

# Against Vedanta:

## Śālikanātha on the Upaniṣads

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**ABSTRACT:** This article looks at a controversy between two major thinkers of the eighth and ninth centuries CE, Maṇḍana and Śālikanātha, regarding the interpretation of the Upaniṣads and the theories of language that are involved in their respective interpretations. In Maṇḍana's view, the Upaniṣads alert us to the non-dual nature of the self. In arguing for this position, he criticizes the view of Prabhākara, according to whom the Upaniṣads cannot simply communicate facts, because the authority of the Vedas, of which they form a part, extends only to the actions that it enjoins. Śālikanātha responds to Maṇḍana's criticism at length, and in so doing offers a more detailed account than Prabhākara had offered of the action-oriented nature of language and the relationship between the meaning and the effect of a linguistic expression. Śālikanātha categorically rejects Maṇḍana's non-dualism (*advaitam*) on the philosophical grounds that any argument *for* non-dualism would actually turn out to undermine it, and on the hermeneutical grounds that the passages of the Upaniṣads which are commonly understood to support non-dualism can be interpreted in a way that is consistent with Śālikanātha's dualist view of the self.

## 1 Getting personal

Śālikanātha (ca. 9<sup>th</sup> c.) devotes much of his *Prakaraṇapañcikā* ("Topical Elaborations") to reviewing and critically assessing ideas on a variety of topics.<sup>1</sup> In general, he approaches this task with fairness and sensitivity. There are a number of authors whom he accords the highly respectful title *bhagavān*. This group includes Pāṇini and Kāśyapa (better known to scholars as Kaṇāda, the author of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*), whom he mentions by name, as well as important Mīmāṃsakas, whom he identifies by their contribution to the system: the *sūtrakāra* (Jaimini), the *bhāṣyakāra* (Śabara), the *vārttikakāra* (Kumārila), and

1. Only relative dates are available for Śālikanātha and Maṇḍana. Maṇḍana knows Kumārila, Prabhākara and Dharmakīrti (all arguably 7<sup>th</sup> c.), and most importantly, his *Bhāvanāvivēkaḥ* was commented upon by Umbēka, who is referred to by Kamalaśīla in the later 8<sup>th</sup> c. Thrasher (1993: 127) suggests somewhere between 660 and 720 for Maṇḍana's *floruit*. As for Śālikanātha, he knows Maṇḍana, and is known to Vācaspatī (10<sup>th</sup> c.) and arguably Jayanta (late 9<sup>th</sup> c.), so a late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> c. date has been proposed (e.g., Verpoorten 2018). I think it is at least possible that Śālikanātha was a younger contemporary of Maṇḍana, especially given their adversarial relationship.

the *ṭikākāra* (Prabhākara).<sup>2</sup> There are other authors whom he quotes but never names. This group includes Dharmakīrti, whom Śālikanātha quotes more than anyone else, sometimes in agreement and sometimes in disagreement.<sup>3</sup> The *Prakaraṇapañcikā* itself is organized by topics — hence the title — and rarely involves a point-by-point refutation of other authors’ views.

Śālikanātha thus generally avoids the polemical style that other authors sometimes adopt toward their intellectual adversaries — for example, Pārthasārathi’s polemics against Śālikanātha himself in his *Nyāyaratnamālā* (“Jewel-Garland of Reasoning”). But there is one exception: Maṇḍana (8<sup>th</sup> c.). In a number of his essays, Śālikanātha presents Maṇḍana’s views, often in a paraphrase rather than a direct quotation, and then criticizes them. His criticism of Maṇḍana is much more harsh and dismissive than of any other author. He never mentions Maṇḍana by name, exactly. But I doubt that it is a coincidence that, when arguing against Maṇḍana’s positions, he calls his imagined opponent a “dimwit” (*manda*, *mandadhī*) on several occasions.<sup>4</sup> In what I think is a similarly punning insult, he introduces Maṇḍana’s ideas at one point by attributing them to “someone whose critical faculties are impaired by enormous arrogance about his own superficial knowledge” (see below, p. 193). Maṇḍana had styled three of his works as “critical analyses” (*Vibhramavivēka*, *Vidhivivēka*, and *Bhāvanāvivēka*), and Śālikanātha surely meant to suggest that these works were vitiated by Maṇḍana’s arrogance. In several other places he refers to him as “someone who hasn’t studied other people’s work,” and mentions his “shoddy reasoning made entirely out of his own ideas.”<sup>5</sup>

Maṇḍana was Śālikanātha’s true intellectual adversary. Maṇḍana was one of the first authors to make important contributions to a number of different intellectual systems, among them Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsā, and Vēdānta. Śālikanātha, too, wrote commentarial works about two very different systems — Mīmāṃsā and Vaiśeṣika — and read deeply in still others. Maṇḍana wrote about several topics, such as the theory of error, the meaning of injunctive sentences, and the nature of the self, that Śālikanātha would later write about himself. And in those writings, Śālikanātha engages with Maṇḍana in both content and form: it is no coincidence that both authors have presented their theory of error in verse (the *Vibhramavivēkaḥ* and *Nayavīthiḥ*), and both have presented their analysis of injunctive sentences in verses supported by an extensive prose commentary (the *Vidhivivēkaḥ* and *Vākyārthamāṭṛkā*). Moreover, although much more work is needed to understand Maṇḍana’s intellectual project as a whole, two things about it are clear: within Mīmāṃsā, he absolutely rejected Prabhākara’s views on the nature of language; beyond Mīmāṃsā, he regarded the hermeneutical and theoretical justification of the non-dualism of the Upaniṣads — what would later be called Advaita Vēdānta — to be an urgent intellectual task. Śālikanātha, by contrast, consistently took it upon himself to defend the views of Prabhākara, whom he

2. See *Prakaraṇapañcikā*, pp. 21, 27, 457, 452; *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, pp. 116, 191, 330, 358, 366, 691.

3. Śālikanātha occasionally refers to him with what appears to be a nickname, *kīrti*; see *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 78.

4. See the passages quoted in footnotes 102, 116, and 81.

5. See *Jātinirṇayaḥ* p. 98 (*anākalitaparavacanasya*) and p. 100 (*svamanīṣānirmitakutarkabalēna*).

called his *guru*, and he dismissed Vēdānta, which he called *Brahmavāda*, as a fundamentally misconceived and irrational enterprise.<sup>6</sup>

These similarities and contrasts by themselves would suggest that Śālikanātha saw himself as an anti-Maṇḍana, seeking to redeem the legacy of Prabhākara in particular, whom Maṇḍana had attacked, and Mīmāṃsā in general, which Maṇḍana had subordinated to Vēdānta.<sup>7</sup> This adversarial relationship may have been even more intense if, as I suspect, both authors were scholar-teachers in the educational institutions of Mithilā.<sup>8</sup>

## 2 Points of contention

This paper will focus on one particular area of disagreement between these two thinkers: their interpretation of the Upaniṣads.

Maṇḍana’s principal concern is to provide a philosophical basis for the claim that statements in the Upaniṣads which appear to describe the nature of the self should be taken at face value, i.e., as statements of fact. From the perspective of the philosophy of language in the modern Euro-American context, there is no reason to expect this claim to be controversial. In the modern context, statements of fact have long been the primary analytical objects of the philosophy of language: the principal questions have clustered around the mapping of linguistic expressions onto states of affairs that can be evaluated in terms of their truth or falsity. Why would we interpret statements of fact as anything *other* than statements of fact?

The dominant framework of interpretation in Maṇḍana’s time, however, was Mīmāṃsā. Mīmāṃsā conceived of the Veda primarily as a source of knowledge for *dharma*, that is to say, ritual obligations. The Veda’s authority was founded on the fact that, without it, human beings would have no way of knowing that, for instance, they are to perform a daily *agni-hōtra* sacrifice if they fall into a particular social category. Hence, among the various kinds of statements found in the Veda, it accords primary importance to ritual injunctions, and interprets all of the other kinds of statements — such as hymns of praise and mythological narrative — as subordinate to them. A basic tenet of Mīmāṃsā is that statements of fact found in the Veda, such as “their faces glow,” are always *for the sake of* an injunction. The statements themselves may be true, or they may be false, or they may be neither. Their truth is, strictly speaking, irrelevant to their function within the text, which is to provide support to a ritual action described elsewhere, usually in the form of stimulating the listener’s interest in performing the ritual. Mīmāṃsā claims that the Veda is reliable (*pramāṇam*) only

6. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 340.

7. See Kuppaswami Sastri (1984 [1937]: xxxiii-xxxiv) for the subordination of Mīmāṃsā to spiritual reflection in the *Brahmasiddhi*.

8. Both Śālikanātha and Maṇḍana had the honorific title *mīśra*, which is characteristic of, although not exclusive to, the Brahmins of Mithilā. Śālikanātha also uses the title for other respected teachers, including Kumārila. Śālikanātha had the title *mahāmahōpadhyāyaḥ*, which, to my very limited knowledge, is mostly used among scholars in Mithila and Bengal. He sometimes mentions that he has written certain works for his students (e.g., the concluding verse of his *Vimalāñjanam*, p. 310 in the *Prakaraṇapañcikā*). Hagiographies of Śaṅkara (e.g., *Śaṅkaradigvijayaḥ*) say that Maṇḍana’s family was from Bihar.

regarding what it tells us to *do*. It never tells us what is *the case*, and hence it cannot be taken to be reliable regarding apparent statements of fact.

The standard Mīmāṃsā position was pressed even further by Prabhākara, who developed a general theory of language according to which the meaning of any utterance, including statements of the Veda and statements in everyday life, depends on what the utterance *does* in the broader framework of discourse or conversation. For Prabhākara, and his commentator Śālikanātha, words always mean what they mean in relation to an effect (*kāryam*). What happens to statements of fact on this position? Prabhākara’s notion of the “meaning” of a statement is not the truth-conditional notion that is usually applied to statements of fact. The concept of “truth” itself is narrower than the concept of “validity” (*prāmāṇyam*) which Indian philosophers critically applied to all sources of knowledge, but it is not immediately obvious whether “validity” has the same significance, and is evaluated in the same way, for every type of statement. Thus the Mīmāṃsā position in general, and Prabhākara’s position in particular, threatens to render the statements of the Upaniṣads, which in Maṇḍana’s reading reveal truths about the nature of reality, invalid regarding the things that they appear to be about. “Invalid,” in this context, does not necessarily mean that the states of affairs they disclose are false — although Śālikanātha will argue that they are — but that those states of affairs are not the *kinds* of things for which the Veda, or indeed language in general, can legitimately be used as an epistemic instrument.

Hence the Upaniṣads occasion a heated debate between Maṇḍana, who attempts to refute Prabhākara’s views, and Śālikanātha, who attempts to defend them. This article will follow this debate closely.<sup>9</sup> Its first part will focus on the arguments that Maṇḍana gives, toward the beginning of his *Brahmasiddhiḥ* (“Proof of Brahma,” pp. 22–26), for his claim that the Upaniṣads express facts about Brahma and the self. I will then turn to Śālikanātha’s restatement and critique of these arguments, which appears in both his *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā* (“Straightforward and Lucid Elaboration,” pp. 20–23) and in his *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* (“Overview of the Epistemic Instruments,” pp. 239–242), in slightly different forms. The former is Śālikanātha’s running commentary on the *Bṛhatī* (“Long [Commentary]”) of Prabhākara on the entire Mīmāṃsā system. The latter is the sixth essay in his *Prakaraṇapañcikā*, a collection of essays ranging over various philosophical topics. The *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* reviews all six of the epistemic instruments accepted by Mīmāṃsakas, and Śālikanātha discusses Maṇḍana’s argument in the context of *śāstram*, i.e., the Veda. In his response, Śālikanātha not only addresses the arguments from the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, but brings in a number of other arguments that Maṇḍana made throughout his work, including the claim that deontic statements (“one should do *x*”) can, in certain circumstances, be reduced to statements of fact (“*x* is a means to a desired end”), which is the central argument of Maṇḍana’s *Vidhivivēkaḥ* (“Analysis of Injunctions”). Śālikanātha also criticizes this argument in his best-known essay, the *Vākyārthamātrkā* (“Fundamentals of Sentence Meaning,” pp. 427–428), although I will not discuss that essay here.

9. I will generally paraphrase rather than translate the passages concerned, in part because translations of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ* are already available (Biardeau 1969; Vetter 1969) and, with luck, translations of Śālikanātha’s works will be prepared soon.

The second part will focus on what Śālikanātha actually makes of the statements in the Upaniṣads. As we will see, Śālikanātha sees no compelling reason to treat these statements as valid regarding the facts they allegedly disclose. Hence his reading is primarily deconstructive: were we to take these statements at face value, he argues, we would believe things that are manifestly contradicted by both experience and reason. He makes this argument in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* (p. 224). In another essay, the *Tattvālōkaḥ* (“Outlook on the Nature [of the Self],” pp. 335–336), he is even more polemical, and criticizes the very foundations of non-dualistic Vēdānta as irrational. Śālikanātha is possibly the earliest critic of non-dualistic Vēdānta, but later on Pārthasārathi — a Mīmāṃsaka, like Śālikanātha, but a follower of Kumārila rather than Prabhākara — would also take a dismissive attitude toward Vēdānta (Venkatkrishnan 2020: 180).

The interpretation of the Upaniṣads, and the theory of language that is called upon in that project, are not the only topics on which Maṇḍana and Śālikanātha disagreed. Śālikanātha, to give one example, seems to refer to Maṇḍana’s *Bhāvanāvivēkaḥ* (“Analysis of Actualization”) when he distinguishes between the type of “actualization” that he accepts, which is specifically linked to injunctive forms, and the more generic type Maṇḍana discusses (*Vākyārthamāṭṛkā* p. 426). Maṇḍana’s views on *karma* as an ontological category, developed once again in his *Bhāvanāvivēkaḥ*, also come in for criticism at least twice in Śālikanātha’s works (*Prakaranapañcikā* pp. 215–216 and *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā* 98–100). Similarly Śālikanātha’s theory of error, developed in his *Nayavīthiḥ* (“Byway of Reasoning”) is almost certainly a direct response to the theory Maṇḍana developed in his *Vibhramavivēkaḥ* (“Analysis of Error”).

### 3 On the nature of language

After setting out the nature of Brahma at the beginning of his *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, Maṇḍana poses the question of what epistemic instrument (*pramāṇam*) allows us to know about Brahma (p. 22). He quickly rejects five of the six that Mīmāṃsakas had accepted: perception, inference, analogy, postulation, and absence. When it comes to the last one, textual tradition (*āgamaḥ*), he begins by setting out an opponent’s position, which is clearly based on the view of language that Prabhākara enunciates in *Bṛhatī* 1.1.2 (pp. 20–41). According to this position, it is impossible for a textual tradition to tell us anything about Brahma, because language in general falls into two categories: statements that depend for their validity (*prāmāṇyam*) on other epistemic instruments, and statements that don’t. The statements of human beings belong to the first category. Human statements ultimately depend either upon one of the other five epistemic instruments, or upon other statements that have not originated from human beings. Given that Brahma is inaccessible to the other five epistemic instruments, we conclude, by elimination, that the only way to know about Brahma is through statements that are not of human origin and that are therefore independent (*svatantraḥ*) from all of the other epistemic instruments, that is, through statements of the Veda. The crucial question is therefore whether statements of the Veda can, in fact, tell us about Brahma.

### 3.1 Maṇḍana's Prābhākara opponent

According to the opponent's position, it is impossible to come to know of Brahma from statements of the Veda. The reason is that statements of the Veda, insofar as they are statements at all, must ultimately point to "something to be done" (*kāryam*). The idea that language is intrinsically oriented toward "something to be done," or as I will call it here, an effect, is Prabhākara's signature contribution to the philosophy of language. This idea could, in principle, be developed in many different ways. The effects to which Prabhākara himself understood the statements of the Veda to ultimately refer are ritual actions: "one should perform the *agnihōtra* oblation as long as one lives" refers, by way of the modal form of the verb, to an obligation to perform a ritual action. Prabhākara's project, and the project of Mīmāṃsā more broadly, was to formulate a series of principles by which any given statement of the Veda could be related to an effect of this type. Prabhākara maintained two closely-related positions — that the meanings expressed by words in a particular discursive unit are relational (*anvitābhīdhānam*), and that the element of meaning to which all others in a particular discursive unit are ultimately related is an effect (*kāryānvitābhīdhānam*) — that would later be elaborated and defended by Śālikanātha in his two-part essay, *Vākyārthamāṭṛkā*. I review these points, well-known as they are, because Maṇḍana clearly understood them to be in conflict with the idea that the Veda can tell us about Brahma.

The content of these purported statements about Brahma, such as "Brahma is bliss," is a state of affairs (*arthaḥ*, *vastu*, or *tattvam*) that already exists (*sthita-*, *bhūta-*, *vyavasthita-* or *siddha-*).<sup>10</sup> I will call such states of affairs "facts," to distinguish them from effects, which are states of affairs that do not yet exist: the content of "he shut the door" is a fact, whereas the content of "please shut the door" is an effect. Maṇḍana's imagined opponent gives four reasons why we cannot understand a fact from the Veda alone.

First, the Veda consists exclusively of injunctions and prohibitions, and it is impossible that such statements refer primarily to facts.<sup>11</sup> The premise of this argument is merely assumed, although Maṇḍana will later reject it. One reason, however, for thinking that the Veda consists exclusively of injunctions and prohibitions is the argument, mentioned subsequently, that the way language is learned means that it is independently valid only with reference to effects, whereas its validity regarding facts is parasitic upon other epistemic instruments.

Second, although injunctions and prohibitions often, and perhaps necessarily, make reference to certain states of affairs that, from the perspective of the statement, are already the case, nevertheless such statements are not epistemic instruments themselves for those states of affairs; rather, they are included in injunctions and prohibitions only as "presuppositions" that are known from other epistemic instruments.<sup>12</sup> This argument refers to the

10. It may be possible that Maṇḍana intends something slightly different by these terms, for instance *arthaḥ* may correspond more toward a "proposition" that involves some form of predication, whereas *vastu* may correspond to an existing "thing," but I have not been able to detect such differences in this particular passage.

11. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 23: *nāpi svatantraḥ, vidhiniṣēdharūpatvāt, tayōś ca sthitē tattvē 'sambhavāt.*

12. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 23: *nāpi tadanapēkṣam vyavasthitavastuviṣayam ēva prāmāṇyam, bhūtānūvādatvē pramāṇāntarāpēkṣatvāt.*

articulation of sentences into a topic (*anuvādaḥ*), which consists of given information, and a focus (*vidhiḥ*), which consists of new information.<sup>13</sup> What is actually enjoined or prohibited is focused, and hence the statement itself is the epistemic instrument for the future action that is either enjoined or prohibited, but the statement may refer to other elements of meaning that are presumed to be known from other epistemic instruments and that are therefore topical. A statement such as “purchase a red calf” is an epistemic instrument only for purchasing, which is something to be done, not for the existence of red calves, which is presupposed.

The third argument holds that, because of the way language is learned, statements about things that are beyond the realm of human experience could not actually be understood. This is a variation on Prabhākara’s well-known argument about language acquisition (*Bṛhatī*, p. 187). We learn the connection (*sambandhaḥ*) between a word and its meaning from everyday life (*lōkaḥ*), and in everyday life, words are always used in relation to an effect (*kāryam*). The reason for this is that only under such circumstances would the use of words serve any purpose (*arthaḥ*). A statement that has no bearing on someone engaging in or desisting from an action (*pravṛtti-nivṛtti*) has no purpose.<sup>14</sup> Language learning has to be based on statements that are “response-eliciting” (*pravartaka-*, literally “causing someone to engage in an action”) rather than statements of fact (*bhūtānuvādaḥ*), because the meaning that a language learner associates with a linguistic expression is the content of a cognition that he or she infers upon seeing a person engage in a particular action.<sup>15</sup> The idea, introduced by Prabhākara and developed at length by Śālikanātha, is that every person comes to learn a language by observing the way that linguistic expressions are connected to practical activity (*vyavahāraḥ*): if a child observes that person A says to person B, “drive the cow,” and subsequently observes person B engaged in the action of driving the cow, he or she will infer (a) that person B acted on the basis of a cognition, the content of which is identical to the action in which that person subsequently engaged; and (b) that the source of person B’s cognition was the statement “drive the cow”; and (c) that the content of the inferred cognition (the driving of the cow) is the meaning of the expression “drive the cow.” A language learner cannot follow this procedure for statements that do not result in action — statements of fact, let us say — and consequently cannot learn the meanings of the relevant linguistic expressions. Hence it would appear that linguistic expressions that refer to facts could not be learned and therefore could not express their meanings.<sup>16</sup> This seems to be an odd conclusion. It is one thing to say that the usual path to understanding the meaning of a *sentence* is blocked when that sentence has no observable consequences in the real world. It is another thing to say that language *per se* cannot express facts. It would seem to undermine the idea, which is so central to the analysis of language in the Euro-American tradition, that

13. I intend to motivate these translations more fully in future work.

14. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 23: *lōkāc ca śabdāsāmarthyādhigamaḥ, tatra kāryaparatayaiva kāryānvayiṣv arthēṣu padāni prayujyantē, tathārthavattvāt, na hi pravṛttinivṛttisūnyasya vacasaḥ kaścid arthaḥ.*

15. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 23: *api ca na bhūtānuvādād vacasaḥ sambandhāvagamaḥ, api tu pravartakāt. pravṛtṭyā anumāyārthapratyayaṁ tatra śabdasya sāmartyapratīṭēḥ.*

16. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *tathā ca na pravṛttisambandharahitēṣv arthēṣu śabdānām śaktir gamyatē. tathā saty anavagatasāmarthyāḥ śabdā bhūtē ’rthē katham tad avagamayēyuh.*

the content of a linguistic expression might be a proposition which can be evaluated as true or false. Can it really be that sentences such as “the cow is white” fail to express a meaning?

At this point it helps to distinguish between two classes of linguistic expressions (*śabdāḥ*): sentences (*vākyāni*) and subsentential expressions, including words (*padāni*). Prabhākara, and Maṇḍana’s imagined opponent, maintain that sentences are the primary units of discourse, and language learners determine the meanings of subsentential expressions by attending to how the presence or absence of individual words corresponds to changes in observed states of affairs. The question is therefore how we are able to understand the unique contribution that a subsentential expression makes to the meaning of one sentence, for instance “cow” in “drive the cow,” such that we could subsequently understand a statement of fact in which that expression occurs, for example “the cow is white.” In the case of things like cows, it is easy enough to see how this happens: one can observe the kinds of things with reference to which the word “cow” is used in everyday life. But it is difficult to see how one could ever understand the meaning of an expression like “Brahma” which is, *ex hypothesi*, otherwise outside the realm of human experience. For either we understand what “Brahma” means already on the basis of other epistemic instruments, in which case the statements of the Veda are not the epistemic instrument through which we understand it, or we don’t, in which case which the statements of the Veda, once again, cannot be the epistemic instrument through which we understand it: for if we are unable to understand what a word like “Brahma” means in the first place, we cannot understand a statement in which it occurs.<sup>17</sup>

We can term this requirement, according to which the hearer of a sentence must have already made a connection (*sambandhaḥ*) between every subsentential expression and its real-world referent, the “known entity constraint.” This constraint can be interpreted in a number of ways, but if we were to invoke Frege’s distinction between sense and reference, we might say that, according to Maṇḍana’s opponent, a subsentential expression cannot convey a sense unless it has previously been known to have a reference. There are various ways of getting around this constraint: for instance, the standard example of a non-existent entity, a “sky-flower,” ought to convey no sense because it has no reference, but it can be analyzed as a composite expression made from two expressions that satisfy the constraint. Maṇḍana’s opponent formulates the constraint as follows: “For the meaning of a word can become the meaning of a sentence insofar as it is qualified; by contrast, something that is not understood from a word, since it can never be observed at all, cannot be introduced into the meaning of a sentence, either as a subordinate element or as the primary element.”<sup>18</sup> This formulation, besides being too strong for reasons discussed below, presupposes a compositional or “bottom-up” theory of sentence-meaning, in which one or more word-meanings are “promoted” to the sentence-meaning through the qualification on those

17. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *api ca pramāṇāntarāvāsitaś cēt sō ’rthaḥ, na śabdasya tatra prāmāṇyam, athānavāsitaḥ, natarām, apadārthatvē vākyaviśayatvāsambhavāt.* The argument is repeated in the *Siddhikāṇḍaḥ* (p. 156): *tatrāpadārthatvē na vākyaviśayatvam.*

18. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 23: *padārtha ēva hi viśiṣṭatayā vākyārthībhavati. atyantāparidṛṣṭas tu padād anavagamyamānaḥ padārthasaṃsargātmakē vākyārthē na guṇatvēna pradhānatvēna vānupravēśam arhati;* compare p. 156, *tatrātyantāparidṛṣṭābrahmādyarthapramāṇābhīmatēṣu vākyēṣu tadvācīni padāni syuḥ, na vā.*



meanings that the sentence provides (either through other word-meanings or grammatical elements). Maṇḍana favors this theory, as we will see below, but Prabhākara’s theory is more “top-down” than “bottom-up.”<sup>19</sup> Hence even Prabhākara’s supporters would not accept this formulation of the known entity constraint. Śālikanātha, in particular, violates the constraint when, in the second part of his *Vākyārthamāṭṛkā*, he makes a case that “what is to be done” in the case of the Vedas is distinct from what we learn as “what is to be done” in everyday life — the former being an *apūrva*, and the latter being an action (Kataoka 2020).

The fourth and final argument that Maṇḍana puts into the mouth of his opponent relates not to language but to thought. In saying that the Vedas tell us about Brahma, Maṇḍana might be taken to be saying that the Vedas lead us to a certain judgment (*pratipattiḥ*) about Brahma. Judgment proceeds by determinations, namely, the determination that a particular content is either the case or not the case, whereas Brahma is said to be beyond all determination. How can a determination about something that is without determination be possible?<sup>20</sup>

### 3.2 Maṇḍana’s response

After laying out this Prabhākara-like position, Maṇḍana announces his own position in the second verse of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, which claims that Brahma is known, at least in general terms, from the Veda. Since Brahma is, on his own view, a “fact,” and since he had imagined a Prabhākara-like opponent to argue against the possibility of facts that are otherwise inaccessible to human knowledge forming the content of any statement, he begins his discussion by responding to the opponent’s arguments. He does not refute it point-by-point, but rather undermines two of the principal claims in his opponent’s theory of language. We can call the first the “action-oriented” hypothesis, because it claims that language is in some sense oriented toward an action, i.e., an effect. And we can call the second the “bystander acquisition” hypothesis, because it claims that the primary mode of language acquisition is observing how adults act when addressed by linguistic expressions, which are, by this very fact, the kinds of expressions that can elicit a response.

These are the two central claims of Prabhākara’s theory of language, but as noted earlier, they are open to a wide variety of interpretations, depending on how one understands such terms as “oriented toward” (*-para-*), the “action” that is to be done (*kāryam*), “practical activity,” (*vyavahārah*), and “response-eliciting” (*pravartakam*), among others. Maṇḍana’s response is important because it serves to gauge the explanatory adequacy of Prabhākara’s theory. Whereas Prabhākara only provided a few examples for his theory of language, which he outlined very briskly, Maṇḍana took it upon himself to come up with a series of counterexamples. Any supporter, or critic, of Prabhākara’s views must interpret them in such a way as to adequately account for the phenomena Maṇḍana adduced. Moreover these

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19. See *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 156 (a *pūrvapakṣaḥ*, but it seems to accord with Maṇḍana’s own views): *tatra padārtha ēva viśiṣṭō vākyārthō bhavati*.
20. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *api ca pralīnanikhilāvachchēdaṃ tattvam āgōcara ēva pratipattēḥ, sarvā hi pratipattēḥ ēvaṃ naivam iti vyavachchēdēna pravartate, anyathā na kaścit pratipannaḥ syāt, sarvaviśēṣapratyastamayē tu katham pratipattiḥ syāt*.

phenomena show quite clearly that the debate Prabhākara initiated about the precise nature of the connection between language and action has a number of important points of contact with the twentieth-century discussion of the same subject in Euro-American circles, and especially with J. L. Austin's notion of "speech acts."

In Prabhākara's theory, the two claims are closely related: the way that language is *used* affects the way that it is *acquired*, and *vice versa*, and both affect the way that language is interpreted. Maṇḍana is probably aware of the interlocking nature of these claims, but he mostly discusses the claims separately. This may be because they threaten his interpretation of the Upaniṣads in different ways: the "action-oriented" hypothesis would force him to interpret statements about Brahma in the Upaniṣads as pertaining to some enjoined action, rather than as pertaining to an existing state of affairs; and the "bystander acquisition" hypothesis would render words such as "Brahma" meaningless, insofar as their meaning cannot be learned from everyday life. It may also be because Maṇḍana intends to sever the connection between language use in everyday life and the acquisition of the kind of linguistic competence necessary to understand the statements of the Upaniṣads.

Maṇḍana first refers to a subsequent discussion (*Brahmasiddhiḥ* pp. 79ff.) about the epistemic independence of Vedic statements — that is, the fact that their content does not depend for its validity on other epistemic instruments — which, in his view, applies both to explicitly injunctive statements as well as to factual statements.

He then provides his first counterexample to the "action-oriented" hypothesis. Compliments and insults are two kinds of speech that do not seem to be oriented toward a future action. If you have just become a mother or a father, I might say, "congratulations on the birth of your child," without thereby meaning for you to do anything in particular. My sole intention, let us say, is to make you happy.<sup>21</sup> Maṇḍana likely thought of this sentence because it is a stock example, in the grammatical literature, of a "statement" (*ākhyānam*).<sup>22</sup> But a question arises here. If you are in fact happy because of my congratulations, should that be considered the "action" toward which my statement was oriented?

Let us frame the matter in Austin's terms (1962: 98). He considered all statements to be acts, specifically "locutionary acts," because speaking is an act. He also considered all statements to be "illocutionary acts" insofar as the speaker, by making the statement, performs an action of a given description. In this case, I performed the locutionary act of speaking, and the illocutionary act of congratulating. It is clear enough, however, that neither of these acts can constitute the "action" toward which a statement is oriented in Prabhākara's theory,

21. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *priyākhyānāni diṣṭyā vardhasē putras tē jāta iti na pravṛttayē nivṛttayē vā, dṛśyantē ca sukhōtpādanaprayōjanāni*.

22. The sentence is cited by the *Kāśikā* on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.4.59 (*avyayē 'yathābhiprētākhyānē kṛṇāḥ Ktvā-ṆamuLau*), which allows the formation of words like *uccaiḥkāram* "loudly" and *nīcaiḥkāram* "quietly" in response to "a statement that does not accord with what the person intends." If I say "you are the father of a son" (*putras tē jātaḥ*) rather quietly, you can respond, "why the hell are you saying it so quietly?" (*kim tarhi vṛṣala nīcaiḥkāram ācakṣē*), and if I say, "your unmarried daughter is pregnant" (*kanyā tē garbhīṇī*) rather loudly, you can respond, "why the hell are you saying it so loudly?" (*kim tarhi vṛṣala uccaiḥkāram ācakṣē*). Note that, in my reading, these statements are not used to *inform* the parent of a state of affairs (e.g., a doctor's words to an anxious father in a hospital waiting room) but rather to remark on a state of affairs already known to the parent.

since Prabhākara characterized that action as an “effect” which, at the time of speaking, is still to be performed (*kāryam*), whereas the locutionary and illocutionary act are fully performed when the statement is made. (The illocutionary act is subject to further “felicity conditions” that determine whether the act has truly been performed, which may include, for example, whether I was sincere in offering my congratulations.)

Austin considered a further class of actions, “perlocutionary acts,” which “produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons,” without however qualifying as an illocutionary act (1962: 101). He distinguished “He urged me to shoot her” as a description of an illocutionary act from “He got me to shoot her” as a description of a perlocutionary act. Others have defined perlocutionary acts primarily by their effects on the hearer or addressee (Searle 1969: 25). Producing happiness, which Maṇḍana observed to be the motivation behind the statement of congratulations, can therefore be considered a perlocutionary act. Does this undermine his claim that such statements are not actually “action-oriented”? One might point out that Austin’s “speech acts” are those of which the speaker is the agent, the “action” with which Prabhākara and Maṇḍana are concerned is generally one in which the hearer, not the speaker, engages. But there may not be much of a distinction between the speaker’s perlocutionary act of “producing happiness” and the hearer’s act of “experiencing happiness.”

For Maṇḍana the important question is whether we are compelled to regard statements such as “congratulations on the birth of your child” as oriented toward, or as he says, “based upon,” an effect (*kāryaniṣṭha-*), which in this case might be characterized as the hearer’s experiencing happiness. One way to answer this question is to convert the statement into an injunction and see whether it amounts to the same thing, in some sense yet to be defined. (We might compare this strategy to Austin’s conversion of statements such as “I shall be there” into statements such as “I promise that I shall be there,” where the latter includes an “explicit performative”: see Austin 1962: 69.) What is the relationship between — we might adapt Austin’s terminology here — the *primary utterance* (“congratulations on the birth of your child”) and the *explicit injunction* (“be happy”)? Maṇḍana appears to say that the injunction is not the *basis* for the primary utterance, because there is no need for the action to be enjoined at all given the circumstances.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this is because one who is congratulated on the birth of a child does not need to be told to be happy. In this sense the perlocutionary effect is independent from the locutionary act: I might be disappointed or surprised if my congratulations don’t make you happy, but I would necessarily not regard my statement as a failure for that reason. By contrast, if I say “it is hot in here,” with an intended perlocutionary effect of getting you to open a window, and you did not open the window, I would probably have to ask a bit more obtrusively. In that case we can say that my primary utterance statement is *based on* a future action because that action would not take place without it. Maṇḍana, however, does not draw out the contrast between the two types of statements.

What if we maintain, against Maṇḍana, that congratulating is similar in this respect to

23. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *na ca sukhī bhava iti tatra pravṛttir upadiśyatē, vastusāmarthyād ēva tatsiddhēr upadēśasyānapēkṣaṇāt.*

making requests obliquely, i.e., that I really do intend to make you happy by congratulating you, and if I fail to produce the intended perlocutionary effects, I might reiterate my congratulations with more conviction?<sup>24</sup> Maṇḍana's argument here is important: "that may be the point of the statement in terms of its production" (that is, its utterance by a speaker), "but not in terms of its understanding" (that is, by the hearer).<sup>25</sup> A principled distinction must be made between two kinds of "purport," to use the common translation for the Sanskrit word Maṇḍana uses here, *tātparyam* (literally "the state of having that as its aim"): one refers simply to what the speaker intends to accomplish *by* making the statement, including its perlocutionary effects; the other refers to what is understood by the hearer. The gap between these two kinds of purport is most obvious in deceptive or manipulative speech, where the speaker's success in accomplishing his goals is defined precisely by the hearer understanding something other than the speaker's true intentions. In the case of uncontroversially action-oriented language, such as Vedic injunctions, the future action is clearly present in the hearer's understanding, so we do not need to examine the speaker's intentions in order to find it, and indeed the very category of "speaker's intention" is not available to Maṇḍana and his interlocutors in the case of Vedic injunctions. For all other types of statement, like congratulations or insults, "the understanding is completely based on a fact."<sup>26</sup>

In this brief passage Maṇḍana insists on separating the *meaning* that is actually understood from a statement from that statement's perlocutionary *effects*, intended or otherwise. This is an important distinction, which Prabhākara did not, to my knowledge, make. But it is also not the case that Prabhākara and his followers conflated meaning with effect. To say that language is "action-oriented" (*kāryapara-*) is not to say that any given statement can, on some analysis, be equated with an explicit injunction. In my understanding of Prabhākara's position, it is rather to say that understanding any given statement means understanding how it relates to something that one is to do, even if that understanding goes beyond the statement's "literal" meaning.

