

TRANSLATION

¹To dust indeed I shall reduce their pride,
 Who, unable to bear the Lord's command,
 Wallow in the state that admits no stain,
 And are excluded from all *āśramas*.

²In this world there are some people who reject the duties of all *varṇas* and *āśramas*, and resemble the Cārvākas [materialists]. They have become one even with the Cāṇḍālas [outcastes] and do not pay any heed to the restraints contained in the injunctions and prohibitions. They are called 'Brahman knowers' merely by convention, and they throw the whole world into confusion. ³Considering that any contact with them whatsoever, such as speaking with them during a debate, leads to hell, virtuous people keep far from them, and even at the mere sight of them they look at the sun [cf. Yls III.42–43]. ⁴For it is stated by the Great Seer:

⁵Men go to hell by even speaking with those people who in vain wear matted hair or shave the head, who eat in vain, who are excluded from all rites of purification, and who avoid offering water and rice balls to their ancestors.

⁶Now even though such a fall does not happen in the case of Śūdras and other low-caste 'Brahman knowers' whom he has approved of, as it does in the case of 'Brahman knowers' belonging to the three upper classes, nevertheless conversations with them that include such things as studying and teaching "That art thou" and other Great Sayings, which constitute an assault on *dharma*, are not allowed. ⁷For statements such as the following are found in *smṛtis*:

There is no expiation for drinking the milk of a brown cow, for having sexual relations with a Brahmin's wife, and for imparting the Veda to a Śūdra.

⁸Nevertheless, desirous of laying to rest the assaults on the *dharma*, we shall speak, keeping ourselves at a league's distance. ⁹Such a course moreover is sanctioned by, among other things, the words of my teacher.

² 'Reject': The author plays on the word *avadhūta*, which, on the one hand, indicates rejection or shaking off (like dust), and, on the other, denotes the highest type of ascetic who is free from all duties.

³ See Yls I.1, III.42.

⁸ The reference here may be to Varada, the teacher of Vedānta Deśika's teacher: cf. Yls I.1.

¹⁰Expiation is unnecessary for anything at all that one does at the command of learned teachers because of the strength of their words.

¹¹Is this condition of yours that is repudiated by all learned men [I] an *āśrama*, or [II] not an *āśrama* [cf. below 138]?

[I. REFUTATION OF ADVAITA RENUNCIATION AS AN ĀŚRAMA]

¹²If it is the former, is it [A] something different from the four *āśramas*, or [B] something not different from them?

¹³[A] Now, it cannot be something different, because we do not find a fifth *āśrama* laid down in the Vedas, the *smṛtis*, the *itihāsas*, the Purāṇas, or other similar treatises. ¹⁴Texts such as: “Then, he enters the final *āśrama*” [ŚāṭU 323.1] that refer to renunciation are also well known.

¹⁵For the term ‘final’ [*carāma*] simply means ‘last’ and not something beyond the well-known (*āśrama*).

[OPPONENT]

¹⁶How do you then account for the teaching on the sixteen types of *āśramas*?

[AUTHOR]

The objection is unfounded because that teaching is based on a four-fold division of the same four (*āśramas*).

¹⁷[B] It cannot even be something not different (from the four *āśramas*), first because it is not admitted, and second because it would place you under the authority of the Veda.

[OPPONENT]

¹⁸Because the Veda enjoins (the acquisition of) knowledge, we too are established in a special *āśrama*.

[AUTHOR]

You should speak slowly before the learned! ¹⁹For the virtuous do not permit you to enter an *āśrama* without first submitting to a penance.

¹⁷ The meaning of this elliptical phrase is unclear. It seems to mean that learned men do not admit such a condition within the fourfold *āśrama* structure [cf. below 19] and that, if the opponent’s state belongs to the fourth *āśrama*, then he would be subject to all Vedic rules on renunciation.

¹⁸ Cf. Śam 31–36, 47–52, and elsewhere.

¹⁹ Cf. Ybh 41–42.

²⁰You are, moreover, incapable of performing a penance that is appropriate for the infamous libertinism that you have followed for a long time.

[OPPONENT]

²¹Libertinism, indeed, constitutes this great vow of ours limited to a specific *āśrama*.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because we find no such injunction. ²²Furthermore, given this great vow, which the whole world fulfils by its own inclination, for what purpose do the scriptures vex us with endless restrictions unconnected with the aims of existence? ²³What, moreover, is this *āśrama* that you assume even with mere words?

[OPPONENT]

²⁴It is a special kind of renunciation called 'Paramahaṃsa.'

[AUTHOR]

That is incorrect, because the Upaniṣads such as the Śāṭyāyanaka [cf. Yls I.6–12] and the *smṛtis* of Parāśara [cf. Yls I.14–18], Dattātreya [cf. Yls I.65], and others, which establish the distinction between special kinds (of ascetics), such as the Paramahaṃsa, teach a dress and behavior code quite the opposite of what you have adopted. ²⁵We can assert, therefore, that the prescription of a triple stick [cf. Ln 36–37n], a bowl, a water strainer, a water pot, a topknot, a sacrificial cord, and a staff found in authoritative sources such as Manu is a general rule and that it does not have a limited application. ²⁶So even today by resorting to the elixir of the books of Bhāskara, Yādavaprakāśa [cf. Yls 1–3n], and the like the old error is eliminated even among the single-staffed ascetics who have abandoned the sacrificial cord and the like; ²⁷how much more among people like you who have specifically assumed a status equal to those who are excluded from the Veda? ²⁸We have already stated [cf. Ybh 136, 169], moreover, that the *smṛtis* also establish an option between items such as the triple staff and the single staff in terms of the principal and the secondary course.

²⁰ 'Libertinism': The Sanskrit term *svaira* means living as one pleases, unchecked by rules or customs. Such an antinomian view is held by Advaita, which considers the renunciation of an enlightened man as a state not subject to any rule.

²⁵ 'Limited application' [*vyavasthītavīṣaya* or simply *vyavasthā*] means that not all provisions of a rule are applicable equally to all renunciators. For example, certain provisions apply only to Kuṭcakas, whereas others apply only to Paramahaṃsas. Such an interpretation of a general rule regarding the articles a renouncer must possess is found in Pm 5, 20, 208–209.

[OPPONENT]

²⁹Surely, there are two types of Paramahaṃsas: those with manifest garb and conduct, and those with concealed garb and conduct. ³⁰Of these, the former type is established because articles such as the staff are enjoined on Paramahaṃsas in Vedic texts such as the Jābāla Upaniṣad and the Kauṣītaka Upaniṣad, in *smṛtis* such as those of Bodhāyana, Śaunaka, Kratu, Kapila, and Viśvāmitra, which are based on the above Vedic texts, in the Mahābhārata, and in Purāṇas such as the Brāhma. The latter type is established because the total abandonment of everything is enjoined in Vedic texts such as the Vājasaneyya, the Taittirīyaka, the Atharvaṇa, and the Bāṣkala Upaniṣad, and in *smṛtis* such as the Bhagavad Gītā, in the *itihāsas*, and Purāṇas such as the Bhāgavata, which are based on the above Vedic texts.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because, as we shall demonstrate, the statements on abandonment refer to the abandonment of such things as the fruits of action, attachment, and the idea that one is the agent of one's action.

[OPPONENT]

³¹Surely we see in the Maitrāyaṇīya Brāhmaṇa and in the Lokākṣi Gṛhya Sūtra, which is based on the former, that Paramahaṃsas are given the option of carrying or not carrying a staff. ³²The Maitrāyaṇīya Brāhmaṇa, for instance, states:

A wanderer, clad in a single piece of cloth, shaven-headed, using his stomach as a bowl, and living always in the wilderness, should enter a village in order to beg food. In the evening (he should go) begging clockwise to households of all *varṇas* without discrimination, avoiding those of a bad repute and of the outcastes. Without a sacrificial cord and devoted to purification, let him, should he so desire, take a single bamboo staff.

³³The phrase 'should he so desire' in this passage shows that carrying a staff is optional. ³⁴The Lokākṣi Gṛhya Sūtra introduces the topic thus: "Now we shall explain the procedure of renunciation in the case of Paramahaṃsas." It continues: "Having shaved his hair together with the topknot, and having discarded his sacrificial cord . . ." [cf. Nrd 20,24]. It then goes on to say:

³⁵Silent and naked, let him go toward the east or the north. If he so desires, he may take, with the words: "Thou art the bolt of

³² Cf. Nrd 27n.

³⁵ On this ritual see Ypra 18.1f, 21.116f.

Indra; friend, protect me,” one straight and pleasant bamboo staff with its bark intact and reaching up to his head that is offered to him by the Adhvaryu priest with the words: “Stay, Lord, and take the staff.”

³⁶Here too, because we find the term ‘desire’ connected with ‘if’, an option is established. ³⁷Likewise, the Vaikhānasa Sūtra while describing the four *āśramas*, each of which has four subdivisions, states:

³⁸Paramahaṃsas are those who, dwelling at the foot of a tree with a single stem or in a deserted house or in a cemetery, and clothed or naked, (search for liberation). For these there exists no right [*dharma*] and wrong [*adhama*], no truth and falsehood, no purity and impurity, nor any such dualism. They are the same to everyone, consider everyone as their own self, treat a clod of earth and a piece of gold in the same manner, and beg from all *varṇas*. . . . [VaiDh 1.9]

³⁹Here the option ‘clothed or naked’ is meant to differentiate between those whose conduct is manifest and those whose conduct is concealed.

⁴⁰The Paramahaṃsa Upaniṣad, on the other hand, in the following and other similar passages, by censuring the wooden staff prescribes that Paramahaṃsas should be equipped with the staff of knowledge:

⁴¹Carrying a staff, therefore, is not the principal course. Should you ask who then is the principal type, this is the principal type: A Paramahaṃsa lives without a staff, without a topknot, without a sacrificial cord, and without a garment. [PhU 47.1–4]

⁴²He who carries the staff of knowledge is called single-staffed.

⁴³A man who carries a wooden staff and eats from all people, but who lacks knowledge, goes to dreadful hells called Mahāraurava. [PhU 50.3–5]

⁴⁴Viṣṇu also states:

⁴⁵The emblem is given for the sake of obtaining food. It is not enjoined for the purpose of liberation.

⁴⁶The Mokṣadharmā Parvan also states:

⁴⁷Even though he possesses this emblem, knowledge alone is the cause of an ascetic’s (liberation); for deliverance from the suffer-

³⁸ The edition of the Abh reads *śmaśāne vā āsinā vā*, which is evidently wrong. I have followed the reading of the critical edition of the VaiDh: *śmaśāne vā vāsināḥ*, which is the reading given later on at Abh 73.

⁴⁵ The meaning is that people recognize a renouncer by his emblem and give him food.

ing of this world all the emblems are useless. [MBh 12.308.48]

⁴⁸My view is that these emblems – wearing an ochre dress, shaving the head, the triple stick [cf. Ln 36–37n], and the water pot – are for obtaining food and not for gaining liberation. [MBh 12.308.47]

⁴⁹Elsewhere also it is said:

⁵⁰Liberation, however, is achieved through the absence of emblems: this is the teaching of the Veda.

