

BHAKTI IN ADVAITA VEDÂNTA:
MADHUSÛDANA SARASVATÎ'S BHAKTIRASÂYANA

BHAKTI IN ADVAITA VEDÂNTA:
A TRANSLATION AND STUDY OF
MADHUSÛDANA SARASVATÎ'S BHAKTIRASÂYANA

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ABSTRACT

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th century), one of the greatest and most vigorous exponents of post-Śaṅkara Advaita, was simultaneously, and somewhat paradoxically, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He authored several works in which he sought to give bhakti a more prominent place within Advaita, a system traditionally regarded as hostile to devotional spirituality.

The Bhaktirasāyana (BR), the most important of these, is an independent composition which attempts a theoretical integration of non-dualist metaphysics and the ecstatic devotionism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The work's main thesis, borrowed from the Vaiṣṇava devotionalists, is that bhakti is highest goal of life (paramapurūṣārtha). To establish this in the face of the orthodox Advaita doctrine that liberation alone is the highest aim, Madhusūdana argues (1) that bhakti is God (bhagavat) appearing in the melted mind of the devotee, (2) that, since bhagavat is supreme bliss, so is bhakti, and (3) that bhakti includes knowledge of the ātman and is a more blissful experience than mokṣa.

While the argument for the experiential superiority of bhakti in the state of jīvanmukti ("liberation in life") is plausible, Madhusūdana does not show, in Advaitic terms,

how it can be experienced eternally after death. Moreover, he fails to establish that bhagavat is ontologically equal to Brahman, which makes it difficult to see how bhakti, as identified with bhagavat, can be ontologically superior, or even equal, to mokṣa. In short, he does not present a convincing argument for bhakti's being the paramapuruṣārtha.

In later works such as the Gūḍārthadīpikā and Advaitasiddhi, Madhusūdana abandons the idea that bhakti is an independent spiritual path and itself the paramapuruṣārtha. The commonly accepted view that he was a champion of the cause of bhakti who successfully integrated devotion and Advaita cannot therefore be accepted without serious qualification.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION: ADVAITA, <u>BHAKTI</u> , AND MADHUSŪDANA	1

PART I:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Chapter

I. DEVOTIONAL TRENDS AND IMPERSONALISM IN THE EARLY SCRIPTURES	20
1.1 <u>Bhakti</u> , Personalism, and Impersonalism	20
1.2 Devotional and Impersonalist Aspects of Vedic Religion	24
1.3 Devotional Trends and Impersonalism in the Major Upanisads	33
1.4 <u>Bhakti</u> and Advaita in the <u>Bhagavad Gītā</u>	43
II. <u>BHAKTI</u> IN THE WRITINGS OF ŚAṂKARA	52
2.1 Introduction: Śaṅkara as a devotee?	52
2.2 Śaṅkara's Authentic Works	54
2.3 Levels of Being and Religious Structures	56
2.4 Structures in Place: <u>Jīva</u> and <u>Īśvara</u>	61
2.5 Śaṅkara's Devaluation of Devotion	67
2.5.1 The penultimacy of religious structures and <u>bhakti</u>	67
2.5.2 <u>Bhakti</u> not an independent path	70
2.5.3 Knowledge the means to liberation	73
2.5.4 Saving knowledge mediated through the Vedic revelation	74
2.5.5 Eligibility for knowledge	75
2.5.6 <u>Karma</u> and <u>bhakti</u> as preparatory to knowledge	77
2.5.7 <u>Bhakti</u> and <u>upāsana</u>	78
2.5.8 The seeker of knowledge rejects devotion	82
2.5.9 The Gītā interpreted for the <u>jñānin</u>	88

2.6	Social Dimensions	90
2.7	Advaita Exclusivism and the Ethos of <u>Bhakti</u>	93
III.	<u>BHAKTI AND ADVAITA IN THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA</u>	96
3.1	Introduction: the Scripture of <u>Kṛṣṇa Bhakti</u>	96
3.2	Devotion as the Supreme Path and One Goal .	99
3.3	Devotion as Practice and Devotion as Goal .	102
3.4	Ecstatic Devotion	103
3.5	Metaphysical Non-dualism	106
3.6	Social Teaching	111
IV.	BENGAL VAIṢṆAVA CONCEPT OF <u>BHAKTI</u>	115
4.1	The Flowering of Ecstatic <u>Bhakti</u> in Bengal	115
4.2	Caitanya and Śrīdhara	117
4.3	The Theology of the Gosvāmins	123
4.3.1	The three-fold deity and his three-fold energy	124
4.3.2	<u>Bhakti</u> as the fifth and highest goal of life	128
4.3.3	The definition of <u>bhakti</u>	132
4.3.4	The stages of devotion	134
4.3.5	The levels of ecstatic love	137
4.3.6	<u>Bhakti</u> given ontic status as Kṛṣṇa's highest power	141
4.4	Bengal Vaiṣṇava Social Practice	149
V.	MADHUSŪDANA ON ADVAITA- <u>BHAKTI</u> : THE THEOLOGY OF DEVOTION IN THE BHAKTIRASĀYANA	152
5.1	Approaching the <u>Bhaktirasayāyana</u>	152
5.2	<u>Bhakti</u> as an Independent Path	154
5.3	The Highest Goal of Life	156
5.4	<u>Bhakti</u> as a Modality of the Mind	159
5.5	<u>Bhakti</u> as <u>Bhagavat</u>	162
5.6	The Nature of <u>Bhagavat</u>	167
5.7	<u>Bhakti</u> and Knowledge of Brahman	176
5.8	<u>Bhakti</u> and <u>Mokṣa</u>	185
5.9	<u>Bhakti</u> Superior to <u>Mokṣa</u>	194
VI.	<u>BHAKTI</u> AND SANSKRIT AESTHETICS	199
6.1	<u>Bhakti</u> , Myth, and Imagination	200
6.2	The Theory of <u>Rasa</u>	205
6.3	Religious Application of the <u>Rasa</u> Theory .	210
6.4	<u>Bhaktirasa</u> in the Theology of the Bengal School	215
6.5	Madhusūdana on <u>Bhaktirasa</u>	223

PART II: THE TEXT

VII.	AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ'S BHAKTIRASAYANA, WITH MADHUSŪDANA'S OWN COMMENTARY	238
	Section Divisions (Added by Translator)	
i.	Opening Prayer and Introduction to Stanza One	238
ii.	The Four Types of Yoga	239
iii.	Preliminary Purification of the Mind through the Yoga of Action	239
iv.	The Approach to Devotion through the Yoga of Knowledge	240
v.	Devotion is the Supreme Goal of Life	243
vi.	The Goal of Life is Bliss Only	244
vii.	Devotion is the Highest Goal of Life Because It is Pure Bliss	246
viii.	Other Terms in the First Stanza Explained	247
ix.	Scriptural Support for Devotion as the Goal Of Life	248
x.	Devotion as Means and Devotion as End	249
xi.	Devotion Distinguished from Knowledge of Brahman	255
xii.	The Characteristics of Devotion	260
xiii.	The Mind in Devotion	261
xiv.	The Three Levels of Devotees	265
xv.	Other Designations of the Melted State	266
xvi.	The Three Levels of Advanced Devotees	266
xvii.	The Definition of Permanent Emotion and Sentiment	267
xviii.	The Permanent Emotion Becomes a Sentiment Because It is Blissful	268
xix.	The Explanation According to Sāṃkhya	272
xx.	Objections Based on Other Theories of Mind	276
xxi.	The Final Position on Mind	280
xxii.	The Form of the Lord in the Melted Mind	283
xxiii.	The Possession of the Lord's Form is Natural	286
xxiv.	The Levels of Non-attachment	292
xxv.	The Relation of Knowledge, Non-attachment, and Devotion	298
xxvi.	The Nature of Knowledge	299
xxvii.	The Nature of the Higher Non-attachment	301
xxviii.	The Nature of Devotion	301
xxix.	The Eleven Stages of Devotion	304
xxx.	Colophon	305

PART III:
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

VIII.	THEORETICAL DIFFICULTIES	307
8.1	Is Madhusūdana's Presentation Convincing?	307
8.2	The Eternality of Devotion	310
8.3	<u>Bhagavat</u> as the Eternal Experiencer of Devotion	313
8.4	<u>Bhagavat</u> Still Ontologically Less Than Brahman	317
8.5	A Suggestive Metaphysical Vagueness	319
IX.	THE CONTINUITY OF MADHUSŪDANA'S THOUGHT ON <u>BHAKTI</u>	322
9.1	Possible Purposes of the BR	323
9.2	Softening the Exclusivism of Orthodox Advaita	328
9.3	<u>Bhakti</u> in the <u>Gūdhārthadīpikā</u>	331
9.3.1	The devotional flavor of the text	332
9.3.2	Surrender to God the Gītā's key teaching	334
9.3.3	The resurgence of Advaitic exclusivism	335
9.3.4	Modi's understanding of the GAD	339
9.3.5	Devotion for the renunciate	341
9.7	Madhusūdana's Final Intention	350
X.	CONCLUDING REMARKS	356
	NOTES	368
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	527
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	529

INTRODUCTION

ADVAITA, BHAKTI, AND MADHUSŪDANA

The tension between the spiritual paths of knowledge and devotion has been a key internal problem for the Hindu tradition since the rise of the devotional schools in the second half of the first millenium C.E.¹ Popular Hindu piety centers on bhakti, a religion of devotion and grace, of loving surrender to a personal God. From the seventh century, the time of Śaṅkara, however, the dominant vision of Hindu metaphysical thought has included the idea of salvation through knowledge of the radical oneness of the individual self with an impersonal ultimate reality, Brahman. Śaṅkara's monastic followers--a small but highly influential minority of the religious population--have maintained and elaborated, and even today continue to carry on, the tradition of his Advaita ("non-dualistic") Vedānta.² For these renunciates, the tat tvam asi ("That thou art") of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which seems to proclaim the identity of the soul and Brahman, is the sacred Word that conveys enlightenment. But for the devotionalists, who not without reason see any tendency towards monistic thought as inimical

to the development of bhakti, both this "great sentence" (mahāvākya) and the aspect of Upaniṣadic thought which it symbolizes are problematic.³

Religious devotion, like other forms of love, seems to require several things. First, it presupposes duality, so that there can be a relationship between the lover and the beloved. Second, it demands that each term of the relationship be personal, capable of feeling and response. That is to say, the relationship must be between an "I" and a "thou." It is difficult to imagine a love relationship between an "I" and an "it." Third, and here religious devotion differs from ordinary love, the relationship must be between unequals: the worshipper feels that he or she is limited and dependent and that the object of worship is unlimited and independent, a being of a wholly different order. Religious devotion flows from the I, the lover, to a Thou who is the one supreme Beloved.

For the theologian of bhakti, Advaita Vedānta seems to threaten and undermine all of these essentials. The non-dualist position is summed up in the well-known formula attributed to Śaṅkara: "Brahman alone is real, the world is false, the individual soul is precisely Brahman, not at all different."⁴ Brahman, the Absolute, is understood to be pure "being-consciousness-bliss."⁵ It is an Other that is mysterious, tremendous, and fascinating, but also utterly

impersonal. Since the transcendent, changeless Brahman is the only reality, the world must be explained as a product of Ignorance (avidyā).⁶ The seeming individuality of souls is likewise a false appearance. When true intuitive knowledge of reality (tattvajñāna) is attained, separative awareness is seen to be a false superimposition, a delusion caused by avidyā. The soul realizes its identity with the Supreme, declaring: "I am Brahman."⁷

This elevation of the jīva to the status of identity with the ultimate is, from the devotionalists' point of view, bad enough. Perhaps worse, however, is the non-dualists' apparent depreciation of the status of the personal God (Īśvara), who turns out to be a penultimate reality, Brahman appearing as if conditioned by association with the world through its cause, avidyā. True, Īśvara is intimately related to the ultimate, unconditioned Brahman as its highest expression. He remains, however, something less by that very fact. The Advaitin, therefore, finds himself in the position of having to go beyond God to attain the highest reality, which he discovers to be his own inner Self. While this is a bold and breath-taking vision, there is a problem: it seems to entail the loss of all the elements required for devotion. Relationship, personhood, dependence, limitation--all are false constructs (vikalpa), ultimately to be transcended in total identity with the Absolute.

In connection with its devaluation of the phenomenal world, Advaita maintained a characteristically ascetic attitude of distrust toward the emotions and indeed the whole human personality. Anything that tended to perpetuate the jīva's involvement in the world of dualism and relationship, or to nourish its sense of existence as a separate center of consciousness, was regarded by the Śaṅkarite renunciates with suspicion. Since love of God fostered the idea of difference (bheda) and dependence on an outside power (pāratantrya), it too was subject to a final negative evaluation.⁸

It is therefore not surprising that, when the teachers of the devotional schools began to formulate their own systems of theistic Vedānta, this outlook, so brilliantly articulated by Śaṅkara and his disciples, was perceived as a serious threat. The theologians of bhakti considered it their duty to criticize Advaita and do their best to refute it; their efforts in this regard were supplemented, on occasion, by denunciations of the teachings of the Śaṅkara school that were indeed quite bitter. Rāmānuja, in his commentary on the BS, wrote of Śaṅkara's views as follows:

This entire theory rests on a fictitious foundation of altogether hollow and vicious arguments, incapable of being stated in definite logical alternatives, and devised by men who are destitute of those particular qualities which cause individuals to be chosen by the Supreme Person revealed in the Upanishads; whose intellects are darkened by the impression of

beginningless evil; and who thus have no insight into the nature of words and sentences, into the real purport conveyed by them, and into the procedure of sound argumentation.⁹

Madhva's dislike of the Advaitins was so great that he called them "deceitful demons" who "play in the darkness of ignorance";¹⁰ he charged that the so-called "Brahman" taught by these "illusionists" (māyāvādins) was the same as the Void of the Madhyamika Buddhists.¹¹ Jīva Gosvāmin had a similar estimate of Śaṅkara's doctrine. It was promulgated, he said, at the express command of Lord Viṣṇu, in order that beings would be deluded and remain in bondage, and the present cycle of creation continue.¹²

The substantive criticism of Advaita put forth by these writers cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice it to say that it centered on the refutation of Śaṅkara's denial of quality, difference, and relationship in the Absolute, and the drawing up of whole lists of objections to his doctrine of Māyā, which was understood by the theists as asserting the total illusoriness of the world.¹³ A significant portion of the vast literature of theistic Vedānta, much of which is still inadequately studied, is in fact made up of such anti-Advaitic polemics.

That Śaṅkara's thought appears so hostile to religious orientations based upon love and grace as to elicit such criticism is not without importance. Advaita for some years now has been recognized by many informed

persons as the most significant product of the combined mystical genius and speculative acumen of the Hindu mind, as by far its most important contribution to world thought. And it is likely to retain much of this recognition, in spite of the recent flux of interest in the theistic Vedānta of Rāmānuja and others.¹⁴ It is worth considering, therefore, what place devotion might have within this system. Is Advaita really so obtuse that it would, in dogmatic concern for an "ultimate" truth that can have little connection with human life or even human thought, cut itself off from the wellsprings of human religiosity? How, if such is the case, has it continued to live as a vital tradition?

The fact is that Śaṅkara's Advaita is normative for large numbers of Hindus. It carries tremendous prestige in the tradition, especially since popularized by Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, and others. While many are thus at least nominally Advaitins, they are also likely, being average people, to be devotees (bhaktas) of a deity which they regard as a supreme personal being. But is this combination really possible? Can one be both a genuine Advaitin and an authentic bhakta? This is an important dilemma for Hindu spirituality for many reasons, not the least of which is that it affects so many. For the student of Indian culture, it brings certain fundamental polarities in the religion of

the subcontinent into sharp focus. And it commends itself to the attention of a more general audience as well, since it has a direct bearing on universal questions pertaining to both religious praxis and, perhaps more important, the very nature of the ultimate itself. The problem of the tension between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob--to use the terms of Pascal's celebrated dicotomy--has been a recurrent one in the history of religious thought. As Pannikar points out:

Within Christian philosophy even as great a theologian as Thomas Aquinas has not been completely successful in welding a union between the Aristotelian philosophical God (prime mover, ultimate cause, absolute Being without relation to the World) and the living God who cares for Man, loves the World to the point of sending the eternal Word, his only begotten Son, to save it.¹⁵

The so-called impersonalism of Hindu and Buddhist thought has been a major barrier to understanding between the East and the Judeo-Christian-Islamic peoples.¹⁶ Thus the issue at hand may also have some relevance, in a converging world, to certain concerns of a more practical, dialogical nature.

For those seeking, in the Hindu or whatever other context it presents itself, to understand the problem of the tension between personal and non-personal concepts of the Godhead, and the associated spiritualities of love and enlightenment, the thought of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is of no small importance. He was one of the few traditional writers that sought to integrate bhakti and non-dualism in a

way that remained true to the strict boundaries of Śaṅkara's system, and the only one to work at this problem systematically. Flourishing in the second half of the sixteenth century C.E.,¹⁷ Madhusūdana was the last of the great thinkers of the classical, post-Śaṅkara Advaita, indeed of the whole pre-modern period of Indian philosophy. His credentials as a staunch Advaitin are impeccable, as we shall see. He was known as an intellectual giant whose mastery of all branches of learning was phenomenal. From his works, we can judge that this reputation was well deserved. In addition to being a master of the more strictly religious disciplines such as Vedānta and Yoga, Madhusūdana was accomplished in aesthetics (alaṅkāra), grammar (vyākaraṇa), and, not the least, the forbiddingly difficult "New Logic" (navyanyāya). The last of these disciplines had originated at Navadvīpa, in his native Bengal, where he studied it under the greatest masters of his time. Madhusūdana also displayed considerable talent as a poet, and is said to have been able to compose extempore involved metrical pieces in flawless classical Sanskrit.

This intellectual acumen and wide learning contributed to his effectiveness as a polemicist--he used the techniques of the navyanyāya, for example, with devastating skill against any who challenged the viewpoint

of Advaita--and it assured him a reputation of legendary proportions. The illustrious paṇḍits of the court of the great Moghul emperor Akbar are said to have been so impressed by his erudition that one of them paid tribute to him in verse, comparing him with the goddess of learning herself, after whom his monastic order had been named.

"Only Madhusūdana Sarasvatī knows the limits of Sarasvatī," the courtier declared, "and only Sarsavatī knows the limits of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī."¹⁸ In later life, it is reported, the great Advaitin returned to Navadvīpa to visit his former teacher Mathurānātha, causing the learned and highly renown logicians of the place to tremble for fear of their reputations: "When Madhusūdana, the master of speech, came to Navadvīpa, Tarkavāgīśa began to shiver and Gadādhara became confused."¹⁹

Madhusūdana gained this renown through such works as the Samkṣepaśārīrikasārasaṃgraha (SSS), the Siddhāntabindu (SB), the Vedāntakalpalatikā (VKL), and the Advaitaratnarakṣana (ARR). In these writings, he combined lucid expositions of the metaphysics of non-dualism with deft rebuttals of the criticisms of its opponents. The latter consisted chiefly of the Nyāya logicians, on one hand, and the followers of Madhva's theistic and devotional Dvaita Vedānta on the other.²⁰ In his Prasthānabhedā ("Doctrinal Divergence"), Madhusūdana displayed his wide

scholarship by outlining all the systems of philosophy and theology known to him and giving an account of their differences within a systematic framework of interpretation. In the process, he mentioned some ninety authors and works from various branches of Sanskrit learning.²¹

His most famous work, however, and the prime source of his claim to immortality in the annals of the Śaṅkara school, was his Advaitasiddhi ("Vindication of Non-dualism") (AS). This work, it is said, successfully defended Śaṅkara's non-dualism against the vigorous attacks of a brilliant follower of Madhva, Vyāsarāja (1460-1539). The latter had almost succeeded in throwing the prestige of Advaita into utter collapse with his Nyāyamṛta, in which he made devastating use of the methods of navyanyāya to refute one after another all of the cherished doctrines of Śaṅkara's scholastic successors. In the ponderous and rigorously dialectical AS, Madhusūdana provided extensive, carefully worked-out answers to all of Vyāsarāja's objections, using to the full his genius as a logician and polemicist, and thus saved the day for the Advaitins. This text has the reputation of being a "tough nut" the kernel of which the "beak of intelligence" has difficulty in reaching.²² To this day it is highly esteemed among traditional paṇḍits, who consider its study indispensable to genuine scholarship in Advaita.²³

Of immediate interest in the present context, however, is the fact that in the midst of the AS Madhusūdana saw fit to insert a verse expressing sentiments of profound devotion to a personal God. Having just completed a section of the work entitled the Nirākāravāda ("Argument for Formlessness"), designed to prove that Brahman as the ultimate real is devoid of any ākāra or form, he wrote:

I know of no higher reality than Kṛṣṇa, whose hand is adorned by the flute. His complexion is like a fresh dark cloud laden with water, and He wears beautiful yellow silk. His reddish lips are like the bimba fruit, His face is as beautiful as the full moon, His eyes are like lotuses.²⁴

After this, Madhusūdana went right on with his highly technical dispute with the Mādhyas, arguing that Brahman does not possess knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term, because Brahman is pure knowledge or consciousness itself. The remainder of the work contains no such devotional outburst.²⁵

Important questions arise here. Why was such a verse placed alone in such a significant place? What did Madhusūdana intend by thus juxtaposing the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa with the formless Brahman? Why did he assert that he knows no higher reality than that deity, when he has just argued against the theists for the formlessness of the supreme principle? If this were the sole instance of such devotional expression, it could perhaps be dismissed as an anomaly. But consider the following verse, which occurs in Madhusūdana's commentary on the BG:

the first verse of the BP.²⁷ As the result of these works, he gained renown as a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa and a strong advocate of the inclusion of bhakti within the spirituality of Advaita.²⁸

The following verses attributed to Madhusūdana evidently had a wide circulation in the tradition. They celebrate one of his teachings that, although unconventional from the orthodox point of view, is nevertheless characteristic, namely the idea that devotion is possible even after the realization of identity with Brahman:

The ultimate truth is non-duality, but duality is necessary for worship. If such bhakti can be experienced, it is a hundred times better than liberation.²⁹

Prior to [the realization of] true knowledge, duality is the cause of delusion; but when knowledge has arisen through direct intuition, duality can be assumed for the sake of devotion. This is even more beautiful than non-duality.³⁰

I have not been able to trace either of these quotes, so it is not possible to confirm the traditional attribution. Nevertheless, the fact that they are ascribed to Madhusūdana is certainly indicative of his reputation as an advocate of bhakti, and they do, if somewhat hyperbolically, reflect his views as set forth in the BR and the GAD. The truth is that verses expressing devotional sentiments occur in his works with a frequency that is singularly uncommon--or, more accurately, unprecedented--in the writings of the great teachers of Advaita. For example:

I take refuge in the dense cloud of being-consciousness-bliss, Brahman in human form, which, having entered into the vast forest [of Vṛndāvana or samsāra], was besieged by the love-struck cowherd women.³¹

I adore the son of Nanda, that effulgence which is the wholeness of the essence of beauty, the supreme Brahman in human form, who removes [all] bondage to the world.³²

I adore the one of lotus-eyes whose face, as he plays upon the flute, is as beautiful as the moon. Appearing in Vṛndāvana to increase the joy (ānanda) of [his foster-father] Nanda and thus reward him for austerities [performed in previous lives], He is that Brahman which is [described as] "truth, knowledge, infinite" [TU 2.1.1]. He is the non-dual bliss which is realized, with liberation as the consequence, by the great sages who have attained transcendent awareness (samādhi) after approaching a guru and practicing meditation.³³

Such quotations should suffice to establish Madhusūdana's strong predilection toward devotion and indicate something of the flavor of its expression in his works. What remains is the more demanding task, that of looking deeper and trying to discover how it was possible for this great follower of Śaṅkara to accommodate a devotional spirituality of this kind in the context of his non-dualism.

Though modern writers on Post-Śaṅkara Advaita commonly remark on the fact that Madhusūdana showed an unusual interest in bhakti for an Advaitin, his thought on this subject has actually received little careful study. What work has been done has been cursory and for the most part descriptive. Only three writers in English, to my knowledge, have dealt with the teachings of the BR in any detail. Gupta's work on the philosophy of Madhusūdana

includes a chapter summarizing the teachings of the BR, and Mishra's book on bhakti in Śaṅkara Vedānta gives the gist of Madhusūdana's views along with those of Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, a student of Madhusūdana whose Bhakticandrikā follows the BR closely. The most adequate statement of the teachings of both the BR and the GAD is to be found in the introduction and appendices of Modi's translation of the SB. All of these expositions, however, are largely uncritical. Mishra, for example, characterizes Madhusūdana as a "stalwart" of bhakti who made the "finest contribution" to the cause of devotionalism in Śaṅkara Vedānta,³⁴ while Gupta asserts that the teachings of the BR represent the "grand climax" of the entire historical evolution of the concept of bhakti in India.³⁵ It is clear that a more critical historical and philosophical analysis of Madhusūdana's thought on devotion is in order.

This study will be an attempt to make a beginning in this direction. Its primary purpose will be twofold: (1) to provide an overview of what I shall call the "orthodox" Advaitic view of bhakti and its role in the spiritual life, i.e., the understanding that was formulated by Śaṅkara and accepted without significant modification by all writers of his tradition prior to Madhusūdana, and (2) to provide a summary and assessment of Madhusūdana's own presentation of the subject in BR. These matters will occupy us in chapters

two and five of part I and in the whole of part III. To allow the reader some direct access to Madhusūdana's thought, an annotated translation of the first and most important chapter of the BR will be included as part II.

A secondary objective of this study will be to provide certain additional background material that is necessary for an understanding of the BR and its historical context. In fulfilling this goal, I shall of course have to take up a number of scriptural and theological matters. I shall also make repeated reference to important social dimensions of the tension between bhakti and Advaita, since a grasp of these is essential to a proper appreciation of the wider religious implications of the text. Lest, however, we become overly involved in historical detail at the expense of our primary aim--determining the significance and the degree of success of Madhusūdana's attempt to wed bhakti and Advaita--the discussion of such subjects will be restricted to essentials.

In chapter one, I shall present a brief discussion of the meaning of the term bhakti and its history in Hindu spirituality prior to Śaṅkara. Chapters three and four will deal with certain developments in the bhakti tradition that occurred in the 800-odd years that intervened between Śaṅkara and Madhusūdana.³⁶ Since a great deal went on in the devotional movements during this period, much of which

has received little or no study, I shall confine myself to discussion of two major elements of the religion of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti which have an immediate bearing on the teachings of the BR and have been fairly well researched by modern scholarship. Sufficient for our present purpose will be a consideration of the teachings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BP) and the doctrines of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava Gosvāmins.³⁷ The latter developed the BP's theology of ecstatic bhakti to new heights under the influence of the great fifteenth century saint and revivalist Caitanya.

Although it is possible that the thinking of the Gosvāmins, especially Rūpa, exerted a direct influence on Madhusūdana, who was himself a Bengali, their work will be used in this study only as an illustration of a fully developed system of Kṛṣṇaite theology. That is to say, it will be discussed as a representative example of the outlook of a wider devotional tradition with which, in its totality, Madhusūdana was interacting in his typically expansive and eclectic way. To determine the nature or extent of any specifically Bengal Vaiṣṇava influence on the author of the BR would be very difficult if not impossible.³⁸ In this study, therefore, I shall confine myself to comparing certain aspects of the Gosvāmins' thought with that of Madhusūdana and avoid more definite conclusions as to actual borrowing of ideas. Such judgments, without a great deal of further research, would be nothing more than speculation.

Finally, I shall in chapter six give a brief introduction to the Sanskrit aestheticians' theory of rasa ("sentiment") and the history and rationale of its adoption by certain theologians of devotion. Among the most important of the latter writers were Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmin and, as the very title of the Bhaktirasāyana suggests, Madhusūdana himself.

PART I:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

CHAPTER ONE

DEVOTIONAL TRENDS AND IMPERSONALISM IN THE EARLY SCRIPTURES

1.1 Bhakti, Personalism, and Impersonalism

The term bhakti, when translated in this study, is consistently rendered as "devotion." This regularity is to enable the reader to be certain of the underlying Sankrit when encountering the translation. The choice of the word "devotion" is of course not purely arbitrary. Bhakti refers to that exceedingly important aspect of Hindu spirituality which corresponds most closely to what the English-speaking world identifies as devotional religion, that is to say, the spirituality of the "heart" rather than the mind or intellect. Hindu devotionalism is a religion of love of, and surrender to, a gracious and personal supreme deity.

As with any other religious term, bhakti has gone through various stages of development and has meant somewhat different things to different people in different times and places. Following Hardy's lead, for example, it is useful to distinguish between a contemplative bhakti, associated with yogic or Vedāntic meditative disciplines, and an

ecstatic bhakti, characteristic of later highly emotive forms of Kṛṣṇa devotionalism.¹ Although this distinction is not crucial to the present study, I will have occasion to refer to it as we proceed.

The etymology of bhakti has been carefully documented by a number of researchers, most recently Dhavamony and Hardy, both of whose works are generally available.² There is therefore no need to repeat here the details which they have presented so well. Suffice it to say that the term stems from the verbal root bhaj, which has the basic meaning: to share, partake, participate. By extension it comes to express resorting to, liking, fondness, and especially love in all its various manifestations, ranging from attachment and enjoyment, through secular love, to love of God and even, on occasion, God's love for humanity.³ In the classical Hindu tradition it comes to mean primarily an intense loving concentration of all one's faculties on a God that is adorable, blissful and bliss-giving, all-powerful and yet readily approachable. An experience which is rewarding in itself, often ecstatically so, it serves as a means of focusing one's psychic energies in such a way as to penetrate behind the world of appearances and gain access to true being, which for the devotionalist is the same as bhagavat ("the Blessed Lord") or īśvara ("the Lord"), that is to say, God. Being

such, bhakti is for many Hindus--perhaps the majority--a yoga or path to salvation that is sufficient unto itself.⁴

Indian spiritual discipline has always aimed at direct experience of the divine and understood salvation to be dependent upon such experience. Conceptions of the nature of the transcendent reality, however, and the means to its immediate realization, have varied radically from age to age and from one school of thought to another. We should not expect, therefore, to find a strict developmental continuity between earlier movements of Indian religious history and those which come later, and we should not be surprised when one strand of spirituality recognized as "Hindu" seems vastly different from, even contradictory to, another. "Hinduism," if it is in any way an entity, is a composite of elements from many different sources, sources not all of which can be documented historically or even identified with any precision. The result is that the tradition is in some respects strained, but in many others enriched and even vivified, by a number of internal tensions and polarities. Of these, the opposition between knowledge and devotion, the focus of the present study, is one of the most central.⁵ It points to two basic ways in which India has thought of the divine. "The religious history of India," writes Hardy, "is marked by the conflict and the interaction of two major trends: to conceive of the absolute

either in terms of a (mystical) state of being or as a personal God."⁶ Used as a device for understanding, this typology can be extremely helpful in sorting out the bewildering variety of the tradition. Within Hinduism, Advaita Vedānta is the preeminent representative of the former tendency, and emotional Kṛṣṇa devotionalism one of the prime examples of the latter.

These particular forms of the two basic types, it should be noted, do not emerge until the second half of the first millenium C.E. While they each obviously have their antecedents in earlier forms of Indian spirituality, a detailed exposition of their roots, development, and interactions--even insofar as these can be known from the limited documentation--is beyond the scope of the present study.⁷ I do, however, want to touch in this chapter on certain key moments in early Hindu religious history with a view to sketching a rough picture of the place of bhakti in the tradition and its relation to impersonalistic ways of thought in the time prior to Śaṅkara. I shall naturally focus on the most important scriptures of this period, namely the Ṛgveda (RV), the Upaniṣads, and the Bhagavad Gītā (BG), though bhakti itself, as we shall see, does not emerge in the Sanskrit tradition--and the light of history--until the time of the last of these.

1.2 Devotional and Impersonalist Aspects of Vedic Religion

Our understanding of the history of devotionalism in the Vedic period is hampered by the lack of written records of any form of religion but that of the Aryans who were, as is well-known, relative late-comers to the sub-continent. Of the earlier indigenous traditions of India, our direct knowledge is very limited. Our first in depth exposure to the religion of the sub-continent comes through the scriptures of the Sanskrit-speaking Aryan immigrants, the Vedas, which do give us a fairly good picture of the spirituality of the priestly classes that composed them. The Vedic hymns and especially their later philosophical outgrowths, the Upaniṣads, reveal types of religiosity which, though containing certain devotional elements that are fairly universal in human religion, are conspicuously lacking in the kind of whole-hearted love of a supreme deity characteristic of the later Hindu tradition. This leads modern scholarship to suspect that the origins of bhakti are to be found apart from the elite Vedic tradition in forms of religion associated with such early cultures as that of the Indus Valley and that of the Dravidians. Though we know little about the spirituality of these peoples, the evidence which we do have lends support to this view. As this data is amply documented in any number of general works on the

religion of South Asia,⁸ there is no need to repeat it here. I will mention, however, the not so well-known fact, which will be pertinent to our later study, that even as late as the end of the first millenium C.E. the orthodox Vedic tradition regarded such devotional practices as image worship, which originated outside its fold, with extreme suspicion.⁹

The textual, and indeed the only, source of our knowledge of early Vedic religion is the Rgveda,¹⁰ which has been described as having claim to be "the first literary masterpiece of the human race."¹¹ As revealed in this text, the piety of the ancient Aryan peoples is based primarily upon a reciprocal relationship between the human worshippers and their deities (devas, "shining ones"), the latter traditionally reckoned to be 33 in number.¹² The devas are understood to be intelligent powers that animate and control various aspects of nature and maintain the cosmic order. No supreme personal deity, however, is recognized by the early hymns of the RV. The term "polytheism" is therefore commonly applied to Vedic religion, and it is roughly appropriate. Max Muller preferred the term "henotheism" (or "kathenotheism"), which he coined for the purpose, because individual hymns frequently address the particular deva being invoked as if it, for the moment, were supreme. As we shall see, the later hymns of the RV tend to subordinate the

various deities to a more abstract underlying reality. In view of this, the term "polysyntheism" or "polysynthetic monism," which has been applied to native American religion,¹³ may finally be the most appropriate label for the Vedic vision.

The Vedic gods, while powerful, are nonetheless not seen as sufficiently different from humankind to demand the kind of total devotion characteristic of bhakti. In this respect, they may cautiously be compared to the gods of the Greek pantheon. Though they have the ability to bestow favors upon humanity, and do so when satisfied by proper praise and sacrifice, they are regarded by the Vedic seers (ṛsis) as fellow inhabitants of the same cosmos, with whom humanity works in a partnership that, while unequal, is not excessively so. The predominance of petitions for material boons such as health, long life, and progeny is particularly striking, and, conversely, evidence of the desire for an intimate relationship with the deity purely for the sake of the relationship itself--a key element of bhakti--is scarce. Dhavamony, who is skeptical of the existence of anything resembling bhakti in the Veda, points out that "the love of the worshipper for his god is rather one of family affection."¹⁴ The hymns often stress humanity's familial ties with the gods, who share "brotherhood, our kinship in the Mother's womb" and "sameness in race" (sajātya).¹⁵

Agni, for example, while "father and mother of men" is also "brother and friend" and even "well-loved guest."¹⁶ This praise, we sense, is not given entirely in a spirit of humble supplication any more than it is free from extrinsic motivation. We find, in fact, that the ṛsis themselves have the power of strengthening the gods through their prayers and sacrificial offerings.¹⁷ In the later Vedic period, this theme is developed to the extent that the gods themselves are understood to be dependent upon the sacrificial offerings for their well-being.¹⁸

The general tone of tender and reciprocal familial affection is, however, deepened on occasion into adoration, as at RV 10.7.3: "Agni I regard as my father, my relation, by brother, my friend; his light will I adore; it shines in heaven, as holy as the sun."¹⁹ The ṛsis describe themselves as deity-seekers (devayū) and even deity-lovers (devakāma).²⁰ Indra's devotees find ecstatic joy in the object of their worship: "In Indra they delight who are fond of visions."²¹ Moreover, they seek Indra's abode with longing, and desire to attain him:

I have beheld his strong and secret dwelling, longing have sought the Founder's [Indra's] habitation. I asked of others, and they said in answer: "May we, awakened men, attain to Indra."²²

Verses such as these have been taken as evidence of the beginnings of bhakti in the Veda. Hopkins, in fact, goes so far as to state that "the bhakti or loving devotion,

which some scholars imagine to be only a late development of Hindu religion, is already evident in the Rig Veda, even in its dangerous trend towards eroticism."²³ In support of this view, he quotes RV 10.43.1-2a:

All my thoughts, seeking happiness, extol Indra, longing for him; they embrace him as wives embrace a fair young bridegroom, him the divine giver of gifts, that he may help me! My mind is directed to thee, Indra, and does not turn from thee; on thee I rest my desire, O much-invoked one.²⁴

This could in fact be a glimpse of a fervent devotional relationship between god and worshipper that is akin to bhakti. In the rest of the hymn, however, the longing for the deity is combined with the archaic symbolism of the soma-ritual in such a way as to cause us to hesitate in making a simple identification between it and the later phenomenon. And there is, of course, the repeated petitionary refrain "that he may help me!", which is of a sort frequent in the Veda but uncharacteristic of the later bhakti literature. Consider also the sentiments expressed in the final verses of the sūkta:

O Much-invoked, may we subdue all famine and evil want with store of grain and cattle. . . . May Indra from the front, and from the centre, as Friend to friends, vouchsafe us room and freedom.²⁵

Even if such prayers were directed toward a supreme divinity, one would be hard put to identify them as bhakti.

Neither the term bhakti itself nor the verbal root bhaj are used in the Vedic hymns to express worship or love

of God.²⁶ While there are occasional instances of an intense emotional attachment to the deities that is similar to later Hindu devotionalism, the instances remain occasional and the similarities rather vague. To see them as the early expressions of true bhakti, as perhaps the beginnings of Hindu devotionalism, is unwarranted.²⁷

If bhakti served the medieval devotionalists as the primary means of human access to the divine, this function was fulfilled for the Vedic ṛsis chiefly by dhī, "vision" or "inspiration."²⁸ Gonda, in fact, identifies this faculty as "their only possibility of entering into communion with the transcendent reality."²⁹ While this statement should be qualified by reference to the seers' use of ritual and the psychically stimulating juice of the soma plant as auxiliaries,³⁰ the centrality of dhī in Vedic spirituality is nevertheless unquestionable. Hence the importance of RV 3.62.10, the sacred gāyatrī: "We meditate on (dhīmahi, possibly 'envision') that most excellent radiance of the god Savitar; may he stimulate our vision (dhiyaḥ)."³¹ This, the most highly celebrated of Vedic mantras, has since the time of the ṛsis been imparted to members of the "twice-born" castes in the ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread (upanayana), and is even now recited thrice daily by the orthodox. It is essentially a prayer for the strengthening of the power of spiritual sight. Savitar, however, is not

the only deity petitioned for this boon. Soma is important in this respect; he is praised as the "Lord of vision" (dhī) because he grants mental power and mystic insight. Sarasvatī and Uṣas are likewise beseeched to bestow dhī.³² According to the tradition, the ṛṣi is to be understood primarily as a "seer" (paśyaka), and Yāska, the ancient etymologist, tells us that the term ṛṣi is itself derived from the root ṛṣ, "to see."³³ As we might expect from the association of dhī with Savitar, the sun, the power of vision is connected with light and inner illumination. It does not, however, seem to be associated with the emotion of love for any deity.

It seems certain, then, that the bhakti tradition is not a simple continuation of, or a direct development from, the spirituality of the Veda. This becomes even more apparent when one considers that the Rgveda in its chronologically later portions shows an increasing tendency to identify the gods with each other and, eventually, to identify all with one underlying abstract reality. Here we find the earliest record of that tendency to devalue divine personality in favor of a higher impersonal principle which, while characteristic of much that is most unique in Hindu and Buddhist thought, is so utterly antagonistic to the theistic spirit.

These hymns, most of which are found in the tenth book of the RV, reveal an initially hesitant but nevertheless definite effort to look through and beyond the gods to discover their source in a higher ultimate. In 10.82 the ṛṣi is in quest of "that which is earlier than this earth and heaven, before the Asuras and gods had being."³⁴ The chanter at 10.121 echos, "Who was the one God above the gods?"³⁵ The realization is that the devas are not the end of the human quest for being. "The gods," says RV 10.129, "were born after this world's creation."³⁶ The hymns identify that which lies beyond the gods as a single reality, as "That One" (tad ekam) of 10.129, a reality which existed "in the beginning,"³⁷ or the "One Being" of 1.164.46, whom the sages are said to name variously.³⁸ Although certain hymns of the RV and portions of the later brāhmaṇas show some tendency to personify this ultimate as, for example, Viśvakarman (the "all-maker"),³⁹ Puruṣa (the primal "Person"),⁴⁰ or Prajāpati (the "Lord of Creatures"),⁴¹ the dominant tendency is to push beyond personality altogether toward a transpersonal ground of being. Especially in Indian thought, when the name (nāma) becomes optional, the form (rūpa) becomes indefinite and the personality tends to vanish. Even the high creator figures are seen, in a manner unthinkable in any truly theistic system, to have had an origin in time and to be less than all-knowing:

As the Golden Germ he arose in the beginning;
when born he was the one Lord of the existent.⁴²

None knoweth whence creation has arisen;
 And whether he has or has not produced it:
 He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
 He only knows, or haply he may know not.⁴³

In their daring speculations, the seers display a reverent wonder combined with a certain scepticism, the latter directed not so much toward the ultimate itself as toward the adequacy of their attempts to encompass it. Even in their praise of the golden being who is "Lord of the existent" there is a subtle yet insistent questioning, a quiet but none the less urgent probing lest the final reality be missed. In a repeated refrain, the ṛsis of RV 10.121 ask, "What God shall we worship our oblation?"⁴⁴ A pronounced sense of humility in the face of the ultimate is evident, and in the end, while the idea of personality seems to be radically questioned, no definite alternative conception is formalized: "Enwrapped in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented."⁴⁵

Given such tendencies, it is not surprising that the next stage in the tradition's development was not theism. The Aryan genius, perhaps under the influence of certain indigenous non-theistic worldviews, was moving in a different direction, toward an intellectual mysticism which looked through and beyond the various personal deities of

the Vedic pantheon to an impersonal absolute that lay beyond them.

1.3 Devotional Trends and Impersonalism in the Major Upaniṣads⁴⁶

The speculative tendencies found in the creation hymns of the tenth book of the RV continue in other texts of the Vedic period. The Atharvaveda, for example, nominates first prāṇa (the "cosmic breath") and later kāla ("time") as the ultimate principle of the universe.⁴⁷ Also, and for perhaps the first time, it uses the term brahman to designate the reality underlying the gods and identifies it as the source of both being and non-being.⁴⁸ This movement toward an abstract conception of the ultimate eventually finds its classical and most complete scriptural expression in the Upaniṣads, which become the fountainhead and ultimate authority for the various schools of Vedānta.

Despite the fact that later commentators, regarding the Upaniṣads as quite literally revealed, were obliged to hold that they teach one single, consistent doctrine, the truth is that they bring together speculations and intuitions that are diverse in nature. No unanimity of viewpoint is attained or even sought. Nevertheless, while the texts do contain even in their earlier portions certain material open to theistic interpretation,⁴⁹ the most

prominent teaching is without question an impersonalistic, idealistic monism. The ethos of the Upaniṣads may be described, correspondingly, as that of an intellectual mysticism, and the tradition gives recognition to this fact in adopting these texts as the primary scriptures of the path of knowledge (jñānamārga).

The etymological meaning of the word upaniṣad, "sitting (sad) down (ni) near (upa)," suggests private instruction, confidentiality--even esotericism. According to the tradition, the term means "secret" (rahasya).⁵⁰ This implies that sacred knowledge of the type discussed in these texts was not given out indiscriminately to all. Even Brahmins, we are told, were subject to rigorous tests before they were accepted as pupils.⁵¹ I point this out to underscore the fact that the kind of abstract philosophical religiosity common to the ṛṣis and the Upaniṣadic sages was restricted to an elite, as it has always been in the religious history of humankind and as it most definitely is in Śaṅkara's Vedānta. The common people, we must assume though the evidence is slight, practiced some form of popular religion that had close ties to the indigenous traditions and was probably theistic in nature.

If love of the divine is difficult to find in the hymns of the Veda, it is even more so in these texts. The primary interest of the Upaniṣadic sages is the intuitive

realization, through higher spiritual gnosis, of the impersonal ultimate that transcends all "name and form" (nāmarūpa). The supreme Brahman is "that from which words turn back, along with the mind, unable to reach";⁵² it is accurately described only through negation. "Now therefore," says Yajñavalkya, "there the teaching 'Not this, not that!' (neti, neti), for there is nothing higher than this, that he is so."⁵³ If the ultimate is described, it is often in the most abstract terms possible: "Being alone, my dear, was this in the beginning, one only, without second."⁵⁴ The Upaniṣadic identification of the inmost self of the human being with the highest reality, the equation of ātman and Brahman that is enshrined in the saying "Thou art That" (tat tvam asi),⁵⁵ is too well known to require comment here. Suffice it to say that, when the quest is to know-- and through knowing to become--Brahman,⁵⁶ and when the sage finally declares "I am Brahman,"⁵⁷ we are obviously encountering a type of thinking that provides little ground for the development of devotional religion.

Nonetheless it is true that certain later Upaniṣads do introduce elements of theism. The Kaṭha, for example, has two verses which admit a place for grace in salvation,⁵⁸ and this Upaniṣad allows itself to speak twice of the highest reality as the "Person" (puruṣa) who is "beyond the unmanifest."⁵⁹ The Iśa, the Muṇḍaka, and the Maitrī speak

of the ultimate principle as the "Lord" (Īśa).⁶⁰ These and similar tendencies show the influence of, and are our first literary evidence for, the truly theistic movements which later emerge more fully into history in the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavad Gītā. In this they may reflect an increasing recognition among the Brahmin elite of popular forms of theistic religion.⁶¹

The late Śvetāśvatara (ŚU) is no doubt the most significant of the Upaniṣads in this regard. Such familiar designations of the supreme personal deities of the classical tradition as Īśvara, maheśvara, and even bhagavat figure prominently in this text.⁶² Sometimes referred to as the "gateway of Hinduism,"⁶³ it goes so far as to personify Brahman, identifying it with Rudra-Śiva, a divinity who arose from obscure origins, possibly in the Indus Valley civilization, to become one of the major deities of the late Vedic tradition. In this Upaniṣad, however, Rudra-Śiva is not just one of the Vedic gods; he is the one God. "Over both the perishable and the soul (ātman)," we are told, "the one God rules."⁶⁴ In addition to the monotheistic turn of phrase, note the suggestion here of a distinction between the Lord and the ātman. In another place the ŚU speaks of "the enjoyer, the object of enjoyment, and the Impeller"-- i.e., the soul, matter, and the Lord--as separable aspects of the "three-fold Brahman."⁶⁵ This, of course, is

suggestive of the theology of later southern Śaivism, for which this text eventually became an important source.⁶⁶

While the appearance of these theistic elements in the scriptures of the Brahmins is an impressive indicator of changes later to come, the references do not yet point to a spirituality of bhakti. It is true that the ŚU, echoing the Kāṭha, speaks forcefully of divine grace⁶⁷ and, in a manner even more suggestive of later devotional practice, of trusting surrender to God.⁶⁸ Yet the method of salvation thematized still remains the familiar Upaniṣadic gnosis, although now combined with the disciplines of yoga, which at this point are gaining greater acceptance in the Sanskrit tradition. Thus at ŚU 2.8-15 we find an interesting combination of yoga and theism that ends, significantly, with a final emphasis on knowledge. These verses present an elaborate description of yogic meditation ending with the declaration, "By knowing God (deva) who is unborn, immovable, free from all natures, one is released from all bonds."⁶⁹ At ŚU 1.10 we read: "By meditating on Him, by uniting with Him, by reflecting on His true being more and more, there is finally cessation of all illusion."⁷⁰ Even in this most explicitly theistic of the Upaniṣads, love of God as such is not mentioned at all, except in a single reference to bhakti at 6.23. This is the only occurrence of the word in any of the major Upaniṣads, and indeed this is

the first time it is used in its technical religious sense in the entire body of Vedic literature. The verse in question says only: "These matters which have been declared are manifest only to the great-souled one who has the highest devotion for God and for his spiritual teacher as for God."⁷¹ Unfortunately, this is not enough to give us a clear idea of what the author understands by bhakti. It is, moreover, somewhat disturbing that this is the very last verse of the text. Were it not for the general theistic tone of the Upaniṣad and its explicit doctrines of grace and surrender, we might be tempted to conclude that the verse represents a later addition.

In terms of structure and function, the closest counterpart to bhakti in this stratum of the Vedic tradition is a kind of reverent meditation called upāṣana, literally "sitting near."⁷² The objects of this contemplative exercise are certain rituals, chants, and--perhaps more important--natural phenomena and deities, which are valorized as symbols of deeper spiritual realities.⁷³ As such, they point to the underlying interconnectedness of things, to the intelligence that governs the universe, the life-energy that animates it, and ultimately to Brahman itself. The Upaniṣads recommend that the seeker of mystic knowledge focus his mind on these sacred symbols. Thus we find: "Meditation on the entire sāman is good,"⁷⁴ "Speech

indeed makes all this known; meditate on speech,"⁷⁵ "Mediate on food as the Self."⁷⁶ Examples of such injunctions could be multiplied indefinitely.

Upāsana may be understood as a discipline that was explorative and yet at the same time conservative. In a period of transition, it functioned as a creative mediator at the interface between the archaic, ritualistic symbology of the saṃhitas and brāhmaṇas and the more philosophical vision of the Upaniṣads. The writers of the classical Vedānta explain that various upāsanas were meant to be practiced by different persons at varying stages of life. The student, the householder, the priest, the hermit, and so on, we are told, each had their proper objects of meditation, which reflected the highest truth in varying degrees according to the interests and capacities of the individuals concerned.⁷⁷ The purpose of the discipline was constant recollection of Brahman as present in its different manifestations, with the aim, according to the interpretation of Śaṅkara's school, of purifying the mind and preparing it gradually for the ultimate realization.

Upāsana is generally translated as "meditation," and with good reason. Śaṅkara defines it in terms that remind us of the dhyāna of the Yogasūtras.⁷⁸ In the introduction to his commentary on the CU, he states: "Upāsana is a continuous current of identical thoughts, unbroken by any

disparate cognitions, directed toward an object accepted from scripture."⁷⁹ Rāmānuja's understanding of the term is essentially the same: "Upāsana' means steady remembrance (dhruvānusmṛti), i.e., a continuity of steady remembrance, uninterrupted like the flow of oil."⁸⁰ It is not, however, to be identified as a type of yogic meditation. Several factors militate against this. First, the practice originates and develops in a ritual context in which the objects of "meditation" include religious symbols and personally conceived cosmic powers. The ambience is not the ascetic, non-theistic--or only nominally theistic--schools of Yoga. Second, while upās is frequently to be translated as "to meditate," it is in many cases more suitably rendered as "to revere," or sometimes even "to worship" or "to adore." For example: "Who is he whom we worship as the Self";⁸¹ "That, verily, know thou, is Brahman, not what they here adore";⁸² "Into blinding darkness enter those who worship the unmanifest";⁸³ "All the gods worship as the eldest the Brahman which is understanding."⁸⁴ At Maitrī 4.4, a distinction between contemplative thought (cintā) and knowledge (vidyā), on the one hand, and the action designated by upās, on the other, is implied: "By knowledge, by austerity, by contemplative thought . . . the wise man who worships Brahman with this triad attains happiness."⁸⁵

It seems likely that in these instances the verb is already being used with something of the sense it carries frequently in the BG, namely, that of reverence or even worship, as in the verse: "Those who, fixing their mind on Me, revere (upāsate) Me"86

For these reasons, to translate upāsana simply as "meditation" is misleading. The scope of the term seems to fall somewhere between pure meditation in the yogic sense, i.e., interior, cognitive meditation, and the love of a supreme being characteristic of bhakti. Hence the translation "reverencing," "reverent meditation," or "mental worship" is to be preferred. Upāsana is a mental "sitting near"; that is to say, a meditative, but reverent approach to Brahman through a symbol prescribed by scripture.

To what extent the Upaniṣadic Brahman could have been the object of love is a moot question. Though the texts, for the most part, describe it in impersonal terms, they also suggest that it is the ultimate referent of all desire. At BU 2.4.5, the classical text on love of, or desire for, the ātman, we find the great monist Yajñavalkhya asserting that the yearning we feel for husband, wife, children, wealth, indeed all things of this world, is only a deflected form of our yearning for the Self. "Verily," he says, "it is not for the love of all that all is dear, but it is for the love of the ātman that all is dear."87

Earlier in the same Upaniṣad we read:

That Self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than all else, for it is the innermost. . . . One should meditate (upāsita) on the Self alone as dear. For him who meditates (upāste) on the Self alone as dear, what he holds dear is not perishable.⁸⁸

Using the rationale reflected in these verses, Śaṅkara interprets tadvanam, the mystic appellation of Brahman at KeU 4.6, as "that which is desired by all living beings because it is the inner Self."⁸⁹ The verse itself then translates: "Known as 'that which is desired by all,' it is to be reverently meditated upon (upāsitavyam) as such."⁹⁰ To the extent, therefore, that upāsana was focused on Brahman itself, that is to say, to the degree that the symbol employed expressed the ultimate in its fullness as the ground of being, the true Self, and the inner controller of all, to that extent it could conceivably have approximated the love of the ultimate represented in bhakti.

Rāmānuja, writing from an overtly theistic perspective almost two thousand years after the time of the Upaniṣadic sages, taught in fact that upāsana is the same thing as bhakti.⁹¹ While it is difficult to accept this interpretation as anything but an attempt, by forcing upāsana to carry a greater load than it could historically bear, to give his Vaiṣṇava devotionalism an air of Vedic sanctity, it should be remembered that Rāmānuja's style of bhakti was not of the fervent devotional type found in later devotional schools. A comparison, if not an identification,

of upāsana and bhakti is not entirely inappropriate. It points to a definite parallel between the functions the two perform in their respective spiritual environments. Even in Śaṅkara's system--where the understanding of saguṇopāsana as meditation on the qualified Brahman is probably closer to the original Upaniṣadic spirit--upāsana occupies structurally and functionally the same position as does bhakti. This parallel between the two will be of importance to the discussion in the next chapter.

1.4 Bhakti and Advaita in the Bhagavad Gītā

Tradition has it that the Bhagavadgītā contains the distilled essence of all the Vedas and, especially, of the Upaniṣads.⁹² Modern scholarship, while recognizing that the work owes much to those earlier scriptures, sees it in addition as a wide-ranging response to certain pressing religious problems of its time, including the need for a more universally appealing, personal conception of the ultimate. It attempts to bring together and coordinate a number of diverse strands of spirituality, both Vedic and non-Vedic, that were present in the contemporary (ca. 200 B.C.E.) religious milieu.⁹³ The degree of success it achieved in this regard is impressive.

The reader who turns from the Upaniṣads to the Gītā will be struck especially by a new theme not encountered in

the older philosophical texts, one which emerges strongly in the midst of the Gītā's multi-leveled orchestration of religious ideas. This new note is the doctrine of salvation through bhakti, understood explicitly as loving devotion to a personal God. The teacher, first of all, is no longer a seer or a sage, but God himself. He is Kṛṣṇa, the supreme personal deity of the extra-Vedic Bhāgavata school, who is identified in the BG as equivalent or even superior to the Upaniṣadic Brahman. Although the theme of bhakti emerges only gradually in the course of the narrative, from the end of the sixth chapter it begins to dominate. In the eleventh and twelfth chapters it reaches a climax in Kṛṣṇa's grand theophany and in the subsequent recognition of bhakti as the highest path to salvation. Then, in the summary of the teachings at the end of eighteenth chapter, the devotional mood attains a final crescendo: "Having become Brahman, . . . he attains supreme bhakti to me";⁹⁴ "Through devotion, he knows Me truly, how great and who I am";⁹⁵ and "Having resorted to Me, by My grace he attains the eternal, imperishable abode."⁹⁶ At 18.66, Kṛṣṇa gives his "supreme word," the "most secret" of all: "Take refuge in Me alone, for I will deliver thee from all sin."⁹⁷

We thus no longer have to search for traces of bhakti; it is in the Gītā impossible to miss. The noun itself appears fourteen times in the text, the verb form

nineteen times.⁹⁸ Though, being unsystematic like the Upaniṣads, the Gītā does not define bhakti explicitly, we can easily gather from usage and context how it understands the term. Bhakti is a taking refuge in God with one's "whole being."⁹⁹ It is an all-encompassing attachment to bhagavat, a constant focusing of the mind on God¹⁰⁰ that affects the devotee's entire life; it is worship that is at the same time both loving and constantly disciplined.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, Kṛṣṇa teaches his disciple:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in worship, whatever you give in charity, whatever austerity you perform, do it as an offering to Me.¹⁰²

Have your mind absorbed in Me, be My devotee, worship Me, bow down to Me, have Me as your highest goal. Having thus disciplined yourself, you will surely come to Me.¹⁰³

To be a devotee (bhakta), one must perform all actions for God¹⁰⁴ and take refuge in God.¹⁰⁵ One must have one's mind and heart constantly fixed on God,¹⁰⁶ one's life absorbed in God,¹⁰⁷ one's inmost Self lost in God.¹⁰⁸ In short, God must be one's all in all.¹⁰⁹ Such a centering of all of one's faculties on the Lord is bhakti, which is not authentic unless it is one-pointed and unwavering.¹¹⁰ According to Kṛṣṇa, the devotee's mind must go to no other object.¹¹¹

Despite this emphasis on bhakti, however, the Gītā does not use the extensive vocabulary of devotion common to the later Vaiṣṇava schools. Such synonyms for ecstatic

spiritual love as preman, anurāga, sneha, praṇaya, and so on, used by the medieval devotional writers,¹¹² do not appear in the text. The only precise word for love employed, other than bhakti itself, is prīti. This occurs once, in an interesting context, at 10.10: "To them who are constantly disciplined and worship Me with love, I give the discipline of the intelligence by which they come to Me." Note here the association of love with discipline (yoga), and intellection (buddhi).¹¹³ The bhakti of the Gītā is clearly not the ecstatic and outwardly emotional love of the later Vaiṣṇava sects. Rather, it is a devotion associated with yogic concentration and knowledge. Indeed, as Zaehner has pointed out, the Gītā's teaching on bhakti presupposes that the aspirant is yukta, i.e., already disciplined in yoga.¹¹⁴ "With his mind tranquil," says Kṛṣṇa, "free from fear, established in his vow of celibacy, his mind controlled and focused on Me, let him sit disciplined (yukta), intent on Me."¹¹⁵ This is the contemplative bhakti which we have indicated is distinguishable from later ecstatic forms of devotion. Hardy identifies it as a type common to the BG, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and the Vedāntic theism of Rāmānuja.¹¹⁶ It is, to use the terminology of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school somewhat anachronistically, the "quiescent devotion" (śāntabhakti) of the meditative and self-controlled yogin or jñānin.¹¹⁷

This observation is confirmed by BG 7.16-19, a passage that has been important to commentators of all persuasions. It is particularly interesting for the present study of the relation between Advaita and bhakti because it asserts that the jñānin, the person who possesses knowledge, is the highest type of devotee. As repeated reference to this passage will be made in the pages that follow, it is worth reproducing here in full:

Persons of good deeds who worship Me are of four kinds, O Arjuna, the afflicted, the seeker of wealth, the seeker of knowledge, and the possessor of knowledge, O Best of the Bhāratas.

Of these, the possessor of knowledge, constantly disciplined, whose devotion is one-pointed, is the best, for I am exceedingly dear to him and he is dear to Me.

Noble indeed are all these but the possessor of knowledge I regard as My very Self, for he, with disciplined Self, has resorted to Me as his highest goal.

At the end of many births, the possessor of knowledge resorts to Me, thinking "Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa] is all that is." Such a great soul is exceedingly difficult to find.¹¹⁸

The emphasis on knowledge here as an apparent preliminary to love of Kṛṣṇa certainly points to the contemplative nature of the BG's bhakti. For Advaitins, the term jñānin means one who has achieved the realization of identity with Brahman. Hence, ignoring the possibility of a final mingling of love and knowledge that these verses suggest, they are able to take them as confirmation of the superiority of the path of knowledge.¹¹⁹

Other passages in the Gītā also provide support for the non-dualist position. At 5.16-17, for example, a distinctly impersonalist tone is struck:

But for those whose ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge, knowledge illumines That Supreme (tat param) like the sun.

Thinking of That, their being absorbed in That, making that their end and highest goal, they attain a state from which there is no return, their sins destroyed by knowledge.¹²⁰

BG 4.36-39 praises knowledge as the boat which rescues even the worst sinner, the fire which reduces all karma to ashes, and the greatest purifier. "One who has faith," Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "whose senses are controlled, who is intent on That, gains knowledge and, having gained knowledge, quickly attains the highest peace."¹²¹ A good number of verses magnifying the power of knowledge could be cited in addition to those already referred to.¹²² Indeed the whole exposition of the nature of the ātman in chapter two and the distinction between the "field" and the "knower of the field" in chapter thirteen, as well as the descriptions of the enlightened sage at 2.55-72 and 12.12-20, are entirely in accord with the non-dualist vision.

At the same time, however, there are at least as many passages which extol bhakti and are consequently troublesome for the strict Advaitin. The first eight verses of chapter twelve are especially important in this regard, since they suggest the superiority of bhakti to the quest

for knowledge of the impersonal absolute. They begin with a question that, for the first time in the scriptural traditions known to us, brings the theme of the present study into explicit focus. Confused, we can imagine, by Kṛṣṇa's alternate praise of devotion to him as the personal God, on the one hand, and his exaltation of knowledge of the ultimate as an impersonal "That," on the other, Arjuna asks: "Those devotees (bhaktas) who, ever disciplined (yukta), worship Thee and those again who [meditate on] the imperishable Unmanifest, which of these is better versed in yoga?"¹²³ Kṛṣṇa's answer is that the ones who are "most perfect in yoga" are the disciplined devotees.¹²⁴ The path of knowledge is fraught with difficulty, but salvation for the true bhakta is swift and sure:

Those who, offering all their actions to Me, are intent on Me, who worship Me, meditating on Me with yoga directed toward no other,

Those whose thoughts are fixed on Me, I quickly deliver from the ocean of death and rebirth, O Partha.¹²⁵

Since the Lord's final recommendation is that his disciple follow the path of devotion, this passage portends difficulty for Śaṅkara's position. We shall see in chapter two that his handling of it is not totally convincing.

Also worthy of mention in this connection is 14.27, in which Kṛṣṇa identifies himself as the foundation (pratiṣṭhā) of the immortal, imperishable Brahman.¹²⁶ Zaehner and others take this as a clear triumph for theism,

and it is indeed possible that it was originally intended to express the superiority of Kṛṣṇa to the Upaniṣadic ultimate.¹²⁷ In interpreting this or any part of the Gītā, it should be remembered that its concluding emphasis, as mentioned above, is on the sufficiency for salvation of surrender to the personal God. Many commentators, with considerable justification, take the injunction at 18.66 to abandon all for Kṛṣṇa as a decisive--and, as it were, retroactive--determinant of the meaning of the entire text. While all of this is obviously supportive of the devotionalist's position, it leads to difficulties for those who are interpreting the text from the standpoint of the path of knowledge, i.e., that of orthodox Advaita.

The truth is that the Gītā, in a manner typical of the great scriptures of the world, is concerned more with the directness of its insight into the divine than with the problems that later systematic interpreters might face. It holds together seemingly conflicting interests in a way that no doubt was frustrating for the commentators who saw the paths of knowledge and devotion, and the associated visions of impersonalism and personalism, as being mutually exclusive. Evidently, its author did not feel such apparent contradictions as acutely as did the teachers of the Vedānta who were to follow. He was able to bring impersonalism and personalism together in a kind of dynamic tension which, in

the final analysis, is one of the important secrets of the text's enduring appeal.¹²⁸

As we shall see in chapters three and five, both the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and Madhusūdana, its student, make attempts to juxtapose Advaitic thought and bhakti that are, each in their own way, comparable to that of the Gītā. More commonly, however, it seems to have been thought that the paradoxes involved in this kind of enterprise were too great. Thus we will find Śaṅkara, in chapter two below, and the Gosvāmins of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava tradition, in chapter four, choosing formulations that emphasize a single side of the polarity. It may be that in doing so they sacrificed something of the creative dynamism evident in scriptures such as the Gītā for positions more easily developed into rigorously consistent systems of thought.

CHAPTER TWO

BHAKTI IN THE WRITINGS OF ŚAṂKARA

2.1 Introduction: Śaṁkara as a Devotee?

We now turn to examine in some detail the place that devotional spirituality occupies in Advaita Vedānta, as formulated by Śaṁkara (ca. 650-750 C.E.),¹ the system's founder and principal authority. The prestige of Advaita, we have already noted, is such that many practicing Hindus, even though they may be devotionally inclined, claim to be philosophical non-dualists or at least to recognize Śaṁkara's non-dualism as the highest truth and greatest wisdom of the sages of their tradition. This combination of Advaita and devotion may or may not be carefully thought out. No doubt in the majority of cases it is not. Even many highly erudite Advaitins, however, will assert that, despite the bitter criticism of Advaita offered by the proponents of the various theistic forms of Vedānta, there is really no conflict between non-dualism and devotion. To see how this is possible, they will say, only a more careful and open-minded consideration of Śaṁkara's thought is needed. Thus A. P. Mishra, who has written a very helpful book on the subject of bhakti in Advaita, writes: "Only a

casual and brief perusal of the System brought me to the conclusion that the monistic [i]deal of the Śaṅkara Vedānta is not only not against Bhakti but, on the contrary, it preaches it in positive and assertive term[s]."² In a similar vein, Swami Smarananda of the Ramakrishna Order, which has been consistently interested in a harmonization of Advaita and bhakti,³ argues:

There is a popular conception or rather misconception that Advaita Vedānta--the non-dualistic school of Vedānta--is opposed to bhakti or devotion, as a path to spiritual attainment. Nothing could be further from the truth, for Advaita is not essentially opposed to any path. . . .

Many of the staunchest advaitins (followers of Advaita) including Śrī Śaṅkara, the greatest of them all, were great devotees too. They could follow the devotional path, because they could see no contradiction between it and the Advaitic conclusion 'Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal, and the jīva is no other than Brahman.'

Many are the ways leading to this supreme realization. Among them the path of devotion has been recognized by all religions, including the Advaita Vedānta, as a very efficacious method of achieving this goal."⁴

Even as sophisticated a philosopher-scholar as Radhakrishnan subscribes to this view. He is convinced that, "While Ś. [Śaṅkara] is an absolute non-dualist in his metaphysics, he had great faith in bhakti or devotion to a personal God."⁵

To what extent can such evaluations of Śaṅkara's understanding of devotion be substantiated? This is a difficult question, and a definitive treatment cannot be attempted here. Nevertheless, because Madhusūdana's views on bhakti were in many ways an implied critique of those of

his illustrious predecessor, it is necessary to have some kind of unbiased understanding of what Śaṅkara's thought on the subject was. Otherwise, it will be impossible to understand what Madhusūdana was seeking to accomplish in the Bhaktirasāyana. After a lapse of more than 800 years, he was the first theorist following Śaṅkara to make any substantial contribution to Advaita's understanding of bhakti.⁶ If this is realized, both the extent of Śaṅkara's authority and the significance of Madhusūdana's work will begin to be appreciated. Here, then, I wish to make at least a preliminary evaluation of Śaṅkara's views on devotional religion.

2.2 Śaṅkara's Authentic Works

At the beginning, we must touch briefly on the subject of the authenticity of the many works attributed to Śaṅkara. Anyone who reads on the problem of bhakti in Advaita will invariably learn of the many devotional hymns (stotras), such as the Bhaja Govindam, the Govindāṣṭaka, the Śivānandalaharī, and others⁷ that are said to have been written by this teacher and are commonly presented as evidence that he was a great devotee.⁸ Unfortunately, critical scholarship suggests that it is highly improbable that these works were written by Śaṅkara himself. It is likely, instead, that they were composed by later followers,

perhaps heads of the monasteries of his order of saṁnyāsins, each of whom had the title "Śaṁkarācārya." The same seems to be true of almost all of the independent treatises (prakaraṇas) attributed to Śaṁkara,⁹ especially those, such as the Prabodhasudhākara, that give considerable attention to devotion and are, like the stotras, frequently cited by the proponents of Advaita-bhakti. To enter into a detailed consideration of the problem of the authorship of the hymns and "minor-works" attributed to Śaṁkara and the various, often conflicting views contained in them would be, for obvious reasons, beyond the scope of this paper. I can here only bring to the reader's attention that Śaṁkara's authorship of these works is highly dubious. Of course, this conclusion of historical criticism does not take away from the fact that these devotional poems and treatises were indeed attributed to Śaṁkara and were accepted and preserved in his order. This in itself is evidence that devotion has historically been recognized as an essential component of the practical spiritual life of the Advaita tradition.¹⁰ But it does not tell us much about the views of Śaṁkara himself.

Given that the hymns and most of the independent treatises referred to cannot be safely ascribed to Śaṁkara, the following evaluation of his position on bhakti must be based on a consideration of the so-called "major-works," his

commentaries on the three prastānas ("foundation-texts") of Vedānta: the Upaniṣads, the BS, and the BG. The authorship of these works is undisputed.¹¹ As a commentary is by nature limited to the subject matter of the primary text, and as the Upaniṣads and the BS say almost nothing about bhakti, we find explicit discussion of this discipline only in the Gītābhāṣya (SGB). The following discussion will therefore rely heavily on that work, though it will become apparent that Śaṅkara's commentaries on the other two prasthānas also provide material that is pertinent to the present inquiry.

By way of introduction to the whole problem, I will begin with a consideration of some aspects of Śaṅkara's thought which, taken together, show that he does actually make a place for bhakti in his system. We will find that he has much to say about ordinary religious life and especially about the personal God, the individual soul, and their relationship.

2.3 Levels of Being and Religious Structures

Fundamental to Śaṅkara's thought is the distinction between the para ("higher") and the apara ("lower") Brahman. He articulates it as follows:

Brahman is appended under two forms; in the first place as qualified by limiting conditions owing to the multiformity of the evolutions of name and form; in the second place as being the opposite of this, i.e. free from all limiting conditions whatever . . . [Many

scriptural passages] declare Brahman to possess a double nature, according as it is the object either of Knowledge or Nescience.¹²

Of these two forms of Brahman, it is the lower that is described at BS 1.1.2 as the source, the support, and the end of the world; it is the lower that, in a word, is the personal God. Îśvara, as the personal God is termed, is the transcendent, supreme Brahman appearing as if conditioned and personalized by virtue of its relation to māyā, the principle of phenomenality. The concept of Îśvara is extremely important in Advaita Vedānta and will receive considerable attention as our discussion proceeds.

While devotionalists have of course objected stridently to the Advaitins' apparent relegation of the Lord to the status of an inferior reality, the scheme of the two-fold Brahman does unquestionably achieve several useful purposes. It enables Śaṅkara, for example, to arrive at a consistent, systematic interpretation of the Upaniṣads, which speak of the ultimate in unsystematic and on occasion even contradictory terms--sometimes as an active, cosmically involved, conditioned, quasi-theistic or personal being and sometimes as inactive, acosmic, unconditioned, transpersonal Absolute. The descriptions of Brahman as "qualified" (saguna) are assigned to its lower aspect, the descriptions of it as "unqualified" (nirguna) to its higher aspect, and the revelation (śruti) is thus interpreted as a unified

whole. In addition to being useful for scriptural exegesis, this device of the two-fold ultimate also allows Śaṅkara to combine his vision of the final unreality of all but the supreme, non-dual "One without second" with a genuine, if provisional, acceptance of a practical religiosity having all the elements of ordinary theism. It is this aspect of his thinking that will be our primary focus in the rest of this section.

In order to understand Śaṅkara's evaluation of conventional piety, it is necessary to look at a second distinction, one that is parallel to division between the higher and lower Brahman and designed to serve some of the same purposes. Śaṅkara does not, as is commonly supposed, teach that everything other than the highest, unqualified Absolute is a bare illusion. He speaks, instead, of three levels of being or reality (sattā). Within the realm of becoming and appearance, he makes a clear distinction between the ontological status of illusory objects (prati-bhāṣikasattā), such as those produced by hallucinations and mirages, and that of the everyday empirical world (vyāvahārikasattā). This distinction is based on the common-sense view that pots, jars, elephants, trees, and the like are experienced intersubjectively and are relatively long-lasting while illusions are not. The everyday world is therefore more real than the illusory realm. Śaṅkara goes

on to make a similar distinction between the truth of the empirical or phenomenal level of experience and that of the transcendental or noumenal level, the level of ultimate Reality (pāramārthikasatya), identified with the para Brahman.¹³ Illusions can be easily overcome by empirical knowledge of various sorts, but the empirical level of experience itself is much more difficult to transcend. Nothing but direct intuitive realization of the Absolute can take us beyond it. While the soul, the world, and even personal God are ultimately seen to be false appearances, reminiscent of a great cosmic dream, they are not exactly illusory, for they are constantly present to the experience of all jīvas.

It is worth noting here that the distinction between illusory and empirical experience shows that Śaṅkara is not a subjective idealist. God and the world for him are much more than mere creations of the mind. There is in fact a certain realism in his thought that causes him, for example, to take pains to refute the views of the Vijñānavāda Buddhist idealists. The teachers of the latter school deny the existence of external objects independent of perception.¹⁴ Śaṅkara, however, does not see such subjectivism as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of māyā. As long as one has not realized the ultimate truth, the world has empirical reality (vyāvahārikasattā). Within

this empirical reality, external objects are quite as real as the cognitions we have of them; they exist in their own right, independent of the individual mind. The same is true of the world as a whole and of Īśvara. When one jīva realizes its identity with Brahman, the activity of the manifest universe is not thereby terminated. It continues on its ordinary course, being experienced by other souls, directed as always by the personal God. Īśvara, the creator and sustainer of the world, has at least as real an independent existence as anything else. He is certainly not an illusion, a mere product of the mind. From the point of view of embodied beings, he is in fact the most real of all conditioned entities since he is the eternal source of all levels of empirical existence other than his own.

Śaṅkara emphasizes repeatedly that as long as we have not attained the realization of the supreme Brahman, in which all duality is dissolved, we cannot avoid recognizing the pragmatic truth of the empirical (vyāvahārika) world and all its relationships. As he says at BS 1.1.14:

The entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered true as long as the knowledge of Brahman being the Self of all has not arisen; just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper wakes. . . . As long as true knowledge does not present itself, there is no reason why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not hold on undisturbed.¹⁵

And again, at BS 2.1.14:

That . . . all those distinctions [Īśvara, jīva, etc.] are valid, as far as the phenomenal world is concerned, scripture as well as the Bhagavadgīta states.¹⁶

The vyāvaharika realm, then, with its undeniable empirical reality, becomes the setting in Śaṅkara's system for all of the symbols, activities, and emotions of ordinary religion.

2.4 Structures in Place: Jīva and Īśvara

Śaṅkara's distinction between levels of reality and his acceptance of the full functionality of the lower Brahman and the practical world enables him to regard all of the religious structures necessary for bhakti with utter seriousness and profound respect. While it is doubtful whether his analysis is finally adequate from the devotionalists' point of view, it is important to consider his presentation of theism carefully and appreciate its depth. It was not without reason that even a Christian theologian such as Otto was able to recognize this great Advaitin's relationship to the theistic worldview of the Gītā, the epics, and the purāṇas as an "inner one."¹⁷ Indeed, as P. Hacker has recently shown, it is almost certain that Śaṅkara and his early followers came from strong Vaiṣṇava backgrounds.¹⁸

Despite his belief that both jīva and īśvara are ultimately identical in the supreme Brahman, Śaṅkara is able to accept the difference between them on the phenomenal plane. "That the jīva has qualities opposite to that of īśvara," he says, "is obvious."¹⁹ The jīva is Brahman in

association with the antaḥkaraṇa, the "inner organ" consisting of mind, ego, and understanding. As such, the jīva is the victim of avidyā, is limited in all respects, and undergoes continual rebirth in the cycles of samsāra. The Lord, however, is subject to none of these defects:

There is a distinction between the Supreme Lord and the embodied [jīva]. One is the doer, the enjoyer, a bearer of merit and demerit, and subject to joy and sorrow. The other is the opposite of this and has qualities such as sinlessness and so on.²⁰

It is true [that īśvara] dwells in the body, but he does not dwell only in the body, because we hear of his all-pervasiveness in scriptures such as "greater than the earth, greater than the heavens" [CU 3.14.3] and "all-pervasive and eternal like the ether." But the jīva dwells only in the body.²¹

Īśvara, like the jīva, is Brahman limited by a conditioning adjunct (upādhi). But His supremacy derives from the special nature of this adjunct, with which the likeness between the two ends. Īśvara is Brahman associated, not with a limited mind and body, but with māyā, the universal creative matrix, the divine energy (śakti) that projects the entire cosmos. Unlike the jīva, the Lord is not taken in by the delusive, concealing power of māyā. On the contrary, the true nature of reality, including especially his identity with the highest Brahman, is eternally transparent to him.²² While the jīva is controlled by māyā, īśvara is the māyāvin, the omnipotent, omniscient controller of māyā.²³ The Lord has the power of manifesting, sustaining, and destroying the world. He is

thus the ruler of the universe and all in it. According to Śaṅkara: "The Highest Lord arranged at the beginning of the present kalpa [cycle of the universe] the entire world with sun and moon, and so on, just as it had been arranged in the preceding kalpa."²⁴ Moreover, "although the creation of this world appears to us a weighty and difficult undertaking, it is mere play to the Lord, whose power is unlimited."²⁵ The jīva may gain certain super-normal yogic powers (siddhis) in the state of liberation, but it can never gain such universal power, which belongs only to God.²⁶

Though the jīvas may ultimately be "one with His [the Lord's] own Self," Śaṅkara makes it clear that "He stands in the realm of the phenomenal in the relation of a ruler to the so-called jīvas."²⁷ Indeed, the jīva is totally dependent upon the Lord's grace for both the experience of saṃsāra and the knowledge that effects mokṣa. Śaṅkara writes:

For the soul which in the state of Nescience is blinded by the darkness of ignorance and hence unable to distinguish itself from the complex of effects and instruments, the saṃsāra-state in which it appears as agent and enjoyer is brought about through the permission of the Lord who is the highest Self, the superintendent of all actions, the witness residing in all beings, the cause of all intelligence; and we must therefore assume that final release also is effected through knowledge caused by the grace of the Lord.²⁸

Īśvara is the "inner controller" (antaryāmin) of the jīva, causing it to act in accordance with its past deeds:

The Lord is a causal agent in all activity. For scripture says, 'He makes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds do a good deed; and the same makes him whom he wishes to lead down from these worlds, do a bad deed' (KauU. 3.8); and again, 'He who dwelling within the self pulls the self from within' [BU 3.7.2-23].²⁹

Although, like the Lord, the jīva is without beginning, it does have an end, attained when its individuality dissolves in the state of mokṣa. Īśvara, however, is eternal. The cycles of creation go on forever, and so does the Lord who rules over them. Like time and the process of change, he is without beginning and without end.³⁰ In Śaṅkara's comments on BS 1.1.5, we read:

If, as the adherents of the Yoga-śāstra assume, the Yogins have a perceptive knowledge of the past and the future through the favor of the Lord; in what terms shall we have to speak of the eternal cognition of the ever pure Lord himself, whose objects are the creation, subsistence, and dissolution of the world!³¹

Īśvara may vanish for the individual who attains final liberation, but never for the world as a whole.

Śaṅkara advances several proofs for the existence of God of the sort that would be entirely acceptable in theistic circles, and he deals extensively with the problem of theodicy.³² He also explicitly accepts that central element of Hindu devotional religion, the doctrine of periodic divine incarnation (avatāra) on earth. "The highest Lord," he declares, "may, when he pleases, assume a bodily shape formed of māyā, in order to gratify thereby his devout worshippers."³³ He supports this statement by a

reference to a theistically oriented smṛti. In his introduction to his commentary on the BG, Śaṅkara provides, in addition to a classic statement of his conception of Īśvara, a revealing explanation of the mystery of the avatāra:

The Blessed Lord is always possessed of knowledge, majesty, power, strength, might, and radiant energy. Controlling his own māyā, the primal cause consisting of the three material qualities that belongs to him as Viṣṇu, he appears, to work the welfare of the world, as if possessed of a body, as if born, though in reality he is unborn, imperishable, the Lord of all beings, in nature eternally pure, free, and liberated.³⁴

While rejecting, at BS 2.2.42, certain doctrines on the origination of the soul held by teachers of the non-orthodox Bhāgavata school, Śaṅkara at the same time makes clear that he is sympathetic with much of their theology, including the idea that the Godhead assumes various manifest forms, and suggests further that he does not disapprove of their devotional spirituality:

We do not controvert the doctrine that Nārāyaṇa, who is known to be higher than the Unevolved, who is the Supreme Self and the Self of All, has multiplied himself through himself into single forms. . . Nor do we raise any objection if it is intended to worship the Bhagavān with unceasing concentration of mind by approaching him [in his temple] or by other means.³⁵

In a similar vein, Śaṅkara writes at BS 1.2.7:

It is taught that God . . . is perceptible, i.e. visible, in the lotus of the heart, just as Hari is in the śālagrama stone. In this, it is a cognition of the Inner Sense [buddhivijñāna] which apprehends him. God, though omnipresent, graciously allows himself to be reverently meditated upon there.³⁶

However inadequate his understanding may be from the devotionalists' point of view, it is clear that Śaṅkara accepts at least the provisional validity of personalized forms of God and devotional worship.

Note that in the last quote but one Śaṅkara is speaking of Nārāyaṇa, a sectarian deity, as the equivalent of the "highest Self." While this may seem puzzling at first, an apparent transgression of the distinction between the higher and lower Brahman, usages like this are common in his writings. His tendency to employ such designations of the transpersonal Absolute as parabrahman, ātman, and paramātman interchangeably with Īśvara, parameśvara, and bhagavat, which are titles of the personal God, and even Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu, which are personal names derived from mythology, is one that has been well-documented.³⁷ This practice, which is continued by the great commentator's followers, should not, however, be a cause of perplexity. Īśvara in Advaita is the highest conception of the Absolute accessible to the limitations of human thought and discourse. Hence, practically speaking, the Lord is the ultimate for all who remain in the grip of phenomenality. Once having made the distinction between para and apara, Brahman and Īśvara, Śaṅkara and his followers feel no need to dwell upon it. The Lord, we have seen, is nothing less than the supreme Reality itself in its aspect of relatedness

to the phenomenal world; as such, īśvara truly is Brahman. There is consequently no harm in speaking of him as the ultimate while one is discoursing within the limitations of phenomenality, where one is necessarily confined by the very act of speaking. Any attempt to maintain a constant and rigorous distinction between the pāramārthika and vyāvahārika standpoints in this respect would make the discussion unbearably cumbersome. Furthermore, by virtue of overemphasis, it would imply a devaluation of the personal God that is not intended.

The foregoing exposition should be sufficient to establish that, despite the charge of "impersonalism" frequently leveled against Śaṅkara, the concept of īśvara and the latter's distinction from the individual soul is richly articulated in his thought.³⁸ The Lord retains for him the full complement of power and grace attributed to God by more conventional thinkers, and the jīva as such its full degree of dependence.

2.5 Śaṅkara's Devaluation of Devotion

2.5.1 The Penultimacy of Religious Structures and Bhakti

The discussion thus far has indicated that the elements necessary for bhakti--including soul, God, and even grace--are present in Advaita in fully functional form. It would seem, therefore, that devotion is possible within this

system. We can not yet conclude, however, that the critique of non-dualism by the theistic Vedāntins is entirely without basis. To be sure, some of their polemics miss the point. Śaṅkara's position may well be a subtle one requiring much sympathy to penetrate, but he was neither a Buddhist nor a devil, nor even as anti-religious as some have made out. This, I think, has been sufficiently established.

Nevertheless it does remain that, while the structures necessary for bhakti are present in Advaita and devotion is therefore possible, the element of ultimacy has been removed from both the devotional experience and its object. This leaves bhakti in a precarious position, in danger of losing much of its compellingness.

Consider, for example, the following passage:

The Lord's being a Lord, his omniscience, his omnipotence, and etc. all depend on the limitation due to the adjuncts whose Self is Nescience; while in reality none of these qualities belong to the Self whose true nature is cleared, by right knowledge, from all adjuncts whatever. . . . The Vedānta texts declare that for him who has reached the state of truth and reality the whole apparent world does not exist.³⁹

The Advaitins' tendency to keep the distinction between the higher and lower Brahman in abeyance while they are speaking of conventional religious notions does not mean that they have forgotten it. On the contrary, they reassert it dramatically, as Śaṅkara does here, as soon as they begin thinking in terms of mokṣa, their final goal. When this happens, ordinary piety is forgotten in the quest for what

is perceived as a higher level of truth. Îśvara may be God in all his glory from the point of view of the world, but from the point of view of liberation he is, as Īśvara, dependent on the world, just as the space limited by pots and jars is, for its existence as such, dependent on those vessels. When the pot is broken, so does the particular configuration of space it contained; when the world disappears in the final disembodied state, so does God.⁴⁰ This kind of thinking does not quite place Īśvara in the realm of māyā, but it does effectively remove him from the sphere of final truth in a way that a true devotionalist could not tolerate.⁴¹

If the Lord himself suffers from penultimacy in Advaita, all the more does bhakti. As we shall see, it is only through direct intuitive knowledge, according to Śaṅkara, that one can attain the ultimate realization. In the final analysis, bhakti must remain within the domain of practical spirituality, merely a preliminary discipline that has no power to take one beyond the sphere of duality. In metaphysical terms, bhakti and its dualistic distinctions are confined to the realm of the false, the realm of māyā.⁴² It neither gives us access to Being, nor does it have itself any true ontological status. So on both counts Advaita makes it difficult for its adherents to take devotion as commonly understood with final seriousness.

2.5.2 Bhakti Not an Independent Path

Though the Advaitins themselves vary in the importance they place on devotional religion, almost all accept that it is but a preliminary step to the acquisition of knowledge. Like selfless action,⁴³ bhakti purifies the mind and prepares it for the final intuition of the identity of jīva and Brahman. It must be remembered in this connection that all of the important writers on Advaita up until modern times were highly educated, intellectually gifted individuals from Brahmin families, men so inclined to the contemplative life that they were willing to take monastic vows and live the lives of ascetics. Thus it is not surprising that, once having felt the intellectual appeal of Śaṅkara's non-dualistic metaphysic, many tended to disparage devotional religion as based on a dualism born of ignorance. The typical attitude of Advaitins toward bhakti is expressed by Amalananda in this verse from his Kalpatataru:

Those slow-minded persons who are unable to directly realize the unqualified supreme Brahman are blessed by the descriptions of the qualified [Brahman]. When their minds have been brought under control by habitual contemplation on the conditioned Brahman, that very Brahman reveals itself as devoid of all limiting adjuncts.⁴⁴

Though somewhat rudely stated here, this is Śaṅkara's position also. Himself a renunciate and follower of the path of knowledge, he sought to extol this path to

encourage his fellow monks and vindicate it in the face of criticism from outside. To understand Śaṅkara's views on bhakti, one must first realize that he was writing at a time when the emotional devotion so dominant in later centuries was still in its formative stages. In spite of the Gītā's emphasis on devotion bhakti was not yet widely accepted in orthodox Smārta⁴⁵ circles as an independent means to salvation.⁴⁶ Rather, it was cultivated in the non-Vedic schools which produced the āgamas, tantras, and the purāṇas, schools such as the Bhāgavata and the Pāñcarāta which were, even in the time of Yāmuna (tenth century) and later, still arguing the case for their orthodoxy.⁴⁷

Certainly, in Śaṅkara's major works, the discussion of bhakti as a possible center of the religious life of serious seekers is conspicuous by its absence. While the chief opponents of Madhusūdana in the sixteenth century were the devotionalists, who by then had cast off the stigma of heterodoxy, Śaṅkara's most serious rivals in the seventh century were the ultra-orthodox Vedic ritualists of the Pūrvamīmāṃsā. The great Mimāṃsakas Kumārila and Prabhākara were then at the height of their influence, having played an important role in the anti-Buddhist Hindu revival that had actually paved the way for Śaṅkara's success. As fellow Smārtas engaged like him in Vedic exegesis, but with a radically different viewpoint, they were enemies closer to

home and therefore more dangerous.⁴⁸ A disproportionately large part of Śaṅkara's writing is taken up in controversy with these representatives of the conservative Vedic establishment, who asserted that salvation could only come through religious works, chiefly proper observance of Vedic ritual, which necessitated remaining in the householders' āśrama. They consequently denied the legitimacy of saṃnyāsa ("renunciation") since it involved the giving up of ritual and indeed all normal social life. Samnyāsa, however, was a key element of Śaṅkara's spirituality; it was, as we shall see, the basis of the path of knowledge, of which he sought to be the champion. The two doctrines clashed, and we must understand the stridency of Śaṅkara's emphasis on knowledge and renunciation as the means to salvation against the background of this controversy. In his Gītābhāṣa, for example, he identifies the key problem of that text as the resolution of the conflict between the pravṛttidharma ("path of works") and the nivṛttidharma ("path of renunciation"). In keeping with his purpose of glorifying saṃnyāsa and defending it from its activist Mimāṃsaka critics, he tries to show that the Gītā teaches the superiority of renunciation and knowledge to the path of works. Much of his commentary is taken up by efforts to demonstrate this conclusion.⁴⁹ For the reasons just stated, he is in all of his writings far less concerned with arguing for the

superiority of knowledge to bhakti. This makes a study such as the present one somewhat more difficult, but Śaṅkara does say enough to allow the careful reader to arrive at a fairly accurate understanding of his views on devotional spirituality.

2.5.3 Knowledge the Means to Liberation

The real, for Śaṅkara, is that which never changes. Liberation, the highest goal of life (paramapuruṣārtha), consists in identification with the unchanging reality, viz., Brahman. He says of mokṣa:

Scripture declares that state to be naturally and originally an unembodied one. . . . Among eternal things, some indeed may be 'eternal, although changing' (parināmanitya) But this [mokṣa] is eternal in the true sense, i.e. eternal without undergoing any changes (kūṭasthanitya), omnipresent as ether, free from all modifications, absolutely self-sufficient, not composed of parts, of self-luminous nature. That bodiless entity in fact, to which merit and demerit do not apply is called release. . . . It [mokṣa] is therefore the same as Brahman.⁵⁰

Given, thus, that the ultimate state is one of stasis, it is understandable that the approach to it should involve a minimization of process and becoming. So neither the religious activism advocated by the Mimāṃsakas nor bhakti lead directly to release. Śaṅkara never tires of repeating that the sole means to liberation is knowledge (jñāna):⁵¹

The attainment of mokṣa is only from knowledge of reality.⁵²

Knowledge of the Self alone is the means to the highest good, for, being the remover of the cognition of duality, it culminates in liberation.⁵³

The Upaniṣad "Having known Him one goes beyond death; there is no other path for going" [Ś.U. 3.8] indicates that a path other than knowledge is not known. Another text [Ś.U. 6.20] says that mokṣa for one who does not possess knowledge is as impossible as rolling up space like a leather hide. And the Purānas and the Smṛtis declare, "Mokṣa is attained through knowledge."⁵⁴

2.5.4 Saving Knowledge Mediated Through The Vedic Revelation

This knowledge is not, of course, discursive. It is rather a direct intuition (sākṣātkāra) that transforms one's perception of reality. Though it is an insight that goes beyond the verbal, it is mediated verbally. It is often forgotten that the "mysticism" of Advaita, if it can be so-called, is anchored in Vedic orthodoxy. Pūrvamīmāṃsā proclaimed uncompromisingly that knowledge of what cannot be directly perceived by the senses--in the Mīmāṃsakas' case, correct ritual behavior (dharma)--must come from the infallible word of the Veda. Advaita, as conservatively orthodox as its sister system,⁵⁵ is committed to the same doctrine. Knowledge of Brahman, the supersensory object of interest to Vedānta, does not come haphazardly through just any mystical practice, but through one channel only: the words of śruti, specifically, the "great sayings" (mahāvākyas) of the Upaniṣads which are heard (śruta) by the qualified pupil from the mouth of the competent teacher. The mahāvākyas, of which the most important is tat tvam asi, "That thou art" [CU 6.8.7], are

the final catalysts of knowledge. At BS 1.1.4, Śaṅkara discusses the seeker's dependence upon scripture at length. He writes: "The fact of everything having its Self in Brahman cannot be grasped without the aid of the scriptural passage 'tat tvam asi.'"⁵⁶ Later on, at 3.2.21, he elaborates:

The only thing needed is that the knowledge of Brahman should be conveyed by the Vedic passages sublating the apparent plurality superimposed upon Brahman by Nescience, such as . . . 'Thou art it.' . . . As soon as Brahman is indicated in this way, knowledge arising of itself discards Nescience, and this whole world of names and forms, which had been hiding Brahman from us, melts away like the imagery of a dream.⁵⁷

Śaṅkara's disciple Sureśvara develops this doctrine of immediate verbal mediation of enlightenment in his writings. He emphasizes, however, that the disciple must be prepared by previous practice before the śruti can be effective in this way.⁵⁸

2.5.5 Eligibility for Knowledge

This last idea brings us to the concept of adhikāra ("eligibility"). While it plays a significant role in Hindu religious thought in general,⁵⁹ the notion is especially important in Advaita Vedānta. Not all are entitled to enter the path of knowledge. In addition to important social qualifications, which will be considered below, a long process of moral and spiritual preparation, either in this life or in previous lives, is presupposed. At the beginning of the BSSB, Śaṅkara outlines the "four-fold means"

(sādhanacatuṣṭya) that an individual must have to qualify for the study of Vedānta. The strict requirements include: (1) the capacity to discriminate between the eternal and the non-eternal; (2) indifference to the rewards of action in this world or the next; (3) the "six-fold endowment," which includes equanimity, self-control, withdrawal from sensual pursuits, concentration, patience, and faith; and (4) the intense desire for liberation.⁶⁰ An even more detailed outline of prerequisites for the study of Advaita is presented at Upadeśasāhasrī 2.1.2. There Śaṅkara indicates that his teaching is truly intended only for the mendicant (parivrajaka) who is a paramahansa ("supreme swan"), a title reserved, at least in the later tradition, for the highest and most respected order of samnyāsins.⁶¹ Those possessed of such qualifications, the highest aspirants (uttamādhi-kārins), are utterly detached from the world and so able to contemplate their identity with the impersonal Brahman. Single-minded in their quest, they seek to remain aloof from everything in the realm of process and becoming, including both religious works and religious emotionalism. Only such individuals are qualified for the path of knowledge, which forms the direct means to immortality.

Other individuals, not possessed of such virtues, are eligible only for the paths of selfless action and devotion. According to Śaṅkara, Arjuna was a seeker of this

second sort. BG 2.47 reads, "Your adhikāra is for action alone,"⁶² and Śaṅkara's gloss has Kṛṣṇa saying directly to Arjuna: "You are qualified for works alone, not for the path of knowledge."⁶³ Later on in the commentary we learn that, "because the Blessed Lord is exceedingly desirous of Arjuna's well-being, he recommends to him only the yoga of action which is based on the cognition of distinction and unconnected with right knowledge."⁶⁴ Arjuna is thus taken as an example of the madhyama adhikārin, the "middling aspirant" who does not yet have the spiritual maturity necessary to tread the lofty way of renunciation and knowledge.⁶⁵

2.5.6 Karma and bhakti as Preparatory to Knowledge

Through the paths of karma and bhakti, individuals not qualified for the path of knowledge gradually attain greater purity. Thus:

The religion of [ritual] activity enjoined on the castes and stages of life [when performed with desire for its results] is the means of attaining the world of the gods. This, when performed with the idea that it is an offering to God, without regard for its rewards, produces purity of mind. And one whose mind is purified attains, by means of the acquisition of fitness for the discipline of knowledge, the means to the highest good which is the same as the means to the arising of knowledge.⁶⁶

It is important to realize that, in Śaṅkara's mind, the paths of action and devotion are allied disciplines applicable to the same level of spiritual striving. So

devotion, which often takes the form of action dedicated to God, is likewise only a means of purification:

The state of being qualified for the discipline of knowledge is a perfection attained as the fruit of the yoga of devotion which consists of worshipping the Blessed Lord through performance of one's allotted duties. The discipline of knowledge, caused by the yoga of devotion to the Blessed Lord, leads to the fruit of mokṣa.⁶⁷

In chapter 13 of the Gītā, verses 7-11, various virtues, including "unwavering devotion," are listed and identified with knowledge. Śaṅkara explains that, "bhakti . . . to Me, the Lord, . . . is knowledge. . . . [i.e.] is called knowledge because of being conducive to knowledge."⁶⁸ Those who perform their duties selflessly as an offering to God, and those who focus their minds and hearts on God with devotion, are engaged, not in the direct ascent to liberation, but in an exercise which, however essential, remains preliminary to the quest for knowledge.

2.5.7 Bhakti and Upāsana

In this and other respects, bhakti for the Advaitin is similar to Upaniṣadic upāsana.⁶⁹ In comparison with the sparsity of discourse on bhakti in the early literature of Advaita, there is a relative abundance of explicit discussion of upāsana. This is because, as we have seen, the latter discipline figures importantly in the Upanisads-- which are the central scriptures of the Śaṅkara tradition--

while the former does not. From the Advaitins' analysis of upāsana it can be determined that it occupies the same structural position in their interpretation of the more orthodox, but archaic, Upaniṣadic spirituality that bhakti occupies in their understanding of later Hindu practice.

Śaṅkara's definition of upāsana, already referred to in our discussion of the Upaniṣads, is worth repeating here: "Upāsana is a continuous current of identical thoughts, unbroken by any disparate cognitions, directed toward an object accepted from scripture."⁷⁰ It is not difficult to see how upāsana, in this view, might have much in common with the Gītā's "devotion with no other object" (ananyabhakti). Śaṅkara describes the latter as "undivided concentration with the unwavering conviction 'There is nothing higher than Vāsudeva, therefore he is our sole goal.'"⁷¹ Elsewhere he says: "Bhakti 'with no other object' is that which is never divided toward objects other than the Blessed Lord."⁷²

At BS 4.1.1, Śaṅkara illustrates the intensity of mental concentration required of those engaged in upāsana. The analogies he uses are reminiscent of the way in which a devotional teacher might describe the bhakta's preoccupation with thought of God:

Thus we say in ordinary life that a person 'is devoted' to a teacher or a king if he follows him with a mind steadily set on him; and of a wife whose husband has gone on a journey we say that she thinks of him only if she steadily remembers him with longing.⁷³

So there are obviously certain parallels between upāsana and bhakti. Although their objects are perhaps different, the difference is not as great as it may seem at first. In Śaṅkara's understanding, at least, the objects of upāsana, such as the holy syllable Om, and the object of bhakti, īśvara, are alike special manifestations or symbols (it is fair to say) of the highest Brahman. The attitude of the practitioner of upāsana toward the object of his meditation is not the emotional bhakti of the later tradition, or even the more reserved, intellectual devotion of the BG. But again, we have seen that upāsana involves a reverential approach to the ultimate that is at least comparable to the combination of love and mental concentration found in bhakti. Finally, Śaṅkara makes it clear that upāsana, like bhakti, is not the direct path to mokṣa, but rather a means to mental purification (sattvaśuddhi).⁷⁴

Śaṅkara specifies his understanding of the difference between upāsana and knowledge at BS 1.1.4. There he points out that, while upāsana is dependent upon the meditating subject for its existence and is prey to the vagaries of human volition, true knowledge is determined by the independently existing object and is therefore not dependent on the mind of its agent.⁷⁵ This idea is summarized succinctly by Vidyāraṇya Svāmin, the great fourteenth century Advaitin, in his Pañcadaśī. "Knowledge,"

he writes, "is determined by its object, while upāsana is determined by its agent."⁷⁶ The implication is that only knowledge can take us beyond subjectivity, beyond the realm of māyā, to true Being.