The question for Maṇḍana, as for many other Indian philosophers, was where to draw the line between "meanings" properly speaking, which are directly conveyed by linguistic expressions, and the "meanings" at which a hearer might arrive upon further consideration of those meanings. Prabhākara's position has been characterized as making the expressive function of words "very long" (*dīrghadīrghō vyāpārah*, *Nyāyamañjarī* p. 209), since their meanings relate to effects that could occur some time after the time of utterance. Maṇḍana's argument against this position would be repeated — or reinvented — by many subsequent authors: what we call "meaning" is nothing more than the power of a particular linguistic expression to produce a particular cognition; like all other powers, meaning is postulated on the basis of not being able to otherwise account for the cognition; one is entitled to postulate only so much as is absolutely required to account for the cognition; in the case of evident

24. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *atha matam — asti tāvat tatra pravṛttiviśeṣaḥ* (sc. *sukhōtpattiḥ*, AO), *vacasaś ca tatra tātparyam*.
25. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *satyam, utpattyā tātparyam, na pratipattyā*; my understanding differs somewhat from that of Biarreau (1969: 171) "il y a une intention (de ce genre) dans le mesure où (ces paroles) produisent (le bonheur), mais non en tant qu'elles font connaître une (activité à exercer)."
26. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 23: *pratipattis tu bhūtārthaniṣṭhaiva*.

statements of fact, the cognition we are trying to account for is the hearer’s understanding (*pratipattiḥ*); given that we have fully accounted for the hearer’s understanding when we posit a *fact* as that statement’s meaning, we have no reason to posit anything else that refers to what the hearer does or doesn’t do upon hearing this statement.<sup>27</sup>

From a statement such as “congratulations on the birth of your child,” one clearly understands a fact (namely, that a child has been born), even if it is less clear whether this fact itself constitutes the principal meaning of the sentence, as Maṇḍana appears to assume, or whether it is embedded as the content of the illocutionary act of congratulating, as I am inclined to believe. Maṇḍana points out, somewhat tendentiously, that we cannot construe this statement as he would normally construe a case of explicitly action-oriented language, which in his analysis causes one to do something that one would not otherwise do (*apravṛt-tappravartanam*).<sup>28</sup> One cannot be told that it is by the birth of a child that one will become happy, since the point is to remark upon a birth that has already happened rather than to encourage the hearer to have another child, and one cannot be told to be happy on account of the birth of a child, because, as Maṇḍana has said, the meaning of statements of fact do not extend to their effects.<sup>29</sup>

Maṇḍana elaborates the idea that meaning is to be distinguished from effect with several other examples. Take a man who thinks that a snake is wrapped around him, when in fact it is a rope. (Ignore the question of how a rope could come to be wrapped around someone without his noticing.) Let us say that you want to assuage his fear. You could achieve this effect in two ways: either by stating a fact (“it’s only a rope”) or issuing a command (“don’t be afraid”). While the effect is at least similar in both cases, it arises very differently. A person who is issued a command must first understand its content and then *intentionally* (*buddhipūrvam*) carry it out. By contrast, the perlocutionary effects of a statement of fact are produced independently of the hearer’s intention: they arise spontaneously, as it were, as soon as the content of the statement is understood.<sup>30</sup> This suggests that the two statements actually do have qualitatively-different contents, such that we can describe the command, but not the statement of fact, as “action-oriented.”

Although this distinction might appear obvious — nobody will deny that the contents of the statements “it’s a rope” and “don’t be afraid” really are different — Maṇḍana is concerned to undercut the argument that statements of fact, when they appear in discourse, can simply be understood as injunctions that embed the statement of fact as their content

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27. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* pp. 23–24: *na ca bhūtārthaparyavasitasyaiva śabdasya prayōjanavattvē pravṛttyavadhivyāpāraḥ kalpayituḃ śakyatē.*
28. *Vidhivivēkaḥ*, p. 463 (prose after 2.1).
29. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *api ca upāyē vā pravṛttaḥ puruṣaḥ pravartyatē, ajñātōpāyatvād vā upēyē prāḡ apravṛtta upāyaprajñāpanadvārēṇa tatra, iha na tāvad upāyē putrajanmani, tasya niṣpannatvāt, nōpēyē sukhē, tadarthavyāpārāntarābhāvāt.*
30. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *tathā rajjuvēṣṭitasya sarpavēṣṭitam ātmānam manyamānasya bhayanivṛttayē tattvākhyānam drśyatē, na tu tatra mā bhaiṣṭiḥ iti niyōgaḥ. tatra hi niyōgō bhavati, yatra niyōgārtham pratibudhya puruṣō buddhipūrvam niyōgasāmarthyād icchayā vā punaḥ pravartatē nivartatē vā. iha tu tattvapratipattimātrān niyōgēcchānapēkṣasya hētvabhāvād ēva tasya bhayanivṛttiḥ.* Compare Wittgenstein (2001 [1953]: §21).

in some way. This argument closely resembles the “performative hypothesis” that would be formulated in the wake of Austin’s work (Levinson 1983: 247). According to the performative hypothesis, every sentence can be analyzed as a top-level phrase with an explicit performative (e.g., “I say to you,” “I order you,” etc.). Maṇḍana wants to resist the idea that statements like “it’s a rope,” insofar as they are action-oriented, can be rephrased to make their injunctive character more transparent, for instance “understand that it is a rope.” The “performance” in this idea is one that the speaker wishes to elicit from the hearer, rather than the performance of the speaker himself or herself, which is the focus of the performative hypothesis, but the two approaches are nevertheless very similar. And if we take restatements such as “understand that it is a rope” to be equivalent to restatements such as “I order you to understand that it is a rope,” the two approaches actually converge.

Maṇḍana’s principal point is that one cannot, strictly speaking, be enjoined to understand the meaning of a sentence. If I say to you, “understand that it is a rope,” if you do in fact understand the statement “it is a rope,” that is not because you have intentionally undertaken an action of “understanding” with respect to the content of that statement, but simply because you have understood the sentence as a whole. That is not to say that people cannot be enjoined to perform certain activities regarding an understood state of affairs. This is perhaps clearer in Sanskrit than in English, because the word “understand” is used with reference to a wide range of cognitive activities. When someone is enjoined to “understand” a statement in English, one is very rarely enjoined to understand the mere meaning of the statement; rather, one is more commonly enjoined to bear that meaning in mind, or to reflect on its motivation, rationale, or consequences. For Maṇḍana, it does not make sense to be enjoined to understand the meaning of a statement, because an understanding of the meaning is “included” within the understanding of the injunction. By contrast, an enjoined action must occur subsequently to the understanding of the injunction.<sup>31</sup> This principle would imply that the word “understand” (*prati-pad*), when it appears to enjoin the understanding of a statement, is necessarily used in a secondary sense, for instance as recommending continued reflection on a statement that is already understood, or preventing one from understanding it differently. Maṇḍana gives another example of the same phenomenon: if I have just returned from a trip, and out of curiosity you ask me about what happened, my answers have the purpose, and effect, of satisfying your curiosity; but that effect is produced in the course of understanding the answer, and not by anything that you do subsequently.<sup>32</sup>

The “performative hypothesis” has not fared well in twentieth-century scholarship. Many of the objections to it, however, are based on the paradoxes turned up when evaluating the truth-values of a primary utterance (“the world is flat”) and its performative transformation (“I claim the world is flat”; see Levinson 1983: 251–252). Maṇḍana offers a different sort of argument, which has nothing to do with whether or not the statements are true or false, but rather turns on the distinction between the action of understanding itself and further

31. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *na ca bhayanivṛttau puruṣārthatvāt svayaṁ pravṛttaḥ puruṣaḥ niyōjyaḥ, nāpi tadupāyē tattvapratipattau rajjuḥ na sarpaḥ iti śabdād ēva tadutpattēḥ, śabdārthapratipattyuttarakālasya ca vyāpārasya vidhinibandhanatvāt.*

32. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *tathā dūradēśavṛttāntākhyānāni pṛṣṭavatām kutūhalinām autsukyānivṛttyarthāni bhūtārthaparyavasitāni na hānāyōpādānāya vā..*

actions that follow from that understanding. Once again, however, Maṇḍana was arguing against a view in which the relevant performance was by the hearer, not by the speaker, so it would not apply *per se* to the version of the performative hypothesis put forward in the 1970s.

Maṇḍana then introduces the example of statements that we can call “quasi-injunctions.” These are also factual on the surface (“the road here is blocked,” “there’s a treasure buried here”), but in contrast to the previous example (“it’s a snake”), it is not sufficient for the hearer to simply understand what has been said; he or she is in fact counseled to intentionally undertake a specific action on the basis of that understanding. In the sense of being meant to elicit action, these statements are obviously “action-oriented.” Once again, however, Maṇḍana insists on a distinction between the meaning of a statement — even its “final” or “all-things-considered” meaning (*paryavasānam*) — and its effects. He argues that expressive power of the sentence is “used up” (*upakṣayaḥ*) in conveying the meaning of the sentence, which in these cases is a fact, and does not extend to the hearer’s actions subsequent on understanding the sentence. If the hearer acts on that understanding at all, it is because he or she recalls that the state of affairs conveyed by the sentence will be helpful or hurtful. The conclusions of such practical reasoning do not, in Maṇḍana’s view, belong to language.<sup>33</sup>

Maṇḍana imagines an objector taking issue with his identification of the all-things-considered meaning (*paryavasānam*): since the speaker really did intend for the hearer to act in a certain way, why shouldn’t we consider these statements as amounting to “you shouldn’t take this road” or “you should dig up this treasure”?<sup>34</sup> Before examining Maṇḍana’s answer, we should note that Paul Grice — whose name, more than anyone else’s, is associated with the attempt to define meaning in terms of a speaker’s intention — resorted to a disjunction between the “meaning” (“M-intended effect”) of imperative and indicative statements: in the former, the hearer should *intend to do* something, and in the latter, the hearer should *think that the utterer believes* something (Grice 1968: 230). Maṇḍana’s imagined opponent, whom we may assume to be following Prabhākara’s lead, wants to say that, in these cases, injunctive statements (“you shouldn’t take this road”) and statements of fact (“this road is blocked”), despite differences in their surface meaning, have the same final meaning.

Maṇḍana seems to anticipate Grice in analyzing the two types of statements separately. He first discusses the difference from the perspective of the hearer. What the statement *means* is distinct from what one who understands the statement *does*. The knowledge that treasure is buried in a certain place, which is knowledge about a state of affairs, may or may not lead to the hearer’s action in the future, depending on a host of other considerations. The understanding is, at most, a secondary element (*aṅgam*) in the hearer’s action. Maṇḍana

33. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *api ca yatrāpi bhūtārthapratipattau hānam upādānam vā sambhavati, yathā — eṣa pratirōdhakavān adhvā, nidhimān eṣa bhūbhāga iti, tatrāpi na hānōpādānayōḥ śabdō vyāpriyatē, bhūtārthōpakṣayāt. śabdād bhūtam artham pratipadya tasya pramāṇāntarād avagatām upakārahētutām apakārahētutām vā saṁsmṛtya icchayā pravartatē dvēṣēna nivartatē vā.*

34. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* p. 24: *nanu prayōktā buddhipūrvakārī śrōtuḥ pravṛttyartham nivṛttyartham vā vacanam prayuñktē, tathā ca pravṛttinivṛttiparyavasitam ēva; idam hi tatra prayōktavyam na prayujyatē na gantavyam anēnādhvanā tathā gṛhāṇēto nidhim iti.*

likens the understanding of “quasi-injunctions” to perceptual cognitions in terms of their relation to future action: both of them represent a fact — precisely how this fact is to be characterized in either case is open to discussion, but Maṇḍana simply means that one can understand the same state of affairs, such as “it is raining,” either on the basis of a linguistic expression or on the basis of a perceptual cognition — and that fact may or may not play a role in the cognizer’s subsequent actions; those actions are not themselves the object (*gōcaraḥ*) of the cognition.<sup>35</sup>

Maṇḍana formulates his position most clearly in response to the claim that the speaker, in saying “there’s a treasure buried here,” might have actually intended the hearer to start digging, and that the “M-intended effect,” in Grice’s words, would in that case be the same as if he had said “you should dig up this treasure.” Maṇḍana insists that we think of meaning not as a result of a speaker’s intention (*abhisandhānam*) but as a result of the relationship that linguistic signifiers have to the things they signify (their “capacity” or *sāmarthyam*).<sup>36</sup> We could recast this distinction as one between intended meaning and literally expressed meaning. Maṇḍana suggests that only the latter is meaning properly speaking, and in this respect his account differs radically from Grice’s intentional account of meaning. One specific liability of an intentional or consequential view of meaning, according to Maṇḍana, is that meanings are relatively discrete, whereas intentions are rather more difficult to pin down, and consequences even more so. Suppose, after hearing someone say “there’s a treasure buried here,” I dig up the treasure and use it to buy a car. Was this specific consequence intended by the speaker? Perhaps the speaker knew I needed a car but didn’t have the money. Or perhaps the speaker intended for me to buy something on the scale of a car, but not necessarily a car. This starts to resemble a guessing-game, but Maṇḍana considers it absurd that any of these intentions, specific or general, should count as the meaning of the statement.<sup>37</sup> Maṇḍana once again offers perceptual cognitions as a comparison: someone might seek some perceptual knowledge (e.g., to see whether the water in Lake Michigan is still or choppy) with the intention of engaging in some action (e.g., to decide whether to swim), but that action does not thereby become the object of one’s perceptual cognitions; similarly one might avail oneself of what is said in order to engage in some action, but the action does not thereby become the statement’s meaning.<sup>38</sup>

To summarize the argument thus far, Maṇḍana argues that the meaning of a linguistic expression is to be distinguished both from the speaker’s intentions and the perlocutionary effects it has on the hearer. His theory of sentence meaning is thus not intentional or conse-

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35. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, pp. 24–25: *naitat sāram. bhūtārthaparyavasitasyāpi vacasō bhūtārthāvagamamukhēna pravṛttinivṛtṭyaṅgabhāvō yatō na vyāhanyatē pratyakṣādīnām iva, bhūtārthapramāparisamāptavyāpṛtayaḥ pratyakṣādayō mātrayāpy agōcarīkṛtapravṛttinivṛttayō na pravṛttinivṛtṭyaṅgabhāvam jahati, tathā śabdō ’pīti na kimcīt praduṣyati.*
36. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *prayōktrabhisamhitē pravṛttinivṛtṭī iti cēt, na prayōktrabhisandhānāc chabdārthatvam, api tu sāmarthyāt.*
37. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *anyathā nidhiprāptidvārikā nānāvidhapuruṣārthāvāptir api tasyābhisamhitēti śabdārthaḥ syāt.*
38. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *yadā ca pravṛtṭim nivṛtṭim vābhisandhāya kimcīt pratyakṣādibhir jijñāsyatē, tadābhisamhitē api pravṛttinivṛtṭī na pratyakṣādipramēyē. tathābhisamhitē api pravṛttinivṛtṭī na śabdārthau.*



quential, but, as we will see in more detail later on, strictly compositional: the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meanings of its constituent sub-sentential expressions. If this is the case, then the only statements which can properly be said to be “action-oriented” are those in which the performance of an action in the future is literally expressed. Statements of fact are not injunctions in disguise, but simply statements of fact. When one understands a statement of fact, one is not acting in accordance with an implicit injunction. These arguments are meant to counter Prabhākara’s general claim that language is always oriented toward action. But this is not merely a stipulation of Prabhākara’s. It is built on the observation that an orientation toward action is “built into” our language use as a consequence of the way that we learn language to begin with: we learn language by making connections, not between words and things, but between sentences and the actions that people undertake upon hearing them.

It is this second and more foundational claim that Maṇḍana proceeds to undercut. It is just not true, he says, that all of our language learning occurs by making connections between statements and the responses they elicit. Much of our language learning in fact takes place by associating statements which are not response-eliciting with perceptible facts.<sup>39</sup> The crucial point on which Maṇḍana and his imagined opponent converge is that the language learner must be able to equate, in terms of their content, the speaker’s use (*prayōgaḥ*) of a linguistic expression and the hearer’s understanding (*pratyayaḥ*). For Prabhākara — and elaborated subsequently by Śālikanātha — this is a complex inferential process whereby the language learner understands that the content that the listener understood from the sentence, prior to engaging in some action, is identical to the content of his own cognition, prior to engaging in the same kind of action. Maṇḍana offers two alternatives.

The first is through what Wittgenstein called “ostentive teaching of words.”<sup>40</sup> Suppose a language learner has already learned the meanings of the words “Dēvadatta” (a proper name), “pot,” “rice,” and “cooks,” as well as the expressions “by means of” and “in” (or the corresponding lexical items and case-endings in Sanskrit). When he hears the sentence “Dēvadatta cooks rice in a pot by means of *kāṣṭhas*,” and sees Dēvadatta cooking rice in a pot, he will look to see what is the instrument by means of which Dēvadatta is doing this action. When he sees that it is firewood, he will understand that the word *kāṣṭha* means a log of firewood. In this case it is a state of affairs that is happening when the sentence is pronounced, rather than a response elicited subsequently, that allows him to form an idea of the word’s meaning.<sup>41</sup>

For his second example Maṇḍana returns to the case of congratulating someone on the birth of a child, his original example of a statement of fact (*tattvākhyānam*). He maintained that such statements are not oriented toward a future action, and although they might have perlocutionary effects, such as producing joy in the hearer, and although such effects

39. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *na ca pravartakavākyavyavahārād ēva sambandhāvagamaḥ, yēna pravṛttiparataivāvagamyēta. anyathāpi darśanāt.*

40. Wittgenstein (2001 [1953]: §6).

41. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *dēvadattaḥ kāṣṭhaiḥ sthālyām ōdanam pacati ity avyutpannakāṣṭhaśabdārthō vyutpannētarapadārthō vyutpannavibhaktiyarthaś ca yat pacatyarthē karaṇam paśyati tasya kāṣṭhaprātipadikārthatām pratipadyatē.*

may well be intended by the speaker, those effects nevertheless play no role in the hearer's understanding. Prabhākara's theory would suggest that a language learner cannot make a connection between the sentence "congratulations on the birth of your child" and its meaning, precisely because the hearer's understanding is not reflected in his response. Maṇḍana, however, claims that the language learner is at least able to infer that the content of the speaker's sentence has produced an idea in the hearer that is a cause of joy. The language learner admittedly does not know precisely what is the cause of the hearer's joy, but if he is given to know, by some other epistemic instrument, that the hearer has recently become a father, he can put the two pieces of the puzzle together: the speaker has used the linguistic expression in reference to the birth of a child, and the hearer has understood the birth of a child from the speaker's linguistic expression.<sup>42</sup>

Maṇḍana's next and final argument pertains to the nature of sentence-meaning. Even if we assume, for the sake of the argument, that all statements in everyday life have the effect of eliciting some response in the listener, and that we learn language primarily from such effects, there is still no reason to think that any sentence, simply by virtue of being a sentence, has an effect as its final meaning.<sup>43</sup> Here we can see Maṇḍana making a compromise with Prabhākara's position: he accepts that words, in the context of a sentence, must always point to something *other than* the proper meaning of the word, but he does not accept that this "something" must always be a future action. In the background of his argument is the idea, familiar from Mīmāṃsā, that the proper meaning of a word is a class ("cow" means the class of cows), while in the context of a sentence it refers to a particular individual ("cow" in "bring the cow" refers to a particular cow).