⁵¹One should similarly consider also other texts aimed at censuring emblems. ⁵²“He lives without a visible emblem, and he keeps his conduct concealed” [VDh 10.18] – this and other similar texts also are aimed precisely at the abandonment of emblems. ⁵³So, we conclude, there are in fact two types of Paramahaṃsas.

[AUTHOR]

⁵⁴That wasn't very clever! The distinction among Paramahaṃsas that you seek is not established by these statements, which are for the most part uttered by Gandharvas, and which, even if they are authoritative, do not refer to this. ⁵⁵To begin with, we exclude here some texts of questionable Vedic or other scriptural authenticity, because they are dubious, for Vijñāneśvara and others who favour your side do not cite them, and Yādavaprakāśa, Bhāskara Ācārya, and the like who have refuted your position do not allude to and censure many of these Vedic texts. ⁵⁶Other texts we do accept but as referring to quite different objects.

⁵⁷Among the latter class of texts, in the Maitrāyaṇīya Brāhmaṇa and the Lokākṣi Gr̥hya Sūtra, which is based on this Brāhmaṇa, the claim that Paramahaṃsas are given the option of carrying or not carrying a staff we find to be untrue, because these texts too intend to point out only the option between a single and a triple staff that is acknowledged by various *smṛtis* and other authoritative texts. ⁵⁸For what the above texts intend to say is: “Let him, should he so desire, take a single bamboo staff [cf. 32] or else a triple staff.” ⁵⁹Similarly the intent of the statement: “If he so desires, he may take . . . [cf. 35],” is: “If he desires to take a single staff, then he may take one staff, otherwise he should take a triple staff.” ⁶⁰If this were not the case, how can there be an option of taking or not taking a staff in the case of a naked ascetic?

⁵⁵ ‘Many of these . . .’: the precise meaning of *bahuśruteḥ* in this context is unclear.

[OPPONENT]

⁶¹Once we have established the division of renunciation in terms of the enlightened and the non-enlightened, the taking of a staff pertains to the non-enlightened and the not taking of a staff pertains to the enlightened.

[AUTHOR]

Look! When you are held by the ear why do you shake your lips? ⁶²For the point of the question was just this: how can a naked ascetic take a staff? ⁶³No one surely is born bearing a bamboo staff. ⁶⁴Neither does a naked ascetic with dishevelled hair who carries a single staff receive your approval, nor is such an ascetic seen among you.

[OPPONENT]

⁶⁵At the time of taking a staff he should also take an ochre robe.

[AUTHOR]

What is the authority for such a course?

[OPPONENT]

⁶⁶Various *smṛtis* and the like.

[AUTHOR]

Then accept the meaning that we have pointed out on the basis of the same texts. ⁶⁷Acknowledge, therefore, that in those texts such an appearance [i.e., nakedness] is allowed only on the occasion of walking toward the east or the north during the rite of renunciation, while immediately thereafter the ascetic is expected to take either a triple or a single staff according to availability or preference, as well as an ochre robe and the like. ⁶⁸As to the assertion: "The taking of a staff pertains to the non-enlightened" [cf. 61], that too is just rash talk, because the staff is enjoined specifically with reference to the enlightened. ⁶⁹How can you, a man of supereminent wisdom, conclude that great seers such as Kapila, Pañcaśikha, and Durvāsas, who are stated in the *itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas* to have

⁶¹ 'Held by the ear': The opponent does not answer the objection but tries to evade it by bringing up a different point.

⁶³ The sarcasm is more evident in the Sanskrit. The term for 'naked' is *jātarūpadhara*, literally 'clad as one was at birth.' So, the author retorts, if he should be clad thus, then he should carry a staff only if he was born with one!

⁶⁶⁻⁶⁷ The Viśiṣṭādvaita interpretation of these texts is that an ascetic is enjoined to become naked only as part of the renunciatory rite [cf. above 35n], which requires him to take the emblems of renunciation immediately after that. These texts, therefore, do not enjoin nudity.

worn ochre robes and topknots and to have carried staffs, as well as Śaṅkara and other founders of your doctrine, and men such as Lord Nāthamuni, Bhāskara, and Yādavaprakāśa are all unenlightened?⁷⁰ Now that is the cry of a non-Vedic doctrine, and so it pleases nobody.

⁷¹The claim, moreover, that in the Vaikhānasa Sūtra “the option ‘clothed or naked’ is meant (to differentiate) between those whose conduct is manifest and those whose conduct is concealed” [cf. 39] is untrue, since that statement cannot refer to this distinction simply because it is not established. ⁷²For in that passage such designations are used so as to inculcate detachment. ⁷³The option in that passage, moreover, is not restrictive, just as the option in this statement is not: “dwelling at the foot of a tree or in a deserted house or in a cemetery” [cf. 38]. ⁷⁴“For these there exists no right and wrong, no truth and falsehood, no purity and impurity, nor any such dualism. They are the same to everyone . . .” [cf. 38]: neither does this statement contain an approval of wrong [*adharmā*], falsehood, and so forth, for if that were true the approval of such things would extend also to ascetics with a manifest garb who are referred to by the general term ‘For these.’ ⁷⁵Now, you do not want that! ⁷⁶Hence this statement also declares that, according to his own situation, each person should abandon wrong [*adharmā*], falsehood, and so forth, as well as right [*dharma*] and the like, with the exception of the few duties [*dharma*] that are part of his own *āśrama*.

⁷⁷The assertion, moreover, that the Paramahaṃsa Upaniṣad by censuring the wooden staff enjoins the staff of knowledge [cf. 40] is incorrect, because (that censure is made) just out of its zeal to enjoin the staff of knowledge, in accordance with the maxim: “A censure is not used to censure something deserving censure but to commend something other

⁷² ‘Such designations’: i.e., clothed [*sāmbhara*] or naked [*digambhara*].

⁷³ In a restrictive option [*vyavasthītavikalpa*]: cf. also Abh 25n] one alternative of the option, e.g., wearing clothes, applies to one type of individual, e.g., an unenlightened ascetic, while the other alternative, e.g., going naked, applied to another type, e.g., an enlightened ascetic. In non-restrictive options, on the other hand, any one can choose one of the alternatives at will.

⁷⁷ ‘Incorrect’: The edition of the Abh reads: *tad api na hi*. . . It is evident that one ‘na’ has been dropped, and that the sentence should read: *tad api na, na hi*. . . —‘A censure . . .’: Cf. Śabara on the PMS 2.4.21; Rāmānuja on the VeS 2.2.41 (University of Poona ed., p. 699); Yāmunācārya, *Āgamaprāmānya*, GOS 160 (Baroda, 1976), p. 103. Yāmuna (*ibid.*, pp. 103–105) gives a long explanation of this rule and offers many examples. The meaning here is that the censure of a wooden staff does not constitute a prohibition of it, but is intended merely to extol the virtue of the staff of knowledge.

than that which is censured.”⁷⁸As the censure of the sacrifice offered before sunrise is intended to commend the sacrifice offered after sunrise, so also is the case in the present statement.⁷⁹Otherwise, how can it say that an ascetic who carries a wooden staff goes to the Mahāraurava and other hells, for if that were true it would mean that one should avoid from afar those who carry a wooden staff, because the carrying of such a staff implies that they are in a state of mortal sin.⁸⁰The same reasons establish that the statement regarding the abandonment of the topknot, sacrificial cord, and garment found in that text [cf. 41] refers to something else.⁸¹In every instance it should be interpreted appropriately according to the directions given below so that it refers to those with a manifest garb and other such people.⁸²Thus, when one considers each statement within its own proper context, it is abundantly clear that all *smṛti* passages directed at the censure of emblems intend to censure those who merely carry the emblems but lack the respective virtues.⁸³It is clear that the statement: “He lives without a visible emblem and he keeps his conduct concealed” [cf. 52] enjoins that one hides one’s emblem and conduct so as to become an object of others’ contempt,⁸⁴for the text does not state that he lives without an emblem or that his conduct is evil.⁸⁵Therefore, the twofold division of Paramahaṃsas that you envisage does exist.⁸⁶Options, such as that between a triple and a single staff, on the other hand, are quite appropriate.

[OPPONENT]

⁸⁷Surely the Bhāgavata Purāṇa declares that Paramahaṃsas do not perform rites:

In renunciation, the first is the Kuṭīcaka, then the Bahūdaka, the Haṃsa, and the non-performer of rites.

[AUTHOR]

So, what of it?

[OPPONENT]

⁸⁸It establishes (the ascetic) whose conduct is concealed.

⁷⁸ The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa [5.31], for example, censures the fire sacrifice offered before sunrise, and concludes: “Every morning they tell falsehood who offer the fire sacrifice before sunrise.” According to Mīmāṃsā, this does not entail a prohibition of such a sacrifice. The text only declares that offering after sunrise is more commendable. Cf. Nrd 99n.

⁸⁸ ‘No’: The edition of the Abh omits ‘na’, which is evidently a typographical error. — ‘It is improper . . .’: The author’s argument is that in a list of categories, one enumerates only the categories and not subdivisions of some of them. So when

[AUTHOR]

No, because it is improper to point out a special category within the class of Paramahaṃsa when the latter is listed together with the three (classes of renouncers) beginning with Kuṭīcaka. ⁸⁹For when enumerating the group of elements beginning with earth one does not include in that enumeration also 'pot' and 'cloth'. ⁹⁰If, on the other hand, it refers to Paramahaṃsas as such, then your supposition is not demonstrated. ⁹¹He is said to be a non-performer of rites because the great number of rites associated with each of the preceding classes is absent in his case, just as one uses the term 'poor' to indicate a man who possesses little wealth. ⁹²Even you do not admit that all Paramahaṃsas are divorced from all rites, because such a position would entail the abolition of the distinction between those whose appearance and conduct are manifest and those in whom they are concealed.

[OPPONENT]

⁹³Surely the Venerable Teacher Śaṅkara – who has made plain to all the meaning of all the *smṛtis*, *itihāsas*, and *Purāṇas*, who is the foremost of all exegetes, and who is the leader of Paramahaṃsa renouncers – in his *Upadeśasāhasrika*, which contains the nectar gathered from the ocean of all the *Upaniṣads* and *smṛtis*, has explained repeatedly and cogently the *dharma* of those whose conduct is concealed, which *dharma* consists of the abandonment of the *dharma* of all *varṇas* and *āśramas*, and has presented that as his own view.

[AUTHOR]

Alas, you wish to overcome sinful acts with the great merits derived from the eulogy of your teacher! ⁹⁴Furthermore, how could the people whose arguments are based on the authority of the absolute non-duality

'Paramahaṃsa' is used in listing the four classes of renouncers, it must refer to all Paramahaṃsas and not to a particular subcategory of Paramahaṃsas.

⁹⁰ According to Advaitins, only the enlightened Paramahaṃsas give up all rites and not the unenlightened. If, therefore, the text refers to all Paramahaṃsas, then the term *niṣkriyāḥ* [non-performer of rites] should have a different meaning, such as that given in 91.

