TRANSLATING WISDOM

Hindu-Muslim Intellectual Interactions in Early Modern South Asia

SHANKAR NAIR

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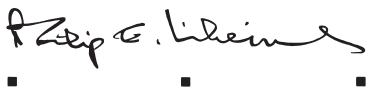

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Shankar Nair

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In grateful memory of
Anne E. Monius

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NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

All translations in this book from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and other languages are my own, except where otherwise noted. Although many of the texts examined in the pages to come are, to varying degrees, *literary* productions, the objectives of this study, unfortunately, often prevent me from translating into comparably literary English. Since the comparison of original Sanskrit texts against their subsequent Persian renditions constitutes a central goal of this book, I have accordingly opted for a more "literal" mode of translation that generally hews more closely to the form of the source texts: it might make for inelegant English, but it permits the reader without access to all the relevant languages a better chance of appreciating the particular translational processes that this study aims to elucidate. A different book (one I hope someday to write!) could prioritize the *aesthetic* qualities and features of the source texts and their translations, lending itself to a different approach to translation than the one adopted here. For this study, however, the primary focus is doctrine and philosophical content, thus demanding a translation style that can best maintain this emphasis, sometimes at the expense of other interests, concerns, and research queries. Several of the texts in this study occupy a fascinating space between philosophy and literature; whenever faced with the dilemma of a translation that either privileges technical conceptual clarity or else literary quality, in this study, I generally privilege the former.

In a similar vein, in the arena of transliteration, there are good and compelling scholarly reasons for transliterating Indo-Persian in a way that reflects local South Asian pronunciations, such that, for example, the Persian transliteration of the Sanskrit "*yoga*" would be rendered as "*jog*" instead of "*jūg*." Such a choice would far better capture the lived, local, contextual aspects of the historical events and processes at play, and I would happily follow suit in a study prioritizing such

objectives. Here, however, with occasional exceptions, conceptual precision and transregional continuity is the higher priority: an Arabic reader of this book will be able to recognize how "*jūg*" is written in Arabic/Persian script, whereas "*jog,*" unfortunately, would be inscrutable. Likewise, with central philosophical terms that have a presence in both Arabic and Persian writing, I typically opt for, for instance, the Arabic-standard "*wujūd*" rather than the Persianized (or, really, "Tehran-ized") "*vujūd*" or "*vojūd,*" since the former has a maximum chance of being consistently recognized across the various types of readers that constitute this book's intended audience. At times, I will offer the locally Indo-Persian pronunciation/transliteration (e.g., *bichchhep*) in the first occurrence, reverting to the more standardized transliteration (*vikṣepa*) thereafter.

Accordingly, for Arabic and Persian, I have adopted the widely utilized *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) transliteration system, with the following modifications: "*ah*" for *tā' marbūṭah* and "*ah*" for final "*he-havvaz*" (e.g., "*khānah*" instead of "*khāneh,*" "*khāna,*" or "*khāne*"). For Sanskrit—again, to ensure the maximum likelihood of comprehension among English-reading Sanskrit specialists and scholars of South Asian philosophy—I employ the widespread International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST).

Introduction

For roughly a century during the height of Muslim power in predominantly Hindu South Asia—coinciding with the reigns of the emperors Akbar, Jahāngīr, and Shāh Jahān from 1556–1658 CE—Muslim elite of the Mughal Empire patronized the translation of a large body of Hindu Sanskrit treatises into the Persian language. The Hindu texts chosen for translation included the *Atharva Veda,* various *Upaniṣads,* the *Mahābhārata* (particularly the *Bhagavad-Gītā*), the *Rāmāyaṇa,* several *Purāṇas,* and numerous other Sanskrit works, among them a popular philosophical tale known as the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* composed by one Gauḍa Abhinanda. This Hindu narrative treatise, produced sometime between the tenth and fourteenth centuries CE and teaching a variety of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the vagaries of the phenomenal world, became an object of such enduring Muslim interest that the Mughals (re)translated it into Persian several times. One of the earliest of these translations, personally commissioned by the soon-to-be emperor Jahāngīr and known as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* was completed in 1597 by a team of three collaborating translators: the Muslim court scholar Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī and the Hindu *paṇḍits* Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī (henceforth, the "translation team").

The Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, alongside its early Persian translation, the *Jūg Bāsisht,* constitutes my central object of inquiry in this book. In particular, I aim to reconstruct the intellectual processes that underlay this translation, tracing the exchanges through which the translation team of Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra, and Paṭhān Miśra, working in tandem, successfully crafted a novel vocabulary with which to express Hindu Sanskrit philosophical ideas in an Islamic Persian idiom. In the process, I argue, these Hindu and Muslim translators engaged in a mode of what we might today term an inter-religious or cross-philosophical

"dialogue." Indeed, though recent studies have (rightly) interpreted the Mughal "translation movement" as an enterprise aimed at Mughal political legitimation and imperial political self-fashioning, hardly any work has been done to establish a fuller *intellectual* conceptualization and context for these translation activities. Accordingly, I will analyze these Sanskrit-to-Persian translations as the joint efforts of Hindu and Muslim scholars to draw upon the vast resources provided by their respective religio-philosophical-literary traditions in order to forge a new, cosmopolitan, interreligious lexicon in the Persian language. How did these translators find a vocabulary with which to express Hindu, Sanskrit philosophical and theological ideas—including Hindu notions of God, conceptions of salvation and the afterlife, ritual notions, etc.—in the Islamic idiom of Persian? How did these two communities of scholars, one Muslim and the other Hindu, devise a shared language with which to communicate and to render one another's religious and philosophical views comprehensible, not only to each other, but to any educated Persian-reader (Muslim, Hindu, or otherwise)? In short, I aim to illustrate how, through the venue of Sanskrit-to-Persian translation, early modern Muslim and Hindu scholars found the words and the means to put their respective intellectual traditions into a certain conversation with one another.

The Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its 1597 Persian translation, the *Jūg Bāsisht,* thus serve as a case study for this line of inquiry. The members of this translation team were each formed and intellectually shaped by a long scholarly heritage, largely tied to Arabic and Persian, in the case of the Muslim scholar Pānīpatī, and to Sanskrit, in the case of the Hindus Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra. With only sporadic exceptions, prior to their historical encounter in South Asia, these Arabo-Persian and Sanskritic intellectual universes had matured and developed for many centuries in effective isolation from one another. Speaking only of the branches of knowledge we might now term "philosophy" or "theology," over six hundred years of Arabic and Persian learning predate the figure of Pānīpatī, while Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, in turn, were preceded by more than a millennium of Sanskrit philosophical dialectics; the numbers grow only larger in relation to other branches of learning. What the translation team had inherited, accordingly, were two historically distinct intellectual traditions whose basic scholarly terms, categories, discursive patterns, and intellectual habits had long since been entrenched, along with all the erudite inscrutability that accompanies centuries of concerted refinement, contention, and debate over well-trodden, discipline-specific questions and academic minutiae. It was by no means obvious how either one of these intellectual traditions, laden with such disciplinary specificity and inertia, could be translated into the terminology and conceptual schemas of the other, but such was a crucial dimension of the task that confronted the translation team. Both the Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit philosophical traditions, furthermore, exhibited an overwhelming historical propensity to utterly ignore, if not actively disdain, one another.

How Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra, and Paṭhān Miśra nevertheless managed to draw upon these very same intellectual resources in order to forge a kind of conversation between the two traditions—translating the Hindu Sanskritic into the terms of the Islamic Arabo-Persian—is the broad subject of this book. In the process, the three figures evinced an approach and implicit *theory* of translation that was deeply and simultaneously informed by the conceptual and cultural worlds of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit thought. I thus hope to offer a multi-textured glimpse at the complex ways early modern Muslim and Hindu intellectuals coexisted, interacted, and comprehended one another's neighboring presence within a particular historical moment of the Indian subcontinent.[1] At the same time, the fruit of the translation team's endeavors—the rendering of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*—contributed a significant piece to the cosmopolitan Indo-Persian courtly culture that had recently developed under Emperor Akbar's impetus at the Mughal court, a culture which aimed to synthesize the contributions of Muslims, Hindus, and other religious groups within a unified political order. Given the increasingly strident religious conflicts, nationalisms, and identity politics that we face in our present day—not only within South Asia, but globally—I would suggest that there is much to learn, both within the academic study of religion and also in our broader public discourse, from this historical case study of dialogue-fashioning between two religious civilizations.

Before jumping into this study proper, however, a number of preliminaries are in order. Most readers will find some portion of the following rudimentary, but hardly any, I suspect, will be familiar with all or even most of it. Since, for a study of this nature, I cannot presume a common background on the audience's part—most Hindu-studies readers will be unfamiliar with Islamic studies, and vice versa—I hope the reader will bear with the long, perhaps tedious preliminaries that occupy much of the remainder of this introduction, as it is important background for the story I aim to tell in this monograph and the logic of my intervention. Chapter 1 will then turn to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and *Jūg Bāsisht* in closer detail.

RELIGIOUS INTERACTIONS IN EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA

Recent academic literature has done much to illuminate the broad variety of ways and contexts in which South Asian Hindus and Muslims have historically interacted. Though approaching the topic through an array of lenses and methodologies, a common trend that pervades much of this literature is a repeated and persistent critique of earlier generations of nationalist South Asian historiography, wherein the entire premodern history of Hindu-Muslim relations is understood as a sequence of events ineluctably treading towards the India-Pakistan Partition of 1947. As Carl Ernst explains the issue: "[t]he main distorting

presupposition in Indian historical thinking today reads the medieval past in terms of modern religious nationalism. In this view, historical events are implicitly seen as prefiguring the partition of British India into an Islamic Republic of Pakistan and an overwhelmingly Hindu Indian Union."[2] In such nationalist histories, "Hinduism" and "Islam" are assumed to be discrete, bounded realities that are fundamentally, mutually opposed or even hostile, but for the individual (proto-secular) forces that would manage and mollify them. In depictions of the Mughal Empire, for instance, one routinely finds the period being characterized by two "factions": on the one hand, a "pluralistic," "tolerant" group, including Emperor Akbar (d. 1605) and Prince Dārā Shikōh (d. 1659), supporting such "liberal" initiatives as the Mughal translation movement (and prefiguring a modern, secular India); and then another, "orthodox" faction, represented by the likes of Emperor Awrangzēb (d. 1707), resistant to any such engagement with anything deemed to fall beyond the pale of a narrowly defined "puritan" or "legalistic" Islam (prefiguring the Pakistani nation-state). To quote just one characteristic depiction of the "process of peaceful co-existence" supposedly represented by the likes of the Mughal translation movement:

> This process of rapprochement and mutual adjustment suffered temporary setbacks at times . . . due to conflicts between the forces supporting orthodoxy and liberalism, between bigotry and the spirit of tolerance. Within Muslim society itself there were small sections which clung fast to orthodoxy and shunned every gesture of reconciliation with other religious groups, while there were also quite a large number of them who condemned the attitude of the bigoted sections and stood for mutual good-will and tolerance. These divergent trends—one leaning towards revivalism, the other towards 'peace with all'—had their own lists of supporters and opponents from amongst the Muslim community.[3]

On this reading of South Asian history, the over thirteen hundred years of variegated historical interactions between Hindus and Muslims can largely be reduced to these two, competing inclinations, vying over generations to fashion either an "orthodox," religiously exclusive environment (in service of either a "legalistic" Islam or a "casteist, Brahminical" Hinduism), or else a tolerant, pluralistic—and, many would add, necessarily "heterodox"—liberal state that manages to reconcile Islam and Hinduism to one another, despite their natural, innate reciprocal hostility.

Seeking correctives to these anachronistic, dichotomous, teleological nationalist histories, scholars such as Richard Eaton, Will Sweetman, Dominique-Sila Khan, Richard King, David Lorenzen, and many others have cautioned against the view that "Hinduism" and "Islam" are objective, ontological entities, emphasizing instead the historically, humanly-constructed nature of these categories.[4] As Ernst again explains regarding "assumptions about the immutable essences of Islam and Hinduism":

> I would like to argue that this kind of approach is fundamentally misleading . . . this approach is ahistorical in regarding religions as unchanging, and it fails to account

> for the varied and complex encounters, relationships, and interpretations that took place between many individual Muslims and Hindus . . . it assumes [for example] that there is a single clear concept of what a Hindu is, although this notion is increasingly coming into question; considerable evidence has accumulated that external concepts of religion, first from post-Mongol Islamicate culture, and eventually from European Christianity in the colonial period, were brought to bear on a multitude of Indian religious traditions to create a single concept of Hinduism.[5]

Accordingly, such scholars assert, preoccupied as we are with the seemingly intractable (and often traumatic) modern realities of a feuding India and Pakistan, rising Hindu-Muslim communal strife and religious nationalisms, we all too often concoct a problematic narrative of the past in these contemporary terms; if we today remark that, in seventeenth-century Mughal South Asia, a struggle was being waged between the irreconcilable forces of "orthodoxy" and "rapprochement" between "Hinduism" and "Islam," then it is because we are projecting distinctively modern categories back into the premodern past. A better framework would instead see a cumulative history of particular interactions between particular individuals and institutions, in which concepts, ideas, social and religious identities, political agendas, etc., are being constantly reshaped, challenged, and renegotiated through complex historical processes embedded in a variety of South Asian contexts. Thus, through this analytical lens, any discussion of "Hindu-Muslim interaction" must be immediately qualified, lest we inappropriately categorize as either "Hindu" or "Muslim" historical individuals who simply would not have described themselves in this way—or even possessed the necessary concepts to be able to do so—even as the categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim" are themselves ever subject to the changes, shifts, and transformations of historical forces and processes.

Hence, emerging from this academic literature is not only a better appreciation of the sheer diversity of the modes of Hindu-Muslim interactions, but also the broad variety of agendas and motivations exhibited by the individuals who engage in those encounters. In the realm of more quotidian exchanges, for instance, ethnographic studies of South Asian shrines and the tombs of Sufi saints (*dargāh*/*mazār*) have illuminated distinctively local patterns of religious identity that differ markedly from more "elite" contexts. Muslims and Hindus alike (and, at certain sites, Christians, Sikhs, and others) regularly visit such intercommunal spaces in search of healing and blessings for life's everyday challenges, participating in a "shared ritual grammar" which exhibits the sort of "permeable religious boundaries" that frustrate the usual categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim";[6] though not ethnographic in orientation, historical studies into the Muslim appropriation of yogic postural and breathing techniques have yielded comparable insights.[7] Accordingly, scholars have sometimes innovated new or modified categories such as "vernacular Hindu"[8] or the "ambiguously Islamic"[9] in order to capture these "popular, non-institutional" iterations of South Asian religious practice.[10] Studies of South Asian rural lives have similarly challenged the field's "exclusive emphasis

on religious community," arguing that lived individual experience is simply too multivalent, socially interconnected, and contextually specific to be reduced to a singular religious label.[11] Such interventions have served not only to problematize the static "Hindu-Muslim" binary of nationalist historiography, but also to dramatically widen the possibilities for how scholars can conceptualize the actions and decisions of South Asian actors, inviting us to consider social, political, economic, cultural, aesthetic, and even emotional motivations alongside—and intertwined with—religious explanations. Such scholarship has furthermore steered the field away from outdated descriptions of "hybrid" or "syncretistic" religious identities, terminologies which tend to cast the group in question as an unnatural admixture of a static and reified "Hinduism" and "Islam," both of these categories problematically "presumed to be self-evident" by modern observers.[12]

Another sphere of recent scholarly activity has explored Hindu-Muslim literary exchanges, where, once again, the critique of ahistorical reifications of "Hinduism" and "Islam" features prominently. Numerous studies have examined the migration, adaptation, and reimagining of terms, concepts, figures of speech, themes, characters, stories, etc., across Hindu and Muslim literary cultures, spanning both elite and vernacular literary registers. The examples are abundant. To name just a few: a seventeenth-century Muslim biography (*sīrah*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, the *Cīrāppurāṇam,* is told in the language and literary conventions of a "Hindu" Tamil *Purāṇa,* complete with references to the Qur'ān as a "Veda," the Islamic testimony of faith ("there is no god but God"[13]) as a *mantra,* and the Prophet Muḥammad as an *avatāra* (a divine "descent" or incarnation),[14] even as the Arabian desert is reimagined as a lush South Indian jungle.[15] The fourteenth-century Kashmiri poetess Lal Dēd writes primarily in a non-dualist Śaiva,[16] Yogic, Tantric idiom, but also incorporates Sufi (Islamic "mystical") tropes of wine-taverns and Persian gardens into her verse.[17] The eighteenth-century Sufi poet Bullhe Shāh delicately interweaves Qur'ānic, Sufi, Hindu devotional (*bhakti*), and local Punjabi literary forms into his *kāfī* lyrics.[18] The "Hindu-Turk Dialogue" of the sixteenth-century Hindu poet-scholar Eknāth satirically imagines a religious debate between a stubborn Muslim and his equally obstinate Hindu interlocutor in the Marāṭhī language.[19] Ismāʿīlī Muslim authors saturate their vernacular devotional hymns (*gināns*) with such "Hindu" literary motifs as the bride pining in separation from her beloved, while praising the Shīʿī Imāms in terms of the "Hindu" cosmology of Viṣṇu's ten *avatāras*.[20] Such boundary-crossing literary cross-fertilizations immediately complicate any simplistic "Hindu-Muslim" dichotomy, revealing, in many cases, that certain boundaries taken for granted today simply did not exist prior to the modern period. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the deeply divisive politics surrounding the languages of Urdu and Hindi, nationalistically coded in the modern imagination to Muslim/Pakistan and Hindu/India, respectively, but exhibiting no such divide in the languages' common origins.[21] Indeed, some of the earliest Hindavī literature to come down to us,[22] including the

Muslim Mawlānā Dā'ūd's *Cāndāyan* (1379) and the subsequent narrative romances (*premākhyānas*) that it would inspire, exhibit a profound and simultaneous participation in multiple literary sources, including Persian narrative conventions, classical Islamic ethics, Sufi metaphysical teachings, Hindu heroes and folk tales, yogic ritual practices, classical Hindu mythology, and Sanskritic notions of desire (*kāma*) and aesthetic relish (*rasa*).[23]

Indeed, these Hindavī *premākhyāna* romances provide a lucid illustration of the multiple motivations and agendas that can simultaneously exert themselves within a given literary work, which recent scholarship has teased out in a manner reminiscent of the ethnographic studies cited above. Aditya Behl has led the way in reconstructing the plainly Sufi goals of several of these *premākhyānas:* for Muslim Sufi practitioners, especially novice initiates, these tales of a hero's quest in search of his elusive beloved serve as a quasi-allegorical guidebook for the steps, states, and stations of the Sufi path, illustrating the means to transform the self and transmute worldly desire into desire for God via a combination of practices, virtues, and asceticism.[24] And yet, this "Sufi objective" of the *premākhyānas* is not incompatible with other kinds of motives, including patronage, praise for the sultan, prestige for oneself and the court, "secular" poetic and musical pleasure, competition with rival Hindu groups, or even little more than a "good laugh."[25] Given this panoply of possible authorial motivations—none of which especially bespeak a "tolerant," "liberal" project for Hindu-Muslim unity, à la nationalist historiography—what is one to make of a Muslim poet's abundant adaptation of "Hindu" features into his composition, as in the *premākhyānas*' pervasive incorporation of Hindu theological terms, mythological episodes, divine and heroic figures, yogic tropes, and *bhakti* themes? A number of scholars have regarded this phenomenon as a popularizing or proselytization strategy;[26] in another recovery of quotidian possibilities, however, Tony Stewart has influentially suggested, by way of contemporary Euro-American translation theory, that Muslim authors' deployment of an "ostensibly Hindu" vernacular terminology simply represents the pragmatic process of an author wishing to convey his religious thoughts in his own mother tongue. Much like an American Muslim today using the English, *ostensibly* Christian term "God" to express her substantially Islamic notion of "Allāh"—because "God" is the nearest option available in English, even though, given the terms' particular histories, they are not perfectly equivalent—South Asian Muslim writers were similarly drawing upon the stock of historically Hindu terms readily available within their respective vernacular tongues and then reimagining them for "thoroughly Islamic" purposes.[27]

Following in a similar vein, the bulk of recent studies to address Hindu-Muslim interactions have turned to the overtly political realm, with particular attention paid to the affairs of imperial courts. This copious literature is far too broad to attempt a summary here, though one can again observe an emphasis upon the historically constructed nature of "Hindu" and "Muslim" identities, with political

exigencies, political thought, and military conflict supplying the threatening—or, at times, politically useful—"other" against which a group might shape and sharpen its own identity.[28] Further mirroring the above scholarly trends, these politics-oriented studies also exhibit a pervasive, self-conscious move away from reified religious identities as the exhaustive explanations for a given Hindu king or Muslim sultan's deeds. A number of scholars have challenged the presumption, for instance, of an essential Islamic iconoclasm, as though a ruler's Muslim identity somehow obliged him, as a matter of earnest religious fervor, to destroy Hindu temples and idols wherever he encountered them.[29] Countering this longstanding supposition via a combination of empirical data and critical re-readings of primary sources, scholars have instead made the case for more multilayered imperial motivations of a simultaneously political, economic, military-strategic, administrative, diplomatic, or even personal character.[30] Often highlighting the "inconvenient" data—such as allegedly iconoclastic Muslim sultans issuing land grants to Hindus, mandating the protection of Brahmins and temples, and minting coins stamped with the image of a Hindu deity,[31] or else beleaguered Hindu kings, purportedly hostile to the bloodthirsty Muslims *en masse,* patronizing the construction of mosques while imitating Muslim forms of dress, architecture, and imperial vocabulary[32]—a cumulative picture emerges wherein pragmatics and *realpolitik* shaped royal behavior far more immediately than any religious or theological considerations. Indeed, in many scholars' analyses, it would seem that religion hardly ends up being a relevant factor at all.

This book builds upon a number of the crucial interventions modeled by this recent academic literature, while also seeking to address certain of its as yet underexplored avenues and implications. Given the field's much-needed turn against anachronistic categories, this study, too, aims to follow suit with careful attention paid to the concepts and terms that it deploys (a task to be taken up in the next section). Certainly the monolithic, reified notions of "Hinduism" and "Islam" that typify nationalist histories are ill-suited to any of the figures and materials examined here. And yet, none of the correctives just surveyed provides quite the right fit for the Sanskrit-to-Persian translations that will be analyzed in the coming chapters. Far from a religiously "ambiguous" or "vernacular" space, Mughal-era translations generally self-consciously present two discrete religious traditions—each with its own distinct scripture(s), religious law, ritual regimens, etc.—which can nevertheless be fruitfully compared with one another; the adopted vantage point within each tradition, furthermore, is typically elite. Similarly, in comparison with Hindu-Muslim literary exchanges, although aspirations for patronage, prestige, etc., are certainly part of the story with the translation movement, nevertheless, many of the Mughal translations were rendered into Persian *prose,* thus rendering sheer "secular" literary pleasure an unlikely motive. In the same way, with regard to the analysis of empire, although practical considerations of political legitimation and imperial political self-fashioning certainly played a very large role in the

Mughal court's interest in Sanskrit materials, any consideration of the contents of the translations themselves, as I will argue, reveals a pronounced religious or theological dimension that might coexist with political intentions, but cannot be readily reduced to them. Some participants in the translation movement, in other words, exhibited pronounced *philosophical* interests which may well have been deeply intertwined with the Mughal court's multifaceted politics, but such framing fails to fully appreciate these participants' articulations of the philosophical quest for knowledge and liberation in their own terms. The continued production and circulation of such texts outside of court sponsorship and after the decline of the Empire is indicative of the other sorts of interests and motivations that the field has so far tended to overlook.

Hence, in the face of nationalist history's almost exclusive emphasis upon religion, the contemporary field has understandably sought to delimit or even marginalize religion's role in directing the course of South Asian history; this study wonders, however, whether the pendulum has shifted somewhat too far in the opposite direction. While much of the recent literature thus tends to underemphasize or explain away the potentially religious, theological, or philosophical dimensions of historical Hindu-Muslim encounters, I will argue that such an approach neglects certain central features of the Mughal translation movement which the field has yet to develop a sufficient and effective vocabulary for addressing. Indeed, Carl Ernst, in his seminal typology of Arabic and Persian translations from Indian languages, does identify a certain category of "metaphysical and mystical" translations that are interested in "a particular kind of mystical and esoteric knowledge that is shared . . . by a small elite" within the Hindu and Muslim communities.[33] Now, for centuries Hindu and Muslim philosophers and theologians have sought to articulate, elaborate, and refine just what this esoteric knowledge is, so surely there is considerably more to be said on this front. And yet, with only sporadic exceptions, the field has been slow to attempt to robustly reconstruct South Asian Hindu-Muslim encounters in the terms of these scholarly traditions themselves.[34] Tony Stewart's influential articulation of translation theory cited above, for instance, is derived entirely from contemporary Euro-American theorists, without any reference to the theories and conceptualizations of Hindu and Muslim translators, themselves the products of centuries-long traditions of scholarly inquiry and theoretical reflection. When the field is effectively unanimous, however, in its desire to cease projecting modern categories back into the premodern past, it seems only appropriate that the emic conceptualizations of these historical Hindu and Muslim actors should themselves feature more prominently in the discussion, informing the etic and standing in conversation with it.

Accordingly, if the discipline's recovery of emic Hindu and Muslim philosophical and theological conceptualizations should require giving a larger space, once again, to some iteration of "religion" in our analytical frameworks, then so be it, if this is what will allow the field to be consistent with its own interventions; it must,

however, be done in a manner that is carefully, historically, contextually sensitive, without falling back into problematic nationalist categories. Hindu studies is comparatively further along in this endeavor, in large part because scholastic materials in general have remained a more vibrant arena of interest within that discipline. As such, recent titles to address Hindu scholastic traditions' notions of "religion" and their varied responses to the Muslim presence in the subcontinent, such as Andrew Nicholson's *Unifying Hinduism,* represent the latest in a somewhat more established thread of disciplinary inquiry—though there still remains considerable work to be done.[35] The field of South Asian Islam, in contrast, suffers from a notable dearth of attention paid to Islamic philosophical and theological materials, itself one of the most pronounced instances of a broader neglect of "post-classical" Islamic intellectual history.[36] As such, conceptualizations of "religion" or "Hinduism" in premodern South Asian Islamic philosophy and theology remain a predominantly unexplored territory, with only a handful of preliminary overviews available to provide sketches of the vast materials still awaiting in-depth study.[37]

This considerable lacuna notwithstanding, many scholars have nonetheless recognized Muslim philosophical and theological perspectives as constituting a significant dimension of historical Hindu-Muslim encounters, extending well beyond the specific confines of scholastic tomes. Aditya Behl, for instance, in his reconstruction of the "Sufi objectives" of the *premākhyāna* romances described above, repeatedly cites the centrality of Islamic metaphysics—particularly the tradition of Sufi metaphysics known as *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being")—as a framing vision that pervades and structures the narratives and, indeed, mediates the manner in which the "Arabic- and Persian-speaking world encountered cultural difference" among both elite and popular audiences.[38] With scores of vernacular poets, such as the abovementioned Bullhe Shāh, likewise exhibiting a clear investment in this Sufi metaphysics, *waḥdat al-wujūd*'s widespread influence and prominence in both scholarly and non-scholarly spaces across much of the early modern subcontinent is unmistakable.[39] Scholarship on Mughal political culture has similarly noted the myriad ways that Mughal elites, the retinues of Emperor Akbar and Prince Dārā Shikōh foremost among them, drew from Sufi thought and Islamic philosophy in crafting the empire's ornate courtly culture, for instance, in projecting the emperor's authority in the "illuminationist" language of the *ishrāqī* philosophical tradition or else in terms of the "perfect human" (*insān-i kāmil*) of the Sufi *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition.[40] Most relevantly for this study, Mughal translators' typical recourse for rendering Hindu thought into Persian was the technical terminology of the Sufi and Islamic philosophical traditions.[41] It is thus acknowledged that Islamic philosophy played an important constituent role in broadly shaping Mughal discourses of "religion" and the "religious other," but, in scholarship to date, such acknowledgments are usually made only in passing; in-depth treatments of the subject remain very much a desideratum. At the same time, for a field currently invested in the delicate task of reconstructing premodern

categories of thought rigorously denuded of modern baggage, the South Asian Islamic scholastic corpus stands as a promising but under-mined resource in the search for premodern emic iterations of "religion" carefully distinguished from the reified, essentialist categories of modern nationalist histories.

Accordingly, this study proposes to examine the Mughal translation movement with an eye to the above observations and concerns. With the aim of moving beyond mere overviews and introductory sketches, I will devote sustained attention to the single treatise introduced at the outset: the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the 1597 translation of the popular medieval Sanskrit work, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* This Persian translation represents a complex confluence of multiple philosophical currents hailing from the Arabo-Persian and Sanskritic intellectual worlds: on the Arabo-Persian side, one encounters the distinctive technical terminology of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy, philosophical Sufism in the *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, and even occasional offerings of Islamic Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophy. On the Sanskrit side, one can discern contributions from the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition, non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, and Yoga (alongside other philosophical threads more marginally present), all translated into Persian terms and thus often obscured under thick layers of Islamic philosophical expression. This multifarious synthesis was, again, accomplished by the translation team of Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, and a central goal of this book is to attempt to reconstruct the inner workings of their intellectual processes and translation choices.

This task is immensely complicated, however, by the utter dearth of available biographical information on the three figures: other than their names and the treatise they have left behind, we know precious little, at present, about any individual member of this Hindu-Muslim translation team. In such a situation, I propose, among our most promising options is to pursue a *philosophical* context for the text at hand through thoroughly locating the technical, scholastic features of the *Jūg Bāsisht* within the intellectual traditions from which they were drawn. Rather than contextualizing the treatise atemporally within abstracted philosophical "schools," as scholarship has often done—as though all of Advaita Vedānta could be reduced to the figure of Śaṅkarācārya (fl. 8th–9th c.) or all of *waḥdat al-wujūd* to Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240)—this study follows the field's current emphasis upon context and historical process, examining the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a text in conversation with the scholarly discussions of its own day. Accordingly, in an effort to map the translation team's particular reception and reimagining of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the form of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* I contextualize the treatise within the careers of three further thinkers roughly contemporaneous with the Persian translation: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (fl. ca. 1600), Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (d. 1648), and Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1641). These figures, one Hindu and two Muslim, were active during roughly the same time period that the *Jūg Bāsisht* was being composed, and were each uniquely invested in or associated with the early

modern study and interpretation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* Each figure, furthermore, was also a prominent representative of one of the particular schools of Hindu and Islamic philosophy most relevant to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its Persian translation: the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition, *waḥdat al-wujūd,* and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, respectively. Through locating the treatise within the careers of these three thinkers, I aim to trace how dimensions of each figure's oeuvre played a role in the translation team's interpretation and rendition of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into Persian.

Such an approach will not only permit a fruitful contextualization of the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a creative work of interreligious, cross-philosophical synthesis, but carries the additional benefit of privileging a robust emic reconstruction of the terms of this Hindu-Muslim "dialogue." To state the matter differently, between this treatise and the philosophical traditions that inform it—represented, for the purposes of this study, by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī—one can encounter not only the internal conceptualizations of "religion" maintained by early modern Hindu and Muslim intellectuals, but also their own methodologies for how multiple such "religions" could be studied comparatively. In order to initiate this excavation of the translation team's own terms, concepts, and methods, let me begin by defining my own central terms and methods.

TERMS OF THE INQUIRY

With the aim of avoiding anachronistic categories, I seek to draw this study's most basic terms, as much as possible, from the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials and contexts to be examined here. While this can never be done perfectly, it strikes me, in light of the observations above, as the soundest course with which to proceed, while subsequent scholarship can hopefully correct any deficiencies in my usages. Accordingly, throughout this study, I strive to use the Arabic terms *islām* and *muslim* (Persian *musalmān*) in the senses in which they were used by the primary Arabic- and Persian-writing thinkers explored in this book, including the translator Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī and the Muslim philosophers Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī and Mīr Findiriskī. For these Muslim thinkers, being "Muslim" means to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muḥammad, a historical individual who received a revelation or "descent" (*nuzūl, tanzīl*) from God (*allāh*) in the form of a book (*kitāb*)—the Qur'ān—articulating and supported by a body of distinctive and normative teachings and doctrines, rites, laws, ethical formations, etc., to which every Muslim is expected to adhere in some fashion. As we shall see in more detail in subsequent chapters, however, for each of these thinkers, this general notion of "Islam" is not monolithic, accommodating within itself a considerable range of practices, beliefs, and ways of being Muslim that are, furthermore, not incompatible with historical change over time. As such, this notion of Islam needs to be sensitively distinguished from the reified, ahistorical iterations that populate much of nationalist historiography.

Indeed, for the time being, at the outset of this study and pending further nuancing in the chapters to follow, to approximate these three Muslim thinkers' conceptualization of the historical body of doctrines, practices, and ethical cultivations that comprise Islam, we could profitably invoke Talal Asad's well-known idea of Islam as a "discursive tradition." As Asad defines it, a "discursive tradition" is an assemblage of "discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history . . . an Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition that addresses itself to conceptions of an Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present."[42] According to this conceptualization of "Islam," the Islamic tradition would consist of a set of discourses that methodically refer to prior Muslim generations in which doctrine and practice were (according to the discourse-makers in question) instituted properly, that is to say, what Asad identifies as "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy."[43] This conceptualization does not, however, reduce "tradition" to the static and slavish repetition of prior generations; rather, since the present moment poses ever-new questions, doubts, situations, and challenges, the discursive tradition must, with reference to past practice, respond to these challenges in novel and innovative ways that can nevertheless claim to regulate, stabilize, and secure correct doctrine and practice for present and future Muslim generations. The Islamic discursive tradition thus authorizes what should be called "Islamic" and marginalizes what should not by means of the tradition's own internal standards and criteria of reasoning and disputation—standards and criteria which may themselves, too, be subject to historical adjustment over time.[44]

More in the terms of Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī, accordingly, we might say that "Islam" comprises a series of discourses that cut across numerous intellectual disciplines and contexts, including Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), the study of the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*),[45] law (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*ḥikmah*), logic (*manṭiq*), Sufism or Islamic "mysticism" (*taṣawwuf*), and other related disciplines. In line with Asad, these discourses do indeed endeavor to discriminate between "true" (*ḥaqq*) and untrue doctrine and practice. Furthermore, each of these Islamic discourses continuously refers to past thinkers within the tradition, but relates itself with especial dedication to certain foundational reference points, not only the Qur'ān and the Prophetic example (*sunnah*), but also to certain watershed figures within a given discipline, such as Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) in the case of philosophy or Ibn al-ʿArabī in the case of Sufism. If anything needs to be added to Asad's account of the Islamic discursive tradition here, it would only be that, for the three Muslim thinkers under consideration, the Islamic tradition exerts its efforts to ensure present and future Muslims' correct alignment with the Qur'ān, Ibn Sīnā, orthopraxy, etc., not only as an end in itself, but also because this alignment is thought to ensure the possibility of such further goals as salvation (*najāt*) or some variety of knowledge, wisdom, or spiritual realization (*maʿrifah, kashf, taḥqīq,* and so on), deemed to be matters of ultimate import.

I would hasten to add, however—taking a cautionary cue from J.Z. Smith[46]—that this particular formulation of the concept "Islam" is not intended to be universal or generalizable to all contexts and academic inquiries; rather, it is only intended provisionally, in reference to these particular Muslim thinkers and for the purposes of this particular study, as is the case for all the terms to be discussed here.

According to Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī, furthermore, the Prophet Muḥammad was not the sole prophet, but, as the Qur'ān itself affirms, only the most recent in a long line of prophets. Hence, the Qur'ān is not the lone "descended book" (*kitāb munazzal*), but the latest in a series of revelations, every human civilization having received at least one book, at some stage of its history, through the tongue of its own corresponding prophet(s). Although, as the Qur'ān insists, these multiple Divine "paths" or "ways" (*sharīʿah, minhāj*) all communicate the same core truth of "divine unity" (*tawḥīd*), they are nevertheless mutually distinguished in language, laws, and other specific characteristics. Furthermore, according to these three Muslim thinkers, as is the case with Islam, flowing forth from every revelation and its attendant prophet is a larger body of legal specifications, doctrines, rites, ethics, customs, etc., that may cumulatively be called a "tradition" (*dīn*) or "path" (*madhhab*)—or, as we may perhaps be willing to say in an English-language context, a "religion."[47] Hence, for these Muslim figures, Islam is only one of many such "religions" that, collectively, span every human society and civilization there has ever been. It is in this specific sense that the generic term "religion" is intended throughout this study.

Indeed, this rough iteration of "religion" also provides a serviceable working concept for the Hindu materials to be examined below. Although the author of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* Gauḍa Abhinanda, never provides a systematic account of what a notion like "religion" or "Hinduism" might mean to him, nor do the two Hindu translators, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, these three voices nonetheless plainly affirm an absolute Truth (*brahman*) that can be known to an aspirant by way of a combination of correct doctrine, a ritual method, and the cultivation of certain virtues, at the end of which path lies the ultimate goal of "liberation" (*mokṣa*). The reality of scriptural "revelation" (*śruti*)[48] is likewise affirmed by all three figures in the form of the Vedas, though the Vedas' precise role in the life of the aspirant is not clearly expounded. The other central Hindu figure considered in this study, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, on the other hand, leaves little space for uncertainty: his vision is one directly conceived on the basis of scriptural "revelation," one of his basic distinctions being the "Vedic" (*vaidika*) as contrasted with that which is "external to the Vedas" (*vedabāhya*). Indeed, if not for how strange it would sound in modern English, my use of the word "Hindu" throughout this book could most often be replaced by the word "Vedic" in Madhusūdana's sense of the term. Madhusūdana additionally conceptualizes what could be considered a robust "discursive tradition" built around the Vedas, wherein eighteen "sciences" (*vidyās*) or disciplines of learning—each

of them investing fundamental authority in the scholars and thinkers of prior generations—support the recitation, ritual performance, and correct interpretation of the Vedas. As with the Muslim thinkers explored in this study, for all of these Hindu thinkers the tradition's maintenance of "orthodox" ritual practice and philosophical truth is not simply an end in itself, but rather, an endeavor whose ultimate aim is knowledge of the ultimately Real (*brahman*) and the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*) from the bondage of the phenomenal world. One thus encounters in these Sanskrit materials a conceptualization of a Vedic tradition or "religion" to be explored in greater detail in chapter 2, and which coincides with the intended meaning of "Hindu" throughout this study.

Finally, a note on a set of related terms that I have so far been employing without proper definition: "philosophy," "theology," and "wisdom." The early Islamic intellectual tradition maintained a distinction between *falsafah* ("philosophy," later known as *ḥikmah*), on the one hand, and *kalām* ("[dialectical] theology"), on the other, for which one could schematically assert that *falsafah,* drawing its method primarily from the Greek Aristotelian-Neoplatonic tradition, pursued the rational demonstration of philosophical truths without (or, at least, with an aspirational bare-minimum of) reliance on scripture, while *kalām* sought the rational interpretation and clarification of revealed scripture (the Qur'ān) alongside the dialectical defense of conventional Islamic beliefs and creeds. This aspect of the distinction between *falsafah/ḥikmah* and *kalām,* centered upon revelation's role—or lack thereof—within rational argumentation, mirrors what I intend by the more generic terms "philosophy" and "theology." Without intending a stark binary and allowing for considerable overlap, "philosophical" discourses will pursue an inquiry comparatively independent of scripture, aiming (in principle) to persuade any given rational interlocutor, regardless of whether that interlocutor happens to share the author's own scriptural commitments; "theological" discourses, by contrast, will tend to be more immediately oriented around scripture, and will admit scripture as an authoritative resource in the context of argumentation and polemics. The terms "philosophy" and "theology," however, ultimately prove to be more etic than emic, given the trajectory of post-classical Islamic intellectual history, as influential Muslim scholars such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) served to normalize much of the intellectual apparatus and dialectical tools of *falsafah* within mainstream *kalām* traditions and otherwise progressively blurred the line between *falsafah* and *kalām.*[49] As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to categorize a great many post-classical figures as exclusively "philosophers" or "theologians"; rather, it can at best be affirmed that a given author writes in more of a philosophical mode at one moment, and then in a more theological mode the next. Complicating the scenario even further is the rise of increasingly speculative forms of philosophical Sufism, particularly in the wake of Ibn ʿArabī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), who furnished even more profoundly

category-blurring articulations of what could be called "philosophical mysticism" or "mystical theology" (*'irfān*).[50]

The philosophy-theology distinction appears even more thoroughly etic in the case of Hindu Sanskrit intellectual traditions, which boast a wide variety of overlapping terms related to rational inquiry—*śāstra* (scientific or technical knowledge), *darśana* (system or school of thought), *ānvīkṣikī* (logical analysis), *nyāya* (logic, syllogistic argumentation), *vicāra* (dialectical inquiry), *tarka* (suppositional reasoning), etc.—but possess no evident vocabulary that would track with "philosophy" and "theology." Despite this absence of equivalent terms, however, a certain space for "philosophy" and "theology" to make some emic sense is offered by the pan-Sanskritic, *pramāṇa*-based analytical framework which, following the seminal contributions of the likes of the Buddhist thinker Dignāga (d. ca. 540) and the Hindu figure Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (fl. 660), would come to characterize the majority of Sanskrit dialectical practices.[51] This *pramāṇa*-based discourse is a mode of dialectic wherein the "valid means of knowledge" (*pramāṇas*), such as "perception" (*pratyakṣa*) or "inference" (*anumāna*), are explicitly identified, queried, and (ideally) agreed upon by all relevant interlocutors so that the debate can proceed on common, mutually-legible epistemological grounds. Though by no means accepted by all thinkers or schools, another of the standard *pramāṇas* is that of "testimony" (*śabda*), that is, the statements and affirmations of trustworthy people. One of the subdivisions of "testimony" is, of course, "Vedic testimony" (*vaidika śabda*), that is, *scriptural* statements and affirmations: this refers first and foremost to the Vedas, but, depending upon the thinker and context in question, may also include other works such as the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa,* or various *Sūtras* or *Āgamas,* each of which might be authoritative for only particular delimited groups or sects within the larger Sanskrit universe. Accordingly, within the shared, pan-Sanskritic terms of this *pramāṇa* framework, an author may choose in one context to lean more heavily upon scriptural testimony alongside rational argumentation—presumably for an audience of coinciding scriptural commitments—or else to privilege perception, inference, and other non-scriptural *pramāṇas,* a sensible strategy in the context of debates between opponents of divergent scriptural allegiances (Hindus vs. Buddhists vs. Jains, etc.) or else if a writer simply wished to conduct an inquiry on more "purely rational" grounds for whatever reason. In this study, the former end of this spectrum would correspond with the intended meaning of "theology," while the latter would coincide with "philosophy."

With regard to both the Muslim and Hindu materials considered here, however, one must take care to differentiate this practice of "philosophical argumentation formally independent of scripture" from a kind of Western, Enlightenment-era ideal of "pure reasoning unconstrained by tradition."[52] Quite to the contrary, both Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit philosophical writing embodied the ethos of a "discursive tradition," overwhelmingly proceeding in the exegetical mode of

commentaries, sub-commentaries, super-commentaries, glosses, etc., upon the treatises of prior generations, while the basic concepts, categories, and queries of even non-commentarial works were typically framed in terms dictated by the prior tradition.[53] Nearly every school of Hindu philosophy, for instance, possessed its own canonical source text, typically in an aphoristic (*sūtra*) format mediated through several intervening commentaries, with which any subsequent author would be expected to engage for his own philosophical reflections even centuries or, in some cases, millennia later; watershed works such as Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'* and *Ishārāt* or Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* performed a comparable function for Muslim intellectuals. Thus, given this shared exegetical character of both "philosophy" and "theology" in premodern South Asia, the distinction between the two should not be overwrought, as is so often the case in the Euro-American academy today; a single South Asian thinker, or even a single Arabic, Persian, or Sanskrit text, could readily participate in both dialectical modes.

Relatedly, even this "dialectical" character of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit philosophy and theology should not be rendered too exclusively: the Muslim and Hindu philosophers examined in this study all crafted sophisticated, highly technical argumentation in numerous compositions, and yet, at the same time, each figure elsewhere affirmed that this same philosophical knowledge could be acquired in non-philosophical ways, for example, through the media of narrative, poetry, or aesthetic experience. Most relevant for our purposes here, the *Jūg Bāsisht* and other Mughal translations regularly occupy this ambiguous middle space, utilizing technical terms, concepts, and resources culled from decidedly philosophical sources, but deploying them in the context of non-dialectical narrative literature and metaphysical exposition. In this study, I indicate this middle space by the term "wisdom" and its adjectival form "sapiential," in reference to a variety of knowing in which philosophical, dialectical discourse, on the one hand, and literary, metaphorical, paradoxical, or otherwise *non*-philosophical expression, on the other, are deemed to be non-contradictory or even complementary in purpose and function. In more emic terms, this notion of "wisdom" overlaps with such Arabo-Persian terms as *ḥikmah* (in its generic, non-technical sense of "wisdom"), *'irfān* ("gnosis" or "mystical knowledge," often with philosophical connotations), *kashf* ("unveiling"), and *dhawq* ("tasting"), or else such Sanskrit terms as *jñāna* ("knowledge," again in a generic, non-technical sense), *vijñāna* ("wisdom," "discernment"), and *saṃvid* ("understanding"). Taking my lead from several of these Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit terms that can polysemously refer both to "philosophy" and to "wisdom," I will similarly employ the English term "philosophy" at times in this more general sense of "wisdom," and, at other times, in its more restrictive, technical, dialectical sense, as context should make clear.

Now, this acknowledgment of the pervasively exegetical, tradition-bound character of early modern South Asian philosophy bears important implications for the methodology of this study. In seeking to trace the influence of Hindu and

Islamic philosophical traditions on Mughal translations such as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* it is important to take this feature of dialectical inquiry into account: although South Asian philosophical texts are often far more innovative than they may appear,[54] it is true nevertheless that this commentarial orientation of philosophical practice renders a certain conservative character to the enterprise, defining and delimiting the field of possible innovations that can feasibly occur within a given philosophical work. If one should ask why, for instance, despite centuries of sharing the same soil, Sanskrit philosophical writings never discussed—and, overwhelmingly, never even acknowledged the existence of—Muslim thought, the controls set up by the philosophical "discursive tradition" are a significant part of the explanation: if the tradition has no precedent for such an endeavor, and if no foundational texts within the tradition provide any particular encouragement or even pretext to do so, then, in such an environment, any dramatically new intellectual initiative would find scarcely any space to take root. The prospect of translating Sanskrit wisdom into Persian, however, was precisely the sort of genuinely novel enterprise that would require immense intellectual creativity effectively without precedent, so how could tradition-bound Hindu and Islamic philosophical traditions possibly take part? To answer this question requires a broader view on South Asian intellectual cultures, the figures who participated in them, and how multiple intellectual cultures could simultaneously operate side by side.

SANSKRIT, ARABIC, AND PERSIAN INTELLECTUAL CULTURES IN EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA

In the centuries leading up the early modern period, three languages had become distinguished as the primary media for scholastic learning and intellectual inquiry for both South Asian Hindus and Muslims. Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian all flourished in various ways during the period of Mughal Muslim rule in fields ranging from astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and law to poetry, linguistics, theology, logic, philosophy, and mysticism.[55] While, in various regions of South Asia throughout this period, texts continued to be produced in numerous vernacular languages and regional dialects—Telugu, Kannada, Awadhi, Brajbhāṣā, Punjabi, Bengali, and many others—none of these languages could claim an elite and "pan-imperial" status in quite the same way as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian.[56] These latter three were available only to educated South Asians, and were able to be read and understood by similarly learned figures in every corner of the empire.[57] Modern studies on Mughal intellectual cultures have tended to focus on one or, at most, two of these trans-regional, language-bound discursive traditions, but an account that simultaneously considers all three is nearly unheard of.[58] Accordingly, this study takes preliminary steps to address this lacuna, utilizing the aforementioned Madhsūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī as representative case studies for their respective intellectual cultures.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī stands as the exemplifying case study of Sanskrit intellectual culture at work. A native of Bengal active in the city of Banaras, one of the great centers of Sanskrit learning of the era,[59] Madhusūdana was arguably the most famous and respected representative of the Hindu non-dualist Advaita Vedānta tradition writing within Mughal lands. The Muslim thinker Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, meanwhile, was one of the preeminent seventeenth-century representatives of the Sufi *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, thus representing, for the purposes of this study, a significant slice of South Asian Arabic and Persian intellectual cultures. Mīr Findiriskī, an Iranian native and frequent journeyer to South Asia, similarly ranked among the most renowned Muslim philosophers of his day, composing treatises primarily in the Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) tradition of Islamic philosophy, and also the author of a Persian commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Although he wrote predominantly in Persian, given the deeply interconnected character of Persian and Arabic scholarship historically, Findiriskī can function for this inquiry as an exemplar of both Persian and Arabic intellectual cultures, representing a different slice of those discursive traditions than Muḥibb Allāh. Another significant feature of these three figures is their parallel relationships with the Mughal imperial order: each was recognized as a scholar of the highest caliber by Mughal rulers and nobles, yet none of the three ever became formally attached to the administration, setting foot in the Mughal court merely a handful of times if at all. This means that the majority of Madhusūdana's, Muḥibb Allāh's, and Findiriskī's intellectual energies were directed at scholarly conversations situated squarely within their respective discursive traditions, but able to be largely disambiguated from the complicating motives, agendas, and politics of the Mughal court.

As for the early modern Sanskrit intellectual culture of which Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was both product and participant, it was marked by what Sheldon Pollock has called the "breath-taking degree of continuity in Sanskrit knowledge systems." On account of this continuity, understanding a given figure's contributions within a given Sanskrit discipline, "let alone understanding the motivation behind them," is "impossible without having a grasp of a millennium and a half of writing on the subject."[60] Throughout the early modern period, Sanskrit intellectuals—that is to say, individuals who wrote in Sanskrit or were educated in Sanskrit curricula—had consistent access to an effectively "unbroken" line of conversation with centuries of previous writers in the language, embracing such classical philosophical and theological disciplines as *mīmāṃsā* (Vedic ritual exegesis[61]), *nyāya* (logic), *yoga,* and numerous branches of *vedānta* (Upaniṣad-exegesis), including the *advaita* (non-dualist), *dvaita* (dualist), and *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified non-dualist) schools. What this primarily means, for my purposes in this study, is that participation in Sanskritic knowledge systems required a remarkable degree of learning in the authors, texts, issues, technical terms and concepts that had long been standardized in those disciplines, demanding such preoccupation that it should cause little surprise if early modern authors in Sanskrit disciplines refer almost exclusively

to one another, manifesting scarcely any concern or interest in contemporaneous Arabic or Persian intellectual disciplines.[62] Madhusūdana was no exception in this regard, as will be discussed in chapter 2. Though a number of possible reasons will be explored, certainly the sheer enormity, complexity, and robustness of Sanskrit intellectual culture—which meant that no casual student could hope to learn the language easily and functionally—contributed to the near complete absence of any Muslims conversant in Sanskrit in the early modern period.[63]

Indo-Arabic and Indo-Persian intellectual cultures—Muḥibb Allāh's primary intellectual home and, insofar as these discursive networks also extended beyond South Asia, Mīr Findiriskī's as well—exhibited a similar (if less longstanding) continuity across the interrelated disciplines of Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth,* jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *ḥikmah, kalām,* logic (*manṭiq*), Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and other associated fields.[64] As a language of scholarship, Arabic, in rather the converse scenario from Sanskrit, displayed an "almost absolute Islamic identity" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India, the purview of Muslim scholars almost exclusively.[65] Again, much like Sanskrit, the sheer technical complexity and eruditeness of Arabic scholastic traditions was likely one significant deterrent, among others, preventing direct Hindu participation in Arabic intellectual culture.

Persian-language scholarship, on the other hand, in contrast to both Sanskrit and Arabic in this time period, was somewhat more fluid and unpredictable, in large part due to Persian's complex standing vis-à-vis Arabic since nearly the beginning of Islam itself. Certain fields of scientific and practical knowledge, for instance, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and ethics, were traditionally pursued in Arabic, the undisputed language of elite learning throughout most of medieval Islamic civilization. In early modern South Asia, however, even though treatises continued to be composed in Arabic, as many if not most scholars in these fields in fact opted for the thitherto unconventional choice of Persian.[66] In certain other fields of "secular" learning, such as history, philology, and lexicography, Persian was the rather clear language of choice over Arabic, though often composed with a comparative interest in Arabic (and/or Sanskrit).[67] In yet another broad field, namely, South Asian works on Sufism, although Persian had long been an option for non-dialectical Sufi works, including poetry, practical guidebooks, and the discourses (*malfūẓāt*) and letters (*maktūbāt*) of Sufi masters,[68] it was only in the Mughal period that Persian became a common option for works of *philosophical* mysticism (*'irfān*), as was the case in Muḥibb Allāh's career.[69] Works of *kalām* and *ḥikmah* (as well as *tafsīr,* Qur'ānic exegesis[70]), similarly, once overwhelmingly composed in Arabic with only occasional Persian exceptions, became increasingly composed, commented upon, and translated into Persian as well. A sort of Persian scholastic "discursive tradition" thus came to the fore in early modern South Asia that was in many respects deeply interpenetrated with Arabic scholarship—and, in this regard, better referred to as a singular "Arabo-Persian" intellectual culture—and yet, in other respects, was comparatively independent of Arabic.

Undoubtedly, recent developments in the Mughal court were closely connected with this rise of Persian intellectual culture. Of particularly far-reaching impact was the third Mughal emperor Akbar's decision, in 1582, to adopt Persian as the official language of the imperial administration: the first two Mughal emperors, Bābur (d. 1530) and Humāyūn (d. 1556), legitimized their rule primarily with reference to their Chaghatāy Central Asian lineage, and thus continued to conduct government affairs in their native Turkic dialect. Akbar, in contrast, notably the first Mughal ruler to be born in South Asia, made much more extensive efforts to fashion the Mughals as a decisively *Indian* empire, while simultaneously pursuing relations with the neighboring Persianate empires around him (particularly Safavid Iran), thus requiring a language that could facilitate the inclusion, involvement, and support of myriad religious and ethnic groups with diverse mother tongues. The Persian language emerged for Akbar as the best linguistic choice for establishing a globally consequential empire in the midst of the overwhelmingly non-Muslim, linguistically heterogeneous population of India.[71] Akbar and his successors amplified this administrative shift to Persian with generous patronage to Persian learning and culture, extended both to Indian intellectuals native to the empire as well as a steady stream of scholars hailing from further lands, including Persia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.[72] Persian's role as a (comparatively) religiously and ethnically "neutral" language of bureaucracy and courtly prestige meant that everyone working within the administration, including large numbers of Hindus, could conduct their affairs in Persian; in many cases, Hindus would excel in the language and proceed to master various literary genres of Persian high culture.[73] An early modern Hindu hence was able to be fully "at home" within Persian intellectual culture, a scholarly space which they shared with Muslims and other religious groups populating Mughal territories.

At least three factors thus converged to furnish early modern Persian intellectual culture with certain key capacities relevantly distinct from Sanskrit and Arabic. In the first place, the Mughal choice of Persian as its administrative language for the purpose of, precisely, integrating the local population into the empire, and its attendant, lavish patronizing of Persian, provided a significant precedent and impetus for Hindus to participate fully and vibrantly in Persian intellectual culture. Second, in comparison with Sanskrit and Arabic's rather inexorable religious identities—Sanskrit being the language of the Veda and Arabic that of the Qur'ān—Persian's relative "religious neutrality," even despite its lengthy prior history within Islamic culture, opened further possibilities for Persian to serve not only as a vehicle for Muslim religious thought but for Hindu thought as well. Lastly, Persian's in many ways still nascent and emerging role as a scholastic, technical language—certainly so in the case of philosophical writing—while still retaining a dynamic role within non-technical literatures afforded it a sort of malleability and flexibility largely unavailable to Sanskrit and Arabic. Whereas the fundamental terms, methods, norms, and animating questions of Sanskrit and Arabic philosophy

had already long since been crystallized and entrenched, philosophy in Persian was not yet so hyper-determined, still able to be remolded and refashioned in ways that could creatively draw from the respective heritages of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian for the sake of innovative and wholly exploratory endeavors. Accordingly, of the three elite, trans-regional languages of scholarship operative in the Mughal Empire, Persian was, effectively, the only feasible medium for the meeting of Hindu and Muslim sapiential traditions that characterizes works like the *Jūg Bāsisht,* as well as much of the Mughal translation movement more broadly.

And so one can identify three robust, pan-imperial, language-bound intellectual cultures operating simultaneously within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mughal South Asia. Indian scholars in this period were carrying on erudite disciplinary conversations in Sanskrit in a manner that, in the great majority of cases, entailed no reference to any other learning in any other language, as was very much the case for Arabic as well; Persian, too, was growing into this sort of role at this time, though with other capacities and qualities peculiar to it. The question then arises as to whether or how these intellectual cultures could interact or influence one another. To date, as described above, scholarship has been ill-equipped to consider such a question: recent works such as Audrey Truschke's *Culture of Encounters* only considers Sanskrit and Persian to the exclusion of Arabic, while Jonardon Ganeri's ambitious *Lost Age of Reason,* an incisive examination of early modern Sanskrit philosophy, is only able to examine Persian philosophical materials comparatively superficially and in translation (and, again, to the exclusion of Arabic).[74] The perceived "religious divide"—wherein Islamic-studies scholars tend to view Sanskrit as a "Hindu language" outside of their field, and Hindu-studies scholars view Arabic and Persian as "Muslim languages" beyond the scope of their own specialty, however problematically—no doubt contributes to this circumstance. Accordingly, a new framework must be derived to analyze these simultaneous, side-by-side activities of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures.

To describe the life of these three South Asian languages in terms of "intellectual cultures," in my usage, is to envision *networks* of scholars in debate and conversation with one another, often across wide expanses of time and geographical space. Resort to the idea of "networks" is beneficial, as Bruno Latour suggests, because it helps to avoid reifying or ontologizing the historical processes under examination: rather than projecting "Hinduism" or "Islam" as discrete agents unto themselves with the causal power to shape history according to their will, as nationalist historians tend to do, Latour would instead have us observe the specific connections and linkages between concrete people, places/contexts, and discourses.[75] A prominent trend within current "network theory," however—particularly theories building on the influential "rhizome" model of Deleuze and Guattari—sets out to destabilize the very notion that a network possesses any recognizable structure, organizing form, detectable pattern, or center, a suggestion that would undermine my isolation of "language" or "discourse" as discernible

structural features of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures.[76] Caroline Levine's recent intervention, however, cites evidence to the effect that "even apparently chaotic networks depend on surprisingly systematic ordering principles . . . suggest[ing] that we can understand networks as distinct forms—as defined patterns of interconnection and exchange that organize social and aesthetic experience."[77] An issue arises only when scholars seek to isolate a single network as a totality unto itself, which, though analytically "clarifying," fails to understand that "[i]t is the rule, not the exception, to be enmeshed at one and the same time in . . . [multiple] different networks."[78]

Taking and developing this latter cue, this study seeks in turn the "analytical clarity" of examining these three language-bound intellectual cultures in isolation—indeed, at the level of individual figures participating and enmeshed within them—and then the apparent "incoherence" or "messiness" of a site where those intellectual cultures concertedly but unpredictably meet, in this case, the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht.* But what conceptual framework might assist in envisioning how these three intellectual cultures intersect?[79] Prolonging the environmental theme but eschewing the "rhizome" model as too dispersed and unstructured for these particular materials, the far more encompassing analogy of multi-structured "ecologies," as deployed, for instance, by Alexander Beecroft, makes appropriate space for Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures as an assemblage of networks intersecting and interpenetrating with countless other networks possessed of their own myriad structures, shapes, and forms.[80] Just as scores of different patterns and formations—temperature, precipitation, soil quality, organismal life-cycles, food chains, etc.—simultaneously act and interact to form an irreducibly complex ecosystem, a *civilizational* ecology, similarly, encompasses multifarious formations within itself, traversing the linguistic, political, social, economic, religious, cultural, and technological, etc., realms. Intellectual cultures are just one formation (of various possible types) embedded within this civilizational ecology.

For the purposes of this study, I propose that, among the various structures and systems inhabiting the Mughal "ecosystem," one can envision Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures in the form of "jet streams." A jet stream—a band of forceful air currents traversing large regions of the globe—possesses a certain, unmistakable structural integrity of its own, though its precise shape, location, force, direction, etc., is influenced by the other environmental systems that surround and interact with it (temperature, atmospheric pressure, weather fronts, cloud cover, and so forth). This formation, I would suggest, captures the character of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian philosophical cultures rather nicely: the language-bound discussions, debates, and polemics that occur internal to each of these three jet streams possess a certain structural integrity and self-sustaining independence unto themselves—hence the incredible continuity across centuries described above—and yet, concurrent economic, social, political, etc., systems also play roles in shaping the life of each jet stream, influencing who receives patronage, who has

access to education, which cities become centers of which field(s) of learning, etc. The jet stream analogy, I hope, captures the manner in which the integrity of these intellectual cultures is sustained through processes in history, rather than appealing to any ahistorical "essence." Atmospheric jet streams, furthermore, possess considerable internal complexity, with streams routinely splitting into branches and tributaries or even containing currents flowing in the opposite direction from the remainder of the jet stream, all while nevertheless retaining a definite overall direction and orientation (itself subject to more gradual transformations over longer stretches of time). Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian philosophical traditions, analogously, exhibit a great internal diversity of competing schools, sects, and voices vying to out-argue one another, and yet still participating in a shared, discernable "discursive tradition." Additionally, atmospheric jet streams exert a substantial influence over global weather patterns, much as philosophical cultures exert an influence over cultural realms situated well beyond philosophical discourse proper. Most typically, atmospheric jet streams also traverse multiple ecosystems (forests, grasslands, deserts, tundra, etc.) across their considerable extension; the three intellectual cultures in question, similarly, extend well beyond the borders of the Mughal Empire into other regions of South and Southeast Asia, in the case of Sanskrit, and across a vast geographic expanse from North Africa and the Balkans into China and Indonesia, in the case of Arabic and Persian.

Most significant for this study, however, is the atmospheric phenomenon of two jet streams, after meandering into close proximity, proceeding to interact and combine with one another, intermixing wind currents despite otherwise retaining their separate structures over the remainder of the two formations. In this respect, the analogy can provide an useful framework for conceptualizing interactions between Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures, with small currents or even "wisps" of one philosophical jet stream interacting with another and then, potentially, taking on a new life within the newly formed discursive environment.[81] Despite the novel intellectual phenomena that often result from such unexpected moments of cross-philosophical encounter, however, it is important to note that the larger Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian jet streams do not lose their overall, effectively independent structural integrity in the process; quite to the contrary, the three substantial discursive traditions continue to march on largely unaltered, though with a few nascent, innovative philosophical possibilities now sprinkled into the mix. With this framework in mind, accordingly, this study must first trace the contours of the Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian jet streams in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the lens of three leading intellectuals' participation in and contribution to their respective jet streams: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī. Having reconstructed these relevant slices of each jet stream, the stage will be set to illustrate how, through the intellectual efforts of the Hindu and Muslim translators Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra,

and Pānīpatī, elements or "wisps" from each jet stream coalesced in the translation team's interpretation and rendition of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*. This approach to the study of the *Jūg Bāsisht* will thus furnish not only a case study of the interactions between Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures, but also an exemplifying glimpse of the complex ways that early modern Hindu and Muslim intellectuals co-existed, interacted, and comprehended one another's religious and philosophical traditions.

Regarding the first stage of this study—the reconstruction of the thought of Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī as contextualized within their respective intellectual cultures—my approach is perhaps most indebted to the intellectual historian Quentin Skinner,[82] though adapted to the unique challenges posed by the South Asian archive. As Ganeri has observed, while Skinner's "fundamental object of analysis" is, above all, "text in context"—and the attendant recovery of the illocutionary force of the text in light of its context—premodern Indian resources offer decidedly more material on the side of "text," and, often, next to nothing on the side of "context."[83] This is particularly true in the case of Sanskrit authors, for whom we typically possess virtually no reliable biographical records (nor even a decisive estimation of where or when they lived!); contextual information is often rather limited, similarly, in the case of South Asian Arabic- and Persian-writing figures, especially those who conducted their main activities outside of the imperial courts. This means that the "superabundance" of available texts must be mined as thoroughly as possible for the sake of reconstructing context; indeed, the texts themselves must perform a dual function, standing as the primary object of analysis ("text") while also serving as the primary means for situating themselves ("context").[84] A central goal of the coming chapters, accordingly, is to establish Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī's respective intellectual contexts, pursuing which textual traditions or philosophical schools each figure drew from or echoed, against whom each debated, what sort of intellectual "intervention" each sought to enact, etc. Although I attempt, to the extent possible, to plumb any available resources external to the three authors' and their interlocutors' writings, given the nature of the archive, this study has little choice but to lean towards what has been called an "internalist" trajectory of intellectual history.[85] Accordingly, for each of the three thinkers in turn, extant biographical data and a robust-as-possible reconstruction of their sociopolitical contexts will be brought to bear on an examination of their particular compositions, the close reading of which will allow a mapping of the disciplinary conversations and intellectual networks in which each of three scholars participated.

Having laid out Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī's respective intellectual networks and contributions to philosophical discourse, the next task will be to trace the "wisps" from each network/discourse that converge within the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht*. Although Skinner remains the overall model here, the even more

gaping lack of a recoverable context for the translation team's endeavors demands a somewhat more nimble approach. In addition to the acute paucity of even basic biographical information on Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, or Pānīpatī, the internal text of the *Jūg Bāsisht* itself also lacks any genre, set of interlocutors, clearly defined audience (other than "cultured Persian-readers"), or other formal features that might help to specify it. Aside from the general environment of the Mughal court itself, seemingly the best context one can hope to provide is an intertextual one, achieved through tracing features of the *Jūg Bāsisht* that have been borrowed from other, more standard works and genres and then reimagined for the purposes of Sanskrit-to-Persian translation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the result of the translation team's efforts is a creative, unpredictable, and, at times, internally inconsistent Persian treatise, for which reason Skinner—whose method might tend to present too unified and univocal a text with internal tensions and contradictions ironed out—must be supplemented by the likes of a Dominic LaCapra, a consistent champion of the unceasing complexity and indeterminacy of historical works in ways that go far beyond the scholar's capacity to "objectively" reconstruct.[86] Situated somewhere betwixt and between these two historical-methodological poles, I will attempt to use Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī—and the philosophical discursive traditions they represent—to render a plausible reconstruction of the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team's creative Hindu-Muslim intellectual synthesis.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The common thread that anchors this study is an examination of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its early modern interpretations, centered upon the Persian translation of the text, the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Chapter 1 provides an introductory overview of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht.* Chapters 2, 3, and 4 investigate the careers and contributions of the three early modern interpreters of this treatise who are relevant to this study: the Hindu philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and the Muslim thinkers Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī and Mīr Findiriskī, all of whom still largely await in-depth treatment in modern scholarship. The cumulative ground covered by these chapters, in turn, enables a sustained and contextualized examination, in chapter 5, of the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* both as an act of translation and as a venue for the confluence of Hindu and Muslim thought.

Chapter 1 introduces readers to the contexts and content of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* a Sanskrit treatise comprising a series of philosophical narratives and articulating a brand of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the phenomenal world, but who nevertheless continues to live a life within the world. Over the course of the early modern period, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* had become increasingly popular throughout South Asia across a surprising array of Hindu sectarian and linguistic boundaries. The Mughal court was no exception to this

trend, patronizing multiple translations of the treatise. The Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* was the earliest of these translations to be composed, commissioned by the soon-to-be Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) and completed by Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī in 1597. Having reviewed this historical context, the chapter then turns to the Sanskrit source text's metaphysics. Known for articulating a unique variety of Indian non-dualism (distinct from the more famous Advaita Vedānta tradition and owing much to the Kashmiri Śaiva milieu), the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* presents a dynamic divine Reality that is in some respects identical with the phenomenal universe that it manifests, and in other respects totally other than that universe. This metaphysical framework furnishes the underlying basis for the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s pointedly ecumenical approach to religious boundaries, affirming that the various Hindu and Buddhist schools and sects are all actually describing one and the same Reality, even if they disagree with each other over how to designate it. Such pluralistic notions may well be a part of what drew Muslim interest to this treatise in the first place.

Chapter 2 turns to the life and thought of the influential Hindu philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (fl. ca. 1600). As perhaps the most famous representative in his era of the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition—recognized even by the Mughal court as one of the "most learned men of [Emperor] Akbar's time"—Madhusūdana critically engaged a large swath of the Sanskrit intellectual tradition across his various treatises. In the process, he arguably delineated a more sharply demarcated and unified vision of the Hindu/"Vedic" tradition, as distinguished from the "non-Vedic," than had perhaps ever before been articulated; and yet, Madhusūdana's writings hardly acknowledge the existence of Muslims, much less engage Islamic thought in any meaningful way. At the same time, Madhusūdana actively undertook the interpretation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in several of his works, penning pointed exegeses of this treatise on the topics of yogic practice, metaphysics, and the relationship between the individual soul (*jīva*) and divine Reality. This chapter begins to explore how, despite an exclusive interest in Sanskrit thought and the absence of any mention of Islam in his writings, Madhusūdana's philosophical contributions nevertheless found their way into the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*, as the translation team resorted to and incorporated Madhusūdana's exegeses of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into their Persian translation. Of particular interest, apparently, was Madhusūdana's exegesis of a multi-part metaphysical query posed by the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha:* is the phenomenal world the product of a creator who is external to our individual souls (*sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda*), or the product of our own individual perceptions and ignorance (*dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda*)? If the latter, then can those individual souls remain genuinely many, or must they somehow be essentially a single soul (*eka-jīva-vāda*)?

Chapter 3 takes up the Muslim Chishtī Sufi thinker Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (d. 1648). Muḥibb Allāh was one of the foremost authorities of his day in the

tradition of philosophical Sufism known as *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being"), achieving renown to the extent that the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān and Prince Dārā Shikōh repeatedly sought his attendance at the imperial court. Although likely not a direct influence upon the translation team, Muḥibb Allāh's formulations of Sufi metaphysics, I argue, are nevertheless representative of the particular Islamic discourses most central to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* coinciding with the primary Islamic vocabulary to which the translation team would resort in order to render the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into Persian. Accordingly, this chapter surveys a number of Muḥibb Allāh's major writings, focusing in particular on his extended reflections on the phenomenon of religious diversity across the myriad societies and civilizations of humankind. Muḥibb Allāh's framework for conceptualizing religious diversity, I suggest, became the principal overall lens through which the translation team would interpret and categorize the "Indian religion" represented by the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* a thread to be further teased out in chapter 5.

Chapter 4 turns to the Iranian Muslim philosopher Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1641). Findiriskī enjoyed considerable renown in the neighboring Safavid Empire, earning a reputation, even among the Safavid emperors, as a leading expert in the Avicennan tradition of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy. Apart from this success in his native Iranian homeland, however, Findiriskī also undertook several extended journeys into Mughal South Asia, where he came to know of the *Jūg Bāsisht* and, ultimately, composed his own Persian commentary upon it. In this commentary, Findiriskī makes manifold comparisons between Hindu thought and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, drawing equivalences between such central Sanskrit notions as "consciousness" (*cit*) and "mind" (*manas*), on the one hand, and the Islamic "intellect" (*'aql*) and "soul" (*nafs*), on the other. Findiriskī thus helps to illuminate how "wisps" of another robust current of Arabo-Persian Islamic intellectual culture would provide an additional formative layer of the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Additionally, the chapter also explores Findiriskī's fascinating decision to engage and encounter Hindu thought through the medium of poetry and "imagination" (*khayāl*), despite a career otherwise largely focused on philosophical dialectics.

With the pieces provided by these preceding chapters in place, chapter 5 returns to the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* which may now be more effectively contextualized and analyzed as a translational act. Setting specific passages of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* alongside the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* these chapters illustrate how the translation team drew upon these various "wisps" of the Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures examined in chapters 2, 3, and 4: Madhusūdana provides a Hindu metaphysical foundation, alongside his specific interpretations of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*; Muḥibb Allāh instantiates the corresponding Islamic metaphysics most central to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* as well as an Islamic framework for conceptualizing religious diversity; Findiriskī, in his own turn, highlights the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s Peripatetic layers, while affirming the equivalences drawn by the translation

team between Hindu and Muslim philosophical concepts. Through these means, these chapters retrace the creative deployment of these various intellectual resources effected by the translation team, who made inventive use of these scholarly tools, with every technical Sanskrit term that they encountered, in search of a vocabulary with which to render Hindu Sanskrit thought within the language of Arabo-Persian Islamic philosophy. This chapter additionally reconstructs the approach and implicit theory of translation deployed by the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s translation team, who thus succeeded, I argue, in bringing the Hindu and Islamic intellectual traditions into a sort of synthetic "dialogue" with one another.

The conclusion, finally, reflects on what we might learn today, both within South Asia and without, from this historical case study in dialogic translation. I consider in particular what these early modern South Asian materials might contribute to contemporary academic discussions on translation theory, cross-cultural dialogue, and the academic study of religion.

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The *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and Its Persian Translation

This chapter will introduce the contexts and content of the Sanskrit treatise that forms the backbone of this study, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* alongside its early Persian translation, the *Jūg Bāsisht.* The original Sanskrit treatise comprises a series of philosophical narratives that cumulatively articulate a brand of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the phenomenal world, while nevertheless encouraging that aspirant to eschew the option of ascetic renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) in favor of a continued, duty-bound existence within the context of society and householder and family life. Over the course of the early modern period, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* had become increasingly popular throughout South Asia across a surprising array of Hindu sectarian and linguistic boundaries, and the Mughal court too can be counted among the treatise's captivated audiences. Among the multiple translations of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* patronized by the Mughal court, the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* was the earliest to be composed, commissioned by the soon-to-be emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) and completed by the translation team of Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, and Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī in the year 1597.

This chapter will first briefly sketch the history and origins of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as well as the text's basic narrative and philosophical content. So as to set up the line of metaphysical inquiry that will thread throughout this study, I will then contextualize and outline some of the *Laghu*'s foundational metaphysical terms, concepts, and teachings. My overarching objective is to attempt to retrace the intellectual processes by which the translation team of Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī creatively translated these very same metaphysical notions into an Islamic Arabo-Persian philosophical lexicon. Accordingly, this

chapter then turns to a brief overview of the Mughal court's translation enterprise and an introduction to our three intrepid translators. As will be seen, however, precious little can be recovered regarding the biographies of the translation team members, thus prompting the broader methodology for the study of the *Jūg Bāsisht* that characterizes this book, as outlined in the introduction. Finally, this chapter concludes with a somewhat more immediate "taste" of the treatise via a sample narrative from the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* translated alongside its Persian rendition in the *Jūg Bāsisht*.

INTRODUCING THE SANSKRIT TREATISE

The Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (hereafter "*Laghu*") was composed by the Kashmiri *paṇḍit* Gauḍa Abhinanda—of probable Bengali ancestry, based upon his name—likely in the tenth century, though possibly as late as the mid-thirteenth. There has long been considerable disagreement over the dating of the *Laghu,* stemming not only from the pervasive difficulty of establishing absolute dates for Sanskrit materials, but even from an inability to identify which historical "Abhinanda" the author might in fact be. The Abhinanda who authored the *Rāmacarita* seems to be the generally favored option, although another Abhinanda, son of the famous poet and Nyāya-philosopher Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, stands as another possibility, while an otherwise unknown third Abhinanda also cannot be ruled out.[1] It is further worthy of note that the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* itself represents only one node of an especially complicated textual history. The *Laghu*'s origins lie in a tenth-century Kashmiri treatise known as the *Mokṣopāya*.[2] This core *Mokṣopāya* text was then modified in succeeding centuries, with additional textual layers and frame stories affixed to it, gradually altering the treatise's contents in significant ways—most characteristically, domesticating it within a Brahminical or Vedāntic framework while excising several Buddhist features.[3] Although diverse versions, redactions, and recensions abound, rendering any brief statement on the topic decidedly incomplete, it can generally be said that the roughly thirty-thousand-verse *Mokṣopāya* was first abridged and reworked in the form of the *Laghu* ("short") *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* approximately five to six thousand verses in length;[4] a third, distinguishable treatise subsequently appeared, commonly known as the "*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*," roughly comparable in length to the *Mokṣopāya* but in fact a redaction presupposing both the *Mokṣopāya* and the *Laghu* and synthesizing verses, sections, and fragments from the two texts.[5]

This *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* consisting of six books (*prakaraṇas*) and written in an accessible narrative style resembling the Sanskrit epics or *Purāṇas,* tells the tale of the young prince Rāma, identified with the famous Hindu hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa.* Rāma, afflicted with *vairāgya* (dispassion) towards the affairs and things of the world, has lost all taste for kingship and royal duties, much to the dismay of his

father Daśaratha. Eventually, Rāma is led to engage in a lengthy spiritual dialogue with the renowned sage (*ṛṣi*) Vasiṣṭha in an attempt to address the former's mounting despair. After leading Rāma, by means of numerous parables and didactic discussions, through successive levels of instruction in eschewing the ego (*ahaṃkāra*) in pursuit of supreme knowledge (*jñāna*), Vasiṣṭha eventually guides Rāma to a state of liberation (*mokṣa*). However, Vasiṣṭha further convinces Rāma that, rather than withdrawing from the world in the manner of a renunciant ascetic, Rāma should instead return to his worldly royal duties, but remain all the while detached and rooted within this supreme knowledge that grants ultimate liberation from the phenomenal world, even while one still continues to live one's life within the world (a condition known as *jīvanmukti,* "liberation while living"). Within each of the *Laghu*'s six books, Vasiṣṭha offers Rāma a series of scaffolded teachings, delivered via direct instruction, with each teaching immediately followed by a short tale or allegory that illustrates the teaching narratively. These narratives are populated by a wide cast of characters drawn from the copious storehouses of Sanskrit myth, literature, folktale, and scripture.

