

VOICES OF SELF-SURRENDER:
RELIGIOUS MULTILINGUALISM IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH INDIA

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This dissertation explores the distinctive intellectual history of South Asian multilingualism. Specifically, it focuses on the South India based Śrīvaiṣṇava religious community (c. tenth century CE onward) as a paradigmatic case. It analyzes the Sanskrit and Manipravalam, a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit, production of theological treatises on the doctrine of self-surrender—a defining feature of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas—to reveal the dynamic interplay between the development of self-surrender and linguistic changes.

Expanding on existing studies of Śrīvaiṣṇavas and self-surrender, this work demonstrates that different languages need to be considered in understanding the medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas' doctrine of self-surrender. I argue that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' linguistic multiplicity provides not only conditioning factors for the doctrinal development but also the possibility to harmonize any theological tensions. The chapters in this dissertation collectively offer insights into how precisely religious authors from the twelfth to the fourteenth century theorized self-surrender in Sanskrit and Manipravalam through specific historical conjunctures between this doctrinal development and linguistic movements: formation, systematization, heterogeneity, distillation, and harmonization.

Based on the case study, this dissertation also challenges Pollock's (2006) binary paradigm between Sanskrit and the vernaculars, showing that it cannot do justice to the highly diverse and fluid multilingual domain of premodern India. To better capture the complexity of

South Asian multilingualism, it offers a new framework for understanding language as not only a linguistic medium but the sphere of related representations—of norms and modes of expression that are constantly negotiated and expanded by the agent—specific to social and intellectual circumstances.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Manasicha Akepiyapornchai received her bachelor's degree in Pali and Sanskrit from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, in 2014. She received her master's in Asian Studies from Cornell University in 2016. She was an exchange student at Harvard University, under the supervision of Professor Francis Clooney, in Spring 2017, and the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Professor Srilata Raman, in Spring 2018. She was also an affiliated researcher at the French Institute of Pondicherry, under the supervision of Kannan Muthukrishnan, and the Pondicherry Centre of the École française d'Extrême-Orient, under the supervision of Dominic Goodall. Akepiyapornchai was a data curator for archival projects, namely the Around Veṅkaṭanātha Project and Bhakti Virtual Archive, and also a cataloguing researcher of monographs in Grantha Tamil script at the École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris Library, in Summer 2020. She currently participates in the Thai Translation of Kālidāsa's *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* Project and the Age of Vedānta Project. After the completion of her doctoral degree from the Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, she will be an Assistant Professor in Classical Studies of South Asia at the University of Texas in Austin.

For my parents

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INTRODUCTION

How can we conceive of multilingualism in a premodern South Asian context in which languages were not bound to nations, and one culture or community often used more than one language? The areas that today are labelled Europe and North America have been the focus of multilingualism studies. In contrast, the history of premodern South Asian multilingualism remains open to investigation. Given that South Asian religious communities are one of the main sites of multilingual textual production—written and oral—and religious agents have heavily and dynamically engaged with languages to serve religious purposes and to claim their identities, the religious domain deserves as much attention as the literary and political domains that recent South Asian scholars have investigated.¹ How did religious agents cross language boundaries; how did they make linguistic choices under a specific historical situation, intellectual tension, or social condition; and how did their choices define and redefine religious ideas? What can their multilingual texts tell us about the impact of multilingualism on their self-understanding in premodern South Asia?

This dissertation “Voices of Self-surrender: Religious Multilingualism in Medieval South India” will answer these questions and explore the intellectual history of South Asian multilingualism during the medieval period, which is critical to linguistic transformation and institutional formation. It particularly engages with two domains, religion and multilingualism. To understand religion, it adopts Gavin Flood’s (1996) definition of religion as a set of people’s beliefs and practices that are related to “the sacred” or “a quality of mysterious power which is believed to dwell within certain objects, persons and places and which is opposed to chaos and

¹ For example, Ollett, *Language of the Snakes*, and Pollock, *The Language of the God in the World of Men*.

death.”² It also agrees with Flood’s understanding that religion exists only within particular cultures and societies.³ Importantly, it acknowledges that what “religion” means in the context of this research is comparative and may not be similar to self-identification of the agents investigated here.⁴

Participating in the scholarship on South Asian multilingualism, my dissertation first criticizes the most groundbreaking among the studies, Sheldon Pollock’s *Language of Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (2006). In this book, Pollock proposes the hierarchical paradigm between “Sanskrit cosmopolis,” the literary and political monopoly, and the vernaculars. Based on the paradigm, the vernaculars were subordinate and had to model on Sanskrit in order to eventually replace it in both polity and poetry in the second millennium. Many scholars have proved that this binary opposition between Sanskrit and vernaculars insufficiently captures the linguistic complexity and interactions in India and beyond (e.g., Hopkins 2002, Shulman 2007 and 2016, McCrea 2013, Francis 2013 and 2021, and Birkenholtz 2018). To specify, the fixation on Sanskrit does not do justice to the highly multilingual terrain of premodern India particularly as it ignores other essential and ancient vernaculars such as Tamil in the South. Furthermore, Pollock’s argument downplays the connection between linguistic changes and religious communities, exemplified by scholars such as Monius (2001) as central to the Tamil-speaking landscape.⁵ Despite its flaws, Pollock’s theory challenges current scholarship to respond and broaden the scope of South Asian multilingualism studies.

² Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 8–10.

⁴ For the comparative nature of the term “religion,” see Freiburger, *Considering Comparison*.

⁵ See my article, “Translation in a Multilingual Context.”

Recent scholarship on South Asian multilingualism has branched into two directions, one that presents an immense history with one language as the protagonist, such as Ollett’s *Language of the Snakes* (2017), and one that offers macrolevel narratives of multilingualism over a myriad of materials across geographical and temporal domains.⁶ However, these studies fail to capture the subtlety, fluidity, and real impact of multilingualism, which can be revealed only when we look at the linguistic usage, the continuity and discontinuity, within a single community.

As a paradigmatic example, I chart the dynamic interplay between the intellectual ideas and linguistic changes in the South Indian-based Śrīvaiṣṇava religious community. The community, which is currently still active and known among the Śrīvaiṣṇava scholars as “the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition,” was formed circa the tenth century CE in the area known today as Tamilnadu, South India.⁷ Remarkable characteristics of the community are the so-called equality of Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures and the use of Sanskrit, Tamil, and Manipravalam, the hybrid language that combines Tamil and Sanskrit, in compositions. More specifically, I focus on the multilingual production of the theological and philosophical treatises from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, when we see the attention given to the doctrinal development of self-surrender, a defining feature of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ theology and practices. Generally speaking, the doctrine emphasizes the hierarchical relationship between God and the devotees who are subordinate to God due to the soul’s essential nature. Devotees can only resort to God as the sole refuge, surrendering their total agency and devotion to Him, in order to be liberated from transmigration of sufferings. Self-surrender was elaborately addressed in the three languages of

⁶ The most recent one among them is *Linguistic and Textual Aspects of Multilingualism in South India and Sri Lanka* (2021).

⁷ All dates mentioned in this work belong to the common era (CE) unless indicated otherwise.

Sanskrit, Tamil, and Manipravalam. “Voices of Self-surrender” shows the intertwined histories between self-surrender and linguistic changes within the Śrīvaiṣṇava community. It argues that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ linguistic multiplicity provides not only conditioning factors for the doctrinal development but also the possibility to harmonize any theological tensions. Therefore, different languages need to be considered in understanding the medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ doctrine of self-surrender. It should be noted that I differentiate between “community” and “tradition” in this work: while the term “community” refers to a body of diverse people who share certain beliefs, the term “tradition” denotes a more tightly bound and inclusive community of people with the emphasis on a doctrine such as self-surrender that they develop and follow.

This work further proposes three meta-insights into religious multilingualism in premodern South Asia. First, it affirms that how to conceptualize South Asian intellectual culture should include an awareness of more than one language. Although languages provide certain frames for the author, their boundaries are not impermeable, and the author has agency in choosing to work in one linguistic domain, or the other, or across. Second, it reveals that Pollock’s dichotomous model of “Sanskrit cosmopolis” and the vernaculars is insufficient for analyzing the cultural contexts in which more than two languages are at stake, and that Sanskrit, while dominant in particular intellectual and social domains, is not hegemonic in relation to the vernaculars. Specifically, in a religious domain like the Śrīvaiṣṇava community where vernaculars grappled with what Vedic orthodoxy, which accepts and relies on the scriptural authority of the Sanskrit Vedas, implied from the early period, linguistic interaction between Sanskrit and the vernaculars must be seen differently. Sanskrit could not operate in a closed environment without much contact with the vernaculars, unlike in the political and literary domains that Pollock’s model implicitly assumes. Finally, this dissertation offers a new

framework to account for the multiplicity of languages and the flexibility of their interactions in South Asian religious contexts. Through this framework, we can view language not only as a linguistic medium but also as the sphere of related representations of norms and modes of expression that are constantly negotiated and expanded by the agent. Importantly, these linguistic spheres are specific to historical circumstances.

In addition, this dissertation seeks to contribute to other fields of study, including, the intellectual history of South Asia, the religious studies of theism, and Śrīvaiṣṇava scholarship. It draws South Asian intellectual historians' attention to "human-scale studies" or micro-perspective investigation of agents and their intellectual projects and dialogical and polemical relationships between texts. For the field of religious studies, it highlights that religious ideas are constructed by working out the tensions between languages that impact agents' choices that entail multilinguality. With attention to subtle and transformative choices made by religious agents in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, this research affirms John Nemeč's argument that "*change is not inimical to religion*, even if particular religious agents are not infrequently inimical to change."⁸ My dissertation further suggests that we cannot subsume authors and their transformative and complex voices under an umbrella of a "coherent" tradition.⁹

The Intellectual History of Śrīvaiṣṇavas' Multilingualism and Self-surrender

This section explains some of methodological and conceptual practices that this dissertation engages strongly with and is indebted to: South Asian intellectual history, the Śrīvaiṣṇava multilingual textual corpus of self-surrender, and language and multilingualism.

⁸ Nemeč, "Innovation and Social Change," 284.

⁹ See the following section on South Asian intellectual history.

South Asian Intellectual History

The primary methodology of this dissertation is the history of ideas or intellectual history, following Quentin Skinner's approach. Skinner views texts as representing "both the intention to be understood, and the intention that this intention should be understood"¹⁰ and thus should be accompanied with contexts specific to those texts to avoid the superimposition of anachronistic ideas and an assumption of textual consistency.¹¹ However, Skinner's supposition of the interactions and dependency between texts, an author's intentions, and contexts is not always applicable to the space that embodies variety and heterogeneities such as medieval South India.

Instead of reading texts to recover the author's intentions, I find the way of reading South Asian texts developed by Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali in *Querying the Medieval* (2000) useful, especially when exploring several texts together.¹² Based on their work, I understand texts as interdiscursive, dialogical, and polemical in the relations that agents have with themselves or others. Agents compose texts—written, oral, and in other forms—to make arguments either directly or indirectly that are specific to a situation and responsive to prior and circulating debates, and "a particular text is itself one momentary effect or result of the textual practices in which agents engage."¹³ Looking at a text in this situational and dialogical manner allows us to effectively examine texts without ample concrete material or historical evidence of the world they inhabited. More importantly, the emphasis on the

¹⁰ Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," 48–49.

¹¹ Ibid., 49: "The 'context' mistakenly gets treated as the determinant of what it said. It needs rather to be treated as an ultimate framework for helping to decide what conventionally recognizable meanings, in a society of *that* kind, it might in principle have been possible for someone to have intended to communicate."

¹² Inden, Walters, and Ali, *Querying the Medieval*, 5–15.

¹³ Ibid., 12.

heterogeneous and transformative dimensions of texts in *Querying the Medieval* draws our attention to the moments of continuity and change and the reasons or situations behind them. This approach further creates space for us to investigate religious agents and helps us avoid the tendency to subsume what the agents did, their decisions and contributions.¹⁴

To document the detailed histories of intellectual encounters and endeavors, this dissertation is modeled on “human-scale studies” proposed by Anne Blackburn in *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (2010). According to Blackburn, this micro-perspective investigation, which is immersed in a particular figure along with the surrounding intellectual and institutional projects, reveals “the ways in which colonial-period institutions and social structure were inhabited at specific historical conjunctures.”¹⁵ Although Blackburn’s project addresses British rule in Sri Lanka, the human-scale investigation illuminates the broader South Asian context and South Asian multilingualism as it complements macro-level studies such as Pollock’s and Ollett’s. It is important to note that there have been various micro-level studies of Śrīvaiṣṇava figures and beyond who contribute to the shaping of either Sanskrit or vernacular communities, especially devotional ones. Nevertheless, by adopting this approach, this dissertation aims to extensively explore a series of religious figures who embodied the multilingual world of both Sanskrit and the vernacular, even if they composed only in Sanskrit and Manipravalam. Specifically, it brings the same attention to a religious figure as it does to textual engagement, and institutional projects. However, while Blackburn’s case study explores Sri Lankan Buddhist intellectual encounters with an external factor such as the British rule, I focus on the internal linguistic tension and formation of a

¹⁴ Ibid., 12-14.

¹⁵ Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*, 203.

Śrīvaiṣṇava communal unity more so than on outside social threats.

The Śrīvaiṣṇava Multilingual Textual Corpus of Self-surrender

Since its origin circa the tenth century, the Śrīvaiṣṇava community used Tamil, which was infused with devotional attitude, and Sanskrit, which was tied to their philosophical system and pan-Indic Vedic orthodoxy, to hand down scriptures and expound theology.¹⁶

On the one hand, the authorship of the Tamil scripture, the *Nārāyirativiyappirapantam*, is attributed to the twelve Āḷvārs (c. sixth to tenth century), the South Indian Vaiṣṇava poets, who were regarded as the Śrīvaiṣṇava first generations. The *Nārāyirativiyappirapantam* is a collection of each Āḷvār's independent work(s), including the *Tiruvāymoḷi* of Nammāḷvār (c. late eighth to early ninth century),¹⁷ the low-born Vaiṣṇava poet and the most revered Āḷvār. Among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, the recovery and anthologization of the corpus and the establishment of its performative recitation for propagation and transmission were credited to Nāthamuni (c. tenth century), the first teacher (*ācārya*) of the generation after the Āḷvārs.¹⁸ Moreover, the Tamil collection inherits classical Tamil literary practices, of which the most notable is the love poetry or the poetry of “interior landscape” (*akam*), used for devotional expression.¹⁹ It also contains many narratives and mythologies found in the Sanskrit literature. Importantly, it shares the Southern devotional or “Tamil *bhakti*” terrain with other religious communities, such as the Śaiva *Nāyaṅmārs* and their *Tēvāram*, and shows the attitude of rivalry toward non-Vedic communities, such as the Buddhists and Jains.²⁰

¹⁶ For other elements in the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' theological formation, see Freschi, “Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.”

¹⁷ Venkatesan, *Endless Song*, 6.

¹⁸ Venkatesan specifies that there is the inscriptional evidence of the recitation of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* since the eleventh century and there are a number of the thirteenth-century inscriptions recounting a festival of its recitation (*Endless Song*, Introduction).

¹⁹ Narayanan, *The Way and the Goal*, 7–57.

²⁰ Anandakichenin, “Āḷvār.”

On the other hand, the Sanskrit scripture mainly comprises authoritative texts that are part of the broader system of philosophical, theological, and scriptural-hermeneutic knowledge, retrospectively collected under the name “Vedānta.” The system emerged in the late first and early second millennia and exegetically and philosophically dominated the premodern Indian world during the second millennium. The name “Vedānta,” which means “the end of the Vedas,” refers to the system’s conformity to both the Vedas or *śruti*, which possess the highest authority among the orthodox Vedic systems, and the Upaniṣads, the later part or the “end” of the Vedas as interpreted in the *Brahmasūtra*. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas developed their sub-system of Vedānta later labeled “qualified non-duality” (Viśiṣṭādvaita).²¹ Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta expounds that the soul and the material world are the qualification of the Supreme God, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, and thus not separate from Him.²² The early medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas further incorporated the scriptural corpus of *smṛti*, which is the subordinate to and in conformity with *śruti*, and those external to Vedānta—the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās or Āgamas, a collection of ritual and theological Sanskrit texts associated with the Vaiṣṇava communities who worship Viṣṇu as the Supreme God. Thus, the Sanskrit heritage of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas is shared by other philosophical and religious domains, especially Vedānta.

Around the twelfth century, the two scriptures were recognized in some of the Śrīvaiṣṇava compositions as authoritatively equivalent sacred texts under the notion of the dual scriptures known today as “Ubhayavedānta” (lit., the two Upaniṣads).²³ A variation of this term,

²¹ The term was first used by Sudarśanasūri, Rāmānuja’s commentator, and became identified with the system in the latter half of the sixteenth century, according to Varadachari, “Antiquity of the term Viśiṣṭādvaita.”

²² For more on Rāmānuja’s theology, see Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, and Lipner, *The Face of Truth*.

²³ It should be noted that the label “the Tamil Veda” can be found before the twelfth century. However, the explicit claim of the two Vedas, one in Tamil and the other in Sanskrit, was made systematically after that. For more information on the pre-twelfth century notion of the Tamil Veda, see Venkatesan, *Endless Song*.

“the confluence of the end of the Vedas” (“*śrutyaṅta yugma*”), occurs for the first time circa the late eleventh or the early twelfth century in the *Yatirāja Vaibhavam* by Āṅdhra Pūrṇa, a disciple of Rāmānuja (c. eleventh century), the most important Śrīvaiṣṇava leader.²⁴ It should be noted that this notion does not refer to a word-for-word parallel between the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures but to their equal status as the revelation of God’s essence. Importantly, the two languages were not perceived as identical.

In my understanding, this notion is based on the claim that the Tamil scripture, most evidently Nammālvār’s *Tiruvāymoḷi*, which is the most authoritative work of poetry among the Ālvārs, is comparable to the Sanskrit one and not the other way around²⁵ since both the Vedas and the Upaniṣads were scriptures within Vedic orthodoxy and highly regarded within Vedānta before the acknowledgment of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the Tamil scripture. The label “Tamil Veda” has its earliest reference (“*drāviḍa-veda*”) in the Sanskrit *taṇṇiyaṅ* (a single praise-poem) attributed to Nāthamuni.²⁶ It should be noted that the status of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* was associated with not only “the Veda” but also the Upaniṣad (“*āmnāyānām śira*”) and the Saṃhitā (“*drāviḍīm brahma-saṃhitām*”) as early as in the Sanskrit praise-poems of Kūreśa (c. eleventh century) and Pārāśara Bhaṭṭar (c. twelfth century).²⁷ The variety of terms used to refer to the *Tiruvāymoḷi* suggests that its authority as a part of the Vedic corpus is more important than its actual identification with the Veda. Thus, it can be considered as either the Veda or Upaniṣad as long as it is as authoritative as the Sanskrit scripture. In addition, the *Tiruvāymoḷi* is

²⁴ Carman and Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda*, 259. For other terms, see Anandakichenin and McCann, “Tamil-Sanskrit Interaction in Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava Literature,” 6.

²⁵ According to Nayar, the other works of the Ālvārs attained the authoritative status after the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, which functioned as the symbol for the whole corpus (*Poetry as Theology*, 42).

²⁶ Venkatesan, *Endless Song*, Appendix 3.

²⁷ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 41–75.

characterized as the distillation of the Sanskrit Veda, as in Mathurakavi's *Kaṅṅinunçiruttāmpu*, because it contains only the accessible and important messages of the Veda.²⁸

While text production in the early period among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas was only through Sanskrit, contemporary to the identification of the *Tiruvāymoli* as the Tamil scripture is the introduction of the hybrid Tamil-Sanskrit language, known as Manipravalam, into the compositions. I argue that the use of Manipravalam enables the crystallization of self-surrender as a soteriological doctrine. Not long after the first appearance of Manipravalam in the Śrīvaiṣṇava corpus, we witness the production of the immense multilingual corpus in all three languages of philosophical and theological texts, commentaries, hagiographies, and poems, some of which circled the doctrinalization and systematization of self-surrender and some of which sought to justify the Ubhayavedānta notion. My dissertation builds upon various studies of Śrīvaiṣṇavas' self-surrender and multilingual corpus from around this period, in particular. It attempts to show that the development of self-surrender and linguistic movements are interdependent.

The recurring and haunting narrative that interlinks theology and the two languages, Sanskrit and Tamil, in Śrīvaiṣṇava scholarship points to the dichotomy between these heritages. This narrative was produced by twentieth-century scholars, for example, Friedhelm Hardy in his *Viraha-Bhakti* and Robert Lester in "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism." They argued for the domination of Sanskrit and its philosophical norm and Tamil emotionalism in the medieval period.²⁹ The dichotomy is also invoked to account for the Śrīvaiṣṇava sectarian split into its current sub-schools, the Teṅkalais (the southern sub-school) and the Vaṭakalais (the northern

²⁸ Adluri, "Ācārya Bhakti," 47–68.

²⁹ Narayanan best explains their arguments in *The Way and the Goal*, 4–5.

sub-school), whose centers are situated in Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram respectively. Although the split became evidently fixed from the eighteenth century onward due to the impact of colonialism, the Śrīvaiṣṇava scholarship has long attempted to trace the disputes that led to the split back to the premodern periods.³⁰ The split is usually understood to be rooted in various communal, theological, and linguistic reasons.³¹ For example, no later than the nineteenth century, the cause of the split was projected onto the binary images of “Tamil Cats” and “Sanskrit Monkeys” to portray the Teṅkalais’ emphasis on Tamil scripture and the exclusive role of God’s grace, as opposed to the Vaṭakalais’ insistence on human’s effort as prescribed in Sanskrit scripture.³²

Many scholars oppose this binary opposition and defend the unity of the Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures and languages based on the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ notion of Ubhayavedānta. Some scholars, for example, Carman and Narayanan 1989, Clooney 1996 and 2015, Anandakichenin 2018, and McCann and Anandakichenin 2020 and 2021 pay attention to Manipravalam literature, which supports this notion. Some scholars include the Manipravalam theological treatises in the scope of their studies, such as Hardy 1979, Venkatachari 1978, Mumme 1988, Clooney 2002 and 2008, and McCann 2016. Nancy Nayar (1992) investigates the Sanskrit praise-poems of Kūreśa and Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, both Rāmānuja’s disciples, showing the confluence of the two scriptures in these poems. Srilata Raman’s *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism* (2007) comprehensively indicates that the seed of the split can be found in the theological discrepancies in the Manipravalam commentaries on the Tamil scripture such

³⁰ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 9.

³¹ For different narratives of the split, see *ibid.*, 4–15.

³² The first occurrence of the simile is found in Tirumaḷicai Aṅṅā Ayyāṅkāṅ’s Tamil text titled “*Paḷanaṭai Viḷakkam*” (*Ibid.*, 15).

as the status of Nammālvār and his surrender.³³ However, the continuous interaction between Sanskrit and Tamil from the premodern period until the present is indisputable despite the split.³⁴

My dissertation is in conversation with these studies; however, it does not intend to make any claims regarding the split or its origin, whose scope is beyond this study. What this work does contribute is the affirmation that Tamil and Sanskrit were both critical to medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas, their texts, theology, and communal identification. Simultaneously, it seeks to complicate the idea that the Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures, as well as their languages, were treated at the same level in every situation and by every author, according to the notion of Ubhayavedānta. As I elaborate later, Manipravalam was initially used to create a foundation in which Sanskrit and Tamil, their scriptures, citations, and theological ideas, could co-exist to support the notion of the Tamil scripture. The use of Manipravalam thus favors the Tamil scripture. Even in the Manipravalam commentaries on the Sanskrit texts of the main *ācāryas*, such as Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, Manipravalam allows the author to bring in Tamil scripture and draw a parallel between these texts. While the majority of the Sanskrit texts ignore or remain implicit about the Tamil heritage, the Manipravalam literature never brings in Sanskrit scripture alone without referring to the Tamil authorities. Given that tension, this dissertation proposes a new framework, one that does not reproduce the hierarchy between Tamil and Sanskrit, but reveals micro-histories of the Śrīvaiṣṇava multilingualism.

Furthermore, this dissertation attempts to fill in a gap with respect to the Sanskrit

³³ Ibid., 175: “This book suggests that this ideological break between the Piḷḷāṇ and Nañcīyar on the status of Nammālvār and the nature of his *prapatti* anticipates one ultimate theological difference between *Vaṭakalai* School and the *Teṅkalai* School.”

³⁴ Ibid., 15–17.

literature composed around the same time as the Manipravalam literature in the studies mentioned and emphasizes the comparison of the literature in these two languages, Sanskrit and Manipravalam. The key inspiration to the inter-language relationships is Steven Hopkins' exploration of Sanskrit and Tamil poems in his *Singing the Body of God* (2002). Hopkins gives insights into the roles and interactions of languages and directs my interest to its central figure, Vedāntadeśika (also Venkaṭanātha), the fourteenth-century Śrīvaiṣṇava poet-philosopher who inhabited the multilingual world.

Several studies take up the topic of self-surrender. Vasudha Rajagopalan's dissertation, of which the first part was published under the title, *The Way and the Goal: Expressions of Devotion in the Early Śrīvaiṣṇava Community* (1987), addresses the literature up to the scope of my research. The second part of Rajagopalan's dissertation, which shares the period and literature under my investigation, is unfortunately still publicly unavailable.³⁵ Although Rajagopalan's dissertation provides a comprehensive study on self-surrender, it does not systematically chart the explicit connection between doctrinal development and the linguistic changes. Gerhard Oberhammer's *Zur spirituellen Praxis des Zufluchtnehmens bei Gott (śaraṇāgatiḥ) vor Venkaṭanātha* (2004) traces the development of self-surrender but only in the Sanskrit literature of Vedāntadeśika's predecessors and the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

Another significant contribution to the field is *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism* (2007) by Srilata Raman. Raman's work focuses on the medieval institutional formation around self-surrender from the time of Rāmānuja and in the medieval literary corpus

³⁵ I managed to get hold of the dissertation thanks to Professor Vasudha Narayanan who kindly sent me the retyped version of it and Patricia Mumme who graciously gave me the printed edition she owns. The materials investigated in her work includes Vātsyā Varadaguru's *Prapannapārijāta*, Peiryavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's *Parantarahasyam*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam*, and Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram*.

of the Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Raman’s historical analysis inspires me to view a theological concept such as self-surrender as one of the defining features in the Śrīvaiṣṇava religious movements. I agree with Raman’s classification of “*prapatti*-literature” or “the literature whose main aim is to present a situation in which *prapatti* [self-surrender] takes place or to define and discuss it.”³⁶ Raman points to the praise poems of Kūreśa and Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, Rāmānuja’s disciples, and the Manipravalam commentaries as two main categories of *prapatti*-literature before investigating the commentaries due to their attention to the theology of self-surrender.³⁷ Raman indicates that these praise poems show the integration of Tamil scripture with the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, and Sanskrit scriptural streams, and they also reflect the increasing importance of temple worship in the understanding. Raman further points out that the poems at this time display a collective attempt to promote self-surrender, inherited from Rāmānuja’s works, over the doctrine of meditative devotion (*bhakti*). The attempt is even more evident in the Tamil *Ñāṇasāram* of Aruḷāḷar Perumāḷ Emperumāṅār, Kūreśa’s contemporary.³⁸ Given that various scholars have comprehensively studied these praise-poems, such as those by Narayanan (1987) and Nayar (1992), I confine myself to another genre.

Also, while Raman views the commentaries as mainly aiming to define self-surrender, I differ from her in this regard. I understand self-surrender as one of the topics, in addition to the scriptural identification of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the Tamil scripture based on what Raman herself shows in her exploration of the commentaries.³⁹ Moreover, while scholars continue to focus on the Manipravalam commentaries, they cannot tell us about the diversity of the

³⁶ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 17.

³⁷ For the commentaries, see Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 17–23.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 53–57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Śrīvaiṣṇava intellectual, social, and linguistic environments as they were historically produced by a single line of Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācāryas* who inhabited one geographical location, Śrīraṅgam.⁴⁰ Although there were likely interactions between Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram, the communities were engaged with different intellectual concerns.