Prabhākara had claimed that we cannot make sense of language use unless we understand it in reference to effects. Maṇḍana retorts that there is no reason to insist that language use depends on a connection with an effect *to the exclusion* of, for example, a connection with a particular state of affairs.<sup>44</sup> This "particular state of affairs" is represented by a complex of mutually-qualifying word-meanings, and this once again suggests that Maṇḍana favors a strictly compositional account of sentence-meaning. Words are used in excess, so to speak, of their proper meanings, but that is not to say they can be used arbitrarily. We may, like Grice, connect certain aspects of meaning to a speaker's intention, but if we do,

42. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *tathā harṣaviśādāśvāsaprayōjanēbhyaḥ tattvākhyānēbhyō harṣādinimittēṣu bhavati vyutpattiḥ. yathaiḥ hi pravṛttiviśēṣadarśanād viśiṣṭapravṛttipratyayas tannimittapratyayō vānumīyatē, hēt-vantarābhāvāt śabdānantaryāc śabdasya tatra sāmāthyam kalpyatē, tathā harṣādyupalabdheḥ harṣādinimittapratyayānumānam, śabdānantaryāc ca śabdasya tatra sāmāthyakalpanā. pramāṇāntarēṇa ca putrajanmanō harṣanimittasya tasyāvagatatvād anyasyābhāvāt 'putras tē jātaḥ' itīdam vākyaṁ āptēna tatra putrajanmani prayuktam iti pratipadyatē, putrajanmaiva cāsmād vākyaḍ anēna pratūtam ity avadhārayati. tad ēvaṁ prayōgapratyayābhyām asminn arthē vākyaṣya sāmāthyam pratipadyatē.*
43. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 25: *bhavatu vā lōkē sarvavacasām pravartakatā, tatas ca sambandhāvagamaḥ. tathāpīdam vicāryam — kiṁ vidhāyakapadavyatirēkiṇām padānām svārthamātraparatā, āhōsvit kāryārthasāmsargaparatā, uta padārthamātrasāmsargaparatēti.*
44. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, pp. 25–26: *tatra svārthamātraparyavasānē vākārthapratyayābhāvāḥ prayōgavaiyarthyaṁ ca syāt, tasmād anyārthavyatiṣaṅgaparatā. tāvatā prayōgapratyayōr upapattau na viśēṣavyatiṣaṅgē pramāṇam asti, yō hi viśēṣavyatiṣaṅgam kalpayati, kalpayaty asāv arthāntaravyatiṣaṅgam. tathā ca vināpī kāryēṇa padārthānām parasparasāmsargād viśiṣṭabhūtārthapratyayasiddhiḥ.*

those aspects of meaning will not be available in the case of the Veda, which Maṇḍana regards as without an author and therefore without intention.<sup>45</sup>

Maṇḍana offers another argument against connecting all instances of language use to effects. If the individual word-meanings construe, in the first place, with an effect, then they can't construe with each other. If they do not construe with each other, they cannot present a particular state of affairs. This would have the unwanted consequence that the words expressing obligations in injunctive sentences could not be construed with the action that is, according to Mīmāṃsakas, their effect.<sup>46</sup> If instead the individual word-meanings construe with each other first, and only then with an effect, then it would be conceded that statements are fundamentally oriented toward something *other* than an effect, namely the particular state of affairs that the word-meanings conjointly convey. The effect, if and when it does appear as the final meaning of the sentence, is overlaid onto this already-existing structure.<sup>47</sup>

The general picture of language that emerges from Maṇḍana's discussion can be characterized as follows. The meaning of a sentence is, in every case, a particular state of affairs. But not all sentences are alike. In the case of injunctive sentences, this state of affairs can be further characterized as an effect that the hearer will subsequently produce by an intentional action. In most other kinds of sentences, this state of affairs is simply a fact, for instance, "I am doing well."<sup>48</sup> Such sentences do not have, as their final meaning, a perlocutionary effect that is distinct from their literal meaning. They mean what they mean, so to speak. Maṇḍana does not deny that statements of fact have perlocutionary effects, and indeed Vēdānta as a scholarly enterprise might be characterized as a perlocutionary effect of the statements of fact in the Upaniṣads.<sup>49</sup> He does, however, deny that these effects, even when they are intended by their speakers, constitute the meaning of the statement. The reasons that Prabhākara had given for denying that a fact could ever be the final meaning of a sentence are not compelling to Maṇḍana: it is not the case that all of our language learning happens by observing how people conduct themselves in response to injunctive sentences, since an "ostensive teaching of words" is also possible; moreover it is not the case that we can understand a particular state of affairs from a sentence only in reference to an effect, since the effect is itself a particular state of affairs.

The consequence of Maṇḍana's argument is that the Veda is a valid epistemic instrument

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45. For Kumārila's discussion of "intention" (*vivakṣā*) with reference to the Veda, see Yoshimizu (2008).
46. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 26: *api ca sarvēṣāṃ kāryānvayitvē parasparaṃ padārthānām anabhisambandhaḥ, tatra na viśiṣṭapadārthaviśayō niyōgaḥ kriyatē, ēkapadārthasādhyā ēva syāt.*
47. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 26: *atha na, viniyōgapratyarthī niyōgaḥ, viśiṣṭaviśayatvāt, pūrvas tarhi viniyōgaḥ, paścān niyōgaḥ. kim ataḥ? asti niyōgātiriktārthānvayē 'pi padasya sāmartyaṃ niyōgānapēkṣaṃ ca, parasparān-vitānām niyōgānvayāt. na ca niyōgākāṅkṣānibandhanaḥ saṃsarga iti pratipādayiṣyatē.*
48. Maṇḍana does not actually use this example; see below (p. 194).
49. The same could be said of most other exegetical, and more broadly scholastic, traditions, although for Mīmāṃsā, for example, the distinction between the Veda's illocutionary effect of enjoining an action (which is undertaken by the performer of a ritual) and its perlocutionary effect of engendering systematic analysis of its statements (which is undertaken by philosophers who may or may not perform the rituals in question) is clearer than in the case of Vēdānta.

not only for actions that are to be done, i.e., the ritual actions we are enjoined to undertake, but also for facts. Thus its statements about the self, found in the Upaniṣads, are valid in the same way that its statements about ritual obligations are valid. According to Maṇḍana, these statements indicate that the duality of self and other is ultimately unreal.

### 3.3 Śālikanātha's summary of Maṇḍana's position

Śālikanātha addresses Maṇḍana's criticism in his *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, when commenting upon Prabhākara's discussion of the second *sūtra* of the Mīmāṃsā system, *cōdanālakṣaṇō 'rthō dharmah*. Prabhākara interprets this *sūtra* to mean that the Veda's authority extends only to actions that are to be done.<sup>50</sup> Śālikanātha prefaces his commentary with a short summary of Maṇḍana's position, which he proceeds to criticize. As noted earlier, he never mentions Maṇḍana by name, but he hints derisively at his opponent's identity, calling him "one whose critical faculties (*vivēka-*) are impaired by enormous arrogance in his own superficial learning."<sup>51</sup> Much of Śālikanātha's argument against Maṇḍana reappears in the section on sacred texts (*śāstram*) in his *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*. There, too, he summarizes Maṇḍana's arguments before responding to them, although the tone is much less polemical. The presentation of the arguments in each passage is very similar. Nevertheless it does not seem that Śālikanātha literally reused much of one text in the other, since the phrasing is, with a few exceptions, rather different. It appears that he had a well-rehearsed critique of Maṇḍana's views on the philosophy of language that he included in both works. Cross-references and short elaborations in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* suggest that it was written after the *R̥juvimalā*, but I can find no unambiguous evidence for the sequence in which the texts were composed.<sup>52</sup>

Maṇḍana, as ventriloquized by Śālikanātha, is most concerned to demonstrate that what we understand from sentences in the Upaniṣad such as "consciousness, bliss, *brahma*" is not an effect to be brought about but a fact, that is, some propositional content about the self and reality that we can understand and eventually, through repeated practice and investigation, realize the truth of.<sup>53</sup> The major points summarized by Śālikanātha are mostly drawn from the previously-discussed passage of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*. "Maṇḍana" claims, first of all, that it is not the case that language learning depends on statements that are oriented toward a future action. One can, in principle, learn the meaning of a statement such as "congratulations on the birth of your child," which has no clear connection to an effect.<sup>54</sup> How exactly? Just as Maṇḍana says in the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*: the language learner observes

50. *Bṛhatī*, p. 20: *kāryē 'rthē vēdasya prāmāṇyam darśayati*.

51. *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 20: *aparipakvavidyāvalēpōdrēkatiraskṛtavivēkah*.

52. References to his *Vākyārthamāṭṛkā* occur both in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* and in the *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*.

53. *vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.9.28 (translation by Olivelle 1998: 102; modified to reflect the later understanding of *vijñānam* as "consciousness" rather than "perception").

54. *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *vināpi vyavahāreṇa siddhārthēsv api śabdēṣu kāryānvayarahitēṣu vyutpattisambhavāt putras tē jāta ityādiṣu*; *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 239: *vināpi vyavahāraṁ siddhārthapratipattiparād api laukikavacanāt sambhavaty ēva kāryē vyutpattiḥ, yathā putras tē jāta ity ādiṣu kāryānvayarahitēṣu siddhārthēṣv api śabdēṣu*.

the hearer's smile, and which allows him to infer that the hearer is happy; the hearer's happiness allows him to infer the existence of a cause of happiness; he identifies the hearer's understanding of something pleasant as that cause, and attributes that understanding to the sentence "congratulations on the birth of your child"; once he understands — from some other epistemic instrument presumably — that the birth of a child was in fact the cause of the hearer's happiness, then he can conclude that the content of the sentence is this specific state of affairs; subsequently he can learn the meaning of the individual terms ("child," "birth," etc.) through learning other sentences that have some, but not all, of the same words.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, one can also learn individual terms through the ostensive teaching of words (*vartamānāpadēśah*), as in the case of learning that *kāṣṭha* means "a log of firewood."<sup>56</sup> Secondly, "Maṇḍana" claims that words do indeed express their proper meanings in relation to something else — he uses Prabhākara's signature phrase *anvitābhidhānam* — but that "something else" need not be a future action. In fact, when the words are actually related to an effect, it is not on account of that relation that we are able to learn their meanings, but rather on account of the relation that the individual word-meanings have to each other. This is because, as Maṇḍana had said in the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, an effect is a particular state of affairs, and one cannot understand a particular state of affairs to begin with unless one first understands how the individual word-meanings relate to each other. In order to make sense of discursive practice, the speaker's utterance and the listener's understanding, we must postulate that the sentences in which discursive practice takes place relate to particular states of affairs — but such states of affairs need not refer to any effects at all.<sup>57</sup>

Śālikanātha's "Maṇḍana" appends two very brief arguments that do not appear in the corresponding passage of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*. The first is that the vast majority of statements in everyday life are, on the face of it, statements of fact. As examples he gives the sentences "Are you doing well?" and "I am doing well."<sup>58</sup> I am not aware of any work of

55. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *harṣādīnibandhanir mukhaprasādādibhir liṅgaiḥ śakyānumānaiva parēśām buddhiḥ, mukhaprasādādi harṣam anumāpayati, sa ca harṣahētum, priyārthapratipattiś ca harṣahētuh, sā ca vākyanibandhanēti — putras tē jātaḥ — ity anēna harṣahētubhūtārthapratītiḥ kṛtēti jñāyatē, harṣahētus ca tasya puruṣasya putrajanmaiva kēvalam astīty ēvam avagacchan viśiṣṭārthaviṣayām śabdasya śaktim adhyavasyati, āvāpōdvāpābhyām ca pratipadam vyavahāra iva vyutpattir atrāpy upapadyata iti niravadyam; see the similar description in *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 239.*
56. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *api ca vyutpannētarapadavibhaktiyarthā vartamānāpadēśē 'pi — kāṣṭhaiḥ pacati — iti kāṣṭhapadārthē vyutpadyantē kāryānvayarahita ēva; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 239: *tathā vyutpannētarapadavibhaktiyarthāḥ kāṣṭhaiḥ pacatīti vartamānāpadēśē 'pi yat pākē karaṇam tat kāṣṭhaśabdēna pratipādyata ity avagamyā pratyakṣēna kāṣṭhānānī karaṇabhāvam avagacchantāḥ kāṣṭhaśabdārthē kāryānvayarahita ēva vyutpadyantē.*
57. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *kiṁ ca vyavahārē 'pi vyutpattau yady api kāryānvitātaiva padānām, tathāpi kāryānvitābhidhāyitayā na vyutpattiḥ, kiṁ tu arthāntarānvitābhidhāyitayaiva. yō hi viśēṣānvitābhidhānam icchati, icchaty ēvāsāv arthāntarānvitābhidhānam. tāvatā ca prayōgapratipattyupapattau na śakyatē viśēṣānvitābhidhānakalpanā; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240: *api ca yēna nāma kāryābhidhāyitvam abhyupagamyatē tēnāpi tāvad arthāntarānvitābhidhāyitvam abhyupagatam ēva, tāvatā ca kāryānvitābhidhānasyāpy utpattēr na śakyatē viśēṣānvitābhidhānāśaktiḥ kalpayitum.*
58. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *tathā ca lōkē siddhārthāny ēva bhūyīṣṭhāni vākyāni dṛśyantē — kuśalam tē, kuśalam mē — ity ēvamādīni; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240: *lōkē ca siddhārthāny ēva prāyaśō vākyāni praśnōt-tararūpāṇi dṛśyantē, kuśalam tē kuśalam mamēty ēvam ādīni.*

Maṇḍana's where he makes this point, but it may be an extrapolation from his discussion of other pleasantries, such as congratulating someone on the birth of a child.

The second is that even injunctive sentences, which are standardly analyzed as pointing toward an effect, in fact do no such thing. The injunctions of the Veda state facts, just like any other sentence. When the Veda says that  $x$  is to be done, this can be rephrased as “ $x$  is a means to a desired end.” On this analysis, sentences that elicit an action, whether they are injunctions like “one who desires heaven performs the *agnihōtra* sacrifice,” or quasi-injunctions like “there's a treasure buried here,” produce their effects in the same way: the hearer understands the fact that is the meaning of the sentence, and decides, on the basis of that information, whether the action spoken of or implied is one that he or she really wants to undertake.<sup>59</sup> The idea that injunctions are reducible to statements of fact is Maṇḍana's calling card: it is his original contribution, which he developed at length both in the *Niyōgakāṇḍaḥ* of his *Brahmasiddhiḥ* and in his *Vidhivivēkaḥ*. Both of those works use the characteristic phrase “a means to a desired end” (*apēkṣitōpāyaḥ*).<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, as far as I am aware, Maṇḍana did not go so far as to claim that explicit injunctions, because they can be analyzed as expressing a proposition about a means–end relationship, are not in fact oriented toward an effect. In fact his discussion in the *Brahmakāṇḍaḥ* of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ* seems to presuppose a distinction between statements oriented toward an action and statements oriented toward a fact, since quasi-injunctions (“there's a treasure buried here”) are excluded from the former category and included in the latter. Thus Śālikanātha is introducing one of Maṇḍana's arguments, about the reduction of injunctions to statements of fact, into the context of another argument, about the possibility of statements of fact *per se*, and making connections between them. This shows that Śālikanātha saw coherence within, and made connections between, different aspects of Maṇḍana's philosophical program.<sup>61</sup> It also shows that he is concerned not just to refute the arguments that appear at the beginning of the *Brahmakāṇḍaḥ*, but the picture of language that emerges from Maṇḍana's work as a whole.

### 3.4 Śālikanātha's response

As noted above, Śālikanātha is more polemical in his introduction of Maṇḍana's views in the *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā* than in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, and the same applies to the beginning of his own response in both works. In the *Ṛjuvimalā*, he says that the preceding view is “childish babble that only children would pay attention to,” whereas in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* he simply says, “here is what I say to this.”<sup>62</sup>

He begins, in both cases, by insisting that language learning is only possible in the first place because of the relation between linguistic expressions and the actions that are

59. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *kiṃ ca kāryam api tad ucyatē, yadapēkṣitōpāyaḥ, tēna siddhaiva karmaṇām apēkṣitōpāyatā kāryaparēṣu gamyatē*; *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240 has the same sentence.

60. *Brahmasiddhiḥ* pp. 115–118; *Vidhivivēkaḥ* p. 471 (prose after 2.3).