The *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* is a far-ranging and multifaceted text to which this study can hardly begin to do justice. Within this treatise, Abhinanda engages a broad array of philosophically fertile topics, ranging from the diaphanous relationship between dream and reality, the nature of time and space, and questions of fate, chance, and free will, to varied and potent reflections upon ethics, virtue, desire, self-discipline, and the very reality of consciousness itself. The treatise's literary and aesthetic features are equally fascinating; Vasiṣṭha's narratives "work on" both Rāma and the reader in ways meant to provoke particular affective responses, realizations, and sudden shifts of consciousness and frames of reference. Constantly probing the evanescent line between imagination and reality, the treatise aims to show as much as to tell the profound, oft-unrecognized extents to which the character of life and the world—its joys along with its sorrows; its pleasures and its tribulations—indeed depends upon our own construal, perception, and mental construction of it. Much as in a dream, in "waking life" too we are both the (typically unknowing) creator as well as the participant ensnared within our own imagined worlds, confronted by the urgent and daunting task of waking up when we likely are not even aware that we are asleep.[6] As Wendy Doniger has delightfully described the work, "[i]t is as if someone took the abstract concept 'The universe is illusory' and made it somehow anthropomorphic, producing a kind of teaching device to make us understand what it *feels* like to realize that everything is an illusion."[7] To my great regret, such potent, affective, even existential dimensions of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* unfortunately but unavoidably, lie beyond the scope of this study, while, on the philosophical front, the demands of space and practicality compel me to single out only a few manageable issues. As such, and taking the lead from a number of the Persian materials relevant to the inquiry, this study proposes to focus primarily on the metaphysics of the

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha, with a full awareness of all that gets lost in delimiting the scope of the work thus.

Although many modern scholars, especially Mughal specialists less acquainted with Sanskrit thought, often refer to the *Laghu* as a treatise of "Advaita Vedānta," the text is not at all a seamless fit with this descriptor. While the text undeniably affirms a "non-dual" (the literal meaning of the term "*advaita*") metaphysics, the Sanskrit intellectual tradition is witness to several competing varieties of non-dualism, of which Advaita Vedānta is only one. The earliest and arguably most fundamental layers of the *Laghu,* meanwhile, hail from an alternate provenance, namely, the Kashmiri milieu that gave rise to the original iteration of the text, the *Mokṣopāya.* As such, a number of the *Laghu*'s most basic metaphysical terms and teachings rub against the grain of "mainstream" Advaita Vedānta, while it would take several more centuries before the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* would become a text broadly accepted by Advaita Vedāntins. This absorption of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into the Advaita Vedānta "canon" was accomplished through successive alterations that were introduced into the *Mokṣopāya* text over several centuries, ultimately rendering it into the more "Vedānta-friendly" *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* versions well-known today.[8] Indeed, the original *Mokṣopāya* in many ways railed against the sort of "Brahminical orthodoxy" typically associated with Advaita Vedānta, the early, more "maverick" iterations of the work affirming liberation as available to anyone—even children and those without access to the *śāstras*—provided that one only engage in the proper practice of "rational reflection" or "inquiry" (*vicāra*), depicted as a kind of "*yoga.*" By the time the text had morphed into the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* known to the Mughal court, however, this tone had been noticeably altered, replaced by a more ambivalent stance wherein certain *śāstras* are praised for facilitating liberation while others are criticized for only increasing attachment and bondage to the world. This domestication of the work to Advaita Vedānta was further accomplished through the exegetical efforts of such important later Advaitins as Vidyāraṇya (d. 1386), Prakāśānanda (ca. 1500), Appayya Dīkṣita (d. 1592), and, of course, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, who will be examined in the next chapter.[9] Indeed, by Madhusūdana's time, it appears the text's authority was well-established and seemingly uncontroversial: in the wake of Vidyāraṇya's efforts, for at least a significant enough body of Advaitins, the teachings of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* were widely deemed to be fully consonant with the scholastic Advaita Vedānta tradition that traces its roots back to the founder-figure of Śaṅkarācārya (8th–9th c.), such that Madhusūdana did not need to justify resorting to it as an authoritative text.

Despite this late, eventual embrace of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* on the part of Advaita Vedānta, the two traditions' respective metaphysics present certain clear discrepancies, the harmonization of which is not at all obvious from the outset. Let us take, by way of illustration, one representative, metaphysically-oriented passage from the Sanskrit *Laghu:*

> When, just as the wind enacts the pulsating power of vibration (*spanda-śakti*), the self (*ātman*), entirely on its own, suddenly enacts a power (*śakti*) called "desire/imagination" (*saṃkalpa*), then [this] self of the world, making itself as if in the form of a discrete semblance (*ābhāsa*) that abounds in the drive toward desire/imagination (*saṃkalpa*), becomes mind (*manas*). This world, which is just pure desire/imagination (*saṃkalpa-mātra*), enjoying the condition of being seen (*dṛśya*), is neither real (*satyam*) nor false (*mithyā*), occurring like the snare of a dream.[10]

This passage contains a number of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s most characteristic metaphysical terms and concepts.[11] Distinct from Advaita Vedānta, the *Laghu* erects a metaphysics that is very much its own, not reducible to any one tradition or extant philosophical school. It exhibits an evident philosophical kinship with the non-dualist Śaiva traditions that originally emerged from the same Kashmiri milieu, including the "Spanda," "Trika," and other schools perhaps most famously associated with the figure of Abhinavagupta (d. 1016).[12] It would be simply inaccurate, however, to call the *Laghu* a "Kashmir Śaiva/Trika text," despite the shared, general Kashmiri non-dualist milieu from which both the *Laghu*/*Mokṣopāya* and the Kashmiri Śaiva traditions hail.[13] Whereas Advaita Vedānta steadfastly endeavors to maintain a conception of the ultimate Reality/Self (*brahman*/*ātman*) that is devoid of all change and activity, the non-dualist Kashmir Śaivas, in sharp contrast, wholeheartedly embrace a dynamic, active conception of the Self/absolutely Real. Abhinanda's metaphysics resonates with the latter, as, in the passage above, we observe him attributing to *ātman* a "power" (*śakti*) of "pulsation" or "vibration" (*spanda*), characterizations of the ultimate Reality largely foreign to classical Advaita Vedānta but central to the Kashmir Śaiva systems, the latter of which label this ultimate Reality "Śiva" or "*cit*" (pure consciousness). As Dyczkowski articulates this "doctrine of vibration" within the context of non-dualist Śaiva thought: "[e]very activity in the universe, as well as every perception, notion, sensation or emotion in the microcosm, ebbs and flows as part of the universal rhythm of the one reality . . . Spanda [is] the dynamic, recurrent and creative activity of the absolute."[14] Hence, for these Śaivas of Kashmir, and also for Abhinanda, the entire universe, with all its entities, objects, and events, are vibrations and modifications of a dynamic, infinite, pulsating pure consciousness (variously termed *cit, caitanya, saṃvid,* and so on).

Alongside these features of an undeniably Kashmiri Śaiva provenance, other features of the metaphysics articulated in this passage form a potential bridge with Advaita Vedānta. Abhinanda affirms here, for instance, that the pure Self/consciousness undergoes the *appearance* (*ābhāsa*) of a transformation but without enduring any real transformation, as the power of *ātman*'s pulsation (*spanda*) makes it manifest itself "as if" in a new form or appearance, namely, the objects of the phenomenal world. Now, *ābhāsa* is a term deployed by both non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivas as well as Advaitins, in addition to several other Sanskritic traditions: the Buddhist Yogācāra (and, to a lesser extent, Madhyamaka) schools were perhaps

the first to develop the concept in detail, emphasizing the *ābhāsas* of the world as, in fact, *false* appearances, constructed by the mind (*citta*), which endows them with the semblance of objective substantiality, when in actuality such objects are only "empty" (*śūnya*) or "mind-only" (*citta-mātra*).[15] There can be little doubt that these early Buddhist valences of the term *ābhāsa* persist within the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* literature, which never tires of emphatically affirming the phenomenal world as the construction of our own minds (*manas, citta*) and our cognitive imaginings (*kalpa, saṃkalpa, vikalpa*); indeed, the text explicitly echoes the Buddhist vocabulary of the world as "mind-only" (*manomātra, citta-mātra,*) on repeated occasions. For instance: "whatever arises is [just] the mind, like a city in the clouds.[16] All this that appears, a self-expansion called 'the world' (*jagat*), is no more than error (*bhrānti*);"[17] "this world entire is mind-only (*manomātra*) . . . the mind is the sky, the earth, the wind. Indeed, the mind is great;"[18] "all this is the mind (*manas*) which flashes forth (*sphurati*) within [its] creations (*sṛṣṭi*)."[19]

Similarly, the Advaita Vedānta deployment of *ābhāsa,* as will be seen in greater detail in the next chapter, likewise emphasizes the "appearance" of the world as, indeed, the *false* appearance (*bhrānti*) of an *imagined* world, the product of ignorance (*avidyā*) which possesses no substantial reality of its own. Perhaps the central difference between Buddhist vs. Advaitin usages of the term, however, is that, while Buddhist invocations of *ābhāsa* are primarily intended to provoke a recognition of the ephemeral and mind-dependent nature of phenomenal objects, Advaita adds something further to the account: once phenomenal semblances are recognized as illusory, the ground is cleared for the recognition of an additional entity that *is* ultimately real, "hiding behind" those false appearances the entire time, namely, the pure Self (*ātman*) or absolute Reality (*brahman*).[20] At times, the *Laghu* too inhabits a similar mode, sweeping away the transient and ephemeral to leave only the absolute as remainder, for instance: "all these movable and unmovable things of the world . . . are destroyed as a dream is destroyed in deep, dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*). Then, a certain being remains that is still, deep, neither light nor darkness, all-pervasive, unmanifest, without name. For the practical purposes of speech (*vyavahārārthaṃ*), the name of that exalted self (*ātman*) is imagined by the wise to be 'truth/cosmic order' (*ṛta*), '*ātman*,' 'the Highest,' '*brahman*,' 'reality' (*satyam*), and so forth."[21]

And so, for Advaita Vedānta, the "semblances" (*ābhāsas*) that constitute the objects of the phenomenal world are at best merely conventionally real (*vyāvahārika*), but not ultimately so (*pāramārthika*), *ātman* being the sole ultimate Reality; in several moments, the *Laghu* is happy to more or less echo this account. Furthermore, as will be seen in greater detail in the next chapter, Advaita Vedānta's insistence that the ultimate Reality/Self (*brahman*/*ātman*) is devoid of all change and transformation means that these false semblances of the world cannot be directly grounded in the changeless *brahman*, but rather, must be grounded in "ignorance" (*avidyā*). Now, ignorance is itself only tenuously connected with *brahman*, rather

like light and shadow, light (*brahman*) being that which immediately destroys the shadow of ignorance upon contact. Hence, Advaitins predominantly depict the two as far more opposed than they are related; *ābhāsas,* accordingly, do not really "come from" *brahman*, on this account, but are instead instantiations and products of *brahman*'s opposite, ignorance. For the non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivas, in contrast, the notion of *ābhāsa* is deployed to notably divergent effect: with Kashmiri Śaivas' embrace of an "infinite absolute that manifests itself actively through the finitude and transitoriness of phenomena perpetually changing in consonance with the absolute's activity"—that is, the "pulses" or "vibrations" (*spanda*) of pure Consciousness—the result is a conception of *ābhāsa* "not . . . in the [Advaitin] sense of semblance, but as the manifest form of the absolute," in other words, less like the relationship between light and shadow, and more like the relationship between the sun and the various individual rays spreading forth from it.[22] In this Kashmiri Śaiva view, there is thus a much more pronounced ontological *continuity*—indeed, an identity—between appearance and Reality, an insight the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* literature is all too happy to echo on repeated occasions: "He who regards the multitude of rays as being distinct from the sun, for him, that multitude is indeed as something other than the sun . . . [but] he who regards the rays as being indistinct from the sun, for him, those rays are [the same as] the sun. He (i.e., the latter) is said to be devoid of doubt;"[23] "just as fulsome multiplicity, spreading forth as waves and the like, appears on the fluctuating ocean without being distinct from it . . . in just the same way, this fulsome, multitudinous [world]—which is consciousness-alone and indistinct from it—manifests upon the ocean of consciousness;"[24] "'the world (*jagat*) is, indeed, *brahman*,' in this way, all this [world] is known through the knowledge of reality (*sattva*)."[25] The *Laghu,* accordingly, in some moments inhabits the Advaitin conception of *ābhāsas* as fleetingly unreal like an evanescent dream, and, at other moments, embodies a Kashmir Śaiva-like insistence on world-appearances as the revelatory epiphanies of pure consciousness.

Closely related to the foregoing is another concept prominently featured in the above-translated passage from the *Laghu,* namely, Abhinanda's repeated mentioning of *ātman*'s "*saṃkalpa.*" This term has its origins in the ancient Vedic practice of formulating an "intention" or "determination" to perform a ritual sacrifice for some desired end,[26] and then later captures an Upaniṣadic notion of "intentionality" or "intellection" more generally.[27] *Saṃkalpa* develops by the medieval period into the more generic meanings of a "wish/desire" or "intention," on the one hand, or an instance of "thought," "mental construction," "conceptualization," or "imagination," on the other. In fact, *saṃkalpa,* along with other closely overlapping terms for "mental construction" and "imagination" (*vikalpa, kalpanā,* etc.), are among the most characteristic concepts strung throughout the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,*[28] which depicts a cosmos comprehensively pervaded by imaginations compounded upon imaginations, each of them with the seeming capacity to generate entire worlds and vivid (dream-)realities.[29] Indeed, the very fabric of the "appearances"

(*ābhāsas*) that comprise the cosmos, it seems, is woven of *saṃkalpa* through and through: as the above passage from the *Laghu,* and myriad others, declare, "this world is nothing but *saṃkalpa.*"[30] Much if not most of the time, the *Laghu* develops this theme in ways that would be largely recognizable to the likes of Advaita Vedānta or Buddhist Madhyamaka or Yogācāra, as the treatise works to dramatically illustrate the fundamental ways that our experience of the world is filtered through our own individual *saṃkalpas*—our mental constructs, conceptions, aspirations, inclinations, attachments, aversions, intentions, desires, imaginings, etc.—indeed, filtered to such an extent that the world as we know it, that is, as it is present to our phenomenal cognition, is quite literally our own "imagination" and creation.

But to affirm that this whole world is *only saṃkalpa* is to go a step further, which the *Laghu* does in ways that arguably rub against the grain of Advaita Vedānta and the Buddhist Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions alike. As in the above passage and several others, the *Laghu* resorts to the phrase "*ātman*'s *saṃkalpa,*" suggesting a notion of a foundational ground of pure consciousness (*cit, caitanya, saṃvid*), the pure Self, whose own desires, volition, and imaginations provoke the world's appearance—*saṃkalpa,* thus, goes all the way down, from the most transient and fleeting of external phenomena to the very bedrock of the cosmos. Such a description is ill-fitted to classical Yogācāra and Madhyamaka molds, who, holding to the core teaching of non-selfhood (*an-ātmatva*), are reluctant to admit a self (*ātman*) as the ultimate ground of existence such that could be described as "pure" (*śuddha*), "infinite" (*ananta*), the "highest" (*parama*), or "*brahman*," terms with which the *Laghu,* in contrast, is fully at ease. Even when certain Yogācāra and Madhyamaka traditions do articulate an arguable candidate for a comparable ultimate ground (*āśraya*) of phenomenal existence, such as the notion of the "store consciousness" (*ālayavijñāna*)[31]—or even when, for that matter, exceptional texts such as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-* or *Śrīmālādevī-sūtras* exhibit an unusual Buddhist willingness to describe this ultimate ground, termed *tathāgatagarbha* (Buddha-nature), as, precisely, a "self" (*ātman*)[32]—nevertheless, none of these Buddhist accounts attribute the same sort of creative agency to this ground of being as does the *Laghu:* neither *ālayavijñāna* nor *tathāgatagarbha* are ever characterized by the sort of "volition" and "desire" (*saṃkalpa*) as the *Laghu*'s "*ātman*." Likewise, although Advaita Vedānta, like the *Laghu,* is eager to affirm *ātman* as the ultimate, foundational ground of all reality, the *ātman* of the Advaitins, unlike that of the *Laghu,* is passive, static, and entirely devoid of any quality remotely resembling the "desire" and "volition" encapsulated by the term *saṃkalpa.* Unsurprisingly, *saṃkalpa* is not a feature of Advaita accounts of absolute Reality (*ātman*/*brahman*), for *brahman*, ever changeless and impassive, simply cannot desire anything, while the dynamic process of creation, as already mentioned, takes place effectively external to *brahman* within the domain and operations of *brahman*'s opposite, ignorance (*avidyā*).

Once again, accordingly, it is the non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivas who most closely reflect this central feature of the *Laghu*'s metaphysics. Within the Kashmir Śaiva corpus, the *saṃkalpa* of Śiva/pure consciousness (*caitanya, saṃvid*) is an oft-invoked concept through which to depict the manifestation of the entire cosmos as directed and impelled, solely and comprehensively, by Śiva's divine will and intention.[33] Indeed, in a manner reminiscent of the *Laghu,* these non-dualist Śaiva accounts similarly emphasize *saṃkalpa*'s all-pervasive operation and presence across the entire span of the cosmos, as in Rājanaka Rāma's *Spandavivṛti* commentary upon a foundational text of these traditions, the *Spandakārikās:* "Śiva . . . is the Wheel of Energies consisting of the manifestations of the wonderfully diverse universe sketched out (in this way) by (his own) will alone (*saṃkalpamātra*)."[34] The *Laghu* and non-dualist Śaiva traditions hence share a metaphysical vision of an infinite consciousness rendered overflowing with *saṃkalpa*. At some point, as an intrinsic capacity of itself, it begins to "imagine/conceive" and "desire/intend" (*saṃkalpa*) all of the possible manifestations, modifications, and deployments of its own self. The ocean of consciousness, in other words, "becoming"[35] aware of the infinite *śaktis* ("powers," "potentialities," or "possibilities") contained within itself—like the ocean's power to become waves, foam, clouds, ice, etc.—and desiring or intending to manifest those possibilities, by means of its own inherent power of vibrant pulsation (*spanda*), actualizes those possibilities in the forms and appearances (*ābhāsas*) of the phenomenal world.[36] Significantly for this study, for the Muslims involved in the Mughal translation movement, as will be discussed below, this particular Hindu account of the appearance of the phenomenal universe was considerably more compelling than, for instance, the accounts of classical Advaita Vedānta. A certain resonance between this *Laghu*/non-dualist Śaiva metaphysics, on the one hand, and the *wujūdī* metaphysics of Mughal Muslim thinkers, on the other, may help to explain, in part, the great popularity that the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* enjoyed within early modern Muslim intellectual circles.

And so, there is the "originary" *saṃkalpa* of the foundational *ātman*/pure consciousness, which then drives its self-manifestation as the objects and entities of the phenomenal world; these objects themselves, in turn, also possess their own, individual capacities to impel further *saṃkalpas*, as the *Laghu* passage above informs us. *Ātman* thus first desires/imagines on a cosmic scale—"making itself" (that is, the pure Subject) "as if" other than itself (namely, an object)—and these objects further extend *ātman*'s originary *saṃkalpa* on a more delimited, particular, individual scale.[37] In terms more appropriate to the human scale, then, it is *ātman* who first dreams me into existence through its *saṃkalpa,* and then I, via my own *saṃkalpas* and first-person experiences—and in constant negotiations with the manifest objects around me and my relationships of desire, attraction, aversion, categorization, memory, etc., with them—imagine my own constructed worlds within this larger world, as do each of us. To no longer fall prey to these multiple layers of delusion posed by the complex and misleading appearances of

the phenomenal world, and by our own mistaken conceptions and constructions of them, is known as "liberation" (*mokṣa*), which entails a certain realization of our own identity with pure consciousness,[38] and which is attained, in the case of the *Laghu,* through the method of inquiry, self-reflection, and disciplined practice proffered by the sage Vasiṣṭha. Indeed, the aspirant's identification with pure consciousness can even extend to the universe as a whole, itself a manifestation of the very same consciousness, as the *Laghu* asserts regarding the one who has attained liberation: "'I—stainless, imperishable, free from passions, whose *vāsanās* ("traces" or "impressions"[39]) are stilled—am the all-pervasive consciousness.' Having thought thus, he [the liberated one] does not grieve . . . 'That which is in the tips of the grasses, in the sky, in the sun, and in people, snakes, and gods, I am that.' Having thought thus, he does not grieve anymore."[40]

Despite this close overlap between their metaphysical perspectives, however, one should nevertheless resist the temptation, once again, to equate the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* literature with any other single traditions. There are genuine divergences between the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and the non-dualist Śaiva traditions: the latter, for instance, frequently describe pure consciousness in terms of Śiva and his feminine counterpart, Śakti, while the former, though intermittently employing terminology from a multitude of philosophical traditions, generally favors the terms preferred by Advaita Vedānta, namely, *ātman* and *brahman*.[41] As Phyllis Granoff has observed,[42] furthermore, despite certain (imperfect) similarities in the usage of such technical terms as *spanda,* Kashmir Śaivism is not the only tradition to make use of these terms, while the *Laghu* also omits a great number of the other foundational terms of Trika thought, such as "*vimarśa.*"[43] Indeed, Śaṇkarācārya's Advaitin predecessor, Gauḍapāda (8th c.)—the arguable "true founder" of the Advaita Vedānta tradition—himself employed the term "*spanda*" in an arguably "proto-non-dual Śaiva" way, as exemplified in the fourth chapter of his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā.* From this, some scholars have speculated that the Advaitin Gauḍapāda may in fact be the source of several of the central developments in non-dualist Kashmiri thought, which could, presumably, include texts like the *Mokṣopāya/Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* though the point remains disputed and insufficiently demonstrated to date.[44] Whatever the truth of these speculations may be, there are certain features of the *Laghu*'s unique metaphysics that evince a strong kinship with aspects of Advaita Vedānta, and which thus pose significant divergences from Kashmiri Śaiva thought.

One such divergence occurs at the close of the passage above, where the text returns to a lexicon shared with Advaita Vedānta: in describing the apparent, phenomenal world as "neither real (*satyam*) nor false (*mithyā*)," Abhinanda arguably echoes the Advaita formulation of *anirvacanīya* ("inexpressible," "indescribable," or "undefinable"). The gist of this concept is that the objects of the apparent world are not truly real because they are sublated (whether by simply ceasing to be on account of their transience, or else by the dawning of the correct perception of

reality, which, according to Advaitins, reveals *brahman* alone to be ultimately real); at the same time, the phenomenal world is also not purely illusory, because it is experienced in the course of everyday, conventional existence, and is thus distinguishable from a complete fiction that is never encountered in the world at all, as in the stock examples of a "hare's horn" or the "son of a barren woman" (or, in terms nearer to the Western philosophical canon, a "square circle"). The term "inexpressible" (*anirvacanīya*) is meant to capture this ambiguous "middle ground," that is, objects which possess a "conventional" (*vyāvahārika*) reality, but are neither ultimately real like *brahman* nor a complete and utter falsehood.[45] The non-dualist Śaiva traditions are not keen on this formulation, having little need for such a resort to inscrutability when, within their metaphysics, the phenomenal world is readily and fully explicable as the pulsating manifestation of pure consciousness.[46] The *Laghu,* however, as we have seen above, alternates between affirmations of the phenomenal world as illusory in the manner of an ephemeral dream, on the one hand, and declarations of the cosmos's essential identity with pure consciousness, on the other. Within such a spectrum, an appeal to the ambiguity of *anirvacanīya* is befitting and effectively supports the overall perspective quite soundly, as, for Abhinanda, the phenomenal world can genuinely be said to be neither real nor unreal. Indeed, the capacious metaphysics of the *Laghu* allows equally well for the converse formulation, namely, that the universe is *both* real and unreal simultaneously, much as the wave, the drop, and the foam both are and are not the ocean at one and the same time. These formulations, once again, though drawing synthetically on the vocabulary of multiple established philosophical schools, presents a metaphysics that is peculiar to the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* alone.

On another point of ambiguity, we should briefly take note of an additional equivocality that accompanies the *Laghu*'s presentation of its metaphysics and cosmology. On repeated occasions (including, partially, in the passage above), Abhinanda lays out the basic stages of his cosmogony. Starting with *brahman*/*ātman*, having harnessed its power of *saṃkalpa, brahman* effects a sequence of successively lower states and manifestations that could be considered a pared-down, reworked cosmology from the Sanskrit Sāṃkhya tradition, although rejecting the *puruṣa-prakṛti* dualism of Sāṃkhya in favor of its own peculiar non-dualism. Even though the *Laghu* varies the ordering between different passages, the overall sequence is one of *brahman* descending into the state of the soul (*jīva*), the intellect (*buddhi*), the "ego" or "I-sense" (*ahaṃkāra*), and the mind (*manas* or *citta*), with other, more minor manifestations sometimes enumerated thereafter, including the sense-faculties (*indriyas*) and/or the five elements (*mahābhūtas*). While ostensibly a depiction of the process of the unfolding of creation, as with many topics in the *Laghu,* these passages carry within them an in-built ambiguity: not only will the sequence of descents sometimes vary slightly from passage to passage, but it is also often not entirely clear if Abhinanda is describing the unfolding of the cosmos, or else the unfolding of the faculties and components of the human individual, or, perhaps,

somehow both at the same time. As in the passage above, for instance, when we are often told that "*ātman* becomes *manas* (mind)," it remains ambiguous whether the *manas* being referred to is an individual human mind or else a universal cosmological entity, the "cosmic mind," so to speak, or "*brahman*'s mind." The two commentators on the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* who accompany the printed Sanskrit edition, Ātmasukha and Mummaḍideva,[47] with whom the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team was almost certainly familiar, sometimes work to iron out such ambiguities, forcing the text into one perspective or the other within a given passage. This ambiguity has additionally led to competing interpretations of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, as in the Advaitin Prakāśānanda's (ca. 1500) derivation from the treatise of a thoroughgoing form of individual, subjective idealism largely unprecedented in the Advaita tradition, wherein the entirety of the phenomenal world is regarded as the creation of the individual mind/soul (*manas/jīva*) alone.[48] Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, as will be outlined in the next chapter, endeavors to make space for both the "individual *manas*" and the "cosmic *manas*" readings, a line of exegesis that, I will argue, would go on to exert some influence over the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team, to whose members we will turn presently. Before this, however, one final implication of the *Laghu*'s metaphysical vision must be considered.

In addition to the bricolage of diverse philosophical materials and traditions that Abhinanda quietly and synthetically interweaves within his treatise, at several points throughout the *Laghu,* one additionally encounters the self-reflexive and explicit assertion that all of these distinct, and even competing, philosophical and theological schools are teaching one and the same truth or reality in their own ways, though utilizing their own distinctive vocabularies. I have already quoted one of these passages above: "[there is] a certain being . . . that is still, deep, neither light nor darkness, all-pervasive, unmanifest, without name. For the practical purposes of speech (*vyavahārārthaṃ*), the name of that exalted self (*ātman*) is imagined by the wise to be 'truth/cosmic order' (*ṛta*), '*ātman*,' 'the Highest' (*para*), '*brahman*,' 'reality' (*satyam*), and so forth."[49] Aside from these particular terms for ultimate Reality, all of which are routinely deployed in various Hindu contexts, the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* also extends the references into the realm of Buddhist (and even Jain and Cārvāka Materialist) thought:

> This [consciousness (*cit*)] which eludes positive designation, and which is not within the range of words . . . is what is *śūnya* ("emptiness") to the [Buddhist] proponents of *śūnya* (i.e., Madhyamaka practitioners), the most excellent *brahman* among the [Vedāntin] knowers of *brahman* (*brahmavid*), that which is "consciousness-only" (*vijñāna-mātra*) to the knowers of *vijñāna* (i.e., Yogācāra Buddhists), *puruṣa* for those who hold the Sāṃkhya view, the Lord (*īśvara*) for the teachers of Yoga, [and] Śiva for the Śaivas.[50]

Since the *Laghu* is a work of narrative "wisdom" rather than a systematic dialectical treatise, Abhinanda is never compelled to think through or work out the

philosophical implications of statements such as these. As such, it is difficult to know what exactly to take away from Abhinanda's affirmations to this effect. On the one hand, they do lend to the *Laghu* a pronounced ecumenical air, of sorts, suggesting the possibility that divergent religious traditions all offer different paths to the same goal. Slaje, on the other hand, is keen to point out the various ways that the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* elevates its own metaphysical view over those of other traditions, the text at one point claiming for itself the title of the "final position [encompassing the] positions of all [the other *Śāstras*]" (or else the "final position of the final positions of all [the other *Śāstras*]") (*sarva-siddhānta-siddhānta*);[51] I would only add that this latter observation is not necessarily incompatible with the former. The notion of *saṃkalpa* once again becomes relevant in this regard, as the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* at numerous points suggests that the primary reason for the divergent views and terminologies of different thinkers and philosophical traditions is that they imbue their terms with "meanings based on [the limitations of] their own imagination (*saṃkalpa*)," or else, "hav[ing] not [yet] reached perfect knowledge," they "base their dispute on appearances [produced by their] own imagination (*sva-vikalpa*)."[52]

Irrespective of the limited conclusions we are able to draw from these relatively isolated statements, a few overall tendencies are clear. On the one hand, despite whatever "ecumenism" Abhinanda may or may not have intended from assertions like these, the *Laghu* is not an "anything goes" kind of text: it has a clear metaphysical and soteriological vision, and a distinctive, consistent notion of truth and falsehood, which somehow coexists with these affirmations of the legitimacy of other philosophical traditions and lexicons. This metaphysical perspective, as noted above, likely resonated with the *wujūdī* inclinations of many early modern Muslim thinkers within (and without) the Mughal court. On the other hand, the *Laghu*'s overall sympathy for *some* iteration of an idea of "multiple articulations of a shared, universal truth"—even if ultimately, perhaps, a supersessionist one—likely also resonated with certain political goals and interests of the Mughal court, as exhibited in initiatives like the Mughal translation movement, to which I now direct my attention. As shall be seen in chapter 5, however, even the *Laghu*'s inchoate ecumenism bears certain arguable complementarities with the framework for conceptualizing religious diversity that prevails within the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* and hence may well be a part of what drew Muslim interest to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the first place.

THE MUGHAL "TRANSLATION MOVEMENT" AND THE *LAGHU-YOGA-VĀSIṢṬHA*

The first two emperors of the Mughal Empire in India, Bābur (r. 1526–30) and Humāyūn (r. 1530–40 and 1555–56), legitimized their rule primarily with

reference to their noble Central Asian lineage, never making much attempt to establish local foundations for their authority. In contrast, the third emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605)—perhaps not-so-incidentally, the first Mughal ruler to be born in South Asia—made much more extensive efforts to fashion the Mughal territory as a decidedly *Indian* empire, thus requiring the involvement and support of the myriad religious and ethnic groups under his rule across the diverse subcontinent. Such a policy, many have argued, was Akbar's best choice for continued governance in the midst of the overwhelmingly non-Muslim population of South Asia.[53] As part of his "inclusivistic" refashioning of the empire, while simultaneously seeking to cultivate for the Mughals the image of a relevant, cultured civilization in the eyes of the other major empires stretched across the known world, Akbar decided, in the year 1582, to abandon Chaghatāy Turkish and adopt Persian as the official administrative language of the empire. Akbar backed up this decision with lavish patronage to Persian scholarship and literature, including the translation of numerous Indian Sanskrit texts into the Persian language. Thus was begun the Mughal "translation movement," that is, the sustained effort, on the part of the Mughal court, to facilitate the Persian translation of Sanskrit texts.[54]

This movement is fairly well-documented in modern scholarship in its bibliographic details, though still in its infancy at the level of close textual analysis. Starting with the reign of Emperor Akbar and continuing through to the period of Prince Dārā Shikōh (d. 1659), Mughal nobles patronized and facilitated the translation of the *Atharva Veda,* various *Upaniṣads,* the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavad-Gītā,* a number of the *Purāṇas*, and numerous other Sanskrit works into Persian. These translations were typically produced by teams of Persian-speaking Muslim courtier-scholars with the assistance of Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, the two groups communicating with one another through some form of a Hindavī vernacular. One such translation, initiated at the request of Prince Salīm (soon to be Emperor Jahāngīr, r. 1605–27), was the Persian rendition of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* the "*Jūg Bāsisht,*" completed in 1597 by the Muslim courtier Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī (d. 1609–10) and two Hindu Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī. Subsequently, around the year 1611, the Persian-writing Iranian philosopher Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1640–41), having made several journeys to India from his homeland of Safavid Persia, began to cut-and-paste his own condensed version of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* entitling his abridgment the *Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsisht* ("Selections from the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*"); Findiriskī also composed a commentary on the full text of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* known as the *Sharḥ-i Jūg.* Both of Findiriskī's texts will be considered in chapter 4.

Indeed, by the sixteenth century, *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* literature enjoyed an immense popularity across an impressive array of Hindu sectarian, geographical, and linguistic boundaries. Aside from the *Mokṣopāya*'s continued historical presence in

Kashmir, manuscript findings demonstrate the *Laghu*'s prevalence from India's southern tip to as far north as Delhi and Banaras, with the larger *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* boasting a distribution that extended even further north back into the Kashmir Valley.[55] Hence, from the north of Kashmir to central Maharashtra to the southern regions of Tamil Nadu, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotees and impersonalist Advaitins alike had embraced the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in varied ways, even rendering the text into several vernacular languages in the process of incorporating it into their diverse regional traditions.[56] The Muslims of the medieval and early modern periods were no exception to this trend, taking interest in the treatise and translating it numerous times for their own purposes. The pre-Mughal Kashmiri sultans Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (r. 1423–70) and Ḥaydar Shāh (r. 1470–72), for instance, are reported to have sat in the audience of the Sanskrit litterateur Śrīvara's (d. ca. 1486) recitations of the *Mokṣopāya/Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.*[57] The Mughals, of course, later produced numerous Persian renditions, including, in addition to the *Jūg Bāsisht* (1597), another Akbar-era *Laghu* translation (1602) by a scholar named Farmulī, who identifies himself only as "the lowliest disciple" of the famous *sant* poet Kabīr (d. 1518); the later translation commissioned by Prince Dārā Shikōh in the year 1656 after witnessing Vasiṣṭha and Rāma in a dream;[58] the rendition of the mysterious Shaykh Ṣūfī Sharīf Qubjahānī, likely based not on the *Laghu,* but on an even shorter Sanskrit abridgment known as the *Yogavāsiṣṭha-sāra*;[59] the Maharashtrian, Banaras-based Brahmin *paṇḍit* of the Mughal court Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī's Hindavī translation of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha-sāra,* dated ca. 1656; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī's (d. 1683) Persian work, the "Mirror of Creation" (*Mirʾāt al-makhlūqāt*), loosely inspired by the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* among other Sanskrit works;[60] and several other Persian works based on, reworking, or inspired in some way by the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* Fatḥollāh Mojtabāʾī, in his own admittedly incomplete survey of Persian manuscripts related to the *Laghu,* lists at least ten renditions produced at the Mughal court, not to mention the several *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*-related works produced independently of court patronage.[61]

At the very beginning stages of this chain of scholarship, thus, stands the Mughal prince Salīm, the soon-to-be-emperor Jahāngīr, whom Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī describes as the facilitator of this early Persian translation of the (*Laghu*-) *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*:

> When expert Arabic linguists, specialists in the different sciences, connoisseurs of the arts of poetry and prose, historians, and Indian *paṇḍits* entered [into] the noble presence [of Prince Salīm] . . . [at that time,] the *Maṣnavī* of Mawlana Rumi, the *Ẓafarnāmah* [history of Tamerlane], the memoirs of Babur, other written histories, and collections of stories were read out in turn. Stories containing morals and advice were conveyed to the august hearing [of the prince]. In these days, the prince commanded that the book *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, which contains Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) and provides commentary on realities, diverse morals, and remarkable advice, and which is one of the famous books of the Brahmins of India, should be translated from the Sanskrit language into Persian.[62]

And so, as Ernst observes, a translation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* was commissioned "as part of the encyclopedic collection of edifying literature initiated by Akbar."[63] By the year 1597, the three commissioned translators, Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, had completed their Persian translation of the entire Sanskrit treatise, some fifteen years after which Mīr Findiriskī, having migrated from Safavid Persia and spending considerable time in various parts of India, condensed this translation into his own shorter Persian rendition of the Sanskrit text, the aforementioned *Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsisht.* For these and most of the translations undertaken by the Mughals, the Sanskrit source text was a version of the treatise that we could recognizably call the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* which must have been circulating through the networks and circles connected with the Mughal court at this time. Since the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* is not a literal, word-for-word rendition, we cannot be certain, with philological exactitude, precisely how closely the version(s) known to the Mughals correspond with the printed edition as we know it today. In a general sense, however, we can say that, so far as can be determined through a textual comparison of the modern printed *Laghu* and the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* the version of the *Laghu* Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī used appears to be in overall close accordance with the modern printed Motilal Banarsidass *Laghu,* as the sequences of vocabulary, teachings, and narrative tales line up quite consistently. As such, I will use the printed edition of the *Laghu* for my present analysis, even though we cannot rule out some variations between this edition and the translation team's copy.

Unsurprisingly, this phenomenon of Mughal translations of Sanskrit texts has long captured the attention of modern scholars. In previous decades of scholarship, one can readily discern an attraction—or revulsion, as the case may be—to the notion that the pre-modern Muslims of Mughal South Asia might have exerted such great efforts to comprehend Hinduism, and thus manifested an admirably liberal, tolerant attitude toward their Hindu brethren. Anticipating the partition of South Asia into modern-day Pakistan and India, such scholars are quick to affirm, as outlined in the introduction, that two broad trajectories characterized the Mughal period: the forces of rigid Islamic orthodoxy, on the one hand, and the spirit of universal tolerance, on the other, of which the translation movement is regarded as one of the grandest expressions. We have already observed how certain more recent scholars have sought correctives for such anachronistic, nationalist histories, as witnessed, for instance, in Carl Ernst's interventions:

> The political context for the Mughal interest in Sanskrit lies in the imperial program devised by Akbar and followed in varying degrees by his successors. Although earlier writers on the Mughals have treated this interest primarily as an indication of liberal personal religious inclinations on the part of Akbar, this romantic conception should yield to a more realistic analysis of policy aspects.[64]

Accordingly, current approaches to Mughal studies tend to situate the translation movement more closely within its historical, political, and social context. John Richards and Muzaffar Alam, for instance, have analyzed the Mughal interest in Sanskrit as an imperial attempt to establish local Indian credentials and legitimacy for the dynasty, on the one hand, and to develop new models of practical governance that drew on indigenous Sanskrit theories of rulership, on the other.[65] For all appearances, the Mughal rulers' choice of the *Laghu* for translation into Persian fits very well with Richards's and Alam's analyses of the translation movement: the *Laghu,* besides being a popular South Asian work, also contains a great deal of commentary on the nature and qualities of the ideal king. Its translation could thus serve the double purpose of broadening the appeal of the Mughal court among indigenous Indian peoples, while also providing a rich resource for native South Asian theories of good governance.

Such interventions have provided vital correctives for how scholarship on the Mughal period has been conducted: without doubt, imperial political motives and pragmatic considerations for successful rulership in a religiously and ethnically diverse empire played centrally determinative roles within the translation movement. Yet such approaches nonetheless tend to overlook any more prevailingly *philosophical* motivations that may have simultaneously driven the Mughal translation enterprise. Hence, even though modern scholars have long observed that the primary resource for Persian translators rendering Sanskrit materials into Persian was the technical vocabulary of Sufism, drawing in particular from the *wujūdī* tradition associated with Ibn ʿArabī and from the corpus of classical Persian Sufi poetry,[66] most scholars have remained largely content with simply noting this, or else regarding it through a lens of Mughal political self-fashioning without considering the philosophical content at any great length. This study, accordingly, aims to dwell precisely on that philosophical content—without pretending, of course, that it somehow constitutes an isolated space free from the broader politics of the court.

To turn, then, to the *Jūg Bāsisht* and the translation team of Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra, and Paṭhān Miśra: although it would have been ideal, for the purposes of this project, to contextualize these three translators within their respective socio-political and intellectual worlds, to examine their other writings, to retrace their networks, etc., this task, alas, is thwarted by the paucity of available materials related to any one of them. Hardly anything is known about the three translators of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* and so our only recourse is to scrutinize their translation in an attempt to recover whatever we can about them. Aside from the general environment of the Mughal court itself, seemingly the best context one can hope to provide for the translation team is intertextual, achieved through tracing features of the *Jūg Bāsisht* that betray a recognizable influence or inheritance from some other known source.

THE *JŪG BĀSISHT* TRANSLATION TEAM

The Muslim Persianist on the team of the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s translators, Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī (d. 1609–10), is, unfortunately, not a very well-known figure. Though he garners passing mention in a few biographical compendiums (*taẕkirahs*), these passages relate little more than his date, his translation of the *Laghu,* and the fact that he was employed at the Mughal court.[67] We may gather from his name that his family hails from the city of Panipat (modern-day Haryana, India). Assuming that the descriptions of the ways these translations were brought about is correct—Findiriskī, for instance, says that the *paṇḍits* would first translate the Sanskrit passage into a Hindavī vernacular, at which point the Persianist would render the Hindavī into Persian—we can guess that Pānīpatī likely did not himself know Sanskrit. Accordingly, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra would have supplied an oral, Hindavī vernacular rendition of the Sanskrit *Laghu,* at which point Pānīpatī would presumably have taken over to supply the final Persian textual product. Knowing so little about the members of the translation team, however, one might remain open to the possibility that Pānīpatī may have had some knowledge of Sanskrit, or else, in a less improbable scenario, perhaps Jagannātha Miśra or Paṭhān Miśra possessed enough proficiency in Persian to contribute directly to the final Persian rendition of the text. Based upon a number of descriptions of the translation process, however, it seems more likely that Pānīpatī was the sole direct author of the final Persian text, though produced in back-and-forth conversation with the two Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, whose "fingerprints" can be carefully gleaned from the Persian text, as I will argue in subsequent chapters.

As for the first of the two Hindu Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, the record is similarly scant. Even his name, "Jājīpūrī," which appears within the opening pages of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* is obscure: the most likely guess would connect him with the temple-town of Jajpur/Jajipur in modern-day Odisha—sometimes referred to as "Yajyapūra"—or else, following a variant in one of the manuscripts, his name could instead be rendered as "Jaypūrī," a possible referent to the city of Jaipur, Rajasthan (or, again, potentially, to another historical Odishan region, Jeypore).[68] The question of his ancestral geography aside, Paṭhān Miśra is likely also mentioned in the *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī,* a record of the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr's (r. 1605–27) varied discussions with a broad spectrum of religious scholars, ranging from Hindu Brahmins and Muslim thinkers to Jewish and Jesuit intellectuals. Among these records, we find a debate between a Brahmin figure named Paṭhān Miśra and a second Brahmin hailing from Gujarat regarding a particular question of Hindu dietary law and ritual impurity, with Emperor Jahāngīr on hand to witness the debate; according to Lefèvre, another figure identified as "Thayān Miśra" in Jahāngīr's memoirs (the *Jahāngīr-nāmah*) might also be Paṭhān Miśra.[69] Such references help to establish Paṭhān Miśra's continued presence at the Mughal court

even into the seventeenth century, as well as his possession of some of the standard knowledge expected of a Hindu Brahmin, though little more than this. While we can, again, assume that he likely did not know Persian, one can hope that future research might bring more information to light.

The second Sanskrit translator, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, in turn, might provide a more interesting case. Although I have not been able to find any historical references to the name "Jagannātha Miśra" other than in the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s preface,[70] another similar name, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, echoes rather prominently throughout the historical record. Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja was a Sanskrit intellectual, poet, and Hindi musician patronized by Emperor Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–58) for a variety of projects, and also, perhaps, the last scholar to compose a significant work in the classical mold of Sanskrit aesthetic theory, *alaṃkāraśāstra*.[71] Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja is known to have received traditional training in the discipline of Nyāya, while he also spent significant time studying with *paṇḍits* in Banaras (hence, potentially, the "Banārasī" portion of his name) at a time when an elder Madhusūdana Sarasvatī might still have been resident there.[72] Indeed, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja sharply criticized Madhusūdana's contemporary and fellow Advaitin, Appayya Dīkṣita, on topics related to Sanskrit aesthetic theory,[73] and was also personally acquainted with a number of other well-known Banaras Advaitins, including his preceptor in Sanskrit grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), Vīreśvara.[74] Through such acquaintances and studentships, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, like the aforementioned courtier-*paṇḍit* Kavīndrācārya, could well have served as a transmitter of contemporary developments in Advaitin thought to the Mughal court. Nevertheless, given the relatively late dates of Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja's well-recorded years at the Mughal court—commencing around the year 1628—it seems unlikely that he could have been involved in a translation completed thirty-one years prior (1597). If this possibility is rejected, then, the identity of our second Sanskrit translator, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, will have to remain a mystery for the moment. His name can only tell us his association with Banaras, which would, again, render him a feasible channel for the transmission of the sort of Advaitin learning represented by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī into the jet streams crisscrossing the Mughal court.

Faced with this dearth of specific data and context for the translation team, we must resort to other means in order to gain analytical traction. Accordingly, this study proposes to envision the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a meeting-point of the Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian jet streams. As trained *paṇḍits*, particularly with some connection to Advaita Vedānta-dominated Banaras, Paṭhān Miśra and Jagannātha Miśra would have brought their early modern Sanskrit learning to bear upon their reading, interpretation, and translation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* In particular, as I will argue over the course of the subsequent chapters, these two Sanskrit *paṇḍits* exhibit within the *Jūg Bāsisht* their acquaintance with particular

debates and discussions then occurring within Sanskrit Advaitin circles, especially on the topics of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* ("creation-as-seeing") and *eka-jīva-vāda* ("doctrine of one soul") as discussed and debated by Advaitin thinkers like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

At the same time, the Islamic philosophical terms and concepts creatively deployed throughout the *Jūg Bāsisht* evince the Muslim translator Niẓām al-Dīn Panīpatī's scholarly learning in the Arabo-Persian world of Islamic philosophy and *wujūdī* metaphysics, as represented by such Muslim thinkers as Mīr Findiriskī and Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī. Even a taste from the opening passage from the Persian text of the *Jūg Bāsisht* may suffice to illustrate this latter point:

> The Brahmins of India possess the religious path (*maẕhab*) of the **ancient sages** (***ḥukamā-i mutaqaddimīn***, i.e., the ancient Greek philosophers) concerning the **oneness of the essence of the Real** (***waḥdat-i ẕāt-i ḥaqq***)—may He be praised and exalted—and concerning the **qualities** (***ṣifāt***) of His **perfection** (***kamāl***), **the levels of His descents** (***marātib-i tanazzulāt-i ū***) [into the world], the origin of **multiplicity** (***kaṣrat***), and the **manifestation of the worlds** (***paydā'ī-i 'ālam o 'ālamīn***). If any distinction (*tafāvut*) should obtain [between the Brahmins and the ancient sages], it would only be with respect to terminology (*iṣṭilāḥ*) and language (*zabān*).[75]

In just this opening paragraph of the text, we encounter an abundance of technical terminology (in bold) drawn from the *wujūdī* tradition of philosophical Sufism; with the opening reference to the philosophers of ancient Greece—referring primarily to Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonic tradition—we also see a foretaste of the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s second main philosophical influence, namely, the tradition of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy. To understand what these terms might have meant to a translator like Pānīpatī, and hence to have some sense of the conceptual starting-points from which he would creatively deploy these same terms for the innovative purposes of translation, requires a deeper knowledge of the broader, contemporaneous intellectual circles in which Pānīpatī himself would have studied and participated. Accordingly, the next three chapters will reconstruct relevant slices of the Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian jet streams as instantiated in the careers and contributions of three important philosophers roughly contemporaneous with the translation of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī. Subsequently, we will then be able to return to passages of the sort seen here, better equipped to identify the jet stream "currents" and "wisps" that comprise the philosophical fabric of this Persian treatise.

A "TASTE" OF THE PERSIAN TEXT

Before bringing this chapter to a close and proceeding to our examination of these three philosophers, it will be useful for the reader to have a slightly fuller exposure

to the Persian text. A small "taste"—what is called the "*ẕawq*" in Persian or the "*rasa*" in Sanskrit—of the character, texture, and "flavor" of the *Jūg Bāsisht* will provide the reader with some additional orientation for the analysis to follow. Accordingly, I translate here some additional material from the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s opening pages. I provide only minimal annotations at this stage, as we will return to the same passage in chapter 5, at that time better equipped to grasp its nuances. For the time being, the reader should take from this passage what she will as we dive deeper into the relevant philosophical worlds over the course of the next several chapters:

> The Kashmiri *paṇḍit* Abhinanda, who is the author of the text of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (*Jūg Bāsisht*), at the commencement of this abridgment,[76] leads off with the name of God and praises for the Creator (most high).
>
> It should be known that the names (*nāmhā*) of the Real (most high) have no end or limit. Every one of the great *ṛṣis* and the seekers of the Real (*ṭālibān-i rāh-i ḥaqq*) has chosen one of His names, which are in accordance with the *avatāras* and are the manifestations (*tajallīyāt*) of the levels of His self-disclosure . . . Those [*ṛṣis* and seekers] remember (*yād*) their [chosen] name much.[77] They seek, by means of that name, a generous emanation (*fayż*) from Him who is the origin of [all] emanation.[78]
>
> The mode of the *avatāra* is laid out in the revered books (*kutub*) of the people of India. Most Indians believe that the lifetime of the world is divided into four portions (*ḥiṣṣah*), each portion being called a "*jug*" (Skt., *yuga*). Each *yuga* is distinguished by its own particular qualities and features . . . After the passing of the four *yugas,* there occurs the "*pralaya*"—that is, the Day of Resurrection (*qiyāmat*)—when all the existents (*mawjūdāt*) of the world go to nothingness (*ʿadam*), [etc.] . . .
>
> They say that, in these four *yugas,* that absolute Being (*hastī-i muṭlaq*) and Light (*nūr*) of the unseen (*ghayb*), for the sake of improving the condition of the people of the world, out of its own will and generosity, manifests [itself] in the world through a special manifestation (*maẓhar-i khāṣṣ*) (i.e., an *avatāra*).[79]

As for the body of the text, I present here one of the narratives from the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* known as the story of the *bāla* or "young child," hailing from the *Laghu*'s third book, the *Utpatti Prakaraṇa.* I translate the original Sanskrit version in the left column, with the corresponding Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* passage translated on the right. The treatise being so multi-textured, it is difficult to define, in the case of the *Laghu,* what would count as a "typical" or "representative" narrative: this particular tale is certainly on the shorter side, and also more comically "absurdist," I would say, than most of the *Laghu*'s other content. This story of the young child thus humorously and memorably exemplifies the particular philosophical lesson that Vasiṣṭha articulates to Rāma in the first portion of the chapter, while touching upon many of the themes concerning *saṃkalpa, manas,* and the world's reality/illusion that were examined above. Again, a fuller appreciation of this Sanskrit narrative and its Persian translation must await the latter stages of this study, but a "taste" from now will help orient the reader for the chapters to come.

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Utpatti Prakaraṇa*)
(3:7:1–27; pp. 228–233)

Vasiṣṭha said:

O Rāma, the mind (*manas*) of those who are wise is nothing other than that very *brahman.* All *śaktis* (potencies) are that highest *brahman,* imperishable (*avyaya*), eternal (*nitya*), ever-full (*āpūrṇa*[80]).

Naught exists which is not within that pervading self (*ātman*). The self shines forth (*ullasati*) by means of that *śakti,* attaining manifestation (*prakāśa*).

Brahman's consciousness-*śakti* (*cid-śakti*), O Rāma, is grasped within bodies, its vibration-*śakti* (*spandaśakti*) within the wind, its strength-*śakti* (*dārḍhyaśakti*), likewise, within stone.

Its moisture-*śakti* within the waters, its heat-*śakti*, in turn, within fire; its emptiness-*śakti* (*śūnyaśakti*), likewise, in the ether (*ākāśa*), its destruction-*śakti* within [all] things perishable (*vināśin*).

Jūg Bāsisht (Nā'īnī and Shuklā)
(Pp. 108–110)

Again Basisht (Vasiṣṭha) said . . . :

These existents (*mawjūdāt*) of the world (*'ālam*), of variegated forms (*ṣūrat*) and multifarious figures (*shakl*): whatever conditions (*aḥvāl*) might befall them—whether living or dying, joy or sorrow, coming or going, good or evil—all those are forms (*ṣūrat*) of the imagination (*khayāl*) and thought (*andīshah*). It is only the *man* (*manas*)—that is, spiritual imagination (*khayāl-i rūḥānī*)—that has any claim over that [state of affairs] . . .

O Rāmchand (Rāma)! The *manas* of those who have become knowing (*gyānī*, Sanskrit *jñānin*) and complete (*kāmil*) is *barahm* (*brahman*).

And this knowledge-*śakti* (*gyānshakt*, Sanskrit *jñānaśakti*)—that is, pondering (*andīshah*) the bodies of each individual—is from *brahman.* Just like the force (*quwwatī*) and brisk vigor (*ravānī*) in the wind, all that is from *brahman.*

The ground (*zamīn*), which has been made flat and spread out upon the waters, and all living, animate creatures (*makhlūqāt*)—they all appear in and upon that [*śakti*], which [also] expunges them. All that is from the strength (*quwwat*) and power (*qudrat*) of *brahman.*

Likewise, the limpidity (*ṣafā*), fluidity (*ravānī*), and digestive properties that exist in water (*āb*) are from *brahman.* The penetrating burning and furious annihilation (*nābūd kardan*) of all things that exist in fire (*ātish*) are from *brahman.* And the *sūn-shakt* (*śūnyaśakti*) also that is in the ether (*ākās*, Sanskrit *ākāśa*)—which is subtle (*laṭīf*) and transcends (*munazzih*) all things and relations (*nisbat*)—is from *brahman.*

Just as *kuśa* grass is [latent] within the water inside of the seed, in the same way, all things—possessed of [variegated] roots, sprouts, branches, flowers, vines, leaves, and fruits—are within *ātman.* Like the tree in the seed, this [world] abides in *brahman.*
In any place, at any time, the *śaktis* arise from it (*brahman*), like grains of rice rising from the earth's surface, variegated in time and space.

That *ātman,* O Rāma, pervading all, of great, exalted, eternal, beauty—when it assumes the *śakti* of cogitation (*manana*) in even the slightest degree, then it is called "*manas*" (mind).

Thereafter, at first, "mind" becomes [just] the awareness (*dṛṣṭi*) of bondage and liberation; afterwards, it becomes the array (*racanā*) of physical manifestation (*prapañca*) known as the "earth" (*bhuvana*). Thus, this latter state of affairs, [seemingly] possessed of enduring stability, is [really just] a tale told to a beloved boy.

Blessed Rāma said:

O best of sages, what is the children's tale that is told? Narrate to me, step-by-step, that [story] by which the [nature of] *manas* is explained.

Vasiṣṭha said:

O Rāma, a certain simple-minded boy asked his nanny: O nanny! Tell me an amusing story.

O great-minded (Rāma), that nanny told a tale, with words sweet and serene, for the amusement of that boy.

By way of analogy (*tamṣīl*), reflect upon and understand [the following]: just as the reality (*ḥaqīqat*) of a peacock (*ṭā'us*)—with its shape, figure, form, appearance, wings, feathers, blood, feet, and head—is hidden (*pinhān*) within the seminal water inside of its egg; in the same way, this entire world (*'ālam*) is within *brahman.*
Or just as a tree—with its trunk, branches, leaves, berries, flowers, and fruits—is contained within the seed, [in the same way] this world with [all] its appearances (*namūdār*) is within *brahman.* For every person and every thing will become manifest (*ẓāhir*) in its own time (*waqt*) and enter into the realm of witnessing (*'ālam-i shuhūd*).[81]

"*Manas*" is an expression for that cogitation (*andīshah*) of a person who is reflecting for his own sake regarding pleasure, desire, pain, ease, good, and evil—whatever occurs and appears [to him]. All that becomes manifest (*paydā*) on account of the *manas.* First, there is the level (*martabah*) of *manas;* then, the level of bondage (*giriftārī*) and liberation (*khalāṣ*); and next, there is the entirety of this world (*dunyā*). An allegory (*tamṣīl*) for this discussion is the tale (*afsānah*) which had been spoken to a boy.

At that time, Rāma entreated Vasiṣṭha:

Please speak that tale to me and explain again [the teaching]!

Vasiṣṭha began:

There was a wishful child of little years, who requested of his nanny: "tell me a story and tale that will make my thoughts cheerful in hearing it." At that time, the nanny started speaking sweet words for the sake of occupying the boy's thoughts and delighting his heart. Of all the [choices], she began one tale, saying:

Once upon a time, there were three princes, handsome (*śubha*), great-souled (*mahātman*), righteous (*dhārmika*), and rejoicing in bravery (*śauryamudita*), [residing] in a completely non-existent (*atyantāsat*) city.
Two of them were never born; moreover, the third never entered into a womb. At the same time, the handsome trio was bent on the maximum in profitable acquisition (*lābha*).
The three, possessed of a stainless abode, departed from their non-existent void (*śūnya*) of a city; traveling along, they saw trees in the firmament (*gagana*), laden with fruits. After stopping to rest among the sky-trees, and eating of their tasty fruit, the three princes happily and playfully departed.

In a certain town that had no population—that is to say, it didn't exist!—there were three princes (*rājankuvār*, Sanskrit *rājakumāra*). All three were righteous (*nīkūkār*), agreeable (*pasandīdah*), brave (*dalīr*), and experienced in warfare (*jang-āzmā*). Of these three princes, two were never born at all—that is to say, they had not been born to a mother—while the third never quickened in his mother's womb.

All three—inclining towards the acquisition (*ḥāṣil kardan*) of their desires and achieving the goal (*maqṣūd*) harbored in their hearts—departed from that non-existent (*nābūd*) town. While on the road traveling, they saw fruit-laden trees in the ether (*ākāsh*). Each of the three approached those trees and plucked fruits of various sorts from them to eat, and took rest in their shade. Afterwards, the three princes left from that place.

Then, they reached a trio of rivers, adorned with billowing waves (*kallola*). Among them, one river was completely dried up (*pariśuṣka*), while the other two did not have even a little water.

On the way, they reached three flowing streams (*āb-i ravān*), each one of which had many waves (*mawj*). Of the three flowing streams, one was a bone-dry canal (*jūy-i khushk*); the remainder didn't have even a little water.

After splashing around for a long time and drinking the milk-like water, they diligently bathed (*snāna*) in that utterly dried up river.

Those three princes entered that dry, waterless stream and bathed (*ghusl*[82]). And in that dried-up stream, like pure, white milk, they splashed around and swam for a while from one bank to the other and then back again, coming and going repeatedly, and then, having drunk the water, quenched their thirst. Then in those two streams that didn't have even a little water, they went around in circles and enjoyed the sights.

Then, at the end of the day, the trio reached a town that had not yet come into being (*bhaviṣyat*), wherein a circle of townsfolk was playing, hurling loud banter at each other audible from afar.

Having departed from that place, by the middle of the evening, they arrived at a town known as *Bihbihkah-nagar*, that is to say, that which does not actually exist (*bi'l-fi'l mawjūd nīst*).[83] They entered that town, famous (*mashhūr*) in all corners of the world, strolling around the alleyways and circulating amongst the populace, while enjoying the views.

There, they then saw their three pleasing houses, one of which was completely without any walls or supports, the other two homes not yet come into being (*anutpanna*).

During the stroll, they unexpectedly spied three houses, ready to be built and decorated, in such a way that one of the houses didn't have any pillars or door or walls, while the other two weren't even buildings (*'imārat*) at all, there having not been any foundations (*bunyād*) laid whatsoever.

Having entered their lovely abodes without any walls, those princes found a trio of pots fashioned from smelted gold.
Among the three pots, two had fallen into pieces; the other one had gone to dust.
Those [princes] of shimmering intellect (*śuddha-buddhi*) picked up the vessel that had gone to dust.

Those three entered into those non-building houses (*khānah-i ʻimārat nāshodah*). In those houses, they found three pots which had been smelted and plaited with gold, poured into a mold, and fashioned into shape. One of them itself didn't exist (*wujūd nadāsht*), while another had fallen into pieces (*pārchah pārchah shodah*), and the other had gone to dust (*zarrah zarrah gardīdah*).

These three princes, who didn't possess a share (*bahrah*) of a full intellect (*ʻaql-i kāmil*) [between them], picked up the pot that had gone to dust. In that pot, they cooked three measures (*durūn*) of rice. It is such a quantity of rice, etc., that, having gathered rice in the palms of both hands, four of those would be called one *durūn.* And those three princes had three *durūns* minus three *durūns.* They distributed all that food to some Brahmins (*barahmanān*) who ate it. But those Brahmins ate it with utter greed, gluttony, and strange inclinations, for they were contemptible and gluttonous, each of those Brahmins not having a mouth.

In it, there were three measures (*droṇa*) of cooked rice, but minus three measures.
Then the food was consumed by [some] Brahmins, eating copiously but who didn't have any mouths.

Then what was left from the food eaten by the Brahmins was eaten by the princes.
For, they were the three princes in that town that had not yet come to be, remaining there happily, O child, occupying themselves with hunting deer.

Whatever was left after the Brahmins' eating, the three princes ate. Afterwards, feeling satisfied, they rested in that *Bihbihkah-nagar,* and passed the evening [there].

Thus, O Rāma, the nanny narrated the pleasing children's tale.

When the story reached this point, Vasiṣṭha said to Rāma:

That boy, possessed of an uncritical (*nirvicāra*) intellect (*dhī*), was certain (*niścaya*) [the tale was] true. Of course, O Rāma, this children's tale was really narrated for you.

[With] this sort of story that the nanny told to her child, that unknowing (*nādān*) child imagined (*khayāl*) the tale to be true (*rāst*). He knew it to have actually occurred, and took it as reality, not having discrimination (*tamayyuz*).

For those whose minds (*cetas*) have abandoned reflective inquiry (*vicāra*), the array (*racanā*) of this *saṃsāra* has attained permanence and is thus [like the case of] a children's tale.
The whole of this world (*jagat*) weaves a snare of *saṃkalpa*; but, from this [very same] weaving of the snare of *saṃkalpa,* the *manas* takes sportive pleasure (*vilāsa*).
O Rāma, having cried out "enough with mere *saṃkalpa*!," resorting to that which is unwavering (*nirvikalpa*[84]), may you attain to tranquil certitude (*śāntiṃ niścayam*).

In the same way, O Rāma, the real condition of this [ephemeral] world (*ḥaqīqat-i ḥāl-i īn dunyā*) is also such that those of short intellect (*kūtah-andīshī*) and absent discrimination (*ʻadam-i tamayyuz*) know something unreal (*ghayr wāqiʻ*) to be real (*wāqiʻ*), and declare something not mentally constructed to be mentally constructed (*iʻtibārī*[85]).

By way of brief commentary on this passage, at this early stage of the study, I will restrict myself to the observation, once again, of the two faces of the world's appearance on display here. On the one hand, the manifestation of the world through *brahman*'s *śakti* is depicted in positive terms, as though all the majestic and delightful qualities of the cosmos are derived from *brahman*'s own glorious attributes and potencies. On the other hand, from another perspective, this phenomenal universe is mere illusion and farce in comparison with the enduring reality of *brahman,* to which we should cleave instead of the world. In this latter mood, both the Sanskrit and Persian versions of the text eschew giving credit to *brahman* for the world's appearance, but instead attribute it to *manas,* imagination (*saṃkalpa/khayāl*), and/or ignorance. The two slightly divergent seed analogies capture this tension rather nicely: in the first analogy, *brahman* is identified with the water within the seed, rather than with the seed itself. The seed—which likely stands for *manas,* in this instance, or else the deluding *saṃkalpa* that concludes the passage—is what possesses at least some of the latent "stuff" of the grass/field, whereas *brahman* is merely the quickening water situated in the heart of that seed, granting it life, motion, etc., but otherwise disengaged from the creation that ensues from it. Here, the world's appearance is construed as snare and delusion, the mood that dominates the chapter overall. In the second analogy, however, the seed itself is identified with *brahman,* hence reverting to the perspective where *brahman*'s own intrinsic potencies provide the entirety of the "raw material" for this phenomenal world, construed now in more favorable terms. This double-sided metaphysics seems overall well-preserved within the Persian translation, though we will have better ability to judge towards the latter stages of the study.

One possible point of *mis*translation, however, is the Persian version's tendency, in this instance, to replace the Sanskrit word *ātman* with the term *brahman.* Though the *Laghu* certainly endorses the view that *ātman* and *brahman* are ultimately non-different, the substitution nonetheless arguably transforms the passage, removing the original version's hints of a teaching tied to first-person consciousness in favor of a rendition told more straightforwardly in terms of a third-person divinity "out there." For the moment, the reader should simply bear such observations in mind, as our inquiry now shifts its focus to the three above-mentioned philosophers: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī.

2

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*

The Bengali Hindu intellectual Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (fl. 1500s–early 1600s) was one of the last great precolonial expositors of the tradition of Sanskrit non-dualist philosophy/theology known as Advaita Vedānta. Madhusūdana flourished during the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556–1605), and was well-known to the Mughal court at the time of the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s composition; based on the available data, he very possibly lived through the reign of Jahāngīr (1605–27) and a portion of the reign of Shāh Jahān (1627–58) as well. Born in Bengal, Madhusūdana spent much of his scholarly career in Banaras (Vārāṇasī), a great center of Sanskrit learning where the Advaita Vedānta tradition, in particular, enjoyed a prominent status.[1] Among Madhusūdana's compositions is his commentary upon Puṣpadanta's *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra*, known as the *Mahimnaḥ-stotra-ṭīkā;* contained within this commentary, and later circulated as an independent treatise, is Madhusūdana's well-known Sanskrit doxography,[2] the *Prasthānabheda* ("The Divisions of the Approaches"), which this chapter will consider at some length. At approximately the same time, Madhusūdana also penned his most influential philosophical work, the *Advaitasiddhi* ("The Establishment of Non-Dualism"), in response to the extended critique of Advaita thought offered up in the *Nyāyāmṛta* of Vyāsatīrtha (d. 1539), a prominent figure in the rival school of Dvaita ("dualist") Vedānta. A vibrant commentarial tradition attaches itself to the *Advaitasiddhi* and Madhusūdana's other works through to the colonial period and continuing even into the late twentieth century, one of several attestations of Madhusūdana's enduring and powerful impact within Sanskrit intellectual circles.[3] From the colonial period onwards, furthermore, Madhusūdana would exert a different sort of influence in Orientalist and Hindu nationalist efforts to articulate an essentialist,

unified "Hindu" identity, in which his *Prasthānabheda* played a role, as will be discussed below.

Although Madhusūdana's philosophical endeavors, and even his general biography, have been fairly well-studied by modern scholars, one specific question is repeatedly raised but seemingly left frustratingly unanswerable: how did Madhusūdana, a leading Hindu intellectual of his day, make sense of and respond to the Muslim political domination of the subcontinent? Contemporary academics have struggled to explain the complete absence of any specific reference to Muslims across Madhusūdana's writings—and, indeed, in the vast majority of Sanskrit writings through to the early modern period—searching high and low for textual clues, drawing tentative or unsubstantiated conclusions, or else giving up on the issue altogether. Still, the question lingers: surely Madhusūdana must have had *some* thoughts and opinions on the reality of Muslim rule in South Asia? As will be seen, this lack of any definitive answers is likely unavoidable, given the limited archive available to us, though I will nonetheless attempt in this chapter to provide some fresh insights for the inquiry. More important, however, is an angle on the question that has not yet been properly explored: if Madhusūdana did not engage Islamic thought directly in his career or writings, then how might he have facilitated such interactions *indirectly,* that is, through "wisps" connected with his contributions to the Sanskrit philosophical jet stream which might then find their way into the Arabo-Persianate world?

In this vein, my aims in this chapter are, in the first place, to reconstruct Madhusūdana's biography and intellectual context as situated within the Sanskrit jet stream; second, to bring this data to bear on his doxographical writing, particularly the *Prasthānabheda;* and third, to outline the philosophical contributions of Madhusūdana that, once present within the jet stream, could be subsequently picked up and utilized elsewhere in a context of Hindu-Muslim (or Sanskrit-Arabo-Persian) interactions: in this case, the relevant arena being the *Jūg Bāsisht.* As regards the second goal, it is hoped that a close analysis of Madhusūdana's doxographical writing might shed some light on the character of the Sanskrit jet stream in the early modern period and how it shaped, and was (re-)shaped by, Madhusūdana's own scholarly endeavors, with particular attention paid to the conceptualization (or lack thereof) of Islam. In the third section, I will analyze Madhusūdana's intellectual contributions to a particular philosophical query then occupying the attention of several Sanskrit thinkers, namely, the paired notions of *eka-jīva-vāda* ("doctrine of one soul") and *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* ("doctrine of creation through perception"). Madhusūdana inquired into these two notions by way of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* citing the work as an authoritative source for the doctrines and thus proffering his articulations of these doctrines as the right interpretation of the treatise. As I will go on to argue in later chapters, Madhusūdana's contributions to the topics of *eka-jīva-vāda* and *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda*

would eventually trickle into the context of the Mughal court, where they were taken up by the translation team and incorporated into their Persian rendering of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.

MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ: LIFE AND TIMES

I have already noted Jonardon Ganeri's observation that, in the world of Sanskrit intellectual history, "textual" data is, by a very large margin, far more readily available than "contextual" data, an observation that certainly applies to the case of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Madhusūdana's own treatises reveal precious little about the details of his life, aside from his teachers and (helpfully) the other treatises he authored, while no other records have yet been uncovered that could even fix his dates or birthplace beyond doubt. Nevertheless, several modern scholars have taken up the effort to squeeze every potential drop of biographical information out of his writings—the debates over Madhusūdana's dates could almost constitute a subfield in their own right!—while a considerable body of local legends, oral histories, and other anecdotal data have also been brought to bear on the topic. Though sorting the reliable data from the unreliable can involve uncertain guesswork, at the very least, a *probable* picture of the figure can be achieved, alongside some less certain, *possible* biographical episodes. These possible but indemonstrable tidbits, unfortunately and unsurprisingly, are frequently the most tantalizing, but one can only analyze them for what they are worth. Beyond this, modern scholars have also utilized Madhusūdana's teaching lineage in an attempt to reconstruct the social and intellectual networks in which he participated, a process which can reveal other potential sites for the transmission of ideas to and from Madhusūdana's mouth and pen. Since this literature is already readily available, I will only outline the general, relevant conclusions of this scholarship here.

It is generally agreed that, in all likelihood, Madhusūdana hailed from the region of Bengal. In one of his early works, the *Vedāntakalpalatikā,* Madhusūdana makes two references to the deity Jagannātha of Purī as the "Lord of the blue mountain" (*nīlācala*), a form of Kṛṣṇa associated with the region of present-day Orissa in eastern India. This location was an important pilgrimage center for Bengalis, particularly those associated with the Bengali Vaiṣṇava movement of Caitanya (d. 1533) that was gaining considerable momentum in Madhusūdana's time.[4] P.M. Modi argues, on the basis of certain references to Banaras in Madhusūdana's *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa*, *Gūḍārthadīpikā*, and *Advaitasiddhi*, that he must also have lived there for a time, thus giving credence to the overwhelming traditional accounts of Madhusūdana conducting his teaching and writing from there.[5] In his *Advaitasiddhi* and *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* Madhusūdana also mentions one of his preceptors in *nyāya* (logic),[6] Hari Rāma Tarkavāgīśa, with whom Madhusūdana likely studied in Navadvīpa, one of the leading centers of *nyāya* learning. In seven of his treatises, Madhusūdana further mentions Viśveśvara Sarasvatī as his *āśrama guru,*

that is, the preceptor from whom he received initiation into the renunciant way of life (*saṃnyāsa*), likely in Banaras; in the *Advaitasiddhi,* Madhusūdana additionally mentions Mādhava Sarasvatī as "the one by whose grace [I] understood the meaning of the scriptures," that is, his instructor in the disciplines of *mīmāṃsā* and *vedānta,* likely also in Banaras.[7] Within his own writings, Madhusūdana most frequently cites, from among his Advaita predecessors, the figures of Śaṅkarācārya, Maṇḍaṇa Miśra, Sureśvara, Prakāśātma Yati, Vācaspati Miśra, Sarvajñātman Muni, Śrī Harṣa, Ānandabodha, and Citsukha.

