas* who suffer in complete darkness

prārabdha karma: latent *karma* accumulated over time

prasāda: grace

prāśnika: questioner, arbitrator of the dispute

prasthānatraya: three-fold systems. The *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Brahma*

Sūtras and ten *Upaniṣads*

pratibimba: reflection

pratiñā: proposition, a component of *anumāna*

pratyakṣa: perception, one of the three *anu-pramānas*

prthvī: earth, a *pañca-bhūta*

puṇya: meritorious *karma*

purāṇaprasthāna: system of Purāṇic texts

puruṣārthas: the human goals; *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*

rākṣasas: orcs, one of the *tamo-yogyas*

Ramā: a name of Lakṣmī, Śrī, Viṣṇu's consort

Rāma: the epic Hero of the Rāmāyaṇa, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

Rāmānujācārya: (1017–1137 CE) the founder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita School of Vedānta

Rāmāyana: the Hindu epic about the Rāma, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, held to be an *āgama* by Madhvācārya

rasa: taste, a *pañca-tanmātra*

rasana: the gustatory organ, a *buddhi-indriyas*

Raurava: [Place of] Terror, one of the Hells

ṛṣis: seers, one of the *vimuktas*

Rudra: a name of Śiva, assists Viṣṇu by producing *mohaśāstras*

rūpa: color, a *pañca-tanmātra*

śabda: sound, a *pañca-tanmātra*

sadābhāva: always non-existent, for example, the horn of a hare, one of the three *abhāvas*, see also *atyāntābhava*

sādhya: thing to be proven, the major term, a component of the *anumāna*

saguṇa: with attributes

Śaivite: a pertaining to Śiva, a devotee of the god Śiva

sākṣī: the internal witness, it is *sva-prakāśa* and is a *pratyakṣa*

śakti: female power

sālokyā: *jīvas* residing simply in *Kṣīrasagare*, a place in *mokṣa*

sāmīpya: *jīvas* residing close to Viṣṇu in *Kṣīrasagare*, a place in *mokṣa*

Śaṅkarācārya: (788–820 CE) the founder of the Advaita School of Vedānta

Śaṅkarāṇa: a name of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's older brother, one of the *vyūhas*

Sāṃkhya: a school of South Asian philosophy

saṁnyāsa: the last stage in the *āśrama* system, renunciation

saṁnyāsi: an ascetic, one who has renounced

saṁpradāya: community and institutions

saṁsāra: worldly existence in the cycle of birth and rebirth

saṁśaya: doubt

saṁsr̥ṣṭa: a combined entity, *brahmāṇḍa*

saṁvāda: accepting a disputed fact, a reason for defeat in a debate, also refers to the debate itself

śaṅkha: conch, a symbol of Kṛṣṇa

sapakṣa: a similar instance confirming the *vyāpti*, a component of the *anumāna*

sarūpa: *jīvas* similar to Viṣṇu residing in *Kṣīrasagare*

śaśaṅga: the horn of a hare, a *sadābhāva* entity

śāstra: teachings, the *āgamas*

sat: real, a component of Madhvācārya's *khyāti-vāda*

Satya-loka: the Region of Truth, a place in *mokṣa*

Śiva: name of a Hindu god

smṛti: traditional human-authored texts

sopādhika: having a limiting adjunct, part of Madhvācārya's *pratibimba-vāda*

soteriology: theories about salvation

spṛṣṭa-duḥkhas: *jīvas* who are completely connected with suffering

sparśa: feeling, a *pañca-tanmātra*

Śrī: a name of Lakṣmī, Ramā, Viṣṇu's consort, an honorific

śrotra: the organ of hearing, one of the *buddhi-indriyas*

śṛtisamsthitās: *tamo-yogyas* whose way to darkness is through *saṁsāra*

śruti: the revealed texts of the Vedic canon

śūdra: the service class, serfs, one of the four *varṇas*

sūtra: a short aphorism or collection of aphorisms

svāmśa: essential parts of the greater whole

svāmi: religious leader, usually a celibate ascetic

svāmiji: esteemed religious leader, the suffix '-ji' is an honorific

sva-nirvāhaka: possessing self-sufficiency, not requiring another

sva-prakāśa: self-luminous, not requiring another to be illuminated

svarga: heaven, the goal of the Mīmāṃsā school, in Mādhva Vedānta it is the *prasāda* of *bhakti-yoga* and a place of temporary residence