61. As Hugo David has already shown with reference to a different controversy (2015).

62. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 20: *tad ētat bālabhāṣitam bālēṣv ēvādaraṇīyatām labhatē*; *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240: *atrōcyatē*.

their effects.<sup>63</sup> Recall that Maṇḍana, as well as Śālikanātha's "Maṇḍana," had claimed that statements such as "congratulations on the birth of your child" are not oriented toward action — in the limited sense that there is nothing in particular that the hearer could do on hearing the sentence that would count as acting in accordance with the statement — but it was nevertheless possible to learn what they mean. Śālikanātha begins by showing that it is in fact impossible to learn language in situations like the one Maṇḍana describes. If one observes a speaker saying *x* to a hearer, and observes that the listener becomes happy in response to it, there is absolutely no way that one could determine the particular cause of the hearer's happiness simply on the basis of this interaction. One may come to learn that the hearer does indeed have a particular cause of happiness, namely the birth of a son, or one may already know this at the time of observing the interaction, but given the innumerable other causes of happiness, there is no reason to assume that this particular state of affairs is the content of the speaker's statement.<sup>64</sup> Śālikanātha's criticism recalls Quine's famous argument about the difficulty a field linguist has in determining the meaning of the expression *gavagai*.<sup>65</sup>

The reason why an orientation toward action is so important to learning language, Śālikanātha explains, is because it allows the language learner to associate the content of the speaker's utterance with the content of the cognition upon which the hearer subsequently acts. The "particular state of affairs" (*viśiṣṭārthaḥ*) represented by the hearer's action is inferred to be the content of both the hearer's cognition and thereby the content of the speaker's utterance. There will still be uncertainties about precisely which aspects of the observed state of affairs correspond to the content of the utterance, but they will diminish as the language learner is exposed to further instances of linguistically-conditioned practical activity. Śālikanātha describes this type of activity as "the original route of language acquisition" (*vyutpattāv ādimārgabhūtaḥ*).<sup>66</sup>

With this evocative phrase, Śālikanātha probably intends to distinguish his conception of language acquisition (*vyutpattiḥ*) from Maṇḍana's. Both thinkers agree that it involves learning the relationship between linguistic expressions and their proper meanings. Yet

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63. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 20: *na hi vṛddhavyavahāram antarēṇa vyutpattis sambhavati; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240: *sarvapuruṣāṇām tāvad vṛddhavyavahāra ēva prathamam śabdānām vyutpattir aṅgikaraṇīyā, na khalu vyavahāram antarēṇa siddhārthānvākhyānē vyutpattir avakalpatē.*
64. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *viśiṣṭārthaviṣaya hi pratipattir arthaviśēṣābhīdhānakalpanānimittam, na ca harṣō harṣahētuvīśēṣānumānē prabhavati. na ca pāriśēṣyēna harṣahētuvīśēṣāniścayaḥ, kālatrayavartivyavahitaviprakṣṭānām harṣahētūnām pāriśēṣyēṇāvadhāraṇānupapattēḥ; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 240: *yady api mukhaprasādādbhīr harṣōtpattir anumīyatē, harṣōtpattīyā ca harṣahētvavagamaḥ, tannimittatā ca śabdasya, tathāpi putras tē jāta itī vākyasya putrajanmākhyaharṣahētupratipādakatā harṣahētūnām ānanyād duranumānā, na ca pāriśēṣyēna tatpratipādakatvādhyavasāyāḥ, bhūtabhaviṣyadvartamānānām sannihitavyavahitānām pāriśēṣyēṇāvadhāraṇāyā atyantaduṣkaratvāt.*
65. Quine (2013 [1960]: 25ff.).
66. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 21: *vyavahāraḥ punaḥ viśiṣṭārthaviṣaya ēva pratyakṣam upalabhyamānas tadviṣayām ēva pratītim anumāpāyan śabdasya viśiṣṭārthābhīdhānakalpanāyām hētur vyutpattāv ādimārgabhūtaḥ kāryābhīdhāyitvam ēva sarvaśabdānām āpādayati; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, pp. 240–241: *vyavahāraḥ punaḥ pratyakṣō viśiṣṭārthaviṣaya ēva upalabhyamānas tadbuddhyanusārēṇa tadgatām ēva śabdasya vācakatām anāyāsēnāpādayan vyutpattāv upāyatām gantum alam.*

Maṇḍana insists that this relationship can be learned apart from the context of linguistically-conditioned practical activity (*vyavahārah*), whereas Śālikanātha seems to suggest that all instances of successful language learning are, in some sense, parasitic upon precisely these contexts. It is somewhat difficult to make out Śālikanātha's argument here, but he claims that in cases like "he cooks with *kāṣṭhas*," even if one one learns the meaning of the word *kāṣṭha* by observing a man cooking with logs, the meaning that one associates with the linguistic expression is nevertheless related to an effect, insofar as it is connected to other meanings that are themselves connected to an effect.<sup>67</sup> Precisely what the "effect" is in cases of ostensive definition is not clear. It may be the action of cooking, or it may be the action of ostension itself (*apadēśah*). In both cases, Śālikanātha's position seems close to Wittgenstein's: "an ostensive definition explains the use — the meaning — of a word when the overall role of the word in language is clear."<sup>68</sup> To learn that *kāṣṭha* means "log," the language learner not only needs to know the meaning of all of the other words in the sentence, as well as the general significance of the inflectional endings, but also what kind of "move in the language game" the sentence represents. If the language learner already knows that "he cooks with *kāṣṭhas*" is intended to describe a situation that he sees before him, in which a man is cooking with logs, then he is likely to understand *kāṣṭha* as a "log." But even this much knowledge presupposes that he has already proceeded quite far along the original route of language acquisition.

By describing an effect (*kāryam*) in terms of a "move in the language game," I am certainly going beyond Maṇḍana's conception of "effect." He had understood it to be the kind of action that one can be enjoined to perform: bringing a cow, for instance. Śālikanātha appears to conceive of it more broadly, as something that is brought about as a consequence of an utterance, although it is somewhat difficult to draw precise limits around the concept. Whenever a sentence is properly understood, he says, one understands the "fact" that it expresses — supposing that it does express such a fact — in relation to the effect it is meant to have.<sup>69</sup> Empson says something similar regarding the archetypal "statement of fact" in twentieth-century Anglophone philosophy: how do we know, really, what to make of the sentence "the cat is on the mat?" It will have "contradictory associations... in that it might come out of a fairy story and might come out of *Reading Without Tears*."<sup>70</sup> Although the "fact" represented by the sentence is the same, if it occurred in a book teaching children to read it would represent one kind of "move in the language game," namely an ostensive teaching of words, and if it occurred in a fairy tale, it would represent another, namely a presentation of facts material to the narrative. For this reason Śālikanātha rejects Maṇḍana's contention that the meanings of words only need to relate to the meanings of the other words

67. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, pp. 21–22: *ata ēva vartamānāpadēśē 'pi kāṣṭhaiḥ pacatīti vyutpattir yā sā kāryān-vitārthāntarasambandhānugūṇyāt kāryānvayiny ēva.*

68. Wittgenstein (2001 [1953]: §30).

69. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *yac cēdam arthāntarānvitābhidhānamātrē padāni vyutpadyanta iti, tad api bālabhāṣitam, sarvēṣv asya vyavahārēṣu kāryānvitārthapratīṭēr nārthāntaramātrānvitābhidhānakalpanā sambhavaṭi. yadi hi kāryānvayō 'pi kvacid vyabhicarati, tatō 'rthāntaramātrānvitābhidhānam kalpyēta, na ca tad asti.*

70. Empson (2004 [1930]: 2).



in the sentence in order to express the meaning of the sentence, or in other words, Maṇḍana's commitment to a strictly compositional theory of sentence-meaning.

Most of the rest of Śālikanātha's discussion in his *Rjuvimalā* deals with why and how we are to understand statements in relation to an effect even when an explicit reference to such an effect is lacking. In the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, he simply refers his readers to his detailed exposition of this topic in his *Vākyārthamātrkā*. In the *Rjuvimalā*, following Maṇḍana's argumentation, he takes up the examples of "quasi-injunctions" such as "there's a treasure buried here." Recall that Maṇḍana sought to distinguish a statement's meaning from its perlocutionary effects, and hence he considered these simple statements of fact rather than injunctions. Śālikanātha does not want to deny that such statements, on some level, express a fact. But he emphatically denies that such facts exhaust the final or all-things-considered meaning of such statements. If the hearer acts upon hearing the statement, it must be because the hearer understands that there is some action to perform. An observer, such as a language learner, will know that such an understanding is the consequence of the speaker's linguistic expression.<sup>71</sup> The mere fact that a linguistic expression referring to an action is not explicitly present does not mean that the understanding of this action (e.g., digging) is not an effect of the linguistic expression that *is* present (e.g. "there's a treasure buried here"). Śālikanātha says that particular relations of compatibility (*yōgyatā*) available in the context of the utterance are sufficient to allow the hearer to understand the particular action that he or she is to perform.<sup>72</sup>

The word that Śālikanātha uses for "supplying" an action against which the speaker's statement comes to make sense is *adhyāhārah*, which is generally used for supplying words that are missing from a sentence. But the relationship in this case between the explicit statement ("there's a treasure buried here") and the supplied action ("you ought to dig it up") is distinct from the relationship between, for example, the statement "not yet" and the omitted words with which it construes (e.g. "I have *not yet* read that book"). Precisely when a statement should be considered incomplete, and therefore in need of supplementation, was a topic of long-running debate within Mīmāṃsā. Here it is sufficient to note that the "supplement," in Śālikanātha's view, may be more like a Gricean implicature. We can roughly trace out a Gricean interpretation of Śālikanātha's argument. The claim that language use is oriented toward some action is comparable to Grice's cooperative principle ("make your contribution such as is required, at the stage in which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged," Levinson 1983: 101). If a speaker utters the statement, "there's a treasure buried here," the hearer would immediately wonder what the point of such a statement was. The mere fact of a treasure being buried in a particular place could be relevant to the "accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange" in several ways, but context will generally allow the hearer to decide what the speaker's purport is.

71. *Rjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *yatra tāvat pravṛttinivṛtī vidyētē, tatra tatkāraṇabhūtā kāryāvagatir asti. na hi tāṃ vinā tē bhavataḥ. śabdānantaryāc ca śabdēnaiva sā kṛtēti kalpayati pārśvasthaḥ.*

72. *Rjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *na ca kāryārthaḥ śabdō na śrūyata ity ētāvata śabdasyākāraṇatvam, adhyāhārādilabhyasyāpi vācakatvavirōdhāt, yōgyatāviśēṣēṇa cādhyāhāryaviśēṣāvagasiddhēḥ.*

We also noted that Maṇḍana's account of meaning differs from Grice's, who defined "(non-natural) meaning" in terms of what a speaker intends for a hearer to understand as intended. In Grice's account, *what is meant* includes both *what is said* and *what is implicated*; in Maṇḍana's, it includes only *what is said*. Śālikanātha is a Gricean *avant la lettre*, insofar as he considers implicatures to form part of the meaning of a statement. The notion of implicature is more specific than that of a speaker's intention or of the consequences of a statement on a hearer, and some of the criticisms that Maṇḍana had leveled against intentional or consequential concepts of meaning have rather less force against the concept of implicature. For instance, consider Maṇḍana's rejection of the possibility that my buying a new car could, first of all, be what the speaker of the sentence "there's a treasure buried here" intended, and secondly, constitute the meaning of that statement. Suppose I meet a rich relative of mine who, because of his involvement in organized crime, buries all of his money rather than putting it in a bank, and when we are walking in his backyard, the following exchange happens:

A: I could really use a new car.

B: There's a treasure buried here.

In that case, I infer I am invited to dig up the treasure and buy a car with it, and that inference is licensed by what is said and my assumption that my relative is saying something relevant and true. The implicated meaning, "dig up the treasure and buy a car with it," is what my relative *meant* in Grice's sense of "intended to be recognized as having been intended."<sup>73</sup>

One might argue that implicatures are not actually meanings because they are inferential. If someone says "there is smoke on the mountain," I understand there to be fire on the mountain through inference, but is that understanding to be considered the statement's meaning? In his *Vākyārthamātrkā*, Śālikanātha is upfront about his view that complex inferential processes operate in the background whenever one successfully understands the meaning of a sentence. In this passage, he merely notes that it would be inappropriate to conclude that the linguistic expression is "inactive" in the understanding of an implicated effect, since one undertakes that action immediately upon hearing the linguistic expression.<sup>74</sup> He then appears to anticipate a feature of implicated meanings that has attracted the attention of modern scholars: they can be "obtained through other epistemic instruments," most relevantly through an explicit statement of the implicated meaning. The speaker might say, "there's a treasure buried here, so you should start digging." The implicature of the first statement is identical in content to the explicit meaning of the second.<sup>75</sup>

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73. Levinson (1983: 101).

74. This is what I take to be the idea behind *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *na ca pramāṇāntarēṇāpi kāryāvagamō ghaṭata iti śabdasya tatraudāsīnyam śakyam kalpayitum, śabdaśravaṇē pravṛttidarśanād ānantaryēṇa śabdasyaiva tatra kāraṇatvasyāvagamāt.*

75. This, again, is my interpretation of *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *pramāṇāntarēṇāpy asāv arthō labhyata iti kāmam śabdō 'nuvādakaḥ syāt, nākāraṇam. na cānuvādakatvaṁ puruṣavacāsām dōṣaḥ.* The phrase *pramāṇāntara-* in these two passages, however, admits of other interpretations.

Śālikanātha proceeds to introduce a distinction between two types of language usage. The first includes “sentences used in the course of practical activity” (*vyavahāravākyaṇi*) and the second includes the use of linguistic expressions exclusively in reference to facts (*siddhārthamātraparatvēna prayōgaḥ*). Śālikanātha does not deny the existence of this second type, although in order to reconcile it with his broader commitment to the action-oriented nature of all language, he will end up arguing that it is dependent on the first. First, however, Śālikanātha summarizes his position regarding the first type of language use. In “sentences used in the course of practical activity,” we are, by definition, using language to do something. That “something” is the effect in reference to which our statements are made and in reference to which they are understood. In some cases, namely that of injunctive statements, our words refer to this effect explicitly; in other cases they do not do so explicitly, but their meanings nevertheless relate to an effect that is either explicitly stated elsewhere or understood as a supplement (*adhyāhāraḥ*).<sup>76</sup> Maṇḍana’s refusal to consider a statement to be oriented toward action unless it contains a word directly expressive of that action is based, Śālikanātha suggests, on his ignorance of a basic tenet of Mīmāṃsā, namely that of sentential holism: the meaning expressed by a sentence is expressed by all of the words together, rather than each word individually. The action is the content (*viśayaḥ*) of the sentence through the mediation (*praṇāḍī*) of the mutually-related word-meanings.<sup>77</sup>

The second type of language use is more interesting, and on this topic he says slightly more in his *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* than in his *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*. By “the use of linguistic expressions exclusively in reference to facts,” Śālikanātha does not mean phrases which are superficially statements of fact but which actually serve some practical purpose. The examples that he attributed to Maṇḍana — “How are you?” “I’m fine” — actually belong to the first type of language use. Depending on the context, “How are you?” could serve the purpose of demonstrating genuine concern for a friend, or it could serve the purpose of letting a customer know that the speaker is ready to take his or her order. What kinds of statements, then, “exclusively refer to facts”? Śālikanātha does not give examples, but we might imagine statements of fact elicited in response to a question. Śālikanātha claims, rather desperately it seems, that such statements must be cases of secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇā*). The argument itself is straightforward: wherever there is a relation to an effect (*kāryānvayaḥ*), there is a relation to a specific configuration of word-meanings (*parasparapadārthānvayaḥ*); hence, given this connection, one can use a linguistic expression in reference to a specific configuration of word-meanings — that is to say, in reference to a fact — when it is clear that one does not intend the statement to relate to any effect. A parallel case would be metonymy:

76. *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *tēna ca sākṣāt śrutyā vādhyāhārēṇa vā sarvavyavahāravākyaṇeṣu kāryānvayāvya-  
hicārāt tadanvitārthābhidhānam liṅādīvyatirēkiṇām, liṅādīnām tu kāryābhidhānam ēvēti siddham. tēna sar-  
vapadāni tāvat kāryānvitam ēvārtham āhuḥ.*

77. *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, p. 22: *na ca pratipadam viśayabhāvaḥ, praṇāḍyāpi tādarthyōpapattēḥ.  
praṇāḍīsamāśrayaṇē ca parasparapadārthāntarasambandhāvagama ēva pramāṇam, anyathā pratipadam  
viśayabhāvē ’nubandhabhēdāt bhinnēṣu niyōgārthēṣu sambandhānām aruṇaikahāyanīnyāvailakṣaṇyāt  
parasparasambandhāvagamaś ca kriyayaiva syāt. ētac ca pratipadādihikaraṇē nipuṇataram upapādayiṣyā-  
maḥ.* The reference is to Prabhākara’s *Bṛhatī* on 2.1.1 and Śālikanātha’s commentary thereon (vol. 3, pp. 283, 285–286).

given that the president lives in the White House, I can use a linguistic expression that would normally refer to the White House (e.g., “1600 Pennsylvania Avenue”) to refer to the president, when it is clear that I do not intend the expression to refer to the White House. Cases of secondary meaning are always motivated by specific considerations, for instance my desire to emphasize the office rather than the person of the president. Śālikanātha denies that such considerations are possible in the case of the Veda, and therefore statements of the Veda always retain their “original reference to an effect” (*svābhāvīkākāryaparātvaṃ*).<sup>78</sup>

This argument is open to criticism from a number of directions. One is that secondary meaning is usually invoked to account for the meaning of individual terms, not the meaning of entire sentences. Sarcasm, however, may be considered a case of secondary meaning on the sentential level: if I were to say that a politician “really cares about our problems,” most people would understand that I meant the opposite of what I said. Even so, meaning is still conceived, in these examples, as the *content* of a statement. Śālikanātha invokes secondary meaning to account not for the content of a statement but the *way* in which that content is presented, namely, as a statement of fact, rather than a statement intended to elicit an action. Here, too, we might think of examples where one mode of presentation is blocked, such as the very common strategy of issuing commands by asking questions (“can you set the table?”). The most serious challenge seems to be the primacy of one type of statement over the other. Śālikanātha suggests that statements should be interpreted as oriented toward an effect unless there is some special reason to suspend this expectation, in which case a statement’s meaning will simply consist in the state of affairs it presents. But Maṇḍana had argued for the opposite procedure, namely, taking statements to be factual unless there is some special reason to connect them with an effect.