Madhusūdana's more prominent disciples included Puruṣottama Sarasvatī, who composed a commentary on Madhusūdana's *Siddhāntabindu* called the *Bindusaṃdīpana,* and a commentary on his *Advaitasiddhi,* the *Advaitasiddhisādhaka;* Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya (fl. 1610, Banaras), who penned another commentary on Madhusūdana's *Advaitasiddhi*—known alternately as the *Advaitasiddhivyākhyā* or the *Advaitacandrikā*—and whom Madhusūdana explicitly mentions as his pupil at the end of the *Siddhāntabindu;* and Śeṣagovinda, who would go on to become a preceptor of the famous grammarian and Advaitin, Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita (fl. 1590, Banaras). Tradition would have it that, at some point, Madhusūdana left Banaras and passed away in the sacred city of Haridvār at the age of 107, but no evidence can be given to confirm this oral account.[8]

Helpfully, Madhusūdana was in the habit, within a given work, of referring readers to his other works, thus allowing us to establish many of his authentic writings with relative ease:

1) *Advaitasiddhi*—Madhusūdana's rejoinder to the Dvaitin Vyāsatīrtha's *Nyāyāmṛta.*
2) *Vedāntakalpalatikā*—one of Madhusūdana's earlier works, a partially doxographical inquiry into *mokṣa* composed around the same time as the *Siddhāntabindu* (no. 4).
3) *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa*—a dialectical work directed against the Naiyāyikas.
4) *Siddhāntabindu*—a commentary on the *Daśaślokī* (traditionally attributed to Śaṅkara), framed around the "great saying" *mahāvākya* "That thou art" (*tat tvam asi*).
5) *Saṃkṣepa-śārīraka-sāra-saṃgraha*—a commentary on Sarvajñātman Muni's *Saṃkṣepa-śārīraka.*
6) *Bhaktirasāyana*—a treatise on *bhakti* (devotion) and aesthetics, composed sometime before the *Gūḍārthadīpikā* (no. 7).
7) *Gūḍārthadīpikā*—a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā.*
8) *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-prathama-śloka-vyākhyā*—a commentary on the first verse of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*
9) *Mahimnaḥ-stotra-ṭīkā*—a commentary on Puṣpadanta's *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra* ("Praise of Śiva's Greatness"), a section of which would later circulate as an independent treatise known as the *Prasthānabheda.*

At least three other works are often attributed to Madhusūdana, but not without dispute: the *Harilīlā-vyākhyā,* the *Īśvara-pratipatti-prakāśa,* and the *Ānandamandākinī.*[9]

Beyond this rather thin biographical sketch available from Madhusūdana's own writings, scholars have had to rely on more questionable external sources for further details of his life. P.C. Divanji and Anantakrishna Sastri, for example, have collected several reports from *paṇḍit* families in Bengal and Banaras who claim Madhusūdana as an ancestor, alongside a small corpus of family and historical chronicles—most prominently, a manuscript entitled the *Vaidikavādamīmāṃsā*—that affirm Madhusūdana's Bengali birth and lineage.[10] These materials give Madhusūdana's birth-name as Kamalanayana (or Kamalajanayana), one of four brothers born in Koṭālipāḍā in the Faridpur district of east Bengal. His family is said to have migrated from the aforementioned Navadvīpa in west Bengal—the great center of Nyāya learning and the Caitanya devotional (*bhakti*) movement—where, after his initial learning under Hari Rāma Tarkavāgīśa, the young Kamalanayana was sent to learn more advanced Nyāya under the celebrated Mathuranātha Tarkavāgīśa (fl. ca. 1575).[11] It was from here that Kamalanayana is said to have resolved to become a renunciant (*saṃnyāsin*), and so left for Banaras. There, Kamalanaya is reported to have become "Madhusūdana" upon his meeting with Viśveśvara Sarasvatī, who initiated him into *saṃnyāsa*; Madhusūdana also undertook his training in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta under Mādhava Sarasvatī at this time. As he started to compose his own numerous treatises, Madhusūdana's reputation as a scholar and sage grew to the point where he attracted several disciples; he also earned a reputation as a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa until his death at the age of 107 in Haridvār. Other than V. Rajagopalan, no modern scholar I am aware of has taken seriously an alternative report that would make Madhusūdana a South Indian by birth who migrated north to Vrindavan, on account of a lack of any corroborating evidence.[12]

Madhusūdana's dates have been the focus of a great deal of scholarly energy, with certain consensuses having been reached but nothing conclusively proven.[13] The rather involved arguments from all sides need not detain us here.[14] Nevertheless, it can thankfully be said, more or less all scholars are in agreement that Madhusūdana was active in the latter half of the sixteenth century, with the majority of scholars favoring dates of approximately 1540–1640. The most interesting concrete resource relevant to the question of Madhusūdana's dates, from the perspective of this study, is the mention of Madhusūdana made by Abū al-Faẓl (d. 1602)—Emperor Akbar's court historian, secretary, and confidant—in the former's Persian history of Akbar's reign, the *Akbar-nāmah,* completed in 1597 (notably, the same year the *Jūg Bāsisht* was composed). Within the third volume of the *Akbar-nāmah,* known as the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī,* Abū al-Faẓl compiled a list of the "learned men of Akbar's time," divided into five hierarchically ordered classes (*ā'īn* number 30, book II). There, among the very highest class of scholars of Akbar's reign, we find

mention of Mādhava Sarasvatī (Madhusūdana's preceptor), followed immediately by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī himself.[15] Thus, Madhusūdana's fame had spread even to the highest levels of the Mughal court, though it remains an open question as to whether Madhusūdana ever actually met Akbar, or whether his good reputation simply spread there by word of mouth. A number of scholars have concluded from such evidence that Madhusūdana was necessarily patronized by Akbar, or that he was "a protégé of the Emperor . . . frequently leading [Akbar's] symposia attended by both Hindu *sadhus* and Muslim *mullahs*."[16] To my knowledge, however, no compelling evidence has yet come to light of such direct connections between Madhusūdana and the Mughal court.

Nevertheless, this Persian document leaves no doubt that Madhusūdana was known to Akbar and the imperial court, and that he was held in the highest esteem among some of its innermost circles. This observation lends some credence to the various oral traditions depicting several encounters between Madhusūdana and Akbar.[17] One of the most famous and best-attested oral traditions was first reported in English in 1925 by the scholar-missionary J.N. Farquhar, who transmitted an account from his *sādhu* informants regarding a meeting between Madhusūdana, Emperor Akbar, and the emperor's Hindu courtier, Rāja Birbal (d. 1586). In this meeting, Madhusūdana is said to have brought up an issue faced by the renunciants (*saṃnyāsis*) of his Daśanāmī order, as belligerent Muslim ascetics (*faqīrs*) would repeatedly attack and harass the renunciants, while the latter could not protect themselves on account of their vow of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*). Birbal suggested, in response, that the order, composed only of Brahmins, should allow armed Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas to join some of its sub-orders. Both Akbar and Madhusūdana, it is said, accepted this plan, at which point Madhusūdana began to initiate Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas into seven of the order's ten sub-orders.[18] Such oral traditions are quite widespread, though, again, not likely to be confirmed or denied.

Given the seeming lack of certain proof, in either direction, for Madhusūdana's direct personal encounter(s) with the elite of the Mughal court, one could, alternatively, seek out an indication of his *indirect* "presence" there through an examination of the networks of early modern Sanskrit scholars, where one might hope to detect a linkage that could explain how Madhusūdana's teachings or reputation might have reached the court's ears. Though likely too late in time, one could cite, for instance, the aforementioned figure of Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī (fl. mid-17th c.), an Advaitin and Sanskrit *paṇḍit* employed as a Mughal courtier who, famously, convinced Emperor Shāh Jahān to abolish the tax on pilgrims traveling to Banaras. For his successful efforts, a "felicitation volume," the *Kavīndracandrodaya,* was compiled for him, containing prose and verse contributions from numerous notables, *paṇḍits*, and Advaitin *saṃnyāsis* resident in the city.[19] A figure such as Kavīndra—a learned Vedāntin *paṇḍit* in his own right, a prominent Mughal courtier, a scholar of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (though almost certainly too late to

have been an influence on the *Jūg Bāsisht*),[20] and a highly regarded representative of Banaras Advaitins—could very well have served the function of transmitting recent names and developments in Sanskrit Advaita philosophy to the imperial court. Similarly, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (fl. early- to mid-17th c.; again, not to be confused with the *Jūg Bāsisht* translator, Jagannātha Miśra) is another such potential connection between the scholastic Sanskrit activities of the Advaitin *paṇḍits* of Banaras, on the one hand, and the elite of the Mughal court, on the other, although his arrival at the court also most likely postdates the composition of the *Jūg Bāsisht.* In any case, for our immediate purposes, it suffices to establish that Madhusūdana was indeed known to, and respected by, the Mughal elite in precisely the time period when the *Jūg Bāsisht* was being prepared, while the court's continued connections with Banaras *paṇḍits* left numerous possibilities for the reception of "wisps" from them.[21] Indeed, the name of one of our three *Jūg Bāsisht* translators, Jagannātha Miśra *Banārasī,* indicates his own direct connection with Banaras, where Jagannātha could have easily been exposed to the recent teachings of Madhusūdana, a leading representative of Advaita Vedānta in the city.[22]

Aside from these particulars of Madhusūdana's biography, the *intellectual* moment in which he lived—or, we might say, the contours of the jet stream with which he was presented and to which he responded—is also a matter of central importance for making sense of Madhusūdana's scholarly endeavors. One especially noteworthy feature of Madhusūdana's scholarly career was his considerable investment in the articulation and defense of *bhakti* (devotion to a personal deity) as a valid means to *mokṣa* (liberation). Now, scholarship has tended to overstate the purported "incompatibility" between *bhakti* and Advaita Vedānta prior to Madhusūdana, erroneously suggesting an Advaitin "consensus" that *jñāna* (knowledge) alone can lead to *mokṣa,* a stance that Madhusūdana then, supposedly, heroically took to task. Such affirmations, however, overlook important predecessors to Madhusūdana in articulating an Advaitin path to *mokṣa* via *bhakti,* including the likes of Vopadeva (fl. 1275), Hemādri (fl. 1275), and Śrīdhara Svāmin (ca. 1350–1450).[23] Nevertheless, the philosophical terms of this Advaitin path of *mokṣa*-via-*bhakti* were still being debated and sorted out, with the topic of non-dualist *bhakti* still boasting ample uncharted philosophical waters. And so Madhusūdana's contributions to this active field of Sanskrit inquiry, primarily in his *Bhaktirasāyana* and *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* are certainly worthy of note. A number of oral traditions corroborate Madhusūdana's reputation as a fervent devotee of Kṛṣṇa, such as his purported friendship with the Hindi devotional poet and author of the famous *Rāmcaritmanas,* Tulsīdās (d. 1623), as well as his reported interactions with the renowned Vaiṣṇava preceptor, Vallabha (d. 1531).[24] Several scholars have suggested that Madhusūdana, in his devoted submission to Lord Kṛṣṇa, was somehow "caught up" in the devotional air established by the aforementioned Bengali Vaiṣṇava Caitanya, though little evidence has been offered to substantiate the

intuition.[25] The best argument to advance such a claim has been offered by Lance Nelson, who, after analyzing certain parallels between Madhusūdana's conceptualization of *bhakti* and that of Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī (the two leading followers of Caitanya), lays out the possibility of concrete interactions between Madhusūdana and the Caitanya tradition. Nelson further emphasizes, however, that other devotional figures exhibited a much less ambiguous impact upon Madhusūdana, notably, the already mentioned Advaitin commentator on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa,* Śrīdhara Svāmin.[26]

More significant for the present purposes than Madhusūdana's *bhakti,* however, was his direct and influential participation in another strand of Sanskrit debate then current in the subcontinent, namely, the polemics between the Advaita (non-dualist) and Dvaita (dualist) Vedāntins. Before Madhusūdana's lifetime, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, one of the main loci of Sanskrit philosophical debate involved the confrontation between the Advaita Vedāntins and the Naiyāyikas (i.e., adherents of the Nyāya [Logic] tradition). On this front, the Advaitins Śrīharṣa (12th c.) and Citsukha (13th c.) composed, with unprecedented philosophical and technical sophistication, their respective critiques of the epistemological framework of the Naiyāyikas.[27] During the same period, as Gaṅgeśa (late 12th c.) spearheaded the responsive reformulation of Nyāya into the system of *navya nyāya* ("new logic"), the Advaitins, through the very process of refuting *navya nyāya,* came to adopt much of its framework and epistemological insights, hence normalizing *navya nyāya* dialectics within the Advaita school, as did much of the later Sanskrit dialectical tradition more generally.[28] Subsequently, as Minkowski has observed, the Advaita tradition seemed to shift opponents in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as the argument with the Naiyāyikas slowly gave way to polemics with fellow theologians—including the rival Vedānta schools of Viśiṣṭādvaita ("qualified non-dualism") and Dvaita ("dualist") Vedānta—over such questions as the ultimate difference or non-difference of the individual soul (*jīva*) from *brahman*.[29]

Into this scene stepped the great Dvaitin thinker, Vyāsatīrtha (d. 1539), who composed his *Nyāyāmṛta* in refutation of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins and Naiyāyikas, but, especially, in refutation of the Advaitins. In systematic, encyclopedic fashion, Vyāsatīrtha made an extended case for the fatal philosophical flaws of the Advaita system, utilizing, in the process, the sophisticated methods of *navya nyāya,* Mīmāṃsā, and large swathes of the Sanskrit philosophical tradition more broadly.[30] Vyāsatīrtha's challenge was one that demanded a response, and Advaitins such as Nṛsiṃhāśrama (fl. 1555) and Appayya Dīkṣita (d. 1592) endeavored to do so. Madhusūdana, however, is the figure to have undertaken the task most head-on, as his *Advaitasiddhi* rendered a point-by-point refutation of the *Nyāyāmṛta*, again making full use of the *navya nyāya* style of dialectic. The impact felt from the *Advaitasiddhi* is readily corroborated by the swift rejoinder penned by the Dvaitin Rāmācarya (ca. 1550–1620), followed by Gauḍa Brahmānanda's commentarial

counter-responses, the *Gurucandrikā* and *Laghucandrikā*. A vibrant tradition of new super-commentaries and refutations continued to be produced throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a handful composed even in the twentieth century.[31] A number of modern scholars have analyzed the specific, detailed arguments of the *Nyāyāmṛta* and *Advaitasiddhi* (as well as a number of Madhusūdana's other writings),[32] but, for the purposes of this study, I will examine only a very small slice of the *Advaitasiddhi*'s contents.

One of the many doctrinal elements addressed in the *Advaitasiddhi*, which was being discussed among Vedāntins throughout the early modern period (often in explicit connection with the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*), was the doctrine of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda,* that is, the doctrine of "creation-as-seeing" or "creation as 'seeing only.'" In brief, *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* contends that only that which is perceived or cognized (*dṛṣṭi,* "seeing") actually exists (*sṛṣṭi,* "creation"), as contrasted with the seemingly more "commonsensical" view that objects are created (*sṛṣṭi*) and continue to exist whether or not there is some perceiver on hand to perceive them (*dṛṣṭi*). This latter view, known as *sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda* or "knowledge/seeing when there is an [independent] creation,"[33] was, generally-speaking, the more common early Advaitin view (perhaps necessary at that time in order to avoid the charge of being "crypto-Buddhist"). *Sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda,* in other words, maintains that creation exists independently of any given knower: whether or not that knower is there to perceive the world, the world just goes on existing on its own. The former doctrine, *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda,* on the other hand, holds that there is no world independent of the knower: when the knower is no longer present to perceive the world, then that world ceases to exist, just like the objects seen in a dream, which disappear upon the dreamer's waking up. Though there were proponents of certain iterations of the view in earlier periods, it was really the figure of Prakāśānanda (ca. 1500)—citing the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as one of the source texts for his position—who seems to have put *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* "on the map," as it were, as a viable philosophical option that Advaitin thinkers could or must thenceforth engage in some fashion.[34] Madhusūdana, accordingly, did precisely that. Throughout his writings, furthermore, most notably in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters of the *Advaitasiddhi*'s first section (*pariccheda*), Madhusūdana links the doctrine of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* with another disputed tenet, *eka-jīva-vāda* or "one-soul theory," which contends that, despite the apparent plurality of individual souls (*jīvas*) in the world, in actual fact, there is only one soul (*eka jīva*), which, through its own "perceiving" (*dṛṣṭi*) and "imagining" (*saṃkalpa/vikalpa*), is the direct material cause of the manifest world.

Two features of Madhusūdana's various discussions of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda* are particularly important for the present inquiry: first, Madhusūdana's referencing of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as a foundational authority on the topic of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* (in addition to other topics such as the means and stages to liberation,

and the analysis of the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states); and, second, the manner in which Madhusūdana seeks to lay out, critique and defend, adjudicate between, and occasionally even reconcile the various interpretations and critiques of this theory that had been offered by different Advaitin thinkers throughout the history of the tradition. On the first point, Madhusūdana's grounding of his inquiry in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* is what created the opportunity for the Sanskrit *paṇḍits* of the translation team, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, to consult Madhusūdana's discussions of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda* during the course of their own preparation of the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation, a suggestion I aim to substantiate in chapter 6. Indeed, Madhusūdana was only developing a connection that had already been well-established within the Advaita tradition, as Vidyāraṇya (d. 1386), Prakāśānanda, and other Advaitin thinkers had already inaugurated the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as an authoritative text for Advaita Vedānta, while also signaling the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as a source-text for the doctrine of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda.*[35] An Advaitin interpretation of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the style of Madhusūdana, thus, would have been a well-established option within the Sanskrit jet stream by the time the translation team was raising its pens to compose the *Jūg Bāsisht.*

On the second point, the tendency, on the part of Madhusūdana, towards a somewhat encyclopedic accounting of the different stances and views of the various thinkers, texts, and sub-schools contained within the internally diverse Advaita tradition is indicative of a larger trend within early modern Advaita Vedānta more generally. As Minkowski indicates, in this period one observes an increase in the production of doxographies by Advaitin authors—including Madhusūdana's *Prasthānabheda*—that aim to place all extant Advaitic or Sanskritic knowledge-systems within a unified, comprehensive hierarchy.[36] At the same time, works in the genre of Advaita "primers"—geared towards elucidating the basic principles of Advaita doctrine in a systematic, introductory manner—became more popular in this period, including the likes of Sadānanda's (ca. 1500) *Vedāntasāra* and Dharmarājādhvarīndra's (ca. 1615) *Vedāntaparibhāṣā.* In these treatises, as well, the diverse views of the different schools of Advaitin thought are assembled and collectively addressed.[37] This apparent need among early modern Advaitins to grapple with and account for the internal diversity within their tradition is a development that is difficult to explain, though it is tempting to attribute it, as a number of scholars have, to the Advaitins' increasing awareness of the Muslim presence in the subcontinent. Scholars have cited Madhusūdana's *Prasthānabheda,* in particular, as a site that betrays this alleged turn of events.

FEARING THE "MUSLIM THREAT"?

Madhusūdana's short, well-known work, the *Prasthānabheda* ("The Divisions of the Approaches"), is itself only a portion of his longer commentary upon

Puṣpadanta's *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra,*[38] occurring within the former's elucidation of the seventh verse: "Since the approaches (*prasthānas*) are diverse—the three [Vedas], Sāṃkhya, Yoga, the doctrine of Paśupati,[39] the Vaiṣṇavas—and because of the variety of inclinations—[people think] 'this [way] is best, that [way] is suitable'—for men who favor various paths, straight or winding, you (Śiva) are the one destination, as the ocean is for the various waters."[40] Having to leave aside for the moment, unfortunately, the fascinating phenomenon of a fervent Vaiṣṇava, Madhusūdana, composing a non-polemical commentary on a praise-poem to Śiva,[41] we see that Madhusūdana utilizes this Sanskrit verse to launch into a fairly rudimentary but far-ranging enumeration of the various "approaches" (*prasthānas*) and "sciences" (*vidyās*) that constitute the (in his view) proper "Vedic" (*vaidika*) tradition, singling out, along the way, a few intellectual traditions that are "external to the Veda" (*vedabāhya*) and thus to be rejected. In the end, Madhusūdana categorizes eighteen such Vedic sciences, including the Vedas themselves, the "Vedic supplements" (*vedāṅgas:* pronunciation, grammar, etc.), the "auxiliary supplements" of the Veda (*upāṅgas:* the *Purāṇas,* Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, etc.), and the "auxiliary Vedas" (*upavedas:* medicine, military science, etc.). His overall schema, accordingly, is as follows:

- **4 Vedas:** 1) *Ṛg;* 2) *Yajur;* 3) *Sāma;* 4) *Atharva;*
- **6 Vedic Supplements** or "Limbs" (*vedāṅgas*): 5) *śikṣā* (pronunciation); 6) *kalpa* (ritual); 7) *vyākaraṇa* (grammar); 8) *nirukta* (etymology); 9) *chandas* (prosody); 10) *jyautiṣa* (astronomy/astrology);
- **4 Auxiliary Supplements** to the Veda (*upāṅgas*): 11) *Purāṇa* (including the *Upapurāṇas*); 12) Nyāya (including Vaiśeṣika); 13) Mīmāṃsā (including Vedānta); 14) *Dharmaśāstra* (including the *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa,* Sāṃkhya, Pātañjala Yoga, and the Pāśupata [Śaiva] and Vaiṣṇava traditions);
- **4 Auxiliary Vedas** (*upavedas*): 15) *āyurveda* (medicine); 16) *dhanurveda* (military science); 17) *gāndharvaveda* (theater, song, and dance); 18) *arthaśāstra* (statecraft, politics, economics, and moral conduct).

Madhusūdana employs the terms "approach" (*prasthāna*) and "science" or "knowledge-discipline" (*vidyā*) in quite a range of senses, referring, at one and the same time, to the "revelation" (*śruti*) itself (the Veda); the proper methods for the study and ritual performance of the Veda; other supplementary "scriptures" (e.g., the Epics and *Purāṇas*); philosophical, theological, legal, and practical knowledge-systems; the foundational texts (*śāstras*) of each of these knowledge-systems, all construed as continuous with the Veda; and the respective praxis enjoined by each of those knowledge-systems. Madhusūdana is clear in presenting these *vidyās* as complementary to one another, rather than as competing "schools." In light of his opening assertion that all these *prasthānas* are aimed, directly or indirectly, at the Lord (*bhagavat*) who is their unifying, overarching goal, the imagery invoked in the original verse of the *Mahimnaḥ-stotra* seems particularly apt: just as all the rivers, tributaries, streams,

and even the rain are ultimately trying to get back to the ocean—and, in many cases, work together to do so, as when rain contributes to a tributary, or a tributary contributes to a river, all on their way towards the same ocean—just so, all the *prasthānas*/*vidyās* have the Lord as their object and destination.[42] I have accordingly translated the term *prasthāna* as "approach" (in the sense of "path," "way of proceeding," or even "method"), although, like the term *vidyā,* it encompasses a broad variety of denotations that is difficult to capture by a single English term.

What Madhusūdana's treatise provides for us, then, is a broad glimpse into the early modern Sanskrit jet stream, and at least one Sanskrit author's vision for making sense of, ordering, and articulating the internal coherence of that jet stream. It would be a mistake, of course, to read the *Prasthānabheda* as an objective account of the current philosophical schools and scholastic disciplines then inhabiting early modern South Asia: Madhusūdana takes up a fair bit of space, for instance, to explain the views of four Buddhist schools, even though the Buddhists had, by that time, been effectively absent from the scene for several centuries. Rather, as Qvarnström, Halbfass, and Nicholson have suggested, doxographical writing in Sanskrit is something of a literary genre in its own right, with its own lexicon and conventions.[43]

Accordingly, by convention, the Buddhists must be accounted for within a doxographical treatise such as the *Prasthānabheda,* but not in a way that is simply an empty gesture. Rather, Buddhist intellectuals, though effectively no longer present in the subcontinent, had nevertheless left their indelible mark on the world of Sanskrit thought, and so remained quite alive within the intellectual world of the Sanskrit jet stream, even if devoid of living representatives within it. In other words, without Buddhist philosophy, there would not have been, for instance, a Nyāya or a Vedānta tradition as Madhusūdana then knew it, these traditions having matured and developed as they did in large part *because* of their sustained, dialectical encounter with Buddhists over several centuries, particularly in their formative periods. It is for this reason, at least in part, I would argue, that post-Buddhist "Hindu" theological and philosophical traditions, in their foundational texts and educational practices, continued to teach and discuss the old Buddhist critiques and the proper counter-responses to them, for the mastery of such argumentation, in the perspective of these Sanskrit knowledge-systems, was still deemed an indispensable step on the way to intellectual clarity and well-reasoned understanding.[44]

And so, rather than an enumeration of the current "schools" of Sanskrit thought, we could instead plausibly read the *Prasthānabheda* as a fairly comprehensive account, in Madhusūdana's view, of the most important constituents of the Sanskrit jet stream as an *academic* space, that is to say, the ideas and traditions that still had an intellectual presence within the realm of early modern Sanskrit scholarship, having shaped the contours of the jet stream even if, for some traditions, lacking living representatives by that time.[45] Exactly which elements of the Sanskrit jet stream are included is thus, in large part, a list received from earlier precedent.

Beyond this, however, Madhusūdana is able to exercise some individual liberty according to his announced standard: he may select those traditions which, in his estimation, have the Lord as their object (*tātparya*), whether directly or indirectly. What is immediately clear is that, for Madhusūdana, only *prasthānas* that operate in the Sanskrit language have any chance of directing the practitioner towards the Lord and the proper ends of humankind (*puruṣārthas*), given that every tradition that earns a mention in the *Prasthānabheda* conducts its activity in Sanskrit. What becomes equally clear is that, according to Madhusūdana, the most basic criterion for that which contributes to the proper ends of humankind is, in his eyes, a sufficient connection and concord with the Veda.[46] For Madhusūdana, in short, a particular intellectual tradition or practice is valuable to the precise extent that it draws from, is connected with, serves the purposes of, and teaches the veridical content of, the Sanskrit Veda, while anything "external" to the Veda (*vedabāhya*) cannot contribute to the proper ends of human existence in any meaningful way.

Accordingly, echoing a framework that had been utilized in several earlier doxographies, Madhusūdana places all the various Sanskrit disciplines of knowledge within a hierarchy, locating Advaita Vedānta at the apex.[47] Although he is here merely employing a schema inherited from previous writers, Madhusūdana does include a few small innovations that some scholars have argued to be of considerable significance. In the first place, in Madhusūdana's concise treatment of the *nāstikas*—that is, the "deniers" of the Veda/truth, typically referring, by this period, to the Cārvāka Materialist, Buddhist, and Jain groups who historically denied the validity of the Vedas—they are contrasted with the *āstikas,* the "affirmers" of the Veda/truth. In this passage, Madhusūdana explicitly associates the *nāstikas* with the category of the "*mlecchas*" ("foreigners," "barbarians"),[48] an affirmation Nicholson takes to be original to Madhusūdana,[49] but which Vācaspati Miśra, at least, had already articulated in the tenth century.[50] Now, one of the most perplexing and frustrating features of Sanskrit doxographical writing for modern scholars is that, despite the ineluctable presence of Muslims across the subcontinent for centuries, no premodern Sanskrit doxography ever mentions or even coins an explicit category to represent them,[51] despite the existence of viable terminology such as "*turuṣka*" or "*yavana*" in other Sanskrit materials.[52] With Madhusūdana's inclusion of the term *mleccha* in connection with the *nāstikas,* however, it becomes tempting to follow Nicholson in interpreting it as really referring, specifically if obliquely, to "Muslims," rather than as a generic placeholder for "all *mlecchas*." The question then arises: has Madhusūdana felt the presence or even threat of Muslims to such an extent that, for perhaps the first time, a non-Sanskrit tradition has finally forced its way into doxographical recognition? Interpreting Madhusūdana's innovation in this fashion becomes all the more tempting in light of the increasing prevalence of "Muslim" as its own explicit category within Indian vernacular writing over the preceding century or so,[53] including, to some extent, in Madhusūdana's native Bengali language.[54]

What sort of evidence could confirm or deny that this was Madhusūdana's intention? One wonders whether such evidence might even exist, given the paucity of direct discussion about Muslims in premodern Sanskrit materials.[55] And yet, any hint of the Muslim presence in India causing perceptible ripples within the Sanskrit jet stream is certainly worthy of focused attention, particularly for the purposes of this study. As Lorenzen and others have affirmed, it is often the presence of a prominent "other" that serves as the central impetus for a community's drawing the lines of its identity more sharply;[56] that the Muslim presence might have provoked a scholar such as Madhusūdana to clarify, defend, reshape, or even reconceptualize the boundaries of the "Vedic" community would be a point of considerable historical significance. Indeed, in articulating, at the conclusion of the *Prasthānabheda,* what makes this "Vedic" community coherent, Madhusūdana, perhaps uniquely among doxographers,[57] goes so far as to depict all the sages (*munis*) and founders of all the multifarious traditions of "Vedic" thought as in fact omnisciently knowing one and the same truth, and yet consciously teaching different paths for different souls situated at different levels of readiness for liberation and knowledge. Thus, we witness in this text a degree of unification of the "Vedic" (or "Hindu") tradition that was seemingly unprecedented up to that point in time, painting all its luminaries as entirely in agreement—although, it should be noted, the eleventh-century allegorical drama, Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya,* comes rather close.[58] In any case, in this regard, there is little doubt that the *Prasthānabheda* played a role in paving the way for later conceptualizations of a unified "Hinduism" at the hands of not only modern South Asian thinkers (such as Vivekānanda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan) but also western Indologists and Orientalists (such as Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Albrecht Weber).[59] Nevertheless, the question remains: what precisely provoked Madhusūdana to these unique elaborations and innovations regarding the Sanskrit intellectual tradition?

It bears re-emphasizing that the great majority of Madhusūdana's scholarly career proceeded, as seen above, as though the presence of Muslims in South Asia was utterly irrelevant: the overwhelmingly significant context for, effectively, the entirety of Madhusūdana's corpus was the Sanskrit discursive tradition in which he participated, addressing his thoughts to this jet stream's questions, conventions, and disciplinary concerns. In asking, however, what could have provoked Madhusūdana to render these intriguing innovations within the *Prasthānabheda*, the answer that has jumped out to many scholars is: "the Muslims." Lorenzen, as we have seen, identifies the increasing awareness of the Muslim presence as the primary facilitator for the formation of a unified "Hindu" identity.[60] Nicholson brings the most evidence to bear upon the specific case of Sanskrit doxographies, including the *Prasthānabheda,* and concludes that "[p]hilosophical authors writing in Sanskrit do not acknowledge Islam explicitly. But the perceived threat of Islam motivated them to create a strictly defined category of *āstika* philosophical systems, systems that professed belief in the authority of the Veda."[61] Hence, according to

Nicholson, the Muslim presence turns out to be the single most important motivating factor for medieval and early modern doxographers like Madhusūdana to cultivate an increasingly unified "Vedic" identity. Nicholson correctly recognizes, however, that Sanskrit doxographies "were not empirical accounts of a state of affairs," but rather, "an idealized vision of the doctrines: clear, unambiguous, distinct, and progressing inevitably from lower to higher."[62] Thus, Nicholson rightly asserts, the question is not "how was it the Buddhists remained in the doxographic record long after they had ceased to exist on the ground?," but rather, "[u]nder what conditions might Buddhism be removed from the doxographic record, and another doctrine (e.g., Islam) take its place? . . . Only a fundamental shift in the understanding of the purpose of doxography could have removed the Buddhists from their fixed place among the *nāstika* schools."[63]

The simple answer to this question, I would argue, is that Muslims could be added to the doxographical roll call as soon as they started writing in Sanskrit and participating in the rules and conventions of the Sanskrit jet stream. Minkowski, whom I quote here at length, comes to much the same conclusion:

> Now, we might have expected Madhusūdana to be more concerned with . . . the pressure of Islamic religious authority on Hindu religious forms. The collective memory of Madhusūdana certainly emphasized his interactions with Akbar and his participation in the 'ecumenical' project at Akbar's court . . . Yet, in his own writing, Madhusūdana ruled out any serious consideration of Islamic theology, even in works where he surveyed the other philosophical positions on offer in his world. The 'yavanas' (foreigners) were too far outside the Vedic fold. Instead, Madhusūdana devoted his efforts to the argument with the Dvaitins. . . . Dialogue or confrontation with comparable Islamic doctrines, after all, would have been conducted without the shared ground rules, textual presuppositions and philosophical commitments of the universe of Sanskritic discourse, unless Madhusūdana made the effort to create them anew for this ecumenical purpose. It would have been very difficult to bring such a dialogue up to the level of philosophical seriousness that Madhusūdana could expect from the start in engaging with the Dvaitins.[64]

Madhusūdana simply did not have the linguistic and conceptual tools at his disposal to seriously engage Islamic thought and practice at the level of refined dialectic; perhaps he could have set out to generate such a scholarly apparatus, but he had far more interesting and intellectually rewarding ways to spend his energies. Sanskrit philosophy, by this point, had become so technical, so standardized in its method and epistemological presuppositions, and so "full" of such a dazzling array of figures and ideas and arguments, that entrance into the club, so to speak, came only after copious prerequisites. For a non-Sanskrit-writing tradition to be included within such an enterprise could only be, at best, a rare, exceptional occasion. By the early modern period, accordingly, to start a new, historically unprecedented dialogue with a given non-Hindu community could most easily occur on the more "neutral" territory of a vernacular or a "young" scholastic language

whose conventions had not yet been so set and deeply entrenched. As I will argue in the chapters to come, Persian was a viable option to fit the latter bill.

Even beyond the conventions of the Sanskrit jet stream, I would further submit that, in considering the question of Sanskritic engagement with the "other," how thinkers conceptualized the nature of the Sanskrit language also needs to be taken into account. For Madhusūdana—indeed, for most Sanskrit thinkers at this time—the Sanskrit language was "the language of the gods in the world of men," that is, the one and only language in which revelation (*śruti*) was uniquely conveyed to humankind in the form of the Vedas, and without which *mokṣa* (liberation) or *jñāna* (liberative knowledge) could simply never be realized. In other words, without *śruti*—which happens to be in Sanskrit, and in no other language—there is simply no hope of attaining *mokṣa,* and *mokṣa,* for someone like Madhusūdana, is perhaps the one and only matter of genuine importance. Taken in this light, Sanskrit scholars' exasperating "Indocentrism," as Halbfass describes it, is perhaps less an irrational and excessive "self-isolation," but rather, a principled prioritization of that which is most vitally important in their own eyes: there may often be a profuse layering of Brahminical chauvinism, no doubt, but such arrogance may nonetheless be informed by this deeper rationale, namely, the belief that Sanskrit and the Sanskrit "revelation" alone can provide that which is most essential and enduring.[65] If what Madhusūdana really cares about is *mokṣa,* and *mokṣa* is impossible without Sanskrit, then what could there really be to learn from a Muslim, for instance, that would be of any real significance? Anything learned could only be, at best, secondary or accidental, so why bother looking?

Indeed, this deeper rationale arguably reveals itself once the *Prasthānabheda* is compared against the doxographical portions of Madhusūdana's other writings. Of all his treatises, the *Vedāntakalpalatikā* and *Siddhāntabindu* contain the most relevant material of a doxographical orientation. As I have argued at greater length elsewhere, in the *Vedāntakalpalatikā,*[66] Madhusūdana again makes use of the *āstika/nāstika* distinction, the latter category including two subgroups of the Materialists (Cārvākas), two subgroups of Buddhists, and the Jains. The *āstika* category, in turn, contains an even broader selection of Sanskrit intellectual traditions than is to be found in the *Prasthānabheda.* No group is ever mentioned, however, that could be identified with "Islam" or even *mlecchas* more generally. Furthermore, although, in the *Vedāntakalpalatikā,* the views of the *nāstikas* are refuted somewhat more summarily than those of the *āstikas,* it is far from a perfunctory "casting aside" simply because the *nāstikas* do not affirm the Veda; rather, Materialist, Buddhist, and Jain arguments are laid out, engaged, and then critiqued in the standard modes of *śāstric* debate as a genuine intellectual undertaking. Furthermore, the *āstika/nāstika* distinction is actually invoked only once in the entire treatise, and, in fact, put into the mouth of an objector (*pūrvapakṣin*), who is then refuted by the respondent (*siddhāntin*). The objector's suggestion of an alliance among the *āstika* traditions united against the *nāstikas,* in other words, is flatly

rejected: the respondent retorts with the "true" view, namely, that Advaita Vedānta alone is veridical. Nowhere in the text is any hierarchy of traditions presented, much less a cohesive vision of all the sages working together to guide civilization collectively toward Advaita Vedānta. Quite to the contrary, at both the opening and the conclusion of the treatise, it is affirmed that the statements of Jaimini (founder-figure of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā), Patañjali (founder-figure of Yoga), Gautama (Nyāya), Kaṇāda (Vaiśeṣika), Kapila (Sāṃkhya), and Śiva, etc., are all to be rejected, so that the reader may turn instead to Advaita Vedānta. The framing of the entire treatise is also relevant, as the persistent question that threads through the work is: which group teaches the correct view of liberation (*mokṣa*), and also a view of the self (*ātman*) that, without logical inconsistency or incoherence, could be thus liberated? Hence, Madhusūdana signals clearly that which is most essential in his eyes.

In the *Siddhāntabindu,*[67] Madhusūdana's commentary on the *Daśaślokī,* we see an even greater departure from the *Prasthānabheda.* Not only is there no group in the treatise that could conceivably represent "Islam" or the *mlecchas,* but even the basic vocabulary of *āstika* and *nāstika* is nowhere deployed. Accordingly, in the two doxographical sections of the treatise, no framework whatsoever is offered to distinguish the *āstikas* from the *nāstikas,* nor any suggestion of any sort of hierarchy of schools or traditions. The views are simply presented, and then refuted in favor of the views of the "followers of the Upaniṣad," that is to say, Advaita Vedānta. The *Siddhāntabindu,* accordingly, thoroughly refuses to entertain any notion of a "(proto-)Hindu unification," and indeed routinely undermines the idea. The framing of the treatise, furthermore, is relevant, as Madhusūdana structures the *Siddhāntabindu* around the "great saying" (*mahāvākya*) "That thou art" (*tat tvam asi*). Now, the Advaita tradition has long considered the hearing of such *mahāvākyas* to be the central if not sole means of achieving liberation, although doubts and confusions over the semantics of these Vedic utterances prevent the dawning of realization within the aspirant.[68] Refuting the Materialists, Buddhists, and Jains, along with all other schools, accordingly, performs the crucial soteriological function of clearing away delusions and uncertainties over the meanings of the *mahāvākya*'s words—are "you" really your body? Your consciousness? Is "that" God the creator of the world? What, then, is "your" relationship with "that"?—without which *mokṣa* is simply not possible. In answer to the above question of why long-absent "*nāstika*" groups continued to be engaged within early modern doxographies, then, this framing of the *Siddhāntabindu* provides a clear answer: even if practitioners of those particular traditions are no longer to be found, doubts posed by their ideas and arguments can nevertheless persist, posing mental confusions and obstacles against liberation within living individuals today that simply must be addressed.

These two additional doxographic offerings within Madhusūdana's corpus, accordingly, do not at all echo the distinctive, peculiar features of his *Prasthānabheda.* What could account for this discrepancy? Modern scholars generally consider the

Vedāntakalpalatikā and the *Siddhāntabindu* to be two of Madhusūdana's earliest works, given that at least one of them is referenced in nearly all of his other writings. These two texts, furthermore, are generally believed to have been composed around the same time, since they each mention one another. The *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra-ṭīkā,* meanwhile, explicitly references the *Vedāntakalpalatikā,* and contains an arguable reference to the *Siddhāntabindu.*[69] It seems fairly certain, accordingly, that both the *Vedāntakalpalatikā* and the *Siddhāntabindu* were composed prior to the *Prasthānabheda.* Could it be that events in Madhusūdana's life in the intervening years prompted him to develop new views, or, perhaps, to emphasize or render explicit certain views that he kept quieter in his younger years? One could only speculate that, as Madhusūdana traveled across different regions of South Asia—or, perhaps, as his status grew more prominent and he took on new roles and responsibilities—he might have perceived a need for certain types of teachings over others. Alternately, if Madhusūdana's contacts with Muslims grew over the years, maybe even at the Mughal court, this might have prompted him to begin to re-envision the boundaries of his own religious and intellectual community.

All such suggestions, however, are inescapably speculative, as most would be that are based on Madhusūdana's tendentious biography. And so more concrete evidence must be sought elsewhere. On this front, we can refer to two of Madhusūdana's other writings: the aforementioned *Bhaktirasāyana,* a treatise on *bhakti* (devotion), and the *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* Madhusūdana's commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā,* itself also containing a considerable volume of discussion on the topic of *bhakti.* Based on Madhusūdana's cross-references, it is clear that the *Bhaktirasāyana* predates the *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* the former being one of his earliest compositions. As Lance Nelson describes in his comparison of the presentation of *bhakti* between the two texts, a significant discrepancy has occurred: in the *Bhaktirasāyana,* Nelson argues, the young Madhusūdana boldly affirms for *bhakti,* against the grain of nearly all preceding Advaita tradition, a status equal to, if not surpassing, that of *jñāna* (knowledge), as he defends the former as an independent means to *mokṣa* (liberation) available to all regardless of gender or social background. In the "more sober" *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* in contrast, Madhusūdana "domesticates" *bhakti* into more conventional Advaitin sensibilities, restricting the attainment of the highest levels of *bhakti* only to male Brahmins who have formally renounced the world (*saṃnyāsa*).[70] While, again, it might be tempting to attribute this shift to Madhusūdana's "exuberant youthfulness" versus his "sober maturity," Nelson disagrees, given that, in the *Gūḍārthadīpikā,* Madhusūdana repeatedly refers his readers back to the *Bhaktirasāyana,* which "disallows the simple explanation that, having changed his mind, he had repudiated the teaching of his earlier work."[71] Instead, Nelson suggests that, between the two works, Madhusūdana "is simply speaking to different audiences and adjusting his discourse accordingly," aiming to bring educated *bhakta* devotees closer to an Advaita perspective, in the first case, and to recommend *bhakti* to his fellow Advaitin renunciants, in the second.[72]

Although I view Nelson to have rather overstated the discrepancy between the *Bhaktirasāyana* and *Gūḍārthadīpikā,*[73] as mentioned above, he has nevertheless offered us a promising key: the question of *audience*. The *Vedāntakalpalatikā* and *Siddhāntabindu,* for instance, are, philosophically-speaking, rather challenging texts, clearly meant for advanced readers of some sort, while the *Prasthānabheda* is written in a far more basic and accessible style. Indeed, the *Prasthānabheda* announces its own audience in its opening section: the treatise was written "for the sake of the cultivation of *bālas*." Now, a *bāla* could be a "novice" or someone "inexperienced" or "lacking in knowledge"; the most literal sense of *bāla,* however, is that of a "youth" or "child." If we follow the literal sense, this means that the *Prasthānabheda* was intended for young students at the early stages of their studies, a suggestion that accords with the simple language of the text and its exceptionally introductory character. If we reflect, additionally, upon the original context of the *Prasthānabheda* before it was re-rendered as an independent treatise, one could readily imagine a slightly different though comparable story: taking advantage of the *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra*'s status as a devotional poem intended for broad popular appeal, Madhusūdana could conceivably have intended his commentary to fulfill a function of public education.[74] Given the cross-sectarian context of the commentary, with a Vaiṣṇava Advaitin offering an interpretation of a Śaiva hymn, Madhusūdana may well have grasped the opportunity to promote a vision of a coherent, ecumenical "Vedic" tradition, a vision plausibly edifying in various ways for an educated but non-scholarly "Hindu" public at large. In contrast, Madhusūdana tells us that he composed the *Siddhāntabindu* for one of his closest disciples, Balabhadra, while the dialectical sophistication of the *Vedāntakalpalatikā* clearly presupposes an intelligent audience already steeped in Sanskrit learning and well-trained in philosophical method. The audience for these latter two doxographies, in short, is completely different, and considerably more scholastically and philosophically advanced, than for the *Prasthānabheda.*

In light of the above, it should come as no surprise if Madhusūdana accordingly tailored his treatises to such significantly divergent audiences. While writing for "young students," "novices," or even those just a bit "dull," Madhusūdana presents a unified vision of the "Vedic" Sanskrit tradition, highly respectful of all its branches of learning, introducing readers to most of its basic constituents even while gently steering them towards an Advaita worldview and away from anything "extra-Vedic." The potential benefit of such a tone and content for a fresh new student, in terms of cultivating an affection and attachment for the "Vedic" tradition, is not too difficult to imagine; the more advanced and committed students of the *Vedāntakalpalatikā* or *Siddhāntabindu,* meanwhile, could likely dispense with such preliminary pleasantries. Accordingly, it may well be the case that Madhusūdana's unique vision of the unanimous founder-sages (*munis*) was less some principled, deliberate transformation to the doxographical genre, and more a particular propaedeutic teaching tool applied to a specific context or audience. The reference

to the *mlecchas* is undeniably present in the *Prasthānabheda,* which could indeed suggest some perceived need, on the part of Madhusūdana, to communicate something to his readers about Muslims; on the other hand, in an introductory work, the fleeting and easily missed reference could very well be simply generic and nothing especially pointed or significant. In general, one could at least say that approaching the *Prasthānabheda* as a "student primer" casts Madhusūdana's unification of the *munis* in a potentially new light, suggesting less a beleaguered Hindu becoming increasingly fearful of the "threat" of Muslims and hence desperately trying to hold his tradition together, and more a teacher offering a perhaps strategically exaggerated account of the unity of the Sanskrit tradition to his young students, in the hopes of pushing them along in the "right" direction.

Nevertheless, it is still instructive to pause in order to search for alternative explanations to the apparent "unificatory" trend of early modern Hindu thought, other than the oft-repeated and oft-assumed (often without a great deal of evidence) "Muslim presence/threat." As much as the latter may indeed have been a determining factor, it should also be recalled that the early modern era was a period of immense fertility and productivity for Sanskrit intellectuals.[75] The Sanskrit jet stream, in other words, seemed to be doing just fine, and so one would hope for a more textured account of the precise character of this "Muslim threat." Certainly Madhusūdana's compositions do not betray the signs of an "epistemological crisis" of the sort articulated by MacIntyre.[76] Unlike the calls for a fundamental Hindu reform that would become increasingly common under British colonial rule, I read Madhusūdana's compositions, in contrast, to be brimming with confidence in the Sanskrit intellectual tradition's ability to provide everything that a tradition should provide. The further observations that Vācaspati Miśra had already associated the *nāstikas* with the *mlecchas*, and that Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* had already presented a popularizing vision of dramatic *āstika* unity, both in periods *prior* to Muslim hegemony, only further undermines the notion of the "Muslim threat" as the primary motivating factor. Bearing all this in mind, suddenly an attitude of genuine indifference towards Muslims seems perhaps just as likely as one of fear. Strictly on the basis of Madhusūdana's writings, it seems that he cared, above all else, about knowledge, Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti, mokṣa,* and the means (*sādhana*) to attaining them: in the early modern socio-cultural-intellectual environment, he might have been content so long as he was able to pursue them all. With such an elaborate and profound Sanskrit intellectual tradition already before him, and with so much work to be done in response to it, Madhusūdana perhaps had little time, energy, or inclination left to worry about or reflect on Muslims, surprising as that may seem to us today. This is not to say that Madhusūdana ignored or had nothing to do with political or social affairs—none of the above is incompatible with, for instance, the traditional orally-transmitted memories of Madhusūdana meeting with Akbar in search of relief for the *saṃnyāsis* against Muslim harassment—but only to robustly open the possibility that perhaps philosophical matters relatively

exclusive to the Sanskrit jet stream provide the predominant context for nearly all of Madhusūdana's Sanskrit oeuvre.

As for Madhusūdana's seemingly synthetic tendencies, then, which have so far been regarded as a response to the changing social conditions wrought by Mughal Muslim rule, explanations more internal to the Sanskrit scholarly universe, or even to Madhusūdana's personal temperament, should also be considered. Indeed, as described above, even in his most advanced philosophical treatise, the *Advaita-siddhi,* a similar impulse towards the comprehensive and encyclopedic capturing of the internal diversity of the Advaita tradition is on display, as Madhusūdana seeks to present, critique, defend, and adjudicate between the various points of view that emerged from within his own Advaita school on the subjects of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda, eka-jīva-vāda,* and other topics. Accordingly, let us take a closer look at how Madhusūdana accomplishes that survey—the fruits of which, I will argue, find their way to the Mughal court and contribute to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* irrespective of Madhusūdana's own apparent disinterest in engaging Islamic thought.

ON THE SOUL (*JĪVA*) IN THE *YOGA-VĀSIṢṬHA*[77]

In Madhusūdana's overall metaphysics, shared, in its broad strokes, by most Advaita Vedāntins, it is affirmed that, in the last analysis, there is one and only one true Reality: *brahman,* which is identical with the true "Self" or *ātman.* Yet we all experience the world around us, and we experience it as not *brahman.* Hence, given that the world—known as "creation" (*sṛṣṭi*)—*is* experienced (unlike other, less controversial fictions that are never directly experienced, such as square circles or cities in the clouds), the appearance of the world thus has to be explained in some manner. Madhusūdana's basic account for creation is through the concept of *avidyā* ("ignorance"): although *brahman* is one, unique, and immutable, it nevertheless "creates" the world through the instrumentality of *avidyā. Brahman,* being eternal and absolute, cannot itself undergo any change or alteration in the process of creation; rather, it is *avidyā* that undergoes all the modifications, while *brahman* is merely the passive locus (*āśraya*) or substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) upon which *avidyā* "sits" or which *avidyā* "covers." *Avidyā,* in other words, is the proper material cause of the universe, the "stuff" out of which the universe is made: the various particular "modifications" (*vṛtti, vivarta*) that this "cosmic ignorance" can assume accounts for the countless, diverse forms of the objects and entities of the world. *Brahman,* meanwhile, is only the substratum that underlies it, unchanged, unaffected, and absolute. *Brahman,* accordingly, is the "cause" of the world only indirectly or by attribution, whereas *avidyā* is the direct cause of the world's appearance.

This *avidyā* has no beginning—it has always been present—but it does have an end: *vidyā*, "knowledge," can destroy *avidyā* (ignorance). Hence, according to Madhusūdana and the Advaita tradition in general, the fundamental goal of

the Advaitin practitioner is to root out his own ignorance so that knowledge will dawn upon him, and the illusion of this world—caused, precisely, by ignorance (*avidyā*)—will finally be dispelled. It is important to note, however, that Madhusūdana would object to the suggestion that *avidyā* and its product, the phenomenal world, are "illusions" pure and simple: a pure illusion would be something totally non-existent (*asat*), like the proverbial square circle or the son of a barren woman, while the world, in contrast, does possess some sort of conventional (*vyāvahārika*) reality. *Avidyā,* thus, is said to be neither existent (*sat*) nor non-existent (*asat*), but a third category, "indefinable" (*anirvacanīya*). This account has, historically, opened Advaitins up to the critique that, with all the work that they make *avidyā* accomplish within their metaphysical vision, they really admit *two* existent realities (*brahman* and *avidyā*) rather than the one that they claim (*brahman* alone). Indeed, as we shall see in chapter 5, Muslim scholars, too, were confused by Advaita teachings in this regard. In any case, whatever the merits or limitations of the critique, Advaitins themselves have long maintained that *avidyā* is neither real nor unreal, while it also disappears at the moment of liberation (*mokṣa*). Hence, the exclusive reality of *brahman* is, in the eyes of Advaitin thinkers, coherently maintained.

Madhusūdana describes this *brahman* as pure, undelimited consciousness (*caitanya*), the only truly existent Reality, and the one and only self-revealing (*svaprakāśa*) entity. Like a light, which, by its very nature, reveals itself and reveals other objects, so too *brahman*, pure consciousness, spontaneously reveals itself and the objects of the universe, which are, in themselves, the non-conscious (*jaḍa*) products of *avidyā. Brahman,* being the substratum of *avidyā,* is hence that which underlies the universe, with *avidyā* as a covering upon it: *brahman* "shines through" the *avidyā*-covering, revealing all the objects contained within *avidyā* in the process. At one point, in answering a critique made by the Viśiṣṭādvaitin Rāmānuja (d. 1137), Madhusūdana invokes the image of the sun in a cloudy sky: *brahman,* the sun, spontaneously reveals itself, but a cloud (*avidyā*) may cover the sun, giving the beholder the mistaken impression that the sun is not there.[78] Without the presence of the sun, furthermore, the sky would be pitch black, and the clouds would not appear at all; it is only when the sun is present that all the clouds, in all their myriad shapes and forms, are revealed. Accordingly, like the clouds, Madhusūdana attributes to *avidyā* two distinct "powers" (*śaktis*): the power of "concealment" (*āvaraṇa śakti*) and the power of "projection" (*vikṣepa śakti*). Through its concealing (*āvaraṇa*) power, *avidyā* hides the real nature of *brahman* as undelimited, infinite, pure consciousness, causing it to appear as limited, finite, and non-conscious, just as the cloud blocks the pure, brilliant light of the sun and renders it dull, weak, and diffuse. Through its projecting (*vikṣepa*) power, *avidyā* projects its own illusory qualities onto *brahman* in the form of the universe, just as the cloud makes the beholder mistakenly think that sunlight is grey, that the sun has the shape of a cloud, etc.[79]

Among all the objects in the world that are other than *brahman,* three in particular garner extended attention from Madhusūdana: *jīva,* the individual person or "soul"; *īśvara,* the Lord and Creator; and *sākṣin,* the omniscient "witness" who is the revealer of all perceived objects. *Brahman,* pure consciousness, when it becomes associated with *avidyā,* illusorily appears as each of these three (as is true of all objects in the world). Advaitins disagree, however, over the particular nature of *brahman*'s association with *avidyā* that produces these three manifestations, and have accordingly crafted rival models and frameworks to account for the relationship. In his *Advaitasiddhi*—and also in other texts, particularly the *Siddhāntabindu*—Madhusūdana expounds all of these frameworks and attempts to adjudicate between them. According to Madhusūdana, the first grand distinction between the models occurs over the question of the *jīva* (soul): are there many *jīvas* (*aneka jīva*), or is there really only one (*eka jīva*)? Those who opt for the first option—that there are many *jīvas*—are further subdivided into three camps: 1) the proponents of *ābhāsavāda* (doctrine of "semblance," *ābhāsa*), 2) the proponents of *pratibimbavāda* (doctrine of "reflection," *pratibimba*), and 3) the proponents of *avacchedavāda* (doctrine of "delimitation," *avaccheda*). As for those who opt for the second option—that there is really only one *jīva*—Madhusūdana identifies this group with the abovementioned doctrine of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda,* within which he enumerates two camps.

Madhusūdana begins his account in the *Advaitasiddhi* with the first subgroup within the group that affirms the existence of many *jīvas* (*aneka-jīva-vāda*), namely, the *ābhāsavādins* (i.e., proponents of the doctrine of "semblance" or "appearance"). The *ābhāsavādin* doctrine aims to emphasize, in particular, the thoroughgoing unreality of creation (*sṛṣṭi*), going so far as to assert that "there is no creation as such."[80] According to this group, the only entity that ever really "appears" is consciousness, which is, in reality, changeless; any purported appearance that is other than pure, immutable consciousness, then, is in fact only an illusion or "semblance" (*ābhāsa*), as discussed in the previous chapter.[81] What is real is the sun; the cloud is utterly *not* the sun, and so, to take the latter as real would be an error pure and simple. The *ābhāsavādins* thus begin with the one and only Reality: *brahman* or the Self (*ātman*). This Self becomes conditioned (*upahita*) by *avidyā* and, owing to the influence of *avidyā,* mistakenly becomes identified with that conditioned state. This conditioned self, identified with its conditioned state, however mistakenly, is known as *īśvara,* the Creator of the world, and also the *sākṣin,* the omniscient Witness over the world. On this point, the *ābhāsavādins* are quick to interject that the pure Self does not *itself* fall prey to the delusion of identifying itself with that conditioned state, because it, after all, remains above the whole fray; rather, only the *conditioned* self (*upahita ātman*) can become the object of such misidentification. We might say, by way of analogy, that the sun itself will ever be the sun, but the particular bit of light that produces a mirage can be misidentified as a lake, which, of course, is not really there.

In turn, the pure Self also becomes conditioned (*upahita*) by a particular modification (*vṛtti*) of *avidyā* called the "intellect" or *buddhi,* and, again, becomes identified with that particular conditioned state. This form of the conditioned self is called the *jīva,* which, through a lack of discrimination, mistakenly thinks itself to be the doer (*kartṛ*), the enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*), and the knower (*jñātṛ*), when, in actuality, it is only failing to recognize its true identity with *ātman/brahman.* The intellect or *buddhi* is different in each body, while there are also countless bodies in the world, and so, these "*jīva* semblances" are also countless. *Avidyā* per se, however—that is, the "cosmic *avidyā,*" as contrasted with each person's individual ignorance—is one; thus, the Self conditioned by the one *avidyā*—that is, *īśvara*—is also one.[82]

We could thus summarize *ābhāsavāda* as follows:

Ātman → (conditioned [*upahita*] by, and identified with, ***avidyā***) = ***īśvara***, ***sākṣin***
Ātman → (conditioned [*upahita*] by, and identified with, ***buddhi***) = ***jīva***

As for the second subgroup of the *aneka-jīva-vādins,* the *pratibimbavādins* (proponents of the doctrine of "reflection"), their doctrine utilizes the idea of a reflection to emphasize, contra the *ābhāsavādins,* the manner in which creation is ultimately *identical* with *brahman.* In the case of an object reflected in a mirror, in a certain sense, the reflected object (*bimba,* often translated as "prototype"), on the one hand, and its "reflection" within the mirror (*pratibimba*), on the other, are identical. If, when a person looks at himself in the mirror, he recognizes himself, then it is precisely because of this sort of "identity" between the prototype and the reflection. So, according to Madhusūdana, the *pratibimbavādins* affirm that the Self, pure consciousness, first becomes conditioned (*upahita*) by cosmic *avidyā,* the result of which is consciousness in the form of *īśvara,* the Creator. This *īśvara*-consciousness, in turn, becomes reflected (*pratibimbita*) upon the particular modification of *avidyā* that is the *buddhi* (intellect), the result of which is the *jīva.* Once again, since there are countless intellects residing within countless bodies, the *jīvas* too are countless.

Madhusūdana also mentions an alternative version of *pratibimbavāda,* wherein the pure Self conditioned (*upahita*) by *avidyā* becomes the Witness, *sākṣin.* This *sākṣin,* in turn, becomes the prototype for two separate reflections: first, the *sākṣin* reflected (*pratibimbita*) upon *avidyā* becomes *īśvara;* second, the *sākṣin* reflected (*pratibimbita*) upon the *buddhi* becomes the *jīva.*

We could thus summarize *pratibimbavāda* as follows:

First model:

Ātman → (**conditioned** [*upahita*] by ***avidyā***) = ***īśvara*** →
īśvara (**reflected** [*pratibimbita*] upon ***buddhi***) = ***jīva***

Second model:

Ātman → (**conditioned** [*upahita*] by ***avidyā***) = ***sākṣin*** →
sākṣin (**reflected** [*pratibimbita*] upon ***avidyā***) = ***īśvara***
sākṣin (**reflected** [*pratibimbita*] upon ***buddhi***) = ***jīva***

As for the third and final subgroup of the *aneka-jīva-vādins,* the *avacchedavādins* (i.e., proponents of the doctrine of "delimitation"), Madhusūdana describes their model as being quite different. He identifies the *avacchedavādins* as those belonging to the so-called "Bhāmatī" sub-school of Advaita Vedānta, which finds its classical expression in Vācaspati Miśra's (ca. 960) super-commentary upon Śaṅkarācārya's *Brahmasūtra* commentary; the *ābhāsavāda* and *pratibimbavāda* models, presumably, are more reflective of Advaita's "Vivaraṇa" sub-school, tracing its lineage through Prakāśātman's (ca. 975) *Vivaraṇa* super-commentary on Padmapāda's (fl. ca. 800) own *Pañcapādikā* super-commentary on the first five sections of Śaṅkarācārya's *Brahmasūtra* commentary.[83] The Bhāmatī sub-school resisted the idea that *brahman* could have any direct connection whatsoever with *avidyā. Brahman,* after all, is Reality, knowledge, and pure consciousness, so ignorance (*avidyā*) should become entirely obliterated on contact with it. Accordingly, the *avacchedavādins* rejected the notion that *brahman* could be the locus (*āśraya*) or substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of *avidyā*; *avidyā* could never "sit upon" or "cover" *brahman* directly—to say so is to suggest that *brahman* could become ignorant! Rather, the locus of ignorance should be, naturally, the entity that is itself ignorant, which is not *brahman*, but rather, the *jīva*, the individual soul. As such, for the *avacchedavādins*, while the *jīva* is the "seat" of *avidyā*, *brahman* is only the "object" (*viṣaya*) of *avidyā*: in other words, the *jīva* is the one who is ignorant, and *brahman* is merely that *about which* the *jīva* is ignorant. Rather than clouds in the sky occluding the sun, for *avacchedavādins,* the impediment rests in the beholder himself, who might have, in this analogy, an eye disease preventing him from seeing the sun properly.

This *avacchedavāda* framework, however, raises an immediate question: how can the *jīva,* itself a *product* of ignorance, also be the "seat" or substratum upon which ignorance rests? This scenario seems to imply an infinite regress, with ignorance depending on *jīva* for its existence—there is no such thing as ignorance without the *jīva,* for it is precisely the *jīva* who is ignorant—but the *jīva,* in turn, depending on ignorance for its own existence, since the *jīva* is the effect/product of ignorance—when ignorance is dispelled, so too is the *jīva,* after which only *brahman* remains. To this charge of a mutual dependency leading to an infinite regress, the *avacchedavādins* reply: quite correct! There is indeed an infinite regress here, but not a problematic one. Just as a plant was produced by a seed that was itself produced by another plant, going back *ad infinitum,* in the same way, *avidyā* effects a new *jīva* and the *jīva* then effects new *avidyā.* Indeed, in the world of Sanskrit thought, where *karma,* reincarnation, and infinite cycles of created and destroyed universes are basic shared presuppositions, this particular infinite regress poses no real difficulties. A particular *jīva* will be born, produce all sorts of new *karmas* during its lifetime, and then die, at which point those *karmas* will determine the character of the *jīva*'s next birth. As generally all Advaitins will agree, this beginningless cycle of rebirth and redeath and the accrual of ever new *karmas* can be

broken in only one way, namely, when the knowledge of *brahman* (*brahma-vidyā*) is attained and all ignorance, along with its effects, is dispelled.

Accordingly, as Madhusūdana explains, for the *avacchedavādins*, in the first place, there is the pure Self, *ātman,* which itself has no direct contact with *avidyā.* The *jīva,* in turn, is in no way a "creation" or "product" of *ātman*; rather, it is entirely an effect of ignorance, as well as the locus upon which ignorance rests. This means that, according to this model, the *jīva,* "delimited" (*avacchinna*) by its own *avidyā,* is the material cause of the universe. In other words, just as the person who erroneously sees the rope as a snake in fact *produces* that snake through her own ignorance, in the same way, the individual, ignorant *jīva* projects and creates the universe. Since, according to the *avacchedavādins,* there are countless *jīvas,* accordingly, in a certain sense, there are also countless worlds, each *jīva* creating and experiencing its own individual universe. Nevertheless, this plurality of *jīvas* all inhabit the same space, and so the suggestion seems to be that the projections of their individual "ignorances" cumulatively effect the collective universe as we know it, shared by all of us though also uniquely experienced by each of us. The object (*viṣaya*) of the *jīva*'s ignorance, meanwhile—that *about which* it is ignorant—is *ātman.* In its ignorance about *ātman,* the *jīva* mistakenly thinks that it (*ātman*) is the Creator of the universe (*īśvara*), when in fact *ātman* is completely unconnected with creation.[84]

We could thus summarize *avacchedavāda* as follows:

> ***Ātman*** = the object (*viṣaya*) of *avidyā*; that *about which* one is ignorant
> ***Jīva*** = the locus (*āśraya*) of *avidyā*, and "delimited" (*avacchinna*) by *avidyā*: the "one who is ignorant." The plurality of *jīvas* is, collectively, the material cause of the universe

What unites all of the three groups above is their shared classification within the perspective of *sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda,* that is, the view that creation is independent of perception. In other words, *sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda* maintains that the created universe continues to exist whether or not you, the individual perceiver, are there to perceive it. Taking the *jīva* as an example of a created entity, all three of the above groups admit that there are multiple *jīvas,* meaning that a particular *jīva* residing in the far north of Kashmir, for instance, will continue to exist whether or not a second particular *jīva* in the deep south of Kerala is aware of the former. In all of these models, accordingly, "existing" and "perceiving" are distinct and separable events. The final two models that Madhusūdana enumerates, however, articulate the alternative doctrine called *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda,* or "creation-as-seeing." Madhusūdana further links both of these models with the abovementioned view of *eka-jīva-vāda,* that is to say, the view which affirms that, despite all appearances, there is, in reality, only one *jīva.*

The first group of advocates for *eka-jīva-vāda,* according to Madhusūdana, identifies *ātman* with *īśvara.* Here, however, *īśvara* is simply a synonym for pure consciousness (*śuddha caitanya*); the *īśvara* articulated in this model does not

directly do any creating. This *īśvara,* in other words, is sheer consciousness entirely unconditioned by *avidyā.* This same consciousness conditioned (*upahita*) by *avidyā,* however, becomes a single *jīva,* which then proceeds to imagine the entire phenomenal cosmos. Just as, in a dream, the dreamer creates an entire universe through her own imaginings—only to have that universe completely destroyed upon waking up—in the same way, this single *jīva,* under the sway of ignorance, imagines the world (including the other [apparent] *jīvas* within it), thus serving as the material cause for all of creation. Should the one and only *jīva* dispel its ignorance, then, this entire imagined (*kalpita*[85]) universe will also cease to be. Given that the creation of the world is here equated with the singular *jīva*'s imaginations and perceptions, this model falls squarely within the category of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda.*[86]

This particular model of *eka-jīva-vāda,* which is the abovementioned view articulated by Prakāśānanda in his *Vedāntasiddhāntamuktāvalī* (15th c.),[87] can be summarized as follows:

Ātman = ***īśvara*** (**unconditioned** by *avidyā*) →
īśvara (**conditioned** [*upahita*] by *avidyā*) = ***jīva***

Finally, we come to the last group of *eka-jīva-vādins,* whose stance is actually Madhusūdana's own preferred model. In a notably synthetic fashion, Madhusūdana here articulates a framework that incorporates the central concepts from all of the above models, namely, *ābhāsa, pratibimba, avaccheda,* and *eka-jīva-vāda.* According to this model, in the first place, there is *ātman*, the pure consciousness that stands alone, suffering no relationship with any other entity. Then, as in the *ābhāsavāda* and *pratibimbavāda* models, this *ātman*-consciousness, when conditioned (*upahita*) by *avidyā,* becomes *īśvara;* this *īśvara,* in turn, stands as the prototype (*bimba*) that, when reflected (*pratibimbita*) in the cosmic or "collective" (*samaṣṭi*) *avidyā,* has the *jīva* as its reflection (*pratibimba*). Since the collective *avidyā* is single, the reflection of *īśvara* within it is also single, resulting in the one and only *jīva* there really is. As in the first *eka-jīva-vāda* model, this singular *jīva* functions as the material cause of the world, projecting the entire phenomenal universe through its own powers of imagination, as in a dream. The *jīva*'s perception (*dṛṣṭi*) of the objects of its own imagination, accordingly, is synonymous with creation (*sṛṣṭi*), in accordance with the basic definition of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda.*

Furthermore, Madhusūdana, collapsing the concepts of *ābhāsa* and *avaccheda,* next describes the "process" by which,[88] during the *jīva*'s creative activities, it becomes delimited (*avacchinna*) by the various different intellects (*buddhis*) residing within the various different bodies, which are then falsely identified with this one true *jīva.* The result is the plethora of individuals in this world, each thinking of herself as a "*jīva,*" when, in fact, she is only a false "semblance" (*ābhāsa*) of the one true *jīva.* As Madhusūdana articulates it, the one *jīva* should be identified as the "I" (*aham*) within each body: while it may appear as though there are multiple "I"s, each "I" is, in fact, only an individual delimitation of the single "I" of the one

and only *jīva.* This *jīva,* hence, is the principle of self-awareness or "I-ness" within each individual.[89]

We could thus summarize Madhusūdana's own preferred interpretation of *eka-jīva-vāda* as follows:

Ātman → (**conditioned** [*upahita*] by *avidyā*) = ***īśvara***
īśvara (the *bimba*) → (**reflected** [*pratibimbita*] in *avidyā*) = ***jīva*** (the *pratibimba*)
jīva → (**delimited** [*avacchinna*] by different *buddhis*) = ***jīvābhāsas*** (multiple)

Though the very specific details of Madhusūdana's quite complex model need not detain us here, for the larger purposes of this study, it is important to highlight Madhusūdana's identification of creation with perception—à la *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda*—occurring, in this case, in the form of the imaginings of the *jīva.* According to this model, the entire world is really just consciousness or awareness; the various existent objects and entities of this world, no matter how insentient they may appear, are really just modifications (*vṛttis*) of consciousness, just as the world seen in a dream is really nothing more than the modifications of the dreamer's mind. It is also important to emphasize, along these lines, that Madhusūdana's preferred framework alone, among these models, articulates an explicitly cosmic or "collective" (*samaṣṭi*) *jīva,* which provides the "mind" within which this entire universe is imagined and projected. Madhusūdana connects this *jīva* directly with the notion of self-awareness or "I-ness," depicting it as the principle and common source for the sense of "I" that occurs within the mind and consciousness of each and every individual self-aware being. Lastly, as mentioned above, Madhusūdana explicitly attributes this doctrine to the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* identifying this work as the doctrine's primary source.[90]

Having laid out these various frameworks, including his own preference, within the *Advaitasiddhi, Siddhāntabindu,* and other treatises, Madhusūdana thus sent his contributions off into the Sanskrit jet stream, where they would become available for others' use. Indeed, in discussing *eka-jīva-vāda* and *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda,* Madhusūdana was only extending a discussion that was already well-established within the Sanskrit jet stream: Vyāsatīrtha, for example, had already critiqued these ideas in his *Nyāyāmṛta,* while Prakāśānanda's rather bold interpretation of the doctrines had attracted considerable attention and resistance; on the other end, Appayya Dīkṣita, Madhusūdana's contemporary, furthered the discussion in his *Siddāntaleśasaṃgraha.* Madhusūdana's notably synthetic treatment of the subject only further serves to emphasize the location of this discussion within a wider jet stream: Madhusūdana, it seems, felt the inclination to square *eka-jīva-vāda,* in some fashion, with the various older *aneka-jīva-vāda* models that had been articulated and refined by centuries of previous Advaitins.

Madhusūdana himself, accordingly, participated in this particular scholastic conversation from completely within the confines of the Sanskrit jet stream. Once released into the jet stream, however, these ideas could travel and be used for other

purposes. As I hope to demonstrate in the chapters to come, this particular Sanskrit discussion did indeed meander into the Mughal court, where the translation team would seize upon it for their own purposes within the *Jūg Bāsisht*. In the process, a "wisp" of the Sanskrit jet stream thus found its way into the world of Arabo-Persian scholarship, despite Madhusūdana's own concerns and interests, it seems, being almost exclusively confined to and determined by the universe of Sanskrit—indeed, explicitly so, if his doxographies are any indication.

Having spent the bulk of this study, so far, on the Sanskrit side of the story, let us now begin to flesh out the Arabo-Persian tradition's contributions to the tale.

3

Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī and an Islamic Framework for Religious Diversity

Muḥibb Allāh ibn Mubāriz Ilāhābādī (1587–1648), the well-known Sufi *shaykh* (spiritual master) and Islamic "mystical" philosopher of South Asia,[1] was born in the latter portion of the long reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and lived through the tenure of his successor, Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27). The majority of Muḥibb Allāh's scholarly activities, however, took place during the reign of the fifth Mughal emperor, Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–58), as Muḥibb Allāh spent the last two decades of his life writing and teaching from Ilāhābād (Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India). It was most likely at some point during this twenty-year period that Muḥibb Allāh composed his short Arabic work *al-Taswiyah bayna al-ifādah wa'l-qabūl* (*The Equivalence between Giving and Receiving*; hereafter, "*Taswiyah*"), arguably his sole "philosophical" treatise (in the restrictive, demonstrative sense of the word). Virtually the entire remainder of his considerable corpus of writings expands, interprets, or otherwise mirrors the writings of the extremely influential Andalusian Sufi thinker Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240). Indeed, Muḥibb Allāh was so dedicated a commentator that later historians would label him "the second Ibn ʿArabī" (*Ibn-i ʿArabī-i ṯānī*) and "the Ibn ʿArabī of India" (*Ibn-i ʿArabī-i Hind*)—a not insignificant title, given the historical observation that Ibn ʿArabī, regarded as the founder of the Sufi "school" of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being"),[2] came to "have enormous influence throughout the Muslim world, not the least in the Subcontinent."[3] As William Chittick expresses the matter:

> During the reigns of Akbar and Jahāngīr, numerous Indian Sufis were writing books and treatises that one might classify as belonging to the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Indeed, by this time, it was difficult to write anything on Sufi theory without employing the technical terminology of this school. This is not to say that all these authors had

> necessarily read any of Ibn al-ʿArabī's works or considered themselves his followers, but rather that this school of thought had played a major role in shaping the intellectual language of the day.[4]

Regarding Muḥibb Allāh, in turn, Chittick rightly asserts: "the most outstanding defender of Ibn al-ʿArabī's own teachings in the subcontinent during the whole period under consideration was no doubt Muḥibb Allāh [ibn] Mubāriz Ilāhābādī."[5] However, despite Muḥibb Allāh's prominence even in his own time, modern scholarship has yet to seriously examine this important intellectual of seventeenth-century India, most glaringly in the arena of the contextualization of his thought within the wider intellectual milieu of Mughal South Asia. Such is the lacuna I hope to address here.

The aims of this chapter, accordingly, are threefold. First, I want to contextualize Muḥibb Allāh's life and writings within his Mughal South Asian context. Modern scholarship erroneously tends to reduce Muḥibb Allāh's multifaceted career to a single historical confrontation, namely, the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being") versus the doctrine of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* ("unity of witnessing"), the latter doctrine attributed to the famous Naqshbandī Sufi *shaykh,* Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624). Against such a thin and inadequate contextualization, an acute need remains to recover the variety and scope of Islamic philosophical disputations in this time period. Accordingly, my second aim in this chapter is to outline the philosophical positions that Muḥibb Allāh articulates in his writings, with particular attention paid to the *Taswiyah,* in an attempt to trace out the debates that Muḥibb Allāh engaged and the thinkers with whom he was in conversation. This exercise will help us to establish certain contours of the early modern Arabo-Persian jet stream during Muḥibb Allāh's lifetime. Third, this chapter will analyze how this jet stream dictated, enabled, and restricted the possibilities of Muḥibb Allāh's scholarly engagement with Hindu thought and practice, illuminating, in the process, Muḥibb Allāh's own framework for conceptualizing religious diversity.

Of the three major intellectuals examined at length in this book, Muḥibb Allāh is the only one not to have had any direct dealings or interest in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*/*Jūg Bāsisht.* This would seem to make him an odd choice for inclusion in this study. However, as I indicated in chapter 1 and will illustrate further in chapter 5, the translation team's principal vocabulary of choice within the *Jūg Bāsisht* draws primarily from the *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("*wujūdī*") tradition. Moreover, the main Muslim scholars of *waḥdat al-wujūd* within the Mughal court at that time, who might seem at first glance more appropriate choices, deployed *wujūdī* thought in certain ways that are notably at odds with the approach of the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team, as will be seen below. As such, this study includes Muḥibb Allāh as not only a preeminent representative of *waḥdat al-wujūd* for the era in general, but one whose particular interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd* better accords with that of the translation team. Even though Muḥibb Allāh perhaps never attended the

Mughal court and was too young to have been a direct influence on the *Jūg Bāsisht,* he can nevertheless be examined as an exemplification of a broader, early modern *wujūdī* "current" within the Arabo-Persian jet stream from which the translation team drew. In making use of Muḥibb Allāh for these ends, the specific, novel contributions to Islamic thought that are uniquely his own need not preoccupy us here, as such contributions, though important and fascinating in their own right, were almost certainly unknown to the translation team, and hence must await another inquiry for another time.

A SUFI PHILOSOPHER OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH ASIA

Both in his own time and in modern scholarship, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī—a spiritual master of the Ṣābirī branch of the Chishtī Sufi order (*ṭarīqah*)[6]—has been recognized as an eminent intellectual and "the most prolific Chishtī author."[7] Not only do the compilers of the Persian (and, later, Urdu and Arabic) *taẕkirahs* ("biographical compendia" or "memorials") consistently praise Muḥibb Allāh as a prominent and erudite scholar of his time,[8] but he even caught the attention of numerous imperial personalities. Emperor Shāh Jahān, for instance, desiring Muḥibb Allāh's presence at the royal court, once wrote to him in a letter: "Greetings, O knower of gnosis and locus of the splendor of the divine sciences, Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh. Having considered well the command, 'Obey God, and obey the Messenger [Muḥammad] and those who have authority among you' [Qur'ān 4:59], come to me, for my desire is beyond limit!" Muḥibb Allāh, notably, politely declined the emperor's order.[9] Similarly, Shāh Jahān's heir-apparent, the Mughal prince Dārā Shikōh (d. 1659), initiated a brief but detailed correspondence with Muḥibb Allāh, posing numerous spiritual and doctrinal questions to him in two particularly dense letters. Upon accepting the position of governor (*ṣūbahdār*) of Allahabad in 1645, Dārā wrote to him: "more than receiving the governorship of the province of Allahabad, I am most gratified at your exalted presence [there]."[10] Even the sixth Mughal emperor Awrangzēb (r. 1658–1707), having taken the throne by force from his elder brother Dārā Shikōh, went out of his way to verify the contents of Muḥibb Allāh's *Taswiyah,* despite the fact that Muḥibb Allāh had already passed away more than a decade earlier. I will have occasion to revisit these events in what follows below.