⁹³ "(The Vedas) would not have declared that (the self) is by nature unrelated to rites and to *varṇa* and the like caused by rites, if rites and ritual instruments such as the sacrificial cord were not to be abandoned. He who seeks after liberation, therefore, should abandon rites together with their instruments, because they impede the knowledge of the identity between the self and the supreme self. He should realize that his self is the highest self, having the characteristics mentioned in the Vedas." *Upadeśasāhasrī*, II.1.32.

of the Self, the falsity of the universe, and other such doctrines taught by him (Śaṅkara), have obtained a proper understanding of some meaningless point, even though it has been determined by him? ⁹⁵By demolishing the validity of 'liberation-in-life,' moreover, we have also crushed those fallacies such as the doctrine of incorporeality that are brought forward to demonstrate the abandonment of the *dharma* of *varṇas* and *āśramas*, because a) the close connection between the body, and pleasure, pain, and the like that are appropriate to that body, is established by means of knowledge such as perception, and, therefore, its denial is prevented by the same means of knowledge; b) relying on the fact that even though by nature the soul is free from *varṇa* and *āśrama*, yet it possesses them insofar as it is conditioned by the body, the action-oriented texts have, indeed, established the performance of actions appropriate to that (body). ⁹⁶For reliance on the error of taking the soul to be the same as the body does not promote texts dealing with the other world. ⁹⁷Therefore, we find nothing at all like the Paramahansa state followed by you, which permits completely unrestrained activity.

[OPPONENT]

⁹⁸Surely only those who carry the emblem of total indifference – except that they desist from what is forbidden because of their aversion to external sense objects – are truly the Brahman knowers called Paramahansas. We, on the other hand, carry the articles (of a renouncer).

[AUTHOR]

No, because even they do not abandon the special emblem and the special *dharma* proper to their particular *āśrama*. ⁹⁹You say that the aversion to sense objects is the reason why they desist from what is forbidden. Now, is this an aversion [A] to all sense objects such as sound and touch, or [B] only to some [cf. 105]?

¹⁰⁰[A] It cannot be the first, for we fail to see even the slightest reduction in such things as the food they eat.

⁹⁵ Liberation-in-life [*jīvanmukti*] is the subject of criticism in Chapter 31 of the Śatadūṣaṇī. —'Action-oriented . . .': *Dharma* and, consequently, texts that deal with *dharma* are divided into *pravṛtta* [relating to action] and *nivṛtta* [relating to non-action or knowledge]: cf. Ypra 1.11n; MDh 12.88–89. The author's argument is that Advaita texts, which by definition are *nivṛtta*, are unqualified to deal with issues such as *varṇa* and *āśrama* which belong to *pravṛtta*.

⁹⁸ 'Emblem of total indifference . . .': The meaning seems to be that they do not carry any external emblem. —'Articles,' namely the staff, bowl, etc., that constitute the external emblem of a renouncer.

[OPPONENT]

¹⁰¹Those things are unreal.

[AUTHOR]

Heaven forbid! ¹⁰²You are an ingrate! ¹⁰³If those who fuss around you in the belief that you know Brahman and, placing you on the seat of honor, daily feed you to your heart's content with the four kinds of food hear that type of talk, how could they not be overcome with grief. ¹⁰⁴The same criterion, moreover, used to demonstrate the unreal nature of the food of those who know Brahman would demonstrate the unreality also of the food of those who are ignorant of Brahman, and it would thereby establish that everyone without effort possesses an aversion to sense objects.

¹⁰⁵[B] In the second alternative also the question arises whether the aversion is [1] to just some types of sense objects, or [2] only to things that are forbidden. ¹⁰⁶[1] If it is the first, then again there is nothing special, since such an aversion is present even in other people [i.e., those ignorant of Brahman]. ¹⁰⁷[2] If it is the second, again the question is raised whether that aversion to forbidden things exists [a] merely because of their undesirability, or [b] because they have ascertained that such things have been determined by authoritative texts to be the cause of evil [cf. 116]. ¹⁰⁸[a] It cannot be the first, because it does not allow an option. ¹⁰⁹They must be undesirable, moreover, either because everybody perceives them as disagreeable, just as swords, fire, thorns, and the like, or because Brahman knowers perceive them as disagreeable, or else merely because one fails to perceive that they are agreeable. ¹¹⁰It cannot be the first, for it goes against the perception of the whole world. ¹¹¹The same reason precludes the second alternative, because it contradicts the self-perception of Brahman knowers. ¹¹²For even when those who know Brahman look at meat dishes and the like, they do not consider them disagreeable in the way they would Neemb leaves. ¹¹³It further contradicts what others infer from their facial expressions and bodily gestures.

[OPPONENT]

¹¹⁴Their gestures and the like should be taken in the same way as those of actors and the like.

¹⁰⁸ The point seems to be that for there to be aversion or detachment a person should have the choice to do the opposite, i.e., to be attached. It is impossible to be attached to a truly undesirable or painful thing.

¹¹² Neemb [Azadirachta Indica] leaves, that are chewed during certain ceremonies, have a very bitter taste.

[AUTHOR]

No, because a) such a motive is impossible, for here the purposes (for those gestures), for example deceiving or entertaining others, are unbecoming; b) a motive of self-interest, on the other hand, would annul the aversion; and c) it is impossible for useful activities such as eating to be performed without a motive.

[OPPONENT]

¹¹⁵Only forbidden actions are absent in them. Hence, there is no reason (for their absence).

[AUTHOR]

That is incorrect, because through oversight even the knowers of Brahman do perform forbidden actions. ¹¹⁶Forbidden actions deliberately committed, on the other hand, are absent only because they have ascertained that such actions have been determined by authoritative texts to be the cause of evil. That is the second alternative [cf. 107]. ¹¹⁷Accordingly, you have the unacceptable conclusion that injunctive texts also are binding on them, because there is no difference between that and being subject to the authority of prohibitory texts. ¹¹⁸Neither of these, however, is acceptable to you.

[OPPONENT]

¹¹⁹Abiding at the summit of the Veda, the sage is never subject to rules, for the fire of Brahman's knowledge has burnt up all qualifications.

This statement sides with the view that (a Brahman knower) stands outside the *āśramas*. To the view that considers him as belonging to an *āśrama*, both the above conclusions are acceptable.

[AUTHOR]

In that case you should wear the prescribed emblem and follow the prescribed conduct. ¹²⁰Then we'll have nothing to argue about.

¹¹⁵ The edition of the Abh omits *na*, which is required by the context.

¹¹⁹ 'Subject to rules': The edition of the Abh reads: *vidhikimkaraḥ*. The editor puts '*veda*' in parentheses as an alternative reading for *vidhi*. In Ch. 62 of the Śatadūṣaṇī (p. 258) this verse occurs with the reading *veda*. In that case, the translation would be 'subject to the Veda.' —'Qualification' [*adhikāra*]: All injunctions and prohibitions are directed at people who are qualified or entitled to perform or to abstain from these actions. The concept of *adhikāra* is at the heart of the Brāhmaṇical conception of *dharma*. The knowledge of Brahman, it is claimed, erases all qualifications, and, therefore, the Vedic injunctions are not applicable to those who possess that knowledge.

[OPPONENT]

¹²¹Even in the absence of obedience to authoritative texts, an enlightened person does not deliberately perform forbidden actions purely through the power of the latent propensities created by the complete suppression of forbidden acts.

[AUTHOR]

That is not correct, for latent propensities created by the suppression of forbidden acts prevents the performance of forbidden acts. ¹²²But acts that are forbidden in the case of those who do not know Brahman are not forbidden in the case of those who know Brahman, because if they were it would be an unwarranted extension of the rule. ¹²³Consequently, since they are not forbidden, (a knower of Brahman) would undoubtedly perform them, for otherwise we would also have to conclude that by reason of latent propensities created by the suppression of activities forbidden during the time of Vedic studentship, those acts would not be undertaken in the later *āśramas*.

[OPPONENT]

¹²⁴One would begin to perform them again in those (*āśramas*) on account of specific injunctions.

[AUTHOR]

No, for that would result in people not performing some acts, such as wearing garlands, that are forbidden to Vedic students but neither forbidden nor prescribed in the case of householders and the like. ¹²⁵If, moreover, latent propensities suppress even non-forbidden actions merely because they had been forbidden earlier, then those who know Brahman would not engage in any type of activity whatsoever, because, if we take into account the variety of people with different qualifications and the diversity of place, time, and the like, every conceivable action is forbidden in some context or other.

[OPPONENT]

¹²⁶I admit that the knowers of Brahman among us are inactive in the manner you have described.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because such a condition does not exist outside of contemplative trance, sleep, and other such states. ¹²⁷We do not object to such a condition existing in a person while he is in a contemplative trance. ¹²⁸Even such a person, when he rises from the trance, undoubtedly becomes subject to the authority of injunctions and prohibitions.

[OPPONENT]

¹²⁹Let us then assume that aversion to forbidden acts is intended for the welfare of the world.

[AUTHOR]

Then it is not an aversion but a suppression by force. ¹³⁰Likewise, then, one should also be favourably disposed toward performing acts that are prescribed. ¹³¹The welfare of the world, moreover, (becomes a motive) only because one fears the sins resulting from scandalizing the world, and therefore it constitutes obedience to authoritative texts.

[OPPONENT]

¹³²We can assume that the aversion to the insignificant delights of things forbidden results solely from the delight of experiencing Brahman.

[AUTHOR]

That is incorrect, for it would imply that such a person would cease to perform even those actions that are neither prescribed nor forbidden. ¹³³Even if it is true, we have already said that it exists only in the state of contemplative trance. ¹³⁴The same argument refutes the claim that one who knows Brahman has an aversion to pleasures because in him, as in an old man, the faculty of enjoyment has been weakened. ¹³⁵We can readily grant, however, that such an aversion results from the non-availability (of forbidden things) or from the fear of a strict king and the like. ¹³⁶But that is horse-celibacy! ¹³⁷The truly voluntary nature of the enterprise, however, is obtained only when the availability is unimpaired.

[II. REFUTATION OF ADVAITA RENUNCIATION AS A NON- ĀŚRAMA]

¹³⁸The same argument refutes the aversion to forbidden acts even within the context of the view that (such Paramahamsas) constitute a state beyond all *āśramas*. ¹³⁹Why, may we ask, do you accept a non-*āśra-*

¹³⁶ 'Horse-celibacy': The sexual restraint of horses achieved by force, i.e., forced celibacy.

¹³⁹ It is clear that the printed edition of the text is corrupt here, and that several other alternative reasons are omitted. The author's rebuttal is addressed to seven alternative reasons. Numbers 1 [at 140] and 2 [at 196] correspond to the first two reasons given here. Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 [at 371, 374, 385, and 395, respectively] of the author's rebuttal are absent here. Number 6 [at 389] of the rebuttal corresponds to number 3 here. —'Distinctive marks' of this state are nudity, violation of customs, appearance of madness, etc.: cf. below 224f.

mic state? Is it [1] because there are authoritative texts that prescribe it, or [2] merely because we notice its distinctive marks (described in the authoritative texts), [cf. below 196] or [3] because one is incapable of performing (the duties of the *āśramas*), [cf. Ybh 389] or [4] for some other reason?