Instead of the praise poems and commentaries, my work is interested not in the Manipravalam commentaries but the theological treatises on self-surrender. These independent treatises in Sanskrit and Manipravalam were not produced by just one community but by those who were contemporaneous and from different generations in both influential and active locations of medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas—Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram. They first appeared in the composition both in Sanskrit and Manipravalam circa the twelfth century after the Śrīvaiṣṇava production of Sanskrit philosophical treatises, Sanskrit devotional poems, and the Manipravalam commentaries. Given the chronological order, one could argue that these treatises were based on and influenced by these preceding genres of literature, especially the Ālvārs' Tamil poems, praise poems, and the Manipravalam commentaries. I understand that the genre of these independent treatises encourages the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors to explicitly make argumentative and systematic theology on self-surrender, unlike the poems, which deal with some of the same issues in a poetic and less assertive manner, or the commentaries, which are bound to the original text and implicitly assert any claims under the shadow of the original text. Thus, these treatises are *prapatti*-literature *par excellence* in the sense that their sole purpose is to defend and define self-surrender as the soteriological doctrine for the whole community. This does not imply that the independent treatises are superior to other genres. It is simply that the

⁴⁰ See Anandakichenin, *My Sapphire-hued Lord*, and Anandakichenin and McCann, "Towards Understanding the Śrīvaiṣṇava Commentary" and "Tamil-Sanskrit Interaction in Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava Literature."

treatises have a different agenda that makes it easier to compare them and to chart their treatments of self-surrender than it would be if we were to look at the more poetic Tamil texts or the less systematic Manipravalam commentaries despite their reference to the poetic sources. In addition, these treatises allow us to compare and contrast the linguistic choices of Śrīvaiṣṇava authors, who wrote these treatises in Sanskrit and Manipravalam, and to provide insights into their dynamic continuity and ruptures, how the authors contribute to the dynamics through their projects, and what the wider contexts are for the texts and their arguments. As Whitney Cox suggests, that the consideration of texts in multiple languages is “revelatory both of their author’s projects and of the wider textual and argumentative context” in a multilingual community.⁴¹ Through diachronic and synchronic textual analysis of the Sanskrit and Manipravalam theological treatises on self-surrender, a genre shared by the two locations of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, “Voices of Self-surrender” treats the doctrinal development and multilingualism as an intertwined history and makes a case for their interdependence.

Language and Multilingualism

Naoki Sakai's works in the context of the Japanese language have helped shape the way I view language and translation. In *Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth-Century Japanese Discourse* (1992), Sakai argues that the unity of Japanese culture, especially Japanese language, is indispensable to the making of Japanese national identification in the discursive space of eighteenth-century Tokugawa Japan, in which some Japanese intellectuals became preoccupied with delineating more clearly the arena of the Japanese language after encountering

⁴¹ Cox, “From Source-Criticism to Intellectual History,” 152.

the language of the Other or the West.⁴² The inquiry into Japanese resulted in the formation of the Japanese homogeneous interior as opposed to the outsider's exterior.⁴³ However, such a homogeneous collectivity does not ontologically exist. It sustains itself by concealing the occurring and recurring heterogeneities within and banishing the outsider from such an imaginary sphere.⁴⁴ The suppression of heterogeneities operates in a highly integrated society, generating the figure of its unity.⁴⁵

Sakai's further analysis of Japanese language in *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and National Culturalism* (1997) reveals that a language like Japanese is historically constructed in the making of the Japan nation when encountering the Other or the West. It further reminds us that the notion of a language as distinct from another language that we are familiar with is a regulative idea under what Sakai terms "the schema of co-figuration" in the modern context. The schema, Sakai indicates, is always at play in the ideological construction of the "regime of translation" that gives the impression that translation is the "symmetrical exchange" between two languages across their boundaries.⁴⁶ It obscures the nature of language as "a site of hybridity" and "context-specific" and presents language as a unity.⁴⁷

I propose that the discursive moment in which the Japanese language was defined

⁴² Sakai, *Voices of the Past*, 13: "Accordingly, in the discursive space of the eighteenth century, where differences are all ascribed to the difference of languages (*langues*), inquiry into the language of the other inevitably leads to the recognition that the other perceives and lives the world differently. This recognition is what writers of the eighteenth century were forced to face. Consequently, their discourse on language was guided by their concern about the identity of a language rather than about language in general."

⁴³ See *ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁶ Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 51: "The regime of translation is an ideology that makes translators imagine their relationship to what they do in translation as the symmetrical exchange between two languages. The operation of translation as it is understood by common sense today is motivated by this ideology."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 19: "My position, which I maintain throughout this book, is that language is essentially a site of hybridity and that any notion of a pure language is some fabricated and dogmatic deviation from the correct view of language. And hybridity is also the fundamental relationship between the body as the agent of action and language."

through its encounter with the language of the Other is comparable to the multilingual intellectual and social worlds of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas in which Sanskrit, Tamil, and Manipravalam are placed in certain relationships and shaped through their mutual contacts. I am aware that the premodern period dealt with here has distinct conditions from those found in the modern domain of nations. For example, the case under study takes into account more than two languages, and the linguistic boundaries in the premodern period are not tied to national borders. Nevertheless, Sakai's works show that language is not a timeless, stable entity but rather is fluid and subject to changes as it is constructed at each specific historical moment by agents. Another aspect of Sakai's studies that is valuable in the case of premodern multilingualism is the important role language plays in the social imagination of the "interior," in which a social identification like Japanese rests on as opposed to the "exterior" Westerners. Similarly, Manipravalam is integral to the Śrīvaiṣṇava communal unity, which was constructed by internally harmonizing multiple heritages, scriptures, religious viewpoints, and languages. However, unlike the construction of the Japanese nation, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' self-understanding which is related to the context of self-surrender seems to be based on shared elements like authorities, soteriology, and linguistic environments more than the opposition to the outsiders.

Guided by Sakai's schema of configuration, Andrew Ollett argues for the plurality of such paradigms in which languages, two or more, are positioned together to be perceived as languages. Central to this study is the claim that Prakrit played a critical but neglected role in literary production before the rise of Sanskrit and the vernaculars. Ollett further develops Sakai's "language unity" into "language order" to look at how languages such as Prakrit define

themselves.⁴⁸ In his definition,

The term “language order” refers to how languages are ordered within a culture, to the recurrent patterns and schemas and tropes by which they are defined and represented, the names under which they are known, and the values with which they are associated. A language order provides the linguistic parameters for all manners of cultural practices, from scratching one’s name on the wall of a cave to composing a text on poetics.⁴⁹

Put differently, languages are defined and redefined constantly in relation to one another. We can homogeneously perceive Prakrit as a language throughout its history through its differences from other languages, among which Sanskrit is the most evident. The binary schema between Prakrit and Sanskrit presents one of the paradigmatic orders in classical India in the educated and elite domain during the first millennium. Prakrit was “a classical language” that exercised its power in various areas of knowledge production, cultural fluency, geographical expansion, and literary culture, similar to Sanskrit.⁵⁰ Its existence in cosmopolitan culture was then replaced by Sanskrit, which turned the classical domain into “Sanskrit cosmopolis,” leading to the forgetting of Prakrit and its glorious past in contemporary India.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ollett, *Language of the Snakes*, 4: “Language, in short, was ordered in premodern India in a way that seems to have few parallels, premodern or modern. That is why, necessary though it is to describe and account for this order, it seems preferable at this stage of research to simply state it as a fact, and to allow its features to emerge over the course of this book. At the foundation of this language order was a dichotomy between Sanskrit and Prakrit. Built upon this “schema of co-figuration,” as I have learned to call it from Naoki Sakai, are a range of other schemas: the three languages, such as we encountered above in Mīrzā Khān; the three and a half languages; the four languages; the six languages.”

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 9–10: “To summarize, Prakrit was a classical language in a number of overlapping senses. Prakrit texts were considered “classics” and studied for upwards of a thousand years, beginning in the first couple of centuries of the common era. Knowledge of the language and the literature was a key component of cultural fluency. Prakrit was cultivated across a vast swath of southern Asia, from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, and from Sindh to Bengal, and it was at least known, if not studied, in Cambodia and Java as well. Like Sanskrit, it was a language of literary intellectual culture, and cut across regions and religious traditions. If it was not cultivated as intensively or as broadly as Sanskrit was, it was nevertheless cultivated by those at the very apex of cosmopolitan culture, such as Bhoja and Ānandavardhana.”

⁵¹ Ibid., Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Ollett’s investigation of Prakrit affirms the value of Sakai’s work in South Asian studies of multilingualism and offers a compelling model. However, it focuses on the macro perspective and formation of a unitary figure of Prakrit throughout the first and second millennium without sufficient attention to the changes this language underwent in each specific context. Furthermore, while Ollett understands that “...premodern India was exceptional in the stability of its textual languages, and thus it is an important site for thinking about how languages are posited as unitary over the course of their history,”⁵² I highlight that textual languages are far from being stable or unitary and that premodern Indian texts are a site of linguistic transformations, particularly when we look deeper into a micro space at a particular point in time. Unlike Ollett’s investigation, which is based on the formalized literary and grammatical treatises,⁵³ my study asks the following questions to highlight the multilingual characteristic and the dynamic relationships of religious texts: Why are multiple languages used in textual production simultaneously? What can one language do or express that another cannot? How do they shape or limit religious ideas in different writings? To answer these, this work proposes the framework of the “language sphere” to draw attention to the micro instances of language usage through the mutual constitutive movements of different linguistic domains.

Language Sphere

The framework of the “language sphere” views language as a linguistic medium and the repertoire of related representations. It invites us to look into the movements and players within one language in relation to another. We can then imagine the whole premodern South Asian multilingual terrain as a myriad network of overlapping and changing spheres that are in

⁵² Ibid., 4.

⁵³ For example, Daṇḍin’s *Mirror of Literature* and Vararuci’s *Light on Prakrit* (Chapter 6).

constant contact and tension. I picture the language sphere as being constructed at each particular moment by three interconnected domains of representations: 1) agency, 2) normativity, and 3) expressivity. The first domain constructs normativity that, in turn, circumscribes the expressive domain. Expressivity is shaped but not limited by the normative domain since the agent can find or create a new expression and expand the normativity in one language by overlapping different language spheres.

This framework begins by investigating agency as reflected in the author's agentive and argumentative manners in text, especially written text. To explain, the author's agency is reflected in the act of composing. The author composes a text to make certain arguments in relation to the author's situation and in conversation with other authors. This domain of agency extends to the social and intellectual backgrounds of the authors, such as their geographical location, social engagement, educational upbringing, and situational problems. This domain of representation is informed by the reading of texts as situational and dialogical and micro-investigation referred to previously. Although the author is embedded in and conditioned by a linguistic environment to begin with, the author can choose which sphere to inhabit and how to engage with the conditions in that sphere. This agency includes crossing the boundaries of language spheres even while working within them.

Next, the territory of normativity highlights the norms constructed, handed down, and circulated by an agent or a group of agents. Specifically, in a religious domain, the norms are explicit and represented in scriptures, authoritative figures, and teachings, which set standards regarding beliefs and practices. Normativity mediates between the domain of agency and expressivity by providing rules or habitual practices that make it hard for the agent to entertain an alternative expression apart from what is already accepted and permitted by norms. These

practices also convince the agents of their contemporaries' resistance if the agent deviates from certain norms. At the same time, ultimately, the agent can decide to follow or subvert the norms. The agency regarding such decisions makes innovation possible despite the normative restriction.

The scope of expressivity indicates potential relationships between the agent and the domain of normativity. Unlike normativity, which is usually clearly articulated by the agents in the written or formalized forms, expressivity is implicit as it can be detected through a comparison between multiple language spheres. The terminology of expressivity here is inherited from Pollock's *The Language of Gods in the World of Men*. Pollock uses expressivity (also "expression," "expressive function," "expressive power," "an expressive instrument," "expressive capability" and so on) to explain the function and capability that a language, like Sanskrit, possesses as opposed to the vernacular languages that were used, in his view, for informational and documentary purposes. Put differently, until the vernaculars managed to replace Sanskrit and become cosmopolitan, Sanskrit was the only language, like Latin in the Roman Empire, that had the power to express something more than real or non-factual statements in literary and political domains since it has more poetic and textual resources to draw from for this expressivity.⁵⁴ This dissertation disagrees with this stable typology between Sanskrit expressivity and the factual use of vernaculars as it does not correctly reflect the complexity and fluidity of textual practices in the case of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas or the South Asian premodern domain.⁵⁵ It also disagrees with Pollock's claim that such expressivity is always

⁵⁴ Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 255. See more in the same chapter.

⁵⁵ Take, for example, Shulman's disagreement with the uniformity of Sanskrit expressivity and monopoly in his review of Pollock's book in which at some points he states, "Where he [Pollock] sees uniformity, I tend to see the most remarkable heterogeneity, local innovation, and context-sensitivity, and by no means only in the "vernacular millennium." Where he sees context-free, theoretically unchanging rules and paradigms, I tend to

attached to a language throughout its existence because language itself is fluid and historically specific.

In this dissertation, the term “expressivity” is used in the widest sense to denote the entire scope of what an agent can use linguistically to express what is within its power, including the normative expressions. Expressivity marks the power that any language temporarily acquires to articulate the normative expressions and other terms, ideas, discourses, debates, discussions, and so on that affirm, challenge, and reshape these norms. In other words, expressivity is the apparatus by which the agent localizes and normalizes the norms, and, at the same time, the mechanism by which the agent explores innovative expressions that dismantle and denormalize such norms. Take an example of the difference between being conservative and creative. While a conservative person is someone who preserves the norms through one’s expressions that conform to and thus reproduce those norms, a creative person expresses original ideas that undermine and eventually replace the norms. Of course, these two aspects are not always be in opposition. They are rather part of a spectrum and can exist in one person.

The Paradigmatic Language Sphere: Manipravalam

“Voices of Self-surrender” focuses on Manipravalam as the paradigmatic example of the language sphere as it combines merging and divergent norms and expressions of both languages in the same place and thus lets us see the moments of rupture and transformative choices when the agents choose to expand the norms or create a new expression in a particular spatial and temporal context. What is being expressed by the author and why? What has been continued and what replaced? The label “Maṇḍiravāḷa,” which preceded its emergence in the Śrīvaiṣṇava

see mechanisms of empirical instantiation and assimilation...” (“The Language of the Gods in the World of Men Review,” 823).

commentaries, refers to the mixing of Sanskrit and the southern local languages that occurs in the literary and grammatical landscape, namely Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, dating to circa the eleventh century. The use of the term to specify the combination of Sanskrit and Tamil in poetry first can be found in the eleventh- or twelfth-century grammatical treatise, the *Vīracōḷiyam*. The hybrid was already used in the ninth century in the prose composition of a Vaiṣṇava retelling of the great Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata* into Tamil, Peruntēvanar's *Pārataveṅpā*, and the writings of other religious communities, such the Jains.⁵⁶ We do not have any evidence of the commentators as well as other medieval Manipravalam authors calling the linguistic medium Manipravalam, to my knowledge.

Manipravalam in the Śrīvaiṣṇava writings and beyond presents a highly heterogeneous movement of the linguistic mixture as well as ideology.⁵⁷ To exemplify, the variety of styles found in Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam can be contrasted with a grammatical theory of Manipravalam in the fourteenth-century Kerala grammatical treatise, the *Līlātilakam*. Exploring the *Līlātilakam*, Rich Freeman (1998) shows that Kerala Manipravalam identifies itself more with Sanskrit literary culture to differentiate itself from the literary hegemony of the region, like Tamil. This methodology localizes Kerala Manipravalam in the poetic domain. Unlike Kerala Manipravalam, the Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam was first used in composition to secure the scriptural status of the two scriptures. The Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam can generally be identified by the use of Sanskrit terminology mixed with Tamil words and grammatical features, or what Erin McCann explains as Sanskrit lexifier or superstratum and Tamil grammatical substratum.⁵⁸ However, in practice, Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam ranges from a

⁵⁶ See Anandakichenin and McCann, "Towards Understanding the Śrīvaiṣṇava Commentary."

⁵⁷ Shulman, *Tamil: A Biography*, 222.

⁵⁸ McCann, "Ācāryābhimāna," 140.

highly colloquial style to a scholastic exegesis, from the domination of Sanskrit to the heavy use of Tamil, and from several Sanskrit scriptural citations to the prioritization of the Tamil scripture. Shulman effectively summarizes the spectrum of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam as follow:

Srivaishnava Tamil Maṇi-pravāḷam, as I have said, offers us a range of dialectical or idiolectical features. Very often the reader senses that he or she is encountering a richly colloquial style, undoubtedly reflecting the context of oral teaching and textual exegesis. We can also definitely assume a relation between written Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṇipravāḷam and characteristic dialectical features of spoken Śrīvaiṣṇava Brahmin Tamil, with its heavy influx of Sanskrit words. In some authors—for example, Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷap Pērumāḷ Nāyaṇār in his *Aruḷiccēyalrahasyam*—there is a somewhat surprising, and rather beautiful, conjunction of recorded colloquial idiomatic speech and high-flown technical terms in Sanskrit, including long Sanskrit compounds (the latter being a diagnostic feature of Tamil Maṇipravāḷam style generally). Quotations from canonical Sanskrit and Tamil works account for some degree of the linguistic mixture that dominates the commentaries. Beyond such rather mechanical indicators, however, we can note differential stylistic and grammatical features, such as the degree to which Sanskrit words are Tamilized according to standard Tamil morphophonemic practice and, even more to the point, the inflection of Sanskrit either with proper Sanskrit nominal and verbal endings or with Tamil suffixes. Sanskrit-derived denominative verbs in Tamil, sometimes phonologically Tamilized, are another common marker.⁵⁹

These features are apparent especially in the Manipravalam commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as shown in Venkatachari's *The Maṇipravāḷa Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas: 12th to 15th Century A.D.* (1978) and Anandakichenin's and McCann's "Towards Understanding the Śrīvaiṣṇava Commentary on the *Nālāyira Tiyviya Paripantam*: The Blending of Two Worlds and Two Languages" (2020). Still, the actual manifestation of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam, especially its script(s) and the appearance and pronunciation of Sanskrit words during its peak production during and after the medieval period is obscure as we do not have any material

⁵⁹ Shulman, *Tamil: A Biography*, 222–223.

evidence from these texts.⁶⁰ The Śrīvaiṣṇavas' reference to Manipravalam as a linguistic medium cannot be found until circa the fifteenth to sixteenth century according to Anandakichenin.⁶¹ Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate the direction of Manipravalam movements based on inscriptions from the Pallava to the Vijayanagara period. Specifically, through the exploration of royal titulatures in the Tamil area from the sixth to fifteenth century, Francis charts the epigraphical development of Manipravalam as follows:

To summarise, as far as *biruda* titulatures in the Tamil area are concerned, we find purely Sanskrit lists in the early period only, then examples with varying proportions of Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha, with a tendency towards almost monoscript Tamil titulatures—with most loanwords naturalised, which makes one wonder whether there was still consciousness that these were loanwords. However, late examples with abundant loanwords in Grantha are still met with.⁶²

We can safely assume that Manipravalam in the Śrīvaiṣṇava corpus might have undergone the same shift from the use of two scripts, Tamil and Grantha or in some cases Telugu for Sanskrit, to the naturalization of Sanskrit into Tamil script and pronunciation, while the use of Grantha for Sanskrit terms is never completely abandoned. This assumption accords with one of the few studies we currently have on contemporary Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam by Giovanni Ciotti and R. Sathyanarayan. Focusing on a recension of *Viṣṇupurāṇavacaṇam* in palm-leaf manuscripts and printed books from the end of the eighteenth century to at least the middle of the twentieth century, they propose that this corpus presents the domination of Tamil script, which suggests the phonological adaptations of Sanskrit words as well as the use of both Tamil and Sanskrit

⁶⁰ The volume titled “The After-life of Tamil with Sanskrit” that I co-edit with Srilata Raman hopes to contribute to the studies on Manipravalam in the contemporary context.

⁶¹ The reference is in the *Periya Tirumuṭi Aṭaivu* (c. fifteenth to sixteenth century) and on the list of works made by Piḷḷai Lokam Jīyar (sixteenth century?), according to Anandakichenin, “When did the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas call their language ‘Manipravalam’?”

⁶² Francis, “Multilingualism in Indian Inscriptions,” 140.

scripts.⁶³ Interestingly, this corpus exemplifies an author’s identification of Manipravalam (“*maṇipravāḷam*”) as Tamil (“*drāviḍa-bhāṣa*” and “*drāmiḍa-bhāṣa*”) as opposed to Sanskrit.⁶⁴

In the most recent study on Manipravalam, “Tamil-Sanskrit Interaction in Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava Literature,” (2021) Suganya Anandakichenin and Erin McCann explore the origin of Manipravalam and point to three assumptions in the Śrīvaiṣṇava Manipravalam scholarship so far: first, Manipravalam is a byproduct of Ubhayavedānta in the sense that it is used to record oral teachings on the two scriptures; second, Tamil in Manipravalam provides accessibility to those do not have knowledge of Sanskrit, for example women and low-caste people or *śūdras*; and third, Sanskrit in Manipravalam helps increase the degree of esoterism of the Tamil scripture.⁶⁵ Developing the case studies from the hagiographical and theological texts in Manipravalam from the thirteenth to fourteenth century, they affirm that Śrīvaiṣṇava authors were bilingual and that there is a division of lexical labors between Sanskrit, which is the main source for pan-Indian philosophical and theological terminology, and Tamil, which offers not only religious-related terms but also ordinary ones.⁶⁶ This study further supports the first assumption and highlights the fact that “the practical and symbolic functions of Manipravalam changed over time,” which conforms with Shulman’s observation. It also makes the two other contradictory assumptions—that Manipravalam is more accessible than Sanskrit and that it is used for esoteric purpose—probable, but not necessary. Interestingly, the study indicates that the hagiographies, which contain a high degree of Tamil and narratives, could be more

⁶³ Ciotti and Sathyanarayanan, “Between Manipravalam and Tamil,” 685.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 682–683.

⁶⁵ Anandakichenin and McCann, “Tamil-Sanskrit Interaction in Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava Literature,” 12. A similar version of the third assumption is made by Rao who claims that Manipravalam is the “ultimate ‘insider’ register, one that would be opaque to those not participating in the Śrīvaiṣṇava temple” (*Re-Figuring the Rāmāyaṇa as Theology*, 19).

⁶⁶ Anandakichenin and McCann, “Tamil-Sanskrit Interaction in Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava Literature,” 29.

accessible and inclusive than the theological treatises or commentaries, which still include the exclusively Vedāntic terminology that the uneducated would not understand.⁶⁷

Building on the scholarship mentioned above, my research is interested in seeking answers to specific questions regarding Manipravalam: 1) Why would the Śrīvaiṣṇavas bring in Manipravalam when they already have Sanskrit and Tamil? 2) What can Manipravalam do that Sanskrit or Tamil alone cannot? And, 3) what are Manipravalam roles in the theological treatises on self-surrender?

To answer the first question, it is critical to look at the more extensive social and historical contexts of the area, which I will do in the first chapter. At this point, it is sufficient to say that there was no need for a written and formalized exegetic engagement with the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, but the need arose roughly two-hundred-years after the emergence of the Tamil devotional corpus when the Manipravalam authors' attempt to identify the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the Tamil Veda in their Manipravalam commentaries.⁶⁸ In fact, the Āḷvārs' Tamil corpus was clearly a cause for the Manipravalam composition, despite the gap, as it provided the theological inspiration and expression perhaps for certain issues and attitudes in the Sanskrit writings. In order to bridge the Āḷvārs' devotional world and the Vedānta system, the medieval authors need Manipravalam, which can hold the two heritages together. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas chose Manipravalam, not Tamil, because it allows the co-presence of the two scriptures, their citations, and theological ideas. However, instead of focusing on the legitimating function of Manipravalam, this dissertation highlights the soteriological systems of self-surrender and the Manipravalam expressions that were heavily influenced by the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁸ The tradition claims the oral engagement with the *Tiruvāymoḷi* by Rāmānuja, for example, before the written composition. See Chapter 1.

To address the second question, my dissertation shows that there are different territorial demarcations in various linguistic spheres despite their overlapping existence in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community and textual corpus. The limitations of these language spheres motivate authors to create a way to transcend them when there is the need to draw the equivalence between the two. Take, for example, the normative practice of scholastic Sanskrit in general that prohibits the citation of scripture or passages in a non-Sanskrit language like Tamil. Specifically, I will show in the first chapter that the Śrīvaiṣṇava linguistic and ideological limitations were formed by Rāmānuja and the Manipravalam commentators.

Importantly, the linguistic mixture of Manipravalam reveals that the two spheres of languages preserve their distinct linguistic functions, as Anandakichenin and McCann argue, and can be associated with different expressive domains to a certain extent. I explain this distinction also in the first chapter. Note that this distinction does not imply that Sanskrit cannot be used to articulate the Tamil expressions or vice versa. It mainly points out that the difference is perceptible and conceivable in a space like the hybrid sphere of Manipravalam in which Tamil and Sanskrit, not just one of them, operate together in a single textual domain. With this distinction in mind, we can look at how each language functions in the doctrinalization of self-surrender, which is related to my third question.

Patricia Mumme in *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute* (1988) indicates that the difference in the interpretative practice and community of audiences of the two locations causes what seems to be a disagreement in the matter of self-surrender between them. Particularly, the community of “Kanchi ācāryas” at Kāñcīpuram were much more “cosmopolitan” as they were engaged in the doctrinal and philosophical debates from the perspective of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta to oppose other philosophical rival systems. In contrast, “the Srirangam ācāryas”

addressed only the Śrīvaiṣṇava community and thus prioritized the Tamil scripture, the devotional attitude, and the practice belonging to this audience.⁶⁹ I agree with Mumme's argument that the inconsistency of self-surrender may be caused by the interpretative difference and increased by the distinction of locations and audience. However, I contend that there are other underlying factors that are stronger than interpretive preference and audience at play. In this dissertation, I indicate that the plurality of self-surrender in the works of these two groups of authors reflects the contesting elements, especially the norms and expressions, that each language sphere places on the development of self-surrender.

Thus, this dissertation investigates the Sanskrit and Manipravalam theological treatises produced by authors from the same and different generations in Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam to encompass the linguistic movements diachronically and synchronically in both locations. Although it does not directly explore any text in Tamil that belongs to a genre of poetry, it analyzes the Sanskrit and Manipravalam treatments of the Tamil Veda and Tamil authoritative passages and teachings that effectively represent Tamil norms and expressions.⁷⁰

Chapter Outline

In what follows, I chart the historical conjunctures between theological development and linguistic transformation in a chronological order with attention to the three domains of each language sphere: 1) the agents or the religious authors, 2) the scripture and teachings, which represent normativity, and 3) argumentative expressions and practices, especially in the doctrinalization of self-surrender. The five chapters show critical movements of the Śrīvaiṣṇava

⁶⁹ See Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 1–25, especially 7–8.

⁷⁰ The Tamil poetry is, for example, the twelfth-century *Ñāṇasāram* (Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 55–57).

multilingualism, namely the limitation of the Sanskrit sphere, which is parallel to the incorporation of Tamil in the Manipravalam sphere, the intensification of the Sanskrit and Manipravalam boundaries, and the harmonizing role of Manipravalam. These linguistic conditions were responsive to a specific social context. Importantly, working within these spheres, the authors shaped and reshaped theological development in different manners, resulting in varying systems of self-surrender, its heterogeneous strands, its distilled version, and, finally, its harmonized form.

Chapter 1 explores the Śrīvaiṣṇava formation of the Sanskrit and Tamil spheres and their norms of scriptures and doctrinal expressions circa the eleventh to twelfth century. Although Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures existed prior to this period, this is the moment in which they were evidently associated with the philosophical system of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and the devotional and inclusive expressions respectively. While scholars often highlight the equivalence between Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures and their languages under the notion of Ubhayavedānta during this period, this chapter points to the central limitation manifested in the Sanskrit sphere based on the soteriological doctrine of *bhakti* expounded by Rāmānuja (traditional dates: c. 1017–1137 CE). To expand the community and accommodate people from different social hierarchies, Rāmānuja’s disciples introduced Manipravalam in their commentaries and explicitly defended the Tamil scripture along with the use of Tamil language in the Āḷvārs’ hymns. The Manipravalam sphere, I argue, was evidently formed based on the Tamil scripture and other authorities in these commentaries, especially the first two that influenced the later commentaries. This was also the moment when self-surrender was formed as another soteriological doctrine, an alternative to *bhakti*, and a basis for communal notion thanks to Manipravalam. Unlike the doctrine of *bhakti*, which is exclusive and deeply based on

Sanskrit Vedānta scriptures and expressions according to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, self-surrender is available to all and combines Sanskrit philosophy and Tamil devotionalism, both co-exist in the Manipravalam sphere. Thus, in this chapter, we see the formation of different language spheres and doctrines.