Aside from the recorded opinions of contemporaries and subsequent generations, there is also the evidence of manuscript distribution and commentarial traditions, which again speak to Muḥibb Allāh's enduring prominence as an early modern intellectual. Manuscripts of Muḥibb Allāh's numerous Arabic and Persian treatises abound in South Asian, and also Iranian, libraries.[11] The commentarial tradition linked to Muḥibb Allāh is similarly quite extensive: with regard to the

Taswiyah specifically, no fewer than sixteen Arabic and Persian commentaries have been attached to it both during and after Muḥibb Allāh's lifetime.[12] Muḥibb Allāh's relevance persists to an extent even through the colonial period, as, in addition to his regular inclusion in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century *taẕkirahs,* the influential Muslim reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (d. 1898) references the *Taswiyah* in his famous commentary on the Qur'ān (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*), completed in 1895.[13] Modern historians of South Asia, meanwhile, routinely cite Muḥibb Allāh as one of the most consequential Mughal intellectuals of his time.[14]

Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh was born in 1587, during the reign of Emperor Akbar, in Ṣadrpūr, a village just outside the area of Khayrābād in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, India.[15] In his *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ,* Muḥibb Allāh explains that he received his early education in this region itself, where he also learned breath control—a Sufi practice of presumably yogic origins[16]—from a wise local Sufi. At a certain point, desiring more advanced learning, Muḥibb Allāh traveled to Lahore to pursue additional studies.[17] There, under the renowned Mullā ʿAbd al-Salām Lāhōrī (d. 1627), Muḥibb Allāh learned the standard rational (*ʿaqlī*) disciplines, including logic (*manṭiq*) and philosophy (*ḥikmah*), in addition to the traditional transmitted (*naqlī*) sciences, such as *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Muḥibb Allāh reports that, after completing his education in Lahore, he returned to his hometown but found no livelihood there, so he sought work in Aḥmadābād, but promptly returned home a second time and took up teaching.[18] One of Muḥibb Allāh's classmates at Lahore was Saʿd Allāh Khān (d. 1656), who would later become Emperor Shāh Jahān's prime minister (*vazīr*). Some of the later *taẕkirahs* report that, upon receiving the post of minister in 1645, Saʿd Allāh Khān invited Muḥibb Allāh to the capital in Delhi to take up his own government post there. Ali rightly notes, however, that "[t]his [episode] is not above doubt because it is not found in any contemporary history."[19]

In any case, at a certain time, Muḥibb Allāh reports that he was overcome with "Divine attraction" (*jadhbah*) and so set out in search of a Sufi *shaykh*.[20] In his *Mirʾāt al-asrār* ("Mirror of Secrets"), Muḥibb Allāh's close friend, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī (d. ca. 1683), recounts that Muḥibb Allāh went to the tomb of the famous Chishtī *shaykh,* Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1235), where the deceased master invisibly directed him to a still-living Chishtī *shaykh* in the Ṣābirī sub-lineage, Abū Saʿīd Gangōhī (d. 1639/40), then residing in the town of Gangōh. In his *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* Muḥibb Allāh describes that he became Abū Saʿīd's disciple and quickly reached the advanced stages of the spiritual path, at which point Abū Saʿīd named Muḥibb Allāh as his vicegerent (*khalīfah*), thus authorizing him to leave Gangōh to instruct others and, eventually, become a *shaykh* in his own right.[21] Muḥibb Allāh affirms in his *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ* that, after departing from Gangōh, he returned to Ṣadrpūr for a time to pursue scholarly activities, but decided at a certain point to venture out on pilgrimage to a number of the Chishtī centers scattered across north India. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī reports that he first met Muḥibb Allāh during this period at the tomb of Shaykh ʿAbd

al-Ḥaqq Aḥmad (d. 1434) in Rudawlī.[22] Finally, after visiting a few more Chishtī centers, Muḥibb Allāh settled permanently on the banks of the Yamuna River in Ilāhābād (Allahabad) in the year 1628, where he spent his last twenty years teaching and writing.[23]

As already mentioned, during his time in Allahabad, Emperor Shāh Jahān and Prince Dārā Shikōh corresponded with Muḥibb Allāh. Shāh Jahān requested his attendance at the royal court, but Muḥibb Allāh politely declined, implying that he wished to devote himself to the spiritual life—in his words, to "obedience to God and to the Messenger [Muḥammad]"—rather than entering into any imperial affairs.[24] Dārā Shikōh, in his own letter, having already requested a copy of Muḥibb Allāh's commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* posed sixteen questions on various spiritual and intellectual matters to Muḥibb Allāh, who responded with an extremely dense, carefully written, lengthy letter (spanning approximately forty pages in the manuscripts). Dārā responded with some follow-up queries, as well as a few reservations regarding Muḥibb Allāh's responses, to which Muḥibb Allāh again replied in a second short, polite letter (approximately seven manuscript pages).[25] Scholarship has frequently singled out this correspondence as concrete evidence of Muḥibb Allāh's direct influence over the prince;[26] it should be noted, however, that Dārā Shikōh never actually resided in Allahabad despite the post he had received there, and there is otherwise no evidence of the two having any further interactions. Thus, though well-known to the royal court, Muḥibb Allāh really sat on its outer fringes. Muḥibb Allāh's disciple, Mīr Muḥammad Qannaujī (d. 1690), on the other hand, became Shāh Jahān's close attendant and the tutor of Dārā Shikōh's brother Awrangzēb (at the time still Prince ʿĀlamgīr),[27] while Mullā Muḥsin Fānī (d. 1668/9), Shāh Jahān's chief justice (*ṣadr*) who also had a notable relationship with Dārā Shikōh, is sometimes counted among Muḥibb Allāh's pupils as well.[28] Accordingly, if Muḥibb Allāh exerted any noteworthy influence over Prince Dārā—which is far from certain—then it would likely have had to come through one of these intermediaries. In a more general sense, however, it can certainly be said that the sort of *wujūdī* learning that Muḥibb Allāh exemplified had numerous avenues through which to exert a presence at the Mughal court, and, indeed, was already vibrantly present there.

Another well-known episode—at least in modern memory, though less conspicuous in precolonial accounts—is Awrangzēb's investigation into Muḥibb Allāh's *Taswiyah* some years after the latter's death.[29] It is reported that Awrangzēb found sections of the treatise objectionable, and asked two of Muḥibb Allāh's still-living disciples near at hand, Muḥammad Qannaujī and Shaykh Muḥammadī al-Fayyāż (d. 1696), to explain and defend it. Shaykh Muḥammadī reportedly replied that he had not yet reached the elevated spiritual station of his teacher and was thus unqualified to comment on the text, but, in any case, if the emperor should desire to burn the book to ashes, much more firewood would be available in the royal kitchens than in the home of a humble ascetic![30] Some *taẕkirahs* report

that Awrangzēb placed Shaykh Muḥammadī in prison, where he eventually passed away,[31] though it is unclear if this event had any connection with the *Taswiyah*, especially since Awrangzēb apparently allowed the treatise to continue to be promulgated, as suggested by the copious commentaries on the *Taswiyah* composed and circulated during and after Awrangzēb's reign.

Yet another significant event, though it occurred in 1664—some sixteen years after Muḥibb Allāh's passing—was the issuing of a *fatwā* (juristic ruling) by certain religious scholars (*'ulamā'*) of Allahabad, proclaiming Muḥibb Allāh, as well as his disciple Shaykh Muḥammadī, to be an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and a heretic (*zindīq*). It is reported that the well-known scholar Shaykh 'Abd al-Rashīd of Jawnpūr (d. 1672), an associate of Muḥibb Allāh, was invited to endorse the *fatwā,* but refused to sign it, retorting that, if Muḥibb Allāh and Shaykh Muḥammadī could not be called Muslims, then no one could.[32] This episode is often sensationalized in modern scholarship as evidence of Muḥibb Allāh's "heterodoxy,"[33] though some early sources do make note of the wide spectrum of responses to Muḥibb Allāh's teachings even in his own lifetime.[34] The severity and practical implications of this diversity of opinions—that is, to what extent the disagreements remained written and intellectual, and to what extent they manifested plainly in the socio-political sphere—remains for future research to determine.

Muḥibb Allāh's various writings, the majority of which were composed during his twenty years in Allahabad, include the following[35]:

1) *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* a commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's famous *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* ("Bezels of Wisdom"), composed in Persian, completed in 1631–32. Muḥibb Allāh had also written an Arabic commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ,* entitled *Taḥliyat al-Fuṣūṣ,* some years prior from Ṣadrpūr, but he mentions in his letters that this attempt was not sufficient and suggests that a more complete commentary, in Persian, would be more beneficial to readers.[36] Muḥibb Allāh later composed a third such commentary, an abridgment of the second commentary, in Persian.
2) *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ* (Persian, completed in 1640), detailing twenty-seven "perspectives" (*manāẓir*) on various Sufi teachings concerned with the practices and stations of the Sufi path, drawing repeatedly from Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah.*
3) *Tarjumat al-Kitāb* (Arabic), on the interpretation of the Qur'ān, on which he later composed a super-commentary (*ḥāshiyah*).
4) *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ* (Arabic), consisting of a series of commentaries on individual sayings (*anfās*) of great spiritual authorities in the Islamic/Sufi tradition.
5) *Ghāyat al-ghāyāt* (Persian), treating numerous issues, and composed at the request of his disciples inquiring into Ibn 'Arabī's account of how and why God grants existence to the universe.

6) *Haft aḥkām* (Persian, completed in 1643), on seven principles of *maʿrifah* or "gnosis," mainly a translation of and commentary on chapter 177 of Ibn ʿArabī's *Futūḥāt*.
7) *Risālah-i sih ruknī* (Persian), on three "pillars" of spiritual praxis, including the rites and practices known as the "five pillars" of Islam, other prayers performed on specific days of certain months, and the particular rites of the "seekers after Truth" (*ṭālibān-i ḥaqq*).
8) *Mughālaṭat al-ʿāmmah* (Arabic).[37]
9) *ʿAqā'id al-khawāṣṣ* (Arabic), covering a series of twenty-one "subtle" topics (*daqīqahs*), aimed at refuting the claim that anything exists other than God.
10) *ʿIbādāt al-khavāṣṣ* (Persian, completed in 1643), a commentary on five chapters of the *Futūḥāt* concerning acts of worship (*ʿibādāt*), and a further treatment of the central practices (the "five pillars") of Islam, moral and creedal topics, and related questions of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The text's introduction stands as a semi-independent treatise, entitled *Imālat al-qulūb*.
11) *Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī* (Persian), Muḥibb Allāh's preserved correspondence. Muḥibb Allāh states in one of these letters, addressed to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Khayrābādī, that the letter is so long it could stand as its own independent treatise, entitled *Risālah-i wujūd-i muṭlaq*, a title sometimes listed in manuscript catalogues. The *Maktūbāt* contains a total of eighteen letters to Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī (2), ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Jawnpūrī (2), Shaykh ʿAṭā' Allah al-Jawnpūrī (1), Mīr Muḥammad Qannaujī (1), Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm [Siyālkōtī?] (1), Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Khayrābādī (3), Shaykh Tāj Muḥammad (1), Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī (5), and Prince Dārā Shikōh (2).
12) *al-Taswiyah bayna al-ifādah wa'l-qabūl* (Arabic), which Muḥibb Allāh himself translated into Persian accompanied by an auto-commentary, the *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*.

As Chittick points out, most of Muḥibb Allāh's writings are based in some manner—often quite explicitly, even at the level of format and style—on Ibn ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, "with relatively little influence from such intermediary figures [in the school of Ibn ʿArabī] as Farghānī and Jāmī,"[38] though Muḥibb Allāh nevertheless demonstrates in his writings and letters his thorough acquaintance with these central figures of the post-Ibn ʿArabī *wujūdī* philosophical tradition. Long sections of many of Muḥibb Allāh's works, in fact, consist of translations, paraphrases, and exegeses of specific passages from Ibn ʿArabī's corpus, most frequently the *Futūḥāt* and secondarily the *Fuṣūṣ*.[39]

Of all these writings, it was arguably the *Taswiyah* that became the most widespread. Though the preoccupation with Awrangzēb's reaction encapsulates the character of modern scholars' interest in the treatise, it is the record of commentaries

and refutations, numbering no fewer than sixteen works, that best speaks to the manner and scope of premodern engagement with the text. An examination of this commentarial tradition, authored by various scholars aligned with competing philosophical and theological schools, would do much in itself to help map the contours of the early modern Arabo-Persian jet stream in which Muḥibb Allāh participated. As a first step, for the purposes of this chapter, I will examine the earliest links in this commentarial chain, namely, the *Taswiyah* itself, Muḥibb Allāh's Persian auto-commentary, the refutation of Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī (d. 1652), and the critical commentary of Khwājah Khwurd (d. 1663). Although the three commentaries of Ḥabīb Allāh Patnah-ī (d. 1728) were composed somewhat later, I reference them here as well, given that they were written in direct response to Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd and hence help to illuminate their counterarguments.[40] Through retracing these seventeenth-century discussions, and the transregional array of antecedent philosophers who were being drawn upon, we can achieve a better understanding of the *Taswiyah* and Muḥibb Allāh's scholarly career as located within the Arabo-Persian jet stream.

Modern scholarship on Muḥibb Allāh, unfortunately, has done a rather poor job of reconstructing this intellectual context. Indeed, due to a notable dearth of studies to address South Asian Islamic philosophy and theology,[41] compounded by a broader neglect of the history of postclassical Islamic philosophy in general,[42] modern scholarship lacks even the basic knowledge of the contours of Indian Islamic intellectual history that would be required to contextualize Muḥibb Allāh's scholarly activities properly. In part as a result of this vacuum, modern studies have instead problematically projected his career within a nationalist lens, erroneously shoehorning Muḥibb Allāh into a "liberalism vs. orthodoxy" binary of the sort outlined in the introduction, here correlated with a theological debate between two competing visions of Islamic metaphysics: Muḥibb Allāh's *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being"), on the one hand, purportedly representing the voice of "liberalism," "Hindu tolerance," and "heterodoxy," and the *waḥdat al-shuhūd* ("unity of witnessing") doctrine of Aḥmad Sirhindī, on the other, supposedly representing the voice of triumphalist Islamic "orthodoxy." To cite just two representative examples of this flawed, binary contextualization:

> The seventeenth century of the Christian era . . . saw the conflict of two metaphysical concepts, *wahdatu'l wujūd* (Unity of Being) and *wahdatu'l shuhūd* (Unity of manifestation), in the realm of Muslim theosophy, and this conflict expressed itself in the formation of many religious groups . . . . The supporters of these two schools of thought were drawn from different strata of society. Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad, Dara Shukoh, Miyan Mir, Mullah Shah, Sarmad and Baba Lal belonged to the pantheistic school of thought; Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, Khwaja Muhammad Masum and Ghulam Yahya belonged to the other school . . . . [W]ith the advent of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (ob. 1624) pantheistic ideas received a setback and his powerful criticism of Ibnu'l 'Arabi discredited his works in mystical circles . . . . It was

> left to Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad, despite severe opposition from orthodox sections, to rehabilitate Ibnu'l 'Arabi and his pantheistic philosophy in the Indian mystical circles.[43]

Thus, Muḥibb Allāh's career, and much of the rest of the seventeenth century, is depicted as a struggle between these two opposing poles: one "pantheistic" and the other "orthodox." Ali depicts the scenario even more dramatically:

> This was the period when the whole atmosphere was vibrating and echoing with the doctrine of *Waḥdat-ush-Shuhud* propounded by . . . Shaikh Aḥmad of Sirhind, against the doctrine of *Waḥdat-ul-Wujud* of Ibn-ul-'Arabi. Shaikh Muhibbullah made up his mind to revive the mystical doctrine of Ibn-ul-'Arabi . . . . [Sirhindī] left no stone unturned in refuting the pantheistic doctrine. He tried to prove that this doctrine was anti-Islamic . . . . Muhibbullah undertook the task of presenting the correct import of the doctrine of unity of Being in the light of the Qur'ān and Hadith. He tried his level best to prove that the doctrine was in no way anti-Islamic.[44]

And so, according to such scholarship, Muḥibb Allāh's primary motivation throughout his career was the refuation of Sirhindī and the defense of *waḥdat al-wujūd* against him, an implicit prefiguring of India and Pakistan's contemporary battle over the soul of the subcontinent.

Indeed, in a great deal of the most widespread scholarship on Islam in South Asia, *waḥdat al-wujūd* is cast as a "non-dualism"—or, often meant more pejoratively, a "monism" or "pantheism"—that opened the gates for all varieties of "religious syncretism"—or, again more pejoratively, "heterodoxy"—which was opposed by the supposedly "strict" or "orthodox sections" of Muslim society, of which Sirhindī is proposed as a central example. Especially among authors who exhibit sympathies for modern-day Pakistan, it is frequently suggested that the increasingly influential "esoteric philosophy" of *waḥdat al-wujūd* found "a strong ally in the Vedantism of orthodox Hinduism," which raised the threat of "the disintegration of Islam in India and its gradual absorption into [the majority religion] Hinduism."[45] *Waḥdat al-wujūd* is in this manner seen as the intellectual foundation for the third Mughal emperor Akbar's novel courtly and political policies, such as the inclusion of greater numbers of Hindus in the Mughal administration, the abolition of the tax (*jizyah*) on non-Muslims, the patronizing of numerous translations of Hindu texts, and Akbar's supposed general promotion of and "experiments" with "syncretism" and "religious eclecticism."[46] Sirhindī, in turn, is regarded as reacting to this *waḥdat al-wujūd* "movement" that was taking hold throughout the subcontinent, but especially in the Mughal court—conceived alternately as an "imperial heresy"[47] or as a "reconciliatory politics,"[48] depending on the author's sensibilities—aiming at a "defense against syncretism"[49] and the "rehabilitation of Islam in India."[50] In place of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being"), Sirhindī is said to have proposed the "corrective" of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* ("oneness of witnessing"), in which the metaphysical assertion of the objective identification

between God and the world is rejected, but the "mystic's devotional concentration on God wherein everything else except God goes out of his consciousness"—that is, the *subjective perception* of unity, even if it is not *objectively* the case—is affirmed as a lofty, if still incomplete, spiritual station.[51] Thus, the mere experience of unity is not in itself a concern; it only becomes a concern when one concludes from this experience that God and the world are *actually* one and the same.[52] Accordingly, Sirhindī expressed the need to transcend this subjective experience of unity in order to ultimately affirm the absolute difference between God and the world, lest the mistaken belief in "pantheism" lead one to reject necessary and true distinctions, such as between "right" and "wrong," and hence to abandon the *sharīʿah* and the example (*sunnah*) of the Prophet Muḥammad. Muḥibb Allāh, in turn, as we have seen, is regularly depicted as making it his life's goal to refute Sirhindī's supposed intervention, despite the fact that Muḥibb Allāh never mentions Sirhindī across his various treatises and does not seem to make much of "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" as a category of self-identity.

This tendency to avoid reading Muḥibb Allāh's treatises on their own scholarly terms, and instead cherry-pick them to fill a nationalist narrative, is frustratingly widespread. I have already noted above the disproportionate emphasis placed on Muḥibb Allāh's two letters to Dārā Shikōh: indeed, it is rare that even the entire letters are consulted, but only the specific few sentences in which Muḥibb Allāh affirms that a ruler should look after the welfare of both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. This brief sentiment within a dense, complex letter has been repeatedly spun to allege Muḥibb Allāh's facilitating role in Prince Dārā's study and appreciation of Hindu thought and practice,[53] despite the two figures' clearly limited interaction.[54] In a brief reflection on Dārā's reaction to Muḥibb Allāh's first letter—in which Muḥibb Allāh frequently quotes the renowned Sufis of earlier generations, including Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz (d. 890 or 899), Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896), Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 910), ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadhānī (d. 1131), Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. circa 1220), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1389/90), and Ibn ʿArabī—Carl Ernst notes that Dārā was impatient with being referred to so many "ancient authorit[ies]" and sought Muḥibb Allāh's inspired, "ecstatic" response, even if it did not happen to be in accord with the Qur'ān. Muḥibb Allāh clearly but courteously replied that he did not support "any suggestions contrary to Qur'ān and *sunnah*" and "managed to insinuate very delicately that the prince was not completely egoless."[55] In the end, Ernst observes, "Dārā Shikōh was not overly impressed by the shaykh's advice, [so] too much should not be made of the Sufi's 'influence' on the prince."[56] Here we have a first small glimpse at the diversity of perspectives and attitudes that simultaneously inhabit the "*wujūdī*" category, contrary to the assumption that *waḥdat al-wujūd* necessarily, monolithically, amounts to a "liberal," "heterodox," "pro-Hindu" politics.

Even the scholarship that eschews over-exaggerating the *wujūdī-shuhūdī* polemic is nevertheless unable to fully break out from this "liberal-orthodox"

dichotomy. Despite the fact that Muḥibb Allāh hardly ever mentions Hindus across his myriad writings—and never in any kind of specificity or detail—Alam, for instance, continues to associate Muḥibb Allāh, as a prominent *wujūdī,* with a "pantheist" and "pro-Hindu" stance, affirming that he was "[a]mong the best interpreters and defenders of this idea of religious closeness and subterranean cultural bonds."[57] Indeed, Alam repeatedly intimates that the natural corollary of being a proponent of *waḥdat al-wujūd* was that one "posed a . . . threat to orthodoxy" and "encouraged assimilation";[58] those *wujūdī* Sufis who emphasized *sharīʿah* and "the differences between faiths," it is suggested, were somehow exceptional, fell short of following through on the full implications of the doctrine, or else "could not completely free themselves from the hegemony of orthodox, juristic Islam."[59] When discussing Muḥibb Allāh's close friend ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, furthermore, Alam cannot reconcile the latter's support of *waḥdat al-wujūd,* on the one hand, with his criticism of certain Hindu beliefs, on the other, resigning himself to describe ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's "attitude" as "complex and somewhat inconsistent."[60] This assumptive *wujūdī*-orthodox dichotomy also manifests in scholarship on Muḥibb Allāh's spiritual predecessor in the Ṣābirī Chishtī *silsilah,* ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangōhī (d. 1537),[61] whose "views of Hindus are har[d] for modern biographers to reconcile."[62] Bruce Lawrence, for instance, reports that ʿAbd al-Quddūs "has been viewed as one of the staunchest Indian proponents of *waḥdat al-wojūd,*" but then remarks at what appears to him to be a discrepancy: "In counseling against the assignment of government posts to non-Muslims, ʿAbd-al-Qoddūs was simply revealing the sober, militantly orthodox side of his multifaceted personality."[63] Simon Digby similarly writes that "throughout his life[,] ʿAbd al-Quddus' attitudes towards the non-Muslim Indian environment were complex and contradictory."[64] Never is it seriously entertained that *waḥdat al-wujūd,* on the one hand, and maintaining distinctions between religious communities on the basis of the *sharīʿah,* on the other, might actually be perfectly consistent, compatible stances.

Fortunately, a few studies have signaled a more careful reconstruction of Muḥibb Allāh's intellectual context in closer consultation with his actual writings, however preliminarily. Rizvi follows the clear indications in Muḥibb Allāh's texts and letters to affirm that, rather than Sirhindī, the influential Islamic philosopher Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī (d. 1652) was in fact Muḥibb Allāh's primary opponent in matters philosophical.[65] G.A. Lipton helpfully synthesizes the available scholarship,[66] telling of an influx of Iranian scholars into India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, coming initially from the prominent intellectual center of Shīrāz and later from Iṣfahān. These Iranian scholars helped to promote the Islamic rational sciences (*ʿulūm-i ʿaqlī*) in such Indian cities as Jawnpūr, later dubbed "the Shīrāz of India" (*Shīrāz-i Hind*) by Emperor Shāh Jahān, from which milieu emerged the well-known Peripatetic philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer (and Muḥibb Allāh's primary philosophical interlocutor), Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī.[67] At roughly the same time, the prominent Iranian scholar of sixteenth-century Shīrāz,

Mīr Fatḥ Allāh Shīrāzī (d. 1590), emigrated to India, enlisted by Emperor Akbar to overhaul the Mughal educational curriculum. Fatḥ Allāh incorporated a robust program in rational theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*falsafah*/*ḥikmah*), and logic (*manṭiq*) that covered numerous foundational works including those of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1390), Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1414), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 1501), Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d. 1498), and his son Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr al-Dashtakī (d. 1541), all of whom were well known and oft-studied in intellectual circles across the Islamic world.[68] One of Fatḥ Allāh's students, Mullā 'Abd al-Salām Lāhōrī (d. 1627), would become Muḥibb Allāh's own teacher in the rational sciences, thus establishing Muḥibb Allāh within the recent revival of philosophical and rational learning then taking place in the subcontinent.[69]

While these studies have accordingly provided a valuable starting point for the proper intellectual contextualization of Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh, there nonetheless remains much work to be done. Beyond the ongoing work of identifying the full cast of characters, recent scholarship betrays precious little familiarity with the actual writings and contributions of these interlocutors, leading to a variety of misreadings and misunderstandings.[70] Given such a situation, the prospect of fully comprehending a text like the *Taswiyah* becomes exceedingly daunting, as Muḥibb Allāh assumes the reader's familiarity with centuries of thinkers, including the likes of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), Ibn 'Arabī, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355), Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Qushjī (d. 1474), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī, and Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī, among numerous others. Given these difficulties posed by the current state of scholarship, my own analysis of the *Taswiyah* here cannot pretend to be flawless. Nevertheless, in order to understand Muḥibb Allāh's life and career, such attempts must be made. Accordingly, I will endeavor below to outline the philosophical positions for which Muḥibb Allāh argues in the *Taswiyah* in light of the rival philosophical stances of his interlocutors, in the hopes of better understanding the transregional Arabo-Persian jet stream with which Muḥibb Allāh was in conversation, and which played a prominent formative role in shaping the intellectual contours of the Mughal court. In particular, I will examine Muḥibb Allāh's philosophical articulation of the notion of *wujūd* ("being" or "existence"), a concept central not only to the *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, but also to the lexicon and metaphysics of the *Jūg Bāsisht*.

AN ISLAMIC NON-DUALISM: MUḤIBB ALLĀH'S *TASWIYAH BAYNA AL-IFĀDAH WA'L-QABŪL*

On the basis of the commentarial tradition attached to the *Taswiyah,* as well as his letters, it becomes clear that one of Muḥibb Allāh's primary intellectual opponents was the aforementioned Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī al-Fārūqī. Not only did Mullā Maḥmūd make the effort to write a specific refutation of the *Taswiyah,*

entitled *Ḥirz al-īmān* ("The Fortress of Faith"),[71] but the later Chishtī Sufi Ḥabīb Allāh Patnah-ī considered the debate with Mullā Maḥmūd significant enough that he undertook to compose his own rejoinder against the *Ḥirz al-īmān*.[72] Muḥibb Allāh also wrote two intricate letters to Mullā Maḥmūd detailing numerous arguments and views rooted in Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* from which Muḥibb Allāh quotes abundantly throughout the correspondence.[73]

Mullā Maḥmūd was a central figure in the seventeenth-century flourishing of the intellectual sciences in Jawnpūr mentioned above, described by many sources as the greatest philosopher of his day, as well as a gifted mathematician, astronomer, and natural scientist.[74] Although Mullā Maḥmūd's writings, much like Muḥibb Allāh's, are still waiting to be edited and to receive proper study, biographers most typically associate him with the Aristotelian/Peripatetic (*mashshāʾī*) tradition of Islamic philosophy, a "school" closely associated with the likes of Ibn Sīnā and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Mullā Maḥmūd was also intimately familiar with the works of the renowned Ṣafavid philosopher Mīr Dāmād; some have suggested that Mullā Maḥmūd studied under Mīr Dāmād for a time, though there seems to be little evidence to support the claim.[75] Mullā Maḥmūd later became attached to the Mughal court, functioning as, among other things, the tutor of Shāh Jahān's second son, Prince Shujāʿ.

While any final say on Mullā Maḥmūd's philosophy will have to await a more thorough examination of his numerous treatises (particularly his extremely widespread *madrasah* textbook, *al-Shams al-bāzighah,* covering primarily the subject of physics), his refutation of the *Taswiyah,* the *Ḥirz al-īmān,* corroborates his biographical reputation as a Peripatetic (*mashshāʾī*), exhibiting a metaphysical orientation closely aligned—though not identical—with the Peripatetic philosopher-theologian Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Although a detailed account is unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter,[76] Mullā Maḥmūd's stance on the notion of *wujūd* ("being" or "existence") is that it corresponds with the way the human intellect (*ʿaql*) organizes its encounters with the world around it. In confronting the multitude of discrete entities in the world, which share the characteristic of being "there" or "present" rather than *not* being there, the intellect, naturally, abstracts a universal notion "existence" that applies equally to all "present" entities: the chair in front of me "exists" just as the apple in front of me "exists," but *un*like the apple I consumed last week, which, accordingly, no longer "exists." This natural process of the intellect, however, merely creates a universal category "existence" that resides in our minds; it would be a mistake to conclude therefrom that "existence"/*wujūd* is a real, objective, singular entity *out there,* part of the basic furniture of the cosmos, with which all these diverse entities are somehow uniformly identified. To the contrary, says Mullā Maḥmūd, the multitude of existent objects in the world is veritably plural. In other terms, one could assert, a table, a chair, an apple, and even God, each possesses its own, unique "specific existence" (*wujūd khāṣṣ*) that is intrinsically distinct from the "specific existences" of the

others. Hence, against any suggestion, à la *waḥdat al-wujūd,* that would claim the diverse entities of the world to be ultimately reducible to a singular Reality or "Existence" (*wujūd*), Mullā Maḥmūd instead insists that the diversity of variegated entities in the world is a genuine, irreducible plurality: there are the mutually distinct "specific existences" (*wujūdāt khāṣṣah*) of tables, chairs, apples, and so on, which are incapable of being simplified or equated with one another; they certainly cannot be reduced to or equated with God's existence, the one Creator—philosophically referred to, in the terminology of Ibn Sīnā, as the "Necessary Existent" (*wājib al-wujūd*)—upon whom all other existents utterly depend for their creation and subsistence at every moment.[77]

Khwājah Khwurd's (d. 1663) reverential, yet critical, Arabic commentary on the *Taswiyah,* as well as the content of the *Taswiyah* itself, confirms another tradition or "school" of Islamic philosophical thought with which Muḥibb Allāh was also in conversation. ʿAbd Allāh al-Dihlavī, commonly known as Khwājah Khwurd, was a Naqshbandī Sufi and son of Shaykh Bāqī Biʾllāh (d. 1603), the famous teacher of Aḥmad Sirhindī. Bāqī Biʾllāh initiated Sirhindī into the Naqshbandī order and, supposedly, was instrumental in turning him away from *waḥdat al-wujūd* and towards *waḥdat al-shuhūd,* though a number of recent scholars have contested or complicated this suggestion.[78] Interestingly, Sirhindī was one of Khwājah Khwurd's main teachers and initiated him into the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah*,[79] though the latter consistently preferred the formulations of *waḥdat al-wujūd* over those of *waḥdat al-shuhūd,* having composed a number of treatises popularizing the teachings of Ibn ʿArabī or based on the works of important later *wujūdī* thinkers, such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī (d. 1492).[80] Khwājah Khwurd thus frustrates a number of the assumptions common to much modern scholarship: on the one hand, he was a direct student of Sirhindī, a fellow Naqshbandī, and the son of Sirhindī's own *shaykh*, yet he demonstrated little interest in even saying much about *waḥdat al-shuhūd*.[81] On the other hand, both he and Muḥibb Allāh were dedicated *wujūdīs*, and yet disagreed with one another to such an extent that Khwājah Khwurd felt compelled to compose a corrective commentary on the *Taswiyah*.

In this Arabic commentary, Khwājah Khwurd manifests his considerable debt to the aforementioned Iranian philosopher, Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī.[82] Dawānī, also an interpreter and defender of Ibn ʿArabī,[83] had become very well known in the subcontinent through the various lines of intellectual transmission passing between the Safavid and Mughal Empires in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as described above. Indeed, even before the Safavid dynasty came to power in 1501, Dawānī had already dedicated a treatise to Sultan Maḥmūd of Gujarāt (r. 1458–1511),[84] this being only one among many Iran-India connections, the most consequential being those facilitated by the abovementioned Mīr Fatḥ Allāh Shīrāzī. It comes as no surprise, then, that both Muḥibb Allāh and Khwājah Khurd were thoroughly acquainted with Dawānī's works. In the *Taswiyah,* Muḥibb Allāh frequently critiques the formulations of *wujūd* that are characteristic of Dawānī,

while Khwājah Khwurd, in his commentary, defends them at length, only to be refuted, in turn, by Ḥabīb Allāh Patnah-ī in his second super-commentary; a century and a half earlier, Dawānī, in the formulation of his own metaphysical and ontological positions, had already sought to critique the stances of such well-known philosophical defenders of Ibn ʿArabī as Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī. What can thus be traced out is a centuries-long, transregional current of debates, situated within the wider Arabo-Persian philosophical jet stream, *between* so-called *wujūdīs*, and hence emblematic of the diversity of interpretations internal to "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" that modern scholarship has been slow to recognize.

In some ways, Khwājah Khwurd's (and Dawānī's[85]) stance on *wujūd* picks up from where Mullā Maḥmūd (and Ṭūsī) leave off. Mullā Maḥmūd, as we have seen, aims to safeguard the distinction between God (the "Necessary Existent," *wājib al-wujūd*) and the created entities of the universe (the "possible" or "contingent existents," *mumkin al-wujūd*) by postulating an intrinsically distinct existence—or "specific existence" (*wujūd khāṣṣ*)—to each thing. This means that every last object, including the Necessary Existent, is innately distinguishable from every other object because its own particular, concrete existence is inherently unique in relation to all other objects and their particular existences. Khwājah Khwurd, in turn, renders the distinction between the Necessary and the possible existents even starker by positing that there is, in fact, only one existence to speak of, namely, the existence of the Necessary.[86] The possible/contingent existents, on the other hand, do not actually possess any existence of their own, but are merely "tinged" (*inṣabagha*) by the Necessary's *wujūd*.[87] Not only do possible entities not possess any existences (*wujūdāt*) of their own, Khwājah Khwurd insists, but, even further, they never really possess any share or portion of the Necessary's existence either; rather, possible objects only acquire some ambiguous state of *apparent* existence—or, more accurately, "existent-ness" (*mawjūdiyyah*)—through relating (*intisāb*) in some fashion to the one and only existence there is, the Necessary existence. As such, Khwājah Khwurd concludes, the seeming existence of the possible objects is, in actuality, unreal (*ghayr ḥaqīqī*), while the Necessary's existence alone is truly real. In the process of arguing that the sole actual existence is the Necessary existence, Khwājah Khwurd affirms, like Mullā Maḥmūd, that the mental, universal concept of "existence" that resides in our minds (*fī'l-dhihn*) has no objective, extramental reality in the world "out there" (*fī'l-khārij*). Rather, for Khwājah Khwurd, the one and only real existence is not a universal that can be predicated of more than one thing, but only a single, discrete, concrete particular.[88]

While this brief sketch of the positions argued by Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd accounts for the philosophical and theological schools represented in the very earliest layers of commentary on the *Taswiyah,* it should be noted that the text itself addresses a number of other philosophical and theological groups, which thus illuminates even more fully the numerous intellectual strands that

constitute the Arabo-Persian jet stream in which Muḥibb Allāh participated. The later commentaries on the *Taswiyah,* similarly, represent a number of these additional philosophical perspectives, although an examination of them unfortunately lies beyond our present needs. The critical voices of Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd, for the purposes of this study, provide enough of an intellectual context with which to sufficiently delineate Muḥibb Allāh's goals within the *Taswiyah,* though future scholarship should take note of the further philosophical currents that Muḥibb Allāh engages. Perhaps the most prominent of these groups was the school of speculative theology (*kalām*) known as the Ashʿariyyah, which traces its origins to the ninth/tenth-century figure Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 936) and receives significant elaboration through the influential efforts of such later Ashʿarī theologians (*mutakallimūn*) as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), al-Ījī, al-Taftāzānī, and Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī.[89] My exceedingly cursory glance at a manuscript suggests that Amān Allāh Banārasī's (d. 1721) commentary on the *Taswiyah* might represent an Ashʿarī perspective on the discussion, although this identification is only tentative.[90] Muḥibb Allāh additionally addresses a group known as the Ḥusbāniyyah (usually translated as "Sophists" or "Skeptics"), who adopt a position in which the entirety of the universe, and all the objects within it, are deemed to be in a constant state of flux, change, and transience.[91] Lastly, the *Taswiyah* contains what could be a reference to the *ishrāqī* ("Illuminationist") school attributed to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), possibly as filtered through the lens of Dawānī, who also considered himself an interpreter within the *ishrāqī* tradition.[92]

Confronted, in his own time, with these diverse philosophical and theological positions on questions of *wujūd,* Muḥibb Allāh sought, in the *Taswiyah* and in other writings, to insert his own positions and counter-arguments into this fray. Like most *wujūdīs,* Muḥibb Allāh invoked the writings of Ibn ʿArabī to formulate his arguments, particularly the latter's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* ("Bezels of Wisdom") as well as his voluminous *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* ("The Meccan Openings"). Muḥibb Allāh was also familiar with the more systematic, philosophical writers of the later *wujūdī* tradition, including such figures as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 1329), Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350), and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī (d. 1492), each of whom had composed a number of treatises in specific response to many of the same philosophical and theological schools with which Muḥibb Allāh was in conversation. In the *Taswiyah,* however, Muḥibb Allāh does not manifestly rely upon these authors, opting instead to formulate his own highly original statements and arguments, interspersed with lengthy quotations from the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* to amplify his point. Nevertheless, one may note certain basic conceptual similarities between Muḥibb Allāh and these authors, such that, one could assert, this particular group of *wujūdīs* constitutes the philosophical "school" with which Muḥibb Allāh exhibits the closest affinity.

Authors in the tradition of Qayṣarī and Jāmī—in writings such as *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kilam fī maʿānī Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *al-Durrah al-fākhirah,* respectively—maintain as their central tenet that the Necessary, God, is existence (*wujūd*), but insist that this sense of the term "existence" must be carefully distinguished from various other senses of the word.[93] To explicate these different senses of "*wujūd,*" Qayṣarī seemingly builds on a framework established by Ibn Sīnā in his discussions on natural kinds: he identifies one type of *wujūd* as "existence in the external world" (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*), which simply corresponds to the existence that we habitually attribute to a given particular object; another type of *wujūd* is "existence in the mind" (*al-wujūd al-dhihnī*), which corresponds to the mentally abstracted universal concept of existence; then there is "*wujūd* insofar as it is what it is" (*al-wujūd min ḥaythu huwa huwa*), which is the real existence of the Necessary, neither one nor many, neither universal nor particular.[94] Hence, in simpler terms, Qayṣarī identifies three varieties of existence: 1) existence instantiated in a particular, 2) the abstracted mental universal "existence," and 3) Existence as such, which is identical with the Necessary, the absolute Real; this would correspond, by way of the example of "human," to: 1) a particular human, Matthew (corresponding to Ibn Sīnā's "*fī'l-kathrah,*" also known as "*bi-sharṭ shay*'"); 2) the concept "human" that arises when the mind, having encountered multiple humans—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and so on—groups them all together under an abstracted universal genus "human" (corresponding with Ibn Sīnā's "*baʿda al-kathrah,*" also known as "*bi-sharṭ lā*"); and 3) the essence "humanity" as such, which is prior both to instantiation in particulars and to mental conceptualization, and possesses a transcendent reality irrespective of whether particular humans are there to concretize or to mentally abstract it (corresponding with Ibn Sīnā's "*qabla al-kathrah,*" also known as "*lā bi-sharṭ*").[95] This latter sense of *wujūd* is what Jāmī refers to as "the reality of existence" (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), as contrasted with mere particular instances of existence (*wujūdāt khāṣṣah*) or the mere concept of existence (*mafhūm al-wujūd*). It should be noted that, although Qayṣarī and Jāmī seek to distinguish this third sense of existence—that is, the real existence of the Necessary, referred to as "absolute existence" (*wujūd muṭlaq*)—from a universal (*kullī*), some of their descriptions of the Necessary do seem to fit the characteristics of a universal. As such, opponents have often objected that, despite their best efforts, these *wujūdī* thinkers have simply made "Necessary existence" into a universal.

Regardless of the validity of this critique, however, a crucial distinction remains: as we have seen both Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd suggest, a mental universal concept (*kullī*) like "existence" has no objective, *extra*-mental existence, but rather, only inhabits our minds. The closest a universal like "existence" could come to existing "out there" in the world is insofar as one would be willing to grant that the mental concept "existence" can be instantiated in particulars (*afrād*), that is, insofar as one is willing to affirm, in a qualified way, that the table, chair, and

apple "possess" (the mental universal) "existence." *Wujūdī* thinkers in the tradition of Qayṣarī and Jāmī, however, affirm that universals do indeed have an objective existence outside the mind, irrespective of the presence or absence of concrete instantiations. It is for this reason that Jāmī emphasizes his aforementioned distinction between the mentally abstracted universal *concept* (*mafhūm*) of existence—a variety of existence that all parties agree exists only in the mind—from what he terms the *reality* (*ḥaqīqah*) of existence—a principial, Necessary reality that encompasses, transcends, and is the source of all other, ontologically "lesser" modes of existence.[96] As Qayṣarī affirms quite explicitly in his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, "we do not concede that the natural universal (*kullī ṭabīʿī*),[97] for its actualization (*taḥaqquq*), depends upon the existence of that which occurs to it[98] . . . for the accident (*ʿāriḍ*) is not actualized except in its substance (*maʿrūḍ*), so, if it were [also] the case that its substance depended upon it (the accident) for its (the substance's) actualization, then this would imply [the fault of] circularity."[99] Here Qayṣarī compares the relationship between a universal and its particulars to that between a substance and an accident: red (an accident) cannot appear in the world without some kind of a substratum in which to appear, such as a piece of fabric; "red" or "redness," in other words, can never be found in the world floating about on its own. The accident "red" thus depends upon the substratum "fabric" for its concrete existence in the world. The reverse is not the case, however, for the fabric can perfectly well exist without the red. Hence, the dependency is unidirectional. In the same way, Qayṣarī affirms, the particulars that fall under a given universal depend upon that universal for their existence, but not vice-versa: the universal reality "human" is there "first,"[100] and particular humans such as Matthew, Mark, and Luke, operating analogously to "accidents" or "attributes" that rest in this universal, depend on (or, we might even say, "derive from") the universal "human" for their existence.

Accordingly, these *wujūdī* thinkers assert that the universal "human" is in fact ontologically prior to its particular instances, and, contrary to the views of the other groups surveyed so far, the same holds all the more true for absolute existence (*wujūd muṭlaq*) in relation to the particular instantiations of existence (*wujūdāt*) in the world.[101] Qayṣarī adds that the universal does indeed require particular instances in order to exist in the levels of reality that lay beneath it,[102] such that the universal reality "human," for instance, in itself cannot appear within the realm of sensory perception (*ʿālam al-shahādah*), but can only exist before our physical eyes through the particular forms of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and so forth. Yet the universal does *not* depend upon these particulars for its objective reality as such: the universal will happily enjoy its existence in higher realms of reality, regardless of whether there is a particular through which it (the universal) can instantiate in the here-below. *Wujūdī* thinkers such as Qayṣarī and Jāmī will readily grant that the mentally abstracted universal is indeed mind-dependent and dependent on concrete particulars for its existence, but further stipulate that there is another kind of "real universal" that is an ontologically prior, objective entity, from which

the particulars themselves derive, and, thus, upon which they depend. *Wujūd,* for these thinkers, is the "real universal" par excellence, identified with God, who is *wujūd* per se. The particular existent objects of the world, in turn, instantiate and manifest (*ẓuhūr, tajallī*) this absolute *wujūd* in the here-below, much as particular humans instantiate and manifest the transcendent, universal reality "human."

Though he formulates his views in a different manner than Qūnawī, Kāshānī, Qayṣarī, and Jāmī, Muḥibb Allāh, in interpreting Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ* in the context of the *Taswiyah*, articulates a philosophical perspective that exhibits several basic similarities. Muḥibb Allāh shares the realist commitments of these *wujūdī* thinkers, for instance, in asserting that universals are extra-mentally real and ontologically prior to their particulars, the latter depending upon the former for their existence.[103] Muḥibb Allāh also affirms, along with these figures, that the universal depends upon the particular only in the respect that the universal can only become manifest (*mutajallī*) at a lower level of reality—in the sensory realm, for instance—through a particular that is of that realm.[104] There is, accordingly, a certain reciprocal dependence, according to Muḥibb Allāh, between the universal and the particular, though the ontological priority of the former is never in question. Accordingly, unlike Qayṣarī and Jāmī, who shy away from such a formulation even if they may ultimately fall into it, Muḥibb Allāh is perfectly comfortable describing the absolute Reality (*al-ḥaqq*), the Necessary (*al-wājib*), as a universal: indeed, he unhesitatingly describes the Necessary as the "highest genus" (*al-jins al-ʿālī*), that is, the genus that contains all other genera or the universal that contains all universals.[105] While the likes of Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd would insist that this highest genus is purely a second-order mental concept (*maʿqūl thānī*) and nothing more—that is, a mental abstraction based on other mental abstractions that does not track with anything real in the external world[106]—the realist Muḥibb Allāh, in contrast, affirms that the highest genus is in fact the real, objective, comprehensive source of all other genera and then, by extension, all particulars and existents. Muḥibb Allāh therefore dubs this highest genus, following Ibn ʿArabī's terminology, the *ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqāʾiq* ("Reality of realities"), describing it as the Essence that includes and encompasses within it the essences of all existent things.[107]

This Reality of realities, accordingly, contains all lower realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) within it. Muḥibb Allāh thus erects a three-level conception of existence, the most fundamental being 1) the Reality of realities itself, which is the source of 2) the realities—such as the essence "human," the essence "horse," and so forth—which are, in turn, the source of 3) the particular existent objects that we see and know in the manifest world. It is in light of this tripartite conception that Muḥibb Allāh can assert, quite strikingly, that concrete, particular objects in the world (the "possible existents," *mumkināt*) are "not other than the Necessary (*al-wājib*)."[108] Though Mullā Maḥmūd, Khwājah Khwurd, and all the other Islamic theological and philosophical schools described here are at pains to establish the irreducible divide between God (the Necessary) and the world (the possible entities), Muḥibb

Allāh, even more strongly than Qayṣarī or Jāmī, readily affirms their fundamental, essential identity.[109] Muḥibb Allāh depicts this identity through the analogy of water and bubbles: each and every bubble, whether in a potential or an actual state, is always "contained" within the ocean water; likewise, every bubble, even though it looks different than water, is really made up of nothing but water.[110] As such, even though there appear to be two distinct entities, ultimately there is only water, the bubbles being nothing more than delimited "forms" (*ṣuwar*) or "manifestations" (*tajallīyāt*) of the water; also evident is the ontological primacy of the water, and the bubbles' complete and utter dependence upon it for their existence. In the same way, the possible existents all depend upon, consist of, manifest, and are principially contained within the real existence of the Necessary, a daring formulation of the ontological continuity between God and the world that is most typically withheld from the philosophical arena, and instead reserved for the more ecstatic, non-technical, "imprecise" realm of poetry, as in the oft-repeated Persian poetic utterance "*hamah ūst*" ("all is He!").[111]

Although, once again, Muḥibb Allāh was almost certainly too young to have influenced the translation team directly, the *Jūg Bāsisht* nevertheless does exhibit this characteristic emphasis on the ontological continuity between God and the phenomenal world. Muḥibb Allāh's precise formulation of *wujūd* here, accordingly, will help us to make better sense of the *Jūg Bāsisht* in the chapters to follow. He represents, in a general way, a viable approach to *waḥdat al-wujūd* that was on offer within the early modern Arabo-Persian jet stream, from which the translation team drew in composing the *Jūg Bāsisht.* What should also be noted from the foregoing is the sheer breadth and complexity of the Arabo-Persian philosophical jet stream in this early modern moment: between several varieties of Peripatetic, Dawānian, Ashʿarī, *ishrāqī,* and other philosophical and theological traditions, Muḥibb Allāh had a great many conversation partners from whom to choose, with only a select slice specifically addressed within the *Taswiyah.*[112] Modern scholars have largely missed this broad scope of pressing philosophical disputations, focusing instead on an imagined *wujūd*-vs.-*shuhūd* rivalry, despite the fact that Sirhindī, so far as is known, is nowhere mentioned across Muḥibb Allāh's numerous compositions. With so much occupying his attention, furthermore, it should also come as little surprise that Muḥibb Allāh would have little time or inclination to engage Hindu philosophical traditions directly. Muḥibb Allāh does, however, engage in considerable reflection on the *general* phenomenon of humankind's pronounced religious diversity, a topic to which we now turn via his less dialectical, more sapiential treatises.

THE QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

In light of Muḥibb Allāh's exceptional willingness to affirm the ontological continuity—though *not* a simple, sheer identity—between God and the world, there

still remains to be addressed the socio-political attitudes that modern scholars have tended to associate with Muḥibb Allāh's *wujūdī* sensibilities. If, in the last analysis, everything in the universe is ultimately a manifestation of the one Reality and reducible to it, then how could the distinctions between different religions, between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy," or even between "right" and "wrong," retain their integrity and normative force? In this vein, as seen above, a number of modern scholars have attributed to Muḥibb Allāh a somehow "pro-Hindu" attitude, with a concomitantly nebulous relationship with the *sharī'ah* and Islamic law.[113] Such associations, however, are rarely grounded in any close, sustained consideration of Muḥibb Allāh's actual writings and teachings.

Indeed, the only concrete evidence offered to support the idea of Muḥibb Allāh's "pro-Hindu" stance are the abovementioned isolated sentences from his two letters to Prince Dārā Shikōh. In these letters, Muḥibb Allāh offers the advice that a ruler's primary consideration is the tranquility and safety of *all* of God's creations, whether they be believers (*mu'minūn*) or unbelievers (*kāfirūn*), since all of God's creation is His manifestation (*paydāyish*). Muḥibb Allāh continues that the lord of all human lords, the Prophet Muḥammad, was merciful to everyone—from the most pious to the most sinful—while the Qur'ān proclaims that God sent the Prophet "as a mercy to the worlds" (21:107). Now, this means that the Prophet was sent as a mercy to *all* people and societies, just as God is the Lord of all the worlds and spreads His mercy over all of them. The prince or king, accordingly, in seeking to follow the example (*sunnah*) of the Prophet who himself reflects God's perfect Lordship, should display mercy towards all his subjects, Muslim or otherwise.[114] Muḥibb Allāh adds at the end of the passage, however, that, even though God, the Lord, showers his unlimited mercy upon all of creation, each created thing only receives that mercy in accordance with its own level (*martabah*), that is to say, in accordance with its own degree of receptivity to that mercy.[115] In other words, a creature may reject God's mercy even though it is being offered, much as, for instance, someone might reject a gesture of kindness from an individual with whom he is angry. Putting aside, for the moment, the likely scenario, based upon his letters, that Dārā Shikōh was not especially enamored of Muḥibb Allāh's replies—and, hence, it seems unlikely that Muḥibb Allāh's particular counsel had much of a formative impact upon the young prince—this passage nevertheless provides a seemingly promising entry point for recovering Muḥibb Allāh's attitudes toward, and potential relations with, the "Hindus" of South Asia. In order to determine whether this passage really does amount to a "pro-Hindu" attitude standing in tension with Islamic law, let us turn then to Muḥibb Allāh's other writings, both Arabic and Persian, in the hopes of deepening and nuancing our understanding of passages such as these, too often read in isolation when they should be read in light of the author's larger corpus.

The idea of God as the "All-Merciful" (*al-raḥmān*) sits at the heart of much of Muḥibb Allāh's metaphysics, even as it forms one of the central themes of Ibn

ʿArabī's thought and, indeed, the Qurʾān itself.[116] Though the theme appears in the majority of his treatises, one of the most sustained treatments occurs in his Persian commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* particularly the chapters on the prophets Ādam, Hūd, Shuʿayb, and Ṣāliḥ. Here, both Muḥibb Allāh and Ibn ʿArabī recount the process of the world's manifestation, when God, who was alone at the "beginning," desired to be known and to witness His own perfections and beauties, a notion supported by the oft-cited *ḥadīth qudsī* where God declares: "I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known. Hence I created the creatures/world (*khalq*) in order that I would be known."[117] In this way, desiring to have His perfections and beauties shared with others, God first conceived the infinite possible creations within His own infinite knowledge. These possibilities, as the objects of God's pre-eternal knowledge, are referred to by Ibn ʿArabī and Muḥibb Allāh as the "immutable essences" (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*). Subsequently, God next brought these countless possibilities into existence, the fruit of which is the continuing process of the coming-to-be of the universe, drawn from God's knowledge into a state of "manifestation" (*tajallī*).[118]

Now, since, according to Muḥibb Allāh, God's existence (*wujūd*) is the only existence there is, this means that the possible (*mumkin*) entities of the created order can only "borrow" their existence from His. In reality, their existence is only His existence deployed in particular, delimited modes. Muḥibb Allāh's analogy of water and bubbles provides a useful illustration: water contains within itself an array of possible modes of manifestation—it may appear as snow, ice, vapor, foam, etc.—but each one of those manifestations is really, ultimately, none other than the water itself. Furthermore, God manifests His own names, qualities, beauties, and perfections *through* these creations, such that, whatever majesty there might be in, for example, a particular mountain, is really just the manifestation or reflection of God's own dimension of majesty (*jalāl*). Every object in the entire phenomenal order, accordingly, is simply the playing out of that "initial" moment in which God desired to see His intrinsic qualities disclosed in every possible outward modality and permutation. He first conceived those infinite modes and possibilities of His own nature—resulting in the fixing of the "immutable essences" within His knowledge—and then, in His infinite mercy, granted them all existence from out of His own *wujūd.* This process of generously pouring forth His own existence, beauties, and qualities into the infinite possible existents of the cosmos is referred to by Muḥibb Allāh, following Ibn ʿArabī, as the "breath" or "breathing out" of the All-Merciful (*nafas al-raḥmān*).[119]

No possible existent, however, can manifest the fullness of God's nature; each manifestation manifests only an aspect or dimension of His names and qualities (*asmāʾ wa ṣifāt*). Hence, each manifestation (*tajallī, ẓuhūr, paydāyish*) is also referred to as a "delimitation" (*taqayyud*) or "specification" (*taʿayyun*), given that it restrictively presents just one articulation of pure Existence to the exclusion of others. The possible entity, thus, simultaneously veils and discloses the divine

Reality.[120] Muḥibb Allāh affirms that it is in fact the immutable essence (*ʿayn thābitah*) that determines in exactly which mode the Real will manifest through that particular object and what that object will exclude: each *ʿayn thābitah* is, precisely, God's pre-eternal knowledge of each and every possibility for that entity in every last detail of its becoming—how it will come to exist, how it will pass away, what it will be/become in every moment in between—a knowledge which is immutably and unchangeably fixed within God's omniscient awareness. When God extends his mercy to grant existence to that immutable essence, then, it will only accept that mercy in accordance with its own pre-determined receptivity to it: the immutable essence of a particular lotus flower, for instance, will happily accept varying degrees and aspects of God's dimensions of "beauty" (*jamāl*) and "peace" (*salām*), but will not especially well accept the more severe or wrathful qualities contained within God's reality (God as the "slayer," *al-mumīt*, or the "conqueror," *al-qahhār*, and so forth).[121] That flower's existence, accordingly, will manifest only those specific qualities of pure, undelimited *wujūd*, while excluding the others. This "receptivity" (*qābiliyyah*) of the possible entity, referenced in the full title of Muḥibb Allāh's *Taswiyah,* is also referred to by various other technical terms, including "capacity" or "preparedness" (*istiʿdād*).

So how, then, does this metaphysical framework relate to the particular question of a *shaykh* or prince's treatment of Muslims and non-Muslims? The first thing worth emphasizing regarding this framework is that "distinction" and "difference" do play a prominent role within it: Muḥibb Allāh's vision is not one of "sheer-unity-pure-and-simple," but rather, a unity that has distinction and difference prefigured within it, as the entirety of the infinite, unique possibilities of the cosmos are principially contained within God's knowledge and His pure, undelimited *wujūd.* Both the unity between a lion and flower, and all that which distinguishes a lion and a flower, have their roots in the most fundamental layers of Reality, which means that difference cannot be so easily discarded in the name of "sheer unity." It is for this reason that Muḥibb Allāh, echoing Ibn ʿArabī, never tires of insisting on the crucial need to find a balance between affirming God's immanence in the world (*tashbīh*), on the one hand, and His utter transcendence of it (*tanzīh*), on the other, for, it is just as important to say "the world is *not* God" as it is to say "the world *is* God."[122] Indeed, when critiquing other thinkers, philosophical schools, and intellectual tendencies, Muḥibb Allāh continually returns to the *tanzīh-tashbīh* dyad, singling out the basic error of these thinkers as either falling too far on the side of *tanzīh* or else too far on the side of *tashbīh*—or, sometimes, both somehow at the same time![123] If the created entities of the world are, thus, simultaneously different from and identical with God, then this is likewise true of created objects with respect to one another; given any two objects, there must be some respect(s) in which they are the "same" (*tashbīh*) and some respect(s) in which they are "different" (*tanzīh*).

In the language of Muḥibb Allāh's letter, however, in the case of Muslims ("*muslimūn*" or "*muʾminūn*") and non-Muslims ("*kāfirūn,*" i.e., "unbelievers"),

we are speaking not just about created objects, but about the more specific category of "religions," or what Muḥibb Allāh calls, in Qur'ānic terms, "*dīn*" or "*shar*ʿ," both of which suggest the idea of a path or "way-to-be-followed,"[124] "*shar*ʿ" also referring to a divine revelation. For Muḥibb Allāh, the starting point of all "religion" is, precisely, revelation (*shar*ʿ), that is, a descent (*tanzīl*) of God's message or word into the world by means of a messenger (*rasūl*), who conveys that word to his community (*ummah*). Muḥibb Allāh is explicit that God has sent multiple revelations through multiple messengers, all of whose messages convey the same essential knowledge and wisdom.[125] At the outset of his Persian auto-commentary on the *Taswiyah,* for instance, Muḥibb Allāh affirms that every one of God's numerous revelations has expressed the truth contained in the Qur'ānic verse "wheresoever you look, there is the face of God" (2:115).[126] This means that, according to Muḥibb Allāh, every single one of the messengers and prophets knew and conveyed to his community the teaching that God, the Essence (*dhāt*), is present and manifest in every last created thing—even the stars, or even the idols of idol-worshippers.[127] Indeed, Muḥibb Allāh even quotes from the considerable corpus of Persian poetry that articulates a certain defense of the practice: "If an unbeliever (*kāfir*) should become enlightened by means of an idol, where in his religion (*dīn*) has he gone astray?"[128] Such affirmations, at first glance, would seem to lend credence to the notion that Muḥibb Allāh, as well as *waḥdat al-wujūd,* go hand-in-hand with "heterodoxy" and a "pro-Hindu" outlook.

The story of revelation, however, does not end here. Even if Reality is one, and the revelations (*sharā'i*ʿ) communicate shared, universal truths, the fact still remains that each revelation is unique, descending in a different language than all the others, and containing teachings, perspectives, laws, and customs that are distinct from all the others—in some cases, drastically or even contradictorily so. This diversity of revelations, hence, must be explained and accounted for. Though there are many ways those in the *wujūdī* tradition have done so, one of Muḥibb Allāh's preferred approaches is in reference to the distinctive souls of each prophet (*nabī*). He asserts that, like all possible, created entities, the prophets too each have their own unique immutable essences (*aʿyān thābitah*), which means that the possibilities of a prophet's soul ("*nafs*" or "*rūḥ*") to manifest the myriad modes of God's names and attributes—the modalities of God's *wujūd* that it is able to adopt and embody—are different for each prophet.[129] Accordingly, each prophet's unique soul "colors" the revelation that comes to it, granting the revelation a certain "tint" in accordance with the basic nature and temperament of the prophet in question's soul, rather as pure light, shining through a stained-glass window, will be rendered red by one window, green by another, and so forth.

Indeed, the analogy ensconced within the very title of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* the "Bezels of Wisdom," communicates precisely this teaching: each prophet is a "bezel," that is, the setting on the top of a ring in which the ringstone is to be placed. Now, these settings vary widely from ring to ring, coming in various shapes and sizes.

Meanwhile, the actual jewel, which represents revelation or God's wisdom, has to assume the one and only particular shape that will fit into a given setting. In this way, the shape of a ring setting—in this case, a prophet's *ʿayn thābitah*—determines the shape of the stone—the revelation—that will be deposited within it; the stone (revelation), in its own turn, willingly accommodates the shape of the setting (the prophet's *ʿayn thābitah*) that is presented to it,[130] the two entities, in this manner, standing in a mutual relationship of shaping and re-fashioning one another. And so, although all the messengers—Muḥammad, Jesus, Moses, and so on[131]—have been sent a common message, the unique contours of each of their souls effect the diversity of the revelations. It is as if one imagined the entire constellation of God's names and attributes as stars in the sky: the unique position of each prophet within that sky—determined by his soul's inherent, particular affinity for some attributes over others, for instance—would re-orient or "skew" what that sky would look like, for the three-dimensional constellation would look different as viewed from different positions and vantage-points within it. The "total sky" of God's Reality (*ḥaqīqah*) that is communicated by each revelation, accordingly, will look different in each case, even though the sky and stars are one and the same throughout.

But it is not only the prophets' souls that are fixed by God's conceiving of the *aʿyān al-thābitah*; the souls of every human individual and every human collectivity are also established within God's knowledge in that same pre-eternal "moment." Accordingly, in his Persian auto-commentary on the *Taswiyah,* for example, Muḥibb Allāh asserts that the multiplicity of, and differences between, the conduct of the numerous prophets is in light of the multiplicity of, and differences between, the capacities or "preparednesses" (*istiʿdādāt*) of the various human communities (or "nations," *umam,* sing. *ummah*) to which those prophets were sent.[132] Although a community is a much more complex phenomenon than a human individual, nonetheless, this affirmation implies that, for Muḥibb Allāh, different human collectivities, too, possess a particular nature, character, or temperament—not to mention different norms and social customs—that are unique to them. When God, accordingly, sends a new revelation to a community by means of a new messenger, that revelation is tailored to suit the specific needs, qualities, and "idiom" of that community, as is the example (*sunnah*) of their messenger, who embodies the ideal human response to revelation for that community. In other words, when God sends a revelation to a community—and, as God states in the Qurʾān, He has sent a messenger to every community (10:47)—He makes sure to do so in their own "language," both literally and figuratively. Otherwise, revelation would be pointless, the *raison dʾêtre* of revelations and prophets being, according to Muḥibb Allāh, to show people the way back to God. They cannot accomplish that purpose unless they speak to the listener in a way that will make sense to her and will address and remedy her specific ailment(s).

If every community has a general "preparedness" (*istiʿdād*) or capacity to display God's names and attributes, then every human individual, all the more so,

possesses a unique, specific preparedness to manifest the various dimensions and qualities of *wujūd*. Just as each individual, therefore, manifests God's *existence* in a unique manner, in the same fashion, every soul also *knows* God in a distinctive way, in accordance with her distinct *isti'dād*.[133] In other words, the *'ayn thābitah* is, precisely, the distinctive relationship that exists between a soul, on the one hand, and God's names and attributes, on the other; the soul's peculiar knowledge of God is, of course, deeply implicated in that relationship. Accordingly, Muḥibb Allāh often states, following Ibn 'Arabī, that every soul creates its own Lord within itself, and then projects that Lord as though He were outside of it.[134] Just as the bezel of a ring "makes" its own ringstone, each soul considers God's nature to be in accordance with its specific relationship with Him; God, in turn, knowing, comprehensively, a given soul's particular relationship with Him, willingly discloses Himself to that soul in that form so that it will accept Him and not turn away from Him, much as the jewel "willingly" shapes itself to fit into the ring's bezel.[135] The problem, however, occurs when someone takes her own individual "lord," fashioned in the image of her own soul, to be absolute, as though only her conception of God is valid to the exclusion of all others. This, Muḥibb Allāh flatly asserts, is no different from the worst forms of idol-worship: just as an idolater may consider God to be within her idol and nowhere else, likewise, the narrow-minded individual creates her own "lord" within herself, and then worships that idea as an idol to the exclusion of all other conceptions of God.[136] As Muḥibb Allāh elegantly states the matter in his Persian *Fuṣūṣ* commentary, "beware, lest you restrict God to your own specific belief (*i'tiqād*), and then you become an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and a rejecter of that which is outside of your own specific limitation."[137] The believer, accordingly, must strive to be constantly open to aspects and dimensions of God's nature that may simply escape her comprehension at the present moment. One's knowledge of God is not static over the course of a lifetime; rather, there is the unceasing possibility of its becoming ever more encompassing and comprehensive, if one would only pursue it in the proper manner. It is for this reason that Muḥibb Allāh insists that, even though we all have our own unique conceptions of God in accordance with our own peculiar capacities, not all conceptions of God are created equal. On the contrary, such conceptions are situated within a hierarchy, with some being more comprehensive than others, just as some descriptions of a complex object are better and more exhaustive while others are more limited, partial, or potentially even distorting.[138]

If it is true, then, as the Qur'ān affirms, that our knowledge of God and our manifestation of His names and attributes may increase,[139] then how does one accomplish this? The most rudimentary answer, for Muḥibb Allāh, is religious praxis, specifically the forms of religious practice sanctioned by God and sent down with His prophets. Muḥibb Allāh is abundantly clear that we cannot accomplish the return to God through our own devices or by any feat of our own individual will (*ikhtiyār*).[140] Since God is the source of all knowledge and salvation, His help or

favor (*ʿināyat*) is needed in order to escape ignorance, and He has already offered us that help through the practices enjoined in the Qurʾān and in the example of the Prophet Muḥammad and the other great friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) throughout history.[141] Accordingly, Muḥibb Allāh insists time and again, throughout all of his writings, on the need for formal religious *praxis* (*ʿamal*), including such rites as the recitation of the Qurʾān (*tilāvat-i qurʾān*), the repetition of God's names (*ẕikr*), and the spiritual retreat (*khalvat*).[142] So vital is formal *praxis,* in fact, that Muḥibb Allāh undertook to write a lengthy Persian treatise, the *ʿIbādāt al-khavāṣṣ,* on the specific subject of Islamic acts of worship (*ʿibādāt*), covering such central topics of Islamic law as the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), purification (*ṭahārat*), canonical prayer (*ṣalāt*), fasting (*ṣawm*), supererogatory acts (*nawāfil*), recommended acts (*sunan*), obligatory acts (*farāʾiḍ*), and numerous others.[143] These were the lifelong activities undertaken by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, who, for Muḥibb Allāh, attained a greater degree of knowledge than any non-prophet could ever hope to achieve, and who manifested God's names and attributes as comprehensively as any human being ever could. So, one should practice as the Prophet practiced in the hopes that she might approach as close as possible to his lofty station.[144]

Of course, we non-prophets will never equal the Prophet's station, which means that we can never abandon the *sharīʿah* and the Prophet's example in this lifetime. This is why, Muḥibb Allāh insists, Ibn ʿArabī himself expended constant efforts to protect the *sharīʿah* of Muḥammad, declaring that the perfection of the traveler on the spiritual path "is that his step never once goes outside of the boundary of the *sharīʿah.*"[145] Indeed, according to Muḥibb Allāh in his Persian *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* there is actually no end to the levels of certainty and degrees of repose in the divine presence that can be achieved. Accordingly, the traveler on the path must, day after day, exert continuous efforts for her spiritual advancement, just as the prophets never ceased to do.[146] The proper believers, accordingly, consistently imitate the conduct of the prophets (*al-anbiyāʾ*) and the messengers (*al-rusul*), rather than following their own whims and "reasoned" opinions, for, to follow only one's own opinion is, again, to make an idol out of one's own individual "lord."[147]

Yet, if all the prophets were sent by God and conveyed authentic revelations, then why follow one prophet over any other? After all, they all know God's nature and manifest His names and qualities with exceptional profundity, so are they not all worthy of being followed? In answer to this question, in his *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah* and in his Persian commentary on *Faṣṣ Hūd,* among other places, Muḥibb Allāh constructs an image in which all the prophets, owing to their intrinsic differences (as outlined above), are all situated in different "locations," all of them facing in the *direction* (*qiblah*) of God, here metaphorically referencing the orientation of the daily prayers (*ṣalāt*), for which Muslims across the globe pray in the direction of the Kaʿbah in Mecca.[148] Now, since they are standing in different places, each prophet faces a different compass direction, even though they are all oriented toward a common central point, God. Muḥibb Allāh first acknowledges that, yes,

God, the Real, is present everywhere and encompasses everything, and so, He is fully present to each direction or *qiblah*; to deny this would be to limit God, that is, to say that He is only in one place and not some other place, which amounts to unbelief (*kufr*) and idol-worship. At the same time, however, qua human individual, each prophet is only able to stand in his own given location at a given time; none of the prophets, being specified (*muta'ayyin*), delimited (*muqayyad*) beings, can stand in all places at once. Only God, the unspecified, undelimited Reality, is present everywhere, while the delimited possible entity, for so long as it remains a possible entity, can only reside in a single "where."[149]

And so, while it may be true, in principle, that all the prophets are to be followed, in actual, practical fact, as a delimited existent, each human can only follow one path back to God, which means following a single prophet within whose "jurisdiction" that particular path falls. Accordingly, Muḥibb Allāh calls for his readers to maintain a balance: on the one hand, it is an error to restrict God only to one's own *qiblah*—rather, He is present to all *qiblahs*—yet, at the level of practical conduct, one must only pray according to the particular *qiblah* that is appropriate to her location, which means following the one and only prophet that is hers to be followed.[150] God fixes the possibilities for a given *'ayn* from pre-eternity, which means that He also fixes its destiny. Accordingly, God providentially intends for each *'ayn* a particular prophet, who will exemplify the *qiblah* for that *'ayn*.[151] If one were to invoke the analogy of "religion" as a path up a steep mountain, difficult of ascent, it could be said that the revelation brought by each prophet establishes, upon one face of that mountain, a new, broad path to the top.[152] While upon a particular path, one is only to follow the guidance offered by that path's particular guide;[153] it would be, in fact, *dangerous* to follow the instructions offered by a guide on one of the other sides of the mountain, where the terrain and obstacles will be distinct, in which case any guidance offered would be, at best, only accidentally beneficial and, at worse, a veritable *mis*guidance of drastic and potentially deadly consequences. From the summit of the mountain, one might be able to look down and observe all the paths simultaneously; the summit of the mountain, however, would coincide with God Himself, the absolutely Real, undelimited *wujūd*. An individual soul, in contrast, is a *delimited* existent: for so long as she remains in the world, a delimited, possible entity with a specific, restricted *'ayn*, then, by this very condition, she has no choice but to stand on a specific one of the numerous revealed paths.[154] Only sheer, undelimited Being can, metaphysically speaking, be present to all places and to all paths all at once. As such, "the one who is to be followed by the entirety of Muslims is the messenger [Muḥammad]."[155]

Hence, confronted with the common scholarly tendency to associate Muḥibb Allāh and *waḥdat al-wujūd* with the ignoring of religious difference and some kind of inevitable, monolithic agenda in favor of "Hindu-Muslim unity," it must be re-emphasized that distinction and difference do play a critical role in Muḥibb Allāh's conceptualization of religious diversity. Even if every created entity is

ultimately a manifestation of the one and only *wujūd*—which, in the last analysis, is the only reality there is—it also cannot be denied that some existents manifest a nobility, an excellence, etc., which surpasses that of other existents:[156] at some level, it is difficult to deny that a spectacular mountain, for instance, is a more majestic theater than a putrid landfill. In this regard, there are very real distinctions between different objects and different people, differences which cannot simply be overlooked and washed away in the name of sheer "unity." Every soul and every entity is specified and individuated in God's pre-eternal knowledge, which means that it uniquely manifests and uniquely veils the full plentitude of God's *wujūd;* for so long as the possible entity remains a possible entity, which is thus in some sense other than the Necessary, absolute *wujūd*, then distinction and difference will have a claim to it. As Muḥibb Allāh expresses the matter, the Kaʿbah and the wine-tavern are indeed, ultimately, one,[157] but, for so long as the heart of the believer is not purified—for so long as there remains even a trace of "otherness" from the Real within him—the two places will not be the same for him.[158] At the same time, Muḥibb Allāh asserts elsewhere, perfect knowledge means knowing an object *completely,* that is to say, in all of its aspects. This means knowing all that which makes a given entity what it is, which is not only *wujūd,* but also its specific *ʿayn thābitah.* True wisdom (*ḥikmat*)—knowing things *as they are*—is also "to know the difference between a snake and fish" and to "distinguish honey from poison."[159] Therefore, one must distinguish between good deeds and bad deeds, and one must act accordingly, for we are not yet at the station of perfection (true perfection belonging to the Real alone) and we do not yet know whether we have molded our souls in this life in such a way as to merit salvation (*najāt*).[160]

Such "soteriological humility" is characteristic of another persistent theme in Muḥibb Allāh's writings (particularly in his Persian treatises), namely, the proper evaluation of spiritual intoxication and transient spiritual states (*aḥwāl,* sing. *ḥāl*).[161] Throughout his works, Muḥibb Allāh insists that "mystical states" of any variety—ecstatic experiences, visions, intoxications, or other comparable phenomena—have no independent authority of their own. If a particular spiritual experience communicates something that is contrary to the Qurʾān and the example (*sunnah*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, or even contrary to reason, then the latter should win out, with the *ḥāl* deemed to be vain, invalid, and utterly valueless. Muḥibb Allāh is even averse to placing any stock in *aḥwāl* that *do* conform to the Qurʾān and *sunnah,* simply for the sake of comprehensively protecting against the temptation to invest these *aḥwāl* with any semblance of authority when, in actuality, they possess none. Hence, repeatedly throughout his writings, Muḥibb Allāh critiques those around him who base their spiritual wayfaring on transient ecstatic experiences, convincing themselves that they have attained salvation or some great spiritual rank without any sound basis. Such individuals should instead be seeking the enduring condition of *maʿrifah* or gnosis through following the model of the Prophet:

> A group of the fools who fancy themselves to be travelling upon the path of the true gnostics (*ʿurafāʾ*) . . . those [fools] do not manifest proper seeing and hearing, and their speculation (*fikr*) is deficient . . . their views arise in ecstacy (*wajd*) and transient states (*ḥāl*), and they fancy that [such] a state is more noble than gnosis (*maʿrifat*) . . . . [This] is a lie which leads people astray.[162]
>
> Your own [individual] speculation cannot grasp which path is good and which is ugly. Rather, it is necessary to grasp every beauty and ugliness from the Book [the Qurʾān], from the *sunnah,* and from the discourse of the friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) . . . If you enact this advice, you will be saved from going astray.[163]

Given this utter worthlessness of *aḥwāl* for Muḥibb Allāh and the considerable danger of misguidance that they pose, whenever he discusses Ibn ʿArabī in any of his Persian writings, Muḥibb Allāh frequently adds the appellation "free of ecstasy and states" (*az wajd u ḥāl barī*) in order to emphasize that the spiritual path is in no way based on such fleeting experiences.[164] The authority, for Muḥibb Allāh, is unambiguously the Qurʾān and the Prophet, and even discriminating reason (*ʿaql*), while one must be wary of any *aḥwāl* experienced along the spiritual path, lest one, "in the grips of a particular *ḥāl,* turn toward a *qiblah* other than that of the Messenger."[165]

Though additional research is in order, it is not clear whom exactly Muḥibb Allāh has in mind when he speaks of these "fools" who erroneously base their spiritual wayfaring on ecstatic states. There is no shortage of examples of ecstatic mystics with little concern for the *sharīʿah* hailing from Muḥibb Allāh's time, such as the naked poet-mystic Sarmad or certain groups among the Nātha Yogis.[166] One might surmise that Muḥibb Allāh was referring to a figure of the likes of the Chishtī *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn (d. 1633/34), a contemporary of Muḥibb Allāh hailing from either Allahabad or Lucknow. ʿAbd al-Jalīl was a vocal proponent of *waḥdat al-wujūd,* but he often presented himself as having little concern for the observance of *sharīʿah*.[167] If he was indeed one of the targets of Muḥibb Allāh's criticisms, then this would constitute another case of *wujūdīs* debating other *wujūdīs,* once again signaling the underappreciated internal diversity hidden within this category.

More interestingly, however, one wonders if Muḥibb Allāh had in mind the sorts of exchanges that he shared with Prince Dārā Shikōh: as seen above, in his first reply to Muḥibb Allāh, Dārā had become impatient with the latter's constant referral to the words of the Prophet and the writings of other past sages. Dārā proclaimed that "the ecstasy (*wajd*) that does not happen to be in accord with the Word of God and the Prophet is much better than that which is written in books . . . Do not refer me to any more books!"[168] To this, Muḥibb Allāh replied: "a mode of being and a vision that is not in accordance with the Book of God and the *sunnah* of the Messenger is not worthy of consideration."[169] Even more interesting, on this point, is how closely Muḥibb Allāh's persistent critique of transient states (*aḥwāl*) echoes the critiques of Aḥmad Sirhindī, who similarly writes that

"experience is inferior to the *sharīʿah* and not vice versa, because *sharīʿah* is based on incontrovertible proof, while Sufi experience is a result of fallible speculation only."[170] Hence, on this most central of issues, contrary to nearly everything that has been written about Muḥibb Allāh in English-language scholarship, it seems that he and Dārā Shikōh are locked in contention, while Muḥibb Allāh and Sirhindī are in fact allies toiling on the same side. Never has the assumption that Muḥibb Allāh was aiming for some ideal of "Hindu-Muslim unity," and that he was Dārā's inspiration for pursuing that purported goal, seemed more unlikely.