Svarga: Heaven, a place in *mokṣa*

svarūpa: essence, natural capacities, innate abilities

svarūpa-jñāna: knowledge that is inherent to, or part of, the very nature of the cognizer

svarūpatraividhya: three-fold classification of *jīvas*: *ucca*, *madhya* and *nīcā*

svataḥ-prāmāṇa: self-valid, when validity cannot be derived from an outside authority

svatantram: independent entity, only Viṣṇu is *svatantram*

svātantrya: independence

tadaspr̥ṣṭa: *cetanas* who are not connected with suffering

Tāmisra: [Place of] Darkness, one of the Hells

tamo-yogya: *jīvas* who are fit only for darkness and will not attain *mokṣa*: *daityas*, *rākṣasas*, *piśacas* and *martyādhamas*

tantras: the *Pañcarātrāgamas*, a body of texts held to be *āgama*

tantric: a type of non-Vedic worship and ritual

Tapo-loka: the Region of Austerities, a place in *mokṣa*

taptamudhra: the ceremonial branding of Mādhvas with images of the *śaṅkha*, conch, and *cakra*, discus, both of which are possessed by Kṛṣṇa

tāratamya: gradation

tarka-doṣa: an error in logic

tatpuruṣa: a determinative compound in Sanskrit

theodicy: theory about the existence of evil as it relates to the divine

ṭīkācārya: author of commentaries, an honorific, a title of Jayatīrtha

tretā-yuga: the second age

tūṣṇībhāva: silence, a reason for defeat in a debate

tvak: touch, one of the *buddhi-indriyas*

ucca: highest *jīvas*, a classification of *svarūpatraividhya*

udāharaṇa: example, a component of the *anumāna*

upādhi: limiting adjunct, a concept in Advaita epistemology

upajīvaka: dependent source, used in reference to hierarchy in epistemology

upajīvyā: foundational source, used in reference to hierarchy in epistemology

upamā: analogy, under the rubric of *anumāna*

upanaya: application, a component of the *anumāna*

upanayana: initiation ceremony for males of the highest three *varṇas*

upastha: procreation, a *karma-indriya*

Vāc: speaking, a *karma-indriya*

vāda: view, theory, discussion; also a debate whose purpose is the pursuit of truth