Let us note what follows for upāsana, and for bhakti as well. Both these disciplines are insufficient in themselves, and the aim of those practicing them should be to attain sufficient purity of mind to experience the immediate intuitive knowledge of Brahman that alone is the direct means to mokṣa. The final realization will perhaps occur in this life, i.e., such persons may make the transition from upāsana or bhakti to jñāna.⁷⁷ More likely, however, they will have to either wait for another birth⁷⁸ or attain the requisite saving knowledge through the process known as kramamukti ("gradual liberation"). The latter consists in the attainment after death of brahmaloka, the highest celestial realm from which there is no rebirth. Inhabitants of this heavenly world attain knowledge of the unconditioned Brahman, and hence mokṣa, when the whole universe, including brahmaloka, is dissolved at the end of the present cosmic cycle (kalpa).⁷⁹

2.5.8 The Seeker of Knowledge Rejects Devotion

Śaṅkara sees the life of the seeker of knowledge as one of constant "dwelling in Brahman" (brahmasamstha),⁸⁰ and he describes the discipline of knowledge as "an intense effort to acquire a continuous current of the awareness of the inner Self."⁸¹ The work required on this path is considerable and requires sincere dedication of one's total life energy; it is no small undertaking. This fact explains the need for renunciation and freedom from mundane concerns. It also throws light on Śaṅkara's idealization of the saṁnyāsin and the special praise he reserves for the naiṣṭhikabrahmacārin ("complete celibate") who, like the great Advaitin himself, has renounced directly from the student stage and has never been entirely caught up in the illusions of the world:

It goes without saying that one who renounces from studenthood and remains in the spiritual life as long as he lives will attain liberation in Brahman.⁸²

Here, the yoga of knowledge--knowledge itself being yoga--is the path prescribed for the Sāṅkhyas, those possessed of knowledge which discriminates between the Self and its objects, who have renounced the world from the stage of studenthood, who have ascertained the real through the wisdom of the Upaniṣads, who belong to the Paramahamsas or highest order of wandering mendicants, whose life is focussed on Brahman only.⁸³

Here we again encounter the high standards that Śaṅkara sets for aspirants to the path of knowledge.

An important part of the Advaitic discipline⁸⁴ is the effort to remove "contrary ideas" (viparītabhāvanā), i.e., dualistic ways of thinking and perception that contradict scriptural teaching as to the Self's oneness and total inactivity. To succeed in the task of uprooting separative consciousness and immersing himself in the idea of oneness, the contemplative who has entered the path of knowledge must abstain from activities and modes of thought and feeling which reinforce dualism. Hence the urgency of Śaṅkara's polemic against those who denied the value of renunciation and asserted that liberation can only come through engagement in the ritualistic observances of the life of the orthodox householder, or through a kind of compromise combination of such works with meditation and knowledge. In the Gītābhāṣya, he speaks of "the impossibility of existing in a single person of both knowledge, which depends on ideas of non-agency and unity, and works, which depend upon ideas of agency and multiplicity."⁸⁵ The practitioner of jñānayoga is taught to regard "the whole world and all knowledge born of difference as mere ignorance, like night."⁸⁶ Since "that which is perceived as being without foundation cannot become a motive for action,"⁸⁷ the man of true discrimination refrains from works. Again and again, Śaṅkara stresses that the renunciate must avoid such activities and attitudes as involve him in dualistic modes of awareness:

The yoga of action, which is the opposite of renunciation, is based on the idea of agency derived from false knowledge and maintains one in the idea that the Self is active by nature. So the impossibility of the yoga of action for the knower of the Self is taught, since right knowledge contradicts false knowledge and its effects.⁸⁸

"`I do nothing at all,' thus the disciplined knower of reality should think" [BG 5.8]. This verse teaches the one who knows the reality of the Self to refrain, through constant mental discipline, from the idea "I am acting" in actions such as seeing or hearing, even when these are undertaken for the mere maintenance of the body. Therefore, it is not possible to imagine even in a dream that the knower of the Self could perform the yoga of action, which is contradictory to right knowledge and based on false knowledge.⁸⁹

All action without exception has its seed in ignorance and desire. Consequently, it is taught that action pertains to the ignorant and discipline of knowledge to those who know. . . . The verse "I give that yoga of discriminative understanding by which they approach Me" [10.10] means that the ignorant followers of the path of works do not so approach.⁹⁰

Now, if the person engaged in the discipline of knowledge is enjoined to avoid the path of action because it involves him in dualistic thinking, should he not also rise above the dualism inherent in worship and devotion? Though Śaṅkara does not deal with this question in explicit terms,⁹¹ it is certain that this is his opinion. In chapter 12 of the Gītā, verses 1-12, Kṛṣṇa clearly asserts that the devotees of the personal God are the "best practitioners of yoga"⁹² and that their path is superior to the path of meditation on the "Imperishable," i.e., the impersonal Absolute, because the latter way is much more difficult. Śaṅkara nevertheless chooses not to take this teaching at its

face value, treating it rather as mere hortatory praise designed to inspire Arjuna, who is not fit for the path of knowledge, to persist in the paths of action and devotion. Referring to 7.18, he writes, "It has been said that 'The one who knows is regarded as my very Self.' Of those who are thus identical with the Blessed Lord (bhagavatsvarūpa), there is no need to say that they are either the best or not the best practitioners of yoga."⁹³ Then follows a crucial passage:

Here, having assumed a distinction between the Lord and the Self, the yoga which consists of concentrating the mind on the Lord in his universal form and performing works for the sake of the Lord is declared. The verse "If you are not able to do even this" [12.11] indicates that karmayoga is the result of ignorance. So the Blessed Lord teaches that it should not be performed by those who meditate on the Imperishable and who see no distinction [between the Lord and the Self]. Likewise, He teaches that meditation on the Imperishable should not be performed by the karmayogins. Having declared, in the verse "They attain Me" [12.4], that those who meditate on the Imperishable are independent in the attainment of liberation, [the Lord] has shown that the others [the bhaktas] are dependent on another, dependent on the Lord, in the verse "I am their deliverer" [12.7]. If the latter were considered to be the very Self of the Lord [like the former] because of the cognition of non-distinction, they would in fact be the Imperishable, so the mention of deliverance in regard to them would be inappropriate. Because the Blessed Lord is exceedingly desirous of Arjuna's well-being, He recommends to him only the yoga of action which is based on the cognition of distinction and unconnected with right knowledge. No one, having definitively known himself to be the Lord, would wish to become subordinate to anyone, because this would be a contradiction [of that knowledge].⁹⁴

It is not surprising that this interesting paragraph is invariably overlooked by those who wish to portray Śaṅkara

as a teacher and practitioner of bhakti. Its implications, however, are important and are worth drawing out at some length.

First, this passage confirms beyond question something that has already been suggested, namely, that Śaṅkara makes no clear distinction between the paths of action and devotion. Rather, he lumps them both together as one yoga, referred to in the singular, which consists of concentrating the mind on God and offering one's actions to him, and which stands over against the discipline of knowledge as an entirely separate path. Despite the fact that this chapter deals explicitly with devotion to Kṛṣṇa, and indeed is entitled "Bhaktiyoga" in its colophon, Śaṅkara has no problem in referring to the discipline in question as karmayoga. In his mind, then, there are two paths, action-devotion and knowledge, for which different types of persons are eligible.

Second, the paragraph clearly states the presuppositions of these two disciplines. Action-devotion is based on the assumption that the Lord and the Self are distinct (ātmeśvarabhedam āśritya, bhedadṛṣṭimantam). It is the effect of ignorance (ajñānakārya) and is unconnected with right knowledge (samyagdarsānānavitam). Further, it involves dependence upon an outside power (pāratantryam), the Lord, for salvation or deliverance. The path of

knowledge, on the other hand, is founded upon the idea of the identity of the Lord and the Self, i.e., true knowledge, and its followers are therefore not dependent upon the Lord for liberation, as if He were some external being other than their very Self.⁹⁵

Third, it becomes readily apparent in this passage that the mutually contradictory nature of the presuppositions of these two paths is the reason why persons are restricted to one or the other. The paths, however, are obviously not of equal value. Śaṅkara again makes it clear that he regards Arjuna as a middling aspirant, eligible only for the lower, purificatory path of action-devotion, but not for the direct path of knowledge. Arjuna and others like him may fancy taking to the latter, higher way, but they are not sufficiently prepared. On the other hand, the pure soul who is eligible for knowledge, whose being is gripped by the truth "I am Brahman,"⁹⁶ will find the idea of descending to the level of action or devotion--and thus becoming involved in duality, ignorance, and dependence--to be abhorrent.⁹⁷ Like it or not, and with apologies to lovers of the Bhaja Govindam, this is what Śaṅkara is saying, almost in so many words: Devotion, conceived dualistically with the distinction of God and soul, is a product of spiritual ignorance suitable only for the lesser aspirants.

In this connection, it is worthwhile noting that in most of his writing Śaṅkara neglects to observe the tradition of invoking the blessings of a diety at the beginning or end, or both, of a philosophical work.⁹⁸ As a possible reason for this, Hacker points out a statement in Śaṅkara's commentary on the Kena Upaniṣad: "He who, having been lead to Brahman, is consecrated to sovereignty does not wish to bow to anybody."⁹⁹ An idea such as this is in perfect accord with the sentiments expressed in the passage of the SGB just quoted.

2.5.9 The Gītā Interpreted for the Jñānin

The difficulty for Śaṅkara in his commentary on the BG is of course the fact that the text frequently extols bhakti and taking refuge in the personal God as if they constituted an independent path to liberation. Consider, for example, the following:

Whoever serves Me with unwavering discipline of devotion, he, having gone beyond the material qualities, is fit for becoming Brahman.

14.26¹⁰⁰

By devotion he knows Me truly, how great I am and who. Then, having known Me truly, he enters into Me forthwith.

18.55¹⁰¹

Śaṅkara, now more obviously than ever writing to recommend the path of knowledge and renunciation, handles these verses

by referring the reader back to 7.16-18, where it is taught that there are four types of devotees: the afflicted (who seeks relief), the seeker of material well-being, the seeker of knowledge, and the possessor of knowledge (jñānin). The supreme bhakti which is the subject of the verses quoted above belongs only to the last of these, the jñānin, but this highest level of devotion is actually "the same as knowledge"¹⁰² or "of the nature of discriminative knowledge."¹⁰³ Śaṅkara writes:

The supreme culmination of knowledge is a steady knowledge of the oneness of the individual conscious self and the Supreme Self in the form of a firm conviction based on personal experience. It is generated by the teachings of the scriptures and the preceptor, in conjunction with the various factors that aid in the arising and maturation of knowledge such as purity of mind, humility, etc., and is accompanied by the renunciation of all works based on notions of difference, notions such as agency and the other elements of action. This same culmination of knowledge is what is declared [at 7.17] to be the fourth, highest kind of devotion in comparison with other types such as that of the afflicted person. By that supreme devotion, he knows the Blessed Lord truly, immediately after which the idea of difference between the individual conscious self and the Lord ceases completely. Therefore, the declaration "He knows Me by devotion," when devotion is defined as the culmination of knowledge, involves no contradiction.¹⁰⁴

In this way, Śaṅkara handles certain verses of the Gītā which are embarrassing for his position by simply identifying the bhakti so highly extolled in them with jñāna. The Gītā's supreme devotion, then, is nothing but the supreme knowledge that is attained by the renunciate Advaitin.¹⁰⁵

This dubious exegesis is extended to Śaṅkara's discussion of devotional surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Gītā 18.66 is hailed by devotionalists as the "final verse" (caramaśloka). It is said to contain the scripture's highest teaching, total surrender to God: "Resort to Me alone as your sole refuge."¹⁰⁶ But Śaṅkara's comments again reduce the spirituality of bhakti to a cognitive discipline:

"Resort to Me alone," the Self of all, abiding alike in all beings, the imperishable Lord, free from conception, birth, old age, and death, with the idea that I alone am the "sole refuge." The meaning is, "Know that there is nothing other than Me."¹⁰⁷

2.6 Social Dimensions

It is necessary to emphasize that Śaṅkara's thinking on bhakti cannot be understood without taking into account his strict hierarchical conceptualization of the spiritual life. There are two mutually incompatible paths, each based upon contradictory assumptions and suited to different types of persons. One way is for the "enlightened," the other for the "unenlightened."¹⁰⁸ Śaṅkara makes this point repeatedly, but perhaps most clearly in the following passage:

The discipline of works is the means to the attainment of the goal of life [mokṣa] only by virtue of being the cause of the attainment of the discipline of knowledge, not independently. But the discipline of knowledge, which is attained by the discipline of works, is the means to the goal of life independently, without relying on anything else.¹⁰⁹

An important social dimension comes into play here. In opposition to the Mīmāṃsaka's exaltation of the householder's life-stage as the foundation of the true religious life, Śaṅkara asserts, not only that saṃnyāsa is a valid path, but that it is essential for the practice of the discipline of knowledge which leads to mokṣa. "All the Upaniṣads," he says, "as well as the Epics, the Purāṇas, and the texts on Yoga, prescribe for the seeker of mokṣa the renunciation of all works as an accessory to knowledge."¹¹⁰ Renunciation is necessary because, as we have seen, the path of knowledge requires a quiet life in which thought is directed in ways that are contrary to the common-sense construction of reality, and also "because mokṣa," its goal, "is the state of dwelling in the actionless nature of the inner Self."¹¹¹ Śaṅkara continues:

It is not possible for one desiring to go to the eastern ocean to be on the same road as one intending to go to the western ocean, because it is in the opposite direction. . . . This [discipline of knowledge] is contradicted by being conjoined with action, like going to the western ocean. Well-informed persons hold the difference [between knowledge and action] to be like that between a mountain and a mustard seed.¹¹²

His conclusion is: "Therefore, the discipline of knowledge is to be undertaken only through the renunciation of all action."¹¹³

Śaṅkara also mentions a more legalistic reason for limiting the discipline of knowledge to the saṃnyāsins, namely that only they can avoid the sin of omitting the performance of prescribed rituals:

The term "brahmasamstha" denotes fulfillment in Brahman, a state of being grounded in Brahman to the exclusion of all other activity. Now such a state is impossible for persons belonging to the three former āśramas [students, householders, and retirees], as scripture declares that they suffer loss through the non-performance of the works enjoined on their āśrama. The mendicant, on the other hand, who has discarded all works can suffer no loss owing to non-performance. Such duties as are incumbent upon him, viz. restraint of the senses and the like, are not opposed to the state of being grounded in Brahman, but rather helpful to it.¹¹⁴

The social aspect of Śaṅkara's thought becomes even more significant religiously when we realize that he, like many classical Hindu authorities, believed that only male Brahmins were eligible for saṁnyāsa.¹¹⁵ Hence, Arjuna's ineligibility for the path of knowledge was based on more than individual considerations of temperament, level of psycho-spiritual maturity, and so on. He was a Kṣatriya, and according to Śaṅkara--and, again, many other orthodox authorities--members of that caste are not eligible for renunciation:

Even though engaged in a battle which was his duty as a Kṣatriya, he [Arjuna], with his understanding and discrimination overcome by grief and delusion, of himself quit that battle and undertook the duty of another, namely, the life of a mendicant. In this way, abandoning one's own duty and taking to what is prohibited is natural to all beings whose minds are afflicted by faults such as grief and delusion.¹¹⁶

A little thought about this limitation and a serious conclusion becomes all too apparent: If mokṣa is attained only by knowledge, and only saṁnyāsins are eligible for knowledge, and only male Brahmins are qualified for

saṃnyāsa, then only male Brahmins can attain mokṣa. Now, to my knowledge Śaṅkara never says this in so many words,¹¹⁷ and the conclusion must be modified to indicate that the restriction does not apply to kramamukti, the "gradual" liberation through rebirth in brahmaloka described above. Moreover, Śaṅkara does concede that there may be some exceptions to this rule.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless the implication is clear. Liberation¹¹⁹ is available directly only to male Brahmins who have, through renunciation, taken to the path of knowledge. Others, including devotees of the personal God, have two options. One is to be satisfied with kramamukti and a wait of countless thousands of years until the current world-cycle comes to an end. The other is to hope for rebirth as a male Brahmin.

2.7 Advaita Exclusivism and the Ethos of Bhakti

This elitism on the social level results from the combination of two factors: first, the notion that there are two separate spiritual paths, each having different qualifications, and second, the hierarchical thinking that underlies the Hindu theory of caste. From the point of view of the tradition itself, of course, this exclusivism is benevolently intended. If every one were intensely seeking liberation, the Advaitin might say, the energy which keeps the world in motion would surely begin to run down. What

would happen to society if more than a small minority took to the path of knowledge? Even if it were socially workable, the radical liminality imposed by renunciation and non-dualistic modes of thought would be psychologically disastrous for most. To be sure, the true Śaṅkara Advaitin does not, and cannot, accept the validity of devotion for himself, because it contradicts the basic assumptions of his discipline. But he recognizes that it is good for others, those whose minds are more encumbered with worldly desires and distinctions, i.e., less "pure," than his. Indeed, for the sake of setting an example to others and encouraging them in their path, the jñānin may willingly fulfill certain outward religious observances associated with bhakti. He knows that, through their devotion, the less qualified aspirants will eventually attain fitness for knowledge and, at last, mokṣa.¹²⁰

However profound the insight into human nature and however good the intentions that may be assumed (for purposes of understanding) to underlie it, this aristocratic mentality is absolutely opposed to the egalitarian spirit of the later bhakti movements. The devotionalists, we shall soon discover, tend to disparage knowledge and to downplay the importance of mokṣa as a goal of spiritual striving. This attitude may well be related to the Advaitins' exclusivism, as if to say, "Since mokṣa is so restricted,

who needs it?"¹²¹ We shall see, in any event, that much of what Madhusūdana writes about bhakti is influenced by this liberal outlook of the devotional movements. The BR especially seems to be aimed at opening up the Advaita to a wider variety of spiritual options for a wider range of aspirants.

CHAPTER THREE

BHAKTI AND ADVAITA IN THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA

3.1 Introduction: The Scripture of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BP), we come in contact with a spirituality that is in many respects radically different from that of Śaṅkara and his followers. This divergence owes much to the fact that this text drew its primary inspiration, not from the Upaniṣads, but rather from the ecstatic devotionalism of the Ālvārs, of whose distinctive religious ethos it was the first expression in Sanskrit.¹ These popular poet-saints, who between the sixth and ninth centuries were the center of a flourishing Vaiṣṇava revival in the Tamil-speaking South,² emphasized theism and taught salvation through a fervent and intensely personal love of the deity. The social practice of the Ālvārs was democratic: indeed they themselves came from all levels of society and included several women in their number.

Composed in the ninth or early tenth century,³ the BP attained wide popularity and became the scriptural basis of all subsequent expressions of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti in North India.⁴ It was the inspiration and catalyst of a vast

outpouring of devotional sentiment and religious activity, affecting not only the educated classes, but also the humblest peasants, through the influence it had on the popular hymns of such poet-saints as Caṇḍīdās and Vidyāpati (fifteenth century), Mīrā Bāī and Sūrdās (sixteenth century). Although the theologian Ramānuja (eleventh century), whose brand of bhakti was more contemplative than emotional, made no reference to the BP, it was important to Madhva (thirteenth century), who wrote a commentary on it called the Bhāgavatatātparya.⁵ For Vallabha (1481-1533) and the Gosvāmins of the Caitanya school (sixteenth century), it assumed paramount importance as the scriptural fountainhead of their Kṛṣṇa-centered systems of theology and spirituality. The Gosvāmins held it in such esteem that they proclaimed it to be the sage Vyāsa's own commentary on his Brahmasūtras, in this way asserting the purāṇa's status as an authentic basis for theology.⁶ Madhusūdana, it seems, considered the Bhāgavata to be the ultimate authority on devotional matters. As we shall see, he quotes profusely from it in the BR.

Like the poetry of the Ālvārs,⁷ the religion of the BP focuses on the story of Kṛṣṇa's youth and dalliance with the cowherd girls, the gopīs, as recounted in the tenth book of the purāṇa, the Kṛṣṇacarita. Thematically most important in this connection are the ravishing beauty of Kṛṣṇa and the

intense, overpowering love which it inspired in the women of Vṛndāvana, the rustic community in which the divine child grew up. The author of the purāṇa is entranced by, and seeks to portray in the Kṛṣṇa story, not God's awesome majesty and power (aiśvarya) as Lord of creation, but his irresistibly sweet attractiveness (mādhurya), made manifest to humankind in the form of a beautiful cowherd youth.

The captivating appearance of the young Kṛṣṇa, the sublime seductiveness of the call of his flute, and the idyllic setting of the forests of Vṛndāvana are conveyed in language that is richly evocative, so much so that the work has been hailed by as eminent a scholar as D. H. H. Ingalls as "the most enchanting poem ever written."⁸ I cannot pretend here to adequately illustrate this aspect of the text. Suffice it to say that Kṛṣṇa is described as the infinite bliss of Brahman concentrated in a small but divinely attractive human form:

Wonderful and indeed marvelous is the fortune of the people of Nanda's Vraja [Vṛndāvana], for the Supreme Bliss, the eternal Brahman in Its fullness, has become their friend!⁹

The gopīs tell Brahmā, the creator, "We saw the entire splendor of your creation [manifested] in one point--Kṛṣṇa"; gazing at the Lord and his brother, Balarāma, they sigh: "This is the reward of all who have eyes; we know of no higher."¹⁰ Indeed, the beauty of the child-avatāra is such that it mesmerizes the whole cosmos.¹¹ Kṛṣṇa is the

"stealer of minds" (cittacora), the one whose charm bewilders even Cupid (madanamohana). Needless to say, the cowherd girls fall madly in love with him, and the story of their bhakti, which is so overpowering as to cause them to forget all consideration of social propriety, is the heart of the purāna. Their relationship with Kṛṣṇa comes to be regarded as the paradigmatic expression of the highest form of total self-abandonment in devotion to God.

3.2 Devotion as the Supreme Path and One Goal

The BP teaches the supremacy of bhakti over all other paths, regarding it as an independent and self-sufficient discipline, indeed as the "highest religion."¹² In this connection, the text introduces three especially distinctive ideas: (1) that bhakti itself is the highest bliss and, as such, the sole goal of the true devotee, (2) that the true devotee does not seek moksa, which is a lesser joy, though the Lord may grant it to him or her if he sees fit, and (3) that, while bhaktas show no interest in moksa, even ascetics who have attained the state of liberation-in-life are attracted to, and practice, devotion.

The ultimacy of bhakti is expressed, for example, at

8.3.20:

One-pointed devotees who have surrendered to the Blessed Lord desire no other boon from Him. Immersed in an ocean of bliss, they sing of His extraordinary and auspicious deeds.¹³

While thus extolling devotion, the purāṇa tends to devalue the traditional goals of knowledge and liberation. Again and again we hear that these are not sought by the genuine bhakta, who wants only the bliss of loving service to the Lord.¹⁴ At 10.14.4, for example, it is said:

For those, O Lord, who abandon bhakti, the fountain of highest blessing, and strive for the acquisition of knowledge only, that [quest for knowledge] becomes nothing more than strenuous exertion, like the pounding of coarse [but empty] husks.¹⁵

Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava at 11.20.34:

My saintly, wise, and one-pointed devotees desire nothing, not even liberation (kaivalya) and freedom from rebirth.¹⁶

And at 12.10.6 we read:

This Brahmin-sage, O Goddess, having obtained supreme devotion to the eternal Person, desires no other boon at all, not even liberation (mokṣa).¹⁷

At least three verses in the purāṇa repeat the phrase "neither yogic powers nor freedom from rebirth,"¹⁸ including these well-known goals of Yoga and Vedānta in lists of blessings that, in comparison with the joy of the bhakti, hold no attraction for the devotee. Numerous other passages expressing the same attitude toward mokṣa could be cited. With a consistency perhaps surprising to readers taught to regard liberation as the highest goal of Hindu spirituality, the BP (and later, the entire devotional tradition that is dependent upon it) presents the attainment of that state as incidental to the bhakta's primary quest.

The Lord may grant it, or he may not; the devotee is indifferent.¹⁹

No sensitive person, however, can be indifferent to the glory of bhakti. It is so great that it is sought and savored even by saints who have realized the ātman, the ultimate goal of the path of knowledge. At 1.7.10, a verse frequently quoted by devotional writers, it is said:

Sages who delight in the Self, who are free of the knots [of ignorance], practice selfless devotion to the Wide-strider [Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa], such are the qualities of Hari!²⁰

Elsewhere, a similar vision is expressed:

Sages who have gone beyond [the] injunctions and prohibitions [of scripture] and are established in the attributeless Absolute, O King, universally delight in discoursing on the glories of Hari.²¹

We may understand this exaltation of bhakti above mokṣa as, at least in part, the devotionalist's response to the Śaṅkara tradition's restriction of mokṣa to the elite few. The orthodox Smārta renunciates may have their liberation, the text seems to be saying, but we have something better, without which even their Brahman-knowledge is manifestly incomplete.

For Śaṅkara, of course, these teachings emphasizing the value of bhakti as an end in itself would have been unacceptable. Knowledge and liberation are always the highest goals for the orthodox Advaita, and when they are attained, all trace of duality disappears.

3.3 Devotion as Practice and Devotion as Goal

The Bhāgavata defines bhakti formally in two ways. On one hand, it is said to be a mental state; specifically, one of loving concentration on God. This idea is put forward at 3.29.11-12, as follows:

The uninterrupted flow of the mind toward Me who am seated in the hearts of all, which arises from the mere hearing of My glories and is like the flow of the waters of the Ganges toward the ocean--this is declared to be the definition of the unqualified yoga of devotion.²²

Except, of course, for the nature of the object specified here, the understanding of bhakti that is given is strikingly similar to Śaṅkara's notion of upāsana. What might be called an essential definition, this description of bhakti as a particular mental state will be analyzed more closely in chapter five when we look at the explanation of devotion given by Madhusūdana in the BR.

In another place, the Bhāgavata provides the rough equivalent of an operational definition of bhakti, describing it as a "nine-fold" (navadhā) discipline consisting of such practices as hearing from the scriptures of the Lord's glories, singing His name, worship, prostration, self-surrender, and so on.²³ Accepted by all Kṛṣṇaite schools, this formula specifies what must be done to experience devotion. The text of the purāna contains descriptions of many devotional practices that in fact correspond to those in this list of nine, and it frequently speaks of them as bhakti or bhaktiyoga.²⁴

How are these two ideas of bhakti related? The Bhāgavata itself suggests that the "nine-fold" devotion of practice is the means to cultivate the higher bhakti which is the final goal.²⁵ We thus have, at least implicitly, the distinction between devotion as means (sādhanabhakti) and devotion as end (phala- or sādhya-bhakti) that is formulated explicitly in various ways by the later bhakti theoreticians, beginning with Śāṅḍilya (tenth century) in his Bhaktisūtras.²⁶

3.4 Ecstatic Devotion

Neither of the definitions given above, however, fully captures what is distinctive in the devotional mood of the BP. It is therefore necessary to emphasize the extent to which the bhakti of this purāna is different from the forms of devotion that found expression in earlier texts of the Sanskrit tradition, for example, in the Gītā. If the language of the BP is rich and sensual in comparison with that of Kṛṣṇa's dialogue with Arjuna, so is the devotion that it expounds.

That the Bhāgavata regards itself as something of a new gospel is suggested by its own explanation of its origins. Early in book one we find the story of the discontent of Vyāsa, who is traditionally regarded as the author of the purāna. Though he was a knower of Brahman and

had successfully completed the gigantic task of editing the endless Veda into four collections suitable to the limited intellects of men of the kali-yuga, though he had composed the huge epic the Mahābhārata, including the precious Gītā, and had distilled the essence of the entire wisdom of the Upaniṣads in aphoristic form in the Brahmasūtras, still this great sage was dissatisfied. His spiritual malaise, we are told, was not removed until he had sung the glory of fervent devotion to the Lord in the verses of the BP.²⁷

The appearance of a novel conception of devotion in this text was mentioned as early as 1920 by Farquhar, who declared: "What distinguishes it [the BP] from all other literature is its new theory of bhakti."²⁸ This fact has been recognized and studied by Gonda, Hacker, and most recently Hardy.²⁹ In the terminology which I proposed in chapter one, the new approach involves a shift from a "contemplative" style of devotion to one easily recognizable as "ecstatic." Gonda writes:

Particularly in the life of the young herdsman god Kṛṣṇa a theory and practice of bhakti is developed in a very emotional and sensual poetry, which differs in its passion and its emotionalism from the more speculative descriptions of the earlier texts. Bhakti is here an overpowering, even suffocating emotion, which causes tears to flow and the voice to falter, and even, [sic] stimulates hysterical laughter, loss of consciousness, and trance.³⁰

When set beside the bhakti of this purāṇa, that of the Gītā seems subdued indeed. There is nothing in the latter text

to compare, for instance, with what Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava at BP 11.14.23-24:

Without bristling of the body-hair, without melting of the mind, without tears of joy, without bhakti, how can the heart become pure? [But] one whose voice is choked with emotion, whose mind melts, who weeps incessantly and sometimes laughs, who sings shamelessly and dances-- one who is thus full of devotion to Me purifies the [whole] world.³¹

Other examples could be adduced by the dozen. Since, however, the characteristics of ecstatic bhakti will be amply illustrated by the citations from the Bhāgavata which appear in chapter one of the BR,³² there is no need to dilate on them here.

As we have already suggested, the distinctive emotional tone of the BP has its roots in the spirituality of the Ālvārs. This conclusion, long assumed by scholars, has recently been irrefutably demonstrated by Hardy, through painstaking literary analysis. In his discussion, Hardy emphasizes the importance to ecstatic bhakti of the theme, prominent in the gopī story, of the intensified emotion of love-in-separation (viraha).³³ The BP describes the gopīs as experiencing the absence of their beloved in several ways. Kṛṣṇa leaves the village daily to take the cows to pasture. While he is gone, the cowherd women dwell on him in their hearts, in thought, in conversation, and in song. Sometimes they hear his flute in the distance, and are filled with longing.³⁴ On one occasion, Kṛṣṇa conceals

himself from the gopīs to humble their pride at having won his favor: this causes them to experience intense anguish.³⁵ The final viraha occurs when Kṛṣṇa leaves Vṛndāvana for Mathurā, never to return. In songs that are adaptations of Ālvār poems, the gopīs express the excruciating love-agony of separation from the physical presence of the all-attractive bhagavat, and while they despair at not seeing their Lord, their bhakti reaches new heights of intensity.³⁶

The shift from contemplative to ecstatic bhakti, as I suggested in chapter one, does not change the structure of our key problem, the tension between devotional spirituality and Advaita. If anything, it serves to highlight it. To see this, one need only picture the contrast between the austere Śaṅkara saṁnyāsin, intent and vigilant in his discrimination between the "eternal" and the "non-eternal" (or absorbed in the tranquility of eternal union with Brahman), and the inconsolable gopī, lost in a frenzy of anguish at her separation from the maddeningly beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa. One might well ask if there is any possibility at all of a rapprochement between these two visions of the spiritual life.

3.5 Metaphysical Non-dualism

This question is made more pressing by the fact that the BP itself juxtaposes its ecstatic gopī-bhakti with,

unlikely as it may seem, an Advaitic metaphysic. This has been recognized by, among others, Dasgupta, Hacker, and Hardy.³⁷ According to the latter:

In general terms it is quite clear that by the eight century Hinduism had developed its new ideological identity with the pūrva- and uttara-mīmāṃsā. For the next few centuries, Vedānta means advaita, and it is predictable that the BhP, trying to reconcile bhakti with brahmin orthodoxy, adopts an advaita position. This distinguishes it from the ViP [Viṣṇu Purāṇa], which otherwise was its major source in the Sanskrit purāṇic tradition.³⁸

The non-dualism of the BP is perhaps most striking at 11.13, a section known as the Haṃsagītā.³⁹ Here the Lord teaches that there is only one ātman, with which he identifies himself.⁴⁰ Then, in a passage that Madhusūdana quotes in the BR,⁴¹ Kṛṣṇa states that the notion of multiplicity is false like a dream and that the world is superimposed on him by māyā. The discourse continues:

One should regard this world as a delusion (vibhrama), a play of the mind, subject to perception, [yet] transient and extremely unstable [like the circle created by a whirling] firebrand. Consciousness is one but appears as if manifold; the diversity produced by the three-fold manifestation of the material qualities is an illusion (māyā), a dream. Having turned one's vision away from that, having abandoned all desire, one should become silent, enjoying the innate bliss [of the Self], free from anxious exertion. If sometimes that which one has renounced with the idea that it is unreal should be seen, one should not be lead into error, [knowing that its] memory will last [only] until the falling away of the body.⁴²

Commenting on this passage, Dasgupta remarks: "It may generally appear rather surprising to find such an extreme idealistic monism in the Bhāgavata, but there are numerous

passages which show that an extreme form of idealism recurs now and then as one of the principal lines of thought in the Bhāgavata."⁴³

I have already referred to Hacker's study of the religious background of Śaṅkara and his early followers. In addition to showing that these early Advaitins grew up in a Vaiṣṇava environment, this writer suggests that other Vaiṣṇava groups were cultivating a "radical advaitism" at a fairly early date. He refers to certain texts which are overtly Vaiṣṇava yet simultaneously teach a non-dualist metaphysic, especially the Paramārthasāra of Ādiśeṣa, which he places to the sixth century A.D.⁴⁴ The first verse of this text reads as follows:

I resort for refuge to you alone, Viṣṇu, who transcend the highest form of prakṛti, who are without beginning; though One, you abide in manifold caves of illusion, you the abode of the All, present in all that moves and does not move.⁴⁵

Given this evidence of non-dualistic thinking in early Vaiṣṇava circles, the Advaitic passages in the BP, which Hacker notes "may date from a time not far distant from Śaṅkara's lifetime,"⁴⁶ are less perplexing than they might at first appear.

The purāna does not confine its monistic language to its philosophical portions. In fact, it goes so far as to include the relation between the gopīs and their beloved Kṛṣṇa within the scope of its non-dualist vision. We read

more than once, for example, that the cowherd women attain tanmayatā ("the state of consisting of Him," i.e., "identity with Him")⁴⁷ and that they are tadātmika ("having Him as their Self").⁴⁸ Indeed, the cultivation of the mood of aikya ("oneness") with Kṛṣṇa is included, along with erotic desire and affection, in a list of attitudes that are capable of leading to union (tanmayatā) with the deity.⁴⁹

At 10.30.3 we find the gopīs engaged in an exercise in identification with Kṛṣṇa together with a play on the mahāvākya "I am Brahman":

The affectionate women imitated their beloved's gait, smile, affectionate glances, and speech. Mimicking the playful pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, they became one with Him [tadātmikā], proclaiming: "I am He!"⁵⁰

Any idea that this identification is intended to be solely on the dramatic or the emotional level can be removed by turning to the message Kṛṣṇa sent to the distraught gopīs after he had left them and gone to Mathurā:

You can never, honored ladies, be separated from Me, since I am the Self of all (sarvātmanā). Just as the elements ether, air, fire, water and earth are in all creatures, so I am the support of mind, breath, the elements, the sense organs, and all material qualities. In Myself, by Myself, I create, preserve, and destroy Myself [as the universe] by the power of My māyā which consists of the elements, the senses, and the material qualities.⁵¹

This implies that the gopī, in a metaphysical sense, is always united with her beloved: first, of course, on the level of spirit or ātman, but also psychically and even, despite the apparent state of viraha, physically. If the

universe and everything in it is nothing but an expression of Kṛṣṇa through His māyā, then the entire being of gopī--body and mind as well as ātman--is constantly one with Him, and the sense of separation from God is nothing more than a superficial reading of the situation. Ultimately, as even the Gosvāmins of the Caitanya school recognize, the whole divine drama being enacted in Vṛndāvana is but a multi-leveled sport (līlā) in which the Lord himself plays all the parts, appearing by his mysterious power in various forms, including those of the gopīs.⁵²

Śrīdhara Svāmin (thirteenth century), the early and perhaps greatest commentator on the BP, recognized and championed its non-dualistic tendencies.⁵³ Nevertheless, in introducing a work such as the BR, which attempts to integrate the bhakti of the BP and Advaita, they must be emphasized anew, because they were (I think it is fair to say) ignored or glossed over by later Vaiṣṇava commentators. These writers, although they regarded the work highly and did much to popularize it, were for the most part, like Rāmānuja and Madhva, extremely hostile toward Advaita.⁵⁴

The conflict between devotion and non-dualism remains one of the key internal tensions of the BP. In this sense, the text functions as a microcosm of the whole Hindu tradition. I cannot here enter into the lengthy task of determining to what extent or by what means the purāṇa is

successful in resolving this conflict. Hardy for one thinks that the resolution is not even attempted.⁵⁵ The important point is that the tension undeniably does exist even here where one might least expect it, in this the scriptural heart of ecstatic devotionism.

That the text has Advaitic tendencies, of course, does not mean that it teaches the systematic and rigorously conceived non-dualism of Śaṅkara and his followers. A purāṇa is primarily a mythic-devotional narrative, and, given this genre, such philosophical precision would not have been possible or desirable. Taken as a whole, the Bhāgavata seems to suggest a type of theistic advaita, one that is willing--perhaps naively, perhaps not--to maintain a tension between the impersonal Reality of metaphysics and the personal God of devotion. Not feeling compelled to collapse one into the other, or elevate one above the other, the text seems to delight in the mystery of an unsystematically conceived ultimate that is both personal and impersonal.⁵⁶

3.6 Social Teaching

The social ethos of Ālvār religion, as indicated above, was decidedly egalitarian. This trend is continued in the BP, which, though it accepts the ideal of the four varṇas, tends to be critical of what it perceives as the

narrow-mindedness, exclusivity, and--sometimes--hypocrisy of the religious establishment. While the simple cowherds of Vraja accepted Kṛṣṇa joyfully and without question, the Brahmins at first turned away from him:

Having thus heard the Blessed Lord's request, those [Brahmins] of petty hopes and pompous ritual, fools whose conceit was great, did not listen.

Because they saw [Him as a mere] human, those ignorant mortals did not honor the Blessed Lord Adhokṣaja, that highest Brahman in person.⁵⁷

The status of a bhakta is determined, not by his or her caste standing or sex, but by the moral qualities and devotion he or she displays. This is made clear by the fact that Sūta, the narrator of the purāṇa is born of a mixed caste despised by the orthodox elite,⁵⁸ and Nārada, the great teacher of bhakti, appears as the son of a Śūdra servant-maid.⁵⁹ The gopīs, of course, are women as well as being of low caste. Despite this, they are recognized as peerless models of the highest kind of devotion. According to Akrūra, a learned minister of the Vṛṣṇis and a close companion of Kṛṣṇa:

These young wives of the cowherds, alone among embodied creatures on earth, have attained the ecstatic love [bhāva] for Govinda, the Self of all, which is the supreme [goal] desired by sages who fear the ocean of mundane existence, and by ourselves as well. For one who has acquired a taste for the stories of Hari, what is the use of [even repeated] births as a Brahmin? . . .

I shall always worship the dust of the feet of these women of Nanda's Vraja, whose singing of the glories of Hari purifies the three worlds.⁶⁰

The stereotype of a Hindu religion totally dominated by a male, Brahmin aristocracy disregards the democratic spirit of the medieval bhakti movements, of which the BP is perhaps the most important expression. The text teaches salvation through loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, available not only to "women and Śūdras," to use the standard formula,⁶¹ but also to untouchable Śvapacas, Pulkasas, and Antevāsāyins.⁶² For example:

By hearing and praising Your name, by bowing down to You, or merely by thinking of You, even an eater of dogs [i.e., a pariah] immediately becomes fit [like a Brahmin] for participating in the soma-sacrifice.⁶³

When such attitudes are taken into consideration, it becomes obvious that the BP, unlike the Śaṅkara Vedānta, is not a product of Brahmanical orthodoxy. Hopkins believes that it was written by a group of ascetics who dedicated their scholarship to the cause of promoting devotionism. "These ascetics," he writes, "may or may not have been Brahmans; if we consider the Alvārs as legitimate examples, we find a variety of class backgrounds which was probably also characteristic of the Bhāgavata ascetics."⁶⁴

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was deeply influenced by the religion of the BP. In the BR, as we shall see, he tries to explicate its devotional spirituality in terms of his strict philosophical non-dualism. The illusionistic metaphysic of the text of course presents him with relatively little difficulty. It is the purāṇa's elevation of ecstatic bhakti

to the status of the highest spiritual goal, along with its egalitarian social teaching, that in the final analysis proves most difficult for him to handle while yet remaining true to the spirit of Advaita as formulated by Śaṅkara.

CHAPTER FOUR

BENGAL VAIṢṆAVA CONCEPT OF BHAKTI

4.1 The Flowering of Ecstatic Bhakti in Bengal

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (1486-1533), the inspiration and historical focus of a great revival of Kṛṣṇa devotionalism in sixteenth century Bengal, was without doubt one of the greatest religious figures of late medieval India. After his death, his movement spread rapidly through much of the North, becoming known, from its point of origin, as the Bengal (Gauḍīya) Vaiṣṇava sampradāya. Caitanya's fervent devotionalism was taken up and formalized in the context of an elaborate theological system by the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, whom he may have appointed to the task. The most important of these writers were Rūpa (fl. 1533-1550)¹ and his nephew Jīva (1511-1596).² Retaining a considerable amount of vitality today, the sect has recently gained a world-wide following through the efforts of the late A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

The intensely emotional bhakti evinced by Caitanya continued the spirit of ecstatic devotion that had been so vividly portrayed in the BP through such figures as Prahlāda

and the gopīs. Indeed, his religiosity was so intense in expression that it may be said to have extended the Kṛṣṇaite devotional ethos of the purāṇa to new heights of emotionalism. Toward the end of his life Caitanya was almost constantly immersed in the mood of the gopī Rādhā's anguished separation from her beloved.³ In this condition, it is said, he experienced the highest conceivable levels of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, states previously attained only by Rādhā herself. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, his biographer, describes Caitanya's ecstasy as follows:

Different emotions arose in him, and agitation caught his heart. He was unable even to groan as dumb people do. Consumed by the fire of loneliness, his self-composure went tossing up and down. . . . [He cried:] "You are my wealth, my life: show yourself to me again!" Paralysed and then shaking, sweating and turning pallid, he wept and uttered indistinct sounds. His body hair stood on end, he laughed, wept, danced about and sang. He jumped up and ran about, the next moment to fall on the ground and lose consciousness.⁴

The Gosvāmins provided a theoretical framework for interpreting this style of bhakti, utilizing material derived primarily from the Bhāgavata, Viṣṇu, and Padma Purāṇas, the Pāñcarātra literature, and Sanskrit Poetics (alankāraśāstra).⁵ The BP was the most important of these sources. It was Caitanya's favorite text, and his followers, as we have seen, came to regard it as their highest scriptural authority.⁶ For the most part, the Gosvāmins were faithful to the devotional spirit of the

Bhāgavata. They cherished the kind of devotional ecstasy displayed in the work, and totally accepted its valuation of bhakti as the highest of all spiritual attainments, its consequent devaluation of mokṣa, its adoption of Kṛṣṇa as the central object of devotion, and, to a great extent, its egalitarian social ethic.

What did not appeal to them, however, was the BP's Advaitic tendencies. Indeed, the Bengal school after Caitanya historically maintained, and continues to maintain, an attitude of hostility toward Advaita. This is understandable considering that the Gosvāmins and especially Baladeva, an important eighteenth century writer of the sect, were well-trained in traditional Vaiṣṇava theology, which of course was committed to the view that non-dualistic thought is totally opposed to devotional spirituality.⁷

4.2 Caitanya and Śrīdhara

Although he was the founding figure of a great religious movement, Caitanya left no written teachings, with the possible exception of eight verses known collectively as the Śikṣāṣṭaka. These stanzas, however, contain no material of a doctrinal nature.⁸ While his biographers show him giving lengthy instructions to the Gosvāmins on philosophical matters, the fact is that the theological discourses attributed to him consist almost entirely of

direct quotations or summaries of passages from the works of the Gosvāmins themselves.⁹ For this reason, it is difficult to say anything positive about the metaphysical outlook of this great figure. It is worthy of note, however, that there is evidence that, even though he was a Vaiṣṇava by birth and inclination, Caitanya may have had a sympathy for Advaitic thinking that was not shared by his followers. A detailed discussion of this question is here neither possible nor appropriate.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is worth treating briefly, for it points to the possibility of a continuing historical connection between bhakti and Advaita in an area where such might appear unlikely.

Caitanya, it seems, had a great reverence for Śrīdhara Svāmin, a saṁnyāsin of the Advaitic Purī order who, as we have seen, wrote the Bhāvārthadīpikā, without question the single most highly regarded commentary on the BP.¹¹ Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja describes a meeting between Caitanya and the Vaiṣṇava philosopher Vallabha (1481-1533), during which the former soundly reprimanded the latter for his audacity in composing the Subodhinī, an independent commentary on the purāṇa that was critical of the author of the Bhāvārtha-dīpikā:

You have the vanity to write your own commentary without showing respect to Śrīdhara, and have even criticized him! It is by the grace of Śrīdhara that I have understood the Bhāgavata. He is a world teacher; I consider him to be my very own guru. Whatever you have written out of pride against Śrīdhara is wasted effort; no one will accept it. Give up your false pride and

follow Śrīdhara in your commentary. Whatever you write in accordance with Śrīdhara will be honored accepted by all.¹²

The authenticity of the sentiments expressed here, and perhaps also of the incident itself, is supported by the fact that they tend to contradict the school's anti-Advaitic stance and therefore would not have been included were they not a genuine memory of the tradition. It is significant, moreover, that all the Gosvāmins who had occasion to deal with material from the BP paid homage to Śrīdhara, even though their interpretations in many cases were different than his.¹³ In this connection, Elkman writes:

It seems likely that Jīva's claims to follow Śrīdhara represent more a concession to Caitanya's beliefs than a personal preference on his part. In actual fact, Jīva follows Śrīdhara on only the most minor points, ignoring all of his Advaitic interpretations on the plea that they are "non-Vaiṣṇava" and were meant merely to entice the Advaitins to study the Bhāgavata¹⁴

Rādhāmohana (eighteenth century), in his commentary on Jīva's Tattvasandarbhā, reports that the Śaṅkara order from a fairly early date was divided into two branches, the Smārtas, who followed the path of knowledge, and the Bhāgavatas, who were interested in bhakti. He notes that Śrīdhara belonged to the latter group.¹⁵ Tradition has it that Śrīdhara's bhakti-oriented commentary on the Gītā caused considerable controversy in the Śaṅkara sampradāya in Banaras, where the orthodox at first wished to reject it. It is said, however, that the commentary was vindicated

through the intervention of Lord Śiva himself.¹⁶ From the time of Śrīdhara, according to De, "a class of mystic-emotional Saṃnyāsins seems to have grown up, who found nothing inconsistent in their practices of Bhakti with their belief in Advaita Vedānta."¹⁷ This tradition emerges into the light of history again in the work of Viṣṇu Purī (fourteenth century), the author of the Bhaktiratnāvalī, an anthology of verses from the BP through which that text first became popular in Bengal. Viṣṇu Purī was a member of the same order of Śaṅkara monks as Śrīdhara. Indeed, in the closing verses of this work he apologizes for any deviation he may have made from the teachings of his illustrious predecessor.¹⁸ The influence of this tradition of devotional Advaita saṃnyāsins seems to have reached Caitanya himself in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, in this case through Iśvara Purī, who was Caitanya's guru, and Mādhavendra Purī, who was the preceptor of Iśvara and therefore Caitanya's paramaguru. Both of these figures were members of Śrīdhara's order. It is possible, therefore, that Caitanya's respect for Śrīdhara was based upon the recognition of a direct spiritual connection between himself and the great commentator, mediated by a lineage of gurus in the Advaitic Purī order.¹⁹

For reasons such as these, De and Elkman believe that Caitanya may have been less hostile to Advaita than his followers made him out to be. On this, De writes:

It is our impression . . . that Caitanya could not have been such an anti-Śaṅkara as depicted by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. The Kavirāja, however, is careless enough to give us a rough idea as to what Caitanya's metaphysics could possibly have been, when he makes Caitanya ridicule Vallabha Bhaṭṭa for differing from Śrīdhara's commentary on the Bhāgavata and say that Śrīdhara was a 'Jagad-Guru' [world-teacher]. . . . Possibly Caitanya was a Śaṅkarite Saṃyāsīn of the Śrīdhara type, although he was far ahead of Śrīdhara in what he understood to be the implications of Bhakti.²⁰

That Rūpa's direct contact with Caitanya was only minimal, and that Jīva most likely had none at all,²¹ may be significant if we take seriously the possibility of some divergence between the views of these theologians and the outlook of the figure tradition regards as their mentor. The fact is that the Gosvāmins, while writing in the name of Caitanya, make little reference to his place in their belief, and none at all to his spiritual experience, his teachings, or to any instruction they may have received from him. Instead, they construct their system on the basis of an elaborate exegesis of previously existing scriptures. "There cannot be any doubt," De writes, "that the devout life of Caitanya inspired these faithful disciples, but in the building up of their systems of theology there is no reference to the life, personality or views of Caitanya himself."²²

Caitanya's higher education appears to have been confined to the study of Sanskrit grammar, in which he became something of a specialist, and it is unlikely that he

studied theology.²³ At any rate it is fairly clear from his biographies that, after his religious conversion and the onset of his devotional ecstasies, he became quite indifferent to systematic philosophizing in any form, be it monistic or dualistic. It is possible that he had, for this very reason--i.e., that he was not troubled by questions of logical consistency--a willingness to accept the philosophical tensions inherent in the theistic non-dualism suggested by significant portions of the BP. This particular sympathy may have been overlooked by his followers in Vṛndāvana, trained as they were in classical Vaiṣṇava theology. Thus Elkman writes:

Though the Bhāgavata embodies a variety of philosophical viewpoints, ~~there~~ can be no question that the doctrine of Advaita represents one of its keynotes, . . . a fact which is clearly seen in the commentary of Śrīdhara. Thus, considering the harsh criticisms which Caitanya leveled at Vallabha for contradicting Śrīdhara's commentary, one may wonder whether Caitanya would have been any more pleased with Jīva's nominal regard for Śrīdhara and his [Jīva's] own original interpretations of the Bhāgavata.²⁴

It must be born in mind, however, that Śrīdhara's teaching was different in important respects from that of Śaṅkara.²⁵ Hence, even if Caitanya acknowledged a spiritual or ideological link with the former and accepted his interpretation of the BP, this would show only a general sympathy for monistic thinking, and not any formal adherence to the metaphysics of orthodox Advaita.

4.3 The Theology of the Gosvāmins

I have already indicated that the Gosvāmins' teachings on bhakti and bhaktirasa may have influenced Madhusūdana and that, even if this cannot be proved, they at least serve as the best example, in fully elaborated scholastic form, of the kind of Kṛṣṇaite devotionism with which he was interacting in the BR. They are therefore worthy of consideration here in some detail. The discussion in the remainder of this chapter will focus on the Gosvāmins' understanding of bhakti in its metaphysical and, secondarily, social dimensions. The theory of bhaktirasa will be considered independently, as promised, in chapter six.

The reader is warned at the outset that the tendency to delight in elaborate analyses, fine distinctions, and often tedious listings of principles, types, stages, and so on, common in Indian scholasticism since the rise of Buddhism, is indulged in to an extreme in the Gosvāmins' writings. This occurs, it seems, under the double influence of the exponents of the highly technical Navyanyāya ("Neologic"), on the one hand, and the analytically-minded theoreticians of Sanskrit poetics, on the other, both groups being well represented in Bengal and the North in the sixteenth century.²⁶ An encounter with a number of such classificatory schemata in our discussion will therefore be unavoidable.

4.3.1 The Three-fold Deity and His Three-fold Energy

The Gosvāmin's writings present a well-articulated metaphysical system, the complexities of which I can only hint at here. For the discussion which follows, however, it is essential to have at least an acquaintance with the two central metaphysical doctrines of the school, that of the three-fold nature of Kṛṣṇa as brahman, paramātmān, and bhagavat, and that of his three-fold divine power or śakti. Significantly, these doctrines are not, as in the traditional Vedānta, supported by reference to portions of the Upaniṣads. Rather, they are based on the Gosvāmins' interpretation of carefully selected passages of the Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas.²⁷

It is important to realize that in this system Kṛṣṇa occupies the place of the supreme principle. The Upaniṣadic Brahman, which even in the theistic versions of Vedānta enjoys that honor,²⁸ is here relegated to a subordinate position. This understanding is enshrined in a unique conception of the nature of the deity, as authority for which Jīva Gosvāmin, the school's chief metaphysician, cites BP 1.2.11:

The knowers of Reality declare that non-dual consciousness (jñāna) is the ultimate Reality. It is called "brahman," "paramātmān," and "bhagavat."²⁹

This verse could easily, and perhaps more convincingly, be given an Advaitic interpretation by recognizing brahman and

so on as various designations of the same undifferentiated, "non-dual" consciousness.³⁰ Jīva, however, chooses to identify the three terms as names of distinct aspects of Kṛṣṇa. These aspects in his theory constitute an ontological hierarchy, arranged, in the order given in the verse, from lowest to highest.

Note first that brahman is only a partial form of Kṛṣṇa, his unqualified (nirviśeṣa) aspect. From the Bengal Vaiṣṇava point of view, the unqualified reality is far from being a complete expression of the ultimate. It is spoken of as being merely Kṛṣṇa's aura, the glow (prabhā) emanating from his body. Those following the path of knowledge are able to realize only this limited manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's fullness, which appears to them in the form of pure consciousness.

The paramātmān is a higher and more perfect expression of Kṛṣṇa than brahman. It is the Lord as the indweller and inner controller of the world and the individual souls (jīvas),³¹ the ground of the phenomenal universe. Since in their meditations they attain the Lord in this more complete form, the practitioners of yoga are better off than the jñānins.

The total fullness of Kṛṣṇa, however, appears only in his highest manifestation as bhagavat, realizable only by his devotees, through bhakti. In this aspect, which

contains and surpasses the other two forms, the Lord is revealed in his essential nature as a personal being possessed of infinite attributes and powers.³²

The Vaiṣṇavas thus reject the Advaitins' notion that the unqualified Brahman is a higher realization than the qualified. Indeed, they reverse it. Their entire argument for the superiority of bhakti to jñāna--and also, as we shall see, to mokṣa--is based on two related principles: (1) the notion that the saviśeṣa ("qualified") bhagavat is, metaphysically speaking, a higher and more inclusive reality than the nirviśeṣa ("unqualified") brahman and (2) the idea that the saviśeṣa realization of the Lord in devotion is, in experiential terms, correspondingly superior to and more satisfying than the nirviśeṣa realization of brahman through knowledge. In short, the experience of bhagavat is both more comprehensive and more blissful, in each case abundantly so, than the realization of brahman.

The essential difference between brahman and bhagavat is that in the former the deity's śaktis are unmanifest and undifferentiated, while in the latter they are fully displayed. As Chakravarti explains:

The vision . . . [of Brahman] attained by the mode of Jñāna is said to be incomplete (asampūrṇadr̥ṣṭi), for it does not manifest the full vigraha [personal form] of the Bhagavat with all His śaktis or powers. Since [the] powers belong to Bhagavat and not to Brahman, the latter, it is said, depends on the śakti of the former even for its manifestation (prakāśa).³³

According to this doctrine, bhagavat is the aṅgin ("principal") and brahman is the aṅga ("subordinate"). The realization of bhagavat, therefore, includes the realization of brahman.³⁴ Since the reverse is not the case, the superiority of bhagavat and bhakti to brahman and jñāna is made complete.

A second important part of Bengal Vaiṣṇava metaphysics is its analysis of the various powers or śaktis of Kṛṣṇa. Like the Lord himself, these powers are divided into three primary aspects, this time on the authority of Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.7.60. This verse, frequently cited in the tradition, speaks of a triad of śaktis: first parā, the "supreme"; second kṣetrajñā, the "knower of the field," i.e., the inner consciousness; and third avidyā, "ignorance."³⁵ Jīva explains the three as (1) the svarūpaśakti ("essential power"), which is the highest and with which Kṛṣṇa governs his own internal dynamics; (2) the jīvaśakti, the power of manifesting individual souls (jīvas); and (3) māyāśakti, the power of manifesting the phenomenal universe.³⁶ The Gosvāmins' understanding of the relation of these śaktis to Kṛṣṇa is expressed in their distinctive doctrine of "inscrutable difference and non-difference" (acintyabhedābheda), after which their system is sometimes named.³⁷ While, as subordinate to the Lord, the powers are different from him, they are at the same time

identical with him in a way that, while realizable in mystical experience, is yet rationally incomprehensible. More will be said of these powers, especially the svarūpaśakti, and the meaning of their relation to bhagavat, in our discussion of the Gosvāmins' theory of bhakti, to which we must now proceed.

4.3.2 Bhakti as the Fifth and Highest Goal of Life

From the time of the Law Books and the Mahābhārata (ca. 400 B.C.E.-400 C.E.), the Hindu tradition acknowledged four "goals of human life" (puruṣārtha), namely: religious duty, (dharma), the acquisition of wealth (artha), pleasure (kāma), and final liberation (mokṣa). The first three were known collectively as the "triad" (trivarga). Although understood and accepted as valid and even necessary pursuits, they were recognized as having a common orientation toward concerns that were phenomenal and transient. Liberation, on the other hand, was quite naturally placed in a different category. It was a spiritual goal, one achieved only through its own unique means. Since it had, as it were, no competitors, it was sui generis, in a class by itself, and since it partook of ultimacy and finality, it became known, especially among the teachers of Advaita, as the paramapurṣārtha, the "highest goal of life."³⁸

With the rise of the devotional schools, however, the notion that bhakti was an end in itself, worthy of pursuit for its own sake, began to come into circulation. The BP, as we have seen, proclaimed devotion to be the "highest religion" (paramo dharmah) and tended to devalue the quest for mokṣa. Such notions, combined with resentment against the excessive restrictions that orthodox Vedānta had placed on eligibility for final liberation, are likely to have produced considerable dissatisfaction with the rigid formula of the four ends of life and the notion that mokṣa alone was the ultimate spiritual goal. In any event, although the exact historical process that lead to it is difficult to trace,³⁹ we find the Gosvāmins by the sixteenth century refusing to accept the finality of either the list of four puruṣārthas or the exaltation of mokṣa as the highest of them.

The Vaiṣṇavas' argument is based on their perception of final release as a limited goal. According to the doctrine of the three-fold deity, liberation for the jñānin results in the attainment of union (sāyujya) with brahman. A limited experience of bliss in this condition is allowed, since the Vaiṣṇava concept of union entails "difference and non-difference" rather than the Advaitins' absolute identity. Nevertheless, the jñānins' brahmatva is a state far lower than the yogins' realization of paramātman or the

devotees' attainment of bhagavat. In comparison with the supreme bliss of the vision of the saviṣeṣa ("quality-full") Lord attained in premabhakti, the bliss of union with nirviṣeṣa ("qualityless") brahman is insignificant.⁴⁰

The Gosvāmins, therefore, follow the BP in its tendency to devalue the experience of mokṣa in favor of the joy of bhakti. Early in the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu (BRS, "Nectar-Ocean of Devotional Sentiment"), for example, Rūpa declares that devotion "makes light of liberation."⁴¹ He goes on to make his understanding of the superiority of bhakti quite plain. While mokṣa is "easily attained by knowledge," he tells us, "devotion to Hari is difficult to acquire by thousands of spiritual exercises."⁴² Again he declares: "Even if the bliss of brahman were to be multiplied a hundred thousand billion times, it would still not be equal to an infinitesimal droplet of the ocean of the bliss of bhakti."⁴³ At 1.2.22 he begins a long section on this topic by describing the desire for mokṣa as a demon that will never disturb the devotee whose mind is absorbed in the service of the Lord's lotus-like feet. This is followed by close to 30 supporting citations from the BP and other purāṇas. At the end, he declares that true devotees are so intent on bhakti that they exhibit no interest at all in acquiring any of the five forms of mokṣa commonly recognized by other Vaiṣṇava schools.⁴⁴

Such thinking obviously requires a reworking of the traditional formula of the four human ends. The Gosvāmins, in fact, choose to expand it, declaring that bhakti is the "fifth goal of life" (pañcamapurūṣārtha). As the "ocean of the nectar of the bliss of divine love," it is actually a higher attainment than mokṣā, being itself the parama-purūṣārtha, the final and ultimate end of all human striving.⁴⁵

All of this, however, is not to say that mokṣa is never attained by devotees or that it has no spiritual value for them. Being the highest reality, bhagavat incorporates brahman as a part of his total nature. The realization of bhagavat thus includes the realization of brahman. Since bhakti is the sole means of realizing bhagavat, it must include jñāna, the means of attaining brahman. Consequently, true bhakti implies jñāna--and also mokṣa, its result. Liberation for the devotee is therefore at some point inevitable. It is release from bondage to mundane existence and the clear realization of the soul's true nature as an atom (anu) of consciousness dependent upon the Lord. As such, however, it does not by any means entail an end of devotional activity. On the contrary, it is a necessary preliminary to the emergence of the highest stages of bhakti. The liberated soul of the bhakta ascends to Kṛṣṇa's transphenomenal paradise where it acquires a

spiritual body (siddhadeha) and, in this exalted condition, enjoys devotion eternally at levels impossible of attainment in the material world. Bhakti, previously restricted in its expression by māyāśakti, the Lord's power of phenomenality, becomes free in mokṣa to manifest itself in its ecstatic fullness.⁴⁶

4.3.3 The Definition of Bhakti

Rūpa Gosvāmin begins the BRS with a definition of what he regards as the highest form of bhakti. "Supreme devotion," he says, "is reverent service (anusthana) of Kṛṣṇa, in accord with his wishes, without any other desire, and unobstructed by knowledge, action, etc."⁴⁷ The key factor here is the exclusion of certain elements that, from the Bengal Vaiṣṇava perspective, render one's devotion less than pure (śuddha). The highest bhakti is solely affective, as distinguished from "mixed" devotion (miśrā bhakti), which includes foreign cognitive or conative elements such as Vedāntic gnosis, ritual action, and yogic meditation. Thus at the outset Rūpa displays his school's characteristic exaltation of emotionalism over knowledge and simultaneously rejects the stance of other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas such as Rāmānuja, Madhva, and Vallabha, all of whom make room for knowledge in some form in their definitions of devotion.⁴⁸ In doing so, he is of course being faithful to Caitanya's radically emotional spirituality.

We have already seen how the Gosvāmins' affective emphasis translates into the theological stricture that realization of bhagavat, the highest expression of the Godhead, is possible through bhakti alone--not through karma, jñāna, or meditative yoga. Now we learn that not even a trace of these other attitudes is acceptable to the authentic devotee. Of all the Vaiṣṇava schools, the Bengal tradition is perhaps the most emphatic and uncompromising in its assertion that pure ecstatic bhakti is the only true way.⁴⁹

This being the case, the absence in this definition of explicit reference to love of the deity or psychic absorption in him, common in other definitions of bhakti,⁵⁰ is noteworthy. The emphasis on service rather than psychology is no doubt attributable to the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas' conception of highest salvation, which combines myth and metaphysics in the idea, already mentioned, of the acquisition of a spiritual body and the experience therein of the exquisite joy of attendance on Kṛṣṇa and his companions in the celestial Vṛndāvana. It must be born in mind, however, that "service" here means more than bodily works alone. In Rūpa's definition, the word anuśīlana implies constant reverence and worship, a complete centering of all of one's life-faculties on God, somewhat after the spirit of the Gītā, but with a greater cultivation of the

purely emotional element. It includes the practice of the various devotional disciplines such as submission to the guru, chanting, worship, devotional dancing, pilgrimage, and so on--in a word, all "endeavors in relation to Kṛṣṇa."⁵¹ Such service naturally assumes affection toward, and continuous mental absorption in, the deity.

4.3.4 The Stages of Devotion

The emphasis on ecstatic love, which we miss in the formal definition of devotion just considered, appears with redoubled force in Rūpa's discussion of the higher stages of bhakti. In fact, the title of the first chapter of the BRS, "The General Characteristics of Devotion" (bhaktisāmānya), already suggests that more developed notions are to come. At the beginning of the second chapter we learn that bhakti is three-fold, or has three levels of development, namely, sādhana ("devotion as means"), bhāva ("emotion"), and preman ("ecstatic love").⁵² In going through the following outline of these stages, the reader should keep in mind that they were not conceived in a vacuum, but, at least in the case of bhāva and preman, were worked out in reference to two paradigms: (1) Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa, as described in the Vaiṣṇava literature in all of its emotional intensity and variation, and (2) that love as re-lived in the ecstasies of Caitanya, which were still fresh in the minds of his followers.

Sādhanabhakti consists of the various devotional practices, especially the "nine-fold" discipline of the BP,⁵³ that prepare the mind for the experience of the higher stages of devotion. Its goal is the manifestation of bhāva in the heart.⁵⁴

Bhāva ("emotion"), the second level, is the beginning of real devotion and therefore in itself already an anticipation of preman ("ecstatic love").⁵⁵ According to Rūpa, it resembles "a ray of the sun of preman" which "softens the heart with a delightful flavor."⁵⁶ It is also called rati ("love"), which, in relation to the more intense levels of experience to come, is best understood as "incipient love."⁵⁷ Although it is only the first taste of true bhakti, this state is described as "a flood of powerful bliss." It is "constantly burning" and yet "sweeter than a hundred-thousand moons."⁵⁸

When bhāva is present, a person displays such symptoms as forbearance, not wasting a moment without thought of God, detachment, humility, longing for God, delight in the singing of the divine name, attachment to stories of God's glories, and fondness for the place in which he, as Kṛṣṇa, once lived.⁵⁹ There may even be a slight manifestation of the physical symptoms of ecstatic devotion (sāttvikabhāvas), such as crying and the thrilling of the body-hair, that were displayed in their fullness by

Rādhā and Caitanya.⁶⁰ The experience of bhāva, Rūpa tells us, may arise as the result of spiritual discipline or, less commonly, through divine grace without reference to the aspirant's practice.⁶¹

Preman, the third and highest level of bhakti, is simply an intensified state of this incipient love;⁶² it is bhāva "developed to the highest degree."⁶³ While, as we have seen, in bhāva the heart is softened, in preman it is "completely softened."⁶⁴ An important characteristic of this stage of devotion is the feeling of strong possessiveness toward the Lord and detachment from all else.⁶⁵ According to the Caitanyacaritāmṛta (CC), this form of love is the "abode of all bliss."⁶⁶

At BRS 1.4.15-16, Rūpa lists nine steps or stages in the appearance of preman:

First there is faith, then association with the holy, then worship, then cessation of all obstacles. Next comes firm dedication, then relish.

Then there is attachment, then bhāva, and then preman arises. This is the order of the manifestation of preman in the aspirant.⁶⁷

The commentators explain faith (śraddhā) as faith in the scriptures and in Kṛṣṇa. It arises, they say, by "some good fortune."⁶⁸ Association with the holy (sādhusaṅga) means association with saints with the desire to learn their spiritual disciplines,⁶⁹ while worship (bhajanakriyā) implies the practice of the nine-fold devotional disciplines

recommended in the BP.⁷⁰ The cessation of obstacles (anarthanivṛtti) means the removal of all evil, impious, or slothful tendencies--behavioral or psychological--that stand in the way of the manifestation of devotion.⁷¹ Firm dedication (niṣṭhā), the fifth step, is explained as steadiness in practice. This quickly leads to relish (ruci), a liking for chanting and the other devotional disciplines, and then to an attachment (āśakti) to the Lord, whereby he becomes the sole object of one's life.⁷² This process of gradual purification and concentration of mind and heart prepares the way for the manifestation of bhāva and, finally, preman.

4.3.5 The Levels of Ecstatic Love

Another list we must consider is that of the stages that occur in the development of preman itself. Rūpa indicates that the advanced levels of love for God are exceedingly difficult to understand.⁷³ In fact, because they are rarely manifest in aspirants, he discusses them only briefly in the BRS⁷⁴ and reserves their detailed consideration for his Ujjvalanīlamanī. He gives, in the latter, an extended analysis of the various nuances of what he and the tradition believe to be the most fervent devotional relationship possible, that of the gopīs' and their beloved Kṛṣṇa. The stages considered are (1) preman

(2) sneha, (3) māna, (4) pranaya, (5) rāga, (6) anurāga, (7) bhāva, and (8) mahābhāva.⁷⁵ In the CC, these levels are compared with the stages which sugar passes through during refinement: sugarcane seed, sugarcane, sugarcane juice, molasses, brown sugar, white sugar, sugar candy, and rock candy. Like the sweetness of sugar, says Kṛṣṇadāsa, the sweet taste (āsvāda) of preman increases as it is refined.⁷⁶

Preman, now considered as the first of these eight higher levels of bhakti, is described as the bond of feeling (bhāvabandhana) that is the indestructible seed (bīja) of love.⁷⁷ Sneha, literally "affection," is a further development of preman which causes complete melting of the heart (hṛdayadrāvaṇa) upon seeing, hearing of, or recollecting the beloved.⁷⁸ This is a deeper state than bhāva or preman, which cause only softening of the heart.

Māna, an emotion that plays a vital part in the classical dramatic accounts of the love affair of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, is an affected mood of fickleness or pique owing to jealousy. The literal meaning of the term is "pride," but it suggests much more: a special combination of indignation and affection, resistance and longing, that serves to heighten the feeling of love between the partners.⁷⁹

Pranaya, the name of the next stage, is usually used as a synonym for love. Here, however, it refers more specifically to a state of love in friendly confidence

(viśrambha), either maitra, friendship qualified by humility, or sakhya, unreserved fellowship.⁸⁰ Rāga, literally "attachment" or "passion," is described as "that stage at which affection for the beloved converts unhappiness into happiness." With this kind of love, Rūpa declares, one is willing to give up one's life for Kṛṣṇa.⁸¹ Anurāga is the state in which love is ever fresh, constantly revealing what was unknown before. It has four aspects: self-surrender (paravaśībhāva), anxious anticipation of separation (premavaicitya), desire for birth as an inanimate object dear to the Lord (aprāñjanma), and having visions of the beloved in the state of separation (vipralambha-visphūr̥ti).⁸²

Bhāva or mahābhāva (the "great ecstasy"), the last stage, is the highest pinnacle of love. According to the tradition, it can be experienced only by Kṛṣṇa's queens and the gopīs.⁸³ The gopīs alone, however, have the ability to experience its higher reaches. Indeed, in its fully developed form it can be attained only by Rādhā⁸⁴ or a divine incarnation that is able to reactualize her unique intensity of love, the only example of the latter recognized by the tradition being Caitanya himself.⁸⁵

Mahābhāva is said to have two levels of development. When several, but not all, of the physical manifestations of love (sāttvikabhāvas) are "burning intensely," it is said to

be "developed" (rūḍha). Symptoms of this state include the inability to bear separation even for a moment (nimeṣāsahatā) and the distortion of one's time sense so that a whole age (kalpa) seems to last only a moment (kṣana) and a moment seems to last a whole age.⁸⁶ The second stage, attained when all of the physical symptoms are present in their full intensity, is called "totally developed great ecstasy" (adhirūḍhamahābhāva), which may in its initial modes be either "delighting" (modana) or "utterly intoxicating" (mohana), depending on the extremity of the physical manifestations.⁸⁷ According to the CC, the former state is experienced when in the presence of the beloved and the latter when separated.⁸⁸ The profundity of mohana is suggested by its association with such phenomena as divine frenzy (divyonmāda) and the willingness to bear unbearable suffering. It is said to have the capacity to cause the whole universe to sorrow.⁸⁹ The final level of this "totally developed great ecstasy" is termed mādana ("maddening"). Including simultaneously the unimaginable bliss of union and the heart-rending pangs of separation, it is said to have infinite varieties of expression that are beyond the reach of language or understanding.⁹⁰

Caitanya's experience of mahābhāva as he relived the ecstatic agony of Rādhā's separation from Kṛṣṇa is reported in the CC as follows:

At first he went as fast as the wind, then suddenly he turned into a pillar, paralysed and unable to move. The flesh around the roots of his hair swelled like boils, and his hair stood on end all over his body. Sweat was dripping from his hair like blood. Unable to speak, his throat emitted gurgling sounds. His eyes filled with tears; his body turned pallid like a white conch. He began to shake, and shivering and trembling fell down on the ground.⁹¹

It would be hard to imagine a true Advaitin accepting the kind of spirituality represented in such descriptions. Madhusūdana's conception of the highest stages of bhakti, as we shall see, makes room for the familiar gopī-paradigm, even including the theme of love in separation. But it remains to be seen whether his idea of devotion approaches the ecstatic extremes envisioned by the Bengal tradition. While he uses much of the same technical terminology, in many cases the meanings are different, and in the end he makes a surprising re-evaluation of the hallowed Vaiṣṇava belief that the bhakti of the gopīs occupies the highest place in the hierarchy of devotional experience.

4.3.6 Bhakti Given Ontic Status as Kṛṣṇa's Highest Power

That the gopī-paradigm occupies a central place in the devotional theory of the Kṛṣṇaite tradition should by now be apparent. To a certain extent, its importance corresponds to that of "bridal mysticism," so-called, in the spirituality of such Christian mystics as St. Bernard and

St. John of the Cross, who have much to say about the erotic imagery of the Song of Solomon.⁹² Hindu thought seeks to avoid charges of moral impropriety in connection with the gopī episodes by a wide variety of stratagems, which I cannot discuss in detail here. The BP itself intertwines several levels of interpretation, from explicitly realistic to symbolic and metaphysical. All emphasize that the bindingness of dharma is suspended in face of the immediate presence and irresistible call of the divine source of dharma.⁹³ Some later writers allegorize the affair-- especially the willingness of the gopīs to endure the social consequences of being unfaithful to their husbands, which were extreme in India--as symbolic of the demands of true religious love, which override all other considerations. Others chose the route of denying that the encounters described in the Bhāgavata were sexual, because the Kṛṣṇa upon whom the gopīs doted was too young.⁹⁴

The Bengal school itself deals with the issue in several ways, the most interesting of which is the doctrine that the gopīs were not ordinary human beings at all, but incarnations of Kṛṣṇa's various divine powers or śaktis. Being such, they were the Lord's eternal companions (parikara) and therefore ultimately inseparable from him. Their sport was thus merely a wondrous manifestation of the eternal play (līlā) of Kṛṣṇa and his own energies, the play that, on a vaster scale, underlies the whole of creation.⁹⁵

This metaphysical turn brings us to what is, from the point of view of the present study, the most important aspect of the Gosvāmins' theory of bhakti. In defining sādhana-bhakti, as we have seen, Rūpa says that its aim is the manifestation of bhāva in the heart. This appears simple enough, but it is necessary to realize that the word "manifestation" (prākāṣyam) is not used casually. It is chosen to compliment and support the author's contention, expressed in the same verse, that bhāva is "eternally accomplished" (nityasiddha).⁹⁶ This means that it is not something which is produced, say, by spiritual practice, nor is it an activity of the devotee's mind. Indeed, the Gosvāmins want to assert that bhāva is not phenomenal in nature at all but rather eternally existent, trans-phenomenal.

The orthodox Advaitins, we have seen, deny bhakti any final ontological status. But for the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas it is the paramapurusaṛtha, superior even to mokṣa. Such an assertion cannot be based on devotional experience alone; it requires an adequate theological foundation. If bhakti is truly a higher spiritual goal than mokṣa, it must have a corresponding metaphysical value. Bhakti, in short, is so important for the Gosvāmins that they seek to give it an ontological status beyond that of the merely psychological. In the thinking of Rūpa and Jīva, it is not a mode of the

mind (manogati) as it is in the definition of BP 3.29.11-12, which from this point of view is inadequate. Neither is it ultimately worshipful service or even love, if the latter is understood as a function of human consciousness. Bhakti in its essential nature is an aspect of the highest power (śakti) of God.

We have seen that Kṛṣṇa, according to the Gosvāmins' theology, has three main powers: the essential power (svarūpaśakti), the power of manifesting individual souls (jīvaśakti), and the power of creating the universe (māyāśakti). To understand their metaphysics of bhakti, we must consider this doctrine in more detail. The essential power is itself divided into three aspects. These correspond to the formula "existence-consciousness-bliss" (saccidānanda)-- which, here as well as in the Advaita, is thought to express the inner nature (svarūpa) of the ultimate.⁹⁷ The three are: (1) the power of upholding existence (saṁdhiśakti), (2) the power of consciousness (saṁvitsakti), and (3) the power of bliss (hlādiśakti).⁹⁸ The last of these, as it includes and transcends the other two, is regarded as the highest aspect of the Lord's essential power.⁹⁹

It is this non-phenomenal hlādiśakti which appears in the heart of the devotee, taking the form of bhāva or preman and causing the experience of bliss. Or, according to an even more subtle analysis, it is actually not the

whole but only the purest essence (sāra) of this highest divine power that appears as preman. Mahābhāva, in turn, is the supreme essence (paramasāra) of preman.¹⁰⁰ Bhakti, then, is identified with the highest aspect of the Lord's most intimate power and placed at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of divine energies.

The schematic arrangement of śaktis may be summarized as follows: the highest of the three main powers is the svarūpaśakti ("essential power"), the highest aspect of this is the hlādinīśakti ("power of bliss"), and the highest aspect of this is devotion, in the form of mahābhāva. Rādhā, the Lord's most intimate companion, is this supreme devotion personified (mahābhāvarūpa).¹⁰¹

While bhakti may seem to be identical with the mental modification in which it becomes manifest, because it takes on that particular form, in reality it is not. It is like fire, says Rūpa, which appears to become one with the red-hot iron by assuming its shape but actually remains separate.¹⁰² Bhakti is in the mind, so to say, but not of it. Although it is self-luminous (svayamprakāśarūpa), it nevertheless appears as if illumined by a mental modification since it enters the latter and even seems to be identical with it.¹⁰³ Thus the devotion which resides in the devotee and appears to be a function of the devotee's mind is really autonomous and non-phenomenal, the essence of the highest divine power.

When the Gosvāmins say that bhakti is nityasiddha ("eternally accomplished"), they point to the idea that it exists constantly in a dynamic and fully actualized condition, entirely independent of its particular manifestation in the mind of the devotee. Ultimately, it is nothing less than an experience eternally belonging to bhagavat himself. Kṛṣṇa not only is bliss. In conjunction with Rādhā, his inseparable hlādinīśakti, he enjoys bliss--and that continually--as mahābhāva, the highest state of bhakti. In this connection, Chakravarti writes:

The Lord, being the supreme relisher of bliss (rasika cūḍāmaṇi) relishes not only the bliss of His own self (svarūpānanda) but also the bliss that flows from His śakti (śaktyānanda). He enjoys His own nature as bliss with the help of His Hlāninī-śakti which is essentially delightful. The bliss that flows from Hlādinī gets transformed into Bhakti and grows much more relishable when it is thrown by the Lord into the hearts of His devotees (bhakta), attendants (parikara) and other individuals.¹⁰⁴

The elevation of hlādinīśakti above the powers samdhinī and saṁvit suggests the subordination of the existence (sat) and consciousness (cit) aspects of the ultimate to his nature as bliss (ānanda). The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, reflecting in an extreme way the typical devotional interest in the affective and the ecstatic rather than the cognitive, opt for pure bliss as the highest essence of the Godhead and the heightened experience of bliss in bhakti as the raison d'etre of his śaktis. "Kṛṣṇa is bliss," says Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. Using his hlādinīśakti,

he causes the tasting of bliss (sukha āsvādana) in his devotees, and, by the same power, he savors his own bliss himself.¹⁰⁵

In their emphasis on the idea of śakti and their decision to describe the relation of Kṛṣṇa and his śaktis as one of "inscrutable difference and non-difference" (acintyabhedābheda), the Gosvāmins exhibit an apparent philosophical inclination, or at least a temptation, toward a tantric-style bipolar monism. This is no doubt due to the actual influence of tantric schools, which were powerful religious forces in Bengal and Orissa for many centuries.¹⁰⁶ The śaktis, especially hlānīnī, are not adventitious (āropita), but are part of bhagavat's essential nature (svarūpabhūta).¹⁰⁷ In terms of the Vaiṣṇavas' mytho-metaphysical vision, Rādhā is separate from Kṛṣṇa, yet tends to union, ultimate non-separation, even identity. The fullness of deity is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. While it is true that Rādhā and the śaktis are dependent upon Kṛṣṇa, he is also dependent upon them, not only for the full realization of his own joy,¹⁰⁸ but even for the complete expression of his majesty and sweetness as bhagavat. Without the śaktis, without Rādhā, bhagavat remains merely brahman, undifferentiated (nirviśeṣa), formless, and devotionally uninteresting.¹⁰⁹

All of this, of course, is very close to the śakti-vāda of the tantrics, with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa substituting for Śiva-Śakti as the ultimate bipolar unity. The Gosvāmins, however, retreat from the abyss of monism, feeling compelled by the requirements of their practical faith to retain the finality of difference and relationship, which they consider to be necessities of devotional spirituality. They manage this by their doctrine of "inscrutability" or "incomprehensibility." The svābhāvikatva of the divine energies, their being an essential part of the Lord's nature (svabhāva), is tempered by their acintyatva, the final "incomprehensibility" of their relation with the ultimate. This allows identity and difference to coexist.

The combination of these two emphases produces some interesting results. Consider, for example, Kṛṣṇa's celestial paradise, which is the goal of all true devotees. It and all its charming features, inhabitants, and so on, including especially Kṛṣṇa's boyish form, are taken to be non-phenomenal, absolute realities, greater even than brahman. This, though absurd from the point of view of traditional Upaniṣadic Vedānta, is made possible by the incomprehensible power of bhagavat, which is inscrutably capable of all that appears impossible to the human mind. The Lord's heaven and its inhabitants are forms of his svarūpaśakti, which is non-phenomenal, identical in a sense with its possessor, and hence absolute.¹¹⁰

From the standpoint of the present discussion, the most important consequence of the doctrine of inscrutable difference and non-difference is that it gives an exalted, almost absolute ontological status to the divine power of bliss--and therefore, a fortiori, to bhakti, which is its highest essence. Devotion becomes bhagavat's own essential energy and, by extension, bhagavat himself appearing in the heart of the devotee. Since as such it is the eternal relishing of divine bliss in its most highly articulated form, a state that is superior, both ontologically and experientially, even to mokṣa, it is eminently worthy of being regarded as the supreme goal of life (parama-puruṣārtha).

4.4 Bengal Vaiṣṇava Social Practice

Carrying the idea that devotion is a śakti of Kṛṣṇa to its logical conclusion, the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas are led to the doctrine that it is inherent in all souls, even those of plants, because they are all intimately related to the Lord as fragments of his divine energy. Although eternally manifest in the Lord's celestial attendants who are beyond the reach of māyā, it is dormant in jīvas that are bound in the material realms created by māyāśakti.¹¹¹ For these souls, it needs to be made manifest by the action of divine grace and the aid of spiritual discipline.¹¹²

The experience of bhakti, however, depends on neither Vedic study nor caste or gender qualification of any kind. Devotion is open to all, regardless of their social status. While Caitanya was somewhat conservative in many aspects of his outward social observance, he made it clear that caste distinctions have no bearing on access to religious practice or the attainment of the final religious goal. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa, he encouraged people of all levels of society to worship Kṛṣṇa, and often shocked his orthodox followers by sacrificing correct observance of caste rules--he himself was a Brahmin--and encouraging common religious, if not social, fellowship.¹¹³

Of the six Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins, who are regarded as the "orthodox" theologians of the movement, Raghunātha Dāsa was a Kṣatriya and Rūpa and Sanātana, although of a Brahmin family, had lost caste by accepting service with a Muslim ruler prior to meeting Caitanya.¹¹⁴ The latter fact is openly acknowledged by the tradition. Sanātana, for example, is more than once portrayed in the CC as expressing such sentiments as, "I am of low caste; I have kept low companions, and have done low work," or, "I have served Muslims; I have associated with the murderers of Brahmins and cows."¹¹⁵ The Gosvāmins displayed a liberal social outlook in their willingness to accept non-Brahmins as disciples. Narottama, a Kṣatriya who was a pupil of Jīva,

was one of these; he in turn caused considerable social controversy by allowing Brahmins as well as fellow non-Brahmins to become his students.¹¹⁶

As far as the movement in Bengal is concerned, there is evidence of a divergence of opinion between Advaita and Nityānanda, Caitanya's senior devotees and aides-de-camp. Advaita, a Brahmin, seems to have adopted a more conservative attitude on social questions while Nityānanda, whose original caste is uncertain, gained a reputation for sympathy for persons whose status in Hindu society was low. The movement from an early period showed a tendency to divide into sub-sects, and some of this division was in fact on caste lines.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, despite the well-known tenacity of the caste mentality in India, the thoroughgoing dependence of this school on the BP would have made it very difficult for any of its members to defend the imposition of social restrictions on the availability of bhakti as the paramapuruṣārtha. A verse still popular in this century among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal reads:

He who worships Kṛṣṇa is not a Śūdra, he is a holy man among men; but he of whatsoever caste who does not worship Kṛṣṇa, he is a Śūdra. All the śāstras witness this.¹¹⁸

Such sentiments would have been worthy of the Bhāgavata itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

MADHUSŪDANA ON ADVAITA-BHAKTI: THE THEOLOGY OF DEVOTION IN THE BHAKTIRASĀYANA

5.1 Approaching the Bhaktirasāyana

Having examined at some length certain key elements in the historical and philosophical background of the BR, we can now proceed to an introduction of the text itself. The present chapter will consist of an attempt bring together in systematic form the text's most important teachings on the metaphysical aspects of bhakti. In chapter six, we will turn to an account of Madhusūdana's discussion of the relation between devotion and the theory of aesthetic sentiment (rasa).

It has already been suggested that the BR represents in some sense (as yet unspecified) an effort to integrate the two divergent forms of spirituality that we have been considering thus far, namely, the impersonalist vision of Advaita and the ecstatic bhakti religion of the BP and the Kṛṣṇaite schools. If we take into account the vastly different emphases of these two traditions, we can readily appreciate that such an undertaking was necessarily an ambitious one, however it may have been conceived. But at

this point it would be unwise to try and say much more. The complexity and importance of the questions that the BR weighs, together with the stature and sophistication of its author, warn us against venturing, prior to careful examination, any facile generalizations about its meaning or purpose. Such considerations will be more appropriately dealt with after we have become more familiar with the text, in the critical remarks reserved for chapter nine.

The teachings of the BR are in fact somewhat elusive; this is not a work that be approached easily or directly. The difficulty is that, while richly suggestive, the text is often frustratingly inexplicit, and sometimes disappointingly vague. On key points such as the nature of bhakti, the distinction between bhagavat and Brahman, the relation of bhakti and mokṣa, and the final ontological status of bhakti, it shifts position subtly or, more frequently, refuses to enter into specific detail or draw out the full implications of what has been said. This may be in part a feature of Madhusūdana's scholastic style of discourse, which assumes that the reader is well-versed the religious and philosophical literature known to the writer and his circle. It may well be due also to the unorthodox and hence controversial nature of his conclusions, which he perhaps felt were better conveyed by intimation than by explicit statement. At any rate, a large part of this

introduction will be taken up with the somewhat risky business of trying to read "between the lines" and spell out what Madhusūdana is suggesting.

The reader is warned to recognize the limitations of this approach. It will require on occasion that we go beyond what Madhusūdana actually says, filling in gaps and extrapolating where his exposition is sketchy. This of course is an audacious and risky enterprise, especially for someone who, no matter how sympathetic, stands outside the tradition. As long as it is done openly and cautiously, however, it is justified as a necessary part of an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the text that is even partially satisfactory.

5.2 Bhakti as an Independent Path

Madhusūdana was a poet of no mean accomplishments, and he used language skillfully, precisely, and imaginatively. We should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that the title of our text contains a play on words. The author reveals one possible meaning of Bhaktirasāyana in stanza 2: "O wise ones! Let this Elixir (rasāyana) of Devotion (bhakti) be drunk of abundantly by you . . ." ¹ Divided differently, however, the Sanskrit compound can also mean "The way, path, or course (ayana) of the sentiment (rasa) of bhakti." It could be interpreted,

on this analysis, as referring to the course of development of bhaktirasa or, alternately, as naming the cultivation of devotional sentiment as a distinct spiritual path. Sanskrit poets delighted in this kind of double and triple entendre, and there is no doubt that Madhusūdana chose this title carefully and was conscious of its various possible meanings. Certainly, all of those I have mentioned are indicative of the contents of the work. The last, however, is probably the most important for our inquiry into the place of devotion in Advaita. It points to one of the most striking and, from the view-point of Advaita, most unorthodox aspects of the BR, namely, Madhusūdana's presentation of bhaktiyoga as a distinct and independent spiritual path that is not in need of completion by Vedic gnosis, the exclusive province of the saṃyāsīn. According to the BR, devotion, on its own, is able to lead the seeker to the highest goal of life (paramapurusaṛtha).

Madhusūdana begins his exposition of the spiritual ascent in section III by identifying the yoga of action (karmayoga) as a preliminary discipline that must be performed by all aspirants until they have acquired sufficient purity of mind. The attainment of this goal, Madhusūdana tells us, is followed by the pursuit of one of two possible paths, knowledge or devotion.² The rest of the text makes clear that the author intends us to understand

these paths as independent, equally valid ways to the highest spiritual attainment.

At first, this seems to be a flagrant contradiction of the orthodox Advaita doctrine, discussed at length in chapter two, that liberation comes through knowledge alone. The fact is, however, that the BR nowhere describes bhakti as a discipline which aims specifically at liberation, nor does it truly accept the latter in its classical role as paramapurusaṛtha. One of the central teachings of the BR, enunciated repeatedly from the first stanza onward, is that love for God, bhakti, is itself the highest goal of life. So, while the teaching is indeed that bhakti is an independent path to the final goal, the goal, at least for the devotee, is not mokṣa but rather bhakti. Following the BP, the BR teaches that devotion is both the means and, in its higher stages, the supreme end. How exactly the relation between bhakti and mokṣa is to be understood is a basic question that we shall have to consider in due order. Before it can be discussed, however, we must examine Madhusūdana's teaching on several other important matters, beginning with his concept of the highest goal of life.

5.3 The Highest Goal of Life

If the Gosvāmins of the Bengal school are unhappy with the exclusion of bhakti from the classical formula of

the four human aims (puruṣārtha), so is Madhusūdana. He makes this quite plain from the outset, declaring in the first stanza, as we have just seen, that bhakti is the paramapurūṣārtha. In section V of his commentary, he writes of bhakti: "Those who know its essence and those who have experienced it declare it to be the highest goal of life, beyond which there is nothing greater."³ This to be sure is the teaching of the BP, and the Kṛṣṇaite Vaiṣṇavas would have no difficulty with it. Nevertheless, it is a radical assertion for an Advaitin. The orthodox followers of Śaṅkara hold that mokṣa is the one supreme goal and that bhakti is a preliminary to it.⁴ Madhusūdana, on the other hand, appears to be saying that what Advaita normally considers to be the means is actually the final end, a rather significant change to say the least. It is necessary, therefore, to try and determine exactly what he means by this assertion.

Madhusūdana's approach to including bhakti among the puruṣārthas is, we discover, quite different from that of the Gosvāmins. In sections VI and VII of the BR, he shifts abruptly from the argument, which he has just presented in section V, that bhakti is the paramapurūṣārtha to a discussion designed to prove that bliss (sukha or ānanda) is the highest aim. He does not wish to expand the four-fold formula, as the Gosvāmins did. Instead, he seeks to by-pass

it by showing that the classically recognized puruṣārthas are so only figuratively, i.e., insofar as they are the means to bliss. "The bliss arising from them," says Madhusūdana, "is the goal of life."⁵ The details of the argument, which becomes rather complex as a logician of the Nyāya school is the ostensible interlocutor, can be gleaned from the translation which follows. What is important for our present purpose is its result, which Madhusūdana also states in the form: "Bliss unmixed with any suffering is the highest goal of life."⁶

The phrase "unmixed with any suffering" refers us back to the first stanza, where Madhusūdana has already described bhakti as "the experience of incomparable bliss, untouched by any suffering."⁷ The final conclusion is not hard to draw. Madhusūdana gives it at the beginning of sec. VII: "Since it is nothing more than bliss unmixed with suffering, the yoga of devotion to the Blessed Lord is also the paramapuruṣārtha."⁸ He uses the adverb "also" (api) here because he has just, at the end of section VI, concluded an elaborate argument to show that mokṣa is the paramapuruṣārtha "for the very reason that it is supreme bliss," a view he acknowledges as the standard doctrine of the Vedāntins.⁹ Because of the logical difficulties involved in asserting that devotion and liberation are both the highest aim, we must understand him as intending that

they are both forms in which the actual highest goal of life, pure bliss, can be experienced by human beings. As section VII indicates, the "perfect meditation" or enstasis (samādhi) sought by the yogins is another way in which this bliss can be attained.¹⁰ The paramapuruṣārtha, then, is bliss alone. At least at this point in the text,¹¹ Madhusūdana's assertions that devotion is "the" highest goal of life mean that, of this highest ānanda, devotion is one possible form.

The fact that both mokṣa and bhakti are supreme bliss draws our attention again to the question of the relation between them. I must defer its consideration once more, however, until we have a better understanding of Madhusūdana's thinking on the nature of devotion itself.

5.4 Bhakti as a Modality of the Mind

In stanza 3 of the text, Madhusūdana defines bhakti as "The modification of the mind melted by the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees which has become a continuous, stream-like flow directed toward the Lord of all."¹² This definition is modeled on that given at BP 3.29.11-12.¹³ Madhusūdana, in his commentary, cites this passage and takes pains to let the reader know that he is following its authority.

In both definitions, bhakti is identified as a modality of the individual psyche; in the purāṇa it is a "flow of the mind" (manogati), in the BR, a "modification" (vṛtti) of the mind. It is, by this definition, distinguished from other psychic modifications by several factors. First, it is unlike ordinary waking consciousness, but like both yogic meditation (dhyāna) and Vedāntic upāsana,¹⁴ in that it is a constant, unbroken stream of awareness. Second, and now in contrast to meditation and upāsana, it occurs in a mind that has been placed in a state of heightened emotional sensibility called "melting." The latter condition is aroused by devotional practices known as the bhāgavatadharmas, the "disciplines of the Lord's devotees,"¹⁵ the most important of which, as we shall see, is "hearing" (śravaṇa) of the sublime attributes and wondrous activities of the Lord and his incarnations. The third distinguishing factor of devotion is, of course, that its object is the "Lord of all," the bhagavat or "Blessed Lord," about whom a good deal will be said shortly.

Though there is a close correspondence between Madhusūdana's definition and that of the BP, our author's introduction of the technical term vṛtti ("mental modification") in place of the purāṇa's more general manogati ("flow of the mind") is significant. It allows him to begin to introduce refinements in the definition that

will eventually lead to its being recast in a new, thoroughly Advaitic mould.

In his commentary, Madhusūdana defines the term vṛtti as "the mind's assumption of a particular form (ākāra)."¹⁶ This is the standard view of Vedānta, which, like the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, conceives of the mind as composed of a subtle, highly plastic substance of constantly changing modalities. According to the cognitive theory of Advaita, discussed in some detail in Madhusūdana's comments on BR 1.20-25,¹⁷ the mind in the process of perception undergoes a change of state, reaching out and assuming the form of its object. This mental modification removes the ignorance veiling the object from the subject and creates a link between the two. Madhusūdana applies this understanding of vṛtti to the initial definition given in stanza 3, glossing the phrase "directed toward the Lord of all" as "having assumed the Lord's form."¹⁸ This allows him to define bhakti more technically as the mind's becoming receptive to, and taking on, the "form" of God. Thus we read: "The worship which consists in the mind's taking on the form of the Blessed Lord is devotion," and again, "Devotion is . . . the mind's taking on the form of the Blessed Lord."¹⁹

5.5 Bhakti as Bhagavat

The next step in the development of Madhusūdana's conception of Advaita-bhakti is a subtle change of emphasis, connected with his discussion of bhakti as a sentiment (rasa).²⁰ Having introduced the concept of devotion as a vṛtti that has assumed the form of the Lord, Madhusūdana from section XVIII on begins to focus his attention on the form itself, as present in the mind. Whatever is apprehended while the mind is in its melted state, he says, becomes a permanent impression. The form of the object, retained in the mind in this particular way, becomes the basis, the permanent emotion (sthāyibhāva), of rasa. The form of the Lord (bhagavadākāra), then, is the permanent emotion which develops into bhaktiraśa.

Though aesthetic categories are here inserted into the discussion, the underlying conceptual foundation remains that of Advaita. Especially interesting is Madhusūdana's use of the "reflection theory" (pratibimbavāda). This doctrine was developed by Sarvajñātma Muni, Prakāśātman, and other post-Śaṅkara Advaitins as an explanation of the relation between Brahman, Īśvara, and jīva. The theory has several variations. Some authors regard both Īśvara and jīva as reflections of the pure Brahman, the former in the universal, cosmic Ignorance (avidyā) or māyā, and the latter in individual Ignorance or, in some cases, in the individual

mind (antaḥkaraṇa).²¹ In Madhusūdana's version, Brahman, the supreme Consciousness (caitanya), when associated with Ignorance, appears as īśvara, the bimbacaitanya or "prototype-Consciousness." Jīva, then, is the reflection (pratibimba) of īśvara in Ignorance.²² Madhusūdana draws on this doctrine in his explanation of bhaktirasa, specifying that the form of the Lord, which is the permanent emotion that develops into the sentiment of devotion, is his reflection in the melted mind.

The immediately obvious intention of this statement is to prepare the way for a new argument for devotion's being supreme bliss. This, in turn, will establish, not that devotion is the highest goal of life, as the previous argument was designed to do, but that it is the highest sentiment (rasa). Since the Lord is bliss, Madhusūdana says, his reflection must also be bliss:

Reflected in the mind, the Lord, who is supreme bliss, becomes a permanent emotion and reaches the state of being a sentiment. Hence it is beyond question that the sentiment of devotion is of the nature of supreme bliss.²³

The worldly sentiments, according to the non-dualist analysis given in the commentary on stanzas 11-13, have as their objects the supreme bliss appearing in limited forms. Bhakti, on the other hand, is the supreme bliss itself manifested in its full abundance. Therefore bhakti deserves to be counted as the highest rasa.