What is most important to take away from the above discussion, for the larger purposes of this study, is that Muḥibb Allāh did not exhibit any kind of "Hindu-Muslim" socio-political agenda in his writings. What interests him throughout his varied treatises, above all else, is truth, salvation, and spiritual realization, articulated in a specifically Islamic idiom. Whereas modern readers might see in Muḥibb Allāh's commentary on the Bezel of *Hūd,* and the affirmation that God is present even in idols, a proclamation for a program of Hindu-Muslim cooperation, Muḥibb Allāh, instead, concludes the section on the note that we may be taken from this world at any moment, and so we should make sure our last moment is one of remembrance (*dhikr*), for God is present everywhere, and so we should be present with Him.[171] The nearest to a social teaching he has to offer is not one of Hindu-Muslim commonality, but rather, of Hindu-Muslim *difference,* as Muḥibb Allāh repeatedly relates the need for each community to follow its *own* prophet, which means that, for Muslims, every last detail of the Prophet's teachings, practices, and customs is indispensable. It may well be the case that, in principle, Muḥibb Allāh wished the best for the myriad non-Muslim communities of the world, and that he—again, in principle—maintained a potentially high opinion of them; it could just as easily be the case that Muḥibb Allāh followed the conventional Islamic view that, after the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad, all other religions were rendered abrogated (*mansūkh*) and hence invalid. What is perhaps more significant than either of these, however, is that, across his voluminous writings, Muḥibb Allāh penned hardly a word about any non-Muslim communities in any kind of specific detail, preferring, instead, to remain a thinker who wrote to and for those already within his own intellectual and religious community. In a manner largely comparable to Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh's prevailing attitude appears to be one of genuine and principled indifference, on the one hand, while exerting great efforts, in a thoroughly "Islamic" manner, to mind one's own soul before God, on the other.

One should of course remain open to the possibility of more fertile cross-pollinations informing Muḥibb Allāh's life and career in less overt ways. As noted above, for instance, Muḥibb Allāh's fellow Ṣābirī Sufi, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, composed his own adaptation and "Sufi commentary" on the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* the *Mirʾāt al-ḥaqāʾiq.* Surely Muḥibb Allāh would have been aware of his friend's scholarly activities in this vein. Additionally, Muḥibb Allāh's spiritual predecessor

in the Chishtī-Ṣābirī *silsilah,* ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangōhī (d. 1537), was well-known for his deep interest in Nātha *yogi* practices and Indic *haṭha yogi* breathing exercises, writing of himself that he taught an Arabic rendition of the *yoga* manual known as the *Pool of Nectar* (*Amṛtakuṇḍa*) to one of his disciples, while also discussing aspects of yogic practices in his *Rushd-nāmah*; this Chishtī interest in *yoga* of course endured long after Gangōhī's and Muḥibb Allāh's respective eras, with later Chishtī masters such as Ḥājjī Imdād Allāh (d. 1899) "continu[ing] to include descriptions of yogic mantras in Hindi alongside Arabic *dhikr* formulas, together with explicit accounts of yogic postures."[172] Through the Sufi breathing exercises mentioned above, likely of yogic provenance, that he learned in his early years, Muḥibb Allāh may well have participated, at the level of his regular spiritual practice, in this very same Chishtī tradition of engaging and adopting Sanskritic knowledge-systems. While there are surely additional such nodes of fascinating intercultural engagement for future scholarship to unearth, however, none of this should obscure the character of Muḥibb Allāh's public scholarly record, which remains steadfastly situated within and internal to the Arabo-Persian jet stream.

THE ARABO-PERSIAN JET STREAM AND THE QUESTION OF INTERACTION

As just described, throughout his numerous scholarly treatises, Muḥibb Allāh makes almost no explicit reference to any non-Muslim community or figure, much less a specifically "Hindu" or Sanskrit intellectual, nor does he ever discuss Sanskritic thought or practice in any recognizable form. Non-Muslims are simply referred to as "unbelievers" (*kāfirūn*), as was the convention in most Arabic and Persian writing, while no particular qualities of any particular non-Muslim groups are ever described. One might assume, of course, that Muḥibb Allāh had some specific group(s) of "Hindus" in mind when he wrote of these *kāfirūn,* but there is no way to know, and it is nevertheless significant that he chose not to name or describe them. In short, in his scholarly writing, Muḥibb Allāh was a thinker—entirely unremarkable, in this regard—thoroughly engrossed in the inquiries, norms, and prevailing concerns of the Arabo-Persian jet stream. This hugely rich tradition was already more than enough to demand his full attention, and so it should come as no surprise if the majority of participants in this intellectual tradition, like Muḥibb Allāh, lacked any particular need or inclination to explore other intellectual worlds in other languages. When one's primary interest is truth, knowledge, and salvation, and one is convinced that these are already fully available within one's own tradition, then there is little likely reward in looking elsewhere.

And yet, religious diversity is clearly a topic of great interest to a thinker like Muḥibb Allāh, and so one might reasonably expect *some* degree of concrete, particular engagement with non-Muslim traditions. There is certainly some precedent

for this sort of phenomenon: Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), of course, penned his well-known Arabic account of the various beliefs, practices, and sects of India, the *Kitāb al-Hind*—a text which examined Sanskritic thought in lengthy detail—while some Buddhist philosophical tenets also found their way into certain genres of Arabic theological writing, however distortedly.[173] Bīrūnī's work, however, was a unique piece of scholarship that, according to most modern scholars, did not inspire further Muslim writing in a comparable vein and was otherwise little known among later medieval and early modern Arabic-writing intellectuals. In other words, Bīrūnī's treatise never belonged to a *tradition* of scholarship, and so, it seems, never properly entered into an intellectual jet stream. The vaguely Buddhist ideas that sometimes appeared in medieval Arabic theological treatises, similarly, were such negligible phenomena as to be easily forgotten or overlooked.

The medieval Arabic language, it seems, at least in its scholastic modes, was simply ill-equipped to build a new vocabulary and to incorporate other intellectual worlds into its sphere of interest in a sustained and detailed way. This became all the more the case by the early modern period, when Arabic had acquired additional volume, complexity, and entrenched disciplinary inertia that could not be easily altered. By the mid-seventeenth century, Arabic had been in use as the primary medium for Muslim thinkers to address philosophical and theological queries for nearly a thousand years; to ask the Arabic jet stream, at that ripe age, to cultivate new vocabularies, new conceptual systems, and dramatically new topics of inquiry for the sake of engaging Sanskrit thought in a deliberate disciplinary fashion was no small request indeed. Given these constraints—and recognizing that a few individual counter-examples might perhaps come to light—a full-fledged Arabic-Sanskrit cross-philosophical "dialogue" seemed largely untenable in Muḥibb Allāh's historical moment. For any such "dialogue" to begin to take place, a language with far less scholastic inertia would seem a more promising option.

Enter Persian: as indicated above, in the early modern period Persian was expanding into new scholarly arenas and in many ways still finding its footing as an intellectual language of philosophical inquiry. Though Persian had, by this time, enjoyed quite a lengthy record as the *de facto* scholarly language for certain disciplines, Arabic had retained predominant claim over *philosophical* enquiry for centuries. During the course of those centuries, however, one finds the utilization of Persian for certain philosophical purposes, as in Ibn Sīnā's (d. 1037) or Suhrawardī's (d. 1191) employment of Persian for the sake of expressing philosophical ideas in a less technical, more accessible, or even "emotional," literary, or "ecstatic" way. In later periods, one finds, for example, Jāmī's (d. 1492) Persian and Arabic "mixed" treatises, where the Persian provides, again, a more accessible, less technical, often more poetic elucidation of the Arabic. By the early modern period, however, one encounters numerous scholars writing voluminous treatises in Persian with, in many cases, language every bit as technical as an equivalent Arabic

work. Mīr Findiriskī, for instance, as we shall see in the next chapter, wrote the majority of his works in Persian; Findiriskī's contemporary Mīr Dāmād also wrote a number of advanced philosophical texts in Persian. Muḥibb Allāh, for his own part, penned such technically challenging, scholarly works as the *Risālah-i wujūd-i muṭlaq*, *ʿIbādāt al-khavāṣṣ*, and *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, suggesting his full comfort with the Persian language to express technical scholarly matters. It also seems as though Muḥibb Allāh was concerned with accessibility, as he notes, in his preface to his Persian commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* that he had originally written a commentary in Arabic, but found that it was not serving its desired audience, and so he composed a second (and, subsequently, a third) commentary in Persian. The "accessibility" of Muḥibb Allāh's Persian version, however, is in no way on account of his watering down the material; quite the contrary, in fact. One could also note the apparent continuance of this trend into the era of Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1762), who wrote numerous treatises in Persian on varied topics that were once the exclusive purview of Arabic, such as the science of *ḥadīth*; indeed, Walī Allāh even translated the Qur'ān into Persian, despite considerable opposition.

Hence, we find a general trend in the early modern period of Persian's elevation into the realm of a technical philosophical language. Although, given its history, the basic vocabulary of this emerging world of Persian scholarship was overwhelmingly drawn from the Arabic jet stream, this "newness" also allowed possibilities for Persian-writing authors to develop more innovative or even experimental modalities. I would suggest that the *Jūg Bāsisht,* and the Mughal translation movement more broadly, represents, among other things, just such an experiment, for which the "wisps" of the *wujūdī* metaphysics of someone like Muḥibb Allāh, as well as his conceptualization of religious diversity, would serve as foundational resources.

4

Mīr Findiriskī and the *Jūg Bāsisht*

Sayyid Amīr Abū al-Qāsim Astarābādī Findiriskī (1562/3–1640/1), better known as Mīr Findiriskī, was a well-known Iranian Muslim philosopher of the Safavid Empire, as well as a frequent traveler to South Asia. Although a renowned philosopher and Sufi who had earned the respect of even the Safavid emperors, he nevertheless stands as an enigmatic and mysterious figure about whom surprisingly little is known. Findiriskī's main claim to fame in his Iranian homeland was as a teacher of Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy, although his somewhat eclectic corpus of (primarily Persian) writings render him somewhat difficult to categorize philosophically. Most significantly for this study, at some point during his various travels across Mughal South Asia, Findiriskī came across a copy of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* in the margins of which he penned his own running commentary, sharing his varied thoughts and observations concerning this Hindu philosophical narrative. Given that we know so little about the three members of the translation team, the highest hope for this chapter is that Findiriskī might serve as a sort of "explanatory commentary" that can provide probable insight into the translation team's (in this case, largely Pānīpatī's) thought processes and translation decisions. For a considerable portion of his commentary, Findiriskī provides running glosses, tracking the Persian text's various Sanskrit expressions and explaining them in the terms of Arabo-Persian Islamic—particularly Peripatetic—philosophy, usually following the translators' lead but at times providing his own suggestions and emendations. At least one of Findiriskī's goals in the commentary, in other words, was to track and evaluate the equivalences between Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian thought proffered by the translation team. Such observations may indeed help us to understand the translation team's choices more deeply. At the same time,

Findiriskī's commentary affords us the opportunity to witness a prominent early modern Islamic philosopher's reception of and reaction to a most fascinating Hindu philosophical tale.

Accordingly, as with the previous two chapters, the first aim of this chapter is to sketch Findiriskī's life and times in order to provide a contextualized entry into his writings. With this context in place, the chapter can then survey his treatises in an attempt to shed light on his reception of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* paying particular attention to his conceptualization of issues of religious and philosophical difference and diversity. Finally, in examining Findiriskī's commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht,* we can also consider how his insights may help to illuminate the decisions and thought-processes of the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team. This final objective, moreover, will provide us with the occasion to at last return to the text of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* situated alongside its Persian rendition, the *Jūg Bāsisht.*

A PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHER BETWEEN THE SAFAVIDS AND THE MUGHALS

Mīr Findiriskī received his early schooling in his native region of Gorgān, also studying for a time in Qazvīn before finally receiving his advanced education in the intellectual center of Iṣfahān. Iṣfahān would also be the city where Findiriskī would ultimately pass away, nearing the age of eighty, in the year 1640/1. He is regularly included in the major *taẕkirahs,* which, overall, paint a rather consistent (and colorful!) picture of the man across the centuries of their composition.[1] Numerous accounts inform us, for instance, that, as a renowned teacher of *mashshā'ī* (Peripatetic) philosophy, Findiriskī enjoyed considerable time in audience with the Safavid emperors Shāh ʿAbbās and Shāh Ṣafī (r. 1587–1629 and 1629–42). One frequently transmitted story, for example, relates that, on one occasion, Shāh ʿAbbās wished to admonish Findiriskī for his unbecoming conduct in the marketplace (*bāzār*), but without the impoliteness of naming and chiding Findiriskī directly. Accordingly, Shāh ʿAbbās reportedly said to him, "I have heard some very strange news that some of the knowledge-seekers stand around at the edge of the cock-fights among the throngs of ruffians," to which Findiriskī replied, "They have spoken a lie to you: every day I am present at the edge of the cock-fights, and I have never seen any one of the knowledge-seekers there!"[2] Despite his reputation, thus, as something of a norm-challenging antinomian—regularly wearing coarse, shabby woolen garments while conducting himself in unexpected, somewhat transgressive ways—the *taẕkirah*-writers unanimously praise his learning in several disciplines, including philosophy (*ḥikmat*), mathematics, medicine, poetry, and alchemy and divination; in the eighteenth century, Vālih Dāghistānī would even call Findiriskī "the Aristotle of the age in philosophy (*ḥikmat*) and the Abū Yazīd [Bisṭāmī] of the era in Sufism (*taṣawwuf*)."[3] In terms of his career in Iran, Findiriskī's most enduring reputation was as a teacher of the philosophical, scientific, and medical corpus of Ibn

Sīnā, particularly the latter's watershed philosophical compendium, *al-Shifā'*, and medical encyclopedia, *al-Qānūn*. On the basis of such activities, Findiriskī came to be widely regarded as one of the three greatest Safavid intellectuals of his generation, alongside Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631/2) and Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1621). It is also possible that Findiriskī was an ancillary teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640), arguably the most influential philosopher-theologian of the entire Safavid period, though the evidence for this suggestion is rather scant.[4]

Despite the considerable fame and renown that Findiriskī thus enjoyed as a prominent philosopher and teacher within Safavid Iran, the *taẕkirah*-writers paint a very different picture regarding his time spent in India. Findiriskī took numerous extended trips to South Asia, the first in the year 1606, and then several more between the years 1627 and 1638.[5] However, the compilers of the *taẕkirahs* consistently relate that, in contrast to his high profile in Iran, in India, Findiriskī took great pains to remain incognito, performing only menial labor, such as the task of shooing cattle off the road to let carriages pass, in the hopes of avoiding any and all recognition. Findiriskī is depicted as wandering the region somewhat itinerantly, reaching as far as Kashmir, Gujarat, and the Deccan, and preferring to meet *gurus* sitting in seclusion rather than kings sitting upon thrones.[6] A number of accounts relate Findiriskī's immediate departure from a locale as soon as anyone recognized him, hence "blowing his cover," so to speak.[7] While modern historiographers would rightly caution against accepting such accounts at face value, the fact that generations of biographers nearly unanimously memorialized Findiriskī in this fashion is certainly suggestive that he simply did not have any great public aspirations in South Asia. Although Findiriskī did have some contact with the Mughal court, his time spent there seems minimal and somewhat incidental: at the invitation of the Grand *Vazīr* Abū al-Ḥasan Āṣaf Khān, Findiriskī only twice met the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān, once in 1628 and then again in only the last two or three years of Findiriskī's life (1637–38).[8] So far as I have been able to find, there is no record of Findiriskī having received any kind of patronage or employ in any South Asian royal court. Findiriskī's quiet stays with reclusive Indian spiritual masters, however, often lasted much longer, such as his reported seven-year residence in a South Asian Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*) in order to undertake a regimen of purificatory practices.[9]

In short, there is little compelling evidence that Findiriskī had any particular, overarching social, political, or public agenda in South Asia, and so it seems that another explanation would better account for his swelling interest in the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* Although Findiriskī does not often write about politics directly, one could perhaps take a further (though debatable) suggestion of his disinterest in kings from his lukewarm depiction of the vocation in his *Risālah-i ṣanā'iyyah*: whereas prophets, the Shī'ī Imāms, and philosophers occupy the noblest possible of vocations, kings (*shāhs*), in contrast, typically sit upon a middle-to-low rung of the hierarchy, tending, in Findiriskī's view, to promote

neither the rectitude nor the corruption of their subjects, but rather, prevailingly serving themselves and their own selfish interests alone.[10] This is not to naïvely claim that Findiriskī exhibited no political agenda at all: to the contrary, one could plausibly read Findiriskī's engagement with the *Laghu* as, in part, a pointed gesture directed at the stifling Iranian Safavid ideologues in affirmation of the idea that wisdom can be found in many places other than Shīʿī dogma.[11] Nevertheless, I do not think such a characterization *exhausts* the reasons for his interest. As Findiriskī mentions in his commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht,* he did attempt to learn Sanskrit himself, and also expressed great frustration at the inaccuracies in the translation, lamenting that the *paṇḍits* of his time no longer knew Sanskrit properly and that the translations were not directly from Sanskrit to Persian, but rather, typically occurred through an oral Hindavī vernacular as intermediary.[12] Such observations clearly point to a scholarly, philosophical interest, on the part of Findiriskī, for Hindu Sanskrit philosophical materials in their own right. Urging the Safavid elite to "broaden their horizons," accordingly, does not sufficiently account for Findiriskī's demonstrable interest in the detailed, technical specifics of the *Laghu*'s Sanskrit metaphysics, ontology, and soteriology; Findiriskī's primary interest in the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* via the *Jūg Bāsisht,* in other words, was its intellectual, philosophical contents first and foremost. At the very least, the trajectory of his life-activities, as well as the tenor of the passages from the *Laghu* that interested him most, indicate that Findiriskī's interests were not *merely* political, but were furthermore fundamentally oriented toward a search for eternal truths and world-liberating knowledge, in whatever form, language, or intellectual tradition these might be expressed.

Aside from the *taẕkirahs,* the corpus of Findiriskī's writings can also help to more fully flesh out his context. Over twenty works have been attributed to Findiriskī with varying degrees of certainty, mostly composed in Persian.[13] The most important and confidently attributed among these include his Persian treatise on the proper ordering of societal vocations and occupations, the *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah*; a collection (*dīvān*) of Persian poetry, alongside a well-known philosophical-didactic poem, the *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah*, itself the subject of at least three commentaries; his Arabic treatise on the philosophical category of "motion" (*ḥarakah*), *al-Risālah fī'l-ḥarakah,* including an evaluation of the notion of the Platonic archetypes (*al-muthul al-Aflāṭūniyyah*); his Persian *Risālah dar tashkīk*, a brief response to a question posed by Āqā Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Kāshānī on the validity of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) concept of gradation (*tashkīk*) in essences (*dhawāt*); a Persian commentary, unfortunately no longer extant, on the Akbar-era translation of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata,* known as the *Razm-nāmah*;[14] his Persian commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht*, the *Sharḥ-i Jūg*, taking the form of a running marginal gloss (*ḥāshiyah*); and his condensed recension of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, the *Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsisht*, in which Findiriskī had stitched together selections from the *Jūg Bāsisht* interspersed with selections from the corpus of classical Persian Sufi poetry. The

Muntakhab also includes a glossary of Sanskrit terms explained in Persian, typically utilizing the lexicon of the *wujūdī* and Peripatetic traditions. Findiriskī also has a number of other treatises accredited to his pen on particular philosophical questions, including *Fī ḥaqīqat al-wujūd* ("On the Reality of Existence"), *Fī irtibāṭ al-ḥādith bi'l-qadīm* ("On the Relationship between the Occasioned and the Eternal"), *Fī'l-maqūlāt al-ʿasharah* ("On the Ten [Aristotelian] Categories"), as well as a treatise on alchemy, though these titles remain unedited and largely unstudied. From these writings, it becomes clear that Findiriskī was an intellectual deeply steeped in the Islamic philosophical tradition, including Peripatetic, Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*), and *wujūdī* thought, as well as in the Persian tradition of Sufi didactic poetry. Findiriskī's several successful pupils—including Mullā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1686/7), author of a well-known gloss on the metaphysics of Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'*; Rajab ʿAli Tabrīzī (d. 1669), whose metaphysics would remain influential for a century or more;[15] and Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzavārī (d. 1686/7), appointed by the Safavid sultan to the position of chief judge (*shaykh al-islām*)—only further indicate Findiriskī's distinguished learning within the Arabo-Persian jet stream.[16] His intellectual formation is thus similar to that of Muḥibb Allāh, though, between the two of them, Findiriskī certainly leans more toward a Peripatetic orientation. It is also worth observing that Findiriskī, in choosing to compose most of his treatises in Persian, was a direct contributor to the rise of Persian as an emerging medium for Islamic philosophical reflection in the early modern period. Hence, like Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī, too, participated in this nascent Persian philosophical jet stream, although one still deeply and inextricably tied to Arabic.

On the question of authorship, some modern scholars have doubted Findiriskī's composition of the *Muntakhab* on the grounds that one of the Sufi poets whose verses have been inserted into the recension has been identified as one Fānī Iṣfahānī, a Sufi poet who passed away in 1807, long after Findiriskī's lifetime.[17] I am inclined to accept the attribution of the *Muntakhab* to Findiriskī, however, for a number of reasons. In the first place, Fānī Iṣfahānī is an obscure and little-known poet, in dramatic contrast to the other poets included in the *Muntakhab* (enumerated below), who were not only, uniformly, literary giants of the world of Persian Sufi poetry, but also all hailed from well before Findiriskī's own lifetime, the latest, Qāsim-i Anvār, passing away in 1433, some two hundred years before Findiriskī and nearly four hundred years prior to Fānī. This discrepancy is immediately suspicious. Furthermore, we have confirmation from *taẕkirah*-authors as early as the late seventeenth century—within fifty or sixty years of Findiriskī's death—that Findiriskī composed some variety of commentary upon the *Jūg Bāsisht,* as ʿAbd Allāh Afandī (d. 1717) reports in 1696 in his major biographical compendium, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā' wa-ḥiyāḍ al-fuḍalā'*: "[As for] his [Findiriskī's] commentary (*sharḥ*) upon the *Jūg Bāsisht* . . . I have seen some of its benefits."[18] Granted, "*Sharḥ-i Jūg*" would most likely refer to Findiriskī's marginal glosses on

the *Jūg Bāsisht* rather than to his *Muntakhab*, but the statement nonetheless confirms Findiriskī's direct association with the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, rendering the fact that all extant manuscripts of both the *Sharḥ-i Jūg* and the *Muntakhab* attribute the works to him just that much more plausible.[19]

Furthermore, while Mojtabā'ī was the first to identify the problematic poet in question as "Fānī Iṣfahānī," he has, unfortunately, given no details as to how he arrived at this identification.[20] One presumes that Mojtabā'ī compared the verse fragments in the *Muntakhab* with some collection of Fānī's poetry, but, so far as I am aware, no such collection has been published, while I have not been able to access any manuscripts of Fānī's poetry on my own in order to check this claim. Fānī being such an obscure and late poet in comparison with the other poets cited,[21] I am inclined to doubt the accuracy of the attribution of these verses to Fānī, at least until further details come to light. One might even suspect that Findiriskī himself could have been the poet in question, writing under the penname "Fānī Iṣfahānī," particularly given his well-known poetic production in his *Dīvān* and *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah,* and the fact that Iṣfahān was Findiriskī's own place of residence, where he was buried, and where his tomb in the *Takht-i Fūlād* cemetery continues to be visited to this day. As will be shown below, the explicit statements and affirmations concerning non-Muslim communities and revelations that appear in Findiriskī's other writings lend weight to the image of a figure who would be interested and intrigued by a text such as the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*. In any case, given Afandī's statement above and its timing, the attribution of the *Sharḥ-i Jūg* to Findiriskī seems secure, while there is strong reason to accept his authorship of the *Muntakhab* as well.

BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

Modern studies have struggled to categorize Findiriskī philosophically, with different scholars affirming one philosophical identity or another via different pieces of evidence from across his writings.[22] Some have considered Findiriskī best characterized as a Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) thinker in the tradition of Ibn Sīnā, while others have regarded him as more in line with the school of Illumination (*ishrāq*) that traces its origins back to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191).[23] Several suggest a certain change and development in Findiriskī's thought over the course of his career, with him typically starting off as a more straightforward Peripatetic, and then coming to embrace Illuminationism and even philosophical Sufism (*'irfān*) later in his career. In most of these latter accounts, Findiriskī's various encounters with Indian Sufis and scholars during his travels in South Asia are highlighted as a likely impetus for the shift, his meetings with disciples of the so-called "Zoroastrian Illuminationist" Āẕar Kayvān (d. 1618), as reported in the enigmatic *Dabistān-i Mazāhib,*[24] cited in particular as a potential turning-point in Findiriskī's philosophical outlook.[25] In my own view, the particular way in which

these questions are posed can be somewhat misleading, since, by this later period in the development of Islamic philosophy, figures like Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 1502), Shams al-Dīn Khafrī (d. 1535), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 1542), and numerous others had already been combining elements of Peripatetic, Illuminationist, and *ʿirfānī/wujūdī* metaphysics in various permutations for quite some time,[26] while the philosophical synthesis achieved by Findiriskī's younger contemporary, Mullā Ṣadrā, marks an arguable high point in the coalescence of these traditions within a single metaphysics.[27] It was quite normal by this time, in other words, for figures to blur the lines between *mashshāʾī, ishrāqī,* and *ʿirfānī/wujūdī* "identities."

Nevertheless, certain seeming discrepancies across Findiriskī's various compositions do demand some attempt at explanation. In addition to his teaching career, which, being primarily tied to the *Shifāʾ* and *Qānūn,* would suggest an Avicennan slant, most of Findiriskī's known writings largely confirm this same Peripatetic orientation. In his aforementioned Persian *Treatise on Gradation* (*Risālah dar tashkīk*), for instance, Findiriskī sides with the mainstream Peripatetic position, contra the Illuminationists, in affirming that, although certain accidents/attributes (*aʿrāḍ*) are subject to gradation (*tashkīk*)—it is logically coherent to speak of one object as "longer" or "smaller" than another, for example—essences (*dhawāt,* sing. *dhāt*), on the other hand, do not admit of gradation. In the case of a "human," for instance, the essence (*dhāt*) of which is a "rational animal," even if it might make semantic sense to speak of one human as "more" or "less rational" than another, such "gradations" or measures of magnitude, Findiriskī asserts along with most Peripatetics, are not matters *essential* to the human being as such, but rather, only concern what is *accidental* to the human being.[28] What a human being essentially is, in other words, is the fact of being an animal combined with the fact of being, in principle, rational; the degree to which one is *actually* rational, on the other hand, is only a matter accidental (*ʿāriḍ*), rather than essential (*dhātī*), to a given human being. In his Arabic *Treatise on Motion* (*al-Risālah fīʾl-ḥarakah*), Findiriskī again favors several roughly classical Peripatetic positions in rejecting all of the following: the occurrence of motion in substances (*jawāhir*), gradation in essences, the cognitive notion of the "unification of the knower and the known" (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil waʾl-maʿqūl*), and the existence of Platonic Forms (*muthul Aflāṭūniyyah*).[29] Such trends characteristic of the majority of his writings do indeed indicate a prevailing Peripatetic orientation across Findiriskī's overall corpus.

Certain moments within Findiriskī's writings, however, complicate this Peripatetic identification in ambiguous and enigmatic ways. Despite Findiriskī's aforementioned rejection in the *Treatise on Motion*, for instance, of the epistemological tenet of the "unification of knower and known," in his Persian *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* in contrast, Findiriskī speaks more favorably about the very same notion.[30] In his well-known philosophical poem, the *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah,* in turn, Findiriskī expresses a certain critique of two foundational figures of Islamic Peripatetic thought, Ibn Sīnā and Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950), indicating that their teachings

represent a sort of limited "exterior/exoteric understanding" (*fahm-i ẓāhirī*) that is unable to grasp the true depths of knowledge (*maʿrifat*):

> Heaven with these stars is clear, pleasing, beautiful; whatever is there above has a form (*ṣūrat*) below. If the form below, by the ladder of gnosis (*maʿrifat*), is trodden upward, it will become the same as its principle (*aṣl*). No outward understanding (*fahm-i ẓāhirī*), whether it be an Abu Nasr [Fārābī] or an Abū ʿAlī [ibn] Sīnā, can grasp these sayings.[31]

Indeed, in this same verse, with its evocation of the (Aristotelian) "form below" possessing an identity with its "principle above"—that is, the idea that any given object within the material realm has some sort of a celestial counterpart or originary principle beyond the transient, material world—many have interpreted Findiriskī to be here *affirming* the reality of the Platonic Forms, despite his rejection of their existence as superfluous in the *Treatise on Motion*.[32] One could attempt to account for this seeming discrepancy in multiple ways: perhaps such statements do not really affirm the Platonic Forms as usually understood, but only the presence of the forms of all objects within God's (or the "Active Intellect's" [*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*]) knowledge, and hence do not really constitute a departure from customary Peripatetic views;[33] or perhaps such assertions do indeed represent on Findiriskī's part a certain turn toward the Illuminationist school, which robustly affirms the concrete reality of the Platonic Forms;[34] or perhaps the intended referent is not the Platonic Forms at all, but rather some iteration of the *wujūdī* notion of "immutable essences" (*aʿyān thābitah*), distinct from the Platonic Forms (as seen in the previous chapter) in that the former are situated within God's knowledge rather than in a separate rung of the ontological ladder, while each immutable essence also corresponds to a single object in the here-below, unlike the Forms that are typically envisioned as universals ontologically connected with *multiple* material particulars.[35] Either of the second or third options would lend credence to the supposition that Findiriskī's philosophical thinking may have developed in new ways later in his career, perhaps through his interactions with South Asian intellectual circles.

Rather than a philosophical or historical resolution to these textual discrepancies, however, one might consider taking a cue from Findiriskī himself. On more than a few occasions throughout his writings—particularly in his poetic or less dialectical compositions—Findiriskī reiterates a theme that, if read earnestly, could provide an alternative path for resolving the seeming contradictions within his corpus. This theme effectively presents the multitude of conflicting philosophical perspectives not only within the Islamic tradition, but across the ages, as differing formulations, angles, or viewpoints on the absolute truth, each voice articulating some aspect of the veritable truth while also being restricted by the limitations of its own perspective or vantage-point. In Findiriskī's own words from his didactic poem, the *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah:*

> The jewel is hidden in the mystery (*ramz*) of the ancient sages (*dānā*), only he who is wise can uncover these mysteries. Leave aside these words! . . . We can say all these [words] of Him, but He is above all that . . . This winding, twisting world possesses nothing, *nothing* [of its own] . . . On this path, the prophets are like camel-drivers; they are the guides and the leaders of the caravan . . . Everyone understands their [the prophets'] words only from his own imagination (*wahm*); they do not grasp the words, for these words are mysterious . . . Would that the sages before us had said everything completely, so that the opposition of those who are incomplete would be removed![36]

Here we see a depiction of an ineffable God who is beyond all descriptions of Him. God's prophets (*anbiyā'*) and messengers (*rusul*), meanwhile, provide guidance to lead humanity back to God, but, in a suggestion that arguably mirrors the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s notion of "*saṃkalpa*" or the uniqueness of each soul according to Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī avers that each individual only grasps a prophet's guidance through the limitations of her own imagination and fancy. Similarly, though Findiriskī acknowledges that the full depths of knowledge (i.e., the "jewel") are somewhere to be found within the teachings of philosophers and sages across the ages, he further depicts each sage's teachings as somehow incomplete, articulating only *something* of the total Truth. When this partiality is combined, for Findiriskī, with the limited imaginations of the individuals who receive those teachings, the result, it seems, can sometimes be closer to ignorance than to knowledge.

For Findiriskī, accordingly, prophets, philosophers, and Shī'ī Imāms across the ages brought the same truth, in different languages and expressions, to different human civilizations. Indeed, according to Findiriskī, since the prophets have a mission to teach not only to the elite, but to every last member of a given community or civilization, they hence have no choice but to take into account the varying intellectual capacities of the myriad individuals within that collective.[37] So, unlike philosophers—who, Findiriskī says, teach only in general, universal terms—the prophets, in contrast, speak to the specific conditions of the context and times in which they find themselves, tailoring their instruction to the particular demands of the community around them. The prophets are thus akin to physicians, prescribing one regimen in times of health in order to maintain health, while prescribing another remedy in times of sickness in order to combat it;[38] although Findiriskī does not say it himself, one could readily imagine a doctor even prescribing two different remedies to two different patients afflicted with the same illness, so as to accommodate those patients' individual needs with respect to allergies, age, constitution, and so forth. In much the same way, Findiriskī affirms, different prophets and revelations enjoin distinct laws (*sharā'i'*) and creeds to suit the particular conditions of the society (the "patients") to whom those teachings are addressed.[39] This conception of prophecy in fact becomes the basis for Findiriskī's conception of Islam's superiority over other religions (*adyān*; sing., *dīn*): when the doctor

offers a new "prescription," updated to the patient's current condition, it would be a mistake for the patient to continue to hold onto the old, now outdated remedy. In Findiriskī's articulation, although Moses was fully correct to teach to the Jewish community what he taught at that ancient time when he taught it, if Moses were alive in the Prophet Muḥammad's time and grasped the conditions of that era, then he (Moses) would have prescribed exactly what the Prophet Muḥammad prescribed. Hence, even if Moses's revelation was true for its time, it is now invalid, given that more recent revelations have been brought to update the remedy in the interim.[40]

Findiriskī explicitly extends this hermeneutic to include the South Asian context on a number of occasions. Once again in his *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* for instance, Findiriskī describes the imperfect state of knowledge of those who fail to see the common meaning (*maʿnā*) behind the varying verbal expressions (*alfāẓ*) of the ancient Greek philosophers, the Islamic philosophers, and the books of the Brahmins and Indians (*barahmanān va hindavān*).[41] The suggestion seems clear: the religion(s) of India too teach the same truths as do the Muslim philosophers, the Shīʿī Imāms, and the Prophet Muḥammad, even though the language, expressions, scripture, customs, practices, and laws are evidently disparate, and even though the teachings of the two traditions may at times appear mutually contradictory. Even if, to Findiriskī's mind, the Hindu tradition might no longer be practicable after the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad—a stance that again reflects the mainstream Muslim view of Islam's having "abrogated" (*naskh*) all prior religions upon its dawning—Findiriskī nevertheless found some interest or benefit in studying the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* up close. As shall be seen presently, in encountering the *Laghu* via the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* translation, Findiriskī applied to this treatise much the same framework for comprehending religious diversity outlined here, only now, we are able to witness this general theory of religious diversity in more concrete application.

A MUSLIM COMMENTARY ON A HINDU TEXT[42]

As mentioned above, upon encountering the *Jūg Bāsisht* at some point during his travels across South Asia, Findiriskī compiled his own abridgment of the Persian text, selecting the passages that he, presumably, found most interesting. Findiriskī then stitched his chosen pericopes together to form a shorter text known as the *Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsisht* (*Selections from the Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* hereafter "*Muntakhab*"). Echoing a common practice among Persian translations of Indic texts, Findiriskī inserted into this condensed version of the *Jūg Bāsisht* numerous selections from the corpus of classical Persian Sufi poetry—culled from the *dīvāns* of such well-known poets as Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 1220), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. 1320), Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ

(d. 1389), Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 1406), Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī (d. 1431), and Qāsim-i Anvār (d. 1433)[43]—and also included a few prefatory verses of his own in praise of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.[44] These prefatory verses appear not only on one of the manuscripts of the *Muntakhab,*[45] but also on one of the manuscripts of Findiriskī's marginal commentary on the full *Jūg Bāsisht,* known as the *Sharḥ-i Jūg*.[46] Hence, even if one doubts Findiriskī's authorship of the *Muntakhab* as per the above, the poem's presence within the *Sharḥ-i Jūg*, which is of more certain authorship, lends credence to the view that these verses indeed came from Findiriskī's own pen. This prefatory, laudatory poem provides us with an insightful glimpse into Findiriskī's interpretation of the *Laghu,* and so it is worth dwelling upon at some length:

> This discourse (i.e., the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*) is like water to the world;
> pure and increasing knowledge, like the Qur'ān.
> Once you have passed through the Qur'ān and the Traditions,[47]
> no one has sayings of this kind.
> An ignorant one who has heard these discourses,
> or has seen this subtle cypress-grove,
> Attaches only to its outward form (*ṣūrat*);
> thus, he makes a fool of himself.[48]

In analyzing these fertile verses, let it suffice to point out the main features of Sufi thought and metaphysics that are referenced therein. The allusion to apparent, exoteric form (*ṣūrat, ẓāhir*) on the one hand, and esoteric meaning or essence (*maʿnā, ḥaqīqat, ẕāt, bāṭin*) on the other—correlated with the "ignorant" versus the "knowing" ones, respectively—is a recurring central theme of Persian Sufi poetry. The accompanying image of "pure water to the world" recalls the conventional poetic motif of the one, essential substance "water" which, across the world, may assume the various outward forms of "wave," "ice," "snow," and "foam," etc., as discussed in the previous chapter. As Annemarie Schimmel explains this motif of Sufi writing:

> [Rūmī discusses] 'the ocean of inner meaning' and the external world . . . us[ing] the image of the foam on the sea to express this very idea . . . outward manifestations and all forms visible to the eyes are nothing but straw and chaff which cover the surface of this divine sea . . . the outward material forms are always conceived as something . . . which hides the fathomless depths of the ocean.[49]
>
> The [Sufi] poets . . . like to speak of the ocean, the billows, the foam, and the drop, which in each instance look different and yet are the same water. Niffarī seems to have been the first to use the symbolism of the divine ocean. Ibn 'Arabī had visualized the divine essence as a large green ocean out of which the fleeting forms emerge like waves, to fall again and disappear in the fathomless depths.[50]

Hence, absolute Reality (*ḥaqīqat*), which transcends every articulation and form, is symbolized by formless water; this Reality, in turn, assumes various delimited forms in the world, just as water appears sometimes as foam, sometimes as ice, and sometimes as snow, yet all these forms are ultimately one and the same water. And so, according to this Sufi metaphysics, as seen with Muḥibb Allāh, one and the same transcendent Reality attains manifestation in the world in diverse forms. Findiriskī's implication, it seems, is that, although the Qur'ān and the *Laghu* are evidently disparate in accidental form, they nevertheless express the same Truth in essential reality. Only the knowing sage, however, will be able to perceive this common essence; the ignorant one, caught up in the world of forms, will never be able to discern the shared basic substance of bubbles and ice. As Findiriskī asserts, quite in this vein, in one of his marginal notes on the *Jūg Bāsisht:* "after understanding to the extent of my capacity (*isti'dād*), I find no opposition in any issue at all between the Brahmins (*barāhimah*) and the Islamic philosophers (*falāsifah*)."[51] As we have already seen, Findiriskī affirms much the same stance in his *Risālah-i ṣanā'iyyah,* where he pointedly proclaims that whatever apparent differences there may be between the speech of the ancient philosophers (*qudamā-i ḥukamā*)—a term Findiriskī uses to encompass the pre-Aristotelian Greek philosophers, Aristotle himself, the Neoplatonists, the philosophers among the Brahmins and Indians (*barahmanān u hindavān*), and others—these are merely differences of expression (*ikhtilāf-i lufẓī*), for all these thinkers arrived at their teachings by way of the intellect (*'aql*), and "the way of the intellect is one" (*ṭarīq al-'aql wāḥid*).[52]

This doctrine of form and essence is intimately tied up with the Islamic cosmological framework of God's names and attributes (*al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt*). According to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad, God has ninety-nine divine names,[53] each of which, as many Sufis such as Ibn 'Arabī have affirmed, articulates an attribute of God's total, ineffable Reality. The effects or traces (*āthār*) of these names, however, can be discerned within the phenomenal world if one is able to glimpse beyond the forms.[54] And so, the divine Name "the Beautiful" (*al-jamīl*), for instance, may be manifested in both a flower and a gazelle: at the level of form, these two objects, qua objects, can never be identical, but the transcendent essence they manifest—God's own dimension of beauty, that is, His name "the Beautiful"—is a singular reality. Indeed, in this Sufi metaphysics, the entire phenomenal universe is envisaged as simply the trace and manifestation of God's many Names, as the Sufi poet Rūmī explains in his *Fīhi mā Fīhi,* again referencing the *ḥadīth qudsī* of the "hidden treasure" already encountered in the previous chapter: "God says, 'I was a Hidden Treasure, so I wanted to be known.' In other words, 'I created the whole of the universe, and the goal in all of it is to make Myself manifest, sometimes through Gentleness and sometimes through Severity . . . . Therefore all creatures make God manifest."[55]

In this cosmological scheme, furthermore, below the formless level of reality—where the names and attributes have their root—are successive levels of

crystallization and corporealization, embracing such "lower" (though still suprahysical) realities as the Platonic forms, angelic beings, and the imaginal (*khayālī*) realities associated with dreams, each of which can attain even more diverse manifestations in the levels below them. Although difficult to discern the precise philosophical details, we have already seen Findiriskī echo such a hierarchical vision of the cosmos, in which diverse phenomenal forms manifest transcendent essences and realities, in his *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah:* "Whatever is there above has a form below; if the form below, by the ladder of gnosis (*maʿrifat*), is trodden upward, it will become the same as its principle (*aṣl*). No outward understanding (*fahm-i ẓāhirī*) can grasp these sayings . . . . The jewel is hidden in the mystery of the ancient sages, only he who is wise can uncover these mysteries . . . . We can say all these [words] of Him, but He is above all that."[56] According to one of the later commentators on this *Qaṣīdah*, Ḥakīm ʿAbbās Sharīf Dārābī, it is indeed the names of God to which Findiriskī is referring in these verses.[57] Another commentator, al-Gīlānī, asserts that Findiriskī is here describing the archetypes (*muthul*), that is, the immaterial universals (*kullīyāt-i mujarrad*) residing above the level of corporeal reality, which govern the relevant species in the corporeal world below them.[58] In other words, much like Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī here appears to envision a metaphysics where, for instance, the transcendent universal "human" is the ontological source and cause of all particular humans (Matthew, Mark, Luke, etc.) that exist in the here-below. As Findiriskī explains in his *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* these universals are not mere mental abstractions of the human mind, but have a real, concrete reality in the levels of existence above this corporeal world; specifically, the universals have their roots and are contained within the emanating intellects that constitute the classical Peripatetic cosmology of the Avicennan tradition.[59]

Of course, not all manifestations of God's Names and Attributes are created equal, and the prophets (*al-anbiyāʾ*)—especially the Prophet Muḥammad—are typically considered to be the most comprehensive manifestation possible within the realm of creation, hence their revered qualification to serve as receptacles for divine revelation (*waḥy*). As we have seen, much like Muḥibb Allāh's discussion of prophecy, Findiriskī too offers an account for the cause and purpose of religious diversity, though he cleaves closer to a Peripatetic lexicon than to a *wujūdī* formulation. The prophets, according to Findiriskī, have attained union with the celestial intellects, and thus, possess comprehensive knowledge; this is also the goal of philosophy (*ḥikmat*). The prophets, however, attain to this knowledge through revelation (*sharʿ, sharīʿah*), rather than through action, effort, or contemplation, which means that they enjoy a divine protection and infallibility that "mere" philosophers do not. While the philosophers only speak to the elite few who possess a requisite philosophical temperament, the prophets, on the other hand, speak to the entire community, with a direct responsibility over the health and well-being of that community.[60]

Like doctors with their patients, however, the remedy for a given ailment is not "one size fits all": the doctor has to take into account the particular constitution of the patient in front of him and then prescribe accordingly. Thus, the prophets, as we have seen Findiriskī assert, do not prescribe one practical path to all people for all time, but rather, God sends new prophets with new revelations as necessary in order to address the new and emerging particularities of people and communities as they transform over time. The truth that all the prophets teach, however, is indeed one and the same all-encompassing Reality.[61] Compounding this is Findiriskī's account for religious diversity at the level of the individual, as, in the *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah* passage examined above, individuals are depicted as only understanding the teachings of the prophets in their own limited way, that is, to the extent that their individual intellects (*ʿaql*) and imaginations (*wahm, khayāl*) are capable of grasping the total truth. And so, invoking a common Sufi metaphor, Findiriskī encourages his readers to make every effort to rend the veil that covers the secret of this knowledge.[62] Accordingly, although Findiriskī does not seem to accept that aspect of Muḥibb Allāh's view which would have the uniqueness of each prophet influence the uniqueness of each *sharīʿah*—Findiriskī, in contrast, asserts that Moses would have relayed the same revelation as the Prophet Muḥammad had the former's mission taken place in seventh-century Arabia—Muḥibb Allāh and Findiriskī are nevertheless in considerable agreement over the notion that the unique qualities, dispositions, and ailments of each person and community profoundly shape the character of the revelation that is conveyed to them.[63]

These considerations of prophethood bring us to Findiriskī's peculiar utilization of the image of the cypress tree (*sarv*) in his prefatory verses, which in Persian poetry is frequently associated with the Prophet Muḥammad as beloved.[64] Typically, however, the cypress-beloved, because it demands the total attention and absorption of the lover, remains single and unique. Hence, the cypress "is often called *āzād,* 'free,' because it stands majestically alone."[65] Yet Findiriskī, in his verses, mentions not a solitary cypress, but rather, a populated cypress-grove; indeed, according to Mojtabāʾī, the latter half of Findiriskī's laudatory poem is actually a quotation from the poet Sanāʾī's (d. 1130) *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat* ("Garden of Reality"),[66] with the sole modification that the phrase "manner of explanation" (*ṭarz-i bayān*) has been changed to "cypress-grove" (*sarvistān*), suggestive of a deliberate decision on Findiriskī's part. What could be the significance of a multitude of prophet-beloveds, or, to use the language of Findiriskī's verses, a multitude of "subtle discourses"? In light of the Islamic metaphysics outlined here, wherein the one Reality can be distinguished from its multiple manifestations in the world, my suggestion is that, just as God's Names and Attributes, and the celestial realities and essences, have attained a direct-as-possible manifestation in the Qurʾān, the *Laghu,* in Findiriskī's estimation, is also a similarly complete and profound manifestation. The two manifestations, the Qurʾān and the *Laghu,* are separate cypress trees, each communicating, in drastically divergent languages, the singular glories

of God's Reality, doing so with such brilliance as to demand our dedication and devotion, provided we have the eyes to see it.

But would Findiriskī say that the *Laghu* is an *equally* profound manifestation as the Qur'ān? His phrase "once you have passed through the Qur'ān and the Traditions" would suggest not. On the other hand, for Findiriskī, it may be less a question of which book is more comprehensive of Reality, and more a question of which book is better suited to a given reader. Indeed, Findiriskī affirms, as we have seen, that Moses would have conveyed the same revelation as Muḥammad had he been a messenger to seventh-century Arabia rather than the ancient near east, thus suggesting a parity between the two prophets. At the same time, however, the patient must follow the most "updated" doctor's orders: the most recent revelation is the one best tailored to current conditions and ailments, and so to follow an older revelation (an "outdated" doctor's order, so to speak) would be an error that could bring great peril.[67]

Accordingly, much like Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī in his *Risālah-i ṣanā'iyyah* deplores those who would seek to undermine the specifically Islamic *sharī'ah* by casting aside the literal words of the revelation or its particular formal practices, labeling such "sects" (*firqah*) as the single gravest threat to a healthy society.[68] Even though the ultimate goal is the one Reality, which lies beyond all form, the only way to reach it is to follow a *sharī'ah,* or, as Rūmī often phrases it, to follow in the footsteps of a prophet.[69] It is only *through* the form that one's field of comprehension can be opened up to the universal essence; universal realities are only available to us in the here-below as manifested in particular forms, so one must penetrate the particular form in order to ascend to the level of the universal reality, or, in the language of Findiriskī's *Qaṣīdah,* one can only climb the ladder of knowledge/gnosis (*ma'rifat*) "upward" if one starts from the "form below."[70] Hence, forms cannot be haphazardly equated in the here-below—ice is never foam at the level of form, nor a flower a gazelle—but can only be identified *transcendently.*[71] The affirmation of a single, supra-formal, transcendent Absolute, accordingly, does not require the dismissal of the very real distinctions that occur at each and every level of reality beneath this Absolute, which include all the levels where we humans, practically speaking, always live.

Having now glimpsed, in its very broad outlines, the Arabo-Persian philosophical resources which Findiriskī brought to his study of the *Laghu* and the overall hermeneutical framework with which he interpreted it in his *Muntakhab,* let us now further this account with a glance at this framework in concrete application. Although a detailed look at Findiriskī's other *Laghu*-related composition, the *Sharḥ-i Jūg*—Findiriskī's marginal commentary on the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha/Jūg Bāsisht*—would be a natural next stage of analysis, such an examination will, unfortunately, have to await a future study. Of all the known manuscripts of the *Sharḥ-i Jūg,* the most important copy is currently held in a private Iranian collection that, unfortunately, I have not yet been able to access. It seems clear that this

manuscript is by far the most complete version: in this copy, according to Mojtabā'ī, Findiriskī's commentarial notes "are copious and cover the margins of almost all the folios,"[72] whereas, in the other copies I have examined to date, the notes are comparatively infrequent and occasional. I will therefore reserve a comprehensive analysis of the *Sharḥ-i Jūg* for another occasion, once this manuscript has become accessible; the material available in the other, less complete manuscripts, however, is certainly sufficient to supplement my analysis here. As such, I will draw from the *Sharḥ-i Jūg* at relevant moments throughout the remainder of this study.

At this juncture, then, let us instead turn to the body of the *Muntakhab.* With all the ground covered in the previous chapters, we are, at last, equipped to return to the text of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* placed side-by-side with the translation team's Persian rendition in the *Jūg Bāsisht*, here selected by Findiriskī and re-woven in the form of the *Muntakhab.* As I hope will be evident, copious slices of the philosophical schools and intellectual currents examined in this study thus far all play into the Persian translation, dictating and informing the creative intellectual processes by which Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī found their own chosen ways to express the Sanskritic thought of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the terms of the Arabo-Persian Islamic intellectual tradition.

THE FRAMEWORK IN CONCRETE APPLICATION

Without knowing more about the translation team's biographies, it is difficult to be sure of what precisely their intellectual formations would have consisted. Yet we can still infer a great deal about their intellectual backgrounds from the *Jūg Bāsisht* itself, that is to say, from the choices they made in translating a given Sanskrit passage one way or another. On the basis of the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* it is clear that, in Pānīpatī's case, his formation was prevailingly Sufi and *wujūdī,* as the perspective on religious diversity reflected within the Persian text owes a great deal to the sort of Islamic discourse exemplified by Muḥibb Allāh.

Yet, as discussed in chapter 3, well before the early modern period, the *wujūdī* tradition had already assimilated a great deal of the terminology and conceptual framework of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy. Hence, Muḥibb Allāh frequently speaks in the Avicennan terms of "necessary" and "possible existents," "universals" and "particulars," etc. Accordingly, in the first place, the evidence of the translation team's (particularly Pānīpatī's) debt to the philosophical Sufi *wujūdī* tradition is unmistakable: from the very first pages of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, we witness a litany of technical terms that come straight from *wujūdī* discourse in ways that mirror Muḥibb Allāh's representative deployment of them; in even just the opening passage of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, as presented in the introduction, we find the deployment of such *wujūdī* terms as *maẓhar* (locus of manifestation), *ta'ayyunāt* (specifications), *waḥdat-i ẕāt* (oneness of the Essence), *tajallī* (manifestation), and so forth

and so on. At the same time, however, the language employed by the translation team also exhibits a distinct *Peripatetic* influence, as in the terms *ṣūrat* (form), *muṭlaq* (absolute), and *ʿaql-i khāliṣ* ("pure intellect," a term referring to the celestial intellects of Avicennan cosmology). In other words, by this point in Islamic intellectual history, there was no longer a clear line dividing Sufi and Peripatetic thought: the two, in general, had become considerably intermingled, allowing for a whole spectrum of intellectual possibilities that, in the large "grey area" between the two poles, drew from both sides, much as Findiriskī and other figures also did. And so, with Findiriskī generally preferring a Peripatetic discourse and Muḥibb Allāh favoring *wujūdī* formulations, we can bring both of their intellectual perspectives to bear on the analysis of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* which, somewhat inevitably, bears the marks of—and exhibits "wisps" from—both philosophical traditions. This "Peripateticized" *wujūdī* Sufism, in other words, formed a large part of the Arabo-Persian intellectual heritage that the translation team (specifically Pānīpatī) brought with them to their reading of the *Laghu,* and which underlay the particular processes of thought and interpretation that informed the team's translation choices and conduct.

Bearing all of this in mind, let us now try to consider how the translation team might have applied these various Arabic and Persian intellectual resources to the translation of a particular, concrete passage of the *Laghu.* I present here a characteristically metaphysical passage from Findiriskī's *Muntakhab,* side-by-side with the original Sanskrit passage from the *Laghu.* For the purposes of comparison, I have translated the two versions of this passage rather literally, even though the result may sound at times inelegant in English. The left column translates Abhinanda's Sanskrit *Laghu*; the right column translates the corresponding passage from Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī's *Jūg Bāsisht* (which Findiriskī has simply excerpted from the larger text, without modification, for the purposes of his abridgment, the *Muntakhab*). Finally, Findiriskī inserts a verse of Persian Sufi poetry into the selection, thus affording us the opportunity to consider his exegesis of the passage as well:

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa*) (6:11:34–35, 6:12:2–6)	***Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsisht*** (folio 99, Mojtabāʾī 2006: *fārsī* 108)
[*Brahman*] is not born, nor does it die in any way, in any place, or at any time; *brahman* alone expands [itself] in the phenomenal[73] form of the world.	The whole world is the manifestation of that Being (*hastī*) and Reality (*ḥaqīqat*) and is found in it, which has no beginning, end, or middle, which is not born nor dies, into which change and transformation have no access. Having given space in your heart for this belief concerning it, repose at peace and ease!
This *brahman* is the whole [world], one, tranquil, without beginning, middle, or end, free from becoming and unbecoming. Having thought thus, be happy!	
. . .	

He who, O Rāma, regards this multitude of rays as distinct from the sun, for him, that multitude is indeed as if other than the sun.

He by whom the bracelet is regarded as distinct from the gold [of which it is made], for him, indeed, that gold is not the same as that bracelet.

[But] he by whom the rays would be regarded as indistinct from the sun, for him, those rays are the same as the sun. He is said to be unwavering.[74]

He by whom the bracelet is regarded as indistinct from the gold, he is said to be unwavering, possessing the great understanding of the oneness of the gold.

Having left aside all multiplicity, be firm in the condition of true knowledge—[which is] completely free of any object (of knowledge)[75]—situated in the womb of pure consciousness.

Know that all these variegated existents and determined forms that come into sight, innumerable and without limit, are all occasions for the appearance of the Essence (*ẕāt*) and manifestations of Absolute Being. The root of all of these appearances is the one Essence of *brahman,* just as with ornaments and gold-pieces, such as bracelets, earrings, anklets, rings, and so forth, each of which has its own distinct determination and form: the source of all of those ornaments is the one essence of gold, which remains the very same gold even after those forms are shattered. Or just as, upon the rising of the exalted sun, thousands upon thousands of scattering beams, radiance, and rays can be seen, [still] the root of all those limitless and endless beams and lights is the one essence of the exalted sun.

When someone attains *barahm-gyān* (*brahma-jñāna,* "knowledge of *brahman*") and arrives at complete knowledge of the Essence, his vision becomes effaced and he becomes annihilated (*fānī*) in the Essence, like a drop which falls into the ocean and becomes the ocean.

Shaykh [Farīd al-Dīn] ʿAṭṭār [d. 1220]:

The eye which is not fixed upon the source—the ocean—
Is fixed upon the drop; how can [such a man] be Muslim (*musalmān*)?

So long as the drop and the ocean do not become one,
How can the stone of your unbelief (*kufr*) become the gem of faith (*īmān*)?

I see everything as the one sun,
But I don't know how it will shine upon you!

Both versions of the passage begin with a description of absolute Reality (*brahman*) that is fairly standard in Hindu Sanskrit literature.[76] Ultimate Reality transcends all descriptions; it is eternal and immutable, thus suffering no change whatsoever even as it manifests itself in the form of the world. One may note the seamless inclusion, in the Persian translation, of standard Sufi designations for the Absolute, such as "Being" (*hastī*), "Reality" (*ḥaqīqat*), and "Essence" (*dhāt/ẕāt*).

One might also note the inclusion, in the Persian translation, of the technical term "locus of manifestation" (*maẓhar*), which, as we have seen, carries with it the entire metaphysics and cosmology of God's names and attributes. Now, while the author Abhinanda, in the original Sanskrit *Laghu,* is happy to speak about the Absolute as "expanding" itself (*jṛmbhate*) in the phenomenal form of the world (*jagad-vivarta-rūpeṇa*) or "shining itself forth" (*svayam ullasati*) as other objects,[77] he never articulates a framework for this shining forth that quite corresponds with the Islamic names and attributes.[78] If the reader will recall Tony Stewart's theory of "seeking equivalences," outlined in the introduction, wherein Muslim translators merely look for overt similarities (or "equivalences") but without seeking "perfect translation" (at least not of technical and nuanced theological concepts), then, so far, it seems that Stewart's theory may indeed hold true.

Both versions of the passage then move on to two common analogies employed throughout the *Laghu*: the golden bracelet and the sun and its rays. To begin with the golden bracelet, in the *Laghu,* this analogy emphasizes the fact that the gold of which a bracelet is made is itself far more enduring than the particular ornamental form that the gold has assumed: some heat or hammering would alter the shape and thus make the bracelet no longer a bracelet—it would become, perhaps, liquid or shards, or another ornament such as a ring or necklace—but this would not make the gold cease to be gold; rather, the gold will endure through any such process of formal alteration. The import of this teaching is that any given ornament or piece of gold is, to one who sees beyond the form, really just gold, rather as ice and foam are really just water. Similarly, even as *brahman* shines itself forth as the myriad forms of the world, it itself remains wholly unchanged and transcendent, the essential reality underlying every fleeting form and apparent transformation.[79] While the translation team's rendition, in typical Persian prose-style, embellishes the analogy and includes additional lines of explanation—presumably required for a Persian-speaking audience but not for Sanskrit-readers—the original passage is rather fairly represented, at least at the doctrinal level.[80]

The *Laghu*'s recurring analogy of the sun and its rays again expresses the view of the essential identification between *brahman* and the phenomenal world, even if Abhinanda did not spell out all the analogy's implications in this particular instance. Each ray of sunlight, according to the analogy, though fleeting and pale in comparison to the sun, is ultimately nothing other than the sun itself; even if only a dim extension, the basic substance of every individual ray is nothing but sunlight. Furthermore, regardless of the fate of the sun's rays—no matter how many times they may be bounced off of objects, refracted, inflected with color, or simply fizzle out into the blackness of space—the sun itself remains transcendently and majestically unaltered. In much the same way, Abhinanda repeats time and again in the *Laghu,* the basic reality of all objects is simply *brahman,* the source of the entire phenomenal order, while any apparent transformations are merely transient and illusory, *brahman* ever remaining exactly what it is.[81] Only one who possesses great

wisdom, however, will be able to see that this is in fact the case. Again, the translation team's rendition seems to present this teaching rather faithfully, despite some poetic elaboration, while the verse of ʿAṭṭār's poetry that Findiriskī has inserted can leave little doubt that an overall similar metaphysical teaching—namely, the alternating identification between the phenomenal order and the Absolute, from one perspective, and then the nothingness of the phenomenal order in the face of the Absolute, from another angle—is given voice in both versions of the passage.

Subsequently, however, the translation team begins to take a few liberties. While the Sanskrit *Laghu* speaks of the one of great understanding, who has laid aside all multiplicity, as abiding in the womb of pure consciousness (*śuddha-cinmātra*), the translation team, perhaps to make the passage a bit more recognizable to readers cultivated in the Persian literary tradition, instead speaks of the wise one who is "annihilated" (*fānī*) in the Essence like a drop in the ocean. Now, the addition of the new analogy of the ocean-drop, though certainly a translator's innovation, does not seem to amount to all that much of a modification. Indeed, throughout the *Laghu,* Abhinanda is happy to speak of the disappearance of the individual ego in the one-and-only pure consciousness,[82] while he also makes frequent use of similar images such as the transient wave on the ocean of *brahman,* an analogy that runs along very comparable lines.[83] The image of the drop and the ocean, accordingly, expresses much the same metaphysical teaching as the previous analogies: just as the drop—a sort of fleeting individuation of the ocean that bears (virtually) no effect on the ocean itself—consists of nothing other than ocean-water, similarly, the objects of the phenomenal world, the appearance and forms of which are transient and illusory, are really nothing other than *brahman.* In comparison with the Sanskrit original, the insertion of the ocean-drop analogy places perhaps slightly more emphasis on the subjective pole of this knowledge, that is to say, on the disappearance of the realized sage herself in the Absolute, though one could certainly make the case that the difference is negligible.

The introduction of the term "annihilated" (*fānī*), however, seems more significant. The term "annihilation" (*fanā'*) has a very long history in Sufi thought and practice, dating back very nearly to the earliest founding figures of the tradition,[84] and has been reused if not reconsidered and refined by perhaps every subsequent Sufi teacher in history. The basic meaning of the term is the "annihilation" or "extinction" of the individual ego or lower self (*nafs*) in the face of God's absolute Reality: as Findiriskī, in his *Sharḥ-i Jūg,* glosses the state of being meant to be communicated by the ocean-drop analogy, "after every relation (*nisbat*), mark (*nishān*), and echo (*āvāz*) of one's own [individual] qualities (*ṣifāt*) have become absolutely annihilated (*muṭlaq fānī gashtah*), one is then called 'subsistent by the subsistence of the Real'" (*bi-baqā'-i ḥaqq bāqī*).[85] *Baqā'* is, of course, the traditional Sufi counterpart of *fanā'*: one is "annihilated" from one's own individual, lower self (*nafs*) but then "subsists" in God alone with the phenomenological awareness of

God as the sole veridical reality. Given this long ritual, practical, theological, and metaphysical history within—and particular to—the Sufi tradition, the word *fanā'* is certainly a prime candidate, on Stewart's translation theory referenced above, for a technical term that cannot be "purely" translated, but rather, can only provide a broad "equivalence" that thus helps a Muslim translator to express his own Islamic worldview in the guise of the local terminology (in this case, the Sanskrit term *brahma-jñāna,* "knowledge of *brahman*"). Yet, considering this moment of translation from within the perspective of the Islamic metaphysics outlined here, it seems that a somewhat different interpretation might emerge: although, with *fanā'* and *brahma-jñāna*, we may indeed be speaking about two experiences, concepts, religious forms, or states of being that are evidently and undeniably distinct, one may nevertheless assert that the transcendent reality manifested therein is shared between them. Taking our lead from the Sufi poet ʿAṭṭār, whom Findiriskī has inserted into this passage, one individual may be looking at a drop and another at foam, but both should have their attention fixed on the ocean from whence the two objects came, or, to utilize ʿAṭṭār's second analogy, they should know the two distinct objects as only the light of the one sun.[86] Stewart is surely correct when he asserts that the translation is "imperfect," but, when one takes into account these Sufi tenets, it can further be said that what is an "imperfect" translation at one level can still be a "perfect" translation at another, more transcendent level.

In the face of this framework, one might, understandably, raise the objection that, if everything expresses the one and only Reality in the end anyway, then what is to stop someone from translating "cat" as "dog" and then claiming, on this supposed metaphysical basis, that the translation is perfectly accurate? At least one response, it seems from the foregoing, would be to reply that such an objection again fails to take into account the distinct levels of reality as they are articulated in the *wujūdī* tradition. There are certain essential realities, or certain aspects of the Real, that, for example, a flower does manifest, and other realities that it does not, even if all those essential realities alike ultimately refer to the (still more transcendent) absolute Reality. Stated more simply, a flower does manifest God's dimension of Beauty (the divine Name "*al-jamīl*"), but it does not, to say the least, manifest His Name "the Slayer" ("*al-mumīt*") particularly well; the case is likewise, *mutatis mutandis,* for a gazelle.[87] If one recalls the famous story of the elephant in the dark room, retold by Rūmī and others—in which a group of men, unable to see the elephant and touching different parts of it, describe this single multi-faceted object in multiple ways ("like a fan," "like a pipe," "like a pillar," etc.)[88]—these men offered *partial* but still *good* descriptions of the reality before them; other descriptions, such as "miniscule" or "orange," would have been inaccurate and irrelevant. Analogously, calling a cat "furry" would be a good but incomplete description, while calling a cat "dog," without any further qualification, would be plainly useless. Again, as argued at length in the previous chapter, it would be a mistake to assume that *waḥdat al-wujūd* amounts to a simplistic repudiation of difference

and distinction as utterly illusory; to the contrary, difference has a very real place within most iterations of *wujūdī* metaphysics.

Hence, according to this *wujūdī* metaphysics, even though all things are ultimately "connected" within a unified, transcendent Reality, nonetheless, within the realm of manifestation, some connections are more relevant than others. We can similarly observe in the *Laghu* that, though Vasiṣṭha teaches Rāma that all the different labels and categories of different people are all ultimately manifestations of a single ultimate Reality, and that Rāma should see himself and the whole world as not other than that Reality, Vasiṣṭha simultaneously implores Rāma to maintain a simultaneous awareness of his reality at the level of forms: Rāma, by birth, by constitution, by temperament, by destiny, is a king, and so he must live this life out as a king. *Wujūdī* thinkers, similarly, speak of the realized individual as "balancing the outward (*ẓāhir*) and the inward (*bāṭin*)" and as "seeing with two eyes [i.e., of the outward and the inward]."[89] Only the discriminative capacity and vision of the wise, however, can comprehend this subtle balancing act. If one lacks this capacity or is unwilling to pursue it, then it seems that one must remain an "ignorant exoterist," drowned in the world of forms, unqualified to plumb the depths of those "subtle discourses" of which Findiriskī speaks in his prefatory verses.

As we have seen in the early stages of this study, modern scholars have proposed a number of useful hermeneutics for conceptualizing the Mughal translation movement, ranging from motivations of political legitimation (Richards) and imperial political self-fashioning (Alam, Gandhi, Truschke), to the search for imperfect translational "equivalences" (Stewart), to the contextually-specific encounters between different South Asian actors (Ernst, et al.), all to be examined as historical *processes* that eschew essentialized religious categories. If one were to speculate how Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, or Findiriskī might respond to such theories and frameworks in the context of the translation of the *Laghu,* I submit they would confirm that these modern studies indeed have a point, yet none of them quite capture the complete picture. Yes, "religions" (our Muslim thinkers would say: "*sharā'i',*" "*adyān,*" or "*madhāhib*") are most certainly historical things, ever changing through time as humans and circumstances compel them to; yet, in the accounts provided by the *wujūdī*-Peripatetic metaphysics articulated here, all such change is precisely the playing out of the possibilities already contained within a transcendent, immutable reality, namely, the total constellation of God's names and attributes as deposited in the multiple revelations sent through the blessed souls of the prophets, and subsequently received uniquely by each individual soul and religious community. Again, yes, the *Jūg Bāsisht* is evidently an "imperfect" translation of the *Laghu* along the lines of "seeking equivalences"; yet, such imperfection can give way to another type of transcendent perfection, provided the reader has the eyes to see: what is at one level the use of an ostensibly Hindu vocabulary to express substantially Sufi ideas is, at the same time, an attempt to express, as far as language will allow, what is universal and shared between both

communities, precisely because *wujūdī* thought contains within itself the insistence that it should transcend its own concepts and formulations.[90] No word or form can capture the Absolute; the best words and forms are those which best help us to transcend those very same words and forms, so as to reach the level of the universal, transcendent, all-encompassing Reality of realities.

No doubt, our three Muslim thinkers and these modern scholars come to an impasse at a certain point. Where Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī might view religious practice to be divesting a soul of all its human particularities and contextual qualities so as to approach God's universal realities (*tajarrud, takhalluq, ta'alluh*), modern scholars have instead tended to see an individual being only all the more intensely and profoundly shaped by his immediate social and cultural context, falling ever *deeper* into cultural particularity. How to adjudicate this tension in the practice of modern scholarship is, in my view, a crucial question for the future of the field, and one that has no easy answers, though I will offer some of my own reflections at the conclusion of this study. And yet, when scholars of South Asia are seemingly unanimous in their goal to cease projecting modern assumptions back into the premodern past, at the very least, it becomes incumbent upon us all to understand, as far as our capacities and contexts will allow, the perspectives and worldviews of those whom we seek to study in their own terms. Such has been a central aspiration of this study, and one that I hope may finally coalesce in a more extended examination of the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht* in the next chapter.

5

A Confluence of Traditions

The Jūg Bāsisht *Revisited*

Having glimpsed the conceptualization of and approach to translation evinced by the *Jūg Bāsisht* as filtered through the lens of its commentator, Mīr Findiriskī, let us now consider the *Jūg Bāsisht* more generally on its own terms, that is to say, in the terms of its translation team, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, and Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī. I aim here to present a sampling of several passages from the *Jūg Bāsisht* that exemplify some of the more instructive moments of the "meeting" between the Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit jet streams, translating these Persian passages side-by-side with the original Sanskrit versions from the *Laghu.* As throughout this study, the focus will again be passages relevant to the topic of metaphysics. Accordingly, this chapter will be divided into two parts, the first emphasizing aspects of the Arabo-Persian jet stream's distinct contributions to the translation team's work and method, and the second emphasizing the same in the case of the Sanskrit jet stream. Regarding the former, the primary analytic feature is the manner in which the Persian language, with the malleability and flexibility afforded by its condition as a still nascent language of scholastic philosophical inquiry, accepted new Sanskritic concepts and terms into its fold in a way that could still effectively convey meaning to a Persian-reading audience. As for the Sanskrit jet stream, the main question is how the two Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, when faced with some of the *Laghu*'s more ambiguous or inconsistent passages, made use of recent developments within the world of the Sanskrit jet stream, as exemplified by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, to assist in the task of translation. By these means, the *paṇḍits* Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra managed to usher "wisps" of the Sanskrit jet stream into this work of Persian scholarship, the *Jūg Bāsisht.*

In thus seeking to recover the unique contributions of the Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, we are confronted with a daunting challenge. With no record of the intermediary oral discussions between the two Sanskrit *paṇḍits* and Pānīpatī, the evidence for the *paṇḍits*' contributions turns out to be elusive and difficult to isolate. Furthermore, given Sanskrit thought's general, widespread assumption, as exemplified by Madhusūdana, that revelation (*śruti*) and the proper knowledge of Reality can only be uttered in the Sanskrit language, the resources are rather thin for recovering any sort of Sanskritic framework for making sense of religious diversity—although the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* itself, as we have seen in chapter 1, offers a few nascent leads. Accordingly, the contribution of the Sanskrit *paṇḍits* to the *Jūg Bāsisht* does not really lie in the arena of a general approach to translation or a framework for comprehending "other" traditions of thought. Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra did contribute, however, by bringing their reading of the *Laghu* to bear upon particular passages, teachings, and doctrines contained within the original Sanskrit treatise, interpreting and translating them in a way that reflects, I will argue, how contemporary Advaitins understood the text at that time. To focus this search and inquiry, I will restrict my analysis to specific passages in the *Laghu* and the *Jūg Bāsisht* that are specifically relevant to the topics of *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda,* already introduced and discussed in the context of Madhusūdana's writings in chapter 2. Let us begin, however, with a more sustained look at the Arabo-Persian side of the story.

THE ARABO-PERSIAN JET STREAM IN THE *JŪG BĀSISHT*

In order to make this translation work, the translation team had to stretch and bend the Persian language in such a way that it could accept an influx of a tremendous volume of new vocabulary whose roots lay in a predominantly foreign source, namely, Sanskrit and its literary and conceptual world(s). As a result, nearly every page of the *Jūg Bāsisht* contains numerous Sanskrit terms—transliterated into Persian—relevant to an extremely wide range of topics, including ritual (e.g., *pūjā*), deities and other Sanskrit proper names (e.g., Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Vyāsa, Sumeru), scriptures (e.g., Veda, *śāstra*), pilgrimage (e.g., *tīrtha*), religious practices (e.g., *yoga, tapasya, dhyāna*), Hindu ethics (e.g., *varṇa, vairāgya, sama, saṃnyāsa*), Hindu "psychology" (e.g., *vāsanā, janma*), metaphysics (e.g., *ātman, brahman*), physics (e.g., *sattva, rajas, tamas*), cosmology (e.g., *mahāpralaya, māyā, brahmāṇḍa*), and many, many others—this is, indeed, hardly the tip of the iceberg! Beyond simply including the transliterated Sanskrit word, the translation team—presumably, Pānīpatī first and foremost[1]—naturally had to find a way to make that term comprehensible to a Persian-reader, whether Muslim, Hindu, Jain, or otherwise. Hence, the translation team would frequently insert a single- or multiple-word definition of the transliterated Sanskrit term, or else provide illustrative analogies

or metaphors typically borrowed from the Sanskrit intellectual tradition, from the tradition of Persian Sufi poetry, or even from elsewhere in the *Laghu* itself. Perhaps most interesting for our purposes, however, are the occasions when the translation team offered clarification by means of correlating the Sanskrit term in question with an apparently similar Arabo-Persian concept or Islamic technical term, typically of a *wujūdī* or Peripatetic provenance. While the *paṇḍits* would surely have helped Pānīpatī at some level with these definitions, illustrations, and glosses of Sanskrit terms and concepts, without any record of the oral Hindavī discourse that served as the intermediary stage between the Sanskrit original and the Persian final product, it is not always easy to tell where the *paṇḍits*' contributions end and Pānīpatī's begin. In any case, we will dwell upon some relatively clearer examples of Pānīpatī's contributions here, and reserve a closer examination of the *paṇḍits*' contributions for the second section below.

Again, one could make a compelling case that the translators' conduct exemplifies Stewart's abovementioned translation-model of "seeking equivalences": perfectly synonymous theological concepts for Sanskrit terms simply did not exist in the Persian language, and so, according to Stewart's argument, Pānīpatī would have instead sought overtly similar but imprecise approximations from within his own Islamic tradition, in this manner communicating a thoroughly Islamic worldview through an ostensibly Sanskrit or Hindu terminology. By this model, Pānīpatī would not really be able to avoid "distorting" the "Hindu" *Jūg Bāsisht* along the way, as a Sanskrit term like "*brahman*" would become, in significant measure, an occasion for the translator to convey, for instance, his own *wujūdī* notion of *wujūd muṭlaq* (absolute Being).[2] From within the perspectives offered by the likes of Muḥibb Allāh and Findiriskī, however, the translation in question could be simultaneously perfect *and* imperfect: imperfect because "*brahman*" and "*wujūd muṭlaq,*" qua formal expressions that fall short of the Absolute itself, are indeed irreconcilably different from one another in the manner of bubbles and ice—no one would ever confuse the two, which, in a very real way that no discriminating person could deny, are different from each another. The translation can also be perfect, however, to the extent that it captures two forms or "expressions" (*alfāẓ*)—one from the source language and one from the target language—that mutually point to a common, transcendent "meaning" (*maʿnā*), and, accordingly, assists the reader in arriving at or grasping that common meaning within herself. Such a framework, however, depends upon the reader having the proper formation and interior cultivation: to the extent that one possesses the capacity (*istiʿdād*) to penetrate forms (*ṣuwar*) and arrive at the transcendent meaning or essence (*ẕāt*), to that precise extent, the translation has the potential to be "perfect" for her.

The overall result of the conduct of the translators is certainly not what modern readers would call a "literal" translation. Although the *Jūg Bāsisht* follows the overall course of the *Laghu* rather faithfully in terms of the progression of stories, key terms, and topics of discussion, the literal wording of the Persian passage is,

often, a significant departure from the Sanskrit original. The translation team did not hesitate to incorporate additional lines of explanation, to insert an illustrative analogy not present in the Sanskrit source text, to overlay the passage with Arabo-Persian Islamic technical terminology, or else to translate according to the demands of Persian prose stylistics. From the perspectives of Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, or Findiriskī, such "departures" from the Sanskrit text were likely not problematic, so long as they served their proper purpose. Nevertheless, such translation practices render each passage of the *Jūg Bāsisht* a very intricate phenomenon, bringing together a complex combination of a degree of literality, a need to provide conventional comprehensibility for Persian-readers who have not before encountered a Sanskritic lexicon, and a desire to provide some possibility for "transcendent" comprehension. With such a multifaceted phenomenon occurring on every page of a nearly five-hundred page Persian treatise, suffice it to say, a comprehensive analysis cannot remotely be accomplished here. However, by way of an exemplifying sampling of passages, I present here some characteristic passages that shed light upon how the translators "came to terms" with the text of the *Laghu*.