Vahni: [Place of] Fire, one of the Hells

Vaiṣṇava: pertaining to Viṣṇu, a devotee of the god Viṣṇu

vaiṣya: the merchant class, one of the four *varṇas*

Vāmana: the dwarf, Vāmana, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu

vānaprastha: the first stage in the *āśrama* system, forest dweller

vandhyāputra, son of a barren woman, a *sadābhāva* entity

- Varāha: the boar, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu
varṇa, class system; *brahmins*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, can also refer to a phoneme
varṇāśrama-dharma: duty according to *varṇa* and *āśrama*
vāsanā: an impression in the mind resulting from previous *karma*
Vāsudeva: ‘The Descendent of Viṣṇu,’ a name of Madhvācārya
vāyu: air, one of the *pañca-bhūtas*
Vāyu: the god of wind, Madhvācārya, the son of Viṣṇu, Bhīma
vedānta: a *tatpuruṣa* comprised of *veda* and *anta*, meaning ‘the culminating sections of the *Vedas*,’ a tradition of South Asian philosophy
vidhi: obligatory duties pertaining to *varṇāśrama-dharma*
vimuktas: *jīvas* who are already liberated from suffering
Vīraśaivism: a *nāstika* tradition of Hinduism
virodha: contradiction, a reason for defeat in a debate
viśeṣa: distinguishing property
Viṣṇu: name of a Hindu god, the god central to Mādhva Vedānta
Viṣṇu-prasāda: the grace of Viṣṇu
vitanda: captious objection, *reductio ad absurdum*
vṛtti: modifications, see *manovṛtti-jñāna*
vyāpti: universal concomitance between the *hetu* and the *sādhya*, a component of the *anumāna*
Vyāsa: author of the *Brahma Sūtras* and the *Mahābhārata*, an incarnation of Viṣṇu
vyāvahārika: everyday experience, a component of Advaita epistemology
vyūhas: emanations of Viṣṇu; Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Nārāyaṇa
yajñas: sacrifices, particularly those enjoined in Vedic texts
Yama: the ruler of Hell
Yami: the wife of Yama
yathārtha: *pramāṇa*, that which reveals an object of knowledge as it is
yoga: *jīvas* joined with Viṣṇu in *Kṣīrasagare*
yogi-jñāna: one of the four types of *kevala-pramāṇa*: *ṛjuyogins*, *tattvika-yogins* and *ayogins/atattvika-yogins*
yogyatā: innate capabilities
yugas: ages of the universe; *kṛta*, *tretā*, *dvāpara* and *kali*

Text index

This index is for advanced scholars wishing to locate my citations of Mādhva materials. Scholars of Mādhva Vedānta have been confronted with difficulties when older scholarship refers to pagination, etc., from older manuscripts that are either hard to find or no longer extant. The result is a great deal of painstaking searches for citations. I have structured this text index to avoid those problems of the past. I have thus included a passage number, if one exists, a portion of the passage that I have cited or to which I have referred, and pagination from Govindācārya's edition of the *Sarvamūla* (hereafter BG) and then Prabhanjanacharya's (hereafter VP). If I have used a different edition from either of these two then it has been indicated in the header.

Madhvācārya's texts have been grouped according to the category system of the *Sarvamūla*:

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Aṇubhāṣya

Anuvyākhyāna

Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya

Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya

Gītātātparyam

Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya

Pramāṇalakṣaṇa

Tattvasaṃkhyāna

Tattvaviveka

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya

Jayātīrtha's texts:

Nyāya Sudhā

Pramāṇapaddhati

Tāttvaparakāśika

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya-ṭika

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<i>arthāpatyupame</i>	65	5
<i>ātmāny ...</i>	65	5
<i>vyāptir upapattimūlam</i>	66	5
<i>pratyakṣam</i>	66	7
<i>mānasapratyakṣajā</i>	66	7

Tattvasaṃkhyāna	BG	VP
1	60	25
2	60	26
3	60	26
4	60	27
5	60	27
6	60	28
7	60	28
8	60	28
10	61	28
Tattvaviveka	BG	VP
2	63	31
6	63	32
Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya	BG	VP
<i>sadāgamaikavijñeya</i>	11	65
<i>nārāyaṇaṃ</i>	11	65
<i>na ca kevalatarkaṇa</i>	11	68
<i>na ca pauraṣeyaṇa</i>	12	70
<i>apauraṣeyatvaṃ ca</i>	12	71–72
<i>uktaṃ ca</i>	12	72
<i>prāmāṇyaṃ ca</i>	13	72
<i>na coccāraṇakāla</i>	13	72
<i>tatprāmāṇyaṃ</i>	13	73
<i>śrutirvāva</i>	14	76
<i>vijñeyaṃ paraṃ</i>	14	76
<i>nityā vedāḥ</i>	14	76–77
<i>tadutpattivacaś caiva</i>	15	77
<i>purāṇāni</i>	15	77
<i>purāṇānām apy</i>	15	78
<i>pratyakṣaṃ trividaṃ</i>	18	87
<i>akṣāṇi ca</i>	18	87
<i>devāsuraṇi</i>	18	87
<i>mokṣo hi</i>	19	90
<i>dharmārthakāmāḥ</i>	19	90
<i>bandhako</i>	20	92
<i>bhedastu</i>	20	94
<i>yadi na</i>	20–21	94–95
<i>asad eva</i>	21	96