Chapter 2 deals with the moment when self-surrender became systematized as a valid soteriological doctrine in place of *bhakti* by two authors, Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Pillai. These two authors were believed to be located in Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam, respectively, circa the twelfth to thirteenth century when Kāñcīpuram was already the main site for Sanskrit textual production, and when we see the bloom of Manipravalam literature in Śrīraṅgam. These two authors can be considered the systematizers of Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres in the matter of self-surrender as they composed the first two independent treatises to systematically define and defend this doctrine. Exploring their treatises in Sanskrit and Manipravalam together reveals the parallel but varying developments of these two language spheres when the two locations of the community were expanding and forming their lineages. Both authors regarded Rāmānuja's *bhakti* as the paradigm for soteriological doctrine and arguments as they incorporated the characteristics of *bhakti* in shaping self-surrender and use the same set of Sanskrit scriptures that support *bhakti* to validate self-surrender. However, while the Tamil scripture is preferred in the Manipravalam treatise, it is absent in the Sanskrit one. This difference points to their decisions to conform to the intellectual inclination in their locations and the influences they place on the later doctrinal development: self-surrender in the Sanskrit sphere is closer to *bhakti*, while in the Manipravalam sphere the doctrine strongly takes on the devotional attitude of the Āḷvārs that highlights the role of God and moves away from the paradigm of *bhakti*.

The third chapter traces the distance between the spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam in the next generation and the heterogenous views on self-surrender. Specifically, it investigates the discussions of self-surrender by two contemporary authors, Piḷḷai Lokācārya and Meghanādārisūri, who were engaged with different intellectual projects and locations. Around this time, we see a growth in the production of Manipravalam literature and engaging discussions of self-surrender in the Manipravalam commentaries and treatises in Śrīraṅgam. Among the *ācāryas* there, Piḷḷai Lokācārya alone was credited with eighteen Manipravalam works. In contrast, Meghanādārisūri composed only in Sanskrit, and his works are concerned with the consolidation of Rāmānuja’s system of Vedānta, like other previous and contemporary Sanskrit authors in Kāñcīpuram. Interestingly, he is the only author of his generation to compose a whole treatise to defend the validity of self-surrender. While Meghanādārisūri attempted to restrict self-surrender only to the Sanskrit Vedāntic domain of scriptures and expressions, Piḷḷai Lokācārya drew the distinction between *bhakti* and self-surrender and prioritized the Tamil scripture over the Sanskrit one. Their contrasting strands of self-surrender reflect the dissimilarity of representational domains of agency, normativity, and expressivity in each sphere of language and the authors’ choice to intensify their linguistic boundaries.

Unlike the previous authors who composed texts in either Sanskrit or Manipravalam alone, Vedāntadeśika (traditionally dates: c. 1268–1369), the author at the center of my dissertation and the focus of Chapters 4 and 5, presents a distinctive case. Despite the overlapping between Sanskrit and Manipravalam in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, the two languages in the earlier literature remain distinct. Although these linguistic tools were available before his time, Vedāntadeśika was the first to exercise the agency in working with both linguistic spheres, especially in the context of self-surrender, in the most systematic and

comprehensive manner in order to participate in discussions in these language spheres and resolve the inconsistency in texts of the same languages. This is evident in his composition of two treatises on self-surrender, the Sanskrit *Nikṣeparakṣā* and the Manipravalam *Rahasyatrayasāram*.

His decision to do so may be rooted in his inhabiting the two locations, making it necessary for him to engage with these communities in both languages. Historical evidence also shows that there was internal social fluctuation within the community due to the entrance of different social groups and religious practices as well as political uncertainty, including the invasion of Muslims and the fall of the Cōḷa kingdom. Importantly, Vedāntadeśika attempted to raise a stronger and more inclusive notion of “the tradition” (*sampradāya*), which was not evident in the earlier literature, for the Śrīvaiṣṇava community based on self-surrender. These social factors may drive Vedāntadeśika to reconcile the accumulated discrepancies in soteriological teachings and status of the Tamil scripture to form a harmonized theological system based on varying strands of self-surrender in the Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres.

The *Nikṣeparakṣā*, which is the focus of Chapter 4, aims at engaging with Sanskrit scriptures and previous viewpoints on self-surrender, especially those found in the Sanskrit treatises dealt with in Chapters 2 and 3. Vedāntadeśika’s Sanskrit discussions on self-surrender in this work reflect in the distilled manner the pressing and elaborate issues discussed in the Manipravalam literature. The system of self-surrender in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* remains subject to the Sanskrit sphere of soteriology based on *bhakti* and contributes to the consolidation of the Sanskrit sphere.

Next, Vedāntadeśika’s *Rahasyatrayasāram*, as shown in Chapter 5, reflects how the use of Manipravalam makes possible the confluence of the two scriptures and the harmonization of

the previous theological debates on self-surrender in Sanskrit and Manipravalam. This harmonized system of self-surrender is an essential basis for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' sense of "the tradition" as it provides a significant shared identity for the community. Thus, Manipravalam makes it possible for the intellectually and socially diverse body of Śrīvaiṣṇavas to imagine a unity based on self-surrender.

It should be noted that I have chosen to refer to the soteriological doctrine of self-surrender as "self-surrender" throughout my dissertation instead of "*prapatti*" as used by some other scholars, including Rajagopalan (1978), Raman (2007), and Freschi (2018), because the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors use several terms for this doctrine including "*prapatti*," "*śaraṇāgati*," "*nyāsa*," "*nikṣepa*," "*samāśrayaṇa*," and so on. I intend to loosely translate all of these terms as "self-surrender," and throughout this work, when necessary, I identify the Sanskrit terms each author uses to avoid placing a static notion of what this means or emphasizing a particular term in order to capture the multiplicity of its definition.

CHAPTER 1 FORMATION

In this chapter, I show the genealogy of two main soteriological doctrines of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, *bhakti* and self-surrender, to reveal that their doctrinal origins were rooted in the respective spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam. In fact, they emerged out of the formation of each linguistic sphere by the most authoritative figure, Rāmānuja, and his followers, the Manipravalam commentators. While Rāmānuja advocates *bhakti* as the only soteriological means, his followers sought an alternative. Rāmānuja used Sanskrit in the soteriological context to express forms of authority, validation, and philosophy, shared with other philosophical Sanskrit systems, especially Vedānta. After Rāmānuja's time, the Manipravalam commentators on the Tamil scripture, most openly that of Nañcīyar, promoted Tamil as belonging to the community unlike Sanskrit which is not accessible to all. The Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns are saturated with devotion, especially to God, which associates Tamil with an intimacy and a relationship with the divine. The distinction in their linguistic mediums reflects the bordering of the two language spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam which became evident around the twelfth century despite a number of overlaps between the two spheres. While the linguistic boundaries set by the authors discussed in this chapter do not emerge exclusively or explicitly in relation to the doctrine of self-surrender or predestine the later linguistic changes, these authors greatly influenced subsequent authors to the extent that their stories can help us understand and imagine later engagements with the language spheres and the developments of self-surrender. This chapter thus serves as a background for the remainder of this dissertation and also outlines some of the social and historical contexts that likely influenced into the linguistic movements and doctrinal discussions.

Rāmānuja is widely known as a proponent of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and the doctrine of meditative devotion or *bhakti* as reflected in his works, which are all in Sanskrit, such as the *Śrībhāṣya*, a commentary on a foundational scripture of Vedānta, the *Brahmasūtra*; and the *Gītābhāṣya*, a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, another Vedāntic scriptural foundation. Rāmānuja’s system of Vedānta forms the philosophy that differs from the existing philosophical schools such as Śāṅkara’s Advaita (non-dualist) Vedānta and Bhāskara’s Bhedābheda (difference and non-difference with God).⁷¹ Rāmānuja was the head of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community having succeeded Nāthamuni and Yāmuna.⁷² Although himself a *brāhmaṇa* from around Kāñcīpuram, Rāmānuja was hagiographically portrayed as being connected to other temples in different areas, including Śrīraṅgam. According to the current Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, he was initiated by Periya Nambi and had five teachers who educated him different heritages in both Tamil and Sanskrit. These teachers were: Periya Nambi (Mahā Pūrṇa), Tirukoṭṭiyūr Nambi (Goṣṭhi Pūrṇa), Tirumālai Āṇḍān (Mālādhara), Tiruvarangattu Perumāḷ Araiyaṅgar, and Periya Tirumalai Nambi (Śrī Śāila Pūrṇa).⁷³ His connection with various communities and Śrīvaiṣṇava heritages suggests that he was as a unifying figure. Rāmānuja is further regarded as “one of the first great organizers of the temple administration” due to his advocacy of a more accessible Pañcarātra ritual to replace Vedic ritual and his introduction of *sūdra* participants in temple administration.⁷⁴ In addition to these socio-religious activities, Rāmānuja’s biographies primarily claimed that he promoted the Āḷvārs’ anti-caste ideology,

⁷¹ Oberhammer in “The Influence of Orthodox Vaiṣṇavism” proposes that the authors earlier than Rāmānuja, namely Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa, probably belonged to Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy, the scholastic system that preceded and influenced Rāmānuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and South Indian Pañcarātric traditions. For Rāmānuja’s differentiation of his system from that of Bhāskara, see Neeval, *Yāmuna’s Vedānta and Pañcarātra*.

⁷² Yāmuna was Nāthamuni’s grandson. These two were both *brāhmaṇas* according to the hagiographies (Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 28).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

⁷⁴ Brockington, *The Sacred Thread*, 138. See also Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology*, 268.

and, they thus praise him as being a crucial socio-religious reformer of his time. The most traditionally recognized sources of his biographies include the *Divyasūricarita* (c. twelfth century) and *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, which are stories of the lineages and the lives of the *ācāryas* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. In addition, there is a Sanskrit text of unknown date called *Prapannamṛitam*, written by Anantacārya, which focuses on the life of Rāmānuja.⁷⁵ Through these acts, Rāmānuja is perceived as associating himself with socio-religious reforms that focus on an egalitarian ideology drawn from the Āḷvārs, as Brockington points out:

The increased participation of worshippers from all social levels with the establishment of more liberal Pañcarātra spread from Śrīraṅgam to other Vaiṣṇava centers is one of Rāmānuja's main legacies to Vaiṣṇava faith as a whole, giving ritualized expression to the Āḷvārs' disregard of and even opposition to caste restrictions, arising from the equality of all men before the deity.⁷⁶

However, most of his own works present a different image; one of a Vedāntin who was immersed in the Sanskrit philosophical and intellectual world of Vedic orthodoxy. This engagement is clearly seen in his teaching of *bhakti* as the main soteriological doctrine for the community. I will now focus on the exploration of his works.

In the first section of this chapter, I investigate Rāmānuja's theological treatises related to *bhakti* to show how his theological description of *bhakti* in his *Śrībhāṣya* is indispensable to the formation of the Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophical system. *Bhakti* serves as a tool for the Śrīvaiṣṇava community to differentiate itself from the rival and preceding philosophical system of Advaita Vedānta. Although the doctrine of *bhakti* was critical to the philosophical formation

⁷⁵ See Ramakrishnananda's *Life of Sri Ramanuja*, and Jagannathan, *Impact of Śrī Rāmānujācārya*.

⁷⁶ Brockington, *The Sacred Thread*, 138. See also Dutta, *From Hagiographies to Biographies*, Chapter 5, for Rāmānuja's image as an egalitarian.

for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, it strictly conformed to Vedic orthodoxy and was available only to those who were from the first three castes, *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, and *vaiśyas*, and not *śūdras* or women. Its limitation prompted the creation of an alternative doctrine, self-surrender, which was already rooted in the devotional expression of the Āḷvārs.⁷⁷

There is no question that Rāmānuja taught *bhakti* in his most important philosophical treatise, the *Śrībhāṣya*. However, later Śrīvaiṣṇava authors claimed that Rāmānuja also put forward self-surrender as the soteriological doctrine instead of *bhakti* in some of his more devotional works, namely the *Gītābhāṣya* and the *Gadyatraya*.⁷⁸ In my opinion, the attribution of self-surrender to Rāmānuja is retrospective. Based on hagiographies from the medieval period from the thirteenth century onward, Dutta also suggests that the attribution might have been a reaction to the marginalized position of self-surrender in Rāmānuja’s writings.⁷⁹ Looking at Rāmānuja’s corpus, we can then see two potential issues. First, there is a discrepancy in his soteriological teaching, where it can be said that Rāmānuja proposed different doctrines in different works. However, this can be understood if we take into account the fact that the *Gītābhāṣya* is a commentary, a genre that leaves less room for originality, while the *Gadyatraya* is a devotional prose that invites more emotional expression and creativity. Second, it is difficult to determine what the soteriological doctrine Rāmānuja taught is and which one the community should follow. Rāmānuja’s ambivalence and unresolved teachings became a point of debate for the generations that followed. The majority of post-Rāmānuja authors, such as Periyavāccān

⁷⁷ The notion of Tamil as the medium of devotional expression is true for these Vaiṣṇava poets as well as the Śaiva poets who lived around the same time. See Peterson, *Poems to Śiva*, for example.

⁷⁸ I decide not to include Rāmānuja’s *Nityagrantha* since it is not the focus of the authors dealt with in this dissertation. For the translation and analysis of this work, see Clooney, “Rāmānuja’s Nityam” and “Rāmānuja’s Nityagrantham.”

⁷⁹ Dutta, *From Hagiographies to Biographies*, 197.

Piḷḷai and Vedāntadeśika, claimed that Rāmānuja taught both doctrines in his *Gītābhāṣya*. In contrast, I argue in the second section of this chapter that that Rāmānuja consistently taught *bhakti* as the soteriological doctrine and did not view self-surrender as a distinct soteriological path even in the *Gītābhāṣya*.

Unlike the way that the *Gītābhāṣya* consistently presents *bhakti* as the main doctrine with self-surrender as its auxiliary, many elements in the *Gadyatraya* makes it difficult to identify Rāmānuja’s intention. Thus, in exploring this work in the third section, I rely on the scholarly studies and the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ commentaries on the text to better understand its complex features and theological points. I highlight that the *Gadyatraya* can be considered the precursor of the Maniṣvalam sphere based on its incorporation of the Tamil devotional attitude and what the post-Rāmānuja authors regarded as the three secrets (*rahasya*) or sacred formulas (*mantra*): the Mūla or Tirumantra, “Aum, I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa” (“*aum namo nārāyaṇāya*”); the Dvaya, “I surrender at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī” (“*śrīmannārāyaṇacaranau prapadye. śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*”); and the Caramaśloka, “Having abandoned all *dharma*, come to Me alone as refuge. I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve” (“*sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇaṃ vraja. ahaṃ tvā mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*”).⁸⁰ It should be noted that Rāmānuja did not yet refer to the category of the three secrets or the “*rahasyas*.” These were first mentioned by his disciple, Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, whose date is debatable (c. 1062–1090, 1085–1090, 1122–1154, or 1123–1174), in his *Aṣṭaślokī* as will be discussed in Chapter 2.⁸¹ The paradigm of the three secrets was then

⁸⁰ See section 2.3.1 for the genealogy of the three secrets.

⁸¹ The first two dates are proposed by Rangachari, *The Sri Vaishnava Brahmins*, 42, and Padmanabhan, *Pārāśarabhaṭṭa*, 6–7. The last two dates are found in Mumme, *The Mumukṣuppaṭi of Piḷḷai Lokācārya*, Appendix 1, 211.

comprehensively developed in Manipravalam independent treatises especially devoted to the interpretation of them, the *rahasyagranthas*.⁸² The Śrīvaiṣṇavas' Manipravalam is suitable to convey the “secret” teachings meant only for the community since, as Ajay Rao argues, it is “an insider register” for the elite and intellectual Śrīvaiṣṇavas.⁸³

In the final section, we will see that self-surrender, as an outgrowth of Rāmānuja's devotional expression in his *Gadyatraya*, evidently emerged as another doctrine, an alternative to *bhakti*, in the Manipravalam commentaries. Even though Rāmānuja and his predecessors, such as Nāthamuni and Yāmuna, composed texts only in Sanskrit, the community believes that they all had strong connections with the Tamil scripture. Nāthamuni is traditionally attributed with the compilation of the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*.⁸⁴ Then, Yāmuna encapsulated the devotional attitudes of the Āḷvārs in his devotional Sanskrit poem, the *Stotraratna*.⁸⁵ Lipner convincingly and clearly explains Rāmānuja's decision to compose works only in Sanskrit:

The tenor of Ramanujan's thinking and the tradition that all his works were in Sanskrit make it clear that, if he wished to publicize the Tamil Vaisnava sources, he wished more to establish as universal a base as possible for his system. For this it is necessary to write in the *lingua franca* of orthodox Hindu scholarship – Sanskrit – and to appeal to sources with the widest scholarly and religious authority. This meant that, in the main, Ramanujan attacked his opponents on common ground in so far as they sought similarly to accredit their views, and that he used common sources to state his own case.⁸⁶

However, Rāmānuja's *Gadyatraya*, for example, shows his connection with Tamil

⁸² Venkatachari categorizes this group of texts within the corpus of *sampradāyagranthas* or traditional works, that include the *rahasyagranthas* and other independent works (*The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 1).

⁸³ Rao, *Re-Figuring the Rāmāyaṇa as Theology*, 19.

⁸⁴ Nāthamuni further divides the Tamil corpus into those that should be recited (*iyarpā*) and sung (*icaipā*). Narayanan, *The Vernacular Veda*, Chapters 6 and 7.

⁸⁵ For the analysis of the *Stotraratna*, see Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 48, and Narayanan, *The Way and the Goal*, Chapter 2.

⁸⁶ Lipner, *The Face of Truth*, 6.

heritage. Nayar supports that “Rāmānuja provided certain theological openings for several features of Ālvār spirituality.”⁸⁷ The community also records that Rāmānuja commissioned his disciple, Tirukkurukaip Piraṅ Pillāṅ, to compose the first commentary in Manipravalam.⁸⁸ The Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* also account for Rāmānuja’s acknowledgment and views on Tamil scripture. Although the references to Rāmānuja are not elaborate, Francis Clooney suggests that the “small-scale” evidence makes it more credible that Rāmānuja must have engaged with Tamil scripture. Moreover, the devotional presence in Rāmānuja’s Vedānta system might have been influenced by the Ālvārs’ devotionalism:

It is still a fact that Rāmānuja’s entirely Sanskrit body of writings does not hint that he knew Tamil or even the *ālvār* literature. Yet there is some evidence for his indebtedness to Tamil. The Īṭu, Nampiḷḷai’s great teaching of *Tiruvāymoḷi* as recorded by Vaṭakkutiruvītippiḷḷai, on occasion, even in passing, refers to Rāmānuja as a reader of the Tamil, and in very specific instances. At 1.4.3, for example, Rāmānuja is remembered as making a subtle point regarding the lord’s deceit. The verse reads in part, “He came as a small dwarf, by his wits he begged the earth, that trickster. I’ve lost my wits because of him...”. An elder teacher, Tirumālai Aṅṅaṅ followed the older interpretations of Āḷavaṅṅar (more familiarly known as Yāmuna) and read “trickster” simply as referring to the dwarf’s tricking Bali. Rāmānuja agrees that the dwarf was helping Indra to regain his kingdom but denies that such is the lord’s primary concern. Rather, he had decided to trick the *ālvār*, to make him fall in love with him in this small, innocuous dwarf form—and then to suddenly steal his heart. Such anecdotes—and there are many of them—are small-scale and particular, and we see no sign of any grand mythic narrative of Rāmānuja’s relationship to *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Indeed, the fact that references to Rāmānuja’s reading of the poetry are so undramatic and small-scale gives the idea more credibility. The presence of emotion and personalism in his writing and his insistence that his intense devotion is Vedānta make more sense if one premises that he was influenced by the devotionalism of the *ālvārs*.⁸⁹

The traditional record, the *Vārtāmālai* (c. fourteenth century), also portrays Rāmānuja receiving

⁸⁷ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 9.

⁸⁸ Carman and Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda*, xi.

⁸⁹ Clooney, “The Use of Sanskrit as a Theological Resource,” 17.

education in the Tamil scripture from the lineage of Yāmuna:⁹⁰

...Nampī told Rāmānuja that he should now proceed to learn the Tiruvāymoḷi from Tirumālaiyāṅṅāṅ and handed him over to the teacher and left. When Nampī proceeded to the temple, he saw Āṅṅāṅ ther[e] and asked: What are you doing here instead of giving a commentary on the Tiruvāymoḷi? Āṅṅāṅ replied: I left because (Rāmānuja) invented new explanations which I have never heard from Āḷavāntār (Yāmuna).

‘What was Rāmānuja’s interpretation?’ asked Nampī (and Āṅṅāṅ explained in detail)...‘O, I have heard that version also from Āḷavāntār,’ said Nampī and continued, ‘Just as the Lord Krishna (while He was on this earth) learnt from the guru Santipān, so too Rāmānuja listening to the Tiruvāymoḷi from you! Rāmānuja will never say anything that Āḷavāntār would not approve of...’⁹¹

Despite these accounts, the engagement with the Tamil scripture was only evident after the time of Rāmānuja in the Manipravalam commentaries. In the last section of this chapter, I argue that the doctrine of self-surrender, the one that is evidently distinct from *bhakti* as seen in the theological treatises of the medieval Śrīvaiṣṇavas, is the product of this emerging Manipravalam sphere. The most significant function of these commentaries is the formation of scriptural sources, terminology, and theological principles based on the Tamil scripture and its modes of devotional and intimate expression. The commentaries regarded the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as Tamil scripture and centered it as the main source of normativity and expression in the Manipravalam sphere. They also incorporated the materials that previously appeared in the Āḷvārs’ Tamil hymns and the epics or *itihāsas*, namely the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. These sources, combined with those derived from Rāmānuja’s Sanskrit sphere of soteriology, construct the Manipravalam commentaries and the development of self-surrender.

⁹⁰ Venkatachari attributes this text to Piṅṅaḷakiyaperumāḷjīyār who may have been the disciple of both Nampīḷḷai and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai (*The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 159–160). However, his authorship and date are unclear.

⁹¹ Rajagopalan, “The Śrī Vaiṣṇava Understanding of Bhakti and Prapatti,” 476–477.

1.1 Rāmānuja's Sanskrit Sphere

This section reveals that Rāmānuja's teaching of the doctrine of *bhakti* presents the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' Sanskrit sphere, its normativity and its expressivity, in the soteriological context. Despite being preceded by authors such as Nāthamuni and Yāmuna who are traditionally believed to have composed some Sanskrit works, Rāmānuja systematically established the Sanskrit norms and expressions.⁹² This is evident in his theorization of *bhakti* that was more elaborate than what we see in, for example, Yāmuna's summary of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*.⁹³ The soteriological defense of *bhakti* is indispensable to the constitution of Rāmānuja's new branch of Vedānta. Compared to self-surrender, *bhakti* can be distinct from Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge to liberation (*mokṣa*) and more grounded in the Vedāntic scriptural domain. Specifically, Rāmānuja develops the main characteristic for any soteriological doctrine, including self-surrender, namely Vedāntic ritual status and the normative elements a doctrine should encompass: the Vedāntic scripture and Mīmāṃsā, the Vedic hermeneutics and ritual system that precedes Vedānta as an exegetical system. These characteristics offer demarcating factors for a soteriological doctrine and its validation. But, the doctrine of *bhakti* comes with its own limitation as it is accessible by only the first three castes (*varṇas*)—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, and *vaiśya*—who can study the Vedas.

⁹² Nāthamuni was reputedly the author of a non-existent work, the *Yogarahasya*, and Yāmuna, his successor, composed his treatises all in Sanskrit, namely the *Siddhitrāya*, *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, and *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, and also the poems like the *Stotraratna* and *Catuśślokī*. See Carman, *Theology of Rāmānuja*, 23-26, and Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 7-8.

⁹³ Yāmuna's *Gītārthasaṃgraha* divides the whole *Bhagavadgītā* into three sections according to the three paths (*yogas*), which are the soteriological means outlined in the *Bhagavadgītā*: Chapters 1-6 deal with the path of action and knowledge (*karma-* and *jñāna-yoga*); Chapters 7-12 focus on the path of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*); and, finally, Chapters 13-18 explain other topics related to the three *yogas* and the relationship between God and the soul. After, summarizing all the chapters in the *Bhagavadgītā*, in one verse per chapter, Yāmuna delineates the main points, including the three *yogas* and the one of wisdom (*jñānī*), who is the best among the devotees. Ultimately, Yāmuna establishes the *Bhagavadgītā* as the main scripture regarding the soteriological doctrine of *bhakti*. For the whole text and translation, see Buitenen, *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā*, 177-182.

The *Śrībhāṣya*'s lengthy commentary on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1 can be split into two sections (minor and major). Then, each of those can be divided into two sub-sections, one for the potential opponent (*pūrvapakṣa*) and the other devoted to the proponent (*siddhānta*).⁹⁴ At the beginning of the section on the minor proponent, Rāmānuja addresses the critical soteriological issue between Advaita Vedānta and his system of Vedānta. Although the two Vedāntas agree that liberation is the cessation of ignorance that comes about by the knowledge of God in the ultimate form of Brahman (*brahmavijñāna*) enjoined in the Upaniṣads, they have different views regarding the nature of this knowledge.⁹⁵ The issue centers on the question of whether knowledge of the sentential meaning of the Upaniṣadic passages proposed by Advaita Vedānta or knowledge, based on the sentence-meaning, in the form of the meditative worship of God is the means to liberation:

The response in this regard [against the Advaitins] is that we agree that liberation is indeed cessation of ignorance, as you stated, and that cessation is only due to the knowledge of Brahman. [However,] it is to be discussed what form of this knowledge intended to be enjoined by Upaniṣadic passages for the cessation of ignorance is. Is it only the knowledge of the meaning of [Upaniṣadic] passages from a sentence? Or is it the knowledge, consisting of the worship [of Brahman], based on that [sentential meaning]?⁹⁶

Rāmānuja immediately rejects the first kind of knowledge and provides two reasons for accepting the second kind. The first reason aims to preserve the injunctive function and authority of the Upaniṣads. According to Rāmānuja, if we were to accept the first kind of

⁹⁴ For the analysis of this section and its theological significance, see Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*.

⁹⁵ For more information on the Upaniṣads, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*.

⁹⁶ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya* (Madras: Ubhaya Vedanta Granthamala, 1963), 15: *atrocyate—yad uktam, 'avidyānivṛttir eva mokṣaḥ; sā ca brahmavijñānād eva bhavati' iti—tad abyupagamyate. avidyānivṛttaye vedāntavākyaḥ vidhīyate jñānaḥ kiṃ rūpam iti vivecanīyam—kiṃ vākyaḥ vākyaṅgajñānamātra, uta tanmūlam upāsanātmakaṃ jñānam iti.*

knowledge as a means to liberation, there would be no use for the injunctive passages in the Upaniṣads since the knowledge from hearing and understanding the Upaniṣadic passages does not need to be enjoined. Second, there is no scriptural support for the view that ignorance can be removed by mere knowledge from the Upaniṣads:

[To answer,] It is not the first alternative, which is the knowledge, arising from [Upaniṣadic] passages. [The first reason is that] [that knowledge] can indeed be attained from the [meaning of] the sentence even without any injunctions. [The second reason is that] only that much [knowledge] cannot stop the ignorance.⁹⁷

Rāmānuja then claims that the knowledge that leads a person to liberation must be different from the knowledge derived from the meaning of the Upaniṣadic passages. As we will see in what follows, in order to validate *bhakti*, Rāmānuja asserts that the Upaniṣads enjoin *bhakti*, a kind of knowledge, which is synonymous with knowledge (*vedana*) of God in the ultimate form of Brahman, meditation (*dhyāna*), and meditative worship (*upāsanā*) as the means to liberation.