While this last idea is of considerable interest in its own right, a discussion of the theory of rasa and its adoption by devotional writers must be reserved for the next chapter. Of immediate concern, however, are the philosophical implications that Madhusūdana has worked into this discussion for the benefit of the discerning reader. In this connection, I must again emphasize that much of the most significant teaching of this text is implicit rather than explicit.

First it should be noted that our author is no longer speaking of devotion as a vṛtti, but as a reflection of bhagavat. Observe also that he is careful to start by defining his key term so that we know exactly what he is talking about: "A reflection is nothing but the original (bimba) itself, apprehended within limiting adjuncts."²⁴ Placed as it is at the beginning of the section, this definition can only be intended to alert the knowledgeable reader to the fact that the author is making use of the pratibimbavāda. More specifically, it is designed to bring to mind one of the important distinguishing features of this doctrine, the idea that the "reflection is nothing but the original itself." Unlike the appearance theory (ābhāsa-vāda), its closest rival, the reflection theory regards the pratibimba as real and identical with the bimba.²⁵

Vidyāraṇya, for example, argues that the image is but the original itself appearing as if located in the mirror, and that it is not the reflection that is illusory but merely its apparent location.²⁶

Normally, the point of the pratibimbavāda's identification of reflection and original is to establish the identity of jīva and Brahman. But Madhusūdana is here utilizing the doctrine in an analysis of devotion. Since he is a master expositor of the various conflicting schools of thought in post-Śaṅkara Advaita, we can be sure that he is well aware of the theoretical implications of the reflection theory and the consequences of its application here. He is expecting his readers to recognize the most important of these, namely, that bhakti, as a reflection, is to be identified with bhagavat, the original.²⁷ Although he does it without any announcement, Madhusūdana makes a further shift from the BP's simple definition of devotion as a mode of the mind. As he strives to arrive at a clearer conception of bhakti from an Advaitic standpoint, he allows it to become, at least implicitly, identical with the Blessed Lord himself. Consider the sequence of thought and the grammatical structure in his sentences: "A reflection is nothing but the original itself. . . . Reflected in the mind, the Lord [subject] . . . becomes a permanent emotion and reaches the state of being a sentiment." I must therefore agree in substance with Gupta when he says:

Madhusūdana started with his pledge to the Bhāgavata and thus declared cittavṛtti [the mental mode] to be bhakti. But later on . . . he almost unconsciously landed into a spiritual region where bhakti becomes Bhagavat Himself and not a mere cittavṛtti.²⁸

Madhusūdana is forced in this direction for two related reasons, though I am not at all not sure that this movement is unconscious, as Gupta suggests. First, in his desire to establish that it is the paramapurusaṛtha and the highest sentiment, he wishes to identify bhakti with supreme bliss. A mere mental mode, a product of māyā, cannot be bliss, so Madhusūdana has to establish that bhakti is something greater.²⁹ But it is axiomatic in Advaita that only Brahman and īśvara (in the language of the BR, bhagavat) can be said to be supreme bliss. On this account alone, then, bhakti must be identified with one or the other.

Second, Madhusūdana wants to give devotion an ontological status that is, at the very least, commensurate with that of mokṣa. But how can a cittavṛtti be placed on a par with liberation, especially when the latter has been identified by Śaṅkara as equivalent to the unchanging Absolute? So again, bhakti must somehow be assimilated to the supreme principle. The well-known equation of mokṣa and Brahman has already closed off one way of accomplishing this. While the Gosvāmins give bhakti a near-absolute status by equating it with the Lord's highest śakti, this

route is not open to Madhusūdana. As an Advaitin, he must hold that Brahman's only śakti is māyā, which is insentient (jaḍa), like the vṛtti, and in the final analysis not fully real. Given the options, then, the identification of bhakti and bhagavat is Madhusūdana's natural and indeed only recourse.

5.6 The Nature of Bhagavat

This of course raises the question of the nature of bhagavat and the relation of bhagavat to Brahman. Considering the numerous quotations from the BP found in the BR and the loving descriptions of the form of Kṛṣṇa found in Madhusūdana's devotional verses, we might conclude that his Blessed Lord is an anthropomorphically conceived deity and that the highest devotional experience is some type of mystical apprehension of a personal form. But the fact is, and this would be surprising were The Elixir of Devotion not written by so rigorous an Advaitin, that the first and most important chapter of the work is, despite the title, almost completely lacking in a personalized concept of the Godhead. Bhagavat appears in the particularized form of Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, etc., only in the numerous verses of the BP that are quoted in the text. The sole exception occurs in the first stanza, where Madhusūdana speaks of devotion to "Mukunda" as the highest goal of life, and in section X, where he glosses the same stanza as follows:

The name "Mukunda" indicates the object of the yoga of devotion. It will be stated that He alone, the inner controller and Lord of all, is the objective cause of the sentiment of devotion.³⁰

At the beginning of chapter two, Madhusūdana defines devotion as the "form of Govinda that has entered firmly into the melted mind."³¹ He then goes on to analyse the different types of bhakti in terms of the experience of the various participants in the Kṛṣṇa-līlā, as recounted in the BP. There is, however, no discussion of the nature of bhagavat himself. So, although "Mukunda" and "Govinda" are both names of Kṛṣṇa and it is certain that Madhusūdana is a devotee of that deity, we cannot determine from such references, which are either too brief or too general, how he understands either Kṛṣṇa or devotional experience of Kṛṣṇa. We must look to the rest of the text to discover this.

Section XI gives us, in passing, an important hint as to Madhusūdana's thinking on this subject. There he suggests that, though it is not the ordinary practice, devotees may take up the study of the Vedānta "for the sake of determining the essential nature of the object of their worship (bhajanīya)."³² While he does not develop this idea, it is warning enough. We should not be taken aback when, as we continue to read, we gradually realize that his portrait of bhagavat is practically indistinguishable from an orthodox Advaitic description of Brahman. Stanza 30, for

example, gives a number of adjectives intended to reveal the nature of the Blessed Lord, and the commentary explains each of them in turn: "'Omnipresent' indicates that He pervades all space, 'eternal' that He exists through all time, 'full' means that since He is one without second He is the substratum of the whole illusion of duality, and 'consciousness and bliss' indicates that He is the supreme goal of life."³³ Commentary on stanzas 11-13 gives, as has already been mentioned, an Advaitin's argument in support of the blissfulness of rasa in general and of bhaktirasa in particular. Complete with quotations from the Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtras, a discussion of the two powers of māyā, and a brief exposition of the non-dualist theory of knowledge, it reads like one of the author's more formal metaphysical treatises. For purposes of this discussion, Madhusūdana shifts abruptly from using the word bhagavat as a designation of the highest principle to the use, instead, of Brahman and caitanya ("Consciousness"). These terms are employed interchangeably for each other, and for bhagavat as well. This practice continues in section XXIII, where Madhusūdana establishes that the form of the Lord is innate in the mind. To provide authoritative support for his argument, he cites a portion of Sureśvara's Sambandhāvārttika that proves the innateness, not indeed of bhagavat, but of the Self or ātman. A little later, quoting a well-

known passage from the Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad, Madhusūdana clearly identifies bhagavat and Brahman: "The Upaniṣadic text, 'All this, verily, is Brahman, in origin, duration, and dissolution' [CU 3.14.11], teaches that all things arise from the Blessed Lord alone, exist in the Blessed Lord alone, and dissolve into the Blessed Lord alone."³⁴

Finally, in section XXIII, Madhusūdana gives a definition of bhagavat which explicitly identifies Him with the ātman of the Advaitins: "The Blessed Lord is the non-dual Self, a mass of perfect being, consciousness, and bliss, the pure existence which is the substratum of all."³⁵

Such passages make it obvious that the BR's understanding of bhagavat is thoroughly Advaitic; it certainly shows no influence of the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas' elevation of bhagavat above the unqualified brahman. If anything, there is an opposite movement which would be totally unacceptable to the Gosvāmins: the concept of bhagavat becomes quite depersonalized and closely identified with the unqualified, supreme Brahman of Advaita.

I pointed out in chapter two that Śaṅkara often spoke of the personal God and the Absolute as if they were equivalent.³⁶ Madhusūdana's tendency in this direction is even more marked, and, as the following excerpts from the GAD will demonstrate, it is by no means confined to the BR:

"To Me [Kṛṣṇa] alone," i.e., the undivided Self whose nature is being-consciousness-bliss, devoid of all limiting adjuncts."³⁷

And so it is said by Brahmā regarding the Blessed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "Thou art the one Self, the ancient Person, the self-luminous truth, infinite, without second, eternal, imperishable, perpetual bliss, unstained, full, free from all limitation, immortal" [BP 10.14.23]. The meaning is, "You are the Self, the Brahman that is devoid of all limiting adjuncts." . . . Blessed Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate reality, the unconditioned Brahman which is the support of all false projections.³⁸

Reading passages such as these along with those from the BR just quoted, we might well wonder if Madhusūdana wishes to completely efface the difference between the Lord and the transpersonal ultimate. The BR, at least, leaves us to search on our own for hints as to exactly what the difference between the two, if any, might be. In his chapter on the BR, Gupta maintains that the essential distinction is that in Brahman knowledge and bliss remain undifferentiated while in bhagavat bliss is separated out, as it were, and fully manifested.³⁹ I find no basis for this conclusion in the text. In fact Madhusūdana at one point defines bhagavat in passing as a "mass of bliss and consciousness" and adds the qualifier "undivided."⁴⁰ Moreover, caitanya and mokṣa are also identified as "supreme bliss."⁴¹

The only real clue to this problem given in the BR appears in section XI, where Madhusūdana is discussing the difference between bhakti and knowledge of Brahman. I will therefore anticipate my consideration of that important passage by noting that in it the author makes a statement

that points clearly, if indirectly, to an important distinction between bhagavat and Brahman. He asserts that devotion is a determinate (savikalpaka) mental modification while knowledge of Brahman is indeterminate (nirvikalpaka).⁴²

The distinction between determinate and indeterminate perception is recognized by all schools of Indian thought, although their understanding of it differs according to their various metaphysical inclinations. For the realists such as the Nyāya, both are types of relative, objective experience, indeterminate being bare apprehension, raw and uninterpreted, and determinate being cognition that is concretized and differentiated through conceptual thought. For late post-Śaṅkara Advaitins, however, all relative experience is savikalpaka, conditioned by "name and form" (nāmarūpa), and only intuitive awareness of the undifferentiated, objectless Consciousness--i.e., Brahman--is nirvikalpaka.⁴³ Building on their understanding of this distinction, these writers distinguish between savikalpaka samādhi ("differentiated enstasis"), the experience of the qualified Brahman at the borderline of transcendence, and nirvikalpaka samādhi, the realization of absolute transcendence and complete identity with the unqualified Brahman.⁴⁴

The point of introducing this somewhat technical discussion is that to characterize a mode of awareness, as Madhusūdana has done, is also to characterize its object. If bhakti is a determinate experience, bhagavat, its object, must be a determinate or conditioned reality. Likewise, if spiritual knowledge is an indeterminate experience, Brahman, its object, must be indeterminate. It becomes apparent that, like Śaṅkara, Madhusūdana does not abandon the distinction between the personal God and the higher Brahman, even though he may relax it temporarily. Bhagavat, as we may have suspected all along, is the same as the Īśvara of orthodox Advaita. He is the qualified (saguna) Brahman. Though ultimately identical with the unqualified, attributeless (nirguna) Brahman, he is conceptually--and for the mystic perhaps also experientially--distinguishable from the final state of pure Being.

In the GAD we find Madhusūdana, in accord with Advaitic tradition, describing Īśvara or bhagavat as having all the attributes and functions of a supreme personal God, qualities which make the Lord a savikalpaka, as opposed to a nirvikalpaka, reality. The determinate nature of bhagavat is obvious, for example, his commentary on BG 7.14:

The Blessed Lord, who is "original" (bimba), is possessed of infinite powers. He is the controller of māyā, omniscient, the bestower of all results [of actions], sleepless, having a form (mūrti) of pure bliss. The supreme guru, he assumes numerous incarnations in order to grace His devotees.⁴⁵

This is the Lord who is the object of bhakti or, more accurately, who becomes bhakti when reflected in the melted mind of the devotee. The language used is appropriate for a description of the qualified Brahman; it could never be used in reference to the actionless, attributeless, impersonal Absolute. With a little research and thought, then, it becomes clear that the objects of bhakti and knowledge of Brahman can, in fact, be distinguished.

There is, however, a danger that a rigid, "textbook" understanding of the Advaitins' distinction between the saguna and nirguna Brahman might lead us to conclude that Madhusūdana regards the Lord as a merely phenomenal reality. It is true that certain of Śaṅkara's followers, in their anxiety to preserve the complete transcendence and purity of Brahman, place Īśvara within the realm of māyā. This at least appears to be the result of the theories which take the pure Brahman itself as the bimba ("original"), regarding the personal God as its reflection (pratibimba) in the universal māyā and the jīva as its reflection in individual Ignorance or the mind. Such thinking makes Īśvara a kind of collective jīva; though greater perhaps in power than the individual soul, he seems, since both he and the jīva are reflections, to be equally involved in phenomenality.⁴⁶ But Madhusūdana, as we have seen, follows the Vivaraṇa school in refusing to reduce the Lord to the status of a reflection.

Īvara is himself the bimba, the very Brahman in its aspect of relatedness to the world. Even though appearing to be conditioned (upāhita) in consequence of his role as the "prototype Consciousness" (bimbacaitanya), he remains nothing other than Brahman. Hence, Madhusūdana can write: "Everything other than the Blessed Lord . . . is false (māyika), . . . the Blessed Lord alone is real."⁴⁷ It is necessary for Madhusūdana to make a distinction between bhagavat and Brahman, since it is essential for the conceptual differentiation of bhakti and jñāna, without which the whole enterprise of writing on devotion would be useless, as we shall see in the next section. Nevertheless, he is not anxious to stress the distinction in the BR, as this would imply a diminution of both bhagavat and bhakti. Given long established Advaita tradition and his particular reading of īvara as bimba, he is well able to speak of the Lord in terms that we might think more appropriate to the nirguṇa ultimate and even to use language which seems to identify the two.

We here approach the realm of the paradoxical, the ultimate mystery of Advaita that defies rigid conceptualization. As long as there remains a universe for Brahman to be related to--which is, according to Śaṅkara Vedānta, forever--the personal God exists as one with the transpersonal Absolute. Hence, when the Lord speaks in

scripture, his voice is often to be interpreted as the "voice" of Brahman in both its aspects, qualified and unqualified, saguna and nirguna, as in Madhusūdana's striking gloss at GAD 12.8: "Having fixed your mind in Me, the qualified Brahman, you, having attained knowledge, with your Self absorbed in Me, will dwell in Me alone, the pure Brahman."⁴⁸

Who or what, then, is the BR's bhagavat? It is clear that, as far as the text is concerned, the Blessed Lord is equivalent to Brahman. Yet, while bhagavat is identical with the non-dual ultimate, he is that highest reality appearing in determinate form in order that, among other things, the supreme bliss which is his/its very nature may be relished. As to the nature of that form, Madhusūdana is silent, except to suggest by his abundant use of the BP that in some unspecified way it is, at least for him, that of his beloved Kṛṣṇa.

5.7 Bhakti and Knowledge of Brahman

Having examined what Madhusūdana says about the nature of bhagavat, the object of devotion, we can now return to our discussion of devotion itself. Our author has described bhakti, first as a vṛtti which grasps the form of the Lord, and then as the reflection of the Lord in the mind. Since he is not making a clear distinction between

bhagavat the impersonal Absolute, the structure of bhakti is turning out to be strikingly similar to, and in some respects difficult to distinguish from, that of knowledge of Brahman.

There are two ways in which such knowledge is spoken of in Advaita. Interestingly enough, they correspond closely to the two conceptions of bhakti presented in the BR. In the first, knowledge is understood as a mental mode which has assumed the "form" of Brahman, thereby destroying Ignorance and allowing the self-luminous reality to reveal itself in its fullness. Such an identification of knowledge and the mental mode is useful at levels of discourse which do not require the most rigorous precision. Ultimately, however, it can be only figurative.⁴⁹ This is because it suggests a duality between knowledge and Brahman which the Advaita does not want to support. In the final analysis, the vṛtti is insentient (jaḍa), a product of māyā. Advaita must, for this reason, identify knowledge with Consciousness itself, remaining true to the "great saying" of the Upaniṣad: "Brahman is truth, knowledge, infinite."⁵⁰ Strictly speaking jñāna is not the vṛtti but Consciousness as reflected in the vṛtti.⁵¹ Knowledge of Brahman then becomes the reflection of Consciousness in its purity on the akhaṇḍākāracittavṛtti ("mental modification of the undivided form")--the psychic mode, generated by the "great sayings"

of the Upaniṣads, that is regarded as the final product of Advaitic spiritual discipline. Since, here as before, the reflection is understood to be non-different from the original, knowledge of Brahman is Brahman.

Madhusūdana, of course, is well aware of the close structural analogy between the bhaktivṛtti and the akhaṇḍākāracittavṛtti, and the conceptual similarity between devotion as the reflection of bhagavat and knowledge as the reflection of Brahman. Indeed, it becomes evident that Madhusūdana's exposition of devotion is consciously framed so as to set up a homology between devotion and jñāna. The problem of the relation between the two is introduced at the beginning of section XI in the form of an objection:

"Devotion to the Lord is merely knowledge of Brahman by another name. . . . Hence the undertaking of this inquiry is useless."⁵² In the discussion which follows, we learn that devotion and knowledge "have distinct natures, as well as means, ends, and qualifications for eligibility."⁵³

While the author is thus obviously intent on differentiating devotion from knowledge, in order to defend the validity of his discourse on the former, he is by no means trying to minimize the importance of the structural similarities between the two. In fact, he wants to suggest to the perceptive reader that the similarities are quite significant. So the list of differences we are confronted with is at the same time a list of parallels.

Consider first the question of their "distinct natures." Madhusūdana writes:

Devotion is a determinate mental modification, the mind's taking the form of the Blessed Lord after becoming melted. Knowledge of Brahman is an indeterminate mental modification whose object is the secondless Self only, and it is not preceded by melting of the mind.⁵⁴

Here, of course, Madhusūdana is speaking of both knowledge and devotion as vṛttis, a usage which, as I have indicated, must be considered figurative. Nevertheless, the passage is an important one, so much so that I have of necessity already referred to it and discussed its key ideas above. The "melting" of the mind, as we have seen, is an essential element of bhakti. That such an emotional state should be absent from the discipline of knowledge, the path of the intellectually gifted seeker who enjoys discriminative thinking and may tend to look down on emotionalism, is not surprising. Neither is the idea that devotion is determinate, grasping the form of God, while knowledge is indeterminate, apprehending the form of the unqualified Brahman. This last distinction is especially crucial, however, because it points to the key metaphysical difference between the two phenomena. Since both bhakti and jñāna are ultimately identical with their objects, the difference between them is based in the final analysis on the fact that their objects are different.

The formal emphasis on distinctions in this passage should not, however, blind us to the fact that Madhusūdana, as I have suggested, also wants us to see certain homologies. So far they are as follows: melted mind/unmelted mind, conditioned mode/unconditioned mode, form of bhagavat/form of Brahman. .

The idea of apprehending the "form" of Brahman--the formless, attributeless, unobjectifiable Absolute--is, of course, problematic in itself. How can the one Knower be known? How can Consciousness become its own object? This difficulty is commonly flaunted by Advaita's critics, notably the Mādhvas and the Naiyāyikas, and Madhusūdana is obliged to address it from various angles in all his major works. His response, in essence, is that truly speaking all knowledge consists of a mental mode grasping Brahman. The distinction between ordinary knowledge and brahmavidyā is that, while in the former the mind apprehends the ultimate as limited by an object, in the latter Brahman is grasped as limited by the akhaṇḍākāracittavṛtti only. So even the final knowledge of Brahman is conditioned (upāhita),⁵⁵ but it is conditioned in a special way. In the VKL, Madhusūdana states:

Even when it is [logically] impossible for Brahman to be an object of knowledge, knowledge is found to have Brahman as its object. This occurs either by its grasping of the original (bimba) or through some quite different process that is inexplicable (anirvacanīya).⁵⁶

If knowledge of Brahman is the apprehension of the original--which, as we have seen, Madhusūdana identifies with Īsvara--then such knowledge would seem to be, like bhakti, a savikalpaka cognition, differentiated from devotion only by the lack of "melting of the mind" (cittadruti). But Madhusūdana has indicated in the BR that a truly nirvikalpaka cognition of Brahman is possible, one which is a characteristic of jñāna alone. Assuming that his thinking on this point did not change in the interval between the composition of the two texts, the nirvikalpaka cognition mentioned in the BR must be referred to the indescribable mode of knowledge described in the VKL. Though he asserts, as he must, that "immediate knowledge having the form (ākāra) of Brahman"⁵⁷ is possible, he confesses that a final understanding of the phenomenon depends on direct intuitive experience.⁵⁸

Having indicated how devotion and knowledge differ in nature, section XI of the BR goes on to discuss how they differ in their means (sādhana), that is to say, the practices which bring them about:

The hearing (śravaṇa) of compositions that bring together the exalted qualities of the Blessed Lord is the means to devotion, while the means to knowledge of Brahman is the great sayings of the Upaniṣads such as, 'Thou are That.'⁵⁹

We have already seen that orthodox Advaita holds that saving knowledge can only come through the mediation of the mahā-

vākyas of the Upaniṣads, which serve as the indispensable final catalysts of realization. It is significant, then, that nowhere in the BR does Madhusūdana suggest that devotees are dependent upon the "hearing" (śravaṇa) of the Vedic revelation for the attainment of their ultimate spiritual aim. This is not, however, to say that there is no place for śravaṇa in bhakti. According to the BP, the first of the disciplines of the Lord's devotees (bhāgavatadharmas) is the "hearing" of the glories of the Lord, and "hearing," Madhusūdana tells us now, is the principal means to devotion. Thus, although there is a significant difference between devotion and knowledge in this respect, there is also an analogy. In both paths, the hearing (śravaṇa) of scripture is of utmost importance. To be sure, śravaṇa in the bhakti literature does not mean precisely what it does as a technical term of Advaita. Nevertheless, it is the first and primary discipline in both paths.⁶⁰ The scriptures of knowledge, the Upaniṣads, and those of devotion, preeminently the Bhāgavata, are of course not the same. Our author knows well, however, that Vaiṣṇavas of Kṛṣṇaite persuasion regard the BP as their highest authority, giving it a status equal to, or greater than, the orthodox Vedānta's indispensable śruti.⁶¹

Section XXIII of the BR, as we have mentioned, seeks to show that the form of the Lord is naturally inherent in

the mind. While discussing this question, Madhusūdana again considers, in passing, the role of scripture in devotional spirituality, and again it is given a place corresponding to that which the "great sayings" have in Advaita. The objector remarks that, if the experience of God is inherent, then the goal of spiritual practice is already accomplished, no cause (hetu) of this state is required, and scripture will therefore be useless. Madhusūdana answers that "scripture serves in the acquisition of the form of the Lord, which in turn prevents the mind's taking on the form of other objects," and he further specifies that this experience of God is "generated by scripture" (śāstra-janyā).⁶² Note that both the objection and the response assume that scripture is in some way the cause of the state of God-realization.

The lack of dependence on the Vedic revelation suggested here is thoroughly in keeping with the democratic spirit of the bhakti movements, and equally opposed to Vedāntic exclusivism. It allows devotion--and through devotion the highest goal of life--to be accessible to those, such as women and members of the lower castes, who are not eligible for Vedic study. This of course raises the question of adhikāra or eligibility for bhakti, which Madhusūdana does not neglect. An important difference between bhakti and jñāna lies in the qualifications that

each path demands of its aspirants. Madhusūdana states it in the most radical form possible: "While all living beings are qualified for devotion, only the renunciates of the highest degree (paramahamsaparivrajakas) who are possessed of the four-fold means are eligible for the knowledge of Brahman."⁶³ The full significance of Madhusūdana's opening the devotional path to "all beings" in the BR will become apparent in the discussion of the relation of bhakti and mokṣa below.

The last difference between devotion and knowledge discussed in section XI has also been touched upon above. The end or result of the bhakti is "an abundance of love for the Blessed Lord," while that of knowledge is "the cessation of the Ignorance which is the root of all evil."⁶⁴ This again emphasizes the fact that, for the the bhakta, the highest goal of life is devotion itself, not mokṣa.

For convenience, the final list of "parallel differences" between bhakti and knowledge can be expressed, in the order of qualification, means, nature, object, and result, as follows: (1) all beings/the highest renunciates, by (2) hearing the BP/hearing the "great sayings" (3) attain a conditioned experience/an unconditioned experience (4) having the Lord as its object/having Brahman as its object and (5) divine love as its result/liberation as its result. The homology is thoroughgoing. It is obviously intended as

a justification of bhakti's being an independent path leading to its own goal, and to recommend devotion as an experience as valid as, and at least equal to, the knowledge so prized by the Advaitins.

All of these distinctions and parallels apply, of course, to devotion and knowledge as vṛttis, which we may now be confident to recognize in each case as a secondary or figurative use of the terms. In their true, ontological dimensions, bhakti and jñāna also show parallelism, even if it is a somewhat abbreviated one. It is that they are identical with, respectively, bhagavat and Brahman. The real extent of the difference between these two realities, as conceived by Madhusūdana, is not made clear in the BR, but at least we have established that one, conditioned in nature, may be identified with īśvara and that the other, the unconditioned, is the para Brahman.

5.8 Bhakti and Mokṣa

If bhakti is similar to the akhaṇḍākāracittavṛtti in structure, it is also similar in at least some of its results. In section XI, as we have seen, Madhusūdana states that one of the important features which distinguishes knowledge of Brahman from bhakti is that the goal of the former is the destruction of Ignorance. This at first seems to imply that bhakti does not have this particular virtue.

Yet we read later that the manifestation of God in bhakti brings about what amounts to the same result: it puts an end to the experience of all other objects. Madhusūdana says:

Because the numberless forms of objects (viṣayākāra) that have entered the mind since beginningless time are destroyed by such a mental form of the Lord, and He alone shines forth, the purpose of life is accomplished.⁶⁵

But the form of the Lord that is generated by scripture, though appearing as if remote at the beginning of practice, gradually removes the forms of objects from the mind and, when lead through the advanced levels of practice to immediacy, completely destroys them.⁶⁶

There follows a typically Advaitic discussion of the process in which external objects are falsely superimposed on Consciousness, with the differences that bhagavat takes the place normally occupied by Brahman, and the manifestation of God in bhakti is equated with knowledge. Thus:

The main point here is that the objects which imprint their forms in the mind are not distinct from the Lord because they are superimposed on Him. . . . Because that which is superimposed is annulled by the knowledge of its substratum, all things vanish at the manifestation of the Lord and merge in Him.⁶⁷

There is no conclusion possible here but that Madhusūdana is saying that devotion leads to the same result as brahma-vidyā--namely, the destruction of Ignorance, the revelation of Brahman as the underlying Consciousness, and the attainment of mokṣa. Bhakti is distinct from knowledge, especially in being a conditioned or savikalpaka experience and being independent of Vedic revelation, but it also leads to liberation.

This at first seems perplexing. We might wonder whether or not Madhusūdana is being inconsistent, since he stated earlier that having mokṣa as its goal was one of the features of knowledge of Brahman that distinguish it from bhakti. Ultimately he is not, because he is here adopting the stance of the BP and the devotional schools, which devalue the quest for mokṣa in favor of the greater bliss of bhakti. Mokṣa is not the goal. The joy of bhakti is so much greater than the joy of liberation that the question of the bhakta's acquisition of the latter is incidental, even though it may in fact occur.⁶⁸

In this connection, Madhusūdana takes over and carefully articulates the devotionalists' distinction between bhakti as a spiritual practice or means (sādhana) and bhakti as an end (sādhya or phala).⁶⁹ The aim of bhakti is not liberation, an experience of a totally different order than devotion, but a fully manifested, self-validating and self-sustaining mode of bhakti itself. This, we have seen, is the state described in the first stanza as the "experience of bliss untouched by any suffering."⁷⁰ Despite what Madhusūdana has said about bliss being the parama-puruṣārtha, of which bhakti, mokṣa, and samādhi are alternative forms, the reader of the BR increasingly becomes aware of the insistent implication that, from the perspective of the devotee at least, devotion is without question the highest goal.

Madhusūdana is well aware that his elevation of bhakti to the status of paramapurṣārtha is in direct opposition to the teachings of orthodox Advaita. Nevertheless, he continues to hold to it, sometimes quite explicitly, sometimes less so, throughout the text. In section XI we find a rejection of the traditional thinking of the Śaṅkara school that is bold and direct. The objector, who is speaking on behalf of the orthodox, raises the criticism that devotees will not experience the desire for liberation (mumukṣutva) "because of the impossibility of detachment from the bliss of devotion," and that, mumukṣutva being one of the four qualifications⁷¹ specified by Śaṅkara, they will consequently be ineligible for the study of Vedānta. The implication, of course, is that this would be a great misfortune since, if tradition is right, they cannot attain mokṣa without such study. Madhusūdana readily admits the truth of the objection as stated. He fails, however, to see any calamity in it:

We admit that this is true, because one already attached to the bliss of devotion does not undertake such study. . . . But the impossibility of detachment from the bliss of devotion is certainly not a source of distress; in fact, it is desirable.⁷²

If indeed the inability to study the Vedas prevents a bhakta from attaining mokṣa, he seems to be saying, then so much the worse for mokṣa. The devotee does not care, for he is in pursuit of a higher goal.

The desire for mokṣa is again depreciated in section XXIV, where Madhusūdana describes it as evidence of a lower stage of spiritual non-attachment. According to this understanding, the yearning for release is itself an attachment which prevents the attainment of the highest love for God and is thus an obstacle to complete fulfillment of life.⁷³ A higher non-attachment is essential for the ultimate experience of devotion; it is characterized by a "lack of regard for all goals, including liberation."⁷⁴ There follows a series of twelve verses from the BP, which amply illustrate the distinctive teaching of that text, here echoed by Madhusūdana, that the true devotee does not desire liberation in any form.

All this, however, is not to say the the devotee does not attain final release. The implication of many of the BP verses which devalue the quest for liberation is that, though the devotee does not desire mokṣa, the Lord grants it anyway.⁷⁵ As early in the text as section VII Madhusūdana tells us that "release from transmigratory existence is inevitable for the devotee,"⁷⁶ and we have just discussed section XXIII, where the manifestation of bhagavat in bhakti is said to produce a state which, though Madhusūdana refuses to label it explicitly as such, is in effect indistinguishable from liberation.

In sections XXV and XXVI of the BR, Madhusūdana discusses the relation of knowledge, non-attachment, and devotion; he comes to the interesting conclusion that the higher non-attachment which is a prerequisite for perfect bhakti cannot exist without knowledge. "First comes knowledge of the Lord," he says, "then there arises the higher non-attachment, and then the devotion which is of the nature of ecstatic love (preman)."⁷⁷ He must of course specify what he means here by knowledge. Is it reverent awareness of God's greatness (māhātmyajñāna), as in Vallabha's definition of bhakti?⁷⁸ Although such an understanding of knowledge might be expected in a devotional treatise, it is not what Madhusūdana has in mind. He describes the realization that must come prior to the attainment of the highest levels of devotion as follows:

Everything other than the Blessed Lord, because it is transient, is false (māyika) like a dream. It is devoid of true significance, painful, and to be shunned. The Blessed Lord alone is real; He is the supreme bliss, self-luminous, eternal, the one to be sought after. This is the kind of knowledge spoken of.⁷⁹

This is clearly the Advaitins' direct realization of Brahman. To confirm this, we need only note that, by way of illustration, Madhusūdana quotes a series of verses from both the BP and the BG⁸⁰ in which the word jñānin ("possessor of knowledge"), a common designation of the Advaitin who has experienced the truth of non-duality, appears no less than seven times. Any doubt as to the

meaning of jñānin in this context is removed when we consider that among these verses we again encounter BG 7.16-19. In this passage, we will recall, the jñānin is described by Kṛṣṇa as the highest type of devotee, as one who is dear to Him, who has realized after many births that "Vāsudeva is all." Śaṅkara refers to these lines in his commentary on the Gīta several times to establish the superiority of the man of Advaitic realization,⁸¹ and Madhusūdana, who follows Śaṅkara closely in his GAD, glosses BG 7.18 thus: "The jñānin, who knows Me [Kṛṣṇa] as the Self, is that very Self, not different from Me; moreover, I am he."⁸² In the BR, he comments on the experience of the jñānin described in 7.19: "Since it is a product of māyā, all other than Vāsudeva is not real; Vāsudeva alone is real, is most dear, because He is the Self."⁸³ Madhusūdana is here certainly thinking of knowledge in the full Advaitic sense, immediate knowledge (aparokṣajñāna), the direct realization (sākṣātkāra) of the ultimate.

To say, however, that such knowledge must precede the full development of bhakti is, since true gnosis is equivalent to mokṣa, the same as saying that the highest devotional experience comes only after liberation. So again we find the teaching of the BR to be in sharp conflict with standard Advaita doctrine. According to Śaṅkara, as we have seen, knowledge and mokṣa entail the abolition of all

duality, and any suggestion that after realization there might be devotion of any sort, not to speak of a further heightening of the devotional experience, is out of the question. Yet, though Madhusūdana here again fails to spell out explicitly the full implications of what he is saying, confirmation of his unorthodox intent is not difficult to find. We need only look at his outline of the eleven stages of devotional experience (bhaktibhūmikā) given in stanzas 34-36 and his commentary thereon.⁸⁴

The description of the sixth stage in this hierarchy is particularly important for the present discussion. It is preceded by four stages of spiritual preparation, and a fifth which consists in the manifestation in the mind of the form of the Lord. This fifth stage is bhakti in a complete but as yet not fully manifested form. Called "love" (rati), it functions as the "permanent emotion" of the sentiment of devotion.⁸⁵ Stages six through eleven are described as the "fruits," i.e., results, of this experience, all but stage six being higher, more developed forms of devotion. These culminate in the "Supreme Limit of Ecstatic Love" (premah paramakāṣṭhā), the eleventh. Stage six, called the "Realization of the Essential Nature" (svarūpādhiḡati), is somewhat peculiar. It is not a devotional experience as such. Rather it turns out to be nothing less than the immediate intuition of the ultimate that is the goal of

Advaita--in Madhusūdana's words, "the direct realization of the essential nature of the inner Self (pratyagātman).⁸⁶ It includes the knowledge of the fundamental identity of jīva and Brahman taught by the "great saying" of the Upaniṣad, "That thou art."⁸⁶ This realization, in turn, generates the intense non-attachment required for the full manifestation of bhakti. Indeed, it is the same as the knowledge spoken of in sections XXV and XXVI as an essential precursor of the highest devotional experience. "Without it," Madhusūdana says, "love (rati), even though it is present, will not reach its full development due to the distractions of the body and senses."⁸⁷

The inescapable conclusion from this is that Madhusūdana is teaching that the higher levels of devotion are only experienced by the jīvanmukta, the one who has attained Self-realization while still dwelling in a human body. He is saying, in other words, that the state of liberation-in-life, which itself presupposes knowledge of Brahman, is a prerequisite for the culmination of bhakti. Such a doctrine certainly seems to represent a triumph for the cause of devotionalism in the Śaṅkara school. It may seem a strange teaching to come from the pen of the author of the Advaitasiddhi, but Madhusūdana has already, in section XI, asserted that "even the saints who are liberated-in-life experience devotion to the Blessed Lord,"

quoting as authority BP 1.7.10.⁸⁸ It is important to remember that Madhusūdana regards himself as a jīvanmukta as well as a bhakta, and also to be aware that this doctrine of the possibility of devotion in the state of liberation-in-life is a key teaching of his GAD, as we shall see in chapter nine.

5.9 Bhakti Superior to Mokṣa

At this point, we are finally in a position in which we can piece together and make explicit a reasonably clear picture of the BR's for the most part implicit teaching on the relation between bhakti and mokṣa as "goals of life." To work this out, we need only juxtapose (a) the discussion of the relation between knowledge, non-attachment, and devotion in sections XXV-XXVI; (b) the description of the sixth stage of devotional experience in the commentary on stanza 35, which continues and builds on the thought of (a); and (c) Madhusūdana's teaching in both the GAD and the BR on the continuance of bhakti in the state of jīvanmukti. Viewed together, these teachings make inescapable the conclusion that our author is depicting devotion in its developed stages as a more advanced and more desirable level of spiritual experience than mokṣa.

The Blessed Lord first appears in the melted mind of the devotee as early as stage five, at which point the

bhakta is already experiencing the sāttvikabhāvas ("ecstatic modes"), outward symptoms of an intensely moving inner experience.⁸⁹ This, however, is only the "sprout" (añkura), the mere beginning, of bhakti. At stage six, the devotee realizes the bliss of the Self, but even this--the final goal of traditional Advaita--is not the end. He goes on to experience and increasingly more blissful levels of spontaneous ecstatic love of bhagavat, plumbing the full range of premabhakti as it was enjoyed by great devotees such as Prahlāda and the gopīs. Though Madhusūdana gives us only a sketchy outline of the higher stages of devotion, it is clear that he regards them as further and more blissful developments beyond the state of Self-realization attained at stage six. If, as we have seen, bhakti, mokṣa, and yogic samādhi are all forms in which the supreme bliss which is the goal of life may be realized, the implication of the BR is that bhakti is the highest of these--that is to say, the highest mode in which the paramapuruṣārtha can be relished.⁹⁰ This is why, his initial effort to widen the concept of paramapuruṣārtha by transferring that title from liberation to bliss notwithstanding, it is still possible for Madhusūdana to speak of bhakti by itself as the highest goal of life.

Except for Madhusūdana's close verbal identification of bhagavat and the inner Self, and the consequent

abstractness of his image of the former, his analysis of the relation between bhakti and mokṣa is strikingly similar to that presented by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. As we have seen, the Gosvāmins regard the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of māyāśakti as preliminary to the emergence of true bhakti. The underlying rationale of Madhusūdana's sixth stage is exactly the same, and it accomplishes a similar end: overcoming, through realization of the ātman, the hindrances to devotion imposed by bondage to ordinary psychophysical existence. The conception of ātman is of course different, but in each case it must be realized in preparation for the highest experience of bhakti.⁹¹

On the principle that mystic realization in its nirviśeṣa ("qualityless") form is much less blissful than saviśeṣa ("qualified") realization, the Gosvāmins regard union with brahman to be far inferior to the vision of bhagavat.⁹² Again, Madhusūdana's analysis of the stages of bhakti reflects a similar attitude. It suggests what for an Advaitin is an almost heretical conclusion, namely, that the nirvikalpaka realization is less, at least experientially speaking, than the savikalpaka. It is almost as if Madhusūdana has accepted the classical Vaiṣṇava belief that in Advaitic mokṣā, since it is a unitive state, bliss is not experienced while in bhakti it is experienced so intensely that the jñānin must remain unfulfilled unless he too can

taste it in that form.⁹³ Having defined bhakti as supreme bliss (paramānanda), he later on in the BR begins to talk of it as preman ("ecstatic love"), which is a key term of the Gauḍīya school, as we have seen. He alludes in passing to "the devotion which is of the nature of ecstatic love,"⁹⁴ and goes on to designate the highest stage of bhakti as "the Supreme Limit of Ecstatic Love."⁹⁵ Although Madhusūdana again is frustratingly vague, it is possible that, since bhakti is both bliss and preman, he is using the latter term to designate the particular kind of bliss experienced in the higher stages of devotion. Preman is the bliss of bhagavat/Brahman, not just attained, but experienced fully and richly in the style of the great devotees of the Bhāgavata. This further development and articulation of the ecstatic bliss experience is the chief interest of the theory of devotional sentiment, to which we shall turn in the next chapter.

Although, like the Gosvāmins, Madhusūdana attempts to transfer bhakti from the realm of the mind and its affections to the sphere of the truly real, it is not clear that he carries this task through, with sufficient attention to detail, to a convincing end. We finish reading the BR with the feeling that, however impressive the presentation, the question of the final metaphysical value of devotion remains to be considered. The difficulty is the same lack

of directness that characterizes the whole text. The reader is forced ascertain the trend of the argument and extend it, on his own, to its logical conclusion. The key, of course, is Madhusūdana's identification of bhakti with bhagavat. Because he often speaks as if bhagavat were equivalent to Brahman, it is obvious that he wants to suggest that bhakti shares an equal, i.e., absolute, ontological status. The message of the BR is not only that bhakti is an independent path, not only that it is blissful, but also that it is fully real and thus capable of being enjoyed eternally as the supreme goal of human existence.

The problems involved in justifying such a conception of devotion in an Advaitic context will be discussed separately in my critical reflections in part III, chapter eight.

CHAPTER SIX

BHAKTI AND SANSKRIT AESTHETICS

Although the philosophical problems inherent in the relation between bhakti and Advaita are the chief interest of the present study, an introduction to the BR would not be complete without a discussion of the theory of rasa or poetic "sentiment" that figures so prominently in the text. The notion of bhaktirasa, the "sentiment of devotion," in fact was important in all of the North Indian schools of Kṛṣṇa devotion that drew their inspiration from the Bhāgavata. Accordingly, this chapter will provide a brief survey of the subject. An overview of the theory of rasa, as developed by the writers on Sanskrit poetics (alaṅkāra-śāstra),¹ will be followed by a short history of its adoption by the Kṛṣṇaite devotional movements. The Bengal Vaiṣṇava exposition of bhaktirasa will be discussed as the primary example of this development. Then, in the last section, a summary of Madhusūdana's views will be given. Certain technical details of the rasa-theory, not essential to the general discussion here, will be elaborated in the notes to the translation in part II.

6.1 Bhakti, Myth, and Imagination

Once the rasa-theory had been adapted to their particular religious milieu, the Vaiṣṇava teachers placed a great deal of emphasis on it and indeed developed it to a high level of sophistication. Still, classical Sanskrit aesthetics, from the standpoint of the devotionalists, was a secular (laukika) discipline.² Although it had a good deal to say about human emotions and their expression in poetry and drama, it was indifferent, if not hostile, toward bhakti. The reason that devotional theologians took such an inordinate interest in the rasa-theory will not therefore be immediately apparent. This may especially be true for those whose familiarity with Indian spirituality is confined to the ascetically oriented forms more well-known in the West.³

Understanding, in this case, must begin with a clear appreciation of the fact that the divine sports of Kṛṣṇa's youth in Vṛdāvana were the central, all-consuming focus of the religious life of the post-Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇava schools in the North. This particular concentration resulted in a high religious valuation being placed on the accounts of the god's exploits that were contained in the purāṇas, especially the BP, and the rich literary tradition dependent on those texts. We have already mentioned that the intense love of the gopīs for their Lord was taken as the paradigm of the highest and most ecstatic kind of bhakti. Other

modes of devotion were illustrated by the love for Kṛṣṇa experienced by, for example, his friends, his parents, or the sages that happened to have contact with him.⁴

It must be emphasized that the stories that made these various expressions of bhakti present and real for the devotees were not treated in simple allegorical fashion, as is now too often the practice. They were not reduced to a collection of symbols "standing for," say, certain abstract metaphysical states, or stages of attainment realized through yoga. Rather, the whole Kṛṣṇa-līlā was taken integrally as a mythic narrative that, continuously recounted and reenacted in various ritual contexts in the community, had to be, not symbolically deciphered for its "meaning" in terms of metaphysics or spiritual praxis, but imaginatively and whole-heartedly entered into.

The interaction of the devotee with the Kṛṣṇa-story took place in a way that was essentially dramatic in inspiration. The theme of the Lord's play or līlā suggested that the activities of the unborn, infinite bhagavat on earth were a role assumed in fun, a kind of divine stage-play with hidden, cosmic dimensions. This, combined with the aesthetic and emotional richness of the literary accounts of the life of the cowherd avatāra, seem naturally to have lead the Vaiṣṇava community to see drama as a means of drawing the devotee closer to God.⁵ As Hein has shown,

vernacular Kṛṣṇa plays were popular in ancient Mathurā, the traditional birthplace of the deity, as early as the second century B.C.E. And drama--in practice as well as concept--continued to be a central element of Kṛṣṇaite spirituality.⁶

The bhakta was, on one level, an avid spectator of the reenactments of the Lord's līlās that took place in the community, as well as a devoted hearer of the accounts of Kṛṣṇa's life read in communal gatherings. Such literary-dramatic experiences served as an effective devotional sādhana. In this connection, Wulff (whose work on the plays of Rūpa Gosvāmin vividly illustrates this phase of Vaiṣṇava spirituality) notes that even today the popular Kṛṣṇa dramas have "the power to awaken profound religious emotions in the devotees who witness them, and to sustain and deepen those emotions not only during the period of a single performance, but through repeated performances over the course of a devotee's entire lifetime."⁷ The serious bhakta was not, however, confined to role of a mere spectator or auditor. Another, more profound, level of participation was available for the more serious aspirants. The BP describes the gopīs as miming Kṛṣṇa's gestures and sports, and recommends that the devotee do the same.⁸ Accordingly, the Vaiṣṇavas developed a theory of devotional practice which allowed the devotee to become an actor, not only in the stage play, but ultimately in the divine drama itself.

Especially in the Bengal school, the highest experience of bhakti came through participation in the mode of devotion experienced by one of the Lord's companions (parikaras), a participation brought about by identification with the character as he, or more likely she, appeared and acted in the mythic narrative. The key practice of advanced aspirants was rāgānuṅābhakti--"devotion following passionate attachment," i.e., bhakti that imitated the love for Kṛṣṇa that was evidenced by his associates.⁹ Its essence has been admirably summarized by Kinsley:

The devotee seeks to involve himself completely in the ongoing drama of Kṛṣṇa by identifying himself with one or another of its participants. In effect, the devotee seeks to replace the ordinary world with the imaginative world of Kṛṣṇa and his companions. While remaining physically in the ordinary world, he seeks to remove himself from it by constantly remembering the transcendental world of Kṛṣṇa and imagining himself to be a part of that world. With the help of scriptural descriptions, he tries to conjure up a world that is as real and immediate to him as the ordinary world in which he normally lives.¹⁰

Comparing the aesthetic approach of the Gauḍīyas with the ascetic orientation of Yoga, Kinsley writes:

The Bengal Vaiṣṇava devotee does not seek to still his mind but stir it by imagination. In yoga the sādhaka attains samādhi by immobilizing his mind and intellect--by stopping the imaginative process. In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism the devotee attains samādhi by ceaselessly imagining himself to be a female companion of Kṛṣṇa.¹¹

This spirituality of imaginative participation was taken very seriously, and worked out in careful detail, by the Vaiṣṇava theologians. In order to provide a conceptual

basis for it, they had to deal with several important problems. How, to begin with, could the devotees enter the realm of the divine drama? To a certain extent the solution was obvious: by natural acts of piety such as reciting the story, meditating on it, acting it out in religious plays, and even, if possible, taking up residence in the place where the events took place, where the hallowed landmarks were yet recognizable and the memory of the divine presence was still alive. These practices were of course adopted and no doubt were effective. But theoretical difficulties remained. How could the bhaktas actually realize the emotions experienced by other persons who were actors in a drama that was, whether temporally or metaphysically, removed from them? And, especially perplexing, how could men, if they wished to enjoy the bliss of the highest bhakti, participate in the love of the female gopīs for the male character Kṛṣṇa?

Fortunately, since drama had for many centuries been regarded in India as the highest, most comprehensive form of art, almost identical questions had already been explored in depth by the writers on Sanskrit aesthetics. It was therefore natural for the Vaiṣṇava theologians to turn to the theories of these "secular" thinkers for aid in conceptualizing their particular imaginative and dramatically-oriented style of devotional sādhana.¹²

6.2 The Theory of Rasa

The first formal expression of Sanskrit aesthetics known to us is the Nāṭyaśāstra (NS), a wide-ranging work which deals with drama, dance, and music as well as literary criticism. Though it is likely that the text contains much that is derived from more ancient tradition, the present redaction is dated at about the sixth century C.E.¹³ The Nāṭyaśāstra gives credit for its authorship to the sage Bharata, who in the verses of the text expounds the art which he himself is said to have received from the god Brahmā. The rich and often highly technical literature of Sanskrit aesthetics, developed by such writers as Dandin, Abhinavagupta, and Viśvanātha, was based upon Bharata's authoritative exposition. The doctrine of rasa, which became the central focus of poetic theory, was first enunciated in its sixth chapter.

A rasa is an emotion, identified as the primary mood of a piece of poetry or a drama, that has been developed to a heightened, idealized state in a process of interaction between a well-executed literary work and a sympathetic connoisseur (rasika). As such, it may be enjoyed for its own intrinsic aesthetic pleasure. Difficult to translate, the term is usually rendered as "sentiment."¹⁴ Etymologically, rasa refers to the act of tasting, and hence has the root-meaning "taste" or "flavor."¹⁵ It is used, for

example, to refer to the pleasurable savor of food or drink. In its technical aesthetic usage, however, it suggests, not the enjoyment of pleasures of the mundane world, but rather the blissful contemplation of the impersonal aesthetic emotions suggested by a work of art. The essence of rasa, it is said, is wonder or astonishment (camatkāra),¹⁶ and the writing of the Sanskrit rhetoricians represents, in large part, an inquiry into the mechanics and preconditions of this highly valued experience, which is held to be the true aim of all artistic expression.

In the classical tradition of poetics, eight rasas are recognized: śṛṅgāra ("erotic love"), hāsyā ("comedy"), karuṇā ("compassion"), raudra ("fury"), vīra ("heroism"), bhayānaka ("terror"), bībhatsa ("revulsion"), and adbhuta ("astonishment").¹⁷ The basis or, one might say, the "raw material" of these rasas is bhāva, "emotion."¹⁸ Eight "permanent emotions" (sthāyibhāvas), each associated with its respective rasa, are recognized: rati ("love"), hāsa ("mirth"), śoka ("grief"), krodha ("anger"), utsāha ("energy"), bhaya ("fear"), jugupsā ("disgust"), and vismaya ("wonder").¹⁹ Since other emotions are not acknowledged as possible sources of sentiment, and each sentiment must have a distinct emotional basis, the number of sthāyibhāvas and the number of rasas are both limited to eight. The goal of the artist's craft is to facilitate the transformation of

the permanent emotion into its corresponding aesthetic sentiment.

Two explanations are given of the significance of the adjective "permanent" (sthāyin), sometimes translated as "dominant," in the term "permanent emotion." The first and possibly original interpretation is that the particular bhāva so qualified is the principal or prevailing emotion of the literary piece. As such, according to the theorists, it should not be overshadowed by any other moods that might be introduced into the composition. Whether complementary or seemingly opposed, the secondary emotions must be used only in an interplay carefully orchestrated so as to strengthen the primary mood. The other explanation builds on the idea that the sthāyibhāva is constantly present in the mind of the sensitive spectator in the form of a vāsanā or saṃskāra, "latent impression." In this respect it is, once acquired, quite literally a permanent component of the psyche, though its conscious experience may be occasional and transitory.²⁰

The notion of sthāyibhāva as saṃskāra suggests another important aspect of the rasa theory, namely, the idea that whether or not an individual experiences rasa when encountering a given literary work does not depend solely on the skill and insight of the artist. Those desirous of appreciating the work must have the latent impressions of the appropriate emotion present in their minds in subtle

form; otherwise, they will never be able to savor the sentiment portrayed. If one has not experienced love, for example, and acquired thereby the appropriate sthāyībhāva, one will not be able to fully enjoy even an inspired presentation of that emotion. For this reason, the theoreticians of rasa universally declare: "Only the connoisseurs of the rasa are capable of relishing the rasa."²¹

The latent impressions which constitute the sthāyībhāva are derived from empirical experience, either in this life or in a previous birth.²² Such experience is the mundane (laukika) cause of emotion. When a work of poetry or drama is being enjoyed, the scene, persons, dialogue, actions, and other depicted factors serve as "supramundane" (alaukika) causes which arouse the latent permanent emotion and develop it into a rasa. Though the elements of the art form that thus serve to arouse the latent impression of the sthāyībhāva may resemble the emotion's original, empirical causes, there is an important difference. The literary causes are generalized, that is to say, divorced from all personal association and historical particularity. Therefore they are capable of producing--not merely heightened emotion of the ordinary (i.e., personal) kind--but rasa, a universal, idealized sentiment. Though the rasa is enjoyed by particular individuals, they neither identify

it as their own private emotion nor think that they are the only ones capable of enjoying it. The sentiment has become impersonal and, like its literary causes, supramundane (alaukika).

The process of aesthetic generalization (sādhāranī-karaṇa) lifts the connoisseur out of his or her individual moods, limited as they are by ego and its attendant anxieties, to a state of self-transcendence in which the rasa may be contemplated calmly and happily. This explains why commonplace emotions such as fear and grief, usually painful when encountered in a personal way, are not so when contemplated in idealized form as aesthetic sentiments. Ordinary emotions are either pleasurable or painful, but the experience of rasa, of no matter what variety, is one of pure joy, beyond the dualities of feeling that trouble the heart in everyday life.²³

The aesthetic experience thus involves a self-forgetfulness and a bliss that is closely parallel to--and, in a sense, an anticipation of--the blissful transcendence found in spiritual liberation or knowledge of Brahman. Indeed, rasa theorists are fond of comparing rasāsvāda ("the relishing of sentiment") with brahmāsvāda ("the experience of Brahman").²⁴ In Viśvanātha's Sāhityadarpaṇa, for example, we find the following description of rasa: "It is pure, indivisible, self-manifested, compounded equally of

joy and consciousness, free of admixture with any other perception, the very twin brother of mystic experience (Brahmāsvādāna sahodarah), and the very life of it is supersensuous (lokottara) wonder."²⁵

The aesthetic and the spiritual experience, however, differ in several important respects. These have been well stated by S. K. De:

It [the experience of rasa] is like the state of the soul serenely contemplating the absolute (brahmāsvāda), with the difference that the state of detachment is not so complete or permanent. The artistic attitude is thus recognized as entirely spiritual. But the idealized artistic creation affords only a temporary release from the ills of life by enabling one to transcend, for the moment, personal relations or practical interest; it restores equanimity of mind (viśrānti) by leading one away, for the time being, from the natural world and offering another in its place. It is an attitude of pure bliss, detached spiritual contemplation (cid-svabhāva samvid), similar to but not the same as the state of true enlightenment which comes only to the knower who, no longer on the empirical plane, transcends permanently the sphere of pleasure and pain.²⁶

6.3 Religious Application of the Rasa Theory

Given the closeness of the rasa-experience to spiritual realization and the general tendency in traditional Hindu culture to understand everything in terms of its relation to final salvation, it is not surprising that the list of rasas began to expand at a fairly early date to include sentiments of more overtly religious dimensions. The first rasa to be added to the list was

śānta, the "tranquil" sentiment, associated with the quest for mokṣa. Its corresponding permanent emotion was identified as nirveda, distaste for worldly pleasure, which was said to arise from knowledge of reality (tattvajñāna). As early as the fifth century A.D. the Jain Anuyogadvāra-sūtra mentioned śānta as a rasa.²⁷ It was accepted by the theorist Udbhaṭa, who wrote in the eighth century, as well as by many of the later writers such as Ānandavardhana (ninth century), Abhinavagupta (tenth-eleventh century), and Viśvanātha (fourteenth century). Other writers, however, were opposed to the acceptance of śānta as a sentiment on the grounds that, being a state of detached absence of emotion, it was neither appropriate for, nor amenable to, dramatic representation.²⁸

Despite this conservative opposition, the acceptance of śānta as the ninth rasa by influential authorities brought the finality of the earlier limitation of the number of rasas to eight into question, and the way for the elevation of other emotions to the status of rasa was opened. Soon new rasas were proposed. Preyas ("friendship") was first mentioned as a rasa by Rudraṭa (ninth century). Prior to this time it had been considered only a bhāva ("secondary emotion").²⁹ Later writers continued to add other moods that they felt to be important to the list of rasas. Among these were śraddhā ("faith") and vātsalya ("parental affection").³⁰

The most important of the new sentiments, however, at least from a religious point of view, was bhakti. It is difficult to determine who first advocated its adoption. Abhinavagupta mentioned that others were proposing bhakti as a new rasa, so the possibility had been broached before his time. But he himself held that bhakti should be regarded as an accessory (aṅga) of śānta.³¹ This was no doubt a reflection of his own spiritual interests as an exponent of Kashmir Śaivism, which were deep but centered more on yogic practice than devotion. The orthodox rhetoricians on the whole did not accept bhakti as a rasa. Shortly after Abhinavagupta, Mammaṭa (eleventh century) decreed that "love directed toward a deity, etc." (ratir devādiviṣayā) was a bhāva, and he explained that the "etc." here included sages, preceptors, kings, and sons but, interestingly enough, not a beloved woman. This meant that, according to this writer, only erotic love was capable of development into a rasa and that bhakti and the others did not have this possibility.³² The fact that this position was widely accepted suggests that many aestheticians did not have serious interest in religious matters.³³ Indeed, even Jagannātha (seventeenth century), writing after the heyday of the advocates of bhaktirasa, still accepted this conservative view. He argued, against Abhinavagupta, that bhakti should not be included in śānta because it is based on attachment.³⁴

The advocates of devotion were, understandably, not happy with the orthodox aestheticians' denial of bhaktirasa. Nor could they accept Abhinavagupta's inclusion of bhakti under śānta, as this sentiment reflected, not the mood of ecstatic devotion, but that of the detached follower of the path of knowledge or yogic meditation. They were, we can imagine, intrigued by the idea that aesthetic sentiment transported the appreciator beyond the limitations of his or her personal situation to experience emotion on a universal level. Rasa-theory seemed to provide an ideal conceptual apparatus for explaining the problems, outlined above, entailed by the bhakta's devotional identification with the characters of the Kṛṣṇa story. If the emotion of a gopī is made available through poetry in such a way as to suggest rasa, any sensitive person can enter into it.³⁵

Participation in the Kṛṣṇa-līlā, then, becomes open to all who are capable of appreciating the rasas evoked by the works celebrating it.³⁶ Realizing the potential in such thinking, the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas took up the study and religious elaboration of aesthetic theory with zeal. Since bhakti is in itself the highest goal as well as the supreme means, they argued, it is not only a rasa but in fact the highest of all rasas.

Vopadeva (thirteenth century) was the first, so far as we know, to apply rasa theory to the task of explaining the emotional bhakti of the BP.³⁷ In his Bhāgavata-

muktāphala, this Maharashtrian writer developed the idea that bhakti is the primary rasa, to which the others are subordinate. There are, he stated, nine types of devotee because the experience of bhaktirasa occurs under the form of the nine sentiments, Bhārata's original eight plus śānta.³⁸ Vopadeva's commentator, Hemādri, argued that bhakti meets all of the technical specifications, such as having a legitimate sthāyibhāva,³⁹ normally required of a rasa. If it is argued that bhakti is not a rasa because of the limited nature of its appeal, said Hemādri, this is true of śānta and the other sentiments also. Each of the rasas can be appreciated only by those who are capable of responding to it.⁴⁰

Hardy refers to an interesting poem in Old Marathi dated 1316, the Vacchāharāṇa, which shows the influence of Vopadeva in describing Kṛṣṇa as the one who plays "the drama of the nine rasas." More important, the poem also introduces a new metaphysical emphasis into the discussion by calling Kṛṣṇa the "container" of those sentiments. This is the first suggestion that we can find in the literature that the theoreticians of bhaktirasa were working to raise the ontological status of bhakti toward ultimacy. As we shall see, this effort involved a new conceptualization of devotional sentiment, one that elevated it from the sphere of poetic suggestion and psychology to a level that was truly transphenomenal.⁴¹

The pioneering efforts of these Maharashtrian devotionalists were continued by Vallabha (1481-1533), the founder of an important Kṛṣṇaite school of Vedānta and associated devotional sect (sampradāya). The extent of his contribution on the subject of bhaktirasa, however, is difficult to estimate, as it has received practically no scholarly attention to date.⁴² The situation, fortunately, is different in respect of the efforts of Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmin (sixteenth century), who developed and elaborated the bhaktirasaśāstra into a complex system.⁴³ Their work, which is perhaps the best example of the direction this kind of thinking took, has been fairly well studied, thanks particularly to the pioneering efforts of S. K. De.⁴⁴

6.4 Bhaktirasa in the Theology of the Bengal School

Because the recounting of, and imaginative participation in, the stories of Kṛṣṇa's life formed such a large part of Vaiṣṇava spiritual practice, it was natural and relatively easy for the Gosvāmins to transfer the theories of classical Sanskrit aesthetics from their literary ambience to the sphere of the devotional cult. In this connection, it should be noted that love (as in other literary traditions) had long been a popular and absorbing theme in Sanskrit drama and poetry. Sanskrit aesthetics had consequently developed the theory of śṛṅgārarasa to a high

level of complexity and detail, particularly under the influence of such writers as Rudrabhaṭṭa (tenth century) and Bhoja (eleventh century).⁴⁵ This made the rasaśāstra even more ideally suited to the needs of the Gosvāmins, who were especially concerned with explicating the nuances of the ecstatic love-relationship of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs.⁴⁶

From what has been said about rasa-theory thus far, the reader will have noticed that it is not elaborated from the viewpoint of the artist or poet and his act of creation. Rather, the chief focus of study is the sentiment experienced by the individual involved in appreciating the emotions portrayed in the work of art, i.e., the spectator (sāmājika) or connoisseur (rasika).⁴⁷ When the theory is applied to bhakti, the devotee takes the place of the artistic connoisseur, and the center of discussion becomes (1) his or her enjoyment of the bliss of devotion and (2) the process of interaction with the drama, in this case the story of Kṛṣṇa's life and exploits, by which this experience is elicited.

The question of the actual locus of rasa is one of the first that must be dealt with. The Vaiṣṇava theologians point out that there is disagreement among the orthodox rhetoricians on this problem. While some hold that the sentiment exists in the original hero and heroine depicted in the drama and impersonated by the actors, others locate

it in the actors themselves. Some, such as Viśvanātha, hold that it resides in the spectator or connoisseur, and there are yet others who hold that, if the actor is a person of taste (sahr̥daya), rasa may exist in both the actor and the audience. The Vaiṣṇavas expand the latter position, declaring that rasa exists simultaneously in the spectators (sāmājika), in the actors (anukartṛ), and in the original characters (anukārya).⁴⁸ In the case of bhaktirasa, the original characters are Kṛṣṇa and his associates, such as Rādhā and the gopīs, his friends, and his foster parents. The roles of both the audience and the actors are taken by the devotees, who assume various bhāvas or moods as, in the process of their devotional practice, they imaginatively identify with one or another of Kṛṣṇa's companions.

Five key modes of approach to the divine are recognized in this regard, each associated with particular characters in the scripture who epitomize the kind of relation with Kṛṣṇa that is involved. Connected with these five devotional moods (pañcabhāva) are an equal number of primary (mukhya) bhaktirasas. These, the Vaiṣṇavas believe, are the sentiments truly authenticated by the purāṇic accounts.⁴⁹ The five bhāvas are arranged hierarchically as follows: (1) śānti ("tranquility"), the attitude of enlightened sages--jñānins or yogins--like Sanaka; (2) dāsya ("servanthood"), experienced by devotees who served Kṛṣṇa,

such as Uddhava; (3) sākhya ("friendship"), enjoyed by Arjuna, Śrīdhāman, and others; (4) vātsalya ("parenthood"), associated with Nanda and Yaśodā, the Lord's foster parents; and (5) madhura ("sweetness"), the mood of erotic love experienced especially by the gopīs.⁵⁰

Ultimately, the sthāyibhāva of Bhaktirasa is one: namely, "love that has Kṛṣṇa as its object" (śrīkṛṣṇaviṣayā rati).⁵¹ In the tranquil mood, this appears in a form uncolored by other emotional attitudes; hence this bhāva is also called suddhā ("pure").⁵² In the other four bhāvas, love (rati) for Kṛṣṇa is refracted, as it were, through the prism of various emotional tones, as indicated by the names given these states. It is important to note, though, that these "mixed" moods are considered to be more blissful, and hence more valuable, than the "tranquil" or "pure" form of devotion. The latter (along with its associated rasa, śānta) is regarded as lower than the others because it is based on the realization of God in his Lordly nature (īśasvarūpa) as the four-armed Nārāyaṇa,⁵³ which inspires awe in addition to love. The śāntabhaktas do not desire to serve Kṛṣṇa or enter into his joyous līlās, but are satisfied in merely obtaining a vision of the deity (tadyānubhāvamātraniṣṭha).⁵⁴ True ecstatic bhakti, therefore, begins only in dāsyā, with the emergence of a feeling of a distinctly personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa as

the supremely blissful bhagavat. Here, the bhakta begins to develop a real sense of participating with the Lord, in however small a capacity, in his eternal sports. After dāsyā, the ascending order of bhaktirasas is determined by increasing degrees of the feeling of intimacy with Kṛṣṇa, the recognition of his divine sweetness (mādhurya), and a corresponding loss of the sense of his overwhelming majesty and power (aiśvarya). The latter, the Gosvāmins emphasize, seriously interferes with the ecstatic devotional mood.⁵⁵ The hierarchy culminates in the sentiment of the gopīs, madhura, the most highly prized of all rasas since it involves the most intimate and most blissful relationship with the Lord. Capable of being experienced in its completeness only by Rādhā herself, it is called bhaktirasarāj, the "king of all devotional sentiments."⁵⁶

Śṛṅgāra, the erotic sentiment of the aestheticians, is in this scheme subsumed in madhura. The remaining seven rasas of the classical writers, insofar as they may be associated with Kṛṣṇa, are given secondary status as gaunabhaktirasas. If they do not involve rati for Kṛṣṇa, however, they are not rasas at all, since only love for the Lord can elevate them to that state.⁵⁷

It is obvious from this that Rūpa and Jīva do not accept the theories of the rhetoricians without modification. In fact, they alter the system significantly

in order to accommodate their particular religious ends. Most notable in this connection is their elaboration and extension of the metaphysical dimensions of rasa-theory in the interest of allowing the initially literary encounter with the gopī's Lord to become a distinctly religious experience. The Gosvāmins want to create a situation in which "aesthetic" joy has the potential of genuine, indeed ultimate, soteriological consequences. Thus the Kṛṣṇa-līlā is regarded as much more than just another historic or even supernatural event that has been immortalized by a poet. It is an ongoing, transphenomenal reality, eternally taking place on the highest celestial plane. Imaginative identification with the story, therefore, if practiced with sufficient intensity, becomes much more than a source of aesthetic pleasure, more even than a cause of profound religious emotion. It is a means of effecting a change in ontological level, of truly transferring one's being to Kṛṣṇa's eternal realm or, however briefly, making that world manifest to the devotee dwelling in the terrestrial sphere.

The metaphysical interest continues in the analysis of bhaktirasa itself. The permanent emotion of the devotional sentiment, like that of the poetic rasas, is latent in the heart of the appreciator. But in the case of bhakti, according to the Gosvāmins, it is not acquired through ordinary external experience. The sthāyibhāva of

devotion, love for Kṛṣṇa, is none other than the rati that, as we have already seen in chapter five, is innately present in all beings as an aspect of the Lord's eternal hlādinī śakti, the divine "power of bliss."⁵⁸ Kṛṣṇarati, the seed of bhaktirasa, is therefore eternal in nature (nityasiddha) and constantly abiding, in latent form, in the heart. As a sthāyibhāva, it is truly permanent.

Bhaktirasa is thus included in the Gosvāmins' efforts, discussed in chapter four, to give bhakti a share in ontological ultimacy. Since it develops from this unique spiritual sthāyibhāva, it is supernatural (alaukika), indeed divine, in nature. The efforts of Rūpa to disassociate bhakti from the mental faculties in which it is manifested are worth recalling here. In this case again, though the sentiment appears in the mind, it is not of the mind: it is a manifestation of the divine bliss itself.⁵⁹

The orthodox rhetoricians think of their rasas as supramundane (alaukika) because they transcend the cares and limitations of ordinary daily experience. The Gosvāmins, however, never tire of asserting that, in comparison with bhaktirasa, the secular sentiments fair so poorly as to be considered mundane (laukika). Consisting of the material quality of luminosity (sattvaguna), they belong to the realm of māyā.⁶⁰ The pleasure that the worldly-minded count as rasa is consequently limited and, like all material

pleasures, inextricably connected with pain.⁶¹ Bhaktirasa is far superior, for its bliss, being that of Kṛṣṇa's highest śakti, is infinite. Even if it is allowed that the joy of literary sentiment is similar to that of the realization of Brahman, the rhetoricians' case is not helped, for according to Bengal Vaiṣṇava theology, the bliss of Brahman is inferior by far to the bliss of Kṛṣṇa, the bhagavat, who is the full expression of the Godhead.⁶²

In their analysis of the various modes and degrees of bhaktirasa that may manifest in the devotee, the Gosvāmins, savoring every possible variation of the sentiment, enter with scholastic earnest into seemingly endless detail. We discover in the end, however, after all the classifications and lists of minutiae are patiently gone through, that the ultimate locus and final connoisseur of rasa is Kṛṣṇa himself, not the devotee. Against Mammaṭa's dictum that devotion to a deity cannot be a sentiment, the Vaiṣṇavas argue that this objection applies only to the "ordinary" deities (prākṛtadeva), not to Kṛṣṇa, for as the Upaniṣad declares: "He, verily, is rasa."⁶³ Devotional sentiment is raised from the level of the psychological to the highest ontic plane: rasa somehow constitutes the essential nature of bhagavat. That which appears in different devotees resulting in various modes of ecstatic love is the one, eternal, infinite rasa. The variety of

sentiments experienced by jīvas is only a limited reflection of the various modes of relationship possible between the Lord and the manifold aspects of his śakti.⁶⁴ And not only is Kṛṣṇa rasa itself, as the Upaniṣad suggests, he is also the supreme rasika, "relisher of rasa." Being perfectly detached and free, and at the same time capable of perfect enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa is the ideal sāmājika. In him, the fullness of rasa is experienced eternally by the power of his hlādinīśakti, using which he simultaneously, out of grace, manifests bhakti in the heart of his devotees.⁶⁵

6.5 Madhusūdana on Bhaktirasa

Madhusūdana's exposition of bhaktirasa is modeled on a pattern that has much in common with that used by the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas. Since Rūpa seems to have written his BRS by 1542,⁶⁶ it is entirely possible that Madhusūdana had access to it before writing the BR. Equally possible, however, is that Madhusūdana and the Gosvāmins derived their ideas independently, from earlier writers such as Vopadeva, Hemādri, and perhaps Vallabha. Certainly Madhusūdana was himself as well-versed in the rasaśāstra as was Rūpa. In the absence, therefore, of a good deal of additional research on the complex religious history of this era, nothing definite can be said about any influence that Rūpa may have had on the author of the BR.⁶⁷

To establish the legitimacy of bhakti as a rasa is, at any rate, one of the central aims of the Bhaktirasāyana. Madhusūdana is as emphatic in his assertion of this claim as the Gosvāmins. If anger, grief, and fear, which are painful, can become rasas, how can it be denied that bhakti, which is infinite bliss, is a rasa? There is, says Madhusūdana, no good reason.⁶⁸ He takes up the classical objection of the orthodox aestheticians with an attitude similar to that of the Vaiṣṇavas, but he gives his argument a slightly different twist. It may be true that "love for deities" (devādiviṣayā ratiḥ) is a bhāva as the rhetoricians claim. Still, this only applies when the "other" deities (devāntara) are concerned. These gods are limited in nature, being themselves transmigrating souls, and do not embody the highest bliss. The objection, however, does not hold true "in reference to the supreme Self who is the highest bliss."⁶⁹ Note here the implied identification of bhagavat and the paramātmān, conceived in the Advaitic sense. The theologians of the Bengal school would, of course, vociferously object to this idea.

In the theory of the Gosvāmins, rati, the sthāyi-bhāva of bhaktirasa, is a non-phenomenal aspect of Kṛṣṇa's highest śakti. It is thus, since the śakti is non-different from its possessor, in a real sense identical with Kṛṣṇa himself. Madhusūdana likewise suggests that the permanent

emotion of the sentiment of devotion is not one derived from ordinary empirical experience. He cannot, however, identify either bhaktirasa or its sthāyibhāva as a power of the Lord, for in Advaita, as already stated, Īsvara's only śakti is māyā. He attempts a more radical solution, one he hopes is a truly non-dualist way of elevating rasa above the phenomenal. The permanent emotion of bhaktirasa is not a divine śakti. It is, we have seen, the very form of bhagavat, present in the mind as a reflection. Because it is a reflection of the Lord, who is pure bliss, the sthāyibhāva also is pure bliss. All the more, then, will the rasa that is developed from it be so.⁷⁰

In our discussion in chapter five above, we noted that defining bhakti as the reflection of the Lord is, according to Advaitic theory, the same as identifying it with him. This, we said, makes it impossible to speak of bhakti as a mode (vṛtti) of the mind. Madhusūdana confirms that this was his intention by making clear, in chapter three of the BR, both that rasa is equivalent to the supreme reality and that it is distinct from the vṛtti which manifests it. His approach in the first chapter was indirect, here it is much more straightforward. Making reference to TU 2.7.1, he explicitly identifies rasa with the Upaniṣadic ātman: "Rasa is the supreme bliss, the very Self,' so say the scriptures."⁷¹ Again:

Rasa is said to be the sthāyibhāva manifested as bliss Since this bliss is that of the Self, it has no locus or support, but the [locus and support] of the vr̥tti which manifests it is the mind of the connoisseur.⁷²

The second half of this verse introduces the idea, so important to the Gosvāmins' exposition, of the disassociation of rasa from the mental modification. This notion is repeated emphatically later on:

A single modification of the mind, consisting of the material quality of luminosity, is produced. Absorbed in the sthāyibhāva and the trio of causative factors,⁷³ it is determined by the combination of these.

This [modification] immediately and necessarily manifests the supreme bliss, and that [bliss] is rasa. Some teachers, however, hold that this [modification] itself is rasa.⁷⁴

Madhusūdana, then, like the Gosvāmins and for similar reasons, takes pains to show that the sentiment of devotion is more than a mere mental phenomenon. The rasa is not the vr̥tti of the mind, as a traditional Advaitin might hold; it is the supreme bliss (sukham uttamam) itself.

Another parallel with Vaiṣṇava writers can be seen in the fact that Madhusūdana consistently contradicts the secular aestheticians' estimation of their sentiments as alaukika ("supramundane") by referring to them as laukika ("mundane") in comparison with bhaktirasa. He displays, however, somewhat more sympathy than the Govāmins for the non-devotional rasas, since he admits that they, like bhakti, are also blissful. From the perspective of Advaita,

he points out, all objects--including even the seductive heroine (kāminī) of the secular love story--are in reality non-different from Consciousness (caitanya), which is infinite joy. The happiness derived from the worldly sentiments is consequently not finally different from the supreme ānanda of Brahman. It is, however, not the pure bliss of the ultimate itself, but the bliss of that Consciousness as conditioned, and hence limited, by the objects. Hence the joy of the mundane rasas is restricted. The bliss of bhaktirasa, on the other hand, since it is nothing other than the pure, unconditioned bliss of God, is unlimited and far superior to the joy of the worldly sentiments.⁷⁵ Bhakti, then, is the highest rasa, because it is the supreme bliss in its perfect fullness, untainted by sorrow. The erotic and the other secular sentiments cannot attain such levels of joy, and are therefore inferior. In comparison with bhaktirasa, they are like fireflies trying to shine in the face of the sun.⁷⁶

In the second chapter of the BR, Madhusūdana enters upon a lengthy and complex analysis of the various types and possible combinations of sthāyibhāvas and rasas. Though the concern for complex detail is comparable with that of the Gosvāmins, Madhusūdana's system of rasa seems, at least on the surface, distinctly idiosyncratic. The orthodox rhetoricians accept eight or, if śānta is included, at most

nine sentiments. The Gosvāmins admit twelve, the conventional nine plus dāsya, sākhya, and vātsalya, but refuse the status of rasa to any emotion not involving love for Kṛṣṇa. Madhusūdana, on the other hand, accepts a total of seventeen sentiments, of which ten are recognized as possible bhaktirasas. At 2.33-34, the latter are listed as: (1) śṛṅgāra ("erotic love"), (2) karuṇa ("compassion"), (3) hāsya ("mirth"), (4) prītibhayānaka ("love-in-fear"), (5) adbhuta ("wonder"), (6) yuddhavīra ("heroism in battle"), (7) dānavīra ("heroism in charity"), (8) śuddha ("pure"), (9) vatsala ("parental affection"), and (10) preyas ("deariness" or "friendship").⁷⁷

A complete exposition of the reasoning behind this list must remain beyond the scope of the present study. Madhusūdana's scheme is complex, and its presentation in chapters two and three of the BR is in many places opaque.⁷⁸ Several salient points, however, are essential to the present discussion.

First, śānta, which is admitted by both Vopadeva and Rūpa Gosvāmin as a legitimate bhaktirasa, is explicitly rejected as such by Madhusūdana since, according to him, it cannot have bhagavat as its object.⁷⁹ This suggests (1) that he follows the classical tradition of the aestheticians in associating śānta with the disciplines of jñāna and yoga, which aim at Brahman-knowledge and mokṣa, and (2) that he

wishes, because of this association, to separate śānta completely from devotion, in accordance with his theory that bhakti is a distinct path with no positive relation to the quest for liberation.⁸⁰ This rejection of the tranquil mood as a possible bhaktirasa also reinforces the conceptual distinction, discussed in chapter five above, between bhagavat as the object of devotion and Brahman as the object of knowledge. The Gosvāmins also connect śānta with the paths of knowledge and yoga, but because they allow in it, as we have seen, both rati for Kṛṣṇa and a vision of his Lordly form, they are willing to include it as a lesser form of bhakti.

The Vaiṣṇavas' śānta finds a close counterpart in Madhusūdana's śuddharasa. Like the former, the "pure sentiment" of the BR is free from mixture with the various emotional tones associated with human love-relationships; it is prompted solely by the mind's joyous realization of the greatness (māhātmya) of the Lord.⁸¹ As we shall soon see, this sentiment plays a very important role in BR's scheme of rasas.

Madhusūdana's system differs from the Gosvāmins' in that he retains śṛṅgāra as the name of the erotic sentiment, whereas the Gosvāmins tend to prefer madhura. Also, while dāsyā and sākhya are included in the BR's list of rasas, they are not counted separately, as in the Vaiṣṇava scheme,

but rather included as two sub-varieties of preyas.⁸² Madhusūdana, furthermore, gives full recognition to several varieties of bhaktirasa that the Gosvāmins de-emphasize or ignore completely. Of course, these differences may well be little more than minor variations on the same theme. It remains, nevertheless, that the correspondences between these two systems of cataloging devotional sentiment are not always easy to discern. This fact, combined with Madhusūdana's willingness to give emotions not directed toward the Lord the status of rasa, may be taken as evidence of the independence of his work from that of the Bengal school.

It is significant, however, that Madhusūdana's śuddha, even though he rejects the aestheticians' śānta, is hard to distinguish from the Vaiṣṇavas' version of the latter sentiment. The term śuddha, we have seen, is sometimes used by the Gosvāmins themselves to designate the sthāyibhāva of śānta. Is this an indication that Madhusūdana was borrowing from the Vaiṣṇava tradition? We cannot be sure. In any case, the most important difference between Madhusūdana's system and that of the Vaiṣṇavas has yet to be discussed. It is not so much formal as axiological; that is to say, it concerns the valuation of the rasas listed rather than the question of which sentiments happen to be included in the lists themselves.

Madhusūdana appears at first to follow the universal Kṛṣṇaite tendency to regard śṛṅgāra, the love of the gopīs for their Lord, as the highest form of bhakti and the highest rasa. He describes it as "extremely intense" (tīvratīvra), "the most powerful" (balavattara) of all sentiments.⁸³ The gopīs, he says, experience the "supreme sentiment" (paramo rasaḥ), consisting of a sublimely delectable blending of erotic love, parental love, friendship, and love-in-fear--a mixture in which, according to a standard rule of the aestheticians, the resulting flavor is greater than the sum of its constituent elements.⁸⁴ Following the Vaiṣṇava tradition of imitative bhakti, he says that a devotee "should subordinate his own mind to that of the Vrajadevīs."⁸⁵

Such thinking, evident also in Madhusūdana's description of the highest stage of bhakti at the end of chapter one of the BR,⁸⁶ shows just how far he is willing to go, as an Advaitin and a renunciate, to accommodate the ecstatic devotional mood of the Vaiṣṇavas. The description of bhaktirasa given in the second and third chapters of the BR is cast explicitly in terms of the experience of Kṛṣṇa's companions in Vṛndāvana. It is designed to suggest the manner in which the divine bliss of bhakti can be richly articulated to include all the ecstatic nuances of the devotion enjoyed by the gopīs and the other bhaktas of the BP.

The glorification of the bhakti of the gopīs, however, is not final. In a radical departure from traditional Vaiṣṇava thought, Madhusūdana reserves the highest experience of devotion for those who follow, not the passionate cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, but rather the tranquil sage-devotees, the enlightened renunciates who worship Kṛṣṇa in a more subdued way. This change of emphasis is not immediately obvious, since the discussion of the eleventh and highest stage of devotion in BR 1 does not suggest anything beyond the bhakti based on śṛṅgāra. A close examination of several key stanzas of chapter two of the text, however, reveals that Madhusūdana does not wish to accept devotion based on the analogy of human passion as the ultimate.

At 2.12-13 we get our first clue in this direction: Madhusūdana says that "pure love" (śuddharati) directed to Kṛṣṇa is the end of all spiritual practice.⁸⁷ Such love, we learn, is the basis of śuddha, the sentiment of the same name. As we have seen, this love arises out of contemplation of the Lord's greatness (māhātmya)--not out of erotic desire (kāma), as does the love of the gopīs.⁸⁸ Further on, at 2.46, we pick up two more relevant pieces of information. We are told, first, that this śuddhabhakti is the mood of ascetics and saints such as Sanaka and the other eternally youthful, eternally celibate, "mind-born" sons of

Brahmā. Second, we learn that Madhusūdana classifies himself in this category of devotees, though of course on a lower level than that of Sanaka.⁸⁹ This personal statement, though brief and discrete, is particularly important, since it is the only clue we have as to Madhusūdana's understanding of his own place in the scheme of bhakti outlined in the BR, and since it would be quite natural for him to regard his own style of devotion as the highest. We begin to see--even if only in vaguest outline--a move toward the reclamation, revalorization, and reinsertion into Kṛṣṇaite devotionalism of a mode of bhakti reminiscent of that of the BG and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Although relegated to the lowest level by the Gosvāmins, this style of devotion is certainly more compatible with the ascetic, non-dualistic orientation of the Śaṅkara saṁnyāsin than the passionate and loving attachment of the cowherd girls. And it is not without scriptural precedent, even in the Bhāgavata.⁹⁰

Stanzas 2.73 and 2.64-65 confirm that this is the direction in which Madhusūdana is heading. While the love of the gopīs is mixed with elements of a variety of sentiments rooted in secular and very human emotions, Madhusūdana tells us that this is not the case with the suddhabhakti of the great saints:

Being devoid of elements of other sentiments, [pure love] like that of Sanaka and the rest, attains the Essential Nature (svarūpa) and becomes the tenth sentiment, which is even greater.⁹¹

Again:

The pure (śuddha) is declared to be unconditioned, and the mixed, to be conditioned. The unconditioned is based solely on the majesty of the Supreme Bliss. It is said, owing to the infinite virtues of its object of worship, to have only one form.⁹²

Several points are worthy of mention here. The first is that, taken together, these verses help explain the significance of Madhusūdana's characterization of bhakti, at BR 1.1, as "either mixed with the nine sentiments or pure (kevala)."⁹³ Since Madhusūdana lists ten bhaktirasas at 2.33-34, we may be initially confused as to the meaning of his reference to nine in the first verse of the work, until at 2.73 we see that he understands śuddha as the "tenth" sentiment. The "pure" or "unmixed" devotion of 1.1 is, then, the śuddhabhaktirasa of BR 2. Second, by saying that this type of bhakti is "unconditioned," he means that it is free of the various emotional colorings associated with the nine "mixed" sentiments. Madhusūdana's conception of śuddha thus again resembles that of the Gosvāmins. But while the latter seem to believe that this particular kind of "purity" is a drawback, Madhusūdana regards it as an advantage. This is our third point, and here the similarity between the two views ceases abruptly. The author of the BR implicitly rejects the Vaiṣṇava evaluation of the mood of the ascetics in his assertion that śuddhabhakti is able, by virtue of its lack of extraneous emotional conditioning, to participate

more intimately in the bliss of the "essential nature" (svarūpa) of God. It is therefore an "even greater" sentiment. Although one wishes here even more earnestly than elsewhere in the second and third chapters of the BR for a commentary to provide further elucidation of Madhusūdana's meaning, his elevation of the tranquil bhakti of the renunciates above the passionate rasa of the gopīs, and in this his flagrant violation of hallowed Vaiṣṇava precedent, is clear enough.⁹⁴

The last and certainly not the least important idea introduced here is contained in the enigmatic attribution to śuddhabhakti of "only one form" (ekarūpa). Pāṇḍeya, the author of the Hindi commentary, explains this as meaning that śuddhabhakti is experienced only in the mode of union or consummation (sambhoga) and not, as in the case of śṛṅgāra, in the two forms of union and separation (vipra-lamba).⁹⁵ If this is Madhusūdana's intention, as seems likely, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, at the pinnacle of his scheme of devotion, he is allowing a dramatic resurgence of the spirit of Advaita. The ecstatic pain of love-in-separation, while an essential ingredient of gopī-bhakti and a vital element in the traditional Kṛṣṇaite understanding of preman and mahābhāva,⁹⁶ is ultimately eliminated in Madhusūdana's version of śuddhabhakti.

We thus find that the higher Vaiṣṇava bhāvas, which are patterned after normal human modes of love (and involve the tension of union/separation as a defining feature), are finally subordinated in the BR to a more ascetic, contemplative, and essentially unitive style of devotion-- one that is, we can venture to say, more appropriate to the emotional life of a sophisticated non-dualist renunciate.

PART II: THE TEXT

CHAPTER SEVEN

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF
MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ'S BHAKTIRASĀYANA,
WITH MADHUSŪDANA'S OWN COMMENTARY

I. Opening Prayer and Introduction to Stanza One¹

I bow to that wondrous Being² in the home of Nanda,³ before whom even Girīśa⁴ prostrates in worship, assuming eleven-foldedness, as it were, with [ten] forms reflected in the nails of His feet.⁵

In order to overcome possible obstacles at the commencement of his work, the author, foremost among the learned,⁶ begins with⁷ an auspicious verse in the form of a meditation upon the Blessed Lord.⁸ He then proceeds to explain the topic and the purpose of the text, and the relation of the text to the topic,⁹ because these things must be made known before any discriminating person will take interest:

1. THEY SAY THAT THE YOGA OF DEVOTION¹⁰ TO MUKUNDA,¹¹ EITHER MIXED WITH THE NINE SENTIMENTS OR PURE,¹² IS THE HIGHEST GOAL OF LIFE¹³ IN THIS WORLD.¹⁴ THIS DEVOTION, WHICH IS THE EXPERIENCE OF INCOMPARABLE BLISS¹⁵ UNTOUCHED BY ANY SUFFERING, I SHALL EXPLAIN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES IN ORDER TO BRING CONTENTMENT TO EVERYONE.

II. The Four Types of Yoga

Four yogas,¹⁶ namely the yoga of action,¹⁷ the eight-fold yoga,¹⁸ the yoga of knowledge,¹⁹ and the yoga of devotion, are well known as being the means to the highest goal of life. The Lord declares:

Three yogas have been taught by Me with the desire to confer the highest good on humanity. They are the yogas of knowledge, action, and devotion. There is no other means whatsoever.

11.20.16²⁰

Here, the eight-fold yoga is to be understood as included within the yoga of knowledge, because it too is taught in verses such as the following:

Having controlled the breath and having mastered the proper yogic posture, one should tirelessly steady the mind, holding it on a single point by means of non-attachment and constant practice.

11.9.11

III. Preliminary Purification of the Mind through the Yoga of Action

Works such as the sacraments performed at the important junctures in life from conception through marriage,²¹ the five great sacrifices,²² the course of seven cooked-offering sacrifices,²³ the course of seven oblation sacrifices,²⁴ and the course of seven soma sacrifices²⁵ are ordained in the scriptures as the essential duties of caste and stage of life.²⁶ They constitute the yoga of action which, being the means to the purification of the mind,²⁷ is

to be performed until that end is attained. According to the declaration of the Blessed Lord:

As long as one has not gained indifference to the world or fondness for the hearing of my story and the other [spiritual disciplines], one should continue to perform action.

11.20.9

That the yoga of action is the means to the purification of the mind is established in revealed texts²⁸ such as, "By sacrifice one rids himself of sin; therefore, they call sacrifice the supreme," and, "By the ladle-oblation or any other sacrifice one's mind is purified."

Two alternative possibilities are accepted as marking the termination [of this process of purifying the mind through the yoga of action]. Disgust with worldly things leads to knowledge of Reality for those whose minds are unmelted.²⁹ For those whose minds are melted, however, there is devotion, preceded by faith in the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees,³⁰ such as the hearing of narratives about Him.³¹

IV. The Approach to Devotion through the Yoga of Knowledge

Then, when purity of mind has been attained, one should practice the eight-fold yoga.³² By this yoga, the mind is made capable of a one-pointedness that is defined as a continuous series, uninterrupted like a flow of oil, of

identical cognitions of the Blessed Lord. As the Lord Himself declares:

When he has become indifferent toward all undertakings and detached, the follower of yoga, his senses controlled, should make his mind steady by constant practice.

When the mind, which is unsteady and quick to wander, is held, he should unwearingly, by the proper means, bring it under the sway of the Self.

11.20.18-19

After this state is attained, the yoga of knowledge which is characterized by non-attachment to the body, senses, and so on becomes established.³³ It is this yoga that is described in the text of the glorious Bhagavad Gītā that begins with the words "absence of pride, lack of deceit" and ends with the statement, "This is declared to be knowledge."³⁴

The goal of this yoga of knowledge is devotion, as indicated in the following words of the Lord:

One should meditate on the origin and passing away of all things, following the order of evolution and involution,³⁵ as taught by the Sāṃkhya system, until his mind becomes tranquil.

The mind of a man who has become averse worldly life and detached, who has seen the truth of what has been taught, abandons its evil nature by continuous reflection on such thoughts.³⁶

By yogic disciplines such as observance of moral restraints,³⁷ by the science of logic, and by worship and meditation directed toward Me, not by any other means, the mind may remember its proper object.³⁸

11.20.22-24

In this passage, the words "until the mind becomes tranquil" [11.20.22] indicate that the yoga of devotion alone is the goal of the yoga of knowledge because, without the yoga of devotion, there cannot be the proper tranquillity of mind.³⁹ The statement, "the mind . . . abandons evil" [11.20.23], refers to this yoga.⁴⁰ The phrases "by worship and meditation directed toward Me" [11.20.24] and "unswerving devotion to Me through yoga directed toward no other" [BG 13.10]⁴¹ mean "by the practice means to devotion⁴² that are included in the yoga of knowledge."

Then,⁴³ some rare soul of great fortune, through dedicated practice of the means to devotion, fixes his love, [previously] absorbed in external things, on the Blessed Lord alone. His mind turns away from all objects of sense, as the Lord Himself proclaims in the following verse:

All the desires dear to the heart of one who constantly worships Me by the yoga of devotion that I have taught are extinguished, O Sage, once I am established in his heart.

11.20.29

The permanent emotion⁴⁴ known as love⁴⁵ is the form of the Blessed Lord, an immediate realization of the highest bliss. It is manifested as a sentiment⁴⁶--by a combination of the objective causes,⁴⁷ the outward signs,⁴⁸ and the associated transitory states⁴⁹--in a special modification of a mind⁵⁰ that has been melted by the hearing of compositions that bring together the wondrous qualities of the Lord and

has assumed His form. This mental modification is the aim of all religious disciplines.

V. Devotion is the Supreme Goal of Life⁵¹

This alone is the yoga of devotion. Those who know its essence and those who have experienced it declare it to be the highest goal of life, beyond which there is nothing greater, and so do scriptural passages such as the following:

Therefore, for the practitioner of yoga endowed with devotion to Me, who has become one with Me, neither knowledge nor detachment are, in this world, the means to the highest good.

That which one attains by sacrifices, austerity, knowledge, detachment, discipline, the virtue of charity, observance of duty, or other means to the highest good,

All that comes to my devotee most quickly through the practice of devotion to Me--heaven, liberation, even [entry into] My celestial abode--if in any way he desires these things.

My pure, wise, single-minded devotees do not desire even slightly absolute liberation and freedom from rebirth, even if this is offered by Me.⁵²

Complete indifference to worldly things, they say, is the sure means to the highest goal. Hence, one who is free from desire and expectation [easily] attains devotion to Me.

The consequences arising from virtue and vice do not affect My one-pointed devotees, for they are pure, even-minded, and have approached that which is beyond the intellect.

11.20.31-36

VI. The Goal of Life is Bliss Only

It is the established doctrine of all systems⁵³ that bliss unmixed with any suffering is the highest goal of life. The commonly accepted view that there are four goals of life--namely, religious duty, the acquisition of wealth, pleasure, and final liberation⁵⁴--is to be taken figuratively. This is because, like the saying, "The plow is life," it suggests that things which are really only means are, in fact, ends.⁵⁵ Therefore our thesis that bliss alone is the goal of life is not upset.

According to the logicians of the Nyāya, there are two goals of life: bliss and the absence of suffering.⁵⁶ But this is not correct, because it is simpler to take bliss alone as the goal of life. The determining factor in a given cognition's giving rise to a desire to act upon it is its having pleasure as its object, not its having either pleasure or the absence of suffering as its object. This would involve unnecessary prolixity.⁵⁷ In fact, the absence of suffering is useful only insofar as it is a pre-condition of bliss.⁵⁸

The authors of the Nyāya treatises, however, might object to this, arguing as follows: "If it can be said that the absence of suffering is useful only insofar as it leads to bliss, it is equally possible to say, because of the lack of any deciding factor,⁵⁹ that bliss is useful only insofar

as it leads to the absence of suffering. Therefore both of these are the goals of life." But this objection is not valid because there is a deciding factor, namely the relationship of invariable concomitance,⁶⁰ "Wherever there is bliss there is the absence of suffering." This is accepted by all as an invariable concomitance because it is seen to hold unconditionally. Thus, because every instance of bliss is invariably accompanied by the absence of suffering, which is the term of greater extension,⁶¹ it is proper to say that the absence of suffering is a pre-condition of bliss. But the reverse relationship, "Wherever there is the absence of suffering there is bliss," does not always hold true. It fails, for example, in deep sleep and cosmic dissolution.⁶² Therefore, because the absence of suffering is not invariably accompanied by bliss, bliss is not its pre-condition. Since the presence of the term of greater extension can be otherwise accounted for as a pre-condition for the term of lesser extension, and as bliss is not the term of greater extension with respect to the absence of suffering, bliss, by itself, is the independent goal of life.⁶³

It might now be objected that the admission that the absence of suffering is useful only in so far as it leads to bliss would mean that final liberation, which consists in the absence of suffering and is devoid of all bliss,⁶⁴ would

not be the goal of life. If so, let us offer a funeral oblation for such a conception of final liberation, for we who follow the Vedānta declare that final liberation is the goal of life for the very reason that it is supreme bliss.⁶⁵

**VII. Devotion is the Highest Goal of Life
Because it is Pure Bliss**

Thus, since it is nothing more than bliss unmixed with suffering, devotion to the Blessed Lord also is the highest goal of life. This is why the author says, "the experience of incomparable bliss, untouched by any suffering" [stanza 1]. By this are refuted all such notions as, "Devotion is not the goal of life because it is not included among religious duty, the acquisition of wealth, pleasure, and final liberation."⁶⁶

Religious duty, the acquisition of wealth, and pleasure are not in themselves independent goals; the bliss arising from them is the goal of life. We can, therefore, omit the qualifications "arising from religious duty," "arising from wealth," and so on, because they lead to prolixity and excessive restriction,⁶⁷ and demonstrate that bliss alone is the goal of life. This being done, we can see that the bliss of devotion is the goal of life in its own right, just like the bliss of perfect meditation.⁶⁸

Now the bliss of perfect meditation may be included within final liberation because it is closely related to it,

or it may be included within religious duty⁶⁹ because it is produced by the sacred disciplines of yoga.⁷⁰ If this is accepted, it is possible to say even to those of limited faith that the bliss of devotion may also be included within final liberation because release from transmigratory existence is inevitable for the devotee.⁷¹ Or equally, it can be said that the yoga of devotion is included within religious duty because it is produced by the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees.⁷²

Therefore the statement that the yoga of devotion is the goal of life, either as included in one of the four commonly accepted goals or independently, is beyond dispute, because it is supreme bliss.⁷³

VIII. Other Terms in the First Stanza Explained

While establishing that devotion is supreme bliss, the author states its two subdivisions: "mixed with the nine sentiments or pure." These will be explained below.⁷⁴

The name "Mukunda"⁷⁵ indicates the object of the yoga of devotion. It will be stated that He alone, the Inner Controller and Lord of all, is the primary objective cause⁷⁶ of the sentiment of devotion. This [mention of the name of the Lord] is used as an auspicious benediction⁷⁷ at the beginning of the work in accord with the following traditional verse:⁷⁸

For them in whose heart dwells the Blessed Lord Hari, the abode of all auspiciousness,⁷⁹ there is never at any time or in any undertaking any inauspiciousness.⁸⁰

"I shall explain"--this is the declaration of the relation of the work to its subject matter.⁸¹ The phrase "in accordance with the scriptures" serves to remove any fear that the work may lack real authority, and the words "in order to bring contentment to everyone" indicate its purpose. The contentment of holy persons is inherent in their nature; what is intended in this text is the purification of the minds of others by the removal of ignorance and misconception through the reasonings expressed herein.

IX. Scriptural Support for Devotion as the Goal of Life

What authoritative statements are there which indicate that the yoga of devotion is the goal of life?

Note the following:

There is no other path more auspicious for one enmeshed in transmigratory existence than that from which may arise devotion toward the Blessed Lord Vāsudeva.

2.2.33

That religious duty is mere toil which, even when well-performed, does not produce delight in the tales about Lord Kṛṣṇa

1.2.8

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa may be attained by charity, the observance of vows, austerity, sacrifice, repetition of sacred formulas, Vedic study, self-control, and by various other means to the highest good.

10.47.24

The Supreme Lord [Brahmā], having thrice studied the Veda in its entirety [with] unwavering [concentration], ascertained by deep thought that from which arises love⁸² toward the Self.⁸³

2.2.34

The attainment of the highest good for men in this world occurs only when the mind is fixed steadily on Me through intense yoga of devotion.