<i>asataḥ</i>	21	96
<i>vailakṣaṇyaṃ</i>	27	106
<i>etat sāmāgāyannāste</i>	31	114
<i>sa tatra</i>	31	115
<i>ahamiti eva</i>	32	116
<i>jīveśvarabhīdā</i>	35	122
<i>matam hi</i>	35	122

Jayatīrtha:

I used the Uttarādimaṭha edition of the *Nyāya Sudhā*

Nyāya Sudhā	NS
1.1.1 <i>ekadeśāpavādena kalpyamāne</i>	630
1.1.1 <i>kimca rajatasyā</i>	630
2.2.8 <i>tamaḥ ajñānam</i>	3162

I used Paṇḍurāṅgi's edition of Jayatīrtha's *Pramāṇapaddhati* (hereafter KTP).

Pramāṇapaddhati	section	KTP
18 <i>tad dvividham</i>	<i>yogijñānaprabhedāḥ</i>	4
18 <i>tadvyatiriktā</i>	<i>yogijñānaprabhedāḥ</i>	4
19 <i>ayoginaḥ api trividhā</i>	<i>ayogijñānaprabhedāḥ</i>	5
19 <i>tatra muktivyogyanāṃ</i>	<i>ayogijñānaprabhedāḥ</i>	5
23 <i>teṣaṃ doṣāḥ</i>	<i>anupramāṇaprabhedāḥ</i>	6
25 <i>prākṛtam ṣaḍviddham</i>	<i>prākṛtendriyāḥ</i>	6
25 <i>eteṣāṃ pañcānāṃ</i>	<i>prākṛtendriyāḥ</i>	6
25 <i>tasya doṣāḥ</i>	<i>prākṛtendriyāḥ</i>	6
27 <i>caturvidham pratyakṣam</i>	<i>pratyakṣaprabhedā</i>	7
28 <i>bāhyendriyaṃ trividham</i>	<i>bāhendriyatraividhyam</i>	7

I used Panchamukhi's (hereafter RSP) and Paṇḍurāṅgi's edition of the BSB for Jayatīrtha's *Tāttvaparakāśika*

Tāttvaparakāśika	RSP edition	KTP
1.1.1 <i>tantram pañcarātrādi</i>	29	117

I used the *Daśaprakaraṇāni* (DP) edited by Śrīman Mādhvarāddhanta-saṁvardhanīśabhā.

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya-ṭika	DP
<i>yaḥ sa duḥkh</i>	698

Sanskrit texts

These texts are all taken from Madhvācārya's *Sarvamūlagranthāḥ* edited by Prabhanjanacharya. The numbering system for the MVK, UK and VTV is my own. Text enclosed in brackets are the full citations from the passages cited by Madhvācārya.

Kathālakṣaṇa

nṛsiṃhakhilājñānatimirāśisiradyutim |
sampraṇamya pravakṣāmi kathālakṣaṇam aṅjasā | KL 1
vādo jalpo vitaṇḍeti trividhā viduṣāṃ kathā |
tattvanirṇayam uddiṣya kevalaṃ guruśiṣyayoḥ | KL 2
kathā 'nyeṣāṃ api satāṃ vādo vā samiteḥ śubhā |
khyātyādyartham spardhayā vā satāṃ jalpa itīryate | KL 3
vitaṇḍā tu satāṃ anyais tattvam eṣu nigūhitam |
svayaṃ vā prāśnikair vāde cintayet tattvanirṇayam | KL 4
rāgadveṣavihīnāstu sarvavidyāviśāradaḥ |
prāśnikā iti samproktā viṣamā eka eva vā | KL 5
aśeṣasaṃśayacchettā niḥsaṃśāya udāradhīḥ |
ekaścet prāśniko jñeyāḥ sarvadoṣavivarjitāḥ | KL 6
eko vā bahavo vā syur viṣṇubhaktiparāśadā |
viṣṇubhaktir hi sarveṣāṃ sadguṇānāṃ svalakṣaṇam | KL 7
prṣṭenāgama evādaḥ vaktavyāḥ sādhyasiddhaye |
naiṣā tarkeṇāpaneyā matir [proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭa ...] ity āha
hi śrutih |
anyārtha evāgamasya vaktavyāḥ prativādinā | KL 8
ṛgyajuḥsāmārtthavaś ca bhāratam pañcarātrakam |
mūlarāmāyaṇam caiva samprocyante sadāgamāḥ | KL 9
anukūlā ya eteṣāṃ te ca proktās sadāgamāḥ |
anye durāgamā nāma tair na sādhyāṃ hi sādhyate | KL 10
svapakṣa āgamaś caiva vaktavyāḥ prativādinā |
tasyāpy anyārthatā sādhyā vādinā svārthasiddhaye | KL 11
anyārthatā nirākāryā svāgamasya viniścayāt |
upapattyavakāśo 'tra hy āgamārthavinirṇaye | KL 12
vādyāgamārthe nirṇīta āgamārthaḥ parasya tu |
nirṇeyāḥ sahitaiḥ paścāt tato niśśeṣanirṇayaḥ | KL 13