One way of salvaging Śālikanātha’s position is to admit, as he already does in some ways, of a range of relationships between what is expressed by a statement and its effect. In no cases are statements entirely without some or another effect. But on one end of the spectrum are statements, like injunctions, where the content is in some sense isomorphic with the effect, or in other words, the effect can be discerned more or less easily among the word-meanings of the sentence. A test for statements of this type is to compare the statement with what Austin called an explicit performative: “Shut the door” and “I order you to shut the door.” On the other end are statements in which there is no obvious relation between the content and its effect. In such cases the explicit performative will differ quite radically from the statement. This category includes highly idiomatic uses of language, e.g., “straight up and down” for “I express my enthusiastic agreement.” But it would also include simple statements of fact, or what Austin called “constative” utterances. It has long been recognized, after Austin, that even constatives have a performative dimension.<sup>79</sup> But

78. *Rjuvimalā Pañcīkā*, p. 22: *lōkē tu yas siddhārthamātraparatvēna prayōgaḥ, sa lōkavacasām pramāṇāntarapratūtārthaparātvaṃ lākṣaṇīkō draṣṭavyaḥ. kāryānvayō hi parasparānvayavyabhicārīti lakṣaṇōpapatteh; Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 241: *lōkē yas siddhārthaparātā padānām prayōgaḥ, sa lākṣaṇīkō bhaviṣyati. kāryānvayō hi parasparam padārthavyabhicārīty avivakṣitvā kāryānvayam parasparapadārthānvayavivakṣayāpi lōkās śabdām prayuñjatē. vivakṣābalēna ca lakṣaṇayā tatparatāpi tatra nirvahati. vēdē tu lakṣaṇānimittam kiñcin nāstīti svābhāvīkākāryaparātvaṃ nāpahartum śakyatē.*

79. Austin (1962: 47); Levinson (1983: 235).

because of the lack of an inherent connection between the content of constatives and their effects, they are, even more than other types of statements, compatible with a broad range of performances. If I say “the battle of Jena took place in 1806,” my illocutionary act might be: to respond to a question, either in a quiz game, or on an examination, or in a conversation; to correct a misstatement; to provide background or explanation for a further statement; and so on. Such statements have been taken to be paradigmatic in Western philosophy because they can be evaluated in truth-conditional terms. But the act of stating a truth — veridiction, as Foucault called it, adapting Nietzsche’s *Wahrsagen*<sup>80</sup> — is nonetheless an act, and therefore a component of practical activity (*vyavahārah*). In between injunctions and statements of fact are statements, including “quasi-injunctions” such as “there’s a treasure buried here” and the entire category of Gricean implicatures, in which the content can be linked to the effect through an inferential process. Thus we might think of statements of fact as a particular class of statements for which the effect derives entirely from context rather than content, and which consequently give the impression of having “meanings” that are entirely distinct from their contexts and effects.

From this point the texts of the *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā* and the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* agree word-for-word. Śālikanātha takes up Maṇḍana’s reductive argument next. Prabhākara had claimed that the key feature about injunctions, and indeed of language in general, is that they refer to “something to be done” (*kāryam*). Maṇḍana had argued, although not in his extended critique of Prabhākara’s theory of language, that even this element of meaning could be interpreted as a fact, namely, the fact that the action under description is a means to a desired end. Śālikanātha disposes of this argument very quickly. Conceptually, there is a clear distinction: “something to be done” is what is to be brought about by action, whereas a means is an instrument by which it is brought about. In individual instances it is clear that what is to be done is distinct from the means: when one splits wood with an axe, the axe is the means, and the wood’s being split is what is to be done. It is only because Vedic rituals, which are “to be done,” are understood to be means to a desired end, that “dimwits” (*mandadhīyām*, i.e., Maṇḍana) could get the mistaken impression that the fact that something is to be done is identical to the fact that it is a means to a desired end, since in this particular case these properties coincide. Something that is inherently difficult or painful is understood as something to be done on the condition that it is also a means to a desired end, but not everything that is understood as something to be done is inherently difficult or painful. Pleasure, for instance, is an end in itself.<sup>81</sup>

In his conclusion, Śālikanātha brings the argument back to the interpretation of the Upaniṣads. Maṇḍana had taken their statements to be statements of fact. Śālikanātha has argued that language use, in general, is meaningful only in relation to an effect. While this principle can sometimes be suspended in everyday life, if a speaker clearly does not intend

80. Foucault (2014: 19–20).

81. *R̥juvimalā Pañcikā*, pp. 22–23, and *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 241: *na cāpēkṣitōpāyataiva kāryatā, kṛtisādhyam kāryam, sādhanam upāyaḥ, sādhyatvōpāyatvē ca bhinnē, kiṃ tu klēśātmakam karmāpēkṣitōpāyatayā kāryam pratīyata iti kāryatā sādhanatām na vyabhicaratīti tādātmayabhramō mandadhīyām. tathā ca sukham svayam ēva kāryam*. For the charged significance of *mandadhī-*, see footnotes 102 and 116. See David (2015) and Kataoka (2020) for other recent discussions of Śālikanātha’s criticism of Maṇḍana’s reductionist views.

his or her words to be understood exclusively in reference to a fact, exceptions cannot be made in the case of the Vedas. Statements in the Veda that appear to refer to facts must always be interpreted otherwise, namely, in reference to an action that is either enjoined elsewhere or supplied. Śālikanātha gives his opponent two options in the case of sentences of the Upaniṣads: either we find some action with which to construe them, such that they are, like all other sentences in the Veda, ultimately for the sake of that action, or we must admit that they are, properly speaking, meaningless, since there is no way for us to learn what they mean.<sup>82</sup>

The second option takes us back to the known entity constraint, which Maṇḍana had attributed to his Prābhākara opponent (see 181 above). It was not discussed either in Maṇḍana's response to his opponent in the *Brahmakāṇḍaḥ* of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, but Maṇḍana did address it in his brief *Siddhikāṇḍaḥ*. There, an opponent formulates the constraint as follows: “Since the meaning of a sentence is the meaning of its constituent words in relation to each other, something cannot be the meaning of a sentence unless it is the meaning of a word, and in order for something to be the meaning of a word, there must be some other epistemic instrument for it.”<sup>83</sup> Maṇḍana responds by saying that it is perfectly possible for a sentence to convey states of affairs that are previously unknown — in fact, this is exactly what sentences do — and they do so by adding *particular* qualifications to something that is only known *in general*, i.e., without those qualifications. He gives a whimsical example: “In a certain land, there are birds called such-and-such that have emerald feet, ruby beaks, and wings of silver and gold.” Here the sentence presents a novel state of affairs, which was not previously known, by combining a set of attributes (*dharmakalāpaḥ*) with the general subject “birds.”<sup>84</sup> This example, however, fails to address the known entity constraint, since all of the individual word-meanings, including crucially the subject of predication, are already known. Regarding statements that predicate qualities of the self, Śālikanātha would probably have offered a dilemma: either the self that is the subject of these statements is the self that is already known to us, in which case Maṇḍana's attempt to read these statements in reference to a non-dual self is doomed, or it isn't, in which case the appropriate analogy is not statements about birds, but statements about something of which we have no experience at all. Nevertheless, it may still be possible to follow Maṇḍana's line of argumentation and insist that the statements found in the Upaniṣads take the form of corrections: “as for what you think of as the self in accordance with worldly experience, that is in fact one” (etc.), on

82. *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcīkā*, p. 23, and *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 241: *ēvaṁ sarvapadānāṁ kāryānvitārthābhīdhāyakatvād yadi vēdāntēṣu kāryaṁ yōgyam adhyāhārādibhir labhyatē tadā kāryārthataiva vēdāntavākyānām api, atha na, tatō 'nabhidhāyakataiva vyutpattivirahāt. atō vidhinirākaraṇam api vēdāntēṣu na kṣatim āvāhati. tasmāt siddham kārya ēva vēdasya prāmāṇyam.*

83. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 156 (verse 1): *nanv anvitapadārthatvād vākyārthasya padārthatām ~ aprāpya na syād vākyārthaḥ padārthatvē 'nyamānakaḥ ~*

84. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 156 (verse 2): *sāmānyēna padārthatvē siddhē 'sādhāraṇair guṇaiḥ ~ śakyāpūrvav-iṣēṣasya lōkavat pratipādanā ~ yathā lōkē dvīpaviṣēṣa ēvaṁnāmānō maratākamayapādāḥ padmarāgamay-acañcavaḥ sauvarṇarājatapakṣāḥ pakṣiṇa iti pakṣisāmānyam pramāṇāntaradhigatamananyasādhāraṇēna dharmakalāpēna saṁśrjyamānam pramāṇāntarānadhigatam viṣēṣarūpam āśadayati, vākyēna ca pramīyatē pramāṇāntarānadhigatēna viṣēṣarūpēna.*

the model of “as for what you think is a snake, that is in fact a rope.”

Śālikanātha does not address the known entity constraint directly, but his more general point is that without a purpose to guide our interpretation of the statements in the Upaniṣads about the self, we cannot convincingly extract a sense from them. For sentence meanings, in his view, are constructed in a “top-down” fashion, starting from a purpose and integrating the meanings of subsentential expressions as appropriate, rather than in the “bottom-up” fashion imagined by Maṇḍana. In any case, he considers the first option — construing apparent statements of fact with an injunction — to be a preferable interpretive strategy (see on this point Uskokov 2018: 141). He develops this strategy in the continuation of this argument in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*.

## 4 Śālikanātha on the Upaniṣads

Śālikanātha proposes to interpret apparent statements of fact in the Upaniṣads by construing them with an explicit injunction, namely, “the self is to be known” (*ātmā jñātavyaḥ*), which he says is transmitted for the sake of not being reborn (*apunarāvṛttiḥ*).<sup>85</sup> As far as I know, this exact phrase does not occur in any Vedic text, but it is found in Kumārila’s *Ślōkavārttikam*, with which Śālikanātha was familiar. Either author, or both, might have meant it as a paraphrase of the well-known passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* (2.4.5): “You see, Maitreyī — it is one’s self (*ātman*) which one should see and hear, and on which one should reflect and concentrate.”<sup>86</sup> As he makes clear in his *Tattvālōkaḥ*, Śālikanātha’s soteriology derives from the idea of “not coming back” found in several Upaniṣads.<sup>87</sup> For him the Upaniṣads tell us what we need to *do* to not be reborn, rather than what we need to *know* in order to realize our already-existing unity with Brahma. Śālika therefore seems to adopt the position that Taber has carefully reconstructed for Kumārila, namely, that self-knowledge is a means to liberation, but not *qua* knowledge, but rather *qua* action.<sup>88</sup> In fact Śālikanātha’s position, as we will see, cautions us against conflating “Vēdānta” as a soteriology of the self, with which Śālikanātha and Kumārila have no quarrel, with “Vēdānta” in the form presented by non-dualists (*brahmvādins*) like Maṇḍana, with which Śālikanātha, at least, disagrees in the strongest possible terms.

Śālikanātha maintains that this very injunction, “the self is to be known,” requires that apparently factual statements about the self in the Upaniṣads must be interpreted otherwise. If this injunction is not meaningless, then it must in principle be possible to know the self. Śālikanātha provides two alternatives. The first is familiar from the foregoing argument: if

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85. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, pp. 241–242: *ataś ca vēdāntānām api ātmā jñātavya ity apunarāvṛttayē samāmnātēna vidhinaikavākyatām āśritya kāryaparātvam ēva varṇanīyam*.
86. *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrōtavyō mantavyō nididhyāsitavyō maitrēyi* (translation by Olivelle 1998: 69). Kumārila’s version, at *Sambandhākṣēpaparihāraḥ* v. 103, is *ātmā jñātavya ity ētan mōkṣārtham na ca cōditam*; see Yoshimizu (2007: 235).
87. Yoshimizu (2007: 245) mentions that Kumārila quotes a phrase presenting this ideal from the *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* (8.15) in his *Tantravārttika* (p. 288).
88. Taber (2007: 169); Uskokov (2018: 178–183).

we accept Maṇḍana's position, the "self" that is to be known will be the self that is described in the Upaniṣads; but if our *only* way of knowing this self is through the statements of the Upaniṣads, then we can never really know it at all, because we can never learn what "self" in the Upaniṣads refers to, at least not in the same way that we learn the meanings of words like "cow" and "bring" from everyday life. Śālikanātha probably expects his Vēdāntin opponents to agree with him on this point, since it is actually *their* position that the word "self" in the Upaniṣads is so far removed from our experience that all attempts to describe it must ultimately fail. But this position has a major liability, which is that the injunction to know the self will no longer be meaningful.<sup>89</sup>

In his view, the injunction should be interpreted as recommending knowledge not of an otherwise-unknown self, but of the self with which we are already intimately acquainted. It will therefore have the usual structure of an injunction, where an action that is not already given, in this case knowing, is enjoined with reference to something that is, in this case the self.<sup>90</sup> Śālikanātha explains his view of the self in great detail in the *Tattvālōkaḥ*, and we can simply refer to his brief characterization of it at the beginning of that essay: "The self — all-pervading, permanent, separate from the intellect, sense faculties, and body, and multiple, one for each individual person — appears in the awareness of objects."<sup>91</sup> This is a thoroughgoingly dualist view of the self. Śālikanātha notes, in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, that the non-dualist view of the self is contradicted by other epistemic instruments, above all our own experience.

If the statements that Maṇḍana points to really served to tell us about the nature of Brahma, then we would have to interpret a sentence like "Brahma is bliss" — a rephrasing of the passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* (3.9.28) with which Śālikanātha began this discussion) — as new information (*vidhiḥ*) that is said of something already given (*anuvādaḥ*). Maṇḍana would therefore have to concede that, at least as far as these statements are concerned, Brahma is already known to us in some form or another. How could Brahma be known to us already? Easy, says Śālikanātha: in everyday life we use the word *brahma* to refer to the self, and thus it ought to have the same meaning in the Veda, according to a standard Mīmāṃsā principle.<sup>92</sup> If this is the case, then the qualities that are predicated of the self in the Upaniṣads, such the supreme bliss that is constantly manifest, are contradicted by "every single cognition that we have."<sup>93</sup>

Śālikanātha explains that the self is manifest (*prakāśaḥ*) in all of our cognitive op-

89. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *anyathā siddhārthapratipattiparatvē vyutpattē abhāvād vṛddhavyavahārāvagatāyāḥ padānām anvitābhidhāyitāyā ēvānupapattēḥ*.

90. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *kāryaparativē ca pramāṇāntarāvagatātmasvarūpapratipattiparatvēnaiva varṇanam kartavyam*.

91. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 316: *buddhīndriyaśarīrēbhyō bhinna ātmā vibhur dhruvaḥ ~ nānābhūtaḥ pratikṣētram arthavittiṣu bhāsatē ~*

92. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *api ca siddhārthaparativē 'pi śabdasya na vēdāntānām paramānandādirūpatvē brahmaṇaḥ prāmāṇyam avakalpatē. tatra hi brahmasvarūpānūvādēnānandādividhir āsthēyaḥ. brahmasvarūpaṁ ca pramāṇāntarasiddham ēvāsrayaṇīyam. brahmasabdasya ca lōkē pramāṇāntarasiddhātmavācitvēna prasiddhē vēdē 'pi sa ēvārthaḥ*.

93. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *tathā sati nityaparakāśaparamānandarūpavidhis sakalapratīviruddhaḥ*.



erations, both those that present new information (*pramāṇāni*) and those that re-present stored information (*smṛtayaḥ*). We have no feeling of supreme bliss in any of those cognitions.<sup>94</sup> Śālikanātha rejects the explanation that the experience of supreme bliss is made “unmanifest” because the self is overwhelmed (*abhibhūtaḥ*) by the pain of the cycle of birth and death: first of all, it does not stand to reason for something delimited, like pain, to overwhelm something that is (*ex hypothesi*) not delimited, such as bliss; secondly, to say that something is intrinsically manifest is to say, precisely, that it *cannot* be overwhelmed, shrouded, or indeed made manifest. At this point Śālikanātha refers the reader to his *Tattvālōkaḥ*, to which we will shortly turn, for further arguments against a non-dualist conception of the self, although he quickly adds one more argument: the Vēdāntins’ claim that the self is devoid of all transformation (*vikāraḥ*) is similarly contradicted by our own experience, because transformations, including cognitive acts, arise in the self all the time.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, according to Śālikanātha, we cannot take statements that appear to predicate bliss and so on of the self literally, because if we did, the Vedas would be telling us something that is flatly contradicted by our own experience, and hence we could not connect the predicate, the new information provided by the Vedas, with the subject, the given information provided elsewhere. Under these circumstances we have to understand these statements in a broader or secondary sense. They do not really tell us anything new, but rather reaffirm certain things that we are in principle able to know independently, namely that the self is not subject to death and decay. Because they do not present new information, they are not actually epistemic instruments for the content they present.<sup>96</sup> The most they can *do* is provide background information for an injunction. By contrast, the statements of the Upaniṣads that enjoin actions with reference to the self can, at least in principle, be epistemic instruments for those actions, provided that there is no other way for us to know that we ought to perform those actions.