Rāmānuja ultimately concludes that soteriological knowledge which should be undertaken is equivalent to the meditative worship of God (*upāsanā*), which is synonymous with *bhakti*. He also harmonizes different Vedāntic passages, which he views as soteriological teachings, to defend the position that the Upaniṣads unitedly propose *bhakti* as the only soteriological doctrine. His argument can be outlined as follows. First, Rāmānuja indicates that soteriological knowledge is equal to meditation, which “has the form of the continuous stream of remembrance like a stream of oil.”⁹⁸ He then argues that this remembrance has the same form as perception.⁹⁹ Next, the remembrance in the form of perception is characterized as the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 15–16: *na tāvat vākyajanyaṃ; tasya vidhānam antareṇāpi vākyād eva siddheḥ; tāvanmātreṇāvidyānivr̥tṭy anupalabdheś ca.*

⁹⁸ Ibid., 17: *dhyānaṃ ca tailadhārāvadicchinnasmṛtisantānarūpam.*

⁹⁹ Ibid.: *sā ca smṛtir darśanasamānākārā.*

nature of the knowledge of Brahman which is the same as the meditative worship: “It is just that knowledge in the form of worship, which is repeated more than once, that is described as constant remembrance.”¹⁰⁰ To support this position, Rāmānuja cites a view of Brahmanandin (fifth century?), who commented on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.¹⁰¹ Rāmānuja claims that, according to Brahmanandin, the knowledge of Brahman, enjoined in the Upaniṣads, refers to meditative worship: “All of this is explained by the author of *The Sentences* (i.e., Brahmanandin), ‘Knowledge should be worship, due to hearing regarding that object.’ What is stated [in this statement] is that the knowledge enjoined as the means to liberation in all the Upaniṣads is the meditative worship [of Brahman].”¹⁰²

In the final step, Rāmānuja shows that meditative worship (*upāsana*) is synonymous with *bhakti*. Thus, the word “*bhakti*” can be used to speak about knowledge in the form of meditative remembrance. He validates this argument with authoritative passages from the Vedāntic sources, namely the *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad*, the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*. While the first two sources are classified as *śruti*, the most authoritative scriptural corpus in Vedic orthodoxy, the *Bhagavadgītā* belongs to the secondary revelation group of *smṛti*, the scriptures that are remembered from the Vedas, for example *itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*:¹⁰³

Indeed, the constant remembrance, having that form, is referred to by the word “*bhakti*” since the word “*bhakti*” is synonymous to the meditative worship. Such a manner is, thus, prescribed by *śruti* and *smṛti* as follows: “Only when a man knows him does he pass beyond death” [*Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* 3.8], “A person

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 18: *tasyaiva vedanasyopāsanarūpasyāsakṛdāvṛttasya dhruvānusmṛtitvam upavarṇitam*.

¹⁰¹ Nakamura, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, Vol. 2. For the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, Chapter 2.

¹⁰² Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 18: *vākyakāreṇaitat sarvaṃ prapañcitam—(vākyagranthaḥ)—“vedanam upāsanaṃ syāt tadviṣaye śravaṇāt” iti sarvāsūpaniṣatsu mokṣasāadhanatayā vihitaṃ vedanam upāsanaṃ ity uktam*.

¹⁰³ For the *Bhagavadgītā* passages, see vol. 2, 336 and 110, respectively.

who knows Him in this way becomes immortal in this world. There is no other path for going forth” [*Puruṣasūkta* 17], “I cannot be seen as I am through the Vedas, penance, charity, and worship, as you have [now] seen me. However, Arjuna, I can be known, seen, and entered truly as I am by exclusive devotion, O Arjuna!” [*Bhagavadgītā* 11.53–54], “Arjuna, the Supreme Person is to be attained by exclusive devotion” [*Bhagavadgītā* 8.22].¹⁰⁴

Moreover, Rāmānuja defends *bhakti* as a valid Vedāntic doctrine through the hermeneutic and ritual system of Mīmāṃsā, which is devoted to the systematization of Vedic rituals and interpretation.¹⁰⁵ Rāmānuja, followed by the later Śrīvaiṣṇava authors, regards the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* of Jaimini (c. 200 BC) as the first part (Pūrva Mīmāṃsā) with the *Brahmasūtra* as the next part (Uttara Mīmāṃsā) of the single interpretative system (*ekasāstra*).¹⁰⁶ Both parts form a unified hermeneutic basis for his Vedāntic system. According to Rāmānuja, the first part outlines the sacrificial rituals, whose results are little and temporary. The realization of their provisional results urges a desire to study the subsequent part of the Vedic scripture—the Upaniṣads explained in the *Brahmasūtra*—which offers the best possible result, eternal liberation, through the knowledge of Brahman. Thus, the study of the first part, which is related to rituals (Karma-mīmāṃsā) is to be followed by the second part on Brahman (Brahma-mīmāṃsā):

Investigation is the desire to know. Since, for desire, it is the desired thing that is predominant, it is the desired knowledge that is intended to be enjoined here. Because the results of ritual actions known through the first part of Mīmāṃsā

¹⁰⁴ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 19: *evaṃrūpā dhruvānusmṛtir eva bhaktiśabdenābhidhīyate; upāsanaparyāyatvād bhaktiśabdasya | ata eva śrutismṛtibhir evam abhidhīyate*—“*tam eva viditvā 'ti mṛtyum eti'*”, *tam evaṃ vidvān amṛta iha bhavati | nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate*”, “*nāhaṃ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā | śakya evaṃ vidhā draṣṭuṃ drṣṭavānāsi māṃ yathā || bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṃvidho 'rjuna! | jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṃ ca parantapa!*”, “*puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha! bhatyā labhyastv ananyayā*” *iti*. The *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* passage is translated by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 421. For the full text, see *ibid.*, 420.

¹⁰⁵ For other *ācāryas'* reception of Mīmāṃsā, see Freschi, “Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.”

¹⁰⁶ Jaimini's *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* is commented by Śabara in the *Śabarabhāṣya*, which is then commented on by Kumārila. See McCrea, “Mīmāṃsā.”

are little and temporary, and because the knowledge of Brahman ascertained through the subsequent part has results that are infinite and un-decaying, what is stated is that Brahman is to be known after the knowledge of ritual actions in the first part, and precisely because of that [knowledge of ritual actions]. The commentator stated that “The intention to know Brahman is after the previously occurring acquisition of ritual actions.” It will be stated also [by the commentator] that there is unity of Mīmāṃsā related to ritual actions and one related to Brahman [in the statement,] “There is establishment of unity of the system [of Mīmāṃsā] since the Vedānta (*śārīraka*) is accompanied with sixteen chapters of Jaiminī.” Thus, there is a division of the first and subsequent parts of Mīmāṃsā by the [internal] division of matters which are desired to be communicated, just like the divisions of the [two sets of] six chapters and like the division between individual chapters [within the Mīmāṃsā system]. The *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* begins with “Now, thus, the investigation of *dharma*” [*Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.1] and concludes in this way, “There is non-repetition from the word [which states] non-repetition” [*Brahmasūtra* 4.4.22]. There is a specific order by means of a specific connection [at each point].¹⁰⁷

In the context of *bhakti*, the first part needs to be studied before the second part since the first part provides the knowledge of ritual actions, which are required to be performed as instruments of *bhakti*.¹⁰⁸ However useful Mīmāṃsā may have been in giving methods that the Vedāntins can use in ritual and interpretative arguments, Rāmānuja’s incorporation of Mīmāṃsā as the first part of his exegetical foundation brings with it a significant restraint. Since the first step to undertake *bhakti* is the study of the Vedas and, according to Mīmāṃsā, the

¹⁰⁷ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 7 and 9: *jñātum icchā jijnāsā. icchāyā iṣyamāṇapradhānavād iṣyamāṇaṃ jñānam iha vidhīyate. mīmāṃsāpūrvabhāgajñātasya karmaṇo ’lpāsthīrāphalatvāt uparitanabhāgāvaseyasya brahmajñānasyānantākṣayaphalatvāc ca pūrvavṛttāt karmajñānād anantaraṃ tata eva hetor brahma jñātavyamityuktaṃ bhavati. tad āha vṛttikārah—“vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaraṃ brahmavividīṣā” iti. vakṣyati ca karmabrahmamīmāṃsāyor aikaśāstryam, “samhītam etac chārīrakaṃ jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśalakṣaṇeneti śāstraikatvasiddhiḥ” iti. ataḥ pratipipādayiṣitārthabhedena ṣaṭkabhedavat adhyāyabhedavac ca pūrvottaramīmāṃsāyor bhedaḥ. mīmāṃsāsāstram, “athāto dharmajijnāsā” ity ārabhya, “anāvṛttih śabdād anāvṛttih śabdāt” ity evamantaṃ saṅgativiśeṣeṇa viśiṣṭakramam. For *Brahmasūtra* 4.4.22, see the edition with Rāmānuja’s *Śrībhāṣya* (Madras: Ubhaya Vedanta Granthamala, 1963), 888. See *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.1 in *Mīmāṃsādarśana* (Pune: Ānandāśrama), vol. 1, 1.*

¹⁰⁸ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 19. In another place, Rāmānuja argues that, just as the knowledge of Brahman is to be repeatedly contemplated on, these ritual actions must be performed as long as the performer lives, according to his caste and stage of life. They are necessary for the maintaining of the performer’s eligibility to perform the contemplation on *Brahman*. (*tasyaiva vedanasya dhyānarūpasyāharaharanuṣṭhīyamānasya abhyāsādheyātīśayasya āprayāṇād anuvartamānasya brahmaprāptisādhanatvāt tadupattaye sarvāṅyāśramakarmāṇi yāvajjīvam anuṣṭheyāni*).

Vedas can only be studied by those outside the three higher castes, only those from the three higher castes are eligible to perform *bhakti*.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, those outside the three higher castes, including the *śūdras*, cannot perform *bhakti* due to their inability to study the Vedas. Rāmānuja explains the restraint in the section on the exclusion of *śūdras* (*apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*, *Brahmasūtra* 1.3.9) in his *Śrībhāṣya*.¹¹⁰

The knowledge and the meditative worship of Brahman can be attained only through the study of the first and the subsequent parts of the Vedas. Since *śūdras* cannot study them both, they cannot know and worship Brahman. Even if *śūdras* desire liberation, they cannot perform the means to attain God without any knowledge. Nor can they attain the knowledge from *itihāsas*, namely the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Purāṇas, which are all regarded in the *Śrībhāṣya* as a supplement of the Vedas. The study of these supplemental scriptures only benefits *śūdras* through the destruction of their sins, so that they can be reborn in any of the three higher castes and, as a result, become eligible to study the Vedas in their next lives. However, the study of these scriptures is not enough to provide *śūdras* the knowledge of and the means to attain Brahman since *itihāsa* and Purāṇas rely on the Vedas. Rāmānuja states:

It is not possible for a *śūdra* to have eligibility [to undertake *bhakti*] since they cannot [study the Vedas]. A person who does not know the nature of Brahman, the worship of Him, and the manner [of the meditative worship] would not know the auxiliaries of that worship such as the recitation of the Vedas, the sacrificial rituals, and so on. [Thus,] it is not possible that that person would be able to complete the meditative worship of Brahman. Even if that incapable person has

¹⁰⁹ The section on the exclusion of *śūdras* with respect to eligibility for the Vedic study and sacrificial rituals can be found from *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.26–38. According to Śabara, *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.26 to *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.32 propose the views of other Vedic teachers. Jaimini then put forward his argument and reason in *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.33. Śabara comments on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.33 that the Vedas refer to the fire required for the undertaking of Vedic study only in the case of the twice-born without mentioning *śūdras*. Thus, *śūdras* are not eligible for the Vedic study since they cannot be initiated for the Vedic study. See *Śabarabhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.33, vol. 4, 1379.

¹¹⁰ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya* 1.3.33–39, 370–380. For the opinions on the exclusion of *śūdras* in the later Maniṣṭhalam literature, see Clooney, “Fierce Words.”

a desire for [that meditative worship] [...] Thus, it is not possible for a *śūdra* to have capability for the Meditative worship, since it is only for a person who knows one's own Vedic recension as prescribed by the injunction for Vedic study. Only in so far as *itihāsas* and Purāṇas support the Vedas can they become a means since they are not independent [of the Vedas]. The permission for a *śūdra* to listen to *itihāsas* and Purāṇas is for the results such as the destruction of sins, not for the meditative worship.¹¹¹

As we have seen in this section, the doctrine of *bhakti* is the protagonist of Rāmānuja's soteriological system. In his teaching of *bhakti* in his *Śrībhāṣya*, Rāmānuja establishes the norms and expressions that are essential to the systematization of self-surrender in the Manipravalam and Sanskrit treatises. That said, it is also important to note that Rāmānuja does not mention self-surrender in his *Śrībhāṣya*.¹¹² The medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava authors explain the absence of self-surrender in the *Śrībhāṣya* by arguing that Rāmānuja taught self-surrender for all of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas in a more secret and intimate space meant only for the community of his followers such as the *Gadyatraya*, while he proposed *bhakti* for the opposing philosophical and theological systems such as Advaita Vedānta.

One of the earliest pieces of evidence for this explanation can be found in Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's Manipravalam commentary on Rāmānuja's *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, the first among the three *gadyas*.¹¹³ In the introduction, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai explains that Rāmānuja defended the first doctrine to remove doubts of Advaita Vedānta but then offered self-surrender in the *Gadyatraya*

¹¹¹ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 372–373: *na śūdrasyādhikāraḥ saṁbhavati, sāmārthyābhāvāt. na hi brahmasvarūpatadupāsanaprakāram ajānataḥ tadaṅgabhūtavedanuvacanayajñādiṣv anadhikṛtasya upāsanopasaṁhārasāmarthyasaṁbhavaḥ. asamarthasya cārthitvasadbhāve 'py adhikāro na saṁbhavati. asāmarthyam ca vedādhyayanābhāvāt [...] ato 'dhyayanavidhisiddhasvādhyāyādhigatajñānasyaiva brahmopāsanopāyatvāt śūdrasya brahmopāsanāsāmarthyāsaṁbhavaḥ. itihāsapurāṇe api vedopabr̥ṇhanam kurvātī evopāyabhāvam anubhavataḥ; na svātantryeṇa. śūdrasyetiḥāsapurāṇaśravaṇānujñānam pāpakṣayādīphalārtham; nopāsanārtham.*

¹¹² Note that the word “*prapatti*” cannot be found anywhere in the *Śrībhāṣya*.

¹¹³ For the loose translation of the whole text, see Rāmānujam, *Gadyatrāyam of Bhagavad Rāmānuja*, 19–20.

for the followers.¹¹⁴ This commentarial account supports my understanding that Rāmānuja needs to provide a soteriological doctrine through which his system can differentiate itself from Advaita Vedānta for his new Vedāntic system. Due to the Advaita Vedānta claim that factual knowledge based on listening to the Upaniṣadic passages is liberative, Rāmānuja defines *bhakti* not only as knowledge but knowledge that has to be performed or meditated based on the Upaniṣadic injunctions. Rāmānuja’s defense further affirms the role of Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta scriptural corpus in the soteriological development of *bhakti*. Compared to self-surrender, which has fewer accounts in the Vedāntic sources like the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā* as we will see in the following chapters, *bhakti* presents itself as a more convincing and appealing doctrine for Rāmānuja’s new Vedānta system due to its Sanskrit scriptural sources that are shared by other Vedāntic systems. Although the soteriological

¹¹⁴ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s commentary on the *Gadyatraya* (Chennai: RNR Printers & Publishers, 2013), 1: “In the *Śrībhāṣya*, to reject the wrong views that only the knowledge rising from the [Upaniṣadic] statements like “That’s how you are” (*tattvamasi*) [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7] is the means to liberation and that only the combination of *karmayoga* and *jñānayoga* is the means to liberation, he [Rāmānuja] affirms that only the knowledge which consists of the meditative worship and has a form of devotion (*bhakti*) is the means to liberation as prescribed in the Upaniṣads. It has ritual action as its auxiliary and can be referred to by the terms, knowledge (*vedana*), meditation (*dhyāna*), meditative worship (*upāsana*) and so on. Good followers may believe that since this meaning [of *bhakti*] is favored by Rāmānuja it is it is the only thing that should be known as the means to liberation. Rāmānuja, knowing that, reveals the fact that self-surrender (*prapatti*) is the meaning that they should know, [so that they can] resort to this means. Thus, if one were to ask, why Rāmānuja does not reject the wrong views by talking about this self-surrender. [The answer is that], Rāmānuja sees that it is inappropriate to reveal this meaning, which is a supreme secret, to those who are not connected to the community, just like [it is not suitable for a *brāhmaṇa* to] teach the Vedas to the outcastes. [Therefore], he destroys them [those with wrong views] through the scripture that they are familiar with [in the *Śrībhāṣya*] and explains his own standpoint (*svasiddhānta*) which is the true meaning of the scripture [in the *Gadyatraya*].” (*śrīpāṣyattil*—“*tat tvam asi*” (*tat tvam asi*) *ityāti vākyajanyajñānamē mōkṣasādhanam eṅṅum, karmajñānasamuccayamē mōkṣasādhanam eṅṅum collukira tattṛṣṭikaḷai nirasikkakkāka, karmāṅgakam āy, vēdanadhyānōpasanātiśabdavācyamāy, bhaktirūpāpannamāṇa upāsanaṭmakajñānamē vēdāntapratipātyamāṇa mōkṣasādhanam eṅṅu ivar niścayittu aruḷicceykaiyālē ivar mōkṣasātanamāka aruṭiyiṭṭa artham ituvēy eṅṅukōṅṭu tammūṭaiya ruciparikruhītamāṇa arthattaiyē viśvasittu irukkum sādhvikaṛ ittaiyē viśvasittu irukkakkūṭum eṅṅu pārttaruḷi, ācāryarucipariḡhītamumāy, tamakkut tañcamākat tām aruṭiyiṭṭu irukkum artham prapattiy eṅṅum itattai ikkatyarūpēna veliyiṭṭu aruḷukirār. āṅāl, iprapattitāṅṅaiyē koṅṭu kudrṣṇinirasaṅgam paṅṅātu olivāṅ eṅṅa eṅṅil: prāhmaṇaṅ caṅṅāḷaṅṅukku vēdattai upadēṣittār pōlē turastarāṅṅavarkaḷukkup paramarahasyamāṅṅa ivvarthattai veliyiṭṭav oṅṅātu eṅṅu pārttu, avarkaḷ iḷinta śāstramukhattālēyē avarkaḷai nirasittu, śāstratātparyamāṅṅa svasiddhāntattai immukhattālē veliyiṭṭukirār). The translation of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7 is by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 252–253.*

normativity that Rāmānuja formed here was later incorporated into the doctrine of self-surrender, they were originally meant for expounding *bhakti* and not the newly developed doctrine of self-surrender.

1.2 *Bhakti in Rāmānuja's Gītābhāṣya*

It is my contention that Rāmānuja still viewed self-surrender as a devotional attitude in his *Gītābhāṣya* despite the later authors' claims that he taught self-surrender as an alternative to *bhakti* in this work. Their claims might be rooted in the respect for Rāmānuja as the most significant *ācārya*. As the one who established the first soteriological doctrine for the community, Rāmānuja became the most critical normative figure for validating self-surrender. Given this, it is possible that the later authors felt the need to argue that Rāmānuja not only approved of self-surrender, but also taught it in his own works.

In this section, I analyze Rāmānuja's teaching of *bhakti* in the *Gītābhāṣya*.¹¹⁵ The selection of passages that I explore is led by Srilata Raman in *Self-surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism* (2007), the most comprehensive study on Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*.¹¹⁶ The first commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* in the Śrīvaiṣṇava literary corpus, the *Gītābhāṣya*, is influenced by a Sanskrit summary of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, by Yāmuna (traditional dates: c. 918–1038). Following Yāmuna, Rāmānuja regards the *Bhagavadgītā* as one of the Vedāntic scriptures and the foundation for his soteriology of *bhakti*. Investigating Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*, Raman focuses on the commentary of Chapters 7 and 18 of the

¹¹⁵ Rāmānuja, "Gītābhāṣya," in *The Bhagavad-Gītā with Eleven Commentaries*, ed. Gajanana Shambhu Sadhale Shastri (Delhi: Parimal Publications), 1991 (vol. 1), 1936 (vol. 2), and 1938 (vol. 3).

¹¹⁶ See Buitenen, *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā*, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*.

Bhagavadgītā.¹¹⁷ According to Raman, Rāmānuja refers to self-surrender, the one which is a penultimate step to the path of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*), in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14. Here is the second half of Rāmānuja’s commentary, translated and analyzed by Raman:

He [Krishna] talks of the means which will free one from *māyā*. Those who approach me alone for refuge, whose intention is true, who is supremely compassionate and the refuge of the entire world, impervious to distinctions, cross over this my *māyā*, composed of the strands. The meaning is that, casting off [that] *māyā* they will worship me alone.

Here it is clearly stated that the *māyā* can only be crossed through taking refuge (*śaraṇa*) with Krishna, which is then described as a means (*upāya*) to this end.¹¹⁸

Raman further notes that self-surrender which is subordinate to *bhaktiyoga* is specific for those without wisdom (non-*jñānī*) or those who are not considered the best of the devotees. This characterization is based on *Bhagavadgītā* 7.16, which outlines the four groups of devotees as follows: “Arjuna, four kinds of people with good deeds worship Me. They are the afflicted one, the one who desires wisdom, the one who desires wealth, and the one of wisdom.”¹¹⁹ The devotees, except the one of wisdom, cannot undertake *bhaktiyoga* since they are deluded by ignorance (*māyā*). They, then, must perform self-surrender to drive away the ignorance before beginning *bhaktiyoga*. This type of self-surrender is reiterated in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.15.

The other type of self-surrender that is equal to *bhaktiyoga* and is suitable for the best devotees, the one of wisdom (*jñānī*), can be seen in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.19. Raman suggests that Rāmānuja interprets self-surrender as “*jñānī’s prapatti*” or *bhaktiyoga* for the one of wisdom

¹¹⁷ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 26-40.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* 7.16 in *The Bhagavad-Gītā with Eleven Commentaries*, ed. Gajanana Shambhu Sadhale Shastri (Delhi: Parimal Publications, 1936), vol. 2, 35: *caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna! | āрто jijñāsar arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha! ||* I chose to translate the word “*jñānī*” as “the one of wisdom” instead of “the man of wisdom” as in Raman’s translation.

since Rāmānuja glosses the verb “to surrender” (*prapad-*) in the verse with the verb “to worship” (*upās-*), which refers to *bhaktiyoga*. Here is Rāmānuja’s commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 7.19:

At the end of many births, one with knowledge surrenders to Me, thinking of Me as everything. He who has great self is difficult to find [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.19].

Surrender to Me is the result of no small number of auspicious births. It is preceded by the knowledge of the true nature of the self as that whose sole enjoyment is subordination to Me. “At the end of many births” means “at the conclusion of auspicious births.” Having been the one of wisdom that “I, whose only enjoyment is subordination to Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu), am whose nature, maintenance, and activities dependent on Him. God is superior to [to all] by the innumerable classes of auspicious qualities,” he surrenders to Me, thinking that “Vāsudeva alone is my supreme goal and means. He is everything desired by Me. [He surrenders to Me] means he worships Me. By saying, “He who has a great self,” what is meant is “He who has a great mind.” By saying, “[He] is difficult to find,” what is meant is “[He] is more difficult to find in the world.”¹²⁰

Raman then maps the same paradigm for the two types of self-surrender onto her analysis of Rāmānuja’s two interpretations of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, arguing that:

Hence, we see that Rāmānuja’s first interpretation of the Caramaśloka deals with Krishna’s promise to the highest category of devotees, the *jñānī*, who is already practicing the three types of *yogas* and is now told to do the kind of *prapatti* which is the equivalent of *bhaktiyoga*. Krishna, in turn, promises to free him from any residual sins, which might constitute a final obstacle to his attainment. Correspondingly, the second interpretation of the *śloka* seems to relate to the *prapatti* of the other type of *bhakta* — whom I shall call the non-*jñānī* — who

¹²⁰ Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* 7.19, vol. 2, 220:

bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate | vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ || nālpasamkhyāsāṅkhyātānām puṇyajanmanām phalam idam, yan maccheṣataikarasātmayāthātmyajñānapūrvakaṃ matprapadanam; api tu bahūnām janmanām puṇyajanmanām ante avasāne vāsudevaśeṣataikaraso 'haṃ tadāyattatvasvarūpasthitipravṛttiś ca; sa cāsāṅkhyeyaiḥ kalyāṇaguṇagaṇaiḥ paratara iti jñānavān bhūtvā vāsudeva eva mama paramaprāpyaṃ prāpakaṃ cānyad api yan manorathavartim sa eva mama tatsarvam iti mām yaḥ prapadyate mām upāste; sa mahatma mahāmanāḥ sudurlabhaḥ durlabhataro loke.

is yet to commence *bhaktiyoga* and is unable to do so because of his sinfulness, his lack of purity.¹²¹

I agree with Raman’s analysis that self-surrender can serve as the penultimate step for *bhaktiyoga*. Therefore, both *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14 and 7.19 should indicate the sequence of self-surrender as an auxiliary, followed by *bhaktiyoga*, which is the means for the one of wisdom. In other words, self-surrender and *bhaktiyoga* form parts of the same process for the one of wisdom, and the one who desires knowledge can probably apply the same process to attain liberation as well. I understand that Rāmānuja’s glossing of the verb “to surrender” in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.19 might indicate that the verse means to say “to worship” when it uses the verb “to surrender” rather than saying that self-surrender can be equated to *bhaktiyoga* as Raman points out. Rāmānuja’s introduction to Chapter 7 of the *Bhagavadgītā* affirms that self-surrender is for the removal of the concealment of Matter (*prakṛti*), which obstructs one from attaining God, but not for the direct attainment of God:

In the seventh chapter here, [these things are] stated: 1) First, the true nature of the Supreme Person who is to be worshipped; 2) His concealment by Matter (*prakṛti*); 3) Surrendering [oneself] to God for the removal of that [concealment]; 4) The division of those who worship God; 5) The superiority of the one of wisdom.¹²²

Let us now turn to Rāmānuja’s commentary on Chapter 18. In the introduction to this chapter, Rāmānuja explicitly states that *bhaktiyoga* is the means for liberation and the essence of the teaching:

¹²¹ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 38.

¹²² Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya*, Introduction to Chapter 7, vol. 2, 6: *tatra saptame tāvad upāsyabhūtaparamapurūṣasvarūpayāthātmyaṃ, prakṛtyā tattirodhānaṃ, tannivṛttayē bhagavatprapattiḥ, upāsakavidhābhedaḥ, jñāninaḥ śraiṣṭhyaṃ cocyate.*

Then, these things are made known [in the eighteenth chapter]: 1) The identity between abandonment and renunciation, which are shown to be the means to liberation; 2) The nature of abandonment which is renunciation; 3) The contemplation that the Lord who is the Master of all is the agent of all actions; 4) The necessity of the pure constituent (*sattva-guṇa*) [which is made known] through the elaboration of the effects of the purity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*); 5) The manner in which the attainment of the Supreme Person is accomplished through the actions according to one's caste which are characterized as the worship of the Supreme Person; 6) [the fact that] *bhaktiyoga* is the essence of the whole *Bhagavadgītā* scripture.¹²³

The same sequence of self-surrender, followed by *bhaktiyoga*, appears in both of Rāmānuja's two interpretations of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66. These interpretations of the verse indicate that Arjuna should undertake *bhaktiyoga* to attain liberation. Importantly, both interpretations present the subordinate ways to remove the obstacles on *bhaktiyoga* and the devotees' subordinate and dependent relationship to God, who is the means and the goal that is liberation or the attainment of God. While the first interpretation states that the devotee who is qualified for the three *yogas*, including *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*, should meditate on God as the means and the goal, the second interpretation indicates that God is the means for the beginning of *bhaktiyoga* for the devotee who is not yet eligible to perform this path. Ultimately, both of Rāmānuja's interpretations culminate in *bhaktiyoga* and do not propose self-surrender as an independent means. Rāmānuja divides *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 into four parts as follows:

- 1) "Having abandoned all *dharmas*" (*sarvadharmān parityajya*),
- 2) "come to Me alone for refuge" (*mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*).
- 3) "I will free you from all sins" (*ahaṃ tvā sarvāpāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*).
- 4) "Do not grieve" (*mā śucaḥ*).

¹²³ Ibid., Introduction to Chapter 18, vol. 3, 284: *anantaram mokṣasādhanatayā nirdiṣṭayoḥ tyāgasannyāsayor aiyaṃ, tyāgasya sannyāsasya ca svarūpaṃ, bhagavati sarveśvare ca sarvakarmaṇām kartṛtvānusandhānaṃ, sattvarajastamasām kāryavarṇanena sattvaguṇasya avaśyopādeyatvaṃ, svavarṇocitānām karmaṇām paramapurūṣārādhanaḥhūtānām paramapurūṣaprāptir nirvartanaprakāraḥ, kṛtsnasya gītāśāstrasya sārārtho bhaktiyoga ity ete pratipādyante.*

In his first interpretation, the focus is on the first two parts, “Having abandoned all *dharmas*” and “come to me alone for refuge.” In this context, the devotee is defined as the one who performs *dharmas*, which refer to the three *yogas*, and instructed to abandon the agency and the result of the *dharmas* or the three *yogas*. The teaching on abandonment is supported by the preceding passages of the *Bhagavadgītā*, 18.4, 18.9, and 18.11.¹²⁴ The devotee should then meditate on God in the form of Kṛṣṇa, a manifestation of Viṣṇu, as “the agent, the one to be worshipped, the goal, and the means” concerning the *dharmas*. Rāmānuja’s first commentary goes as follows:

A person who is performing all *dharmas* in forms of *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga*, and *bhaktiyoga*, which are the means to liberation, according to eligibility, with excessive love, as a way of worshipping Me, that person, having abandoned the results, actions, and agency, as already stated in the *Bhagavadgītā* by Kṛṣṇa, meditate indeed on Me alone as the agent, the one to be worshipped, the goal, and the means. This alone is the scriptural way to abandon *dharmas*, as is explained very clearly at the beginning of this chapter, beginning with: “Listen to my conclusion regarding the abandonment O Arjuna! Abandonment is declared as three-fold O tiger among men!” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.4]; “Having abandoned the attachment and also result, that abandonment is regarded as virtuous” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.9]; “Because it is not possible to abandon actions entirely for one who is in a body. But the one who abandons the result of an action is called an abandoner” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.11]; “I will free you from all sins” means “I will free you, existing in this way, from all sins, which have a form of doing what should not to be done and not doing what to be done, which are endless and are accumulated over a beginningless period of time and are obstacles to the attainment of Me.” “Do not grieve” means “do not feel grief.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ For these *Bhagavadgītā* passages, see vol. 3, 293, 301, and 303.