pratyakṣasiddheṣu artheṣu praśne mām akṣajam vadet |
jñānam vā jñānasiddheṣu nānumām prathamam vadet | KL 14
paratuṣṭikaram vākyaṃ vadetām yadi vādinau |
sa evātrāgamo jñeyah paratuṣṭir hi tatphalam | KL 15
evam nirṇayaparyantaṃ vāde subahavo 'pi hi |
ghateyuś cirakālam ca jalpo yāvatparo jitaḥ | KL 16
tattvanirṇayavailomyaṃ vāde sāksāt parājayah |
saṃvāde ślāghyataiva syād gurutvamarasya ca | KL 17
tattvanirṇayavailomye nindyo daṇḍyo 'tha vā bhavet |
virodhāsaṅgatinyūnatūṣṇīmbhāvadhikaitijitaḥ | KL 18
bhavej jalpe vitanḍāyām nyāyo jalpavadīritaḥ |
saṃvāde daṇḍyatā na syāt vitanḍājalpayor api | KL 19
parājitatvamātram syān nindyoḥ daṇḍyo 'api vā 'nyathā |
anuvādādirāhityaṃ naiva jalpe 'pi dūṣaṇam | KL 20
vidyāhīnatvaliṅge 'pi vādinoh syān parājayah |
tadabhāvān naiva ṣaṭkād anyo nigrāha iṣyate | KL 21
antarbhāvād ihānyeṣāṃ nigrāhānām iti sma ha |
vidyāparīkṣāpūrvaiva vṛttirjalpavitanḍayoh | KL 22
skhalitatvādimātreṇa na tatrāpi parājayah |
vādajalpavitanḍanām iti śuddham svalakṣaṇam | KL 23
ānandatīrthamuninā brahmatarkānusārataḥ |
kathālakṣaṇam ity uktam prītyarthaṃ śārngadhanvanaḥ | KL 24
sadoditāmitajñānapūravāritahr̥ttamāḥ |
narasiṃhaḥ priyatamaḥ prīyatām puruṣottamaḥ | KL 25

Māyāvādakhaṇḍanam

narasiṃho 'khilajñānamatadhvāntadivākaraḥ |
jayatyamitasajjñānasukhasāktipayonidhiḥ | MVK 1
vimatam anārambaṇīyam anyathāpratipādakatvāt yaditthaṃ tattathā
yathā sampratipannam | MVK 2
na hi brahmātmaikyasya yāthārthyaṃ tatpakṣe | advaitahāneḥ
svarūpātireke | anatireke svaprakāśatvād ātmanaḥ siddhsādhnatā |
MVK 3–4
nirviśeṣatvād ātmano nānadhigato viśeṣaḥ | MVK 5
siddhatvāt svarūpasya viśeṣābhāvāc ca nājñānam kasyacid āvarakam |
MVK 6
anadhigatārthagatāṃ pramāṇam iti ca tanmatam | MVK 7
ajñānāsambhavād eva tanmatam akhilam apākṛtam | MVK 8
mithyātve caikyasyātattvāvedakatvan āgamasya syāt | satyatā ca
bhedasya | MVK 9–10