Our first passage, already translated above in the introduction, comes from the opening of the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Presumably penned by Pānīpatī, this passage describes the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, in rather *wujūdī* fashion, as "Sufism" (*taṣawwuf*) and a "commentary upon realities" (*sharḥ-i ḥaqā'iq*).[3] Pānīpatī proceeds to introduce his readers to the "religious path" (*maẕhab*) of Abhinanda, the "Hindu" author of the *Laghu.* Along the way, Pānīpatī frequently presents the foundations of Abhinanda's *maẕhab* in decidedly *wujūdī* terms, echoing the discourses of Muḥibb Allāh and Findiriskī, thus placing this "religious paths of the Brahmins of India" within the broad Islamic framework for comprehending religious diversity laid out in previous chapters:

> The Brahmins of India possess the religious path (*maẕhab*) of the ancient sages (*ḥukamā-i mutaqaddimīn*[4]) concerning the oneness of the essence of the Real (*waḥdat-i ẕāt-i ḥaqq*)—may He be praised and exalted—and concerning the qualities (*ṣifāt*) of His perfection (*kamāl*), the levels of His descents [into the world], the origin of multiplicity, and the manifestation of the worlds. If any distinction should obtain [between the Brahmins and the ancient sages], it would only be with respect to terminology (*iṣṭilāḥ*) and language (*zabān*).[5]
>
> The Kashmiri *paṇḍit* Abhinanda, who is the author of the manuscript of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (*Jūg Bāsisht*), at the commencement of this abridgment,[6] leads off with the name of God and praises for the Creator (most high).[7]
>
> It should be known that the names of the Real (*nāmhā-i ḥaqq*), most high, have no end or limit. Every one of the great *ṛṣis*[8] and seekers of the Real (*ṭālibān-i rāh-i ḥaqq*) has chosen one of His names, which are in accordance with the *avatāras*[9] and are the manifestations (*tajallīyāt*) of the levels of His self-disclosure . . . Those [*ṛṣis* and seekers] remember their [chosen] name much.[10] They seek, by means of that name, a generous emanation (*fayż*) from Him who is the origin of [all] emanation.[11]

> The mode of the *avatāra* is laid out in the revered books (*kutub*) of the people of India. Most Indians believe that the lifetime of the world is divided into four stages, each stage being called a "*yuga.*" Each *yuga* is distinguished by its own particular qualities and features . . . .[12] After the passing of the four *yugas,* there occurs the "*pralaya*"—that is, the Day of Resurrection (*qiyāmat*)—when all the existents (*mawjūdāt*) of the world go to nothingness . . . .
>
> They say that, in these four *yugas,* that absolute Being and Light of the unseen, for the sake of improving the condition of the people of the world, out of His own will and generosity, manifests [Himself] in the world through a special manifestation (*maẓhar-i khāṣṣ*) [i.e., the *avatāra*].[13] One of these special manifestations is Narasiṃha, who is in the half-man-half-lion form . . . .

Pānīpatī subsequently enumerates various Hindu deities as the distinct names and specifications (*taʿayyunāt*) of God, including Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī, Rāma, and others. He further goes on to mention "the Book, the Veda—God's speech from His own mouth" which "manifests a total and perfect manifestation."[14] A few pages later, Pānīpatī refers to the Vedas as "books of *sharīʿah,*"[15] a comment directly echoed by Findiriskī in his own *Sharḥ-i Jūg* commentary.[16] Pānīpatī then details the "essence of *brahman*" (*ẕāt-i barahm*), utilizing the "Peripateticized" *wujūdī* lexicon of the "pure intellect" (*ʿaql-i khāliṣ*), the "absolute" (*muṭlaq*), "without change, form, or delimitation" (*bī taghyīr u ṣūrat u qayd*),[17] these descriptors being, again, confirmed and explicated by Findiriskī within his *Sharḥ-i Jūg* commentary.[18]

Revisiting this passage now with the benefit of the material covered in the prior three chapters, the reader will hopefully recognize, in the opening paragraph, the hallmarks of a *wujūdī* metaphysics, wherein a singular Divine essence discloses its intrinsic qualities and attributes, voluntarily adopting lesser and lesser manifestations to project itself forth in the form(s) of the phenomenal world. The translation team (primarily Pānīpatī) further associates the "religious path" (*maẓhab*) of the Brahmins with that of the ancient Greek philosophers, declaring the two groups' mutual distinctions to be merely a matter of "language," an assertion that, I would argue, mirrors Findiriskī's distinction between worldly "form" (*lufẓ, ṣūrat*) vs. transcendent "meaning" (*maʿnā*), as examined in the previous chapter. Pānīpatī next invokes the notion of the Divine names and attributes, examined in chapter 3, which are traditionally enumerated at ninety-nine but which Muḥibb Allāh, following Ibn ʿArabī, affirms to be in fact infinite in number. Pānīpatī evidently favors this latter interpretation, as he describes the names as "having no end or limit," thus creating the space for other valid ways of characterizing God in other scriptures and in other languages. In this case, the translators are suggesting that the Hindu deities and *avatāras,* including Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī, Rāma, Narasiṃha, and so forth, should also be counted among the names of God, standing alongside the Arabic, Islamic names of *al-Raḥmān, al-Raḥīm,* and all the rest.

Islamic thinkers in the *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, as we have seen, view the Divine names as articulations of the grand modes through which the human

individual might relate to God. God Himself, in His essence (*dhāt*), is utterly transcendent and unknowable, and hence beyond any form of relationship with any "other." According to these thinkers, however, God chooses to "manifest" or "disclose" Himself (*tajallī*) to creation, voluntarily assuming the various names and attributes as His grand modes of relating to human beings and the world. Accordingly, God is the Qur'ānic name "the Merciful" (*al-raḥmān*) insofar as He turns a merciful face toward creation; He is the Qur'ānic name "the Just" (*al-ʿadl*) insofar as He discloses His justice to the world; and He is the name "the Lord" (*al-rabb*) insofar as He manifests lordship over the world, and so on. At any given moment, accordingly, a human individual—whether consciously or not—will always experience a relationship with God through some combination of these names. In their introductory comments here, the translation team includes the Hindu deities and *avatāras* under this Qur'ānic framework: a devotee who approaches Viṣṇu, hence, is simply relating to that particular (Sanskritic) Divine name, which is merely one aspect, dimension, or "face" of the absolute, transcendent Real.

A devotee of a particular deity, furthermore, experiences a unique attraction or special affinity for that particular face of the Divine, which the translators render by the Qur'ānic terminology of "choosing one of His names" and "remembering that name much." Here the three translators echo the dozens of exhortations in the Qur'ān to "remember God often" (26:227) or to "mention the name of one's Lord" (87:15), the operative word being *dhikr* (Persian, *yād*), a reference to the central Sufi practice of "remembering" or "mentioning" God's names. Through one's unique relationship with her chosen Divine name, that name will become a bridge between the human and the Divine, through which the "emanations" of God's mercy, "filtered" through the Divine face or aspect in question, will reach the devotee—this term "emanation" (*fayḍ/fayż*) hailing from a Peripatetic provenance, originally referring to the emanating activity of the celestial intellects in pouring forth the cosmos,[19] but here adapted to the Sufi context of an aspirant's personal relationship with the Divine via His names. Hence, despite the countless formal differences that exist between the varieties of Islamic remembrance and piety versus the varieties of Hindu worship and contemplation, the translators are nevertheless willing to assert that these both fall under the general Qur'ānic concept of mentioning or invoking God's names, a notion that the translators will later correlate with the Hindu practice of *japa* (repetition of Divine names or *mantras*). Exactly how a devotee or "sage/seer" (*ṛṣi*) accomplishes this remembrance is, according to the translators, laid out in the "revered books" (*kutub-i muʿtabirah*) of the Indians, a term that again has a strong Qur'ānic resonance in the Qur'ān's repeated affirmation of the various revealed books that have been sent down to God's chosen messengers.

In this fashion, in the very opening pages of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* we see Pānīpatī establish much of the basic metaphysical language that will permeate the remainder of the text, and in terms of which he wants his readers to frame "the path of the

Brahmins." This lexicon is, evidently, profoundly indebted to the *wujūdī* tradition as represented by the likes of Muḥibb Allāh, suffused through and through with the language of God's "manifestation," His "qualities," and His "perfection," combined with an overlay of such Peripatetic vocabulary as God's "emanation" and the notion of the "pure intellect" (*ʿaql-i khāliṣ*). Pānīpatī also erects homologies between these *wujūdī* concepts and apparently similar concepts from the Sanskrit tradition: the opening verse of the *Laghu,* which speaks of the Lord who "shines forth" (*vibhāti*) in the world and in the self, becomes a site of connection for the idea of God's "manifestation"; the idea of the Veda and the *avatāra* become articulated in terms of the revealed Book (*kitāb*) and, implicitly, prophecy (*nubuwwah*), all, again, couched within a metaphysics of God's *wujūd* and self-manifestations (*tajallī, ẓuhūr, paydā*). Other basic constituents of "the Brahmin path," however, such as the four "*yugas*" or cosmic ages, are explained largely accurately and on their own terms, despite the fact that such notions rub against the grain of foundational Islamic beliefs. The only "help" that Pānīpatī gives his readers for understanding these Hindu concepts is through correlating the *pralaya*, or cosmic dissolution, with the Islamic notion of the Day of Resurrection (*qiyāmat*) at the end of time. Although the cosmic dissolution at the end of a grand cycle of *yugas*, as depicted in Hindu cosmologies, is disparate from the Islamic Day of Resurrection in more ways than could be counted, such plain difference between the two eschatologies does not seem to bother Pānīpatī—indeed, we might presume that such distinctions between the two forms is, for him, already a foregone conclusion. In this fashion, the translation team exhibits a considerable willingness to allow differences between the two traditions to remain on the page, without rushing to explain them away. Perhaps Pānīpatī's Islamic framework for comprehending religious diversity is robust enough that he need not feel threatened by "foreign" Hindu notions of, for instance, rebirth, redeath, and cyclical time.

Another important feature of the process of translation is how the translators accommodate ambiguities within the Sanskrit source text. One such difficulty presented by the *Laghu,* as seen in chapter 1, is the text's use of the term "*manas*" (mind), a concept especially central to the *Laghu*'s philosophical and cosmological outlook, and which Abhinanda had little interest in presenting systematically. The *Laghu*'s characteristic, idealist tenet of "*manomātra*" (mind-only) enunciates that the entire phenomenal universe in fact consists only of the mind, or of the ignorance, attachment, and agitations of the mind; the *Laghu*'s accordant suggestion is that, if the *manas* is purified and pacified, then knowledge (*jñāna*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) from the bondage of this world may dawn upon the aspirant. The *Laghu,* however, as we have seen, continually shifts between different aspects of what *manomātra* might mean: is it the case that the ignorance, attachment, and agitation in the mind of me—a human individual—effects this entire universe? Or is it that *brahman* produced a cosmological entity "*manas,*" which then goes

about the business of creating the universe? Or is it *brahman*'s own mind (*manas*) that produces the universe? Or is it some combination of the foregoing, such that some form of cosmic *manas* produces the universe, while the particular ignorance, attachment, and agitation of that *manas* that is reflected in me, a human individual, in turn, produces additional worlds as presented to my own cognition? To all of these questions, the *Laghu* answers sometimes a "yes," sometimes a "no," and sometimes a "nobody knows"; at other times, the text cannot even be bothered to provide an answer!

Pānīpatī, and also Findiriskī in his *Sharḥ,* do their best to attend to this inherent ambiguity of the term. In many cases, Pānīpatī, with the help of the Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, preserves the particular iteration of *manas* that occurs within a given passage, while resisting the urge to systematize a term that Abhinanda did not himself care to render systematic. Findiriskī, in his commentary, carefully and explicitly picks up upon and preserves these ambiguities of the term: "*manas* is one usage is the *nafs* (lower soul); in another usage is the mind (*khāṭir*) and perception (*shu'ūr*); in another usage is the first specification (*ta'ayyun-i awwal*); in another usage is sheer thought (*andīshah-i maḥż*) and pure conceptualization (*taṣawwur-i khāliṣ*) . . . and [in another usage] is a person's thinking about himself."[20] In this manner, Findiriskī acknowledges and attempts to accommodate the numerous ways in which Abhinanda deploys this term, while also finding homologies between these various usages and Arabo-Persian Islamic thought. The *nafs,* for instance, is a reference to the Qur'ānic concept, central to Sufi thought and practice, of the individual soul, carnal self, or ego which persists in being forgetful (*ghāfilah*) of God, and which must accordingly be purified so as to achieve a condition of remembrance (*dhikr*) of God. This forgetfulness of the *nafs,* and its misguided desire to remain attached to a condition of forgetfulness, is central to the Sufi account of what allows an individual to persist in delusion about the true nature of the self and world. Findiriskī's gloss of the *manas* as the "first specification" (*ta'ayyun-i awwal*), on the other hand, employs a "Peripateticized" *wujūdī* concept that refers to the first, most comprehensive level of God's process of self-manifestation, hence rearticulating the *manas* as a cosmological entity in Islamic philosophical terms;[21] elsewhere, Findiriskī, following Pānīpatī, identifies this "first specification" with the Hindu creator-deity Brahmā, who emerges from Viṣṇu's navel seated upon a lotus in order to project forth the universe and initiate the next grand cycle of *yugas*.[22]

Through his additional gloss on *manas* as "pure conceptualization" (*taṣawwur-i khāliṣ*), Findiriskī additionally associates the *manas* with a largely Peripatetic formulation of the aforementioned *ḥadīth* of the "hidden treasure," wherein God, desiring to know Himself and to have others know Him, creates the objects and entities of the universe. As seen in Muḥibb Allāh's discussions, this *ḥadīth* in part references the "moment" when God conceives, within His own knowledge, all the

possibilities of the cosmos—these possibilities being equivalent to the potential modes of the manifestation of His own *wujūd*—and then creates those possibilities in the forms of the world. "Pure conceptualization" (*taṣawwur-i khāliṣ*) may refer to God's initial conception of the possibilities prior to their actualization, referred to by Muḥibb Allāh and the *wujūdī* tradition as the "most holy emanation" (*fayḍ aqdas*), and referenced repeatedly throughout the *Jūg Bāsisht*; on the other hand, *taʿayyun-i awwal* might refer to this cosmological *fayḍ aqdas* specifically, whereas *taṣawwur-i khāliṣ* renders the more ambiguous and underdetermined "*manas*-as-thought" per se, not specified to be indicating "God's mind," individual human subjectivity, both, or neither. Findiriskī persists in highlighting these multiple senses of individual Sanskrit terms throughout his commentary, as with the terms "*citta,*" "*cit,*" "*buddhi,*" "*dhyāna,*" "*tamas,*" and numerous others.

In some instances, however, it appears as though Pānīpatī, for lack of a better term, "took advantage" of certain of the *Laghu*'s ambiguities so as to bring the text into a somewhat closer harmony with his own doctrinal commitments (though one must be open to the possibility that the *paṇḍits*, too, may have had a hand in the act). Let us take, by way of example, one of the source passages, already encountered in chapter 1, from the Sanskrit *Laghu:*

> When, just as the wind enacts the pulsating power of vibration (*spanda-śakti*), the self (*ātman*), entirely on its own, suddenly enacts a power (*śakti*) called "desire/imagination" (*saṃkalpa*), then, [this] self of the world, making itself as if in the form of a discrete semblance (*ābhāsa*) that abounds in the drive toward desire/imagination (*saṃkalpa*), becomes mind (*manas*). This world, which is just pure desire/imagination (*saṃkalpa-mātra*), enjoying the condition of being seen (*dṛśya*), is neither real (*satyam*) nor false (*mithyā*), occurring like the snare of a dream.[23]

While the main features of this passage are translated rather well in the *Jūg Bāsisht,* Pānīpatī does make one minor but significant alteration: instead of the comparatively ambiguous "it (*ātman*) makes itself *manas,*" as we have in the Sanskrit original, Pānīpatī instead writes, "when the world is ready to manifest, then the *manas* of *brahman* (*man-i barahm*) enters into activity."[24] There is an easily missed, but arguably significant, difference between the two: in the former case, *brahman* merely makes itself into something lower than itself called "mind" as part of the process of manifestation; the Persian rendition, however, is written as though the mind is explicitly *brahman*'s own, which then directs the course of creation. This latter articulation, hence, appears to place *manas* on a higher rung of the ontological hierarchy than Abhinanda seems to have intended; indeed, Abhinanda only rarely, if ever, raises *manas* up so high as to constitute *brahman*'s own mind, at least not so explicitly. Pānīpatī, however, seemingly because he favors an Islamic metaphysics in which God Himself is the undisputed ultimate Creator of everything, tweaked the passage in favor of that intuition, however consciously or unconsciously.

As discussed in chapter 1, within this same passage, there occur a number of the fundamental concepts of the *Laghu*'s metaphysics, which it is worthwhile to review here for the purposes of the remainder of this chapter. The Sanskrit *Laghu,* in contrast to Advaita Vedānta, tends to favor a vision of *brahman* somewhat more consonant with the metaphysics of non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism: while Advaita steadfastly endeavors to maintain a conception of *ātman* that is devoid of all change and transformation, Kashmiri Śaivas, in sharp contrast, wholeheartedly embrace a dynamic, active divine Self. Hence, we observe Abhinanda, in this passage, attributing to *ātman* a "power" (*śakti*) of "pulsation" or "vibration" (*spanda*), again typical of non-dualist Śaiva articulations of the nature of ultimate Reality, which they call Śiva or *cit* (pure consciousness). For Kashmiri Śaivas, and also for Abhinanda, thus, the entire universe, with all its entities and objects, are just pulsations and modifications of a dynamic, infinite, pulsating pure consciousness, called *cit, saṃvid,* or *caitanya* (though Abhinanda hardly ever resorts to the identity of "Śiva"). Abhinanda further emphasizes, however, that, throughout this entire procedure of *ātman's* imagining the endless possibilities of the world within itself and then projecting them forth, nonetheless, no real change accrues to *ātman* in the process. Rather, as Abhinanda affirms in a somewhat more Advaitin mode, there is only *apparent* change in the form of neither-real-nor-false semblances (*ābhāsas*), a formulation that seems to draw upon the Advaitin notion of *anirvacanīya.*

As also discussed in chapter 1, a further key element of this passage from the *Laghu* is its invocation of *ātman's* power of *saṃkalpa* ("wish/desire," "imagination," "mental construction," and so on). This concept is, again, a central feature of the *Laghu* that aligns more closely with non-dualist Kashmiri Śaiva metaphysics than with Advaita Vedānta, the latter tending to deplore the idea of *brahman*/*ātman* wanting or desiring anything. Abhinanda, in contrast, is perfectly content to depict an *ātman* vibrantly overflowing with *saṃkalpa*, an intrinsic capacity of pure consciousness, which begins to "desire" and to "imagine" (*saṃkalpa*) the potentialities (*śaktis*) of creation within itself, and then actualizes those potentialities by force of its own "pulsation" or "vibration" (*spanda*); in other, seemingly more Advaitic moments, however, Abhinanda will instead underscore the privative, deluding character of *ātman*'s *saṃkalpa.* As we shall see presently, Pānīpatī and Findiriskī are eager to connect this Sanskrit idea of *saṃkalpa* with the *wujūdī* interpretation of the *ḥadīth* of the hidden treasure, in which God "desires" to be known and then "imagines" or "conceptualizes" all the possibilities of creation within Himself, "before" proceeding to create them. This particular conceptual linkage between the Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian intellectual traditions is invoked and persistently repeated throughout the Persian text, thus constituting one of the central homologies between Hindu and Islamic metaphysics to be proposed by the translation team. Let us now see how this homology plays out within the Persian text, as we shift our attention to the specific contributions that the Sanskrit *paṇḍits* brought to this meeting of the two jet streams within the *Jūg Bāsisht*.

THE SANSKRIT JET STREAM IN THE *JŪG BĀSISHT*

Given how precious little we know about the Sanskrit *paṇḍits* Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, we can do little more than to speculate concerning their motivations for participating in the Mughal court's translation efforts. While early modern Hindu *śāstric* writing in Sanskrit, as exemplified by Madhusūdana, tends to leave the pronounced impression that a proper *paṇḍit* should be effectively uninterested in any literature composed in any language other than Sanskrit, the period is nevertheless also characterized, as we have seen, by the flourishing of regional vernaculars, often at the hands of *paṇḍits* who, for one reason or another, chose to write in a non-Sanskrit medium. Could it be that, for Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, Persian literature was of interest for similar reasons, even if their grasp of the language was conceivably fairly minimal? Perhaps they were just pursuing the paycheck—or else, were they actually interested in learning from or contributing to Persianate thought? This would seem to relate to the question of whether the *paṇḍits* were little invested in the final product and so only sought to make available their grammatical acumen in the Sanskrit language (providing a linguistically accurate Hindavī rendition and nothing more). On the other hand, if they were more invested in the final product and in the Persian end of the process, perhaps these *paṇḍits* could have proffered something more than strictly their grammatical know-how.

Although, at present, we cannot resolve such queries with any certainty, I nonetheless contend that a textual analysis of the *Jūg Bāsisht* reveals the *paṇḍits*' contributions of some portion of their philosophical Sanskrit learning, alongside their more formal translation skills. Though we can only guess at their precise motivations for making these contributions, it nevertheless reveals a degree of investment on the part of the *paṇḍits* if they concerned themselves with the Persian rendition at the level of philosophical content and doctrine. More specifically, I aim to show that Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra—who, as trained *paṇḍits* (at least one of them associated with Banaras), would have had access to the contemporaneous Sanskrit discussions taking place in Banaras and perhaps other intellectual centers—brought their knowledge of recent Advaitin debates concerning *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda* to bear upon the Persian translation project, leaving a distinct mark on the *Jūg Bāsisht* in the peculiar manner in which the text treats the subject of the *jīva*. Although I restrict myself here to questions of metaphysics, a similar analysis, I would argue, would reveal the *paṇḍits*' additional contributions to other content treated in the *Laghu* and interpreted by recent Advaitin exegetes, including, questions of epistemology, yogic practice, spiritual praxis, and other topics. In this manner, I would suggest, wisps of the recent philosophical activity occurring within the wider Sanskrit jet stream found their way into the Persian intellectual and literary sphere via the two *paṇḍits* and the venue provided by the *Jūg Bāsisht*.

It is worth mentioning, in the first place, that the Mughal court already possessed considerable knowledge of Advaita Vedānta at the time that this particular

translation was undertaken in the late sixteenth century. Abū al-Fażl (d. 1602), for instance, Emperor Akbar's vizier and court historian, probably concluded his voluminous *Akbar-nāmah*, the official chronicle of Akbar's reign, just a year or so before the *Jūg Bāsisht* was completed in 1597. In the famous final volume of the *Akbar-nāmah,* the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī,* Abū al-Fażl displays his awareness of even relatively recent developments in Advaita thought. Shireen Moosvi translates Abū al-Fażl's account of the beliefs of the followers of Vedānta ("*Bedant*"):

> Except for the Infinite God, they do not consider anything existing, and hold the universe to be an Appearance without existence. Just as a human being, while dreaming in sleep, sees figures and undergoes thousands of pleasures and joys, so they hold what we experience while awake to be similar. One spreading light has just assumed different names with different kinds of perceptions . . . . In this great science (*'ilm*), they speak of six things: *Barmma* [*brahman*]; *Isur* [*īśvara*]; *jiv* [*jīva*]; *aggiyan* [*ajñāna*]; *sambandh* [*sambandha*]; *bhed* [*bheda*]. They regard all the six as without beginning, and the first one as without end. *Barmma* is the Incomparable Creator . . . . *Aggiyan:* as against former thinkers, they regard it as existing (*wujudi*), and hold it to consist of two powers[:] *b[i]chchhep shakti* [*vikṣepa śakti*], the power of becoming apparent, and *avarna shakti* [*āvaraṇa sakti*], the power of concealing recognition . . . . They say *aggiyan* combined with the first power [*bichchhep*] gets the name *maya* [*māyā*]; combined with the second [*avarna*], [it becomes] *abiddya* [*avidyā*].[25]

Moosvi correctly observes that the Vedāntic language employed here does not very much resemble the teachings of the figure generally considered to be Advaita Vedānta's founder, Śaṅkarācārya. She incorrectly seeks the alternative source of such terminology, however, in the scriptures prior to Śaṅkara, namely, the Upaniṣads; rather, one must look to the post-Śaṅkara Advaita tradition to locate these doctrinal formulations. Even a cursory glance at the abovementioned Advaita primer, the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda (fl. 1500), for example, reveals these same formulations, which had in fact become standard in later scholastic Advaita Vedānta. The division of the powers of "ignorance" (*avidyā, ajñāna*) into the two categories of "projection" (*vikṣepa*) and "covering" (*āvaraṇa*), for instance, develops only in post-Śaṅkara Advaitin thought, and remains standard even through to the time of Madhusūdana's writing. Such relatively recent developments in Advaitin thought, hence, had already been transmitted to the Mughal court. We might view the comparable contributions of Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* accordingly, as another instance of this continuing process of transmission.

Reading over Abū al-Fażl's account of the teachings of Vedānta, however, one cannot help but notice his seeming difficulty with the Advaitin concept of *avidyā.* Though "ignorance" or *avidyā* is thought to be the direct material cause of the phenomenal universe, an Advaitin would certainly not acquiesce to its being described as "existing" (Abū al-Fażl uses the characteristic term of Peripatetic and philosophical Sufi thought, "*wujūdī*"). Rather, for an Advaitin such as Sadānanda or Madhusūdana, *brahman* alone would be ultimately existent, while *avidyā,*

although it is a beginningless entity, is not an *ultimately* existent (*pāramārthika*) object, suffering its own destruction at the moment that knowledge (*vidyā, jñāna*) arises. Nevertheless, given his own penchant for an Islamic *wujūdī* metaphysics, Abū al-Fażl's confusion is understandable: many later Advaitins make *avidyā* bear so much explanatory weight as the direct cause of the universe, and also exert so much effort to maintain *avidyā* as something incompatible with and external to *brahman,* that it would not be surprising for a practitioner of another tradition to wonder if this somehow constitutes a "dualism" that contravenes the Advaitin claim to a "non-dualist" vision (though the Advaitins argue at great length, of course, that it does not). From a *wujūdī* perspective, in contrast, the principles of change and creation lie within the Divine itself, as, desiring to know itself through its self-manifestation, it conceives all possible creations and then voluntarily "delimits" (*taqyīd*) itself in the form of those possibilities, thus making them actual. Although *wujūdī* thinkers would insist, with the Advaitins, that no real change accrues to the Divine Essence at any point in this process—rather, such change only occurs behind the "veil" (*ḥijāb*) of appearance or, as an Advaitin might say, in the illusory "semblances" (*ābhāsas*) produced by "ignorance" (*avidyā*)—nevertheless, the willingness of *wujūdī* thinkers to root creation directly within the Real itself constitutes a significant point of departure from the Advaitins, exhibiting a nearer kinship with non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism. It is rather unsurprising, then, that Muslim scholars of the Mughal court would seem to find something more familiar in the "*spanda*" and "*śakti*" metaphysics of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* than in the metaphysics of mainstream, scholastic Advaita Vedānta.[26]

And so, with this backdrop in place, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra stepped into this translation job as the only proper Sanskrit-readers in the room. At one level, accordingly, the two *paṇḍits* would have had to balance the basic teachings and terminology of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* against the *wujūdī*-Peripatetic conceptual universe of their fellow translator, Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, while also taking into account the insights of some of the *Laghu*'s various historical interpreters. As can be demonstrated with reasonable certainty, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra made use of the two commentaries that are also available in the modern printed edition of the *Laghu,* namely, the *Vāsiṣṭhacandrikā* of Ātmasukha (printed with *Laghu* chapters 1–3) and the *Saṃsārataraṇī* of Mummaḍideva (accompanying *Laghu* chapters 4–6); further research will have to be conducted, however, to determine whether the *paṇḍits* also had access to any of the *Laghu*'s other commentaries, whether those known to us today or perhaps some no longer extant.[27] Beyond just this, however, we also find Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra themselves, of their own accord and creativity, inserting elements of Advaitin thought into the Persian text that are absent from the original *Laghu.*[28] To take one fairly rudimentary example, let us compare a passage from the third chapter (*prakaraṇa*) of the Sanskrit original against the corresponding Persian rendition:

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Utpatti Prakaraṇa*)
(3:1:2–4; pp. 97–99)

The name that is taught for experience (*anubhūti*), knowing, and cognition is, simply, "[direct] perception" (*pratyakṣa*); that, according to us, is the *jīva.*

That *jīva* is consciousness (*saṃvid*); it is man, possessing the sense of "I" . . . .

That *jīva,* assuming a manifold sequence of states through primal *saṃkalpa,* doubt (*vikalpa*), [and] error (*bhrama*), bursts forth as the world (*jagat*), just as water bursts forth as a wave.

Ātmasukha's commentary: That which is immediate consciousness (*aparokṣa caitanya*) is the *jīva* . . . . That *jīva*—the self of immediate consciousness—is the *saṃvid* (consciousness), which is *brahman* . . . .

[One should] see that all of manifestation (*prapañca*) is an illusory transformation (*vivarta*) of *brahman* . . . .

The *paramātman* is that on whose part there is primal doubt (*saṃśaya*) and error (*bhrama*); by means of that [primal doubt and error], it assumes a sequence of the states of being, starting with self-conception (*abhimāna*) . . . then ego (*ahaṃkāra*) . . . then intellect (*buddhi*), then mind (*manas*), [and so forth.]

Jūg Bāsisht (Nā'īnī and Shuklā)
(Pp. 72–73)

That absolute Being intellected and conceived itself in itself, and, by itself—through *gyān-paratchah* (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*), that is, outward perception (*dar yāft-i ẓāhir*)—knew itself as "this is I." The reality of *gyān* (*jñāna*) is of three types: one of them is *paratchah-gyān* (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*), which is that one sees the form of something with the outward eye and understands "that thing is that thing" . . . .

The second is *anumīt-gyān* (*anumita jñāna*, inferential knowledge), which is inferring an *implicandum* through an *implicans*, that is, setting up a proof of, say, smoke as the mark of fire. For someone who sees smoke, he knows that there is fire, because smoke is the effect and fire is its *implicandum* . . . .

The third is *shabd-gyān* (*śabda-jñāna*, verbal testimony) . . . .

And *pratyakṣa-jñāna* is also of two types: the first is *paramān* (*pramāṇa*), which is that one knows and perceives each thing in accordance with the reality of that thing. And the second is *bahram* (*bhrama*, error).

Bhrama also is of two conditions: the first is called *sansay* (*saṃśaya*), which is that someone, while perceiving one thing, is in doubt and uncertainty; for example, having seen silver, he cannot decide if it is silver or tin. The second [condition of *bhrama*] is *vīrajay* (*viparyaya*?), which is that one enacts something contrary to that [thing]; for example, he perceives silver as tin or vice versa.

From this perception and knowing, *Barahm-rūp* (*Brahma-rūpa*) knows itself as "I am this *jīvātman*," which is an expression for the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the soul (*jān*). Because of *gyān-i sansay* (doubtful knowledge) and *gyān-i vīrajay* (contrary knowledge), when that one essence of the Real sees itself as creation or sees creation as itself, several other names appear to the *jīvātman*, and those are *buddhi*—the intellect (*'aql*) of comprehension—*manas*—the mind (*khāṭir*)—[and so forth.]

In the original Sanskrit version of *Laghu* 3:1:2–4, Abhinanda speaks of the soul (*jīva*) in terms of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), which the commentator Ātmasukha glosses as the *jīva* that is "immediate" or "directly experienced" consciousness (*aparokṣa caitanya*).[29] The idea here is that, underneath all the layers of self-identification that we normally experience—our identifications with our bodies, minds, egos, possessions, etc.—there lies a basic, immediately experienced sense of "I." Abhinanda and Ātmasukha identify this direct experience of "I," in unmediated self-awareness, with pure consciousness itself, which they then further identify with ultimate Reality, *brahman,* the sense being that the innermost kernel of an individual's sense of self-awareness is none other than *brahman*, the pure Self (*ātman*) or the pure "I," as discussed in chapter 3 in the context of Madhusūdana's thought. Further, in seeking to describe how pure consciousness, the Self (*ātman*), can descend from its pure, exalted state down into the muck of the phenomenal world, Abhinanda invokes the experience of perceptual error (*bhrama*): just as, in a dark room, perceptual error can create a snake that is not really there, in the same way, pure consciousness experiences error (*bhrama*) about the true nature of things, and hence "creates" lower states and conditions (*avasthās*) for itself to adopt, as if the Self has mistakenly taken itself to be an object other than itself.

The Persian version of this passage in the *Jūg Bāsisht* also speaks of valid sense perception (*pratyakṣa*) and perceptual error (*bhrama*). The passage additionally incorporates, however, a description of three varieties of the "valid means of knowledge" introduced at the outset of this study, known as the *pramāṇas*: sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and verbal testimony (*śabda*), accompanied by a short explanation of each.[30] This material is simply not present in the original Sanskrit passage or in any of the extant commentaries, which leaves us with the most likely explanation that Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra have stepped in to provide a sort of "*pramāṇa* 101" introductory overview of some of the basic components of Sanskrit epistemology in order to provide an explanation to Persian readers of an elementary topic in Sanskrit philosophy that it would be unnecessary to provide for Sanskrit-readers. The Persian passage goes on, then, to provide a slightly more advanced lesson, as we find an explanation of two varieties of "error" (*bhrama*): "*sansay*" and "*vīrajay.*" "*Sansay*" is defined as a person having doubt (*taraddud*) about what she is seeing, as when someone sees something shining in the distance and cannot be sure whether or not it is silver. From this description, it is clear that "*sansay*" is the Sanskrit word *saṃśaya*, meaning "doubt." The second category, *vīrajay*, is defined as someone seeing something contrary to the actual state of affairs, as when she sees a shining oyster shell in the distance and mistakenly takes it to be silver.[31] Though the spelling is rather divergent, "*vīrajay*" is perhaps a Persian transliteration of a (misheard?) Hindavī pronunciation of the Sanskrit term "*viparyaya,*" a category of error in Sanskrit epistemology that is often paired with *saṃśaya.*[32] In any case, although these paired categories of perceptual

error go back a fair ways in the history of Sanskrit ideas, it is nonetheless clear that the *paṇḍits* furnished this discussion for the *Jūg Bāsisht* of their own accord. Hence, we can be confident that Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra were willing to contribute their philosophical knowledge to the translation project when they so desired and saw fit.

The Persian rendition of the passage concludes on a similar note to Ātmasukha's in his commentary on the Sanskrit passage, both versions emphasizing that *brahman* or *paramātman* (the "highest Self") has a moment of self-awareness or self-perception, which, in conjunction with perceptual error, results in a sequence of successively lower states and manifestations on the part of *brahman*. While Ātmasukha mentions more in passing that this "I-sense" of *brahman* is correlated with the concept of the *jīva,* the Persian translators render the connection more emphatically: *brahman*'s knowing and being aware of itself is, precisely, the *jīva,* a theme we will revisit in just a moment. Subsequently, the universe unfolds in sequence, from the "I-sense" or ego to *buddhi* to *manas,* etc.[33] Indeed, one of the repeated topics of discussion throughout the *Laghu* is the process of the unfolding of creation, in which *brahman* or *ātman* typically descends through a sequence of progressively lower states or conditions. These states are usually enumerated using the terms *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* or *citta* (mind), *ahaṃkāra* (ego), and *jīva* (soul). As with many topics in the *Laghu*, these discussions carry within them an inbuilt ambiguity: not only will the sequence of descents sometimes vary from passage to passage, but the reader is not infrequently left with some doubt over whether Abhinanda is referring to the unfolding of the cosmos, the unfolding of the human individual, or both (Ātmasukha takes the above case to be plainly cosmological, though the root text is notably less committed). As described above, for instance, when we are often told that "*ātman* becomes *manas*," it typically remains ambiguous whether the *manas* being referred to is an individual human mind or a universal cosmological entity that somehow mirrors the makeup of the human faculties.

Interestingly, while *buddhi, manas, citta,* and *ahaṃkāra* are all terms that appear very frequently (in Persian transliteration) throughout the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the term *jīva* appears only a handful of times, overwhelmingly tending to be replaced by the Persian word *jān* ("soul"), despite the hundreds of occurrences of "*jīva*" within the Sanskrit original. Furthermore, though Findiriskī, in his commentary, offers several glosses to explain the meaning of all four of the former terms (*buddhi, manas, citta, ahaṃkāra*), as well as other terms similar to them, he never once offers a gloss on the word "*jīva*" in the manuscripts I have seen. Further still, among the small handful of times that the term *jīva* does appear within the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the majority of occurrences, just as in the above passage, rather than keeping the original word "*jīva,*" instead change the term to "*jīvātman*" (literally, "the self [*ātman*] of the soul," but a term that has also come to mean simply "soul"). These occurrences become all the more interesting when one recalls that the

concept of the *jīva* was attracting considerable attention and discussion in Sanskrit intellectual circles in ways that, in this particular historical moment, *buddhi, manas, citta,* and *ahaṃkāra* simply were not. The two traditionally trained *paṇḍits*, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, at least one associated with Madhusūdana's base of operations, Banaras, could very conceivably have been aware of these contemporaneous Advaitin debates, and perhaps had their own views and philosophical investments in the matter.

So, how to characterize the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s curious and anomalous presentation of the *jīva*? There does indeed appear to be some kind of anxiety over the term, given the rarity of its appearance within the Persian text in transliteration, in comparison with the *jīva*'s companion terms (*buddhi, manas, citta, ahaṃkāra*) that are transliterated regularly and often. Yet, at the same time, Pānīpatī was perfectly happy, it seems, to simply supply the Persian word "*jān*" instead, time and again; Findiriskī, meanwhile, was not even inclined to offer a basic gloss of "*jīva*" on the few occasions when it does occur. Pānīpatī and Findiriskī, it seems, had little stake in the concept, and were quite comfortable rendering the concept as "*jān*" or other similar words from the Islamic tradition (*rūḥ, nafs,* and so forth). In the end, this anxiety over the term *jīva* appears most likely to have sprung from the side of the Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, rather than Pānīpatī. It seems a reasonable conclusion that, as Sanskrit-readers, it would have been *their* decision, rather than Pānīpatī's, to employ "*jīvātman*" instead of "*jīva*" within the *Jūg Bāsisht,* while they, as traditionally trained *paṇḍits*, were the ones privy to the contemporary debates over the concept of *jīva* then taking place through the contributions of Madhusūdana, Appayya Dīkṣita, and other Advaitins. A few of the mere handful of passages that do include the Sanskrit term "*jīvātman,*" moreover, do so when the original Sanskrit text does not, meaning that it was again likely the *paṇḍits* who supplied the term in those locations; in other passages, the term only appears in the commentaries but not within the root text of the *Laghu,* in which case it would still be largely the two *paṇḍits*' decision, rather than Pānīpatī's, to choose to utilize the term on that particular occasion of translation.

To help decipher this mystery, let us turn again to the text itself to see what clues might emerge. Again, it is comparatively more difficult to infer conclusions about the Sanskrit *paṇḍits* than about the Persian-writing translator, given that any contributions the *paṇḍits* made is covered over by a layer of Pānīpatī's decisions on the Persian end of the process. Still, some hints can nevertheless come to light. As I hope to show through the following examples, the philosophical contributions of the two *paṇḍits* can indeed be discerned in the manner of the treatment of the term "*jīva*" within the *Jūg Bāsisht,* read in light of the contemporary Sanskrit conversations over the doctrines of *eka-jīva-vāda* and *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* as instantiated in the writings of Madhusūdana and other early modern Advaitins.

The first passage to be considered occurs in *Laghu* 5:10:64–65, translated here alongside the corresponding Persian rendition:

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Upaśama Prakaraṇa*) (5:10:64–65; p. 531)	***Jūg Bāsisht*** (Nā'īnī and Shuklā) (p. 275–78)
O Rama, the two seeds of the mind (*citta*) are the [spontaneous] motion of the *prāṇa* (life-breath) and the *vāsanās* ("traces" or "impressions"[34]). . . . The motion of the *prāṇa* is by force of the *vāsanās*, and the *vāsanās* are [formed] because of it (the motion of the *prāṇa*). Thus, on the part of the seed of the mind (*citta*), the sequence of seed and sprout comes into being.	The seed of the *man* (*manas*) is two seeds. The first is the movement and motion of the *bād-prān* (wind-*prāṇa*), and the second is the interior attachment (*ta'alluq-i darūni*) that one carries along from previous *janmas* (births) . . . .
(Mummaḍideva's commentary then speaks in various terms about the *vāsanās*, on the one hand, and the motion of *prāṇa*, on the other, standing in a relationship of being mutual causes of one another, like a seed and a sprout.)	[Here the Persian text enters into a rather long interlude about yogic practice and quieting the desires of the mind, during which the translators explain the sense of the term "*bāsan*" (*vāsanā*).]
	. . . O Rama! Above I had said that the seed of the *citta* (mind) is two things: one is the movement of the *bād-prān*, and the second is the *bāsan*, which is interior desire (*khwāhish*) . . . . Because of the force of the *bāsans*, there comes about the movement of the *bād-prān*, and after the movement of the *bād-prān*, again the *bāsans* appear—just as a tree appears from a seed, and, again, a seed appears from a tree.
	They call the coming together of the movement of the *bād-prān* and the *bāsans* "*jīv*" (*jīva*), that is to say, the *jān* ("soul").

If the reader will recall the Advaita model of *avacchedavāda* outlined in chapter 2, this is the model where all contact between *brahman* and *avidyā* is most decisively refuted. According to the proponents of *avacchedavāda*, *brahman* is not the locus of ignorance; rather, the *jīva,* the individual soul, is the locus of ignorance, even if it is, at one and the same time, also the product of ignorance. This infinite regress is acceptable to the *avacchedavādins,* for, just as a seed produces the plant-sprout which will then eventually produce another seed, similarly, *avidyā* effects the *jīva,* which, in its own turn, will effect fresh *avidyā*, *ad infinitum,* unless and until the knowledge of *brahman* (*brahma-jñāna*) should dawn upon the *jīva* and break the cycle. Now, looking at the original Sanskrit version of this passage, one can see that it fits quite well into this sort of model: the *Laghu* never mentions the term "*avacchedavāda*"—indeed, it never makes explicit mention of any of these formalized models, being in fact a prior source text for some of

them—but it nevertheless seems clear that this particular passage leans firmly in that direction, presenting a vision of the perpetuation of human souls with which an *avacchedavādin* should be quite comfortable. Instead of speaking in terms of "*jīva*" and "*avidyā,*" the *Laghu* here speaks of the *prāṇa*—the "breath" or life-force that characterizes and animates all living things—and the *vāsanās*—the "traces" or "impressions" of actions that attach to a human individual, determine her future condition within the cycle of rebirth and redeath, and keep her locked within that cycle for so long as she remains attached to her *vāsanās* and their fruits. Though *prāṇa* is not exactly equivalent to *jīva* while *vāsanā* is not exactly equivalent to *avidyā,* the respective pairings are interrelated enough to warrant the association. Indeed, the *avacchedavādins* and Abhinanda even end up utilizing the same explanatory analogy, namely, the mutually-generating seed and sprout, which is precisely the image taken up by the *Laghu* commentator Mummaḍideva.

Quite significant, however, is the observation that neither the Sanskrit *Laghu* nor the commentator ever once mentions the term "*jīva*" in this context; rather, this passage is aimed at explaining the generation and perpetuation of the "mind" (*citta,* often synonymous, in the *Laghu,* with "*manas*"). Though the *citta* and the *jīva* are certainly closely interrelated concepts, it would require an explicit mentioning of the *jīva* to clinch the suggestion that the *avacchedavāda* model fits appropriately to this passage. Such a mentioning is exactly what the translation team (presumably, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra) have added: after providing a comparable account of the *bād-prān* ("wind-*prāṇa*") and the *bāsans* (*vāsanās*) mutually generating one another, the conjunction of which generates the *manas* or *citta,* the Persian version of the passage concludes by mentioning that this conjunction is also what produces the *jīva,* glossed, as it typically is in the *Jūg Bāsisht,* by the Persian word "*jān*" ("soul," or also, "life"). This explicit insertion of the term "*jīva*" is a small alteration, to be sure, but it is strongly indicative that the *paṇḍit* translators had an *avacchedavāda* model in mind as they mulled over this passage, and then decided to add in the final element to make the connection with "*jīva*" explicit. Since Pānīpatī would have little conceivable reason for seeking to include the word *jīva* in the passage—especially when he was so content to leave it out and replace it with "*jān*" on dozens of other occasions—the most reasonable reading, to my mind, would take Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra to have been thinking in terms of these various Advaitin *jīva*-models as they proceeded with their translation task. Indeed, this would hardly be surprising, as contemporaneous Advaitins such as Madhusūdana, as we have seen, considered the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* a *locus classicus* for several of these very models. Any individual associated with the early modern Advaita tradition, accordingly, would pick up a copy of the *Laghu* with the expectation of seeing these *jīva*-models exhibited therein.

With this first example, hence, we see the two *paṇḍits*, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, deliberately imposing an Advaita model for conceptualizing the *jīva*

onto the text of the *Laghu*, which then finds expression in the manner in which the text is ultimately rendered into Persian. The question remains, however, whether the *paṇḍits* had any stake in the matter. That is to say, it remains to be seen whether the *paṇḍits* themselves preferred any one of the Advaita *jīva*-models over the others such that they worked this preference into the Persian rendition. In the following passage—another of the many passages from the *Jūg Bāsisht* where one would expect explicit mention of the term "*jīva*"—we can witness some choices being made by the translation team that indicate something to this effect:

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa*) (6:9:28–29; p. 673–74)	***Jūg Bāsisht*** (Nā'īnī and Shuklā) (p. 380–81)
The *jīva* lives (*jīvati*) through this ancient consciousness (*cid-rūpa*), which has the form of the *ātman* [but] possesses the stain-scrape of cognized objects (*cetya*). The *jīva* lives through the *cid-rūpa*, which possesses the error (*bhrama*) of cognized objects.	There is nothing that is distinct or separate from *ātman* and Reality (*ḥaqīqat*), nor that has any independence from it . . . . This **soul** (***jān***), under its own power, is helpless . . . . When the Real Being (*hastī-i ḥaqq*) and pure Essence of *brahman* (*ẕāt-i pāk-i barahm*) casts its own **image** into the **mirror** of being (*wujūd*), that image is the soul (***jān***), whose imaginary (*wahmī*) being is dependent on the Essence of *brahman,* while the **individual** (***shakhṣ***) image and shadow, in itself, possesses no existence or independence.
Mummaḍideva's commentary: This *jīva,* being connected with perceivable objects (*dṛśya*), maintains its life-breaths (*prāṇān*) through that ancient, beginningless *cidrūpa*—the very nature of consciousness (*cit-svarūpa*), being the self (*ātman*) of everything—which possesses the stain of being in the form of a **reflection** (***pratibimba***).	(The passage goes on to refer to several other objects that appear in the world which have no existence independent of *brahman*, including the *buddhi* and the *ahaṃkāra*.)

In the original Sanskrit version of this passage, Abhinanda describes the *jīva* as depending on pure consciousness (*cit*), here identified with the pure Self (*ātman*), for its sustenance and existence. He alludes to a metaphysical vision that is often repeated in the *Laghu,* where ultimate Reality is depicted as pure consciousness, which, in the "beginning," is the only entity there is. Being the only entity there is, this primordial consciousness has no objects to perceive, and, hence, is devoid of any form of cognition or object-awareness. As we have already seen, however, at a certain stage, this pure, objectless consciousness begins to conceive of its own infinite powers (*śaktis*) and the infinite possibilities of creation. As these thoughts and conceptions enter the internal, imaginative awareness of this pure consciousness, it then becomes full of objects of cognition, even if those objects, like a dream, have not attained external, objective existence. Regardless, having dreamed up the potential cosmos within itself in this fashion, pure consciousness abandons its original purity and simplicity. Of course, it will be recalled, Abhinanda deems

these modifications of pure consciousness in the form of cognized objects to be merely apparent or illusory transformations (*vivarta, ābhāsa*); any cognized (*cetya*) or perceivable (*dṛśya*) object is, accordingly, inherently tied up in some fashion with error (*bhrama*) and illusion, *cit* being, in the last analysis, immutable and the sole veridical Reality. The *jīva* is another one of these myriad cognized objects, and, being thus woven of the fabric of *cit*'s thoughts and conceptions, it is entirely dependent on *cit* for its continued existence.

In Mummaḍideva's commentary, however, the commentator opens up a new angle on the passage through introducing a terminology of "reflection," correlating the stain of *cit*'s possession of cognized objects, on the one hand, with its condition of being a reflection (*pratibimba*), on the other. This choice of terminology in the context of a discussion on the *jīva*, moreover, clearly signals the Advaita framework of "reflection-theory," *pratibimbavāda,* which Mummaḍideva is referencing at this juncture. If the reader will recall, the *pratibimbavāda* model maintains that pure *ātman* is untainted by *avidyā*, but, once *ātman* is conditioned (*upahita*) by *avidyā*, it can then serve as the prototype (*bimba*) that will be reflected (*pratibimbita*) upon that *avidyā.* The resulting reflections of *ātman* on different types of *avidyās* produce a number of entities, one of which is the *jīva.* The *jīva,* hence, *is cit* in the form of a reflection, just as your image in a mirror (the *jīva*), in some sense, *is* you (*cit*). In this fashion, in this portion of his commentary, Mummaḍideva wishes to render the idea of *jīva* as a "stain" upon *cit* by means of this Advaitin language of *pratibimbavāda.*

In the corresponding passage of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the translation team follows Mummaḍideva's lead, as we find the reflection terminology echoed prominently in the Persian, despite its complete absence from the Sanskrit root text. The translators write of the "pure Essence of *brahman*" that "casts its own image into the mirror of being (*wujūd*)": though the re-casting of the Sanskritic "mirror of ignorance (*avidyā*)," as in the *pratibimbavāda* model, into the form of the Arabo-Persianate "mirror of *being* (*wujūd*)" is a shift certainly deserving of discussion, this shift was likely wrought by Pānīpatī rather than the two *paṇḍits*, and so need not detain us here.[35] The active handiwork of the *paṇḍits*, however, is more visible in how the passage treats the concept of the "soul." The Persian passage, like the Sanskrit but with a more explicit and emphatic tone, dwells on the soul's utter dependence upon *ātman* and the former's nothingness apart from the latter. Notably, however, the Persian rendition consistently utilizes the term "*jān*" instead of "*jīva*" or "*jīvātman,*" while the translators even go out of their way to surround the word "*jān*" with such modifiers as *shakḥṣ* ("individual") and, a few lines earlier, *jān-i ādam* ("the soul of a [particular] person"), thus emphasizing that what is being discussed here is a decidedly *individual*, particular soul. The original Sanskrit offers no such clarity on the issue—hardly any indication is given to conclude whether the *jīva* in question is an individual or cosmic variety—but the translators feel

somehow compelled to single out the "soul" in question as the particular soul of a human individual.

This all falls in line with a general trend within the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* wherein the term "*jīva*" and, especially, "*jīvātman,*" on the few occasions when they do occur, tend to be employed in reference to the cosmic *jīva* specifically. The two *paṇḍits* clearly follow Mummaḍideva, however, in taking this particular passage to be exhibiting *pratibimbavāda,* a model that accounts for a plurality of individual souls but does not offer any space for or notion of a cosmic *jīva.* As such, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, it seems, feel compelled to remove the term "*jīva*" from the passage, preferring to reserve this term for the cosmic *jīva,* even while taking extra measures to emphasize that the "soul" in question here—now safely rendered as "*jān*"—is decidedly individual (that is, non-cosmic). In light of these intriguing decisions, seemingly betraying a commitment to the "*jīva*" as a cosmological entity, it appears that the two *paṇḍits* are in fact inclined towards an *eka-jīva-vāda* ("one soul theory") formulation of the soul, along the lines of Madhusūdana's own preference detailed in chapter 2.[36] In another similar passage from the *Laghu,* for instance, when Mummaḍideva again invokes *pratibimbavāda* by describing the *jīva* as "consciousness reflected in the individual intellect (*buddhi*)," [37] the corresponding Persian, while retaining every other technical Sanskrit term in the passage (*puryaṣṭaka, buddhi,* etc.), only employs the term *jān* instead of *jīva,* once again preferring to replace "*jīva*" completely with the Persian word *jān,* with no trace of the original Sanskrit term, whenever an unambiguously individual human soul is the topic at hand.[38]

For a clear example of the reverse side of this operation—that is, where Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra deliberately include the Sanskrit transliteration of *jīvātman* in order to specifically denote the cosmic *jīva*—we may turn to *Laghu* 4:4:54 and the corresponding Persian rendition:

Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (*Sthiti Prakaraṇa*) (4:4:51–54; p. 325)	***Jūg Bāsisht*** (Nā'īnī and Shuklā) (p. 152)
O Rāma, the form of consciousness (*cit*) that is afflicted by doubts, the locus of space, time, and activity—that is called the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*).	O Rāma! Know that the Essence of the Real and of *brahman*, which manifests its **will** (***irādah***) and **desire** (***khwāhish***) in itself to itself—that very **desire** of *brahman* is called ***jīvātman***, that is, the **spirit of each person** (***rūḥ-i har kas***) . . . . This *jīvātman*, after knowing its own manifest creations and conceiving the manifestations of its specifications, from its own knowledge and conceptions, it manifests the quality of *ahankār* (*ahaṃkāra*) . . . .
And that [*kṣetrajña*], engendering ***vāsanās***, **repeatedly** enters into the state of ego-hood (*ahaṃkāratā*); the ego, having become stained [and] discriminating, is called the intellect (*buddhi*).	
The intellect, when impelled by *saṃkalpa* (imagination/will/desire), enters the abode of the mind (*manas*) . . .	

The *jīva,* thus, becomes ensnared by the trap of the *vāsanās* and *saṃkalpa.*

Mummaḍideva's commentary: The form of *cit* called "*kṣetrajña*" becomes **limited** (***upahita***) by doubt and *saṃkalpa*, etc., and becomes **delimited** (***avacchinna***) by space, time, and activity . . . . The *kṣetrajña* is the *jīva* . . . . Consciousness (*cit*), possessed of the various powers (*śaktis*) of *saṃkalpa,* becomes bound.

[The text then describes how the *jīvātman* next becomes *buddhi, manas, citta*, and so forth.]
Jīvātman, having become connected with that same ancient desire and previously mentioned will [of *brahman*], and having become fixed to that connection, and having become delimited by reason of [its] acts and deeds, after having descended from that level of absoluteness and disengagement, it began to manifest in lower levels as manifest creations and **births** (*janam*, that is, *janma*) . . . . That Essence of *brahman* and of Consciousness (*cidātman*), from its own desire becoming established, became *jīvātman*, and became bound in the specifications and manifestations of the world . . . . [B]y reason of its (*brahman*'s) own desire, it became fixed in the level of *jīvātman*.

In the original Sanskrit passage, Abhinanda describes the *jīva* as enveloped by the snare of *saṃkalpas* (desires) and *vāsanās* (traces, impressions), while Mummaḍideva, as he elaborates on the relationship between the *jīva* and the *vāsanās* in his commentary, speaks of the *jīva* as "delimited" (*avacchinna*) by the restrictions of space and time, etc. The mention of the term *avacchinna,* combined with the description of the transmigrating *jīva* being determined by its *vāsanās* and then, in a continuing cycle, creating new *vāsanās,* quickly brings to mind the *avacchedavāda* (seed-sprout) model of the *jīva,* as described by Madhusūdana and seen in the preceding passage. Indeed, we should not be surprised by this, as both commentators on the *Laghu*, Ātmasukha and Mummaḍideva, invoke these frameworks at various points in their commentaries, in both the *aneka-jīva* and *eka-jīva* modes. Given that Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra were making use of these commentaries, we could expect that they might try to weave Mummaḍideva's emphasis on *avacchedavāda* in this section of his commentary into their Persian translation.

Quite to the contrary, however, we find that the two Sanskrit *paṇḍits* instead pushed forward a different model entirely. In the corresponding passage from the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* the translation team did indeed insert the term "*jīvātman*," rather than replacing it with "*jān*" as usual, but then define this *jīvātman* as "*brahman*'s own desire (*khwāhish*) and will (*irādah*) to manifest itself to itself" and to "fix the specifications (*taʿayyunāt*) and manifestations (*maẓāhir*) of the world"; the text then adds the gloss that the *jīvātman* is the spirit (*rūḥ*) within

each individual.[39] The model being presented here seems as distant as could be from *avacchedavāda*! For instance, of all the models, *avacchedavāda* seeks to keep *brahman* as far removed as possible from any contact with ignorance, change, or desire, insisting instead that *brahman* cannot be the locus of *avidyā*, but only its object (*viṣaya*) without any direct conjunction between the two. In the version told in the *Jūg Bāsisht,* however, we find *brahman*, the Absolute, exhibiting its own desire and will to manifest itself to itself, while that very desire and will of *brahman* is identified, precisely, with the *jīva.* The *avacchedavādins*' depiction of *jīva,* in sharp contrast, was one far removed from *brahman*, with *jīva* locked within the beginningless cycle of *saṃsāra* as it created its own individual universes by means of its own ignorance. The *jīvātman* depicted in the Persian passage, however, is not really an individual "soul" at all, but the very desire of God to "make Himself known," as announced in the aforementioned *ḥadīth qudsī* of the hidden treasure.

While it might be tempting to conclude that Pānīpatī just did not know what to do with the term "*jīva,*" and so he simply turned it into "God's desire" in order to slip in the *ḥadīth* and render things a bit more recognizably Islamic, I would submit that a different reading of the scenario is more compelling. In Madhusūdana's *eka-jīva-vāda* model, it will be recalled, the entire universe is deemed to be the creation of the single cosmic or collective *jīva*, which itself is the principle of "I-ness" in every individual *jīva* (*jīvābhāsa*). According to this framework, the process of this cosmic *jīva* dreaming up universes within itself precisely *is* the creation of the universe. Looking back at the Persian passage, we find that the given definition of *jīvātman* fits that description quite well: just as the cosmic *jīva* dreams up the world in Madhusūdana's framework, in the same way, in the *ḥadīth qudsī*, God wanted to know or to recognize Himself, and so, He conceived all the possible deployments of His *wujūd* within Himself, which, in a sense, is none other than God's becoming aware of Himself or His "I." I would argue, accordingly, that the identification of *jīvātman* with God's desire and will to know Himself is, precisely, the conceptual linking of Madhusūdana's doctrine of the *jīva* as the sense of "I" in all things—the "I" which, ultimately, reduces to the one and only "I" of the pure Self, *ātman*—with the Islamic *ḥadīth qudsī*'s affirmation of God wanting to know Himself through His self-manifestations.

In this manner, I would argue that this passage from the *Laghu* exhibits the two *paṇḍits*' predilection for *eka-jīva-vāda* in the mold of Madhusūdana and their willingness to push that preference onto the text on the right occasion, even where the Sanskrit text offers virtually no pretext to do so. Indeed, the very choice to render the term *jīvātman* (literally "self of the soul") instead of simply *jīva* ("soul") is suggestive of Madhusūdana's model, in which the one cosmic *jīva* became the "I-ness" of the countless "soul-semblances" (*jīvābhāsas*); the gloss of *jīvātman*, in the Persian passage, as "the spirit (*rūḥ*) of each individual" could be read as further confirmation of this way of reading the passage. The cumulative impact of the process,

then, is that Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra not only wished to make the *eka-jīva,* à la Madhusūdana, the primary referent of the term "*jīva/jīvātman,*" but then Pānīpatī, in his own turn, sought to link this *eka-jīva*—the principle of the sense of "I" in all conscious things—with the *wujūdī* conception of creation as God's coming to know His own self in all the various modes, aspects, and dimensions of His being/finding. Findiriskī, too, in his *Sharḥ-i Jūg,* explicitly links this *ḥadīth qudsī* with the appearance of God's awareness of His own self: "and when there occurred to Him the desire and will to manifest, to that same extent of desiring and conceiving of Himself within Himself, He descended from that level and came down from the level of absoluteness and non-delimitation-ness, and He became delimited by the knowledge and will of Himself—that knowledge and desire having become expanded—and by [the fact that] He knew Himself as 'this is I.'"[40]

Indeed, though infrequent overall, the most common usage of the term *jīvātman* throughout the *Jūg Bāsisht* is undoubtedly in the sense of God's "I-ness" and His desire to know and to recognize Himself, a theme that is vigorously repeated across the entire length of the Persian translation. In this fashion, the *paṇḍits*' decision to incorporate *eka-jīva-vāda,* in the style of Madhusūdana, into the *Jūg Bāsisht* actually facilitated one of the most prominent and oft-repeated Sanskrit/Arabo-Persian homologies to occur throughout the entire work, especially in the realm of metaphysical topics. Significantly, this homology comprises a meeting of philosophical currents far more complex than simply an "encounter between Sufism and Vedānta in the Mughal court,"[41] as secondary scholarship on the Mughal translation movement often describes it. Rather, intellectual traditions ranging from Advaita Vedānta, Śaiva non-dualism, and Yogācāra Buddhism on the Sanskrit side—not to mention the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* itself, representing its own peculiar philosophical synthesis—to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, Peripatetic philosophy, and Sufi poetic wisdom on the Arabo-Persian side—along with traces of, for instance, *ishrāqī* Illuminationist thought—are all participants in the particular confluence of traditions on display here. In the first place, we find Madhusūdana's Advaitin conceptualization of the *jīva* as the universal principle of "I-ness" within all conscious beings; second, there is the *wujūdī*-cum-Peripatetic reading of the *ḥadīth* of the hidden treasure, wherein God "becomes" aware of Himself in the process of conceptualizing all the possible modes of His own *wujūd* to be deployed within the theater of creation; and third, there is the non-dualist Kashmiri *spanda* vision (in its uniquely *Vāsiṣṭhan* iteration) of pure consciousness that, conceiving the infinite potentialities (*śaktis*) within itself and overflowing with effulgence, dynamically actualizes these objects of its own imagination and desire (*saṃkalpa*) in the form of the world. The concept of *saṃkalpa*—the will, desire, conception, and imagination of both *brahman* and the human soul, individual forger of its own subjectively experienced worlds within the world—hence arguably forms the most fertile metaphysical bridge between the Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian jet streams within the *Jūg Bāsisht*.

The long journey of this study has culminated, rather humbly, in the reconstruction of a single, fascinating meeting of Hindu and Islamic metaphysical traditions. Similarly vibrant reconstructions, once again, could be accomplished via other philosophical topics within the ambit of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* including epistemology, the practice of philosophical inquiry, or *yoga* and other forms of praxis and self-cultivation. Even further, of course, other passages, other texts, and other contexts will surely involve other currents and facets of Hindu and Islamic thought, which future research, it is hoped, will continue to unearth and to reconstruct. My hope is that this study has offered some useful leads for this important work to come.

Conclusion

It is my hope that this monograph has accomplished a number of related goals. In the first place, this study has aimed to further the process of filling in the gaping holes that still remain in our knowledge of the history of philosophical thinking in early modern South Asia. Particularly in the case of Arabic philosophical writing, modern scholarship has hardly begun to reconstruct the intellectual conversations that pervaded the landscape of Mughal India; the rise of Persian (not to mention the myriad Indian vernaculars) as emerging media of philosophical reflection in this period has also not received the attention it deserves, particularly in the case of authors writing at the fringe or outside of the imperial courts. Through the case-studies of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī, I have sought in this study to retrace a small sampling of the philosophical conversations that were occupying Sanskrit-, Arabic-, and Persian-writing intellectuals of the time, both in an attempt to recover the contents of these discussions and debates, on the one hand, and in order to furnish some picture of the "schools" and networks of scholars who participated in these conversations, on the other. As we have seen, these three authors engaged in numerous questions of philosophical import, including, among others: the nature of being (*wujūd*), the ontological status of universals and particulars, the proper roles of reason and revelation in the pursuit of knowledge, the God-world relationship, the nature of the soul, and the metaphysical roots of religious diversity.

Along the way, I have emphasized the importance of the fact that, by the early modern period, Arabic and Sanskrit had served as the foundational languages of Islamic and Hindu philosophical inquiry for nearly a millennium, in the case of Arabic, and well over a millennium, in the case of Sanskrit. This long, continuous

history meant that any early modern South Asian thinker who wanted to seriously engage either Hindu or Islamic philosophy had to become well-versed in staggeringly deep traditions of erudite scholastic material, likely demanding a lifetime's worth of effort to learning the writings of generations of forebears even while mastering new developments, positions, arguments, and counter-arguments being produced in the present day. This long history also meant that the basic disciplinary procedures and technical vocabulary of Sanskrit and Arabic philosophy had already become thoroughly crystallized by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rendering both disciplines resistant to the sorts of linguistic and conceptual gymnastics that would be required to initiate a "dialogue" with another, historically distinct scholarly tradition. Given this situation, in which the two "jet streams" of Sanskrit and Arabic intellectual activity were already so well-established in their respective forms even while participants in both jet streams already had so much scholarly material to digest, synthesize, and respond to, it should come as little surprise that Sanskrit and Arabic philosophers of the Mughal period overwhelmingly tended to ignore one another, writing in such a way that they betrayed hardly any awareness of the other's existence.

Most modern Euro-American philosophy departments, although lacking a comparable exegetical bent, are otherwise little different, having such a weighty, exacting historical discipline already before them that the idea of seriously including "non-Western" philosophy within their fold has only been inchoately entertained in recent years—and, even then, the idea is not typically a disciplinary priority. Compounding this scenario is the confidence (at times even haughtiness) shared by both Sanskrit and Arabic jet streams that their own tradition is sufficient unto itself to attain to the completeness of the philosophical project, which means that engaging a "foreign" intellectual tradition would serve, according to most thinkers, at best a secondary or supplemental philosophical purpose. This view is reflected even in Muḥibb Allāh's otherwise capacious framework for comprehending religious diversity, wherein, even if all the prophets uniformly came to establish authentic paths back to the Real, it is nevertheless incumbent upon each individual to follow in *one* particular prophet's footsteps. Each pathway up the mountain has its own sherpa; while other sherpas situated upon other paths might have some worthwhile wisdom to impart, in principle, the sherpa of one's own path should be sufficient and, unlike the other sherpas, offers guidance tailor-made for the particular path upon which one currently stands. Indeed, guidance derived from experience gained upon *other* pathways might prove misleading for the unique exigencies of one's own particular path. Meanwhile, the stakes and consequences of a mistake only increase the higher one ascends.

Especially important for the sorts of intellectual transformations examined in this study, in turn, is the phenomenon of the gradual elevation of Persian to a language of scholastic philosophical activity during the course of the early modern period in South Asia. Though there had been notable examples of Muslim

intellectuals composing philosophical treatises in Persian before the sixteenth century—Ibn Sīnā, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Suhrawardī, and Ṭūsī, for instance, all wrote a minority of their philosophical treatises in Persian, even if they clearly favored Arabic for the most technical subjects[1]—early modern intellectuals are unique in the degree to which they favor Persian, at times even over Arabic, as a preferred medium of philosophical expression. Hence, we encounter Muḥibb Allāh fearing that his Arabic treatise, the *Taswiyah*, might be too inaccessible for his South Asian contemporaries, and so penning a Persian auto-commentary in the hopes of making it more broadly comprehensible; for his second and third commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* he similarly opted to write in Persian for the sake of accessibility. A great many of Muḥibb Allāh's Indian contemporaries, including many of the later commentators on the *Taswiyah*, made the same choice. We also find the Safavid Iranian intellectual, Mīr Findiriskī, composing the majority of his philosophical treatises in Persian, a fact which only further corroborates the notion that Persian was growing as an effective scholastic medium at this point in time. Complementing this increasing use of Persian among Muslim intellectuals was Emperor Akbar's establishment of Persian as the official administrative language of the Mughal Empire, on account of which generations of both Muslim and non-Muslim Indians would choose to learn Persian and to submit themselves to a Persianate literary and cultural curriculum. In the generations subsequent to the time-period of this study, Persian-writing Hindu scholars would only increase in prominence.[2] Such circumstances created a genuine space for Persian to develop into a scholarly language that Muslims and Hindus could both share and lay claim to.

And so, as the Mughal court convened teams of Hindu and Muslim scholars to undertake the task of translating Sanskrit texts, Persian emerged as a natural choice for the target language. Persian's unique possession of sufficiently scholarly registers alongside an abiding plasticity rendered it a capable "host" to Sanskrit material. Moreover, Persian alone was pan-imperial in its scope while also remaining relatively neutral in terms of which religious communities it could successfully "belong" to. When these Hindu and Muslim translation teams thus endeavored collectively to convey Sanskritic thoughts via a non-Sanskrit medium, and to re-fashion the Persian language for this end, they unsurprisingly and inevitably brought their intellectual and literary backgrounds to bear upon the task. Such variables help to explain some of what distinguishes the Mughal translation movement from the other great "translation moment" of Islamic history, namely, the ʿAbbāsid-sponsored translation of the massive corpus of Greek philosophical and scientific texts into Arabic during the eighth to tenth centuries.[3] The contrast between a young, ʿAbbāsid-era Arabic—still in its infancy as an emerging medium of philosophical and general academic inquiry—versus the fully matured, scholastic Arabic of the Mughal period helps to illustrate why the latter could not easily vehicle the early modern Hindu-Muslim encounter, leaving Persian as the more viable option. At the same time, Islamic philosophy itself had developed

considerably in the intervening seven or eight centuries, embracing the imaginal (*khayālī*) and the literary in ways that were simply not the case at the time of the translation of the Greek corpus. Hence, while the Greek-to-Arabic translation movement favored technical, scientific materials to the near complete exclusion of poetry and literature, the Mughal translation movement, in sharp contrast, opted overwhelmingly for the literary and the sapiential, eschewing technical, dialectical Sanskrit philosophical materials while creatively re-imagining Hindu wisdom within a Persian Sufi mold, "philosophical" in only the more capacious sense of the word. The influence of Ibn ʿArabī's Sufism, particularly his metaphysics, is a central factor in this story, as can also be seen in the roughly contemporaneous translations then taking place in China in the context of the Muslim-Neo-Confucian encounter.[4]

Accordingly, in a text such as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* we find two thitherto largely distinct traditions of scholarship—a slice of the Sanskrit jet stream represented by Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, on the one hand, and a subsection of the Arabo-Persian jet stream represented by Pānīpatī, on the other—convening to accomplish a single feat of translation. As I have sought to illustrate in this study, restricting the inquiry to only certain textual contents relevant to the subject of metaphysics, the scholastic elements at play in this particular project of translation were complex, exhibiting the confluence of Advaita, Śaiva non-dualist, *wujūdī*, Islamic Peripatetic, and Sufi poetic traditions, in addition to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s own unique philosophical synthesis, which drew from and innovated on Upaniṣadic, Yogic, Sāṃkhya, and Buddhist resources, among others. In the face of all of these variegated philosophical universes, the members of the translation team each contributed something in order to make the translation "work." The contributions that came from the two sides were certainly not equivalent in scope, as the overarching framework and approach to translation, for instance, owes far more to the Arabo-Persian jet stream, even while both jet streams contributed, in their own ways, to the challenge of articulating particular Sanskrit concepts via an Arabo-Persian terminology. Yet, the joint participation of both parties is nonetheless evident, especially in the particular metaphysical confluence that would homologize the Hindu Sanskrit notions of *saṃkalpa* and *brahman*'s self-awareness, on the one hand, with the Islamic conception of God's desire in the *ḥadīth* of the hidden treasure, on the other.

It is my hope, however, that this examination of a particular moment of interaction between early modern South Asian religio-philosophical traditions might additionally convey something useful for the analysis of other times and contexts. More specifically, I would suggest that the phenomenon of what I have labeled scholarly "jet streams" might provide a viable framework for the examination of other historical moments. Indeed, I would suggest that this model is not too far removed from our own academic departments in a modern university: just as an economist, qua economist, replete with her own disciplinary vocabulary and

field-specific queries, will largely only be able to speak with her fellow economists, in the same way, a Muḥibb Allāh or a Madhusūdana, deeply invested within his own philosophical tradition, may only be inclined to write to the fellow members of his own discipline. A modern economist and anthropologist could attempt a conversation about their respective research projects, but this act would typically require them to drop their discipline-specific vocabularies to a large extent, searching for a way to communicate their ideas in a more accessible and less technical language, that is to say, in "plain English." Indeed, even though the economist and anthropologist might be studying the same region, working in neighboring buildings, walking the same sidewalks, and using the same libraries—they might even be researching the same *topic,* say, poverty or global capitalism—nevertheless they may almost never speak with one another, as their disciplinary languages and vantage-points render it difficult for them to engage one another as scholars in their respective disciplines. Neither discipline, within itself, possesses the necessary tools for communicating regularly and effectively with the other. Similarly, it seems perfectly possible that the likes of Muḥibb Allāh/Findiriskī and Madhusūdana could have discussed their thoughts and religious views with one another through the medium of a shared vernacular, but, necessarily, in more informal terms. Such conversations would not constitute a "scholastic" conversation, nor would there likely be a written record of such "unofficial" interactions.[5]

Faced with this scenario, one can attempt to dig up some evidence of such interactions from each scholar's writings, but, as I have endeavored to show particularly in the case of Madhusūdana, making strong inferences on that basis is often tenuous, especially when the author in question is writing in accordance with the normative conventions of his discipline. As much as we might like to view the *Prasthānabheda* as "proof" of Madhusūdana's responding to an encroaching Muslim presence, at best such suggestions can only remain within the domain of conjecture, given that other plausible explanations can also be given for why the text looks the way that it does, without a clear means to affirm one explanation over another.

What, then, would it take to facilitate, for instance, Muḥibb Allāh and Madhusūdana's conversation at the level of a technical, scholastic exchange? The simple answer, it seems to me from the foregoing, is that a new interdisciplinary language would have to be fashioned. If our economist and anthropologist were truly committed to facilitating a sustained, trenchant conversation between their two disciplines, one of the most ready options would be to initiate an interdisciplinary workshop or interdepartmental colloquium. In such a colloquium, scholars from both fields could, together, draw on materials from their respective disciplines and backgrounds in an attempt to craft a new, shared vocabulary for interdisciplinary communication and learning. In my reading, such was one of the basic goals of scholars such as Pānīpatī, Findiriskī, and perhaps even Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra: a considerable proportion of Findiriskī's *Sharḥ-i Jūg*,

for instance, consists of glosses of Sanskrit technical terms, while Findiriskī also composed a Persian glossary of Sanskrit words in the *Laghu*; Pānīpatī, similarly, peppers the *Jūg Bāsisht* with glosses, definitions, and more informal conceptual linkages, as seen in its opening pages. Beyond this treatise, one could additionally cite the efforts of figures such as Dārā Shikōh, who, in his *Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn,* also sought to produce a comprehensive glossary of Hindu Sanskrit terms and their Islamic Arabo-Persian equivalents.

We could conceive such scholarly efforts, I would argue, as something akin to the establishment of an interdepartmental colloquium with its own interdisciplinary vocabulary, the participants perhaps hoping that their "colloquium" might eventually grow into a new (sub)discipline in its own right, complete with its own disciplinary inquiries and technical lexicon. In other words, when wisps from two jet streams meet, the resulting current may fizzle out immediately, or it might endure; eventually, perhaps it could become its own independent jet stream/discipline. Such processes, however, require time and circumstance, and, for a number of reasons beyond this study's scope, this particular early modern attempt at establishing a new "interdisciplinary" Persian jet stream did not quite have the opportunity to properly establish its foundations and persist and grow. Emperor Awrangzēb's (real but exaggerated) shift in policy away from such translation projects was certainly a factor—perhaps akin to an interdisciplinary colloquium losing its funding and institutional support—while the general undermining of Persianate institutional learning during the colonial period was likely the decisive death knell.