¹⁴⁰[1] It cannot be the first, because we find no text that enjoins it; on the contrary, it is explicitly forbidden by hundreds of *smṛti* passages, such as: “A twice-born shall not remain even for a day outside the *āśramas*” [=MBh I.1618*]. ¹⁴¹One should not view this passage as referring to non-enlightened people, because there is nothing that would indicate such a restriction, ¹⁴²for it can be so restricted only if there exists a rule that enjoins a state outside the *āśramas*. ¹⁴³Even for the enlightened what is prohibited is not an *āśrama* but libertinism [cf. Abh 20n]. ¹⁴⁴So, for example:

One who does not desist from wrong conduct, who is not calm, who is not collected, and whose mind is not tranquil, will not attain Him through knowledge. [Kāṭha Up. 2.24]

[OPPONENT]

¹⁴⁵As water adheres not to the leaf of a lotus flower, (so evil action adheres not to him who knows this). [ChUp 4.14.3; cf. BhG 5.10] Undesired, desired, and mixed – threefold is the fruit of action that ensues after death for those who practise not abandonment, but never for men of renunciation. [BhG 18.12]

Surely these Vedic and *smṛti* texts teach that sins committed after (their enlightenment) do not defile those who are enlightened.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because by force of the Vedic text that teaches one to desist from wrong conduct [144], the Vedic and other texts that speak of non-defilement [145] refer to (sins committed) unintentionally and to times of adversity. ¹⁴⁶The Sūtras, moreover, admonish:

And all types of food are permitted (only) when one’s life is in danger, because that is shown (in the scriptures) [VeS 3.4.28], and again:

And, hence, there is also a scriptural text on not acting wantonly [VeS 3.4.31].

[OPPONENT]

¹⁴⁷“Performing actions in this world, indeed, let a man wish to live a hundred years” – after stating that, the text goes on to say: “actions do

not adhere to a man" [IśU 2]. Thus the Veda teaches that even deliberate actions do not defile (an enlightened person).

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because this passage either refers to desireless actions that form a subsidiary element [cf. Śaṃ 48n] of knowledge, or is intended as eulogy of knowledge. ¹⁴⁸Accordingly, (Bādarāyaṇa) gives the following *sūtras*:

"(The rule does) not (specially apply to the enlightened) because there is no specification" [VeS 3.4.13],

and:

"Or else the permission (of actions) is intended as eulogy of knowledge" [VeS 3.4.14].

For otherwise it would go against what was stated before.

[OPPONENT]

¹⁴⁹Is it not rather the Vedic text on desisting from wrong conduct [145] that you should explain as having some other reference?

[AUTHOR]

No, because we see no other object that could be its purport.

[OPPONENT]

¹⁵⁰In this passage too the purport is derived only from the opposition (of these qualities) to knowledge.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true for the following reason. By teaching that when the abstention from wrong conduct and the like are not present there arises the defect of not attaining the object of knowledge, the statement censures wrong conduct and the like, and thereby it shows that knowledge is characterized by their absence. The passage refers to this attribute of knowledge.

[OPPONENT]

¹⁵¹The abstention from wrong conduct and the like is for the purpose of attaining knowledge. One who has attained knowledge, however, insofar as he is totally indifferent, is permitted to act as he pleases.

¹⁵¹ The author's aim is to show that wrong conduct is not merely an impediment to knowledge – a point his opponent will readily grant – but that it also impedes the attainment of the goal of knowledge, i.e., Brahmā, even in the case of a person who has already attained that knowledge. The argument rests on the masculine pronoun *enam* ['him'] used in the passage, for this pronoun cannot refer to the neuter noun *jñānam* [knowledge] but only to the masculine *brahmā*.

[AUTHOR]

That is not correct, because the passage teaches: “(One) will not attain him” based on the fact that wrong conduct and the like are opposed to the attainment of Brahmā, ¹⁵²for the text does not say: “One who does not desist from wrong conduct will not attain knowledge.”

[OPPONENT]

¹⁵³The purport of the statement is to deny knowledge (to such a person), just as the statement “A pauper does not eat dainty food” denies special ingredients such as milk.

[AUTHOR]

That is not correct for the following reasons. a) The very use of the instrumental case connected with causal priority and posteriority shows that (knowledge) has already been achieved. Taking (the sentence) to mean that (knowledge) is something yet to be achieved would contradict it. This meaning, moreover, does not follow the natural and obvious sense of the sentence. ¹⁵⁴The same argument, as well as the fact that, unlike a meal, Brahman cannot be attained in any other way (than by knowledge), refute the claim that this passage should be interpreted in the same way as the sentence “A pauper does not eat with milk.” ¹⁵⁵b) Even if we take (the sentence) to mean that (knowledge) is something yet to be achieved, it has been taught that desisting from wrong conduct and the like also should be practised until death for the complete attainment of knowledge that one must pursue and increase every day, because it has been taught that knowledge should be pursued until death. ¹⁵⁶Given the fact, therefore, that there is a life-long prohibition of libertinism, and that (Brahman) is not attained in any other way (than by knowledge), we must interpret

¹⁵³ ‘A pauper . . .’: When one says that a pauper does not eat dainty food, he does not mean that a pauper eats no food at all, but only that special ingredients such as milk that make food dainty are absent in a pauper’s food. Similarly, the opponent argues, when the passage refers to Brahmā with the masculine pronoun *enam* [him], what it really refers to is the attribute that accompanies the attainment of Brahmā, i.e., knowledge. Without knowledge, of course, one would not attain Brahmā at all. The argument is clearer and the connection between the passage and the example is more evident in the Sanskrit where a single word, *saṃpannam*, is used for ‘dainty food.’ — ‘Instrumental case’: In the passage the word *prajñānena* [‘through knowledge’] is put in the instrumental case, which indicates its causal priority to the attainment of Brahmā. It suggests, therefore, that this knowledge is already in hand and that it is not something that needs to be acquired.

passages such as “Performing actions, . . .” (147) as referring to the injunction on actions that form a subsidiary element [cf. Śaṃ 48n] of knowledge or as eulogies of knowledge.

¹⁵⁸Though thou art the most sinful of all sinners, thou shalt cross over all evil by the boat of knowledge alone. [BhG 4.36]

¹⁵⁹As a burning fire reduces the firewood to ashes, Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. [BhG 4.37]

¹⁶⁰Casting actions upon Brahman, who so acts abandoning attachment, evil cleaves not to him as water cleaves not to a lotus leaf. [BhG 5.10]

¹⁶¹He whose self is free from the thought of I, whose intelligence is untainted, slays not, though he slay these creatures, and he is not slain. [BhG 18.17]

^{157, 162} These also and other similar statements, therefore, are made with the intention of prohibiting attitudes such as the attachment to the fruits and the notion that one is the author of one’s actions, and with the intention, for example, of teaching the excellence of a special type of knowledge. They do not indicate the approval of libertinism. ¹⁶³For this very reason, immediately after the statement:

If a man worships me with undivided devotion, even though he be of very evil conduct, yet he must be regarded as righteous, for he has the right resolution [BhG 9.30],

the author sets it right with the statement that begins:

Quickly he becomes righteous and he goes to everlasting peace. [BhG 9.31]

[OPPONENT]

¹⁶⁴“Therefore, let a Brahmin become disgusted with learning and wish to live as a child” [BāU 3.5.1] – on account of this rule that enjoins the enlightened to live as a child, we obtain the practices such as travelling, speaking, and eating at one’s pleasure.

[AUTHOR]

But in this passage the expression ‘as a child’ does not refer to the condition of a child, ¹⁶⁵for one cannot assume it as a special period of life. ¹⁶⁶But one can assume a child’s behavior in not revealing one’s greatness. The injunction, therefore, refers to this, for otherwise it would contradict

¹⁶¹ ‘He is not slain’ [*na nihanyate*]: The critical edition of the MBh [6.40.17] reads: *na nibadhyate* [he is not bound], and does not even give our reading as a variant.

what we have stated above. ¹⁶⁷A *sūtra*, moreover, states: “(The passage enjoining a child’s life means that the ascetic is to live) not revealing (his greatness), because thus it fits the context” [VeS 3.4.50]. ¹⁶⁸The *smṛtis* enjoin that yogins should behave like fools by not revealing their greatness in order to assist their yogic endeavor. ¹⁶⁹So, for example:

Let the wise man, though he knows, behave among men as if he were an idiot [MDh 2.110], because praise is fatal to the success of yoga. [ViP 2.13.42]

^{170, 175} Sanatsujāta also in verses such as the following extols the man established in Brahman – the man who places before our eyes Brahman, the inner self of all beings, and who is the boundless friend of the whole world:

¹⁷¹If one always sees oneself in beings occupied with their various tasks, why should one worry any more? [MBh 5.45.22]

¹⁷²I am, indeed, your mother and father. I also am your son. I am the self of all this – both of what exists and of what exists not. [MBh 5.45.25]

¹⁷³I am the ancient grandfather, O Bhārata, the father and the son as well. You are my very self, but you are not mine and I am not yours. [MBh 5.45.26]

¹⁷⁴The self alone is my abode and the self is my birth. [MBh 5.45.27]

¹⁷⁷Sanatsujāta then enjoins such a person to guard his condition in verses such as:

¹⁷⁶People who are learned in the Veda prescribe for him proper conduct. One would thus not think that he is an eminent man internally or externally. [MBh 5.42.248*]

¹⁷⁹Then he prescribes the contemplation of the true nature of the immaculate self in verses such as:

¹⁷⁸Now a Brahmin ought to strike at the inner self which is signless, motionless, perfect, and free of all duality. [MBh 5.42.24, 251*]

¹⁸¹Then Sanatsujāta censures the man who perceives the self wrongly:

¹⁸⁰He who perceives the self other than it really is, how can he, a thief and a plunderer of the self, not commit a sin? [MBh 5.42.252*; cf. MDh 4.255.]

¹⁷⁶ I am not sure of the exact meaning of the second half of the verse.

¹⁷⁸ The meaning is not very clear. VAN BUITENEN translates: “What brahmin can thus kill the inner soul?”

¹⁸³Finally he explains that (a knower of the self), though he is truly a cultured person, poses as an ill-mannered man only to bring contempt on himself:

¹⁸²Let him be unwearied, esteemed for not accepting gifts, and harmless. A wise Brahmin who knows Brahman, though cultured, should not behave as a man of culture. [MBh 5.42.25]

¹⁸⁴The point is further clarified in the same text:

¹⁸⁵Those (who act like) fools always eat vomit not for enjoyment but to shun praise and to guard their strength. They thus eat vomit because they enjoy their strength. [MBh 5.42.22]

¹⁸⁶Praise and holiness never go hand in hand. The wise know that praise belongs to this world and holiness to the next. [MBh 5.42.30]

¹⁸⁷For the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa states:

¹⁸⁸Therefore, let him who knows thus appear to dance, let him appear to tremble, let him appear to dart his eyes around while he speaks, let him appear to be exhilarated, let him appear to revel, and let him appear to butt with the horns. (He thinks): "Would they abuse me, or would they destroy my sins?" [TB 2.3.9.9]

¹⁸⁹Now, even this text only prescribes activities common to all (renouncers), such as behaving like madmen, in order to eliminate sins and to bring disgrace upon themselves. It prescribes neither the performance of forbidden acts, such as adultery, by Paramahāṃsas nor even the abandonment of the permanent and occasional rites [cf. Pm 45n]. ¹⁹⁰Manu also states:

¹⁹¹Let a Brahmin shrink from honor as he would from poison. Let him always long for scorn as if it were nectar. [MDh 2.162]

^{192, 195} This same point is made also by other *smṛtis* in passages such as the following:

¹⁸² The reading of the first half-verse in the Abh is corrupt and unintelligible. In the translation I have followed the reading of the critical edition of the MBh: *āśrāntaḥ syād anādānāt saṃmato nirupadravaḥ*. VAN BUITENEN's translation of the second half misses the point: "educated in reality rather than appearance as a brahman-knowing sage." The intent of the text, as the Abh clearly points out, is that an ascetic should outwardly behave as an uncultured and uneducated person so as to bring the contempt of the world upon himself.

