

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 Jājipūrī, and Nizām 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 Pānīpati, 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 *dr̥ṣṭi-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, Pānīpati first and foremost—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 *wujūdi* 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 *wujūdi* 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" (*alfāz*)—one from the source language and one from the target language—that mutually point to a common, transcendent "meaning" (*ma'nā*), 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 (*isti'dād*) to penetrate forms (*ṣuwar*) and arrive at the transcendent meaning or essence (*ḡāt*), 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 Bāsishṭ* 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 Bāsishṭ*. 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” (*mazhab*) of Abhinanda, the “Hindu” author of the *Laghu*. Along the way, Pānīpatī frequently presents the foundations of Abhinanda’s *mazhab* 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 (*mazhab*) of the ancient sages (*hukamā-i mutaqaaddimīn*⁴) concerning the oneness of the essence of the Real (*wahdat-i zāt-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 (*iṣṭilāh*) and language (*zabān*).⁵

The Kashmiri *paṇḍit* Abhinanda, who is the author of the manuscript of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (*Jūg Bāsishṭ*), 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 (*nāmḥā-i ḥaqq*), most high, have no end or limit. Every one of the great *rṣis*⁸ and seekers of the Real (*tālibān-i rāh-i ḥaqq*) has chosen one of His names, which are in accordance with the *avatāras*⁹ and are the manifestations (*tajalliyāt*) of the levels of His self-disclosure . . . Those [*rṣis* and seekers] remember their [chosen] name much.¹⁰ They seek, by means of that name, a generous emanation (*fayẓ*) 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 features¹² 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*” (*ẓāt-i barahm*), utilizing the “Peripateticized” *wujūdī* lexicon of the “pure intellect” (*ʿaql-i khālīṣ*), 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” (*luḡẓ, 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-rahīmān*) insofar as He turns a merciful face toward creation; He is the Qur’ānic name “the Just” (*al-’adl*) 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/fayz*) 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 mu’tabirah*) 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” (*aql-i khālīṣ*). 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, zuhūr, 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'āyyun-i awwal*); in another usage is sheer thought (*andīshah-i maḥẓ*) 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'āyyun-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 khālīṣ*) 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” (*ḥayd aqdas*), and referenced repeatedly throughout the *Jūg Bāsishṭ*; on the other hand, *ta’āyyun-i awwal* might refer to this cosmological *ḥayd aqdas* specifically, whereas *taṣawwur-i khālīṣ* 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 (*drśya*), 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 Bāsishṭ*, 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 private, deluding character of *ātman*'s *saṃkalpa*. As we shall see presently, Pānīpati and Findiriskī are eager to connect this Sanskrit idea of *saṃkalpa* with the *wujūdi* 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 Bāsīst*.

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 Bāsishṭ* 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 *drṣṭi-srṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda* to bear upon the Persian translation project, leaving a distinct mark on the *Jūg Bāsishṭ* 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 Bāsishṭ*.

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-Faḥl (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'in-i Akbarī*, Abū al-Faḥl displays his awareness of even relatively recent developments in Advaita thought. Shireen Moosvi translates Abū al-Faḥl'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 (*wujūdi*), and hold it to consist of two powers[:] *b[i]chchhep shakti* [*vikṣepa śakti*], the power of becoming apparent, and *avarna shakti* [*āvaraṇa śakti*], 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] *abidya* [*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 Mīśra and Paṭhān Mīśra to the *Jūg Bāsisht*, accordingly, as another instance of this continuing process of transmission.

Reading over Abū al-Faḥl'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-Faḥl uses the characteristic term of Peripatetic and philosophical Sufi thought, "*wujūdi*"). 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-Faẓl'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 *Samsāratarāṇī* 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’ini 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 zāhir*)—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 *anumit-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 (*rūh*) 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 (*khāfir*)—[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 Bāsish*t 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?) Hindavi 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 Mīśra and Paṭhān Mīśra, 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 (*rūh*, *naḥs*, 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 *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-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)

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.

(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.)

Jūg Bāsisht (Nā’īnī and Shuklā)
(p. 275–78)

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)

[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 (*Nīrvāṇa Prakaraṇa*)
(6:9:28–29; p. 673–74)

The *jīva* lives (*jīvati*) through this ancient consciousness (*cid-rūpa*), which has the form of the *ātman* [but] possesses the stain-scraps of cognized objects (*cetya*). The *jīva* lives through the *cid-rūpa*, which possesses the error (*bhrama*) of cognized objects.

Mummaḍideva’s commentary: This *jīva*, being connected with perceivable objects (*drśya*), 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*).

Jūg Bāsisht (Nā’īni and Shuklā)
(p. 380–81)

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* (*zāt-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** (*shakhs*) image and shadow, in itself, possesses no existence or independence.

(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 *shakhs* ("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)

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” (*kṣetrajñā*).

And that [*kṣetrajñā*], 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*) . . .

Jūg Bāsisht (Nā’ini and Shuklā)
(p. 152)

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** (*rūh-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*) . . .

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

Mummaḍideva's commentary: The form of *cit* called “*kṣetrajñā*” becomes **limited** (*upahita*) by doubt and *saṃkalpa*, etc., and becomes **delimited** (*avacchinna*) by space, time, and activity The *kṣetrajñā* 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 *avachedavāda* (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 Mīśra and Paṭhān Mīśra were making use of these commentaries, we could expect that they might try to weave Mummaḍideva's emphasis on *avachedavāda* 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 (*ta'āyyunāt*) and manifestations (*mazāhir*) of the world”; the text then adds the gloss that the *jīvātman* is the spirit (*rūh*) 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 *samsāra* 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 Pānīpati 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.