*evam eva prayojanam api nirastam | svarūpatvān mokṣasya pūrvam eva
siddhatvāt |* MVK 11

*ajñānāsambhavena caturthaprakārābhāvāt pañcamaparakāratā 'pi
nirastā |* MVK12

*viṣayaprayojanābhāvād evādhikārī ca | tadabhāvād eva sambando 'pi |
MVK 13*

*dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca | kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni
kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate | uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ paramātmety
udāhṛtaḥ | yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ | yasmāt
kṣaram atīto 'ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ | ato 'smi loke vede ca
prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ | yo mām evam asammūḍho jñāti
puruṣottamam | sa sarvavid bhajati mām sarvabhāvena bhārata | iti
guhyatamaḥ śāstram idam uktaḥ mayā 'nagha | etad buddhvā
buddhimān syāt kṛtakṛtyaś ca bhārata |* MVK 14 (BG 15.16–20)

*indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā arthebhyaś ca paraṁ manaḥ | manasastu
parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahānparaḥ | mahataḥ paramvyaktam
avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ | puruṣān na paraṁ kiṃcit sā kṣṣṭā sā parā
gatiḥ |* MVK 15 (Kātha Upaniṣad 3.10–11)

bhūmraḥ kratuvajjyāyastvaṁ tathā ca darśayati | MVK 16

*iti viṣṇoḥ puruṣottamatvam eva sarvaśāstrārthatvena bhagavatā śrutyā
cābhihitam |* MVK 17

*iti sarvamuninā māvādatamo 'khilam | nirastaṁ tattvavādena satām
saṁśayanuttaye |* MVK 18

nāsti nārāyaṇasamaṁ na bhūtaṁ na bhaviṣyati |

etena satyavākyaena sarvārthān sādhayāmy aham | MVK 19

Upādhikhaṇḍana

*nārāyaṇo 'gaṇyaguṇanityaikaṇilayākṛtiḥ |
aśeṣadoṣarahitaḥ prīyatām kamalālayaḥ |* UK 1

*ajñātā 'khilasaṁvettur ghaṭate na kutaścana |
upādhibhedād ghaṭata iti cet sa svabhāvataḥ |
ajñānato vā dvaitasya satyatā svata eva cet |* UK 2

*anavasthitir ajñānahetau vā 'nyonyasiddhitā |
cakrakāpattir athavā bhedaścopādhitaḥ kutaḥ |* UK 3

*vidyamānasya bhedasya jñāpako naiva kārakaḥ |
upādhir dṛṣṭapūrvō hi khe 'pi deśāntarasya saḥ |
jñāpako vidyamānasya muḍhabuddhivyapekṣayā |* UK 4

*na ced upādhisambandha ekadeśo 'tha sarvagaḥ |
ekadeśo 'navasthā syāt sarvagaś cen na bhedakaḥ |* UK 5
sukhaduḥkhādibhogaś ca svarupaikye na bhedataḥ |