¹⁸⁵ The meaning is not totally clear. See the variants in the critical edition of the MBh and VAN BUITENEN's translation.

¹⁸⁸ The edition of the Abh reads *uttame* for *uta me*, the TB reading, which I have followed.

¹⁹³He whom nò one considers either as good or as evil, either as learned or as ignorant, either as virtuous or as vile – he truly is a Brahmin.

¹⁹⁴Let a wise man follow his observances, adopting a disguise and unknown to others. Let him roam the earth as if he were blind, foolish, and dumb. [NpU 147]

¹⁹⁵Not abandoning the conduct proper to one, guarding one's strength, and the practice of non-possession – these are regarded as the means of purification.

¹⁹⁶ [2] The same argument refutes also the second reason [cf. 139]; the mention of distinctive marks [cf. above 139n] amounts to nothing when, on the one hand, (such a state) contradicts express Vedic texts [cf. Pm 61n], and, on the other, it does not result from an injunction. ¹⁹⁷There is, moreover, no mention of distinctive marks, ¹⁹⁸for the same text (that gives this episode) explains that even Ādi-Bharata adopted completely the conduct of an idiot to attain perfection in yoga. ¹⁹⁹So, for instance, we find this passage in the Ādi-Bharata account of the Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

²⁰⁰After his death there he was born as a Brahmin with the memory of his former lives. He was born in a pure and eminent family of yogins who followed the path of righteous conduct.

²⁰¹He possessed all knowledge and he knew the true import of all sacred texts. He viewed the soul, O Maitreya, as different from primal matter.

²⁰²Imbued with the knowledge of the self, O great sage, he always looked upon gods and all other creatures as identical with himself.

²⁰³He did not rehearse the Vedic texts that the teacher taught him after his Vedic initiation. He paid no heed to rituals and he did not learn the sacred texts.

²⁰⁴Even when something was said to him repeatedly, he responded with an incoherent speech that was both ungrammatical and vulgar.

²⁰⁵With a filthy body and dirty clothes, with matted hair and rotten teeth, he was despised by urbane gentlemen.

²⁰⁰ 'After his death ...': The story goes that King Bharata, due to his attachment to a doe, was reborn as a deer. After atoning for his attachment, the Bharata-deer died and was reborn in a Brahmin family.

²⁰¹ The reference is to the well-known Sāṃkhya doctrine of the distinction between primal matter [*prakṛti*] and soul [*puruṣa*]. The knowledge of this distinction is the cause of liberation.

²⁰⁶“Praise is fatal to the success of yoga, and a yogin who is scorned by men attains the perfection of yoga.

²⁰⁷Therefore, without reviling the path of the virtuous let a yogin act in such a manner that people will despise him, and let him never associate with them.”

²⁰⁸Keeping these words of Hiranyagarbha in mind, the wise one presented himself to the world in the guise of an idiot and a madman.

²⁰⁹His food was worm-eaten and broken grain, vegetables, wild fruit, and grains of corn. He ate a lot of anything he happened to come by, paying no heed to rules regarding the proper time.

²¹⁰After his father’s death his brothers, cousins, and relatives put him to work in the fields and fed him vile food.

²¹¹As he had a firm and robust body and played the idiot in outward act, he was employed by everybody, receiving only food as wages.

²¹²Seeing him thus, uncouth but having the aspect of a Brahmin, the head servant of King Sauvīra thought him a suitable man to work (for the king) without pay. [ViP 2.13.36–48]

²¹³Similarly, further on, it is said:

²¹⁴Yogins, without being recognized in their true nature, roam about this earth in various disguises helping people. [ViP 3.15.23]

²¹⁵Now, no adharmic course of action is mentioned here, nor is it an assault on *dharmā*. ²¹⁶He [Ādi-Bharata] did not undertake rites such as Vedic sacrifices simply because he was a Vedic student. ²¹⁷For this very reason it is also stated there: “without reviling the path of the virtuous” [207].

²¹⁸Moreover, since the Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions among other things that he wore a sacrificial cord and the like, it follows that he belonged to an *āśrama*. ²¹⁹For it states:

²²⁰Who art thou, roaming in disguise? What great ascetic art thou, wearing the Brahmin’s cord? [BhP 5.10.16]

²⁰⁷ I read *dūṣayan*, following the reading below at 217, which fits the context better. The edition of the Abh reads *dūṣayet*.

²⁰⁹ I read *akālasamyamaṃ*, with the elision of ‘a’ before ‘e’. WILSON translates: “. . . as part of a necessary, but temporary affliction,” and explains *kālasamyama* as “a state of suffering and mortification lasting only for a season, or in other words bodily existence, the body being contemplated as a sore, for which food is ungent.” This seems an unnecessary and forced interpretation. Clearly the point of the whole episode is to point out that Ādi-Bharata flouted all norms of conduct and etiquette. Here he is said to have paid no heed to rules regarding proper food and the proper time for eating.

²²¹Here the phrase “roaming in disguise” explains that he does not display his greatness. ²²²So, even the statement: “He did not rehearse the Vedic texts that the teacher taught him after his Vedic initiation” [203], does not deny that he had undergone Vedic initiation. ²²³He abandoned Vedic recitation also either because the Vedas became naturally manifest to him as a result of, among other things, the fact that he remembered them through latent mental impressions derived from his previous lives, or because he remembered the Vedas upon hearing them just once. ²²⁴Also the vow of insanity and the like undertaken by Durvāsas and others were practised occasionally by men deeply grounded in the *dharma* of the *āśramas* to reap fruits such as that of being the butt of people’s ridicule; such vows do not constitute the abandonment of all *āśramas*. ²²⁵The *smṛtis*, therefore, disclose that Durvāsas afterwards became a renouncer and was equipped with such (emblems) as the ochre robe and the staff.

[OPPONENT]

²²⁶Since the authoritative texts disclose that Ṛbhu, Śuka, Saṃvarta, and the like practised nudity and other similar vows, we believe that they were outside all the *āśramas*.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because even nudity is a special kind of vow that aims at enduring rain, wind, heat, and the like; a vow that is associated with the special practice of eating each mouthful completely (as soon as it is received). It is a vow that only certain unique men of ancient times were qualified to perform. ²²⁷If he were outside the *āśramas*, how could the king have chosen Saṃvarta, who was subsisting on air alone, as the priest for his sacrifice? ²²⁸Nudity, therefore, is just a special vow common to all *varṇas* and *āśramas*, ²²⁹for only householders can perform priestly functions and the like. ²³⁰In the olden days even a widower, after fulfilling certain conditions such as taking a (new) wife, was considered fit to function as a priest.

[OPPONENT]

²³¹Over five hundred royal courtesans flocked to him. [MBh 12.312.37]

²²⁶ For the story of Śuka see MBh 12.312f, and for the story of Ṛbhu see BhP 5.5.28f. — ‘Eating each mouthful . . .’: A naked renouncer has no begging bowl. He receives his food directly in his hand, eating the food as soon as he receives it. For a detailed description of this type of begging, see Ypra 57.33–68.

²²⁷ The story of Saṃvarta and King Marutta is recorded in the MBh 14.5–9.

²³¹ ‘Over . . .’: Here I follow the critical edition of the MBh and read *param* in

After he had eaten, my dear, each of them in turn showed him the beautiful park of the female quarters in the palace. [MBh 12.312.39]

Surely, these texts show that the great seer, Śuka, a knower of Brahman, also ate in the company of courtesans.

[AUTHOR]

Wrong, because that statement is also made with reference to a situation in which these women were employed as servants to feed Brahmins and others who had completed their Vedic initiation, and, after the meal, to perform such services as fanning. ²³²It is quite clear that the intent here, indeed, was only to test Śuka's chastity and other such virtues. ²³³The text does not indicate that he ate forbidden food.

²³⁵When one has known the ultimate truth and it is ever present and immediately perceived in one's heart, what need is there to live in the *āśramas* and in the forest? This I ask you. Do explain it to me. [MBh 12.313.20–21]

^{234, 236} For, when he was so questioned by Śuka further on in the text, Janaka replied that it is obligatory to perform those very duties of the *āśramas* after giving up attachment to them.

²³⁸No one attains liberation without learning and knowledge, and, according to the *smṛtis*, no one acquires learning without the tutelage of a teacher. [MBh 12.313.22]

²³⁹In this work the teacher is called his boatsman and learning his boat. After he has acquired knowledge, after he has done all there is to do, and after he has crossed over (the river of *saṃsāra*), he may abandon both. [MBh 12.316.40]

²⁴⁰Abandon *dharma* and *adharmā*. Abandon even truth and untruth. Having abandoned both truth and untruth, abandon that by which you did the abandoning. [MBh 12.316.40; 318.44]

^{237, 241} In this passage found in the same text, moreover, the statement: "after he has crossed over (the river of *saṃsāra*), he may abandon both," declares that until one has attained liberation one should, indeed, attend to the means of attaining it, namely learning and the teacher. ^{242, 244}The verse: "Abandon *dharma* and *adharmā* . . .," on the other hand, does not accord with your position, because its meaning is made clear by this verse:

place of *purāṇ*. This episode occurs in the story of Śuka's encounter with King Janaka, to whose palace he had been sent by his father, Vyāsa, to learn from the king about liberation.

²⁴³Abandon *dharma* by abstaining from desire. Abandon *adharmā* by practising non-injury. Abandon both truth and untruth by discernment, and discernment by absolute certainty. [MBh 12.316.41]

^{245, 250} In the following passage of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa describing the appearance of the Paramahansa Śuka, moreover, the phrase “he had no visible emblem” [246] is used to indicate the concealment of the emblem, because such a concealment is associated with the vow of nudity.

²⁴⁶While he was roaming the earth, the blessed son of Vyāsa [Śuka], rid of all care and content with the knowledge of his self, happened to come there. He had the appearance of an Avadhūta, he had no visible emblem, and he was surrounded by children.

²⁴⁷He was sixteen years old, with delicate feet, hands, thighs, arms, shoulders, cheeks, and body. He had a face with charming red eyes, a prominent nose, even ears, and fine eyebrows, and his beautiful neck was shaped like a conch.

²⁴⁸⁻²⁴⁹Flesh covered his collarbones, and his chest was broad and high. His navel was like an eddy, and his belly was handsome with many folds. He was dark and naked, with dishevelled curly hair. He captivated the hearts of women with his handsome youth, his charming body, and his enchanting smile. He had long hands and a delicate head. The sages rose from their seats to meet him. . . . [BhP 1.19.25-28]

^{251, 255}The following passage of the Aśvamedhika Parvan, furthermore, also indicates nothing more than the fact that Saṃvarta assumed the guise of a madman, because he is introduced as “virtuous” [*dhārmika*] and because he is said to be devoted to the special *dharma* of dwelling constantly in a holy place.