¹²⁵ Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* 18.66, vol. 3, 411–412: *karmayogajñānayogabhaktiyogarūpān sarvān dharmān paramaniśreyasasāadhanabhūtān madārāadhanatvena atimātraprītyā yathādhikāraṃ kurvāṇa evoktarītyā phalakarmakartrtvādiriparityāgena parityajya mām ekam eva kartāraṃ ārādhyaṃ prāpyam upāyam cānusaṃdhatsva; eṣa eva sarvadharmānām śāstrīyaparityāga iti ‘niścayaṃ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bhāratasattama! | tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra! trividhaḥ saṃprakīrtitaḥ’ [18.4] ityārabhya ‘saṅgaṃ tyaktvā phalaṃ caiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ’ [18.9] ‘na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṃ tyaktuṃ karmāny aśeṣataḥ. yastu karmaphalatyāgī sa tyāgīty abhidhīyate’ [18.11] ityadyāyādaḥ sudrḍham upapāditam. ‘ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi’ evaṃ vartamānaṃ tvāṃ matprāptivirodhibhyo ‘nādikālasaṅcitānantākṛtyakaraṇakṛtyākaraṇarūpebhyah sarvabhyah pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi; mā śucaḥ śokaṃ mā kṛthāḥ.*

Here, Rāmānuja interprets self-surrender as the mental contemplation on God’s features by glossing the phrase “come to Me alone for refuge” with the injunction for the devotee to contemplate God (*anusamdhatsva*). The contemplation plays a role in the performance of the three *yogas*, resulting in the release from sins, which are obstacles in attaining God. The contemplation on God, especially as an agent, can be found in many places in Rāmānuja’s commentary on Chapter 18, including verses 4, 12, 13, 17, 40, 49, and 57.¹²⁶ It should suffice to give Rāmānuja’s commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 18.4 as an example since Rāmānuja himself cites this verse to support the abandonment in his first interpretation. In his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 18.4, Rāmānuja explains that the abandonment of agency embodies a contemplation on the fact that God has agency regarding the actions performed by the devotee. This suggests that the contemplation on God’s agency is the counterpart of the detachment from agency and result. According to this statement, the contemplation does not refer to *bhakti*, but is only a step towards it:

Listen to my conclusion regarding the abandonment, O Arjuna! Abandonment is declared as three-fold, O Tiger among men! [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.4].

[...] The abandonment is proclaimed to be three kinds by Me [...] [First,] the abandonment of results, thinking that the results such as heavens, produced by actions, do not belong to me. [Second,] the abandonment of actions is the complete giving up of the possession regarding deeds with the thought that “This is my action, which is the means for my result.” [Third,] the abandonment of agency of oneself through the contemplation (*anusamdhāna*) that the Lord of all is the agent.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Ibid., vol. 3, 293–294, 308, 311, 323, 351, 370, and 387. The contemplation on God is also referred to in Rāmānuja’s commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 7.26, 11.55, and 13.8, see vol. 2, 225, 331–332, and 363–364 respectively.

¹²⁷ Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* 18.4, vol. 3, 293: *niscayaṃ śruṇu me tatra tyāge bharatasattama! | tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra! trividhaḥ saṃprakīrtitaḥ || [...] mayā trividhaḥ saṃprakīrtitaḥ [...] karmajanyaṃ svargādikaṃ phalaṃ mama na syād iti phalatyaḡgaḥ; madīyaphalasādhanatayā madīyam idaṃ karmeti karmaṇi mamatāyāḥ parityāgaḥ karmaviśayas tyāgaḥ; sarveśvare kartṛtvānusaṃdhānenātmanaḥ kartṛtātyāgaḥ kartṛtvaviśayas*

The last two parts of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 receive less attention than the first two parts. For “I will free you from all sins,” Rāmānuja defines “sins” as the obstacles to the attainment of God. Finally, he simply paraphrases the last part, “Do not grieve.”

In the second interpretation, Rāmānuja indicates that the word “*dharmas*” in the first part refers to the expiations that are too difficult for a person like Arjuna to accomplish. Knowing that he cannot undertake *bhaktiyoga* or perform the expiations to remove the sins in a short amount of time, Arjuna grieves. Kṛṣṇa then instructs Arjuna to abandon the *dharmas* and surrender to Him as a form of expiation. In this case, the abandonment of *dharmas* refers to an actual physical giving up of the expiations instead of the mental detachment from agency and result seen in the first interpretation. Rāmānuja further emphasizes God’s position as the refuge and His compassion by describing self-surrender as a giving up of the burden of removing sins on God. God Himself is both the means to the removal of the obstacles and the goal. In the third part of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, the sins, which are to be removed by God, are again the obstacles to *bhaktiyoga*. Finally, Rāmānuja reiterates the final part. Here is Rāmānuja’s second interpretation:

Alternatively, because *bhaktiyoga* can be accomplished only by a person who is completely dear to God and free from all sins, and because of the infinity of sins which are obstacles to the beginning of that [*bhaktiyoga*], Arjuna grieves, seeing his own inability to begin *bhaktiyoga* due to the impossibility of getting beyond these sins by means of *dharmas* which consist of the form of this or that expiation for those sins and which are to be done in a limited time. Removing the grief of Arjuna, who is grieving in this way, God said, “Having abandoned all *dharmas*, come to Me alone for refuge.” Endless acts of various sorts such as *kṛcchra*, *cāndrāyaṇa*, *kūśmāṇḍa*, *vaiśvānara*, *vrātapati*, *pavitreṣṭi*, *trivṛt*, and *agniṣṭoma*, etc. are suitable for [removing] endless sins of various sorts piled up from a beginningless period of time which are obstacles for the undertaking of

tyāgaḥ.

bhaktiyoga and take the form of expiations for these sins. Having abandoned all these *dharmas* which are difficult to be performed by you who have only limited time, for accomplishing the undertaking of *bhaktiyoga*, take refuge in Me who is the one to be resorted to for the whole world without considering any differences and supremely compassionate, an ocean of compassion for people who depend on Me alone. I will free you from all sins, which are obstacles to undertaking *bhaktiyoga* whose nature has already been stated; do not grieve.¹²⁸

Thus, Rāmānuja’s two interpretations offer the steps that help one perform the three *yogas*. In particular, they proclaim the ways that one can follow to remove the obstacles to becoming eligible for *bhaktiyoga*. It is important to note that Rāmānuja does not claim that *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 is the teaching of the soteriological doctrine of self-surrender as later authors argued as we will see in the subsequent chapters.

Unlike in the *Gītābhāṣya*, Rāmānuja, in his *Gadyatraya*, prioritizes the devotional expression, which is not foreign to the later-developed doctrine of self-surrender. The devotional attitude that underlies the *Gadyatraya* links this work with the preceding poems of the Āḷvārs and Yāmuna, which likely influenced Rāmānuja’s devotional piece.

1.3 Rāmānuja’s Gadyatraya as the Precursor of the Manipravalam Sphere

In his *Gadyatraya*, Rāmānuja clearly emphasizes self-surrender to God. The emphasis may be influenced by the devotional poetry that predates Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya*, namely the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*, especially, but not exclusively, the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, and the

¹²⁸ Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* 18.66, vol. 3, 412–413: *athavā, sarvapāpavinirmuktātyantabhagavatprīyapurusaṅnirvartiyatvād bhaktiyogasya tadārambhavirodhipāpānām ānantyāc ca tatprāyaścittarūpair dharmaiḥ aparimitakālakṛtais teṣāṃ dustaratayātmano bhaktiyogārambhānarhatām ālocya śocato ’rjunasya śokam apanudan śrībhagavān uvāca— ‘sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja’ iti. bhaktiyogārambhavirodhyanādikālasaṅcitanānāvīdhānantapāpānugūṇān tattatprāyaścittarūpān kṛcchracāndrāyaṇakūsmāṇḍavaiśvānaravrātapatipavitreṣṭitriṣṭvāgnīṣṭomādīkān nānāvīdhānantāṃs tvayā parimitakālavartinā duranuṣṭhānān sarvān dharmān parityajya bhaktiyogārambhāsiddhaye mām ekaṃ paramakāruṇikam anālocitaviśeṣāśeṣalokaśaraṇyam āśritavātsalyajaladhīṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyasva. ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo yathoditasvarūpabhaktiyārambhavirodhibhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi; mā śucaḥ.*

Stotraratna, a Sanskrit praise-poem of Yāmuna. These devotional works contain various features that later influenced the doctrinal systematization of self-surrender both in Sanskrit and Manipravalam literature. The first-person perspective, the helpless attitude, and the surrendering act of the author make the *Gadyatraya* distinct from Rāmānuja’s other more philosophical works and lend support for subsequent generations to argue that Rāmānuja favored self-surrender over *bhakti* in this work. The devotional works that follow, namely the Sanskrit praise-poems of Kūreśa and Pārāśara Bhaṭṭar continued the similar integration of emotional features from the Āḷvārs’ hymns into Sanskrit.¹²⁹ Another important characteristic of this work that was inherited by the later authors is the reference to *itihāsas*, which became the norms in the subsequent Manipravalam commentaries on Nammāḷvār’s *Tiruvāymoḷi*.

Instead of resorting only to the Vedāntic scripture, the later commentators bring in the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, other Tamil hymns, and *itihāsas* to represent the norms of authorities. They further expressed self-surrender as distinct from *bhakti* through its devotional characteristic based on these norms. Given the parallel between the authoritative elements in the *Gadyatraya* and the norms in the Manipravalam commentaries, I view Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya* as the predecessor of these texts and the Manipravalam sphere developed within them. In what follows, I outline these distinctive features of Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya* along with the later arguments that this work proposes self-surrender as an independent doctrine.

The *Gadyatraya* is divided into three parts: the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, *Śrīraṅgagadya*, and *Vaikunṭhagadya*. Among the three *gadyas*, the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, which is the longest one, presents the most comprehensive process of self-surrender as a preliminary step to *bhakti* as in

¹²⁹ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 259. Also, Carman and Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda*, 44.

the *Stotraratna*.¹³⁰ The devotee begins his salvific journey by surrendering to Śrī, the consort of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa.¹³¹ For the first time, the experience of God is described as that which can be completed by supreme devotion (*parabhakti*), supreme knowledge (*parajñāna*), and utmost devotion (*paramabhakti*). The experience produces love that in turn brings about the subservience of the devotee. This description of the experience of God is reiterated throughout the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*. Here, the devotee asks for Śrī's protection so that he can experience God and be His servant eternally:

[That experience] which is the eternally and incessantly most splendid is completely filled with supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion which is exclusive to the pair of feet of the blessed one who is excellent. The experience of God who is limitless and eminently dear [to me] is an end in itself. The experience of the blessed one in such a manner produced the limitless and eminent love and the love brought about the subservient state [for me]. I desire to attain the eternal service which is characterized by the exclusive desire for total subservience which is suitable to that subservient state. *Let me be uninterruptedly in the same state of the ultimate self-surrender (śaraṇāgati) at the pair of feet of the blessed one.*¹³²

Śrī responds that he will attain what he desires.¹³³ Then, the devotee praises God's qualities at

¹³⁰ For detailed summary of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, see Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 42–45.

¹³¹ The *Gadyatrāya* in *Rahasyarakṣā* (Madras: Sri Vedanta Desika Seventh Centenary Trust, 1969), 125: “I who have no other refuge surrender at the goddess Śrī. She, the blessed one, is on the lotus and possessed of auspicious innumerable qualities which are limitless and excellent such as nature, forms, qualities, power, sovereignty, moral conduct, conforming to the desire of the blessed one, Nārāyaṇa.”

(*bhagavannārāyaṇābhīmatānūrūpasvarūparūpaḡaṇavibhavaśīvarāśīlādyanavadhikātiśayāsamkhyeyakalyāṇa-ḡaṇagaṇām padmavanālayām bhagavatīm śrīyaḡ devīm nityānapāyinīm niravadyām devadevadvīyamahiṣīm akhilajaganmātaram (asmanmātaram) aśaraṇyaśaraṇyām ananyaśaraṇaḡ śaraṇamaham prapadye*).

For the role of Śrī in Rāmānuja's works, see Kumar, *The Goddess Lakṣmī*, 62–75.

¹³² Rāmānuja, *Gadyatrāya*, 136 (italics mine):

pāramārthikabhagavaccaraṇāravindayugalaikāntikātyantikaparabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktikṛtaparipūrṇāna varatanityaviśadatamānanyaprayojanānavadhikātiśayapriyabhagavadanubhavajanitānavadhikātiśayaprītikāritā śeṣāvasthociṭāśeṣa-śeṣataikaratirūpanityakaimkaryaprāptyapekṣayā pāramārthikī bhagavaccaraṇāravindaśaraṇāgatir yathāvasthitā aviratāstu me.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 141: “Let (it) be yours.” (*astu te*.)

great length.¹³⁴ Elisa Freschi notes that these qualities of God might not only serve a decorative purpose for the text, but also play a role in the process of self-surrender. In Freschi's explanation, "[t]he long process of uttering God's attributes and one's shortcomings might be itself part of the salvific process of becoming aware of His greatness and of one's inadequacy."¹³⁵ The climactic moment comes when the devotee declares that he has no other refuge and surrenders to God. As Freschi points out, style and structure in the *Gadyatraya* have great impact on self-surrender since they dramatize the situation by delaying the devotee's request to perform service to God, God's response to make the case for the devotee's helplessness, and His grace:

The narrative and dialogical structure of the text appear, therefore, to have a profound impact on the doctrine propounded, namely, *prapatti* [self-surrender]. Without this structure, the text would occupy only a few lines, stating that once one has obtained *prapatti* through God's mercy, one can become *bhakta*. Within the structure, however, the same content gets a different connotation, insofar as both the request(s) and the response are delayed enough to show the difficulty of what has just been requested and the wondrous nature of God's compassion.¹³⁶

Self-surrender accompanied by the expression of the devotee's state of having no other refuge echoes what we see in the *Tiruvāymoli* and *Stotraratna*. These two works are traditionally regarded as paradigmatic moments of self-surrender. The emphasis on self-surrender in the *Gadyatraya* might be shaped by these preceding works or conditioned by the style of praise-poetry and the dialogue between God and His devotee. Vasudha Narayanan effectively summarizes the *Tiruvāymoli* as follows:

¹³⁴ Ibid., 142–159. For almost complete translation, see Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 236–237.

¹³⁵ Freschi, "Bhakti in Rāmānuja," 302–303.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 303.

In about one fourth of the poems Nammālvār talks of his separation and talks from the stance of a lovesick “heroine,” a person seen in earlier (2nd–4th c. C.E.) secular Tamil poems of love. In thirty-three verses Nammālvār identifies himself as a cowherd girl who pines for Krishna. The rest of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* contains philosophical statements, didactic verses, wonder at the creations of the Lord, descriptions of sacred places where Viṣṇu is enshrined, recollection of past unions with the Lord, and the importance of serving the other devotees. The poem begins and ends with triumphant statements of union with the Lord.¹³⁷

In *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10, Nammālvār declares his desire to be God’s servant before expressing his helplessness and falling down at the feet of God in the form of the Lord of the Sacred Hill (Vēṅkaṭam) to seek refuge:¹³⁸

‘I won’t part from you for an instant’
 says Śrī who rests on your chest,
 lord of matchless fame,
 holder of the three worlds,
 my king, master of Vēṅkaṭam
 dear to peerless immortals and sages
 with nowhere else to go, I’ve settled at your feet.¹³⁹

According to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, *Stotraratna* 22 also indicates a critical moment of self-surrender. In this verse, Yāmuna, using a first-person pronoun, expresses what can be interpreted in light of the soteriological doctrine of self-surrender later developed as the two qualifications, namely his helplessness (*ākiñcanya*) and his state of having no other means (*ananyagatitva*). The author claims that he does not yet attain nor is he yet eligible for the three means, namely *dharma*, knowledge, and *bhakti*. These three means can be interpreted as alluding to the three *yogas*—*karma*-, *jñāna*-, and *bhakti-yoga*—the collective means to reach

¹³⁷ Narayanan, *The Vernacular Veda*, 3.

¹³⁸ For the uniqueness of this verse, see Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 81–84.

¹³⁹ Translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 215. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam* (Ceṅṅai: Tiruvēṅkaṭattāṅ Tirumaṅṅam, 1973), 553.

God according to the *Bhagavadgītā*. The author is helpless and seeks God as refuge (*śaraṇya*):

I am not established in *dharma*; I do not know the self,
I do not have *bhakti* regarding your lotus feet;
I am unworthy, and I have no other means.
My refuge (*śaraṇya*)!
I fall down and surrender (*śaraṇam prapadye*) at your feet.¹⁴⁰

The author's lack of means to attaining God is similar to *Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.7.1, "I've observed no vows, I've no subtle wisdom, still I can't bear to leave you for even a moment. Lord asleep on the serpent, my father who abides in the city of Śrīvaramaṅgala with its fields of red paddy and blossoming lotus, I am nothing without you."¹⁴¹ According to the earliest commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, Nammālvār expresses his own lack of the three *yogas* in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Instead of searching for other means, Nammālvār views surrender to God's grace as an alternative to the three *yogas*. Here is the Tamil verse, followed by the first Manipravalam commentary by Tirukkurukaip Piraṅ Piḷḷāṅ, the introduction to section 5.7:

O Lord who has the serpent for a bed!
I have not done any [pious ritual] act
I have no intelligence,
and yet
I cannot move away from you and survive.
O King, sitting in state,
enthroned in the city of Cīrīvaramaṅkalam,
a city
filled with fertile fields of red paddy
interwoven with blossoms of lotus flowers,
I am not a burden on you!

¹⁴⁰ Yāmuna, *Stotraratna* 22 in *Rahasyarakṣā*, ed. Chettaloor V. Srivatsankacharyar (Madras: Sri Vedanta Desika Seventh Centenary Trust, 1969), 74:

*na dharmaniṣṭho 'smi, na ca ātmavedī, na bhaktimāṃs tvaccaraṅāravinde |
akiṅcano 'nanyagatiḥ śaraṇya! tvatpādamūlaṃ śaraṇam prapadye ||*

¹⁴¹ Translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 176. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 526.

Even though he thus imitates the nature, form, and activities of the Lord who is the Lord of all, the ālvār does not find anything to hold onto and says, “I am separated from him and suffer so, and yet the Lord ignores me. This is because I have no upāya in the form of karmayoga, jñānayoga, and bhaktiyoga [to make it possible] for him to unite with me, but even though I do not have any of them [upāyas] I cannot survive if I am to be separated from you who are extremely enjoyable. Therefore, since you have come to the city of Cirīvaramaṅkalam to make me an object [of your love], and since it does not befit you to let go of this ātmā, which is your servant, you cannot let me go. Therefore you have to make me, who am your servant (aṭiyēṅ), an object of your grace.”¹⁴²

What is added in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* is the use of the Dvaya in self-surrender.¹⁴³ The imperative to recite the Dvaya is found immediately after the moment of self-surrender.¹⁴⁴ Raman comments that self-surrender through the Dvaya removes the devotee’s sins and Matter (*prakṛti*) which are obstacles to the undertaking of *bhakti* and transforms the devotee from one who is without knowledge (non-*jñānī*) into one of wisdom (*jñānī*)—the ideal devotee in the *Bhagavadgītā* and Rāmānuja’s *Gītābhāṣya*.¹⁴⁵ The devotee further asks God to make him one whose only nature is supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and the utmost devotion.¹⁴⁶ These three elements enable him to experience God as we have seen above. Now that he has experienced God, the devotee requests to be His eternal servant:

I have the experience of the blessed one who is limitlessly and eminently dear [to me] as an end in itself. [That experience] which is the eternally and incessantly most splendid was completely filled with supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion. The experience of the blessed one in such a manner produced the limitless and eminent love and the love brought

¹⁴² Carman and Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda*, 116–117.

¹⁴³ The Manipravalam commentary of the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, the *Ītu Muppattāyirappaṭi*, draws the connection between *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 and the Dvaya, claiming that the Dvaya is a Sanskrit translation of Nammālvār’s expression of self-surrender. See Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 128–132, and Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 184–192 on “The Tiruvāymoḷi in Correlation with the Three Holy Mantras.”

¹⁴⁴ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 160: *nārāyaṇa! aśaraṇyaśaraṇya! ananyaśaraṇaḥ tvatpādāravindayugalaṃ śaraṇamaḥaṃ prapadye. atra dvayam.*

¹⁴⁵ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 45. See also the diagram of the salvific process outlined in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* here.

¹⁴⁶ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 168: *parabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktyekasvabhāvaṃ māṃ kuruṣva.*

about the subservient state [for me]. [Now,] make me become the eternal servant who is characterized by the exclusive desire for total subservience which is suitable to that subservient state.¹⁴⁷

In response, God accepts the devotee, who has stated the Dvaya and possesses supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion as His eternal servant. God asserts that all of the obstacles to the experience of Himself have been removed through His compassion. He is the only means to the attainment of the goal which is He Himself.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the Dvaya, Rāmānuja also refers to the recitation of the Tirumantra towards the end of the *Vaikuṅṭhagadya* along with the devotee's request that God accept him as a servant.¹⁴⁹ Raman suggests that the use of the Tirumantra and Dvaya might be derived from the Pāñcarātra system and its focus on the worship of Nārāyaṇa.¹⁵⁰

At the end of the *Śaraṅāgatigadya*, God promises that the devotee will become His

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 168 (italics mine): *parabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktikṛtaparipūrṇānavaratānityaviśadatamānanya-prayojanānavadhikātiśaya-priyabhagavadanubhavo 'haṃ tathāvidhabhagavadanubhavajanitānavadhikātiśaya-prītikāritaśeṣāvasthacitāśeṣaśeṣataikaratirūpanityakiṅkaro bhavāni*.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 169 (emphasis mine): “Although you were impeded by the obstacle to supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion which are exceedingly exclusive to My pair of feet [...], you have stated the Dvaya indeed in some manner or another. Thus, you have supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and the utmost devotion which are exceedingly exclusive to *My pair of feet that cause the destruction of all (obstacles) only through my compassion (dayā)* [...] You have the experience of Me who is limitless and exceedingly dear. [That experience] which is an end in itself and eternally and incessantly most splendid was completely filled. The experience of Me in such a manner produced the limitless and eminent love and the love brought about the subservient state [for you]. *Be the eternal servant who is characterized by the exclusive desire for total subservience which is suitable to that subservient state.*” [...] *maccaraṅāravindayugaklaikāntikātyantika-parabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktivighnapratihato 'pi, yena kenāpi prakāreṇa dvayavaktā tvam, kevalaṃ madīyayaiva dayayā niśeṣavinaṣtasahetukamaccaraṅāravindayugalaikāntikātyantika-parabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktiḥ [...]*

paripūrṇānavaratānityaviśadatamānanya-prayojanānavadhikātiśayapriyamadanubhavas tvam tathāvidhamadanubhavajanitānavadhikātiśayaprītikāritāśeṣāvasthacitāśeṣataikaratirūpanityakiṅkaro bhava).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 191. See the sequence of the recitation of the Tirumantra in Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 46–47.

¹⁵⁰ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 48–49. Raman also points out in the same context that, in addition to the use of the two secrets, the importance of the Goddess and the prioritization of self-surrender might be influenced by the Pāñcarātra Āgamas. Moreover, the influence from the Pāñcarātra Āgamas on the *Gadyatraya* could account for the difference between the concept of self-surrender in the *Gadyatraya* and that in the *Gītābhāṣya*. It should be noted also that the influence from Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās on Rāmānuja is evident in his *Nityagrantha*. For this last point, see Rastelli, “Service as an end in Itself.”

eternal servant in His abode, Vaikuṅṭha, after the devotee’s death. Once more, God stresses that all of this is possible due to His compassion.¹⁵¹ He further confirms that the devotee does not need to doubt whether or not he will attain the knowledge, perception, and attainment of God according to His promises which He made during His manifestation as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in *itihāsas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, an episode of the *Mahābhārata*. Rāmānuja cites *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20, in which Rāma promises to show compassion to those who surrender to Him: “For someone who surrenders to Me even once and for someone who begs, ‘I am yours,’ I give safety for all beings. This is My promise.”¹⁵² The same statement is alluded to in *Stotraratna* 64, along with two other passages, “You are compassionate toward someone who surrenders to You even once, requesting, ‘Lord! I am yours,’ since You remember your promise. Why am I the only one excluded from your promise?”¹⁵³ Importantly, Rāmānuja concludes the list of God’s promises with *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66. However, he does not refer to this as one of the three secrets in the Manipravalam soteriological paradigm of self-surrender, as developed in the later literature.¹⁵⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 is used merely as a scriptural authority equivalent to the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

¹⁵¹ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 173: “[The experience of Me] which is the eternally and incessantly most splendid was completely filled with supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion, which are exclusive to My pair of feet and are attained *by my compassion (prasāda) only at the time [...] when [your] body falls*. The experience of Me who is limitlessly and eminently dear is an end in itself. It produced the limitless and eminent love and the love brought about the subservient state [for you]. *You will be the eternal servant who is characterized by the exclusive desire for total subservience which is suitable to that subservient state.*”

(*śarīrapātasamaye [...] tadānīmeva matprasādalahamaccaraṇāravindayugalaikāntikātyantikaparabhaktiparajñānaparamabhaktikṛtaparipūrṇāna varatanityaviśadatamānanyaprayojanānavadhikātiśayapriyamadanubhavajanitānavadhikātiśayaprītikāritāśeṣāv asthociṭāśeṣaśeṣataikaratirūpanityakiṅkaro bhaviṣyasi*).

¹⁵² *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20 in *The Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition*, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1971), vol. 6, 70:

sakṛd eva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate | abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmy etad vrataṃ mama ||

¹⁵³ Yāmūnā, *Stotraratna* 64, 120:

*nanu prapannaḥ sakṛd eva nātha! tavāham asmīti ca yācamānaḥ |
tavānukampyaḥ smarataḥ pratijñāṃ madekavarjaṃ kimidaṃ vrataṃ te? ||*

¹⁵⁴ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 175–176.

Pandit Agnihotram highlights these features in the *Gadyatraya* to reject Rāmānuja’s authorship of this less philosophical work. This argument also extends to challenging Rāmānuja’s authorship of the *Nityagrantha*. Robert Lester further advances Agnihotram’s argument.¹⁵⁵ Both scholars isolate these two works of the others mainly based on the theology, the dialogue and devotional style, and the terminology that cannot be found in any of Rāmānuja’s other works. I previously argued in my Master’s thesis, drawing from the opinions of various scholars in the field, that the rejection of Rāmānuja’s authenticity is not convincing enough.¹⁵⁶ To give an example, John Carman states that Rāmānuja intends to write these works in a style of praise-poetry (*stotra*), and therefore, the *Gadyatraya* should be seen as following this genre. He further suggests that Rāmānuja’s decision to compose these hymns in prose instead of verse reflects “his insistence on literal precision.”¹⁵⁷

I agree that some of the elements presented by Rāmānuja in the *Gadyatraya*, namely the ease and effectiveness of the performance of self-surrender compared to other means, the devotee’s helplessness and lack of agency, the desire to be God’s eternal servant, self-surrender to Śrī before Nārāyaṇa, the use of the Dvaya and Tirumantra, and the reference to *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, indeed became central to the later systematization of self-surrender.¹⁵⁸ However, they do not suggest that self-surrender can be used as an independent means that is separate from *bhakti*.¹⁵⁹ Rāmānuja’s teaching in the *Gadyatraya* still focuses on the doctrine of *bhakti*, and this remains consistent, for the most part, in the *Śrībhāṣya* and *Gītābhāṣya*.