3.25.44

The complete fulfillment which arises for embodied beings through meditation on Thy lotus feet or through hearing tales about Thy devotees, O Lord, is not found even in Brahman, in all its greatness. How much less [could it be enjoyed] by those [gods or residents of heaven] who fall from celestial cars that are crushed by the sword of death?⁸⁴

4.9.10

In these verses, that devotion is the goal of life is implied by the fact that it is said to be the end result of all good works. This is suggested by the general context as well. Devotion is explicitly stated to be the goal of life in the words "highest good" [3.25.44] and "complete fulfillment" [4.9.10]. And the same is indicated in the Bhagavad Gītā:

Among all yogis, he who worships Me with faith, with his mind absorbed in Me, I deem the best.

BG 6.47

X. Devotion as Means and Devotion as End

But other statements indicate that the yoga of devotion is the means:⁸⁵

The yoga of devotion directed towards the Blessed Lord Vāsudeva quickly generates non-attachment and that knowledge which is not dependent upon reasoning.⁸⁶

1.2.7

The man of exalted intelligence, be he without desires, desirous of everything, or desirous of liberation alone, should worship the Supreme Spirit by means of intense yoga of devotion.

2.3.10

Some few who are totally devoted to Vāsudeva cast off their sin completely by means of this devotion alone, [which removes evil] like the sun dispels the mist.

6.1.15

And in the Bhagavad Gītā also:

Through devotion, he comes to know Me in truth, how great and Who I am. Then, having known Me truly, he forthwith enters into Me.

BG 18.55

In these verses, it is clearly indicated that, since the yoga of devotion is a means to another end, it is not the goal of life.

There is no difficulty in this connection, however, because we maintain that devotion is two-fold, distinguishable as either means or end.⁸⁷ On the one hand, it is the end that is indicated when the word is used in accordance with its abstract derivation: "The worship⁸⁸ which consists in the mind's taking on the form of the Blessed Lord is devotion." And, because this devotion is the highest goal of life, the authoritativeness of the previously cited scriptures [describing devotion as the goal

of life] is uncontradicted. On the other hand, the means--consisting of hearing, singing, and so on⁸⁹--is suggested when we understand the word in accordance with its instrumental derivation: "The Blessed Lord is worshiped, i.e., He is served, the mind having His form is fashioned, by this." Because this sort of devotion is not itself the goal of life, the authoritativeness of the statements describing devotion as means also remains uncontradicted.

To illustrate, we find that the word "vijñāna" is used in the sense of "Brahman" in the verse "Brahman is knowledge (vijñāna) and bliss" [BU 3.9.2]. This is in accordance with its abstract derivation as meaning "knowledge." At the same time, the word is used in the sense of "mind" in the verse, "Knowledge (vijñāna) directs the sacrifice" [TU 2.5.1]. Here the usage is based on the instrumental derivation, "Something is known by this."⁹⁰

The above⁹¹ is clarified by Prabuddha:⁹²

Thinking constantly of Hari, the destroyer of a multitude of sins, and reminding each other of Him, their bodies thrill in the rapture of devotion-generated devotion.⁹³

11.3.31

In this verse, the first use of the word "devotion" is meant to suggest the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees, in harmony with the instrumental derivation. By the second use, devotion as end is intended, in accordance with the abstract derivation. This is shown clearly in the verse which summarizes this passage:

Following in this way the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees, one intent on Nārāyaṇa quickly, by means of the devotion generated by these, crosses beyond the Māyā⁹⁴ which is so difficult to overcome.

11.3.33

Here, the phrase "spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees" is employed as a substitute for the word "devotion" in its first use above.

In the case of Vedic study, the method and the goal are the 'same, namely the repetition⁹⁵ of the sacred syllables. The only distinction is that in one case there is dependence on the teacher and in the other there is none. In the present case, it might be argued, the situation is similar. The same devotion consisting of the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees, which is the means when practiced under the guidance of a teacher, having attained its culmination becomes the end, which is independent of the teacher. Therefore there can be no justification of the two-foldedness of devotion on the basis of the distinction between means and end.

This reasoning, however, is invalid because, in the verse which occurs between the two just cited above, there is a reference to a state where one's purpose in life has been fulfilled:⁹⁶

Sometimes they weep from anxious thought of Acyuta; sometimes they laugh and rejoice. Sometimes they utter strange [words], dance, sing, and imitate the Unborn One.⁹⁷ Having attained the Supreme, fully content, they become silent.

11.3.32

Now, the repetition of the sacred syllables which is the fruit of Vedic study is the means to a further end, namely knowledge of the meaning of the text and performance of the actions enjoined thereby. If the devotion generated by the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees were also a means to another goal, Prabuddha would not have indicated that the devotees are completely fulfilled by declaring that they, having attained the Supreme, are contented and become silent. Rather, he would have pointed out something else to be accomplished subsequently. But he does not do this. Therefore, because the two-foldedness of devotion as means and end can in this way be justified, it is established that there is no contradiction between the statements representing devotion as the means and those describing it as the end. They simply refer to different things.⁹⁸

Statements such as, "[some few] . . . cast off their sin completely,"⁹⁹ apply to devotion as end in addition to devotion as means because, as will be explained, devotion as end also has both direct and indirect rewards.¹⁰⁰

Consider the following verses:

The indestructible fruit of a man's austerity, learning, sacrifice, Vedic recitation, knowledge, and charity is declared by the wise to be the act of extolling the glories of the Illustrious Lord.

1.5.22

What man, other than a butcher of beasts, could ever tire of the recitation of the glorious qualities of the Illustrious Lord being sung by those who are free of desire? For they are an antidote to [the pain of] worldly existence and a delight to the ear and mind.

10.1.4

In these passages, the mention of the means is to be understood as referring to the end, as it is in the statement, "One should mix the soma with the cows" [RV 9.46.4]. It is established in the Pūrvā Mīmāṃsā¹⁰¹ that the proper meaning of this phrase is, "One should mix the soma with the milk derived from cows." A further illustration may be taken from the Uttara Mīmāṃsā.¹⁰² In the section of the Brahmasūtras beginning with the word "anumānika" there is the aphorism, "The subtle [body], for that is appropriate" [1.4.2]. This aphorism establishes that the word "Unmanifest" in the text, "The Unmanifest is beyond the Great" [KU 1.3.11], refers to the [subtle] body which is derived from it. It is the same in the verses we are considering. The phrases "the act of extolling the glories" and "the recitation of the glorious qualities" are to be understood as referring to the love¹⁰³ which arises from them. Otherwise, they could not be the highest goal of life.

XI. Devotion Distinguished from Knowledge of Brahman

At this point, there might be an objection:

"Devotion to the Lord is merely knowledge of Brahman by another name. Knowledge of Brahman is taught as the goal of all good deeds in revealed texts such as, 'By recitation of the Veda, by sacrifice, by charity, by austerity, and by fasting, Brahmins seek to know Him' [BU 4.4.22]. And the same thing is taught in the section of the Brahmasūtras beginning with the words 'sarvāpekṣā' [3.4.26-39].¹⁰⁴ The verses previously quoted in this work also indicate that devotion to the Blessed Lord is the same as the knowledge of Brahman, because they too define devotion as the goal of all good deeds. Further, it is already established in the Brahmasūtras, through the removal of ignorance and misconception, that knowledge of Brahman is the supreme goal of life. Hence undertaking this inquiry¹⁰⁵ is useless."

But this is not so, because devotion and knowledge of Brahman have distinct natures, as well as means, ends, and qualifications.¹⁰⁶ Devotion is a conditioned mental mode,¹⁰⁷ the mind's taking the form of the Blessed Lord after becoming melted. Knowledge of Brahman is an unconditioned mental mode¹⁰⁸ whose object is the secondless Self only, and it is not preceded by melting of the mind. The hearing of compositions which bring together the exalted qualities of the Blessed Lord¹⁰⁹ is the means to devotion,

while the means to knowledge of Brahman is the great sayings of the Upaniṣads such as, "Thou art That" [CU 6.9.4]. The fruit of devotion is an abundance of love for the Blessed Lord. The fruit of the knowledge of Brahman is the cessation of the ignorance which is the root of all evil. While all living beings are qualified for devotion,¹¹⁰ only the renunciates of the highest degree¹¹¹ who are possessed of the "four-fold means"¹¹² are eligible for knowledge of Brahman.

Both devotion and knowledge of Brahman result from good deeds such as sacrifice and charity, and so do [other ends such as] heaven and the desire for knowledge.¹¹³ To illustrate: Although the injunction, "He who desires heaven should perform the new and full moon sacrifices," establishes that good works are a means to heaven, the statement, "The new and full moon sacrifices fulfill all desires,"¹¹⁴ shows that they are a means to other ends as well. And the verse [just quoted by the objector], "By the recitation of the Veda, by sacrifice, by charity, by austerity, and by fasting, Brahmins seek to know Him" [BU 4.4.22], in fact does establish that good deeds are a means to the desire for knowledge. This is in accordance with the maxim of "separate connection."¹¹⁵ That good works are also a means to devotion and the knowledge of Brahman may be similarly proven.¹¹⁶ The results are the same only when the

entire complex of causal factors is identical, but not when merely one cause is common. Otherwise, undesirable consequences would follow.¹¹⁷ Therefore, devotion and knowledge of Brahman, neither of which is the fruit of the other, may, like heaven and the desire for knowledge, both be the result of a single means.

It might be objected that, if devotion is distinct from knowledge of Brahman, it will, like heaven and so on, not be the supreme goal of life.

This is not so. Heaven and the other goals cannot be enjoyed forever. They can be experienced only at certain limited times and places through certain specific bodies and sense organs, and, moreover, they are pervaded by the two-fold pain of perishability and contingency. So they are certainly not ultimate. The uninterrupted flow of the bliss of devotion, however, is ultimate because it may be enjoyed equally in all times and places without limitation as to body and sense organs, like the fruit of knowledge of Brahman, and because it does not have the two-fold pain of perishability and contingency. As it is said:

If someone, abandoning his allotted duties and worshiping the lotus feet of Hari, should stumble while yet a novice, what evil could befall him wherever he might be? On the other hand, what can those who do not so worship gain by following their allotted duties?

1.5.17

A person serving Mukunda will never in any circumstances return to transmigratory existence as others may. One remembering the embrace of the feet of Mukunda, having perceived its excellence, will never desire to abandon it again.

1.5.19

Those whose minds, attached to His glorious qualities, have even once been fixed on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and who have [thereby] expiated all their sins, will not see Death or his noose-bearing servants even in their dreams.

6.1.19

The qualification "untouched by any suffering" is employed [in stanza 1] for the sake of teaching that devotion is so even in the midst of calamity. Thus again, devotion is not the same as heaven and the rest which are ultimately painful.¹¹⁸

For similar reasons, devotion is also different from the sentiments prized by the worldly.¹¹⁹ These, not prescribed by scripture and not being a cause of the destruction of sins, are certainly affected by pain at the time of calamity. The chief distinction [between devotion and the worldly sentiments], however, is explained below, where it is shown that devotion has both direct and indirect rewards.¹²⁰

It might be objected: "If all this is so, the desire for liberation will not arise because of the impossibility of detachment from the bliss of devotion. In that case,

there can be no commencement of the study of Vedānta, which has the desire for liberation as one of its prerequisites."¹²¹

We admit that this is true, because one already attached to the bliss of devotion does not undertake such study.¹²² Nevertheless, Vedāntic inquiry may be necessary even for devotees for the sake of determining the essential nature of the object of their worship.¹²³ But the impossibility of detachment from the bliss of devotion is certainly not a source of distress; in fact, it is desirable. Even saints who are liberated-in-life¹²⁴ enjoy devotion to the Blessed Lord, as it is taught:

Sages who delight in the Self, who are free of the knots [of ignorance], practice selfless devotion to the Widestrider,¹²⁵ such are the qualities of Hari!¹²⁶

1.7.10

Thus ends the commentary on the first stanza, which serves as a summary of the meaning of the whole text.

The author now further¹²⁷ specifies the aim of the work by mentioning its title:

2. O WISE ONES, LET THIS INEXHAUSTIBLE ELIXIR OF DEVOTION¹²⁸ BE DRUNK OF ABUNDANTLY BY YOU WHO HAVE LONG BEEN AFFLICTED BY THE INTENSE ILLNESS OF WORLDLY EXISTENCE, FOR IT IS EXTREMELY EFFICACIOUS IN THE REMOVAL OF THAT.

The meaning of the stanza is clear.

XII. The Characteristics of Devotion¹²⁹

Next the author begins the discourse by setting forth the general characteristics of devotion to the Blessed Lord. He does this to establish that, as a sentiment, it is the goal of life:

3. THE MODIFICATION OF THE MIND MELTED BY THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF THE LORD'S DEVOTEES THAT HAS BECOME A CONTINUOUS, STREAM-LIKE FLOW DIRECTED TOWARD THE LORD OF ALL IS CALLED DEVOTION.

Here, "the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees" means the hearing of the Lord's glories.¹³⁰ But this does not necessarily mean doing it consciously as a religious practice. In the verse, "Therefore one should fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means whatsoever" [BP 7.1.31], the phrase "by any means" suggests that it should be by the hearing of the glorious qualities of the Lord, either as a religious discipline or without any special effort. Thus our definition remains wide enough to include even those such as Śiṣupāla¹³¹ as devotees.

In our system, the word "modification"¹³² always means the mind's assumption of a particular form. The mind becomes melted because of the "heating" action of desire, anger, and so on--which are explained below--in conjunction with the hearing of the Lord's glorious qualities. The modification of a mind that is so melted and, continuously flowing like a stream, is directed toward the Lord of all, i.e., has assumed the form of the Lord, is called devotion by those who are well-versed in the scriptures.

Regarding this definition of devotion, there is the text:

The uninterrupted flow of the mind toward Me who am seated in the hearts of all, which arises from the mere hearing of My glories and is like the flow of the waters of the Ganges toward the ocean--this is declared to be the definition of the unqualified yoga of devotion.

3.29.11-12

In this verse, the word "uninterrupted"¹³³ indicates the continuous, stream-like flow.¹³⁴ The simile "like the waters of the Ganges" suggests the melted state of the mind toward the Blessed Lord, and "the flow of the mind toward Me who am seated in the hearts of all" shows that the mind has assumed the form of the Lord of all. According to this description, a modification of the mind in the unmelted state, though it may be a continuous flow, or a modification which is quickly disappearing, though it may be in the melted state, or one not directed toward the Lord of all, though continuously flowing in a melted mind, will not be called devotion.

XIII. The Mind in Devotion

To make all of this clear, the author explains the behavior of the mind:

4. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MIND, LIKE LAC, IS HARD BY NATURE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH OBJECTS THAT SERVE AS HEATING AGENTS,¹³⁵ HOWEVER, IT WILL BECOME MELTED.

There can be no destruction of the hardness of lac without conjunction with heating agents like fire. Rather, when there is contact with such things as sunlight, there will be mere softening and not a complete melting. This fact is well known. In the same way, without conjunction with heating agents such as the objects of desire, anger, and so on--which will be explained immediately below--there cannot be any melting of the mind. The result of contact with just any object will be mere softening. This is why the word "heating agent" is used.

The author now enumerates these heating agents:

5. THE HEATING AGENTS FOR THE LAC OF THE MIND ARE DESIRE, ANGER, FEAR, AFFECTION, JOY, GRIEF, COMPASSION, AND SO ON. WHEN THESE SUBSIDE, THE MIND BECOMES HARD.

He will give the definitions of each of these and explain their differences.¹³⁶ The basic idea here is that whatever object stimulates a high degree of desire, anger, or other emotion will cause the mind to melt. When the emotion ceases due to the transference of attention to another object, the mind will again become hard.

The author now states the purpose of the melting of the mind:

6. THE FORM WHICH ANY OBJECT IMPRINTS IN A MELTED MIND MAY BE DESIGNATED BY TERMS [MEANING "PERMANENT IMPRESSION"] SUCH AS SAMSKĀRA, VASANĀ, BHĀVA, OR BHAVANA.¹³⁷

But it cannot be identified with the "soul-property" postulated by the logicians of the Nyāya as something

generated by perishable cognitions.¹³⁸ This the meaning [of the stanza].

7. IN CONJUNCTION WITH A NON-HEATING AGENT THE MIND ONLY BECOMES SOFT. NOTHING AT ALL CAN ENTER INTO SUCH A MIND AS A PERMANENT IMPRESSION.¹³⁹

The prefix "non-" is used here in the sense of "slightly." When there is conjunction with objects which are non-heating agents--that is, like the sunlight in the lac analogy, only slightly heating--there is merely a moderate loosening of the parts of the mind. In such a mind, therefore, as in lac that is only slightly melted, no object can enter as a permanent impression. An object may enter as a semblance of a permanent impression, but that is something quite different.

In the melted mind, there is a permanent impression; but when there is mere softening there is only a semblance of a permanent impression. The author states the decisive factor in this:

8. WHATEVER HAS ENTERED THE MIND WHILE IT IS IN THE MELTED CONDITION IS NOT RELEASED BY THE MIND EVEN WHEN IT MELTS AGAIN AFTER REGAINING ITS HARDNESS.

Although the same vermilion color which is introduced into melted lac reappears when the lac comes into contact with fire and its hardness is removed again, the color which is put into lac when it is merely soft does not reappear when there is remelting. In the same way, the form of the object that enters into the mind while it is melted, remaining

there until the mind has regained its hardness, is not abandoned by the mind. It continues to present itself even when another object is being apprehended during another melting. Therefore it is called a permanent impression. But the form that enters during the state of softness does not remain until the mind becomes hard again. Or if it does, it is abandoned by the mind when another object is being perceived. Hence it is a semblance of a permanent impression. This is the meaning of the stanza.

Therefore he into whose melted mind the form of the Blessed Lord enters even once¹⁴⁰ is completely fulfilled, because the Lord will be constantly present in his awareness. As it is said:

He who sees the Self in the form of the Blessed Lord in all creatures and sees all creatures in the Self which is the Blessed Lord is the best of the Lord's devotees.

11.2.45

Seeing the Lord in all beings is possible because His very form, having entered the melted state of the mind, shines forth while one is perceiving them, just as the color which has been infused into melted lac is always present. And since such a permanent impression is indestructible, he who has it is called an advanced devotee. This is the intention of the verse.

XIV. The Three Levels of Devotees¹⁴¹

The objection that only a knower of Brahman can be in such a state is untenable since the melted condition of the mind is not required in the case of a knower of Brahman. Hence is it not possible to classify a knower of Brahman among devotees either of the advanced, intermediate, or beginning levels.

When there is the condition of seeing "the Self in the form of the Blessed Lord in all creatures" [11.2.45] at the culmination of the melted state, the devotee is said to be at the advanced level. But when there is the slightly melted state and a semblance of a permanent impression, it is said:

He who shows love toward the Lord, friendship toward those who have surrendered to Him, compassion toward the ignorant, and indifference toward the hostile is an intermediate.

11.2.46

The implication is that, for one who is in such a condition, the subsequent arising of the melted state is imminent.

In regard to him in whose mind the melted state has not reached perfection or even slightly arisen, but who himself faithfully practices the disciplines of the Lord's devotees for the sake of attaining that, and who has the capacity¹⁴² to destroy the hardness of his mind, it is said:

He who strives faithfully to offer worship to Hari in His image only and does not worship Him in His devotees or in others, is known as a beginner.

11.2.47

The word "beginner"¹⁴³ is used here to mean one who is in the beginning stage,¹⁴⁴ that is, one whose practice of the means to devotion has just started.

XV. Other Designations of the Melting State

This melted state is also known by the words love,¹⁴⁵ attachment,¹⁴⁶ and affection.¹⁴⁷ For instance:

He is called the foremost of devotees whose heart Hari--
Who destroys a multitude of sins even when called on
absentmindedly--does not leave because His lotus feet
are bound by the cord of love.¹⁴⁸

11.2.54

"Love"¹⁴⁹ here is the melted state. It is a cord, a means of binding like a rope, since that which has once entered in the melting state cannot come out again.

XVI. The Three Levels of Advanced Devotees

Advanced devotees themselves are of three levels because the form of the Lord that has entered consciousness in the melted state is perceived in three ways. The first is accompanied by the appearance of the world as real, as in the verse:

Having no other object of devotion, he bows in worship to ether, air, fire, water, and earth, the celestial bodies, living beings, the four quarters, trees and the like, rivers and oceans, and whatsoever may exist, [seeing them] as the body of Hari.

11.2.41

The novice among advanced devotees has this type of perception. The second level is characterized by the apprehension of the manifest world as false:

Thus the entire universe--which is unreal in essence, resembling a dream, devoid of intelligence, and painful with much suffering--arises from Māyā and appears in Thee, who art the infinite, with eternal consciousness and bliss as Thy nature, as if it were real.

10.14.22

Such a perception belongs to the middle level of advanced devotion. In the third level, the world is not apprehended in either manner.¹⁵⁰ Thus:

While I was meditating on His lotus feet with my mind overcome by devotion and my eyes filled with tears of anguish, Hari slowly revealed Himself in my heart. With the hairs of my body standing on end because of the abundance of love, supremely content, lost in a flood of bliss, I could not see either,¹⁵¹ O Sage.

1.6.17-18

This describes the highest of the advanced devotees. The attainment of this highest state is a consequence of the uninterrupted practice of spiritual discipline.

XVII. The Definition of Permanent Emotion and Sentiment

The word "permanent"¹⁵² is used here with its primary, non-technical meaning of "not passing away" to indicate the stability of the form of the object that has entered into the melted mind:¹⁵³

9. THEREFORE¹⁵⁴ THE FORM OF THE OBJECT IS CALLED A PERMANENT EMOTION. MANIFESTED, IT BECOMES A SENTIMENT BECAUSE IT IS SUPREME BLISS.

Once the distinction between the spectator and the events of the play has disappeared, the permanent emotion existing in the spectator is manifested by the conjunction of the objective causes, the outward signs, and the associated transitory states.¹⁵⁵ Being an immediate awareness of pure bliss, it develops into a sentiment. This is the rule of the experts in aesthetic theory. As the great preceptor Bharata¹⁵⁶ has said: "The arising of sentiment is from the conjunction of the objective causes, the outward signs, and the associated transitory states" [NS 6.31]. Thus the author defines permanent emotion here in order to establish that devotion too is a sentiment.¹⁵⁷

**XVIII. The Permanent Emotion Becomes a Sentiment
Because it is Blissful¹⁵⁸**

In order to show that the permanent emotion becomes a sentiment, he proceeds to demonstrate that it is supreme bliss:¹⁵⁹

10. THE LORD HIMSELF IS SUPREME BLISS. HIS FORM,
HAVING ENTERED¹⁶⁰ THE MIND, BECOMES A SENTIMENT OF THE
HIGHEST DEGREE.

It is said that a reflection¹⁶¹ is nothing but the original¹⁶² itself, apprehended within limiting adjuncts.¹⁶³ Reflected in the mind, the Lord, who is supreme bliss, becomes a permanent emotion and reaches the state of being a sentiment. Hence it is beyond question that the sentiment of devotion is of the nature of supreme bliss. This does

not, however, result in the identity of the primary objective cause and the permanent emotion because the distinction between original and reflection is well-known in the world, like the distinction between the individual soul and the Lord.¹⁶⁴

It might be objected: "Granted that the sentiment of devotion is of the nature of supreme bliss because its permanent emotion, the form of the Blessed Lord, is of that nature. How then can sentiments such as erotic love¹⁶⁵ also be supremely blissful when their respective objects, such as the beloved one, are not so?" In response to this, he says:

11. EVEN WHEN THE OBJECT IS ONE'S BELOVED, THE CAUSE IS STILL PURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLISS. THE CAUSE APPEARS, HOWEVER, AS AN EFFECT AND NOT AS ITSELF BECAUSE IT IS COVERED BY THE VEIL OF ILLUSION.

Brahman, the supreme bliss, is the material cause of the world. This is taught in revealed texts such as the following: "From bliss, indeed are these beings born; by bliss, when born, do they live; and into bliss, when departing, do they enter" [TU 3.6.1]. And the same is established by the aphorism: "From which there is the production, etc., of all this" [BS 1.1.2]. It is universally recognized that an effect is non-different from its material cause, as a pot is non-different from the clay [of which it is made]. "All this, verily, is Brahman" [CU 3.14.1], "All this is the Self" [BU 2.4.6], "Being only, my dear, was this in the beginning" [CU 6.2.1]--in statements

such as these, the Chāndogya and other Upaniṣads reiterate this truth. It is also demonstrated by the aphorism: "Because of the word 'origin,' the effect is not other than the cause" [BS 2.1.14].

This being the case, there are two reasons for our inability to perceive the non-difference of the effect from the cause, namely, Māyā's powers of projection and concealment.¹⁶⁶ Thus the author states in the second half of stanza 11, "It appears, however, as an effect." Projection makes what is not an effect¹⁶⁷ appear as if it were, and concealment brings about its non-appearance in its own form as undivided bliss. As it is said:

That which is perceived in the Self when in reality it does not exist and that which is not perceived [when it does]--know that to be [caused by] My Māyā. It is like a false appearance, like darkness.¹⁶⁸

2.9.33

To answer the question, "How, then, can this bliss be perceived?" the author says:

12. WHEN THERE IS A MOMENTARY DISAPPEARANCE OF THE COVERING OF MĀYĀ, BRAHMAN, WHICH IS BEING ITSELF BUT IS UNKNOWN, MAY BE KNOWN BY A PURE MENTAL MODIFICATION THROUGH THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE DIRECTED TOWARD SUCH OBJECTS AS THE BELOVED.

The validity of all the means of knowledge¹⁶⁹ rests on their being revealers of what was previously unknown. Otherwise, even memory would have to be accepted as a valid means of knowledge.¹⁷⁰ But only Consciousness,¹⁷¹ which shines with its own luminosity, can be unknown. Not so the

insentient because there is no possibility of insentient things shining forth, and therefore their further obscuration would serve no purpose.¹⁷² Consequently, in order that the means of knowledge that are directed toward such things as the beloved may be considered valid as being revealers of the unknown, their object must be said to be nothing but Consciousness as limited by those things. To regard them as valid means of knowledge would otherwise be impossible. Thus, when the covering of Māyā is removed by the pure, direct mental modification generated by a valid means of knowledge, Consciousness, though in reality the supreme bliss, shines as limited by the various objects of which it is the material cause. But, because the unlimited essential nature of Consciousness is not directly perceived, immediate liberation does not occur.¹⁷³ Nor is there any contradiction of the self-luminosity [of Consciousness].¹⁷⁴

Then what? In answer, the author says:

13. THEN THAT ALONE BECOMES A PERMANENT EMOTION IN THE MIND AND REACHES THE STATE OF BEING A SENTIMENT, SLIGHTLY DIMINISHED BY MIXTURE WITH THE INSENTIENT.

Becoming a permanent emotion when reflected in a modification of a melted mind, this very Consciousness, limited by objects, attains the status of a sentiment. Hence even the sentiments based on worldly experience can be said to be supremely blissful. However, while in the case of the sentiment of devotion there is a great abundance of

bliss due to the manifestation of the Lord who is a mass of unlimited bliss and consciousness, in the sentiments based on worldly experience there is a lesser degree of bliss. This is because only a portion of bliss and consciousness is manifested in the worldly sentiments owing to limitation by objects. Therefore the sentiment of devotion alone should be cultivated and the worldly sentiments should be ignored. This is the author's meaning.¹⁷⁵

XIX. The Explanation According to Sāṃkhya¹⁷⁶

14. ^ THUS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEACHINGS OF VEDĀNTA, THE PERMANENT EMOTION HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE A SENTIMENT. NOW THE SAME WILL BE TAUGHT IN TERMS OF THE TEACHINGS OF SĀṂKHYA.

That is, it will be taught that the permanent emotion is a sentiment.

In order to do this, the Sāṃkhya system is discussed:

15. THE MATERIAL QUALITIES¹⁷⁷--THE LUMINOUS, THE ACTIVE, AND THE INERT--ARE OF THE NATURE OF JOY, PAIN, AND DELUSION. THE PRIMAL MATERIAL CAUSE¹⁷⁸ IS COMPOSED OF THEM, AS ARE ALL ITS EFFECTS.

The Sāṃkhyas teach in the following fashion:

"All existent things have one common material cause consisting of joy, pain, and delusion because they themselves are seen to consist of these. All things that are seen to share a certain nature have a common material cause of that nature, just as things like pots and bowls,

which are made of clay, have clay as their common cause. There is no admission here of any universal other than the pervading material cause, so there is no fault in the inference¹⁷⁹ as there might be if "potness" and other such universals were accepted.¹⁸⁰ Since things are all experienced as consisting of joy, pain, and delusion, they have these factors as their common cause. By such an inference it is established that there is a cause consisting of joy, pain, and delusion. The joy-aspect of this cause is the luminous quality, the pain-aspect is the active quality, and the delusion-aspect is the inert quality. Thus it is proved that the primal material cause is composed of the three material qualities.

"This inference [involving the perception of a single material cause present in all things] cannot be used for the cross-purpose of supporting the doctrine of ultimate atoms¹⁸¹ or the doctrine of Brahman. In the atomic theory, it is impossible to perceive any effect as consisting of atoms because it is maintained that the cause [the atoms] and the effect are distinct and, further, that the atoms are invisible. Besides, there is no valid means of knowledge that can be applied to prove the existence of the atoms. The fact is that, utilizing reasoning that is simple and straightforward, the inference of the material cause of the first effects of creation points to one factor only, just as

the inference of the creator of the world points to a single agent.¹⁸²

"Even when the identity of cause and effect is acknowledged, as by the followers of Vedānta, the perception of the world as consisting of Brahman is not possible because Brahman is said not to be an object of any of the ordinary means of knowledge. If it is argued that Brahman, as existence itself, is the object of all the means of knowledge and that, as a result, any effect can be seen to consist of It, we reply that this is a mere commotion, unexpected and useless. It is impossible for Brahman, which is admitted to be without genus and species, to assume a variety of forms."¹⁸³

This, at least, is how the thinking of the Sāṃkhyas goes.

It might be objected [against this position] as follows: "Your logic is faulty, because it is not possible to identify internal states such as joy, pain, and delusion with external objects like pots and so on. If it were, each object would appear to each observer as threefold."

The author gives the response to this:

16. EACH AND EVERY THING IS COMPOSED OF THE THREE MATERIAL QUALITIES AND MAY BE EXPERIENCED IN THREE DIFFERENT WAYS BY THREE DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERING MENTAL CONSTITUTIONS.

The idea is that it is by no means impossible for external things and internal things to share a common nature since it

is these very externals that become internal by being reflected in the mind. Nor must we be driven to the undesirable conclusion that everything will appear the same to all. There are differences among individuals in the mental impressions which act as subsidiary causes.¹⁸⁴ This very point is now illustrated:

17. THE BLISS-ASPECT OF A DESIRABLE WOMAN IS EXPERIENCED BY HER HUSBAND. TO A RIVAL WIFE, SHE APPEARS AS A SOURCE OF PAIN. HER DELUSION-ASPECT IS APPARENT TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS UNABLE TO OBTAIN HER.

For the husband, only the luminous quality of the woman is prominent; for the rival wife, only the active quality is manifest, and for another man, desiring but not obtaining her, only the inert quality stands out. So, to them respectively, joy, pain, and delusion become manifest. In this way the differences in their perceptions are explained.

Variation in the perception of one thing because of differences in mental impressions is mentioned by Ācārya Bhaṭṭa¹⁸⁵ also:

A corpse, an object of desire, something to be eaten-- these are the three varying conceptions held by an ascetic, a lover, and a dog in respect of the body of a single beautiful woman.

The author now states what has been accomplished:

18. THIS BEING SO, WHEN THE FORM OF BLISS HAS ENTERED THE MIND, IT, HAVING BECOME A PERMANENT EMOTION, DEVELOPS INTO A SENTIMENT.

The idea is that even permanent emotions such as anger are blissful. This is because they are the result of the

melting of the mind. Although containing portions of the active and the inert material qualities, the melted mind is characterized by a predominance of the luminous quality, and the luminous quality is blissful. Therefore all permanent emotions contain bliss. Even so, it must be understood that there is a gradation of bliss due to the intermixture of various degrees of the active and the inert qualities. Hence the same degree of bliss is not experienced in every sentiment. This is made clear further on.¹⁸⁶

XX. Objections Based on Other Theories of Mind

In reference to what has been said thus far, the Nyāya logicians might object as follows: "Since the mind is unchanging, without parts, and atomic in size, how is it possible to say that it undergoes transformation into the form of an object by becoming melted? And how can you use the illustration of lac, a substance composed of parts? Increase and diminution are not possible in the case of something that is partless. Therefore the foregoing discussion of the nature of the permanent emotion is unsound."

In answer to this, the author says:

19. THE MIND IS UNITARY LIKE AN ATOM; THEREFORE IT CANNOT ACQUIRE THE FORM OF AN OBJECT--THIS AND SIMILAR OPINIONS OF OTHERS ARE DISREGARDED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BASED ON ANY AUTHORITATIVE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE.

The words "and similar" serve to include the view of the Prābhākaras¹⁸⁷ that the mind is all pervading¹⁸⁸ and the doctrine of the Buddhists that the mind is the immediately preceding cognition that serves as the cause of its successors.¹⁸⁹

The truth is that the mind is of medium size.¹⁹⁰ We infer this from the fact that it is an instrument, like an ax, and a sense organ, like the eye. There are no grounds at all for inferring that it is atomic. Nor can it be inferred that it is all pervading because it is an eternal sense organ like the faculty of hearing,¹⁹¹ since the latter's eternality remains unproved. In fact, because the ether itself is non-eternal,¹⁹² all the more so will be the faculty of hearing which is its product.¹⁹³ Since something that is produced can never be all pervading, our inference [that the mind is] of medium size does not fail in respect of [the objection based on the supposed nature of] the faculty of hearing.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, there is an invariable rule¹⁹⁵ that whatever sense apprehends a particular quality is a product of the element which possess that quality. This proves that the eye and the other senses are products of the elements which possess the qualities that they apprehend.¹⁹⁶ Since the mind perceives the qualities of all five of the gross elements, we must accept that it is a product of those

elements. There are no grounds for making a distinction between the mind and the other senses in this respect.¹⁹⁷ A distinction cannot be based on the supposition that dissimilar things [such as the elements] cannot combine to produce an effect [such as the mind]. Gold, silk, and cotton threads are dissimilar, yet they can combine to form a single cloth. If one does not accept a whole consisting of parts in this case, there will be the undesirable consequence of bidding farewell to all wholes consisting of parts, for we would have to deny this category in other cases also. Therefore the mind be understood as a product of the five gross elements in their pure state.¹⁹⁸

Having a predominance of the luminous quality,¹⁹⁹ the mind has a natural inclination towards expansion and contraction. A clear substance, it is capable like the eye of being affected by concrete objects. Joy, pain, desire, and knowledge reside in the mind; this we accept. Since these things are known to pervade the entire body, so must the mind which is their locus. Hence the mind is co-extensive with the body in size.

If it is objected [by the followers of the Nyāya] that the rejection of the atomicity of the mind entails the possibility of its being connected with all the sense organs simultaneously and that hence there will be the unwanted contingency of diverse cognitions arising at the same

time,²⁰⁰ we say, "Not so." A single cognition alone is produced by a single sense organ at any one time. Otherwise, why would there not be the simultaneous occurrence of two visual perceptions? The simultaneous arising of cognitions produced by different sense organs is, however, desirable. We have examples such as the concurrent experience of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell when someone is eating a long sweetcake. Moreover, the objectors themselves accept the doctrine that the conjunction of the skin and the mind is necessary for all perception; otherwise they cannot explain the phenomenon of deep sleep.²⁰¹ So it will be difficult for them to deny the simultaneous perception of, for example, the taste and touch of sugar which is in contact with the area of the skin that forms the tongue.²⁰²

The result of all this is that a divergence of opinion in respect of the [theory of] mind which we accept--and which is supported by revealed scripture, traditional wisdom, and reason--is not possible. The [Buddhist] teaching that the mind is the immediately preceding cognition is disregarded as being extremely illogical; the detailed refutation of this view is set forth in our Vedāntakalpalatikā.²⁰³

XXI. The Final Position on Mind

The view of the Vedānta and the Sāṃkhya that the mind is a composite, naturally clear substance that grasps the form of the object like a mirror is correct because it is based on proper authority. Therefore the author says:

20. THE MIND, THROUGH CONTACT WITH THE OBJECT, GRASPS ITS FORM--SO IT IS RIGHTLY DETERMINED BY THE FOLLOWERS OF VEDANTA AND SĀMKHYA.

Although the Sāṃkhyas hold that the mind is derived from the ego-principle²⁰⁴ while the followers of Vedānta teach that it is produced from the elements, still both recognize the fact that the mind grasps the form of the object. Hence they are both mentioned as alike.

The mind's assumption of the form of the object is preceded by its melting. In support of this understanding, the author quotes a statement of Śaṅkara:

21. AS COPPER POURED INTO A MOULD [MŪṢĀ] COMES TO RESEMBLE IT, SO THE MIND THAT [REACHES OUT AND] PERVADES AN OBJECT SUCH AS A POT CERTAINLY BECOMES SIMILAR TO IT.²⁰⁵

A mūṣā is a crucible.²⁰⁶ Heated in a crucible and poured into a mould made of clay that has an inner cavity with the shape of an idol or other image, copper assumes that shape because it has been melted. In the same way the mind itself, melted by passion, hate, and so on, and "poured" into some object through the eyes or one of the other sense organs, takes on the form of the object. This is the meaning of the stanza.

Even though melting is discussed here in general terms, on the basis of experience it must be restricted to the melting that is a result of attachment, hate, and so forth. Otherwise, in the absence of these factors, there is mere softening. This point has already been discussed above.²⁰⁷

The mind takes on the form of the object because, like light, it removes the covering which conceals the object--this inference is declared by Śaṅkara to be the authority in the matter:

22. OR JUST AS LIGHT, THE MANIFESTOR, TAKES ON THE FORM OF THAT WHICH IT MAKES MANIFEST, SO THE MIND, BECAUSE IT IS THE MANIFESTOR OF ALL THINGS, IS KNOWN TO ASSUME THEIR FORMS.²⁰⁸

Because the removal of the object's covering does not occur if the manifestor does not assume its form--this is the meaning.

23. THESE WORDS OF THE HOLY ONE WHOSE FEET ARE WORTHY OF WORSHIP²⁰⁹ ARE LOGICALLY COMPELLING. THE PRESENT TOPIC IS NOW EXAMINED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE VĀRTIKAS.²¹⁰

The words of Śaṅkara are in the stanza, "Or just as light, the manifestor . . ." The reasoning of the author of the Vārtikas [Sureśvara] is also presented in the form of an inference, as follows:

24. THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE GOES OUT FROM THE KNOWER AND, HAVING GONE OUT, MEETS THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE. JOINED WITH THE OBJECT, IT TAKES ON ITS LIKENESS.²¹¹

This special transformation of the mind is preceded by the melting of the mind and is called the means of knowledge²¹² or "knowledge in the form of a mental modification."²¹³

From the knower--who is a composite of consciousness and unconsciousness, that is, who consists of the mind together with consciousness²¹⁴--the mental modification flows out through sense organs like the eye and reaches an object such as a pot. But it does not at the same time abandon the mind, which is limited by the body, just as water flowing from a tank through an irrigation ditch does not lose contact with its source.²¹⁵ Connected with the pot, the mental modification assumes its form, and the pot is perceived because of the manifestation of Consciousness in it. This is the meaning of the stanza. The whole process is explained at length in our Siddhāntabindu.²¹⁶

25. IN THE SAME WAY, MANY SUCH STATEMENTS COULD BE CITED IN SUPPORT OF THE FACT THAT THE MIND GRASPS THE FORM OF THE OBJECT.

The point is that they are not quoted owing to fear that the work may become too lengthy.

The same doctrine is taught by Vidyāraṇya in the Pañcadaśī. The author now quotes him with a view to concluding [this portion of the discussion]:

26. THEREFORE, WHENEVER THERE IS A MAIDEN WHO IS FLESH, THERE IS ANOTHER WHO IS MENTAL. ALTHOUGH THE ONE OF FLESH IS A SINGLE ENTITY, THE MENTAL MAIDEN IS DISTINGUISHED . . .²¹⁷

Because of the impossibility of the cognition of distinction in a single physical body without distinction in the mental form--this is the meaning.

He now illustrates the perception of difference that is well known to all:

27. . . . IN MANY WAYS AS WIFE, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, SISTER-IN-LAW, BROTHER-IN-LAW'S WIFE, AND MOTHER. A MAN ALSO IS [DISTINGUISHED AS] SON-IN-LAW, FATHER-IN-LAW, SON, FATHER, AND SO ON.²¹⁸

The words "distinguished as" should be supplied in the second half of the stanza.

Having explained the distinction that the physical form is single while the mental is manifold, the author²¹⁹ goes on to state the further difference that the former is perishable while the latter is not:

28. EVEN WHEN THE EXTERNAL BODY IS DESTROYED, THE MENTAL BODY REMAINS. THEREFORE THE WISE CALL IT "THE PERMANENT."²²⁰

The idea is that the mental body is not destroyed.

29. THUS THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE PERMANENT EMOTION HAS BEEN EXPOUNDED. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH OF ITS VARIETIES WILL BE EXPLAINED IN DETAIL SEPARATELY.

Because it is not subject to destruction, the mental form of an object is called a permanent emotion. Its varieties-- such as love,²²¹ humor,²²² and so on--and their characteristics will be discussed in the next chapter.²²³ This is the meaning of the stanza.

XXII. The Form of the Lord in the Melted Mind

Since the form of the object that has entered into the melted mind is permanent, the author says:

30. WHEN THE MELTED MIND GRASPS THE THE LORD--WHO IS OMNIPRESENT, ETERNAL, FULL, AND OF THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLISS--WHAT ELSE REMAINS?

"Omnipresent" indicates that He pervades all space; "eternal" that He exists through all time; "full" means that, since He is one without second, He is the substratum of the whole illusion of duality; and "consciousness and bliss" marks the Lord as the supreme goal of life. Because the numberless forms of objects that have entered the mind since beginningless time are destroyed by such a mental form of the Lord, and He alone shines forth, the purpose of life is accomplished. This is the meaning.

The author now reminds us of the purpose of melting, as previously explained,²²⁴ in order to inspire steadfastness in striving for it:

31. THE HARD MIND DOES NOT GRASP; THE SOFT MIND DOES NOT RECEIVE AN IMPRESSION. KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS DIRECTED TOWARD OBJECTS LIKE STONES, THE WISE CALL INDIFFERENT COGNITION.²²⁵

The hard mind simply does not grasp the object. The soft mind, though it grasps, does not retain a permanent impression. This is because in both cases there is no melting of the mind, as has been previously explained.²²⁶ Hardness is the state of not being even slightly melted, while softness is that of being slightly so. These conditions may be recognized by the absence of the ecstatic modes,²²⁷ which are effects of the melted state and are set forth as follows:

Becoming paralysed, perspiring, thrilling of the hair on the body, breaking of the voice, trembling, changing color, crying, and fainting--these are known as the eight ecstatic modes.

NS̄ 6.22

Therefore, hardness in respect of the Blessed Lord is condemned:

That heart is made of stone which is not, alas! affected by the singing of the names of Hari. When the heart is affected, there will be tears in the eyes and bristling of the hairs of the body.

2.3.2

Without devotion, a melted mind, tears of joy, and thrilling of the hair, how can the heart become pure?

11.14.23

The meaning is that, without devotion, how can the mind be purified? Without the melting of the mind, how can there be devotion? And without tears of joy and thrilling of the hair, how can the melting state be known? The mention of tears of joy and the bristling of the body hair is meant to suggest paralysis, perspiring, and the other ecstatic modes also.

Because there is no impression made in the mind when it is not melted, the wise, i.e., the learned, call knowledge of things such as stones indifferent cognition. This knowledge is not a cause of permanent mental impressions. According to the author of the Nyāya-vārtika,²²⁸ "The object which is neither a means to pleasure nor a source of pain is an object of indifference."

Attachment is the cause of a permanent mental impression in the case of an object which provides pleasure; when an object that is a source of pain is present, aversion is the cause. In the absence of both, because the mind does not melt, no permanent mental impression is created. This is the meaning.

The mind's acquisition of the form of the Blessed Lord is the secret meaning of all the scriptures because all scriptures, though differing in approach, culminate in this state alone. Before it is attained, however, the forms of all other objects must be removed from the mind.

XXIII. The Possession of the Lord's Form is Natural²²⁹

It might be asked how the mind's being filled with an infinite number of desirable and undesirable impressions that have been entering it during its melted state from beginningless time might cease. Indeed, this condition seems to be the inherent nature of the mind, just as coolness is the nature of water, warmth the nature of fire, and mobility the nature of wind. When something possesses a quality inherently, there is no possibility that this inherent nature may be destroyed. In answer to this doubt, the author says:

32. THEREFORE THE WISE SHOULD CONSTANTLY, BY THE MEANS SANCTIONED IN THE SCRIPTURES, MAINTAIN HARDNESS TOWARD WORLDLY OBJECTS AND THE MELTED STATE IN RESPECT OF THE FEET OF THE LORD.

The condition of being filled with the forms of worldly objects is not the inherent nature of the mind. The fact is that this condition is the effect of adventitious causes. In the waking state, the mind's taking the form of gross objects is caused by such factors as contact with the organs of sense. The mind in the dreaming state assumes the form of subtle objects that are produced by the impressions latent within it. But in deep sleep, when such causes are absent, the mind becomes devoid of objects. Any mention of the dissolution of the mind in deep sleep is intended merely to signify its condition of being without objects.²³⁰ This is taught by the revered author of the Brahmasūtras as follows: "It [continues] up to [its final] passing away,²³¹ because of the teaching of transmigratory existence [until then]" [BS 4.2.8]. The meaning of the aphorism is that the "passing away," i.e., dissolution,²³² of the mind is designated as its point of termination, and involvement in transmigration will continue until, but not after, this has taken place. Even in deep sleep there is no dissolution of the mind, because the mind re-emerges,²³³ and it is taught that it has continued involvement in transmigration. The mention of dissolution of the mind by the author of the Vivaraṇa [in the passage] beginning with the words, "What subtlety, pray, is this?" is intended to convey the opinion of the opponent, not his own, for otherwise the aphorism would be contradicted.²³⁴

What is inherent in the mind, however, is its having the form of the Blessed Lord. This is because the eternal Lord, the Inner Controller of all, pervades everything and is the substratum of the inexpressible Māyā that is possessed of many and variegated powers as the subtle cause that produces the mind itself. While a pot's being filled with water is the result of some outside cause, its being occupied by the ether is natural because the ether is omnipresent. It is the same with the mind. This point is expounded by the author of the Vārtika:

Just as a pot's being filled with ether at its production is a consequence of the nature of the ether itself and is not produced by a cause, so is the condition of the mind.

The joy, suffering, and so on of the mind are caused by its merit and demerit. Its pervasion by the consciousness of the Self is innately established, in accordance with the very structure of reality.

SV 543b-545a

If the mind's possession of the form of the Lord is natural and thus does not need to be brought about by any cause, what is the use of scripture?²³⁵ The answer to this objection is that scripture serves in the acquisition of the form of the Lord that prevents the mind's taking on the form of other objects. The form of the Lord that is inherent in the mind does not prevent the mind's assuming other forms. It can co-exist with that condition and indeed supports it.²³⁶ But the form of the Lord that is generated by

scripture,²³⁷ though appearing as if remote at the beginning of practice, gradually removes the forms of objects from the mind and, when lead through the advanced levels of practice to immediacy, completely destroys them.²³⁸ As it is said:

The mind throws off the impurities born of the action of the material qualities²³⁹ through intense devotion and longing for the feet of the lotus-naved Lord. Thus purified, it will see the reality of the Self, as eyes that are unclouded see the light of the sun.

11.3.40

As gold melted by fire gives up its impurities and regains its own pure nature, so the mind, shaking off the results of action by means of the yoga of devotion, attains Me.

The more the mind is cleansed by the hearing and recital of purifying verses about Me, the more it sees the subtle reality, like eyes made sharp by medicinal ointments.

The mind of one whose thought dwells on the objects of sense remains deeply attached to them; the mind of one who meditates on Me is lost in Me.

Therefore, having abandoned thought of all that is unreal as one abandons the reveries of dreams, fix your mind on Me, having made it intent on My being.

11.14.25-28

Such a yoga was taught by My disciples Sanaka and the rest²⁴⁰ so that the mind might be withdrawn from all else and fixed on Me.

11.13.14

This same yoga was taught by the revered Kapiladeva:²⁴¹

By performing one's own duty without desire for its fruit, by a pure mind, by intense devotion toward Me nourished over a long time by what one has learned about Me,

By knowledge which has ascertained the Real, by strong detachment, by yoga combined with austerity, and by intense concentration on the Self--

Constantly being consumed by these, a man's crude nature gradually disappears in this very life, as the firestick is consumed by the fire it produces.

3.27.21-23

The words "crude nature" here mean the common condition of having impressions of the forms of objects.²⁴²

In the Hamsagītā we read:²⁴³

The mind is entangled in the material qualities, and the material qualities likewise in the mind. How, O Lord, may these be separated by the seeker who is desirous of liberation?

11.13.17

The Blessed Lord responds to this question of Sanaka and his brothers as follows:

It is I alone who am apprehended by the mind, by speech, by vision, and the other faculties. Know truly that there is nothing other than Me.

11.13.24

The states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep are modifications of the mind caused by the material qualities. Because it is the witness of these, the soul²⁴⁴ is known to be distinct.

Because the bondage of transmigration involves the Self in the activity of the material qualities, one should abandon [this bondage] and abide in Me who am the Fourth.²⁴⁵ Then the mind and the material qualities will be separated.²⁴⁶

The enlightened one, realizing this bondage wrought by the ego to be contrary to what he desires, remaining in the Fourth, should forsake all concern for worldly existence.

As long as one does not terminate his knowledge of plurality by proper reasoning, he sleeps in ignorance even though awake, as if imagining himself to be awake in a dream.

Because of the unreality of all things other than the Self, the differences based on them, one's goals and one's motives, are all false like the visions of a dream.

He who, in the waking state, experiences the everchanging external objects through all the senses; Who, in dreams, enjoys objects resembling the external ones in the mind; Who, in deep sleep, puts an end to them all--He, the Lord of the senses, the Witness of this threefold modification of the material qualities, is one, because He has continuity of memory throughout.²⁴⁷

So, having thoroughly pondered these three states of the mind arising from the material qualities and determined that they are superimposed on Me by My Māyā, and having cut out the whole store of doubts contained in the heart by the sword of knowledge sharpened by inference and scriptural testimony, you should worship Me.

11.13.27-33

Thus by inquiry removing the error of multiplicity, he should come to rest in the Self, fixing his purified mind on Me, the omnipresent.

11.11.21

The main point here is that the objects which imprint their forms in the mind are not distinct from the Lord because they are superimposed on Him. For all objects appear as existent--as, for example, "an existing pot" or "an existing cloth"--because they participate in the existence of the Lord Himself. Furthermore, the Upaniṣadic text, "All this, verily, is Brahman, in origin, duration, and dissolution" [CU 3.14.1], teaches that all things arise from the Blessed Lord alone, exist in the Blessed alone, and dissolve into the Blessed Lord alone. They are non-different from the Lord, like pots from clay, and will be

contradicted²⁴⁸ [by true knowledge] like the universe of the dream state. Because that which is superimposed is annulled by the knowledge of its substratum, all things vanish at the manifestation of the Lord and merge in Him.

This being the case, all love, even that directed toward worldly objects, is in reality fixed on the Blessed Lord, because nothing different from Him is presented to awareness. Such a state²⁴⁹ was desired by Prahlaḍa:²⁵⁰

Let not unceasing love,²⁵¹ such as the indiscriminating have for worldly objects, depart from the heart of me who am constantly meditating on Thee.

VP 1.20.19

XXIV. The Levels of Non-Attachment²⁵²

By reasonings such as these it may be determined that the Blessed Lord is the non-dual Self, a mass of perfect being, consciousness, and bliss,²⁵³ the pure existence²⁵⁴ which is the substratum of all. For one who has so realized, the great non-attachment called Mastery arises toward the objects of waking experience, because he knows that they are as insignificant as the objects of a dream. This non-attachment is described in an aphorism of the revered Patañjali: "One who is devoid of desire for objects seen and objects heard of through scripture attains the non-attachment called Mastery" [YS 1.15].²⁵⁵

The fact that non-attachment has four stages, related as means and end,²⁵⁶ is widely acknowledged in all

the scriptures. The first of these stages is characterized by the resolution, "I will most certainly remove the faults of my mind, even though it may require great effort." This is called the Non-attachment of Exertion. When the practice of the means is performed continually, one acquires constant attentiveness, like that of a doctor. This takes the form, "So many faults²⁵⁷ are now eliminated and so many yet remain," and is the second stage, called the Non-attachment of Discrimination. The third stage is attained by the regular and conscientious practice of the first two. Called the Non-attachment of the Single Sense, it is a state in which the external senses²⁵⁸ have lost their inclination toward objects while the impressions of those objects yet remain in the mind.²⁵⁹ After the practice of these three stages, there arises a mental attitude of desirelessness toward perceptible objects, such as attractive women, even while they are being apprehended by the senses, and also toward objects heard of from scripture, such as heaven. This fourth state, produced by the practice of seeking out the defects in objects,²⁶⁰ is the Non-attachment of Mastery [mentioned in YS 1.15 above].

Non-attachment is further divisible into two levels, a lower and a higher. The latter is described in an aphorism of Patañjali: "The higher is the lack of desire for the material qualities because of the realization of the

spirit" [YS 1.16].²⁶¹ Realization of the spirit is the same as knowledge of the Self. The lack of desire for, or non-attachment to, the material qualities--i.e., the objects of sense such as sound and so on--that follows such realization is the higher, indeed the best, because it is the goal to be achieved.²⁶² The lower non-attachment [just described as having four stages] is that which comes before, and is the means to, this end.

The sign of the lower level is the desire for liberation alone, without regard for any other end.

Mucukunda²⁶³ had this type of non-attachment:

I wish for no boon, O Lord, other than the service of Thy feet, which is most desired by those who have renounced all possessions. Having worshiped Thee, O Hari, the dispenser of liberation, what discerning person would chose a boon leading to his own bondage?

Therefore, O Lord, having completely cast off desires, from which there arises involvement with the material qualities--the luminous, the active, and the inert--I resort to Thee, who art free from the material qualities, the stainless, non-dual, pure intelligence, the Supreme Spirt.

Long afflicted by my own wickedness, tormented by regrets, having six insatiable enemies,²⁶⁴ I can in no way find peace. I have approached Thy lotus feet, O Giver of Refuge, O Supreme Self, which are the truth, free from fear and grief. Protect me, O Lord, who am so distressed.

10.51.56-58

In such a state, love for the Blessed Lord does not reach its highest limit. For this reason, the Lord says to him:

Living the life of a member of the warrior caste, you have slain living creatures in the hunt and by other means as well. Concentrating your mind and seeking refuge in Me, you should destroy this sin through austerity.

In your next birth, O King, having become a noble Brahmin, the best friend of all creatures, you will attain Me, who am Brahman, at death.

10.51.63-64

It is this lower non-attachment that is described in the aphorism of Patañjali quoted above, namely: "One who is devoid of desire of objects seen and objects heard of through scripture attains the non-attachment called Mastery" [YS 1.15]. The supreme limit of love does not arise with this, nor is there at this time the state of complete fulfillment of all goals of life. This is because the highest degree of love, which is the cause of the state of complete fulfillment, cannot arise in the absence of the higher non-attachment.

The sign of this higher non-attachment is the lack of regard for all goals including liberation.²⁶⁵ To illustrate:

I lead beyond death those who--having abandoned this world and the next, the body which wanders in both, as well as wealth, houses, and all else associated with that body in this world--worship only Me, the Omnipresent, with devotion directed toward no other.

3.25.39-40

Such people would not accept residence in My world, equality in power with Me, close proximity to Me, similarity in form with Me, or even oneness with Me were these being offered without the possibility of serving Me.²⁶⁶

3.29.13

There are some who, delighting in the worship of My feet and exerting themselves in My service, do not desire oneness with Me. These devotees, gathering together, celebrate with each other My glorious exploits.

3.25.34

One whose mind is fixed on Me desires nothing except Me--not the status of Lord Brahmā, the creator, nor the seat of the Great Indra, not lordship over the whole earth nor sovereignty in the nether world, neither yogic powers nor freedom from rebirth.

11.14.14

Says Prahlāda:

I am Thy devotee, but desire nothing, and Thou art my Master, but have no need of my service. In our relationship, there is no object to be attained, though it is otherwise for a worldly king and his servant.

7.10.6

And Pṛthu:²⁶⁷

I shall never desire even that [liberation] in which is not found the nectar of Thy lotus feet flowing out through the lips of the supremely great [saints] from the depths of their hearts. Give me ten thousand ears; this is my wish.²⁶⁸

4.20.24

Dhruva²⁶⁹ also:

The complete fulfillment which arises for embodied beings through meditation on Thy lotus feet or through hearing tales about Thy devotees, O Lord, is not found even in Brahman, in all its greatness. How much less

[could it be enjoyed] by those [gods or residents of heaven] who fall from celestial cars that are crushed by the sword of death?²⁷⁰

4.9.10

The Queens:²⁷¹

We, O Righteous Lady, desire neither the sovereignty of the earth, lordship over heaven, nor [sensual] enjoyment; neither supernatural powers, the status of Lord Brahmā, nor the eternal abode of Hari. We desire only to bear on our heads the dust of the radiant feet of the Mace-wielder,²⁷² which is rich with the fragrance of the saffron from the breasts of Śrī.²⁷³

10.83.41-42

And Indra:²⁷⁴

Thy rightful share [of the sacrifice], O Supreme One, has been recovered by Thee while rescuing us. The lotus of the heart, Thy home, which was afflicted by demons, has blossomed. For those who are desirous of serving Thee, what is the value of this [world] which is devoured by Time? When even liberation is not highly regarded by them, O Man-lion, what might be the value of other goals?

7.8.42

For one who has devotion to the Lord Hari, the Master of the final beatitude, and is thus sporting in an ocean of nectar, what could be the use of insignificant ditch water?

6.12.22

Also Vṛtra:²⁷⁵

Apart from Thee, O Excellent One, I do not desire the uppermost heaven, the status of Lord Brahmā, sovereignty over the earth, or lordship in the netherworld. Nor do I want yogic powers or freedom from rebirth.

6.11.25

And the Vedas:²⁷⁶

There are some, O Lord, who do not seek even liberation. Abandoning their homes to find association with the flocks of swans²⁷⁷ that gather at Thy lotus feet, they are refreshed by swimming in the great ocean of nectar that is the tale of the deeds of Thee who have assumed bodily form for the sake of teaching the nature of the Self, so difficult to understand.

10.87.21

Many similar verses could be cited.

When there is such a state of higher non-attachment characterized by a lack of regard for all goals including liberation, the love for the highest Self, the supreme bliss, reaches its utmost limit, because love for other ends does not arise. Thus Vṛtra says:

My mind longs for Thee, O Lotus-eyed One, as unfledged nestlings desire their mother, as young calves that are suffering from hunger seek milk, as a despondent lover pines for her absent beloved.

6.11.26

XXV. The Relation of Knowledge, Non-Attachment, and Devotion

Because the attainment of the supreme limit of love for the Blessed Lord²⁷⁸ is impossible without the higher non-attachment, and because the higher non-attachment cannot exist without knowledge, both knowledge and non-attachment should be cultivated in order to acquire it. Thus it is said:

By non-enjoyment of the material qualities that compose the primal cause,²⁷⁹ by knowledge made full through non-attachment, by yoga, and by devotion fixed on Me, one attains Me, the inner Self, here in this body.

3.25.27

By the yoga of devotion accompanied by knowledge and non-attachment, yogis resort for shelter to the tips of My feet which are free from danger from any quarter.

3.25.43

Devotion, non-attachment, and knowledge of the Blessed Lord arise for the devotee who constantly worships the feet of Acyuta. Thereupon, O King, he attains the highest peace directly.

11.4.43

The devotee is the person who practices the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees. First comes knowledge of the Blessed Lord, then there arises the higher non-attachment, and then the devotion which is of the nature of love.²⁸⁰ The Blessed Lord Himself teaches this to Uddhava:²⁸¹

For the possessor of knowledge, I alone am the desired object and favored means; I am heaven and final liberation also. No other thing is dear to him excepting Me.

Those who have knowledge and discrimination know My highest state. Therefore the possessor of knowledge is the dearest to Me, for he maintains Me²⁸² through his knowledge.

11.19.2-3

XXVI. The Nature of Knowledge

What sort of knowledge is meant? Because there is a desire to know this, it is stated briefly:

The threefold change that appears in you, O Udhava, occurs not in the beginning, nor in final liberation, but only in the interval of Māyā. Birth and so on belong to that. Since this is so, what have they to do with you? That which exists at the beginning and the end of the unreal, also exists in the interval.²⁸³

11.19.7

Everything other than the Blessed Lord, because it is transient, is false²⁸⁴ like a dream. It is devoid of true significance, painful, and to be shunned. The Blessed Lord alone is real; He is the supreme bliss--self-luminous, eternal, and omnipresent--the one to be sought after. This is the kind of knowledge spoken of. It is taught in the Bhagavad Gītā also:

Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna: the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the one desirous of gain, and the possessor of knowledge.

Among these the possessor of knowledge, who is constantly controlled, whose devotion is one-pointed, is the most excellent. For I am exceedingly dear to the possessor of knowledge, and he is dear to Me.

Noble indeed are all these, but the possessor of knowledge I hold to be My very Self, for with steadfast mind he resorts to Me alone as the highest goal.

At the end of many births, the possessor of knowledge surrenders to Me, thinking "Vāsudeva is all." Such a great soul is exceedingly hard to find.

BG 7.16-19

Everything other than Vāsudeva, since it is a product of Māyā, is not real. Vāsudeva alone is real, is the dearest, because He is the Self. This is the meaning.

XXVII. The Nature of the Higher Non-Attachment

The non-attachment that has this type of knowledge as its prerequisite is expounded as follows:

The revealed texts, perception, traditional wisdom, and inference are the four means of knowledge. Because it remains unestablished in the face of these, the wise man becomes detached from this mental construct.²⁸⁵

Because they are the fruits of actions, the wise man sees all things--the invisible, up to and including the world of Brahmā, like the visible--as perishable and devoid of value.

11.19.17-18

And elsewhere:

One should realize that, for men marrying and undertaking the prescribed actions for the sake of the avoidance of sorrow and the acquisition of pleasure, there will be the reverse of the expected result.

What joy can there be from wealth, from houses, children, friends, or cattle? Though difficult to attain, they are, when acquired through much work, transient, and constant sources of distress which lead to one's own death.

In the same way, one should know that heaven, a product of action, is perishable. In it there is the prospect of destruction at the hands of equals or superiors, as among the rulers of petty principalities.

11.3.18-20

XXVIII. The Nature of Devotion

What is the nature of this devotion toward the Blessed Lord which, preceded by knowledge and non-attachment, is attained by one who practices the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees? Such being the question, it is said:

If you are unable to hold your mind unmoving in Brahman, perform all actions for Me, without expectation of result.

One who hears with faith the auspicious tales about Me which purify the worlds, who sings of, and meditates on, My birth and actions, who takes Me as his sole refuge, O Uddhava, gains unswerving devotion toward Me, the Eternal.

11.11.22-24

And likewise:

The yoga of devotion has already been explained to you, O sinless one. Since you were so pleased, now again I shall tell you of the best means of cultivating devotion to Me.

Careful assistance at My worship, complete prostration before Me, showing great respect for My devotees, seeing Me in all beings,

Acting always for My purposes, uttering My glories in all speech, fixing the mind on Me, renunciation of all desires,

Abandoning wealth, enjoyment, and pleasure for My sake, offering sacrifice, giving gifts, performing oblations, chanting sacred syllables, keeping vows, and performing austerities for Me--

For those surrendering themselves through such practices, O Uddhava, there arises devotion to Me. What other aim can remain for them?

11.19.19-24

And in another place:

Therefore one desirous of knowing the highest good should resort to a teacher who is well versed in the Veda, who has realized the supreme Brahman, and who is established in tranquillity.

Worshiping the teacher as his very Self, he should learn from him, by sincere imitation, the disciplines of the Lord's devotees, by which he may please Hari, who is the Self and who gives Himself.²⁸⁶

At first there should be non-attachment of the mind toward all things and attachment to the saintly. Then compassion, friendship, or respect toward his fellow creatures as may be proper.

Purity; austerity; patience; silence; scriptural study; straightforwardness; celibacy; non-violence; equanimity toward the pairs of opposites;²⁸⁷

Seeing the Lord as the Self in all things; solitude; homelessness; the wearing of clean tree-bark; contentment with whatever comes;

Faith in the scriptures about the Lord without condemnation of others; discipline of mind, speech, and action; truthfulness, calmness, and self-control;

Hearing and singing of, and meditation on, the glories of the birth and life of Hari whose deeds are so marvelous; the performance of all activity for His sake;

The dedication as offerings to the Supreme of sacrifice, charity, austerity, repetition of sacred syllables, virtuous behavior, and whatever one holds dear such as wife, children, houses, and even life itself;

Friendliness to those who regard Kṛṣṇa as their Lord; service to both the great and the saintly;

Recounting with others the purifying tales of the Blessed Lord; sharing together delight, contentment, and the turning away from the body--

Thus thinking constantly of Hari, the destroyer of a multitude of sins, and reminding each other of Him, their bodies thrill in the rapture of devotion-generated devotion.²⁸⁸

Sometimes they weep from anxious thought of Acyuta; sometimes they laugh and rejoice. Sometimes they utter strange [words], dance, sing, and imitate the Unborn One. Having attained the Supreme, fully content, they become silent.

Following in this way the spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees, one intent on Nārāyaṇa quickly, by means of the devotion generated by these, crosses beyond Māyā, so difficult to overcome.

Therefore, by means such as these, which are sanctioned by scripture, one should acquire purity of mind. This is the meaning.

XXIX. The Eleven Stages of Devotion

The author now proposes to relate, for the sake of easy comprehension by intelligent persons, the scripturally sanctioned means according to their distinct stages:

33. THE MEANS ARE DESCRIBED BY NĀRADA IN THE FIRST BOOK.²⁸⁹ I SHALL STATE THEM BRIEFLY, TOGETHER WITH THEIR DIVISION INTO SEPARATE STAGES.

The meaning is clear. He now declares them:

34. FIRST THERE IS SERVICE OF THE GREAT, THEN BEING A FIT OBJECT OF THEIR COMPASSION. NEXT THERE IS FAITH IN THEIR DISCIPLINES, AND THEN COMES HEARING OF THE GLORIES OF HARI.

35. THEN THERE IS THE ARISING OF THE SPROUT OF LOVE,²⁹⁰ AND NEXT REALIZATION OF THE ESSENTIAL NATURE. THEN COMES THE INCREASE OF ECSTATIC LOVE FOR THE SUPREME BLISS, AND AFTER THAT THE DIRECT MANIFESTATION OF HIM.

36. NEXT THERE IS SPONTANEOUS ABSORPTION IN THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF THE LORD'S DEVOTEES, AND THEN COMES POSSESSION OF HIS GLORIOUS QUALITIES IN ONESELF. FINALLY, THERE ARISES THE SUPREME LIMIT OF ECSTATIC LOVE. THUS, THE STAGES OF DEVOTION HAVE BEEN DECLARED.²⁹¹

37. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED LORD, ITS MEANS AND ESSENTIAL NATURE, TOGETHER WITH ITS STAGES HAVE HERE BEEN PROPERLY EXPLAINED TO THE BEST OF OUR UNDERSTANDING.

Now the first chapter is ended.

XXX. Colophon

HERE ENDS THE FIRST CHAPTER, ENTITLED
 "THE DEFINITION OF THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
 OF DEVOTION"

BY THE DISTINGUISHED MADHUSÛDANA SARASVATÎ,
 AN ENLIGHTENED SAINT OF THE HIGHEST ORDER,²⁹²
 A WANDERING MENDICANT,²⁹³

THE MOST EXCELLENT OF TEACHERS AND BEST OF ASCETICS
 WHOSE PROFICIENCY IN ALL BRANCHES OF LEARNING
 IS FAMED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.²⁹⁴

And the most excellent commentary thereon, composed by the
 same best of ascetics.

PART III:
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER EIGHT

THEORETICAL DIFFICULTIES

As promised in the introduction, the third part of this study will be concerned with an evaluation of the teachings of the BR. We shall, in this connection, consider certain important views that Madhusūdana presents in this text in terms of their compatibility with (1) the principles of Śaṅkara's non-dualism and (2) the later and somewhat different thinking on the relation of bhakti and Advaita that Madhusūdana himself sets forth in his GAD. The first and more general of these problems will be our concern in this chapter.

8.1 Is Madhusūdana's Presentation Convincing?

The teachings of the BR, as we have had repeated occasion to notice, represent a radical departure from the traditional Advaitic attitude toward devotional spirituality. Hence we may well ask whether Madhusūdana is able to deal adequately with the theoretical problems that these teachings raise. It is one thing to declare that bhakti is an independent path to, and itself sufficient as, the supreme spiritual goal, one thing to say that it is the

crown of the experience of liberation-in-life; but it is another to show that these teachings are justifiable in terms of Śaṅkara's Advaita.

Madhusūdana's follower and interpreter Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, for one, seems to have been satisfied that they were. In his Bhakticandrikā, which depends heavily on the BR, we read: "The devotion that is an end is never a means; itself the only goal of life, it reduces even mokṣa to straw."¹ Despite the fact that we do not know of any Advaitins who chose the opposite course of explicitly criticizing the position of the BR, I think that there are good reasons for concluding that Nārāyaṇa's estimate is far too sanguine.

For an Advaitin, the notion of bhakti as the paramapurusaṛtha involves serious difficulties on several levels. If, to take a relatively minor example, Madhusūdana wants to say that the highest stages of bhakti occur only after Advaitic realization has taken place, he must find some way to make room for such an experience in the non-dualist understanding of jīvanmukti. But it is difficult to see how the realization of an ecstatic climax of devotion in that state, as envisioned in the BR, could be justified. The admission of even the faintest trace of dualistic awareness in jīvanmukti--since it implies the continued presence of Ignorance (avidyā) after the rise of knowledge--

leads to theoretical embarrassment and is, in fact, a problem much discussed in the tradition.² Nowhere in his writings, to my knowledge, does Madhusūdana attempt an exposition of the expanded conception of liberation-in-life that his enthusiastic advocacy of the possibility of bhakti in that state would seem to require.

This, however, is only the beginning of the problems that arise if the teachings of the BR are examined, with any kind of rigor, from an Advaitic standpoint. Even if we grant that Madhusūdana's case for the superiority of bhakti as enjoyed by the jīvanmukta is plausible, the BR is frustratingly vague as to what happens to the liberated devotee's experience of devotion after his earthly life is over. What, we might well ask, is the significance of the devotional experience when viewed from perspective of eternity? This problem, in turn, leads to an even more difficult question, that of the ultimate metaphysical status of bhakti. No matter how convincing Madhusūdana's efforts to establish the experiential superiority of devotion, it is not all all clear that he is successful in demonstrating that it has a greater ontological value than mokṣa, or indeed even an equal ontological value.

8.2 The Eternality of Devotion

According to orthodox Advaita, the liberated saint at death should attain videhamukti or disembodied liberation. Having realized his eternal identity as Brahman, he experiences after the demise of his physical frame no further existence as a separate center of consciousness. His individuality is simply dissolved. What remains is a state of monistic kaivalya ("isolation"), consisting of nothing but the self-luminous oneness of the pure Brahman, from which even the slightest trace of Ignorance (avidyāleśa), the smallest remnant of duality that may have persisted in the state of jīvanmukti, has been eliminated. If this is the ultimate destiny of all jīvanmuktas, as the soteriology of Advaita seems to require, it would appear necessary to conclude that bhakti cannot continue in the final state of liberation, even for great devotees who have attained the supreme heights of devotion. But, if this is the case, the bhakta will be no better off in the long term than the jñānin who was a non-devotee. Both the devotee and his devotion will in the end dissolve in the absolute unity of Brahman. This, of course, would completely undermine the case for bhakti's being the supreme goal of life. If nothing else, the paramapurusaṛtha must at least be a state which does not come to an end.

Madhusūdana does not discuss this problem at all, except to indicate almost in passing that the devotional experience, once attained, is eternal. In section IX of the BR the objection is raised that, if devotion were something different than knowledge of Brahman, it would be, no matter how desirable, only a temporary goal like the joys of heaven (svārga), which must eventually end in a further earthly incarnation. Our author argues that this is not the case:

Heaven and the other goals cannot be enjoyed forever. They can be experienced only at certain limited times and places through certain specific bodies and sense organs, and, moreover, they are pervaded by the two-fold pain of perishability and contingency. So they are certainly not ultimate. The uninterrupted flow of the bliss of devotion, however, is ultimate because it can be enjoyed equally in all times and places without limitation as to body and sense organs, like the fruit of knowledge of Brahman, and because it does not have the two-fold pain of perishability and contingency.³

This, unfortunately, is all Madhusūdana sees fit to tell us.

It is obvious here that our author is suggesting that bhakti is not "perishable," that it is an experience that has no end. We feel the need, however, of a more detailed explanation. Does Madhusūdana want, as Gupta suggests, to allow jīvanmukti as the sixth stage of devotional experience, but avoid videhakaivalya ("disembodied liberation"), its natural consequence, so that the devotee can continue to enjoy the bliss of devotion eternally?⁴ It may be, but how this possibility should be conceived, and how it might be accommodated within the

framework of Advaita, Madhusūdana does not say. The liberated devotee's continued enjoyment of devotional bliss in a celestial realm such as brahmaloka could be imagined as a sort of post-mortem extension of the jīvanmukta state. There is the difficulty, though, that in Advaita even brahmaloka is a phenomenal, ultimately impermanent state, the residents of which, as we have seen, attain absolute liberation with the dissolution of that world at the end of a cosmic age. Vaiṣṇava theology avoids this problem by positing a transphenomenal "abode" (dhāman) of God, a super-celestial heaven⁵ that is beyond māyā and therefore truly eternal. To this divine abode the liberated soul can go to enjoy eternal bhakti. Advaitins, however, cannot recognize the possibility of such a transphenomenal realm; they can admit nothing beyond māyā except īśvara and the pure, formless Brahman. It therefore seems that, even if some sort of postmortem existence is granted--as Śaṅkara actually does allow for those enlightened beings to whom the Lord has entrusted certain cosmic "offices" (adhikāra)⁶--the jīvanmukta-devotee will eventually have to attain videhamukti at the end of the world-age, and therewith lose his experience of bhakti and be content with the mere bliss of mokṣa. Thus, there is a serious difficulty in the idea of bhakti as an eternal experience of the individual mukta. If Madhusūdana wants the notion of enjoying devotion

"equally in all times and places without limitation as to body and sense organs" to suggest continued individual experience, and if he wants the eternality of devotion to be based on such experience, the concept of final liberation or videhamukti, like the theory of jīvanmukti, must also be considerably reworked and expanded.

8.3 Bhagavat as the Eternal Experiencer of Devotion

This, however, is not the only possible approach to securing the eternality of devotion. As an Advaitin, Madhusūdana could, and perhaps properly should, argue that of course bhakti does not continue as an individual experience since, even in the state of jīvanmukti, there is no longer any question of individuality. The jīva has realized its identity with the ultimate and seen the illusoriness of its former sense of existence as a separate ego-center. So whatever individuality appears to remain is only that, an appearance, the playful activity of the Lord's māyā. Already, then, the bhakta has disappeared and only bhagavat remains. Madhusūdana has declared that bhagavat is eternal, non-phenomenal, and real. Bhakti, since it is identical with bhagavat, must therefore share in these attributes, participating in eternality and Being to the same degree as does the Lord. But in what sense can it continue without the bhakta?

The lack of an individual consciousness to enjoy the bliss of devotion presents a serious problem since, among other things, it is axiomatic for the devotionalist that the bliss of bhakti, unless it is experienced consciously, will be nothing but the "ordinary" static bliss of Brahman.⁷ Should this particular quality be lost, bhakti would cease to be conceptualizable as distinct from mokṣa. It is perhaps for this reason that Madhusūdana defines devotion in stanza 1 of the BR, not just as bliss, but as the "experience" (samvid) of bliss. But, the individuality of the bhakta having been dissolved in liberation, who is left to experience bhakti eternally? Obviously, the only candidate is bhagavat himself. By following this line of thought, therefore, we are lead to a theory that requires something strikingly similar to the Bengal Vaiṣṇava notion of Kṛṣṇa's eternal relishing of bhakti in the form of his own hlādinīśakti.⁸ Devotion must be experienced, and since there is in the final state of mokṣa (according to Advaita) no more devotee to perform that function, it must be experienced by bhagavat or īśvara; it has to become, in the end, the Lord's enjoyment of his own bliss.

The idea of the devotee losing himself in an eternal identity with the personal God, and experiencing bhakti in that state on a universalized, indeed completely divinized level, would seem to be a possible extension of rasa-theory,

which takes the universalized experience of emotion as its ideal. It might appear, however, to contradict the Advaitin's belief that the liberated soul, especially in videhamukti, is merged in the formless nirguṇa Brahman. Although we are here going far beyond what Madhusūdana actually says, it is worth noting that the more theistically oriented concept of salvation outlined above as a possible foundation for the thinking of the BR could find some support in an interesting doctrine held by some post-Śaṅkara Advaitins, that of sarvamukti or "universal salvation."

First suggested by Vācaspati (tenth century), this theory was developed most fully by Appayya Dīkṣita, a younger contemporary of Madhusūdana who, in his later works, also displayed strong devotional inclinations.⁹ In his early Siddhāntaleśasamgraha, a summary of the teachings of post-Śaṅkara Advaita, Appayya writes that the attainment of liberation, even in its disembodied form, involves, not the realization of oneness with the transcendent Brahman, but rather identity with Iśvara. Interestingly enough, he maintains that this is a consequence of the very theory of the relation of jīva and Iśvara that Madhusūdana uses in the BR, namely, the version of the pratibimbavāda in which the Lord is the original of which the jīva is a reflection. Since it is the merger of the pratibimba ("reflection") in the bimba ("original")--which in this view is Iśvara, not

the pure Absolute--mokṣa is now understood as the attainment of Īśvaratva ("Lordship," i.e., identity with the personal God), not the realization of final oneness with the transpersonal Brahman. As long as other reflections--other jīvas--continue to exist, the Lord also must continue to exist as their bimba and there can be no final merger in the Absolute for the souls that have attained identity with Him. For this reason, Appaya held that the ultimate salvation of any one soul could not be attained until all jīvas were liberated, which would mean that all pratibimbās would be destroyed, and the universe finally dissolved along with its Lord. Hence the designation sarvamukti ("universal salvation").¹⁰

The problem with this doctrine is that, while having potentially valuable ethical implications, it forgets Advaita's teaching that souls are infinite in number and that the universe and Īśvara are endless. It therefore amounts to an assertion, coming from within the Advaita tradition, that liberation is not oneness with the supreme Brahman but an eternal state of union with the personal God.

I mention this theory only to show that the possibility of identity with bhagavat is not entirely foreign to Advaita. Whether or not Madhusūdana's thinking was inclined in this direction is, from the BR, impossible to tell. Appaya, of course, believed that Īśvaratva was

attained by all liberated souls, not just bhaktas. Could Madhusūdana have come up with a scheme that allowed jñānins who were not inclined to bhakti to attain merger in the pure Absolute while at the same time permitting devotees to attain an eternal unity with bhagavat? If so, what would be the fate of those such as Madhusūdana himself who followed the path of knowledge and were perhaps even jīvanmuktas but who were also fervent devotees of the personal God? Moreover, since bhagavat in the BR is so closely identified with Brahman, would not the idea of his eternal experience of his own bliss as bhakti suggest an internal division (svagatabheda) in the ultimate that would undercut the very foundational principles of Śaṅkara's non-dualism?

8.4 Bhagavat Still Ontologically Less Than Brahman

It becomes obvious that to incorporate bhakti as an eternal reality within Advaita would require at the very least a more elaborate soteriological structure and a more carefully articulated notion of īśvara than the orthodox system, or even Madhusūdana himself, provides. To demonstrate this, I have had to fill out and extend his thought considerably, which has required much unwarranted speculation. But even if he had presented us with a more adequate conceptualization of the Advaita-bhakta's final

state, and the more developed understanding of the personal God that this would demand, his theory would still face problems. Unless developed on lines radically different from those I have suggested, it would require an additional argument for a final ontological parity between the para Brahman and īśvara. This is because an Advaitin must in the end hold that an eternal union with the personal God, no matter how exalted a state, is still penultimate to the attainment of Brahman, as the very concept of an eventual sarvamukti itself implies. To admit this, however, is to admit that bhakti, even as bhagavat, is ontologically less than mokṣa.

Madhusūdana is easily justified in holding that the Lord, as Brahman, is real and beyond māyā. It is more difficult, however, to show that the Lord as Lord is such.¹¹ Unlike theoreticians such as Śrīdhara and, in his later works, Appayya, who were willing to compromise certain foundational principles of Śaṅkara's non-dualism in order to accommodate bhakti, Madhusūdana remains (metaphysically, if not also religiously) an authentic Advaitin in the BR. As such, he cannot explicitly argue for an ultimate identification of bhagavat and Being. He must maintain the distinction between the savikalpaka and the nirvikalpaka, though he might--for devotional reasons as well as others we have discussed in chapter two¹²--write in a way that

suggested he was collapsing it. If systematically developed, an argument for the ontological parity of Iśvara and the pure Absolute would eventually lead an Advaitin to the brink of a fatal admission. It would entail, unless I am mistaken, the recognition of the final reality of māyā and the world, since these are the factors whose "existence" is responsible for calling Iśvara (as Iśvara) into being. The concept of śakti could not have helped Madhusūdana here, as it did the Gosvāmins and perhaps Śrīdhara and Appayya, for if interpreted realistically it also would lead to a basic violation of Śaṅkara's vision.

8.5 A Suggestive Metaphysical Vagueness

Madhusūdana's efforts in the BR to establish bhakti as the paramapurusaṛtha suggest that he was hoping to place it on an ontological par with mokṣa, a difficult goal for anyone working within the context of Advaita. If this was in fact his intention, his efforts, while richly suggestive and for that reason extremely valuable, leave the critical reader finally unsatisfied. If he was only trying to establish the easier thesis to defend--namely, the experiential superiority of bhakti to mokṣa--the results are still inadequate when the question of the eternality of the experience is raised, by reason if nothing else of the lack of sufficient development. Indeed, even if we reduce the

scope of bhakti's superiority to the period of liberation-in-life, the teaching of the BR is not without problems. As we have seen, it calls at the very least for a more expanded conceptualization of jivanmukti than is available in the traditional works on Advaita.

The fact is that Madhusūdana is disappointingly vague in his whole treatment of the higher stages of bhakti and their metaphysical significance. When dealing with ideas that threaten to have a momentous impact on Advaitic theory, he combines a tantalizing and seemingly reckless suggestiveness with a frustrating refusal to draw out explicitly the full implications of what he is saying.

We must avoid, however, the hasty conclusion that Madhusūdana was unconscious of these limitations. At this late date, a charge that the most brilliant non-dualist metaphysician of the sixteenth century was careless or incompetent, even in this one instance, would place a considerable burden of proof on the accuser. It is more probable than not that Madhusūdana knew precisely what he was about when he wrote the BR. True, the text is sketchy on critical points, ones that the author must have known would be controversial. But it seems to me that, with a writer of Madhusūdana's caliber, we must at least consider the possibility that such apparent defects were deliberate, based on, if nothing else, a keen awareness of the

insurmountably paradoxical quality of his own spiritual experience. In the end, the question of why Madhusūdana did not attempt a more adequate theoretical justification of the key teachings of the BR throws us back on a more basic problem, that of trying to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of his purpose in writing the work. This task will be one of those taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONTINUITY OF MADHUSŪDANA'S THOUGHT ON BHAKTI

This chapter will address certain problems centering around the continuity and consistency of Madhusūdana's thought on bhakti. In this connection, we will examine a number of previously unrecognized but nevertheless significant discrepancies between the outlook of the BR and that of the Gūḍhārthadīpikā (GAD), Madhusūdana's later commentary on the BG. As a starting point for this discussion, however, and with a view to shedding light on questions raised in the previous chapter, I would like to back-step, as it were, and consider the more fundamental problem of what it was our author hoped to accomplish in the BR. One is, presumably, entitled to regard the purpose of a treatise devoted to glorifying the path of bhakti as problematic when the work comes from the pen of one of the greatest champions of Advaita, a thinker whom the devotional schools regarded as a formidable enemy. Having become familiar with the substance of the text's teachings, we are now in a position to give serious consideration to the question of Madhusūdana's intentions in writing it.

9.1 Possible Purposes of the BR

It goes without saying that the motivation behind a work like the BR must have been complex and that it will be impossible to fathom it completely from a vantage point so far removed in time as our own. Nevertheless, two possible motives do readily suggest themselves. They are related, and taken together they provide a useful starting point for thought about this problem.

First, there is the obvious possibility that Madhusūdana was trying work out a synthesis between Bhāgavata devotionalism and Advaita, an effort that grew out of his personal religious concerns. This hypothesis seems well-supported by what we know of his own spiritual experience. Despite the fact that Madhusūdana was an uncompromising Advaitin, he was also a fervent devotee of Kṛṣṇa and therefore caught up in a certain conflict of interest. Since, as Venkateswaran points out, his bhakti "occurred on a very 'high level' and after lifelong scholarship and sophistication," there can be no doubt that he was sensitive to its problematic quality, keenly aware of "the dialectical and paradoxical tension in which his mind lived, between the qualityless, transcendent impersonal Brahman, on the one hand, and the particular, concrete, quality-flooded Person Krishna, on the other."¹ As noted in the introduction, Madhusūdana was a master of all the

various branches of learning current in his day and showed a marked tendency to apply his wide knowledge in efforts toward synthesis and syncretism. This can be seen, for example, in his consistent interest in the Yogasūtras of Patañjali and the teachings of the Yogavāsīṣṭha, and in his attempts, of which I shall say more shortly, to make room in Advaita for certain doctrines and practices derived from these texts. It would seem reasonable, therefore, to understand Madhusūdana's work on the theory of bhakti as an extension of this synthetic activity, an effort to bring together and--to the extent it was possible--integrate two important streams of the spirituality of his age in which he himself was vitally interested. We could then regard the text as something of a personal document, one in which the author attempted to work out the tensions between his own private religious life, in which devotion played a significant role, and his public stance as a defender of the ultimacy of formlessness and non-duality.

The assumption that an interest in a theoretical integration of Advaita and bhakti lies behind the BR has more or less tacitly informed our discussion of the text up to the present point. It has served especially as the basis of our critique, in chapter eight, of the BR's presentation of the metaphysical dimensions of bhakti. Other students of Madhusūdana have of course based their evaluations of the

text on similar premises. Gupta, for example, regards the BR as the attempt of one of the greatest intellects of medieval India to work out a "reconciliation" of Advaita and bhakti,² while Mishra sees it as an endeavor to arrive at a "fusion or compromise" between Śaṅkara Vedānta and the religion of the Bhāgavatas.³ Mahadevan goes further, claiming without hesitation that to Madhusūdana "must be given the credit of reconciling the philosophy of Advaita with the experience of a bhakta."⁴

The idea that Madhusūdana himself felt a keen personal interest in the outcome of the discussion in the BR suggests, as a corollary to this "theory of synthesis," that the text should be regarded as a presentation of his own final and considered views on the subject. We have not yet committed ourselves to this position, but Modi, Gupta, Mishra, and Mahadevan all seem to take it for granted. They assume that the BR is a straightforward statement of its author's personal convictions, an effort to supplement or expand, from the devotional viewpoint, the more conventional version of non-dualist spirituality he outlined in such works as the VKL and the SB. This notion seems at first both natural and plausible, and is indeed useful insofar as it facilitates an initial entry into interpretation of the text. Nevertheless we shall shortly have occasion to question its adequacy as the foundation of any final understanding.

A second possible impulse behind the BR is social in nature. That is to say, the text may represent in part an attempt to mitigate the socio-religious elitism of the Śaṅkara school and a concern that Advaitic realization be opened, at least in principle, to a broader spectrum of religious seekers. Mahadevan, for example, characterizes the BR as effort to liberalize Advaita by including bhakti along with jñāna as an independent means to salvation:

Madhusūdana . . . was the first to claim that the path of devotion (bhakti) leads to non-dual realization. To Madhusūdana Sarāsvatī, devotion is as good a means to release as knowledge. . . . Whether we agree with him or not in bestowing on bhakti the importance which he gives it, we cannot help but admire the catholicity of spirit which animates his exposition of Advaita.⁵

Divanji, another perceptive commentator, accepts this outgoing social concern as the primary factor behind the BR, and seems to de-emphasize Madhusūdana's personal interest in the topic. In his excellent introduction to the Siddhāntabindu, he writes:

Bhaktirasāyana seems to have been specially composed in order to establish that those persons who according to the orthodox view are debarred from resorting to the works of the first type [the Vedānta texts] for their salvation have another way, namely Bhaktimārga, open to them and that just as the Vedānta doctrine can be expounded scientifically with the help of quotations taken from the Upanishads so the Bhakti doctrine can be expounded scientifically with the help of quotations taken from the Bhāgawatpurāṇa and the Bhagawadgītā.⁶

Divanji suggests that, though a high-caste Brahmin himself and a member of one of the most respected orders of Śaṅkara saṁnyāsins, Madhusūdana did not believe that salvation was

available to his kind only. He was a "magnanimous soul" whose vision of Advaita included the low and the humble and who, "believing that they had as much a claim on his services as the members of his own class had expounded for their benefit the same doctrine [Advaita] in another form with slightly different variations through works like the Bhaktirasāyana."⁷ The implication is that Madhusūdana was writing, not primarily to address problems of a personal nature or questions of interest to those following his own path--namely, the Advaita saṁnyāsins--but for the benefit of others who, because of social restrictions or personal factors such as temperament, were not able to engage in the pursuit of Brahman-knowledge. Divanji's remarks should remind us of Advaita's commitment to the concept of the enlightened individual who acts unselfishly out of concern for lokasaṁgraha, the welfare of the unenlightened world.⁸ At the same time, they bring to mind Madhusūdana's own statement of purpose, given in the first stanza of the BR: "to bring contentment to everyone."⁹ This apparently deserves to be taken as more than a casual remark.

The notion that our author was writing primarily for the sake of others may conflict to a certain extent with the view that the BR represents a personal statement containing his own final views. As we have seen in chapter two, the Advaitin's idea of noblesse oblige includes supporting

others in their worship, even though it may be opposed to his understanding of the ultimate truth of non-duality.¹⁰ So we must remain open to the possibility that, in speaking for the "contentment of everyone," for the benefit of those not able to follow the path of saṁnyāsa, Madhusūdana was not giving us the final truth, the paramārthikasatya, as he saw it. That this is not a mere idle suspicion will be seen when it is realized that there are significant differences between the teachings on bhakti found in the BR, on one hand, and those of the GAD, on the other. We shall see that the teachings of the latter are considerably closer to the orthodox doctrine. Any judgment, therefore, as to the nature of Madhusūdana's purposes in writing the BR must await at least a preliminary comparison of its teachings with pertinent material gleaned from his commentary on the Gītā.

9.2 Softening the Exclusivism of Orthodox Advaita

I have mentioned Mahadevan and Divanji's suggestion that one of Madhusūdana's chief motivations in writing the BR was to soften the exclusivism of Advaita by making devotion a possible path to mokṣa. From what has been said thus far, it is clear that this idea must be taken seriously. Whatever we may have to say about the shortcomings of his effort to give a more satisfactory

ontological basis to bhakti, Madhusūdana has at least made a plausible case for its being a means to Self-realization, a means that, unlike Śaṅkara's way of knowledge, is open to all persons, regardless of caste or sex.

While the teaching of the BR represents in many respects an innovative departure from mainstream Advaita tradition, the truth is that, by the time of Madhusūdana, certain Advaitins had already abandoned rigid adherence to the idea that jñāna was the only means to salvation. We find the first traces of what Mahādevan calls a "tendency to liberalize Advaita" beginning to appear at least as early as the fourteenth century in the work of Vidyāraṇya.¹¹

Although in his Vivaraṇaprameyasamgraha this author sticks to the orthodox view that knowledge mediated through the Upaniṣadic "great sayings" is the only way to liberation, he teaches in the Pañcadaśi, a more popular work, that yogic meditation is also a valid path. Quoting the dictum of BG 5.5, "The state attained by the Sāṅkhyas is also attained by the followers of Yoga,"¹² Vidyāraṇya asserts that either knowledge or yoga may be followed, according to one's aptitude.¹³ The immediate source of this doctrine seems to be the Yogavāsiṣṭha (YV), which began to be read by Advaitins sometime after the mid-ninth century.¹⁴

Madhusūdana, as I have mentioned, had a great interest in yoga, and he, like Vidyāraṇya, accepted it as an independent

path to mokṣa. He refers to the teaching of the YV on this question in the GAD and ARR, both of which are much more conservative in their presentation of Advaita than the BR.¹⁵ At GAD 6.29, for example he states that both yoga and jñāna lead to the immediate realization of the Self (ātmasākṣāt-kāra), and he cites the following verse of the YV as authoritative support for this view: "There are two ways, O Rāma, to the destruction of the mind, [namely] yoga and jñāna."¹⁶ So bhakti is only one of the unorthodox means given cognizance by Madhusūdana. Already in the BR, as we have seen, he recognizes yogic samādhi as a form of the paramapurṣārtha, and in the GAD he explicitly accepts it as an authentic means to mokṣa.

It is likely that both Vidyāraṇya and Madhusūdana were in this accommodation of yoga responding to the needs and interests of ascetics of their day, among whom the YV and other yogic and tantric teachings had become popular.¹⁷ Even as conservative a movement as the Śaṅkara Advaita was not above the necessity of adapting to historical change. And if yoga, the interest of ascetics and monks, could find a place in Advaita, why not bhakti? It was of vital spiritual interest to renunciates to be sure, but also, and on a much more extensive scale than yoga, it had captured the minds of the masses. The BP especially had a wide audience in the sixteenth century. Its devotional teachings

were very important to bhāgavatasamnyāsins such as Śrīdhāra and Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Madhusūdana was probably not the only orthodox Advaitin to be fascinated by its powerful emotional appeal. The parallels between the objectless mokṣa of Advaita and the undifferentiated samādhi of yoga were much greater than those between the former and bhakti, and the marriage between Advaita and yoga was therefore much easier to arrange. Nevertheless, Madhusūdana did make the attempt to articulate a vision of Advaita-bhakti that accommodated the spirit of Bhāgavata devotionalism.

Had the attitude toward devotional spirituality expressed in the BR prevailed, it would have represented a significant modification of the exclusivistic attitude of the Śaṅkara tradition. But, for better or worse, it did not. This may have been because the theoretical integration of Advaita and bhakti was never fully worked out, or else because the views of the BR were simply too radical a departure from Advaitic orthodoxy. At any rate, we shall see that even Madhusūdana himself was not entirely consistent in support of the relatively liberal position he took in the BR.

9.3 Bhakti in the Gūḍhārthadīpikā

In scholarly discussions of Madhusūdana's contribution to Advaita, the GAD is commonly mentioned along

with the BR as his other important contribution to the debate on the place of bhakti in that system. Because the GAD does indeed have a great deal to say about devotion, it is worth looking at its teachings here, if only briefly, to see what light they may shed on our attempt to understand both the BR and Madhusūdana's overall thinking on bhakti. The Gītā commentary is clearly the later of the two works, since it cites the BR three times. An examination of its treatment of devotion, therefore, will help us determine the extent to which the ideas expressed in the BR represent Madhusūdana's final views on the subject.

9.3.1 The Devotional Flavor of the Text

That the author of the GAD is interested in bhakti is obvious from the outset. In the introduction, he proclaims that devotion is essential at every stage of spiritual development, since it removes the obstacles that stand in the way of progress.¹⁸ Elsewhere he says that, while bhakti is the means to success in the paths of both knowledge and action, it is at the same time the end of both,¹⁹ being Kṛṣṇa's highest teaching.²⁰ We have already noted that the GAD accepts the possibility of devotion in the state of jīvanmukti. Madhusūdana asserts this belief emphatically at several points in the work, most notably in verses 37-39 of the introduction. In that passage we again encounter BP 1.7.10 and BG 7.17:

In the state of liberation-in-life there is no idea that devotion has any further end [i.e., it is experienced as an end-in-itself]. Worship of Hari is natural to such persons, like the virtues such as lack of hatred, and so on, [enumerated at BG 12.13-20].

"Sages who delight in the Self, who are free of the knots [of ignorance], practice selfless devotion to the Wide-strider [Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa], such are the qualities of Hari!" [BP 1.7.10]

"Of these, the person of knowledge (jnānin), constantly disciplined, who has single-minded devōtīōn, is the best" [BG 7.17]. According to such declarations, he is the foremost of those who are devoted with ecstatic love.²¹

At several points in the course of the GAD,²² the author refers to the example of devotees such as Śrīdhāman, Ajāmila, Pralāda, Dhruva, Ambarīṣa, and the gopīs, all of whom are prominent in the BP but rarely mentioned in the writings of other Advaitins. For a more detailed explanation of the experience of these individuals, Madhusūdana refers his readers to the discussion of devotional theory in the BR.²³

The text of the GAD is embellished with devotional verses found, for the most part, at the beginning and end of each chapter. Some of these have already been quoted; other choice examples include:

Some persons who are pure in body and mind strive [for liberation] by restraining their senses, abandoning worldly enjoyments, and resorting to yoga. But I have become liberated [simply by] tasting the essence of the ambrosia which is the endless and limitless glory of Nārāyaṇa.²⁴

I adore that darling son of Nanda, the supreme bliss itself, who is worshiped by all the yogins and without devotion to whom there can be no liberation.²⁵

These should suffice to show that the devotional tone of the work is at least comparable to that of the BR.

9.3.2 Surrender to God the Gītā's Key Teaching

Madhusūdana pays respect to Śaṅkara and claims to be faithfully following his lead in interpreting the BG.²⁶ Nevertheless, he has a basic disagreement with his great predecessor regarding the centrality of saṁnyāsa. While Śaṅkara argues that renunciation is the key teaching of the Gītā, Madhusūdana believes, and asserts repeatedly, that the most essential message of the text is surrender to God or bhagavadekaśaraṇatā, literally "the state of having the Blessed Lord as one's sole refuge." Thus:

Only the state of having the Blessed Lord as one's sole refuge is the means to mokṣa, not the performance of action or the renunciation of action.²⁷

It is not renunciation that is enjoined here [as Śaṅkara asserts]. Rather, the state of having the Lord as one's sole refuge is prescribed generally for the student, the householder, the retiree, and the renunciate. . . . The state of having the Lord as one's sole refuge is itself the highest secret of all the scriptures; it is the final teaching of the Gītā. Without it, even renunciation will not lead to its proper end. . . . Hence the Lord intends to teach only the state of having Him as one's sole refuge with disregard for the path of renunciation.²⁸

The idea of surrender to God is given a non-dualistic turn at GAD 18.66:

"I am His"; "He is mine"; "I am He"--thus the state of surrender to the Lord is threefold, according to the maturity of practice of the means.