²⁵²The virtuous [*dhārmika*] son of Aṅgiras, O King, Saṃvarta by name, roams the wide world naked and bewildering the people. [MBh 14.6.18]

²⁵³Roaming at will in the guise of a madman, he dwells constantly in the city of Vārānasī. [MBh 14.6.22]

²⁴⁸⁻²⁴⁹ ‘Handsome youth’: The reading is uncertain. The edition of the Abh reads *sadāpīccalayā* [sic], which I have emended to *sadāpīcyavayo*, following the Nirṇaya Sāgar Press edition of the BhP.

²⁵⁰ I read *nagnacaryāparatvāl līngasya* in place of the reading of the Abh edition: . . . *paratvālīngasya*.

²⁵² The Abh edition reads *caṅkumate*, which I believe is a printing error and should read *caṅkramate*. The critical edition of the MBh reads *caṅkramīti dīśah*.

²⁵⁴He follows neither *dharma* nor *adharma*, neither good nor evil.
[Cf. MBh 14.19.7; 12.App.20.102.]

²⁵⁶It is, moreover, incorrect to explain the Ajagara narrative [MBh 12.172] in accordance with libertinism [cf. Abh 20n]. ²⁵⁷Thus, to Yudhiṣṭhira's question:

Thou knowest all modes of conduct! What mode would enable a man to roam the earth free from sorrow? And what should a man do to attain in this world the supreme state? [MBh 12.172.1]

Bhīṣma replied:

²⁵⁸On this point too they relate this ancient legend, the conversation between Prahāda and the sage Ajagara.

²⁵⁹The learned Prahāda, the wisest of the wise, O King, asked a certain wandering Brahmin who was even-minded and healthy.
[MBh 12.172.2-3]

²⁶⁰Prahāda:

You are composed, pure, gentle, and patient, and you seek complete indifference to the world. You have no ill will, and you are praiseworthy and highly esteemed. You are wise, but you wander among men like an idiot. [MBh 12.172.4]

²⁶¹With such words Prahāda's question first points out the virtues of the Brahmin, virtues which should be practised by those who desire liberation.

²⁶²You appear to stand above matters of *dharma*, wealth [*artha*], and pleasure [*kāma*]. You do not attend to *dharma* or concern yourself with wealth. Neither do you occupy yourself with pleasure. [MBh 12.172.6-7]

This statement made there also refers only to optional rites and so forth, for otherwise it would contradict what is said a little later about his accepting lawful [*dharmya*] food [cf. MBh 12.172.24: below 271]. ²⁶³Questioned by Prahāda, the Brahmin asserts there the impermanence of all things, and goes on to say:

²⁶⁴When a man knows the beginning and the end of things, what remains there for him to do? [MBh 12.172.13]

²⁶⁵Seeing all creatures in the embrace of death, I look upon everything as the same. Soundly I sleep; there is nothing that I need to do. [MBh 12.172.18]

²⁶⁶I eat any meal I get by chance, be it ever so large. But many a day I go to sleep without any food. [MBh 12.172.19]

²⁶² The Abh edition reads *dharmopabhoga*-. I have emended it to *dharmyopabhoga*-, following verse 271 below.

²⁶⁷Sometimes a lot of rich food comes my way, and at other times very little. Sometimes I obtain nothing at all. [MBh 12.172.20]

²⁶⁸Sometimes I eat a little grain, and at other times I even eat oil-cakes. I eat rice and meat, rich as well as poor food. [MBh 12.172.21]

²⁶⁹I wear rags, and I also wear hemp, linen, and skin. Some days I even wear very expensive clothes. [MBh 12.172.23]

²⁷⁰Some nights I sleep on a bed, and other nights on the bare ground. It happens that sometimes I even sleep in palaces. [MBh 12.172.22]

²⁷¹I do not refuse lawful food that comes my way by chance, and I do not pine for what is difficult to get. [MBh 12.172.24]

²⁷²Keeping pure, I practise this python [*ajagara*] vow, which brings joy to the heart, and which the niggards cannot follow. In this vow food and drink are not obtained by forethought, and fate determines the proper time and place. [MBh 12.172.27]

²⁷³Keeping pure, I practise this python vow with true insight, realizing that joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty, pleasure and disgust, life and death, are all determined by fate. [MBh 12.172.30]

²⁷⁴(Keeping pure, I practise this python vow.) I have no fixed abode, and I possess naturally (the virtues of patience, self-restraint, austerity, and sincerity.) [MBh 12.172.32]

²⁷⁵Here too the author is careful to point out specifically that (Ajagara) has not departed from the *dharma*. He does so by using the term 'lawful' [*dharma*ya: 271] even when he describes the life style in which a person lives on what he happens to get by chance. ²⁷⁶Later on also in verses such as the following he teaches this mode of life and the avoidance of praise as consisting of total indifference:

²⁷⁷Without praising, without saluting, and without accepting gifts, wander alone in the wilderness, indifferent to the pairs of opposites and dwelling anywhere at all. [MBh 12.234.9]

²⁷⁸He who wears anything, who eats anything, and who sleeps anywhere at all – the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 12.237.12]

²⁷⁹He who desires not, nor performs rites, who salutes not, nor offers praise, who changes not, and whose actions have ceased – the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 12.237.24]

²⁷⁴ Deśika cites only the first words of this verse. I have supplied within parentheses the translation of the remaining section.

²⁸⁰He who, although alone, always considers himself complete like space, and for whom a crowd is like a deserted spot – the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 12.237.11]

²⁸¹He within whom words vanish like stones thrown into a well and do not return to the speaker – the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 12.237.8]

²⁸²He who has no upper garment, who sleeps without a mattress, who uses his hand as a pillow, and who remains tranquil – the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 12.261.29]

²⁸³He who shrinks from company as from a snake, from praise as from death, and from women as from a corpse—the gods call him a Brahmin. [MBh 3. App.19.65]

²⁸⁴It is quite clear that statements such as: “Having taken the vow of a silent sage, he remained silent (even when men spoke to him)” [BhP 5.5.29], teach only that one should pretend to be an idiot and the like.

²⁸⁵When the Lord noticed that this world was definitely opposed to the practice of yoga, he considered any resistance to it as abhorrent and he undertook the vow called ‘python’ [*ajagara*]. Thereafter he ate, drank, chewed, and passed urine while he was in a prone position. . . . [BhP 5.5.32]

Likewise, following the life style of cows, deer, and crows, he behaved like them, drinking and passing urine while he was walking, standing, and sitting down. [BhP 5.5.34]

These and all other seemingly perverse statements given there refer to a special vow of imitating the life style of pythons, cows, and deer, a vow that attracts the contempt of the world and assists in the practice of yoga.

²⁸⁶Consequently, it involves no contradiction when the text informs us that R̥ṣabha, who, in fact, led such a life, was subject to injunctions and prohibitions. ²⁸⁷In the very introduction (to his story), therefore, it is said: “Intending to undertake the *dharma* of Paramahamsas which is characterized by devotion, knowledge, and detachment . . .” [BhP 5.5.28].

^{288, 304}The word ‘though’ [*api*: 302] and other similar pointers make it clear that in the aforesaid manner statements such as the following given

²⁸⁵ The Abh edition reads *yogasyutthā(vyutthah?) pratīpam iha cakṣānas tat-prakṛtakarma bībhatsitam ājagaraṃ* . . . My reconstruction is based on the Nirṇaya Sāgar Press edition of the BhP.

³⁰⁰ The other teachers are: pigeon, python, sea, moth, bee, elephant, honey bee, deer, fish, the courtesan Piṅgalā, osprey, child, maiden, blacksmith, serpent, spider, and wasp. Cf. BhP 11.7.34. The symbolism of these teachers is explained in BhP 11.7.37–9.33.

later in the same work are hyperboles intended to praise the person who is firmly established in yoga:

²⁸⁹Seeing an Avadhūta Brahmin, handsome and wise, roaming about fearlessly, Yadu, who knew the *dharma*, asked him:

²⁹⁰Inactive as you are, O Brahmin, how have you acquired this sharp intelligence, endowed with which you, though wise, roam this world like a fool?

²⁹¹In this world men for the most part strive after *dharma*, wealth, pleasure, and the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of longevity, fame, and fortune.

²⁹²You, however, are competent, wise, clever, and handsome, and your speech is measured. Yet, like an idiot, or a lunatic, or a goblin, you have no desire to do anything at all.

²⁹³While people continue to be engulfed by the forest fire of passion and greed, you, a liberated man, are not burnt by that fire, like an elephant submerged in the waters of the Ganges.

²⁹⁴You have no contact with pleasures, and you live by yourself. We ask you, O Brahmin, what is the cause of the bliss that you find in yourself? Deign to answer us. [BhP 11.7.25–30]

^{295, 298}So requested, the Avadhūta Brahmin began:

^{296, 297, 299}I have many teachers, O King, to whom I have gone for wisdom. Receiving some wisdom from each of them I stand here liberated. Listen to who these teachers are: earth, air, space, water, fire, moon, sun, . . . I have resorted to these twenty-four teachers, O King. [BhP 11.7.32–35]

³⁰⁰Having thus enumerated the series of teachers, he said:

³⁰¹A yogin is like the wind. He pays no heed to merit and defect, and, although immersed in all sorts of sense objects everywhere, he is not attached to them. [BhP 11.7.40]

³⁰²A self-controlled man is like fire. Brilliant, blazing by reason of austerity, and unapproachable, he uses his stomach as a bowl, and he is not tainted by impurity even though he eats everything indiscriminately. [BhP 11.7.45]

³⁰³Sometimes hidden and sometimes visible, he is to be worshipped by those who seek freedom's bliss. He eats everywhere, burning away the past and future sins of those who offer him food. [BhP 11.7.46]

³⁰⁵The introductory question, moreover, shows that he possessed virtues such as non-possession and humility. ³⁰⁶The same point is made also in the reply. ³⁰⁷The proper meaning of the remark about eating everything,

therefore, is that, with regard to food he obtains at random, he has given up distinguishing the good from the bad.

³⁰⁸Some say that texts such as the following demonstrate the use of the hands as a begging bowl even when eating food other than that which is obtained at random:

³⁰⁹Let a sage follow the *mādhūkara* [bee-like: cf. Pm 45n] way without hurting the households. Let him eat small morsels just enough to sustain his body. [BhP 11.8.9]

³¹⁰He should not store away begged food for use in the evening or the next day. Let him not be a gatherer like a bee, but use his hand as a bowl to receive what is just sufficient for the stomach. [BhP 11.8.11]

³¹¹As the sun absorbs water with its rays and in due course releases it without clinging to it, so a yogin enjoys the objects with his senses and in due course lets them go without clinging to them. [BhP 11.7.50]

³¹²These also, on the contrary, refer to such things as the abandonment of durable begging bowls, because some permit renunciators at the time of begging to receive food in funnels made of old leaves.

³¹⁴A man who is established in knowledge, or who is detached from the world, or who is devoted to me, or who is totally indifferent should abandon the *āśramas* along with their distinctive emblems and live beyond the range of injunctions. [BhP 11.18.28]

³¹⁵Although he is wise, let him play around like a child. Although he is clever, let him act like a fool. Although he is learned, let him speak like a lunatic. Although he is an expert in the Veda, let him behave like a cow. [BhP 11.18.29]

³¹⁶A sage should eat food that he gets by chance, whether it is good or bad. Let him use clothes and a sleeping mat that he has similarly obtained. [BhP 11.18.35]

^{313, 317}This passage too found further on in the same work should be interpreted in the aforementioned manner as referring to the rule that while a person performs actions he should focus the mind on the thought that he is not the agent of his actions. ³¹⁸Otherwise, how can injunctions such as: "(He should) live beyond the range of injunctions," found in that very passage, obtain?