Now, it should also be emphasized that not all interdisciplinary colloquia are created equal, nor does every participant enter into such a conversation with the same intentions. Some of our economists or anthropologists might actually be interested in learning something from the other discipline so as to benefit their own work; others, however, are already convinced of the superiority of their own disciplines, and may participate more out of interest in the spectacle, or else, to learn something deemed to be of only secondary value. At worst, a scholar may attend the colloquium simply with the intention of refuting the other side, so as to demonstrate the superiority of her own jet stream. It must be pointed out that a similar spectrum of intentions could also be found amongst the courtiers of the Mughal court. Akbar's court historian ʿAbd al-Qādir Badāʾūnī (d. 1615), for instance, could scarcely hide his disdain for the emperor's translation projects, but nevertheless participated in the early *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* translations under the direct orders of Akbar. Abū al-Faẓl mentions numerous motivations behind Akbar's commissioned translation of the *Mahābhārata*, including the socio-political ideal of attenuating the ignorance and squabbling between Indian Muslims and Hindus at the time. None of these broad varieties of motivation should be ruled out from the analyses of modern scholars; one of my main goals in this study has been to highlight and detail some of the varieties of motivations that have not yet received sufficient attention.

To take one more example, we have already had occasion to mention Muḥibb Allāh's friend ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, who translated the *Bhagavad-Gītā* under the title *Mirʾāt al-ḥaqāʾiq*. In his preface, the translator affirms that the *Gītā* is a text that elucidates the "secrets of *tawḥīd*," that is, "*waḥdat al-wujūd*."[6] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, however, does not shy away from critiquing what he perceives to be the doctrinal errors of the *Gītā*, such as the divinity of Kṛṣṇa (who was "really" only a human prophet), while Chishtī, moreover, avoids the question of reincarnation, casting it instead in terms of the Islamic doctrine of the resurrection of humankind on the Day of Judgment.[7] As Vassie concisely states the matter, the "sort of treatment [effected by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] could not have been motivated by the same syncretistic urge of which Akbar and his 'Divine Religion' (*Dīn-i ilāhī*) have stood accused . . . [For ʿAbd al-Raḥmān,] [t]he Bhagavadgita was right only insofar as it either was, or could be forced to appear, in accord with the Islamic faith and practice of the Sufis; and it was unequivocally wrong insofar as it diverged from that perceived norm."[8] In the case of the *Mirʾāt al-ḥaqāʾiq,* it seems, the motivation for studying non-Muslim materials was more a matter of finding confirmation for ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's own theological views, rather than necessarily appreciating Hindu teachings in their own terms.

Such a diversity of views and intentions is natural, just as there is a diversity of aims and motivations within most any modern academic department. Accordingly, even though ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's attitude might differ markedly from that of Dārā Shikōh, this does not at all undermine the idea of both belonging to a fledgling "interdisciplinary colloquium," as evidenced by the fact that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's explicit purpose in producing the *Mirʾāt al-ḥaqāʾiq* was "to do for the Bhagavadgita what Shaykh Ṣūfī Qubjahānī had done for the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*" (when he translated it some decades prior); Dārā Shikōh, notably, cites the same translation of Qubjahānī as his motivation for producing a new translation of the *Laghu*,[9] declaring the former to contain too many deficiencies.[10] One could regard such connections and developments as the evolution of a disciplinary "field," wherein participating scholars cite a common body or growing "canon" of foundational scholarship and seek to refine and build off it in their own new works. The 1597 *Jūg Bāsisht*, accordingly, provides perhaps the first such example of the attempt to establish and refine the Persian world's comprehension of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (and Hindu Sanskrit thought more generally). Furthermore, given the three translators' exceptional willingness to repeatedly depict those aspects of Hindu thought that would most typically be deemed to contradict Islamic thought (*avatāras, yugas,* reincarnation, *vāsanās,* etc.) without any apparent criticism, we could best categorize the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a comparatively less theologically-driven enterprise than the works of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān or Dārā Shikōh. Rather, in the *Jūg Bāsisht,* we find a generally concerted and consistent effort to present Hindu thought, to a significant extent, in its own terms and terminology, while simultaneously seeking to show how Islam/Sufism promulgates essentially the same teachings, even if the

two diverge markedly at the level of form and manifestation—a divergence from which the translation team typically did not shy away.

Nevertheless, it bears repeating that an interdisciplinary colloquium is just a colloquium, while the parent disciplines continue on their usual way, most often without being greatly impacted. And so, just as economics remains economics and anthropology remains anthropology, similarly, the wider Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian jet streams stayed their respective courses throughout the early modern period without much reference to the "wisps" that coalesced within the Mughal translation movement. Irrespective of the existence of an interdisciplinary colloquium, even among the most devoted participants, most of the scholars in a modern economics or anthropology department would persist in their usual research conduct; most of the conversations generated between the two departments would remain informal, casual, and far less technical. The additional complication in the South Asian case was that, not only were the *disciplinary* languages distinct, but, even further, the very languages of communication—Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian—that mediated the disciplines were different, hence posing an even grander barrier. Nonetheless, despite these considerable challenges, this shared Hindu-Muslim Persian philosophical discourse did reach considerably sophisticated heights over the course of the Mughal period. Unfortunately, this momentum lasted only for so many decades, for the complex reasons briefly indicated above.

FROM HISTORY TO THEORY? POSSIBILITIES FOR THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION

Before at last concluding this book, allow me to suggest some further reflections for what this study in early modern dialogical translation might have to offer to scholars today. For decades now within the field of religious studies, a persistent question has been variously proposed and debated, at times treated as an issue that concerns the very future of the academic study of religion: namely, whether "non-Western" religions must remain strictly objects of study, or else—particularly in light of religious studies' Orientalist and imperialist legacies—whether other ("non-Western") civilizational epistemologies might be allowed a more genuine place at the table. That is to say, can religious studies, as a field, allow space for the perspectives and methodologies of, for example, an indigenous African philosopher, or a Native American theory of ritual, not merely as *objects* of study, but as voices and perspectives that can be legitimately learned from and dialogued with for the crafting of theory and method, despite the relative absence of shared disciplinary categories, norms, assumptions, and goals between "their" discourses and "our" own? A quick glance, for instance, at the past several years of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (*JAAR*)—the leading journal for the discipline within the United States—reveals this debate to be recurring, fervent, and, in some ways, at a bit of an impasse. In a 2011 issue of the *JAAR* dedicated to a roundtable on

Arvind Sharma's *A Primal Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion* (79, no. 4), for example, one finds the respondents alternately praising Sharma's book for finally attempting to bring indigenous (largely oral) philosophical traditions into the purview of the philosophy of religion, while also expressing a certain frustration that the volume effectively inserts indigenous philosophies into the pre-existent paradigms, queries, and frameworks of the current, still deeply Eurocentric field, as opposed to "*critique[ing]* the traditional formulation of philosophy of religion" or "*shifting* the foundational paradigms of the discipline in light of the insights of primal religions."[11] Sharma replies out of a sort of disciplinary necessity and pragmatism: the study of religion operates "in a world that has been Europeanized to such an extent that the very response to such a Europeanization must perforce often be articulated through the use of the terms (both literally and figuratively) imposed by Europe . . . . [Some scholars] even seem to maintain that such an enterprise as is represented by this book must accept the paradigmatic status of Western concepts[,] at least for the time being."[12] Despite a vague, widespread sentiment that the study of religion should someday exhibit a less exclusively Eurocentric paradigm, the path forward to successfully reshaping the field's foundational questions and categories, it seems, remains elusive.

A number of similar disciplinary themes and debates emerged in the articles, responses, and rejoinders published in a 2006 special issue of the *JAAR* on "the future of the Study of Religion in the academy" (74, no. 1). In the back-and-forth between José Ignacio Cabezón and William Schweiker, for instance, the two authors discuss the possibilities of examining the religious traditions of "the Other" not just as a source of *data*, but also as a source of *theory*, in light of contemporary questioning over whether "western/secular theoretical apparatuses" are exclusively appropriate for studying "non-western" cultures, or whether it is desirable to seek to "liberate" religious studies from the theories and categories of "just one socio-historical-religious context" among many. While Schweiker rightly critiques a number of Cabezón's conceptual "dyads" (e.g., "us" vs. "the other"), both scholars agree that "casting the theoretical net a bit wider" would be a welcome development in the field—and one that has already begun in some measure—though such "theory pluralism" should not fall prey to a kind of "knee-jerk inclusivism." Rather, theories of any variety should be included only if they "work."[13] Gavin Flood, writing in a similar vein, emphasizes that the study of religion can become an arena in which religious traditions' self-representations and self-inquiries can take place within a framework of rational discourse, but that it is vital for such inquiry to become a cross-disciplinary *conversation,* such that even the more conventional subfields—anthropology, sociology, text-history, philology, etc.—are allowed to weigh in, challenge, and offer corrective readings through external critique (and *vice versa*).[14]

In her response, however, Nancy Levene laments that such proposals simply perpetuate some version of the same interminable, decades-old "religious studies

vs. theology" debate, without anything new being offered to actually help the field move forward in any practical, constructive way.[15] Indeed, Flood does admit that the study of religion has yet to craft a vocabulary with which to facilitate the conversations he proposes: "Religious Studies . . . needs to be able to discuss and articulate ideas of shared concern in forms of language, whereby different world religions and discre[te] subject-specific areas can communicate and illumine each other. We need to overcome the inadequate choice of using either problematic universal categories in understanding religions or a relativistic reversion to purely area-specific study."[16] Perhaps sensing that a new approach and a new vocabulary are required, Peter Ochs proposes, among other strategies, starting with how two traditions, in their mutual interactions, historically characterized one another.[17]

In some ways, this study has taken up Flood's and Ochs' respective calls for action. The core of my analysis has offered a sustained consideration, in primarily (aspirationally) emic terms, of the historical interaction (or, as Ochs might phrase it, "dialogue") between South Asian Muslim and Hindu philosophical cultures in the very moments when they were collaboratively crafting the language with which to understand one another. The fruits of their labors, one could argue, may well constitute a third option distinguishable from Flood's dilemmic "universal categories" vs. "relativism," as the translation team deployed their specific traditions' intellectual resources in ways that allowed them to posit genuine difference at the level of form and manifestation, but shared, universal truth and content within more transcendent levels of reality and meaning. In a word, echoing many of the calls for broadening the methodological bases of religious studies, I have sought to take seriously the concepts and comparative insights of these early modern Muslim and Hindu thinkers as resources for potentially more than a mere "archaeology of (outdated) ideas."

As Elizabeth Pritchard challengingly queries the discipline, however: "but, seriously, what does it mean to take religion seriously?"[18] Critiquing some of the field's more influential iterations of this idea from the likes of Amy Hollywood, Robert Orsi, and Dipesh Chakrabarty—who variously champion such methodological priorities as "radical openness," non-reductionism, emphasizing yet coming to terms with difference, etc.—Pritchard perceptively cautions that, while displays of "taking the other seriously" are "frequently posed as an antidote to or rebuttal of secular liberalism," the gesture is often actually "more about avoiding conflict . . . . Thus rather than being an antidote to secular liberalism, such calls are, instead, an insidious reinscription of a secular liberal assumption," namely, "that a nonconflictual, liminal space free of power can be created."[19] In the name of undermining one's own paradigm via openness to another paradigm, in other words, this "taking seriously" ends up only largely reaffirming—and subsuming the "other" within—one's own paradigm, in this case the "good, liberal" politics of much of the academic humanities, knowingly or unknowingly promoting values of "tolerance," "solidarity," and "openness" over the recognition of genuine conflict and

incommensurability. As scholars writing in a comparable vein to Pritchard, such as Russell McCutcheon, Bruce Lincoln, and Aaron Hughes, have forcefully and usefully interjected, normatively projecting *any* given political agenda is simply not the proper job of the historian of religion.[20] On McCutcheon's articulation of the matter, far too many scholars, unreflectively or else under the guise of "scholarly critique," merely "dislodge one set of normative values only to reinstate [our] own in their place . . . in step with our own liberal democratic/free market interests"; the proper "scholar of religion qua critic," in contrast, "has no interest in determining which social formation is right or true or just or best and she does not practice conflict management. Instead, she is an equal opportunity historicizer."[21] It is precisely in an attempt to avoid subsuming the Mughal translation movement within a modern Western liberal pluralism that this study has striven not only to cleave close to emic terms and categories situated in their historical contexts (impossible as this may be to achieve perfectly), but has also spent considerable time with the *exclusivistic* trajectories of Hindu and Islamic thought: the preponderant moments when Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, or Findiriskī utterly ignore the religious "other" or affirm the superiority or exclusive salvific efficacy of their own traditions, on the one hand, should be just as interesting to us and worthy of attention as their far more exceptional and infrequent moments of "dialogue," on the other. I have endeavored in the above to turn the lens of the intellectual historian upon both.

And yet, though a welcome intervention, McCutcheon's and Lincoln's respective agendas for religious studies serve to dramatically thicken the barrier between scholar and object of study: "history" (i.e., what historians of religion do), according to Lincoln, is the "sharpest possible contrast" from "religion,"[22] while, for McCutcheon, the roles of "critic" vs. "caretaker" are "mutually exclusive,"[23] thus leaving no space whatsoever, it seems, for the likes of Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī, or the translation team to ever find themselves on the "theory" side of the enterprise. What form of "taking religion seriously" is still available to us, under such circumstances? A second variety of call for explicit and critical self-awareness could point to a possible way forward: in addition to increased cognizance of our own political interests and agendas, à la Pritchard, McCutcheon, and Lincoln, religious studies would also benefit from its scholars being more cognizant of their *philosophical* and *metaphysical* presuppositions. As Kevin Schilbrack has argued in several venues (including the *JAAR*), "historians, anthropologists, and others who develop theories about religion always also develop philosophies. In order to study religions, one must at least implicitly have answered certain questions about what one takes to be real and not real, knowable and not knowable, and good and not good. In other words, scholars of religion . . . live and act with certain metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological presuppositions."[24]

Schilbrack's call for scholars to pay attention to metaphysics and to our own metaphysical presuppositions is significant in the context of a discipline that has

largely turned away from metaphysics, prevailingly treating it as a misguided or impossible endeavor or else incompatible with the requirements of religious studies or the secular university more broadly.[25] At the same time, a compelling case can be made that even the most "anti-metaphysical" of religious studies scholars end up taking implicit metaphysical stances: although one might expect, for instance, a metaphysically neutral or agnostic lens to approach "sameness" and "difference" as equally real or equally constructed by human cognitive processes, the field's current aversion to and distrust (particularly on postmodern grounds) of religious comparison arguably betrays an implicit metaphysical presumption that difference is somehow prior or more fundamentally real than sameness or similarity.[26] Such a stance cannot simply be assumed, however, as self-evident—plenty of rational or even scientific evidence could be leveled against it—but should be acknowledged, reflected upon, and even justified, as necessary.

Now, Lincoln and McCutcheon are of course quite aware, to an extent, that their chosen methods, unflinching historicism, and enthusiastic reductionism involve certain presumptions that are not metaphysically neutral. They justify their methods as wholly appropriate to the academic context (and religious/theological approaches as wholly inappropriate), however, on the grounds that their methods have the upper hand in being evidence-based and hence publicly verifiable, open to critical inquiry, and grounded in history and a certain commonsensicality that religious claims (being grounded in an ahistorical, infallible, invisible authority) lack. It is open to question, however, whether such a justification really stands up to scrutiny: McCutcheon, for instance, articulates the difference between objects of scholarly vs. theological inquiry through appeals to a naturalist distinction between "obvious" vs. "non-obvious" objects (i.e., things you do vs. don't "bump into")[27] or Daniel Dennett's analogy of "skyhooks" vs. "cranes" ("immaterial or imaginary devices . . . for attaching objects to the sky" vs. "materially based . . . mechanical devices.")[28]

Just what counts as "obvious" and open to public scrutiny, however, is, well, not so very obvious! The field of analytic philosophy, for instance—a discipline utterly opposed to appeals to invisible, publicly inscrutable authorities if there ever was one—also inquires regularly and energetically into "abstract" (as opposed to "concrete") objects of an arguably ahistorical and "non-obvious" nature;[29] as outlined above, for more than a millennium, premodern Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit philosophical traditions too have explored similar metaphysical queries (are numbers real? Physical objects/particulars? Universals? Causation? Freedom? Mind/Consciousness? Being?) by means of publicly debatable rational argumentation, without relying on the sort of appeals to invisible, "infallible" authorities that so concerns McCutcheon. Thus, from the vantage point of both premodern and contemporary analytic philosophy, a compelling case can be made that far more of metaphysics falls within the realm of rational, publicly debatable, evidence-based inquiry than McCutcheon's account would suggest, and yet, it is the

not-quite-sufficiently examined metaphysical presumptions and implications of his methodology that render him unable or unwilling to entertain this.[30] Hence, if, in fact, religious studies scholars are routinely taking explicit or implicit metaphysical stances, and if metaphysical inquiry is indeed more compatible with academic inquiry than the discipline usually recognizes, then, perhaps, it turns out, there is some space for the likes of Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī, or the translation team on the "theorizing" side of the enterprise after all.

Lincoln and McCutcheon furthermore deploy another theoretical insight with which they can further insulate themselves from the charge of affirmatively making metaphysical or "truth" claims, namely, the epistemological assertion (one that, again, however intuitive it may seem, is not self-evident and stands in need of demonstration) that "scholarly" explanations of religion are not necessarily any more objectively "true" than theological explanations, for *any* explanation only bears meaning in relation to the shared theories, interests, systems, and lenses of value of the given community within which that explanation participates. Putting aside, for the moment, the privileged, context-transcending vantage point that would seem to be required to make this ostensibly universal claim, this sort of theoretical affirmation allows scholars the space to back off from declaring, for example, "the purpose of ritual is x," opting instead for the more relativistic formulation, "*given my theory y,* ritual functions to x."[31] Such a tendency is exhibited in McCutcheon's appeals to discursive relativity or the "game" of discursive rules,[32] or else in Lincoln's well-known affirmation that "scholarship is myth with footnotes";[33] also in a similar vein is J.Z. Smith's influential take on the fundamental task of the religious studies scholar, namely, to "imagine religion," for religion is "solely the creation of the scholar's study . . . for the scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization. Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy."[34]

Indeed, this move to step back from making any claim about the way the world *really is,* and instead rendering explanatory analyses as meaningful only within the confines of their specific discursive contexts, extends far beyond a McCutcheon-Lincoln-Smith orientation and into the discipline at large, including even the most enthusiastic supporters (contra McCutcheon and Lincoln) of opening up the gates of theory to the religious "other." In a recent contribution to the *JAAR,* Jacob Sherman, reflecting on the legacy of the field's prevailing "linguistic turn," identifies this theoretical tendency as perhaps the least appreciated but most significant obstacle against "taking seriously" the religious other: "one can argue that strong versions of the linguistic turn in fact covertly continue and compound the problem of an a priori privileging [of] the scholar's etic viewpoint over that of his or her emic subjects. Why? Because strong versions of the linguistic turn seem to know ahead of time how thoroughly language can or cannot refer to that which exists before, beyond, or beneath language."[35] It is a welcome development, to be sure, that much of the study of religion has become more receptive to an emic

"postcolonial revaluing" of non-Western epistemologies, to cite Sherman's phrasing, but the majority of these emic epistemologies—certainly those represented by Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī—view their philosophical traditions to be accessing and capturing something objectively *real*. To the extent that the study of religion is only willing or able to entertain that such philosophers are merely articulating something real *for them* or relative to *their* particular cultural/social/political/ideological system or context, however, to that same extent, it would seem, we would fail to really take these figures seriously.

Although Sherman's account of the "linguistic turn" is surely oversimplified,[36] I take it that he has a real point of considerable consequence for the discipline. Now, there are excellent, indeed urgent, moral and political reasons for retaining a methodology that insists upon the relativity of differing conceptual schemes and prioritizes the understanding of "other" social, intellectual, and cultural worlds on their own terms, without immediate evaluation according to some etic criteria of "our" own devising. So as to never repeat the hubristic pretensions to universal, all-encompassing knowledge (in reality overwhelmingly Eurocentric and Orientalist) characteristic of the civilization-shattering age of imperialism, a theoretical insistence on *some* degree of linguistic relativism and the epistemological limits of any given knowledge-claim is a matter of crucial importance. Nevertheless, insofar as such theoretical frameworks, and their accompanying aversion to metaphysics or objective truth-claims, should be deemed normative for the discipline without any particular consultation with "other" ("non-Western") voices, it arguably represents, despite many good intentions, simply the latest in several centuries of the "Western canon" continuing to dictate the basic terms of what counts as knowledge.[37] For both Schilbrack and Sherman, the best way out of the conundrum is for the field to take metaphysics seriously again, though in decidedly less insular ways, allowing every religious tradition a place at the table so long as their truth claims are able to be formulated in a way that is supported by some form of evidence or reason-giving available for public evaluation and critique—a public that should now be considerably more diverse than it once was. To achieve this end would require the field to be open and willing to experiment with potentially new forms of rationality and reason-giving as inhabited by other religious and intellectual traditions, such as narrative or praxis, thus creating the broad potential for "non-Western" traditions to at last have a say in the fundamental intellectual criteria of the discipline.[38]

Although somewhat nervous at the prospect of reauthorizing the robust critical evaluation of non-Christian truth claims within a religious studies discipline still dominated by Christian-centered inquiry—would the "public" that would engage in Schilbrack's "public evaluation" really be sufficiently diverse to overcome the threat of a lingering Eurocentric bias?—nevertheless, if "taking the other seriously" is to be a methodological priority, as I think it should be, then I am hard-pressed to envision a better alternative. More important than my opinion, if we

really are to allow the likes of Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, or Findiriskī to have a say in "theory," then their own careers would seem to confirm this particular course of action: each of these three figures, alongside countless others in the intellectual history of Hindu and Muslim thought, have engaged in detailed rational polemics on metaphysics and related philosophical queries. Indeed, numerous of these Hindu and Muslim philosophers have not infrequently deployed the discursive norms of Sanskrit or Arabo-Persian reason-giving practices precisely in order to discuss and debate across religious boundaries, whether it be the encounter with primarily Greek, Christian, and Jewish thought in the case of Islamic philosophy, or polemics with Buddhist, Jains, and other Indian intellectual traditions in the case of Hindu philosophy. If these distinct religious and intellectual traditions, often without appeal to scripture, personal experience, or any other "invisible" authority, could manage to craft shared discursive norms with which to evaluate one another's truth claims, then it seems we should be able to accomplish something similar for our own purposes today. At the very least, it could safely be said that we have hardly begun to mine the vast "non-Western" philosophical resources with which one could possibly attempt such an endeavor, and so it would seem unjustified to reject the effort out of hand when, to date, it has hardly begun.[39]

And yet, the translation team of Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī, most fascinatingly, took an entirely different route for putting the Hindu and Islamic intellectual traditions into "conversation" with one another, an approach from which we should also consider learning. Although drawing from dialectically-oriented intellectual traditions, the three translators deployed these philosophical resources in a more "sapiential" mode, that is to say, the language of narrative, poetry, and "imagination" (*khayāl*). As I hope the previous chapters have shown, the translation team's resort to the "imagination" was itself deeply interconnected with their respective worldviews and cosmologies—and, thus, metaphysics remained a central part of the picture—but the emphasis on argumentation and dialectical reason-giving is largely absent from this scenario. Instead, the three translators creatively "imagined" correlations and homologies between Hindu and Muslim thought, though this was an imagining that still claimed to track onto objective reality, something crucially distinct, it seems, from a J.Z. Smith-esque "imagining" of religion within the scholar's study. For many in the contemporary study of religion, to mimic such an approach for our present-day purposes would surely raise the specter of normative theology; on the other hand, for a discipline that has been spinning its wheels for decades, largely desirous of some sort of conversation with the religious "other" but having little constructive program for how to pursue it, the translation team offers a concrete historical example of a comparable dialogue being forged by means of a deliberate, reflective negotiation of sameness and difference. Once again, rather than rejecting out of hand the idea that there is something to learn from such historical precedents, I would encourage

the study of religion today, bearing all of the above admonitions in mind, to be willing to try to think *with* (rather than simply *about*) this historical case study of encounter between two disparate religio-philosophical traditions. In order to facilitate similar cross-civilizational learning within the contemporary academy, we would do well to reflect on the processes through which the translation team found the words and the means to put their respective intellectual traditions into a certain conversation with one another. Or else, perhaps theology would be a more hospitable disciplinary home for such developments to take place: I would certainly welcome the development if insights from this study might take on a life within the realm of theological inquiries, though I must leave such explorations to other scholars better trained within that discipline.

Accordingly, let us then preliminarily consider some of the crucial points of reflection that emerge from this South Asian case study, in pursuit of a method for forging our own cross-civilizational conversations in the study of religion today. One feature of the production of the *Jūg Bāsisht* that quickly stands out is the sorts of questions that the intellectuals involved felt should be answered at the outset of the project: in addressing the issue of other intellectual traditions or religious paths, our entire cast of scholars chose to focus on fundamental questions of metaphysics and ontology as their initial, *starting* impulse. Though we in the academy today need not follow their example slavishly, it does seem plausible to me, in light of recent trends in the field—notably, what Sherman identifies as the "linguistic turn"—that a renewed attention to metaphysics and its related concerns could be crucial in facilitating the next step forward. The nature of human language, for instance, and whether it is contextually-bounded to the point of forestalling true cross-cultural communication and understanding, would be a critical question to re-open in dialogue with other "non-Western" intellectual traditions. The Arabo-Persian scholars examined in this study promoted a theory of language and meaning that offers clear space for the possibility of profound intercultural comprehension, for, according to Muḥibb Allāh, Findiriskī, and, it seems, Pānīpatī, the human intellect is able, potentially, to penetrate the contingent forms (*ṣūrat*) of the world so as to access the universal meanings (*maʿnā*) that underlie them. Such an account of language may well be too "Neoplatonic" for most contemporary academic tastes, but this should not prevent modern scholars from engaging in the debate nonetheless, as neither side can simply be taken for granted. Plenty of premodern Sanskrit theories of language, in turn, demand a bare minimum of metaphysical presuppositions. Even if one ends up siding with the view that human knowledge is simply too contextually-bound to allow for "true" cross-cultural comprehension, there are nevertheless productive conversations to be had regarding how a scholar should best seek to cultivate herself in service of a "fusion of horizons" (à la Gadamer) that is both fruitful and ethical. On the topic of self-cultivation, once again, many an insightful dialogue can be had with any of a number of non-Euro-American traditions, within which a seemingly endless array of

diverse models of human flourishing could be consulted as we seek to work out these issues in our own academic disciplines today.

Perhaps even more significant, however, is what the example of Mughal scholarship might be able to teach us at the level of procedure and ethics. The Muslim translators and their patrons have sometimes been likened to Orientalists insofar as they appear to simply fashion Sanskrit writing in their own image, continuously replacing Sanskrit thoughts with Islamic ideas and Sufi terminology. Whatever the value of this critique—I have already suggested, in chapters 4 and 5, how I think our early modern thinkers might have responded—the fact still remains that this purported "Muslim Orientalism" shows few signs of having engendered the crippling, deleterious effects upon South Asian intellectual cultures that would typify the age of European imperialism. In the writings of Madhusūdana, for instance, one would be hard-pressed to detect anything approaching the sort of "epistemological crisis"[40] that would become so common during the era of British colonialism; quite to the contrary, Sanskrit scholarship seems to have flourished in the early modern period under Mughal Muslim rule.

While many reasons could be proffered to explain this phenomenon—patterns of Mughal patronage to Sanskrit learning come quickly to mind[41]—one significant insight that emerges from the early modern case-study examined here is that, without the presence of the jet streams, the *Jūg Bāsisht* would not have been possible. In other words, while it may seem, on first consideration, that the predominantly autonomous and "isolationist" Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian jet streams of early modern South Asia would have posed an *obstacle* to interdisciplinary learning, at the same time, the "strength" of the wisps that emerged from the jet streams was, in large part, a consequence of the vitality of those jet streams themselves. The *inter*disciplinary work, in other words, would have been impoverished had the isolated source disciplines themselves been compromised. Disciplines tend to be strongest when they can stand on their own legs, remaining in conversation with their own members without constant preoccupation with those outside of the discipline. Contemporary conditions are such that a great many traditions of knowledge in the world today do not enjoy this autonomy, making it all the more worthwhile for those of us in the study of religion today to think deeply on what the proper response(s) to this seemingly global epistemological crisis should be.

In light of this study, if cross-cultural learning is indeed one of our goals, then we can ask: in what way could we strike up a conversation with another jet stream, could we choose a "neutral" language, and could we begin to shape that language into a new *disciplinary* language? The flourishing of Sanskrit under Mughal rule depended crucially on the continued functioning of Sanskrit institutions of learning: can the study of religion play a role in preserving or promoting similar such institutions across the globe, and would it be "just" or "acceptably academic" to do so? Or could religious studies departments more actively seek out representatives of other knowledge-systems to join the department, even temporarily, with

the goal of crafting the necessary lexicon to think *between* knowledge-systems in a way that gives sufficient voice to the intellectual commitments of all parties involved? We need also to ask whether our current disciplinary language is still malleable enough, as early modern Persian arguably was, to serve as the medium for this dialogue, or whether a more "neutral" language would have to be adopted.

What that language could be would vary from conversation-case to conversation-case, I imagine, but, certainly, at the level of *disciplinary* language, a scholar interested in pursuing this dialogue might have to adopt a less technical mode of discourse, at least at the early stages of the conversation. Building up an interdisciplinary language, after all, takes considerable time and sustained effort, and may not achieve the desired goals immediately. One of the striking features of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, however, is the predominantly poetic and literary language employed therein, as opposed to a more reason-giving mode of expression; similarly, Findiriskī, a thoroughgoing philosopher in other contexts, suddenly adopted a prevailingly poetic mode for the sake of engaging the "Hindu other" in his *Muntakhab.* If the implication is that cross-civilizational conversation somehow benefits from a literary mode of discourse, then what possibilities could that leave for a modern academic? Can we consider more literary or aesthetic approaches to academic discourse that could serve as the base lexicon for this conversation?[42] Perhaps we need not extend the matter this far, as other moments of historical encounter between scholastic disciplines would suggest: it is an intriguing contrast, for example, that, in comparison with the Hindu-Muslim encounter that took place in the Mughal court, Buddhist and Hindu philosophers *began* their centuries of debates via a robustly dialectical mode of discourse, once Dignāga, Kumārila, and others had formulated the *pramāṇa*-framework that would then serve as the basic language of disputation between most Sanskrit-writing philosophers thenceforth. Somewhat comparably, it was the Greek Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tradition that provided the basic shared epistemological framework which would allow Muslims such as Fārābī and Avicenna, a Jewish thinker like Maimonides (d. 1204), and a Christian such as Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) to read one another's works and respond to and debate one another's ideas over centuries, again, in a decidedly philosophical, argumentative mode. Historical models like these, and many others, could also be consulted for additional insight into how we could craft a new interdisciplinary-intercultural lexicon for our needs today.

Here I have likely raised more questions than I have provided answers, but such is the nature of venturing into uncharted territories. Whatever the best procedure may be going forward, the starting point is nonetheless clear: in the interests of avoiding the perpetuation of the iniquities of Orientalism and imperialism, a position of epistemic humility must be adopted alongside a position of contextual sensitivity. This should not be controversial—as we have seen, contemporary scholars of South Asian religions are effectively unanimous in their goal to cease projecting modern categories back into the premodern past—but I would argue that this goal

has remained insufficiently realized. The building block of any contextually-sensitive study is the "local, emic analysis" that aims, in the first place, to understand, as far as possible, the perspectives and worldviews of those whom we would seek to study in their own terms.[43] This task is far from accomplished in the case of early modern South Asian thinkers, and so a great deal more work has to been done to reconstruct the various social, political, cultural, and intellectual contexts in which these remarkable figures lived, and to recover what exactly it was that they had to say. It is my hope that this study has been at least a small step in service of this important task.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Although I try, as much as possible, to employ the term "South Asia" throughout this study, the occasional use of the term "India" is intended in the premodern, pre-Partition sense of the Arabic and Persian word *Hind,* which, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, would have referred to a continuous geographical expanse comprising parts of modern-day Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

2. Ernst, *Eternal Garden,* 19.

3. S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements*, 330. Despite this problematic framing, which pervades much of Rizvi's writing, the extraordinary erudition on display in his scholarship warrants greater appreciation than it has received of late.

4. Though I group these scholars together here for the sake of brevity, it should be emphasized that they all offer their own distinct versions of the critique of nationalist historiography. Khan and Lorenzen, for instance, disagree in significant ways over the details of the historical processes by which a unified "Hindu" identity emerged. See, e.g., Eaton, "Introduction"; Sweetman, "'Hinduism' and the History of 'Religion'"; Gilmartin and Lawrence, "Introduction"; King, *Orientalism and Religion;* D. Khan, *Crossing the Threshold;* and Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?" Though not often acknowledged, much of the current "anti-essentialist" scholarship in South Asian studies is discernibly grounded in the theoretical insights of W.C. Smith (see, e.g., *Meaning and End of Religion*) and the archaeological and genealogical methods pioneered by Michel Foucault (see, e.g., *Archaeology of Knowledge;* "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"; and *Discipline and Punish*).

5. Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 173.

6. Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room,* 194.

7. See Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga."

8. See DeNapoli, *Real Sadhus;* see also Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room.*

9. See Bellamy, *The Powerful Ephemeral.*

10. Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room,* 2. See also Taneja, *Jinnealogy.*

11. Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu & Muslim,* 39. As Gottschalk observes, for instance, of the competing and overlapping narratives regarding a rural Bihari community's shared water reservoir (did the Hindu king or Muslim sultan build it? For washing elephants or for performing Islamic ritual ablutions?), making sense of something as commonplace as the ways that Hindu and Muslim villagers relate to their water tank requires attention to "multiple group identities" that "complement and compete with *Hindu* and *Muslim*" as identity-markers (40, 173–74).

12. Ernst and Stewart, "Syncretism," 588.

13. This Arabic phrase, *lā ilāha illā'Llāh,* is known as the *shahādah* ("testimony") or *kalimah* ("word"). It is the so-called "first pillar" of Islam and the formula one recites in order to become Muslim. The phrase punctuates daily Islamic ritual practice, while the central Sufi practice of *dhikr* ("remembrance" of God) often takes the form of the methodical repetition of the formula.

14. *Avatāra* is a Hindu term denoting the incarnation or "descent" of a deity, typically Viṣṇu, into the world in physical (often human) form. In contrast, standard Islamic creeds, basing themselves upon the Qur'ān (see 4:171, 9:30, 19:35, 41:6, 112:3, etc.), have insisted that, contrary to Christian beliefs about Jesus, the Prophet Muḥammad is strictly human and not divine, for God never became human or produced any offspring. This makes the willingness of so many Indo-Muslim authors to refer to the Prophet by the term *avatāra*—a notion that, to all appearances, overlaps closely with the idea of an "incarnation"—all the more striking.

15. See V. Narayanan, "Religious Vocabulary."

16. *Śaiva* is a Sanskrit term referring to a devotee of the Hindu deity Śiva. The related terms *vaiṣṇava* and *śākta* refer to devotees of the Hindu deities Viṣṇu and Devī (the Goddess), respectively.

17. It is also significant that Kashmiri Hindu and Muslim communities have both continually claimed Lal Dēd as one of their own. See Lal Dēd, *I, Lalla*, and Mikkelson and Kachru, "The Mind is Its Own Place."

18. To provide just one of myriad possible examples, in several poems, Bullhe Shāh overlays the Sufi trope of the reed flute's (*ney*) mournful sound—most famously depicted in the opening of Rūmī's *Maṣnavī,* where the reed laments at being separated from its Beloved/place of origin—with the intoxicating flute-play of the Hindu deity/hero Kṛṣṇa, known to play his flute to lure the milkmaids (*gopīs*) of Vrindāvan into the forest for nighttime romantic trysts. Both of these literary motifs are additionally juxtaposed with the flute-playing folk hero of local Punjabi legend, Ranjha. See B. Shah, *Bullhe Shah,* 181, 404; Shackle, "Punjabi Sufi Poetry"; Rinehart, "Interpretations of the Poetry."

19. See Zelliot, "A Medieval Encounter," and Ernst, *Eternal Garden,* 33–37.

20. See Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment;* Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom;* Shackle and Moir, *Ismaili Hymns.*

21. The title of one recent major volume on the subject puts the matter succinctly: Orsini, *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*. On the other hand, Allison Busch warns of "another breed of literary historian [who] . . . goes to the opposite extreme," wanting (with "wishful thinking") to see in the overlapping premodern histories of Hindi and Urdu a kind of "Hindu-Muslim unity" that equally falls prey to a "presentist fallacy" ("Hidden in Plain View," 270–71).

22. "Hindavī" is here intended as a general umbrella term for the numerous premodern regional dialects/languages that precede modern standard Hindi-Urdu. See Faruqi, "A Long History," and Behl and Weightman, *Madhumālatī,* xi–xxv.

23. See Behl and Weightman, *Madhumālatī,* xi–xlvi; Behl, *Magic Doe;* and Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic.*

24. Behl and Weightman, *Madhumālatī,* xi–xlvi.

25. Pauwels, "When a Sufi Tells," 32. See also Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic* (particularly chap. 9); Orsini, "*Barahmasas*"; and Phukan, "Through a Persian Prism."

26. The idea here is that Islamic teachings would be presented in an accessible, indigenized form so as to attract local readers and listeners in a language they would recognize. See Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment;* Pauwels, "When a Sufi Tells"; Irani, "Mystical Love, Prophetic Compassion, and Ethics"; Aquil, *Sufism, Culture, and Politics,* particularly chapters 5–6.

27. Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence," 286.

28. See, e.g., Pollock, "*Rāmāyaṇa* and Political Imagination"; Talbot, "Inscribing the Other"; Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam;* Granoff, "Tales of Broken Limbs"; and Moin, *Millennial Sovereign.*

29. Among the most influential purveyors of this idea is Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples: What Really Happened to Them?* The countervailing view, during this era of scholarship, came primarily from Indian Marxist historians and apologists for Islam, who argued that this apparent Islamic iconoclasm was only a façade for what was actually a self-interested pursuit of material wealth and plunder; see, e.g., Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India in the Thirteenth Century.*

30. See, e.g., Talbot, "Inscribing the Other"; Eaton, "Temple Desecration"; Wink, *Al-Hind,* 294–333, 252–55, 277–79; and Truschke, *Aurangzeb,* 78–88. In one of the more entertaining examples of this scholarly trend, as he considers why the Mughal Emperor Bābur destroyed two naked Jain idols on one particular occasion, only to enjoy a pleasant tour of some Hindu temples the next day without desecrating any of them, Ernst suggests the episode simply doesn't make sense if read in terms of a stereotypical Islamic iconoclasm. Some of the more immediate factors to consider include administrative prudence—the custodian of the Hindu temples was one of Bābur's subordinates, and so there would be little to gain from destroying one of his employees' charges—or perhaps simply the "good mood" that might have come to Bābur after receiving the news, the morning of the tour, that a major rival Rājput ruler had just surrendered to his authority. Relatedly, Bābur may also have been in a good mood simply due to his recovering from the severe opium hangover, complete with nausea and copious vomiting, that had afflicted him the previous several days! (Ernst, "Admiring the Works," 115–16).

31. See Eaton, "Temple Desecration"; Pollock, "*Rāmāyaṇa* and Political Imagination," 285; Truschke, *Aurangzeb,* 78–88.

32. See Wagoner, "'Sultan among Hindu Kings'" and "Harihara"; Ernst, *Eternal Garden,* 32–33; Pollock, "*Rāmāyaṇa* and Political Imagination," 285; and F. Flood, *Objects of Translation,* 61–87.

33. Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 183, 186–87.

34. This observation is especially true of South Asian Islamic studies, though the situation is somewhat better in the case of the study of Hinduism. Perhaps the primary exception

on the Islamic side are the several studies of the well-known Muslim scholar Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050), who, however, predates the Mughal Empire by over five centuries. See, e.g., Kozah, *The Birth of Indology;* Lawrence, "al-Bīrūnī"; and Said, *Al-Biruni Commemorative Volume.*

35. Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism;* see also Michael S. Allen's review in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion.* In many ways, the comprehensive survey that Wilhelm Halbfass achieved in his *Tradition and Reflection* has set the tone for this particular line of inquiry within Hindu studies until today. The truly field-changing contribution came via Sheldon Pollock's seminal study, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men,* and yet Pollock's intellectual agenda represents precisely the tendency to ignore or "downplay the importance of specifically or overtly religious motivations and religious communities" as an "understandable reaction to modern scholarship's long-standing and lamentable tendency to explain nearly all aspects of premodern South Asia in religious terms. But . . . this reaction does tend to distract attention from what are manifestly religious phenomena . . . [including] philosophical literature produced in Sanskrit" (McCrea, "In the World of Men," 118–19).

36. El-Rouayheb summarizes the state of scholarship succinctly: "[l]ittle research has been done on the intellectual life of the Arab-Islamic world between the 15th and 19th centuries. This scholarly neglect almost certainly reflects the widespread assumption that intellectual life in the Arab-Islamic world entered a long period of stagnation or 'sclerosis' after the 13th or 14th century. This state of affairs is often believed to have lasted until the 19th century, when European military and economic expansion awakened the Arab-Islamic world from its dogmatic slumber, and inaugurated a 'reawakening' or 'renaissance' (*nahḍa*). An influential statement of this view of intellectual life in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire before the 19th century is to be found in Gibb and Bowen's *Islamic Society and the West.* Although they noted that 'the barrenness of the period has been greatly exaggerated,' they still stated that Arabic scholarly culture had degenerated, on the whole, into a rote, unquestioning acquisition of a narrow and religiously dominated field of knowledge. No 'quickening breath had blown' on Arab-Islamic scholarship for centuries" ("Opening the Gate," 263). Griffel addresses a similar long-held assumption which problematically viewed Ghazālī's (d. 1111) critique of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) to have crippled philosophy in the Islamic world to such an extent that it almost completely disappeared soon thereafter (see the introduction to *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*). Though specialists are now largely agreed that this was not at all the case, scholarship has been slow to catch up with the realization.

37. See Ernst, "Muslim Studies," "Limits of Universalism," and "Fayzi's Illuminationist Interpretation"; Vassie, "'Abd al-Raḥman Chishtī"; Friedmann, "Medieval Muslim Views"; Tareen, "Translating the 'Other'"; and Fuerst, "Locating Religion." Some of the studies that offer a somewhat more in-depth reconstruction of Islamic theological discourses on Hindu thought unfortunately remain in dissertation form (see, e.g., Vassie, "Persian Interpretations," and Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning") or else are published by foreign presses difficult to access in the United States (see, e.g., Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab*).

38. Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic,* 328.

39. See Shackle, "Punjabi Sufi Poetry," and B. Shah, *Bullhe Shah,* passim. For more general determinations of *waḥdat al-wujūd*'s widespread influence across South Asian religious, literary, and political cultures, see Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent,*

passim; S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* passim; and Alam, *Languages of Political Islam,* 81–114.

40. See, e.g., Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning," passim; Alam, *Languages of Political Islam,* 81–114; Moin, *Millennial Sovereign,* 9, 49–50; Richards, *The Mughal Empire,* 46–47; Ernst, "Limits of Universalism," 8–9; and S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History,* 356–57. These Sufi and Islamic philosophical "illuminationist" themes even extended into the techniques of Mughal painting and portraiture; see, e.g., Asher, "A Ray from the Sun," and Mumtaz, "Objects of Devotion."

41. See Ernst, "Muslim Studies," and Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning."

42. Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,* 14. See also Asad, *Genealogies of Religion.*

43. Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,* 15.

44. Asad acknowledges his debt to Alasdair MacIntyre, particularly *After Virtue,* for this formulation of the idea of a "tradition." Regarding some implications of this debt, see Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition."

45. Findiriskī, being the only Shīʿī figure among these three Muslim thinkers, would also add the sayings of the Shīʿī Imāms alongside the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad.

46. See J.Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion.*

47. Of the many proposed definitions of "religion" in the Western intellectual canon, both premodern and modern, it is perhaps Lactantius and Augustine's proposed etymology for *religio* (that which "[re-]binds" the aspirant to God) that would be most immediately conversant with Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī's Arabo-Persian conceptualizations.

48. The notion of *śruti,* literally "hearing," refers to a word or scripture "revealed" to a human being—in the Hindu case, to the ancient "seers" (*ṛṣis*) who are thought to have spontaneously "heard" the Vedas, and then transmitted them to humankind—and considered to be authoritative in a supra-human way—in this case, the claim that the Vedas are *apauruṣeya,* "not of human authorship." A number of Hindu traditions believe the Vedas to have been composed and revealed to humankind by a supreme deity (*īśvara*), but the equally if not more prevalent classical view saw the Vedas as so thoroughly authorless that not even God could have composed them. The Vedas, in other words, simply "always were" for all pre-eternity. See Murty, *Reason and Revelation*, and Clooney, "Why the Veda Has No Author."

49. Hence, the celebrated historian Ibn Khaldūn is able to assert in the early fourteenth century that "by his time, works on *Kalām* and works on *Falsafa* appeared to be no longer distinguishable, whether in regard to terminology and forms of argument, or concerning concepts and doctrines considered by both the *mutakallimūn* [theologians] and the *falāsifa* [philosophers]" (Sabra, "*Kalām* Atomism," 203).

50. For an introductory overview of these post-classical developments, see relevant chapters from Winter, *Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology,* particularly the introduction.

51. On Dignāga's and Kumārila's foundational contributions to *pramāṇa*-based dialectics, see, e.g., McCrea, "The Transformations of Mīmāṃsā," and Arnold, "Kumārila."

52. On the rejection of tradition in Enlightenment conceptions of rationality, see Bristow, "Enlightenment."

53. As McCrea and Patil inform us, "[a]mong the most salient features of Sanskrit philosophical literature is its commentarial orientation. This orientation is reflected not only in

texts that comment explicitly on other texts, but also in those independent works that do not present themselves as doing so. Even in such independent works philosophical problems are typically framed and their solutions are presented with reference to foundational texts in their respective traditions" ("Traditionalism and Innovation," 303). McCrea and Patil proceed to argue that, despite such appearances, Sanskrit commentary often contains immensely creative innovation, all hidden under the guise of "never saying anything new." See also Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason,* 102–16. Regarding the prevailing commentarial orientation of post-classical Muslim materials, see the special issue of *Oriens* (41, no. 3–4 [2013]) edited by Asad Q. Ahmed and Margaret Larkin, particularly their introduction, "The *Ḥāshiya* and Islamic Intellectual History."

54. See McCrea and Patil, "Traditionalism and Innovation."

55. As Sheldon Pollock notes regarding the flourishing of Sanskrit in the early modern period, "[t]he two centuries before European colonialism decisively established itself in the sub-continent around 1750 constitute one of the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought (in language analysis, logic, hermeneutics, moral-legal philosophy, and the rest). Thinkers produced new formulations of old problems, in entirely new discursive idioms, in what were often new scholarly genres" ("The Death of Sanskrit," 393); see also Pollock, "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," particularly 91–121. On the flourishing of the Arabic language during the Mughal period, see Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature;* Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India"; and Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals." As for Persian, see, among several other studies, Alam, *Languages of Political Islam;* Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India;* and Abdul Ghani, *A History of Persian Language at the Mughal Court.*

56. Hindavī (including Brajbhāṣā, Awadhi, etc.) poses a more ambiguous case. Hindavī dialects developed elite literary registers that attained a certain cross-regional status, but also retained certain characteristics of a vernacular. In any case, though Hindavī enjoyed widespread success as a medium of literature, it did not become a central vehicle of scientific and scholarly learning in this time period, the latter being this study's primary concern.

57. Although a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century South Asian scholar conversant in Arabic and Persian would have been commonplace and a scholar knowing Sanskrit and Persian not unheard of, hardly any scholar would have been conversant in all three languages. One of the only possible exceptions would be ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī (d. 1683), who *might* have known Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit (see Vassie, "ʿAbd al-Raḥman Chishtī," 368). ʿAbd al-Qādir Badāʾūnī (d. 1605), Emperor Akbar's court historian, "mentions one Brahm[i]n as an Arabic and Persian teacher" during this period, though I am not aware of any further biographical details on this individual (Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian," 326). Regarding the Sanskrit-Persian combination, at an earlier stage of the translation movement under Akbar and Jahāngīr, so far as we know, scholars conversant in both Sanskrit and Persian were not particularly common, although they included the likes of Kavi Karṇapūra and the Jain scholar Siddhicandra, who not only attended Akbar's court but even read Persian works to the Mughal princes on a regular basis, at Akbar's request. By the time of Prince Dārā Shikōh and afterwards, however, signs indicate that the Sanskrit-Persian combination was likely becoming more common, though scholarship has yet to excavate these periods thoroughly. Siddhicandra describes his Persian skills in his *Bhānucandragaṇicarita,* 4:90, 104–105; see also Truschke, *Culture of Encounters,* 15–34, 68, 78–79, 95–96, 141–61.

58. The only previous works of which I am aware that simultaneously treat primary sources and intellectual cultures in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian are the publications of David Pingree on the cross-cultural transmission of the natural sciences, particularly astronomy, astrology, and mathematics (see, e.g., *From Astral Omens* and "Sanskrit Translations"). Pingree, remarkably, even treats additional languages beyond these three. A number of other scholars of unusually broad talents, such as Shlomo Pines and David Shulman, demonstrate varying degrees of mastery, proficiency, or familiarity with Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian; to my knowledge, however, none has attempted any study that simultaneously traverses all three languages.

59. On Banaras's rise as an in many ways unprecedented center of Sanskrit intellectual activity in the early modern period, see O'Hanlon, "Letters Home" and "Speaking from Śiva's Temple"; Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta"; Venkatkrishnan, "Ritual, Reflection, and Religion"; and Bronner, "South Meets North."

60. Pollock, "Is There an Indian Intellectual History?," 540.

61. For a useful overview of the discipline of Mīmāṃsā, see Char, "Mīmāṃsā Ethics."

62. When these other knowledge systems are recognized by early modern Sanskrit authors, the evaluation is reliably negative, as when, for instance, Khaṇḍadeva (d. ca. 1665) writes in his *Mīmāṃsā Kaustubha:* "there does indeed exist a prohibition of a general moral scope [*puruṣārtha*] . . . applying to words of barbarian [*bārbara*] and other languages, since there is a scriptural prohibition against learning them at all" (Pollock, "Languages of Science," 35). As Pollock notes, Khaṇḍadeva elsewhere identifies Persian (*pārasika*) with these "barbarian" languages.

63. Regarding potential rare exceptions, see note 57 above.

64. See Ahmad, *Contribution of Indo-Pakistan,* and Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India.*

65. Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India." See also Ahmad, *Contribution of Indo-Pakistan.*

66. See Casari, "India."

67. See Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India," and Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran,* 23–31.

68. See, e.g., Ernst, *Eternal Garden;* Sharafuddin Maneri, *The Hundred Letters;* Nizamuddin Awliya, *Morals for the Heart.* S.A.A. Rizvi's *History of Sufism in India* consults and reports on an astonishing volume of Indo-Persian Sufi materials.

69. See, e.g., Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-'Arabī's Influence," and Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals."

70. Although, as Travis Zadeh has demonstrated, Qur'ānic translation and exegesis in Persian has in fact a longer historical precedent than is usually recognized; see his *Vernacular Qur'an*.

71. On the rise and eventual fall of Persian in the Mughal Empire, see Alam, "Culture and Politics"; S. Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia;* M.A. Syed, "How Could Urdu Be the Envy "; and Abdul Ghani, *History of Persian Language.*

72. As part of these efforts, the Mughals also patronized Arabic and Sanskrit works, albeit in smaller numbers. See, e.g., Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India"; Chaudhuri, *Muslim Patronage;* Patkar, "Moghul Patronage"; and Truschke, *Culture of Encounters.*

73. See, e.g., Kinra, *Writing Self*, and Alam and Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi."

74. Also worthy of note in this context is Sheldon Pollock's collaborative monograph, *Literary Cultures in History,* which treats an impressively broad spectrum of South Asian

languages and literatures. Yet, though a panoply of elite and vernacular languages each gets its own chapter in the book, the format never allows a sustained consideration of the relationships *between* these various language-worlds. Indo-Arabic, furthermore, is not included in the volume.

75. See Latour, *Reassembling the Social.*

76. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.* The "rhizome" was Deleuze and Guattari's response to the previous conventional metaphor for a network, namely, the tree: a single, unified entity whose every branch traces back to a shared trunk and root.

77. Levine, *Forms,* 112–13.

78. Levine, *Forms*, 114.

79. Pollock's idea of a language "cosmopolis" can and has been profitably invoked to conceptualize the Mughal translation movement (see, e.g., Truschke, *Culture of Encounters*). The idea of the cosmopolis, however, being so closely connected with royal power and the imperial court (see Pollock, *Language of the Gods*), does not provide quite the right fit for this study, many in its cast of characters having only tangential interactions with the Mughal court. Accordingly, although the Mughal translation movement can indeed be productively analyzed as an instance of a "Persian cosmopolis," this study argues that a cosmopolitan conceptualization in fact obscures other, hitherto neglected philosophical dimensions of the translation enterprise.

80. See Beecroft, *Ecology of World Literature.*

81. Again, as described above, it is likely more accurate to describe two ("Sanskrit" and "Arabo-Persian") rather than three ("Sanskrit," "Arabic," and "Persian") early modern jet streams, given that, in the specific field of philosophy, Persian had not quite yet emerged as a medium of inquiry independent of Arabic. "Wisdom" discourse, however, does indeed occur in Persian in this period in ways that are more robustly independent of Arabic, yet still operating within a deeply shared conceptual world. Hence, calling it an "Arabo-Persian" philosophical jet stream is legitimate, though this jet stream would possess substantial internal diversity and/or external branches.

82. See Skinner, *Visions of Politics.*

83. Ganeri, "Contextualism in the Study of Indian Intellectual Cultures," 552–53.

84. Ganeri, "Contextualism in the Study of Indian Intellectual Cultures," 553–54.

85. On the distinction between internalist vs. externalist approaches to intellectual history, see Kelley, "Intellectual History." For an especially brief and accessible overview, see Gordon, "What is Intellectual History."

86. See LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, and Jacoby, "A New Intellectual History."

1. THE *LAGHU-YOGA-VĀSISTHA* AND ITS PERSIAN TRANSLATION

1. See Hanneder, *Studies on the Mokṣopāya,* 48–55, and Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology."

2. See Slaje, "Locating the *Mokṣopāya,*" 35.

3. See Slaje, *Vom Mokṣopāya,* 91–154; Hanneder, "The *Mokṣopāya*" and *Studies on the Mokṣopāya*, 8–18; and Leslie, *Authority and Meaning,* 106–9.

4. Against Peter Thomi, who suggests that the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* was not an abridgement, but rather the original work upon which the later, expanded version was based

(see "The Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha"), Hanneder and Slaje have convincingly argued that the *Laghu* is in fact an abstract of the original Kashmiri recension, the *Mokṣopāya* (see "Noch einmal"; Slaje, *Vom Mokṣopāya*, 125 ff.; Hanneder, "The *Mokṣopāya*"), thus confirming and expanding Divanji's prior hypotheses ("The Text of the Laghu Yogavāsiṣṭha"). For additional contributions to the debate over dating and chronology, see Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology"; Christopher Chapple's introduction to Venkatesananda, *Concise Yoga Vasistha,* ix-xv; Atreya, *Yogavasistha and Its Philosophy,* chapter 2; and Mainkar, *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa,* chapter 6.

5. See Hanneder, "The *Mokṣopāya*," 9–10. As Slaje has effectively shown, however, based on textual variants, the modern printed editions of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in fact derive from separate recensions on different branches of the stemma, meaning that the historical text represented in the modern printed *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* was certainly *not* a direct redaction of the historical text represented in the modern printed *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* Both of these editions were originally printed around a century ago through Nirṇaya Sāgar Press. See Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology," 54–55.

6. For more on these literary, affective, and psychological dimensions of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* see the collection of essays in Chapple and Chakrabarti, *Engaged Emancipation*, as well as Madaio, "Transformative Dialogue."

7. Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams,* 132.

8. See Slaje, *Vom Mokṣopāya,* 91–97 and "Observations," 771–96, and Hanneder, *Studies on the Mokṣopāya,* 1–18.

9. Regarding these later Advaitins' appropriations of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* see Fort, *Jīvanmukti in Transformation,* 58–76, 84–128; Slaje, "Liberation from Intentionality" and "On Changing Others' Ideas"; and Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy*.

10. *Laghu* VI:12:7–9, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 777.

11. For an overview of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s philosophical teachings, see Hanneder, *Studies on the Mokṣopāya*; Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy,* vol. 2; Chapple and Chakrabarti, *Engaged Emancipation*; Atreya, *Yogavasistha and Its Philosophy;* and Mainkar, *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa,* 85–148, 187–239.

12. For a mapping of the complex and overlapping currents of Śaivism in Kashmir, see Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," particularly 690–704.

13. See Slaje, "Guide to the Philosophical," 151–52.

14. Dyczkowski, *Doctrine of Vibration,* 21. See also Vasugupta's *Spanda-kārikās,* one of the most foundational texts, along with its commentaries, to articulate this doctrine within the Kashmiri Śaiva corpus.

15. See Timalsina, "Concept of Ābhāsa," 56–59, and Chapple, "Negative Theology." The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* is clearly central to the development of these Buddhist views. For a more detailed account, see Garfield and Westerhoff, *Madhyamaka and Yogācāra,* particularly 1–10, 165–83.

16. Literally, "like a city of Gandharvas," a common expression for an imaginary city in the sky.

17. *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:84:30, in Vālmīki, *Yogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 334. For more on the concept of *manas* in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* see Chenet, "Nature of Idealism"; Mainkar, *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa,* 201–7; and Pathak, "Dr. B.L. Atreya's Interpretation," 148–55.

18. *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:110:15, in Vālmīki, *Yogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 384.

19. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:4:2, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 209.

20. For a more detailed account of the Advaita notion of *ābhāsa* in comparison with Yogācāra, see, e.g., Darling, *Evaluation of the Vedāntic Critique*, and Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy,* 125–142.

21. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:1:11–13, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 102–3.

22. Dyczkowski, *Doctrine of Vibration,* 24–25.

23. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* VI:12:2, 4, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 776.

24. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* IV:4:11–12, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 317.

25. *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:9:30, in Vālmīki, *Yogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 148.

26. *Saṃkalpa* in the Vedic context refers simultaneously to the "intention/determination" to perform a given ritual sacrifice as well as the "expectation" that said ritual will indeed result in the desired fruit or reward. See Lipner, *Fruits of Our Desiring,* 71, and Bühnemann, *Pūjā,* passim.

27. Shulman, *More Than Real,* 115.

28. Regarding the technical terms used within the *Laghu* and the frequency of their occurrence, see Slaje, "A Guide to the Philosophical," 153–73.

29. For a fuller account of *saṃkalpa* in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* see Shulman, *More Than Real,* 109–17, and Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams,* 127–296.

30. *Saṃkalpa-mātram eva idaṃ jagat* (*Laghu* VI:12:9, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 777).

31. On the notion of "non-self" (*anātman*) and "store consciousness" (*ālayavijñāna*) in Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, see, e.g., Garfield and Westerhoff, *Madhyamaka and Yogācāra,* passim.

32. For more on the *tathāgatagarbha* Mahāyāna *sūtras* and the peculiar Buddhist doctrines that emerged therefrom, see Radich, *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra;* King, "Is 'Buddha-Nature' Buddhist?"; and Paul, "Concept of Tathāgatagarbha."

33. See, e.g., the introductory verses of Utpala's *Spandapradīpika* commentary on the *Spandakārikas:* "[w]e revere the Lord of Power . . . the conscious nature called *Spanda* . . . by Whose will (*sankalpa*) (all things) arise and fall away" (Dyczkowski, *Stanzas on Vibration,* 158; see also 52).

34. Dyczkowski, *Stanzas on Vibration*, 108.

35. Although such temporal language is, unfortunately, unavoidable, the "process" described here need not be one that takes place in a *temporal* sequence, but may rather indicate only ontological or metaphysical priority and posteriority.

36. See, e.g., Dyczkowski, *Doctrine of Vibration,* 57, 72, 80, 84, 92–93, 97, 102, 117.

37. For a useful overview of this process of movement from potentiality to actuality, conceptualization to manifestation, and intention to activity in Trika thought (with a particular emphasis on Somānanda's [d. 925] articulation of the matter), see Nemec, *Ubiquitous Śiva,* 25–30.

38. See, e.g., Muller-Ortega, *Triadic Heart of Śiva,* 82–99. The book provides a beneficial overview of the important theme of the heart within Abhinavagupta's thought, though, for some of the errors in the details, see Alexis Sanderson's review in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.

39. *Vāsanās* are the imprints left upon a human individual as a result of her having undertaken some action in the past. This "trace" or "impression" left by the previous deed will then bear some sort of fruit in the future, even if it be in a future lifetime. The concept

of the *vāsanā* is, accordingly, closely linked with the concepts of *karma* and rebirth, as one's *vāsanās* acquired from a previous life will affect, among other things, the type of condition into which one is born in the next lifetime. The cycle of *vāsanās* can only be broken if one's attachment to the *vāsanās* and their fruits are broken, which most decisively occurs upon the dawning of the knowledge (*jñāna*) of one's true identity with the Self, *ātman*.

40. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* 6:13:69, 71, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 795.

41. Again, regarding the *Laghu*'s technical terms and their frequency, see Slaje, "A Guide to the Philosophical," 153–73.

42. Granoff, "*Yogavāsiṣṭha,*" 182.

43. That is, "self-reflective consciousness or awareness" (see Dyczkowski, *Doctrine of Vibration,* 43, 49, 327).

44. Isayeva, *From Early Vedanta to Kashmir Shaivism*, has offered perhaps the most extended reflections to this effect, though the book has been the object of strong pushback. See, e.g., Ashok Aklujkar's review in the *JAOS*.

45. See Thrasher, *Advaita Vedānta of the Brahma-siddhi,* 1–38.

46. See Dyczkowski, *Doctrine of Vibration,* 24, 33–38, and Larson, "Aesthetic (Rasāsvāda) and the Religious (Brahmāsvāda)," 379–83.

47. Ātmasukha was writing in Banaras, no earlier than the twelfth century; Mummaḍideva, in turn, was a south Indian active not earlier than the fifteenth century. Regarding the dating of these two commentators, see Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology," 54, 63.

48. See Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 115–22.

49. *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:1:11–13, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 102–3.

50. *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* V:87:18; see Slaje, "Sarvasiddhāntasiddhānta," 314–15.

51. Slaje, "Sarvasiddhāntasiddhānta," 314.

52. Slaje, "Sarvasiddhāntasiddhānta," 311 (translations slightly modified).

53. See Richards, "Formulation of Imperial Authority," and Alam, "The Mughals, the Sufi Shaikhs, and the Formation of the Akbari Dispensation."

54. I borrow the phrase "translation movement" from Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 173.

55. See Slaje, "The *Mokṣopāya* Project (III)"; and Stephan and Stinner, "The *Mokṣopāya* Project (IV)."

56. For a sampling of the proliferation of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and the varied medieval and early modern receptions of the treatise across sectarian and religious lines, see Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology," 52–69.

57. See Śrīvara, *Rājataraṅginī,* 125, and Peter Thomi's introduction to the *Yogavāsiṣṭhasāra,* 1:5, both cited in Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning," 99.

58. See Alam, "In Search of a Sacred King."

59. See Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning," 100–10.

60. See Alam, *Languages of Political Islam,* 97–98.

61. Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab*, 11–13, 20–24. Despite the differing versions and recensions of the *Mokṣopāya/Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in circulation, the Mughals tended not to differentiate between them, referring to them all as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the *Jog Basasht,* or some other variant.

62. I have slightly modified the translation provided in Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 185. The full Persian text of Pānīpatī's remarks can be found in Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 1–3.

63. Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 185.

64. Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 179.

65. See Richards, *Mughal Empire*, and Alam, *Languages of Political Islam* (chapters 1–2) and "In Search of a Sacred King."

66. See, e.g., Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 183.

67. See, e.g., Lāhūrī, *Khazīnat,* 455.

68. See Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* z.

69. See Lefèvre, "Beyond Diversity," 128–29.

70. Though "Jagannātha Miśra" could potentially be a misspelling of the name of the Advaitin scholar Jagannāthāśrama—the preceptor of the famous Nṛsiṃhāśrama (fl. 1555)—Jagannāthāśrama would likely have been too old or passed away by 1597, when the *Jūg Bāsisht* was composed.

71. See Sarma, *Panditarāja Jagannātha,* 96–99.

72. See Athavale, "New Light on the Life," 415–20.

73. See Sarma, *Panditarāja Jagannātha.*

74. See O'Hanlon, "Speaking from Siva's Temple," 82–83.

75. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 5.

76. "Abridgment" refers to the fact that the text in question is the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* that is, the shortened (*laghu*) version as contrasted with the larger *Mokṣopāya/Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.

77. This "mentioning" (*yād*) refers to a central practice of Sufism and of general Islamic piety, namely, *dhikr/ẕikr,* the "mention," "remembrance," and "invoking" of God's divine names. In the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the Hindu version of the practice of repeatedly invoking God's names is referred to by the widespread Sanskrit term "*japa.*"

78. In Islamic Neoplatonic cosmology, an emanation is a dispensation from the celestial intellects that establishes a connection between the practitioner and higher levels of reality.

79. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 5–6.

80. The term *āpūrṇa* conveys both *brahman*'s intrinsic plenitude and abundance, as well as its being "satisfied," that is, utterly sufficient unto itself, lacking nothing, and standing in need of no other.

81. This realm of "witnessing" (*shuhūd,* usually "*shahādah*" in the Qur'ān) is generally contrasted with the "realm of the hidden" (*ʿālam-i ghayb*), where all things remain unmanifest and imperceptible, known only to God. See Qur'ān 6:73, 9:94, 9:105, 39:46, 59:22, and 62:8, among several other instances.

82. It is intriguing that the original Sanskrit text used a standard term for a Hindu *ritual* bath, *snāna*, while the Persian rendition employed the term for the Islamic major ritual ablution, *ghusl*.

83. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht*, 109, suggest that the Persian is transliterating the Sanskrit "Vibhīṣaṇa Nagara." *Nagara* means "town" while Vibhīṣaṇa, the "Terrifying," is the brother of Rāvaṇa, the main antagonist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Perhaps, however, it is another of the term's literal meanings that is at play: that of "abortion" or "miscarriage," again suggesting a non-existent existent. As for the addition of the town's name, not present in the printed Sanskrit edition, either the name was present in the divergent manuscripts on which the Persian translation was based, or else the two Sanskrit pundits inserted this addition orally.

84. *Nirvikalpa* is a term with a long life in Sanskrit philosophical debates, carrying a basic meaning of being "unwavering," and hence "without doubt" and/or "unchanging," but

also carrying more technical meanings of unconstructed or non-conceptual awareness. For our purposes here, we could simply gloss the term as "that which is devoid of *saṃkalpa,*" coinciding in this context with *brahman/ātman*.

85. *I'tibārī* is actually a rather technical term in Islamic philosophy, sometimes translated as "entities/beings of reason," that is, objects whose existence is somehow "aspectual" or "mind-dependent." For more, see Izutsu, *Concept and Reality*.

2. MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ AND THE *YOGA-VĀSIṢṬHA*

1. See Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 85.

2. On the applicability of the term "doxography" to this mode of Sanskrit writing, see Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 144–48.

3. See Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 78, and Potter, "Bibliography."

4. See Nelson, "Life of Madhusūdana," 22–23. A "Vaiṣṇava," once again, is a devotee of the deity Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa being one of the more popular forms or manifestations of Viṣṇu. A "Śaiva," meanwhile, is a devotee of the deity Śiva, and a "Śākta" a devotee of the Goddess.

5. Modi, *Translation of Siddhanta Bindu,* 2–3.

6. The tradition of *nyāya* (literally, "logic"), whose founding is attributed to the figure of Gautama, is most closely associated with the development of Sanskrit logic and epistemology.

7. Nelson, "Life of Madhusūdana," 24, and Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xviii. Mīmāṃsā, also called *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* or "Prior Mīmāṃsā," the founding of which is attributed to Jaimini, is the Sanskrit tradition primarily concerned with proper Vedic ritual exegesis. Vedānta, also called *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* or "Later Mīmāṃsā," was the tradition primarily concerned with the proper interpretation of the Upaniṣads, that is, the latter portions of the Vedas.

8. See Nelson, "Life of Madhusūdana," 24, and Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xviii.

9. On the arguments for and against Madhusūdana's authorship of these and other treatises, see, e.g., Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* i–xiii, and S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 7–11.

10. See Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xiv–xv, and Sastra, *Nyāyāmṛta and Advaitasiddhi,* 308.

11. See Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xvii, and Jagadiswarananda, "Sri Madhusudanasarasvati," 309.

12. See Rajagopalan, *Preceptors of Advaita,* 255–57; see also Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xiv–xviii.

13. For a comprehensive listing of the scholarship on Madhusūdana's date, see the section on Madhusūdana in Potter, "Bibliography."

14. For the strongest arguments in favor of an earlier date for Madhusūdana (ca. 1490–1602), see Modi, *Translation of Siddhanta Bindu,* 21–27. For the strongest arguments in favor of a later date (ca. 1540–1647), see Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* xviii–xxv. The majority of scholars favor the latter set of dates; see, e.g., Thangaswami, *Bibliographical Survey,* 282–90; Potter, "Madhusūdana Sarasvatī"; and S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 5–7.

15. See Abū al-Faẓl, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī,* 166 and *The Ain I Akbari,* 537–47, and Bhattacharyya, "Sanskrit Scholars," 31–36. Although not all the Sanskrit scholars on the list are easily identifiable, there may be up to seven other Vedāntins listed there, including Nṛsiṃhāśrama, his preceptor Nārāyaṇāśrama, and Rāmatīrtha.

16. Potter, "Madhusūdana Sarasvatī," 590–91.

17. For a sampling of these oral tales, see Jagadiswarananda, "Sri Madhusudanasarasvati," and Tripāṭhī, *Madhusūdanasarasvatīcaritam.*

18. See Farquhar, "Organization of the Sannyasis," 483; see also Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics,* 30–33.

19. Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 85; see also Raghavan, "Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī," 162.

20. See Rahurkar, "Bhasa-Yogavasisthasara of Kavindracarya," 471–82.

21. Akbar established his "house of religious discussion" (*'ibādatkhānah*) in the mid-1570s, where he would host religious discussions between Muslims, Brahmins, Jains, Christians, and others. The practice lasted into Jahāngīr's reign, if not longer. Akbar also established the institution of the *maktabkhānah* ("house of writing"), which served as a "translation bureau" of sorts. One can only speculate whether Madhusūdana may have attended either space at any point. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History,* 104–40.

22. Regarding Madhusūdana's public career in Banaras, see Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta."

23. See, e.g., Śrīdhara's *Subodhinī* commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gītā* and his commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa;* see also Venkatkrishnan, "Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, and the Bhakti Movement."

24. See Nelson, "Life of Madhusūdana," 26–27, and Potter, "Madhusūdana Sarasvatī," 590–91. Scholars especially doubt the latter relationship, since Vallabha's dates seem too early to fit into Madhusūdana's probable timeline.

25. See, e.g., S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 1–2.

26. See Nelson, "Ontology of *Bhakti.*"

27. See, e.g., Granoff, *Philosophy and Argument.*

28. For more on this "new logic," see Ganeri, "*Navya-nyāya*."

29. See Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 77–79.

30. See McCrea, "Freed by the Weight," and Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 87.

31. See Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 75, 78, 87–88, 95, and Potter, "Bibliography."

32. See Madhusūdana, *Advaita-Siddhiḥ*; Pellegrini, "Analysis of the Second and Fourth Definitions"; Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy* and *Seeing and Appearance;* S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta;* K. Nair, *Advaitasiddhi;* and B.N.K. Sharma, *Advaitasiddhi Vs Nyāyāmṛta,* among other available works.

33. Paraphrasing *sṛṣṭau satyām dṛṣṭir jñānam*; see Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 33.

34. See Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 102–35.

35. See Slaje, "On Changing Others' Ideas" and "Liberation from Intentionality," and Fort, "Liberation While Living."

36. Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 78.

37. Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 78–79; see also Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāraḥ*, and Dharmarāja, *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*. On the general efflorescence of synthetic, encyclopedic writing in early modern Sanskrit more generally (beyond Advaita Vedānta), see Pollock, "*Rāmāyaṇa* and Political Imagination," 286.

38. Almost nothing is known about Puṣpadanta, including his dates. Some manuscripts of the *Stotra* give an alternate author: either a figure by the name of Grahila, or another author named Kumārilabhaṭṭa, who could conceivably be the famous founder of the Bhāṭṭa

Mīmāṃsā school. Either way, the *Stotra* was almost certainly composed before the ninth century CE. On the date of the text, see Lienhard, *History of Classical Poetry,* 140–41.

39. I.e., the Pāśupata tradition of Śaivism.

40. *Śivamahimnaḥ-stotra* 7, in Brown, *Mahimnastava,* 10.

41. For a perhaps comparable example of another early modern Advaitin, Appayya Dīkṣīta (d. 1592), writing across Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Śākta materials and allegiances, see Rao, "Vaiṣṇava Writings of a Śaiva" and Bronner, "Singing to God."

42. Most of these traditions, of course, would vehemently object to the idea that Madhusūdana's conception of the Lord is their goal, but this is beside the point for Madhusūdana. As far as he is concerned, their true object is the Lord, whether they know it or not!

43. See Qvarnström, "Haribhadra and the Beginnings of Doxography"; Halbfass, *India and Europe* and *Tradition and Reflection*, 51–85; and Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 144–65.

44. The tenth-century Śaiva Siddhāntin, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, in fact wields Buddhist arguments against the existence of an enduring self to refute the positions of his "fellow Hindus," namely, the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and Sāṃkhya schools. Having thus cleared the ground, Rāmakaṇṭha then goes on to refute the Buddhists so as to establish his own characteristic position. Here we have just one example among many of how a Hindu thinker might utilize Buddhist arguments for a constructive purpose, even at a historical moment when he is not actually talking to any living Buddhists (see Watson, *Self's Awareness of Itself.*)

45. By way of modern parallel, I might suggest, an instructor faced with crafting a syllabus for an "Introduction to Religious Studies" course will often include the "founder figures" or other influential past thinkers of the discipline—Mircea Eliade, Rudolf Otto, Max Müller, W.C. Smith, etc.—even if such figures might be deemed outdated or in themselves unusable for the contemporary discipline. The idea is that there is still something intellectually valuable and pedagogically instructive about mastering those "outdated" figures who nevertheless *shaped* the field as we know it today.

46. The *puruṣārthas* or "ends of humankind" are intended to summarize the four goals a human being may legitimately pursue during his lifetime. These ends include: 1) *dharma* (righteousness), 2) *artha* (wealth), 3) *kāma* (pleasure), and 4) *mokṣa* (liberation).

47. The *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha* of Mādhava/Cannibhaṭṭa (14th c.) is perhaps the best-known Advaita doxography to employ this framework, while another Advaitin contemporary to Madhusūdana, Appayya Dīkṣita, utilizes a similar method for his *Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha.* For a more comprehensive account of this feature of Sanskrit doxographical writing, see Halbfass, *India and Europe,* 349–68.

48. The line in question translates: "the *prasthānas* [of the *nāstikas*] should be disregarded because, like the *prasthānas* of the barbarians (*mlecchas*), etc., they are not conducive to the proper ends of humankind (*puruṣārthas*) even indirectly, since they are external to the Veda." On the history and meaning of the term *nāstika,* see Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 166–84.The term *mleccha* has a long history in Sanskrit, referring first and foremost to any and all foreign, non-subcontinental communities, deemed to be entirely outside of, and unconnected with, the caste-hierarchy so closely associated with the Sanskrit language and Brahminical Hinduism (see Prasher-Sen, "Naming and Social Exclusion," 418, 426–31, 435).

49. See Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 164–65, 191, 196.

50. Vācaspati Miśra associates the Buddhists and Jains (and Kāpālikas) with the *mlecchas* in his commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* II.1.3, while Śaṅkara (8th–9th c.), in his

own turn, had already criticized these groups for being "external to the Veda" (*vedabāhya*); see Allen's review of *Unifying Hinduism,* 882–83.

51. As Halbfass writes: "The Indocentrism developed in 'orthodox' Hindu thought transcends by far what is ordinarily called 'ethnocentrism.' It is not simply an unquestioned perspective or bias, but a sophisticated theoretical structure of self-universalization and self-isolation. Seen from within this complex, highly differentiated structure, the *mlecchas* are nothing but a faint and distant phenomenon at the horizon of the indigenous tradition. They do not possess an 'otherness' against which one's own identity could be asserted, or in which it could be reflected. They are neither targets of possible conversion, nor sources of potential inspiration" (*India and Europe,* 187).