dr̥ṣyo hy upādhibhede 'pi hastapādādigo yathā | UK 6
nānā dehagabhogānusandhānaṃ yogino yathā |
na ced bhogānusandhānaṃ tadiccha yoginaḥ kutaḥ | UK 7
anusandhānarahitadehabāhulyaman yathā |
siddham eva hi tatpakṣe viśeṣo yoginaḥ kutaḥ | UK 8
siddhau hi karmabhedasya syād upādhivibhinnaṭā |
tatsiddhau caiva tatsiddhir ity anyonyavyapāśrayaḥ | UK 9
ātmavabhāvabhedasya vidoṣatvena cākhilāḥ |
pratyakṣādivirodhāc ca duṣṭaḥ pakṣo 'yamañjasā | UK 10
ceṣṭāliṅgena sātmatve paradehasya sādHITE |
anyatvaṃ svātmanas tasmāt sarvair evānubhūyate | UK 11
ajñatā cālpaṃśaktitvaṃ duḥkhitvaṃ svalpakartr̥tā |
sarvajñātādīśagaṇaviruddhā hy anubhūtiḡāḥ | UK 12
sarvajñādiguṇā viṣṇoḥ śrutiṣu pratipāditāḥ |
[ayaṃ sahasramṛṣibhiḥ sahaskṛtaḥ samudra iva paprathe |
satyaḥ so asya mahima gr̥ṇe śavo yajñeṣu viprarāḡye RV 8.3.4]
satyaḥ so asya mahime 'ty ādi vākyaṇmṛṣā na ca | UK 13
na ca vedoktamithyātve mānaṃ tanmānatā 'pi na |
ato 'jñāsambhavād eva nādhikāryaikyavādinām | UK 14
ato nājñātam iti ca viṣayo viṣayāntare |
ajñābhāvāt phalaṃ kasya yogaḥ śāsanṣṛṅgayoḥ | UK 15
durghaṭatvaṃ bhūṣaṇaṃ cet syād avidyātvaṃ ātmanaḥ |
andhantamo 'py alaṅkāro nityaduḥkhaṃ śiromaṇiḥ | UK 16
ataḥ paro mātraye 'ti pūrvaśrutinidarśitaḥ |
[paro mātrayā tanvā vṛdhāna na te mahitvamanvaśnuvanti RV 7.99.1]
anyamīśam iti śrutyā bhinnajīvadṛṣaṃ gataḥ |
[samāne vṛkṣe puruṣaḥ nimagno 'nīśayā śocati mahyumānaḥ |
juṣṭaṃ yadā paśyaty anyam īśam asya mahimānam iti vītaśokaḥ | MU
3.1.3]
bhinnatvenātmasādr̥ṣyado yadeti śruteḥ sadā | UK 17
[yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukmavarṇaṃ karttāram īśaṃ puruṣaṃ
brahmayonim | R̥g Veda 7.99.1:
tadā vidvānpuṇyapāpe vidhūya nirañjanaḥ paramaṃ sām̐yam upaitti |
MU 3.1.2]
māyavādatamovyāptam iti tattvadṛṣā jagat |
bhātaṃ sarvajñāsūryeṇa prītaye śrīpateḥ sadā | UK 18
namo 'mandanijānandasāndrasundaramūrtaye |
indirāpataye nityānandabhojanadāyine | UK 19

Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya: ekajīvavāda (pp. 119–120 of Prabhanjanacharya)

na tāvadekajīvavādo yujyate | VTV 1

ekajñānaparikalpitatve ca saravasya sarvam idaṃ parikalpitam iti jānataḥ punaḥ śiṣyādibodhanaṃ na yujyate | VTV 2

na hi svapno 'yam iti niścitya svāpnoaputradāyārthaṃ yatate | VTV 3
[next line skipped]

na ca bahūnāṃ dṛśyamānatvād asyājñānaparikalpitam idaṃ iti niścayo yujyate | VTV 4

svapne tu prabodhānantaram ekasyāvaśiṣṭatvāt niścayaḥ | *na cātra tathāsti* | VTV 5–6

tasya tasya tatheti pratipattavyam ityaṅgīkāre vastuni vikalpāsambhvāt akalpitam ity eva syāt | VTV 7–8

na ca tathā pratipattavyam ity atra pramāṇam asti | VTV 9

śiṣyājñānaparikalpitam ity aṅgīkāre tasyaivācāryabhāve tasyam eva kalpito bhavatīti samayag granthādhigamasyānrthaheṭutvaṃ syāt | VTV 10

na ca kasyacidmuktiḥ | *granthādhigame tasyaivasva śiṣyājñānaparikalpitatvaprapṛteḥ* | VTV 11

sa caikajīvo yadi bhedavādī bhavati tasya tatraiva daḍharthanna kadācit bhedanivṛttir iti na kasyāpi muktiḥ syāt | VTV 12

tena yathā kalpitaṃ tathāiva bhavatīti tena ekajīvavādināṃ nityanirayakalpane sa eva syāt | VTV 13

na ca ekajīvājñānaparikalpitaṃ samastam ity atra kiṃcinmānam asti | VTV 14

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