¹⁵⁵ See details in Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 212–237 and his footnote, 298–300n1. See also Lester, *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, and “Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism: The Concept of Prapatti or Śaraṇāgati.”

¹⁵⁶ See my thesis, “Vedāntadeśika’s Interpretation of Rāmānuja’s Prapatti: A Study based on the Nikṣeparakṣā.”

¹⁵⁷ Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 209.

¹⁵⁸ For other features, see Freschi, “Bhakti in Rāmānuja,” 299–301.

¹⁵⁹ Freschi points out that the word “*bhakti*” is mentioned 19 times in the space of 23 sentences in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* (“Bhakti in Rāmānuja,” 286).

Take, for example, the description of the devotee’s nature found in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, namely supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion. Based on Rāmānuja’s citations and the commentary on this work by Vedāntadeśika, these three aspects form part of Rāmānuja’s *bhakti* system.¹⁶⁰ According to Rāmānuja, the one with supreme knowledge can be equated with “the one of wisdom” (*jñānī*), the ideal devotee in the context of *bhakti*, through the citation of the three successive verses (*ślokatraya*) from the *Bhagavadgītā*, Chapter 7, verses 17, 18, and 19.¹⁶¹ The same verses are also cited in the conclusion of the *Śrībhāṣya*, also in the context of *bhakti*.¹⁶²

Make me become the one with the knowledge as stated in these preceding three verses. “The one of wisdom, who is continuously engaged [in Me] and has exclusive love, is better than those [devotees] since I am greatly dear to him and he is dear to me. [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.17] Indeed, all the [devotees] are noble but the one with the knowledge is regarded as My very Self since he whose self is engaged stays only in Me, the unsurpassed way. [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.18] At the end of many births, the one with the knowledge who knows that all is Vāsudeva surrenders to Me. He, the one with a great self, is difficult to find. [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.19].”¹⁶³

Then, Rāmānuja shows that supreme devotion is equivalent to *bhakti* through the citation of

¹⁶⁰ Raman argues that these three elements are “another way of describing the *bhaktiyoga* of the *Gītābhāṣya*”. She further proposes that post-Rāmānuja commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* view these three elements as *bhakti* of the one of wisdom who is not twice-born through the association with Nammālvār, the low-caste author of the text (*Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 49). However, I think that there is not enough evidence in the *Gadyatraya* that these three elements point to *bhakti* for those who are not twice-born. Given that Rāmānuja himself was a twice-born, *bhakti* in this context more likely refers to *bhakti* for the twice-born. Since the later commentaries on the *Gadyatraya* all agree that the works feature Rāmānuja’s self-surrender to God, it is more likely that all the practices mentioned in the texts should be compatible to Rāmānuja, who was a twice-born and thus capable of undertaking the rituals prescribed in the *Gadyatraya*. Also, Rāmānuja used the first-person pronoun in the composition, suggesting that the content is meant for himself.

¹⁶¹ For the *Bhagavadgītā* passages, see vol. 2, 39–43.

¹⁶² See Freschi, “Bhakti in Rāmānuja,” 296–299.

¹⁶³ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 167:

*teṣāṃ jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktir viśiṣyate | priyo hi jñānino ’tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ ||
udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam | āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamāṃ gatim ||
bahūnāṃ janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate | vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ ||
iti ślokatrayoditajñāninaṃ mām kuruṣva.*

another three verses from different places in the *Bhagavadgītā*, namely 8.22, 11.54, and 18.54.¹⁶⁴ The first two verses can be found in the *Śrībhāṣya* where Rāmānuja explains that *bhakti* is synonymous with the meditative worship, enjoined in *śruti* and *smṛti*.¹⁶⁵

Make me become the one with supreme devotion as stated in the verses in three [different] occasions. “Arjuna, the Supreme Person is to be attained by exclusive devotion. [*Bhagavadgītā* 8.22] However, [I can be known, seen, and entered] by exclusive devotion. [*Bhagavadgītā* 11.54] He [the one with pure mind] attains supreme devotion to Me [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.54].”¹⁶⁶

We are now left with the utmost devotion that Rāmānuja mentions without being able to provide any scriptural quotations that actually use the term. Commenting on the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, Vedāntadeśika explains the utmost devotion along with the two additional aspects in his Sanskrit commentary on the *Gadyatraya*. The three aspects are the successive stages of a single experience of God which has a form of direct perception. One stage leads to another. Thus, the utmost devotion, which is the final stage, can be retrospectively regarded as the culmination of the experience of God within the paradigm of *bhakti*. Vedāntadeśika defines these three elements as follows:

Here, **supreme devotion** is thought that consists of a desire to directly perceive God more and more. It is born from the nature of the object like in the passage, “Which love” [*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.20.19], and not from thinking that it is the means to a desire. **Supreme knowledge** is the act of directly perceiving Him. **Utmost**

¹⁶⁴ See the *Bhagavadgītā* passages in vol. 2, 110, 336, and vol. 3, 379, respectively.

¹⁶⁵ Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 19.

¹⁶⁶ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 168: *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyās tv ananyayā bhaktyā tvananyayā śakyah madbhaktim labhate parām iti sthānatrayoditaparabhaktiyuktaṃ mām kuruṣva.*

Note that in their commentaries on the *Gadyatraya*, Periyavāccāṅ Pillaḷai (73 and 81 respectively) and Vedāntadeśika (72) like Rāmānuja, understand that supreme knowledge is referred to by *Bhagavadgītā* 7.17–19 and supreme devotion is stated in *Bhagavadgītā* 8.22, 11.54, and 18.54. However, Sudarśanasūri interprets that the three later *Bhagavadgītā* verses point to utmost devotion instead (73). For the last two commentaries, see *Gadyatrayam of Bhagavad Rāmānujārya* (Melkote: Academy of Sanskrit Research, 2009).

devotion is a desire to perceive God continuously when He has been directly perceived. The experience, which is one and continuous, is the direct perception itself as something very agreeable, for people who are eternally liberated and those who have been liberated, but is broken up into stages by dividing into the forms of supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion by the division of the moments.¹⁶⁷

In the context of these three aspects—supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion—Rāmānuja reuses several *Bhagavadgītā* passages that he cites in the context of *bhakti* in the *Śrībhāṣya*. The sequence of the devotee’s self-surrender, followed by the request for supreme devotion, supreme knowledge, and utmost devotion, in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* further indicates that self-surrender is a preliminary step to these stages of *bhakti*, which is the soteriological means for the one of wisdom.¹⁶⁸

The exact sequence is reiterated in Rāmānuja’s *Śrīraṅgagadya* with different terminology, one that is closer to the terminology in the *Bhagavadgītā*. In the *Śrīraṅgagadya*, *bhakti*, brought about by “correct knowledge” (*saṃyagjñāna*) and “correct action” (*samīcīnakriyā*), is the means to attaining eternal service to God. The correct knowledge and the correct action here may allude *jñānayoga* and *karmayoga* in the *Bhagavadgītā*.¹⁶⁹ Before undertaking *bhakti*, the devotee surrenders to God to remove the obstacles. Thus, self-surrender here also functions as an auxiliary to *bhakti*:

¹⁶⁷ Vedāntadeśika’s commentary on the *Gadyatraya* (Melkote: Academy of Sanskrit Research, 2009), 18 (emphasis mine): *atra parabhaktiḥ uttarottarasākṣātkārecchātmikā dhīḥ, sā ca ‘yā prītiḥ’ ity ādiṣu iva viśayasvabhāvajā, na tu iṣṭasādhanatvabuddhijā. parajñānam – uttarottarasākṣātkārah. anukūlatamatvena sākṣātkṛte nirantarānubhūṣā paramabhaktiḥ. anubhavas tu iha anukūlatamatvena sākṣātkāra eva. nityānāṃ muktānāṃ ca nityānuvṛttaikarūpānubhavaḥ kṣaṇabhedena parabhaktitvādyākārabhedaiś ca. See Viṣṇupurāṇa 1.20.19, ed. M. M. Pathak (Vadodara: Oriental Institute, 1997), vol. 1, 146.*

¹⁶⁸ In addition to Vedāntadeśika, Nañcīyar, commenting on *Tiruvāymoḷi* 10.10.11 as referring to utmost devotion (*paramabhakti*), also implies that the whole *Tiruvāymoḷi* is about *ālvār-bhakti* (Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 111).

¹⁶⁹ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 46. See similarities between the *Gadyatraya* and the *Gītābhāṣya*, *ibid.*, 50–51.

I am devoid of all the self's qualities, beginning with pure nature and faith, which are suitable to devotion (*bhakti*). The devotion is brought about by correct knowledge (*saṁyagjñāna*) and correct action (*samīcīnakriyā*). The devotion is the means for attaining the eternal service, which is characterized by the exclusive pleasure for total subservience that is suitable to that subservient state, brought about by the limitless and eminent love. The love is produced through the experience of all of God's qualities beginning with limitless and eminent mastership, preceded by the contemplation on the nature of the self, which is characterized by the exclusive desire for eternal servitude (*nityadāsyā*) of the self who is eternally controlled [by God]. I am bound by the bonds of *karmas* that do not loosen [even with] endless effort and are heaped up through the endless ignorance (*avidyā*). I do not see the means of crossing over even with the view towards the endless future. I surrender at the pair of your lotus feet, Nārāyaṇa with Śrī, who is the refuge manifesting for all beings.¹⁷⁰

Finally, in the last *gadya*, the *Vaiṣṇavagadya*, Rāmānuja begins by praising Yāmuna's teaching on *bhakti*: "Having dived into the teacher Yāmuna's ocean of ambrosia according to my understanding, I brought forth the gem called 'the means of *bhakti*' and I put it on display."¹⁷¹ Rāmānuja's statement here suggests that the *Gadyatraya* involves the teaching of *bhakti*.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 181–182:

*svātmanīyānīyānīyadāsyāikarasātmasvabhāvānusandhānapūrvakabhagavadanavadhikātiśayāsvāmyādyak
hilaḡuṇānubhavanitānavadhikātiśayaprītikāritāśeṣāvasthacitāśeṣaśeṣataikaratirūpanīyakaiṅkaryaprāptiyupāy
abhūtabhaktitadupāyasamyagjñānatadupāyasamīcīnakriyātadanuḡuṇasāttvikatāstikyādīsamastātmagūṇavihīnaḡ
anādyavidyāsañcitānantāśakyavisraṁsanakarmapāśapragrathitaḡ, anāgatānantakālasamīkṣayā
'pyadrṣṭasantāropāyaḡ, nikhīlajantuḡjātaśaraṇya! śrīman nārāyaṇa! tava caraṇāravindayugalaḡ śaraṇam ahaḡ
prapadye.*

¹⁷¹ Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 189:

yāmunāryasudhāmbhodhimavāḡāhya yathāmati | ādāya bhaktiyogākhyam ratnam saḡdarśayāmyaham ||

¹⁷² Vedāntadeśika, in his commentary on this verse, refuses to read *bhakti* as soteriological *bhakti*, stating that "the word 'the means of *bhakti*' here is intent on the contemplation of God as an end in itself" ("ihāsau *bhaktiyogaśabdaḡ svayamprayanabhagavadanusamdhānaparaḡ.*") Vedāntadeśika probably intends to maintain the argument that the *Gadyatraya* presents soteriological self-surrender by claiming that the word "*bhakti*" does not always have technical sense of soteriological doctrine of *bhakti*. However, the fact that Vedāntadeśika has to argue for the non-technical sense of *bhakti* seems to imply that the reading of the word as soteriological doctrine of *bhakti* is a more natural one in this case. See Vedāntadeśika's commentary on the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, 105.

Like many scholars, Carman’s analysis of the *Gadyatraya* agrees with my understanding.¹⁷³ Carman argues that this text shares the same message with other works of Rāmānuja that *bhakti* is the only means and clarifies that the *Gadyatraya* presents the doctrine of *bhakti* in a way that seems to differ from other works because it is “considered from the standpoint of man’s essential nature of subservience to and helplessness before God, and it is therefore not surprising that it is particularly emphasized in a *stotra*, that is a praise of God’s glory and a confession of one’s own unworthiness.”¹⁷⁴ According to Carman, the *Gadyatraya* presents theological ideas that are not entirely distinct from those in other undisputed works of Rāmānuja, especially pertaining to his teaching of God’s supremacy and accessibility:

I submit that he [Rāmānuja] maintained both the balance and the inner connection of supremacy and accessibility (*paratva* and *saulabhya*) in his concept of the Divine nature in a way that sets him apart, not only from Hindu theologians of other schools but even, to a lesser extent, from his own followers. The *Gadyatraya* and the *Nityagrantha* seem to me to exhibit the balance and unity of *paratva* and *saulabhya* that is evident in Rāmānuja’s other works. They do not add anything essential, though they do make some points more explicit, and the evidence from them can therefore be ignored by those unconvinced that they are authentic.¹⁷⁵

Carman further comments that although Rāmānuja does not intend to establish self-surrender in these works, his emphasis on the ideas of the divine grace and the soul’s realization of its subordination and dependence on God may contribute to its development in the later Manipravalam commentaries.¹⁷⁶ I concur that there are various features in the *Gadyatraya* that parallel the characteristics of self-surrender later systematized. One could argue that Rāmānuja

¹⁷³ Others include Lipner, *The Face of Truth, Raman, Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, and Freschi, “Bhakti in Rāmānuja.”

¹⁷⁴ Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 223–224.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 235–236.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

was not resolutely uniform on the subordinate of self-surrender to *bhakti* in his *Gadyatraya*. In any case, these features created the ambiguity between *bhakti* and self-surrender for Rāmānuja’s followers.

After the time of Rāmānuja, self-surrender in the Manipravalam literature embodies the devotional attitude of the Āḷvārs more than in Sanskrit literature to the extent that this doctrine does not need to be performed. In contrast, self-surrender in the Sanskrit sphere is a Vedāntic ritual to be undertaken similar to *bhakti*. Raman frames the division of the later-developed strands of self-surrender in terms of the “doing” and “non-doing” of self-surrender. She claims that the origin of this distinction is rooted in the unresolved tensions in Rāmānuja’s definition of self-surrender in the *Gītābhāṣya* and the *Gadyatraya* before becoming further intensified in the Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* which I turn to next. Building on the recent studies of this group of literature, I highlight that, in addition to the inconsistency they inherited from Rāmānuja, these Manipravalam commentaries are the location of the rise of the Manipravalam norms and expressions which are critical to the differentiation between self-surrender as an independent doctrine and *bhakti*.

1.4 The Rise of the Manipravalam Sphere and Self-surrender

Let us consider the introduction of Manipravalam in the Śrīvaiṣṇava composition from a historical perspective before looking at its impact on self-surrender and the formation of the Manipravalam sphere. Following the lead of Raman, my research identifies the rise of Manipravalam as contemporaneous to the historical and social conditions of the devotional integration. According to Raman, comparing the rise of Manipravalam to what happened in the Śaiva community is revelatory.

Around the eleventh to the twelfth century, the religious communities of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva were characterized by temple-building activity under Chola rule. The attention to temple-formation activity is reflected in the representation of the most important Śrīvaiṣṇava figure, Rāmānuja, as the main organizer of temple worships and rituals based on the recitation of the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns in Śrīraṅgam, which became the center for other temple networks.¹⁷⁷ Also during this period, an expansion of agriculture and land-ownership gave rise to the involvement of non-brahmin (*brāhmaṇa*) groups in temple management. The period in which the first two Manipravalam commentaries on the Tamil scripture that followed the time of Rāmānuja, Raman states, “saw the expansion of sacred, urban centres such as the Śaivite Cidambaram or the Vaiṣṇavite Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram.”¹⁷⁸ According to Raman, given “the growing wealth and agrarian importance of such centres,” it is understandable that the post-Rāmānuja authors would incorporate the more temple-related and devotional aspects of their literature into Rāmānuja's theology.¹⁷⁹ Thus, we witness the parallel integrations to accommodate people from different social hierarchies: the Sanskrit system of Śaiva philosophy, Śaivasiddhānta, integrated the Śaiva devotional corpus of the Śaiva poets, the Nāyaṇmārs, and the Sanskrit system of Vedānta included the Āḷvār's hymns and devotionalism.¹⁸⁰ Raman further indicates that the legitimation of the Tamil hymns in both communities was “imperative” after the eleventh century as they are not in Sanskrit. In the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, the Manipravalam commentaries and hagiographies were specifically produced to define the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the Tamil Veda.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict*, 75–76.

¹⁷⁸ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 177.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 177–178.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 58–60.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Building on this historical narrative, I suggest that it is appropriate to characterize this legitimation of the Tamil scripture as the incorporation of it within the Vedāntic system. My suggestion is based on the fact that the more established system and the Sanskrit literature on Vedānta within the Śrīvaiṣṇava corpus preceded the Manipravalam textual production. However, my argument does not deny the Tamil or devotional influence on the Sanskrit treatises that expound the Vedānta system, especially those of Rāmānuja.¹⁸² The direction of integrating the Tamil hymns into the Sanskrit domain further accounts for the decision not to use Tamil alone as a medium to comment on the hymns despite the Tamil commentarial practice on the grammatical works such as the *Iraiyāṇār Akkaporuḷ*, the *Tolkāppiyam*, and the *Vīracōḷiyam* before the twelfth century and the proliferation of Tamil commentarial genre during the twelfth to the fourteenth century.¹⁸³ One might then wonder why the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors did not only use Tamil to communicate their philosophy. It may be the case that Tamil was not meant to express the philosophy of Vedānta as the early authors, such as Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, discussed it, but only in Sanskrit treatises to converse with other Vedānta authors, such as Śaṅkara, who also used only Sanskrit. At the same time, Clooney points out that the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors never attempt pure Tamil engagement even with the Āḷvārs’ hymns. He argues that the Manipravalam commentators resorted to Sanskrit interpretative techniques to clarify the theological issues in the Tamil songs—but such interpretation “privileges rather than dilutes its poetic effectiveness.”¹⁸⁴

From the Tamil perspective, the recognition of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the “Tamil Veda” comparable to the Sanskrit one was historically pioneering because it is the first vernacular text

¹⁸² See section 1.1.

¹⁸³ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 57.

¹⁸⁴ Clooney, “The Use of Sanskrit as a Theological Resource,” 17.

to be regarded as equivalent to the Sanskrit Vedas. The concept of the Tamil Veda, on the one hand, broadens the Sanskrit normativity to accommodate sacred texts in a language other than Sanskrit and, on the other hand, introduces a new normative expression derived from the Sanskrit sphere that allows the definition of scripture as a Veda to be associated with non-Sanskrit languages such as Tamil. This is a more radical move in comparison to the preceding designation of the *Mahābhārata* which is still in Sanskrit as the fifth Veda.¹⁸⁵ In addition, it is earlier than that of the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta which, from around the thirteenth century makes the Śaiva scripture the “real” (*uṇmai*) revelation of which the Vedas are the general (*potu*) revelation.¹⁸⁶

While the Tamil scripture enters into the Vedāntic Sanskrit domain, the Sanskrit sphere and its revelation also incorporates Tamil. Through Tamil, the Sanskrit sphere opens up to wider and lower social groups other than those from the three higher castes and to other kinds of expression, such as the devotion to God. As a combination of both Sanskrit and Tamil, Manipravalam makes present both scriptures in the same sphere, blurring the boundaries of normativity and bringing their expressive practices together. Most evidently, Manipravalam allows for the citation of both Tamil and Sanskrit passages, while Sanskrit restricts the citations to only the Sanskrit passages. In this regard, Manipravalam is a suitable medium for the integration of the Tamil scripture into the Sanskrit Vedānta. Importantly, I contend that the Tamil scripture and its devotional expression incorporated in the Manipravalam sphere offers the distinguishing tool that makes the distinction between *bhakti* and self-surrender more evident to the point that self-surrender became an independent means separate from *bhakti*.

¹⁸⁵ See Fitzgerald, “India’s Fifth Veda,” for example.

¹⁸⁶ See Peterson, *Poems to Śiva*.

The five most authoritative commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoli* are the *Ārāyirappaṭi* (“6,000 unit commentary”) by Tirukkurukaip Piran̄ Piḷḷān̄ (c. 1060); the *Onpatināyirappaṭi* (“9,000 unit commentary”) by Nañcīyar (c. 1113–1208); the *Iruppattunālāyirappaṭi* (“24,000 unit commentary”) by Periyavāccān̄ Piḷḷai (c. 1167–1262);¹⁸⁷ the *Ītu Muppattāyirappaṭi* (“36,000 unit commentary”), traditionally believed to be authored by Nampiḷḷai (c. 1230) and recorded by Vaṭakku Tiruvīti Piḷḷai (c. 1250); and, finally, the *Paṇṇīrāyirappaṭi* (“12,000 unit commentary”) by Vātikēsari Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷa Cīyar (c. 1300).¹⁸⁸ The commentaries, except for the first one, were produced during the medieval period by the authors who were active in Śrīraṅgam and focused more on the Tamil scripture and the three secrets.¹⁸⁹ They were traditionally recorded for transmission from teacher to disciple. Nampiḷḷai was said to have been a direct disciple of Nañcīyar, who was a disciple of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, and a teacher of Periyavāccān̄ Piḷḷai, Vaṭakku Tiruvīti Piḷḷai, and Vātikēsari Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷa Cīyar.¹⁹⁰ According to *The Sri Vaishnava Brahmans* (1931), the group of commentators is part of the retrospectively constructed lineage of the Teṅkalai *ācāryas*.¹⁹¹ That said, the first commentator listed here, Tirukkurukaip Piran̄ Piḷḷān̄, was Rāmānuja’s cousin and the leading disciple in the lineage of the Vaṭakalai hierarchy of *ācāryas*. He was followed by Viṣṇu Citta, Vātsya Varadaguru (Nāṭātūr Ammāl), Ātreya Rāmānuja (Kiṭampī Appullār), and Vedāntadeśika.¹⁹² Clooney, in his *Seeing through Texts: Doing Theology among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas of South India* (1996), proposes to view the five commentaries as comprising “a single complex conversation”

¹⁸⁷ The date is from Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 14.

¹⁸⁸ Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 26, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 21.

¹⁸⁹ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 25–26.

¹⁹⁰ Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 26, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 127–128.

¹⁹¹ See the chart of “The Teṅgalai Sri Vaishnavas” in Rangachari, *The Sri Vaishnava Brahmans*, 42.

¹⁹² See the chart in *ibid.*, 37.

of the followers of the same community. They are closely connected and collectively form “the irenic and progressive development” as detailed here:

The style and development of the increasingly larger commentaries indicate the irenic and progressive development. This development may be put schematically as follows, as far as the written texts are concerned:

- Piḷḷān offers a prose commentary of the verse of *Tiruvāymoli*, drawing heavily on Rāmānuja’s Sanskrit terminology;
- Nañcīyar offers a brief opening comment on the verse, and then a series of specific comments elucidating particularly difficult or interesting words in the text;
- Periyavāccāṅppiḷḷai incorporates almost everything found in Nañcīyar’s commentary, but amplifies it with comments on more of the individual words and with more elaborate and philosophical expositions of the ideas of the songs;
- Vaṭakutiruvītippiḷḷai, recording Naṁpiḷḷai faithfully, says more in every way. It is tempting to say that Vaṭakutiruvītippiḷḷai’s commentary is a fuller version of Periyavāccāṅppiḷḷai’s but, if we respect the tradition that both are reports of Naṁpiḷḷai’s teachings, it is more accurate to see Periyavāccāṅppiḷḷai’s as a “condensation” of Naṁpiḷḷai’s teaching which was recorded more expansively in Vaṭakutiruvītippiḷḷai’s *Ītu*.¹⁹³

Although all of the commentaries collectively contribute to the development of self-surrender, the first two particularly play a role in forming the paradigms of self-surrender and its scriptural corpus by combining Rāmānuja’s theology with the Tamil scripture and other texts such as *itihāsas* for the subsequent commentators. According to Raman, the two commentaries can be viewed as the source of the traditional split, which was the continuing result of the theological divergence in the works of the two roughly contemporary authors, Vedāntadeśika and Piḷḷai Lokācārya, who were retrospectively regarded as the founders of the Vaṭakalai and Tenkalai sub-school, respectively.¹⁹⁴ This divergence is then rooted in the heterogeneous theology of

¹⁹³ Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 34.

¹⁹⁴ See Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 157–158. See also Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation.

Rāmānuja in his *Gītābhāṣya* and *Gadyatraya*, amplified by the innovative and varying interpretation of these commentaries:

The material being presented here argues that *prapatti* ideas in the early part of this period, in the writings of the teacher Rāmānuja, evolved in the context of exegesis on the *Bhagavadgītā* and in praise-poems (*stotra*) written in Sanskrit. Further, that these core ideas of *prapatti* reveal a soteriological concept which is defined in a heterogeneous way, its definition varying according to the status of its practitioner. The study also argues that these core ideas re-emerge in the Tamil commentaries of the teachers who came after Rāmānuja are further theologically moulded by the emergence of and experimentation with this new literary genre. Thus, the first commentary of Tirukkuruḱaip Pirāṇ Piḷḷāṇ and the second commentary of Nañcīyar differ in the sort of *prapatti* they emphasize because Nañcīyar’s commentary innovates on the commentarial genre including in itself elements of hagiography. The difference in emphasis between Piḷḷāṇ and Nañcīyar on *prapatti* thus generated, which remains in a pre-systematic stage, is therefore seen as one crucial factor in the emergence of two different schools of interpretation of the concept by the mid-thirteenth century. Thus, it is suggested that the original heterogeneous understanding of *prapatti* in Rāmānuja is a major contributory cause to a larger theological dispute which arises among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas after the mid- thirteenth century and the eventual division of the community into two sub-sects.¹⁹⁵

Central to the heterogeneity is the division between “doing” and “non-doing” of self-surrender which arises when we compare the first two Manipravalam commentaries as Raman indicates:

This book suggests that this ideological break between the Piḷḷāṇ and Nañcīyar on the status of Nammālvār and the nature of his *prapatti* anticipates one ultimate theological difference between *Vaṭakalai* School and the *Teṅkalai* School. In the commentarial literature which immediately followed Nañcīyar, the conceptions of God’s compassion are further developed, leading to a new model which, in effect, obviates any doctrinal grounds for “doing” *prapatti*.¹⁹⁶

In what follows, I draw on Raman’s analysis of the first two commentaries to illustrate their contributions to the rise of the soteriology of self-surrender. We see self-surrender overtly

¹⁹⁵ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 23.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

emerge as an alternative to *bhakti* after the time of Rāmānuja in these two commentaries. Collectively, they point to the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, and, by extension, to other hymns of the Āḷvārs, and *itihāsas* as the norms for self-surrender. Claiming that Nammāḷvār himself performed self-surrender, they further established Nammāḷvār as the authoritative figure of the practice. Importantly, they derived devotional attitudes from the Tamil hymns to define self-surrender as the means for “the one who has no other refuge (*ananyaśaraṇa*) and no other goal (*ananyaprayojana*)” and specify God as the ultimate liberator due to His grace with Śrī as His mediator (*puruṣakāra*). All of these requirements in the surrendering process influenced later literature and became paradigmatic in the theology of self-surrender.

In the first commentary, the *Ārayirappaṭi*, Tirukkurukaippirāṇ Piḷḷāṇ (henceforth Piḷḷāṇ) directs readers’ attention to *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 which he claims to be the moment in which Nammāḷvār surrenders himself to God. As Raman translates:

You on whose chest the lady seated on the flower resides, saying,
 I cannot move away even for a second,
 You of incomparable Fame! You with the three worlds! My ruler!
 Lord of Vēṅkaṭam, desired by the incomparable immortals and groups of sages!
 I, your servant, without any refuge, sat at your feet and entered.¹⁹⁷

[Nammāḷvār] says, “You are the great ocean of unbounded compassion, the master due to your qualities. You, stand, graciously, on the alternative, Sacred Hill, which is to be desired even by the incomparable, eternal beings who have as their sole enjoyment their attendance upon you and their experience of your qualities in the divine land. Considering you the Refuge of the entire world impervious to distinctions, I, with no other refuge and without any other goal, with the Senior Goddess as mediator, took refuge at your feet. Right now, I, your servant, having become a person whose obstacles have been vanquished, should obtain the right at all times to all [manner of] service at your feet.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ This translation is from Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 79. For more information on the verse, see *ibid.*, 81–84.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

The commentary describes Nammālvār as the one who has no other refuge (*ananyaśaraṇa*), who has no other goal (*ananyaprayojana*), and who identifies Śrī, Viṣṇu’s consort, as the mediator (*puruṣakāra*), as one of requirements in the surrendering process. Raman suggests that Piḷḷāṇ adopted the terminology from Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya*, particularly the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*.¹⁹⁹ Self-surrender is defined here as “*samāśrayana*” and is implied as an alternative to *bhakti* whose difficulty is stressed in the commentary on *Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.2.8, 4.7.9, and 5.7 and others.²⁰⁰ Raman indicates that “Piḷḷāṇ’s views on *samāśrayana* in the *Ārāyiram*, it seems evident, have a certain internal coherence and are elaborate enough to be called the doctrine of self-surrender.”²⁰¹ It is a soteriological means (*upāya*) for a person like Nammālvār who is helpless due to the states of having no other means as explained in the introduction to the section, 6.10. However, God remains the ultimate cause of the whole surrendering process.²⁰²

Though he called out, inviting him until he could even be heard in the divine land, [Nammālvār] did not see God. Then, realizing that here was no other means of seeing him except to take refuge at his feet, he did so at the feet of the Lord of Vēṅkaṭam, the refuge of the entire world, speaking of His qualities such as compassion and parental love, etc., as his support, with the Goddess as mediator.²⁰³

However, the emphasis on *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 is no longer evident in the second commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, Nañcīyar’s *Oṅpatiṇāyirappaṭi*, which is the most structurally and doctrinally influential among all the commentaries.²⁰⁴ This verse is instead embedded in the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 80.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 76–77.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 96.