52. Regarding the terms *turuṣka* ("Turk"), *yavana* ("Greek"), and other Sanskrit words signifying the ethnic, though often actually quite generic, "other," see Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other?*, and Talbot, "Inscribing the Other."

53. See Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?," 646–55, and Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 190–200.

54. See O'Connell, *Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal,* particularly part II.

55. See, e.g., Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?," 647, and Talbot, "Inscribing the Other."

56. Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?," 631.

57. I hesitate to definitively declare Madhusūdana as the first to present such a depiction, as there are still too many as yet unstudied texts awaiting examination.

58. See Allen, "Dueling Dramas."

59. See Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 183, and Hanneder, "Conservative Approach," 575.

60. See Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?"

61. Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 200–201.

62. Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 191.

63. Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism,* 191–92.

64. Minkowski, "Advaita Vedānta," 90–91.

65. Halbfass, *India and Europe,* 187.

66. Shankar Nair, "Islam in Sanskrit Doxography: A Reconsideration via the Writings of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī" (under review). I am here utilizing Karmarkar's edition of Madhusūdana, *Vedāntakalpalatikā,* the relevant material appearing on 1–45. See also Panicker, *Vedāntakalpalatikā: A Study,* particularly 27–34.

67. I here reference Divānji's edition of Madhusūdana, *Siddhāntabindu,* as well as Vedāntachārya, *Siddhāntabindu,* the relevant material appearing on 4–8, 105–16, 306–33, 462.

68. Regarding the mechanics of how the *mahāvākyas* prompt liberation, see Hirst, *Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta,* 138–60.

69. On the cross-references and order of Madhusūdana's writings, see S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 7–11, and Madhusūdana, *Siddhāntabindu,* ii–xiii.

70. Nelson, "Madhusudana Sarasvati on the Hidden Meaning," 83–85.

71. Nelson, "Madhusudana Sarasvati on the Hidden Meaning," 84.

72. Nelson, "Madhusudana Sarasvati on the Hidden Meaning," 84.

73. Like many if not most scholars of Advaita Vedānta, Nelson tends to overstate the purported "incompatibility" between *bhakti* and Advaita Vedānta prior to Madhusūdana. For a useful corrective, see Venkatkrishnan, "Love in the Time of Scholarship," particularly 150–51n11.

74. I have in mind here the sorts of public pedagogical functions of cross-sectarian *stotras* that Bronner outlines in "Singing to God," 15–17.

75. See Pollock, "New Intellectuals" and "Death of Sanskrit."

76. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?,* 361–62.

77. For the Sanskrit editions upon which I am relying, see Madhusūdana, *Advaitasiddhi,* particularly the two chapters on *dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* (1025–54) and *eka-jīva-vāda* (1055–80), and Madhusūdana, *Siddhāntabindu,* 229–38. For more detailed overviews of Madhusūdana's thought, see Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance* and *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy*; S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta*; and, to a lesser extent, B. Gupta, *Disinterested Witness*.

78. See S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 42.

79. S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta*, 105. The standard Advaita analogy for *avidyā*'s power of projection is the famous example of the rope and snake: in a dark room, one may see a rope and mistakenly believe it to be a snake. The beholder's own ignorance (*avidyā*), in other words, falsely projects the quality of "snake" onto the rope.

80. Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy,* 8.

81. Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy,* 8.

82. See Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 29, and S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 84–85.

83. On the Bhāmatī vs. Vivaraṇa sub-schools, see Roodurmun, *Bhāmatī and Vivaraṇa*. See also Lawrence McCrea's important querying of these two categories, suggesting that their genesis may in fact lay in figures as late as Vyāsatīrtha (d. 1539) and Appayya Dīkṣita (d. 1592) ("Freed by the Weight," 94–97).

84. See Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 31, and S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 86.

85. The term for "imagined," *kalpita*, is derived from the same verbal root that furnishes the terms *saṃkalpa*, *vikalpa*, and *kalpa*, examined in the previous chapter in the context of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.

86. See Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy,* 43–45.

87. It is worth emphasizing that, though one may be tempted to interpret Prakāśānanda's single *jīva* as some sort of "cosmic *jīva*" that then imagines the universe, the author seems quite uninterested in making such a suggestion. Instead, it seems he would rather insist to the reader something to the effect of "you, and you alone, are responsible for this whole world full of suffering and bondage! Do what you need to do to escape!"

88. Although it is unavoidable to describe the "process" in sequential terms, these cosmogonic "events" do not necessarily take place in a *temporal* sequence.

89. See Timalsina, *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy,* 40–43, and S. Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta,* 87–88.

90. See Timalsina, *Seeing and Appearance,* 129–30.

3. MUHIBB ALLĀH ILĀHĀBĀDĪ AND AN ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK

1. By the term "mystic," I refer to a spiritual aspirant who endeavors after a heightened proximity to the Divine by means of a set of disciplines typically practiced in an initiatic context. In the case of the Muslim figure Muḥibb Allāh, it is more or less synonymous with "Sufi," though this latter term obviously does not apply to a Hindu figure like Madhusūdana.

2. Chittick points out that Ibn ʿArabī never used the term "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" in his own writings, while it was a few generations after Ibn ʿArabī's passing that the phrase became

crystallized as a technical term referring to a specific "metaphysical doctrine" or "school of thought"; see Chittick, "Rumi and *waḥdat al-wujūd*." It seems significant that Muḥibb Allāh too, dedicated commentator that he was, also avoids the term "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" in his *Taswiyah*.

3. Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent,* 23.

4. Chittick, "Two Treatises by Khwāja Khurd," 153.

5. Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence," 233.

6. A *ṭarīqah* or "Sufi order" is a lineage of Sufi practitioners, generationally connected through an initiatic chain (*silsilah*) of master-disciple (*shaykh/pīr-murīd*) relationships, that is said to extend all the way back to the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 632). First arising around the eleventh century, new *ṭarīqahs* would subsequently branch off from existing ones, typically named after the charismatic *shaykh* who began (knowingly or unknowingly) the new *silsilah.* The Chishtī order was first brought to South Asia in the late twelfth century by Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236), where it would go on to become "the most widespread and popular of all the Sufi traditions in this vast region" (Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love,* 1). The Ṣābirī sub-branch of the Chishtī order, of which the most well-known *shaykh* was ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangōhī (d. 1537), was founded in the thirteenth century. See also Nizami, "Čishtiyya" and Moalem, "Sufi Thoughts," 71–83.

7. S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:17.

8. See, for example, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Chishtī's (d. 1683) *Mirʾāt al-asrār* (completed in 1654; see also the Urdu translation by Siyāl, *Mirʾātulasrār,* 1193–1195); Shāh ʿAżud al-Dīn Muḥammad Chishtī's (d. 1758) *Maqāṣid al-ʿārifīn* (completed in 1712), 389; Muḥammad Akram Barāsawī's *Iqtibās al-anwār* (completed ca. 1729); Shāhnavāz Khān Awrangābādī's (d. 1757) *Maʾāthir al-umarāʾ* (completed in 1747), 2:130; Vajīh al-Dīn Ashraf's *Baḥr-i zakhkhār* (completed in 1789); Khudā Bakhsh Khān's (d. 1908) *Maḥbūb al-albāb fī taʿrīf al-kutub waʾl-kuttāb* (completed in 1896/7), 379; Raḥmān ʿAlī's (d. 1907) *Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i hind,* 175; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī's (d. 1922) *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir wa-bahjat al-masāmiʿ waʾl-nawāẓir,* 5:609–11; and Niẓāmī Badāyūnī's (d. 1947) *Qāmūs al-mashāhīr,* 2:160).

9. Muḥibb Allāh wrote in response: "The command of him who has authority has been received, and the sign of his affection has been understood. But the person who has not crossed through the first and second stages (i.e., the 'obedience to God' and 'obedience to the Messenger' referenced in Shāh Jahān's letter), how can he arrive at the third stage?" Quoted from Nizami, *Tārīkh-i mashāʾikh-i Chisht,* 225–26 (translation mine).

10. Quoted from Ali, "Shaikh Muhibbullah," 254 (translation mine).

11. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* vol. 2; Ahmad, *Contribution of Indo-Pakistan;* Ali, "Shaikh Muhibbullah" and "An Important Persian Work"; Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence"; and Moalem, "Sufi Thoughts."

12. These include the commentaries and refutations of Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī, Khwājah Khwurd, Amān Allāh Banārasī, Shaykh Muḥammadī al-Fayyāż al-Hargāmī, Mawlawī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm al-Lakhnawī, Shaykh Muḥammad Afżal ʿAbbāsī Ilāhābādī, Shaykh Kalīm Allāh Jahānābādī, Mawlānā ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm Farangī, Sayyid ʿAlī Akbar Dihlawī Fayżābādī, Shāh ʿAlī Qalandar-i Kākōravī, Ḥāfiẓ ʿInāyat Allāh Akbarābādī, and the three super-commentaries composed by Ḥabīb Allāh Paṭnah-ī in response to the abovementioned commentaries of Mullā Maḥmūd and Khwājah Khwurd. These are all in addition to Muḥibb Allāh's own Persian auto-commentary, as well as a number of commentaries of

as yet undetermined authorship, such as the *Ḥirz al-shayṭān* and *Ḥāshiyat al-Taswiyah*. See Ahmad, *Contribution of Indo-Pakistan,* 91–92; Moalem, "Sufi Thoughts," 111–12; and Ali, "Manuscript Copies," 37–59; these observations are also based on my own archival research.

13. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:463. One could also note a text such as ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Lakhnawī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm's (d. 1810) *Risālah fī bayān waḥdat al-wujūd* (also known as *Tanazzulāt-i sitta* and *Risālat waḥdat al-wujūd wa shuhūd al-ḥaqq fī kull mawjūd*), in which the author analyzes many of the most celebrated commentators and systematizers of Ibn ʿArabī, from Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) to Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh (see Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence," 241).

14. See, e.g., Ali, "Shaikh Muhibbullah," 241; Ahmad, *Contribution of Indo-Pakistan,* xxvi; Y.H. Khan, "Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad," 315; S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements,* 330–46; Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence," 233–36; Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent,* 96–101; A. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture,* 138, 192, 198; Alam, *Languages of Political Islam,* 96–97, 170; W.C. Smith, "Crystallization of Muslim Communities," 182–83; and numerous others.

15. al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 5:609. The majority of the following biographical accounts are also related in Ali, "Shaykh Muḥibbullah," 241–45, 249–56 as well as Moalem, "Sufi Thoughts," 91–97.

16. The Sufi adoption of yogic practices of breath control was widespread across the medieval and early modern subcontinent, including in the Chishtī order. See, e.g., Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga."

17. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ*.

18. Muḥibb Allāh, *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ*.

19. Ali, "Shaykh Muḥibbullah," 243. See also al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 5:609.

20. Muḥibb Allāh, *Anfās al-khawāṣṣ*. See also Vajīh al-Dīn Ashraf's *Baḥr-i zakhkhār,* which is quoted in al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 5:609.

21. See Ali, "Shaykh Muḥibbullah," 245.

22. See Siyāl, *Mirʾātulasrār,* 1194.

23. al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 5:609–10.

24. See Nizami, *Tārīkh-i mashāʾikh-i Chisht,* 225–26. There is of course no intrinsic incompatibility between "the Sufi path" and imperial affairs—throughout their history, a great many Sufis have considered their practice to be fully compatible with engagements of a more political or temporal nature—but there has also always been, at the same time, a certain Sufi wariness of the dangers, distractions, and dispersions that so often accompany such entanglements. The negotiation between these two stances is perhaps no more evident in any other *ṭarīqah* than the Chishtiyyah, whose members were offered numerous opportunities for a close alliance with the Mughal court while also striving to maintain certain characteristic ascetic ideals. See, e.g., Alam, "Mughals, the Sufi Shaikhs," 27–28.

25. See Muḥibb Allāh's *Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī.*

26. See, e.g., A. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 138, 192; Davis, "Dara Shukuh and Aurangzib," 104–5; and Farooqi, "Resurgence of the Chishtīs," 11–12. M. Mujeeb provides one of the starkest articulations to this effect: "[w]hat [Dārā Shikōh] respresents socially is the culmination of that understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims of which Akbar laid the foundation and which led to the creation of a mixed governing class with a common code of behaviour. This understanding reached its highest point symbolically in Dārā

Shikōh's translation of the *Upanishads* and in Shaikh Muḥibbullāh Allāhābādī's verdict that a ruler who believed in a Prophet called 'the Blessing for All Humanity' could not discriminate between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects" (*Indian Muslims,* 363).

27. According to the *taẕkirahs,* Muḥammad Qannaujī taught Awrangzēb *ḥadīth,* jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and two famous works of the exceedingly influential Sunnī Sufi theologian, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), the Arabic *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ("Revival of the Religious Sciences") and Persian *Kīmīyā-i sa'ādat* ("Alchemy of Felicity"). Muḥammad Qannaujī is also reported to have taken part in the composition of Awrangzēb's famous compilation of Sunnī (primarily Ḥanafī) legal rulings, the *Fatāwā-i 'Ālamgīrī.*

28. See Ali, "Shaikh Muḥibbullah," 255–56; Qanungo, *Dara Shukoh,* 262–263; and Shāhnavāz Khān Awrangābādī, *Ma'āthir al-umarā',* 128–31.

29. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:270–71 and Y.H. Khan, "Shah Muhibbullah," 318. As far as I have been able to determine, Shēr Khān Lōdī's *Mir'āt al-khayāl* (completed in 1690/1) is the only early source to have reported this event, while it is not consistently included in the later *taẕkirahs.* S.A.A. Rizvi notes, furthermore, that Shēr Khān Lōdī was "hostile" to *waḥdat al-wujūd,* a sentiment that could well have colored his account (*Muslim Revivalist Movements*, 338). Accordingly, although I unfortunately have not been able to consult all the relevant *taẕkirah* manuscripts, the specific details of the episode should nevertheless be read with some skepticism.

30. S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:271, citing Shēr Khān Lōdī.

31. See al-Ḥasanī, *al-A'lām,* 6:799–800.

32. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:98, 2:268, citing the *Ma'ārij al-wilāyat* of Ghulām Mu'īn al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Khweshgī Qaṣūrī (completed in 1683); see also Khair-ud-Din Muhammad, *Tazkirat-ul-Ulama,* 51–57.

33. See, e.g., Y.H. Khan, "Shah Muhibbullah," 316–17, and Ali, "Shaikh Muḥibbullah," 251, both of whom mistakenly describe the *fatwā* as occurring *during* Muḥibb Allāh's lifetime and causing quite an uproar, without, however, citing any dates or specific sources (see Lipton, "*The Equivalence,*" 23).

34. See, e.g., Shāhnavāz Khān Awrangābādī, *Ma'āthir al-umarā',* 130. al-Ḥasanī, *al-A'lām,* 5:610 offers a good summary of the wide spectrum of opinions regarding Muḥibb Allāh's teachings, ranging from the highest praise for his perfect wisdom, to the recognition of his great knowledge while affirming that he made some grave errors, to the flat claim that he had gone astray and had led others astray (a Qur'ānic terminology indicating one of the most wretched conditions attainable by human beings). This spectrum of opinion is not dissimilar from the range of historical responses to Ibn 'Arabī across the Islamic world; see Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition.*

35. Listed here are only the treatises generally agreed to be attributable to Muḥibb Allāh, who helpfully cross-refers in most of his works to his other works.

36. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements*, 335.

37. I have unfortunately been unable to access any manuscript copies of this work thus far.

38. Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-'Arabī's Influence," 233.

39. My sincere thanks to Ryan Brizendine for sharing with me his detailed mapping of which sections of Muḥibb Allāh's *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ* and *Haft aḥkām* correspond with which sections of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*.

40. The only slightly later commentaries of Shaykh Muḥammadī al-Fayyāż (d. 1696) and Amān Allāh Banārasī (d. 1721) are certainly deserving of close scholarly attention, but, unfortunately, lie only just beyond the temporal scope of this study.

41. For the rare, preliminary efforts to address this lacuna, see Ahmed, "Logic in the Khayrābādī School"; Ahmed and Pourjavady, "Theology in the Indian Subcontinent"; Sajjad Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād in India"; and Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals." Aziz Ahmad's *An Intellectual History of Islam in India* covers much relevant ground, to be sure, though it is unfortunately pervaded by a problematic and distorting nationalist lens.

42. See introduction, n36. For notable recent attempts to fill this lacuna, see El-Rouayheb and Schmidtke, *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy.*

43. Y.H. Khan, "Shah Muhibbullah," 315, 322.

44. Ali, "Shaikh Muḥibbullah," 245–46, 247.

45. Rahman, *Islam,* 148, and A. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture,* 186, quoted from Damrel, "'Naqshbandī Reaction," 177; see also Qureshi, *Muslim Community.* Authors more sympathetic toward modern-day India, in contrast, have typically spoken of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as promoting such lofty ideals as "reconciliation" and "peace with all," against which the "orthodox" reaction is seen as a tragedy (S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements,* 330; see also Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims*).

46. Akbar's famous "*dīn-i ilāhī*" or "divine religion" was of course central to this discussion. See Damrel, "Naqshbandī Reaction," 176–77, and Choudhury, *The Din-i Ilahi.*

47. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture,* 183.

48. Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent,* 79.

49. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* 402.

50. Rahman, *Islam*, 148.

51. Sirhindī, *Selected Letters*, 44; see also Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.*

52. Muḥibb Allāh would of course object to such a simplistic formulation of his metaphysics, as will be seen below.

53. See n26.

54. Even though he was appointed governor of Allahabad, Dārā in fact never resided there, governing instead through proxy agents. Dārā did at one point request a copy of Muḥibb Allāh's commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam,* but, given that this commentary says nothing about Hindus in particular—it is written in as general terms as, e.g., the *Fuṣūṣ* commentary of Jāmī (a Central Asian Sufi, d. 1492), whose works were well-known throughout the subcontinent, including to Dārā—and that the prince had much more extended exposure to numerous other teachers, it is far from evident that Muḥibb Allāh's *Fuṣūṣ* commentary should be counted as a relevant facilitator of Dārā's well-known engagement with Hindu sages and texts.

55. See Muḥibb Allāh's letters, *Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh*, ff. 386–434.

56. Ernst, "Notes on the Correspondence."

57. Alam, *Languages of Political Islam,* 96.

58. Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 151–52.

59. Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 161.

60. Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 97.

61. Muḥibb Allāh is the third *shaykh* in the Chishtī-Ṣābirī *silsilah* to come after ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangōhī.

62. See Damrel, "Naqshbandī Reaction," 185–86.

63. Lawrence, "'Abd-al-Qoddūs."

64. Digby, "'Abd al-Quddus," 36.

65. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements,* 334–38, and *History of Sufism of India,* 2:268–71.

66. Lipton, "*The Equivalence*" and "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī's *Taswiya.*"

67. See H.A.G. Khan, "India," 1059–63.

68. See Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin,* 205–6; H.A.G. Khan, "India," 1062–63; and Robinson, *'Ulama of Farangi Mahall,* 43, 57–59. For more, particularly on Damascus and the Ottoman context, see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History* and "Opening the Gate."

69. See Y.H. Khan, "Shah Muhibbullah," 315–16; Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin,* 206; and Robinson, *'Ulama of Farangi Mahall,* 43, 170. Robinson additionally locates Muḥibb Allāh within the chain of transmission that culminates in the influential *Dars-i Niẓāmī* curriculum of the Farangī Maḥall *madrasah,* which further promoted the flourishing of the rational sciences across Mughal South Asia.

70. For fuller details, see S. Nair, "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī on Ontology." To provide just two examples of such misreadings, Lipton reads the term "specific existence" (*wujūd khāṣṣ*) according to Ibn Sīnā's usage, neglecting the later figure al-Ṭūsī's new technical renderings for the term, this being the meaning to which Muḥibb Allāh refers in the *Taswiyah.* This misunderstanding leads Lipton to nearly the opposite reading of the relevant passage from what Muḥibb Allāh intended: whereas Muḥibb Allāh denies "specific existence" to the Real, Lipton reads the passage as an affirmation (see *"The Equivalence,"* 77–78). Lipton also misunderstands the tripartite division of "quiddity" (*māhiyyah*) into *bi-sharṭ lā, bi-sharṭ shay',* and *lā bi-sharṭ,* a topic that was frequently discussed in post-Avicennan debates by the likes of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350) and Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1390). Qayṣarī, for instance, correlates the highest level of existence with "*lā bi-sharṭ,*" while "existence *bi-sharṭ lā*" is merely an abstract mental concept that has no objective, extra-mental reality (see Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kilam,* 13–14). Lipton, in contrast, mistakenly affirms that "existence *bi-sharṭ lā*" is the highest level of existence (see *"The Equivalence,"* 44–47). In other contexts, *wujūdī* thinkers might correlate the *ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq* ("Reality of realities") with "existence *bi-sharṭ lā,*" but not with "existence *lā bi-sharṭ,*" as Lipton writes (see Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought,* 179–81).

71. *Ḥirz al-īmān,* ff. 85L–104R.

72. *Ḥāshiyat Ḥirz al-īmān,* ff. 121L–131R.

73. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Maktūbāt,* ff. 1–30.

74. See Sajjad Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād in India," for a number of these sources. See also Khair-ud-Din Muhammad, *Tazkirat-ul-Ulama,* 51–55, and A.S.B. Ansari, "al-Fārūḳī."

75. 'Alī Awjabī asserts that it was actually Mīr Findiriskī who suggested Mullā Maḥmūd should go to Iran to study with Mīr Dāmād, though he does not provide any source for the report. See Awjabī, "Ḥikmat-i yamānī dar Hind," 84. I am not aware of any evidence to this effect, leaving me skeptical of the account.

76. For a fuller account of this and all the philosophical stances referenced in this chapter, see Nair, "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī on Ontology," as well as my forthcoming translation of the *Taswiyah*.

77. See Mullā Maḥmūd, *Ḥirz al-īmān*, and Ḥabīb Allāh Patnah-ī, *Hāshiyat Ḥirz al-īmān*. On Ibn Sīnā's notion of "necessary existence," see Davidson, "Avicenna's Proof." Regarding the figure of Ṭūsī, see Mayer, "Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's Critique," 212–18, and McGinnis, "Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī."

78. See, e.g., Damrel, "Naqshbandī Reaction," 186–88; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya,* 54; Sabir, "Khwaja Baqi Billah"; Alam, "Mughals, the Sufi Shaikhs," 35.

79. Khwājah Khurd's other teachers included the famous Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Muḥaddiṯ al-Dihlavī (d. 1642), Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Dihlavī (d. 1633), and Shaykh Ilāh Dād (d. 1640); see al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 5:578.

80. See Chittick, "Two Treatises," 154, and S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:250.

81. According to S.A.A. Rizvi, Khwājah Khwurd simply considered the "differences" between the *wujūdīs* and the *shuhūdīs* to be "purely superficial" (*History of Sufism in India,* 2:250). In his Arabic treatise *Fawāʾiḥ,* Khwājah Khwurd sums up his position on the matter: "the *shuhūd* [witnessing] that is opposed to *wujūd* [being] is not worthy of consideration" (Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence," 233).

82. See Khwājah Khwurd, *Sharḥ al-Taswiyah,* ff. 54R.

83. See, e.g., Ernst, "Controversies over Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ*." Dawānī's somewhat unpredictable writings include much material from the Peripatetic and Illuminationist traditions as well.

84. See Ernst, "Limits of Universalism," 5.

85. For a more detailed account of Dawānī's ontology, see Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran,* 90–91, and S. Nair, "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī on Ontology," 668–70.

86. Khwājah Khwurd, indeed, consistently describes the Necessary as "absolute existence" (*wujūd muṭlaq*) or as "pure existence (*wujūd ṣirf*), subsistent by itself," without any dependence upon any other entity; see Khwājah Khwurd, *Sharḥ al-Taswiyah,* 50R.

87. See Khwājah Khwurd's *Sharḥ al-Taswiyah,* 44L, and also Dawānī, *al-Ḥawrāʾ,* 207–8.

88. Khwājah Khwurd, *Sharḥ al-Taswiyah,* 44R-46R. See also Dawānī, *Shawākil al-ḥūr,* 167–68.

89. For an overview of later Ashʿarī polemics against the *wujūdī* tradition, see Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī in the Later Islamic Tradition,* 141–61.

90. Amān Allāh's writings include a treatise on the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), a super-commentary (*ḥāshiyah*) on ʿAbd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī's well-known Qurʾān commentary, and commentaries and super-commentaries on several treatises composed by Ījī, Taftāzānī, and Dawānī. Amān Allāh also composed a commentary on the *magnum opus* of the aforementioned classmate of Mullā Maḥmūd, ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Jawnpūrī, known as the *Rashīdiyyah,* which introduces the method of the science of disputation and polemics (*ʿilm al-munāẓarah*). Amān Allāh is additionally known to have debated with Mullā Maḥmūd and the famous philosopher of Safavid Iṣfahān, Mīr Dāmād, over the latter's doctrine of "perpetual creation" (*ḥudūth dahrī*). See al-Ḥasanī, *al-Aʿlām,* 6:800.

91. For more on the Ḥusbāniyyah, see Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 212–13. In his Persian auto-commentary on the *Taswiyah*, Muḥibb Allāh also makes one reference to another influential school of early Islamic theology (*kalām*), the Muʿtazilah, though this group does not occupy Muḥibb Allāh's attention at any great length. This is not surprising, as the Muʿtazilah tradition had largely disappeared in the Sunnī world long before Muḥibb Allāh's time (though surviving in various forms, particularly within the diverse currents of Shīʿī theology).

92. For more on the history of *ishrāqī* thought in South Asia, see Zanjānī-aṣl, *Ḥikmat-i ishrāqī dar Hind.*

93. See Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ,* 13–29, and Jāmī, *The Precious Pearl,* 1–10 (Arabic).

94. Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ,* 13. Regarding Ibn Sīnā's own three-part framework, see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 177–79; for further philosophical background, see Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition," 105–13.

95. For a fuller explanation, see Marmura, "Avicenna's Chapter on Universals." I have opted not to translate the terms for these categories, as their translations are clumsy and liable to confuse more than to clarify for the non-Arabic reader. For readers familiar with the Latin philosophical tradition, however, these categories have ready correlates: 1) *fi'l-kathrah = bi-sharṭ shay'* = Latin *in re;* 2) *baʿda al-kathrah = bi-sharṭ lā* = Latin *post rem;* 3) *qabla al-kathrah = lā bi-sharṭ* = Latin *ante rem.* St. Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), for instance, explained this tripartite division as follows: 1) *in re* = the universal in things; 2) *post rem* = the mentally abstracted universal; 3) *ante rem* = the universal as an idea or archetype in God's mind. See Kennedy, "St. Albertus Magnus."

96. See Jāmī, *al-Durrah al-fākhirah,* 3–4 (Arabic).

97. That is, a natural universal as contrasted with a second-order universal.

98. "Occurs to" renders the verb *ʿaraḍa ʿalā,* which is the same verbal root from which the term "accident" or "attribute" (*ʿaraḍ*) is derived. "Occurs" thus expresses how an accident/attribute "occurs" to a substance, as the color red "occurs" to a piece of fabric.

99. Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ,* 21.

100. "First," in this context, implies an ontological priority, but need not imply a temporal one.

101. Though, again, it would be incorrect to call this existence a "universal," properly speaking, since Qayṣarī and Jāmī seem to have in mind what corresponds to the Avicennan *qabla al-kathrah* or *lā bi-sharṭ,* as opposed to the mentally abstracted universal (*baʿda al-kathrah* or *bi-sharṭ lā*).

102. Thinkers in the tradition of Ibn ʿArabī often speak of the total hierarchy of reality as being divided into five levels, typically referred to as the "Five Divine Presences" (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyah al-khams*). Though different thinkers within this tradition have divided the five levels differently, there is a broad consensus that the physical, sensory realm is the lowest. See Chittick, "Five Divine Presences."

103. See, e.g., sections 4 and 9 of Malihe Moalem's edition of the *Taswiyah,* reproduced in Lipton, *"The Equivalence,"* 81–88.

104. See *Taswiyah,* section 5.

105. *Taswiyah,* section 4. Muḥibb Allāh has arguable precedent for this formulation in ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī's (d. 1291) commentary on the Divine Names (*Sharḥ asmā' al-ḥusnā*), where the author critiques Aristotle for not positing *wujūd* as the *jins al-ajnās* ("genus of [all] genera"). My thanks to Yousef Casewit for directing me to this reference.

106. A typical example of a "second-order" concept is the concept of "number": from perceiving numerous concrete things grouped in pairs of two, we abstract the general concept "two"; from perceiving numerous things grouped in pairs of three, we abstract the general concept "three," and so on. After having already abstracted these concepts, we subsequently abstract an additional, even more general concept on the basis of these previously abstracted concepts, namely, the idea of "number" itself. "Number" can thus be considered a second-order universal, which does not track with anything real outside the mind:

"number" per se is never perceived in the external world, but only within our minds. On the purported non-existence of the second-order universal, see, for instance, Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid,* 377–78. See also al-Dashtakī, *Ishrāq Hayākil al-nūr,* 187, and al-Gūrānī, *Itḥāf al-dhakī,* 228–29.

107. *Taswiyah,* section 3.

108. "*Laysa al-mumkin ghayr al-wājib*" (*Taswiyah,* section 2).

109. Though *wujūdī* thinkers such as Qayṣarī and Jāmī similarly undercut the distinction between God and the world, Muḥibb Allāh is rather unique in his readiness to formulate such a stark affirmation of their identity. Even Jāmī frequently insists, for instance, that, even though the possible existent is the manifestation of Necessary existence, the Necessary is nevertheless "other than the possible in every respect" (*ghayr al-mumkin min jamīʿ al-wujūh*) (see Khwājah Khwurd, *Sharḥ al-Taswiyah,* 42L). Muḥibb Allāh, in contrast, only rarely feels the need to make such qualifications, at least in the *Taswiyah.* In his Persian auto-commentary on the *Taswiyah,* however, he does indeed render such qualifications with greater frequency, perhaps in response to the criticisms and counter-arguments that had been leveled against him in the interim.

110. *Taswiyah,* sections 2–3.

111. On the phrase *hamah ūst* in the sapiential tradition of Persian Sufi poetry, see, e.g., Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* 279–85.

112. One might add to this list the school of Mīr Dāmād, referred to as the "Yemeni philosophy" (*al-ḥikmah al-yamāniyyah*).

113. Fazlur Rahman was perhaps the most vocal modern Muslim critic of the tradition of *waḥdat al-wujūd* along these lines, lamenting that, as a philosophy, it undercuts the foundations of orthodoxy and even the distinctions between right and wrong. Rahman further "denounced Ibn ʿArabi for adulterating Islam with 'foreign elements'" (Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition,* 386n12). It has been suggested, however, that this may have been only Rahman's public face, while he expressed admiration for Ibn ʿArabi in private (ibid). Such an approach on the part of Rahman, if true, would have in fact mirrored the strategy of a great many premodern Muslim authorities when forced to comment upon *waḥdat al-wujūd*!

114. Muḥibb Allāh, *Maktūbāt,* 195R–195L.

115. Muḥibb Allāh, *Maktūbāt,* 195L.

116. As is well-known, every chapter of the Qurʾān except for chapter 9 (*al-Tawbah*) begins with the phrase "in the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate" (*biʾsmi-ʾLlāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*).

117. A *ḥadīth qudsī* is a narration from the Prophet Muḥammad in which God speaks in the first person through the tongue of Muḥammad, and yet it is not considered a part of the Qurʾānic corpus. Muḥibb Allāh quotes this *ḥadīth* often, as does Ibn ʿArabī; see, e.g., his *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* 157. This particular *ḥadīth,* however, is of doubtful authenticity according to the majority of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholars, a fact that Ibn ʿArabī himself acknowledges, though he nevertheless affirms the soundness of the *ḥadīth* by way of "unveiling" (*kashf*) (see Brown, *Hadith,* 192–95).

118. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 254R–258L. The "act" of God's conceiving the totality of creation within His knowledge is often designated as the "most holy effusion" (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*). The second step of the process—the manifestation of the world in concrete existence—is typically designated as the "holy effusion" (*al-fayḍ al-muqaddas*).

119. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 269L (*Faṣṣ Hūd*).

120. Chittick proffers, to illustrate this point, the image of white light refracted through a prism in the form of a rainbow: each resultant color reveals something of the original, pure light, but only to the exclusion of the other colors; the colors are unified by virtue of being "light," but distinct and delimited by virtue of being "red," "not-orange," "not-yellow," etc. (see Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds,* 18, 140)

121. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 258L, 264L, 269L, 274R.

122. See, e.g., Muḥibb Allāh's Persian commentary on *Faṣṣ Ismā'īl* in *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah* 77. *Tashbīh* literally means "making [God] similar" or "affirming [God] to be similar," i.e., recognizing the continuities between God and world, such as the declaration that all worldly beauties are really reflections of God's beauty. *Tanzīh* literally means "declaring [God's] incomparability," i.e., recognizing that God is entirely beyond the world or any conception that we may have of Him.

123. See, e.g., Muḥibb Allāh's first letter (in Persian) to Mullā Maḥmūd al-Jawnpūrī, where the former lays out the numerous errors associated with falling too far on the side of *tanzīh* or *tashbīh* with reference to the "bezels" (*fuṣūṣ*) of Ilyās (Elias), Ādam (Adam), Sulaymān (Solomon), Isḥāq (Isaac), Shu'ayb, 'Uzayr (Ezra), and Nūḥ (Noah) (*Maktūbāt,* 2L–4R).

124. Rahman, *Islam,* 100.

125. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* 175. The Qur'ān, again, is also explicit that God has brought multiple revelations to different human communities at different times through different prophets, at each instance in the tongue of the community in question (see, e.g., Qur'ān 5:48, 10:47, 14:4). The Qur'ān is equally explicit, furthermore, that all the prophets, and the messages they bring, "confirm one another" (see, e.g., Qur'ān 2:136, 3:3).

126. In Muḥibb Allāh's own words: "this statement ['wheresoever you look, there is the face of God'] has descended upon every one of the prophets (*anbiyā'*)" (*Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 8).

127. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 3. The force of this statement, in an Islamic context, lies in the Qur'ān's (and the general Islamic tradition's) pervasive calls against the worship of celestial bodies and idols, for fear of compromising God's unity and hence falling into the grave error of "associating partners with God" (*shirk*).

128. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 4. On the long history of Sufi subversions of the conventional Islamic condemnation of idol-worship, see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity,* 268–317.

129. This theme is scattered particularly throughout Muḥibb Allāh's commentary on *Faṣṣ Hūd*.

130. Or rather, it could be said, God, as the "stone-cutter," molds the revelation into that shape.

131. Since the Qur'ān mentions only Abrahamic prophets to the exclusion of other regions of the world, at least three textual sources concerning prophecy became particularly important in the "non-Abrahamic" South Asian context: first, the Qur'ānic verse "to every community (*ummah*) [was have sent] a messenger (*rasūl*)" (10:47); second, the Qur'ānic verse "verily, We have sent messengers before thee [Muḥammad]. About some of them We have told thee, and about others we have not" (40:78); and third, an oft-quoted *ḥadīth* which

announces that, from Adam to Muḥammad, God has sent 124,000 prophets (or 224,000, according to some variants). Such texts are frequently invoked by South Asian scholars seeking to justify the idea that the subcontinent too saw its own share of authentic messengers of God. See Friedmann, "Medieval Muslim Views," 219.

132. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, 8. See also *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 277R.

133. Indeed, as Ibn ʿArabī repeatedly points out, the word *wujūd*, "existence," is derived from the Arabic root *w-j-d,* the basic meaning of which is "to find." "Existence," therefore, is also "finding," in the sense of "becoming aware" of something within one's knowledge or consciousness. In other words, "to be" is also "to know"; for Ibn ʿArabī, the two go hand-in-hand. See Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 15.

134. See, e.g., *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, 52 and *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 273L (*Faṣṣ Hūd*).

135. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 274R (*Faṣṣ Hūd*).

136. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 274R.

137. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 274L.

138. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 274R. Muḥibb Allāh also comments that God blessed Ibn ʿArabī with the vision of *all* the prophets' immutable essences, hence making his knowledge of the various dimensions and modalities of God's Reality just about as comprehensive as a human being could ever attain. See *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 264L.

139. "Say: my Lord, increase me in knowledge!" (Qurʾān 20:114).

140. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 110.

141. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* 156–57. The term *walī* (pl. *awliyāʾ*, "friends [of God]") refers to those exceptional individuals who have attained such profound depths of spiritual realization that God has brought them close to Him even during this lifetime. The term is often translated as "saint," though some object to certain Christian connotations of the term that would not suit the Islamic context.

142. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* 156. According to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad, God has ninety-nine divine names (*al-raḥmān,* the "All-Merciful"; *al-jamīl,* the "Beautiful"; *al-jalīl,* the "Majestic," and so forth) which should be "memorized" (*ḥafiẓa*). *Dhikr*/*ẕikr* is the repeated utterance of these names of God. A common Islamic pious activity that is usually done with a "rosary" (*tasbīḥ*), *dhikr* is one of the central practices associated with Sufism. The word "*dhikr*" actually has the double-meaning of "mention"—in the sense of mentioning God's names—as well as "remembrance"—in the sense of remembering God and His attributes. Hence, Sufis frequently speak of the heart of Islamic practice as the mention/remembrance of God through His blessed names. The *khalvat* or spiritual retreat, in turn, is a common Sufi practice of retiring alone in a secluded space for an extended period of isolated meditation, contemplation, and *dhikr,* often recommended to be forty days in duration.

143. See *ʿIbādāt al-khavāṣṣ,* MS. 193.

144. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ,* 156.

145. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ*, 188.

146. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ*, 158.

147. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ*, 153 (citing Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam, Faṣṣ Shuʿayb*).

148. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 113.

149. See Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 113–14 and *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 275L–276R.

150. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 114.

151. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 114. Muḥibb Allāh adds, furthermore, that, for a soul who is meant to find a spiritual master (*shaykh*) in this life, that spiritual master, too, becomes a part of her *qiblah*.

152. Muḥibb Allāh, in more specifically Islamic terms, speaks of the Prophet Muḥammad's famous "nocturnal ascent" (*miʿrāj*) through the seven heavens and into the direct presence of God, which serves as the prototype for the Muslim practitioner's return to God. He affirms that there is no canonical prayer (*ṣalāt*) without the *miʿrāj*, implying that the daily prayers performed by Muslims would accomplish nothing were it not for the Prophet, who opened up a pathway back to God that his followers can now tread by following in his footsteps (*Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 275L).

153. As we have seen, Muḥibb Allāh would likely add that every individual Muslim will experience a unique journey up that path, as one Muslim's journey through life will always be different than another's, just as one climber may find one section of the mountain difficult that another finds easy. Yet all those unique, individual journeys will nevertheless take place within the broad confines of the one "Islamic" path. Each path up each face of the mountain, corresponding with a single one of the world's religions, will exhibit a similar internal diversity. One cannot, however, successfully reach the top by just following any course one wishes, as the risk of "falling" would be considerable; one might conceptualize "conversion" to another religion, however, as a climber finding an opportunity to successfully switch to another of the established paths and thus joining up with another guide, namely, the prophet assigned to that new religion/path.

154. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 275L.

155. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 115.

156. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah,* 113.

157. The Kaʿbah is the cube-shaped building in Mecca in the direction of which all Muslims pray their canonical prayers (*ṣalāt*), and which all Muslims who have the means must visit at least once in their lives as part of the *ḥajj* pilgrimage. As such, the Kaʿbah is a central feature of Islamic piety. The wine-tavern, in Sufi poetic convention, is the symbolic "opposite" of the Kaʿbah, the consumption of wine being forbidden by Islamic law.

158. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ*, 276L.

159. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, 108.

160. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, 111–12.

161. The classical Sufi tradition long maintained a distinction between transient "states" (*aḥwāl*) and permanent spiritual "stations" (*maqāmāt*), affirming the former to be fleeting and therefore not reliably indicative of any spiritual progress, while the latter are enduring conditions of the soul that properly signal the attainment of new perfections and attainments along the path. The enumeration of these states and stations occupied a great many Sufi authors. For a particularly influential example, see ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī's (d. 1072) *Risālah* (see *Al-Qushayri's Epistle*); partial translations of several treatises on *aḥwāl* and *maqāmāt* are also available in Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*.

162. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ*, 2.

163. Muḥibb Allāh, *Manāẓir-i akhaṣṣ al-khavāṣṣ*, 186.

164. See, among myriad other passages, Muḥibb Allāh, *ʿIbādāt al-khavāṣṣ,* 17.

165. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Taswiyah*, 115.

166. Muḥammad Saʿīd Sarmad, notably, often sat in the company of Dārā Shikōh, who is said to have been quite devoted to this poet-*majdhūb.* See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:475–79. Interestingly, for our purposes in this study, Sarmad is sometimes claimed to have been a student of Mīr Findiriskī, the main subject of the next chapter.

167. See S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 2:289–90. It should be noted, however, that the situation is probably rather more complicated than this. ʿAbd al-Jalīl did compose, for instance, a treatise by the name of *Rūḥ wa nafs,* which was "written to show that belief in *waḥdat al-wujūd* in no sense contradicts the necessity of following the Sharīʿa" (Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence," 231–32). Hence, even this *wujūdī* with a reputation for being lax with the *sharīʿah* may in fact have been conscientiously *sharīʿah*-minded.

168. Ernst, "Notes on the Correspondence," 2.

169. Muḥibb Allāh, *Maktūbāt,* 214L.

170. From the *Zubdat al-maqāmāt,* cited in Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, 41.

171. Muḥibb Allāh, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ,* 275R.

172. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," 28–29.

173. See, for example, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī's (d. 1286) writing as translated in Calverley and Pollock, *Nature, Man and God,* 139–43.

4. MĪR FINDIRISKĪ AND THE *JŪG BĀSISHT*

1. See, e.g., Vālih, *Riyāż al-Shuʿarā,* 37–39; ʿAlī Shāh, *Ṭarāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq,* 158–59; Hidāyat, *Riyāż al-ʿĀrifīn,* 276–278; Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ,* 5:499–502.

2. Vālih, *Riyāż al-Shuʿarā,* 37.

3. Quoted in Mojtabāʾī, "Muntakhab," xx–xxi (translation mine). The second reference is to Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874), one of the most celebrated figures of the early formative years of the Sufi tradition.

4. See Zādhūsh, *Rāhnamā,* 12–16, 20–22, 37, and Dabashi, "Mir Damad," 622.

5. See Zādhūsh, *Rāhnamā,* 17–18.

6. Zādhūsh, *Rāhnamā*, 17; Vālih, *Riyāż al-Shuʿarā,* 37–39; ʿAlī Shāh, *Ṭarāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq,* 158–59; and Hidāyat, *Riyāż al-ʿĀrifīn,* 276–78. In the *Dabistān-i mazāhib,* it is further reported that, for a time, Findiriskī enjoyed the company of a group associated with the enigmatic Zoroastrian teacher, Āẕar Kayvān (see Shea and Troyer, *Oriental Literature,* 75–77.)

7. See, e.g., Vālih, *Riyāż al-Shuʿarā,* 37–39; ʿAlī Shāh, *Ṭarāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq,* 158–59; and Hidāyat, *Riyāż al-ʿĀrifīn,* 276–78.

8. See Zādhūsh, *Rāhnamā,* 17–18, and Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 17.

9. Jamshīdī, introduction to Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 19.

10. See Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 65, 98, 107.

11. As Hamid Dabashi explains: "In their relentless quest for self-legitimacy, the Safavid monarchs needed the Shiʿi jurists and dogmaticians, as well as the preachers and the clerics, to propagate the ideological foundation of their state. This inevitably created an unfavorable atmosphere for the free exercise of . . . [the] theological, philosophical and scientific disciplines. If we witness the rise of a particular philosophical disposition, recently identified as the 'School of Isfahan,' during the Safavid period, this phenomenon must be attributed more to the diligent and relentless philosophical engagements of a limited number of individuals rather than considered to be the product of favorable and conducive social

circumstances. Those who engaged in philosophical matters did so at some peril to their personal safety and social standing" (Dabashi, "Mir Damad," 598). For a more detailed account of the difficulties posed to the practice of philosophy in the Safavid context, see Lewisohn, "Sufism and the School of Isfahan."

12. See Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab,* 19–20. In his commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht,* Findiriskī also references al-Bīrūnī's Arabic translation of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras,* a further indication of his keen interest in Sanskrit knowledge.

13. For a rather comprehensive listing of these works along with their editions and manuscripts, see Zādhūsh, *Rāhnamā*, 80–126.

14. Regarding the *Razm-nāmah*, see Truschke, "Mughal *Book of War.*"

15. See Faruque and Rustom, "Rajab 'Alī Tabrīzī."

16. See Mehdi Aminrazavi, "Mīr Findiriskī."

17. See Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab,* 43–45. Mojtabā'ī himself is of the view that Findiriskī composed the *Muntakhab,* but then a later scribe, while copying the manuscript sometime in the nineteenth century, inserted Fānī's verses.

18. See Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā',* 499–501.

19. On the details of these manuscripts, see Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab,* 45–46.

20. Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab*, 43.

21. Mojtabā'ī takes Fānī's date of death from Hidāyat's *taẕkirah*; see Mojtabā'ī, *Muntakhab,* 43n2, and Hidāyat, *Taẕkirah-i Riyāż al-'Ārifīn.*

22. For a useful overview of this debate, see Jamshīdī, introduction to Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanā'iyyah,* 16–17, 31–36.

23. For more on the *ishrāqī* school, see Ziai, "Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī" and "The Illuminationist Tradition."

24. See Shea and Troyer, *Oriental Literature*, 140.

25. For more on Āẕar Kayvān, particularly the idea of him as a "Zoroastrian Illuminationist," see Corbin, "Āẕar Kayvān"; for a number of the problems with this characterization, see Sheffield, "The Language of Heaven."

26. See Pourjavady, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī," 432–33, and *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran,* 11–15, 24–25.

27. See Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*.

28. I have chosen this example for simplicity's sake; Findiriskī examines the topic via the question of extension (*miqdār*) in the case of lines (*khaṭṭ*), planes (*saṭḥ*), and bodies (*jism*); see Findiriskī, "*Muntakhabātī,*" 91–94. For a fuller contrast between Peripatetic and Illuminationist stances on this question of extension and bodies, see Arslan, "An Early Attempt."

29. See Findiriskī, "*Muntakhabātī,*" 81–90. In rejecting the reality of Platonic Forms, Findiriskī argues that these multiple Forms would have to terminate in a single, originary mover. Plato, meanwhile, already grants that one Form prior to matter can yield multiple forms within matter, so a *multiplicity* of such Forms prior to matter is thus superfluous. Rather, invoking a sort of Ockham's razor, Findiriskī argues that a workable cosmology requires only a single Mover who directly effects forms within matter without needing to gratuitously posit a set of additional entities intermediary between the prime Mover and matter, à la the Platonic Forms/archetypes. Regarding Ibn Sīnā's comparable refutation of the Platonic Forms, see Marmura, "Avicenna's Critique."

30. See Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanā'iyyah,* 32.

31. Verses 1–3; see Esfahani, "Philosophical and Mystical Dimensions," 187–88.

32. Esfahani, "Philosophical and Mystical Dimensions," 188.

33. One the relationship between God, form, and matter in Peripatetic thought, see Rahman, "Essence and Existence."

34. On the *ishrāqī* affirmation of the Platonic Forms/archetypes, see Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination,* 42–46, 81–90.

35. In other words, whereas a Platonic view would have every physical horse participating in a *single* transcendent Form/archetype of "horseness," for the *wujūdī* tradition, each and every horse would have its own, individual immutable essence, i.e., that particular horse as it is uniquely, eternally known to God's knowledge. Many *wujūdīs* nevertheless make space for the Platonic archetypes within their cosmologies, although the archetypes remain consistently distinct from the *aʿyān thābitah*. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge,* 84.

36. Verses 13–14, 20, 23, 26, 35, 39; see Esfahani, "Philosophical and Mystical Dimensions," 204–38.

37. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 117.

38. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah*, 118.

39. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah*, 119.

40. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah*, 119.

41. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah*, 138–40.

42. This and the next section are partially based upon S. Nair, "Sufism as Medium and Method."

43. See above regarding the anomalous final poet included in the text, "Fānī Iṣfahānī" (d. 1807—if this is the correct identification).

44. For my analysis I am relying on Mojtabāʾī's critical edition in Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab*.

45. What Mojtabāʾī labels "Ms. A," now preserved in the Asia Institute, Shiraz, Iran; see Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab*, 45–46.

46. See Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab*, 20–23.

47. For the Shīʿī thinker Findiriskī, the "Traditions" (*akhbār*) would include not only the sayings (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, but likely also the formally recorded statements and deeds of the Shīʿī Imāms.

48. Literally, "thus, he laughs at his own beard."

49. Schimmel, *Triumphal Sun, 77.*

50. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 284.

51. Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab, fārsī* 15. This term "capacity" (*istiʿdād*) is the same *wujūdī* technical term utilized by Muḥibb Allāh, as discussed in chapter 3.

52. See Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 138–40.

53. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* 50:894 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 35:6476.

54. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge,* 8–9.

55. Chittick's translation, *Sufi Path of Love,* 48.

56. Verses 1–3, already quoted above.

57. See Dārābī Shīrāzī, *Tuḥfat al-murād,* 42.

58. Dārābī Shīrāzī, *Tuḥfat al-murād,* 252–55.

59. See Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 82, 85.

60. See Findiriskī, *Muntakhabātī*, 71–76 and *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 119.

61. *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 119.

62. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 139.

63. See Findiriskī, *Muntakhābātī,* 71–76 and *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 119.

64. See, for example, Rūmī's verse: "[the Prophet] is the cypress of the garden of prophethood" (Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, 203).

65. Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade,* 164.

66. See Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab,* 23 and *muqaddimah-i fārsī* [Persian introduction] 14–15.

67. Findiriskī, *Muntakhabātī,* 75–76 and *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 119.

68. Findiriskī, *Risālah-i ṣanāʿiyyah,* 119–20. Here Findiriskī follows a long line of Muslim heresiographers in labeling this group the *bāṭinīs,* that is, those who seek the "inner/esoteric" (*bāṭin*) meaning of the Qurʾān and *sharīʿah* in such an exclusive way that they neglect their "outer/exoteric/literal" (*ẓāhir*) significance. The *ẓāhirīs* represent the opposite tendency, namely, an exclusive focus upon the outer/exoteric/literal to the exclusion of the inner. Findiriskī criticizes both groups, though he perceives a far graver and more pernicious threat in the *bāṭinīs*, while advocating for a "middle path" between the two extremes that, Findiriskī claims, is what the Qurʾān intends by its reference to the "straight path" (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) in its opening chapter.

69. See, e.g., Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love,* 119–24.

70. For this reason, I would argue, Findiriskī took care in his laudatory verses to describe the ignorant ones as "attaching *only* to the outward form," or, more literally, "not attaching *except* to the [discourse's] form" (*juz bi-ṣūrat bi-dīn na-payvandad*): it is perfectly fine—indeed, praiseworthy—to be attached to the outward form, just not to the exclusion of the inner meaning!

71. As Franklin Lewis explains Rūmī's views on the matter: "Rumi held that the true meaning or significance (*maʿni*) of things and words and religious praxis must be discovered and revealed beyond the outward surface (*surat* or *zāher*) . . . [the term] *maʿni* suggests the real experiential comprehension achieved through self-discipline and purity, not through easy or superficial or worldly understanding. Rumi continually urges his readers to discard the husk and taste the inner fruit of religion" (*Rumi: Past and Present,* 405). Lewis also translates a number of relevant verses on this topic from Rūmī's *Maṣnavī:* "the conflicts among men stem from names; trace back the meaning and achieve accord . . . Hindus praise me in the terms of India; and the Sindis praise in terms from Sind . . . Every prophet, every saint has his path; but as they return to God, all are one . . . Love's folk live beyond religious borders; the community and creed of lovers: God" (M2:3680, 1757–9, M1:3086, M2:1770; Lewis, *Rumi,* 405–6).

72. Mojtabāʾī, *Muntakhab*, 21.

73. The term "phenomenal" (*vivarta*) also denotes the meaning "illusory." As Atreya describes, "[t]he test or definition of reality is eternal persistence, according to the *Yoga-vasistha*" (Atreya, *Yogavasistha*, 45). For Advaita Vedānta, *vivarta* ("apparent modification") refers to a theory of causation wherein the cause (*brahman*) appears to undergo modification in the course of producing an effect (the world), but that modification/effect is in fact merely illusory (*mithyā*).

74. The term "unwavering" or "having no doubt" (*nirvikalpa*) is also related to the terms *kalpa/saṃkalpa* examined in chapter 1, the sense being that an individual who could be described as *nirvikalpa* is devoid of the passions, inclinations, fancy, and mental constructions that give rise to the phenomenal world as we perceive (and, indeed, construct) it.

75. That is, a condition of pure consciousness that is without any object of consciousness. As discussed in chapter 1, in the *Laghu*'s non-dualist perspective, the highest Reality is sometimes depicted as an "undisturbed" pure consciousness or pure Subject that, having cast aside all *saṃkalpas,* is devoid of the internal modifications that would give rise to any objects of perception/imagination. This is translated in the Persian through the conventional Sufi formulation of the "effacement of one's vision" (*maḥv-i mushāhadah*) in the Essence (*ẕāt*), that is, being so drowned (*istighrāq*) in the Essence that one no longer perceives the world—the conventional object of awareness—but only sees God everywhere. While the Sufi intellectual tradition, following the Islamic philosophical and theological traditions, tends to speak of the Essence in terms of "being" (*wujūd*) rather than "consciousness," one should recall Muḥibb Allāh's reminder that the primary meaning of the term *wujūd* is actually "finding," such that "to be" is simultaneously "to find" or "to know." Accordingly, we find Ibn ʿArabī, for instance, often employing the formulation that there is nothing "found" except God, who is "pure finding," hence "pure consciousness." See Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 15–16.

76. See, e.g., *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* II:18 and *Bhagavad-Gītā* II:20.

77. See *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:1:14, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 103.

78. While the cosmology laid out in the *Laghu*—pared-down and modified from the Sāṃkhya school—might be said to resemble a "Platonic" cosmology in the broad sense that archetypal elements (e.g., universal soul [*jīva*], ego [*ahaṃkāra*], ether [*ākāśa*], or water [*jala*]) subsequently diversify into material particulars, there is of course a historical and cultural specificity to the Neoplatonic Sufi doctrine of God's names and attributes that would have posed a considerable obstacle to any translator.

79. As is written, slightly more technically, in the larger *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, III:61: "just as the quality of being a bracelet is not distinct from the gold (itself) . . . in the same way, the universe is not distinct from *brahman. Brahman* is the universe, though the universe is not intrinsic to *brahman*; the gold is the bracelet-state, though the bracelet-state is not intrinsic to the gold" (Venkatesananda's translation, *Vasiṣṭha's Yoga*, 87). B.L. Atreya summarizes this doctrine thus: "One form may be separate from another form as such, but they can never be separate and distinct from the Reality of which it is a form. An ornament of gold is never separate from gold with which it is ever one and identical. Bubbles, ripples, waves, etc., are never different from water of which they are forms, and abstracted from which they will cease to be anything at all. Everything, in the same way, in this universe . . . is *identical* with the Reality . . . Everything in this universe, thus, *is* Brahman" (Atreya, *Yogavasistha,* 45).

80. Indeed, one need not look very far for numerous parallel Sufi formulations current in South Asia in the translation team's own time. In their popular commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, for instance, Kāshānī (d. 1329 or 1335–36), Qayṣarī (d. 1350), and Jāmī (d. 1492) all speak of the "Reality of realities" (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*), which is the all-comprehensive unarticulated substance that contains all realities and entities in potentiality. Then, when a form (*ṣūrah*) inheres in that substance, the substance becomes delimited as a thing (*shay'*) that has thus entered into actuality. No real transformation occurs, however, as the Reality of realities remains ever unchanged and abiding, while, it is important to note, the form in question has no actual reality whatsoever apart from the Reality of realities. Such formulations bear a strong resemblance to the analogy of gold fashioned into a bracelet. Indeed, Muḥibb Allāh echoes much the same terminology in his *Taswiyah,* proclaiming the

real but subtle "equivalence" (*taswiyah*) between the all-comprehensive unarticulated substance and the emergent delimited form, utilizing, as we have seen, the metaphor of bubbles and water.

81. In the terms of Advaita Vedānta, Śaṅkarācārya explains the analogy thus: "Brahman, like the sun, appears to be affected when the nature of the reflecting medium changes—when, for example, it becomes dirty and the light becomes pallid—but neither Brahman nor the sun are really affected" (Potter's paraphrase of Śaṅkara in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies,* 3:85). Also relevant is the following line from Findiriskī's *Qaṣīdah-i ḥikmiyyah:* "the sun is bright and shines upon all while it itself remains one" (verse 6).

82. See, e.g., *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* VI:13:69–72, already cited in chapter one: "'I—stainless, imperishable, free from passions, abiding in peace, complete—am the all-pervasive consciousness,' having thought thus, he does not grieve. 'I am without thought, pure, awakened, imperishable, eternal, tranquil, the splendor of all things,' having thought thus, he does not grieve. 'That which is in the tips of the blades of grass, in the sky, in the sun, in men, snakes and gods, I am that,' having thought thus, he never grieves again. 'The greatness of me, who is that consciousness, whose manifestations are infinite, pervades [the world] up and down, in all directions'—who, having known this, could possibly perish?"

83. See, e.g., *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* III:1:16, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 104.

84. The term comes into relatively clear formulation with the early Sufi figures of Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874) and, perhaps, Dhū'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 859).

85. Findiriskī, *Jūg Bāsisht,* Ms. 651, 134R.

86. Though these verses come from 'Aṭṭār's *Dīvān,* the poet elaborates such sentiments even more extensively in some of his other literary compositions, such as his famous *Conference of the Birds* (*Manṭiq al-ṭayr*): "The man of God here sees nothing besides God . . . . He at no time sees anyone other than Him . . . the whole world is the Worshipped One (God)"; "[e]verything is God! . . . See this world and the other world in such a way that they are He! Nothing exists besides Him, and if something does exist, then it too is He" (verses 3690–93, 52–54; Ritter's translation, *Ocean of the Soul,* 625, 591).

87. Though, in the case of a gazelle, the divine Name "the Slayer" is indeed somewhat more manifest, as when a gazelle consumes grass or fights with another gazelle. Such would be part of the transcendent account for why flowers and gazelles are distinct forms in the here-below.

88. See Nicholson, *Tales of Mystic Meaning,* 111.

89. See, e.g., Sands, *Sufi Commentaries on the Qur'an,* 8–13, and Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabī," 500–503.

90. Such an insistence is what, precisely, makes possible Muḥibb Allāh's affirmation, with reference to other religious communities, of the validity of idol worship—for every object, in the last analysis, is nothing but a reflection of God's names and attributes—even though he never condones it as an *Islamic* practice to be emulated by Muslims.

5. A CONFLUENCE OF TRADITIONS: THE *JŪG BĀSISHT* REVISITED

1. Once again, according to the procedure that Findiriskī and others describe, the two *paṇḍits*, Jagannātha and Paṭhān Miśra, would have first orally translated the *Laghu* into some form of Hindavī vernacular; Pānīpatī, in turn, would have taken this oral Hindavī translation and rendered it into Persian prose.

2. Stewart would hasten to add, however, that, in the moment of utilizing this Sanskrit word (*brahman*) to express an Arabo-Persian Islamic concept (*wujūd muṭlaq*), both the target and the source language become altered in the process. After such a linguistic event, the precise semantic range of the terms involved—and, accordingly, the broad possibilities for expression possessed by both languages—will be transformed on both sides of the process.

3. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 2.

4. This, again, is a reference to the ancient Greek philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists. On the theme of Islamic philosophy's internal sense of continuity with the Greek heritage and other traditions of ancient thought, particularly in the relevant cases of Suhrawardī and al-Bīrūnī, see Walbridge, *Leaven of the Ancients* and *Wisdom of the Mystic East*. Insofar as Findiriskī, in particular, is perceived to exhibit certain occasional *ishrāqī* tendencies, he may well have conceptualized the *Laghu* in terms of this Illuminationist reclaiming of the "wisdom of the ancients."

5. Pānīpatī closely echoes Findiriskī's sentiments, here mirroring the latter's framework of formal "expression" (*lufẓ*) versus essential "meaning" (*ma'nā*), as examined in the previous chapter.

6. Again, "abridgment" refers to the fact that the text in question is the "*Laghu*" (short) *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, as contrasted with the larger *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha/Mokṣopāya*.

7. Here Pānīpatī refers to the opening verse of the *Laghu*: "Salutations to that manifest Self, the Lord, who is both within and beyond the heavens, the earth, and the sky, who shines forth in me [and] in each self" (*Laghu* 1:1:1, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ,* 2).

8. The *ṛṣis* are "seers" or sages. This is also the term applied to the ancient "seers" who originally "heard" (*śruti*) and transmitted the Veda to humankind.

9. The Hindu concept of the *avatāra*—literally a "descent" of the Divine—refers to the belief that, periodically, God "descends" into the world in a physical form or birth so as to restore the order (*dharma*) of the world, which had fallen out of balance. Viṣṇu is said to descend in ten *avatāras,* including Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. See, e.g., one of the paradigmatic enunciations of this belief in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (4:7–8).

10. This "mentioning" (*yād*) refers to a central practice of Sufism and of general Islamic piety, namely, *dhikr/ẕikr,* the "mention," "remembrance," and "invoking" of God's divine names. In the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the Hindu version of the practice of repeatedly invoking God's names is referred to by the widespread Sanskrit term "*japa.*"

11. In Islamic Neoplatonic cosmology, the celestial intellects, from within their own substance, are said to "emanate" (*fayḍ*) the lower levels of reality below them. An emanation can thus be a grace or mercy from the intellects that establishes a connection between the practitioner and higher levels of reality.

12. Pānīpatī goes on to describe the *yugas* at considerable length. For the sake of brevity, I omit that section here.

13. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 5–6.

14. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht*, 6.

15. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht*, 8.

16. See Findiriskī, *Jūg Bāsisht,* Ms. 651, 83R.

17. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 8.

18. See Findiriskī, *Muntakhab,* Ms. 275, 4R, 7R

19. Regarding this original sense of "emanation" (*fayḍ*) in a Peripatetic context, see McGinnis, *Avicenna,* 203–8.

20. Findiriskī, *Muntakhab,* Ms. 275, 6L.

21. For a fuller account of the "first specification" in *wujūdī* thought, see Chittick and Wilson, *Fakhruddin ʿIraqi,* 3–32.

22. Findiriskī, *Muntakhab,* Ms. 275, 8R.

23. *Laghu* 6:12:7–9, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 777.

24. Nāʾīnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 342–43.

25. Moosvi, "Mughal Encounter," 14 (transliterations modified in brackets); see Abū al-Faẓl, *Ain I Akbari,* 2:86–87.

26. This discrepancy between Advaitin and *wujūdī* metaphysics may help to explain, in part, why the Mughals translated hardly any of Śaṅkarācārya's writings or the larger scholastic Advaita corpus into Persian, much to the surprise of many modern scholars. One should not jump to too general conclusions, however, until more Persian translations are studied in closer detail. As Svevo D'Onofrio has convincingly demonstrated, for instance, the Persian translation of fifty Upaniṣads facilitated by Dārā Shikōh, the *Sirr-i Akbar*, regularly incorporates Advaitin (and, in particular, Śaṅkara's) commentary into the main text of the translation throughout (see "A Persian Commentary to the *Upaniṣads*," 541–58). See also Ganeri, "Migrating Texts and Tradition."

27. Divanji notes that, in his *Vāsiṣṭhacandrikā* commentary upon the *Laghu,* Ātmasukha testifies to the existence of other commentaries that predate his own; Divanji also mentions the *Vāsiṣṭhatattvabodhinī* of Rāmabrahmendra, a commentary on the *Laghu* that remains unpublished (see Divanji, "Text of the Laghu Yogavāsiṣṭha," 715). According to the *Catalogus Catalogorum,* an Advaitin by the name of Advayāraṇya (14th c.) had composed a commentary on the *Laghu* entitled *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhapadadīpikā*, while Rāmānandatīrtha (14th c.) had also produced a commentary (see Lo Turco, "Towards a Chronology," 62).

28. Any affirmation of this nature must remain tentative in light of the persistent possibility that the two *paṇḍits* consulted commentaries of which we today are no longer aware, while I have only consulted Ātmasukha and Mummaḍideva's (partial) commentaries in the modern printed edition of the *Laghu.* Nevertheless, even if what I suggest to be the two *paṇḍits*' original contributions ultimately turn out to derive from other historical commentaries, it will nonetheless still constitute a case of the *paṇḍits* exercising their own agency, will, and doctrinal predilections in choosing which material to incorporate from which commentaries, thus leaving their own philosophical-theological fingerprints upon the *Jūg Bāsisht* regardless.

29. *Laghu* 3:1:2–4, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ,* 98.

30. Interestingly, when the Persian text describes "inference" or *anumāna-jñāna,* the *pakṣa* or "site/locus" component of a standard Sanskrit inferential syllogism disappears from the explanation, presumably because there is simply no equivalent to the idea of the "site" of an inference in Arabic logic (*manṭiq*), the latter having its historical roots in the Aristotelian logical tradition. For more on the *pakṣa* and its place in Sanskrit syllogisms, see Matilal, *Character of Logic*, and Staal, "Concept of *Pakṣa*."

31. The "silver and shell" analogy is a standard example in Sanskrit discussions about perceptual error.

32. See, for example, T.K. Narayanan, *Nyāyasāra,* 33. Notably, the *saṃśaya-viparyaya* pairing is akin in many respects to the categorizations of ignorance we have already encountered,

āvaraṇa and *vikṣepa,* in the sense that, in both pairings, the former term refers to a type of ignorance that merely covers over or occludes the truth, while the latter term, in both cases, refers to an ignorance that actively projects a falsehood contrary to the actual state of affairs.

33. Ātmasukha and the Persian translators cite slightly variant sequences in their respective versions of this passage, the former explicitly citing the "ego" or *ahaṃkāra,* and even inserting two other states prior to the ego, in contrast to the Persian. It is nevertheless worthwhile to recall that the *Laghu* presents numerous divergent accounts of this sequence throughout its body, offering several permutations of the series.

34. The *vāsanās* are the imprint left on a human individual as a result of her having undertaken some action in the past. This "trace" or "impression" left by the previous deed will then bear some sort of fruit in the future, even if it be in a future lifetime. The concept of the *vāsanās* is, accordingly, closely associated with the concepts of *karma* and reincarnation, as one's *vāsanās* acquired from a previous lifetime will affect, for instance, the type of conditions into which one is born in her next lifetime. The cycle of *vāsanās* can only be broken if one's attachment to the *vāsanās* and their fruits is broken, which most decisively occurs at the dawning of the knowledge of *brahman*, thought to grant liberation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of rebirths and redeaths.

35. The shift from the "mirror of ignorance" to the "mirror of being" may be less drastic than it appears at first glance. Since the metaphysics of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* in comparison with conventional Advaita Vedānta, is far more willing to accept "ignorance" into the fold of *brahman*, the "mirror of ignorance" really becomes a matter of *brahman* voluntarily "limiting" its infinite consciousness in the form of finite objects of cognition. These objects thus "reflect" the powers and potentialities (*śaktis*) inherent within *brahman.* Similarly, in the case of *wujūdī* thought, the Real, which is pure, undelimited "being" or "existence" (*wujūd*), contains latently within itself all possible, delimited forms of created existents. This pure, unrestricted *wujūd* thus conceives of all of its possible modes of deployment in the form of limited, finite existent objects, and then actualizes them in the act of creation. Each finite existent, accordingly, "reflects" some aspect or dimension of the Real's infinite, undelimited *wujūd*.

36. Despite the *Laghu*'s own noted ambiguity regarding whether it teaches a doctrine of *eka-jīva* or *aneka-jīva,* Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra do have commentarial precedent for reading the text with an *eka-jīva-vāda* slant. Not only do Advaitins such as Prakāśānanda and Madhusūdana take precisely this interpretive angle, but the *Laghu*'s direct commentator, Ātmasukha, signals that the cosmic *jīva* is being discussed at various points of the text, as when he describes *brahman*'s "seeing itself as the *samaṣṭi* ('collective') *jīva*—i.e., the *hiraṇyagarbha* ('golden womb,' a common term for the *eka-jīva*)—and as the *samaṣṭi-manas*" (see Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ,* 103–4).

37. *Laghu* 6:5:7, in Abhinanda, *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ*, 630.

38. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 346–47.

39. Nā'īnī and Shuklā, *Jūg Bāsisht,* 152.

40. Findiriskī, Ms. 651, 72L.

41. See, e.g., Ernst, "Muslim Studies," 183–87.

CONCLUSION

1. See, e.g., Nasr and Aminrazavi, *Anthology of Philosophy*, and also Nāṣir Khusraw, *Knowledge and Liberation*.

2. See, e.g., Pellò, "Black Curls," and Ernst, "Persian Philosophical Defense of Vedanta."

3. Regarding the Greek-to-Arabic translation movement, see Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, and Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*.

4. See Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, and Murata, Chittick, and Weiming, *Sage Learning*.

5. The exception would be in the case of the Mughal royalty, whose vernacular interactions with Hindu *sādhus* sometimes were recorded. Prince Dārā Shikōh's meetings with Bābā Lāl Dās at Lahore provide perhaps the most famous example; see Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning," 112–36, and Huart and Massignon, "Dara Shikoh's Interview."

6. Vassie, "'Abd al-Raḥman Chishtī," 369.

7. Vassie, "'Abd al-Raḥman Chishtī," 371–74.

8. Vassie, "'Abd al-Raḥman Chishtī," 375–76.

9. The Dārā-commissioned translation of the *Laghu* has been edited by Tārā Chand and Sayyid Amīr Ḥasan ʿĀbidī (*Jūg Bishist*).

10. See Gandhi, "Mughal Self-Fashioning," 102–12, and Vassie, "'Abd al-Raḥman Chishtī," 368.

11. Grillo, "Urgency of Widening," 804 (italics original).

12. A. Sharma, "Response," 844.

13. See Cabezón, "Discipline and Its Other" and "In Defense of Abstraction"; Schweiker, "Discipline(s) and Its (Their) Other(s)."

14. See G. Flood, "Reflections on Tradition."

15. See Levene, "Response to Gavin Flood." Levene contends that "rational discourse" itself, for instance, must be interrogated as a concept of assumed universal applicability.

16. G. Flood, "Reflections on Tradition," 48.

17. Ochs, "Comparative Religious Traditions," 126.

18. Pritchard, "Seriously, What Does 'Taking Religion Seriously' Mean?," 1088.

19. Pritchard, "Seriously, What Does 'Taking Religion Seriously' Mean?," 1088–89, 1099.

20. See, e.g., Hughes, *Islam and the Tyranny of Authenticity.*

21. McCutcheon, "A Direct Question," 1080–81. See also McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers*, and Lincoln, "Theses on Method." On the call to make the scholar's own politics and interests explicit as vital for the specific practice of religious comparison, see Urban, "Making a Place."

22. Lincoln, "Theses on Method," 8.

23. McCutcheon, "A Direct Question," 1079.

24. Schilbrack, "Bruce Lincoln's Philosophy," 44. See also Schilbrack's *Philosophy and the Study of Religions* as well as the *JAAR* roundtable dedicated to this monograph (83, no. 1 [2015]: 236–60).

25. See Schilbrack, *Philosophy and the Study of Religions,* 152–53.

26. As Wendy Doniger once lamented: "The tension between sameness and difference has become a crucial issue for the self-definition of postmodernism. Now the mere addition of *accent aigu* transforms the modest English word into the magic buzzword for everything that right-thinking (or, as the case may be, left-thinking) men and women care about: *différence* (or, even buzzier yet, *différance*). For postmodernism, sameness is the devil, difference the angel . . . . The academic world . . . now suffers from a post-post-colonial backlash: in this age of multinationalism, to assume that two texts from different cultures are 'the same' in any significant way is regarded as demeaning the individualism

of each, a reflection of the old racist attitude that 'all wogs look alike'—in the dark, all cats are gray. And in the climate of anti-Orientalism, it is regarded as imperialist of a scholar to stand outside (presumably above) two different cultures to equate them" (Doniger, "Myth and Methods," 532–33, cited in Taylor, "Introduction," 14). To Derrida's credit, he did think through many of the metaphysical implications of his theories, though I believe one could accurately say many of his "inheritors" in the broader humanities have not felt the need to follow suit.

27. McCutcheon, *Discipline of Religion,* 150.

28. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion,* x.

29. See Rosen, "Abstract Objects," and Balaguer, "Platonism in Metaphysics"; see also William Wood's review of Schilbrack's *Manifesto* (*JAAR* 83, no. 1 [2015], 251–52). Although analytic philosophy is often associated with a rejection of metaphysics, metaphysics has enjoyed an energetic resurgence within the discipline since the mid-twentieth century, while early thinkers in the tradition also readily engaged in metaphysical inquiry, the period of roughly the 1930s–50s constituting the primary exception. See Simons, "Metaphysics in Analytic Philosophy."

30. I would affirm, following Schilbrack, that it would be unfair to expect McCutcheon to "become a philosopher," so to speak, in addition to a historian. However, insofar as a historian may be pressed on the metaphysical implications of her method, she should then be obliged to render her philosophical presuppositions explicit and defend their appropriateness, *a fortiori* in the case of someone like McCutcheon who goes on the offensive to exclude metaphysical inquiry from the study of religion (see Schilbrack, "Bruce Lincoln's Philosophy," 44–45).

31. See McCutcheon, *Discipline of Religion,* 153.

32. See, e.g., McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers,* 107–9; *Discipline of Religion,* 153; and "'My Theory of the Brontosaurus.'"

33. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth,* 209.

34. J.Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion,* xi.

35. Sherman, "Deprovincializing Philosophy," 348–49.

36. The "linguistic turn" is an umbrella term for a variety of developments within analytic and continental philosophy and linguistics (ca. 1930s) and then later in the humanities and social sciences more broadly (ca. 1970s), variously exhibiting an emphasis on language's central role in the human process of making and constructing meaning. Some consider the phrase to refer to a single overall "turn" manifested variously across different disciplines (see, e.g., Spiegel, "Introduction"), while others perceive multiple, generally unrelated theoretical developments problematically lumped together under a single label (see, e.g., Surkis, "When Was the Linguistic Turn?"). The respective "linguistic turns" of analytic vs. continental philosophy certainly seem to represent two largely distinguishable philosophical developments, the former finding its origins in the likes of Carnap, Bergmann, Wittgenstein, or even Frege (see Rorty, "Introduction," and Hacker, "Linguistic Turn") and the latter developing from the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure and the poststructuralism of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, and others. However, for the present context, it is significant that both the analytic and continental "linguistic turns" shared a common rejection of metaphysics, which analytic philosophy would only *later* overturn via interventions from Quine, Kripke, and others. Sherman, "Deprovincializing Philosophy," appears to have

this Saussure-Foucault-Derrida trajectory in mind, which does seem to enjoy considerably more currency in religious studies today.

37. Although postcolonial theory, and subaltern studies in particular, has achieved a great deal in convincing numerous fields to pay greater attention to subaltern voices, it nevertheless seems the case that the basic terms of the endeavor are still largely dictated by "Western" academic norms (or, to state the matter in other terms, subaltern voices would not especially recognize themselves in the articulations and scholarship that have emerged from much of postcolonial studies, with important exceptions). See, e.g., Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, where the author makes a powerful case for the pluralization of the discipline of history in light of marginalized, non-European, subaltern perspectives (see, e.g., his distinction between "History 1" and "History 2"), and yet knowingly and unflinchingly couches the very "spirit" of the subaltern intervention itself in such terms (of European provenance) as "social justice" and the "democratic project" (72, 106).

38. See Schilbrack, *Philosophy and the Study of Religions*, and Sherman, "Deprovincializing Philosophy." Regarding the fraught search for alternative standards of rationality, see Epstein, "Diviner and the Scientist."

39. For some of the recent groundbreaking efforts to bring such "non-Western" philosophical materials into the ambit of the philosophy of religion, see Patil, *Against a Hindu God*, and Ganeri, *Philosophy in Classical India.* In a similar vein though in the context of psychology and ritual studies, see Seligman, et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*.

40. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*

41. See Patkar, "Moghul Patronage."

42. An example of the sort of approach that might serve this trend may be Martha Nussbaum's *Cultivating Humanity* and her concept of "narrative imagination."

43. Leavitt, "The Social in Kashmiri Aesthetics," 290–91.

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