^{319, 322} I have not been able to identify this work of Vararuci.

³²⁰Let a wise man abandon those aspects of his condition associated with the body, lineage, and so forth, and defined by *varṇa* and *āśrama*, and fix his mind on the true condition of his self.

³²¹How can he continue to belong to a *varṇa* or an *āśrama* when he knows that the true nature of a Brahmin is the perpetual consciousness free from all attributes.

^{319, 322}This passage found in the Svarūpagrantha of Vararuci's work can be taken either as containing a teaching, under the assumption that Vararuci was a seer, or as making an argument. If it is the former, then the passage should be so construed as not to contradict the universally accepted statements of various seers, *smṛtis*, and so forth. It should then be taken as referring to an injunction connected with a special *dharma* of *varṇas* and *āśramas*, which *dharma* consists of contemplating the essence of the pure self in its true reality. If it is the latter, then those who respect authority should loathe it as the work of a wicked sophist – the root of all perversions of *dharma* – just as one loathes books such as the materialist text written by Bṛhaspati. ³²³The method employed above also explains the episode of Vidura.

³²⁴Muttering prayers, performing austerities, going on pilgrimage, taking to renunciation, performing incantations, and engaging in divine worship – these six cause women and Śūdras to fall from their caste.

Even though *smṛtis* such as this declare that muttering prayers, performing austerities, and so forth, which are outside (their *dharma* of) serving the husband or the three upper *varṇas*, cause women, Śūdras, and the like to fall from their caste, nevertheless, just as renunciation is authorized for superior Kṣatriyas, so even Śūdras and the like are permitted to perform certain types of vows. ³²⁵In their case the offense of abandoning the sacrificial cord and the like is inapplicable, because they do not possess these items even before (taking the vows). ³²⁶Those noble men who prac-

³²³ The method referred to is the general assumption that outrageous modes of conduct recorded in ancient texts were employed only to court dishonor and not to give up the *dharma* of *varṇas* and *āśramas*. Vidura is a well-known Mahābhārata character, the son of Vyāsa by a slave girl. Although of low birth, he is the ideal wise man of the MBh and the Purāṇas. I am not sure what episode is referred to here by Deśika.

³²⁴⁻³²⁵ The term 'vows' here seems to indicate some type of renunciation. Thus, women and Śūdras are permitted to adopt a renunciatory way of live. In their case, however, the absence of a sacrificial cord is not an offense, because they did not possess one even before their renunciation.

tised nudity did so only after attaining the acme of chastity. ³²⁷For the Vedas mention “seers girded with the wind” [RV 10.136.2] and “seers girded with the wind were ascetics and celibates” [TA 2.7]. ³²⁸They do not, however, mention (naked) people like you who own storehouses full of clothes, thread, and the like, who reject the distinctions between such things as Brahmins and outcastes, and milk and liquor, who resort to the wives of other people, who live like cattle and deer, and who continue to engage in procreation. ³²⁹Sanatkumāra and the like were naked because they remained children permanently, for the Vedas refer to these noble ones as children who were totally engrossed in the contemplation of Brahman alone. ³³⁰The nudity of Paśupati is a subsidiary element [cf. Śaṃ 48n] of a special Pāśupata vow; therefore, irrespective of whether it accords with or is contrary to *dharma*, it is totally unacceptable to those who are devoted to the Vedic *dharma*. ³³¹With regard to Śiva’s pattern of behavior, such as deluding the righteous wife of the sages, which is contrary to the teachings of the Veda, it is clearly stated there that Śiva, who was totally detached from sensual pleasure, had no intention of deceiving her. ³³²Even otherwise, those who admit his divine lordship should shun (such behavior) precisely because of his lordship, ³³³for it is said: “One should not imitate the gods.” ³³⁴The Mahāpāśupatas, furthermore, declare: “(The Lord) is autonomous and he is untainted even by actions contrary to the norms of the world and the teachings of the Veda.” ³³⁵Those who do not accept Śiva as the Lord, on the other hand, should excuse (such conduct) as resulting from the greatness of his lustre. ³³⁶For the *smṛtis* contain statements such as:

Transgression of the *dharma* and violence are found among the ancient sages. They committed no sin on account of the greatness of their lustre. A man of later times who, seeing their conduct, follows it, falls. [ĀpDh 2.13.7–9]

³³⁷This explains the spontaneous playfulness of the Lord of all [Kṛṣṇa], the blessed son of Vasudeva, whereby he confounded the judgment of the

³²⁹ Sanatkumāra appears as the teacher of Nārada in the ChU 7.1. Later tradition views him as one of the four or seven mind-born sons of Brahmā. The Harivaṃsa (12.14–16) considers him a renouncer who always remained as he was born. This explains his name, which means ‘perpetual child.’

³³¹ The story is about Arundhatī, the wife of the seven seers, who left her alone and went to the Himalayas. Śiva, assuming the guise of a Brahmin mendicant, came to her home and asked for food. Cf. MBh 9.47.28f.

³³⁴ This quotation is found also in Udayana’s Nyāyakusumāñjali (Kashi Sanskrit Series, 30; Vārānasi, 1957), pp. 15–16. There it reads: *lokavedaviruddhair api nirlepaḥ svatantraś ceti*.

cowherds' wives. ³³⁸Blessed Parāśara and others, moreover, have shunned such conduct, because it resulted from the fact that (Kṛṣṇa) was not subject to the law of *karma*. ³³⁹It is, moreover, said: "The wives of cowherds (attained union with him) through passion" [BhP 7.1.30], and, "Behavior corresponding to the love of the Lord is aimed only at liberation."

[OPPONENT]

³⁴⁰How is it possible that, on the one hand, he comes into being "to establish the *dharma*" [BhG 4.8] and, on the other, he disturbs it?

[AUTHOR]

That is not correct; we have already answered this objection. ³⁴¹During the time when he was outwardly pretending to be the son of the cowherd Nanda he had no obligation to follow the conduct proper to his own *varṇa* and *āśrama*. ³⁴²The Ābhīra women too were, in fact, divine damsels who in previous lives had performed a vow beseeching that the Lord alone be their husband. So, in their case one should look for the contemplation suitable for nymphs. ³⁴³It is not a fault for the Lord to grant to each the fruit he or she may desire. ³⁴⁴From the time, however, the Lord, acting as if he had realized that he was the son of Vasudeva, assumed the Kṣatriya *dharma* appropriate to the race of Yadu, he always observed all his duties with great care. ³⁴⁵Thus, for instance, it is narrated everywhere:

³⁴⁶There is nothing in the three worlds, O Pārtha, that I need to do, nor anything unattained that I need to gain. And yet I am engaged in work. [BhG 3.22]

³⁴⁷Likewise:

Mādhava took a bath, adorned himself, and performed the silent recitation. He then made a fire oblation and worshipped the rising sun.

³⁴⁸Similarly, when he brought back to life the foetus of Virāṭa's daughter burnt by the fire of Aśvatthāma's missile, the Lord himself, who had enjoyed over sixteen thousand women while he lived in the Vṛndāvana and who spent the prime of his youth amidst a multitude of cowherdesses, said:

³³⁸ Not being subject to *karma* is a characteristic of God: cf. Rāmānuja, Śrībhāṣya on VeS 1.6.7 (Univ. of Poona ed., p. 409), where the supreme being is called *akarmavaśyaḥ*. The reasoning here is that one who is not subject to *karma* need not worry about sin and virtue.

³⁴⁸ For the story see MBh 14.67-68 and BhP 1.8.7f.

³⁴⁹If I have been chaste, if I have spoken the truth, and if my sovereign power remains unimpeded – then may the infant live.
[MBh 14.68.*138]

[OPPONENT]

³⁵⁰Surely the epilogue of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad [6.21] establishes the state beyond the *āśramas* as the necessary condition of people who are entitled (to study) that Upaniṣad. This passage, therefore, enjoins that state, because it is something not hitherto obtained (by any other injunction).

[AUTHOR]

No, because that term [i.e., *atyāśramin*] can be explained either as indicating a person belonging to a special *āśrama* that is very eminent [*atīśayita*], or as indicating a person belonging to a particular *āśrama* that is beyond [*atīkrānta*] the three beginning with Vedic studentship, or else by using some other cogent reason. ³⁵¹Otherwise, the result is that this passage would openly contradict hundreds of Vedic, *smṛti*, *itihāsa*, and other authoritative texts whose meaning is perfectly clear.

[OPPONENT]

³⁵²By prescribing the abandonment of all duties texts such as the following do establish the state beyond the *āśramas*: “. . . performing only such actions as are needed for his body’s maintenance . . .” [BhG 4.21], “. . . he abandons all undertakings . . .” [BhG 12.16], “Having abandoned all duties . . .” [BhG 18.66].

[AUTHOR]

That is incorrect, for in each such instance the beginning and other indicators of meaning clearly point out the respective object (of the abandonment) as either the attachment to fruits, the belief that one is the author of one’s actions, and so forth, or areas of *dharma* different from those that (the text) is in the process of enjoining.

³⁵³I wish to know, O Mighty-armed, the true nature of renunciation. [BhG 18.1]

³⁵⁰ “By the power of austerity and the favor of god, the wise Śvetāśvatara duly spoke about the supreme and pure Brahman to those who had gone beyond the *āśramas* [*atyāśramin*], that which is pleasing to the company of seers.” ŚvU 6.21. — ‘Not hitherto obtained’: i.e., this state beyond the *āśramas* has not been enjoined previously. The claim, therefore, is that this passage contains a new and original injunction [*apūrvavidhi*].

³⁵² ‘Beginning and other . . .’: Cf. Nrd 157n.

³⁵⁴To Dhanañjaya, who had thus approached him with the desire of understanding the true nature of renunciation and abandonment, the Lord replied:

³⁵⁵Even these actions, however, should be done only after abandoning attachment and the (desire) for the fruits (of those actions): this, O Pārtha, is my surest and final judgment. [BhG 18.6]

³⁵⁶It is improper to renounce prescribed actions. To abandon them through delusion is said to constitute the 'Dark' type of abandonment. [BhG 18.7; cf. below 387]

^{357, 360}Consequently, even statements such as those cited below, though they are aimed at prohibiting every form of activity, should be explained by reference either to the liberated condition or to the condition of ecstatic rapture.

³⁵⁸The man, however, whose delight is but in the self, whose satisfaction is in the self, and who is totally content in the self, has nothing that he needs to do. [BhG 3.17]

³⁵⁹For him there is no purpose here in actions done or left undone, and he has no reliance on any being for any end. [BhG 3.18]

³⁶¹It is established, therefore, that terms such as 'renunciation' and 'abandonment' refer as appropriate either to a particular *āśrama* or to such things as the attachment to the fruits (of action) and the belief that one is the author of one's actions, and that they do not amount to libertinism [cf. Abh 20n].

³⁶²Some have obtained immortality not through rites, progeny, or wealth, but through renunciation. [MNU 227]

Renunciation, indeed, surpasses (all these lower austerities). [MNU 516]

That is why they say that renunciation has surpassed (all) these austerities. [MNU 538]

These passages, for example, and others such as those cited below, therefore, should also be explained as appropriate either with reference to a specific *dharma* and the like, or with reference to such acts as the offering of one's self.