In the *Tattvālōkaḥ*, Śālikanātha’s essay on the self, he mounts a larger attack on Maṇḍana’s non-dualism. It covers some of the same ground — namely, that statements about the self in the Upaniṣads that contradict our experience and reason must be interpreted as non-literal — but addresses some of Maṇḍana’s positions more directly and polemically. Śālikanātha discusses a number of topics from various perspectives until he reaches the topic of liberation (*mōkṣaḥ*). What is liberation? His own position is that liberation is the complete destruction of the body resulting from the diminution of all good and bad karma.<sup>97</sup> But before explaining his position, he introduces Maṇḍana’s definition of liberation as “the disappearance of

94. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *sarvapratiṭipattiṣu hi pramāṇasmṛtibhūtāsv ātmā prakāśatē. na ca tatra paramānandas saṁvēdyatē.*

95. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *na ca sām̐sārikaduḥkḥābhibhūtatvāt tasya ’prakāśaḥ, abhibhavānupapattēḥ. avacchinnaṁ hi duḥkham, anavacchinnaś cānanda iti, nālpīyasā mahatō ’bhibhavas sambhavati. svaprakāśasya cābhibhavāvaraṇābhiviyaktīnām asambhava ēva. abhinnaikātmatattvapratiṭipādanam api pramāṇāntaraviruddham ēvēti vakṣyatē tattvālōkē. sakalavikārasūnyatāpi vijñānādivikārōṭpattēḥ pramāṇāntaraviruddhaiva.*

96. *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, p. 242: *iti parasparānvayāyōgyatayā nānandādīparatvam. ajarāmaratvayōs tu pramāṇāntaraprasiddhēr ēvānūvādatvād aprāmānyam iti.*

97. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 341: *ātyantikā tu dēhōcchēdō niśśēṣadharmādharmaṇīkṣayanibandhanō mōkṣaḥ.*

nescience,” which is taken from the *Niyōgakāṇḍaḥ* of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*.<sup>98</sup> In expanding on this definition, he offers a summary of non-dualistic Vēdānta as he understood it, and hence it is worth quoting word for word:

The reality of Brahma is unitary, without a second, unmixed, and free from all attributes, but on account of beginningless nescience it appears to have a second, namely the body and so on, and appears clouded with attributes, hence it is termed the “living being,” and appears to be bound. Therefore the cycle of birth and death is simply this beginningless nescience, and liberation is its disappearance due to the arising of pure knowledge that is beyond all conceptualization.<sup>99</sup>

In rejecting this view, Śālikanātha distinguishes himself from Maṇḍana in the starkest possible terms: “those who depend on evidence (*pramāṇaparatantrāḥ*) take this to be an elaboration of what is ultimately just pure faith (*śraddhā*).” If we assume, as Mīmāṃsakas do, that absolutely all of our knowledge comes to us by one of the six epistemic instruments, then there will never be any evidence for non-dualism (*advaitam*), because the non-dual can never fall within the scope of one of those epistemic instruments.<sup>100</sup> The opposition between “evidence” and “faith” may seem disconcertingly modern, but Śālikanātha was hardly the only thinker in South Asia in the later first millennium who looked skeptically on claims based on “faith” without the secure corroboration of experience or rational argumentation.<sup>101</sup> He proceeds to present, and then critique, three kinds of arguments for non-dualism, each allegedly based on a valid epistemic instrument. These arguments are precisely the ones on which Maṇḍana’s fame as a theorist of non-dualism rests: the claim that perceptual cognition does not imply differentiation; the claim that everything that exists instantiates the universal Being (*sattā*); and the claim that the Upaniṣads reveal the self to be non-dual.

Although perception leads the list of epistemic instruments, it is particularly significant that Śālikanātha begins his discussion here. For the argument from perception responds to a point that Maṇḍana had made toward the beginning of the *Tarkakāṇḍaḥ* of the *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, when polemically dismissing the very position that Śālikanātha would later take. Here, again, I quote word for word:

Now given that the transmitted Veda is more authoritative than the other epistemic instruments, as for the dimwit who sees that statements in everyday life

98. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 335: *kaḥ punar eṣa mōkṣaḥ? avidyāstamaya iti kēcit; Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 119 (v. 106): *avidyāstamayō mōkṣaḥ*.

99. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 335: *yat ēkam ēvādvitīyam asaṁśṣṭam sakalōpādhipariśuddham brahmatattvam, tat anādyavidyāvaśēna śarīrādisadvitīyam ivōpādihikaluṣitam ivāvabhāsamānam labdhajīvavyapadēsam sat, baddham iva lakṣyatē. atō anādyavidyaiva saṁsārah, nikhilavikalpātītapariśuddhavidyōdayāt tadastamaya ēva mōkṣa iti*.

100. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 336: *tad idam śraddhāmātravijrmbhitam iti pramāṇaparatantrāḥ. syād ētad ēvam yady advaitam kasyacit pramāṇasya gōcaraḥ, na caitad ittham, na khalv advaitam kasyacit pramāṇasya gōcaraḥ*.

101. McCrea, “A Premodern Indian Enlightenment?” (talk at Chicago in December 2019).

have a non-literal meaning when they conflict with perception and so on and therefore thinks that the language of the Veda should operate in the same way as the language of everyday life, or the one who thinks that perception and so on are actually more authoritative, because he has grown totally accustomed to the blindness of seeing difference, and because he sees that statements in everyday life are blocked by them — we will have to refute this so-called conflict in order to educate that person. For someone who is bitten by a scorpion with weak venom won't die of it, but he should be treated for it nevertheless.<sup>102</sup>

Maṇḍana will therefore argue that there is in fact no conflict between the non-dualism he finds in the Upaniṣads and the dualism that is generally believed to be intrinsic to perceptual cognition. Against the view that perceptual cognitions, insofar as they present their objects as a positive content (*vidhiḥ*), necessarily delimit (*vyavacchēdah*) those objects from other objects, Maṇḍana argues that perception merely presents its object as a positive content without any additional delimitation. Maṇḍana must explain the characteristic “object-sensitivity” (*pratiniyamah*) of perception, i.e., the fact that sight perceives only visual form, hearing perceives only sounds, and so on, without recourse to the idea that cognitions of particular types exclude objects of particular types. He insists that the activity of perception is exhausted in the presentation of its object as a positive content.<sup>103</sup>

This is the reason that Śālikanātha puts into the mouth of his opponent, who argues that perception is capable of directly realizing (*sākṣātkarōti*) the non-dual. Śālikanātha concedes that the function of perception is indeed limited to presenting positive contents. But it is one thing to say that it does not involve a judgment of distinction, and another to say that its contents are free from distinction. In fact it presents visual forms as visual forms, tastes as tastes, and so on. Maṇḍana might have had a point if one were to have exactly the same cognition with reference to a taste as one has with reference to a visual form. As it stands, however, the claim that non-dualism is amendable to perceptual cognition is contradicted every single time that anyone has a perceptual cognition.<sup>104</sup> Maṇḍana had actually made a weaker claim, namely that the way perception operates is not in principle in conflict with

102. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 44: *tad ēvaṁ balavattvē 'py āmnāyasya yo nāma mandadhīr laukikavacasām pratyakṣādivirōdha upacaritārthatadarśanāl lōkavad vēdē 'pi śabdavṛttam iti manyatē, yo vā nirūḍhanibīdatayā bhēdadarśanāndhakārasya pratyakṣādīnām ēva balavattvaṁ manyatē, lōkavacasām ca tair bādhadarśanāt, tatpratibōdhanāya virōdhō nirasyatē, na hi yō nāma mandaviṣēṇa vṛścikēna daṣṭō mriyatē, nāsau na cikitsyata iti.* Note the use of the word *mandadhī-*, which is very likely picked up and thrown back at Maṇḍana in Śālikanātha's response (fn. 116).
103. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, pp. 46–47: ... *darśanam ...yathā rūpavidhimātrōpakṣayān na rasam vyavachinatti, tathā bhūbhāgadarśananiyamō 'pi bhūbhāgavidhimātravyāpāratvān na ghaṭadṛśyam api vyavacchindiyāt.* See also Thrasher (1993: 77): “He attempts to show that *bheda*, difference, is not given in perception, but is a mental construction, a *vikalpa*, a relative construction that follows the direct apprehension of the bare object (*arthamātra*).”
104. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 336: *syān matam, pratyakṣam ēva vidhimātrōpakṣīnavyāpāram aparispṛṣṭānyōnyabhēdam advitīyam ēkam tattvaṁ. tad asat. satyam vidhāyakam ēva pratyakṣam, tac ca vidadhad api rūpaṁ rūpatayā, rasam ca rasatayā vidadhāti na punar sarvam ēkatayā, yathā rūpē dhārāvāhinī buddhiḥ, tathābhūtaiva yadi rasē 'pi syāt, tadā bhavēd ēva pratyakṣēna sākṣātkṛtam advaitam, na tv ētad ēvam iti sarvapatipatṛsvasam-viditam.*

non-dualism, but Śālikanātha's argument, that distinction permeates the very apparatus of perception, applies to it with equal force.

Śālikanātha now moves on to a different argument for non-dualism: "if it can be established that the universal alone is what exists, then it can be proven that, because Being is the highest universal, existence consists in that alone."<sup>105</sup> This is a highly condensed and synthesized version of several of Maṇḍana's arguments: first, that between the individual instance (*vyaktiḥ*) and the universal that it instantiates (*sāmānyam*), it is only the universal that truly exists; second, because universals can be encompassed within other, more general, universals, there is a single universal, Being (*sattā*), that is instantiated by everything that exists; everything that exists is therefore identical to this highest universal.<sup>106</sup> For Maṇḍana, it is undifferentiated existence that perception apprehends, and our cognitions of differentiated objects results from a secondary act of conceptual construction (*vikalpaḥ*). Thrasher (1993: 80–82) notes that an almost identical position was known to Kumārila, and in commenting on this passage, Umbēka and Pārthasārathi ascribed this position to Vēdāntins.<sup>107</sup>

This argument, according to Śālikanātha, shows that Maṇḍana is confused about the ontological status of existence.<sup>108</sup> It hinges on an equivalence between "existence" treated as a concrete particular (*viśeṣaḥ*) and "Being" treated as the highest universal (*sāmānyam*). Existence, however, is neither a particular, nor a single thing comprised of both a universal and a particular. In contrast to Maṇḍana's view of perception grasping existence itself, Śālikanātha claims that perception encompasses both the particular and the universal, which are connected to each other.<sup>109</sup> As for the idea of a highest universal called "existence," Śālikanātha says, in his *Jātinirṇayaḥ* ("Determination of Natural Kinds"), that it is epistemically inert: our cognition of natural kinds is based on their recurrent forms, but since there is no such recurrent form in the case of everything that exists, is cannot be the case that "existence" itself is the object of a perceptual cognition.<sup>110</sup>

Śālikanātha finally addresses the claim that non-dualism is based on the authority of the

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105. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 336: *yacca pramēyavikalpēna sāmānyam ēva vastv iti sthāpayitvā, sattāyā mahāsāmānyarūpatvāt tāvanmātram ēva sattvam iti sādhitam.*
106. These positions are sketched in Thrasher (1993: 77–86); see also Biardeau (1969: 71–77).
107. *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 71: *vastumātraviṣayaṁ prathamam avikalpakam pratyakṣam, tatpūrvās tu vikalpabudhayaō viśeṣān avagāhantē*; Thrasher quotes Kumārila's *Ślōkavārttikam*, *Pratyakṣaparicchedaḥ*, vv. 114–116 (for a discussion and translation see Taber 2005: 95, 205–206).
108. Śālikanātha calls the argument *gaganagrāsakalpam* (*Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 336), which literally means "like the consumption of mica." This refers to a stage in the alchemical process in which chips of mica are added to mercury in order to activate it in preparation for its subsequent transformation into gold or silver (White 1996: 268). Śālikanātha probably means that Maṇḍana is trying in vain to turn one ontological category into another.
109. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, pp. 336–337: *sattvam na viśeṣamātram vastu, sarvatrānuvṛttapratibhāsapravēdanīyasya sāmānyasyāpahnōtum āśakyatvāt. nāpi sāmānyaviśeṣātmakam ēkam vastu, ekasya dvairūpyavirōdhāt. sāmānyaviśeṣau tu paraspa[ra]sambaddhē dvē vastunī pratyakṣam avagāhatē, tathā ca kutas sattādvaitasiddhiḥ* (echoing Maṇḍana's phrasing; see fn. 107).
110. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 337: *yathā ca sāmānyaviśeṣayōr jātivyaktyōr iha pratyayō nāstīti tathā jātinirṇayē nirṇītam; Jātinirṇayaḥ*, p. 100: *tad ēvam apākṛtē padārthasvarūpātīrēkiṇi mahāsāmānyē sattākhyē yat svamanīṣānirmitakutarkabalēna sanmātraviṣayaṁ pratyakṣam iti sādhitam tad atidūrōtsāritam.*

Vedas. First he merely summarizes the argument which he mounted in the *Ṛjuvimalā* and *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam* and which we have already discussed at length: “because the content of the Veda is exclusively something to be done, it is impossible that it should be a valid epistemic instrument for an existing state of affairs.”<sup>111</sup> Here, however, he adds another argument: the passages that are put forward as evidence for non-dualism consist of sentences; sentences consist of multiple words, and the meanings they convey are similarly complex, formed from multiple word-meanings. Dualism seems to be “built into” language-based cognitions just as it is built into perception.<sup>112</sup> Sanskrit grammar does not use the categories of “subject” and “object,” but we might note that these are both fundamental categories of language and, in many philosophical traditions, the principal forms of dualism.

Can one come to an understanding of something non-dual on the basis of language? Does language contain resources for transcending its intrinsic dualism? For many interpreters, this is precisely what the most memorable passages of the Upaniṣads do. “Here, then, is the rule of substitution: ‘not —, not —,’ for there is nothing beyond this not.”<sup>113</sup> “About this self, one can only say ‘not —, not —.’”<sup>114</sup> Maṇḍana takes these passages to negate all possible attributes of the self and therefore establish the self as non-dual.<sup>115</sup> Śālikanātha, however, thinks that this interpretation is impossible. The pronoun “this” refers to something as existing, while the negative particle “not” indicates something’s non-existence. These meanings can be combined when the negation refers to a specific element of meaning within the sentence, for instance the predicate “pipe” in the sentence “this is not a pipe.” But the non-dualist, according to Śālikanātha, wants the negation to be total (*ātyantikah*). “Total” is how Maṇḍana had described existential negation, such as “there is no sky-flower.” An existential reading of the negation is obviously incompatible with the existential presupposition of the pronoun “this.”<sup>116</sup>

Śālikanātha then observes, with some evident satisfaction, that Maṇḍana “is hit with his own arrow,” and quotes a verse from the *Brahmasiddhiḥ* in which Maṇḍana claims that every negation presupposes a positive statement.<sup>117</sup> Śālikanātha presumably wants us to think that

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111. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 337: *āgamasya kāryaikaviṣayatayā siddhē tattvē prāmāṇyānupapattēḥ*.
112. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 337: *api ca vākyātmāgamah pramāṇam iṣyatē. taccānēkapadātmakam anēkapadārthātmani vākyārthē dhiyam upajanayat katham advaitam avabhāsayēt*.
113. *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad*, 2.3.6 (*athāta ādēśō nēti nēti na hy ētas mād iti nēty anyat param asti*), tr. Olivelle (1998: 67).
114. *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad*, 3.9.26 (*sa ēṣa nēti nēty ātmā*), tr. Olivelle (1998: 101).
115. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 337: *athēdam ucyatē sa ēṣa ādēśō nēti nētīti sakalōpādhiṇiṣēdhēna nānābhūtavastvantarāpākaraṇād advaitam āgamēna sādhyata iti*; see *Brahmasiddhiḥ* pp. 12, 20, 26.
116. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 337: *tad apy asāram. yaḥ khalv ēṣa iti sadrūpatayā pratyavamṛṣṭaḥ padārthaḥ sō ’sattvāpā-dakēna nañarthēna saha sambaddhum ayōgyaḥ, asti nāstīvat. anvayāyōgayōś ca padārthayōr anvayāsambhavān na vākyārthūbhavanam. ēvaṁ tarhi nirākṛtāni sarvāṇy ēva niṣēdhavākyāni. manda maivam paribhāvaya. na hi niṣēdhavākyēṣu kasyacid ātyantikō niṣēdhaḥ kiṁ tu kvacit kiṁcin niṣidhyatē. brahmādvaitābhīmānī tu bhavān ātyantikam ēva niṣēdham abhilaṣati*; see also *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 44: *katham tarhy atyantāsatām pradhānakhapuṣpādīnām pratiṣēdhaḥ, na hi tatra kvaciddēśē kālē vā niṣēdhaḥ, ātyantikavāt*. Note that *manda* may be picking up on Maṇḍana’s own dismissive outburst, *mandadhī-* (see fn. 102), or it may be a punning nickname for Maṇḍana, or both.
117. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, pp. 337–338: *tathā ca sō ’yam ātmīya ēva bāṇō bhavantaṁ praharati — labdharūpē kvacit kiṁcit*

this claim is incompatible with reading the negative particle as expressing a “total” negation in the aforementioned passages. If total negation does not mean existential negation, but rather the negation of any possible predicate of a subject whose existence is presupposed, then there is not actually a “lack of compatibility” between the elements of meaning in the sentence, and there is no contradiction with Maṇḍana’s statement. But Śālikanātha may have gotten carried away here: before he imputed a dubious interpretation of these passages to Maṇḍana, his task was to establish that language cannot serve as an epistemic instrument for something non-dual. But he could have made a different argument: as Maṇḍana noted, it is in the nature of negative statements that they negate *something*, and hence they present a thing in both a positive and negative aspect; because difference is part of the logical structure of negation, something non-dual can never be directly presented by a negative statement.

Śālikanātha then drops his guard somewhat, and concedes the rather obvious point there are passages in the Upaniṣads that, if read literally, present the self as non-dual. Maṇḍana himself claimed that these passages merely give us a general idea of the non-dual self, the true nature of which will have to be realized through other means. Hence the claim that dualism is built into the nature of language has little bearing on the ultimate reality of non-dualism, since the Upaniṣads could only ever make us aware of this non-dual reality through dualistic means. Nevertheless, Śālikanātha says that it is not reasonable to interpret the Upaniṣads as literally (*yathāśrutaḥ*) making us aware of the non-dual.<sup>118</sup> One reason, which he does not mention here but which we surveyed in detail above, is that the Veda can only serve as an epistemic instrument for something to be done, and to the extent that it mentions already-existing things or states of affairs, it merely makes reference to things that are presumed to be “given” (*anuvādaḥ*), and never serves to make us aware of their existence *for the first time*. The Veda cannot refer to the non-dual, because it is not known through any other means, nor can it make us aware of it, because it is not something to be done. The reason Śālikanātha mentions here, however, is that the non-dual self as allegedly described in the Upaniṣads conflicts with what we know to be the case on the basis of other epistemic instruments. This conflict would remain whether the Veda made us aware of the non-dual self or merely referred to it.