Madhusūdana mentions Ambarīṣa, Prahlāda, and the gopīs as examples of bhaktas who experienced the highest of these three states. For details, he again refers the reader to the BR.²⁹

9.3.3 The Resurgence of Advaitic Exclusivism

The GAD's insistence that the universally available option of devotional surrender is the single most important determinant of an individual's spiritual destiny helps to cushion the impact of its author's conservative views on eligibility for saṁnyāsa. The purification of the mind through karmayoga, says Madhusūdana, culminates in taking refuge in the Lord. Brahmins who have done so may renounce, but Kṣatriyas and others may not.³⁰ Referring, for example, to the fact that Śaṅkara interprets BG 18.66 as an argument in favor of saṁnyāsa, Madhusūdana, who takes it as a call to surrender to the Lord, complains: "The teaching of renunciation to Arjuna who is a Kṣatriya and not eligible for renunciation is not proper."³¹ Thus, while rejecting Śaṅkara's understanding of that particular verse in favor of his own theory of bhagavadekaśaraṇatā, Madhusūdana accepts without question the great Advaitin's view that only Brahmins may renounce. Yet at the same time he seems to admit that non-Brahmins may obtain mokṣa.

The relevant passages are the following:

Whoever has purified his mind by the actions previously described necessarily becomes one who has the Blessed Lord as his sole refuge, since the purification of the mind invariably leads to that state. If a Brahmin is such, let him renounce all action, since he is free of any obstacle to renunciation. He, having the Blessed Lord as his sole refuge, will attain liberation from samsāra by the power of the Blessed Lord's grace alone. If a Kṣatriya is such, since he does not have eligibility for renunciation, let him perform action, but with Me [Kṛṣṇa] as his refuge. . . . By the grace bestowed by Me, the Lord, he attains the eternal, imperishable place of Viṣṇu through the arising of knowledge of Me [without renunciation], like Hiranyagarbha. Such a one who has the Blessed Lord as his sole refuge would not perform prohibited actions, but even if he should, by My grace no obstacle would arise [for him] and, through knowledge of Me, he would attain liberation.³²

Kṣatriyas and members of other castes, however, are not eligible for renunciation. . . . Such individuals, having the Lord as their sole refuge, will attain liberation [1] owing to the fructification of renunciation performed in a previous life or [2] by the arising of knowledge of reality simply by the grace of the Blessed Lord, without renunciation, along with Hiranyagarbha or [3], having been born as a Brahmin in the next life, by the arising of knowledge preceded by renunciation.³³

What are we to make of such teaching? Several things should be noted, the first being that the orthodox doctrine that liberation comes through knowledge is here accepted as a matter of course. Second, renunciation remains an important factor even for non-Brahmins, either as a carry-over from a previous life--as in alternative (1), which conveniently rationalizes any remarkable spiritual gifts that may be possessed by a non-renunciate--or as the hope of a future life, as in alternative (3). Third, in the

absence of renunciation, as in option (2), salvation can only be attained by the power of divine grace. The mention of Hiraṇyagarbha (a name of Brahmā) and the "place of Viṣṇu" is intended to indicate the locus of the operation of this grace by recalling Śaṅkara's commentary on BS 4.3.10, the relevant portion of which reads as follows:

When the reabsorption of the effected Brahman world [brahmaloka] draws near, the souls in which meanwhile perfect knowledge has sprung up proceed, together with Hiraṇyagarbha the ruler of that world, . . . to the pure highest place of Viṣṇu. This is the release by successive steps [kramamukti].³⁴

The conclusion is as inescapable as it is surprising. In the final analysis, the GAD is offering the non-Brahmin, not the salvation through an independent path of devotion as presented in the BR, but the same limited fare set out by Śaṅkara. To be sure, it is made more palatable by the lavish use of the language of bhakti, but it is still in effect either kramamukti, gradual liberation through rebirth in the world of Hiraṇyagarbha, or waiting for rebirth as a male Brahmin.³⁵ Devotion and surrender to God may be open to all, but mokṣa is not. Despite the pervasive devotional tone of the text, the liberal view of the BR has been abandoned and, on this important question at least, Madhusūdana has returned to the fold of orthodoxy. This retreat may not be total, but as the following passage indicates, it goes to the extent of restoring the Vedic revelation to its privileged place as the final mediator of

salvation and saving knowledge, even for the devotee who has taken recourse to God's grace:

The supreme liberation . . . is attained by those who have cast off all obstacles by contemplation on the unqualified at the end of their enjoyment of celestial powers in brahmaloka. This is occasioned by the rise of knowledge of reality and the cessation of ignorance and all its effects through the medium of the Vedānta sayings, which manifest themselves spontaneously by the Lord's grace, without the necessity of instruction by the guru and the difficulty of the practice of hearing (śravaṇa), reflection (manana), and deep meditation (nīdīdhyāsa).³⁶

That the hearing of the "great sentences" (mahāvākya) is essential even for the bhakta is reaffirmed in a particularly perplexing passage at GAD 18.65. After quoting BP 7.5.23-24, the classical source of the nine-fold "disciplines of the Lord's devotees" (bhāgavata-dharmas), and then referring his readers back to the BR for a more detailed explanation of those practices, Madhusūdana writes:

Thus constantly having your mind absorbed in Me because of the arising of attachment to Me through the practice of the disciplines of the Lord's devotees, you will come to Me, the Blessed Lord Vāsudeva, i.e., you will attain Me by the realization of Me produced by the Vedānta sayings.³⁷

Apart from the continuation here of the BR's close identification of bhagavat and Brahman, these remarks are completely contrary to the spirit of the author's earlier work.

9.3.4 Modi's Understanding of the GAD

P. M. Modi, in his 1929 study of the BR and the GAD, described both of these texts as teaching the same doctrine of bhakti as an independent path to the highest goal.³⁸ Subsequent writers such as Suryanaraya Sastri, Mahdevan, and Mishra have tended to echo this view uncritically, taking for granted that the viewpoint of the GAD is the same as that of the BR. Given what has been said above, however, we may be justified in questioning the validity of this assumption.

Referring to GAD 7.16, Modi asserts that "Madhusudana admits the possibility of 'Suddhapremabhakti' the 'Pure Loving Devotion' being a means to Moksha."³⁹ The passage in question (BG 7.16-18) is one that has been very important to the discussion of the relation of knowledge and devotion. So if the author of the GAD had here actually given the interpretation that Modi is suggesting, it would be significant indeed. But the text of Madhusūdana's commentary reads somewhat differently:

"The fourth [and highest] devotee is the one who is desireless, here called the 'possessor of knowledge' (jñānin). Knowledge is the immediate realization of the Blessed Lord. The possessor of knowledge is one who is constantly absorbed in that [knowledge]. All his desires having ceased, he has crossed beyond māyā. The word 'and' [in the BG verse] indicates that any desireless premabhakta should also be included as a possessor of knowledge.⁴⁰

Madhusūdana mentions Sanaka, Nārada, Prahlāda, Pṛthu, and Śuka as examples of desireless premabhaktas who were

jñānins; the gopīs, Akrūra, and Yudhiṣṭhira are said to be examples of desireless premabhaktas.⁴¹ The idea is that the latter should also count as jñānins, or at least be included along with those realized souls as favorites of the Lord. We find here an interesting attempt to soften the Gītā's assertion, embarrassing for the devotionalist, that the jñānin is most dear to Kṛṣṇa. We are not told, however, that bhakti is an independent means to liberation. In fact, the mention of Sanaka, Nārada, and so on as jñānin-devotees points in rather a different direction, reminding us of chapter two of the BR, where, contrary to expectation, Madhusūdana declares that the rasa experienced by the great renunciates is higher than that enjoyed by the gopīs.⁴²

Modi also mentions GAD 9.1 as evidence that Madhusūdana regards bhakti as a direct means to mokṣa. There, however, our author speaks of "the immediate attainment of liberation from knowledge of the Blessed Lord,"⁴³ of which devotion is a "special cause" (asādhāraṇo hetuh).⁴⁴ The "knowledge of the Blessed Lord" itself is given a typically non-theistic Advaitic interpretation, being described as "having scripture as its means and Brahman as its object." Madhusūdana remarks, "This true knowledge alone is the direct means to liberation,"⁴⁵ adding: "It can be attained with ease by means of the Upaniṣadic sayings combined with reflection, as taught by one's preceptor."⁴⁶

9.3.5 Devotion for the Renunciate

This is certainly does not sound like the path of bhakti presented in the BR, where there is no mention of the necessity of knowledge or the Vedic sentences. The fact is that the GAD present a style of devotion very much adapted to the mood of the Vedāntic saṃnyāsin, not a path designed, as in the BR, "for the contentment of all." Thus, in Madhusūdana's explanation of the meaning of the compound brahmabhūta ("having become Brahman") at BG 18.54, we read:

"Having become Brahman" means having attained, through hearing (śravaṇa) and meditation (manana), the firm conviction "I am Brahman" [BU 1.4.10], and having acquired, through the practice of equanimity and self-control, a tranquil nature and a pure mind . . . Being thus, an ascetic following the path of knowledge attains devotion to Me, the Blessed Lord, the pure supreme Self.

And then comes the startling declaration:

Devotion is upāsana, a repetition of the mental modification having my form known as deep meditation (nididhyāsana), the fruit of the practice of hearing (śravaṇa) and reflection (manana). This devotion is the supreme, the best, the last of the four types of devotion described [at BG 7.17] thus: "Four-fold are they that worship Me." Or, it is knowledge itself.⁴⁷

In the BR, bhakti is an independent path which attains the ultimate goal with no reference to the Vedic path of knowledge. In the GAD, on the other hand, though bhakti has a prominent place, it is ultimately made subordinate to the path of knowledge and, in deference to orthodoxy, forced to accommodate itself to traditional Vedāntic discipline and pass through the final bottleneck of the mahāvākyas.

It is difficult to say what the reason for this change of position might have been. One possibility is that the BR represents a rash burst of youthful enthusiasm, and the GAD the more sober views of a later period. But the BR when written already constituted a departure from the respectably orthodox teachings of earlier works such as the VKL and SB, and as we have seen, Madhusūdana was still dabbling in the unorthodox teachings of the YS and YV in the GAD and the ARR, the latter perhaps his latest work. So we cannot speak of a simple and orderly development of thought. My suggestion is that Madhusūdana is in the BR and the GAD simply speaking to different audiences and adjusting his discourse accordingly. In the former, he is writing "for the contentment of all," perhaps with the intention of recommending the viewpoint of Advaita to educated bhaktas⁴⁸ that stood outside the exclusive tradition of Śaṅkara saṁnyāsins. He therefore, as Divanji suggests, presents the teachings of Advaita in a form adapted to the egalitarian ethos of Bhāgavata devotionism, with which, as the result of his own predilection toward bhakti, he has considerable sympathy. In the GAD, however, he is speaking from within the Śaṅkara tradition,⁴⁹ and trying to recommend bhakti--as well as yoga--to his fellow saṁnyāsins. Though, as we have seen, he subordinates renunciation to surrender to God, he still argues clearly for the superiority of path of knowledge.

The first eight verses of BG 12 are crucial to the discussion of the relation of devotion and knowledge. The author of the GAD chooses to follow Śaṅkara in regarding the denigration of meditation on the "imperishable" (i.e., the path of jñāna) in that passage as nothing more than a pedagogical device designed to emphasize the efficacy of devotion. "Seeing that Arjuna is eligible only for the knowledge of the qualified [Brahman] (saguṇavidyā)," Madhusūdana writes, "the omniscient Lord will teach that to him, since the means (sādhana) must be graded according to one's eligibility (adhikāra)." Interestingly enough, the devotion to the saguṇa Brahman described here involves merging the mind into the Lord "like the color vermilion into lac."⁵⁰ This analogy figures prominently in the description of bhakti given in the BR. Its use in this context may indicate the level at which Madhusūdana places the spirituality expounded in that text, relative to the kind of Vedāntic bhakti he is championing here. Quoting Amalānanda's versified put-down of the "dull-minded" devotees who are unable to realize the unqualified Brahman⁵¹ and, once again, the Gītā's praise of the jñānin-devotee at 7.17-18, Madhusūdana concludes: "From the highest perspective (paramārthataḥ), the most well-versed in yoga are those who meditate on the imperishable."⁵² He is not making this remark simply out of deference to Śaṅkara's

interpretation, for at 18.66, as we have seen, he is not afraid to openly disagree with the great commentator.⁵³ Madhusūdana's final advice to Arjuna--and through him all other non-Brahmins who seek spiritual realization--is that of a conservative Śaṅkarite: Kṛṣṇa's pupil should follow the path of knowledge, having first "attained the proper qualification" (adhikāram āsādyā).⁵⁴ Of course, Madhusūdana neglects to mention that such competence cannot be obtained by a Kṣatriya in his present birth.

The ideal life of devotion portrayed in the GAD is, then, something quite different from that described in the BR. It is bhakti rendered compatible with jñānayoga. The latter, it will be remembered, was the alternative left undiscussed at BR 1, section III, where the spiritual life was split into the ways of knowledge and devotion. I suggest that, just as the BR opts for the path of pure love, and speaks from a point of view proper to it, so the GAD chooses the path of wisdom. It picks up, as it were, the way neglected by the earlier text, speaking, as did Śaṅkara, out of the rather different set of values belonging to the saṁnyāsins to whom, like the SGB, it is primarily addressed. Yet, unlike Śaṅkara's work, it strives to show the relevance of bhakti to the path of knowledge. If the BR can be said, at least in part, to be recommending Advaita to the bhaktas, the GAD is promoting the cause of bhakti among the Advaitins.

The teaching of the GAD is perhaps best epitomized in the following verse found at the conclusion of its ninth chapter:

Those whose hearts are purified by the taste of the nectar which flows from the lotus-feet of Govinda quickly cross over the ocean of samsāra and see the perfect Effulgence. They comprehend the highest beatitude (paramam śreyas) by means of the Upaniṣads, cast off error, know that duality is like a dream, and find the untainted bliss.⁵⁵

Note that devotion here serves a purificatory function, while the final realization comes through the standard orthodox means.

On a more theoretical plane, the following passage from GAD 7.14 provides a fascinating example of the way in which Madhusūdana applies his great genius to the problem of infusing the spirituality of his beloved BP into the sāṃnyāsins' path of knowledge. It is well worth quoting in full:

The jīva, because it is limited by the mind, cognizes by means of the eyes, etc., only that which is connected with the mind and becomes restricted in its knowledge, knowing only a little. Thus arises participation in hundreds of evils [that begin with ideas] such as "I know," "I do," and "I enjoy." The Blessed Lord, who is original (bimba), is possessed of infinite powers. He is the controller of māyā, omniscient, the bestower of all results [of actions], sleepless, having a form of pure bliss. The supreme guru, he assumes numerous incarnations in order to grace His devotees. If the jīva pays homage to Him by offering all its actions to Him, it will attain all the goals of life, because what is offered to the original is also returned to be imaged in the reflection (pratibimba).

This is what was intended by Prahlāda when he said:

The compassionate Lord, who is innately full of the wealth of the Self, does not seek the esteem of humans who are ignorant. Whatever regard they may offer to Him, the Blessed Lord, is [really returned] to themselves, as the auspicious mark [placed] on the face [appears] in its reflection [BP 7.9.11].

If it is wished that a face reflected in a mirror acquire an auspicious mark such as the tilaka, the mark must be placed on the face, which is the original. [Then] it will quite spontaneously be reflected in the image. There is no other way of achieving this. In the same way, the jīva, who is the reflection, acquires that which is offered to the Lord who is the original. There is no other means for it to attain the goal of life. This is the meaning of the illustration [given by Prahlāda].

The mind of one who constantly pays homage to the infinite Blessed Lord becomes devoid of sin, which is an obstacle to knowledge, and full of merit, which is conducive to knowledge. Then, refined by the service of the guru and the hearing of, and reflection and meditation on, the sayings of the Upaniṣads, which [discipline] is preceded by renunciation of all action and [the acquisition of] tranquillity, self-control, and the other virtues, it [the mind] becomes completely clear like a spotless mirror. In such a mind there arises the mental mode which is an immediate realization of the form of unconditioned Consciousness and is free of the forms of anything that is not the Self. This is [the realization] "I am Brahman" caused by the saying of the Upaniṣad "Thou are That" that has been imparted by the guru. Consciousness, reflected in that mode, immediately destroys ignorance, which has Consciousness as both its object and its support, just as a light destroys darkness.⁵⁶

Thus far it is apparent that, through devotion, the mind of the follower of jñānayoga is prepared for the final vision of unity. But is there anything more that can be said of bhakti, or is it now reduced to its former instrumental function as a purifier of the mind, a mere preliminary to knowledge? At this point, we remember that

the GAD agrees with the BR, and deviates from orthodox Advaita, at least to the extent of accepting the teaching that the experience of devotion is available in the state of liberation-in-life, after knowledge has dawned. Hence we are not overly surprised to find that there follows in this same passage a description of devotional experience of the personal God. This statement indeed more explicit and more extravagant than anything we have seen in the BR, which relies in this respect perhaps too heavily on quotations from the BP. After a brief exposition of the three-fold Vedāntic discipline of hearing, reflection, and deep meditation, Madhusūdana states its result: "With the dropping off of all limiting adjuncts, they [those who resort to Kṛṣṇa] remain with the form of pure being-consciousness-bliss."⁵⁷ Then the mood of the discourse changes abruptly:

So the intended meaning of "resort" [in BG 7.14] must be "see." Those saintly ones who have Me as their sole refuge see "Me alone," the Blessed Lord Vāsudeva, the complete essence of infinite beauty, the abode of all refinements, the glory of whose two lotus feet is greater than the beauty of a fresh lotus, Gopāla, who delights in uninterrupted playing on the flute, whose heart is attached to playing in Vṛndāvana, who held the Govardhana mountain aloft in sport, by whom a host of wicked persons such as Siṣupāla and Kaṁsa were slain, whose feet steal all the beauty of a fresh lotus, whose form is a mass of supreme bliss, who transcends the world created by Brahma. Meditating constantly on Me as such, they spend their days. Because their minds are immersed in the great ocean of bliss which is ecstatic love of Me, they are not overcome by all the fluctuations of māyā and the material qualities.⁵⁸

This, we must assume, is intended as a description of the experience of the jīvanmukta.⁵⁹

The GAD's presentation of the glory of bhakti is certainly impressive. And yet at the same time the unqualified support of the devotional spirituality that we found in the BR is missing. Not only does the GAD reject the earlier text's understanding of bhakti as an independent path, it also drops the theme, so important in the BR, of bhakti as the highest goal of life (paramapurusaṛtha). The idea is simply not mentioned. The only possible basis for an argument that that Madhusūdana may still be entertaining this theory is found in two passages, already referred to, found in his commentary on chapter 18. The first asserts that bhaktiyoga is the Lord's "most secret word, more secret than karmayoga and jñānayoga its fruit, more secret than all, supreme, elevated above all."⁶⁰ In the second, explaining the relationship between the disciplines of karma and jñāna and the path of bhakti, Madhusūdana declares that the latter is the "means to both and the end of both."⁶¹ But there is no explanation of what is meant by either of these pregnant sayings, and the first may be merely an echo of the BG verse (18.64) being commented upon. Madhusūdana, furthermore, makes no attempt to suggest, as he does in the BR, that the blissful experience of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti enjoyed in jīvanmukti is eternal. On the contrary, he asserts that the

"highest beatitude" (param niḥśreyasam) is nothing other than "the complete cessation of samsāra along with its cause," which is to say, in standard Advaitic parlance, mokṣa. And he makes this statement conspicuously, in verse two of his introduction to the GAD, where he identifies the attainment of the state in question, equivalent to liberation, as the aim of the whole teaching of the Gītā.⁶²

Consider in this connection the following passage from the AS, which was probably written at about the same time as the GAD since the two works refer to each other.⁶³ In the fourth Pariccheda, Madhusūdana comments on two verses of the BP, expressing ideas which must disappoint those who see him as a champion of the devotionalism of that text:

Verses such as "He who asks blessings of Thee [is no servant, he is nothing but a tradesman]" [BP 7.10.4b] teach the superiority of the devotion that, motivated by attachment to the [Lord's] glories, desires no reward. This [superiority of devotion], however, lies in its expediting the immediate realization of Reality. It does not indicate its status relative to liberation. The superiority [of bhakti to mokṣa] taught in verses such as "[Selfless devotion toward the Blessed Lord is] superior to liberation" [BP 3.25.33a] is only to the extent that devotion is the generator of liberation, as the father is [said to be superior to the son only because] the father is the generator of the son.⁶⁴

The view of the GAD--not surprisingly, given its emphasis on the path of renunciation, Vedāntic discipline, and so on--is substantially the same. Thus, in his commentary on BG 13.10, Madhusūdana quotes the Bhāgavata again, with a similar end in view: "This [bhakti] is the cause of

knowledge, as shown in the saying, 'So long as one has not developed love (prīti) for Me, Vāsudeva, one will not be released (mucyate) from the conjunction with the body [BP 5.5.6]."⁶⁵ I cannot see in these passages anything but a rejection of one of the most central teachings of the BP (and the BR as well), namely, the doctrine that bhakti is the paramapurusa, a greater goal than liberation.

If Madhusūdana is in fact changing his position on the ultimate value of bhakti vis-à-vis mokṣa, as he certainly appears to be, he is saved from the two most difficult philosophical dilemmas arising from the teaching of the BR. These are: (1) the problem of explaining how it is possible for devotion to continue in videhamukti ("disembodied liberation") and (2) that of establishing the ontological parity of bhakti and mokṣa. Devotion now being at its grandest only an added enhancement of the jīvanmukta's interior bliss, neither its eternality nor its ultimacy will require proof. So the only difficulty remaining of those we discussed in chapter eight will be that of justifying presence of bhakti in the condition, admittedly temporary, of liberation-in-life.⁶⁶

9.7 Madhusūdana's Final Intention

In the GAD, then, Madhusūdana claims for saṁnyāsins the right to enjoy bhakti without, as he did in the BR,

granting non-renunciate devotees a corresponding access to mokṣa. He furthermore ignores the idea of bhakti as the paramapurusaṛtha. The problem now remains: If the BR and the GAD have different and indeed contradictory teachings on the place and function of devotion in Advaita, which is Madhusūdana's true outlook? We hypothesized at the start of this chapter that one motivation for his writing on bhakti may have been to think through his own spiritual experience and somehow bring together the two strands of Upaniṣadic non-dualism and Kṛṣṇa devotionalism on which it was based. If this was the case, as seems impossible to doubt, something of what he wrote must represent his own personal understanding of the problem. But what? If we take definite agreement between the BR and the GAD, his two major works on bhakti, as our criterion, three things can be said. First, it is at least clear that Madhusūdana, who regarded himself as a jīvanmukta, believed that it was perfectly possible to experience devotion in that state. Second, it is equally certain that he thought bhakti a great help at all levels of spiritual practice. Third, both texts make it obvious that he saw a very close relation between the Brahman of Advaita and the bhagavat of the BP, and that he identified the latter with Kṛṣṇa. Beyond these points, however, we cannot speak with certainty.

As to the especially important question of whether or not Madhusūdana actually felt that bhakti was an independent path to mokṣa, the texts are in direct conflict. The BR says that it is, the GAD that it is not. Which is the final position? The fact that Madhusūdana repeatedly refers to the BR in the GAD would seem to debar the simple explanation that he had changed his mind and repudiated the teaching of his earlier work, so we must look elsewhere for an answer. Madhusūdana himself was a samnyāsin of one of the most prestigious orders and a disciple of orthodox teachers. It would seem likely that during his novitiate he had followed the traditional disciplines of the Śaṅkara school. The relatively conservative brand of devotional Advaita taught in the GAD would therefore probably be more representative of his own personal spirituality.⁶⁷ Since Madhusūdana nevertheless continues to recognize the significantly different vision of the BR, it is possible that the earlier text was the product of a sense of obligation to instruct the unenlightened in terms acceptable to them, perhaps designed, as I have already suggested, to encourage Kṛṣṇa devotionalists to come closer to the true views of the Śaṅkara school, as modified by him to make room for devotion.

It is significant that, in his Prasthānabheda (actually a portion of his commentary on the Mahimnastotra),

Madhusūdana enunciates the principle that those teachers who advocate viewpoints inconsonant with the highest truth of Advaita are not necessarily ignorant. They are only, he says, seeking to capture the minds of those whose awareness is not sufficiently developed to comprehend non-duality, hoping thereby to prevent the latter from embracing heterodox doctrines.⁶⁸ Was the BR part of a similar stratagem? If so, the theory that Madhusūdana was seriously attempting to modify the exclusivistic stance of Advaita would be subject to serious question. Against this understanding, it could be argued that his sympathy for devotional spirituality was indeed so great that his concession to orthodoxy in the GAD was just that, a concession designed to make his presentation of the value of bhakti in the path of knowledge more acceptable to his conservative fellow sannyāsins. It would, however, be more difficult to find support for this alternate hypothesis.

The loss for the devotionalist of the notion of bhakti as an independent path and supreme goal of life is mitigated in the GAD only by the fact that the continuance and blissful development of bhakti is allowed as an experiential enhancement of the state of jīvanmukti. This, however, is really no compensation at all, since there is also in this text a renewed emphasis on Advaita's conservative social teaching. The bhaktas, unless as male

Brahmins they qualify for saṁnyāsa, are not eligible for jīvanmukti. But, at least according to the BR, the full development of devotion presupposes that state. So the final result is somewhat ironic. The Advaitin renunciate, in borrowing Kṛṣṇa-bhakti from the devotionalists, has excluded the latter from the highest levels of their own path, which have, in effect, been preempted for the saṁnyāsins alone. Again, therefore, the teaching of the GAD represents in certain crucial respects not an accommodation but actually a betrayal of the devotional ethos of the BP.

In view of his tradition and training, as well as the orthodox nature of his major works, I am inclined to the conclusion that the teachings of the GAD, and not the BR, are closer to Madhusūdana's own personal experience as a jñānin-devotee and more indicative of his final outlook. The result is that Madhusūdana's reputation as a champion of devotion must be qualified. To be sure, his status as the foremost advocate of the inclusion of bhakti within the Advaitic spiritual experience remains intact. But it is somewhat diminished by his failure to provide an adequate theoretical justification of his position, at least in reference to the problem of devotion in jīvanmukti, and perhaps on other levels as well. Furthermore, his reputation as a liberal who sought to open Advaita to all by making devotion an independent path to non-dual realization

has been shown to be almost entirely undeserved. Despite his encounter with the Lord of the cowherds, Madhusūdana remains an orthodox Advaitin and, as such, an incurable spiritual elitist.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUDING REMARKS

R. D. Ranade, in his autobiographical essay "The Evolution of My Own Thought," discusses the factors which caused him to turn from an antipathy toward philosophy to a vital and consuming interest in the subject. He reports that the following experience played a pivotal role in this intellectual conversion:

When I happened to pay a visit to Benares from Poona in October, 1908, I had been to see the remnant of the Mutt [monastery] of Śaṅkarāchārya at Benares, when on a cool evening I happened to hear the devotional songs of Śaṅkarāchārya recited at the Mutt, which made me pause and think how a so-called Advaita Philosopher could at the same time make room for devotional songs in his philosophical teaching. That to me was a crux, which impelled me to study Indian philosophy all the more.¹

By referring to this experience as a "crux," he apparently means to say that it confronted him with a puzzling and provocative problem, one that opened up for him intriguing new vistas of thought. No matter that Śaṅkara himself probably did not write the hymns Ranade refers to, the question that arose in his mind that evening remains impelling: "How is it that Advaitins are also bhaktas?" This is of course the problem we have been dealing with throughout this study. To the practicing Advaitin-devotee, it may appear to be of mere academic interest, but if one

approaches it, as Ranade did, from the point of view of a philosopher, one is quickly swept into direct confrontation with the most profound problems of Indian religious thought. It is indeed a crux for the tradition, generating a deep but creative internal tension that has been the stimulus for much profound religious thought and experience.

We have observed how, in the late hymns of the Rgveda, the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, all of which are of central importance to the tradition in its various phases, impersonalist visions of the Godhead are held together in dynamic conflict with personalist and (in the BG and BP) devotional spiritualities.² Little or no acknowledgement of the apparent contradictions involved is given; indeed there often seems to be a reckless oblivion to the paradoxical implications of such juxtapositions, if not a positive delight in them. Interpreters of these scriptures sought, however, to derive from them systems of thought exhibiting a more studied consistency. Such writers fell generally into two broad categories, as we have seen: the non-dualists (or monists) and the theists. The former emphasized the impersonalist revelation and an intellectual mysticism. The devotionalists, on the other hand, held tenaciously to the finality of the theistically oriented portions of the sacred texts and the ultimacy of the devotee's loving relation with the personal God.

These writers naturally sought to resolve the seeming contradictions embodied in the scriptures in favor of the views that their school of thought wished to champion. Śaṅkara, as we have seen, explained the personalistic passages of the śruti as aparā vidyā, a lower-level wisdom that must eventually be transcended. To be sure, he regarded conventional religious practices and devotionalism as true and valid, indeed even indispensable, for the masses engaged in the active life (pravṛttimārga). For such people, religious rites and bhakti had the positive value of contributing to cittaśuddhi, purification of the mind. But he believed that such practices were spiritually harmful for the paramahaṃsa ascetics who, having completed the process of mental purification, were eligible for the path of renunciation (nivṛttimārga). Religious ritual and bhakti tended to confirm the experience of duality; they encouraged false attitudes of difference between God and the Self (ātmeśvarabheda) and dependence on an external power (pāratantrya). They therefore interfered with the practice of Self-inquiry whereby the saṃnyāsin sought to establish himself in the truth of the ultimate identity of jīva and Brahman, as taught in the "great sayings" of the Upaniṣads. Action and devotion alike were consigned to the realm of māyā, and as such they were not to be taken seriously by the aspirant to non-dual realization.³ Along with this kind of

thinking, which was asectic in orientation and radically opposed to common sense understandings of the world and the self, Śaṅkara and his followers developed social attitudes that were decidedly elitist.

The response of the Kṛṣṇaite tradition, the devotional movement with which we have been primarily concerned, was on the whole typical of that of the various bhakti schools. In the sphere of practical religion, the followers of the Bhāgavata rejected the Advaitins' exclusivism and opened up the path of bhakti to all who were sincere. Moksa, which the Advaitins held was open only to the very few, was devalued as an incidental by-product of the devotional life; the bliss of bhakti itself was enthroned as the highest goal of life (paramapurusaṛtha) in its place. In the realm of metaphysics, there was an attempt, especially marked in the work of the Gosvāmins of the Bengal school, to give bhakti an exalted, near absolute, ontological status by identifying it with Kṛṣṇa's highest śakti, thus transferring it from the realm of the psychological to the sphere of the ultimately real.⁴

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has emerged in the present study as a highly sophisticated, complex thinker who sought on at least two levels to bring about a rapprochement between between these two conflicting estimates of the value of bhakti. In his earlier work, the BR, he seems to be

writing more from the viewpoint of the devotionalist than that of the orthodox Advaitin saṁnyāsin. Though an Advaita metaphysic is assumed, bhakti is presented as being both an independent spiritual path and itself the paramapurūṣārtha. The realization of the highest stages of bhakti is said to include Advaitic Self-knowledge as one of its preliminary stages, brought about through devotional experience alone, without the mediation of the Upaniṣadic revelation. As in Vaiṣṇava thought, there is an attempt to raise bhakti from the level of merely mental phenomena and give it true ontological status, in this case by identifying it with the reflection of bhagavat in the mind of the devotee, such a reflection being, according to the non-dualists' pratibimbavāda ("reflection theory"), ultimately identical with bhagavat himself.⁵

The seriousness with which Madhusūdana took the doctrine of bhakti as an independent path and paramapurūṣārtha is, however, brought into question by the GAD, his commentary on the Bhagavad Gītā. While this later work gives much attention to bhakti, the viewpoint from which Madhusūdana is writing is quite different from that adopted in the BR. The teachings of the GAD, consequently, differ in several important respects from those of the earlier text. The Gītā commentary presents a version of Kṛṣṇaite devotionalism designed to appeal to the orthodox Śaṅkara

samnyāsin. The notions of bhakti as a path and as a goal in itself are abandoned. The ideal spiritual life is described as one that progresses from the purificatory path of karma to the way of renunciation and knowledge, and eventually culminates in jīvanmukti ("liberation-in-life"), the latter state being available only to the samnyāsin engaged in Vedāntic inquiry. But whereas Śaṅkara saw bhakti as a hindrance to the highest aspirants who had taken to the path of knowledge, Madhusūdana recommends it with enthusiasm as helpful at every stage of practice and a desirable enhancement of the jīvanmukti experience.⁶

The problem with Madhusūdana's presentation, to summarize what has been presented in some detail above, is twofold. First, he neglects to deal with several important theoretical questions that this teaching on bhakti raises, such as the problem of the continued experience of devotion after enlightenment and the question of the ontological status of bhagavat vis-à-vis the nirguna Brahman. Even if we leave the more extravagant claims for bhakti made by the BR aside and consider only teachings of the GAD, we are still left wishing for an explanation of the Advaitin's post-liberation vision of the flute-carrying, yellow-clad Kṛṣṇa and all that such an experience implies for Advaitic theory. Second, on the socio-religious level, Madhusūdana seems to violate the dominant egalitarian sentiment of the

Bhāgavata and the devotional movements dependent on it by, at least in the GAD, reserving the highest spiritual experiences--of bhakti as well as of mokṣa--for the Brahmin saṃnyāsin alone.⁷

While we must certainly admire the pioneering brilliance of Madhusūdana's exposition, we cannot but feel that he did not say as much on the subject as he could have. This is not the place (nor has the present writer the adhikāra) to suggest what those additional words might have been. In passing, however, I would mention the Upaniṣadic theme of the priyatva ("deariness") of the Self, along with the later notion of the ātman as the paramapremāspada ("object of supreme love"), as ideas that one might have expected to be more fully developed by Madhusūdana as he wrote on Advaita-bhakti.⁸ It would also, it seems to me, be regrettable if these were not among the essential foci of any future discussion of this question. Perhaps in this category as well should be Appaya's important idea of the enlightened jīva attaining īśvaratva (identity with the personal God) rather than merger in the impersonal Brahman.⁹ The problem, of course, is that Madhusūdana himself was the last of the great expositors of classical Advaita. So we can neither look for a tradition of writers who carried on and extended Madhusūdana's thinking¹⁰ nor hope that the inquiry will be taken up again, at least in the terms used

by Madhusūdana. It goes without saying that the world, India not excepted, is much different today than in the 16th century. Necessarily, therefore, further discussion of this question will be forced to go beyond the traditional categories of Advaitic scholasticism. It will have to take into account wider realms of thought and experience, giving cognizance both to the present day needs of the Hindu community and the unavoidable impact of the religious and philosophical experience of other traditions.

Of course, it may be doubted that the problem, involving as it does the notoriously difficult task of conceptualizing ultimacy, is amenable to any rigorous philosophical or theological solution. We may be dealing here with a religious experience which exhibits in an especially provocative way a feature that seems to be common to all authentic visions of the Godhead, namely, the well-known tendency of such experiences to strain the limitations of language, to lead the mind toward the the realm of "mystery" and "paradox." For one who wishes to speak of Advaita and at the same time retain the ultimacy of bhakti, problems of conceptualization are even greater than those found in orthodox Śaṅkara Advaita, with its clear-cut subordination of the personal experience to the impersonal, or in theistic Vaiṣṇavism, which, in retreating to the opposite position, shys away from mystery and paradox in

favor of a more anthropomorphic and, one might say, common sense view of reality.

It may be that in this case resolution, if such is to be had, will come more readily through image and metaphor, after the manner of the great scriptures, than through precise metaphysical delineation. There were several devotional poets with strong non-dualist tendencies who seem to have believed that this was the case. Jñānadeva (fl. 1290) and Kabir (ca. 1398-1448) are good examples. Their approach to the problem of devotion in the context of non-dualism was in many ways more straightforward than Madhusūdana's. Jñānadeva, for instance, was highly literate and well able to engage in metaphysical discourse, as he proved in his Amṛtānubhāva. Nevertheless, this great Maharashtrian saint chose the medium of poetic imagery to express his understanding of Advaita-bhakti. Three centuries before the BR, he wrote in his Jñāneśvarī:

As the waters of the Ganges still sparkle even after they have reached the sea, so is his enjoyment [of union with Me]. . . .

Some may hold the opinion that when union is reached there can be no experience of it; but one might as well ask how a word can be uttered by words. . . .

Can anything that is not space understand the nature of space? . . .

One who has not become united with Me cannot know where I am; therefore it cannot be said that he worships Me.

Thus he who . . . becomes one with Me enjoys Me as a young woman delights in her youth.

As waves delight in the embrace of the water, light rejoices in the sun and space wanders through the heavens, so when he is united with Me he worships Me without action, as gold ornaments do honor to the gold of which they are made.

The fragrance of sandalwood could be said to offer its worship to the tree and the moonlight adores the moon with true joy.

Similarly, though the thought of action is inconsistent with non-duality, yet there is a form of devotion in union; this cannot be described in words but only known in experience.¹¹

It would be possible to reject this approach as exhibiting a naive lack of philosophical sophistication, a surrender of the powers of thought in an acceptance of contradiction that goes beyond the tolerance even of Vedāntic discourse. Or one might gladly acknowledge it as embodying an honest recognition of the mystery of the absolute and the highest human experience thereof. In either case, however, one must admire the directness and freshness of the approach.

The example of Jñānadeva is particularly instructive at the present juncture because this writer includes in his Amṛtānubhava a systematic critique of Śaṅkara's doctrine of māyā.¹² This does not mean that he was opposed to non-dualism. On the contrary, he embraced it, but not in strictly Śaṅkarite terms. He was instead one of the earliest exponents of a type of thinking, owing much to Kashmir Śaiva sources, that gave bhakti an exalted status in the context of a tantric-style Advaita. Śaṅkara's māyā was replaced with a fully real śakti without abandoning the non-

dualist position, because śakti was conceived as mysteriously identical with the absolute. In such a system, it was possible to give bhakti a central place without compromising the unity or transcendence of the ultimate. The Gosvāmins readily saw this, though they tried to avoid the final non-dualistic implications that were involved.¹³ This kind of thinking, moreover, has had considerable influence on the Śaṅkara tradition, especially in the modern period. Since Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, proponents of Advaita have tended to slip unannounced into a mode of discourse reminiscent of Śaiva or Śākta non-dualism (i.e., one that implies the full reality of śakti) when speaking, as they often have, of the value of bhakti and the possibility of its continued experience after realization has been attained.¹⁴ Though the idea of bhakti as paramapuruṣārtha is absent, it has often been approached and sometimes duplicated through the notion of parā bhakti ("supreme devotion")--borrowed, in an age in which liberal Advaitins have felt the need for a synthetic view of "Hinduism," from Nārada's Bhaktisūtras.¹⁵

Meanwhile Madhusūdana's attempt at integrating bhakti and the orthodox māyāvāda, although more authentic in terms of Śaṅkara's original vision than such quasi-tantric interpretations, has languished, suffering from the twin afflictions of exaggerated praise, on one hand, and lack of

careful study and development, on the other. It is hoped that this study will accomplish something in the way of rectifying this neglect. Madhusūdana's writings on bhakti represent an important phase of Advaitic thought, one that strains the limits of the system to their utmost and, in the process, raises important questions for the tradition as a whole. It is my feeling that a careful and creative consideration of the problems that Madhusūdana's work raises would make a significant contribution to the ongoing vitality of Advaita in its modern context.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹This problem occupies a place in Hindu religious life parallel in importance to that of the conflict between contemplation and social service in Christian spirituality. Christians obviously do not have a strong, orthodox tradition of non-dualistic theology to call their devotional life into question. Hindus, on the other hand, do not have a developed tradition of social service, or at least did not before Vivekananda.

For a good example of how the theme of the conflict between the paths of knowledge and devotion has filtered down to the popular level and is alive even today, see "The Uddhav Līlā of Svāmī Kuṅvar Pāl," trans. Norvin Hein, The Miracle Plays of Mathurā (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), chap. 8.

²On the orthodox Advaita tradition, in modern India, see Wm. Cenkner, A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1983).

³Theistic interpreters are obliged to deal with this "great saying" (mahāvākya) of CU 6.8.7 because it is part of revealed scripture (śruti), and because it receives so much emphasis in the Śaṅkara tradition. But their interpretations, for the most part, seem forced and artificial.

For Rāmānuja, "That thou art" means "Thou art a mode of That (tatprakāra).". See VAS 82 (S.S. Ragavachar, Vedārtha-Saṅgraha of Śrī Rāmānujācārya [Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1968], p. 67), SBR 1.1.1 (G. Thibaut, The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuja [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971], pp. 130-132).

Vādirāja, a follower of Madhva, proposes that we understand tat tvam asi as tasmims tvam asi. That is, he claims, on the basis of an obscure rule of Pāṇini, that he is justified in turning any offensive "identity statement" (aikyavākya) into a declaration of inherence through the interpretation of a nominative as a locative. Thus, "I am Brahman" [BU 1.4.10], "Thou art That" and "All this, verily, is Brahman" [CU 3.14.1] really mean "I am in Brahman," "Thou art in That," and "All this is in Brahman" (ahaṃ brahmaṇi tasmims tvam sarvam brahmaṇi vartate, Nyāyaratnavali 401).

See L. Stafford Betty, Vādirāja's Refutation of Śaṅkara's Non-dualism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), pp. 154, 191.

Murāri Gupta, a close associate of Caitanya and his earliest biographer, tells us in his Kaḍacā that his master was extremely distressed at having been initiated in a dream with tat tvam asi as his saṁnyāsamantra. His uneasiness was somewhat allayed, but not completely, when Murāri interpreted the māhāvākya as a genitive compound (which would read tasya tvam asi) meaning "You are His." Later Keśava Bhārati, Caitanya's actual saṁnyāsaguru, initiated him with the same mantra and, it is said, gave his disciple a similar explanation of its purport. See Stuart Mark Elkman, "Jīva Gosvāmin's Tattvasandharbha: A Study of the Philosophical and Sectarian Development of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Movement" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1981), pp. 9-10.

⁴brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva na paraḥ. Śaṅkara, the first systematizer of the Advaita, is regarded by many as the greatest thinker the Hindu tradition has produced. According to Thomas Berry, "His work is so comprehensive in its scope, so penetrating in its insight, and so influential on later centuries that he may be considered the Aquinas of the Hindu tradition" (Religions of India [Beverly Hills: Benzinger, 1973], p. 56). Śaṅkara's works, especially his commentaries on the major Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Brahma Sūtras, are regarded as the most authoritative expositions of the system of Advaita.

⁵sat-cit-ānanda.

⁶Avidyā in Advaita is hypostacized as a positive (bhāvarūpa), quasi-ontological force. Śaṅkara uses the term as a synonym for māyā, the inexplicable power which generates the world appearance and obscures the real. See chap. VII, notes 94, 166; also J. G. Arapura, "Māyā and the Discourse about Brahman," in M. Sprung, ed., Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973), pp. 109-121. In this study, avidyā is invariably translated as "Ignorance."

⁷ahaṁ brahmāsmi, BU 1.4.10.

⁸See chap. 2.5. Hardy writes:

"The very premises of Vedānta entail a negative attitude towards the whole empirical personality. Subject as it appears to the three limitations of time, space, and matter, in view of the experience styled brahman or nirvāna, it can only be regarded as duḥkha, existential suffering or contingent existence. . . . It follows from

this that the emotions, placed below the 'mind' and the 'ego' and in fact directly involved via the sense impressions in matter . . . were automatically suspect. Any spiritual exercise must start by suppressing them" (Friedhelm Hardy, Viraha-Bhakti [Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983], p. 16).

⁹SBR 1.1.1; Thibaut, p. 39.

¹⁰Madhva's Tattvodyota, quoted by C. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964), p. 372.

¹¹īyac chūnyavādinah śūnyam tad eva brahma māyinaḥ, Madhva's Anubhāsyā on BS 2.2.29, quoted by M. Hirayana, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (Bombay: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 339.

¹²Tattvasandarbhā 23: "Śaṅkara, however, commonly accepted to be an avatāra of Śiva, realized the significance of the Bhāgavata [Purāṇa], characterized by utterances concerning the joys of bhakti which surpass even the joy of liberation, to be superior to his own doctrines, and was afraid to upset the views found in this divinely composed composition on Vedānta. As will be explained later, he propagated the doctrines of Advaita at the command of bhagavat in order that the latter's true nature might remain hidden. Still, Śaṅkara desired his own words to be fruitful, and so touched on the Bhāgavata indirectly, by describing in such works as his Govindāṣṭaka, etc. certain events found only in the Bhāgavata, such as Yaśodā's amazement at the vision of the universal form [of Kṛṣṇa], Kṛṣṇa's theft of the Gopis' clothes, etc." (trans. by Elkman, pp. 189).

¹³See, e.g., SBR 1.1.1, passim (Thibaut, pp. 39-156); Tattvasandarbhā 35-44 (Elkman, pp. 237-256).

¹⁴"It [Advaita] has been, and continues to be, the most widely accepted system of thought among philosophers in India, and it is, we believe, one of the greatest philosophical achievements to be found in the East or the West" (E. Deutsch, Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction [Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1969], p. 3). The recent interest among (especially Christian) scholars in Rāmānuja may be seen in such works as R. C. Zaehner's The Bhagavad-Gītā (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) and John B. Carman's The Theology of Rāmānuja: An Essay in Interreligious Understanding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). See also Betty, Refutation of

Śaṅkara's Non-dualism. Interestingly enough, Fr. R. Panikkar takes exception to what he sees as Zaehner's identification of Advaita with a "monolithic monism." He writes: "I think that Advaita Vedānta in spite of its monistic danger--only too real in many of its representatives--contains a deeper truth which should not be easily dismissed in favour of an unqualified theism. Christian trinity is something more than pure theism. God is there not just one person, and yet is one God" (Raimundo Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism [rev. ed.; Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981], p. 142, note 92).

¹⁵Panikkar, Unknown Christ, p. 143. I am indebted to Fr. Panikkar for the reference to Pascal.

¹⁶W. T. Stace speaks of the "Great Divide" between the theistic and pantheistic (better, monistic) ways of viewing the ultimate (The Teachings of the Mystics, [New York: New American Library, 1960], pp. 126-127). In a discussion of the problems of inter-religious understanding, John Hick notes:

"It would seem that one or the other of two basic concepts provides the framework of religious experience. One, which presides over the theistic forms of religion, is the concept of God, or of the Eternal One as personal. The other, which presides over the nontheistic forms of religion, is the concept of the Absolute, or of the Eternal One as nonpersonal" (God Has Many Names [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982], pp. 24-25).

Hick thinks these differences are reconcilable, as perhaps might Madhusūdana. Another Christian philosopher of religion, Keith Yandell, writes of the same problem from quite a difference perspective:

"No one can consistently worship with Isaiah in the temple and then meditate with Shankara in the grove. Either, as a first step towards consistency, one personalizes Brahman or depersonalizes God, and so begins to transform one tradition into another, or one rejects at least one tradition. Eclecticism in this context is inconsistent . . ." ("Religious Experience and Rational Appraisal," Religious Studies, X [1974], pp. 173-174).

This "divide" between theistic and monistic ways of thought is, of course, not exclusively an East/West phenomenon. The West has its representatives of the transpersonalistic viewpoint, and, as we shall soon see, the tension between these two views has been a central dynamic of the Hindu tradition from at least the time of the Bhagavad Gītā.

¹⁷The overwhelming preponderance of scholarly opinion has Madhusūdana flourishing in second half of the sixteenth century. Modi, on the basis of strong traditions that Madhusūdana (1) lived for 107 years, (2) had philosophical discussions with Vallabha (1481-1533), and (3) interacted with the Emperor Akbar about 1565, gives the dates 1495-1602 (P. M. Modi, trans., Siddhanta Bindu [reprint; Allahabad: Vohra Publishers & Distributors, 1985], p. 27; see below, note 26; chap. 9, note 31). Divanji gives the dates 1540-1647 (P. C. Divanji, ed. and trans., Siddhāntabindu of Madhusūdana [Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1933], p. xxv). For a review of the rather complicated discussion, see Modi, pp. 21-27; Divanji, pp. xviii-xxv; or Gupta, pp. i-iv. See Swami Jagadiswarananda, "Sri Madhusūdanasarasvatī," Vedanta Kesari, XXVIII (1941-42), 308-314, for a good summary of the semi-legendary traditions on the life of Madhusūdana.

¹⁸sarasvatyāḥ pāraṃ vetti madhusūdanasarasvatī madhusūdanasarasvatyāḥ pāraṃ vetti sarasvatī (A. K. Majumdar, Caitanya, His Life and Doctrine [Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969], p. 90, note 4; Jagadiswarananda, p. 312). According to Jagadiswarananda, this tradition is preserved in the introduction to the Harilīlaviveka. Seṣagovinda, a disciple of Madhusūdana, revered his master as an incarnation of Sarasvatī: sarasvatyavatāraṃ taṃ vande śrīmadhusūdanam (Jagadiswarananda, p. 311). See the colophon of the BR, which describes its author as a "master teacher whose proficiency in all branches of learning is famed throughout the world" (ācāryavaryaviśvaviśruta-sarvatantrasvatantratāka, JSP, p. 139).

¹⁹navadvīpe samāyāte madhusūdanavākpatāu / cakampe tarkavāgīśa kātaro 'bhūd gadādharaḥ, Majumdar, p. 90, note 4; Jagadiswarananda, p. 314.

²⁰To my knowledge, he makes no reference to the teachings of the Gosvāmins of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school, who were his contemporaries and as bitterly opposed to Advaita as the Mādhyas. It is likely that the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas were not considered serious opponents since, not yet having a commentary on the BS to their credit, they were not recognized as an independent sampradāya or school of Vedānta.

²¹The Prasthānabheda is actually a portion of his larger work, the Mahīmnastotraṭīkā, being his commentary on verse 7 of that hymn. See Divanji, pp. viii, xxvi; Modi, pp. 12, 36.

²²Ganganatha Jha, trans., The Advaitasiddhi of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (Allahabad: The Bevedere Steam Printing Works, 1917), vol. I, pt. 1., "Preliminary Note."

²³M. Hirayanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (Bombay: George Allen & Unwin [India] Private Ltd., 1973), p. 341.

²⁴vaṃśībhūṣitakarān navaṇīradābhāt pītāambarād aruṇabimbaphalādharoṣṭhāt / pūrṇendusundaramukhād aravindanetrāt kṛṣṇāt paraṃ kim api tattvam ahaṃ na jāne. This verse, which is frequently quoted, is also found at the end of the GAD (Pan, p. 775). Brahmānanda, a disciple of Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, writes in his Laghucandrikā on this portion of the AS: "Even though a jīvanmukta the teacher remembers Śrī Kṛṣṇa because of the impressions of worship acquired previously; hence this verse" (jīvanmukto 'pi ācāryaḥ pūrvasañcitabhajanavāsanayā śrīkṛṣṇaṃ smarati--vaṃśītyādi, quoted by Mishra, p. 233 [my trans.]). Though these remarks are evidence that the verse was indeed an original part of the text, the idea expressed seems to miss the point. Madhusūdana taught, as we shall see, that bhakti was a natural and highly desirable enhancement of the state of liberation-in-life, not a mere hold-over from the previous condition of ignorance.

²⁵I am indebted to Venkateswaran for his analysis of the implications of the appearance of this verse at this point in the Advaitasiddhi (T. K. Venkateswaran, "Rādhā-Krishna Bhajanās of South India: A Phenomenological, Theological, and Philosophical Study," in M. Singer, ed., Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968], pp. 148-151.

²⁶dhyānābhyāsavaśīkṛtena manasā tan nirguṇaṃ niṣkriyaṃ jyotiḥ kiṃcana yogino yadi paraṃ paśyanti paśyantu te / asmākaṃ tu tad eva locanacamatkārāya bhūyāc ciraṃ kālindīpulinodare kim api yan nīlaṃ maho dhāvati, GAD 13, invocation; Pan, 522.

²⁷For a discussion of the authenticity and chronology of Madhusūdana's works, see Divanji, pp. ii-xiii; Gupta, pp. vii-xvi; Modi, pp. 27-54. Following Modi, his major works may be ordered as follows: VKL, SB, Mahimnastotraṭīkā, SSSS, BR, Bhāgavatapurāṇaprathamaśloka-vyākhyā, AS, GAD, ARR.

²⁸The Vallabhadigvijaya, a biography of the great Vaiṣṇava theologian, is generally hostile towards Advaita. Nevertheless, it includes an account of an amicable meeting between Madhusūdana and Vallabha. "Madhusūdana shows him the

Bhaktirasāyana and he is pleased. He also sends his eldest son Viṭṭhalanātha to Madhusūdana to study, and the comment is made that although Madhusūdana was an Advaitin, he was full of the highest bhakti" (P. Granoff, personal communication). Another biography of Vallabha, the Nijāvarta, recounts the same episodes, reporting that Madhusūdana recited the verse vaṃśībhūṣita (note 24) for the great Vaiṣṇava ācārya, who is said to have been very pleased. See Modi, pp. 22-23.

²⁹pāramārthikam advaitam dvaitam bhajanahetave / tadṛṣī yadi bhaktiḥ syāt sā tu muktiśatādhikā. Quoted by Chakravarti, p. 190 (my trans.).

³⁰dvaitam mohāya bodhāt prāk jāte bodhe manīṣayā / bhaktyartham kalpitaṃ dvaitam advaitād api sundaram. Quoted by Swami Smarananda, "The Place of Bhakti in Advaita Vedānta," Prabuddha Bharata, LXXIX (1974), p. 300; S. C. Chakravarti, Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaiṣṇavaism (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1969), p. 190 (my trans.). I have thus far not been able to find either of these verses in Madhusūdana's own works.

³¹bṛhadāranyaniviṣṭam viluṭhitam ābhīravāranārī- bhiḥ / satyacidānandaḡhanaṃ brahma narākāram ālambe, ARR, p. 1, invocation; quoted by Divanji, p. xxviii, note 1 (my trans.).

³²parākṛtajagadbhāṇḍam param brahma narākṛti / saundaryasārasarvasvaṃ vande nandātmajaṃ mahāḥ, GAD 14, end; Pan, p. 608; quoted by Divanji, p. xxviii, note 1 (my trans.).

³³satyaṃ jñānam anantam advayasukhaṃ yad brahma gatvā gurum mattvā labdhasamādhībhīr munivarair mokṣāya sākṣātkṛtam / jātam nandatapobalāt tadadhikānandāya vṛndāvane veṇuṃ vādayad indusundaramukhaṃ vande 'ra- vindekṣaṇam, SSS, p. 1, invocation; quoted by Divanji, p. xxviii, note 1 (my trans.).

³⁴A. P. Mishra, The Development and Place of Bhakti in Śaṅkara Vedānta (Allahabad: The University of Allahabad, Sanskrit Department, 1967), p. 254.

³⁵S. Gupta, Studies in the Philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966), p. 205.

³⁶Fortunately, at least for the purpose of confining this study to a reasonable length, there was practically speaking no development of doctrine on bhakti in the Śaṅkara tradition in the years between these two great teachers. See chap. 2, note 6; Mishra, pp. iv, 154-155.

³⁷This part of my study will perforce neglect certain developments of this period that would require separate research to bring our understanding to the point at which their implications for the topic at hand could be properly assessed. There remain glaring gaps in our historical knowledge of the development of the bhakti movement and its interaction with the Advaita tradition between the time of the composition of the the BP and that of Madhusūdana. More work needs done, for example, on Śrīdhāra and other Bhāgavatasamnyāsins, on the writings of Vopadeva and Hemādri, and on Vallabha's understanding of bhakti and bhaktirasa. It is probable that Madhusūdana was aware of the contributions of these individuals (see notes 28, 38; Modi, pp. 10-11), but to what extent they influenced him is difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge.

³⁸Cp. the following dates: Rūpa, fl. 1533-1550; Jīva, ca. 1511-1596; Madhusūdana, ca. 1495-1602 (Modi) or 1540-1647 (Divanji). These figures were thus all roughly contemporaries, Rūpa most likely being the oldest, and it is possible that they had some kind of interaction. But there is no hard evidence at all for this. Madhusūdana is said to have studied Nyāya at Navadvīpa in Bengal, the birth-place of Caitanya and a center of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava movement. It should be remembered, however, that the followers of Caitanya split at an early date into a Bengal faction and a Vṛndāvana faction. The Gosvāmins, the center of the latter group, lived and worked at a considerable distance from Bengal. Their views differed in certain respects from those of the Navadvīpa circle, and were not accepted as authoritative in the East until they were made popular and given credibility in the middle of the seventeenth century by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, whose work was inspired by the Gosvāmins themselves (S. K. De, Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal [Calcutta: General Printers and Publishers, Ltd., 1942], pp. 79, 88; E. C. Dimock, "Doctrine and Practice Among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal," in M. Singer, pp. 45-46). It is interesting that Jīva Gosvāmin is said to have studied at Banaras with a certain Madhusūdana Vācaspati. While S. K. De believes that this Madhusūdana, whom he identifies as "an accomplished grammarian, Smārta, and Vedāntist," was not the same as the author of the BR, A. K. Majumdar argues that he was. "Jīva Gosvāmin," he writes, "studied under a Madhusūdana Sarasvatī at Vārāṇasī, and it is quite likely that this teacher was none other than this great advaita scholar." Majumdar's conclusion may seem unlikely, but there are also traditions that Madhusūdana accepted both Vyāsarāma, the disciple of his old dualist foe Vyāsātīrtha, and Viṭṭhalnātha, the son of Vallabha, as pupils. His reputation may have been such

that his instruction was sought after by talented students of opposing viewpoints who wished to fine-tune their critiques of Advaita. (See De, VFM, pp. 111 and 112, note 5; Majumdar, pp. 89 and 90, note 4; Jagadiswarananda, p. 311; and note 28 above.)

As we shall see, there are certain parallels between Madhusūdana's teaching and that of the Gosvāmins. But many of the ideas so shared could easily be explained by reference to earlier writers on devotion and aesthetics with whom both the great Advaitin and the Vaiṣṇavas were familiar. Madhusūdana was almost certainly acquainted with the important pre-Gauḍīya works on the philosophy and spirituality of the BP such as those of Vopadeva, Hemādri, and Viṣṇu Purī. In fact, he is said to have written the Harilīlāvyākya, a commentary on Vopadeva's Harilīlā. (This attribution is accepted by Modi [p. 37] and other authorities, though Divanji [p. ix] is somewhat doubtful.) He was, moreover, well-versed in the teachings of the Sanskrit aestheticians. So the similarities between the doctrines of the BR and the Bengal school by no means necessarily entail borrowing.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

¹Friedhelm Hardy, Viraha-Bhakti: The early History of Kṛṣṇa devotion in South India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 25-29, 36-38. To distinguish between these two types of bhakti, Hardy uses the terms "intellectual" and "emotional" instead of my "contemplative" and "ecstatic." While I think the distinction he is getting at is valid and important, I fail to see how bhakti can be either intellectual or anything but emotional. One can be emotional in a refined way without being emotive. Is this being intellectual? Cp. the later Vaiṣṇava idea of śānta ("quiescent") bhakti, which corresponds to my "contemplative," and Hardy's "intellectual," devotion.

²Mariasusai Dhavamony, Love of God According to Śaiva Siddhānta: A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Saivism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 13-23; Hardy, VB, pp. 25-29.

³Dhavamony, pp. 13-23; Hardy, VB, pp. 25-29; R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇvism Saivism and Minor Religious Systems (Varanasi, India: Indological Book House, n.d.), p. 29.

⁴A common characteristic of all forms of yoga is that the break-through to salvation is brought about, or at least facilitated, by intense mental concentration on the ultimate principle. In bhakti this concentration is attained through love.

⁵The not unrelated tension between the religious demands of the performance of dharma and the quest for mokṣa is perceptively developed by David Kinsley in his book Hinduism (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982).

⁶Hardy, VB, p. 13.

⁷I do not know of anyone who has done this in a systematic way.

⁸See, e.g., A. L. Basham, The Wonder that was India (New York: Grove Press, 1959); Thomas Berry, Religions of

India (Beverly Hills: Benzinger, 1973); Thomas J. Hopkins, The Hindu Religious Tradition (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971). Dhavamony (p. 22) writes: "The early history of Hinduism . . . indicates that Brahmanism grew into Hinduism owing to its assimilation, accompanied by syncretism, of non-Brahmanical religious elements, of which bhakti was the chief. Even today the tension in Hinduism between non-dualism and bhakti religion has not been satisfactorily resolved." See also Dhavamony, chap. 7 ("The Origins of Bhakti").

⁹See chap. 2, notes 45-47.

¹⁰The Sāmaveda and the Yajurveda are largely reworkings of the hymns of the Rgveda. The Atharva is also a later text.

¹¹Bishop Stephen Neil, Bhakti: Hindu and Christian (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1974), p. 8.

¹²Any study of the Rgveda should be prefaced by a statement of the fact that this scripture presents, in a language that is often obscure and exceedingly hard to translate, a spirituality that is archaic in nature and consequently difficult of access for moderns. There were debates as to the meaning of key words and phrases in the Veda as early as Yāska's Nirukta (ca. 500 B.C.E.). This portion of my study therefore proceeds with a consciousness of limitation that is greater than that felt in subsequent sections. Perhaps the most reliable scholarly guide in this difficult area is Jan Gonda, whom for the most part I follow. See Jan Gonda, Vedic Literature (Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas), vol. I, pt. 1 of A History of Indian Literature, edited by Jan Gonda (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975); Vision of the Vedic Poets (reprint ed.; New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984).

¹³Joseph Epes Brown writes of the native American tradition: "Such beliefs in a plurality of indwelling spirits (often referred to rather unkindly as 'animism' or 'animitism') must be understood in relation to a polysynthetic quality of vision. The recognition of multiplicity on one level of reality need not militate against the coalescing of the omnipresent spirit-beings within a more ultimate unitary principle. Such a polysynthetic metaphysic of nature, immediately experienced rather than dangerously abstracted, speaks with particular force to the root causes of many of today's problems, especially to our present so-called 'ecological crisis'" ("The Roots of Renewal," in Seeing with a Native Eye, ed. W. H. Capps [New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976], p. 30).

¹⁴Dhavamony, p. 55.

¹⁵RV 8.72.8; RV 8.18.9, 8.72.7, 3.54.16.

¹⁶RV 6.1.5; RV 10.7.3, 6.2.7.

¹⁷RV 2.14.

¹⁸See Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), p. 190.

¹⁹Trans. E. W. Hopkins, Ethics of India (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924), pp. 10-11. Compare the mood of this statement with that of the popular Hindu devotional verse: "You alone are my father, my mother, my relative, and friend; You alone are my knowledge and my wealth; You alone are my all, my God of gods" (tvam eva mātā ca pitā tvam eva tvam eva bandhuś ca sakhā tvam eva / tvam eva vidyā dravinam tvam eva tvam eva sarvam mama devadeva).

²⁰RV 8.92.7, 10.42.9; see Dhavamony, p. 55.

²¹indram madanty anu dhīranāsah (RV 3.34.8, trans. Dhavamony, p. 51). Note that the root mad, "to delight, rejoice," is common in the later literature of ecstatic bhakti.

²²RV 5.30.2, trans. R. T. H. Griffiths, The Hymns of the Rgveda, new revised edition ed. by J. L. Shastri (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), p. 249; also quoted by Dhavamony, p. 51.

²³E. W. Hopkins, p. 8.

²⁴Trans. E. W. Hopkins, p. 8. Cp. RV 1.62.11: "Thoughts ancient, seeking wealth, with adoration, with newest lauds have sped to thee, O Mighty. As yearning wives cleave to their yearning husbands, so cleave our hymns to thee, O Lord most potent" (trans. Griffiths, p. 42). Also, RV 10.64.2: "The will and thoughts within my breast exert their power: they yearn with love, and fly to all the regions round. No other comforter is found save only these: my longing and hopes are fixed upon the Gods" (trans. Griffiths, p. 578).

²⁵RV 10.43.10-11, trans. Griffiths, p. 562.

²⁶Dhavamony, p. 56.

²⁷Swami Smarananda of the Ramakrishna order comments on this problem, from the point of view of a "liberal" Advaitin sympathetic to devotion, as follows:

"The Vedic Aryans prayed to various deities such as Indra, Varuna, Vāyu, Agni, and so on, for fulfilling various desires or to be rid of various evils. These prayers later evolved into systematic offerings and sacrifices to propitiate those deities. But these were purely sakāma (desire-motivated) sacrifices. They were a far cry the idea of supreme love of God, asking nothing, seeking nothing, as it developed in the bhāgavata school and other dualistic traditions of later times" (Smarananda, pp. 300-309).

²⁸See Gonda, Vedic Literature, pp. 65-73.

²⁹Gonda, Vedic Literature, p. 66.

³⁰It has been suggested that soma was a hallucinogenic plant that stimulated the ṛsis' visions. See, for example, R. Gordon Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., n.d.). Not wishing to judge the experiences of the ancient seers to be hallucinations, and yet recognizing the parallels between their spirituality and, for example, certain forms of native American religion that use so-called "narcotic" substances as part of their religious exercises, I prefer the more neutral term "psychically stimulating."

³¹tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt. See Gonda, Vedic Literature, p. 67.

³²Gonda, Vedic Literature. p. 66-67.

³³ṛsir darśanāt, Nirukta 2.11; sāksātkṛtadharmāṇa ṛsayo babhūvaḥ, Nirukta, 1.20. See L. Sarup, ed. and trans., The Nighāntu and the Nirukta (2nd reprint; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), pp. 50, 41 [Sanskrit text].

³⁴RV 10.82.5, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, ed. S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 18.

³⁵RV 10.121.8, trans. E. J. Thomas, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 24.

³⁶RV 10.129.6, trans. A. A. Macdonell, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 23.

³⁷RV 10.129.3, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 21.

³⁸Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 46.

³⁹RV 10.82, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 18.

⁴⁰RV 10.90, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 19.

⁴¹RV 10.121; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 6.1.1.5, 6.1.2.13, etc.

⁴²RV 10.121.1, trans. E. J. Thomas, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 24; italics mine.

⁴³RV 10.129.7, trans. A. A. Macdonnell, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 24.

⁴⁴RV 10.121.1-8, after E. J. Thomas, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 24.

⁴⁵RV 10.82.7, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 18.

⁴⁶While there are over 200 Upaniṣads extant, including an obviously apocryphal Allah Upaniṣad, the tradition reckons their number at 108. The majority of even the latter number are distinctly sectarian in nature and of a relatively late date. The principal and most ancient Upaniṣads, upon which the discussion here is based, are generally regarded as thirteen or fourteen: the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Taitirīya, Aitareya, Kauṣītakti, Kena, Kaṭha, Īśa, Muṇḍaka, Praṣna, Māṇḍūkya, Maitrī, Svetāśvatara, and Mahānārāyaṇa. Saṃkara comments upon, or refers to, all of these but the Maitrī (Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 37).

⁴⁷AV 11.4; 19.53-54.

⁴⁸AV 4.1; 10.2; 10.8.

⁴⁹See, e.g., BU 3.7, a passage important to Rāmānuja.

⁵⁰Paul Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upanishads, trans. A. S. Geden (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 12. See note 72, below.

⁵¹See PU 1.1-2; Kaṭha 1.20-29.

⁵²yato vāco nirvartante aprāpya manasā saha, TU 2.4.1.

⁵³athāta ādeśaḥ--neti neti, na hy etasmād iti nety anyat param asti, BU 2.3.6. See also BU 3.9.26; 4.2.4; 4.4.22; 4.5.15.

⁵⁴sad eva, saumya, idam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam, CU 6.2.1.

⁵⁵CU 6.8.6.

⁵⁶"He, verily, who knows that supreme Brahman, becomes that very Brahman" (sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati, MuU 3.2.9).

⁵⁷aham brahmāsmi, BU 1.4.10.

⁵⁸Kaṭha 2.20, 23.

⁵⁹avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ, Kaṭha 3.11; avyaktāt paraḥ puruṣaḥ, Kaṭha 6.8.

⁶⁰Iśa 1; Maitrī 6.18; MuU 3.1.3.

⁶¹Thomas J. Hopkins, The Hindu Religious Tradition (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 69.

⁶²ŚU 3.11; 4.10; 5.4; 6.7.

⁶³Mishra, p. 65; Dhavamony, p. 66.

⁶⁴kṣaram pradhānam amṛtākṣaram haraḥ kṣarātmānāv
Iśate deva ekaḥ, SU 1.10.

⁶⁵bhoktā bhogyam preritāram ca matvā sarvam proktaṃ
trividhaṃ brahma etat, SU 1.12.

⁶⁶Cp. the trividhaṃ brahma with the tripadārtha ("three realities") of Southern Śaivism: pati ("the Lord"), paśu ("souls"), and pāśa ("fetters"). See Dhavamony, p. 119.

⁶⁷"The grace of the creator" (dhātuh prasādāt, ŚU 3.20); "the grace of God" (devaprasādāt, SU 6.21).

⁶⁸"In that God . . . do I, desirous of liberation, take refuge" (taṃ ha devaṃ . . . mumukṣur vai śaraṇam aham prapadye, SU 6.18).

⁶⁹ajam dhruvam sarvatattvair viśuddham jñātvā
mucyate sarvapāśaiḥ, SU 2.15.

⁷⁰tasyābhidhyānād yojanāt tattvabhāvād bhūyaś cānte
viśvamāyānivṛttiḥ, SU 1.10. See also SU 2.8-15, 5.13; Maitrī 6.18-19; Kaṭha 2.3.18.

⁷¹tyasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau /
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ, SU 6.23.

⁷²The verbal form (as in vacam upāssva, "meditate on speech") is considerably more common than the noun upāsana (G. A. Jacob, A Concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971], pp 245-248). The stem upās, consisting of the root ās ("sit") and the verbal prefix upa ("toward"), means literally to "sit near" and by extension to "attend to," "wait upon," "serve," "revere," "worship." It is frequently used in the later literature, particularly in the Bhagavad Gītā, in the sense of "worship." See, e.g., BG 9.13-14, 9.22, 13.25.

In this connection the similar etymological meaning of the word upaniṣad must be noted. The verbal root sad ("sit") and the prefixes upa ("toward") and ni ("down") combine to give the meaning "sit down toward." Because of the striking etymological parallel with upāsana, it has been suggested that upaniṣad refers to the same type of reverent meditation. Although many scholars would disagree, holding that the upaniṣad suggests simply approaching a teacher and "sitting close" beside him to hear secret wisdom, the idea of "reverent attention" in either case remains. See A. B. Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads [reprint; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970], p. 492; Deussen, pp. 10-16.

⁷³Throughout the Upaniṣads, we find examples of elements of the Vedic religion used in this way, e.g.: the sacrifice (CU 3.16-17), the sacrificial fire (BU 6.2.9-15, CU 5.4-10), the sun (CU 3.19.1), the golden Person in the sun (hiraṇyamayaḥ puruṣaḥ, CU 1.6.6), the wind (vāyu, BU 3.7.2) the Gāyatrī mantra (CU 3.12), speech (vāc, CU 7.2.2.), mind (manas, CU 7.3.2), space (ākāśa, CU 3.18.1), the cosmic person (MuU 2.1.2-10), and especially the sacred syllable om (MāU 1-12, PU 5).

⁷⁴samastasya khalu sāmna upāsanaṃ sādhu, CU 2.2.1.

⁷⁵vāg evaitat sarvaṃ vijñāpayati vacam upassva, CU 7.2.

⁷⁶ato 'nnam ātmety upāsīta, Maitrī 6.12.

⁷⁷Gambhirananda, Swami, "Upanisadic Meditation," The Cultural Heritage of India (2nd ed.; Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1958), I, 383-384.

⁷⁸YS 3.2.

⁷⁹upāsanaṃ tu yathāśāstraṃ samarthitaṃ kiñcid ālambanaṃ upādāya tasmin samānācittavṛttisantānākaraṇaṃ tadvilakṣaṇapratyayanantaritam, quoted by Mishra, p. 18, note 3 (my trans.). In his commentary on BU 1.3.9, Śaṅkara

defines upāsana as "approaching with the mind a form such as that of a deity, as taught by the Veda in the eulogistic portions, and 'sitting,' i.e., reflecting [on it] to the extent that there arises identification with the form of the deity, etc., like the ordinary identification with the body" (upāsanaṃ nāmapāsyārthavāde yathā devatādisvarūpaṃ śrutyā jñāpyate tathā manasopagamyā āsanaṃ cintanam laukika-pratyayāvyaavadhānena yavat taddevatādisvarūpātmaḥimānābhivyaṅktir itylaukikātmābhimānavat, quoted by Mishra, p. 19, note 1[my trans.]).

⁸⁰SBR 1.1.1; Thibaut, p. 14.

⁸¹ko'yam ātmeti vyaṃ upāsmāhe, AU 3.1.1.

⁸²tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedam yad idam upāsate,
KeU 5.

⁸³andhaṃ tamaḥ praviśanti ye 'sambhūtim upāsate,
Iśa 12.

⁸⁴vijñānaṃ devās sarve brahma jyeṣṭham upāsate,
TU 2.5.1. Cp. also: "The dwarf who is seated in the middle, all the gods adore" (madhye vāmanaṃ āsinaṃ viśve deva upāsate, Kaṭha 5.3); "Those, verily, who worship, thinking 'sacrifice and actions are our work'" (ye ha vai tad iṣṭāpūrte kṛtam ity upāsate, PU 1.9), "The wise who, free from desires, worship the Person" (upāsate puruṣaṃ ye hy akāmās . . . dhīrāḥ, MuU 3.2.1).

⁸⁵vidyayā tapasā cintayā . . . sukham aśnute ya evaṃ vidvān anena trikeṇa brahmopāsate.

⁸⁶mayyāveśya mano ye mām upāsate, BG 12.2. See also BG 9.14, 15; 12.2, 6; 13.25

⁸⁷na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati. Cp. Augustine's "My heart is restless 'till it rests in Thee"; also C. S. Lewis's description of God as "the One, the real object of desire, which . . . is what we are really wanting in all wants" (C.S. Lewis, unpublished letter to Arthur Greeves, quoted in Eliane Tixler, "Imagination Baptized, or, 'Holiness' in the Chronicles of Narnia," in Peter J. Schakel, ed., The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C. S. Lewis. [(no city) The Kent State University Press, 1977], p. 141).

⁸⁸tad etat preyaḥ putrāt preyo vittāt preyo 'nyasmāt sarvasmāt antaratarā . . . ātmānam eva priyaṃ upāsīta sa ya ātmānam eva priyaṃ upāste na hāsya priyaṃ pramāyukaṃ bhavati, BU 1.4.8.

⁸⁹tasya prāñijātasya pratyagātmabhūtatvād vananīyaṃ sambhājanīyaṃ atas tadvanam nama prakhyātaṃ brahma tadvanam, quoted by Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968), p. 592 (my trans.).

⁹⁰tadd ha tadvanam nāma tadvanam ity upāsītavyaṃ sa ya etad evaṃ vedābhi hainaṃ sarvaṇi bhūtāni saṃvañchanti, KeU 4.9.

⁹¹"Steady remembrance of this kind is designated by the word 'devotion' (bhakti); for this term has the same meaning as upāsānā (meditation)," SBR 1.1.1; Thibaut, p. 16.

⁹²Śaṅkara: "This scripture called the Gītā is the summary of the essence of the meaning of the entire Veda" (tad idaṃ gītāśāstraṃ samastavedasārasaṃgrāhabhūtaṃ, SGB intro.; Pan, p. 5). There is also the traditional verse: "All the Upaniṣads are the cows, Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd's son, is the milker, the wise Arjuna is the calf, and the nectar-like Gītā is the milk" (sarvopāṣado gāvo dugḍha gopālanandanah / partho vatsahsudhīr bhoktā dugḍham gītāmṛtam mahat).

⁹³For example: Vedic ritualism, Upaniṣadic intuitionism and monism, yogic meditation and other forms of non-Vedic asceticism, the ethos of renunciation encouraged by the Buddhist, Jaina, and other "heterodox" movements, and the theism of the popular but unorthodox forms of religion such as that of the Bhāgavata school. See Bhandarkar, pp. 2-33.

⁹⁴brahmabhūtaḥ . . . madbhaktiṃ labhate parām, BG 18.54.

⁹⁵bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś ca 'smi tattvaḥ, BG 18.55.

⁹⁶madvyapāśrayaḥ matprasādād avāpnoti śāśvataṃ padam avyayam, BG 18.56.

⁹⁷mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja / aham sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi, BG 18.66.

⁹⁸Jacob, Concordance, p. 664.

⁹⁹sarvabhāvena, BG 18.62.

¹⁰⁰mayy āveśya mano, BG 12.2; mayy eva mana ādhatsva, BG 12.8.

¹⁰¹teṣāṃ satatayuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prītipūrvakam, BG 10.10.

102 yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi yad dadāsi yat / yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam, BG 9.27.

103 manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru / mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṃ matparāyaṇaḥ, BG 9.34.

104 matkarmakṛt, BG 11.55; matkarmaparama, BG 12.10.

105 madāśraya, BG 7.1.

106 manmanas, BG 9.34, 18.65; maccitta, BG 6.14, 10.9, 18.57-58.

107 madgataprāṇa, BG 10.9.

108 madgatenāntarātmanā, BG 6.47.

109 matparāyana, BG 9.34.

110 ananyā, BG 6.29, 8.22, 9.13, 9.22, 9.30, 10.13, 11.54, 12.6; avyābhicāriṇī, BG 13.10, 14.26, 18.33.

111 cetasā nā 'nyagāminā, BG 8.8; ananyacetāḥ satataṃ, BG 8.14.

112 See chap. 4.3.4-5.

113 The śloka reads: teṣāṃ satatayuktānāṃ bhajatām prītipūrvakam / dadāmi buddhiyogaṃ tam yena mām upayānti te. It occurs in an interesting passage that combines a yogic ethos of control and discipline with what may be the beginnings of an emotive style of bhakti, and a final emphasis on gnosis. Verse 10.8 says that the "wise" (budha) are "endowed with emotion" (bhāvasamanvita), and 10.9 describes a communal discipline resembling the devotional practices of the BP. This is juxtaposed at 10.11 with talk of the destruction of ignorance by the "light of knowledge" (jñānadīpena), but the latter is obtained--not by yogic discipline or Vedic study--but through the grace of Kṛṣṇa himself. It is worthy of note that, while the word prīti is used only once in the text, in this particular context, there are many instances in which Kṛṣṇa declares that his devotees are "dear" (priya) to him, e.g.: 7.17, 12.14-20, 18.65, 69.

114 R. C. Zaehner, Concordant Discord (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 136; quoted by Hardy, VB, p. 27.

115 praśāntātmā vigatabhīr brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ / manaḥ saṃyamya maccitto yukta āsīta matparaḥ, BG 6.14. Cp. BG 9.14: "Constantly singing My praises and striving, firmly

fixed in their vows, bowing down to Me with devotion, the ever disciplined ones worship Me" (satataṃ kīrtayanto māmi yatantaś ca dr̥dhavratāḥ / namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nityayuktā upāsate). BG 9.22 reads, in part: "For those persons, ever disciplined, who worship Me . . ." (. . . mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate / teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānām . . .). See also BG 6.31, 6.47.

116 Hardy, VB, pp. 37-40.

117 See chap. 6.4.

118 caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna / ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha // teṣāṃ jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktir viśiṣyate / priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ // udārāḥ sarva evai 'te jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam / āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evā 'nuttamāṃ gatim // bahūnām janmānām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate / vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ, BG 7.16-19.

119 "The jñānin is the very Self, not other than Me [Kṛṣṇa]" (jñānī tv ātmaiva nānyo matta iti, SGB 7.18; Pan, p. 364). See also SGB 18.55, quoted below, chap. 2, note 81.

120 jñānena tu tad ajñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāsitam ātmanaḥ / teṣāṃ ādityavaj jñānaṃ prakāśyayanti tat param // tad buddhayaś tadātmanāś tanniṣṭhāś tatparāyanāḥ / gacchanty apunarāvṛttim jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ, BG 5.16-17. Note that tat param is neuter.

121 śraddhāvāṃl labhate jñānaṃ tatparaḥ saṃyatendriyaḥ / jñānaṃ labdhvā parāṃ śāntim acireṇā 'dhigacchati.

122 BG 3.39-41; 4.33-35; 5.15; 6.8; 7.2; 9.1; 14.1-2; 18.50.

123 evaṃ satatayuktā ye bhaktāś tvām paryupāsate / ye cā 'pi akṣaram avyaktam teṣāṃ ke yogavittamaḥ, BG 12.1.

124 yuktatama, BG 12.2.

125 ye tu sarvāni karmāni mayi samnyasya matparāḥ / ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate // teṣāṃ ahaṃ samuddhartā mṛtyusaṃsārasāgarāt / bhavāmi nacirāt pārtha mayi āveśitacetasaṃ, BG 12.6-7.

126 brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhitā 'ham amṛtasyāvayasya ca, BG 14.27.

¹²⁷R. C. Zaehner, The Bhagavad-Gītā (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 358. No true Vedāntin, however, even one of theistic persuasion, would accept any reality higher than Brahman. Rāmānuja, therefore, interprets brahmano as a reference to the emancipated soul, and Madhva sees it as a designation of māyā (S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgītā [London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971], p. 325). Nevertheless, it is possible that the text itself (not being overly concerned with Vedic orthodoxy) means to suggest such a diminution of the impersonal Absolute. The Buddhist ideal of Nirvāṇa also seems to be subordinated to the personal God by the description, at BG 6.15, of the "peace which has nirvāṇa as its end and abides in Me" (śāntiṃ nirvāṇaparamāṃ matsamsthām).

¹²⁸Hardy points out that the distinction between the three mārgas--karma, bhakti, and jñāna--was not made by the author of the Gītā, who seems to think of loving Kṛṣṇa, dedicating one's actions to him, and knowing him as the omnipresent Self as three aspects of a single integrated spirituality. The three mārga theory, a product of later interpreters, was "artificially read back into the Gītā" (Hardy, VB, p. 46).

NOTES

CHAPTER TWO

¹This seems to be the currently accepted approximation of the period of Saṅkara's life, though we must keep in mind the tradition that he lived for a mere 32 years. In 1950 H. Nakamura argued for the dates 700-750; he was followed by L. Renou and D. H. H. Ingalls. P. Hacker in 1959 proposed a slightly earlier period beginning ca. 650, and in 1981 Potter concluded, "No firm evidence forces us to date Saṅkara any later than mid-seventh century." See Karl H. Potter, ed., Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Vol. III: Advaita Vedānta up to Saṅkara and His Pupils (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 116; Hardy, VB, p. 488, note 23; Sengaḡu Mayeda, A Thousand Teachings: The Upadeśasāhasrī of Saṅkara (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1979), p. 3, "The Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya ascribed to Saṅkara," WZKSO, IX (1965), p. 155, note 1. Prior to Nakamura's research, however, the dates 788-820 were standard. The difference of one century is not crucial for the present discussion.

²Aḡya Prasad Mishra, The development and Place of Bhakti in Saṅkara Vedānta (Allahabad: The University of Allahabad, 1967), p. ii.

³Sri Ramakrishna was a great bhakta, but nevertheless taught that Advaita was the highest truth and the aim of all spiritual disciplines. His leading disciple, Swami Vivekananda, seemed publicly to be more of a jñānin, but had profound devotional experiences in his private life. Vivekananda once stated: "He [Sri Ramakrishna] was all bhakti without, but within he was all jñāna; I am all jñāna without; but within my heart it is all bhakti" (The Life of Swami Vivekananda By His Eastern and Western Disciples [Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1955], p. 115).

⁴Smarananda, pp. 300-309.

⁵S. Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sūtra: The Philosophy of the Spiritual Life (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 37.

⁶One possible exception is Śrīdhara Svāmin (ca. 1350-1450), who wrote valuable commentaries on the Viṣṇu and

Bhāgavata Purāṇas and the BG. A member of the Purī order of Śaṅkara samnyāsins, he was nominally an Advaitin. His devotional leanings were so strong, however, that the authoritativeness of his commentaries was questioned by orthodox non-dualists. Although he held along with Śaṅkara that the world is a false appearance, he was sufficiently influenced by Vaiṣṇava thought to adopt certain teachings that were incompatible with Advaita. Most notable of these was the notion, typical of theistic Vedānta, of a plurality of souls that emanate from God like sparks from a fire. This in itself was enough to disqualify him from consideration as a strict non-dualist. Madhusūdana, in spite of his advocacy of bhakti, would never have accepted such a notion. Śrīdhara also interpreted the concept of śakti more realistically than did Śaṅkara or Madhusūdana. Like the BP and the Kṛṣṇa-devotionalists (and Madhusūdana in the BR), he taught that bhakti was a goal superior to mokṣa, being possible even after liberation. See Jadunath Sinha, The Philosophy & Religion of Chaitanya and His Followers (Calcutta: Sinha Publishing House Private Limited, 1976), pp. 1-11; also Elkman, p. 30, note 15.

Other, more orthodox writers of post-Śaṅkara Advaita prior to Madhusūdana saw no need to diverge from the emphatic subordination of bhakti to jñāna envisioned by their great master. This is understandable, since during this period they were often engaged in the process of defending their system against the vigorous attacks of devotionalists such as Rāmānuja and Madhva. On this, see Mishra, pp. iv, 154-155.

Appaya Dīkṣita, a younger contemporary of Madhusūdana, was a prolific South-Indian writer on Advaita who also had devotional leanings, in this case toward Śiva and the Śaiva teachings of Śrīkaṇṭha (ca. eleventh-thirteenth century). To satisfy his devotional bent, it seems, Appaya produced a number of works in which he adopted the point of view of that author, the most important of these writings being his Śivārkamaṇidīpikā, a commentary on Śrīkaṇṭha's Śaiva interpretation of the BS. In his introduction to this work, he states that, while Śaṅkara's understanding of the BS is ultimately the most correct, the desire for the final Advaitic intuition can only come through the grace of Śiva. Therefore, he argues, it is worthwhile writing a commentary that proclaims the supremacy of the saguna Brahman. In this devotional mood, Appaya, like Śrīdhara, presents a realistic interpretation of śakti without denying the Advaitin's notion that the world is an illusion. According to Prof. K. Sivaraman: "In his Śivārkamaṇidīpikā and other works such as the Śivādvaitanirṇaya and the Śivānandalahari, Appaya advocates the view of the identity of the universe with Brahman through citśakti [the supreme 'Consciousness-energy' of the Absolute]. The only

viable way of understanding citśakti pariṇāma [the 'transformation' of Consciousness-energy] is by treating the world thus 'evolved' as really speaking, a vivarta [appearance] in Śaṅkara's sense. Thus Śrīkaṅṭha's position, according to Appaya, culminates in vivartavāda. If Śrīkaṅṭha still employs the language of viśiṣṭa [real qualification], . . . it is because, says Appaya, his task was the creation of faith in devotion to saguṇa brahman" (personal communication, December 1986). For a discussion of Appaya's theistically oriented concept of sarvamukti, see chap. 8.3.

⁷See T. M. P. Mahadevan, The Hymns of Śaṅkara (Madras: Ganesh & Co. Private Ltd., 1970).

⁸See Radhakrishnan, Brahma Sūtra, pp. 37-38.

⁹Even as orthodox a Hindu scholar as the highly respected Mahamahopadhyaya Gopi Nath Kaviraj writes regarding the hymns: "No doubt, most of these stotras must have been written by the later Śaṅkarācāryas but all of them have been attributed to the first Śaṅkarācārya." In reference to the treatises he says, "It is difficult to decide about the authorship and genuineness of these works" (translated from the Hindi by Mishra, p. 128). Of the prakaraṇas, Hacker, Ingalls, and Mayeda recognize only the Upadeśasāhasrī as genuine, rejecting even the Ātmabodha and Vivekacūḍāmaṇī, which are held in high esteem by the Advaita tradition (Potter, Advaita, pp. 116, 320).

¹⁰Note that Jīva Gosvāmin, a contemporary of Madhusūdana and a bitter opponent of Śaṅkara, still accepts the traditional attribution to the great non-dualist of several devotional poems on Kṛṣṇa (Tattvasandarbhā 23; Elkman, p. 188; see intro., note 12).

While strict Advaitins do not accept devotion as part of their own spirituality, they have no difficulty in recommending it to others, as we shall see. To what extent the inclusion of bhakti in the form of stotras, pūjā, etc., in the discipline of the Śaṅkara mathas ("monasteries") themselves is a legitimate expression of the Advaitic path, and to what extent it is a mere concession to the "weakness" of the available aspirants, is not clear. Swami Vivekananda's Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati in the Himalayan foothills provides an instructive example in this respect. It was established as center for strictly non-dualistic spiritual practice. For this reason images, pūjā, kīrtan, and so on, were forbidden. This policy, however, proved almost impossible to enforce. Vivekananda discovered, while visiting the ashrama on one occasion, that certain residents had begun daily worship of a picture of Sri Ramakrishna. After returning to Calcutta, he remarked: "I thought of having one centre at least from which the external worship of Sri Ramakrishna would be excluded. But I found that the

Old Man had already established himself even there" (Swami Nikhilananda, Vivekananda: A Biography [3rd ed.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975], p. 316; see also pp. 282-283, 315-316). Cp. note 44 below.

¹¹Śaṅkara's authorship of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya, convincingly demonstrated by Mayeda in 1965, has been accepted by Ingalls, Ragahvan, and Hacker. See Mayeda, "The Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya"; P. Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism," WZKSO, 1965, IX, 152; Potter, Advaita, pp. 294-295. In addition to the BSSB, the SGB, the commentaries on the 10 major Upaniṣads, the commentary on Gauḍapāda's Kārikas on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, and the Upadeśasāhasrī, Mayeda accepts as authentic works of Śaṅkara (1) the Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivarāna, an exposition of Vyāsa's commentary on the YS, and (2) the commentary on the Adhyātmapaṭala of the Apastambadarmasūtra (A Thousand Teachings, p. 6).

¹²BSSB 1.1.11; Th I, 61-62.

¹³See his commentary on BU 3.5.1 (Swāmī Mādhvānanda, trans., The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, [5th ed.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975], p. 332-333; Potter, Advaita, p. 197). See also Eliot Deutsch, Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1969), chap. 3.

¹⁴SBSB 2.2.28-32. In the post-Śaṅkara Advaita, a kind of subjective idealism called dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda ("the doctrine of creation through perception") was put forward by Prakāśānanda (twelfth century), but there is no doubt that this view would have been rejected by Śaṅkara.

¹⁵Th I, 324.

¹⁶BSSB 2.2.14, Th I, 330.

¹⁷Rudolph Otto, Mysticism East and West (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), p. 123. Later on the same page, Otto speaks of the "aparā vidyā Śaṅkara" as a "passionate theist." In view of what will be said about Śaṅkara's views below, I think this latter statement is something of an misrepresentation. I do, however, agree with Otto's observation that the great Advaitin stands sympathetically on the inside of the theistic tradition. He transcends it by moving "deeper," so to say, "from within." See the next note.

¹⁸Hacker's study of Śaṅkara's authentic works demonstrates that his thinking on conventional religious

matters, as well as that of his disciples, is consistently Vaiṣṇava in tone and language (Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism," pp. 147-154). In this article Hacker further suggests that the wide-spread notion that Saṅkara's religious background and sympathy was Saiva was originated by the much later writer Mādhava-Vidyāraṇa, "who on the basis of the mere name Saṅkara constructed the legend of the bhāṣyakāra having been an incorporation of the divine Saṅkara or Siva" (p. 148). Cf. also Mayeda, A Thousand Teachings, p. 8, note 13.

¹⁹pratyakṣam eva jīvasyeśvaraviparīta dharmatvam,
BSSB 3.2.5; SHS II, 705 (Th II, 139).

²⁰viśeṣo hi bhavati śārīraparameśvarayoḥ / ekaḥ
kartā bhoktā dharmādharmasādhanāḥ sukhaduḥkḥādīmāṣ ca, ekas
tadviparīto 'napahatapāpmatvādiguṇaḥ, BSSB 1.2.8; SHS I,
155.

²¹satyaṃ / [Īśvaraḥ] śārīre bhavati, na tu śārīra
eva bhavati / "jyāyān pṛthivyā jyāyān antarīkṣāt, ākāśavat
sarvagataś ca nityaḥ" iti ca vyāptitvaśraṇāt / jīvas tu
śārīra eva bhavati, BSSB 1.2.3; SHS I, 150.

²²BSSB 3.2.9: "The soul which rises cannot be the Lord, who is everlastingly free from Nescience" (Th II, p. 149). SGB, intro., describes Īśvara as "eternally pure, enlightened, and liberated" (nityaśuddhabuddhamukta, see note 34).

²³"Omniscient, the source of scripture" (BSSB 1.1.3; Th I, 20); "all knowing, all perceiving" (BSSB 1.2.21; Th I, 136); "absolute ruler of past and the future" (BSSB 1.3.24; Th I, 196).

²⁴BSSB 1.3.30; Th I, 215.

²⁵BSSB 2.2.33; Th I, 357.

²⁶BSSB 4.4.17; Th II, 415-416.

²⁷BSSB 2.1.14; Th I, 329.

²⁸BSSB 2.3.41; Th II, 59.

²⁹BSSB 2.3.41; Th II, 58-59.

³⁰BSSB 2.1.35-36; Th I, 359-361.

³¹BSSB 1.1.5; Th I, 50.

³²BSSB 2.2.1 (Th I, 365-367); 2.1.34 (Th I, 357-359); 3.2.38-41 (Th I, 180-183). See Otto, pp. 124-126.

³³syāt parameśvarasyāpicchāvaśān māyāmayaṃ rūpaṃ sādhakānugrahārtham, BSSB 1.1.20; SHS I, 112.

³⁴sa ca bhagavān jñānaiśvaryaśaktibalavīryatejobhiḥ sadā sampannas trigunātmikāṃ vaiṣṇaviṃ svāṃ māyāṃ mūlaprakṛtiṃ vaśikṛtyājo 'vayo bhūtānāṃ īśvaro nityasuddhabuddhamuktasvabhāvo 'pi san svamāyayā dehavān iva jāta iva lokānugrahaṃ kurvan lakṣyate, SGB, intro; Pan, 4-5.

³⁵yat tāvad ucyate yo 'sau Nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt prasiddhaḥ paramātmā sarvātmā sa ātmanātmānam anekadhā vyūhyāvasthita iti, tan na nirākrīyate . . . yad api tasya bhagavato 'bhigamanādi-lakṣaṇam ārādhanam ajasram ananya-cittatayābhipreyate, tad api na pratiśidhyate, quoted and translated by Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 151.

³⁶īśvaras tatra hṛdayapūṇḍarīke nicāyyo draṣṭavya upadiśyate yathā śālagrāme Hariḥ. tatrāsya buddhi-vijñānam grāhakam. sarvagato 'piśvaras tatropāsyamānaḥ prasīdati, quoted and translated by Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 149. See Hacker's comments on this and the previous quotation, pp. 149-152.

³⁷See G. A. Jacob, ed., The Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda (Bombay: Tukārām Jāvajī, 1894), pp. vii-ix; Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 151; Otto, p. 127; Mayeda, "The Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya," pp. 183-185; Panikkar, Unknown Christ, pp. 112, 114. Mayeda, for example, lists some 15 instances of this kind of usage in the SGB alone.

³⁸In this connection it is interesting that Śaṅkara's frequent use of the word īśvara, in comparison with that of later Advaitins, including his disciples, is one of the criteria proposed by Hacker and Mayeda to identify which of the many works attributed to him are genuine (Mayeda, "Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya," p. 183; Potter, Advaita, p. 115).

³⁹BSSB 2.1.14; Th I, pp. 329-330. Text: tadevam avidyātmakopādiparicchedāpekṣam eveśvarasyeśvaratvaṃ sarvajñatvaṃ sarvaśaktitvaṃ ca na paramārthato vidyayā 'pāstasarvopādhisvarūpe ātmanīśitriśitavyasarvajñatvādi-vyavahāra upapadyate / . . . evaṃ paramārthāvasthāyāṃ sarvavyavahārābhāvaṃ vadanti vedāntāḥ sarve, SHS I, 405.

⁴⁰Śaṅkara develops this analogy at BSSB 2.1.14; Th I, p. 329.

⁴¹Regarding developments in post-Śaṅkara Advaita, Panikkar observes: "His followers were so keen to preserve the absolute purity and transcendence of Brahman and its total uncontamination by the World that they placed Īśvara in the realm of māyā, since it is he who is concerned with the creation of the world and hence gets involved in the cosmic play. This leads either to a practical dualism (between a para and apara brahman, between pāramārthika and vyāvahārika) or to an illusionistic conception of Īśvara" (Unknown Christ, p. 151). Again, and this criticism might apply to Śaṅkara himself as well as his scholastic successors: "The Īśvara of the Śaṅkara school is in fact almost completely turned towards the phenomenal order. . . . The divergence between Brahman and Īśvara is overstressed in order to save the Absolute purity of the former" (Unknown Christ, pp. 158-159).

⁴²"As long as it [Brahman] is the object of Nescience, there are applied to it the categories of devotion, object of devotion, and the like" (BSSB 1.1.11; Th I, 62). Text: tatrāvidyāvastāyām brahmaṇa upāsyopāsakā- 'dilakṣaṇaḥ sarvo vyavahāraḥ, SHS I, 923.

⁴³See BSSB 3.4.26: "Works serve to remove impurity, but knowledge is the highest way. When the impurities have been removed by works, then knowledge emerges" (kaṣāyapaktiḥ karmāni jñānaṃ tu parama gatiḥ / kaṣāye karmabhiḥ pakve tato jñānaṃ pravartate, SHS II, 923).

⁴⁴nirviseṣam param brahma sākṣātkartum anīśvarāḥ / ye mandās te 'nukampyante saviṣeṣanirūpanaiḥ // vaśīkrte manasy eṣāṃ saguṇabrahmasīlanāt / tad evāvirbhavet sākṣād apetopādhikalpanam, quoted by Gupta, p. 80, note 14 (my trans.). Madhusūdana quotes this verse approvingly at GAD 12.13; Pan, p. 512.

Appaya Dikṣita (see note 6 above) seems willing to identify himself as one of the "weak-minded": "O Lord, for purposes of meditation I have given a name and form to You though You do not have them; by means of hymns I have sought to describe You though you are indescribable; I have journeyed to sacred places to be in your presence, though you are omnipresent. I have committed these three sins in my ignorance for which I crave your pardon" (rūpaṃ rūpavivarjitasya bhavato dhyānena yat kalpitam stutyā anirvacaniyatā durīkṛtā yan mayā / vyāpītvam ca nirākṛtam bhagavataḥ yat tīrthayātrādīnā kṣantavyam jagadīśa tad vikalatā doṣatrayam matkṛtam, quoted by M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, "Bhakti from the Advaitic Standpoint," Vedanta Kesari, LII [1966], 483 [my trans.]).