²⁰² Ibid., 89–92.

²⁰³ Ibid., 77.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 126.

Rāmāyaṇa context and assimilated to the epic situation of Lakṣmana taking refuge with his elder brother, Rāma, the manifestation of Viṣṇu and the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.²⁰⁵ Lakṣmana’s surrender represents one of various epic surrendering events, all of which are of similar importance.²⁰⁶ Raman terms surrender in Nañcīyar’s commentary as “epic surrender” due to his stress on *itihāsas*, both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in commenting on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.²⁰⁷ Nañcīyar’s use of passages and stories from *itihāsas* might have been inherited from previous references to them in the Āḷvār’s poetry.²⁰⁸ The *itihāsas* also serve as inspiration for the audiences. Unlike the Vedas which are accessible only to the three higher castes, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are available to people from the lowest caste and women as well. Their accessibility might be one of the reasons why they are favored in the Manipravalam commentaries and the *rahasyagranthas* as we will see in other chapters.²⁰⁹ Although Nañcīyar echoes Piḷḷān’s terms in his commentary on *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10, he notably omits referring to self-surrender as a means to liberation and reinforces the role of God instead.²¹⁰ Nammāḷvār is thus highlighted as one who has no other means:

... I, who am without any of the means mentioned in the scriptures, regarding [myself] as having no other goal, grasped your feet themselves as the means”. This also means, “Forsaking all other means that I have to reach the ultimate goal, I approached such that there was no gap between my head and your feet, and took refuge.”²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 114.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 115.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 100: “To put it broadly and succinctly, the *Oṅpatiṅāyiram* associates Nammāḷvār’s act of *prapatti* in VI.10.10, as well as other situations of taking refuge, with archetypal situations in the *Rāmāyaṇa* where certain characters in the epic take refuge with or seek the protection of Rāma. By doing so the *Oṅpatiṅāyiram* places the *prapatti* of the protection of Rāma in an epic context, in the context of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, a theological strategy which is reinforced by the commentary’s emphasis in its introduction on Nammāḷvār’s status as a *ṛṣi* (like Vālmiki) or the *jñānī* of the *Bhagavadgītā*.”

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 104.

²⁰⁹ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, among other authors, highly regards *itihāsas*. See section 3.2.2.

²¹⁰ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 117–118.

²¹¹ Ibid., 117.

The liberating role of self-surrender here is overshadowed by the devotee’s relationship to God and God’s greatness. Self-surrender is defined as “the mental determination (*adhyavasāya*) of oneself as subordinate (*śeṣa*) to God, who is the Principal (*śeṣin*). That is, it is the *prapatti* of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Gītābhāṣya*.”²¹² Moreover, central to the commentaries is the legitimization of the figure of Nammālvār, who belongs to the lowest caste of *śūdra*.²¹³ According to Raman, the commentaries consider the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as the lived, first-hand religious experience of self-surrender of Nammālvār.²¹⁴ The theological elaboration of the doctrine of self-surrender is developed through the lens of Nammālvār’s life-story. Raman further shows that the commentaries portray the figure of Nammālvār in many ways, of which the one by Nañcīyar’s is the most influential.²¹⁵ In his interpretation, as previously noted, the problem of Nammālvār being from the fourth caste is put aside through the elevated identification of Nammālvār as a seer or *ṛṣi* like Vālmiki, the mythical composer of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Commenting on Nañcīyar’s introduction, Raman states:

Rather, the charge that the *ālvār* is a *śūdra* is treated as irrelevant in view of his fundamental superiority to all mortals. Thus, it is said that he is accomplished in [knowing about] the realities (*tattvas*) and what is good for one (*hita*) and in imparting this to others and that he is superior to others born in the fourth caste, like Vidura and Śabari.²¹⁶

In my opinion, the heterogeneity in the first two Manipravalam commentaries cannot overshadow the aspects shared by all of the spheres, namely Rāmānuja’s paradigmatic

²¹² Ibid., 126.

²¹³ Ibid., 60.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 65–70.

²¹⁵ Nañcīyar’s image of Nammālvār was followed by his disciples, see *ibid.*, Conclusion.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 105. These two characters are from the low caste in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, respectively.

soteriology and the devotional attitude, rooted in the Tamil scripture. As Clooney points out, devotionism in Rāmānuja’s writing and theology makes sense once we assume the influence of the Āḷvārs on his Vedānta system.²¹⁷ The seeming difference may be accounted for by the inheritance of Rāmānuja’s theology and terminology in the case of the *Ārayirappaṭi* versus the preference for the Tamil devotional attitude to God in the second commentary.²¹⁸ The difference in their Sanskrit and Tamil inclinations is also reflected in the styles of Manipravalam in their works: while Piḷḷāṇ uses “highly Sanskritized Tamil,” Nañcīyar’s Manipravalam is “more tamilized.”²¹⁹ Nañcīyar explicitly prioritizes the Tamil scripture along with the Tamil language over Sanskrit norms and expressions in the introduction to his *Onpaṭiṇāyirappaṭi*. Nañcīyar’s validation of the Tamil scripture and language results in the association of these elements with accessibility and intimacy. Tamil is also presented as the medium to express the devotee’s desire and relationship towards God in soteriology—unlike Sanskrit which expresses soteriological doctrine like *bhakti* only from the philosophical and theological perspective based on the Upaniṣads. I argue that Nañcīyar’s argument is the first explicit articulation of the Manipravalam sphere as distinct to the Sanskrit sphere established by previous generations as it points to the difference between the two linguistic spheres.

In the introduction to the *Onpaṭiṇāyirappaṭi*, Nañcīyar raises the possible objections against the non-authoritative status of Nammāḷvār and the *Tiruvāymoḷi* as well as other Tamil

²¹⁷ Clooney, “The Use of Sanskrit as a Theological Resource,” 17–18.

²¹⁸ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 175. Raman points to the rise of the hagiographical genre, of which the first traditional hagiography is the Sanskrit *Divyasūricarita*, as one of the critical factors of the divergence. Unlike in the first commentary, the two genres, commentarial and hagiographical, mingle in the second commentary, Nañcīyar’s *Onpaṭiṇāyirappaṭi*.

²¹⁹ Carman and Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda*, xii, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 100.

poems from people who belong to a Vedic community.²²⁰ Clooney sums up the objections:

Thereafter Nañcīyar vigorously defends *Tiruvāymoḷi* against a series of seven objections which can be summarized briefly: 1. The songs cannot be taken seriously, since they are written in a vernacular tongue instead of sacred Sanskrit; 2. Women and low-class *śūdras* are well-versed in them, although they are barred from access to real sacred texts; 3. They were composed in this worst age of the world by a man of the lowest class, who has no access to knowledge; 4. *Tiruvāymoḷi* is a regional text, not available everywhere; 5. People from outside the Vedic tradition accept it; 6. The songs judge inferior those states of lordship and isolation which scripture and tradition describe as legitimate human goals; and 7. the songs speak frequently of sexual desire, but such talk is contrary to both scripture and tradition.²²¹

The attacks are based mainly on two fundamental issues concerning the use of non-Sanskrit language and the contradiction to Vedic orthodoxy. The first and fourth objections discredit Tamil language (*trāviṭa-pāṣai* > (Sanskrit) *dravida-bhāṣā*) which is “prohibited” (*niṣitta-pāṣai* > (Sanskrit) *niṣiddha-bhāṣā*) to express divine revelation or sacred texts and limited to the South Indian region, unlike Sanskrit (*saṃskṛta-pāṣai* > (Sanskrit) *saṃskṛta-bhāṣā*) whose authority is undisputed and accessible in other areas. The other objections can be reduced to the contradiction between the Tamil scripture, such as the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, and Vedic Sanskrit corpus. The Sanskrit scripture is not accessible to women and people of a lower class. In contrast, the Tamil scripture is not only available to these groups of people but also composed by one of them: Nammālvār, who was a *śūdra*. The Tamil scripture further contains teachings on the human goals and sexual desire, which are opposed to those found in the Vedic scripture. Unlike the Sanskrit scripture, which is limited to Vedic communities, the Tamil scripture gains

²²⁰ For further discussion, see Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 124–126, Venkarachari, *The Mañipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 26–29, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 108. The text of Nañcīyar’s introduction can be found in *Pakavat Viṣayam*, ed. Krishnaswami Ayyangar (Trichy: Books Propagation Society, 1975), vol. 1, 61–64.

²²¹ Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 125.

recognition from those outside of Vedic orthodoxy also. According to the objector, the Vedic norm and its expression can only exist in the Sanskrit sphere. As a result, the Tamil scripture along with its linguistic medium, situated in the Tamil sphere, must be invalid as it is external to the Sanskrit sphere.

In response to these objections, Nañcīyar argues that Tamil could express topics related to God and is accessible to lower-class people who do not know Sanskrit and those outside the Tamil region. Therefore, the Tamil scripture composed in Tamil is as authoritative as the Sanskrit scripture, but it is even more socially and geographically accessible. The Tamil scripture is Nammālvār's revelation of God's teaching and is highly regarded by people outside of the Vedic communities. It does not contradict the Vedic teachings. Some instructions in the Tamil scripture, such as a sexual desire towards God and a disregard for other human goals except the highest attainment of God, are rooted in prioritizing human's devotional relationship with God and the direct attainment of Him. Thus, the Tamil scripture highlights the desire and criticizes other human goals such as lordship and isolated consciousness. Here is a selected translation of Nañcīyar's answer:

- 1) According to Yama's statement [purportedly from the untraceable verse in the *Matsyapurāṇa*], "Brāhmaṇas should not sing anything in languages other [than Sanskrit], except the praise of Hari (Viṣṇu)," the prohibition of the languages other [than Sanskrit] should apply only to the topics apart from God [...]²²²
- 2) Due to his great mercy, the ālvār [Nammālvār] renders the meaning of the Vedas in Tamil (*trāviṭa-pāṣai*), so that [people other than those from the three castes] like women, *śūdras*, and so on, who are not eligible to [study] the Vedas, will not be lost.

²²² In this statement, Yama reprimands the king for banishing Kaiśikas and others who praise Viṣṇu with vernacular songs from his kingdom (Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 214, footnote 48).

- 3) [...] [Nammālvār] is the receptacle of the direct divine grace; he is well-versed in truth and human goals; he is active in teaching them; he is distinct from [people from low caste] like Vidura and Śabarī.
- 4) This language [, Tamil,] travels around and can be found everywhere in places filled with learned people [...]
- 5) The acceptance of those outside of Vedic orthodoxy who see the excellence of them [the Tamil poems] is the cause for their praiseworthiness.
- 6) They talk about devotion (*bhakti*), referred to in the Upaniṣads as meditative worship (*upāsana*) and knowledge of God, in terms of sexual love.
- 7) Lordship and isolated consciousness are criticized on the basis of their faults such as [their results that] are little and unstable [...]²²³

It should be noted that such treatment is, however, absent in the *Ārayirappaṭi*, which is devoted to Rāmānuja's theology. This indicates that the crystallization of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' connection with the Tamil scripture and language is a pressing task by Nañcīyar's time. It might be the case that Rāmānuja's explicit normativity, which is only in Sanskrit and highly Vedānta-oriented, may not allow it to include the expanding and diversified community of followers or attract new ones in the time of Nañcīyar or within his social scope. Importantly, the normative and expressive representations we have seen in the commentaries of these two authors, especially the *Onpaṭiṇāyirappaṭi*, were accommodated more in the following Manipravalam literature, most evidently the *rahasyagranthas*, and thus pervades the Manipravalam sphere more than the Sanskrit one as I will show in the next chapter.

²²³ Pakavat Viṣayam, 62–63: kuṟittu, “harikīrtiṃ vinaivānyadbrāhmaṇēna narōttama. bhāṣāgānaṃ na gātavyaṃ tasmāt pāpaṃ tvayā kṛtam. eṇṇa yamaṇvacapaṭṭiṇpaṭiyē pāṣāniṣēdham bhagavatviṣayam oḷiya bhāyaviṣayaṅkaḷilēy ākaiyālum [...] ālvār tammuṭaiya kṛpāṭiṣayattālē vēdattil anadhikārikaḷāṇa strīśūtrātikaḷum ilavātapaṭi vēdārhattai drāviḍabhāṣaiyālē aruḷicceykaiyālum [...] niran tarabhagavatkaṭākṣapātramumāy, tattvahitaṅkaḷil nipaṇarāy, avarrainuṭaiya upadēsattilum pravṛttarāy, viduraśabaryātikaḷil ilakṣaṇarāṇa ālvār [...] ippāṣai naṭaiyāṭi śiṣṭapracuramāṇa dēśaṅkaḷēṅkum uṅṭāy [...] ivarriṇ naṇmaiyaik kaṇṭa avaitikaṇuṅ kūṭap parikrahikkai ślākyatāhētuv ākaiyālum, vēdanam eṇṇum, upāsanam eṇṇum upaniṣattut taṇṇil colla paṭukīra bhaktiyai ivarriḷ kāmamākak collukaiyālum, aiśvaryaikaivalyaṅkaḷai dūṣittatu alpāstiratvādidoṣattālēy ākaiyālum.” This translation is mine with the guidance of Clooney's unpublished translation of Nañcīyar's introduction. The *Matsyapurāṇa* passage is untraceable.

1.5 Summary

To summarize, the formation of the two language spheres by Rāmānuja and Manipravalam commentators that I deal with in this chapter precedes the time of the authors that I investigate in the following chapters. Their linguistic boundaries were constructed by normativity and expressivity, which, in turn, served as the conditions for the later authors. Specifically, Rāmānuja's doctrinalization of *bhakti* set a paradigm for later systematization of self-surrender in both Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres. In order to be considered another valid soteriological doctrine, self-surrender must be supported by Vedāntic scripture and hermeneutically subject to the Sanskrit sphere even if its surrendering attitude might be more rooted in the Tamil poems. The argument that self-surrender is another Upaniṣadic doctrine was essential to the preservation of the Vedāntic status of Rāmānuja's system, especially in the Sanskrit treatises which are directed toward and can be accessed by outsiders. As shown in the subsequent chapters, self-surrender as found in the medieval Sanskrit treatises conforms more to these models than the Manipravalam treatises. Due to Rāmānuja's Sanskrit soteriology, Sanskrit came to be associated with philosophical and intellectual arguments, endeavors, and debates. At the same time, it was perceived as being different from Tamil, which offers a devotional tone to the whole community.

Self-surrender in Manipravalam literature moves away from the model of *bhakti* and embodies notions that are more important in the Tamil scripture, namely the devotee's subordination to God in the liberating process to the extent that the devotee has very passive role and self-surrender is no longer an action to be performed. Despite its root in the confluence of Tamil and Sanskrit, self-surrender participates with these norms differently. The theological terminology, characteristics, and hermeneutics used in the validation of self-surrender belong

to the Sanskrit sphere, formulated by Rāmānuja. Yet, the surrendering attitude, its accessibility, intimacy, and the dominance of God in granting liberation are derived from the Tamil scripture and recur as the primary modes of expression as seen in the Manipravalam commentaries.

As will be shown in the following chapters, I trace the development of self-surrender step-by-step to see how the normativity and expressivity in Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres derived from Rāmānuja's Vedāntic soteriology and the Tamil scripture and its Manipravalam commentaries varyingly affect the later soteriological development in the Sanskrit and Manipravalam treatises and how each post-Rāmānuja author dealt with the restrictions within their given or chosen sphere. One of the apparent conditioning factors is that Rāmānuja's first soteriological doctrine is in Sanskrit under the Vedāntic scriptural normativity without explicit connection to the Tamil scripture. On the one hand, the following Sanskrit treatises, subjected to the Sanskrit sphere, do not depend on the Tamil scripture in their soteriological arguments, even if they are infused with the Tamil devotional representation. With Rāmānuja's soteriological demarcation, self-surrender in the Sanskrit literature is modelled on the Vedāntic means such as *bhakti*. On the other hand, the Manipravalam authors incorporated Tamil normativity and expressivity in addition to Rāmānuja's Sanskrit sphere and moved the discussion closer to the Tamil scripture. They eventually prioritized total surrender and God's grace over Rāmānuja's modeling characteristics of *bhakti*. Finally, in the last chapter, Vedāntadeśika used Manipravalam to transcend the norms and expressive limitations in each language sphere, making possible the confluence of the two scriptures and the harmonization of the previous debates on self-surrender not only in the Sanskrit texts but also those in Manipravalam.

CHAPTER 2 SYSTEMATIZATION

This chapter explores the moment when self-surrender was explicitly systematized by Vātsya Varadaguru (c. 1165–1200 to 1277)²²⁴ and Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷḷai (c. 1167–1262),²²⁵ who inhabited Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam, respectively, based on the linguistic representations in Sanskrit and Manipravalam that were influential in these locations. Although both authors subscribed to Rāmānuja’s soteriological model of *bhakti*, the norms and expressions in the different language spheres that reflect the intellectual contexts of the two locations conditioned their Sanskrit and Manipravalam treatises on self-surrender, resulting in a difference in the sets of authority that they highlight and their definitions of self-surrender. Although self-surrender was already an alternative to *bhakti* in the Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoli* that preceded the treatises investigated here, the linguistic representations, specifically the scriptural authorities and theological characteristics, that these authors chose to devise and, in some cases, invent in their systematization of self-surrender, serve as the defining norms and expressions for the later doctrinal development of self-surrender in the corresponding domains of Sanskrit and Manipravalam. I chose these two authors because they were contemporary and could be compared to chart their engagement with the linguistic spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam. Unfortunately, we have little historical evidence on their lives, and I, therefore, rely mostly on their works and the traditional account of their lineages to reconstruct these authors. Their engagement with their respective linguistic spheres also reflects their social and intellectual contexts. Based on the tradition today, these two authors were part of different lineages that

²²⁴ This date is proposed by Marlewicz, “Self-Surrender of the Afflicted One.”

²²⁵ The date is given in Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 14.

were retrospectively considered as the Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai.

Because Vātsya Varadaguru was preceded by the Kāñcī authors, he can be considered a part of the Sanskrit sphere. He was a disciple of Viṣṇu Citta who was the disciple of Tirukkurukaip Piraṅ Piḷḷāṅ, the first commentator of the *Tiruvāymoli* and was succeeded by the significant figures in Kāñcīpuram, such as Ātreya Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, however, was a student of Nampiḷḷai, who was the disciple of Nañcīyar, the second commentator of the *Tiruvāymoli*, and himself a Manipravalam commentator of the Tamil hymns. The Śrīraṅgam community Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai inhabited was saturated with Manipravalam norms and expressions because, by this time, it was known to be the main site for the production of the Manipravalam commentaries and discussions of self-surrender as an alternative to *bhakti*. While Vātsya Varadaguru composed only Sanskrit works, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai used only Manipravalam and was immersed in the world of the Manipravalam commentaries.

Both authors invented a new genre of literature that focuses on the systematization of self-surrender. Vātsya Varadaguru was, to my knowledge, the only Sanskrit author around this time who openly regards self-surrender as an alternative soteriological doctrine in his *Prapannapārijāta*. However, he limited his systematization of self-surrender only to one work while devoting his other works, namely the *Premyamālā*, the *Tattvasāra*, and the *Tattvanirnaya* to Vedāntic philosophical discussions. His other works consolidate Rāmānuja's *bhakti* as the primary doctrine found in the Vedāntic treatises of other authors around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Kāñcī, such as Nārāyaṇārya, Ātreya Rāmānuja, and Meghanādārisūri.

Among the Manipravalam authors of this time, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai is innovative and

has the most variety in his composition. He was the first *ācārya* to comment on all of the Ālvārs' Tamil poems, not merely the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.²²⁶ In addition, he introduced Manipravalam commentaries on the devotional Sanskrit works of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja. Importantly, he initiated the genre of the *rahasyagranthas*. One could say that in order to systematize self-surrender, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai set up this new platform, the *rahasyagrathas*, to specifically defend self-surrender based on both the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures. He then uses the three secrets, the Tirumantra, Dvaya, and Caramaśloka, to harmonize these two scriptures as I show below. As Patricia Mumme argues, Manipravalam became “a major vehicle for the expression of Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrine” and not just a tool for commenting on the Tamil hymns thanks to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.²²⁷ As we will see in subsequent chapters, the later authors in the Śrīraṅgam community only used Manipravalam in their theological treatises. To converse with these authors, according to the traditional record, Vedāntadeśika himself wrote in Manipravalam instead of Sanskrit, which he employed during his stay in Kāñcīpuram.²²⁸ It should be noted that the three secrets became specific to the Manipravalam language sphere thanks to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's *rahasyagranthas* even if they are in Sanskrit and can be found in the earlier Sanskrit works of Rāmānuja and Pārāśara Bhaṭṭar before. In this chapter, I investigate Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's most comprehensive *rahasyagrantha*, the *Parantarahasyam*.²²⁹

The invention of the novel Sanskrit text on self-surrender and the Manipravalam

²²⁶ For Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's life and role as a commentator, see Anandakichenin, *My Sapphire-hued Lord*, 84–87.

²²⁷ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 5.

²²⁸ See Chapters 4 and 5.

²²⁹ Varadachari in *Agamas and South Indian Vaisnavism* (322) indicates that the *Parantarahasyam* was composed by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's son, Nāyaṅār Āccāṅ Piḷḷai (c. 1227–1327). However, Mumme (*The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 14) and Venkatachari (*The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 116–120) both attribute this work to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai. In my opinion, there is enough area of similarity in terms of the ideas and style of composition in the *Parantarahasyam* and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's works authorship is not in doubt of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai like the commentary on Rāmānuja's *Gadyatraya* and the *Nigamanappati*.

rahasyagranthas are crucial to the defense that self-surrender is an independent means alternative to *bhakti* and the claim that self-surrender can be found in different linguistic terrains. Thus, one could say that the two authors participated in their own social and intellectual domains and intended to establish self-surrender for their distinct audiences at Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam despite their shared influence from Rāmānuja and social interactions. This is evident in their varying incorporations of the scriptural sources and understandings of self-surrender. It should be noted that dissimilarity may be partly based on the styles of the compositions: verse in the *Prapannapārijāta* and prose in the *Parantarahasyam*.

To explain further, in the *Prapannapārijāta*, Vātsya Varadaguru provides Sanskrit scriptural authorities for its validation of self-surrender. Instead of the Tamil scripture and the paradigm of the three secrets, he resorts to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās as another foundational scriptural source. In the conclusion of the *Prapannapārijāta*, Vātsya Varadaguru imagines a community of good people who undertake self-surrender as the audience of this work. He claims that this composition, entitled “*Prapannapārijāta*,” validates self-surrender through the authority of the Sanskrit scripture, namely *śruti*, *smṛti*, the statements of the sages, and the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.²³⁰ Self-surrender which is referred to in the verses as “offering” (*nyāsa*) is likened to a boat that will carry those who perform it across transmigration to liberation:

A great bridge across the milky ocean of practices of those who have surrendered is assembled with the pieces of the mountains of Vedānta, *smṛti*, important and true statements of the sages, and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

Those who desire to quickly attain the far shore of the ocean by this path surely will be liberated [due to] being free from previous and later sinful actions.

²³⁰ The title can be interpreted as “the Pārijāta tree for those who surrender” (*prapanna-pārijāta*). Pārijāta which is a name of a tree refers to God who grants the goal to the devotees (Rajagopalan, “The Śrī Vaiṣṇava Understanding of Bhakti and Prapatti,” 296).

The ship of offering (*nyāsa*) has a bottom board, which is held together and fixed by wretchedness, is loaded with pins of faith, can be controlled by pulling the rope of a request, and has offering as the good oar.

[Since] it [the ship of offering] carries embodied beings across the ocean of transmigration, fearless people who get on it will be rescued [from the ocean of transmigration] immediately and without any defects.

The composition titled the “*Prapannapārijāta*” is known in the world as that in which all the needs are produced for good people all around.²³¹

This concluding verse reflects that the scriptural authority and validity of self-surrender are focal concerns of the *Prapannapārijāta*. This is also seen through the fact that the majority of the topics in this work are related to scripture.²³² The last verse then states that the goal of the text is to provide all of the needs for the devotees through the teaching of self-surrender. Thus, self-surrender is meant for the whole community.²³³ However, given the limited eligibility of *bhakti* as shown in the first chapter, the project to consolidate *bhakti* probably presents an intellectual argument to defend Rāmānuja’s philosophical system of Vedānta rather than an

²³¹ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, ed. P. V. Ramanujaswami (Tirupati: Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams, 1954), 55–56: *traiyantasmṛtīmukhyasanmunivacaḥśrīpāṃcarātrācalakṣodraiḥ saṃghaṭītaḥ prapannacaritāḥ kṣīrābdhisetur mahān | ye vāñchnty amunā pathā ’ptum acirāt pāraṃ bhavāmbhonidheḥ te pūrvottarapāpakarmanicayaiḥ muktā vimuktāḥ smṛtāḥ ||*
kārpaṇyācitabaddhamūlaphalakā viśvāsakīlācitā yācñābandhanarajjukṣṭivaśagā nikṣepasaṃkṣepaṇiḥ | saṃsārāṇnavatāriṇī tanubhṛtāṃ nyāsātmanauḥ tām imām acchidrām atha pārayiṣṇum abhayāḥ sadyo ’dhiruḍhā janāḥ ||

aśeṣāpekṣitam yatra parito jāyate satām | prapannapārijātākhyāḥ prabandhaḥ kathito bhuvi ||

²³² The *Prapannapārijāta* is divided into ten chapters. I base the names of the chapters on the 1954 edition, 1–3. The first three chapters outline scriptural authority (lit., the prosperity of scriptural authority - *mānasaubhāgya*), nature (*svarūpa*), and an eligible person (*adhikārī*). The following chapters elaborate on the performance of self-surrender in relation to *mantras* and the relationship between the practitioners in the community. The fourth chapter deals with the relationship between *ācāryas* and those who have surrendered as well as the role of *ācāryas* in the transmission of the Dvaya. The next chapter illustrates the service that needs to be done after self-surrender by the exclusive devotees (*ekāntis*) and the best devotees (*paramaikāntis*). It defines service as an obligatory rite (*nitya-karma*) but not as a means to liberation. The sixth chapter describes the service that the devotees should perform to Śrī and the attendants of God. The following chapter (*bhagavad-upāsana*) proclaims the importance of the Vaiṣṇava community. Chapter 8 instructs the practitioners to conform to the scripture and their injunctions. Chapter 9 makes known the avoidance of prohibited acts and the performance of expiations when offenses occur. The final chapter proclaims that being God’s eternal servant in Vaikuṅṭha is the ultimate result of self-surrender.

²³³ Marlewicz, “Self-Surrender of the Afflicted One,” 299. Also, it should be noted that Vātsya Varadaguru does not mention the word “*śrīvaiṣṇava*” anywhere in the *Prapannapārijāta* and the word used in the text is “*vaiṣṇava*,” which can be found both in Vātsya Varadaguru’s words and citations on pages 16, 21–23, 34–35, 41–42, 45–46, 48–49, and 54.

actual engagement with the practice.