For what purpose shall we continue to study, for what purpose shall we continue to sacrifice? [AitĀ 3.2.6]

³⁵⁷⁻³⁶⁰ Cf. Pm 178-9. Here Deśika follows Rāmānuja's commentary on the BhG 3.17, where Rāmānuja interprets the statement as referring to a person who has already reached *mokṣa*.

Our world is the self; so what is the use of offspring to us? [BāU 4.4.22]

³⁶³Consequently, even if we do find a statement on the abandonment of all *āśramas*, it should be interpreted only according to maxims given above [cf. 351, 370]. ³⁶⁴Such a statement, however, does not exist. ³⁶⁵On the contrary, the Veda first establishes the *āśramas* in the passage: “There are three divisions of *dharma*,” and goes on to declare that immortality is gained only by the knowers of Brahman who belong to an *āśrama*: “He who is established in Brahman attains immortality” [ChU 2.23]. ³⁶⁶The following passage teaches that a knower of Brahman who devotes himself to the householder’s *dharma* until death does not return to this life:

He, indeed, who conducts himself in that manner all his life reaches the world of Brahmā and he does not return again – he does not return again. [ChU 8.15.1]

³⁶⁷Passages such as the following, moreover, teach that rites devoid of knowledge produce temporary results, whereas rites accompanied by knowledge produce permanent results.

Whosoever, O Gārgi, without knowing this Imperishable (performs sacrifices, worships, performs austerities in this world for a thousand years, he obtains from them only a temporary result). [BāU 3.8.10]

³⁶⁸It is not possible, therefore, to abandon the *dharma* proper to one’s own *varṇa* and *āśrama* at any time during one’s life.

³⁶⁹There are other passages which are not found in acknowledged Vedas and *smṛtis*. Sinful people, because of their devotion to opinions that accord with their conduct, first interpolate them and then claim to find them in some Purāṇas that are not well known, or whose collections are lost, or whose beginnings and ends are not determined. These passages are not admitted in venerable assemblies distinguished for their meticulous study of express Vedic and other authoritative texts [cf. Pm 61n]. ³⁷⁰Even if such passages are considered authoritative, they should also be explained according to the maxim: “(A scriptural text) should be interpreted so as not to contradict well-known (scriptural texts).”

³⁷¹[3] It cannot be the third [cf. above 139n], because we find no text that points to the state beyond the *āśramas* [cf. 350–51].

[OPPONENT]

³⁷²In the case of a person liberated in this life, the state of not belonging to an *āśrama* is established by just presuming the existence of such a Vedic statement.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, for that state is without foundation, because (the doctrine of liberation in this life) has been refuted.

[OPPONENT]

³⁷³We can grant that all *āśramas* are abandoned by virtue of eternal liberation.

[AUTHOR]

That is not true, because the treatise containing instructions on the means of liberation, in the section that deals extensively with this topic, refutes also that (type of liberation).

³⁷⁴ [4] The fourth [cf. above 139n], on the other hand, is utterly perverse.

[OPPONENT]

³⁷⁵We accept the abandonment of all the *āśramas*, because it has been done by Gauḍapāda, Hari, and the like.

[AUTHOR]

Look! These prelates – a fallen Brahmin, a Śūdra's son, and the like – are not held up by the learned as examples of proper conduct. You, who follow their example, are likewise shunned by the learned. ³⁷⁶Moreover, in that case why don't you accept the doctrines of even the Buddhists, the materialists, and so forth, for they have been followed by Dharmakīrti and the like? ³⁷⁷For even if you follow them your liberation will not be obstructed!

³⁷² 'Presumption' [*arthāpatti*] is a recognized means of cognition [*pramāṇa*] in Mīmāṃsā. The classical example is that of a man who is fat, although he is never seen to eat during the day. So we presume that he eats at night. Similarly, here the express Vedic text [cf. Pm 61n] declares the state of liberation in this life. Then we must presume that there should be texts lost or unknown to us that prescribe the state beyond the *āśramas*, because a liberated person is not subject to rules. — 'Refuted': Vedānta Deśika refutes the doctrine of *jīvanmukti* in the 31st chapter of his *Śatadūṣaṇī*.

³⁷³ I am not sure what is meant by 'eternal liberation' [*nityamukti*]. It may mean that one can abandon the *āśramas* in anticipation of or with respect to the liberation that will come after death.

³⁷⁵ Hari, in all probability, refers to Bhartr̥hari. Both Gauḍapāda and Bhartr̥hari had a bad reputation in orthodox Brahmin circles. Gauḍapāda was sympathetic to Buddhism, and Bhartr̥hari is said to have at one time become a Buddhist monk. Cf. S. DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Reprint; Delhi, 1975), I, pp. 423–424; S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Indian Philosophy* (Reprint; New York, 1962), II, p. 465.

[OPPONENT]

³⁷⁸That is true; but as long as we live we need to have a livelihood. So we comport ourselves in a manner that would gratify the people.

[AUTHOR]

At last you have let out this hidden truth! ³⁷⁹This is the secret of the materialist practice. So by attacking the latter we attack the former also. ³⁸⁰For even you do not openly admit materialists into your assemblies. Neither do you openly favor the name 'materialist.'

[OPPONENT]

³⁸¹Surely, you cannot deny that the epithet 'Brahman-knower' is used with reference to us.

[AUTHOR]

That is right. ³⁸²But we maintain that it is founded on an error, and is, therefore, as meaningless as the contemporary use of 'seer' and other similar terms among the Digambara Jains and the like.

[OPPONENT]

³⁸³In holy places you yourself address us as 'knowers of the truth.'

[AUTHOR]

So what?

[OPPONENT]

³⁸⁴(We possess) truly the knowledge of the truth.

[AUTHOR]

That is nonsense. We use this title either to mock you or having regard to times when we gain something by rites that depend on you.

³⁸⁵ [5] It cannot even be the fifth [cf. above 139n], because that would result in sinfulness [*adharmā*]. ³⁸⁶You contend that you abandon all *dharma* because following the *dharma* of your *āśrama* causes you distress and you fear that it would disrupt your contemplation of the self. This may well be a true and sincere statement. Nevertheless, the Vedas, the *smṛtis*, and other authoritative texts are enraged when the *dharma* is neglected by able men. The certain conclusion, therefore, is that such people must either renew themselves by performing a penance or fall into hell. ³⁸⁷For this type of abandonment is said to be the 'passionate' [cf. 355]:

³⁸⁸If a man abandons an action, deeming it painful, through fear of bodily distress, his abandonment is the passionate type, and he shall never reap the fruit of abandonment. [BhG 18.8]

³⁸⁹ [6] The sixth [cf. above 139n], on the other hand, would be a splendid reason if the disability is natural and absolutely true, ³⁹⁰for rules have no force with regard to those who are disabled. ³⁹¹There exists no real disability, however, because, on the one hand, we see no difference between (you) and other able people who follow the rules, and, on the other, it contradicts the testimony of your own heart. ³⁹²There are, moreover, other witnesses of human conduct:

³⁹³Sun and Moon, Wind and Fire,
Heaven and Earth, Water, one's heart, and Yama,
Day and Night, both the Twilights, and Dharma –
They know the deeds a man commits. [MBh 1.68.29]

³⁹⁴Even in conditions such as that of a widower it is clear that a person should practise, for instance, the *dharma* common to all. If he deviates from that he has to do a penance, and if he fails to do it he falls into hell.

³⁹⁵ [7] Neither can it be the seventh [cf. above 139n], for, on the one hand, it is annulled by the entire body of general rules, and, on the other, it is nowhere specifically stated. It is impossible, therefore, that sins deliberately committed could ever be non-defiling.

[OPPONENT]

³⁹⁶Surely, you people purify even the lowest born men, calling them the devotees of the Lord. You too are thus bent on the destruction of established rules of conduct. Hence this is a feature common to us all. So what makes you different from us?

[AUTHOR]

That is not true. ³⁹⁷What is it that you suggest as the cause of this destruction? a) Is it the respect we show to those men after they have been liberated by setting up their images, worshipping them, and so forth? b) Or is it our acknowledgment, by leaving out, for instance, marks of disrespect in our dealings with them, that while still alive they are superior to others?

^{398a)} It cannot be the first. Nescience, karmic residues, the connection to a physical body, and the like have been totally eliminated in them by the special power derived from worshipping the Lord, and their identity with the Lord has been made manifest. As such they are not connected to a particular caste. Treatises on the setting up and the worship of the images of devotees, nevertheless, note that one should make images of them corresponding to the appearance they formerly had on earth so as to exclude other people. Following the authority of the appropriate texts, these treatises then prescribe from among the teachings on the topic of

worship only that form of worship that is appropriate for each case. Now, how can you infer that this causes the destruction of *dharmā*?³⁹⁹ It is established that, according to the Vedic text: “(They traverse) these worlds” [TU 3.10.5], these, who in the liberated state are equal to Ananta, Garuḍa, and Viśvaksena, perform such acts as following the Lord.

⁴⁰⁰b) It cannot be the second either, because while they are present in this body the esteem given to them does not go far enough to create such a destruction. ⁴⁰¹We respect in them the eminence they have achieved over others in their caste by their devotion to the Lord. ⁴⁰²But we do not actually deny as you do the very distinction among castes and so forth. Such a denial would cause the destruction of the established rules of conduct. ⁴⁰³It cannot be said that, since we avoid certain types of relationships with them in accordance with their caste and the like, we should also show marks of disrespect to them, even though they are devotees of the Lord. True, as required by time, we avoid contact with them, just as we do in the case of our own mother who shares female qualities. If we are to remain faithful to the scriptures, however, it does not follow that we should show marks of disrespect to them or to her, because they are eminently qualified to receive mental and verbal expressions of esteem, as ascertained by hundreds of passages in the Purāṇas and *itihāsas*, and statements of the Lord. ⁴⁰⁴Now, the Lord has said:

“Let a wise man not treat with contempt my devotees, even though they may be equal to Śūdras.”

⁴⁰⁵All of us assuredly obey the rule that elephants, horses, birds, cattle, deer, and the like, as well as domestic priests, ministers, generals, queens, hump-backs, dwarfs, deaf men, and others who have attained a rank of honor by their association with the king, and who, above all, should not be treated with contempt, have qualities dissimilar to those native to their respective classes. There can be no fault, then, when we obey the same rule also with regard to the people who have resorted to the Lord; the maxim says: “The Lord, the King of kings, should be treated like a king.”

⁴⁰⁶It is well known from the Purāṇas that (these devotees) were various incarnations of the earliest devotees such as Ananta and Garuḍa. ⁴⁰⁷Following the treatises on setting up images of devotees, one should ascertain that the setting up of their images, their worship, and so forth,

⁴⁰³ ‘Mother’: One avoids contact with one’s mother during her monthly period, yet one does not show disrespect to her.

⁴⁰⁶⁻⁴⁰⁷ Here the reference is to low caste devotees who have died and who are now regarded as saints.

are to be carried out in the same way as, for example, those of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and the other incarnations of the Lord.

That concludes the Alepakamatabhaṅgavāda, the sixty-fifth argument of the Śatadūṣaṇī.