⁴⁵The orthodox Vedic tradition and the bhakti tradition are not, as modern Hindus frequently assume, historically the same. We have already noted that the Vedas and early Upaniṣads know next to nothing of bhakti in the forms in which later Hindus experienced it. Bhakti, as we have seen, begins to emerge in the Sanskrit tradition in the so called "theistic" Upaniṣads and the BG. But even some nine centuries later, at the time of Saṅkara, it is still not completely accepted by the orthodox. In this case, the "orthodox" are the Smārta Brahmins who followed the Vedic way of life and ritual as preserved and interpreted in the smṛti literature, especially the śrauta-, gṛhya-, and dharma-sūtras (i.e., the texts of the various Vedic schools on public sacrifice, household ritual, and social institutions). This community, to which it must be remembered Saṅkara belonged, had no defining theistic commitment and no allegiance to any scripture other than the śruti and smṛti (J. A. B. van Buitenen, "On the Archaism of the Bhāgavata Purāna," in Milton Singer, p. 217, note 42). It tended to regard those who worshipped according to the style of the Tantras or Purānas as unorthodox.

The mind-set of at least the more conservative members of the orthodox camp can be inferred from the fact that the author of the Mīmāṃsāsūtra, Jaimini (ca. 400-200 B.C.E.), remains silent regarding the existence of a supreme Being though he accepts the existence of the Vedic gods. Although some later Mīmāṃsakas admit the reality of God, Kumārila, the most influential of them, and others deny it vigorously and reduce even the Vedic gods to mere verbal accessories of the sacrifice. Hence the oft-quoted Mīmāṃsaka dictum, "The deva is essentially the mantra" (mantrātmako devaḥ). See Sloka-vārtika 16.41-87, trans. Gananatha Jha, in Radhakrishnan and Moore, pp. 498-503).

In the smṛti literature, the term devalaka ("deity worshipper") is consistently used as a pejorative designation for temple priests who made a living offering pūjā according to the prescriptions of the Tantras. Manu 3.152, for example, classifies them along with physicians, butchers, and shopkeepers as persons to be avoided, and Mahābhārata 12.77.8 (crit. ed.) calls them "outcaste Brahmins" (brāhmaṇacāṇḍāla). (See van Buitenen, "Archaism," p. 28-29, for these and other references). While the Smārtas showed an increasing readiness to interact with the bhakti traditions as time passed and the latter continued to gain in popularity, their attitude was much more rigid in the seventh century. Saṅkara, as we have seen already, seems to have had a certain sympathy for extra-Vedic theism, considerably more than some of his orthodox vaidika brethren. Nevertheless, he was first and last an adherent of the Smārta path. Mayeda notes that "he made enthusiastic efforts to restore the orthodox Brahmanical tradition,

without paying attention to the bhakti (devotional) movement, which had made a deep impression on ordinary Hindus in his age" (A Thousand Teachings, p. 5). Regarding the centrality of the Vedic revelation in the process of salvation and certain other important religious and social questions, he was extremely conservative, as we shall see in the remainder of this chapter. Cf. Venkateswaran, pp. 144-146; van Buitenen, "Archaism," pp. 26-29; and Hardy, VB, pp. 489-494.

⁴⁶The independence of bhakti as a path to liberation would have been a threat to the centrality of the Vedic revelation and the position of its Brahmin custodians. The devotional movements had their own scriptures and, as we shall see, a distinctly egalitarian outlook. On both counts, the orthodox were suspicious. Compare dates: Saṅkara (seventh-eighth century), Bhāgavata Purāṇa (ninth-tenth century), Rāmānuja (eleventh century). The first great proponent of theistic Vedānta, Rāmānuja, thus came some four centuries after Saṅkara. There were, of course, widespread devotional movements prior to the time of Rāmānuja. The point is that these movements did not have the status of Vedic orthodoxy. Van Buitenen identifies three stages in the "Brahminization" or "Sanskritization" of the Vaiṣṇava tradition in the South, beginning roughly two centuries after Saṅkara: (1) the acceptance of the Tamil prabandham in traditional temple worship through the efforts Nāthamuni (ninth century), (2) the acceptance of the Pañcarātra literature as a result of the work of Yāmuna (tenth century), and (3) the "Vedānticization" of Vaiṣṇava devotionalism under Rāmānuja. The "acceptance" referred to here, however, was not universal, especially among the Smārtas. See van Buitenen, "Archaism," p. 30, and next note.

⁴⁷Yāmuna's Āgamaprāmāṇyam is largely a defence of the orthodoxy of the Pañcarātra-Bhāgavata school to which he belonged. After quoting extensively from this work, van Buitenen (p. 29) sums up the socio-religious situation it was seeking to address, as follows:

"The Bhāgavatas laid claim to being Brahmans; it is also clear that those who made the claim were the priests among the Bhāgavatas. The Smārtas vehemently disputed their claim, because Bhāgavatas/Sātvatas were traditionally (i.e. by smṛti) known to be a very low class: the issue in fact . . . of a Vaiśya Vratya [a member of the merchant class who does not observe his religious duties, Manu 10.20, 23]. And not only does the Bhāgavata stand condemned by his heredity but his lowliness is compounded by his sacerdotal occupation; priest to his idol he lives off his priesthood, and, whatever his social pretensions, he is a common pūjārī."

In light of the situation thus portrayed by Yāmuna, van Buitenen ("Archaism," p. 31) interprets the conscious but artificial adoption of archaic Vedic morphology and semantics that is a unique feature of the Bhāgavata Purāna as an attempt to suggest that "I am not only orthodox in the Vedic tradition, I even sound like the Veda." He suggests further that it may well have been the same kind of anxiety to prove Vedic orthodoxy that prompted Madhva, as late as the thirteenth century, to write his Rgbhāṣya, a commentary on a number of hymns of the RV. A similar concern is reflected in the Bengal Vaiṣṇava insistence that the BP has an authority equal to that of the Veda (see chap. 4.3.1, note 26). Indeed, it may be observed even today in the strident efforts of the teachers of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness to make a simple equation of their sectarian Vaiṣṇava traditions with an idealized "Vedic" culture.

⁴⁸Mayeda suggests that Śaṅkara's preoccupation with the superiority of the monastic life to religious activism was due in part to the pedagogical situation in which he found himself:

"It is highly probable that jñānakarmasamuccayavāda [the "doctrine of (salvation through) a combination of knowledge and religious works] in many varieties was prevalent among Mīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins while Śaṅkara was active. Śaṅkara, therefore, seems to have taught his teachings to, or fought against, mostly thinkers holding various types of jñānakarmasamuccayavāda" (A Thousand Teachings, p. 90).

The Vedānta is also and more formally known as the Uttaramīmāṃsā, the "subsequent study" or the "inquiry into the later (portion of the Veda)." This indicates its character as being primarily an exegetical system aiming at an interpretation of the Upaniṣads, the final part or "end" (anta) of the Veda. As such Uttaramīmāṃsā is a sister system to, and according to some presupposed study of, the Pūrvamīmāṃsā, the "prior study" or the "inquiry into the prior (portion of the Veda, the ritual texts)." Thus, though the Uttaramīmāṃsā de-emphasizes ritualism in favor of religious knowledge, the two systems are closely related expressions of the orthodox tradition. Cf. the saying: vyavahāre bhāṭṭaḥ paramārthe śāṅkaraḥ, note 117 below.

⁴⁹This interpretation is, of course, highly questionable. Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna to remain in the battle and carry out his caste duty and personal calling (svadharma) as a warrior (chap. 2, passim; 3.30; 11,34; 18.45-48, etc.) and to rely on Kṛṣṇa in loving devotion for his salvation (11.55, 18.58, 66). The teachings of karmayoga and bhaktiyoga are the great contributions of the

Gītā to the tradition, and it may be that one of the primary intentions of its author was to counteract the widespread interest in renunciation and monasticism inspired by the then (ca. 200 B.C.E.) powerful Buddhist movement. But Saṃkara was writing at a different historical moment, and there is no doubt that he felt that the need of his time was for a champion of the path of the saṃnyāsin.

⁵⁰BSSB 1.1.4; Th I, 28.

⁵¹Saṃkara, of course, is not alone in this. The Upaniṣads repeatedly emphasize the salvific power of knowledge: "One who knows Brahman, attains the supreme" (brahmavid āpnoti param), TU 2.1; "He who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman" (brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati), MuU 3.2.9, and so on. Saṃhya-Yoga holds that release comes from the discriminative realization (vivekakhyāti) of the self (puruṣa) and its separation from the not-self (prakṛti). Manu (I2.85) declares that knowledge of the Self is the most excellent means to the highest good, that it is the first of the sciences because it leads to liberation (G. Buhler, trans., The Laws of Manu [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959], p. 501).

⁵²kevalād eva tattvajñānān mokṣaprāptih, SGB 2.20; Pan, p. 45.

⁵³ātmajñānasya tu kevalasya niḥśreyasahetutvaṃ bhedapratyayanivartakatvena kaivalyaphalāvasānatvāt, SGB 18.66; Pan, p. 756.

⁵⁴"tam eva viditvātimṛtyum eti nānyaṃ panthā vidyate 'yanāya" iti vidyāya anyāṃ panthā mokṣāya na vidyate iti śruteḥ carmavad akāśaveṣṭānasambhavavad aviduṣo mokṣā-sambhavaśruter jñānāt kaivalyam āpnotīti ca purāṇasmṛteḥ, SGB 18.66; Pan, p. 758.

⁵⁵See note 48 above.

⁵⁶Th I, 23. Text: "tattvam asi" iti brahmātma-bhāvasya śāstram antareṇānavagamyamānatvāt, SHS I, 40. Also: "Brahman, which is omniscient, omnipotent, and the cause of the manifestation, the maintenance, and the dissolution of the world, is known only from the Vedānta scripture" (brahma sarvajñaṃ sarvaśakti jagadutpatti-sthitilayakāraṇaṃ vedāntaśāstrād evāvagamyate, BSSB 1.1.4; SHS I, 39).

⁵⁷Th II, 163.

⁵⁸There is a debate among Advaitins as to whether the mahāvākya triggers enlightenment immediately or whether further meditation is needed to remove the obstacles to realization. Maṇḍana holds the latter view but Sureśvara, following his master, champions the former, with the qualification that the aspirant must be properly prepared. See Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika, 4.891-935 and Naiṣkarmyasiddhi, 2.4-8, summarized by Potter, Advaita, pp. 516-517, 537-538.

⁵⁹At the beginning of their works, authors of all Hindu religious treatises are required by tradition to state, among other things, the adhikārin, the type of person qualified to study the work (cf. chap. 7, note 9). See Swami Vivekananda's remarks on "The Evils of Adhikaravada" (Complete Works, V, 262-265).

⁶⁰See chap. 7, note 112.

⁶¹On the paramahamsaparivrajaka, see the quotation from SGB 3.3, sec. 2.5.8 below (note 83), and especially chap. 7, note 111.

The passage from the Upadeśasāhasrī reads as follows:

"The means to final release is knowledge [of Brahman]. It should be repeatedly related to the pupil until it is firmly grasped, if he is dispassionate towards all things non-eternal . . . ; if he has abandoned the desire for sons, wealth, and worlds and reached the state of a paramahansa wandering ascetic; if he is endowed with tranquility, self-control, compassion, and so forth; if he is possessed of the qualities of a pupil which are well known from the scriptures; if he is a Brahmin who is [internally and externally] pure; if he approaches his teacher in the prescribed manner; if his caste, profession, behavior, knowledge [of the Veda], and family have been examined" (trans. Mayeda, A Thousand Teachings, p. 211).

On the requirement that the student be a Brahmin, see sec. 2.6 below.

Mayeda makes an interesting attempt to reconstruct the social milieu in which Śaṅkara carried on his teaching ministry:

"Śaṅkara would not teach his doctrine to city dwellers. In cities the power of Buddhism was still strong, though already declining, and Jainism prevailed among the merchants and manufacturers. Popular Hinduism occupied the minds of ordinary people while city dwellers pursued ease and pleasure. There were also hedonists in cities, and it was difficult for Śaṅkara to communicate Vedānta philosophy to these people. Consequently he propagated

his teachings chiefly among samnyāsins, who had renounced the world, and intellectuals in the villages, and he gradually won the respect of Brahmins and feudal lords" (A Thousand Teachings, p. 5).

The requirements for the study of Advaita, even in Śaṅkara's day, may not have been as strict in practice as the texts cited here suggest (see Mayeda, A Thousand Teachings, p. 97, note 17). Nevertheless, one might well ask how many of the "city dwellers" who have accepted the philosophical truth of Advaita over the centuries have been the type of person Śaṅkara really had in mind when he described his ideal pupil. Indeed, considering the stringency of these qualifications, against the history of political maneuvering in and among the various Śaṅkara mathas, one wonders how many of Śaṅkara's renunciāte followers actually possessed them. See Kane, vol. II, pt. 2, 948-950; also note 10 above.

⁶²karmany evādhikāras te.

⁶³tava ca karmany evādhikāro na jñānaniṣṭhāyām, Pan, p. 106.

⁶⁴yasmāc cārjunasyātyantam eva hitaiṣi bhagavāms tasya samyagdarśanānavitām karmayogaṃ bhedadṛṣṭimantam evopadiśati, SGB 12.12; Pan 512.

⁶⁵There is a certain inconsistency in Śaṅkara's simultaneous insistence that the BG as a whole teaches renunciation, but that Arjuna, to whom Kṛṣṇa's message is addressed, is disqualified by caste and aptitude from putting the teaching into practice. See Madhusūdana's commentary on BG 18.66 (quoted below, chap. 9, notes 28, 31).

⁶⁶yaḥ pravṛttilakṣaṇo dharmo varṇāśramāṃś coddīśya vihitaḥ sa ca devādīsthānaprāptihetur api sann īśvarārpanabuddhyanuṣṭhiyamānaḥ sattvasuddhaye bhavati phalābhisandhivarjitaḥ śuddhasattvasya ca jñānaniṣṭhāyogyatāprāptīdvāreṇa jñānotpattiheturvena ca niḥsreyasaheturvam api pratipadyate, SGB, Intro.; Pan, 7.

⁶⁷svakarmanā bhagavato 'bhyarcanabhaktiyogasya siddhiprāptiḥ phalaṃ jñānaniṣṭhāyogyatā / yannimittā jñānaniṣṭhā mokṣaphalāvasanā / sa bhagavadbhaktiyogo 'dhunā stuyate śāstrārthopasamhāraprakaraṇe śāstrārthanīścaya-dārḍhyāya, SGB 18.56; Pan, p. 744-745.

⁶⁸mayi ceṣvare . . . bhaktir . . . sā ca jñānam . . . / . . . jñānam iti proktaṃ jñānārthatvāt, SGB 13.10-11; Pan, pp. 548-550.

⁶⁹See chap. 1.3.

⁷⁰For Sanskrit, see chap. 1.3, note 79. Cp. SGB 12.3: "Upāsana means approaching the object to be meditated upon by making it an object of awareness and remaining with it for a long time with an unbroken stream of steady thought like a flow of oil" (upāsana nāma yathāśāstraṃ upāsyasyā 'rthasya viśayīkaraṇena sāmīpyaṃ upagamyā talladhāravat samanapratyayappravāheṇa dīrghakālaṃ yat āsanam tat upāsanam ācakṣate, Pan, p. 502.

⁷¹apṛthaksamādhinā nānyo bhagavato vāsudevāt paro 'sty atah sa eva no gatih ity evaṃ niścita 'vyabhicāriṇī buddhir, SGB 13.10; Pan, p. 548.

⁷²ananyayā 'pṛthagbhūṭayā bhagavato 'nyatra pṛthāṇ na kadācid api yā bhavati sā tv ananyā bhaktiḥ, SGB 11.54; Pan, p. 496-497.

⁷³Th II, 332. Vidyāranya Svāmin (fourteenth century), perhaps feeling the influence of the Kṛṣṇa-gopī paradigm, compares the concentration of upāsana to the preoccupation of a married woman with her paramour (PD 9.84-87). See Swāmī Swāhānanda, trans. Pañcadaśī (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975), pp. 402-403.

⁷⁴tāny etāni upāsanāni sattvaśuddhikaratvena vastutattvāvabhāsakatvād, Śaṅkara's commentary on the CU, intro.; quoted by Mishra, p. 19, note 2 (my trans.).

⁷⁵BSSB 1.1.4; Th I, p. 35. See also BSSB 1.1.2; Th I, p. 18.

⁷⁶vastutantro bhaved bodhaḥ kartṛtantram upāsanam, PD 9.74; Swāhānanda, p. 399.

⁷⁷"The state called mokṣa that is attained by the renunciate Sāṅkhyas who follow the path of knowledge is also attained by the Yogins through the acquisition of saṃnyāsa and knowledge of the supreme" (yat sāṅkhyair jñānaniṣṭhaiḥ saṃnyāsibhiḥ prāpyate sthānam mokṣākhyam tad yogair api . . . paramārthajñānasamnyāsaprāptidvāreṇa gamyate, SGB 5.5; Pan, p. 250.

⁷⁸Hopefully, as a male Brahmin. See the discussion of the social side of Śaṅkara's thought, below.

⁷⁹Kramamukti is originally postulated as the state gained by those who are devoted to meditations on the conditioned Brahman through various symbols as described in the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara discusses it in detail in his

commentary on BS 4.3-4. See also BSSB 4.3.10-11, 4.4.22, and 1.3.13; SGB 8.23-27; and Potter, Advaita, pp. 26-27.

⁸⁰BSSB 3.4.20; Th II, 301. The terms comes from CU 3.23.1: "He who dwells in Brahman attains immortality" (brahmasamsthō 'mṛtatvam eti).

⁸¹pratyagātma viṣaya pratyayasamtānakaraṇābhiniveśaś ca jñānaniṣṭhā, SGB 18.55; Pan, p. 744.

⁸²kim u vaktavyam brahmacaryād eva samnyasya yāvad-jivam yo brahmany evāvatiṣṭhate sa brahmanirvāṇam ṛcchatīti, SGB 2.72; Pan, p. 133.

⁸³tatra jñānayogena jñānam eva yogas tena sāmkyānām atmaviṣayavivekajñānavatām brahmacaryaśramād eva kṛta-samnyāsānām vedāntavijñānasuniścitarthānām paramahaṃsa-parivrājakānām brahmany evāvatiṣṭhitānām niṣṭhā proktā, karmayogena karmaiva yogah, SGB 3.3; Pan, pp. 141-142. On the Paramahaṃsa, see chap. 7, note 111.

⁸⁴For an outline of this discipline, see Vedāntasāra 182-192, summarized by Zimmer, pp. 431-432. See also Śaṅkara's commentary on BU 1.4.2, 2.4.5, 2.5.1 (intro.), and 4.5.6 (Swami Madhavananda, The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya [5th ed.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975], pp. 68-69, 247-248, 262, and 569); also Cenker, pp. 65-83.

⁸⁵jñānakarmaṇoh kartṛtvākartṛtvaikatvānekativabuddhy-āśrayayor ekapuruṣāsambhavam, SGB 2.10; Pan, p. 42.

⁸⁶niśevāvidyāmātram idaṃ sarvaṃ bheda jātān idaṃ jñānam, SGB 2.69; Pan, p. 128.

⁸⁷nāpramāṇabuddhyā gṛhyamāṇāyāḥ karma-hetutvopapattih, SGB 2.69; Pan, p. 128.

⁸⁸tadviparītasya mithyājñānamūlakakartṛtvā-'bhimānapuraḥsarasya sakriyātmasvarūpāvasthānarūpasya karmayogasya . . . samyagjñānamithyājñānatatkāryavirodhad abhavaḥ pratipādyate, SGB 5.1; Pan, p. 244.

⁸⁹"naiva kiṃcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit" ity anena ca śarīrasthitimātraprayuktesv api darśana-śravaṇādikarmasv ātmayāthātma vidāḥ karomīti pratyayasya samāhitacetastayā sadā 'kartavyatvopadeśād ātmataṭtvavidāḥ samyagdarśanaviruddho mithyājñānahetukaḥ karmayogaḥ svapne 'pi na sambhāvayitum śakyate, SGB 5.1; Pan, p. 245.

⁹⁰avidyākāma bījaṃ hi sarvaṃ eva karma / tathā

copapāditam / avidvadviṣayam karma vidvadviṣayā ca sarvakarmasamnyāsapūrvikā jñānaniṣṭhā / . . . dadāmi buddhiyogaṃ taṃ yena mām upayānti te arthān na karminno 'jñā upayānti., SGB 18.66; Pan, p. 761.

⁹¹Remember that the devotionalists had not yet made a forceful claim for bhakti as an independent path to liberation. Even Rāmānuja, some 400 years after Śaṅkara, accepts that devotion is "a particular kind of knowledge" (jñānaviṣeṣa, VAŚ 238; S. S. Ranghavachar, trans., Vedā rthasamgraha of Srī Rāmānujācārya [Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1968], p. 184).

⁹²yuktatamā, 12.2.

⁹³jñānt tv ātmaiva me matam iti hy uktam / na hi bhagavatsvarūpānāṃ satam yuktatamatvam ayuktatamatvam vā vācyam, SGB 12.4; Pan, p. 505.

⁹⁴atra cātmeśvarabhedam āsṛitya viśvarūpa īśvare cetaḥsamādhānalakṣaṇo yoga ukta īśvarārtham karmānuṣṭhānādi ca / "athaitad apy āsakto 'si" ity ajñānakāryasūcanān nābhedadarsīno 'kṣaropāsakasya karmayoga upapadyate iti darsayati / tathā karmayogino 'kṣaropāsanānupapattiṃ darsayati bhagavān "te prāpnuvanti mām eva" iti / akṣar- 'opāsakanāṃ kaivalyapṛāptau svātantryam uktvetareṣāṃ paratantryam īśvaradhīnatam darśitavāṃs teṣāṃ ahaṃ samuddharteti / yadi hīśvarasyātmabhūtas te mata abheda- darśitvād akṣararūpā eva ta iti samudaraṇakarmavacanaṃ tān praty apeśalaṃ syāt / yasmāc cārjunasyātyantam eva hitaiṣī bhagavāṃs tasya samyagdarsānanānvitam karmayogaṃ bhedadṛṣṭimantam evopadiśati / na ca ātmanam īśvaram pramāṇato budhvā kasyacid guṇabhāvaṃ jigamiṣati kaścid virodhāt, SGB 12.12; Pan, p. 511-512.

⁹⁵This seems to contradict the passage of BSSB 2.3.41 quoted above in which Śaṅkara asserts that both bondage and the knowledge which leads to final liberation arise from the grace of the Lord. But cp. BSSB 3.2.5: "Because 'from him,' i.e. from the Lord there are the bondage and release of it, viz. the individual soul. That means, bondage is due to the absence of knowledge of the Lord's true nature; release is due to the presence of such knowledge" (Th II, 139). Kaṭha 2.20 declares: "He beholds the majesty of the Self by the grace of the Creator (dhātuh prasādāt)." (The full text is, paśyati . . . dhātuh prasādāt mahimānam ātmanah.) But Śaṅkara prefers to read dhātuprasādāt, "by the tranquillity of the senses," thus avoiding the theistic implications of the verse. A similar instance occurs at Kaṭha 2.23: "[The Self] can be obtained only by him whom He chooses; to him alone this Self reveals His own form" (yam eva eṣa vṛnnute tena labhyas, tasya eṣa

āt mā vivṛṇute tam ū svām). Śaṅkara tortures the syntax to make the aspirant the agent of choice and the Self the object of choice: "'whom' means 'his own Self'" (yam eva--svām ātmānam); "'he' means 'the aspirant'" (eṣa--sādhaḥ). The translation thus becomes: "[The Self] can be known through the Self alone, which he [the aspirant] chooses, i.e., meditates on." This reversal effectively, but unconvincingly, removes the element of grace. See Mariasusai Dhavamony, Love of God According to Śaiva Siddhānta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 63-66.

⁹⁶ahaṃ brahmāsmi, BU 1.4.10.

⁹⁷While describing the ideals of Advaita Ashrama, Swami Vivekananda declared:

"'Dependence is misery. Independence is happiness.' The Advaita is the only system which gives unto man complete possession of himself and takes off all dependence and its associated superstitions, thus making us brave to suffer, brave to do, and in the long run to attain to Absolute Freedom.

"Hitherto it has not been possible to preach this Noble Truth entirely free of the settings of dualistic weakness; this alone, we are convinced, explains why it has not been more operative and useful to mankind at large" (Nikhilananda, Vivekananda, p. 283).

But see note 10 above.

⁹⁸The bhāṣyas on the MĀU and the TU, and a portion of the Upadeśasāhasrī, begin with invocations to the neutral Brahman or ātman. The SGB begins with a verse in praise of Nārāyaṇa, but it is a quotation and not an original composition. The rest of Śaṅkara's authentic works do not have invocations (Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 152).

⁹⁹na hi svārājye 'bhikṣito brahmatvam gamitaḥ kaṃcana namitum icchati, quoted by Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 152 (my trans.). Again, cp. Vivekananda:

"What does the Advaitist preach? He dethrones all the gods that ever existed, or ever will exist in the universe and places on that throne the Self of man, the Atman, No books, no scriptures, no science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed, exists, or ever will exist. I am to worship, therefore, none but myself. 'I worship my Self,' says the Advaitist. To whom shall I bow down? I salute my Self. To whom shall I go for help?" (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda [13th ed.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976], II, 250).

¹⁰⁰mām ca yo' vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate / sa guṇān samatīyaitān brahmabūyāya kalpate.

¹⁰¹bhaktiyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ / tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram.

¹⁰²parameśvare bhaktiṃ bhajanam parām uttamām jñānalakṣaṇām (SGB 18.54; Pan, p. 741); jñānalakṣaṇayā bhaktiyā (SGB 18.55; Pan, p. 741).

¹⁰³vivekajñānātmakena bhaktiyogena, SGB 14.26; Pan, pp. 605-606.

¹⁰⁴sāstrācāryopadeśena jñānotpattiparipākahetum sahakārikāraṇam buddhiviśuddhyādy amānitvādi capekṣya janitasya kṣetrañhaparamātmakatvajñānasya kartrādi-kārabhedabuddhinibandhanasarvakarmasamnyāsasahitasya svātmānubhavanīścayarūpeṇa yad avasthānam sā parā jñānaniṣṭhety ucyate / seyaṃ jñānaniṣṭhārtātibhaktitrayāpekṣayā parā caturthī bhaktir ity uktā / tayā parayā bhaktiyā bhagavantaṃ tattvato 'bhijānāti / yadanantaram eśvarakṣetrañhabhedabuddhir aśeṣato nirvartate ato jñānaniṣṭhālakṣaṇayā bhaktiyā mām abhijānātīti vacanam na virudhyate, SGB 18.55; Pan, pp. 742-743.

¹⁰⁵This identification of devotion and the Advaitin's discipline of knowledge is found also at Vivekacūḍāmaṇi 32-33a. There we are at first surprised to read: "Among all causes of liberation, bhakti is the best." We soon learn, however, that "bhakti is an earnest seeking to know one's own real nature . . . the reality of one's own Self" (mokṣakāraṇasāmagryām bhaktir eva garhyasī / svasvarūpānusandhānam bhaktir ity abhidhiyate // svātma-tattvānusandhānam bhaktir ity apare jaguḥ). See Swami Madhavananda, trans., Vivekacūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Saṃkarācārya (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), p. 11.

¹⁰⁶mām ekaṃ śaraṇam vraja.

¹⁰⁷mām ekaṃ sarvātmānam samaṃ sarvabhūtasthaṃ Iśvaram acyutaṃ garbhajanmajarāmarāṇavivarjitam aham evety evam ekaṃ śaraṇam vraja na matto 'nyad astīty avadhārayety arthaḥ, SGB 18.66; Pan, p. 753.

¹⁰⁸"The Blessed Lord Nārāyaṇa, having divided the enlightened Sāṃkhyas from the unenlightened men of action, makes them take two paths" (bhagavān nārāyaṇaḥ sāṃkhyān viduṣo 'viduśaś ca karmināḥ pravibhajya dve niṣṭhe grāhayati, SGB 2.21; Pan, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹karmanīṣṭhāyā jñānaniṣṭhāprāptihetutvena puruṣārthahetutvaṃ na svātantryeṇa, jñānaniṣṭhā tu

karmaniṣṭhopāyalabdhātmikā satī svātantryeṇa puruṣārthahetur anyānapekṣā, SGB 3.4; Pan, p. 144.

110 sarvopaniṣatsv itihāsapurāṇayogaśāstreṣu ca jñānāṅgatvena mumukṣoḥ sarvakarmasamnyāsavidhanāt, SGB 3.1; Pan, p. 136.

111 pratyagātmāvikriyasvarūpaniṣṭhatvāc ca mokṣasya, SGB 18.55; Pan, p. 744.

112 na hi pūrvasamudraṃ jigamiṣoḥ prātilomyena pratyaksamudraṃ jigamiṣnuna samānamārgatvaṃ sambhavati / . . . sā [jñānaniṣṭhā] pratyaksamudragamanavat karmaṇā sahabhāvitvena virūdyate / parvatasarṣpayor ivāntaravān virodhaḥ pramāṇnavidaṃ niścitaḥ, SGB 18.55; Pan, p. 744.

113 tasmāt sarvakarmasamnyāsenaiiva jñānaniṣṭhā karyeti siddham, SGB 18.55; Pan, p. 744. On the necessity of renunciation many other passages could be quoted, e.g.: "The aim of this Gītā-scripture, in short, is the supreme good which is characterized by the complete cessation of saṃsāra along with its causes, and this arises from the religious practice in the form of the discipline of Self-knowledge, preceded by renunciation of all works" (tasyāsyā gītāśāstrasya saṃkṣepataḥ prayojanaṃ paraṃ niḥśreyasaṃ sahetukasya saṃsārasyātyantoparamalakṣaṇam, tac ca sarvakarmasamnyāsapūrvakād ātmajñānaniṣṭhārūpād dharmād bhavati, SGB, intro.; Pan, p. 6); "The cessation of grief and delusion which are the seeds of saṃsāra is from nothing other than knowledge of the Self preceded by renunciation of all action" (saṃsārabhījabhūtau śokamohau tayoś ca sarvakarmasamnyāsapūrvakād ātmajñānād nānyato nivṛttir iti, SGB 2.10; Pan, p. 40); "The cause of the cessation of this [cause of saṃsāra] is well known in the Gītā to be knowledge together with renunciation [undertaken] when there is indifference to the world" (asya [saṃsārakāraṇasya] nivṛttikāraṇam jñānam vairāgye sasamnyāsam gītāśāstre prasiddham, SGB 13.21; Pan, p. 568); and so on.

114 BSSB 3.4.20; Th II, 301-302.

115 See his commentary on BU 3.5.1 and BU 4.5.15. According to Upadeśasāhasrī 2.1.2 (quoted above, note 61), the student of Advaita should be both a Brahmin and a paramahansa.

Farquhar believes that the early view that any educated male of the three upper castes could become a renunciate was replaced by the rule limiting eligibility for samnyāsa to Brahmins about 300 C.E. (J. N. Farquhar, "The Organization of the Sannyasis of the Vedānta," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society [England], [July, 1925], p. 481).

This restriction was accepted by many authorities, notably Medātithi, the commentator on Manu. It finds support in such passages as BU 3.5.1, "Brāhmaṇas, having known the Self and having risen above the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for [heavenly] worlds, live as mendicants" (etaṃ vai tam ātmānaṃ viditvā brāhmaṇāḥ putraīśānāyās ca vittaiśānāyās ca lokaiśānāyās ca vyutthāya atha bhikṣācāryaṃ caranti), and MuU 1.2.12, "Having scrutinized the worlds that are the rewards of actions, a Brāhmaṇa should attain non-attachment" (parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirvedam āyān). Manu's description of saṃnyāsa at 6.38 begins: "A Brāhmaṇa may depart from his house . . ." (Buhler, p. 205).

A widely circulated verse from the Vaikhānasadharmapraśna reads: "Brahmins have four life-stages, Kṣatriyas have the first three, and Vaiśyas the first two; the four stages are that of the student, the householder, the retiree, and the renunciate" (brāhmaṇasyā-'śramās catvārah, kṣatriyasyādyās trayah, vaiśyasyādyau, tadāśramiṇas catvāro brahmacārī gṛhasto vānaprastho bhikṣur īti, quoted by Farquhar, pp. 480-481 [my trans.]). Saṃkara's order of renunciates, the daśanāmīs, followed this rule strictly until, interestingly enough, the time of Madhusūdana (chap. 9, note 31).

The issue did not remain without controversy, however, and there are texts which follow the earlier tradition of allowing male members of any of the dvija or "twice born" castes, i.e., all except the śūdras, to take saṃnyāsa. A number of writers accept this more liberal view, including Saṃkara's own disciple Sureśvara, who in his Vārttika on Saṃkara's commentary on BU 3.5.1 expresses his disagreement with his guru's position (P. V. Kane, The History of Dharmasāstra [2nd ed.; Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1974], vol. II, part 2, pp. 942-944; Farquhar, pp. 478-479). Vidyāraṇya Svāmin (fourteenth century), referring in his Jīvanmuktiviveka to such female sages as Sulabhā, Gārgī Vācāknvī, and Māitreyī, takes the liberal position that women are eligible for what he calls vividiṣā saṃnyāsa ("the renunciation of the seeker"), thus: "For this renunciation, women also are qualified (asmimś ca tyāge striyo 'pi adhikriyante, Jīvanmuktiviveka of Vidyāraṇya, ed. with an English translation by S. Subramanya Sastrī and T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar [Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Center, 1978], pp. 4, 182). (I am indebted to Swami Atmarupananda of the Vedanta Society of Southern California for this reference.)

It has for long been commonly recognized that social factors are extremely important in Hinduism. The tradition prescribes different duties, religious practices, and observances for different persons according to their place in the social hierarchy, stage of life, and so on. A

person's spiritual options are commonly, especially in more orthodox circles, limited and channelled by the same criteria. Since the Hindu tradition provides an extremely wide, often bewildering, variety of spiritual alternatives, such limitations may be, from a practical point of view, necessary to prevent social and psychological confusion.

Though a radical metaphysically speaking, Śaṅkara was extremely conservative socially. For example: "The primal creator Viṣṇu, called Nārāyaṇa, was born in part as Kṛṣṇa of Devakī and Vasudeva for the protection of the earthly Brahman [the Vedas and the sacrifice] and Brahminhood. By the protection of Brahminhood, the Vedic way of life is preserved, since the distinctions of castes and stages of life depend upon it [Brahminhood]" (sa ādikartā nārāyaṇākhyo viṣṇur bhaumasya brahmaṇo brāhmaṇasya rakṣanārtham devakyāṃ vasudevād aṃṣena kṛṣṇaḥ kila sambabhūva / brāhmaṇatvasya hi rakṣanena rakṣitaḥ syād vaidiko dharmah tadadhīnatvād varṇāśramabhedānām, SGB, intro.; Pan, p. 4). Most accounts of Śaṅkara's life hold that his family belonged to the elite Nambūdiri Brahmin caste of Kerala.

Śaṅkara's spiritual exclusivism is typical of the traditional hierarchical outlook of orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism. That the highest goal of life should be restricted to the highest caste is no scandal to this way of thinking. Everyone and indeed everything must find and accept his, her, or its place in the great hierarchy of being; tradition simply requires Brahmins to bear the responsibility of being at or near its peak.

¹¹⁶sokamohābhyāṃ hy abhibhūtavivekavijñānaḥ svata eva kṣātradharme yuddhe pravṛtto 'pi tasmād yuddhād upararāma / paradharmam ca bhikṣājīvanādikaṃ kartum pravavṛte / tathāca sarvaprāṇinām sokamohādidoṣāviṣṭacetasām svabhāvata eva svadharmaparitṛyāgaḥ pratiṣiddhasevā ca syāt, SGB 2.10; Pan, p. 40.

¹¹⁷Other writers, however, do. In the introduction to Bhāskara's commentary in the Gītā, for example, we read: "The Blessed dharma is only for Brahmans a way to release. The Sūdra, etc., cannot be elevated . . . nor can iron be made into gold by heating it some more . . . Even the Kṣatriya and the Vaiṣya do not have the same qualification for release as the Brahman. Therefore, only the Brahman has it" (van Buitenen, "Archaism," p. 32).

The translator remarks (p. 33):

"In Bhāskara we have a spokesman for an old-fashioned Vedānta, in which the desire of knowing Brahman is compatible only with the performance of appropriate Vedic ritual, which excludes all but the Brahman

[caste]. This attitude was only partly reformed by Saṅkara. Although he relegated all ritual performances to the realm of vyavahāra, or the provisional truth of process, he did not alter the spirit of exclusiveness associated with the Vedānta. Precisely this uncompromising dichotomy between the realms of supreme truth and relative process encouraged an attitude summed up in the well-known dictum: vyavahāre Bhāṭṭaḥ, paramārthe Sāṅkaraḥ 'in vyavahāra, a follower of Kumārilla Bhāṭṭa; in respect of the supreme truth, a follower of Saṅkara.' But to be a legitimate follower of Kumārilla, the Mīmāṃsaka had in theory to be twice-born, in practice to be a Brahman.

"It would not be difficult to multiply quotations in line with Bhāskara's views. They are important inasmuch as they show, for the age with which we are concerned, the mentality of those who traditionally regarded themselves (and, however reluctantly, were regarded by others) as the final arbiters of dharma and mokṣa. Against their spirit of exclusiveness, in society as well as in soteriology, the rise of the bhakti movement placed a spirit of catholicity."

118 These exceptions appear to be only such as were necessitated by scriptural passages suggestive of the more liberal attitude of an earlier age, and which therefore called the later restrictions into question. BSSB 3.4.36 indicates that there is a possibility for knowledge even for one who is outside of the system of the four life-stages. In his comments, Saṅkara allows that certain persons mentioned in scripture were knowers of Brahman, such as Raikva [CU 6.1-3], a cart-puller who did not observe caste rules, and Gārgī [BU 3.6, 8], a woman. SGB 9.32 (Pan, p. 439) admits a chance of "attaining the highest goal" (parāṃ gatim) for those of "sinful birth" (pāpayonayaḥ) such as women, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras. The SGB twice discusses the case of Janaka, a King famed for his enlightenment (2.10 and 3.20; Pan, pp. 44-46, 158-160). In both cases, however, Saṅkara is noncommittal as to whether Janaka is a knower of Brahman or not, e.g.:

"Therefore, 'by action alone' wise Kṣatriyas of old such as Janaka and Aśvapati "came to," i.e., tried to attain, 'perfection,' i.e., mokṣa. If they were persons who had attained right knowledge, they came to perfection by action alone, i.e., without renouncing action, because of the karma determining their lives, in order to foster the welfare of the world. But if Janaka and the others were persons who had not attained right knowledge, they came to perfection gradually by action which is the means of purifying the mind. Thus the verse should be explained" (karmaṇaiva hi tasmāt pūrve kṣatriyā vidvāṃsaḥ saṃsīdhiṃ mokṣaṃ gantum āsthitāḥ pravṛttā

janakādayo janakāśvapatiprabhṛtayah / yadi te prāptasamyagdarśanās tato lokasaṃgrahārtham prārābdhakarmatvāt karmaṇā sahaivā 'saṃnyasyaiva karma saṃsiddhim āsthitā ity arthaḥ / athāprāptasamyagdarśanā janakādayas tadā karmaṇā sattvasuddhisādhanabhūtena kramaṇa saṃsiddhim āsthitā iti vyākhyeyah slokaḥ, SGB 3.20; Pan, p. 159).

¹¹⁹That is, the states of jīvanmukti or sadyomukti.

¹²⁰See BG 3.20-26, on which Śaṅkara comments: "For Me [Kṛṣṇa] or any other who, knowing the Self, desires to effect the welfare of the world, there is no action to be done but that which is for the welfare of the world. Therefore, for such a knower of the Self, the following is taught. . . . He should not create confusion in the minds of the ignorant, the indiscriminating, who are attached to action. What, then, should he do? He should encourage them to enjoy, to do, all actions, the wise man himself performing in a disciplined way the very action [required] of the ignorant" (evaṃ lokasaṃgrahaṃ cikīrṣor mamātmavido na kartavyam asti anyasya vā lokasaṃgrahaṃ muktvā tatas tasyātmavida idam upadiśyate . . . buddhibhedas taṃ na janayen notpādayed ajñānam avivekināṃ karmasaṅgināṃ . . . kiṃtu kuryāj joṣayet kārayet sarvakarmaṇi vidvān svayaṃ tad evāviduṣāṃ karma yukto 'bhiyuktaḥ samācaran, SGB 3.25-26; Pan, pp. 162-163).

Cf. also SGB 2.11.

It is clear that the Śaṅkara tradition recognizes and celebrates the selfless action performed by realized saṃnyāsins for the sake of lokasaṃgraha. See Cenkenner's descriptions of "The ministry of the Śaṅkarācāryas," "The Capacity of a Jagadguru," and "The Teaching of the Śaṅkarācāryas" (pp. 127-146).

Peter Berger points out that the detached, "as if" observance of social and religious customs, "out of consideration for the weaker spirit of the masses that has a need of these," is a common feature of world-relativizing mystical religion (The Sacred Canopy [Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969], p. 98). By way of illustration, he cites a passage from the Theologia germanica that parallels the attitude of the Advaitin almost exactly: "Perfect men accept the law along with such ignorant men as understand and know nothing other or better, and practice it with them, to the intent that thereby they may be kept from evil ways, or if it be possible, brought to something higher" (J. Bernhart, ed., Theologia germanica [New York: Pantheon, 1949], p. 159; quoted by Berger, p. 98).

The complexity of Advaitic thinking on devotional religion is suggested by the fact that Śaṅkara is regarded,

not only as the originator of the Advaita system, but also as an important reformer of popular Hinduism whose distaste for action did not prevent him from traveling widely to spread his views and correct religious abuses. He is venerated as the founding teacher (sthāpanācārya) of six schools of worship (ṣaṣṭa) recognized by the Śmāṛta Brahmins. These are the Śaiva, the Vaiṣṇava, the Śākta (worship of the Goddess), the Saura (worship of the sun), the Gāṇapatya (worship of the elephant-faced Gaṇapati), and the Kaumāra (worship of Kumāra or Skanda, the son of Siva). See Iyer, pp. 478-479; Venkateswaran, pp. 146-147; and Raymond Panikkar, "Advaita and Bhakti: Love and Identity in a Hindu-Christian Dialogue," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, VII (Spring, 1970), 301.

¹²¹See chaps. 3.2, 4.3.2.

NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

¹Hardy, VB, pp. 11, 44.

²Hardy, VB, pp. 261-269.

³Hardy, VB, p. 488.

⁴Hardy, VB, pp. 11, 43.

⁵S. N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966) IV, 1.

⁶See chap. 4, note 6.

⁷T. J. Hopkins, The Hindu Religious Tradition, p. 118. Hardy gives ca. 600-950 as the period of the Ālvārs ("Mādhavendra Purī; A Link Between Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and South Indian Bhakti," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society [of Great Britain and Ireland], 1974, p. 23).

⁸Writing in the forward to Milton Singer, p. iv.

⁹aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṃ nandagopavrajaukasām / yanmitraṃ paramānandaṃ pūrṇaṃ brahma sanātanam, BP 10.14.32; GS II, 1115.

¹⁰ekadeśe 'khilasargasauṣṭavyaṃ tvadīyam adrākṣma vayaṃ madhudviṣaḥ, BP 10.39.21b (GS II, 1218); akṣavatāṃ phalam idaṃ na paraṃ vidāmaḥ, BP 10.21.7 (GS II, 1146).

¹¹See BP 10.39.20; 10.21; 10.35; 10.44.14.

¹²paramo dharmah, 1.2.6; see 1.2.8, 2.2.33-34, 3.25.44, 4.9.10, 10.47.24, quoted in BR 1, sec. IX. For all references to BR 1, see the translation in chap. 7.

¹³ekāntino yasya na kañcanārthaṃ vāñcchanti ye vai bhagavatprapannāḥ / atyadbhutaṃ taccharitaṃ sumāṅgalaṃ gāyanta ānandasamudramagnāḥ, BP 8.3.20; GS II, 830.

¹⁴Cp. the extension of this principle in Hemādri's dictum that devotion is the experience of bliss, while mokṣa is only the state of bliss. Below, chap. 4, note 105.

¹⁵śreyāḥsrutiṃ bhaktim udasya te vibho kliśyanti ye kevalabodhalabdhaye / teśāṃ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate nānyad sthūlatuṣāvaghātinām, BP 10.14.4; GS II, 1111.

¹⁶na kiṃcit sādhave dīrā bhaktā hy ekāntino mama / vāñchanty api māyā dattaṃ kaivalyam apunarbhavam, BP 11.20.34; GS II, 1589.

¹⁷naivecchaty āśiṣaḥ kvāpi brahmaṛṣir mokṣam apy uta / bhaktiṃ parāṃ bhagavati labdhavān puruṣe 'vyaye, BP 12.10.6; GS II, 1694.

¹⁸na yogasiddhīr apunarbhavaṃ vā, BP 6.11.25, 10.16.37, 11.14.14.

¹⁹See BP 11.20.31-34, quoted by Madhusūdana in BR 1, sec. V; see also BR 1, sec. XXIV. In his discussion of this subject in the BRS, Rūpa Gosvāmin quotes BP 3.4.15; 3.25.34, 36; 3.29.13; 4.9.10; 4.20.24; 5.14.44; 6.11.25; 6.17.28; 6.18.74; 7.6.25; 7.8.42; 8.3.20; 9.4.67; 10.16.37; 10.87.21; 11.14.14; 11.20.34; 12.10.6 (BRS 1.2.22-57; Bon, pp. 81-105).

This attitude towards mokṣa found widespread acceptance in the devotional traditions. Cp. Jñāneśvarī 9.191: "In them the spirit of devotion is so fervent that they even dismiss liberation [as worthless]" (V. G. Pradhan, trans., Jñāneśvarī [London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967], I, 229; see chap. 4, note 39). In Tulsī Dās's Rāmacartiamānasa we read:

"This supreme state of final beatitude is most difficult to attain, so declare the saints as well as the Puranas[,] Vedas and Agamas (Tantras). By worshipping Śrī Rāma, my lord, the same beatitude comes unsolicited even against our will. Water cannot stay except on land notwithstanding our best efforts; even so, mark you, O king of the birds, the joy of final beatitude cannot stay apart from Devotion to Śrī Hari. Realizing this, the wise devotees of Śrī Hari spurn final emancipation and remain enamoured of Devotion" (Uttarakāṇḍa, dohā 118, caupāī 2-4, trans. by the editor, Kalyāna Kapataru, XVII [August, 1951], 273; reprint edition, Shree Ramacharitamanasa [Chandigarh: Shree Geeta Press, n.d.], pt. III, p. 273).

²⁰ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame / kurvanty ahaitukīṃ bhaktim ithambhūtaguṇo hariḥ, BP 1.7.10; GS I, 25. See the discussion of jīvanmukti at BR 1, sec. XI; on the importance of this verse to the Vaiṣṇava tradition, see chap. 9, note 21.

²¹prāyena munayo rājan nivṛtā vidhiṣedhatah /
nairgunyasthā rāmanṭe sma gunānukathane hareh, BP 2.1.7; GS
I, 95. See also BP 1.8.20; 2.1.9.

²²madguṇaśrutimātreṇa mayi sarvaguhāśaye / manogatir
avicchinā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau // lakṣaṇaṃ
bhaktiyogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam / ahaituky avyavahitā
yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame, BP 3.29.11-12; GS I, 300.

²³BP 7.5.23; see chap. 7, note 30.

²⁴See the translation of BR 1 in chap. 7.

²⁵BP 1.3.31-33, quoted and discussed in BR 1, sec.

X.

²⁶SBS 56-57, 59; Swami Harshananda, trans., Śāṅḍilya
Bhakti Sūtras with Svapneśvara Bhāṣya (Mysore: Prasaranga,
University of Mysore, 1976), pp. 124-134. See BR 1, sec.
IV, note 32; sec. X, with note 85. The date of the SBS is
uncertain; I follow Hardy (VB, p. 563, note 22) in assigning
the text to the century following the BP. But it should be
kept in mind that, as Harshananda (p. xviii) points out,
there is no direct reference to that purāṇa in the sūtras.

²⁷BP 1.4-7. The story is also designed to show that
even knowers of Brahman are unfulfilled without bhakti. It
ends with 1.7.10, just discussed above.

²⁸J. N. Farquhar, An Outline of the Religious
Literature of India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920),
p. 229; quoted by Hardy, VB, p. 38.

²⁹Hardy, VB, pp. 38-39.

³⁰Gonda, J., "Het begrip bhakti," in Tijdschrift
voor Philosophie, vol. 10 (Louvain), p. 640; quoted and
translated by Hardy, VB, p. 38.

³¹katham vinā romaharṣaṃ dravatā cetasā vinā / vinā
'nandāśrukalayā sudhyed bhaktyā vinā 'śayaḥ // vāg gadgadā
dravate yasya citta rudaty abhikṣaṇaṃ hasati kvacicca /
vilajja udgāyati nr̥tyate ca madbhaktiyukto bhuvanaṃ punāti,
BP 11.14.23-24; GS II, 1555. Madhusūdana quotes and
comments upon verse 23 under BR 1.31 (chap. 7, sec. XXII).

³²See, e.g., BR 1, sec. XXVIII.

³³Hardy, VB, passim.

³⁴BP 10.29.40; 10.30-31.

³⁵BP 10.21, 35.

³⁶BP 10.39, 47. See Hardy, VB, pp. 530-531; Edward Dimmock, The Place of the Hidden Moon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 1-13.

³⁷Dasgupta, IV, 33; Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 154; Hardy, VB, pp. 494-496, 538.

³⁸Hardy, VB, p. 494.

³⁹"Song of the Swan"; see BR 1, sec. XXIII and note 243.

⁴⁰At 11.13 the Lord, in order to teach Brahmā and his mind-born sons, appeared before them in the form of a swan. When they asked him who he was, he replied: "Verily, since the Self is unitary, what could be the relevance of your question, O wise ones, and on what basis could I answer it? In truth, when the five elements are the common constituents of [all] beings [and they have but one Self], your question, 'Who are you, revered Sir,' is a useless verbal exercise. It is I alone who am apprehended by the mind, by speech, by vision, and the other faculties. Know truly that there is nothing other than Me" (vastuno yady anānatvam ātmanaḥ praśna Idṛśaḥ / kathaṃ ghaṭeta vo viprā vaktur vā me āśrayaḥ // pañcātmakeṣu bhūteṣu samāeṣu ca vastutaḥ / ko bhavaṇ iti vaḥ praśno vācārambho hy anarthakaḥ // manasā vacasā dṛṣṭayā gṛhyate 'nyair apī ndriyair / aham eva no matto 'nyad iti budhyadhvam, BP 11.13.22-24; GS II, 1549).

⁴¹BP 11.13.24, 27-33; BR 1, sec. XXIII.

⁴²Ikṣeta vibhramam idaṃ manaso vilāsaṃ dṛṣṭam vinaṣṭamatilolam alātacakram / vijñānam ekam urudheva vibhāti māyā svapnaś tridhā gunavisargakṛto vikalpaḥ // dṛṣṭim tataḥ pratīnivartya nivr̥ttatr̥ṣṇas tūṣṇīm bhaven nijasukhānubhavo nirīṇaḥ / saṃdṛśyate kva ca yadīdam avastubuddhyā tyaktam bhramāya na bhavet smṛtir ā nīpātāt, BP 11.13.34-35; GS II, 1551. Cp. BP 11.22.10-11: "It is not possible for a soul (puruṣa) conjoined with beginningless ignorance to attain knowledge of the Self by itself; there should be another who is a knower of reality to impart knowledge. In this respect there is not the slightest difference between the soul and God, and any supposition that it is distinct from Him is futile" (anādyavidyāyuktasya puruṣasyātmavedanam / svato na sambhavād anyas tattvajño jñānādo bhavet // puruṣeśvarayo atra na vailakṣaṇyam any

api / tadanyakalpanāpārthā, GS II, 1597). Also 11.2.22: "Those [sages] wandered over the earth, seeing the whole universe, consisting of being and non-being, as God Himself, non-different from the Self" (ta ete bhagavadrūpam viśvaṃ sadasadātmakam / ātmano 'vyatirekeṇa paśyanto vyacaran mahīm, GS II, 1493. See also BP 2.1.39; 11.2.38.

⁴³Dasgupta, IV, 33. Noting the fact that Buddhism was strong in South India at least as late as the seventh century, and also the presence in the BP of passages expressing a bodhisattva ethic of self-sacrifice for the spiritual welfare of others (7.9.40-44, 9.21.12), R. Mukerjee argues that verses such as this show the influence of Mahāyāna idealism. See The Lord of the Autumn Moons (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1957), pp. 31-32, 36-38.

⁴⁴Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 154.

⁴⁵param parasyāṅ prakṛter anādim ekaṃ niviṣṭaṃ bahudhā guhāsu / sarvālayaṃ sarva-carācara-sthaṃ tvām eva Viṣṇuṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye, quoted and translated by Hardy, VB, p. 496, note 56. Hardy notes that the commentator glosses guhā as māyā. In his own Paramārthasāra (vs. 2), the great Śaiva non-dualist Abhinavagupta acknowledges his debt to Adīṣeṣa.

Cp. the following verses from the Ātmabodha: "All the multiformed manifestations are projected in the eternal, all-pervading Viṣṇu, whose nature is bliss and consciousness, like bracelets and etc. are [fabricated] in gold. . . . On the destruction of the limiting adjuncts, the sage is merged in Viṣṇu without any remainder, like water into water, space into space, light into light" (saccid-ātmany anusyūte nitye viṣṇau prakalpitāṅ / vyaktayo vividhās sarvā hāṭake kaṭakādivat // . . . upādhivilayād viṣṇau nirviṣeṣaṃ viṣeṇ muniḥ / jale jalaṃ viyad vyomani tejas tejasi vā yathā, Ātmabodha 9, 53; Chinmayananda, Ātmabodha of Bhagawan Sri Sankaracharya [Madras: The Chinmayananda Publications Trust, 1977], pp. 16, 103). Though the Ātmabodha was probably not written by Saṅkara himself (see chap. 2.2), it certainly does come from within his tradition, where it is regarded with considerable veneration as an epitome of the great ācārya's teaching.

⁴⁶Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins," p. 154.

⁴⁷BP 10.21.20; 10.29.15.

⁴⁸BP 10.14.43; 10.30.2-3.

49 "They, constantly holding [an attitude of] erotic desire, anger, fear, affection, oneness, or friendship toward Hari, attain union with Him" (kāmaṃ krodhaṃ bhayaṃ snehaṃ aikyaṃ sauhṛdaṃ eva ca / nityaṃ harau vidadhato yānti tanmayatāṃ hi te, BP 10.29.15; GS II, 1175).

50 gatimitaprekṣaṇabhāṣaṇādiṣu priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍhamurtayaḥ / asāv ahaṃ ty ity abalās tadātmikā nyavediṣuḥ kṛṣṇavihāravibhramāḥ, BP 10.30.3; GS II, 1179. I am indebted to Hardy, VB, p. 540, for this and the previous three references.

51 bhavatīnāṃ viyogo me na hi sarvātmanā kvacit / yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu khaṃ vayvagnir jalaṃ mahī / tathahaṃ ca manaḥprāṇabhūtendriyaguṇāśrayaḥ // ātmany evātmanā 'tmanāṃ sṛje hanmy anupālaye / ātmamāyanubhāvena bhūtendriyaguṇātmanā, BP 10.47.29-30; GS II, 1260.

52 See Hardy, VB, p. 541.

53 Author of the Bhāgavatabhāvārthadīpikā, which continues to be the most authoritative and well-known commentary on the BP. Śrīdhāra, who also composed widely-respected commentaries on the Ītā and the Viṣṇupurāṇa, was a member of the Purī order of Saṅkara samnyāsins and was thus nominally an Advaitin, though he had strong theistic and devotional tendencies. His commentary on the BP was so universally esteemed that commentators of other schools were often content, on points regarding which there was no doctrinal disagreement, to merely recommend his interpretation, either by referring reader to his work by name, or simply incorporating portions of his commentary verbatim. Caitanya is reported to have had a high estimation of the Bhāvārthadīpikā. See chaps. 2, note 6, 4.2; Sinha, p. 1; N. Raghunathan, trans., Srimad Bhāgavatam (Madras: Vighneswara Publishing House, 1976), I, 654.

54 See chap. 4, note 7.

55 Hardy, VB, p. 539. Hardy attempts to suggest "in what sense the BhP may be considered an ideological opus universal: its treatment of the gopī episodes spans the whole spectrum from Hv [Harivaṃśa] sensuality and Alvār emotionalism, via the yoga of the ViP [Viṣṇu Purāṇa], to the extreme of advaita and illusionism" (VB, p. 541).

56 Hardy remarks:

"It is difficult to imagine what kind of a person the author could have been, maintaining in himself this incredible tension between intense emotionalism and monistic and theistic illusionism. But, however

incongruous this enormous edifice may appear to us, it contains stimuli and inspiration which remained operative for the following thousand years" (VB, p. 541).

See also Daniel P. Sheridan, "Devotion in the Bhāgavata Purāna and Christian Love: Bhakti, Agape, Eros," Horizons, VIII (1981), 273-275.

57iti te bhagavadyāñcām śṛṇvanto 'pi na śuśruvaḥ /
kṣudrāśā bhūrikarmāno bālīśā vṛddhamāninaḥ // . . . taṃ
brahma paramaṃ sāksād bhagavantam adhokṣajam / manuṣyadr̥ṣṭyā
duṣpraajā martyātmāno na menire, BP 10.23.9, 11; GS II, 1153.

58_{1.18.18.}

59_{1.5.23; 7.15.72-74.}

60etāḥ param tanubhr̥to bhuvi gopavadhvo govinda eva
nikhilātmani rūdhabhāvāḥ / vāñchanti yat bhavabhiyo munayo
vayaṃ ca kiṃ brahmājanmābhir anantakathārasasya // . . .
vande nandavrajāstrināṃ pādareṇum abhikṣaśaḥ / yāsāṃ
harikathodgītāṃ punāti bhuvanatrāyāṃ, BP 10.47.57, 63; GS
II, 1263.

61_{See BG 9.32.}

62_{T. J. Hopkins, "The Social Teaching of the Bhāgavata Purāna," in Milton Singer, p. 19.}

63yannāmadheyaśravaṇānukīrtanād yatprahvaṇād yat
smaraṇād api kvacit / śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt, BP 3.33.6; GS, I, 317.

64_{T. J. Hopkins, "Social Teaching," p. 22.}

NOTES

CHAPTER FOUR

¹S. K. De, Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal (Calcutta: General Printers and Publishers Limited, 1942), p. 121.

²Elkman, pp. 31, 34.

³Though Rādhā is not mentioned in the BP, by the time of Caitanya she had become the queen of the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa's favorite. See W. G. Archer, The Loves of Krishna (New York: Grove Press, n.d.), pp. 72-9; Charlotte Vaudeville, "Krishna Gopāla, Rādhā, and the Great Goddess," in John S. Hawley and Donna M. Wulff, eds., The Divine Consort: Rādhā and the Goddesses of India (Berkeley Religious Studies Series; Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1982), pp. 2, 9-12.

⁴CC madhya 2.55ff., trans. by Hardy, VB, p. 5.

⁵On the alaṅkāraśāstra (Sanskrit poetics), see chap. 6.

⁶Jīva Gosvāmin rejects all pramāṇas (sources of knowledge) other than the authoritative word (śabda), and his concept of what texts may count as śabapramāṇa differs radically from that of traditional Vedānta. The latter regards only the Vedas and the Upaniṣads as revealed scripture (śruti) and classifies other texts such as the epics and purāṇas as tradition (smṛti), having considerably lesser value as pramāṇa. Jīva, however, has such high regard for the purāṇas that he assigns them a place equal to that of the sacred śruti. Indeed, since they are the completion or fulfillment (pūrāṇa) of the Veda, rendering its unfathomable meaning accessible to people in the present dark age, they are, practically speaking, superior to the Vedic revelation. An important qualification here is that, conveniently enough for the Gosvāmins' sectarian interests, only purāṇas which are devoted to Kṛṣṇa are authentic. Of these, the BP is the most authoritative, being the sage Vyāsa's own commentary on his Brahmasūtras (Jīva Gosvāmin, Tattvasandarbhā 9-23, trans. Elkman, pp. 117-192; De, VFM, pp. 196-199). Jīva calls the BP the "greatest of all the pramāṇas" (sarvaprāmāṇacakravartibhūtam, De, VFM, p. 199,

note 3). At Tattvasandarbhā 22a, he says that "in the present age those seeking to know the highest truth need only study the Bhāgavata Purāna" (trans. Elkman, p. 172), and again at sec. 23 he declares: "Aside from the sun-like Bhāgavata, no other scripture is capable of properly illuminating reality" (trans. Elkman, p. 188). Cp. BP 1.2.3, 12.13.15.

⁷Rūpa and Jīva came from a Vaiṣṇava family, and it is known that Rūpa showed Kṛṣṇaite tendencies even prior to meeting Caitanya (De, VFM, p. 110). Their works clearly demonstrate their wide Sanskrit learning. Jīva is said to have studied in Banaras, where he acquired a thorough education in all the schools of Vedānta, and became well-versed in other disciplines such as Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya. In his Sarvasamvādinī, he refers to the views of Saṅkara, Vācaspati, Rāmānuja, and Madhva (Elkman, p. 33). Elkman argues that much of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava's hostility to Advaita is attributable to the influence of Madhva's Dvaita, as transmitted through Baladeva (eighteenth century), a Mādhva samnyāsin from Orissa who joined the Caitanya sect, reportedly attracted by the divinity of its founder. Baladeva attempted to establish an affiliation between the Gauḍīya school and his former sampradāya by showing that both Caitanya and Jīva acknowledged a debt to Madhva (Elkman, pp. 39-40). On the spuriousness of this connection, see Elkman and also Hardy, "Mādhavendra Purī: A Link Between Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and South Indian Bhakti" (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society [of Great Britain and Ireland], 1974, p. 25-26. Hardy (p. 26, note 18) points out that "a Mādhva could not possibly have given [as Caitanya did] such high esteem to Śrīdhara Svāmi's advaitic commentary on the BhP."

After a careful study of Jīva's Tattvasandarbhā and its commentaries, Elkman (p. 328) concludes:

"From a philosophical point of view, Baladeva places considerably more emphasis on the dualistic side of Jīva's writings, and displays a hostility towards the views of Saṅkara which is uncharacteristic of Jīva, who himself cites Saṅkara as an authority several times in his Sarvasamvādinī. In tone, Baladeva is more polemical than conciliatory, and closer in temperament to the later Mādhva authors than to Jīva and the other Gosvāmins" (Elkman, p. 328).

Elkman believes that the subsequent popularity of Baladeva's interpretation of Jīva's work led the Bengal tradition in the direction of a more consciously dualistic stance and, concomitantly, a more aggressive sectarianism, both of which were uncharacteristic of the earlier Gauḍīya teachers. Elkman is aware, however, that Jīva himself exhibited antipathy towards Advaita, asserting at Tattvasandarbhā 23,

for example, that Śaṅkara was an incarnation of Śiva who, at the Lord's command, taught māyāvāda with the express purpose of preventing people from realizing His true nature and thus ensuring the continuance of the present world age (Elkman, pp. 90, 189-191; see intro., above, note 12). For more on the Vaiṣṇava attitude toward Advaita, see Edward Dimmock, The Place of the Hidden Moon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 126, note 3.

⁸ De, VFM, p. 84; CC antya 20.4-64.

⁹Many of the verses of the CC which are presented as Caitanya's theological instruction to his disciples are direct quotations or Bengali translations of passages from such works as the Brhadbhāgavatāmṛta of Sanātana Gosvāmin, the Bhaktirasāmṛtasīndhu and Laghūbhāgavatāmṛta of Rūpa Gosvāmin, and the Ṣaṭsandarbha and Sarvasaṁvādinī of Jīva Gosvāmin. (See Majumdar, p. 216; Elkman, pp. 3-4, 13-15, 321; and the notes below, which show that many verses in the CC are in fact direct quotations, in the original Sanskrit, from the BRS.) De writes: "It is indeed difficult to say how much of this elaborate theologizing, which is piously put in his [Caitanya's] mouth, was actually uttered by him; for his reported utterances are in fact faithful summaries of the highly scholastic texts of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins themselves, who, as leisured recluses, could devote their keenly trained minds to the construction of elaborate systems" (De, VFM, p. 85).

¹⁰For a fuller treatment, see Elkman's dissertation.

¹¹See 3.5 and note 53 thereon.

¹²CC antya 7.128-32, trans. Elkman, pp. 21-22.

¹³Elkman, p. 22.

¹⁴Elkman, p. 323.

¹⁵The relevant portion of his commentary on Tattvasandarbha 28 reads as follows:

"Here, the system of Śaṅkara known as Māyāvāda, which deals with the unqualified brahman, is not considered, since it contradicts the bhakti scriptures of Jīva's school. Śaṅkara, however, also demonstrated the significance of the Bhāgavata by describing [in his poetry] such events as Kṛṣṇa's theft of the Gopīs' clothes, etc. There consequently developed a split within Śaṅkara's school on account of the bhakti oriented doctrines which he passed on to his disciples, the [devotional] group of Advaitins being known as

'Bhāgavatas', and the others as 'Smārtas'. Of these, Śrīdhara is an adherent of the 'Bhāgavata' tradition. However, . . . Jīva does not accept Śrīdhara's doctrines in their entirety" (trans. Elkman, p. 81).
 Again, whether or not the attribution of devotional writings to Śaṅkara himself is correct, the fact that writers both within and without the tradition accept the attribution, and that those within the tradition make use of devotional practices, is indicative of the significant role that bhakti acquired for an important segment of Śaṅkara saṁnyāsins.
 See also De, VFM, p. 112, note 2; Elkman, p. 24.

¹⁶Swami Vireswarananda, trans., Srimad Bhagavad Gita (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1972), p. iv; De, VFM, p. 14.

¹⁷De, VFM, p. 14.

¹⁸De, VFM, p. 14.

¹⁹Elkman, p. 24-26; Hardy, "Mādhavendra," pp. 31-33. Cf. CC ādi 9.10-12: "Mādhava Purī was the initial sprout of the wish-fulfilling tree of bhakti; Iśvara Purī was the seedling; and Caitanya, though the gardener, was, by his inscrutable power, the sturdy tree" (trans. Elkman, p. 25). Viṣṇu Purī and Keśava Bhāratī, Caitanya's saṁnyāsaguru, may also have been disciples of this teacher (Hardy, "Mādhavendra," pp. 32-33), as certainly was Advaita, one of Caitanya's closest associates in Bengal.

The latter's name, which he probably received from Mādhavendra, may be taken as indicative of his philosophical predilections, and also those of his preceptor and his monastic order. The Caitanyabhāgavata characterizes him as the "greatest teacher of knowledge, devotion, and non-attachment" (jñāna bhakti vairāyera guru mukhyatara, quoted and trans. by De, VFM, p. 24), an interesting combination of spiritualities suggestive of Śrīdhara Svāmin's outlook. The same text reports that, after Caitanya left Bengal to live in the pilgrimage town of Purī, Advaita reverted to interests typical of the non-dualists: "Advaita-ācārya has abandoned the path of bhakti, and has taken mukti [release from rebirth] as his chief concern" (trans. Edward Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal," in Milton Singer, p. 54). The CC likewise speaks of Advaita's sympathy for the path of knowledge (ādi 12.40, 65-67; 17.67). "It is highly probable," writes De, "that Advaita, following the tradition of Śrīdhara Svāmin and Mādhavendra Purī, believed in tempering intellectual Advaitaism with emotional Bhakti" (VFM, p. 25). See De, VFM, pp. 24-25; Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 54. (In sec. 4 of the present chapter, we shall note the possibly related fact that Advaita, a Brahmin, was more conservative on social questions than his co-worker Nityānanda.)

Given all this evidence, Hardy concludes: "It seems beyond doubt that the decisive influence on Caitanya's mysticism was exerted from a [devotionally oriented] movement within advaitic Vedānta, from a movement within the monastic system created by Śaṅkara" ("Mādhavendra," p. 32).

²⁰De, VFM, p. 112, note 2.

²¹De, VFM, pp. 86, 112.

²²De, VFM, p. 173. Edward Dimmock, a student of De, writes: "It is of considerable significance that the Gosvāmins rarely mention Caitanya except in formal ways, and then usually in devotional rather than theological contexts. They ignore completely the matter so vital to the other main branch of the movement--Caitanya conceived as both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa bound in a single body" ("Doctrine and Practice," p. 45).

²³De, VFM, p. 53-55.

²⁴Elkman, p. 325.

²⁵See above, chap. 2, note 6.

²⁶De, VFM, p. 150; De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 59-61.

²⁷See note 6, above.

²⁸Vaiṣṇava theologians such as Rāmānuja and Madhva identify the Upaniṣadic Brahman with their supreme deity, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa.

²⁹vadanti tat tattvavidas tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam / brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate, BP 1.2.11; GS I, 5.

³⁰Śrīdhara understands the three terms, not as referring to different aspects of reality, but as different names for the same ultimate: "'Then [it might be objected], even the knowers of Reality contradict each other.' Not so. The same Reality is designated by different names, and thus he declares 'It is called Brahman, paramātmān, and bhagavat' by, respectively, the followers of the Upaniṣads, the worshipers of Hiraṇyagarbha, and the Sātvatas (nanu tattvavido 'pi vigītavacanā eva / maivam / tasyaiva tattvasya nāmāntarair abhidhānād ity āha / aupaniṣadair brahmeti, hiraṇyagarbhair paramātmēti, sātvatair bhagavān ity abhidhiyate, JLS, p. 16).

³¹As in most Hindu theistic systems, the jīvas of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school are individual atoms (ānū) of pure consciousness, quantitatively many and distinct, while qualitatively the same (De, VFM, p. 227). A distinction is made between the vyastikṣetrajña ("individual consciousness"), i.e., the soul, and the samaṣṭikṣetrajña ("universal consciousness"), i.e., God, the latter being the object of the former's worship (Dasgupta, IV, 402).

³²Elkman, pp. 114-117, 271; Chakravarti, pp. 52-53, 80-81. As I write this, I have just received my copy of the January, 1985 issue of Back to Godhead: The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement. In an article by Mathureśa Dāsa entitled "Can God Do That?" I read:

"Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān are progressive realizations of the same Supreme Person. Brahman is the effulgence of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body. Paramātmā is Kṛṣṇa's personal expansion through which he creates and maintains the material universe. And Bhagavān is Kṛṣṇa's original form as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all other features of God" (Back to Godhead, XX, 34).

³³Chakravarti, p. 77.

³⁴De, VFM, p. 224; Chakravarti, p. 78.

³⁵viṣṇuśaktih parā proktā kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā / avidyā karmasamjñāyā tṛtīyā śaktir isyate (VP 6.7.60; quoted by Chakravarti, p. 19). Note that the purāna speaks of the śakti of Viṣṇu, not of Kṛṣṇa. This verse is quoted at least three times in the CC (ādi 7.119; madhya 8.153, 20.112).

³⁶CC madhya 8.151, 20.111, 20.149; Tattvasandarbha 31 (Elkman, p. 227-228); Chakravarti, pp. 57ff.; De, VFM, pp. 209ff.

³⁷The acintyabhedābhedavāda. See De, VFM, p. 214.

³⁸p. V. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1974), vol. II, pt. I, p. 8; Chakravarti, pp. 244-248.

³⁹Neither the BP nor either of Bhaktisūtras refer to bhakti as a distinct puruṣārtha. The earliest trace of this notion that I have been able to find is in the work of the 13th century Maharashtrian saint, poet, and philosopher Jñānadeva. In his celebrated Marathi version of the BG, the Jñāneśvarī (9.191, 18.864), he anticipates the Gosvāmins by declaring bhakti superior to the four commonly recognized

goals of life. See V. G. Pradhan, trans., Jñāneśvarī (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967), I, 229 and II, 289; B. P. Bahirat, The Philosophy of Jñānadeva (3rd ed.; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), p. 95. This thinker also seems to have been the first to identify bhakti with the supreme power or śakti of the the Godhead, though he does it from a non-dualistic Śaiva perspective (owing much to Kashmir Śaivism), to which the Gosvāmins could scarcely acknowledge any debt (Bahirat, pp. xii-xiii, 93-96).

⁴⁰De, VFM, pp. 291; Chakravarti, p. 235-238.

⁴¹mokṣalaghutākṛt, BRS 1.1.17; Tridandi Swami Bhakti Hridaya Bon Maharaj, trans., Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuh (Vrindaban: Institute of Oriental Philosophy, 1965), I, 31.

⁴²jñānataḥ sulabhā muktir . . . seyaṃ sādhanasāhasrair bhaktiḥ sudurlabhā, BRS 1.1.36; Bon I, 36.

⁴³brahmānando bhaved eṣa cet parārdhaguṇīkṛtaḥ / naiti bhaktisukhambhodheḥ parmanūtulām api, BRS 1.1.38; Bon I, 49.

⁴⁴BRS 1.2.22-57; Bon I, 81-105. Verse 22, which is quoted at CC madhya 19.176, reads: bhuktimuktisprhā yāvat piśācī hr̥di vartate / tāvat bhaktisukhasyātra katham abhyudayo bhavet. Verse 57: kin tu premaikamādhuryajuṣa ekāntino harau / naivāṅgīkurvate jātu muktiṃ pañcavidham api. Cp. BP 3.29.13, quoted by Rūpa at BRS 1.2.28 (Bon I, 86) and Madhusūdana in his commentary on the first chapter of the BR (see BR 1, sec. XXIV).

⁴⁵kṛṣṇaviṣayaka premā--parama puruṣārtha / yāra āge tṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha / pañcama puruṣārtha--premanandāmṛtasindhu / mokṣādi ānanda yāra nahe eka bindu, CC 1.7.84-85; BVS, pt. 1, II, p. 68-69.

⁴⁶CC madhya 8.221-230; De, VFM, pp. 203-204, 222, 229, 238, 270, 289-290, 295; Chakravarti, pp. 175, 243; Kinsley, Divine Player, p. 159.

⁴⁷anyābhilāṣitāśūnyaṃ jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam / ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā, BRS 1.1.11 (= CC madhya 19.167); Bon I, 19. See BRS 1.1.12 (= CC madhya 19.170) and also CC madhya 19.168-169a.

⁴⁸Rāmānuja (VAS 128, 129, 252) speaks of bhakti as a "particular kind of knowledge" (jñānaviśeṣa). "Only knowledge which has attained the nature of supreme devotion," he declares, "is in reality a means of attaining the Lord" (parabhaktirūpāpannameva vedanam tattvato

bhagavatprāptiḥ sādhanam, VAS 251). See S. S. Raghavachar, trans., Vedārtha-saṅgraha of Śrī Rāmānujācārya (Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1968), pp. 100, 101, 191-192.

Madhva (thirteenth century) defines bhakti as a "constant, supreme affection (parasneha) accompanied by knowledge" (jñānapūrvaparasneho nityo bhaktir itīryate, Mahābhāratatāparyanirṇaya, 1.107; quoted by Dasgupta, IV, 58, note 1 [my trans.]). Madhva's understanding of the relation between knowledge and devotion is very close to that of Rāmānuja:

"Knowledge being a constituent of devotion, the latter is referred to as knowledge. Devotion is designated as a particular kind of knowledge. . . When the scriptures speak of knowledge as the means to release, that kind [of knowledge, i.e., devotion] is intended" (jñānasya bhaktibhāgatvāt bhaktir jñānam itīryate / jñānasya viśeṣo yad bhaktir ity abhidhīyate . . . jñānam eva vimuktaye vadanti śrutayaḥ so 'yaṁ viśeṣo pi hy udīryate, Anuvyākhyāna 4; quoted by B. N. K. Sharma, Madhva's Teaching in His Own Words [Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1979], p. 104 [my trans.]).

Jayatīrtha (fl. 1365-1388), one of the great defenders of Madhva's system, describes bhakti as follows:

"What is called bhakti toward the Supreme Lord consists of an uninterrupted flow of love (preman). It cannot be hindered by thousands of obstacles. It is many times greater than love for oneself or all that is regarded as one's own and is accompanied by knowledge [of the Lord's] having unlimited and infinite good and beautiful qualities" (parameśvarabhaktir nāma niravadhikānantānavadyakalyāṇaguṇatvajñānapūrvakaḥ svātmātmiyasamastavastubhyaḥ anekaguṇādhikaḥ antarāyasahasreṇāpi apratibaddhaḥ nirantarapremapravāhaḥ, Nyāyasudhā; quoted by Dasgupta, IV, 317, note 2; also by B. N. K. Sharma, p. 105 [my trans.]).

The definition of bhakti offered by Vallabha (1481-1533) is similar to that of Madhva: "a firm and overwhelming affection (sneha) [for the Lord] accompanied by a knowledge of [His] greatness" (māhātmyajñānapūrvas tu sudṛḍhaḥ sarvato 'dhikaḥ / sneho bhaktir iti proktaḥ, Tattvārthadīpa; quoted by Dasgupta, IV, 347 and Chakravarti, p. 191 [my trans.]).

49 "The Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism differs from all the four great schools of Vaiṣṇavaism in asserting that the best type of devotion is not only not in need of jñāna (knowledge) and karma (action) but is by nature unmixed with them" (Chakravarti, p. 193).

50 ¹Sāṅḍilya (SBS 2) defines bhakti as "supreme love (anurakti) for the Lord" (sā parā'nuraktir īśvare). Svapnśvara, his commentator, explains anurakti as "deep

attachment" (rāga) which follows (anu-) knowledge of the Lord's greatness. He adds that bhakti is a "special modification of the mind directed towards the Supreme Lord" (parameśvaraviṣayakāntaḥkaraṇavṛttiviśeṣa). See Swami Harshananda, trans., Sāṅḍilya Bhakti Sūtras with Svapneśvara Bhāṣya (Mysore: Prasaranga, University of Mysore, 1976), pp. 15, 18. Nārada (NBS 2) defines bhakti as "supreme love (paramapreman) for God" (sā tu asmiṁ paramapremarūpā). See Swami Tyagisananda, Aphorisms on The Gospel of Divine Love or Nārada Bhakti Sūtras (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978), p. 1. Cp. the definition of bhakti as a "flow of the mind" (manogati) at BP 3.29.11-12, quoted above, chap. 3.3.

⁵¹Bon I, 21. Note that, of Madhusūdana's eleven stages of bhakti, the first is sevā or service. See BR 1, sec. XXIX.

⁵²sā bhaktis sādhanam bhāvaḥ premā ceti tridhositā, BRS 1.2.1; Bon I, 57

⁵³See BP 7.5.23-24, quoted chap. 7, note 291, pt. V.

⁵⁴"Accomplished by action, sādhana has bhāva as its end" (kṛtisādhyā bhavet sādhyabhāvā sā sādhanābhīdhā, BRS 1.2.2a; Bon I, 59).

⁵⁵BRS 1.3.2, Bon I, 333.

⁵⁶premasuryāṁsusāmyabhāk . . . rucibhiḥ citta-māsr̥ṇyakṛd, BRS 1.3.1 (= CC m.23.5), Bon I, 328.

⁵⁷BRS 1.3.13, Bon I, 341; cp. CC madhya 22.165. Note that Madhusūdana describes his fifth stage of bhakti, a state of incipient love, as "the arising of the sprout of rati" (ratyaṅkurotpatti, BR 1.35; JSP, p. 93).

⁵⁸BRS 1.3.61; Bon I, 371.

⁵⁹BRS 1.3.25-26 (= CC m.23.18-19), Bon I, 348; cp. CC madhya 23.20-30.

⁶⁰BRS 1.3.2; Bon I, 333.

⁶¹BRS 1.2.6; Bon I, 336.

⁶²BRS 1.4.1 (= CC m.23.7); Bon I, 373.

⁶³ārūḍhaḥ paramotkarṣam, BRS 1.4.5; Bon I, 376.

⁶⁴samyāṁmansr̥ṇitasvāntaḥ, BRS 1.4.1, Bon I, 373.

⁶⁵BRS 1.4.1-3; Bon, pp. 373-375.

⁶⁶sei premā--`prayojana' sarvānanda-dhāma, CC madhya 23.13; BVS pt. 2, vol. IX, p. 8.

⁶⁷ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhusaṅgo 'tha bhajanakriyā / tato 'narthanivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ // athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati / sādhakānām ayaṃ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ, BRS 1.4.15-16; Bon I, 382.

⁶⁸kona bhāgye, CC madhya 23.9; BVS pt. 2, vol. IX, p. 6. See Bon I, 383.

⁶⁹Bon I, 382. The qualities of a genuine sādhu are enumerated at BP 11.11.29-31. For further discussion of the benefit of association with saints, see chap. 7, note 291, pt. I.

⁷⁰CC madhya 23.10; BVS pt. 2, vol. IX, p. 6. See BP 7.5.23-24, quoted chap. 7, note 291, pt. IV.

⁷¹Bon I, xxi-xxii.

⁷²Bon I, xxii-xxiii.

⁷³BRS 1.4.17 (= CC m.23.40); Bon I, 383.

⁷⁴BRS 1.4.19; Bon I, 385. This classification of levels of preman has a strong literary-dramatic component. On one important level, it represents a categorization--of a sort common in later rhetorical treatises--of the diverse moods of the nāyikā ("heroine," in this case preeminently Rādhā). Thus we find Rūpa illustrating the various levels of emotion described in his Ujjvalanīlamanī with quotations from his poetry and dramas (Donna M. Wulff, Drama as a Mode of Religious Realization: the Vidagdhamādhava of Rūpa Gosvāmī [Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984], p. 28-29, 149-156; Karine Schomer, "Where Have All the Rādhās Gone?: New Images of Women in Modern Hindi Poetry," in Hawley and Wulff, pp. 91-92). See chap. 6.1, 6.4.

⁷⁵CC madhya 19.178 and 23.42.

⁷⁶CC madhya 23.43-44.

⁷⁷De, VFM, p. 161; also Chakravarti, p. 254.

⁷⁸Wulff, p. 151; De, VFM, p. 161.

⁷⁹De, VFM, p. 162; Bon I, xxxvi.

⁸⁰De, VFM, p. 162.

⁸¹BRS 3.2.87, quoted by BVS, pt. 2, vol. VII, p. 358.

⁸²Majumdar, p. 319; De, VFM, p. 162; Chakravarti, p. 255. Note the frequently recurring, indeed central, idea that separation is the stimulus for the most intense emotions of love and longing. See chap. 3.4.

⁸³CC madhya 23.57.

⁸⁴Bon I, xxxviii.

⁸⁵Some of hostility displayed by the Bengal Vaiṣṇava tradition toward the Ramakrishna Mission and its teachings is no doubt due to the latter group's belief that their teacher was an avatāra of the same order as Caitanya. In fact the first claim for Ramakrishna's divine status was founded--and, it is said, vindicated--on the basis of the very categories of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava bhaktirasaśāstra that are presently being considered. The saint's learned teacher-disciple, the Bhairavī Brāmanī, declared that her "student" was experiencing levels of mahābhāva previously experienced only by Rādhā and Caitanya and that he therefore must be a divine incarnation. See Swami Nikhilananda, trans., The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna (abridged ed.; New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1974), pp. 28-31.

⁸⁶De, VFM, p. 162.

⁸⁷De, VFM, p. 163.

⁸⁸CC madhya 23.58; BVS, pt. 2, vol. IX, p. 36.

⁸⁹De, VFM, p. 163; Majumdar, pp. 319-320.

⁹⁰De, VFM, p. 163; Bon I, xlii.

⁹¹CC antya 14.91-96, trans. and abbreviated by Hardy, VB, p. 4.

⁹²Cf. St. Bernard, Sermones de diversis 8.9: "A completely refined soul . . . has but a single and perfect desire, to be introduced by the King into his chamber, to be united with him, to enjoy him" (quoted by Dimmock, Hidden Moon, p. 2).

⁹³BP 10.32.10, 10.33.30-40. See Daniel P. Sheridan, "Devotion in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Christian Love," Horizons, VIII (1981), 268-273.

⁹⁴See, e.g., Swami Vivekananda, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati Memorial Edition (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), III, 257-259; also S. Bhagavantam, ed., Summer Showers in Brindavan: Discourses by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Prasanti Nilayam: Sri Sathya Sai Education & Publication Foundation, n.d), pp. 111-112.

⁹⁵See De, VFM, pp. 264-268; Dimmock, Hidden Moon, pp. 201-204; Kinsley, Divine Player, p. 108.

⁹⁶nityasiddhasya bhāvasya prākṛtyaṃ hṛdi sādhyatā ("The manifestation in the heart of the eternally accomplished bhāva is the attainment of the goal"), BRS 1.2.2b; Bon, 59. Cf. CC madhya 22.107: nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-premā 'sādhyā' kabhu naya / śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya, BVS, pt. 2, vol. VIII, p. 389.

⁹⁷CC madhya 8.154. The Advaita Vedānta made this formula current as the "essential definition" (svarūpa-lakṣana) of Brahman.

⁹⁸CC madhya 8.155. The authority here is VP 1.12.69, quoted at CC madhya 8.156.

⁹⁹De, VFM, p. 213.

¹⁰⁰hlādinira sāra nāma aṃśa, tara 'prema' nāma / ānanda-cinmaya-rasa premera ākhyāna // premera parama-sāra mahābhāva' jani / sei mahābhāva-rūpa rādā-tākurani, CC madhya 8.159-160; BVS, pt. 2, vol. III, pp. 187-188.

¹⁰¹CC madhya 8.160.

¹⁰²In Madhusūdana's theory, the mind takes on the form of the Lord; here, the Lord's power, or a fraction thereof, takes on the form of the mind.

¹⁰³BRS 1.3.4; Bon I, 334-335.

¹⁰⁴Chakravarti, p. 186.

¹⁰⁵kṛṣṇake āhlāde, tā 'te nāma--'hlādinī' / se śakti-dvāre sukha āsvāde apani // sukha-rūpa kṛṣṇa kare sukha āsvādāna / bhakta-gane sukha dite 'hlādinī'--kāraṇa, CC madhya 8.157-158; BVS, pt. 2, vol. III, pp. 186-187. Note that hlādinīśakti is said to include as well as transcend the "lower" energies of saṃdhinī ("existence") and saṃvit ("consciousness"). Hence, bhakti as hlādinī is not only bliss, its existence is independent and fully real, and it requires no external consciousness to experience itself. The emphasis on bhakti as the experience of bliss, as

opposed to the state of bliss suggested by Advaitic metaphysics, may be found at least as early as Hemādri, Vopadeva's commentator, who writes: "This [bhakti] is even greater than liberation, for while in liberation there is the state of bliss, in bhakti there is the experience of bliss" (sā ca . . . siddher garīyasī kaivalyād adhikā, kaivalye sukhatvaṃ bhaktau sukhānubhāvaḥ, Hemādri's Kaivalyadīpikā, quoted by Mishra, p. 253, note 1 [my trans.]). The inclusion of consciousness in bhakti is stressed by Baladeva in his Siddhāntaratna. According to his theory, devotion is not the hlādinīśakti alone but rather the combined essence of the two powers hlādinī and saṃvit (hlādinīsāra-samavetasamvitsārarūpa, quoted by De, VFM, p. 269, note 5). In this connection it is interesting that Madhusūdana, in stanza 1 of the BR, defines bhakti as "the experience of bliss" (sukhasamvit). More will be said about this in chap. 5.

¹⁰⁶The debt that the Gosvāmins owe to monistic tantric thought has been increasingly recognized. See De, VFM, pp. 20-21; Masson and Patwardan, I, 4; Dimmock, Hidden Moon, pp. 81-83; Vaudeville, p. 11. Shrivatasa Gosvāmi, a modern exponent of the Gauḍīya tradition, writes:

"A single non-dual Being effulgent with absolute bliss cannot enjoy itself any more than sugar can taste its own sweetness. Hence the absolutely blissful one, for the manifestation of its eternal self-enjoyment, polarizes its singularity into 'he' and 'she.' Non-dual in essence, it becomes dual in function. . . . this functional duality implies the split of the Absolute into power or potency (śakti), . . . and the possessor of power (śaktimān)" ("Rādhā: The Play and Perfection of Rasa," in Hawley and Wulff, pp. 74-75).

¹⁰⁷De, VFM, p. 209.

¹⁰⁸"When Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhā, he enchants even Cupid; otherwise, though ravishing the whole world, he himself is enchanted by Cupid" (rādhāsaṃge yadā bhāti tadā madanamohanah / anyathā viśvamohō 'pi svayaṃ madananamohitaḥ, Govindalīlāmṛta, 13.29; quoted by Majumdar, p. 291 [my trans.]). "By himself, Kṛṣṇa is advaya-jñāna-tattva [the principle of incomparable knowledge], with Rādhā He is advaya-rasa-tattva [the principle of incomparable relishing of bliss]" (Majumdar, p. 272-273, 292).

¹⁰⁹See 4.3.1; De, VFM, p. 223; Majumdar, pp. 273-274.

¹¹⁰De, VFM, pp. 253-258.

¹¹¹Chakravarti, p. 196-197.

¹¹²De, VFM, p. 225.

¹¹³De, VFM, pp. 81-82, note 1; Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 52.

¹¹⁴De, VFM, p. 110; Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 53.

¹¹⁵CC madhya 1.179, 186, quoted and trans. by Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 220, note 18.

¹¹⁶Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 53.

¹¹⁷Dimmock, Hidden Moon, p. 71.

¹¹⁸Quoted and trans. by Dimmock, "Doctrine and Practice," p. 52.

NOTES

CHAPTER FIVE

¹BR 1.2; JSP, p. 32. For all references to BR 1, see the translation in chap. 7.

²BR 1, sec. III; JSP, p. 5-6.

³tam paramam niratisayam puruṣartham vadanti rasajñāh . . . tad anubhavitāras ca, BR 1, sec. V; JSP, 11-12.

⁴See chap. 2.5.3. Even as late as the 17th century, Dharmarāja writes: "mokṣa alone is the supreme goal of life" (mokṣa eva paramapurūṣārthaḥ, Dharmarāja Adhvarin, Vedāntaparibhāṣā, ed. with an English translation by S. S. Suryanarayana Śāstri [Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Center, 1971], p. 2).

⁵tajjanyasukhasyaiva puruṣārthatve, BR 1, sec. VII; JSP, p. 14.

⁶dukhāsambhinnasukhaḥ hi paramaḥ puruṣārtha iti, BR 1, sec. VI; JSP, p. 12. Cp. "Bliss alone is the goal of life" (sukham eva puruṣārthaḥ, BR 1, sec. VI; JSP, p. 13); "bliss, by itself, is the independent goal of life" (sukhañ ca . . . tad eva svatantraḥ puruṣārthaḥ, BR 1, sec. VI; JSP, p. 14); "bliss alone is the goal of life" (sukhamātram puruṣārthaḥ, BR 1, sec. VII; JSP, p. 16).

⁷nirupamasukhasamvidrūpam asprṣṭaduḥkham, BR 1.1; JSP, p. 1.

⁸bhagavadbhaktiyogasyāpi duḥkhāsambhinnasukhatvenaiva paramapurūṣārthatvam, BR 1, sec. VII; JSP, p. 15.

⁹mokṣasya . . . paramānandarūpatvena tu tasya puruṣārthatvam vedāntavādino vadanti, BR 1, sec. VI; JSP, p. 15.

¹⁰"The bliss of devotion is the goal of life in its own right, just like the bliss of perfect meditation" (samādhisukhasyeva bhaktisukhasyāpi svatantra-

puruṣārthatvāt, BR 1, sec. VII; JSP, p. 16). There is good indication that Madhusūdana, like Vidyāraṇya and perhaps other later Advaitins, accepts yoga as an independent path to mokṣa. See below, chap. 9.2.

¹¹It eventually becomes apparent that bhakti is the highest form of bliss and hence, in effect, by itself the one paramapuruṣārtha. See below, 5.8-9.

¹²drutasya bhagavaddharmād dhārāvāhikatām gatā / sarveṣe manasi vṛttir bhaktir ity abhidhiyate, BR 1.3; JSP, p. 33.

¹³See chap. 3.3.

¹⁴Compare YS 3.2, Śaṅkara's definition of upāsana above (chap. 2.5.7), and Rāmānuja's identification of bhakti and upāsana (chap. 1.5).

¹⁵See chap. 7, note 30.

¹⁶tadākārataiva hi sarvatra vṛttiśabdārtho 'smākaṃ darśane, BR 1, sec. XII; JSP, p. 34

¹⁷See BR 1, sec. XXI.

¹⁸sarveṣaviṣayavṛttiḥ / bhagavadākāratety arthaḥ, BR 1, sec. XII; JSP, p. 34.

¹⁹bhajanam antaḥkaranasya bhagavadākāratārūpam bhaktiḥ, BR 1, sec. X (JSP, 21); dravibhāvapūrvikā hi manaso bhagavadākāratā . . . bhaktiḥ, BR 1, sec. XI (JSP, p. 27).

²⁰For a discussion of the theory of rasa and its relation to bhakti, see chap. 6.

²¹See S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, trans., The Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha of Appayya Dīkṣita, vol. I (Madras: University of Madras, 1935), I, 35-42, 161-170; Divanji, pp. 67, 93, 96-97, 111, 124, 236ff.

²²ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyam Iśvaraḥ, ajñānapratibimbiṭaṃ caitanyaṃ jīva iti . . . mukhyo vedāntasiddhāntaḥ, SB 1; Divanji, p. 29. See GAD 7.14, quoted below, note 45; also Gupta, p. 128.

²³paramānandaś ca bhagavān manasi pratibimbitas sthāyibhāvatām āśādyā rasatām āśādayatīti bhaktirasasya paramānandarūpatvaṃ nirvivādam, BR 1, sec. XVIII; JSP, p. 45.

²⁴bimbam eva hi upādhiṣṭhatvena pratīyamānam pratibimbam, BR I, sec. XVIII; JSP, p. 45.

²⁵pratibimbasya paramārthikatvāt, SB I; Divanji, p. 28.

²⁶Mahadevan, p. 221; both Vācaspati and Padmapāda advocate this view. See Suryanarayana Sastri, SLS, p. 31.

²⁷According to Dasgupta (IV, 352-353), two teachers of Vallabha's school, Puruṣottama (seventeenth century) and Gopeśvara (late eighteenth century), criticise this very theory. Both see that the notion that bhakti is a reflection of God in the melted mind would make bhakti identical with God, and both object to it on that ground. Madhusūdana himself feigns to back off from the full implications of this view by making an apparent concession: "This does not, however, result in the identity of the objective cause (ālambanavibhāva) and the permanent emotion because the distinction between original and reflection is well known in the world, like the distinction between the jīva and the Lord" (nāpy ālambanavibhāvasthāyibhāvayor aikyam, bimbapratibimbabhāvena bhedasya vyavahārasiddhatvād Iśajīvayor iva, BR I, sec. XVIII; JSP, p. p. 45). I cannot believe, however, that this is Madhusūdana's final position. The very point of the pratibimbavāda in Advaita, as the author of the BR well knows, is to provide a conceptual antidote to the common sense distinction between jīva and Iśvara. It is also common knowledge that what is accepted as true "in the world" (vyavahāra) is, for an Advaitin, no criterion of ultimate truth (pāramārtha). Therefore, despite this seeming capitulation to the more common sense view contained in the objection--which seems to be that of an aesthician rather than a Vedāntin--I must conclude that Madhusūdana holds fast to the Advaitic position that the reflection is only apparently different from the original. He wants, in fact, to exploit it in service of his effort to raise the ontological status of bhakti in the direction of ultimacy.

²⁸Gupta, pp. 204-205.

²⁹Note that in his discussion of bhaktirasa in BR 3, Madhusūdana makes a clear distinction between the rasa and the vṛtti which manifests it. See chap. 6.5.

³⁰mukunda iti bhaktiyogasya viṣayanirdeśaḥ / sarvāntaryāmi sarveśvara eva bhaktirasālambanavibhāva iti vakṣyate, BR I, sec. X; JSP, p. 16.

³¹drute citte praviṣṭā yā govindākāratā sthirā / yā bhaktir ity abhīhitā . . ., BR 2.1; JSP, p. 140.

³²bhajanīyasvarūpanirṇayārthaṃ bhaktānām api tad-
vicārasya vāśyakatvac ca, BR I, sec. XI; JSP, pp. 31-32.

³³vibhum iti sarvadeśavyāpakatvaṃ, nityam iti
sarvakālavāpakatvaṃ, pūrṇaṃ ity advitīyataya
sarvadvaitabhramadhiṣṭhānatvaṃ, bodhasukhātmakam iti
niratīśayapumarthatvaṃ darśitam, BR I, sec. XXII; JSP, p.
64.

³⁴"sarvañ khalv idam brahma tajjalān" iti śrutyā
bhagavadekodbhavatvena bhagavadekasthititvena
bhagavadekalayatvena ca . . . bodhanāt, BR I, sec. XXIII;
JSP, p. 76.

³⁵sarvādhiṣṭhānasanmātraṃ paripūrṇasaccid-
ānandaghanam bhagavantam advayam ātmānam, BR I, sec. XXIII;
JSP, p. 77.

³⁶See chap. 2.4 and note 37 thereon.

³⁷mām eva sarvopādhivirahitam cidānandasadātmānam
akhaṇḍam, GAD 7.14; Pan, p. 360. Cp. the following
statement from the introduction to the GAD: "The Blessed
Lord, the Supreme Bliss, is established as the meaning of
the word That [in the sentence 'Thou art That']" (bhagavān
paramānandas tātpadārtho 'vadhāryate, GAD intro., vs. 9;
Pan, p. 3).

³⁸tathā coktaṃ brahmaṇā bhagavantaṃ śrīkṛṣṇaṃ prati
"ekas tvam ātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ satyaḥ svajyotir ananta
ādyaḥ / nityo 'kṣaro 'jasrasukho nirañjanaḥ pūrṇaḥ 'dvayaḥ
mukta upādhitō 'mṛtaḥ" iti / sarvopādhiśūya ātmā brahma tvam
ity arthaḥ . . . bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasya ca sarva-
kalpanādhiṣṭhānatvena paramārthasatyanirupādhibrahma-
rūpatvāt, GAD 14.27; Pan, p. 607.

³⁹Gupta, p. 207.

⁴⁰anavachinnacidānandaghanasya bhagavatasya
sphuraṇāt, BR I, sec. XVIII; JSP, p. 49.

⁴¹"Consciousness, in reality the supreme bliss,
shines as limited by various objects of which it is the
material cause" (tattadviśayāvacchinatvena bhāsate vastutaḥ
paramānandarūpam viśayopādānacaitanyam, BR I, sec. XVIII;
JSP, p. 48). For an equation of bliss and mokṣa, see note 9
above.

⁴²See below at note 54.

43 "The most distinctive note in Advaita is probably that of pure, undifferentiated or objectless consciousness. To be sure, a distinction between two kinds of awareness--nirvikalpaka or construction-free and savikalpaka or construction-filled--is a common one in Indian philosophy by Śaṅkara's time, especially as found in the Yoga systems of Buddhism and Hinduism. But Advaita elevates the distinction to new heights by identifying construction-free awareness with reality, Brahman" (Potter, Advaita, p 92).