Given this conflict, we have two alternatives. We could resolve the conflict in favor of our experience of duality, and interpret the passages of the Upaniṣads non-literally, such that they referred to the self that is given in our experience rather than to a non-dual self. Or we could resolve the conflict in favor of the Upaniṣads, and maintain that our experience of duality is somehow all a mistake. These, in a nutshell, are the approaches the Śālikanātha and Maṇḍana, respectively, take toward the Upaniṣads.<sup>119</sup>

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*tādṛg ēva niṣidhyatē ~ vidhānam antarēṇātō na niṣēdhasya sambhavaḥ ~ (= Brahmasiddhiḥ, p. 44, translated by Biarreau 1969: 199 as “C’est quand on a appréhendé une forme quelque part que l’on nie quelque chose de même sorte exactement. C’est pourquoi il n’est possible de nier sans avoir (d’abord) posé.”).*

118. *Tattvālōkah*, p. 338: *ataḥ pratyakṣādiviruddhārthatvād advaitāvabōdhaka āmnāyatō na yathāśrutō varṇay-itum nyāyayāḥ*. Unless, of course, *yathāśrutaḥ* refers specifically to the way that Maṇḍana has “heard” these passages. But I assume that Śālikanātha, as a Mīmāṃsaka, understands the way something is literally heard (*śrutih*) to be identical for everyone.
119. Maṇḍana argues for the second option, as Śālikanātha says, “at great length” (see the following note). See

Śālikanātha says that the second option is mere fantasy.<sup>120</sup> What “conflict with other epistemic instruments” actually means is that the meanings of the words in a sentence are incompatible with each other and as a result they cannot combine into a single coherent sentence-meaning. Consequently the very cognition that is claimed to be “in conflict” with other epistemic instruments does not even arise.<sup>121</sup> This argument is difficult to accept on its face. It is true that no coherent sense arises from sentences like “colorless green ideas sleep furiously,” in which the individual word-meanings are actually incompatible with each other. But are the statements of the Upaniṣads like this? Maṇḍana would surely claim that sentences such as “the self is bliss” do present a coherent sense, although one that conflicts with our mundane experience of what we believe — mistakenly, Maṇḍana would add — to be the self. Śālikanātha glosses over the difficult question of precisely when a sentence ought to be considered literally nonsensical. “Her eyes opened” presents no difficulty at all. “Her eyes blossomed” presents a slight incompatibility — blossoming is properly used of flowers rather than eyes — that would generally trigger a secondary meaning for “blossom,” although it is so often used for eyes in Sanskrit that it may arguably be taken literally as a synonym for “open.” “Her eyes honked” presents a more serious incompatibility that can only be redeemed, if at all, by a creatively non-literal reading of the verb. Śālikanātha’s more general point, perhaps, is that true conflict between the Vedas and other epistemic instruments can always be avoided by interpreting the Veda non-literally, specifically according to qualitative (*gauṇī*) or non-qualitative (*lākṣaṇī*) transfer of meaning.<sup>122</sup> There is nothing controversial about this procedure in itself, and indeed many of the statements in the Upaniṣads can only be understood non-literally. Śālikanātha’s originality, or audacity, lies in seeking a non-literal interpretation of any statement that might otherwise indicate that the self is non-dual.

Śālikanātha proceeds to give a “sample” (*dik*) of how he would interpret statements in the Upaniṣads that are generally taken to indicate the non-dual nature of the self. Note that, as he says in the *Pramāṇapārāyaṇam*, he will ultimately construe all of these statements as background information to the injunction “the self is to be known.” Because these statements merely refer to states of affairs that we could, in principle, figure out from other sources, the Veda has no special authority regarding their content. That does not mean, however, that the truth of their content is irrelevant. Their content ought to be veridical, on some construal, because otherwise it would not make sense for them to serve as characterizations to the self that is enjoined to be known. That is why Śālikanātha is concerned to show that there is ultimately no conflict between the self as disclosed by the Upaniṣads and the self that he presents in the *Tattvālōkaḥ*.

Statements that describe the self as “bliss” (e.g., *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 3.9.28, which

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*Brahmasiddhiḥ*, p. 40 (*śabdasya prāmāṇyābhyupagamē pramāṇāntaravirōdhē ’pi tasyaiva balavattvam*) and pp. 43–44.

120. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 338: *yat tv idaṁ prapañcēna prasādhitaṁ — pratyakṣādivirōdhē ’py āgamasyaiva balīyastvam, tadvaśēna pratyakṣādīnām ēva bhrāntatā kalpanīyēti, tad api manōrathamātram.*
121. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 338: *pratyakṣādivirōdhē padārthānām anvayayōgyatāviraḥād āgamād arthabōdhasyaiva tadvirōdhē ’nudayāt.*
122. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 338: *ataḥ pratyakṣādivirōdhād āgamē gauṇī lākṣaṇīkī vā vṛttir āśrayitavyā.*

Śālikanātha quotes elsewhere) indicate that pain is not an intrinsic part of the self. “Bliss” is used here secondarily to indicate the absence of pain, and to suggest that the “bliss” that can be pursued in the world outside of the self is paltry and beset with pain.<sup>123</sup> Statements that describe the self as “one” indicate, first of all, that each individual self is master within his or her own individual abode, supporting Śālikanātha’s understanding of the self as multiple and assigned to each individual person. At the same time, when read together with the phrase “Indra by his wizardry travels in many forms” (*Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 2.5.19), they indicate that the self is not identical to the body, since each individual has a single self that takes on different bodies in birth after birth.<sup>124</sup> The much-discussed statement “about this self, one can only say ‘not—,’ ‘not—’” (*Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 3.9.26, 4.5.15) indicates only that the self is distinct from all of the things one might equate it with, such as the body, the intellect, and so on.<sup>125</sup> Statements that describe the self as “consciousness” (*vijñānam*, e.g., *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 3.9.28, 4.3.7, 4.4.5) show that the self, by virtue of being linked to consciousness, is distinct from the physical elements.<sup>126</sup> Statements about the self being “everything” (e.g., *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 4.4.5) are metonymic, since everything is for the sake of the self.<sup>127</sup> The statement “when the self is known, all of this becomes known” (a rendering of *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 4.5.6, “For when one has seen and heard one’s self, when one has reflected and concentrated on one’s self, one knows this whole world”) serves to show that all knowledge is useless so long as knowledge of the self, which conduces to the highest goal of liberation, is absent.<sup>128</sup>

These interpretations offer a glimpse into how Śālikanātha sought to reconcile his commitment to the validity of the Veda concerning matters of *dharma*, or supramundane obligation, with a firm commitment to the reality of the mundane world. They are motivated interpretations, to be sure, and Śālikanātha says nothing at all about the ways in which the context of each statement does, or does not, support his interpretation. But in Śālikanātha’s theory of interpretation, the consideration of which meaning might make the most sense given the local context of the statement is secondary to the consideration of the overall purpose of the text. According to Śālikanātha, its purpose is to enjoin knowledge with reference to the self, and this self must crucially be *given* through epistemic instruments other than the Veda, since otherwise it would be impossible to carry out the injunction.

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123. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 338: *tatrānandādiśrutayaś svābhāvīkaduḥkḥābhāvaparatayā varṇanīyaḥ, laukikānandasyālpatayā, duḥkḥānuśaktatayā ca vyākhyeyāḥ*.
124. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, pp. 338–339: *ekatvaśrutayaś caikasmīn āyatana ēkasyaiva svāmitvam ity ēvamparāḥ. indrō māyābhiḥ pururūpa tīyata iti dēhāt mābhīmānēna janmani janmani bhīnna ivābhātīty arthaḥ. anēkadēhapari-grahē ’py ēka ēvātmēti nānātvaniṣēdhasyārthaḥ*. The translation is from Olivelle (1998: 74).
125. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 339: *sa ēṣa nēty ēṣa nētīti ca śarīrādīnām ātmatvaniṣēdhas tadvyatīrīktapratīpattiparāḥ*. The translation is from Olivelle (1998: 101, 131).
126. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 339: *vijñānaśrutayaś ca cicchaktiyōgītvād vyōmādibhyō viśēṣābhīdhānaparāḥ*.
127. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 339: *sarvātmaśrutayaś ca sarvasyātmārthatvāt tādarthyanimittōpacārāḥ*.
128. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 339: *ātmani vijñātē sarvam idaṁ vijñātāṁ bhavatīti yad ucyatē tad ātmajñānasya parama-puruṣārthamōkṣaphalatvāt tasmīn avijñātē* (eds. *vijñātē*) *sarvam ēva jñānam niṣphalam*. The translation is from Olivelle (1998: 129). If we read *vijñātē*, the sense would be that knowledge of the self renders all other knowledge superfluous.



Śālikanātha concludes his argument against non-dualism in the *Tattvālōkaḥ* with two brief objections. Śālikanātha finds it hard to believe that reasonable people (*buddhimantaḥ*) could offer the first objection: individual consciousness, to the extent that it is “luminous” (*prakāśaḥ*, i.e., conscious), cannot be separate from “luminosity” (*prakāśaḥ*), and since Brahma is luminosity, the individual consciousness has to be identical with Brahma. For the argument could be run in the exact opposite direction: if the multiplicity of appearances is identical with luminosity, then luminosity too will be multiple.<sup>129</sup>

The second objection follows from the first, but returns, as a kind of call-back, to the definition of liberation with which Śālikanātha had started this discussion. Phenomenal reality appears to have a multiplicity of forms through the superimposition of nescience. That is to say, the dualism we experience is a kind of cognitive error.<sup>130</sup> Śālikanātha appears to have run out of patience by this point, because he mentions several arguments in quick succession. First, the claim that the multiplicity of individual selves are unreal, but are nevertheless identical with the one real self, just doesn’t add up (*na ghaṭatē*). Among other criticisms, one could point out that, if the unreal selves are not “luminous” (i.e., conscious) by nature, in contrast to the one real self, which is, it is impossible that those unreal selves would ever be luminous. For the argument that only something that is luminous by nature (*prakāśātma*) can be luminous, Śālikanātha refers us to his “Proof of External Objects.”<sup>131</sup> The denial of the reality of the phenomenal world is, for Śālikanātha, a “delusion” (*mōha*) that “Advaita Vēdāntins” (*brahmavādi-*) have introduced into their system from the positions of the Mahāyāna Buddhists.<sup>132</sup> Finally, to say that nescience “manifests” a phenomenal reality which is ultimately unreal, as the Vēdāntins do, is to accept a view according to which nescience, as a kind of cognitive error, consists in the appearance of something unreal (*asatkhyātīḥ*). Śālikanātha, by contrast, has defended Prabhākara’s theory of error, in which error consists solely in the failure to apprehend some aspect of something, at some length in his essay called *Nayavīthiḥ*.<sup>133</sup> For all of these reasons — the incoherent claims about phenomenal reality being both different from and identical with true reality, and the appeal to a mistaken concept of cognitive error, besides the fact that it has no compelling

129. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, pp. 339–340: *athōcyēta — vittēr bhinnasyāprakāśātmanaḥ prakāśaḥ ēvōpapanna iti, yad yat prakāśatē, tat tat prakāśād abhinnam, prakāśātmakam ca brahma. atō brahmātmakam jagad iti siddham advaitam. tad idam svapakṣaviruddham. katham ēva buddhimantō ’bhidadhati. ēvam hi nānābhūtānām ākāraṇām prakāśābhēdē prakāśasyāpi nānābhāvāpattēr advaitam dūram apāstam.* I have not so far succeeded in finding this argument in Maṇḍana’s work, but the accusations of self-contradiction suggest that it must be directed at him.

130. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 340: *athōcyēta — vividhō ’yam ākāraprapaṅcō ’vidyādhyāśavaśād avabhāsata iti.*

131. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 340: *ētaḍ api svavacanaviruddham. sadātmā prakāśaḥ, tēna saḥāsadātmāna ākāraṣ tāvad abhinnā iti na ghaṭatē. tathāsatyaparakāśātmānas* (ed. *tathā satyaparakāśātmānas*) *tē katham iva prakāśēran. api cāprakāśātmana ēva prakāśas sambhavatīti bāhyārthasiddhāv uktam.* Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī takes the “proof of external objects” to refer to a critical discussion of Dharmakīrti’s position in *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā* pp. 78–80, on the strength of the fact that Śālikanātha says elsewhere that this proof is contained in his *Ṛjuvimalā Pañcikā*, although this precise point is not made in that passage.

132. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 340: *ata ēṣō ’pi mādhyānikapakṣānupravēśād brahmavādinām mōha ēva.*

133. *Tattvālōkaḥ*, p. 340: *api cātyantam asantaḥ prapaṅcāḥ katham ivāvidyā prakāśayitum alam. na khaluv asatkhyātir avidyā, kim tv agrahaṇarūpaivēti nayavīthyām sādhitam.*

grounding in either the Vedas or in lived experience — liberation cannot be the disappearance of nescience.

## 5 Conclusions

I will conclude by looking in two directions: first, at the “big picture” of Śālikanātha’s philosophy, and how his criticism of Maṇḍana coheres with his broader commitments; and second, at the longer history of relations between Advaita and Mīmāṃsā thinkers.

Śālikanātha was a wide-ranging and systematic thinker, and scholarship still does not have an adequate account of his thought as a whole. In particular, Śālikanātha, like his intellectual role-model Kumārila, seems to have been pulled in two different, although possibly not contradictory, directions: on the one hand, he was primarily concerned with articulating the principles of interpretation for the ritual injunctions of the Veda, and much of his exegetical and philosophical work begins from a picture in which a subject acts in order to fulfil obligations that have been brought to his awareness through language; on the other hand, he admits of the possibility and desirability of liberation through self-knowledge. In Kumārila’s case, recent scholarship has shown that he subscribed to a soteriology that involved liberation of the individual soul, through both self-knowledge and detached performance of obligatory rituals, resulting in its unification with the “highest soul” (*paramātmān*).<sup>134</sup> Kumārila’s soteriology has been seen as a kind of “Vēdānta,” both in the sense of being founded on statements in the Upaniṣads, and in the sense of involving a unity of the individual soul with the highest soul, as found in different forms in the Vēdānta of Śāṅkara and Maṇḍana later on. Śālikanātha’s statements, however, require us to recover a “Vēdānta” that is absolutely distinct from the “Vēdānta” theorized by Śāṅkara and Maṇḍana. Although Śālikanātha accepts the idea of “not coming back” found in the Upaniṣads, he considers the individual soul to be ultimately real, and rejects any attempt to identify it with a supra-individual entity or principle.

As we have seen, Śālikanātha interprets the Upaniṣads in support of this position. We might suspect that his interpretations are forced, based on his prior commitment to the position that the Veda is only authoritative regarding things we are to do, and never regarding already-existing states of affairs. Yet apart from his insistence that the word *brahma* commonly refers to the soul, which is questionable, the interpretive principles he deploys are utterly uncontroversial: how can a given statement be reconciled with what we already know to be the case, either on the basis of our real-world experience, or on the basis of what the Vedas tell us? These interpretations may well have been unorthodox in Śālikanātha’s own time, given that thinkers as diverse as Maṇḍana, Śāṅkara, and Kumārila found the Upaniṣads to support non-dualism. Śālikanātha certainly seems to have had a rebellious streak. I wonder whether part of his motivation in following Prabhākara, an idiosyncratic and often obscure thinker who had few if any other followers, was to occupy a space from which he could criticize the positions of more prominent intellectuals such as Kumārila, Dharmakīrti,

134. See Mesquita (1994); Taber (2007); Yoshimizu (2007).

and of course Maṇḍana. Speculation aside, his interpretation of the Upaniṣads is an attempt to “take them back” from a competing interpretive tradition and reconcile them with his global commitments: an action-oriented theory of language, an epistemology founded on real-world experience, and an individualistic and dualistic view of the self.

In broad terms, Śālikanātha attempted to absorb Vēdānta into Mīmāṃsā. By contrast, the history of Vēdānta, from its very origins, is a history of attempting to absorb Mīmāṃsā into itself — typified by the self-representation of Vēdānta as *Uttaramīmāṃsā*, a Mīmāṃsā that follows and supercedes the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* of Jaimini.<sup>135</sup> When theistic and devotional movements adopted Vēdānta as their preferred theological idiom, arguably beginning with Yāmunācārya (10<sup>th</sup> c.), the ideas and techniques of Mīmāṃsā were part of the package, so to speak. This resulted in the historical irony of Mīmāṃsā, once an atheistic system, being studied primarily as a theological *organon* by devotees of Viṣṇu and Śiva.<sup>136</sup> Śālikanātha’s criticism of the very foundations of non-dualistic Vēdānta runs counter to this tendency. One of the very few thinkers to follow in his footsteps was Pārthasārathi (11<sup>th</sup> c.), a follower of Kumārila and often a fierce critic of Śālikanātha. Early on in Pārthasārathi’s independent overview of the Mīmāṃsā system, the *Śāstradīpikā*, he discusses a position according to which mere existence is apprehended by non-conceptual cognition, before concluding that one would do well to ignore the entire doctrine of non-dualism in which this position is advanced, for reasons that are very similar to Śālikanātha’s reasons for rejecting Maṇḍana’s views: the Advaitins have failed to put the proper effort into philosophical reasoning, and as a result they are misled by non-literal language in the Upaniṣads into believing that phenomenal reality does not really exist, and they don’t understand that the real point of these statements is to direct the listener’s attention away from phenomenal reality and toward *brahma* instead.<sup>137</sup>

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135. The literature on the relationship of Vēdānta and Mīmāṃsā is large (Parpola 1981, 1994; Pollock 2004, and Bronkhorst 2007, as well as the other essays in that volume, and most recently Uskokov 2018: 33–38. I note that the terminology of *Pūrvā*- and *Uttaramīmāṃsā* is used by Vēdāntins and not, to my knowledge, by Mīmāṃsakas.
136. Venkatkrishnan (2015b, 2020).
137. I thank Anand Venkatkrishnan for directing me to this passage (*Śāstradīpikā* p. 65), which he has discussed (Venkatkrishnan 2015a: 83, Venkatkrishnan 2020: 180. The passage is: *tasmād brahmaṇaḥ praśaṃsārthair asthāyitvēna prapañcasyāsattvam upacāradbhir aupaniṣadair vādais tadanusāribhiś cētihāsupurāṇair bhrāntānām vākyatātparyam ajānānām nyāyābhiyōgaśūnyānām pralāpō ’yam advaitavāda ity up-ēkṣaṇīyaḥ*).

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