44 See Vedāntasāra 193-198; Swami Nikhilananda, trans., Vedāntasāra or Essence of Vedānta of Sadānanda Yogīndra (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), pp. 109-111.

45 sa ced bimbabhūtaṃ bhagavantam anantaśaktiṃ māyā-niyantāraṃ sarvavidyaṃ sarvaphaladātāraṃ anīṣam ānandaghana-mūrtim anekān avatāraṃ bhaktānugrahāya vidadhatam ārādayati paramagurum, GAD 7.14; Pan, p. 360.

46 Suryanarayana Sastri, SLS, pp. 38-40.

47 bhagavadvyatiriktaṃ sarvam . . . māyikaṃ . . . / bhagavān eva satyaḥ, BR 1, sec. XXVI; JSP, pp. 86-87.

48 mayy eva saguṇe brahmaṇi manaḥ . . . ādhatsva . . . nivatsyasi labdhajñānaḥ san madātmanā mayy eva śuddhe brahmaṇi eva, GAD 12.8; Pan, 508.

49 "Since it is a determinant of knowledge, the vṛtti is figuratively spoken of as knowledge. This has been stated in the Vivarāṇa: 'Because the vṛtti of the mind is figuratively referred to as knowledge' (jñānavacchedakatvāc ca vṛttau jñānatvopacāraḥ / tad uktam vivarāṇe "antaḥkaraṇavṛttau jñānatvopacārāt" iti, Vedāntaparibhāṣā, ed. Suryanarayana Sastri, pp. 7-8.

50 satyaṃ jñānam anataṃ brahma, TU 2.1.1.

51 Gupta, p. 172.

52 nāmāntareṇa brahmavidyaiva bhagavadbhaktiḥ . . . vyartho 'yam vicārārambhaḥ, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 26.

53 svarūpasādhanaaphalādhikārivailakṣaṇyāt, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 26.

54 dravībhāvapūrvikā hi manaso bhagavadākārataḥ savikalpakavṛttirūpā bhaktiḥ, dravībhāvanupetaḥ 'dviṭīyatma-mātrāgocārā nirvikalpakamanovṛttir brahmavidyā, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 26.

55 Gupta, pp. 34, 87.

⁵⁶brahmaṇo jñānaviṣayatāsamhaye 'pi jñānasya brahmaviṣayatā vartate, sā ca tadbimbagrāhakatvaṃ vā, anyad eva vā kiṃcid anirvacanīyam, VKL 47; R. D. Karmarkar, ed. and trans., Vedāntakalpalatikā, (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, 1962), p. 108.

⁵⁷brahmākārāparokṣapramā, VKL 47; Karmarkar, p. 109.

⁵⁸tatra cānubhava eva eva śaraṇam, VKL 47, Karmarkar, p. 110.

⁵⁹bhagavadguṇagarimagranthanarūpagranthaśravanam bhaktisādhanam, tattvamasyādivedāntamahāvākhyam brahmavidyā sādhanam, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 27.

⁶⁰Compare the formulaic summary of Advaitic spiritual discipline as śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana with the "nine-fold devotion" of the BP 7.5.23-24: śravaṇa, kīrtana, etc.

⁶¹See chap. 4, note 6.

⁶²cittasya bhagavadākāratāyāḥ svabhāvikatvena hetvanapekṣāyāṃ śāstrasya kvopayoga itī anyākāratā-virodhībhagavadākāratāsampanādana ity avehi / . . . bhagavadākāratā . . . śāstrajanyā, BR 1, sec. XXIII; JSP, p. 71.

Since here, as in the rest of the BR, we are almost swimming in a sea of quotations from the BP, we must assume that the scripture being referred to is that purāṇa, functioning for the bhakta, at least for the purposes of the present work, as the śruti does for the Advaitin. Note, however, that Madhusūdana does not explicitly state which scripture is intended. The meaning of the word śāstra is somewhat ambiguous: it is also used by Advaitins to refer to the Vedic texts. See chap. 7, notes 237 and 291, pt. VI.

⁶³prāṇimātrasya bhaktau adhikārah, brahmavidyāyān tu sādhanacatuṣṭayasampannasya paramahaṃsaparivrājikasya, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 27.

⁶⁴bhagavadviṣayakapremaprakarṣo bhaktiphalam, sarvānarthamūlājñānanivṛttir brahmavidyāphalam, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 27.

⁶⁵etādṛṣena bhagavadākāreṇa manogatenānādi-kālapraviṣṭāsankhyaviṣayākārāṇām kavalīkaraṇāt tanmātrapariśphūrtyā kṛtakṛtyo bhavati, BR 1, sec. XXII; JSP, p. 64-65.

⁶⁶bhagavadākāratā . . . śāstrajanyā tu sādhanopakrame parokṣeva bhāsamānā 'bhyāsakrameṇa

viṣayākāratāṃ śanaiśśanais tirodadhatī sādhanā-
paripākenāparokṣatāṃ nītā satī tām samḍlaghātāṃ upahanti, BR
1, sec. XXIII; JSP, p. 71.

⁶⁷ayam atra niṣkarṣaḥ--citte svākārasamarpakā ye
viṣayās te bhagavadvyatirikṭā na bhavanti, bhagavaty
adhyastatvāt . . . / ata eva bhagavadākārasphūrtyā te sarve
nivartamānās tadrūpā eva bhavati, adhiṣṭhānājñāna-
nivartyatvād adhyastānām, BR 1, sec. XXIII; JSP, p. 76.

⁶⁸See chaps. 3.2, 4.3.2.

⁶⁹See BR 1, sec. X.

⁷⁰nirupamasukhasaṃvidrūpam asprṣṭaduḥkham, BR 1.1;
JSP, p. 1.

⁷¹sādhana-catuṣṭaya. See chap. 2.5.5; chap. 7, note
112.

⁷²nanu evaṃ sati bhaktisukhād vairāgyāsambhavana
mumukṣutvasambhavāt tadadhikārikacaturlakṣaṇamimāṃsārambho
na syād iti cet, satyam, bhaktisukhāsaktān prati tasyā
anārambhāt / . . . bhaktisukhād vairāgyam na syād iti tv
iṣṭam eva nā 'pāditam, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, pp. 31-32.

⁷³See BR 1, sec. XXIV; JSP, pp. 79-80.

⁷⁴paravairāgyasya liṅgaṃ mokṣaparyantasakalaphala-
nirapekṣatvam, BR 1, sec. XXIV; JSP, p. 80.

⁷⁵BP 3.29.13; 9.4.67; 11.20.33-34.

⁷⁶bhaktasya saṃsāramokṣasyāvaśyakatvāt, BR 1, sec.
VII; JSP, p. 16.

⁷⁷prathamam bhagavatprabodhas, tataḥ paraṃ vairāgyam
tataḥ premalakṣaṇā bhaktiḥ, BR 1, sec. XXV; JSP, p. 85.

⁷⁸See chap. 4.3.3, note 49.

⁷⁹bhagavadvyatiriktaṃ sarvam āgamāpāyitvāt svapnavan
māyikaṃ tucchaṃ duḥkharūpaṃ ca heyam / bhagavān eva satyas
svaprakāśaparamānandarūpo nityo vibhuś copādeya iti jñānam
ity arthaḥ, BR 1, sec. XXVI; JSP, pp. 86-87.

⁸⁰BP 11.9.2-3, 11.19.7; BG 7.16-19.

⁸¹For example, "The jñānin is the very Self, not
other than Me" (jñāni tv ātmaiva nānyo matta iti, SGB 7.18;
Pan, p. 364.) See also SGB on 18.55, quoted in chap. 2 at
note 104.

⁸²mām ātmatvena jñānavāñ jñāñī ātmaiva na matto bhinnah kiñ tv aham eva sa iti, GAD 7.18; Pan, pp. 364-65. See also GAD, intro., verse 39 (Pan, p. 7), and 18.54 (Pan, p. 741).

⁸³vāsudevātiriktaṃ sarvaṃ satyan nāsti māyikatvāt, vāsudeva evātmavāt priyatamas satya ity arthaḥ, BR 1, sec. XXVI; JSP, p. 88.

⁸⁴See BR 1, sec. XXIX; JSP, p. 93.

⁸⁵For "permanent emotion" (sthāyibhāva) and other terms of Sanskrit aesthetics, see chap. 6.

⁸⁶pratyagātmavarūpasya sthūlasūkṣmadehadvayā tiriktatvena sāksātkāraṣ ṣaṣṭhi bhūmikā, JSP, p. 126; evaṃ śuddhe tvampadalakṣye 'vagate tatpadalakṣyena sahaḥbheda-jñānaṃ bhavati, JSP, p. 128. See BR 1, sec. XXIX, note 291, pt. VI.

⁸⁷anyathā dehendriyādivikṣepeṇa jātayā api rater anirvāhāt, BR 1, sec. XXIX; JSP, pp. 126-127. See BR 1, note 291, pt. VI.

⁸⁸jīvanmuktānām api bhagavadbhaktipratipādanāt, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 32. On BP 1.7.10, see chaps. 3.2, 9.3.1 (note 22).

⁸⁹See BR 1, sec. XXII, commentary on stanza 31.

⁹⁰A comparable exaltation of the bliss of bhakti over the bliss, not of mokṣa, but of yogic meditation occurs in a marvelous verse in the invocation to chap. 13 of the GAD, quoted in my introduction, note 24.

⁹¹See chap. 4.3.2. This kind of thinking is common among Vaiṣṇavas, with the difference of course that they do not regard the jīva or ātman as identical with Brahman. Yāmuna, in his Gītārthasaṃgraha writes: "When all nescience has vanished and one has perceived the ātman which is attendant on God, then one may acquire perfect bhakti and thereby attain God's paradise" (vs. 26, trans. J. A. B. van Buitenen, Rāmānuja on the Bhagavad Gita [Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass, 1968], p. 179). Rāmānuja himself teaches in his commentary on the Gītā that Self-realization (ātmāvalokana) must precede true devotion: "Through jñānayoga one arrives at true contemplation of the realizing ātman. This contemplation, again, is propaedeutic to bhaktiyoga; through bhakti alone one is capable of realizing God" (van Buitenen, Rāmānuja, pp. 65-66).

Note that, while Rāmānuja and his followers reject the idea of jīvanmukti, holding that liberation is possible only after the soul's departure from the body, Madhva, Vallabha, and the Gosvāmins all admit that this state is possible. The Vaiṣṇavas do not, however, place the high valuation on liberation-in-life that the Śaṅkara tradition does.

⁹²See chap. 4.3.1.

⁹³See Hemādri's dictum regarding the superiority of bhakti to mokṣa, discussed at chap. 4, note 105.

⁹⁴See above, note 77.

⁹⁵BR 1, sec. XXIX, stanza 36; JSP, p. 93.

⁹⁶bhaktisukhadhārāyās sarvadeśakālaśarīrendriyādi-sādharāṇyena brahmavidyāphalavad upabhoktuṃ śakyatvāt . . . niratiśayopapattēh, BR 1, sec. XI; JSP, p. 30.

NOTES

CHAPTER SIX

¹Sanskrit aesthetics generally goes by the name alaṃkārasāstra, literally, "the science of [poetic] ornamentation." It is also called the rasasāstra ("science of aesthetic sentiment"), due to its tendency to concentrate, in its later period, on the theory of rasa. It is concerned almost exclusively with problems of poetics and drama, and is therefore more limited in scope than the more broadly conceived Western philosophic discipline known as aesthetics. I follow established convention here in referring to it as "aesthetics" or "poetics," and its writers as "aestheticians" or "rhetoricians."

²Cf. Nāṭyaśāstra 22.99, 148: "Most people always want happiness. And women, of infinite variety, are the source of happiness. . . . One practices austerities for the sake of religion. And after all, we are (only) concerned with religion because we want to be happy. The source of happiness is women, and we want to make love to them" (bhūyiṣṭham eva loko 'yam sukham icchati sarvadā / sukhasya hi striyo mūlaṃ nānaśilāś ca tāḥ punaḥ // . . . dharmārtham hi tapaścaryā sukhārtham dharma iṣyate / sukhasya mūlaṃ pramadaś ca tāsu sambhoga iṣyate, quoted and trans. by Masson and Patwardan, Aesthetic Rapture: The Rasādhyāya of the Nāṭyaśāstra [Poona: Deccan College, 1970], I, 37; II, 52, note 308).

A study of the religious dimensions of the rasaśāstra as formulated by the great Śaiva mystic Abhinavagupta is not possible here. See K. C. Pandey, Comparative Aesthetics, Vol. I: Indian Aesthetics (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Studies, Vol. II; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1959), chap. 2, "The Śaiva Basis of Abhinava's Aesthetics"; also Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969).

³See intro., note 8.

⁴See my exposition of the five primary bhaktirasas of the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas, below, sec. 6.4.

⁵Donna M. Wulff, Drama as a Mode of Religious Realization: The Vidadghamādhava of Rūpa Gosvāmī (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 8-11. See David Kinsley's lucid exposition of the Kṛṣṇaite theology of līlā in The Divine Player (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), chaps. 2-3.

⁶Norvin Hein, The Miracle Plays of Mathurā (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), chap. 9; Wulff, chap. 2.

⁷Wulff, pp. 22-23.

⁸Hein, pp. 259-262, quotes Harivaṃśa 2.21; VP 5.13.24-29; BP 10.29-30, 11.11.23.

⁹The extent to which Rūpa in his BRS envisioned the devotees entering into the devotional moods of the main characters--such as Nanda, Yaśodā, the prominent gopīs, and especially Rādhā--is actually the subject of much dispute, the details of which I cannot enter into here. Suffice it to say that the later commentators tend to confine the devotees to the role of spectators--as mañjarīs or maid-servants of the gopīs, who derive satisfaction by facilitating the trysts of their mistresses with Kṛṣṇa. "The commentators . . .," writes Wulff, "are more concerned than Rūpa to maintain distance, not only between the devotees and the Lord, but also between the devotee and Kṛṣṇa's close associates, who are elsewhere classified by Jīva as parts of Kṛṣṇa himself" (p. 31). See Wulff, pp. 29-34.

¹⁰Kinsley, The Divine Player, p. 159. See pp. 153-161 of Kinsley's book for a clear exposition of Bengal Vaiṣṇava devotional practice.

Even today, serious devotees in Brīḍavan strive to enter into Kṛṣṇa's eternal līlā by adjusting their lives to synchronize with the child-god's diurnal routine, as it varies through the liturgical year. To aid the bhakta's imagination, the eight watches of the Lord's day, and the divine sports that he and his companions enact therein, are described in loving detail in such texts as the Govinda-līlāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. The routine of the temples of Brīḍavan likewise follows the Lord's daily round, thus providing ritual support for the devotee's recollection. See Shrivatsa Goswami, pp. 79-80, 339 (note 36); John S. Hawley, At Play with Krishna: Pilgrimage Dramas from Brīḍavan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 6-9.

¹¹Kinsley, Divine Player, p. 161.

¹²Wulff, pp. 2, 9; Hardy, VB, pp. 559-557.

¹³We find references to poetic terms in the Vedas and in Pāṇini's grammar (fourth century B.C.E.). See Edwin Gerow, "Classical Sanskrit Aesthetics," in Joseph W. Elder, ed. Lectures in Indian Civilization (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 88-89. On the date of the NS, see S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics (2nd rev. ed.; Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukopadhyay, 1960), I, 18-31. Masson and Patwardhan remark: "While an exact date seems out of the question, we are inclined to date the text within two or three hundred years of the third century A.D." (Aesthetic Rapture, I, 1).

¹⁴Sometimes, as "mood," though "sentiment" is more popular, having the advantage of suggesting refined, pleasurable emotion. In the works of A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi, founder of the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement, the term is translated as "mellow" or "transcendental mellow."

¹⁵Ras, "to taste," is the Sanskrit root. According to the standard etymology, "Rasa is that which is tasted or enjoyed" (rasyate āsvāyate iti rasah, quoted by Chakravarti, p. 345, note 9 [my trans.]). The word can also mean "sap," "juice," "liquid extract," "elixir," "essence," "pith," "pleasure," "delight," or even "bliss."

¹⁶rāse sārāś camatkāro yaṃ vinā na rasorasah (Alaṅkāraustubha, 5.7; quoted by Chakravarti, p. 345, note 10).

¹⁷NS 6.15-16; De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 275.

¹⁸The Bengal Vaiṣṇava tradition uses this same term to designate the first appearance of bhakti in the heart of the devotee. See chap. 4.3.4.

¹⁹NS 6.17.

²⁰De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 133-134, note 40. The first explanation is referred to by Jīva Gosvāmin as a rule of the exponents of the rasaśāstra: viruddhair aviruddhair vā bhavair vicchidyate na yaḥ ātmabhāvaṃ nayaty anyān sa sthāyī lavaṇākaraḥ (quoted by Chakravarti, p. 349).

²¹rasikā eva rasāsvāde योग्याह, quoted by S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 54 (my trans.).

²²The question of the nature and original source of the sthāyibhāva of bhaktirasa is a crucial one for both the

Vaiṣṇva theologians and Madhusūdana. In their view, as we shall see, it is not derived from empirical experience.

²³De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic, p. 12-13, 53; De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 133-134; Kinsley, pp. 150-151

²⁴De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 261.

²⁵Quoted by A. K. Coomaraswamy, The Dance of Shiva (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1985), p. 35.

²⁶De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic, p. 13.

²⁷v. Raghavan, The Number of Rasa-s (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Center, 1975), p. xviii.

²⁸De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 275-277. The encyclopedic Agni Purāna has a section on rasa which, though it recognizes śānta as a ninth sentiment, is highly idiosyncratic in its approach. It made, so far as I can see, no special contribution to the religious development of the rasa theory being discussed here. See De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 200-206.

²⁹Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 119; De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 275.

³⁰Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, pp. 119-142.

³¹Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 122.

³²De, Sanskrit Poetics, II, 278-279.

³³It also shows that the Vaiṣṇavas' designation of the rasaśāstra as an essentially "secular" (laukika) discipline is not entirely inappropriate, even in the context of traditional India. Cf. note 2.

³⁴De, VFM, p. 124, note 1; Sanskrit Poetics, II, 268, note 19.

³⁵Hardy, VB, p. 560.

³⁶This at least partially explains the importance in Vaiṣṇava spirituality of śravaṇa, the "hearing" of the accounts of Kṛṣṇa's life. See sec. 6.1, above.

³⁷Hardy, VB, p. 561. James D. Redington

(Vallabhācārya on the Love Games of Kṛṣṇa [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983], pp. 3-5) argues that the BP itself has a distinctly "aesthetic orientation." This, he feels, is made most obvious in the final verse of the opening invocation: "Drink, O connoisseurs (rasika) on earth who are endowed with emotion (bhāvika), drink constantly [of this] Bhāgavata-nectar (rasa), [this] vessel that is the fruit fallen from the wish-fulfilling tree of the Veda, full of the nectar (rasa) flowing from the mouth of Śuka" (nigamakalpatārora galitam phalaṃ śukamukhād amṛta-dravasamyutam / pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam muhur aho rasikā bhūvi bhāvukāḥ, BP 1.1.3, my translation). Redington refers to BP 7.1.10, 10.29.15, and 10.43.17, all of which could be construed as depicting characters acting out various sentiments in accordance with the canons of classical Sanskrit aesthetics. On this basis, he develops (p. 5) the interesting, and perhaps defensible, thesis that the BP is in an important sense a secondary work--in that it makes conscious use of the categories, aesthetic and otherwise, of scholastic traditions that were already well developed.

³⁸sa navadhā bhaktaḥ. bhaktirasasyaiva hāsya-śṛṅgāraकरुणाराद्राभयानकबिभत्सासंतद्विभुताविरा-रुपेणानुभवāt (quoted by Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 143). Cp. Madhusūdana's notion of devotion "mixed with the nine sentiments" (BR 1.1).

³⁹According to Hemādri, the sthāyin of bhaktirasa is "the fixation of the mind [on God] by any means" (kenāpy upāyena manoniveśa, Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 143). Cp. BP 7.1.31.

⁴⁰Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, pp. 143-144.

⁴¹See Hardy, VB, pp. 561-562.

⁴²This is an area that cries for further research. Pereira writes that "Vallabha did not create his theology of joy in a vacuum, but bases his structure on the theory of aesthetics, which originates in the work of Bharata" (José Pereira, Hindu Theology: A Reader [Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday, 1976], p. 317). While this may well be true, I have been able to confirm an interest in a detailed application of the categories of rasa theory to bhakti only in Vallabha's followers. Pereira gives no documentation for Vallabha's interest in the subject, but he does note (p. 317) that the great poet and aesthetician Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, who flourished at about the same time as Madhusūdana (ca. 1620-65), was a member of Vallabha's sampradāya.

Redington (pp. 7-11) shows that, while both Vallabha and his son Viṭṭhala (ca. 1518-1588) understand the love-play of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs in terms of aesthetic categories, especially śṛṅgārarasa, the use of the technical terminology of poetics is more prominent in Viṭṭhala, e.g.: "The love-making that occurred after that was nothing but His gift of His own innate bliss according to the canons of rasa, since His very essence is rasa, as is declared in scripture: "He, verily, is rasa" [TŪ 2.7.1] (tadanantaram yad ramaṇam, tat tu "raso vai sa" iti śruteh svarūpasya rasātmakatvād rasarītyā svarūpānandadānam eva, Subodhīnī on BP 10.29.16, Viṭṭhala's interpolation; Redington, p. 369, my translation).

Majumdar's discussion of this school's theories on rasa appears to be based on the work of Viṭṭhala and a later author named Puruṣottama (b. 1660). Majumdar (p. 74, note 50) quotes the former as saying: "Rasa, the enjoyer of rasa, and bhagavat are one" (sa raso bhagavān eva rasavāṃś caiva ekaḥ, Majumdar, pp. 70-71; 74, notes 50-51; for dates see Dasgupta, IV, pp. 374, 377). Evidently the tendency to try to elevate the status of bhaktirasa by closely identifying it with Kṛṣṇa was fairly widespread in the sixteenth century.

Dasgupta's remarks on bhaktirasa in the Vallabha school are based on the Bhaktimārtanda by Gopeśvara, but this writer was not born until 1781 (Dasgupta, IV, 350-354, 380). Hardy (VB, p. 562) credits Vallabha with the statement, "When the mind and all the senses have taken on the form of Bhagavān [bhagavadrūpatā] . . . who (which) creates pure bliss, then alone [one possesses] bhakti-rasa." A perusal of Dasgupta, Hardy's source in this case, quickly reveals, however, that the quote is not from Vallabha at all but from Gopeśvara. Nevertheless, the statement is interesting because the notion of bhagavadrūpatā ("taking on the form of Bhagavān") is so important in the BR. Intriguing in this connection also is the fact that, according to Dasgupta, both Puruṣottama and Gopeśvara reject the doctrine that bhakti is "a reflection of God in the melted heart . . . on the ground that this would make bhakti identical with God" (IV, 352-353). It is possible, therefore, that writers of Vallabha's school were, by the seventeenth century, familiar with the teachings of the BR.

It is clear that Vallabha and especially Viṭṭhala were interested in the religious applications of rasa theory. But nowhere have I been able to find evidence that they developed this interest to the extent that the Gosvāmins did.

Viṭṭhala was a younger contemporary of Madhusūdana. It is perhaps significant that, according to one of Vallabha's biographies (the Nijavarta), he was sent by his father to Madhusūdana as a student, to further his

scholastic education (P. M. Modi, Siddhanta Bindu [Allahabad: Vohra Publishers and Distributors, 1985], pp. 22-23). See my intro., note 28.

⁴³The classical statement of Vaiṣṇava bhaktirasa theory is found in Rūpa's companion works, the Bhaktirasāmrtasindhu and the Ujjvalanīlamani. In the latter, Rūpa acknowledges his debt to Vopadeva: spāṣṭham muktāphale caitad bopadevena varṇitam (quoted by Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 144). Jīva's Prītisāṃdarbha gives, according to De, a rather more metaphysical account of the subject than Rūpa, though he follows the general outline of his uncle's treatment (VFM, p. 123, note 1).

⁴⁴See De, VFM.

⁴⁵De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic, pp. 44-45, 59-60, 117-118.

⁴⁶Prof. De sees a close connection between Rūpa's work and "a prolific series of erotico-rhetorical treatises, beginning with Rudrabhaṭṭa's Śṛṅgāratilaka, in which the minute diversities of the amorous condition are elaborately analysed with surprising assiduity and acuteness" (Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic, p. 45).

⁴⁷De, Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic, p. 16.

⁴⁸Chakravarti, p. 348.

⁴⁹De, VFM, p. 149.

⁵⁰CC madhya 19.180-237; De, VFM, p. 143-149; Wulff, pp. 27-28; Shrivatsa Goswami, pp. 77-80.

⁵¹De, VFM, p. 143; Wulff, p. 27.

⁵²De, VFM, pp. 144-145.

⁵³De, VFM, p. 145; Wulff, p. 27.

⁵⁴De, VFM, pp. 272, 296; Shrivatsa Goswami, p. 79.

⁵⁵CC madhya 19. 193-200; De, VFM, pp. 153 (note 1), 303; Chakravarti, p. 261; Shrivatsa Goswami, pp. 76-77.

⁵⁶De, VFM, p. 148, 286. Note that the devotees of Rāma were also attracted to the theory of bhaktirasa and recognized the value of approaching the deity through the various sentiments. Priya Dās, a commentator on the

Bhaktamāla, endorses exactly the same five bhāvas acknowledged by the Gosvāmins. In Rāma devotionalism, however, the dāsyabhāva or servant mood, exemplified by Hanumān, is regarded as the highest. See F. R. Allchin, trans., Tulsī Dās, The Petition to Rām (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1966), pp. 57-59.

⁵⁷De, VFM, p. 149; Wulff, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁸See above, chap. 4.3.6; Chakravarti, p. 345.

⁵⁹See above, 4.3.6.

⁶⁰For a discussion of the three material qualities (guṇas), see chap., note 177.

⁶¹Chakravarti, p. 348.

⁶²Chakravarti, p. 348, 357-358; see above, chap. 4.3.1.

⁶³raso vai saḥ, TU 2.7.1; De, VFM, p. 213.

⁶⁴De, VFM, p. 285.

⁶⁵Chakravarti, p. 350, 353-355.

⁶⁶Wulff, p. 4.

⁶⁷See intro., note 38.

⁶⁸krodhaśokabhayādīnāṃ sāksātsukhavirodhinām / rasatvaṃ abhyupagataṃ tathā'nubhavamātrataḥ // ihānubhavasiddhe 'pi sahasraguṇito rasaḥ / jaḍeneva tvayā kasmāt akasmāt apalapyate, BR 2.78-79; JSP, p. 185.

⁶⁹ratir devādiviṣayā vyabhicārī tathorjitaḥ / bhāvaḥ prokto rasō neti yad uktam rasakovidaiḥ // devāntareṣu jīvatvāt parānandāprakāśanāt / tad yojyam paramānandarūpe na paramātmani, BR 2.74-75; JSP, p. 183.

⁷⁰See BR 1, sec. IV: "The permanent emotion known as love (rati) is the form of the Blessed Lord. Manifest as a rasa . . . it reveals itself as an immediate realization of the highest bliss" (rasarūpatayā 'bhivyakto bhagavadākāra-rūpo ratyākhyasthāyibhāvaḥ paramānandasākṣāt[kār]ātmakaḥ prādurbhavati, JSP, p. 10). See also BR 1, sec. XVIII (1.10 and commentary); chap. 5.5; and Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 184.

⁷¹paramānanda ātmaiva rasa ity āhur āgamāḥ, BR 3.24; JSP, p. 197.

⁷²sthāyibhāvaḥ sukhatvena vyajamāno rasaḥ smṛtaḥ //
sukhasyātmasvarūpatvāt tadādhāro na vidyate / tadvyāñjikāyā
vṛtes tu sāmājikamaṇaḥ prati, BR 3.2b-3; JSP, pp. 186, 188.

⁷³The "causative factors" are the vibhāvas, anubhāvas, and vyabhicāribhāvas. See BR 1, secs. IV, XVII and the notes thereon.

⁷⁴bhāvātritayasamsṛṣṭasthāyibhāvāvagāhinī /
samūhālanātmāikā jāyate sāttviki matiḥ // sā 'nantara-
kṣaṇe 'vaśyaṃ vyanakti sukham uttamam / tad rasaḥ
kecid ācāryas tām eva tu rasaṃ viduḥ, BR 3.12-13; JSP, p.
191.

⁷⁵See BR 1, sec. XVIII, stanzas 1.11-12 and commentary.

⁷⁶kāntādiviṣayā vā ye rasādyās tatra nedṛṣam /
rasatvaṃ puṣyate pūrṇasukhāsparsītvakāraṇāt / paripūrṇarasā
kṣudrarasebhyo bhagavadraṭiḥ / khadyotebhya ivādityaprabheva
balavatara, BR 2.76-77; JSP, p. 184.

⁷⁷BR 2.31-35; JSP, pp. 161-162.

⁷⁸Further details may be found in Gupta, pp. 220-229 and appendix. Gupta's study is largely descriptive, and more work needs to be done to determine exactly what Madhusūdana was trying to accomplish in his exposition of rasa-theory in chapters two and three of the BR. Insofar as I can determine, however, I have extracted all the material from those chapters that has a bearing on the philosophical dimensions of the issue at hand.

⁷⁹BR 2.26-28; JSP, p. 158.

⁸⁰Raghavan, Number of Rasa-s, p. 152.

⁸¹BR 2.12-13; JSP, p. 150.

⁸²BR 2.9-11; JSP, p. 147.

⁸³BR 2.36; JSP, p. 164.

⁸⁴BR 2.66-71; JSP, p. 180-182.

⁸⁵vrajadeviṣu ca spaṣṭam drṣṭam raticatuṣṭayam /
taccittālanātmāna svacittam tādrṣam bhavet, BR 2.71; JSP,
p. 182.

⁸⁶See BR 1, sec. XXIX and the notes thereon.

⁸⁷ekaḥ paramānandamayāḥ śrīśamāhātmyakāraṇaṃ //
tājanyāyāṃ drutaṃ sūddha ratir govindagocarā / etadantaṃ hi
śāstreṣu sādhanāmnānam iṣyate, BR 2.12b-13; JSP, p. 150.

⁸⁸See BR 2.12b (previous note) and 2.65 (note 85 below).

⁸⁹sūddhasattvodbhavā 'py evaṃ sādhaḥkeṣv asmaḍādiṣu /
drṣṭamātraphalā sā tu siddheṣu sanakādiṣu, BR 2.46; JSP, p.
165. On Sanaka and the four "mind-born" sons of Brahmā, see
chap. 7, note 240, below. It is perhaps significant in this
connection that Saṃkara, in the introduction to his
commentary on the BG, identifies Sanaka and the others as
the first, paradigmatic exponents of the path of
renunciation and knowledge:

"The Blessed Lord, having created the world, and being
desirous of its preservation, brought forth in the
beginning Marīci and the other Progenitors and caused
them to adopt the path of action declared in the Vedas.
Then, having brought forth others such as Sanaka,
Sanandana, and the rest, he caused them to adopt the
path of cessation from action, characterized by
knowledge and detachment" (sa bhagavān sṛṣṭvedaṃ jagat
tasya ca sthitiṃ cikīrṣur marīcyādīn agre sṛṣṭvā
prajāpatin pravṛttīlakṣaṇaṃ dharmāṃ grāhayāmāsa vedoktam
/ tato 'nyāṃs ca sanakasanandanādīn utpādya
nivṛttīdharmāṃ jñānavairāgyalakṣaṇaṃ grāhayāmāsa, Pan,
pp. 2-3))

There can be no doubt that Madhusūdana was familiar with this passage.

⁹⁰See, e.g., BP 6.13; 11.2-3, 7-9, 13. Not surprisingly, these are also among the passages that show strong non-dualist tendencies.

⁹¹rasāntaravibhāvādirāhitye tu svarūpabhāk / daśamīm
eti rasatām sanakāder ivādhikām, BR 2. 73; JSP, p. 183.

⁹²tatrānupādhiḥ sūddhā syāt sopādhir miśritoditā //
anupādhiḥ parānandamahimaikanibandhanā / bhajanīya-
guṇānantyād ekarūpaiva socyate, BR 2.64b-65; JSP, p. 179.

⁹³navarasamilitam vā kevalam vā, BR 1.1; JSP, p. 1.

⁹⁴Note that Madhusūdana calls the sixth stage of bhakti, which consists of Advaitic knowledge of the ātman, the "realization of the essential nature" (svārūpādhigatī). In the BR 1, sec. XI, Madhusūdana states that a devotee may engage in the study of the Vedānta "for the sake of determining the essential nature (svārūpa) of the object of their worship" (bhajanīyasvarūpanirṇayārthaṃ, JSP, p. 31).

So the granting to śuddhabhakti of access to the essential nature in the phrase svarūpabhāk (2.73) is probably meant to have Advaitic overtones. But the passage in question is obscure and, in the absence of any elaboration by the author, it is difficult to say exactly what he intends. See chap. 7, note 291, pt. VI.

⁹⁵ek hī prakārkā (sambhogrūp) mānā jātā hai, JSP, p. 180.

⁹⁶See chap. 4.3.5.

NOTES

CHAPTER SEVEN

¹The BR consists of three chapters, called ullāsas ("causing to shine forth," "manifestors," a term used by the aesthete Mammaṭa to designate the divisions of his celebrated Kāvya-prakāśa). The title of the first is "The Definition of the General Characteristics of Devotion" (bhaktisāmānyanirūpaṇa), which bears an interesting resemblance to the title of the first section (laharī, "wave") of Rūpa Gosvāmin's BRS, "The General Characteristics of Devotion" (bhaktisāmānya). BR 1 is accompanied by the author's own commentary (ṭikā) and contains most of the material of philosophical interest found in the text. The earliest published edition of the work (Calcutta, 1913) in fact contained only the first ullāsa, and for some time it was thought that this was the complete text. Subsequent editions, however, corrected this impression by including all three chapters. The second and third ullāsas deal with the details of rasa-theory and specify the various ways in which bhaktirasa is articulated in terms of the experience of the great devotees of the BP. They are entitled, respectively, "The Definition of the Special Varieties of Devotion" (bhaktiviśeṣanirūpaṇa) and "The Definition of the Sentiment of Devotion" (bhaktirasānirūpaṇa). Unfortunately Madhusūdana did not provide us with a commentary on this portion of the text (or, if he did, it has been lost). The result is that the meaning of many individual stanzas in the second and third ullāsas is less clear than one might hope--as is, consequently, the structure and rationale of the whole system of rasa that Madhusūdana is trying to present. For discussion of the teachings of these chapters, see above, chap. 6.5. The present translation is based on the edition of Srī Janardana Sāstrī Pāṇḍeya (Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1961), hereafter abbreviated JSP.

To avoid confusion between the frequent references in the commentary to the "verses" (ślokas) quoted by the author from the BP and other sources, and the (less frequent) reference to the "verses" (kārikas) of the BR itself, I consistently translate the former as "verse" and the latter as "stanza."

Note that the section headings given in the translation do not occur in the original Sanskrit text. I have inserted them to make the logical structure of the

discourse a little easier to grasp and to facilitate reference to important passages of the text.

²The indefinite pronoun kaṃcit, here translated as "that wondrous Being," signifies inexpressibility. The inexpressible Brahman is grasped by human consciousness in personal terms as bhagavat ("the Blessed Lord") or īśvara ("the Lord"). See note 8, below; chaps. 2.4, 5.6.

³The Lord is addressed in this verse as Kṛṣṇa. During his childhood and early youth, Kṛṣṇa lived in the house of Nanda, the chief of the cowherds of Vṛndāvana, as his foster son. See BP 10 and VP 5.

⁴"Mountain-lord," a name of Śiva, who is said to dwell on Mount Kailāsa, a remote Himalayan peak.

⁵At BP 3.12.12, Śiva as Rudra is described as having eleven forms: Manyu, Manu, Mahinasa, Mahān, Śiva, Ṛtuhvaja, Ugraretas, Bhava, Kāla, Vāmadeva, and Dhṛtavrata. BU 3.9.4 says that the Rudras are the ten vital breaths, with the Self as the eleventh. (See Walker, Hindu World [New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1968], II, 314.) As he bows, ten of Śiva's forms are reflected in Lord Kṛṣṇa's ten toenails and Śiva himself, we must suppose, assumes the eleventh.

Śiva is Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa's greatest rival for supremacy among the Hindu gods. In making him a devotee of, and therefore subservient to, Viṣṇu in this verse, Madhusūdana displays a typical Vaiṣṇava attitude. In his Bhaktisandarbha, Jīva Gosvāmin writes that deities like Śiva and Brahmā should be worshiped only (1) as great Vaiṣṇavas--i.e., devotees of Kṛṣṇa--or (2) as particular loci (adhīsthāna) or manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. Some scriptures encourage equal worship of all deities, Jīva admits, since such an attitude may be useful for the yogin or the jñānin. This way of thinking would, however, be a serious handicap for the Vaiṣṇava devotee. The latter must focus his entire devotion on Kṛṣṇa alone and subordinate all other deities to him. See De, VFM, 275.

⁶śiṣṭāgranī, "foremost among the learned (śiṣṭa)."
From the root śās ("to teach, command"), śiṣṭa suggests one who is well educated, widely read, and highly cultured. Cp. the colophon, sec. XXX. On Madhusūdana's reputation as a scholar, see my introduction above.

⁷aṅgīkurvann adau, literally, "receives at the beginning" or, perhaps, "recites at the beginning."

⁸bhagavat, literally "possessing (-vat) fortune (bhaga)," hence "blessed," "glorious," "divine," "holy." Though applied in the literature to saints and demigods as well as gods, it comes to be used especially as a title of the supreme deity. In this sense it is roughly equivalent to īśvara ("Lord"), as used in the Vedānta, but with the particular connotations of loving compassion and approachability. In the present work, the term is translated as "the Blessed Lord" or, to avoid repetition, simply "the Lord." It could just as easily have been translated by the English word "God," with which meaning modern Indian vernaculars use the Sanskrit nominative singular form bhagavān. At GAD 2.2 Madhusūdana quotes the traditional scriptural definitions of bhaga and bhagavat from the VP:

"Bhaga is the designation of the six [attributes] complete dominion, righteousness, fame, glory, detachment, and liberation' [VP 6.5.74]. 'Complete' here applies to each of the attributes. . . . He is bhagavat in whom such complete dominion and so on reside constantly and unrestrictedly. . . . 'He who knows the origin and the dissolution of all beings, their coming and going, their knowledge and ignorance, is called bhagavat' [VP 6.5.78]. . . . A designation such as bhagavat should be applied to Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa] alone" ("aiśvāryasya samagrasya dharmasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ / vairāgyasyātha mokṣasya śaṅṅā bhaga itīṅgā //" "samagrasyeti prayekam sambandhaḥ . . . etādṛśam samagram aiśvāryādikaṃ nityam apratibandhena yatra vartate bhagavān iti. . . . "utpattim ca vināśam ca bhūtānām āgatim gatim / veti vidyām avidyām ca sa vācyo bhagavān iti //" . . . etādṛśo bhagavacchabdārthaḥ śrīvāsudeva eva paryavasīta, Pan, 31-32).

⁹At the beginning of any learned treatise in Sanskrit, it is customary for the author to make the value of his work explicit for his readers by stating its four anubandhas ("indispensable elements"). These are: the viśaya (the "topic" of the work), the prayojana (the "aim" or "purpose" of the work), the sambandha (the "relation" of the work to the topic or the purpose), and the adhikārin (the "qualified person" eligible to study the work). See Vedāntasāra 5 (Nikhilananda, p. 3) and Annambhaṭṭa's Tarkasamgrāha, ed. Athalye and Bodas (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1974), p. 21. That Madhusūdana intends sambandha to be the relation between the work and its topic is made clear in section VIII, where he comments: "'I shall explain'--this is the declaration of the relation of the work to its subject matter" (tam ahaṃ vyanajmīty abhidheyasambandhanirdeśaḥ, JSP, p. 17). Since the purpose of the work is to "bring contentment to all"

(akhilatustyai, stanza 1) and since "all living beings are qualified for devotion" (prāṇimātrasya bhaktāu adhikārah, sec. XI; JSP, p. 27), no special adhikāra ("qualification") need be mentioned. This is significant, in light of the highly restrictive qualifications placed on the study of traditional Advaita.

¹⁰bhaktiyoga, "the path of devotion, of loving and intense attachment to God." See chap. 1.1, chaps. 3-6, *passim*. Note that Madhusūdana uses bhakti and bhaktiyoga as interchangeable synonyms. In this translation, bhakti is invariably rendered as "devotion."

¹¹A name of Kṛṣṇa.

¹²navarasamilitam vā kevalam vā. The nine bhaktirasas ("devotional sentiments") referred to are: (1) śṛṅgāra ("erotic love"), (2) karuṇa ("compassion"), (3) hāsyā ("mirth"), (4) prītibhayanaka ("love-in-fear"), (5) adbhuta ("wonder"), (6) yuddhavira ("heroism in battle"), (7) dānavira ("heroism in charity"), (8) vatsala ("parental affection"), and (9) preyas ("deariness" or "friendship"). The word kevala is used here, probably for metrical purposes, as a synonym for śuddha, which is described as the "tenth rasa" at BR 2.73. The idea is as follows. Devotion may be mixed, i.e., experienced in terms of the devotional mood of one or another of the participants in the Kṛṣṇa-līlā. As such, it would express one or more of the nine "sentiments" (rasas). But bhakti may also be "pure," i.e., enjoyed as simple bliss without reference to the various sentiments. Being divorced from the rasas that have their parallel in mundane human emotions, it would then have a more ascetic orientation. In the final analysis, although Madhusūdana has great regard for the ecstatic love of the gopīs, he regards the pure (śuddha) devotion of such sage-devotees as Sanaka as the highest. See chap. 6.5 for references and a discussion of Madhusūdana's theory of bhaktirasa; see chap. 6, *passim*, for rasa-theory in general.

¹³pumartham (equivalent to puruṣārtha), "goal of life" or, more literally, the "aim, end or goal of man." This term is here translated consistently by the phrase "goal(s) of life." The paramapurūṣārtha (in this verse, pumartham paramam) is the highest human goal. See the discussion of devotion vis-à-vis the four commonly accepted puruṣārthas in secs. V-VII and IX, and chaps. 4.3.2, 5.3.

¹⁴The word iha in this verse is somewhat puzzling. Although it is probably added just for metrical purposes, one could conceivably make a case for its being consciously intended to suggest the limitation of bhakti to "this world"

(iha) as opposed to the "next world" (amutra), i.e., as a statement that devotion is restricted to the state of liberation-in-life (jīvanmukti) and not experienced in disembodied liberation (vidēhamukti). This, of course, would upset the whole interpretation of the BR presented in chap. 5. It is clear, however, that Madhusūdana is trying to establish (1) that bhakti is the paramapurusaṛtha and (2) that, as such, it can be experienced eternally, both of which would be impossible if devotion was confined to the state of jīvanmukti alone. See secs. V-VII; also chaps. 5.3, 5.9, and 8.

¹⁵nirupamasukhasamvidrūpam, "the experience (samvid) of incomparable bliss (sukha)," taking sukhasamvid as "consciousness of bliss" (genitive tatpuruṣa) rather than "consciousness and bliss" (dvandva). I am indebted to Professor K. Sivaraman for this suggestion, which is important in the light of Hemādri's dictum that bhakti is the experience of bliss (sukhānubhava), while mokṣa is simply the state of bliss (sukhatva). See chap. 4, note 105. The word sukha, when connected with devotion or the aesthetic sentiments, is generally translated as "bliss," signifying happiness of a transphenomenal order. In other contexts, it can mean ordinary happiness or pleasure.

¹⁶Madhusūdana here lists the yogas in their order of priority from the devotional standpoint. As we shall soon see, the yogas of action, meditation, and knowledge are, in the BR, regarded as preliminaries to bhakti.

A yoga is a way or path of spiritual development. It involves disciplined activity aimed at preparing the practitioner for immediate, salvific experience of the transcendent, the conception of the latter varying with the particular religious context in which the effort is being carried on. A derivative of the Sanskrit root yuj, it is a cognate of the English "yoke" and suggests "means," "discipline," "endeavor," and also "joining," "union." There are many varieties of yoga in the Hindu (and Buddhist) traditions, including bhaktiyoga, which is the subject of the present work. The term, of course, means much more than the system of physical discipline, more properly known as hathayoga, that has gained some popularity in the West. Nevertheless, as the word is now commonly used in English, I leave it untranslated.

¹⁷karmayoga, the yoga based on the disinterested performance of karma ("action" in the form of duties and religious rites). See BG, chap. 3.

¹⁸The aṣṭāṅga ("eight-limbed") yoga of physical and mental discipline systematized by Patañjali in his Yoga-

sūtras (YS). The eight limbs are: (1) yama ("restraints" consisting of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possessiveness); (2) niyama ("observances," consisting of purity, contentment, austerity, scriptural study, and surrender to the Lord); (3) āsana ("posture"); (4) prāṇāyāma ("control of the breath"); (5) pratyāhāra ("withdrawal of the senses"); (6) dhāraṇa ("concentration"); (7) dhyāna ("meditation"); and (8) samādhi ("perfect meditation," "absorption," "enstasis"). See YS 2.29-32.

¹⁹jñānayoga, to be described shortly.

²⁰Unless otherwise indicated, all verse references are to the BP.

²¹I have taken the liberty in this translation of relegating the long list of rites given at this point in the text to the notes in order to avoid unnecessary and tedious complexity. The "sacraments" of the Brahmanical tradition are called saṃskāras ("consecrations"). The Hindu law books (dharmasūtras and dharmasāstras) mention some forty saṃskāras, but our text lists only eleven of the more commonly observed rites, as follows: (1) garbhādhāna ("conception"), (2) pūṃsavana ("securing a male child"), (3) śimantonnayana ("parting the hair" of the mother as symbolic preparation for delivery), (4) jātakarman ("birth ceremony"), (5) nāmakarana ("naming ceremony"), (6) anna-prāśana (first "partaking of solid food"), (7) caula (first "tonsure"), (8) upanayana ("initiation" as student and investiture with the sacred thread at the beginning of Vedic study), (9) the four vedavratas ("scripture-observances," marking the periods of Vedic study), (10) snāna ("bathing," marking the end of student life), and (11) sahādharmacāriṇī-saṃyoga ("union with a partner who will be a companion in the performance of duty," i.e., marriage). For details, see Walker, II, 315-316; Kane, II, chaps. VI-IX; and Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. XXXII (authorized reprint; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp. 366-369.

²²The pañcamahāyajñas, daily sacrifices, incumbent on all householders, directed to (1) the gods, (2) the elemental spirits, (3) the ancestors, (4) the sages (in the form of study and teaching), and (5) humanity (as hospitality, charity, etc.). See Walker, I, 360; Kane, II, chap. XVIII; and Keith, pp. 359-360.

²³The pākayajñas ("cooked-offering sacrifices"). These, along with the saṃskāras and the pañcamahāyajñas were classed as gṛhya ("domestic") rites, generally performed by

householders within the privacy of their own homes using the domestic fire. (See Keith, pp. 358-378.) Madhusūdana lists them as follows: (1) the aṣṭaka, a type of śrāddha performed eight days after the full moon (Kane, IV, 353-360); (2) the pārvaṇa, a type of śrāddha performed on the new moon day (Kane, IV, 426ff.); (3) the śrāddha itself, an offering to the ancestors performed at various times through the liturgical year (Kane, IV, chap. 9); (4) the śrāvaṇī, an offering to the serpents to gain their good will (Kane, II, 821-829); (5) the āgrahāyanī, a ceremony marking the end of the period in which raised cots were used for sleeping, a practice adopted during the rainy season from fear of snakes (Kane, II, 829-831); (6) the caitrī, a rite of uncertain import, performed on the full moon day of the month caitra (Kane, II, 820); and (7) the aśvayujī, an offering to Paśupati-Siva performed on the full moon day of the month āśvayuja or āśvina (Kane, II, 826-827).

²⁴The haviryajñas ("oblation sacrifices"). These were śrauta sacrifices, distinguished from the domestic rites chiefly by the use of the three specially maintained śrauta fires--or at least one of the three--instead of the single domestic fire, and by being for the most part public, involving the use of one or more priests. The śrauta were of three types: īsti (an offering of non-flesh food such as butter, rice, etc.), paśu (an animal sacrifice), and soma (marked by libations of soma juice, as described in the next note). The seven haviryajñas listed are (1) the agnyādheya, the "installation of the fire" (Kane, II, 986-997); (2) the agnihotra, the daily morning and evening oblations to Agni, the fire-god (Kane, II, 998-1008); (3) the darśapūrnamāsa, the "new and full moon sacrifices" after which all īstis were modeled (Kane, II, 1009ff.); (4) the āgrayana, an offering of the "first fruits" harvested in the various seasons (Kane, II, 1106-1107); (5) the cāturmāsya, the "four-monthly" or seasonal sacrifices (Kane, II, 1091-1103); (6) the nirūḍhapaśubandha, an offering of an eviscerated animal (Kane, II, 1224-1228); and (7) the sautrāmanī, a mixed īsti and paśu sacrifice dedicated to Indra as Sutrāman, the "good protector" (Kane, II, 1224-1228).

²⁵The soma sacrifices were śrauta rites distinguished by the ceremonial pressing and drinking of the juice of the soma plant. They also involve the sacrifice of animals, usually goats. The agnistoma was the model, the six others being regarded as derivatives of it. The seven somayajñas listed are (1) the agnistoma, the "praise of Agni" (Kane, II, 1133-1203); (2) the atyagnistoma (Kane, II, 1205); (3) the ukthya (Kane, II, 1204); (4) the sodaśin (Kane, II, 1204); (5) the vājapeya, "drink of strength," lasting for seventeen days and featuring a chariot race

(Kane, II, 1206-1212); (6) the atirātra, "overnight" sacrifice, involving nocturnal libations of soma (Kane, II, 1205); and (7) the aptoryāma, an extension of the preceding (Kane, II, 1206).

²⁶varṇāśramadharmā.

²⁷antaḥkaraṇa, literally "the inner organ," composed of buddhi, the discriminative faculty; ahaṁkāra, the ego-sense; citta, memory; and manas, thought. There is some dispute within the tradition as to the exact meaning of these terms, especially citta and manas, so these translations are very rough. In practice, manas, citta, and antaḥkaraṇa are often used loosely as synonyms. Since this is the case in the present work, we need not delve into further complications here. See BSSB 2.3.32 (Th II, 48) and 2.4.6 (Th II, 81); Vedāntasāra 65-69 (Nikhilananda, pp. 46-47).

²⁸śruti, the authoritative statements of the Veda, regarded as revealed scripture, which are "heard" (śruta) directly from one's teacher. I have not been able to trace the source of these particular texts. The ideas, however, are common and similar expressions may be found, for example, in Satapatha and Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇas (personal communication from Dr. Fred Smith, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Pennsylvania).

²⁹The words "melted mind" (drutacitta) refer to a state of heightened emotional sensibility in which the mind can be deeply impressed by emotionally-charged objects. (See secs. XII-XIII, below.) The melted state is a characteristic of the devotee (bhakta) as opposed to the possessor of knowledge (jñānin), whose mind remains unmelted, i.e., not emotionally aroused, and hence more inclined toward an intellectual, analytical approach to life and the spiritual quest.

³⁰In the present translation, the term bhāgavatadharmā is invariably rendered by the phrase "spiritual disciplines of the Lord's devotees". The bhāgavatas are the devotees of bhagavat. Dharma in this context means "practice," "discipline," "rule," "duty." The bhāgavatdharmas are traditionally listed as nine: (1) hearing of the virtues and glorious exploits of the Lord (śravaṇa), (2) singing his praise and chanting his name (kīrtana), (3) constant thinking of him (smaraṇa), (4) constant attendance and service (padasevaṇa), (5) worship (arcana), (6) reverent prostration (vandana), (7) regarding oneself as the Lord's servant (dāsya), (8) regarding the Lord as one's friend (sakhya), and (9) self-surrender

(ātmanivedana). See note 291, pt. IV, and BP 7.5.23-24, which is quoted there.

³¹After the practice of karmayoga has reached its goal--the purification of the mind, which is an essential prerequisite for success in the the higher yogas--the spiritual ascent bifurcates into the paths of knowledge, as followed by the orthodox Śaṅkara saṁnyāsins, and bhakti. From here onward in the text, Madhusūdana is exclusively concerned with the second of these two disciplines, the way of devotion. It will become apparent that the yoga of knowledge discussed in sec. IV is not the rigorous and highly formalized discipline adhered to by the saṁnyāsin, but rather a loosely conceived collection of practices--including both meditative yoga and certain devotional disciplines (sādhanabhakti)--designed to further prepare the mind for Self-realization (ātmasākṣātkāra) and the higher levels of devotional experience. Madhusūdana discusses the relation between the orthodox Advaitic path of knowledge and devotion in his GAD. See chap. 9.

³²Which has just been declared to be included in the yoga of knowledge, at least from the point of view of the BP and the present discussion of devotional spirituality.

³³See the discussion of non-attachment and knowledge as preliminary to the highest levels of devotion, secs. XXIV-XXVIII.

³⁴The reference is to BG 13.7-11, which reads as follows:

"Absence of pride; lack of deceit; non-violence; tranquillity; straight-forwardness; service of the teacher; purity; steadfastness; self-control; [8] indifference to the objects of the senses; absence of egoism; contemplation of the evil of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain; [9] non-attachment; absence of clinging to sons, wife, home, and the rest; constant even-mindedness toward occurrences desirable and undesirable; [10] unswerving devotion to Me through yoga directed toward no other; frequenting lonely places; dislike for crowds of people; [11] constancy in the knowledge that pertains to the Self; awareness of the goal of true knowledge--this is declared to be knowledge; what is other than this is ignorance"

(amānitvam adambhitvam ahiṁsā kṣāntir ārjavam / ācāry-
opāśanam śaucaṁ sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ //
indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṁkāra eva ca /
janmamṛtyujarāvyaḍhiduḥkhaḍoṣānudarśanam // asaktir
anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāraḡṛhādiṣu / nityam ca
samacittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu // mayi cānanyayogena

bhaktir avyabhicārinī / viviktadeśasevitvam aratir
janasamsadi // adhyātmajñānanityatvam tattvajñānā-
rthadarśanam / etaj jñānam iti proktam ajñānam yad ato
'nyathā').

Madhusūdana, in his GAD, comments on this passage as follows: "These twenty, from absence of pride through awareness of the goal of true knowledge, are called knowledge because of being conducive to that" (etad amānitvādi tattvajñānārthadarśanāntam viṃśatisaṃkhyam jñānam iti proktam, jñānārthatvāt, GAD 7.14.11; Pan, p. 549). What is being described here, and what Madhusūdana wants to suggest by quoting this passage at this point in the BR, is therefore neither knowledge itself as the immediate realization of Brahman nor the discipline followed by the orthodox Saṃkara saṃnyāsin but rather, as indicated in note 31, a loose amalgam of yogic, ascetic, contemplative, and even devotional practices designed to prepare the mind for knowledge and, eventually, the highest levels of bhakti.

³⁵pratilomānulomataḥ, literally "with the grain and against the grain." In the present context, where Sāṃkhya doctrines of the "origin and passing away of all things" are being discussed, the most appropriate translation is "according to the order of evolution and involution." Śrīdhara explains anulomataḥ as "production in due order beginning with prakṛti" (prakṛtyādikramena bhavam) and pratilomataḥ as "dissolution in due order beginning with the element earth" (prthivyādikramena apyayam, JLS, p. 674).

³⁶The text of the verse: nirvinṇasya viraktasya puruṣasyoktavedinaḥ / manas tyajati daurātmyam cintitasyānucintayā. Śrīdhara glosses the difficult phrase cintitasyānucintayā (which I have translated "by continuous reflection on such thoughts") as "repeated reflection on the thoughts ('objects of reflection,' 'things thought about') imparted by the preceptor" (gurūpaḍiṣṭasyaiva cintitasya punaḥpunar anucintayā). The text of Śrīdhara's commentary: nanūpāyasahasrenāpi mano viśayākāratām na tyajati kiṃ bhūyo bhūyaḥ upadeśeneti cet tatrāha nirvinṇasyeti tatas cāgamāpāyīṣu teṣv avadhībhūtātmadarśanāt tadavivekāpannasamsāre nirvinṇasyāto viraktasya tatas coktavedino gurūpaḍiṣṭārthālocakasya tato gurūpaḍiṣṭasyaiva cintitasya punaḥpunar anucintayā daurātmyam dehādyabhimānam tyajati, JLS, p. 674).

³⁷yama, see note 18.

³⁸"Proper object" is my translation of yogyam, the meaning of which is not clear. Śrīdhara glosses it as paramātman ("supreme Self"): etair upāyair yogyam paramātmānam manāḥ smaret, JLS, p. 674.

³⁹Pāṇḍeya, the author of the Hindi anuvāda, explains that jñāna is useful only as long as bhakti has not arisen, because it is bhakti that leads to the final tranquillity of mind (JSP, 9). The text reads bhaktiyogaṃ vinā manassamyakprasādābhāvāt, "without the yoga of devotion there cannot be proper tranquillity of mind." This is perplexing, however, because it appears from the reference to Sāṃkhya in 11.20.22, which is the basis of the remark in question, and indeed the whole tenor of the passage, that the verse is describing the yoga of knowledge--not bhakti--as the discipline which leads to the mind "becoming tranquil" (prasīdati). Therefore, it would seem more straightforward to say that knowledge, not devotion, is necessary for "proper tranquillity (prasāda) of mind," especially as Madhusūdana later stresses that one can enter upon the higher levels of devotion only after such tranquillity has been attained through the yoga of knowledge. The yoga of devotion is the goal or end (avadhi) of knowledge, he will assert, not because bhakti itself leads to tranquillity of mind, but because it presupposes and builds upon the tranquillity which is a result of knowledge. Tranquillity is therefore not a product of bhakti but a prerequisite for it. In his comments on sec. XXIX, Madhusūdana indicates that knowledge is an essential basis of the full development of love because it removes psycho-physical distractions that impede such development (note 291, pt. VI). Cp. sec. XXV: "First comes knowledge of the Blessed Lord, then there arises the higher non-attachment, and then the devotion which is of the nature of love." For these reasons, I have been tempted to amend the text to read jñānayogaṃ vinā and translate accordingly. But consulting the edition of the BR prepared by Mahāmahopadhyāya Durācaraṇ Sāṃkhya-Vedānta-Tīrtha Mahodaya (Calcutta: Surendranath Bhattacharya, 1944), I find the same reading--bhaktiyogaṃ vinā. So I let it stand and remain somewhat perplexed.

⁴⁰Of knowledge? See previous note.

⁴¹A portion of the Gītā text just cited. See note 34 for a full translation.

⁴²sādhanabhakti, the spiritual practices that serve as a means (sādhana) to encourage the growth of devotion. The devotional exercises described in 11.20.23-24 and BG 13.10 are forms of sādhanabhakti, which Madhusūdana here wants to include in jñānayoga as preliminary to the higher devotion. Sādhanabhakti is therefore to be distinguished from sādhya- or phala-bhakti, "devotion as end." See sec. X and note 30.

⁴³That is, after purifying the mind through the practice of the yoga of action and further preparing it through the yoga of knowledge, which here includes meditative yoga and sādhana bhakti.

⁴⁴sthāyibhāva, a permanent mental impression of an emotional state. See sec. XVII and chap. 6, *passim*.

⁴⁵Sanskrit has many words for love. The most frequently used in this text is preman, which suggests an ecstatic, selfless love for God. I translate preman as "love" or "ecstatic love," and when this is done no note is given. But in cases where "love" is the translation of another term, reference is made to the notes where the Sanskrit will be found.

Here the word is rati which, depending on the context, has various shades of meaning such as "delight," "joy," "enjoyment," or "amorous love." In classical aesthetic theory, it is associated with the sentiment of erotic love (śṛṅgāra) as the sthāyibhāva of the latter. In the exposition of bhaktirasa given by both the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas and Madhusūdana, rati is the sthāyibhāva, and nascent state, of premabhakti. Madhusūdana calls the initial stage of devotion the "sprout of love" (ratyañkurotpatti). See stanza 35 and note 291, pt. V; also chaps. 4.3.4-5, 6.4-5.

⁴⁶rasa, "sentiment." In this translation, rasa is invariably translated as "sentiment." For a discussion of rasa theory and its application to bhakti, see chap. 6.

⁴⁷vibhāvas, "objective causes," the external object and associated qualities which serve to arouse the latent emotion of the sthāyibhāva into full manifestation as a rasa. The ālambanavibhāva ("primary objective cause") is the figure who is the main focus of the sentiment, e.g., the hero or heroine of a drama or, in devotion, Lord Kṛṣṇa. The uddīpanavibhāvas ("exciting objective causes") are the personal qualities and accessories, such as the beautiful garments, perfumes, and other paraphernalia connected with the primary figure, that serve to enhance the mood. Jīva Gosvāmin mentions some 85 uddīpanavibhāvas of Kṛṣṇarati, including the Lord's beauty, smile, sweet fragrance, crown, and flute, his armllets and anklets, the garlands that adorn his neck, his footprints, and so on (De, VFM, 140-141).

⁴⁸anubhāvas, "outward signs" or "effects," the physical manifestations of the rising emotion, such as laughing, crying, singing, dancing, and other actions of the characters, which make the internal emotion of the actors visible and communicate it to the audience. See De, VFM, p. 141.

⁴⁹vyabhicāribhāvas, "associated transitory states," temporary mental states not tied to any one of the basic emotions (love, humor, fear, etc.) but which, briefly portrayed, enhance the development of the basic emotion towards full manifestation as rasa. The orthodox rhetoricians accept thirty-three vyabhicāribhāvas, including confusion, shyness, fatigue, indifference, distraction, and reflection (De, VFM, p. 140-141).

Abhinavagupta explains that Bharata, author of the Nāṭyaśāstra, created this special language for describing the origin of rasa in order to emphasize that the aesthetic experience pertains to a level of reality that is beyond the ordinary (alaukika). In his Abhinavabharatī, he gives an illuminating explanation of the rationale behind this terminology:

In the course of our ordinary life, we acquire a certain proficiency (pāṭava) through long practice in inferring people's mental moods (cittavṛtti), i.e. their basic emotions (sthāyyātma)[,] from observing certain signs (liṅga) consisting in causes, effects, and accompanying elements (sahacāra). In watching a drama (or reading a poem--adhunā), a garden, a glance, i.e. ordinary causes (effects, etc.)[,] lose their ordinary characters of cause, etc. and take on the essential nature of the function of awakening a permanent emotion (vibhāvanā), the function of leading the spectator to a recognition of this permanent emotion (anubhāvanā) and of adding color (to the emotions in question--samuparañjakatva). And so they acquire the non-ordinary names of vibhāvas etc." (trans. Masson and Patwardan, Aesthetic Rapture, I, 26).

For an excellent discussion of rasa-theory and its technical terms, see Masson and Patwardan, Aesthetic Rapture, I, 23-35 and their translation in the same volume (pp. 43-57) of the Rasādhyāya of the Nāṭyaśāstra, with excerpts from Abhinavagupta's commentary.

⁵⁰manovṛttau. Note that the rasa is manifest in the vṛtti, it is not the vṛtti itself. Cf. chap. 6.5.

⁵¹On Madhusūdana's understanding of bhakti--and later bliss--as the paramapurūṣārtha, see chap. 5.3, 5.8-9.

⁵²True devotees do not seek liberation because their only desire is to serve God and enjoy the bliss of devotion. For some, there is the fear that liberation will bring an end to the joy of service, which for them is a higher goal than liberation. See chaps. 3.2 and 4.3.2.

⁵³sarvatāntrasiddhānta, literally "the settled doctrine (siddhānta) of all the books (tantra)," i.e., of

the texts of the various systems of thought such as Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, etc.

⁵⁴dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa. See chap. 4.3.2.

⁵⁵The four are not ends in themselves, but are means to happiness, as the plow is a means to livelihood.

⁵⁶The original view of the Nyāya school is that the goal of life is the absence of suffering only. Thus, Gautama's Nyāyasūtra (1.1.22) defines liberation as absolute freedom from suffering (tadatyantavimokṣo 'pavargaḥ), and Vatsyāyana (fifth century), in his commentary thereon, argues against the notion that liberation is bliss, concluding that what the scriptures call bliss is only the cessation of suffering. (See M. Gangopadhyaya, Nyāya: Gautama's Nyāya-Sūtra with Vātsyāyana's Commentary [Calcutta: Indian Studies, 1982], pp. 27-32, 424.) Jayānta (ninth century), in his Nyāyamañjarī, takes a similar line. (See A. G. K. Warrier, The Concept of Mukti in Advaita Vedānta [Madras: University of Madras, 1961], p. 31.) Some later Naiyāyikas, however, hold that bliss has a place in liberation. Bhāsarvajña (tenth century), for example, argues in his Nyāyasāra that, from scriptural statements regarding the bliss of liberation, it is known that the liberated soul enjoys bliss eternally. Hence, he believes, liberation is the attainment of eternal bliss as well as the cessation of suffering (nityasaṃvedyamānasukhena viśiṣṭā-tyantikī dukhanivṛttih puruṣasya mokṣa iti, Nyāyasāra, quoted by Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya, Nyāya Philosophy [Calcutta: Indian Studies Past and Present, 1967], pt. I, p. 98). According to Mahāmahopadhyāya Phanibhuṣana Tarkavāgīśa, this view was current at an even earlier period and was referred to as "the view of a section of the Naiyāyikas" (Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya, p. 92). It is this understanding that Madhusūdana is attacking in the present context. Madhusūdana gives a similar argument against the Nyāya view at VKL 9 (Karmarkar, p. 27). See Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya, pp. 85-93; K. Potter, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 28-30.

⁵⁷Learned tradition has it that action involves the train jñānecchāpravṛttiphala ("knowledge, desire, activity, and result"), each factor leading to the next. Madhusūdana argues that, unless the knowledge or cognition contains happiness as its object, no desire will be generated. The objector would of course assert that knowledge of the possibility of the elimination of suffering can also lead to desire, as in the case of the removal of a thorn, where one knows that suffering can be stopped and acts to put an end

to it. But the reply would be that the desire to remove suffering is itself ultimately directed toward the happiness that thereby results, so it is simpler to say that knowledge generates desire only when it presents the possibility of happiness.

⁵⁸The argument will be that the absence of suffering is not valuable in itself, but only insofar as it is a pre-condition (paricāyaka) of bliss, i.e., a state that paves the way for the experience of bliss. On the other hand, Madhusūdana argues, bliss is valuable in and of itself.

⁵⁹vinigamaka.

⁶⁰vyāpyavyāpakabhāva.

⁶¹vyāpaka.

⁶²In both, according to the Nyāya, there is absence of pain but no bliss.

⁶³As the absence of suffering is the invariable concomitant of bliss, it appears with the latter not because it is itself the goal of life but because it is anyathā-siddha ("otherwise accomplished"), i.e., it is incidentally required as a prior condition of bliss. Hence it occupies a position of subordinate interest, and bliss alone is the true goal of life.

⁶⁴The objector now resorts to the position of the earlier Naiyāyikas that liberation is not bliss at all but consists solely in the absolute cessation of suffering. See note 56.

⁶⁵And not merely the absence of suffering.

⁶⁶The four commonly recognized goals of life. See chap. 4.3.2.

⁶⁷gauravāt ananugamāt ca. To postulate four different types of bliss is unnecessarily complex and excessively verbose. This is the fault of gaurava ("prolixity"). Then, to consider only these specific types of bliss as the goal of life is to exclude others; this is ananugama ("excessive restriction"). So it is better to drop the modifiers and define the goal of life simply as bliss.

⁶⁸samādhī.

⁶⁹dharmā.

⁷⁰yogadharmā.

⁷¹See the discussion of the sixth stage of devotional practice, note 291, pt. VI.

⁷²bhāgavatadharmā. See note 30.

⁷³The important point is that the goal of life is bliss. Devotion is bliss, therefore it is the goal of life. It can be considered such in its own right or, if necessary to satisfy the formula-bound, as included within the commonly accepted quartet of goals.

⁷⁴At BR 2.31-35 (JSP, pp. 161-162). See note 12 and chap. 6.5.

⁷⁵A name of Kṛṣṇa.

⁷⁶ālambanavibhāva, literally "the foundational cause," the object toward which the emotion is directed, in this case Lord Kṛṣṇa. See note 47.

⁷⁷maṅgala, literally "auspiciousness" or "happiness." In a more technical sense, it means an auspicious word or phrase used at the beginning of a work in order to ward off any obstacles to its completion or proper understanding. The verse that follows in the text makes a play on the two meanings of the word.

⁷⁸smṛti, "remembrance," "traditional wisdom," as opposed to śrūti ("revealed scripture"). Cp. note 28.

⁷⁹maṅgala.

⁸⁰amaṅgala. I have not been able to trace this verse.

⁸¹See note 9.

⁸²rati, a term which, were Madhusūdana not talking about bhakti and rasa, might be translated in this verse as "delight." (See note 45.) Note that in sec. IV Madhusūdana has already identified rati as the sthāyibhāva of bhaktirasa, and that the Gosvāmins did the same. Śrīdhara (see note 83) glosses "toward the Self (ātmani)" as "toward Hari (harau)," so the translation "love" is not inappropriate in this devotional context.

⁸³So according to Śrīdhara, who glosses: bhagavān brahmā / kūṭastho nirvikārah / ekāgracittah sann ity arthah / tris trīn varān kārtsnyena sākalyena brahma vedam anvīkṣya

vicārya / yata ātmani harau ratir bhavet / tad eva manīṣayā
adhyavasyat niścītavān, JLS, p. 65.

84yā nirvṛtis tanubhṛtām tava pādapadmadyānād
bhavadjanakathāśravaṇeṇa vā syād / sā brahmaṇi svamahimany
api nātha mā bhūt kiṃ tv antakāsilulitāt patatām vimānāt.
This is a difficult verse. Śrīdhara comments:

"It may be objected that, while the joy of heaven, etc. can be obtained through [rituals] motivated by selfish desire, it cannot be [attained] by desireless worship. Therefore he [Dhruva] says, 'The complete fulfillment, etc.' The phrase 'even in all its greatness' means 'even in its innate bliss-form'; 'let not' means 'is not found.' Is it necessary to say that this [fulfillment] does not exist [for those falling] from celestial cars 'crushed' (i.e., 'cleaved') 'by the sword of death' (i.e., 'by Time') (nanu svargādisukhaṃ sakāmaḥ prāpyate niškāmbhajane tan na syād ity ata āha yeti svamahimani niḥānandarūpe 'pi mā bhūt na bhavatīty arthaḥ antakasyā-sinā kālena lulitāt khaṇḍitād vimānāt sā nāstīti kim u vaktavyam, JLS, p. 180).

Viṣṇu Purī's remarks indicate essential agreement:

"Since in reality the joy of hearing [the Lord's glories] is superior even to liberation, it is proper to speak of it as a goal of life in its own right. Nirvṛti means 'joy.' . . . 'In Brahman' means 'in the state of liberation.' If that joy is not found even there, it goes without saying that it will not be enjoyed by persons 'falling from celestial cars' (i.e., from heaven) 'crushed' (i.e., attacked) by the sword of death (i.e., Time)" (vastutas tu mokṣād api śravaṇasukhaṃ garhya iti svataḥ puruṣārthatvam evaiṣam yuktam iti / nirvṛtiḥ sukhaṃ / . . . brahmaṇi mokṣāvasthāyām apīty arthaḥ / sā nirvṛtir mā bhūt na bhavati yadi tadā antakaḥ kāla evāsiḥ khaḍgas tena lulitād upadrutād vimānāt svargādeḥ patatām janānām tat sukhaṃ na bhavatīti kim vācyam iti, Kāntimālā, BRA, p. 74).

The idea is that neither the celestials nor those merged in Brahman enjoy a bliss as great as that enjoyed by embodied bhaktas. Cp. BG 9.20-21.

85sādhana, the means to the highest goal, and not the goal itself. See note 42.

86ahaituka, "not of the reasoning kind." Viṣṇu Purī comments: "'knowledge,' whose object is the Self; 'not dependent on reasoning,' not requiring proof, not the object of dry argumentation, i.e., Upaniṣadic knowledge" (jñānam ātmatattvaviṣayam ahaitukam hetuśūnyam śuṣkatarkādy-agocaram / aupaniṣadam ity arthaḥ, Kāntimālā, BRA, p. 7). He seems again to follow Śrīdhara, who glosses: ahaitukam śuṣkatarkādyagocaram aupaniṣadam ity arthaḥ, JLS, p. 16.

⁸⁷phala, literally "fruit," hence "result," "end."

⁸⁸bhajana, "worship" is an abstract neuter noun derived from the same root--bhaj--as the word bhakti itself.

⁸⁹The bhāgavatadharmas. See note 30.

⁹⁰According to Sanskrit grammar, all words come from verbal roots. Thus, as we have already noted above, bhakti is derived from the root bhaj. The word viññāna is from the root jñā ("to know") plus the intensive prefix vi-. The meaning of a word may be related to the root in various ways. It may express the basic notion of the verb as an abstract entity, such as "worship" or "knowledge." In such a case the grammarians will explain the meaning by bhāva-vyutpatti or abstract derivation such as, in our text, "worship . . . is devotion" (bhajanam . . . iti bhaktiḥ). Or the meaning may indicate some activity related to the abstract entity, such as the means to it. To suggest the latter, the grammarians will give the karānavyutpatti or instrumental derivation, e.g., "He is worshiped . . . by this" (bhajyate . . . anayeti). The point is that, just as viññāna can mean either knowledge or the means to it, so bhakti can mean either devotion or its means, depending upon how it is used. Madhusūdana employs the grammarian's method of analysis in order to provide further justification for his position that the term has this two-fold sense.

⁹¹That is, the distinction between the two types of devotion.

⁹²A great yogin and devotee, Prabuddha was one of the nine, among Rṣabha's 100 sons, who were famed as saints. See BP 11.2.14-23.

⁹³bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā. I use the literal but awkward translation "devotion-generated devotion" in order to retain the word order, which is important for the discussion which follows.

⁹⁴"Divine creative power," etymologically related to the root mā, "to measure, mete out." In Advaita Vedānta, Māyā is the power that superimposes the real-unreal universe of multiplicity upon the formlessness of pure being and veils our awareness of the ultimate truth of things. It should be obvious from our analysis of Śaṅkara's "levels of being" (chap. 2.3) that Māyā, as the source of the empirical world, is not to be translated simply as "illusion." Though Śaṅkara did on occasion use the term in this sense, the translation "illusion" actually suggests not so much his own understanding of Māyā but rather that of the later advocates

of Advaitic solipsism (dr̥stisr̥stivāda, see chap. 2, note 14), and perhaps also the polemically distorted interpretation of the concept common to Śaṅkara's theistic critics. J. G. Arapura writes:

"To treat māyā as illusion is to misunderstand it. Truly speaking, it is the cosmic condition of which illusion is the model. All descriptions of māyā are given through analogy with human illusory experiences but to identify the terms of the analogy is to mistake its purpose" ("Māyā and the Discourse about Brahman," in M. Sprung, ed., Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta [Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973], p. 120).

Māyā figures in the Sanskrit tradition from the time of the R̥g Veda, and the concept as used in Advaita takes over and includes some of its earlier meanings. It is a "wondrous creative power" by which the gods assume many forms; it is a "magic display" which entrances the soul and causes it to be lost in the repeated cycles of birth and re-birth. Cp. BG 7.14: "This divine Māyā of Mine, consisting of the material qualities, is exceedingly difficult to escape; only those who resort to Me overcome this Māyā" (daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā / mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etaṁ taranti te).

Since the word has a wide range of meaning that is misrepresented by simplistic translations such as "illusion," and since it has a certain currency now even in the West, I feel justified in leaving it, like "yoga" and "Brahman," untranslated. See L. Thomas O'Neil, Māyā in Śaṅkara: Measuring the Immeasurable (Columbia, Missouri: South Asia Books, 1980), pp. 29-40, 92-94.

⁹⁵grahana, literally "grasping"--which is to say, remembering and repeating but, in this stage of Vedic study where mere mechanical repetition is aimed at, not necessarily understanding. Since the English word "grasping" conveys the idea of understanding and makes it difficult to see how one process can be both the means and the end, I use the word "repetition." The student learns to repeat the Veda by repeating the Veda, in the beginning by imitating the chanting of his teacher. Traditional Indian education places great emphasis on memory and assumes that understanding of what has been memorized will come with time and maturation. Thus, the first step in the study of Sanskrit in the traditional schools is to memorize Pānini's grammar. Then only gradually does the student learn what it all means.

Consider in this context the following warning issued by the ancient etymologist Yāska: "He is the bearer of a burden only--the blockhead who, having studied, does not know the meaning of the Veda. . . . Whatever is learnt

without its being understood is called mere cramming; like dry logs of wood on an extinguished fire, it can never illuminate" (Nirukta 1.17, trans. L. Sarup, p. 18).

⁹⁶That is, a state in which the devotee stops performing sādhana and enjoys its result.

⁹⁷Kṛṣṇa, who in reality is free from birth as the unborn, undying Brahman.

⁹⁸Devotion as end (sādhya bhakti) is the full realization of the bliss of God, and is therefore distinct from devotion as means (sādhana bhakti), which consists primarily of the bhāgavatadharmas.

⁹⁹BP 6.1.15, already quoted at the beginning of sec. X.

¹⁰⁰The question of the direct (dr̥ṣṭa, literally "seen") and indirect (adr̥ṣṭa, "unseen") rewards of bhakti is discussed at BR 2.44-50 (JSP, pp. 168-171). Madhusūdana defines a direct reward as one that is attained in this present body (vartamānatanuprāpya) and an indirect reward as one to be enjoyed in a future body (bhāvīdehopabhogya). The indirect rewards of bhakti include religious merit (punya) and (as in BP 6.1.15, quoted above) the destruction of sin, both of which generate salutary experiences in a future life--either on earth or a celestial paradise--for those devotees who do not secure liberation in the present body. For the jīvanmuktas, however, there are only the direct rewards, chief among which is the manifestation of bliss (sukhavyakti).

¹⁰¹"The inquiry (mīmāṃsā) into the earlier (pūrva) portion of the Veda," the system of thought formulated by Jaimini in his Pūrvamīmāṃsasūtras. Jaimini's system deals primarily with interpretation of the samhita and brāhmaṇa sections of the Veda, the primary aim of this exegesis being the determination of correct ritual practice.

¹⁰²"The inquiry into the latter (uttara) portion," the Vedānta system, based on the BS of Badārayāṇa, which is concerned with interpretation of the Upaniṣads, the final sections of the Veda. The pūrva- and uttara-mīmāṃsās may also be understood as the "earlier" and "later" inquiries, since some thinkers (e.g., Rāmānuja) believe that the study of the ritual texts must precede the study of the Vedānta.

¹⁰³prīti, "love," roughly synonymous with preman in Vaiṣṇava thought.

¹⁰⁴This section of the BS teaches that works lead to knowledge. See Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sūtra, pp. 517-518.

¹⁰⁵. . . into devotion as if it were a new topic.

¹⁰⁶ svarūpasādhanaphalādhikārivailakṣaṇyāt, "because of differences of nature (svarūpa), means (sādhana), end (phala), and qualified persons (adhikārin)."

¹⁰⁷savikalpakavṛtti, see chap. 5.6-7.

¹⁰⁸nirvikalpakavṛtti, see chap. 5.6-7.

¹⁰⁹For Sanskrit, see chap. 5.7, note 59. Hearing (śravaṇa) is the first element of the nine-fold devotion of BP 7.5.22-23. (See notes 30 and 291, pt. IV.) The most important composition to be heard by the devotee is, of course, the BP. On this, see chap. 5.7 and note 237, below.

¹¹⁰See BP 11.12.8-9, quoted in note 291, pt. I.

¹¹¹paramahamsaparivrājikas. A parivrajaka is, literally, a "wanderer," a "wandering religious mendicant." The term perhaps owes its currency to the oft-cited text, BU 4.4.22: "Seeking this realm [of the Self], mendicant Brahmins wander forth" (etam eva pravrajino lokam icchanto brāhmaṇāḥ pravrajanti). It is used to designate a renunciate who has left the ties of family life and social duty to seek salvation. Among saṁnyāsins, the itinerant life is held in high esteem as a means of avoiding social and other attachments. The higher orders of saṁnyāsins, especially the paramahamsas, were traditionally subject to severe restrictions as to the amount of time they could settle in any one location: in some cases only one night in a given place was allowed.

Paramahamsa means "supreme swan." In the Hindu tradition, liberated saints are likened to swans or geese, who are free to range at will through the sky, on the earth, or across the water. (See BP 10.87.21, quoted in sec. XXIV.) In particular, the reference is to the wild geese that are said to fly at altitudes as high as 35,000 feet and thus be able to soar over the Himalayas to quench their thirst in the sacred Mānasa lake on Mount Kailāsa. The vehicle-mascot (vāhana) of Brahmā, the creator, is one such hamsa. It is reputed to have the power of separating out and drinking only the milk from a mixture of milk and water, becoming thus a symbol of spiritual discrimination. The word hamsa is also associated with the sacred syllables so'ham ("I am He") chanted by renunciates who wish to realize their identity with the absolute (John S. Hawley, At

Play with Kṛṣṇa [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985], p. 290, note 25; Paramahansa Yogananda, Autobiography of a Yogi [11th ed.; Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship Publishers, 1979], p. 460).

According to Vidyāraṇya's Jīvanmuktiviveka, there are four orders of renunciates (saṁnyāsins). The kuṭīcaka, who resides in a secluded hermitage and the bahūdaka, who wanders from place to place, have "sharp detachment," the "firm resolve of the intellect not to have a child, wife, or wealth in this life." The hamsa and the paramahansa, however, have a "sharper detachment," expressed in the following terms: "For me the whole of this world, whirling through the cycle of rebirths, shall never be." The hamsa attains liberating knowledge in brahmaloka, but the paramahansa in this very life. Paramahansa is thus the religious title of the highest order of saṁnyāsins (S. Subrahmanya Sastri and T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, ed. and trans., The Jīvanmuktiviveka of Vidyāraṇya [Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1935], pp. 2, 176-178; Kane, II, 938-942).

For Saṅkara's specification of the paramahansa as the ideal adhikārin, see chap. 2.5.5 and 2.5.8 (note 83). The point of all this is, again, that the qualifications for engaging in the study of Advaita are very high indeed (see next note). Also worthy of contemplation is the fact that, in the colophons of his works, Madhusūdana consistently identifies himself as a paramahansa-parivrājika. See sec. XXX, below, and note 294 thereon.

¹¹²sādhana-caṭuṣaya, the "four-fold means [to knowledge]" consisting of: (1) discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal (nityānityavastuviveka); (2) absence of desire for the enjoyment of the results of one's actions both in this world and the next (ihāmutraphala-bhogavairāgya); (3) the six endowments (śamādamādi-saṅkasampatī), namely, tranquillity (śama), self-control (dama), withdrawal (uparati) from the pursuit of sense objects and the performance of prescribed rituals, patience (titikṣā), concentration (samādhāna), and faith (śraddhā); and (4) the desire for liberation (mumuksutva). Possession of the "four-fold means" is the most essential qualification for the study of Vedānta. This subject is discussed at BS 3.4.27, which makes reference to BU 4.4.23. The Upaniṣad declares: "Therefore he who knows thus, having become tranquil (śānta), self-controlled (dānta), withdrawn (uparata), patient (titikṣu), and concentrated (samāhita), sees the Self in himself and sees all in the Self (tasmād evaṁvit, śānto dānto uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā, atmany evātmanam paśyati sarvam ātmanam paśyati). See BSSB 1.1.1 (Th I, 12), 3.4.27 (Th II, 309); Vedāntasāra 15-26, (Nikhilananda, pp. 9-14); and chap. 2.5.5., above.

113 The argument will show that one thing, such as good deeds, can be a means to more than one end. Since they are conducive to purity of mind, good works can be a factor in any of these results.

114 I have not been able to find the source of these precise quotations, but similar expressions are common in the Brāhmaṇas and the literature of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā.

115 The saṃyogapṛthaktvanyāya. Writers on Vedānta often seek to substantiate their arguments by reference to rules of interpretation established by the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. This is such a case, based on Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra 4.3.5-7 and the Sabarabhāṣya thereon. The ritual texts prescribe the offering of a single substance in two different types of sacrifices, each leading to different results. According to the maxim of separate connection, the relation of the substance with its result in one case is quite distinct from that in the other, because the injunctions prescribing the acts are themselves distinct and separate. Hence the relation between a good deed (in this case the new or full moon sacrifice) and the result (heaven) mentioned in one injunction will be an entirely separate affair from its relation to a result (the desire for knowledge) specified in another text. The same will apply to any connection between good deeds and results, such as devotion or the knowledge of Brahman, that may be mentioned in other texts. So a single means may lead to different results, and the fact of having common means, such as good works, does not necessitate that any two results be identical. See Pandit Mohanlal Sandal, trans., The Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaiminī, Vol. XXVI of the Sacred Books of the Hindus (Allahabad: The Panini Office, 1923-25). pp. 228-229.

116 See BSSB 3.4.26.

117 There would be atiprasaṅga ("undesired consequences"). All things, for example, that happened to have clay as a common cause would have to be identical. The simple distinction between the clay pot and the clay doll would require special explanation.

118 parinatīvirasena, literally "tasteless (without delight or disagreeable) in the end," because they lead to pain. This is a common estimation of all sense-pleasures in the ascetic spirituality of Advaita Vedānta. Compare this with the Buddhist teaching "All is suffering" (sarvaṃ duḥkham). Even the joys of heaven (svārga) are not much valued in the impersonalist traditions of India because such celestial "pleasures," like everything else in the realm of phenomenality, are ultimately perishable, contingent, and therefore painful.

¹¹⁹That is, the sentiments recognized by the classical aestheticians. See chap. 6.2.

¹²⁰See note 100. The discussion at BR 2.44-50 does not refer to the secular rasas at all. We can only assume the idea to be that the effects of the experience of worldly sentiments are immediate only while some of the effects of devotion (such as the acquisition of spiritual merit and release from sin) are not realized immediately but only in a future birth. Note that in both the secular rasas and in bhakti there is the manifestation of bliss. In bhakti, however, the bliss is much greater. For additional discussion of the difference between devotion and the sentiments of the aestheticians, see sec. XVIII, especially the commentary on stanza 13, and chap. 6.5.

¹²¹As explained above in note 112, the desire for liberation (mumukṣutva) is one of the "four-fold means" and is regarded as an essential prerequisite for undertaking the study of Vedānta.

¹²²satyam, bhakti sukhāsaktān prati anārambhāt. And perhaps the devotee does not wish to study Vedānta, because he or she is caught up in the bliss and emotion of bhakti and finds the thought of intellectual inquiry dry and uninviting. The anti-intellectualism of many devotional sects is well known.

¹²³bhajanīyasvarūpanirṇayārthaṃ bhaktānām api tadvicārasya "vaśyakatvāc ca. Although its precise meaning is difficult to determine with certainty, this phrase may be an important indication of Madhusūdana's understanding of the value of Vedāntic discipline for the bhakta. See note 291, sec. VI.

"Object of worship" is my translation of bhajanīya, "that which should be worshiped." Cp. SBS 85: "This [world] is not different from the object of devotion [namely, God]" (bhajanīyenādvitīyam idam, Harshananda, p. 194).

¹²⁴jīvanmuktānām api, see chaps. 5.8 and 8.1.

¹²⁵urukrama, "the wide strider," a reference to the myth of Viṣṇu's incarnation as Vāmana ("the dwarf"), in which he shows his prowess by encompassing the entire universe in three steps. See BP 8.18-23.

¹²⁶On this verse, which figures importantly in the Kṛṣṇaite tradition, see chaps. 3.2, 5.8, and especially 9.3.1 (note 21).

127 In stanza 1 and the commentary thereon, he has already stated that the purpose of the work is to "bring contentment to everyone" (akhilatustyai). See note 9.

128 For a discussion of the play on words involved in the title Bhaktirasāyana, see chap. 5.2.

129 See chap. 5.4 for a discussion of this section and its implications.

130 bhagavadguṇaśravaṇa, "the hearing of the Lord's glories." Again, this is the first element of the nine-fold devotion of BP 7.5.23-24. See note 30 and chap. 5.7.

131 The son of Damaghoṣa, King of Chedi, Śiśupāla was Kṛṣṇa's cousin. He became Kṛṣṇa's relentless enemy after the latter abducted his betrothed, Rukmini, and married her (BP 10.53-54). Śiśupāla's intense hatred caused his mind to be fixed so constantly on his divine cousin that, after his death at Kṛṣṇa's hand, he attained salvation (BP 10.74). The story of Kāṁsa, the wicked King of Mathurā, is similar. His fear of Kṛṣṇa, whom he had been told was to be his death, was so strong that his mind was continually occupied with thought of him. For this reason, Kāṁsa, like Śiśupāla, attained salvation after the final encounter with his foe (BP 10.44). Though Madhusūdana here seems to admit Śiśupāla and the like as bhaktas, he later disqualifies them. In chapter 2 of the BR he stipulates that bhaktirasa must be based on love (see note 136), and at GAD 7.16 he writes: "But Kāṁsa and Śiśupāla, even though they were constantly intent on thought of God out of fear and hate, were not bhaktas, because they did not have love for Him" (kāṁsasiśupālayas tu bhayād dveṣāc ca satatabhagavac-cintāparā api na bhaktāḥ bhagavadanurakter abhāvāt, Pan, p. 363).

132 vṛtti. For an explanation of the process of cognition by means of mental modification (vṛttijñāna), see stanza 24 and the commentary thereon.

133 avichinnā.

134 . . . mentioned in stanza 2.

135 tāpaka.

136 At BR 2.2-28, Madhusūdana explains that the various "heating agents" produce different qualities of "melting." These arouse different permanent emotions and a corresponding variety of sentiments. For example, desire produces two different kinds of permanent emotions, love in

union (sambhogarati) and love in separation (viprayogarati), depending upon whether its object is present or absent. Affection (sneha) is either paternal or fraternal, leading to the permanent emotions of paternal love (vatsalarati) or fraternal love (preyorati). In a similar way, Madhusūdana assigns various permanent emotions and sentiments to each of the heating agents, arriving at an involved list of seventeen of each. (For a summary, see Gupta, p. 220-223). Not all of these, however, may become sentiments of devotion, but only those that are directed toward the Lord and are not opposed to the feeling of love (prīti) (BR 2.27, 30; JSP, pp. 159-160). Eliminating those which do not so qualify, there remain the nine devotional sentiments and śuddha (the "pure") bhakti, to which Madhusūdana alludes in the first stanza. (See note 12 for a list and discussion.)

The important point in all of this is that the experience of devotion varies according to the emotional nature of the individual and the mode in which he or she approaches God. Thus the milkmaids of Kṛṣṇa's village experienced an erotically tinged devotion, their minds being melted by lust (kāma). The devotion of Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa's mother, is colored by her parental love, and her mind is melted by affection (sneha). Śiśupāla's melting is due to his anger (krodha), while Kamsa's is due to fear. Since anger and fear are opposed to love (prītivirodhena), the last two individuals do not experience bhakti (BR 2.29-30; JSP, pp. 159-160; see note 131). Sanakā and other saints, whose minds are melted merely by contemplating the Lord's wondrous majesty (mahiman), experienced devotion in its pure form, untouched by any extraneous sentiments (BR 2.12-13, 64-65, 73; JSP pp. 150, 179, 183). See chap. 6.5. This kind of thinking is based on BP 7.1.25-30 and 10.29.15, to which the reader is referred for fuller understanding.

¹³⁷All of the terms listed are roughly synonymous in this context. Madhusūdana nevertheless chooses to use vāsanā consistently in the subsequent discussion.

¹³⁸na tu vinaśyatā jñānena janitas tārīkādī-
arikalpita ātmaḡuṇa ity arthah. The Nyāya realist rejects the identification of knowledge and consciousness common to Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Vedānta. He regards consciousness as an adventitious property of the soul and knowledge as the simple "awareness of an object" (arthagrahaṇa). Hence jñāna is for him more appropriately translated as "cognition." As such, it generates an impression but is itself a momentary experience since, if it continued to exist, it would remain present as an object of perception, and memory would not be needed (Nyāyasūtras 3.2.42-44; Gangopadhyaya, Nyāya-Sūtra, pp. 254-257). The Nyāya differs further from Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Vedānta in its doctrine that the impressions (saṃskāra

or bhāvanā) generated by such cognition are properties or qualities (guṇa) that inhere in the soul (ātman), which is conceived of as a substance (dravya). (See Potter, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977], pp. 112-127.) Madhusūdana here, in passing, rejects both of these notions. For the Advaitin knowledge is eternal, being identical with Consciousness (caitanya, see chap. 5.7). Moreover, and perhaps more important in the present connection, the saṃskāra resides not in the ātman, which of course has no qualities, but in the mind (citta).

Advaitā here adopts the view of Yoga. According to the Vyāsabhāṣya on YS 2.13: "This mind (citta)--which is filled from beginningless time with impressions (vāsanā) produced by the experience of afflictions, actions, and consequences--is variegated like a fishnet covered with knots" (kleśakarmavipākānubhavanirvartitābhis tu vāsanābhir anādikālasammūrçhitam idaṃ cittaṃ vicitrikṛtam iva sarvato matsyajalam granthibhir ivātataṃ). In the same passage, Vyāsa suggests that vāsanā and saṃskāra are identical (Bangali Baba, Yogasūtra of Patañjali with commentary of Vyāsa [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976], p. 38).

The rasa theory also regards the sthāyibhāva as a saṃskāra or vāsanā residing in the mind (De, Sanskrit Poetics, I, 133-134, note 40). Thus the two terms are widely accepted in the tradition as designations of a permanent mental impression derived from experience. Madhusūdana's special contribution here is the conception of a vāsanā or saṃskāra produced, not by ordinary empirical cognition, but by the manifestation in the mind of the form of bhagavat. This notion has a parallel in Bengal Vaiṣṇava rasa-theory. See my discussion of Madhusūdana's notion of sthāyibhāva in note 153.

139 vāsanā, "permanent impression."

140 . . . as a true permanent impression because of the melted condition of the mind at the time of entry . . .

141 This classification, based on BP 11.2.45-47, is also utilized by Jīva Gosvāmin (Dasgupta, IV, 422).

142 sāmagrī, literally "equipment."

143 prākṛta.

144 prakṛti.

145 pranaya.

146 anurāga.

147 sneha.

148 pranaya.

149 pranaya.

150 It is not seen as either real or false, i.e., it is not seen at all.

151 The text reads: nāpaśyam ubhayaṃ mune. Śrīdhara (JLS, P. 26) glosses ubhayaṃ ātmānam param ca--"neither myself nor the Supreme"--but Madhusūdana seems to want to give the verse, out of context, an ad hoc interpretation of his own. See previous note.

152 sthāyī.

153 That is, Madhusūdana intends the second and more literal of the two meanings discussed at chap. 6.2. While sthāyibhāva is commonly used by the rhetoricians in the sense of the "dominant" or "prevailing" mood of a literary piece, it is also understood to refer to a "permanent" or "abiding" state of mind. (Sthāyīn comes from the root sthā, "to stand, remain.") As a saṃskāra or vāsanā, the sthāyībhāva is said to be a permanent aspect of consciousness. In Madhusūdana's theory of devotion, however, and that of the Gosvāmins, the sthāyibhāva of bhaktirasa is not acquired through empirical experience, as are the permanent emotions of the secular aestheticians. Rather, it is innate in the mind as either the form of the Lord or, in the Bengal school, an aspect of the divine svarūpaśakti. It is therefore permanent in a more profound, metaphysical sense. The sthāyībhāva of bhaktirasa never actually "enters" the mind, since it has always been there. See sec. XXIII; chaps. 4.3.6, 5.5, 6.5.

154 Because the object is never released from the mind. See stanza 8.

155 The spectator's identification with the events and emotions of the play leads to self-transcendence and a blissful state of awareness. See Masson and Patwardan, Aesthetic Rapture, I, 33. For explanations of the technical terms, see notes 47-49.

156 The author of the Nāṭyaśāstra. See chap. 6.2.

157 Madhusūdana wants to show that devotion is a true sentiment. But a sentiment develops only from a permanent emotion and must involve the apprehension of bliss, so he must show that devotion arises from legitimate permanent

emotion that is blissful. For this role he nominates the form of the Lord as reflected in the melted mind.

¹⁵⁸For discussion of this section and its implications, see chaps. 5.5 and 6.5.

¹⁵⁹The permanent emotion is a reflection of either the Lord, who is the supreme bliss, or an object, which is the supreme bliss limited by adjuncts. This idea is developed immediately below.

¹⁶⁰Actually, as Madhusūdana demonstrates in sec. XXIII, the form of the Lord is innate in the mind; so it never really enters, but only becomes manifest. See note 153.

¹⁶¹pratibimba.

¹⁶²bimba.

¹⁶³upādhi.

¹⁶⁴Because, as Madhusūdana well knows, the pratibimbavāda explicitly emphasizes the identity of the Lord (iśvara) and the individual soul (jīva), the Lord's reflection, I cannot accept this disclaimer as the author's final opinion. According to the reflection theory, the permanent emotion, the form of the Lord reflected in the mind, must ultimately be identical with the primary objective cause (ālambanavibhāva), the Lord himself, who is the original. Later writers of the Vallabha sampradāya criticise this very theory on the grounds that it would make bhakti identical with God. See chap. 5.5, note 27.

¹⁶⁵śṛṅgāra.

¹⁶⁶According to the Advaita, Māyā is said to have two powers or śaktis: vikṣepa ("projection") and āvāraṇa ("concealment"). The power of projection creates the world of names and forms and the power of concealment veils the true nature of reality. As Vidyāraṇya says at PD 6.26 and 33:

"Ignorance appears as twofold with the forms of projection and concealment. Concealment produces [such ideas as], 'the Immovable [Brahman] does not appear; [therefore] It does not exist.' . . . Mind and the two bodies [gross and subtle] are superimposed on the Immovable, like silver on mother-of-pearl, when It has been concealed by ignorance. This superimposition is called projection" (vikṣepāvṛtirūpābhyāṃ dvidhā 'vidyā vyavasthitā / na bhāti nāsti kūṭastha ity āpādanam āvṛtiḥ // . . . avidyāvṛtakūṭasthe dehadvayayutā

citiḥ / śuktau rūpyavad adhyastā vikṣepādhyāsa eva hi
(Swahananda, pp. 134, 137).

When a person attains enlightenment, the concealing power of Māyā is broken. Even though the individual may continue to experience the world of names and forms, it no longer deludes him. As long, however, as the body remains alive and action continues, the enlightened saint yet remains under the influence of the power of projection (PD 6.53; Swahananda, p. 144).

167 That is, Brahman or caitanya, the cause.

168 Śrīdhara glosses:

"A thing that, because it is something indefinable, is perceived in the absence of the thing (i.e., without reality) in the Self which is its support, and one that is not perceived, even though it exists--know these to be [caused by] my Māyā. 'Like a false appearance,' such as seeing two moons [on account of double vision]--this is the illustration of cognition in the absence of an object. 'Like darkness' is the illustration of non-cognition of an existing object. For example, the planet Rāhu, though present among the other planets, is not seen because it is dark" (ṛte arthaṃ vināpi vāstavam arthaṃ yad yataḥ kimapi aniruktam ātmany adhiṣṭhāne pratiyeta sad api ca na pratiyeta, tat ātmano mama māyām vidyāt / yathā abhāso dvicandrādir ity arthaṃ vinā pratītau drṣṭāntaḥ / yathā tama iti sato 'pratītau / tamo rāhur yathā grahamaṇḍale sthito 'pi na drṣyate tathā, JLS, p. 82).

169 māna.

170 Most Indian thinkers--with the exception of the Jains, the Vaiśeṣikas, and some Vedāntins (such as Madhva)--deny that memory (smṛti) is a valid means of knowledge. Novelty is regarded as an essential characteristic of genuine knowledge; the latter must be new, not previously acquired (anadhigata). This requirement disqualifies memory, which necessarily reveals only that which has been known before. See Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965), p. 371ff.; Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1972), pp. 22-23; and especially Sinha, Indian Epistemology of Perception (Calcutta: Sinha Publishing House Private, Ltd., 1969), chap. 10.

171 caitanya. Since this word is in Advaita synonymous with Brahman, and as such designates the ultimate reality, I capitalize it in translation, as "Consciousness."

172 According to the epistemology of Advaita, the object itself is never perceived. It is Consciousness, as limited by the objects, that is revealed by the vr̥tti. And it is Consciousness, as limited by the vr̥tti, that does the revealing. Knowledge and ignorance relate only to the real, i.e., to Consciousness. Objects, which are neither real or unreal (sadasadvilakṣaṇa), are strictly speaking neither known or unknown. P. Granoff discusses this doctrine, summarizing Vimuktātman's demonstration (at Iṣṭasiddhi 1.125, 137) of the unknowability of the object, as follows:

"The purpose of knowledge is to remove ignorance, avidyā; avidyā, in turn, functions to obscure awareness. Since that which has no awareness or sentience needs no further obscuration, avidyā cannot be associated with any jadavastu [insentient object]. This makes knowledge of the insentient impossible. Only the soul as obscured by ignorance is really "dr̥śya" [perceivable] or "prameya" [knowable], etc." (Philosophy and Argument in Late Vedānta [Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978], p. 253, n. 170).

I am indebted to Prof. Granoff for my understanding of this point.

173 An immediate realization of Consciousness in its unconditioned form would result in instant liberation (sadyomukti), but not so the perception of the same consciousness as limited by objects. In the latter case, the mental modification (vr̥tti) does not eradicate the ignorance obscuring the object-delimited Consciousness (viśayāvacchinna). Rather, the ignorance is temporarily "overpowered" (abhibhūta) or suppressed by the vr̥tti, just as a magic gem temporarily suppresses the burning power of fire. When the vr̥tti is withdrawn, obscuration sets in again. This is the explanation given by Madhusūdana in the SB (Divanji, pp. 35-36, 238). See also Gupta, pp. 155-156.

174 To say that Consciousness is self-luminous (svaprakāśa) means that it shines by itself and is not the object of any means of knowledge. While manifesting everything, it cannot itself be manifested by anything else. But this claim is made only for Consciousness that is unlimited (anavacchinna). When it is limited by objects, it may become the object of a means of knowledge. The self-luminosity of unlimited Consciousness is not compromised, however, by the fact that limited consciousness can thus be manifested by something other than itself. I am indebted to Prof. Granoff for my understanding of this point.

175 At BR 2.74-79 (JSP, pp. 183-185), Madhusūdana again emphasizes the superiority of the sentiment of

devotion to those based on ordinary worldly emotions. Its excellence, relative to the rasas of the aestheticians, is like the light of the sun compared to that of a firefly (BR 2.77). See chap. 6.5.

176 One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy, the Sāṃkhya is based upon an dichotomy between spirit and matter. There are a multiplicity of spirit-monads (puruṣas), which, prior to mokṣa, are caught up in bondage through association with matter (prakṛti). Matter in its primal state is composed of the three material "qualities" (guṇas) in undifferentiated equilibrium; when this equilibrium is disturbed, primal matter begins to unfold in various directions, manifesting the universe. Everything except pure spirit is a product of primal matter. This includes mind as well as physical objects. All things, therefore, derive their individual characteristics from the material qualities, which produce them by combining in varying proportions.

Patañjali's Yoga, regarded by the tradition as the sister system of Sāṃkhya, accepts the ontology of the latter almost completely, making only a few changes such as the addition of its own concept of Iśvara, a sort of eternally liberated puruṣa. The Advaita Vedānta, though differing radically in many respects from the Sāṃkhya, also owes much to its influence. Collapse the multiplicity of puruṣas into one ātman, for example, and reduce prakṛti to a real-unreal Māyā which is dependent upon the ātman, and one begins to come very close to the non-dualist metaphysic. Advaita has borrowed the guṇa doctrine from the Sāṃkhya and much of its psychology as well. Therefore, as Madhusūdana expounds the rasa theory from the point of view of that system, he can find himself in agreement with much of what is said, excepting of course such items as the criticism of the Advaita doctrine of Brahman (commentary on stanza 15) and the minor point about the composition of the mind (commentary on stanza 20).

177 The guṇas, literally "strands" or "qualities," are the three basic factors that make up (prakṛti), primal matter. They pervade creation, the evolute of prakṛti, in all its aspects, mental and physical. The principle of creativity and luminosity is sattva, the "luminous quality"; the principle of activity and passion is rajas, the "active quality"; and that of destruction and inertia is tamas, the "inert quality." As specified in the text, a predominance of these in the mind is associated, respectively, with the manifestation therein of happiness (sukha), suffering (duḥkha), or delusion (moha). Each of the terms sattva, rajas, and tamas has an extraordinarily wide range of meaning, so the reader is asked to be aware of the

limitations of the translations and regard them as suggestive rather than exhaustive. The term guna in this technical usage does not, of course, intend "quality" in the sense of an attribute of a substance. If anything, gunas are factors which combine to make up substances. This ambiguity, however, is present in the original Sanskrit, and as "quality" is in common use as a translation, I have elected to use it with the foregoing cautions. For the classical presentation of the guna theory, see Sāṃkhyakārikā 12-15.

178 prakṛti.

179 vyabhicāra.

180 The Nyāya logician might argue that things may have a similar nature without sharing a common material cause. This would involve the acceptance of a universal such as, for example, "potness." Utilizing such a notion, the pots filling a shop could be understood to have the same nature even though they might not all have the same material cause. Some might be made of clay, but others of brass or copper. But an admission like this would constitute a "fault in inference" (vyabhicāra) in view of the rule, just enunciated by the Sāṃkhya, that "all things that are seen to share a certain nature have a common material cause of that nature." The alleged fault is that the sādhana ("minor premise")--having a particular nature, in this case "potness," in common--is perceived without the sādhya ("conclusion"), the state of having a common material cause. But, as Madhusūdana points out, Sāṃkhya does not admit universals of this type, so there is no such difficulty. I am indebted to Prof. Granoff for my understanding of this point.

181 paramāṇus. These impartite "atoms" are the ultimate constituents of the universe according to the pluralistic Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system.

182 God must be one, otherwise creation would be impossible owing to the conflict of separate wills.

183 The Sāṃkhya believes that this is required by the Vedāntin's theory.

184 The different mental impressions serve to color their experience differently.

185 The reference is presumably to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, a leading exponent of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system. The idea expressed in the verse is set forth in Kumārila's Śloka-

vārttika (śūnyavāda, verses 59 and 215), but not in the same words. The exact quotation appears on p. 12, verse 7 of the Sarvasiddhāntasaṃgraha of Saṃkara (ed. M. Raṅgācārya, Madras, 1909) and in the Sarvadarśanasamgraha of Mādhava, in the section dealing with Buddhist doctrine (personal communication, Sri K. Venugopalan, Dictionary Department, Deccan College, Poona). The verse, in fact, appears frequently in Buddhist sources (P. Granoff, personal communication).

¹⁸⁶At BR 2.74-79 (JSP, pp. 183-185).

¹⁸⁷The followers of Prabhākara, author of the Bṛhatī, a commentary on the Śabarabhāṣya. The Prābhākaras were one of the two main schools of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the other being that founded by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

¹⁸⁸According to the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the mind is all-pervading (vibhu)--i.e., omnipresent--functioning as a sense-organ by virtue of the limiting adjunct of the body. See Nārāyaṇa's Manameyodaya 1.2.5, 2.2.124-129 (ed. and trans. C. K. Raja and S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri [Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1933], pp. 10-11, 214-218); also G. Bhatt, Epistemology of the Bhaṭṭa School of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962), pp. 168-173.

¹⁸⁹According to the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness (kṣanikavāda), nothing exists for more than one moment. Things come into existence at one moment and are destroyed at the next. Entities which to the ordinary observer appear to possess permanence, are in fact nothing but a series of momentary existences, each causally determining its successor and thus creating an illusion of continuity. The mind also is nothing but a series of momentary cognitions linked together in a causal relationship. See Dasgupta, I, 158-162.

¹⁹⁰That is, it is neither atomic nor all-pervading.

¹⁹¹This is a reference to the view held by the Naiyāyikas and the Māmāṃsakas that the sense of hearing is identical with the ether (ākāśa), which they hold to be all-pervading and eternal, as limited by the "ear-orifice" of a particular individual. The ether, though omnipresent, is not able to apprehend all sounds when thus associated with the ear because it is restricted by the limitations of the individual psycho-physical organism. See Sinha, Indian Psychology: Perception, p. 13.

¹⁹²Madhusūdana here rejects the doctrine of the

Nyāya and the Mīmāṃsā that the ether (ākāśa) is eternal. According to the Advaita Vedānta, the ether is a product of Māyā and must therefore be non-eternal.

¹⁹³Here the opponent's identification of the ether and the sense of hearing is implicitly rejected. The auditory faculty is, for the Vedāntin, a product or derivative of the ether.

¹⁹⁴The original inference is as follows: "The mind is of medium size because it is a sense organ like the eye." The opponent objects that the fact that something is a sense organ does not necessarily prove that it is of medium size, for the faculty of hearing is a sense organ, but it is not of medium size. Rather it is all-pervading. Against this objection Madhusūdana argues that the auditory sense is a non-eternal product of the ether and that, being a product, it cannot be all-pervading.

¹⁹⁵vyāpti.

¹⁹⁶According to the Vedānta, the Mīmāṃsā, and the Nyāya, each of the various sense qualities is associated with a particular one of the five elements, of which it is considered to be the essence. Thus the quality of smell belongs to earth, taste to water, color to fire, touch to air, and sound to ether. The affinity that a sense has for the particular quality it apprehends is due to the fact that each sense is produced from the element which possesses that quality. It is a case, as Bhatt (p. 164) suggests, of "like apprehending like." The eye has an affinity for color because it is produced from the element fire, which has color as its quality. Being "fiery," it is naturally capable of apprehending the fiery quality. Similarly, the sense of smell, which perceives the earthy quality, is derived from earth, and so on in respect of the other senses. In the Nyāya and the Mīmāṃsā, however, the organ of hearing is not a product of the ether but rather identical with it (note 191). The Sāṃkhyas hold a completely different view. The senses, they say, are evolutes of the ego-principle (ahaṃkāra) and not products of the elements. They are thus psychic (āhamkārika) in nature rather than strictly physical (bhautika). See Bhatt, p. 164ff.; also Chatterjee, p. 133ff.

Note that the argument which follows in the text is aimed at showing that the mind is a composite entity and, hence, capable of melting.

¹⁹⁷The Vedānta holds that the mind is one of the senses, a product of not one but all of the elements in combination. For the Nyāya, however, the mind is an

independent principle. As an atom, it is ultimate and impartite. Rather than being a product of something else, it is one of the nine independent, eternal substances (dravya), along with the five elements, time, space, and soul.

¹⁹⁸That is, it is a composite formed from the five elements in the pure, subtle form in which they exist before each of the five elements is alloyed with fractions of the other four in the process of "making five-fold" (pañcī-karana), which precedes production of material creation. This is the view of Advaita.

¹⁹⁹The nature of the luminous quality (sattvaguna) has been briefly described in note 177. It is the principle associated with clarity, intelligence, happiness, and tranquillity. Although each of the gunas is present in every aspect of creation, they appear in different proportions in different situations. Mind has a predominance of sattva; stones, of tamas, the principle of inertia and ignorance.

²⁰⁰The Naiyāyika bases his doctrine that the mind is atomic on his belief in the impossibility of the occurrence of simultaneous cognitions. At Nyāya Sūtra 1.1.16 we read: "The non-occurrence of simultaneous cognitions is the grounds for [the inference of] the mind" (yugapaj-jñānānutpattir manaso liṅgam, Gangopadhyaya, Nyāya-Sūtra, p. 424). Although the several senses are more or less constantly in contact with their various objects, simultaneous cognitions do not occur. Therefore there must be some other factor necessary for perception over and above the contact of the senses with their objects. The mind is said to be an "extra auxiliary cause" (sahakārinimittāntara) in this respect, and contact of the mind with the senses is taken as the necessary additional factor in perception. It follows, moreover, that the mind must be atomic in size because otherwise it could be in contact with more than one sense organ at the same time, simultaneous cognitions being the result. To the objection that we often do have the impression of experiencing different cognitions through different senses at the same time, the Naiyāyika would respond that this feeling is only an illusion created by the mind's capacity for extremely rapid movement. This ability enables it to have contact with several sense organs in quick succession.

The Vedāntins would agree with the Naiyāyikas only to the extent of admitting that it is impossible to have more than one cognition at a time through one sense. For them, as we shall see, the mind is of such a size and, being partite, is in possession of sufficient flexibility, as to

be in contact with two or more different sense organs simultaneously. See Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya, pp. 81-82; and Tarkasaṃgraha (ed. Athalye and Bodas), pp. 147-148.

201 The main function of the mind, according to the Nyāya, is to provide a link between the soul (ātman) and the sense organs. Conjunction between the soul and the mind (ātmanahsaṃyoga) is postulated as a necessary condition for perception. As the soul is said to be all pervading, however, it would seem that the mind must be unable to avoid contact with it, and that the connection between the soul and the mind must therefore be eternal. If this is the case, it becomes difficult to account for the phenomenon of deep sleep, where there is no perception and, hence, an apparent disjunction of the soul and the mind. To avoid this difficulty, the Naiyāyikas assert that in sleep the mind enters a particular vein, the purītat, situated near the heart. When it does so, they say, its conjunction with the soul ceases. But this solution is not really satisfactory, for if the soul is truly all-pervading, it must be present in the purītat as well as everywhere else. So a further requirement for perception is stipulated, namely, contact of the mind with the skin. It is then declared that there is no skin in the purītat, so that the contact of the mind with the skin is suspended when the mind enters therein. See Tarkasaṃgraha (ed. Athalye and Bodas), pp. 147-148.

202 Sugar sitting on the tongue would be, according to the Vedāntin, simultaneously perceived by both taste and touch. The Naiyāyika is in trouble here, for the doctrine that the conjunction of the skin and the mind is necessary for perception goes against the notion of the impossibility of simultaneous cognitions and undermines the argument for the atomicity of the mind. It appears that this doctrine was not well thought out but invented ad hoc to avoid the difficulties regarding the relationship of soul and mind stated above.

203 I have not been able to find any reference to the Buddhist theory of mind in this text, a treatise in which Madhusūdana attempts to set forth the true nature of liberation and refute the views of other schools. Divanji notes that, of the at least eleven references to the VKL that can be found in Madhusūdana's other writings, few can actually be traced in the present printed editions of the work. For this and other reasons he concludes that the text as we now have it is incomplete. See Divanji, p. v; R. D. Karmarkar, ed., Vedāntakalpalatikā (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962).

204 ahamkāra.

205 Upadeśasāhasrī 14.3.

206 This explanatory phrase may be the interpolation of some overzealous copyist or perhaps the mistaken incorporation into the text of what was originally a reader's marginal note. In the verse the copper, already melted, is poured into the mūṣā, the form of which it assumes. The mūṣā must therefore be the mold itself, not the crucible (puṭapākayantra) in which the copper is melted.

207 See sec. XIII.

208 Upadeśasāhasrī 14.4.

209 The bhagavatpūjyapāda, i.e., Śaṅkara.

210 Sureśvara (seventh century), disciple of Śaṅkara and author of the Vārtikas or versified glosses on his teacher's commentaries on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Taitirīya Upaniṣads.

211 Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadvārtika 1.2.103. In the process of knowing, the one universal Consciousness appears in the three forms described in this stanza. The first is the knower (mātr), which is Consciousness limited by the mind (antahkaraṇāvacchinnacaitanya). The second is the object of knowledge (meva), which is Consciousness limited by the object (visayāvacchinnacaitanya). Consciousness limited by the modification (vṛtti) of the mind (antahkaranavṛttyavacchinnacaitanya) is the third, called the means of knowledge (māna). The function of the mental modification is to create a connection between the subject-Consciousness and the object-Consciousness and to temporarily suppress the veil of Ignorance which obscures the latter. (See stanza 12 and its commentary, with notes.) The vṛtti accomplishes this by the process, clearly described in the text, of flowing out and assuming the form of the object. For further details see SB (ed. Divanji), pp. 32-36, 235-238; Sinha, pp. 128-139.

212 māna.

213 vṛttijñāna.

214 cidacidgranthirūpa, "a composite of consciousness and unconsciousness." The mind is a product of the five elements (bhautika) and, hence, unconscious (jada). Its consciousness is derived from caitanya, which is reflected in it.

215 The mental modification (vṛtti) remains a part of the mind even while flowing out--being, so to say, an expansion of the mental substance. Though the vṛtti flows out of the mind, the latter is not exhausted so as to become "empty." Indeed, the vṛtti remains in the mind just as water remains in the tank even though some of it may be flowing out through the irrigation channels.

216 SB (ed. Divanji), pp.32-36, 235-238.

217 PD 4.25.

218 The first half of the stanza is PD 4.23a, the second half is Madhusūdana's.

219 Madhusūdana.

220 sthāyī.

221 rati, the permanent emotion of śṛṅgāra, the sentiment of erotic love.

222 hāsa, the permanent emotion of hāsyā, the sentiment of mirth.

223 See especially BR 2.2-43. Gupta gives a good summary, pp. 220-224 and appendix.

224 See stanza 8 and commentary.

225 upekṣājñāna.

226 See sec. XIII.

227 sāttvikabhāvas.

228 Uddyotakara (sixth century C.E.). Sri K. Venugopalan, of the Dictionary Department, Deccan College, has kindly attempted to trace this quote for me in the Nyāyavārttika, but without success. He informs me, however, that the idea is found in Dharmottara's commentary on the Nyāyabindu and in Jayantabhaṭṭa's Nyāyamañjarī (personal communication).

229 For a discussion of this important section, see chap. 5.7-8.

230 That is, it is only figurative.

231 apīti.

²³²laya, the final dispersion of the individuality upon attainment of knowledge of Brahman and liberation.

²³³That is, it awakens.

²³⁴Madhusūdana here wants to support his view that the mind is not dissolved in deep sleep by a reference to the Pañcapādikavivarāṇa of Prakāśātman (thirteenth century), a commentary on Padmapāda's Pañcapādika (seventh-eight century), which in turn is a commentary on a portion of the BSSB. The phrase "What subtlety, pray, is this?" (keyam sūkṣmatā nāma), however, appears in neither the Pañcapādika nor Prakāśātman's Vivarāṇa, nor even in Vidyāraṇya's Vivaraṇaprameyasamgraha (personal communication from Sri K. Venugopalan, Dictionary Department, Deccan College).

²³⁵śāstrasya kopayoga iti. Scripture (śāstra) urges us to strive to realize God and specifies means and disciplines dedicated to the end. If God is already attained, what is the point of all this? See stanza 32 above and note 237.

²³⁶It is the Lord, as Consciousness, who/which reveals the objects. Without this inherent form of the Lord, the mind, itself insentient, would have no power of manifestation (see note 214). Here Madhusūdana is talking of the "form" of bhagavat in a way that Advaitins usually talk of Brahman or caitanya. This is not, however, a deviation from Advaitic principle since, strictly speaking, it is not the pure Absolute (śuddhabrahman) that is present in the mind as a reflection, making possible the experience of objects. It is, rather, the "prototype Consciousness" (bimbacaitanya), which is the same as Īśvara or bhagavat. See chap. 5.5-6.

²³⁷śāstrajanyā. Madhusūdana is unfortunately not specific about the important question of which śāstra or scripture he has in mind. In sec. XI he specified that "the hearing of compositions that bring together the exalted qualities of the Blessed Lord is the means to devotion" (Sanskrit: chap. 5.7, note 59). This, combined with the general tendency of the BR to regard the BP as its primary authority, makes it almost certain that it is the latter text that Madhusūdana has in mind here (see chap. 5.7). Note, however, that Saṅkara habitually used the term śāstra to designate the śruti-texts, e.g.: "Brahman is known only from the Vedānta scripture" (brahma . . . vedānta-śāstrād evāvagamyate, BSSB 1.1.4); "The purpose of the scripture is the destruction of all difference posited by Ignorance" (avidyākalpitabhedanivṛttiparatvāt śāstrasya, BSSB 1.1.4); "Scripture is the final means of knowledge

(śāstram tu antyam pramānam, SGB 2.18). See T. M. P. Mahadevan, Sankarācharya (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1968), p. 77-78.

²³⁸Here, bhakti begins to sound very much like knowledge of Brahman. See chap. 5.7.

²³⁹The material qualities (guṇa), as mentioned above (note 177), are the basic constituents of creation. Since everything, in the final analysis, consists of them, the guṇas and their activity come to stand for relative creation in general, as opposed to absolute Being or Spirit. Hence the notion of the contamination of Spirit by involvement with the guṇas is suggestive of any kind of relative involvement whatsoever. Conversely detachment from the guṇas implies indifference to, or separation from, every aspect of mundane existence.

²⁴⁰The four mind-born sons of Brahmā, who were "boy-sages," great spiritual adepts who remained eternally youthful and celibate. Their names were Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, and Sanatkumāra. See BP 3.12, 4.22, 11.13. The fact that Madhusūdana himself identifies with these figures is of great significance. See chap. 6.5, note 83.

²⁴¹According to the BP (3.25-33), Kapila, the founder of the Sāṃkhya system, was an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Scholars are generally agreed that Sāṃkhya is one of the oldest systems of Indian philosophy, but all evidence regarding its founder is mythical. If there was an historical personage of the name Kapila who was responsible for originating this school, it is likely that he lived in the century preceding the Buddha. The works ascribed to him, the Sāṃkhyapravacanasūtra and the Tattvasamāsa, appear to be of much more recent origin (probably fourteenth century C.E.). See Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, (2nd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958), I, 212.

²⁴²Madhusūdana has just stated that "the condition of being filled with the forms of objects is not the inherent nature (svabhāva) of the mind" and that "this condition is the effect of adventitious causes" (viṣayākāratā hi na cittasya svabhāvabhūtā, tasyā āgantukahetujanyatvāt, JSP, p. 69). He continues: "What is inherent (svabhāvakī) in the mind, however, is its having the form of the Blessed Lord" (bhagavadākāratā tu cittasya svabhāvakī, JSP, p. 70). It seems strange, therefore, that he should now use the word "inherent" or "natural" (svabhāvakī) in reference to the state of being filled with the forms of objects (viṣayākāratā). But this is what he does: prakṛtiḥ svabhāvakī viṣayākāratety arthaḥ (JSP, p. 73).

This could be an error in the text, and perhaps we should read asvabhāvakī, the "unnatural" or "adventitious" condition. In light of the association with the term prakṛti ("crude nature," "unrefined state"), however, I have chosen the more conservative alternative of translating svabhāvakī as "common." ("Natural" cannot be used because it also would suggest innateness.) By saying that "crude nature" (prakṛti) refers to "the common condition of having impressions of the forms of objects," Madhusūdana is giving a rather lofty philosophical interpretation of the BP text. More simply, he could have glossed prakṛti as "the state of being entangled in the material qualities of prakṛti." This seems, in fact, to be the idea of the citation from the Hamsagītā that immediately follows. See note 239 for the significance of the important notion of involvement in the material qualities.

243 "The Song of the Swan," a section of the BP (11.13.15-42) in which the Lord tells how He appeared before Brahmā and his four saintly, mind-born sons (note 240) to answer their questions regarding the means of extricating the mind from sense attachment.

244 jīva.

245 turya, "the Fourth," the state of pure awareness which underlies and supports the waking, dreaming, and deep-sleep states. In respect of these three, it is the fourth. See the Māndūkya Upaniṣad for the classical exposition of this notion.

246 Śrīdhara explains tad guṇacetasām as follows: tad tadā guṇacetasām guṇānām cetasaś cānyonyam tyāgaḥ bhavati, JLS, p. 657. I have translated accordingly.

247 The Lord as Consciousness, the Fourth, is the constant and silent witness of the other three states.

248 bādhya, "to be contradicted, set aside, annulled." Because the world is false appearance produced by Māyā, its apparent reality will be contradicted or sublated by true knowledge.

249 That is, the state in which this reality is experienced.

250 Regarded by the tradition as one of the greatest devotees of all time. To save Prahlāda from destruction at the hands of his evil father, the demon-king Hiranyakaśipu, the Lord incarnated as Narasiṃha, the Man-lion. See BP 7.2-10.

251 prīti.

252 For a discussion of the implications of this and the following five sections, especially the implication that Advaitic knowledge is preliminary to the highest stages of bhakti, see chap. 5.8-9.

253 paripūrṇasaccidānandaghana.

254 sanmātra.

255 dr̥ṣṭānuśravikaviṣayavitṛṣṇasya vaśīkārasaṃjñā vairāgyam, Bangali Baba, p. 8. In verses 13-15 of his introduction to the GAD (Pan, pp. 3-4), Madhusūdana equates this vaśīkāvairāgya with the "non-attachment to the enjoyment of the results of action in this world and the next" (ihāmutraphalabhogavairāgya) that is the second of the "four-fold means" that qualifies a renunciate for the study of Advaita. It leads, he says, to the strengthening of the desire for mokṣa. Thus it becomes a preparation for jñāna rather than, as here in the BR, a preliminary to bhakti. This provides further support for my thesis that Madhusūdana is writing from quite a different standpoint in the GAD. See note 112, below; also chap. 9.3.

256 That is, the earlier stages are the means to those which follow.

257 doṣa, "fault," is also a common medical term meaning "bodily humor," "morbid element," or "disease."

258 The five senses, external as opposed to the mind. See next note.

259 antahkarana, in relation to the five external senses, the "internal sense."

260 The practice of reflecting on the unpleasant aspects of sense objects rather than their pleasant aspects is a type of Vedāntic vicāra ("reflective discipline") designed to produce non-attachment. Confronted by the temptation of amassing wealth, for example, the aspirant would deliberately bring to mind and reflect on all the troubles and grief that money brings in its train, thus overcoming temptation and attachment.

261 puruṣa, see note 176.

262 According to Vyāsa's commentary on YS 1.16, this higher non-attachment is a very advanced state indeed, practically equivalent to liberation:

"There are two kinds of non-attachment. The higher of these is the pure calm of knowledge at the appearance of which the yogin whose realization has dawned thinks: 'Attained is that which had to be attained; destroyed are the afflictions that had to be destroyed; broken is the series of births whose links were tightly joined, because of the continuance of which, having been born, one dies, and, having died, one is reborn.' This non-attachment is the supreme culmination of knowledge, for liberation is not something distinct from it" (tatra yad uttaram taj jñānaprasādamātram yasyodaye sati yogī pratyuditakhyātir evaṃ manyate--prāptam prāpanīyam / kṣīṇaḥ kṣetavyāḥ kleśaḥ / chinnaḥ śliṣṭaparvabhava-saṅkramo yasyāvicchedāḥ janitvā mriyate mṛtvā ca jāyata iti / jñānasyaiva parā kṣāṭhā vairāgyam / etasyaiva hi nāntarīyakam kaivalyam iti, Bangali Baba, p. 8).

263^A A brave and pious king who helped protect the gods against the demons. His story is told at BP 10.51.

264^A According to Śrīdhara (JLS, p. 538): ". . . known as the senses" (indriyalakṣaṇāḥ), i.e., the five senses and the mind, which is the "internal sense" (antahkarana). Another traditional formula counts the six enemies as lust (kāma), anger (krodha), greed (lobha), infatuation (moha), pride (mada), and jealousy (matsara).

265^A mokṣaparyantam, literally "up to and including liberation." The point is that, while the lower non-attachment just described involves lack of desire for everything except liberation, the higher is characterized by desirelessness toward everything including liberation. This is amply illustrated by the twelve verses cited following. The author here, continuing to take the point of view of the devotional schools, implicitly slights the Vedāntins' high valuation of the "desire for mokṣa." See notes 112, 121 above; and chaps. 3.2, 4.3.2, 5.8-9.

266^A This text refers to the purāṇic doctrine of the five kinds of liberation. Sālokya is the attainment of the same heavenly realm (loka) occupied by the Lord, sārṣṭi is the acquisition of powers similar to his, sāmīpya is close proximity to him, sārūpya is the assumption of a form or beauty (rūpa) similar to his, and ekatva or sāyujya is oneness with him. From none of these states does the soul return to transmigration.

Contrary to what we might expect ekatva or oneness is not always regarded as the highest goal. This is especially the case in the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school. Even though the soul in the state of oneness is never completely identified with the Lord so as to lose its individuality (as

in the liberation of Advaita), still to be completely immersed in the divine bliss is to lose one's ability to experience the outward glories and sports of the Lord as well as the capacity for service. The Gosvāmins, for this reason, regard ekatva as the lowest of the five. For them sāmīpya or close proximity is the highest, for in it there is direct perception of the supernaturally glorious form of the Lord, and in it the bliss of devotion, a goal superior to any state of liberation, is at its highest. See De, VFM, pp. 294-295. Rūpa Goswāmin quotes the present verse (BP 3.29.13) at BRS 1.1.14 and again at 1.2.28 (Bon, pp. 28, 86); he then goes on to state that, though all but ekatva are compatible with bhakti, true devotees, who are "tasting the unique sweetness of preman" (premaikamādhuryajūṣa), do not desire any of the five forms of liberation (BRS 1.2.55-57; Bon, pp. 106).

267 Viṣṇu incarnate in partial form as the son of Vena. A king renowned for his virtue, Pṛthu was most famous for taming the goddess Earth, who was withholding food from his subjects. See BP 4.15-23.

268 I have followed Śrīdhara's interpretation of this verse. "The nectar of Thy lotus feet" is glossed "the bliss of hearing Thy glory, etc." (yaśaḥśravanādisukham). The ten thousand ears are "to hear Thy glory" (yaśaḥśravanāya). Pṛthu is saying that he does not desire liberation if in that state he cannot hear the nectar-like stories of the Lord being sung by the great saints. The text of Śrīdhara's commentary: mahattamānām antarhṛdayān mukhdvāreṇa nirgato bhavatpādāmbhojamakarando yaśaḥśravanādisukham yatra nāsti tādrśam cet kaivalyaṃ tarhi tat kvacit kadācid api na kāmaye tarhi kiṃ kāmāyase tad āha yaśaḥśravanāya karnānām ayutaṃ vidhatsva nanu ko 'py evaṃ na vṛtavān kim anyacintayety āha mama tu eṣa eva varah, JLS, 199.

269 The son of King Uttānapāda. As a boy Dhruva, inspired by the celestial sage Nārada, performed austerities so rigorous that the breathing of all creation was obstructed. The Lord blessed him with the boon that, on his death, he would have the pole star (dhruva, "fixed") as his abode. See BP 4.8-12.

270 This verse has already be quoted once in sec. IX. See note 84.

271 Kṛṣṇa's Queens, addressing Draupadi.

272 An epithet of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa.

273 A name of Lakṣmī, goddess of prosperity and beauty (śrī), the consort of Viṣṇu.

274 The King of the devas, addressing the Lord who, in His Man-lion incarnation, has just slain the demon Hiranyakaṣipu. The latter had been tyrannizing his own son Prahlāda and, indeed, all the world.

275 A demon important in the Rgveda, where he is Indra's chief adversary. In the BP account (6.11-12), he is presented as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu.

276 At the end of the period of universal dissolution (mahāpralaya), the eternal Vedas awaken Viṣṇu from his cosmic sleep by singing his praises.

277 See note 111.

278 bhagavatpremaparākāṣṭhā.

279 prakṛti.

280 premalakṣaṇā bhaktiḥ.

281 A devotee of Kṛṣṇa who was a leader of the Yadu clan, into which Kṛṣṇa was born.

282 Śrīdhara: yato 'sau jñānena mām dhārayati, JLS, p. 670.

283 The Self which exists both before and after the appearance of the products of Māyā continues to exist in the interim as the support or locus (adhiṣṭhāna) of these phenomenal manifestations, just as, in the classical analogy of the snake and the rope, the rope continues to exist as the substratum of the illusory snake. This seems to be the meaning of this obscure passage, which Śrīdhara glosses as follows: "The rope which exists at the beginning and end of the unreal snake also exists in the interval, but the snake does not exist; similarly, this change does not exist" (asataḥ sarpāder adyantayor yad asti rajjvadi tad eva madhye 'pi na tu sarpādi tadvad ayam vikāro nāsti, JLS, p. 670).

284 māyikā.

285 vikalpa. He becomes detached from all of creation, realizing that it is but a false mental construct. Śrīdhara: ". . . because of the falsity of the mental construct" (vikalpasya mithyātvāt, JLS, p. 671).

286 Śrīdhara: "Who in reality is the Self and Who gives Himself to the worshipers" (vastuta ātmā ātmapradaś copāsakānām, JLS, p. 630).

287 The pairs such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, and so on, which trouble people in this world of relativity.

288 This and the following two verses are cited and commented upon by Madhusūdana in sec. X.

289 The eleven stages of devotion enumerated in verses 34-36 follow roughly Nārada's account of his own growth in bhakti, described in Book I of the BP (1.5.23-40). Born as the son of the servant-maid of a group sages, he waited on them, earned their grace, was attracted to their practices, heard their accounts of the Lord's glories, and so on. Note that there is very little in common between Madhusūdana's eleven stages of devotion and the nine enumerated by Rūpa at BRS 1.4.15 (see chap. 4.3.4). Gupta's suggestion (p. xxii) that Madhusūdana based these stages on the model of the seven stages of knowledge listed in the YV, and cited by Madhusūdana at GAD 3.18, seems to me to have little foundation.

The Bhaktisūtras attributed to Nārada contain a list of eleven types of bhakti, as follows: (1) love of the greatness of God's qualities (gunamahātmyāsakti); (2) love of the beauty of God's form (rūpāsakti); (3) love of worship (pūjāsakti); (4) love of the constant remembrance of God (smāraṇāsakti); (5-8) love of the Lord as his servant, friend, parent, and beloved (dāsya-, sakhya-, vātsalya-, and kāntāsakti); (9) love of complete self-surrender (ātmanivedanāsakti); (10) love in identity with God (tanmayatāsakti); and (11) supreme love in separation (paramavirahāsakti) (NBS 82, Swami Tyāgīśānanda, Aphorisms on the Gospel of Divine Love or the Nārada Bhakti Sūtras [Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978], pp. 22-23). To what extent the NBS intends this list as a hierarchical arrangement is not clear. It does not use any word for stages or degrees, but says only that bhakti is "elevenfold" (ekādaśadhā). At any rate, the scheme has little in common with Madhusūdana's eleven bhaktibhūmikās.

290 rati.

291 Madhusūdana's commentary on these three verses (34-36) covers forty-four pages in the text. Remarks from his own hand occupy a total of only about two pages of this bulk; the rest is made up of some 190 verses from the BP which the author quotes to explain, through illustrative reference to the legends of great devotees, the various stages of devotion. This section of the commentary is, therefore, lengthy--perhaps unnecessarily so--and for that reason somewhat tedious. Rather than translating it in full, I here summarize its essential points, providing

direct translations of Madhusūdana's own commentary where appropriate, together with a sampling of the more important verses cited.

Madhusūdana explains the stages as follows:

I. Service of the Great (mahatām sevā). Note that the word seva ("service") used here carries also the meanings "resorting to," "constant attendance on," and "dwelling near" or "frequenting." Close contact is implied. By "the great" Madhusūdana means either the devotees of the Lord, i.e., saints and one's preceptor, or the Lord himself in the form of an avatāra ("divine incarnation") such as Kṛṣṇa. "Service of the great," he says, "is two-fold: service of the devotees of the Lord or service of the Lord Himself" (sākṣādbhagavatsevā, JSP, p. 97).

Just as it harms the mind to associate with persons of bad character and unwholesome interests, so association with saintly persons purifies the mind, helping it to overcome attachment to worldly things and acquire a tendency to dwell on things spiritual. Worldly desires begin to become spiritual desires, e.g., for hearing tales of the Lord's glory and realizing him in one's own life. Of course if one is fortunate enough to live at the time of an avatāra of the Lord, an even greater opportunity presents itself.

Some examples of service of the Lord's devotees quoted by the author:

"They say that service of the great (mahatsevā) is the gateway to liberation while association with those attached to women leads to hell. The great are those who are even-minded, tranquil, free from anger, kind-hearted, and pure" (BP 5.5.2).

"The wise know attachment as the ageless bond of the Self. But that same attachment, when directed towards the saintly, is an open gateway to liberation" (BP 3.25.20).

An example of service of the Lord Himself:

"For merely by loving attachment (bhāva) [to Me], the milkmaids, the cows, and the trees, along with the beasts, the serpents, and other other dull-witted creatures, all became perfected and easily attained Me . . .

"Whom even one striving by means of yoga, reasoning, vows, austerities, sacrifices, recitation and study of the Veda, or renunciation may well not reach" (BP 11.12.8-9).

Madhusūdana comments: "Without either close association with the Lord Himself or with those [saints] who are in close contact with Him, whichever is possible, devotion to the Lord will not arise. Here is the distinction: for those who have close association with the Lord Himself, there is no requirement for any further contact [with saints], because their goal is already achieved, but for those who are enjoying the company of saints, there is the further requirement of direct contact with the Lord, as this is the goal" (JSP, p. 101).

Note that Rūpa Gosvāmin, in his scheme of devotional stages, counts "association with the holy" (sādhusaṅga) as the second, to be preceded by faith (śraddhā). See chap. 4.3.4.

II. Being a Fit Object of Their Compassion (taddayā-pātratā). Here the word "compassion" suggests also the active spiritual help or grace that flows from the saint or avatāra to the devotee. Though the great souls show love impartially to all creatures, devotees who possess, either naturally or by self-effort, noble qualities such as kindness, non-violence, patience, truthfulness, tranquillity, and so on, may become the special object of their compassion. "The compassion of great," comments Madhusūdana, "directed toward oneself, arises because of one's virtues such as having a pure and tractable disposition" (JSP, p. 102). The virtues are important for, "If the disciple does not have such qualities, association with the great, even if attained, is useless (nirarthaka)" (JSP, p. 104).

The compassion of the great is expressed in the form of grace and special attention bestowed upon the devotee, which aids him in his spiritual development. It may be earned by the bhakta's own efforts or bestowed without such consideration (JSP, 104).

III. Faith in Their Disciplines (śraddhā teṣāṃ dharmeṣu). "For one who is possessed of the qualities just described and is engaged in the service of the great, faith in their disciplines arises in the form of a particular inclination, namely, 'By the performance of such disciplines I too may become one whose purpose in life is fulfilled'" (JSP, p. 108).

Madhusūdana cites a series of verses that extol these disciplines and explain how the aspirant may acquire a liking for their practice, e.g.:

"Who will not love to hear of Him by the sword of constant meditation on Whom the wise and disciplined souls have cut the knot of karma that binds them?"

"O Brahmins! Through service of great saints and frequent pilgrimage to holy places, a taste for tales of Vāsudeva arises in those who are attentive and faithful" (BP 1.2.15-16).

"This faith with the maturation of practice causes an increasing dislike for all objects, both of this world and the next, and leads one to regard the performance of the disciplines of the Lord's devotees as the sole support of his life, just as hunger makes one wholly intent on food" (JSP, 109). Madhusūdana illustrates such intense faith with the example of the fasting King Parīkṣit, who says to Suka, the narrator of the purāṇa:

"As I drink the nectar-like story of Hari flowing from the lotus of your mouth, this intolerable hunger does not trouble me, who have given up even water" (BP 10.1.23).

IV. Hearing of the Glories of Hari (hariguna-śruti). "This phrase," says Madhusūdana, "is meant to suggest all nine of the disciplines of the Lord's devotees" (JSP, p. 115). (See note 30 above.) These nine are enumerated at BP 7.5.23-24, which the author of the BR quotes:

"Hearing (śravaṇa) of the glories of Viṣṇu, singing of them, constant thought of Him, attendance at His feet, worship, reverent prostration, regarding oneself as His servant, thinking of Him as a close friend, and surrender of oneself to Him--

"If this nine-fold devotion, offered to the Blessed Lord Viṣṇu, were practiced by a man (pumsā), it would indeed, I deem, be the highest learning."

"The performance of such disciplines of the Lord's devotees according to one's capacity is the fourth stage. These four stages are means (sādhana) only" (JSP, p. 124). That is, the first four stages serve only as the means to devotion, which begins at the next stage, and are not ends in themselves.

V. The Arising of the Sprout of Love (raty-aṅkurotpatti). This is the beginning of true devotion, the result of the practice of the first four stages. "This love (rati) will be explained as the permanent emotion of the sentiment of devotion. It is a special permanent impression of the form of the Lord that has entered into the melted mind, the 'sprout' of the 'seed' which consists in the performance of the disciplines of the Lord's devotees" (JSP, p. 124). The following text is cited:

"As a result of association with the saintly, one hears stories, like elixir to the mind and ear, from which one gains knowledge of My heroic deeds. From the enjoyment of these, faith in the path to liberation, love (rati), and devotion follow in quick succession" (BP 3.25.25).

"The idea is that after one has faith in the experience of the sentiment of devotion, love (rati), the permanent emotion, will arise. Then that will develop into the sentiment of devotion, all in proper sequence" (JSP, p. 125). (See sec. XVII.) "This, the fifth stage, represents the real essence (svarūpa) of devotion. The other six levels become the fruit of this through a particular process of development" (JSP, p. 126). The devotion that has been described BR 1.3-10 begins at this stage and develops until it reaches its highest limit in stage eleven.

Rūpa Gosvāmin also uses the word rati to designate the initial stage of bhakti that emerges out of the practice of sādhanabhakti (chap. 4.3.4), as well as the sthāyibhāva of bhaktirasa (chap. 6.4). In both theories, then, rati is the nascent state of love which develops eventually into preman. While the author of the BR regards rati as the manifestation of the form of bhagavat, Rūpa understands it as an appearance in the devotee's mind of the divine hlādinī śakti. The classical aestheticians, as we have seen, regard rati as the sthyāyibhāva of śṛṅgārarasa, the sentiment of erotic love.

VI. Realization of the Essential Nature (sva-rūpādhigati). This stage is especially interesting since Mādhusūdana indicates clearly that it is the same as knowledge of Brahman, the highest goal of Advaita. He describes it as "the direct realization of the essential nature (svarūpa) of the inner Self (pratyagātman) as distinct from both the gross and subtle bodies" (pratyag-ātmasvarūpasya sthūlasūkṣmadehadvayātirikatatvena sākṣātkāraṣ saṣṭhī bhūmikā, JSP, p. 126). The following verses are said to illustrate its nature:

"The Self is eternal, immutable, pure, one, the conscious principle within the body, the support [of all], changeless, self-luminous, the [first] cause, all pervading, unattached, uncircumscribed.

"Realizing the Self through these twelve preeminent characteristics, one should abandon the false notions of 'I' and 'mine' with regard to the body which are born of delusion" (BP 7.7.19-20).

Any doubts regarding the equivalence of this state to

Vedāntic knowledge of Brahman are removed by Madhusūdana's assertion that it includes the realization of the truth of the "great saying" of the Upaniṣad, "Thou art That" (CU 6.9.4): "When, in this way, that which is designated by the word 'thou' is realized in its purity, there arises knowledge of its non-difference from what is designated by the word 'That'" (evam śuddhe tvampadalakṣye 'vagate tatpadalakṣyeṇa sahābheda jñānam bhavati, BR, p. 128). Madhusūdana declares that such "knowledge of reality" (tattvajñāna) generates intense non-attachment and suggests that this non-attachment prepares the ground for the next stage (etādṛṣatattvajñāne sati vairāgyadārḍhyād bhagavati premno vṛddhir bhavati, JSP, p. 129). "Without it," he says, "love (rati) will not reach its full development due to the distractions of the body and senses" (anyathā dehendriyādivikṣepeṇa jātāyā api rater anirvāhāt, JSP, p. 126-127). Cp. GAD 7.17: "Of the four types of devotees, the possessor of knowledge (jñānin) . . . is the best . . . since he is able to concentrate his mind on the Lord constantly, due to the absence of distractions" (caturvidhānām teṣām madhye jñānī . . . viśiṣyate . . . yato . . . bhagavati . . . sadā samāhitacetā vikṣepābhāvāt, Pan, p. 363). (See also the discussion of knowledge and non-attachment as preliminaries to the highest levels of devotion, BR 1, secs. XXV-XXVII; chap. 5.8-9.)

Note that svarūpādhiḡati is not the same as the realization of bhagavat. The latter occurs in the eighth stage and is preceded by the increase of love made possible by the knowledge and non-attachment generated here. This is a further confirmation of the fact that, though Madhusūdana often speaks of bhagavat as identical with the Self, he does wish to retain both a conceptual and an experiential distinction between the two.

The interpretation of this stage is made somewhat uncertain by the fact that Madhusūdana has earlier (sec. XI) asserted that "inquiry into the Vedānta may be necessary even for devotees for the sake of determining the essential nature (svarūpa) of the object of their worship" (see note 123). If, as seems likely, he is using svarūpa in that passage indicate the same reality--the ātman--that is intended here in the compound svarūpādhiḡati, it could possibly be argued that he really believes that this and the higher stages of bhakti are open only to those who undertake study of Vedānta, i.e., Advaitin renunciates. This interpretation might find some support in Madhusūdana's failure to explicitly specify which scripture (śāstra) "generates" the manifestation of the form of God in the mind (see note 237, above, and chap. 5.7, notes 59 and 62). Is, then, the allusion to the "great saying" tat tvam asi here a covert introduction of Advaitic orthodoxy? Is, in other words, Madhusūdana trying to suggest that the mediation of

the śruti essential even for the bhakta? Such an interpretation of the text would have the advantage of harmonizing the teachings of the BR with those of the GAD (see chap. 9.3). But the problem, over and above Madhusūdana's ambiguity, is that no Brahmin renunciate, as we shall see, is named among the purāṇic heroes the author mentions in his commentary on BR 1 as exemplars of the higher stages of bhakti. The paradigmatic bhaktas referred to are all either Kṣatriya kings, princes, or noblemen (Ambarīṣa, Parīkṣit, Uddhava, and Prahlāda) or, worse for the interpretation under consideration, Kṣatriya women (Kṛṣṇa's queens) or even low-caste women (the gopīs).

Of course, there is always the doctrine, enunciated by Madhusūdana at GAD 18.63 (see chap. 9.3.3), that renunciation performed in a previous life may be efficacious in provoking liberation in a present, non-renounced existence. And the Vaiṣṇavas teach that the gopīs are incarnations of great sages (rṣis). But we cannot base our interpretation of the text on the unlikely possibility that Madhusūdana had such notions in mind to rationalize the status of all the exemplar-devotees referred to. I feel confident that he is here suggesting the possibility of Self-realization, as a preliminary to the higher stages of bhakti, attainable without reference to Vedāntic inquiry and all the restrictions that pertain thereto.

VII. The Increase of Love for the Supreme Bliss (paramānande premavṛddhiḥ). Preman is the developed and enhanced state of rati. In the literature of the devotional schools, the word suggests "pure, ecstatic love of God." (See chap. 4.3.4-5.) The "Supreme Bliss" is, of course, the Lord. Purified by knowledge and non-attachment, the mind becomes lost in the love that first appeared at stage five. The example of Prahlāda, son of the demon-king Hiraṇyakaśipu (see notes 250, 274), is cited:

"That boy, who had abandoned all his toys because his mind was absorbed in the Lord, seemed like an insentient dolt. His mind possessed by Kṛṣṇa, he was unaware of the world around him.

"Lost in the embrace of Govinda, he was not aware of anything while sitting, roaming about, eating, lying down, drinking, or speaking.

"Sometimes, his mind agitated by anxious yearning for Vaikuṇṭha [Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa], he wept. Sometimes he laughed out of joy at the thought of Him; sometimes he sang loudly. Sometimes, yearning [for Him], he cried out. Sometimes he danced without inhibition, and sometimes, intent on contemplation on Him and identified with Him, he would imitate [His actions].

"Sometimes he sat silent, the hairs on his body thrilling in rapture, delighting in the close contact, his eyes closed with tears of joy from his unswerving love" (BP 7.4.37-41).

Madhusūdana states that this stage represents the end of the practice of the means (sādhana) and that "the four remaining stages are accomplished without effort" (JSP, p. 131-132).

VIII. **The Direct Manifestation of Him (tasya sphuraṇam)**. "The eighth stage is the immediate realization (sāksātkāra), caused by the super-abundance of love (premātiśaya), of the Blessed Lord who is the object of that love (premāspadībhūta" (JSP, p. 132). Devotees at this level (who are not specifically named in the passage cited) commune with celestial manifestations of the Lord:

"There are some few, My devotees, who have such longing for Me and take such delight in the worship of My feet that they do not desire oneness with Me. Joining together, they celebrate My heroic deeds.

"These saintly ones see My divine forms--radiant, boon-bestowing, with charming face and violet eyes--and they engage with them in enviable conversations.

"Their minds and life-breath stolen by My beautiful limbs, My enchanting sports, smiles, looks, and sweet speech, they are transported, by [their] devotion, to My exceedingly subtle state" (BP 3.25.34-36).

It is worth noting a study such as this that the words premāspada ("object of love"), which are used here in reference to bhagavat, are also used in Advaita as a designation of the ātman. In the SB, for example, Madhusūdana speaks of the discrimination between "the suffering [jīva] and the object of supreme love" (duḥkhiparamapremāspadānvayavyatireka, Divanji, p. 70). In another place he describes the Self as the "object of supreme love, since it is of the nature of bliss" (paramapremāspadatvena ca tasyānandarūpatvāt, Divanji, p. 9). This usage seems to be based on PD 1.8-9, where the Self is described as parapremāspada (Swahananda, pp. 4-5). See also GAD 7.17 (Pan, p. 363).

IX. **Spontaneous Absorption in the Disciplines of the Lord's Devotees (bhagavadharmaniṣṭhā)**. At this stage the devotee, filled with love for God, is constantly engaged in devotional activities. These are no longer consciously cultivated as means to realization, but are spontaneous

expressions of ecstatic love. Ambarīṣa, a king whose devotion was so great that the Lord protected him against the powerful curse of the sage Durvāsas (BP 9.4-5), was such a devotee:

"He attained such great love (bhāva) for the Blessed Lord Vāsudeva and for His saintly devotees that he looked upon the whole universe as if it were a clod of earth.

"He directed his mind toward the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words to describing the glories of Lord Vaiṣṇava, his hands to cleaning the temples of Hari, his ears to narrations of the purifying tales of Acyuta,

"His eyes to seeing the shrines which contained images of Mukunda, his limbs to embracing the bodies of the servants of the Lord, his sense of smell to the fragrance of His lotus feet, his taste to the sacred basil leaves offered to Him" (9.4.15-19).

Also cited as examples are Uddhava (BP 11.6.48) and Parīkṣit (BP 1.9.15-21). Madhusūdana concludes: "The absorption in the disciplines of the Lord's devotees that requires effort is a means (sādhana), but this absorption, which is accomplished spontaneously (svatassiddhā), is an end in itself (phalabhūtā)" (JSP, p. 136).

X. Possession of His Glorious Qualities in Oneself (svasmiṃs tadguṇaśālitā). Madhusūdana's exposition of the tenth and eleventh stages is disappointingly brief, covering a total of only 21 lines of text. He begins his discussion of the former by quoting two verses from the BP (3.25.37-38) which indicate that the devotee attains supernatural powers, divine radiance, and other spiritual gifts, even though he has no desire for these things. These are explained in a brief comment as a "manifestation [in the devotee] of qualities that are imperishable and similar to the Lord's" (avinaśvarabhagavattulyaḡuṇavibhāva, JSP, p. 137). Madhusūdana gives no further explanation of the possibilities involved, but the state seems equivalent to the sārśtimukti of traditional Vaiṣṇava thought. See note 266.

XI. The Supreme Limit of Love (premaḡ paramā kaśṡhā). Madhusūdana's explanation of this stage is short: "It is characterized by the inability to endure separation (viraha) to the extent of giving up one's very life" (prāṇa-parityāḡāvaddivirahāśaḡiṣṡnutārūpā, BR, p. 137). This comment is supported by four passages from the BP illustrating the anguish experienced by the bhaktas when

separated from Kṛṣṇa. Here, the paradigms are the gopīs and the queen's of Dvārakā:

"There was supreme bliss for the milkmaids on seeing Govinda, a moment without Whom was to them like a hundred world ages" (BP 10.19.16).

"When you go off to the forest during the day, an instant seems like a world age to us [the gopīs] who are not seeing you. A dolt is he who made the lashes of these eyes that are gazing at your radiant face with its [frame of] curly hair!" (BP 10.31.15)

"Whenever, O Lotus-eyed One, you depart [from Dvārakā] for the land of the Kurus [Hastināpur] or the Madhus [Mathurā] with the desire to see your friends, a moment resembles a hundred thousand years for us [Kṛṣṇa's queens], O Acyuta, who become like the eyes without the sun" (BP 1.11.9).

The highest intolerance of separation is illustrated by the gopīs who were prevented by jealous relatives from responding to the call of Kṛṣṇa's flute and participating in the celebrated Dance of Love (rāsālīlā) on the moonlit banks of the Yamunā:

"Some milkmaids, confined in their inner apartments and unable to escape, meditated on Kṛṣṇa with closed eyes, deeply engaged in thought of Him.

"Their sins removed by the intense agony of unbearable separation from their beloved, their merits exhausted in the ecstasy of Acyuta's embrace attained during meditation, associating with Him, the Supreme Self, with bonds destroyed thereby even though they regarded Him as their lover, they immediately abandoned the body composed of the three material qualities" (BP 10.29.9-11).

At this point, Madhusūdana admits that he is only hinting at the nature of preman, and he promises to explain it in greater detail in the second chapter (diñmātram ihodāhṛtam / anantarollāse punar etat saprapaṅcam udāharisyate prema, JSP, p. 139). The important aspects of that discussion have already been summarized in chap. 6.5. In BR 2, we noted, Madhusūdana at first identifies the gopī's love for Kṛṣṇa as the highest sentiment (paramo rasāh). But he then goes on to identify the suddhabhakti ("pure devotion") of sages like Sanaka as an even superior rasa (eti rasatām adhikām). This, combined with the emphasis here on the "inability to endure separation" and

the tenor of the last verse quoted, which suggests a kind of disembodied union with Kṛṣṇa, suggests that Madhusūdana, as a true Advaitin, envisions some kind of unitive experience as the final goal of bhakti. Certainly Madhusūdana does not develop the theme of vipralamba or viraha ("love-in-separation") to anywhere near the extent that the Gosvāmins do. It is disappointing, however, that neither here, in the commentary on the last verses of the first chapter, nor in BR 2 or 3 do we find any discussion of the metaphysical implications of the higher stages of bhakti. Does the "inability to endure separation" mean that the devotee utterly loses him/herself in the experience of bhagavat, so that an authentic Advaitic identity is attained? Perhaps, but in the absence of any further help from Madhusūdana, we are only guessing. On all of this, see chap. 6.5.

Note that both the inability to endure separation and the distortion of time suggested by the BP quotations given here are recognized by Rūpa as symptoms of mahābhava, the highest level of preman. They are, however, associated with the rūḍha ("developed") and not the adhirūḍha ("totally developed") state of that "great ecstasy" (chap. 4.3.5).

292 paramahansa, see note 111.

293 parivrājaka, see note 111.

294 The colophons of the VKL, SB, GAD, and AS, which I have at hand, do not contain the laudatory epithets "most excellent of teachers and best of ascetics whose proficiency in all branches of learning is famed throughout the world" (ācāryavaryaviśvaviśrutasarvatāntrasvatāntratāka . . . yativara). An admiring copyist may have added them. All but the VKL include instead a more humble designation that serves as a tribute to Madhusūdana's guru: "disciple at the revered feet of the glorious Viśveśvara Sarasvatī" (śrī-viśveśvarasarasvatīpūjyapādaśiṣya, Pan. 775; see Divanji, p. iv, note 1, and p. 82).

NOTES

CHAPTER EIGHT

¹phalabhaktir na sādhanam / kiṃtu svataḥ pumartha-rūpaiva mokṣam api tṛṇīkaroti, quoted by Mishra, p. 252, note 2 (my trans.).

²See N. K. Brahma, Philosophy of Hindu Sādhana (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1932), pp. 181-201.

³nanu brahmavidyātirikṭatve bhakteḥ svargādivan niratiśayapurusaṛthatvaṃ na syāt iti cen na, svargāder niyatadeśakālaśarīrendriyādibhogyatvena sarvatropabhoktum aśakyatvāt kṣayitvapāratantryalakṣaṇaduḥkhadvayā-nuviddhatvena niratiśayatvābhāve 'pi bhaktisukhadārāyās sarvadeśakālaśarīrendriyādisādhāraṇyena brahmavidyāphalavad upabhoktum śakyatvāt kṣayitvapāratantryalakṣaṇaduḥkhadvayānuvedhābhāvena niratiśayopapatteḥ, BR I, sec. XI; JSP, p. 30.

⁴Gupta, p. 210.

⁵Vaikuṇṭha, Goloka, etc.

⁶See BSSB 3.3.32; Th II, pp. 235-238.

⁷See chap. 4.3.6, note 106.

⁸See chap. 4.3.6.

⁹Suryanarayana Sastri, SLS, pp. 9-17, 35.

¹⁰Suryanarayana Sastri, SLS, pp. 400-408.

¹¹While Madhusūdana asserts boldly that the Lord alone is real (BR I, sec. XXVI), this can only refer to the Lord as Brahman, since Saṅkara, as we have seen, has already established that, for Advaita, "The Lord's being a Lord, his omniscience, his omnipotence, and etc. all depend on the limitation due to the adjuncts whose Self is Nescience" (BSSB 2.1.4; Th I, p. 329). See chap. 2.5.1.

¹²See chap. 2.4 with note 37.

NOTES

CHAPTER NINE

¹Venkateswaran, p. 150.

²Gupta, p. 195.

³Mishra, p. 246.

⁴Mahadevan, p. 271. P. M. Modi, who was perhaps the earliest interpreter of Madhusūdana's views on bhakti in English, writes: "He [Madhusūdana] could show by a careful examination of the Bhagavata Purana that the metaphysics of Saṃkara and the ethics of Vallabha can be combined together to form a religio-philosophical system" (Modi, pp. 12-13). The philosophical difficulties raised in the previous chapter show that, if this was truly Madhusūdana's intention, he was not entirely successful. The two spiritual standpoints remain recalcitrant in the face of efforts to bring them together in a single system. I shall shortly suggest the possibility that this was not what Madhusūdana was actually trying to do in the BR.

⁵Mahadevan, p. 271.

⁶Divanji, XXV.

⁷Divanji, XXVII.

⁸See chap. 2.7 and note 120 thereon.

⁹akhilatuṣṭyai, BR 1.1; JSP, p. 1; cf. note 68.

¹⁰See chap. 2.7 and note 120 thereon.

¹¹Mahadevan, p. 270.

¹²yat sāmkyaih prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate.

¹³PD 12.82, Swāhānanda, pp. 499-500; see Mahadevan, pp. 260-261, 269-271.

¹⁴Divanji, pp. LXXXIX-XC. Dasgupta (II, 232), noting that a summary of this text was written by Gauḍa Abhinanda in the ninth century, assigns it to the seventh or eighth.

¹⁵Divanji, p. CXXVI. Madhusūdana quotes the YV at GAD 3.18, 5.23, 6.29, 6.32, and 6.35, in the first instance advocating an unorthodox scheme of seven stages of spiritual realization derived from that text. He also cites the YV as authority in the SB and AV (Divanji, LXXXIX). At GAD, intro., vs. 14-28, he inserts some of the key terminology of the YS, suggesting that yogic discipline is necessary even after the dawn of knowledge to remove the accumulated vāsanās that stand in the way of full enlightenment. See also section XXIV of the BR where our author introduces a discussion of non-attachment based on the teachings of the YS.

¹⁶The immediately relevant portion of this important passage reads:

"The person disciplined in yoga and the person of equal vision both see the Self, hence both are eligible for Self-realization. Just as the restraint of the fluctuations of the mind is one cause of the immediate realization of the witness-Self, so also is the isolation of the all-pervading Consciousness by means of the discriminative rejection of the insentient. [Therefore] it is not yoga alone that is necessarily required [though only it is mentioned in the present verse, 6.29]. As Vasiṣṭha says: 'There are two ways, O Rāma, to the destruction of the mind, [namely] yoga and jñāna. Yoga is restraint of the fluctuations of the mind and jñāna is right vision. Some individuals cannot attain to yoga, others are unable to ascertain through discrimination the true structure of Reality. Therefore, Śiva, the supreme divinity, proclaimed two paths.' Destruction of the mind is the non-perception of the mind due to its separation from the witness-Self, of which it is the limiting adjunct. There are two means to bring this about. The first is undifferentiated perfect meditation (asamprajñātasamādhi) [the goal of yoga]. And the second is [the Vedāntins'] discriminative deliberation, which takes the form: 'That which is witnessed [the mind] is falsely constructed in the witness-Self. Since it is unreal, it does not exist. The Witness-Self alone is the ultimate truth; only it exists'" (yo yogayuktātmā yo vā samadarśanaḥ sa ātmānam Ikṣata iti yogisamadarsīnav ātmekṣaṇādhikārinav uktau / yathā hi cittavṛttinirodhaḥ sāksīsākṣātkārahetus tathā jaḍavivekena sarvānusyūtacaitanyaprthakkarānam api nāvaśyaṃ yoga evāpekṣitaḥ / atha evāha vasiṣṭhaḥ "dvau

kramau cittanāśasya yogo jñānaṃ ca rāghava / yogo
vṛttinirodho hi jñānaṃ samyagavekṣaṇam // asādhyāḥ
kasyacid yogaḥ kasyacit tattvaniścayaḥ / prakārau dvau
tato devo jagāda paramaḥ śivaḥ //” iti / cittanāśasya
sākṣinaḥ sakāśāt tadupādhibhūtacittasya pṛthakkaraṇāt
tadadarśanasya / tasyopāyadvayam eko samprajātasamādhiḥ
/ . . . dvitīyas tu sākṣini kalpitam sākṣyam anṛtatvān
nāsty eva / sākṣy eva tu paramārthasatyāḥ kevalo vidyate
iti vicāraḥ, GAD 6.29; Pan, pp. 318-319.

¹⁷Even among the Śaṅkara samnyāsins, the orthodox practice of śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana was supplemented, perhaps even superseded, at an early date by yogic and tantric practices such as the use of prānāyāma, meditation, and mantras, interest in pūjā and various forms of Devī-worship, and so on. See the Saundaryalahari and the Aparokṣānubhūti, both attributed to Śaṅkara. Vidyāraṇya's Jīvanmuktiviveka relies heavily on the YV (Dasgupta, II, 251-252).

¹⁸According to the authority of scriptural statements such as this, devotion to the Blessed Lord with body, mind, and speech is useful in all stages. Bhakti practiced in an earlier stage will usher in the next. Otherwise, because of the abundance of obstacles, the goal will be extremely difficult to attain. . . . Even when a prior stage is attained, devotion to the Blessed Lord is prescribed for each subsequent level, for without it the higher ones are not attained" (ityādīśrutimānena kāyena manasā girā sarvāvasthāsu bhagavadbhaktir atropayujyate // 31 // pūrvabhūmau kṛtā bhaktir uttarāṃ bhūmiṃ ānayet / anyathā vighnabāhulyāt phalasiḍdhiḥ sudurlabhā // 32 // . . . evam prāgbhūmisiḍdhav apy uttarottarabhūmaye / vidheyā bhagavadbhaktis tām vinā sā na siḍhyati // 36 //, GAD intro, 31-32, 36; Pan, p. 6.

¹⁹See note 53.

²⁰Earlier, knowledge was explained as more secret than the secret karmayoga. But now hear My most secret word, more secret than karmayoga and jñānayoga its fruit, more secret than all, supreme, elevated above all! Out of grace it is again being declared to you, even though already mentioned here and there" (pūrvam hi guhyāt karmayogād guhyataram jñānam ākhyātam, adhunā tu karmayogāt tatphala-bhūtajñānāc ca sarvasmād atīśayena guhyam yaṃ guhyatamaṃ paramam sarvataḥ prakṛṣṭam me mama vaco vākhyam bhūyas tatrataktam api tvadanugrahārtham punar vakṣyamānaṃ śṛṇu, GAD 18.64; Pan, p. 750.

²¹jīvanmuktidasāyām tu na bhakteḥ phalakaḥ / adveṣṭrtvādivat teṣāṃ svabhāvo bhajanam hareḥ //37//

ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame / kurvanty
ahaitukīm bhaktim ithambhūtaguṇo hariḥ //38// teśaṃ jñānī
nityayukta ekabhaktir viśiṣyate / ityādivacanaḥ premabhakto
yam mukhya ucyate //39// (GAD, intro.; Pan, pp. 6-7). BG
12.13-20 contains a description of the qualities of an
enlightened devotee, whom both Saṅkara and Madhusūdana
understand as a paradigmatic renunciate-jñānin. The first
virtue listed is "non-hatred" (adveṣṭā, BG 12.13). BP
1.7.10 is cited at least twice in Madhusūdana's works, here
and at BR 1, sec. XI (JSP, p. 32). It is an important verse
for the Bengal Vaiṣṇava tradition, appearing, for example,
at BRS 1.2.54 and several times in the CC (e.g., madhya
6.186, 17.140, 24.5). Indeed, an entire chapter of the
latter work (madhya 24) is devoted to 61 different
explanations of this text (called the ātmārāma verse),
reportedly given by Caitanya himself. In its original
context, it is a response to a question as to why the
enlightened sage Suka, who was indifferent to the world,
bothered to learn the voluminous Bhāgavata by heart. Even
the enlightened, the bard explains, are devoted to Kṛṣṇa and
delight in hearing of his glories. See chaps. 3.2; 7, sec.
XI.

²²For example, GAD 7.16; 9.26, 30-31; 18.66.

²³"The essential nature, the means, and the
varieties of bhakti, which is loving attachment to the
Blessed Lord, along with the varieties of devotees, has been
described in detail by us in our BR; hence, here we can
stop" (bhagavadanuraktirūpāyās tu bhakteḥ svarūpaṃ sādhanam
bhedās tathā bhaktānam api bhagavadbhaktirasayane asmābhiḥ
saviśeṣam prapañcitā itihoparamyate, GAD 7.16; Pan, p. 363).
See also GAD 18.65 (Pan, p. 750) and 18.66 (Pan, p. 754).

²⁴kecin nigṛhya karaṇāni viśṛjya bhogam āsthāya
yogam amalātmadhiyo yatante / nārāyaṇasya mahimānam ananta-
pāram āsvādayann amṛtasāram ahaṃ tu muktaḥ, quoted by
Divianji, p. XXVIII, note 3, as appearing on p. 417 of the
Anandāśrama (Poona) edition of the Bhagavadgītā with the GAD
and the Subodhinī of Śrīdhāra (my trans.). I have not been
able to find it in Panśīkar's edition.

²⁵yadbhaktiṃ na vinā muktir yaḥ sevyāḥ sarvayoginām
/ tam vande paramānandaghaṇam śrīnandanandanam, GAD, chap.
7, invocation; Pan, p. 341.

²⁶bhagavatpādabhāṣyārtham ālocyātiprayatnataḥ /
prāyaḥ pratyakṣaram kurve gītāgūḍhārthadīpikāṃ, GAD Intro,
vs. 1; Pan, p. 1. At several points in the course of the
GAD, he refers the reader to Saṅkara's arguments. See
Divianji, p. li.

²⁷madekaśaraṇatāmātraṃ mokṣasādhanam na karmā-
nuṣṭhānaṃ karmasaṃnyāso vā, GAD 18.57; Pan, p. 746.

²⁸na hy atra karmatyāgo vidhiyate apitu vidyamāne
'pi karmaṇi tatranādareṇa bhagvadekaśaraṇatāmātraṃ
brahmacāriḡrhasṭhavānaprasthabhikṣūnāṃ sādharanyena
vidhiyate / . . . sarveṣāṃ tu sāstrānāṃ paramaṃ rahasyam
īśvaraśaraṇataiveti tatraiva sāstrapariśamāptir bhagavatā
kṛtā / tām antareṇa saṃnyāsasyāpi svaphalāparyavasāyitvāt /
. . . tasmāt saṃnyāsadharmeṣv apy anādareṇa
bhagvadekaśaraṇatāmātre tātparyaṃ bhagavataḥ, GAD 18.66;
Pan, 753-754.

²⁹tasyaivāhaṃ mamaivāsau sa evāhaṃ iti tridhā /
bhagavaccharaṇatvaṃ syāt sādhanābhyāsapākataḥ // viśeṣo
varṇito 'smabhiḥ sarve bhaktirasayane . . . / ambariṣa-
prahlādagopīprabhṛtayaḥ cāsyāṃ bhūmikāyāṃ udāhartavyāḥ, GAD
18.66; Pan, p. 754.

³⁰GAD 3.20, Pan, pp. 159-160; GAD 18.56, Pan,
pp.744-746; GAD 18.63, Pan, pp. 749-750. See following
three notes.

³¹arjunaṃ ca kṣatriyaṃ saṃnyāsānadhikāriṇaṃ prati
saṃnyāsopadeśāyogāt, GAD 18.66; Pan, p. 754. See note 53.
At GAD 3.20, Madhusūdana outlines the whole orthodox
argument for this position, and explicitly rejects the more
liberal interpretation of Sureśvara:

"[Only Brahmins are eligible] because the saying of the
Upaniṣads enjoining renunciation, namely, 'Brahmins,
having overcome the desire for sons, wealth, and heaven,
practice the life of mendicants' [BU 3.5.1], intends
only Brahmins, as the injunction, 'The king desiring
dominion should perform the rājasūya sacrifice,' intends
only Kṣatriyas. And the smṛti declares, 'Brahmins have
four stages of life, Kṣatriyas three, and Vaiśyas two.'
And in the Purānas the absence of saṃnyāsa for Kṣatriyas
and Vaiśyas is also declared: 'This dharma which bears
the mark of Viṣṇu is for the Brahmins; it is not taught
for the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas.' You [Arjuna], whose
body was acquired through actions that led to birth as a
Kṣatriya, even though you may be a knower, are qualified
only to perform action for the sake of the well-being of
the world, like Janaka and the others. You are not able
to renounce, because of not having obtained birth as a
Brahmin. This is the meaning. It was determined by the
Blessed author of the Commentary [Śaṅkara], who knew the
intention of the Blessed Lord to be such, that saṃnyāsa
is for Brahmins only, not for others. We note, however,
that the author of the Vārttika [on the BU, Sureśvara]
has made the merely audacious assertion that
renunciation is for Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas as well"

("brāhmanāḥ putraiṣaṇāyās ca vittaiṣaṇāyās ca lokaiṣaṇāyās ca vyuthāyātha bhikṣācaryaṃ caranti" iti saṃnyāsa vidhāyake vākye brāhmanatvasya vivikṣitatvāt "svārājyakāmo rājā rājasūyena yajeta" ity atra kṣatriyatvavat "catvāra āśramā brāhmanasya tryo rājanyasya dvau vaiśyasya" iti ca smṛti / purāṇe 'pi "mukhajānām ayaṃ dharmo yad viṣṇor līngadhāraṇam / bāhujātorujātānān nāyaṃ dharmāḥ praśasyate //") iti kṣatriyavaiśyayor saṃnyāsābhāva uktāḥ / . . . kṣatriyajanaṃprāpakena karmanārabdhaśarīras tvam vidvān api janakādivat prārabdhakarmabalena lokasaṃgrahārthaṃ karma kartuṃ yogyo bhavasi na tu tyaktuṃ brāhmanajanmalābhād ity abhiprāyaḥ / etādṛśabhaḡavadabhiprāyavidā bhagavata bhāṣyakṛtā brāhmanasyaiva saṃnyāso nānyasyeti nirṇītam / vārtikakṛtā tu prauḡhivādamaṡtreṇa kṣatriyavaiśyayor api saṃnyāso 'stity uktam iti draṡṡavyam, Pan, 129-130.

The question of eligibility for saṃnyāsa must have been an important issue for Madhusūdana. He discusses it in the passages quoted in the following two notes and also at 5.5-6 (Pan, pp. 252-253).

In this connection it should be mentioned that tradition holds that the opening of certain orders of Saṃkara saṃnyāsins in North India to Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas was initiated by Madhusūdana on the advice of the Emperor Akbar. The purpose is said to have been to provide groups of monks capable of carrying arms to protect the Brahmin saṃnyāsins, who followed the rule of strict non-violence, from the attacks of Muslim faqirs who were persecuting them as representatives of Hinduism. Farquhar regards this tradition as historically accurate (Farquhar, pp. 482-484). Given the emphatic statement of the impropriety of renunciation for the Kṣatriya expressed in the GAD, however, we may legitimately doubt that our Madhusūdana was involved.

³²Cp. this estimate of what happens after the attainment of purity of mind through karmayoga with that given in BR 1, sec. III. The text reads: yaḥ pūrvoktāḥ karmabhiḥ śuddhāntaḡkaraṇaḥ so 'vaśyaṃ bhagavadekaśaraṇo bhagavadekaśaraṇatāparyantatvād antaḡkaraṇaśuddheḡ / etādṛśaś cet brāhmanāḥ saṃnyāsapratibandharahitāḥ sarvakarmāṇi saṃnyastu nāma / saṃsāravimokṣas tu tasya bhagavadekaśaraṇasya bhagavatprasādād eva / etādṛśaś cet kṣatriyādiḥ saṃnyāsānadhikāri sa karotu nāma karmāṇi kiṃtu madvyapāśrayaḥ, ahaṃ bhagavān vāsudeva eva vyapāśrayaḥ śaraṇaṃ yasya sa madekaśaraṇo mayy arpitasarvātmabhāvaḥ saṃnyāsānadhikārāt sarvakarmāṇi sarvāṇi karmāṇi varnā-śramadharmarūpāṇi laukikāṇi pratiśiddhāṇi vā sadā kurvāno maiprasādān namesvarasyānugrahād avāpnōti / hiranyagarbhavan madvijñānotpattiyā śāśvatam nityaṃ padam vaiṣṇavam avyayam aparīṇāmī / etādṛśo bhagavadekaśaraṇaḥ karoty eva na pratiśiddhāṇi karmāṇi, yadi kuryāt tathāpi matprasādāt

pratyavāyānutpattyā madvijñānena mokṣabhāg bhavatīti, GAD 18.56; Pan, pp. 745-746.

³³kṣatriyādes tu samnyāsānadhikāriṇo mumukṣor antaḥkaraṇasuddhyanantaram api bhagavadājñāpālanāya lokasamgrahāya ca yathākathamcit karmāṇi kurvato 'pi bhagavadekaśaraṇatayā pūrvajanmakṛtasamnyāsādiparipākād vā hiranyagarbhanyāyena tadapekṣaṇād vā bhagavadanugrahāmātreṇahaiva tattvajñānotpattyā 'grimajanmani brāhmaṇajanmālābhena samnyāsādipūrvakajñānotpattyā vā mokṣa iti, GAD 18.63; Pan, 749-750.

³⁴BSSB 4.3.10; Th, II, pp. 391.

³⁵Who could be certain, if they were not already a renunciate, that they had been born previously as a male Brahmin and that, furthermore, in that birth they had taken to the difficult path of samnyāsa?

³⁶saguṇopāsanayā nirastasarvaprati-bandhānām vinā gurūpadeśam vinā ca śravaṇamanananididhyāsanādyāvṛttikleśam svayam āvirbhūtena vedāntavākhyeṇeśvaraprasādasahakṛteṇa tattvajñānodayād avidyātakāryanivṛtṭyā brahmaloka evaiśvarya bhogānte nirguṇavidyāphalāparamakāivalyopapatteḥ, GAD 12.6-7; Pan, p. 507.

³⁷etac ca bhaktirasāyane vyākhyātaṃ vistareṇa / evam sadā bhāgavatadharmānuṣṭhānena mayy anurāgottpattyā manmanāḥ san, mām bhagavantaṃ vāsudevam eva eśyasi prāpsyasi vedāntavākhyajanitena madbodhena, GAD 18.65; Pan, p. 751. Cp. also GAD 12.10: "Performing the actions known as the disciplines of the Lord's devotees, you will obtain the perfection defined as the state of Brahman by means of the purification of the mind and the arising of knowledge" (bhāgavatadharmasamjñakāṇi karmāṇy api kurvan siddhiṃ brahmābhāvalakṣaṇām sattvasuddhijñānautpattidvāreṇāvāpsyasi, Pan, p. 509).

³⁸See Modi, introduction, appendix II and III. The conclusion of his study reads: "Madhusudana emphatically stated that there are three Paths to absolution discussed in the B.G. and that in his opinion the Path of Devotion was as good as that of Knowledge and as such he himself followed that Path, though he did not adversely criticise the Jñānamārga" (p. 175). As we shall see, Madhusūdana did not regard devotion as an independent path, and, for this and other reasons, it is much more likely that he followed the path of knowledge, as supplemented (in practice and attainment) by the experience of bhakti.

³⁹Modi, p. 16.

⁴⁰niṣkāmaś caturtha idānim ucyate jñāni ca, jñānam bhagavattattvasākṣātkāras tena nityayukto jñānī tīrṇamāyo nivṛtasarvakāmaḥ / cakāro yasya kasyāpi niṣkāmaprema-bhaktasya jñāniny antarbhāvārthaḥ, GAD 7.16; Pan, p. 363.

⁴¹tatra niṣkāmabhakto jñāni yathā sanakādir yathā nārado yathā prahlādo yathā pṛthur yathā vā sukaḥ / niṣkāmaḥ śuddhapremabhakto yathā gopikādir yathā vā 'krūra-yudhiṣṭhirādiḥ, GAD 7.16; Pan, p. 363.

⁴²See chap. 6.5.

⁴³bhagavattattvavijñānāt sākṣānmokṣapraprtir abhihitā / tatra cānyā bhaktir asādhāraṇo hetur ity uktam "puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā" ity, GAD 9.1; Pan, pp. 409-410.

⁴⁴tatra cānyā bhaktir asādhāraṇo hetur ity uktam "puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tu ananyayā" [BG 8.22] ity, GAD 9.1; Pan, 410. Cf. notes 64-65.

⁴⁵jñānam śabdapramānakam brahmatattvaviṣayakatvam . . . / idam eva samyagjñānam sākṣānmokṣasāadhanam, GAD 9.1; Pan, p. 410.

⁴⁶gurūpadarśitavicārasahakṛtena vedāntavākyena sukhena kartum śakyam, GAD 9.2; Pan. p. 411.

⁴⁷brahmabhūto 'haṃ brahmāsmīti dṛḍhaniścayavān śravaṇamananābhāsāt, prasannātmā śuddhacittah sama-damādyabhyāsāt / . . . evambhūto jñānaniṣṭho yatir mad-bhaktim mayi bhagavati śuddhe paramātmāni bhaktim upāsanaṃ madākāracittavṛttirūpaṃ paripakvanididhyāsanākhyāṃ śravaṇamananābhāysaphalabhūtāṃ labhate parām śreṣṭhāṃ avyavadhānena sākṣātkāraphalāṃ "caturvidhā bhajante mām" ity atroktasya bhakticatustayasyāntyāṃ jñānalakṣaṇām iti vā, GAD 18.54; Pan, p. 741.

Modi (p. 170) suggests that Madhusūdana's gloss of bhakti as jñānalakṣaṇām ("knowledge itself," or "defined as knowledge") represents nothing more than his submission to the authority of Saṃkara, who uses the same phrase in his interpretation of this verse (see chap. 2, note 102). But Madhusūdana feels free to deviate from the great ācārya's interpretation at other places where the latter glosses bhakti as jñāna. Thus he substitutes premalakṣaṇa for Saṃkara's jñānalakṣaṇa at 8.22 (Pan, p. 402) and prīti for his jñāna at 13.10 (Pan, 548). The rest of the present chapter will show that the GAD's Vedāntic interpretation of bhakti is not merely a concession to Saṃkara and Advaitic orthodoxy. Madhusūdana, of course, does not wish to follow the Bhāṣyakāra in collapsing bhakti

completely into jñāna. But he is interested in finding a way to render Kṛṣṇaite devotionāism compatible with the traditional disciplines of the Saṅkara saṁnyāsin.

⁴⁸I am thinking here especially of devotionalists without clear sectarian affiliation, such as Madhusūdana's contemporary and fellow resident of Banaras, Tulsī Dās, of whom the great Advaitin is said to have written: "This moving Tulasī plant has leaves of supreme bliss; its flowers are poetry, kissed by the bee Rāma (paramānandapatro 'yaṁ jaṅgamas tulasītaruḥ / kavitāmañjarī yasya rāma bhramara-cumpitā, quoted by Swami Jagadīswarananda, "Sri Madhusudanasarasvatī," Vedānta Kesari, XXVIII [1941-42], 313 [my trans.]).

⁴⁹See above, note 26.

⁵⁰tatra sarvajño bhagavān arjunasya saḡuṇavidyāyām evādhikāraṁ paśyaṁs tam prati taṁ vidhāsyati, yathādhikāraṁ taratamyopetani ca sadhanani. . . mayi bhagavati vāsudeve parameśvare saḡuṇe brahmaṇi mana aveśyananyaśaraṇataya niratiśayapriyataya ca praveśya hīḡgularaṅga iva jatu tanmayam kṛtvā ye mān . . . upāsate, GAD 12.2; Pan, pp. 501-502.

⁵¹Cited above, chap. 2.5.2.

⁵²tasmād akṣaropāsakā eva paramārthato yogavittamaḥ "priyo hi jñānio 'tyartham ahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ / udāraḥ sarva evaite jñāni tv ātmaiva me matam" ityādina punaḥ punaḥ praśastatamatayoktās / teṣāṁ eva jñānaṁ dharmajātaṁ caṁsaraṇiyam adhikāraṁ āsādyā tvayety arjunam bubodhayiṣuḥ paramahitaiṣi bhagavān abhedadarsinaḥ kṛtakṛtyān akṣaropāsakan praṣtauti saptabhiḥ, GAD 12.13; Pan, p. 513.

⁵³See above, secs. 9.3.2-3, and especially his commentary on 18.66:

"In this scripture called the Gītā, a tryad of disciplines, related as means and ends, is intended and expressed many times. Among these, the discipline of action is summed up as culminating in the renunciation of all action in the verse, 'Worshiping Him through his own action, a man attains perfection' [18.46]. The discipline of knowledge, together with the maturation of the practices of hearing (śravaṇa), etc., is summarized in the verse: 'Then, having known Me in reality, he enters Me forthwith' [18.55]. The discipline of devotion to the Blessed Lord, being the means to both and the end of both, is summed up at the end, thus: 'Having abandoned all dharmas, come to Me as your sole refuge' [18.66]. The author of the Commentary

[Śaṅkara], however, says that 'come to Me as your sole refuge' is the summary of the discipline of knowledge, with 'having abandoned all dharmas' serving as a restatement of the need to abandon all action. [But then] who am I, wretched person that I am, to expound the intention of the Blessed Lord? The speech of the Supreme Person called the Gītā is the secret meaning of the words of the Veda; who among those that are not extremely brilliant can explain it? [Yet] somehow I have managed this childish performance. It will [I hope] invoke the appreciation of great souls who have spontaneous affection [for all, including my humble self]" (asmin hi gītasāstre niṣṭhātrayaṃ sādhyasādhanabhāvāpannam vivakṣitam uktam ca bahudhā / tatra karmaniṣṭhā sarvakarmasamnyāsaparyantopasamhṛtā "svakarmanā tam abhyarcya siddhiṃ vindati mānavah" ity atra / samnyāsapūrvakaśravanādiparipākasahitā jñānaniṣṭhopasamhṛtā "tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram" ity atra / bhagavadbhaktiniṣṭhā tūbhaya-sādhanabhūto bhayaphalabhūtā bhavatīty anta upasamhṛtā "sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇam vraja" ity atra / bhāṣyakṛtas tu sarvadharmān parityajyeti sarvakarmasamnyāsānuvādena mām ekaṃ śaraṇam vrajeti jñānaniṣṭhopasamhṛtety ahuḥ / bhagavadabhiprāyavarṇane ke vayaṃ varākāḥ "vaco yad gītākhyam paramapurusaṣyā-gamagirāṃ rahasyam tadvyākhyāṃ anatinipunaḥ ko vitanutām / aham tv etad bālyam yad iha kṛtavān asmi kathamapi ahetusnehānām tad api kutukāyaiva mahatām," GAD, 18.66; Pan, 754-755).

On Madhusūdana's willingness to disagree with Śaṅkara, see also note 47. It may be significant that the discipline of action is here said to lead to renunciation, not the alternative paths of renunciation (i.e., knowledge) and devotion, as specified in BR 1, sec. III.

⁵⁴See note 50.

⁵⁵śrīgovindapadāravindamakarandāsvādasuddhāśayāḥ saṃsārāmbudhim uttaranti sahasā paśyanti pūrṇam mahāḥ / vedāntair avadhārayanti paramam śreyas tyajanti bhramam dvaitam svapnasamaṃ vidanti vimalam vindanti cānandatām, GAD 9, end; Pan, 441.

⁵⁶ata eva jīvo 'ntahkaraṇāvacchinnatvāt tatsambandham evākṣyādidvārā bhāṣayan kiṃcitjñō bhavati / tatas ca jānāmi karomi bhūṅje cety anarthaśatabhājanam bhavati / sa ced bimbabhūtāṃ bhagavantam anantaśaktiṃ māyā-niyantāram sarvavidam sarvaphaladātāram anīṣam ānandaghana-mūrtim anekān avatārān bhaktānugrahāya vidadhatam ārādayati paramagurum aśeṣakarmasamarpaṇena tadā bimbasamarpitasya pratibimbe pratiphalanāt sarvaṃ api puruṣārthān āśādayati /

etad evābhipretya prahlādenoktaṃ "naivātmanaḥ prabhur ayam
nijaḷābhapūrṇo mānaṃ janād aviduṣaḥ karuṇo vṛṇite / yad yaj
jano bhagavate vidadhīta mānaṃ tac cātmane pratimukhasya
yathā mukhaśrīḥ //" iti / darpaṇapratibimbītasya mukhasya
tilakādiśrīḥ apekṣitā ced bimbabhūte mukhe samarpaṇīyā / sā
svayam eva tatra pratiphalati nānyaḥ kaścit prāptav upāyo
'sti yathā tathā bimbhūteśvare samarpitam eva tat
pratibimbabhūto jīvo labhate nānyaḥ kaścit tasya puruṣārtha-
lābhe 'sty upāya iti drṣṭāntārthah / tasya yadā bhagavantam
anantam anavaratam āraḍhayato 'ntaḥkaranam
jñānapratibandhakapāpena rahitam jñānānukūlapuṇyena
copacitam bhavati, tadātinirmale mukuramaṇḍala iva mukham
atisvacche 'ntaḥkaraṇe sarvakarmatyāgaśamaḍamādīpūrvaka-
gurūpasadanavedāntavākhyāśravaṇamanananididhyāsanaiḥ
saṃskṛte tattvamasīti gurūpaḍiṣṭavedāntavākya-karaṇīkāṇam-
brahmāsmītyanātmākāraśūnyā nirupādhīcaitanyākārā
sākṣātkārātmīkā vṛttir udeṭi / tasyām ca pratiphalitam
caitanyam sadya eva svaviṣayāśrayām avidyām unmulayati
dīpa iva tamaḥ, GAD 7.14; Pan, p. 360.

⁵⁷sarvopādhīnivṛṭṭyā saccidānandaghanarūpeṇaiva
tiṣṭhantīty arthah, GAD 7.14; Pan, P. 361.

⁵⁸prapaśyanti itī vaktavye prapadyante ity ukte 'rthe
madekaśaraṇāḥ santo māṃ eva bhagavantam vāsudevam īdṛṣam
anantasaundaryasārasarvasvam akhilakalākālāpanīlayam
abhinavapaṇka jaśobhādhīkacaranakamalayugalaprabham
anavaratavenuvādananīratavṛndāvanakrīḍāśaktamānasa-
heloddhṛtagovardhanākhyamahīdharam gopālam nīśūḍita-
śīśupālakamsādiduṣṭasamgham abhinavajaladaśobhā-
sarvasvahaṇaṇacaranaparamānanda ghanamayamūrtim
atīvairīṇcaprapaṇcam anavaratam anucīntayanto dīvasān
atīvāhayanti te matpremamāhānandasamudramagnamanastayā
samastamāyāguṇavīkārair nābhībhūyante, GAD 7.14; Pan, p.
361.

⁵⁹That Madhusūdana, in this text speaking from the point of view of the renunciate, wants to interpret the Gītā as teaching a progression from karmayoga to jñāna, with bhakti both helping on the way and enhancing the final achievement, is confirmed by his introduction to the GAD (notes 18, 21; Pan, pp. 1-7), together with his comments on 18.64 (note 20) and 18.66 (note 53).

⁶⁰See note 20.

⁶¹See note 53.

⁶²sahetukasya saṃsārasyātyantoparamātmakam / param
nīḥsreyasam gītāśāstrasyoktam prayojanam, GAD intro., 2;
Pan, p. 2.

⁶³Modi, pp. 46, 49.

⁶⁴"yas ta āśiṣa" ityādinā phalam anicchato guṇalobhena ya bhaktis tasya tu gariyastvaṃ yat pratipāditam, tat tattvasakṣātkāre tvarāsamādakam, na tu muktitaratamyakṣepikam / "bhaktiḥ siddher" ityādinā pratipāditam gariyastvam api tajjanakatvamātreṇa putrāt pitur iva, AS, Pariccheda 4; quoted by Mishra, p. 254, note 1, and by Modi, p. 16, note 18 (my trans.). The BP verses referred to read as follows: yas ta āśiṣa āśāste na sa bhṛtyah sa vai vaṇik (7.10.4b; GS I, 778); animittā bhāga-vatī bhaktiḥ siddher gariyasī (3.25.33a; GS I, 280).

⁶⁵bhaktiḥ . . . sāpi jñānahetuḥ "prītir na yāvat mayi vāsudeve na mucyate dehayogena tāvad" ityukteḥ, GAD 13.10; Pan, p. 402. Madhusūdana's characterization of bhakti as a "special cause" (asādhāraṇahetu) of knowledge has already been mentioned (note 43).

⁶⁶Brahmānanda's comments on Madhusūdana's own devotion in jīvanmukti (introduction, note 23), though lacking the spirit of his great predecessor's glorification of the joy of that experience, indicate one possible starting point for such a justification.

⁶⁷Remember that, at BR 2.46, Madhusūdana identifies himself with great renunciate devotees such as Sanaka. See chap. 6.5.

⁶⁸"The Sages who promulgated [the various apparently contradictory] systems of doctrine all had as their final purport the Supreme Lord, the One without second taught in the Upaniṣads, and the ultimate truth of the appearance theory [as taught by Advaita]. Certainly these sages were not deluded, since they were omniscient. Realizing, however, that persons inclined toward [enjoyment of] external objects could not be immediately introduced to the supreme goal of life, they taught a variety of [lesser] forms [of doctrine] with a view to [attract the minds of the ignorant and thus] ward off heterodoxy" (sarveṣāṃ ca pra-sthānakartṛiṇāṃ munīnāṃ vivartavādaparyavasānenādvītiye parameśvare eva vedāntapratipādye tātparyam / na hi te munayo bhrāntāḥ sarvajñatvāt teṣāṃ, kintu bahirviṣaya-pravaṇānāṃ āpatataḥ paramapurusaṛthe praveśo na bhavatīti nāstikyanirvāraṇāya taiḥ prakārabhedāḥ pradarsitāḥ, Madhusūdana's Tīkā on Mahimnastotra 7; Mahimnastotram, Haridāsa Saṃskṛta Granthamālā [Banaras: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1949], pp. 16-17).

Cp. the following remarks made earlier in the commentary on the same verse: "The Ganges and Narmadā Rivers, following a straight course, reach the ocean

NOTES

CHAPTER TEN

¹R. D. Ranade, "The Evolution of My Own Thought," in S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, eds., Contemporary Indian Philosophy (rev. 2nd ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1952), p. 543.

²See chaps. 1.4, 3.5.

³Chap. 2.

⁴Chaps. 3 and 4.

⁵Chaps. 5 and 7.

⁶Chap. 9.

⁷Chaps. 8 and 9.

⁸See chaps 1.3 and 7, note 291, pt. VIII.

⁹See chap. 8.3.

¹⁰Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha is a possible exception. I have not studied his work, but from what Mishra says of it, it does not seem that this writer addressed any of the problems in Madhusūdana's thought on bhakti that we have raised, nor does it appear that he added anything of significance to his illustrious predecessor's teaching. See Mishra, chap. 7.

¹¹Pradhan, II, pp. 307-308. See R. D. Ranade, Mysticism in India: The Poet Saints of India (reprint ed.; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 136.

¹²Amṛtānubhava 7. See Bahirat, pp. 198-228; Ranade, pp. 154-156.

¹³See chap. 4.3.6, with note 106.

¹⁴Ramakrishna proclaimed Brahman and śakti to be identical, "like fire and its power to burn" (Nikhilananda, trans., Gospel, p. 161). For him, the world did not vanish "like a dream" in the highest realization, as it did for Śaṅkara: he saw it as a reflex of of Śakti, the Divine

Mother. "O Mother," Ramakrishna sang, "Thou art verily Brahman and Thou art verily Sakti. . . . Thou art the Absolute and Thou dost manifest Thyself as the Relative" (*ibid.*, p. 178). The jñānin lost in the unity of the nirguna Brahman is, in Ramakrishna's teaching, compared to a person who has climbed up to the roof of a house and forgotten the steps altogether. This, however, is not the most complete realization:

"The vijñāni, who is more intimately acquainted with Brahman, realizes something more. He realizes that the steps are made of the same materials as the roof: bricks, lime, and brick-dust. That which is realized intuitively as Brahman . . . is then found to have become the universe and all its living beings" (*ibid.*, p. 155).

Ramakrishna explained that it is this realization that makes bhakti possible even after enlightenment:

"The Mother has kept me in the state of a bhakta, a vijñāni. That is why I joke with Rakhai and others. Had I been in the condition of a jñāni I couldn't do that.

"In this state I realize that it is the Mother alone who has become everything. I see Her everywhere. In the Kālī temple I found that the Mother Herself had become everything--even the wicked" (*ibid.*, 290-291).

Again: "The most advanced devotees say that He Himself has become all this--the twenty-four cosmic principles, the universe, and all living beings. The devotee of God wants to eat sugar, and not to become sugar" (*ibid.*, p. 192).

In all this, we see an interesting blend of Advaita, tantrism, and even (in the sugar metaphor) Vaiṣṇava devotionalism. While Ramakrishna did not see himself as a spokesman for the Saṅkara tradition per se, his vision, especially as transmitted by the more intellectual Vivekananda, has been extremely influential in modern Advaitic circles.

¹⁵Swami Vivekananda remarks:

"Sri Ramakrishna used to say that there is another stage of Bhakti which is called the Supreme Devotion (Parā bhakti) i.e. to love Him after becoming established in the consciousness of Advaita and after having attained Mukti. It may seem paradoxical, and the question may be raised here why such a one who has already attained Mukti would be desirous of retaining the spirit of Bhakti? The answer is: The Mukta or the Free is beyond all law; no law applies in his case, and hence no question can be asked regarding him. Even becoming Mukta, some, out of their own free will, retain Bhakti to taste of its sweetness" (Complete Works, V, 336-337).

See Vivekananda's essay "Para-Bhakti or Supreme Devotion" (Complete Works, III, 70-100).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARR	<u>Advaitaratnaraksana.</u>
AS	<u>Advaitasiddhi.</u>
AU	<u>Aitareya Upaniṣad.</u>
AV	<u>Atharvaveda.</u>
BG	<u>Bhagavad Gītā.</u>
BR	<u>Bhaktirasāyana.</u>
BS	<u>Brahmasūtras.</u>
BSSB	<u>Brahmasūtraśaṅkarabhāṣya.</u>
BU	<u>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.</u>
BVS	A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami, trans., <u>Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta.</u>
CC	<u>Caitanyacaritāmṛta.</u>
CU	<u>Chāndogya Upaniṣad.</u>
GAD	<u>Gūḍhārthadīpikā.</u>
GS	C. L. Goswāmi, ed. and trans., <u>Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna.</u>
JLS	J. L. Shastri, ed., Śrīdhara's <u>Bhāvārthabodhinī</u> [= <u>Bhāvārthadīpikā</u>].
JSP	Janārdana Śāstrī Pāṇḍeya, ed., <u>Śrīmadbhaktirasayanam.</u>
Kaṭha	<u>Kaṭha Upaniṣad.</u>
KeU	<u>Kena Upaniṣad.</u>
MĀU	<u>Māndūkya Upaniṣad.</u>
MuU	<u>Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.</u>
NBS	<u>Nārada bhaktisūtras.</u>
NS	<u>Nāṭya Śāstra.</u>
NV	<u>Nyāyavārttika.</u>
Pan	Wasudev Laxman Sastri Paṅṣīkar, ed., <u>Śrīmadbhagavadgītā.</u>
PU	<u>Praśna Upaniṣad.</u>
RV	<u>Rgveda.</u>
SB	<u>Śiddhāntabindu.</u>
SBR	<u>Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānuja.</u>
SBS	<u>Śāṅḍilyabhaktisūtras.</u>
SGB	<u>Śaṅkaragītābhāṣya.</u>
SHS	Swami Hanumandaśa Sastri, ed. <u>Brahmasūtra Śaṅkarabhāṣya.</u>
SSS	<u>Śaṅkṣepasārīrikasārasaṅgraha.</u>
SU	<u>Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad.</u>
SV	<u>Sambandhavārttika.</u>
Th	G. Thibaut, trans., <u>The Vedānta-sūtras with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya.</u>

TU	<u>Taittirīya Upaniṣad.</u>
VAS	<u>Vedārthasaṃgraha.</u>
VB	<u>Viraha-Bhakti.</u>
VFM	<u>The Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal.</u>
VKL	<u>Vedāntakalpalatikā.</u>
VP	<u>Viṣṇu Purāna.</u>
WZKSO	<u>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens, und Archiv für indische Philosophie, Vienna.</u>
YS	<u>Yogasūtras.</u>

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