In contrast, in the *Parantarahasyam*, we see the combination of the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptural norms made possible thanks to the use of Manipravalam. Indebted to the preceding Manipravalam commentators on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai regards the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam* as authoritative and presents self-surrender as the main doctrine. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's work can be characterized as an incorporation and expansion of the previously less systematic and explicit discussions on self-surrender in the Manipravalam commentaries.²³⁴ Importantly, his preference for the authoritative sources in addition to the Sanskrit scripture and prioritization of self-surrender over *bhakti* point to his intention to provide an alternative to Rāmānuja's Sanskrit soteriology of *bhakti*, which is not available to the whole community. Thus, unlike Vātsya Varadaguru's argument which is more for intellectual and philosophical in its defense and debates, with Manipravalam as the medium, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's system of self-surrender takes into account the accessibility and practices of the community.

In what follows, I will first illustrate that both authors rely on the Vedāntic Sanskrit scripture, *itihāsas*, and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās in their systematization of self-surrender to argue that they share the same normative influence from Rāmānuja's Sanskrit soteriological model and the Manipravalam commentaries. It should be noted that the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās seem to already play a role in Yāmuna's *Āgamaprāmāṇya* and Rāmānuja's works such as the *Gadyatraya* and *Nityagrantha*.²³⁵ These texts have the status of scripture as they are God's

²³⁴ According to Clooney, his Manipravalam commentary should be understood as an incorporation and amplification of the previous commentaries (*Seeing through Texts*, 34).

²³⁵ Section 1.3. For more information on the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās in the Śrīvaiṣṇava theological context, especially related to Śrī, Kumar, *The Goddess Lakṣmī*.

words and thus created by God since the time of Yāmuna.²³⁶ However, the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās became part of the normativity of self-surrender for the first time thanks to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Vātsya Varadaguru. However, as a part of the Manipravalam domain, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai incorporates the norms, such as the Tamil scripture and the three secrets, in his treatise, while they are absent in Vātsya Varadaguru’s Sanskrit treatise, as I show in the second and third sections.²³⁷ The authors’ participations in the two locations and language spheres render the distinction in their treatments of self-surrender as we see in the last section. While Vātsya Varadaguru identifies self-surrender with *bhakti* to conform to the Sanskrit soteriological expression of a doctrine based on *bhakti* and to gain his community’s acceptance of the Sanskrit authors who mainly, but not exclusively, consolidated *bhakti* as the primary soteriological doctrine, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, in accordance with other Manipravalam authors, explicitly prefers self-surrender and shapes it with the Tamil devotional expression as illustrated in the Manipravalam commentaries.

2.1 The Sanskrit Norms of Self-Surrender

In their works, both Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai validate self-surrender within the Vedāntic system and share the same set of Sanskrit scripture, namely *śruti*, *itihāsas*, and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. The fact that the two authors choose to use the same set of scripture in their systematization of self-surrender, along with the fact that there is clear familiarity with it in the early Manipravalam commentaries, indicates that these scriptural sources were internally

²³⁶ See McCrea, “Does God Have Free Will.”

²³⁷ It should be noted that, in addition to the incorporation of the Tamil hymns and *itihāsas*, Mumme in *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute* also argues for the use of analogies and Purāṇas as the main strategies of the Śrīraṅgam *ācāryas*. Here, I explore Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s reliance on the same sets of authorities and further pay attention to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and the three secrets as they are evidently brought into discussions by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai more than the analogies and *itihāsas* in his *Parantarahasyam*.

circulated and definitely accepted around that time. It is also likely that how both use the scripture is influenced by Rāmānuja’s incorporation of the Vedāntic Sanskrit scripture in his system of *bhakti*. However, these two authors were the first to elaborately claim that these sources contain injunctions for self-surrender. Their incorporations of these injunctions set the normative paradigms for both the Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres in the soteriological context of self-surrender.

2.1.1 Injunctions of Self-surrender

Both authors cite passages from Sanskrit scripture to present the main Vedāntic injunctions of self-surrender, proving that self-surrender is an independent means to liberation. By assigning Vedāntic injunctions to self-surrender, they further argue that self-surrender is a Vedāntic doctrine just like *bhakti*, making it a valid alternative doctrine. Among the citations from *śruti* and *smṛti*, both authors regard passages from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, as the most significant injunctions of self-surrender.

Vātsya Varadaguru, in the first chapter on the scriptural authority, claims that the *mantra* in the Vedas prescribes self-surrender as an offering (*nyāsa*). According to Gerhard Oberhammer, the concept of an offering may be derived from Vātsya Varadaguru’s interpretation of “the doctrine of asceticism” as an “internalized sacrifice” in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 10.63.19: “You, who are pervading and delighting in wealth, are joined with the breath. O Brahman, you are the creator of all and the giver of energy to the fire, speech to the sun, splendor to the moon, You are grasped in the sacrificial ladle. One should offer oneself as *aum* to You, the great glorious Brahman.”²³⁸ This passage is similar to *Mahānārāyaṇa*

²³⁸ *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, ed. Suriya Mahajan (Puṇyākhyapattane: Ānandāśrama, 2008), vol. 2, 274–275: *vasuraṇyo vibhur asi prāṇe tvam api sandhātā brahman tvam asi viśvasṛktejodās tvam asy agner vacādās tvam*

Upaniṣad 24.2.²³⁹ Vātsya Varadaguru then innovatively applies this concept to self-surrender.²⁴⁰ Oberhammer’s observation points out that Vātsya Varadaguru’s implicit classification of self-surrender as a Vedic offering might come from a *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* passage. The *Prapannapārijāta* passage reads:

Self-surrender is first enjoined in the Veda of *Taittirīyas (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka)* and the application of this practice is [derived] from the *mantra* [beginning with] “*vasuraṇya*.”

In the same manner, Brahman, who is to be worshiped in this case, is said to be the cause of all and is the only One to be surrendered to by this [epithet] “the Creator of the universe, the all-pervading one.”

Brahman is praised with the qualities in this manner: You are the giver of splendor to the suns like before; You are brilliant and pleasant.

Having made oneself an offering, one should offer the body into the great fire of Brahman with the syllable *aum* as handed down through transmission.

Thus, the application of this self-surrender is passed down as consisting of the sacred syllable *aum*. The application is referred to in the body of offering by the wise in the same manner.

Best people say that, among austerities, there is self-surrender (*prapatti*) which is called offering (*nyāsa*). The *Dvaya* is remembered in the *vallis* of *Kaṭha [Upaniṣad]* as the prayer for self-surrender.²⁴¹

In addition, Vātsya Varadaguru paraphrases *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* 6.18, “Who at first created the Brahman and delivered to him the Vedas; who manifests himself by his own

asi sūryasya dyummodās tvam asi candramasa upayāmagr̥hīto 'si brahmaṇe tvā mahasa om ity ātmānaṃ yuñjīta iti.

²³⁹ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.2 (Bombay: Government Central Book Depôt, 1888), 25.

²⁴⁰ Oberhammer, “The Influence of Orthodox Vaiṣṇavism,” 48. However, it should be noted that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai uses the same *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* passage to identify self-surrender with the offering as well. Thus, Vātsya Varadaguru’s identification might not be innovative. Oberhammer further suggests that the concept of an internalized sacrifice might have been derived from Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy that also influenced Rāmānuja’s system (ibid., 48–49).

²⁴¹ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 3–4:

*prapattiḥ—taittirīyāṇāṃ vede tāvat vidhīyate | nyāsābhyāsaprayogo hi “vasuraṇye” ti mantrataḥ ||
tatropāsyam yathā brahma sarvakāraṇam ucyate | prapattavyam tadaiveti “vibhu viśvasṛg” iti api ||
sūryādīnāṃ yathāpūrvaṃ tejaḥ kalpayitā asi ca | vasuvat ramaṇīyo asi iti evaṃ brahma guṇaiḥ stutam ||
jīvātmānaṃ haviḥ kṛtvā taccharīraṃ mahīyasi | brahmāgnai juhuyād om ity anena āmnāyarūpitaṃ ||
iti prapatter amnātaḥ prayogaḥ praṇavātmanā | tasyaivaṃ viduṣo yajñāsarīre tatra kalpitaḥ ||
prapattiṃ tapasām eṣāṃ nyāsābhyāmāhuruttamāḥ | āmnātaṃ kaṭhavallīṣu prapatter vācakaṃ dvayam ||* For the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, Chapter 7.

intelligence—in that God do I, desirous of liberation, seek refuge,” to affirm that self-surrender is enjoined as a means to liberation in Vedāntic scripture:²⁴²

The favorable authority is stated to be in harmony with *Śvetāśvatara* [Upaniṣad]. The Upaniṣad states the instruction of the performance of offering in this way.

One who desires liberation should seek refuge for the sake of [His] grace which is the knowledge of the self as it is said in *śruti* that “[Brahman] created Brahmā in the beginning” [and] “He taught him [the Vedas].”²⁴³

He then resorts to *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72, “There will be affliction, desire, confusion, and unhappiness as long as one does not take refuge with You, the destroyer of all sins,” to claim the supremacy of God in granting liberation to a person who surrenders to Him.²⁴⁴ Vātsya Varadaguru’s use of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* as the main authority, especially regarding the supremacy of God, is unmistakably influenced by the way Rāmānuja’s use of the text in the *Śrībhāṣya*. Although Rāmānuja does not cite the same passage as Vātsya Varadaguru, he frequently refers to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* in the *Śrībhāṣya*.²⁴⁵ Vātsya Varadaguru also incorporates other *smṛti* texts as citations. For example, in the first chapter, he supports the soteriological status of self-surrender with passages from Dharmaśāstra,²⁴⁶ such as *Manusmṛti* 8.9.2, “[I]f the witness has no quarrel with Yama, the god of death and the judge of the dead, then there is no need for him

²⁴² Translated by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 433. For the full text, see *ibid.*, 432.

²⁴³ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 4–5:

pramāṇam subhagaṃ prāha śvetāśvatarasamjñitam [corr., “samhitā”] | prāha copaniṣannyāse yathā ’nuṣṭhānadarśinī || “brahmāṇam vidadhāty agre” “yas tasmai diśati” śrutiḥ | ātmajñānaprasādārthaṃ mumukṣuḥ śaraṇam vrajet ||

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7: “Parāśara who knows the supremacy of God due to the boon of Vasiṣṭha declared in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* in this way, ‘There will be affliction, desire, confusion, and unhappiness as long as one does not take refuge with You, the destroyer of all sins’ [*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72].”

(*varadānāt vasiṣṭhasya devatāpāramārthyavit | parāśaraḥ praṇijagau purāṇe vaiṣṇave tathā || “tāvad ārtis tadā vāñchā tāvan mohaḥ tadā” sukham | yāvan na yāti śaraṇam tvām aśeṣāghanāśanam ||*). See *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72, vol. 1, 50.

²⁴⁵ For Rāmānuja’s use of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, see Adluri, *Textual Authority*.

²⁴⁶ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 8–9:

yamo vaivasvato rājā yas tavaiṣa hr̥di sthitaḥ | tena ced avivādas te mā gaṅgām mā kurūn gamaḥ || and atha pātakabhītas tvam sarvabhāvena bhārata! vimuktānyasamārambho nārāyaṇaparo bhava ||

offering is superior to other ascetic practices: “Thus, offering is said to be superior to these austerities.”²⁵¹ The passage is followed by another passage from *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2, in which the offering is likened to the Supreme Brahman.²⁵² He then argues that self-surrender is characterized as the offering, and the offering is nothing other than God who is the only means to attain the highest goal, which is God Himself. In this context, the passages from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* are the main source for the concept of offering and the identification between self-surrender and the offering:

The manifold means—which are described as it is done in, “truthfulness, austerity, self-control, donation, duty, procreation, sacrificial offering to the fire, sacrificial ritual, mental contemplation, and offering,” which are written in the scripture as being the means to obtain service, which is thus the ultimate goal—are said to be superior to the others, as said in, “Thus, the offering is said to be superior to these austerities” [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1] [and] “Offering is Brahman; Brahman is the Supreme; The Supreme is Brahman; Offering is superior to those austerities which are inferior” [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2]. And the special means called offering (*nyāsa*) is stated as being the most superior above all, as in, “Thus, truthfulness is said to be supreme” [and] “Thus, austerity is said to be supreme.” And since every single thing other than that is called inferior; because a special means that is more distinguished than this is not evoked; and because the means suitable for the obtainment of that service is the means that is referred to by the word “I pay obeisance” [in the *Dvaya*], there are the means and the goal, which are the intention of all the scriptures.²⁵³

²⁵¹ It should be noted that *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1, 25: “*tasmān nyāsam eṣāṃ tapasām atiriktam āhuḥ*,” is echoed almost word for word by the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā* 37.36, ed. M. D. Ramanujacarya (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1966), vol. 2, 371: “But, among these austerities, offering is heard as being the distinguished one” (*teṣāṃ tu tapasāṃ nyāsam atiriktam tapaḥ śrutam*). This is made explicit by Vedāntadeśika in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* as we will see in Chapter 4.

²⁵² *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2, 23. It is also cited in Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 45.

²⁵³ Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 20–21: *appaṭi paramaprāpyamāṇa kainkaryattaip perukaikku sādhaṇamāka śāstraṅkaḷilē elutukīra*, “*satyaṃ tapō damaś śamō dānaṃ dharmah prajananam agnyōgnihoṭram yajñō mānasam nyāsaḥ*” *enrāppōlē*, *collukīra sādhanasamūhaṅkaḷai*, “*tasmāt satyaṃ paramam vadanti, tasmāt tapaḥ paramam vadanti*” *enru onrukkoṅru utkṛṣṭamāka colli, ellāttukkuṃ mēlē* “*tasmān nyāsam eṣāṃ tapasām atiriktam āhuḥ*” “*nyāsa iti brahmā, brahmā hi paraḥ, parō hi brahmā, tāni vā eṭāny varāṇi tapāṃsi nyāsa ēvātyarēcayāt*” *enru sarvōtkṛṣṭamāka nyāsaśabdavācyamāṇa upāyaviśēṣattaic colli, tatvyāriktaṅkaḷaiyaṭaiya apakṛṣṭamāka collukaiyālum, itukku mēlē vilakṣaṇamāyiruppatu oru upāyaviśēṣattai eṭāmaiyaḷum, anta kainkaryaprāptikku ucitamāṇa upāyamum namaśśabdōktamāṇa upāyamē ākaiyālē, ivai sakalaśāstratātparyāṅkaḷāna upāyōpāyaṅkaḷ.*

Given that both authors draw from the same scriptural sources and agree on the identification between self-surrender and the offering, we can assume that the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* might also be the main source for the concept of the offering in the *Prapannapārijāta*.

Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai structures the *Parantarāhasyam* according to the three secrets, the Tirumantra, the Dvaya, and the Caramaśloka, devoting one chapter to each of them. Like Vātsya Varadaguru, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai incorporates the same passages from *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18, *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72, and also *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1 in the Caramaśloka Chapter and also the Dvaya Chapter.²⁵⁴ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai employs these passages along with other citations to present injunctions of self-surrender. Interestingly, he assigns different roles to the passages from the three sources in the summary of the first part of the Dvaya. He separates the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* passage from the other two Upaniṣadic passages, arguing that the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* passage only communicates the fact that God is the accomplished means (*siddhopāya*) for four groups of people. On the other hand, the two Upaniṣadic passages single out one particular group of people among the four stated in *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72 who are eligible to request the result of liberation. Thus, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* passage indicates that God is the accomplished means which is the meaning of the first part of the Dvaya. The other two passages are in accordance with the later part of the Dvaya which makes known the result:

Then, since the accomplished means which has been accepted in this [first part of the Dvaya] is common to all four kinds of eligible people, beginning with those who are afflicted, as in the statement, “There will be affliction, desire, confusion, and unhappiness as long as one does not take refuge with You, the destroyer of all sins” [*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72], there is the need to say which eligible person is the one who has accepted [God] as the means among those previously stated. Given that is the case, the later part [of the Dvaya] specifies the eligible one through the determination based on his request for a particular

²⁵⁴ See section 2.2.1 for Vātsya Varadaguru. Note that Vātsya Varadaguru focuses on the second part of *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24 not the first one like Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.

result as stated in “in that God do I, desirous of liberation, seek refuge” [Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.18] “One attains the greatness of Brahman” [Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad 24.1]. Thus, it means that [the Dvaya] requests the means in the former part and the goal which is its result in the later part.²⁵⁵

With Manipravalam as a medium, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai has a choice to cite from scriptures in both Sanskrit and Tamil, yet he provides only Sanskrit citations to prove the injunctions of self-surrender. His decision to use only Sanskrit scripture to validate self-surrender suggests that Sanskrit is an embodiment of the authority and validation in soteriology thanks to Rāmānuja’s model of using Sanskrit Vedāntic scriptures in validating a doctrine like in the case of *bhakti*. Even though the *Parantarahasyam* is in Manipravalam, its soteriological arguments are closely tied to the Sanskrit sphere. In addition to *śruti*, the two authors further bring in the authoritative sources which are, according to them, subordinate to the Upaniṣads, namely *itihāsas* and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, to systematize self-surrender.

2.1.2 *Itihāsas* and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās

The *itihāsas*, namely the *Māhābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, are another authoritative source in Vātsya Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta* and Peiryavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s *Parantarahasyam*. It should be noted that Yāmuna alludes to the two *itihāsas*’ narratives of God’s promises, especially when Rāma vows to save any beings who surrenders to Him, including Vibhīṣaṇa, in the *Stotraratna* 64.²⁵⁶ Rāmānuja follows Yāmuna when he cites two passages from these two *itihāsas*, namely

²⁵⁵ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 35: *aṅantaram, itil svīkṛtamāṇa siddhōpāyam “tāvad ārtis tadā vācchā tāvan mōhaḥ tadā ’sukham, yāvan na yāti śaraṇam tvām aśēṣāghanāsanam” enru, ārtādikaḷāṇa caturvidhādihikārikaḷukkum sādharānam ākaiyālē, ivarkaḷil kīl upāyasvīkaraṇam paṇṇi nirkiṛavaṇ enta adihikāri enkiṛa apēkṣayilē, “mumukṣūr vai śaraṇam aham prapadyē” “brahmaṇō mahimānam āpnoti” enkiṛapaṭiyē phalaviṣēṣaprārthanārūpādhyavasāyattālē ivānai viṣēṣikkīratu: uttarārtham. āka, pūrvārthattālē upāyaprārthanam paṇṇīrāy, uttarārthattālē tatphalamāṇa upēyattai prārttikkiṛatu enratāyīru. Viṣṇupurāṇa 1.9.72, vol. 1, 50. The Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad passage is translated by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 433. For the text of Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad 24.1, see 25.*

²⁵⁶ Section 1.3.

Rāmāyaṇa 6.12.20 and *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 in his *Śaraṇāgatigadya*. Nañcīyar also has high regard for *itihāsas* in his Manipravalam commentary.²⁵⁷ By the time of Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, these two passages can be regarded as paradigmatic passages of soteriological self-surrender. Influenced by their predecessors, both authors employ the same paradigmatic passages from the two *itihāsas*. However, Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai treat these passages differently, as we will see.

Vātsya Varadaguru uses the two passages to prove that self-surrender is enjoined in *smṛti* as it is the case in *śruti*.²⁵⁸ Without any commentary on the passages, Vātsya Varadaguru treats them as injunctions of self-surrender, two among various others. This is understandable given that he pays attention to the validation of self-surrender and its identification with *bhakti* in the *Prapannapārijāta*. Importantly, Vātsya Varadaguru does not regard *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as the Caramaśloka or one of the three secrets as in the *Parantarahasyam*, nor does he present it as the main Vedāntic injunction of self-surrender as we will see in Vedāntadeśika's *Nikṣeparakṣā*.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Section 1.4.

²⁵⁸ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 7: “God stated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, “For someone who surrenders to Me even once and for someone who begs, ‘I am yours,’ I give safety for all beings. This is My promise” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20].

“Having abandoned all *dharmas*, come to Me alone for refuge. I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.66].” (*rāmāyaṇe ca bhagavān bhārata ca yad uktavān* “*sakṛdeva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate | abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmy etad vrataṃ mama*” || “*sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja | ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*” ||). For the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage, see vol. 6, 70. See also section 1.3.

²⁵⁹ In addition to *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, Vātsya Varadaguru cites parts of *Bhagavadgītā* 7.18-19 (vol. 2, 41–43) which he views as prescribing independent self-surrender as a soteriological doctrine. Unlike what we have seen in Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya* and *Gadyatraya* (sections 1.2 and 1.3), Vātsya Varadaguru interprets the predicate to surrender in a more literal sense compared to Rāmānuja. In the *Gītābhāṣya*, Rāmānuja construes self-surrender in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.19 in the sense of contemplation which is equivalent to *bhakti*. In the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, he understands that the two *Bhagavadgītā* passages describe the one with knowledge who is in the stage before the undertaking of *bhakti*. According to his reading, the two verses point to the fact that the one with knowledge who surrenders to God at the end of many births is the best among the devotees. Here are the *Bhagavadgītā* passages in Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 50:

“It is said by God Himself, “The one with knowledge is regarded as My Self” [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.18]. One surrenders [to God] after the end of many births and deaths out of good fortune.

Unlike Vātsya Varadaguru, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai situates *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 within the paradigm of the three secrets and the Manipravalam soteriological sphere. He recognizes *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as the Caramaśloka and assigns a particular function and status to it in relation to the other secrets, namely the Tirumantra and the Dvaya. He devotes the last chapter of the *Parantarahasyam* to the interpretation and the theological explanation of the Caramaśloka. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai argues that the Caramaśloka, which is God’s speech in the *Bhagavadgītā*, has the same status as *itihāsas* and Purāṇas, which play a role in reinforcing the Vedas (*upabṛmhaṇa*).²⁶⁰ He also provides word-for-word commentary for the Caramaśloka. Collectively, the Caramaśloka instructs a person who has no other means and refuge like Arjuna to surrender to God through the determination that God is the means for the attainment of the goal.²⁶¹ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai also cites other passages of the *Bhagavadgītā*. For example, he brings in *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14, 15.4, and 18.62 to argue that the exclusive devotion to God is necessary in the context of self-surrender:²⁶²

The word “alone” (*eka*) indicates the object to be accepted as stated in, “May You alone be the means for me” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31] “Having attained your feet alone as refuge” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.36.28 or 29?] “Those who surrender to Me alone” [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.14] “I surrender to the Primordial Person alone” [*Bhagavadgītā* 15.4] “Go to Him alone as refuge” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.62], and then due to the authority of its position that indicates the specification, comes to mean the limitation [that God alone is the refuge].²⁶³

[That one who] “knows that all is Vāsudeva, the one with great self, is difficult to find” [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.19].

The success of the one who surrenders is stated by God in the scripture.”

(*svayaṃ bhagavatā coktaṃ “jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam” | bahujanmasahasrānte diṣṭyā yas tu prapadyate || “vāsudevas sarvaṃ iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ” | uktā śāstre bhagavatā prapanne kṛtakṛtyatā ||*).

²⁶⁰ See below, section 2.3.

²⁶¹ See the summary of the Caramaśloka in section 2.3.

²⁶² See *Bhagavadgītā* vol. 2, 28, vol. 3, 160, and vol. 3, 383, for the respective verses.

²⁶³ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 56: *ēkapadam*, “*tvam ēva upāyabhūto me bhava*” “*tvām ēva śaraṇaṃ prāpya*” “*mām ēva yē prapatyantē*” “*tam ēva cādyam puruṣaṃ prapadyē*” “*tam ēva śaraṇaṃ gaccha*” *enṇu svīkāryavastuvai nirdēśittu, aṅantaram avadhāraṇattai eḷutippōrukīra sthānapramāṇattālē, avadhāraṇārtham ākīratu*. See *Rāmāyaṇa* 5.36.28 or 29?, vol. 5, 275, and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31, vol. 2, 370.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is one of the most crucial sources for the doctrine of self-surrender in Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s intellectual reservoir. The turn to the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be seen in the commentary on the *Tiruvāymoli* by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s predecessor, Nañcīyar, who motivated Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and later generations of Manipravalam authors to incorporate the *Rāmāyaṇa* into their soteriological discussion.²⁶⁴ The importance Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai gives to the *Rāmāyaṇa* affirms its popularity in the soteriology of self-surrender. In the *Parantarahasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai cites many passages from the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the chapter on the Dvaya and some in the chapter on the Tirumantra. However, to my knowledge, he does not mention any *Rāmāyaṇa* passages in the chapter on the Caramaśloka.²⁶⁵ Unlike Vātsyā Varadaguru who categorizes the *Rāmāyaṇa* as one of the Sanskrit scriptures for validation of self-surrender, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai does not see the *Rāmāyaṇa* as only providing injunctions for self-surrender, but highlights its role as the source of narratives and stories of ideal practices of devotees. In other words, according to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, this text not only enjoins self-surrender, but also teaches the devotees how to properly undertake this practice. For example, the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of Vibhīṣaṇa is used to affirm the fact that self-surrender is available to all since a desire to attain God is the only qualification. He further suggests reading the passage as communicating that self-surrender is to be performed only once, according to the word “once” (*sakṛd*) in the passage. He then provides alternative ways of understanding this word and the entire passage through the words of the previous *ācāryas*, Eṃpār and Āḷvāṅ:

²⁶⁴ See how Nañcīyar handles the *Rāmāyaṇa* in section 1.4 and more in Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 98–126.

²⁶⁵ This chapter is overwhelmed with the passages from the *Bhagavadgītā* instead of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai also cites other passages from the *Mahābhārata*, in addition to the *Bhagavadgītā*. In this context, given the amounts of citations from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it might be the case that he prefers the *Rāmāyaṇa* than the *Mahābhārata*.

If it is enough to do [surrender] once as stated in “for someone who surrenders to Me even once” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20], then the present tense in the phrase, “I surrender,” shows that [surrender] is characterized as the knowledge which consists of determination like the knowledge which consists of meditative worship. The meditative worship is not to be performed once [since] it is to be repeated in a manner that it needs to be continued like an uninterrupted stream of oil. Then, one may ask how to reconcile between single performance as stated in “even once” and the present tense. [To answer,] the phrase “even once” reveals the fact that single performance is enough for God’s acceptance. The present tense shows that there is a continuation since one needs to spend time until the falling of the body and is eager to attain the desired result. Empār stated, “If one were to look at the result one attains, it is such that it is inappropriate for one to say “once” even if one does not perform [self-surrender] until the fall of the body.” Alternatively, “even once” can be substituted with the word “immediately” when it is stated “for the one who surrenders even once.” Ālvāṇ makes the substitution, saying “for the one who surrenders immediately.”²⁶⁶

Previous *ācāryas*’s views on this passage are recorded here to support the position favored by Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai. At the same time, these views indicate that this Vibhīṣaṇa passage had already received attention in the theological context prior to Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai.

The Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās seem to become important in the soteriology of self-surrender only around the time of these two authors. Compared to *itihāsas*, they play a more important role in Vātsya Varadaguru’s systematization of soteriological self-surrender. His incorporation of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās to systematize self-surrender in Sanskrit is, in fact, innovative among the Sanskrit literature. The passages cited by Vātsya Varadaguru are from various Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, such as the *Paramasaṃhitā*, the *Lakṣmītantra*, the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*,

²⁶⁶ Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 34: “*sakṛd ēva prapannāya*” *eṅkiṛapaṭiyē sakṛtkaraṇam amaiyumākil, asakṛdāvṛttirūpamāṇa upāsaṅātmaḥajñāṇam pōlē inta adhyavasāyātmakajñāṇamum, “prapadyē” eṅkiṛa vartamāṇattāl tailadhārāvadvicchinnaṃ pōravēṅṅumpāṭi tōṅṅāṇiṅṅratu. appōtu “sakṛd ēva” eṅkiṛa sakṛtkaraṇattukkum ivvarthamāṇattukkum cērttiyēṅṅēṅṅil: “sakṛd ēva” eṅkiṛaviṭam, bhagavadviṣayikārattukku sakṛtkaraṇam amaiyumēṅṅum iṭattai prakāśippikkiratu; vartamāṇam, yāvaśśarīrapātam kālakṣēpāpekṣaiyālum, abhimataphalalābhatvaraiyālum, anuvartikkum iṭattai prakāśippikkiratu. “yāvaśśarīrapātam anuṣṭhiyāṅṅhālum perukīra phalattiṅ kaṅṅattai pārttāl, ‘sakṛd’ eṅkakkum pōrātapaṭikāṅ iruppatu!” eṅṅru empār aruḷicceyvar. aṅṅṅāṅṅriyilē, ‘sahaśaiva prapannāya’ eṅkiṛapaṭi” eṅṅru ālvāṅ paṅikkum.*

and also the lost *Sātyakitantra*.²⁶⁷ The Saṃhitās, especially the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* and the *Lakṣmītantra*, are the core texts that inform the characteristics and procedure of self-surrender.²⁶⁸ These two texts must have circulated before the time of Vātsya Varadaguru and it is likely that the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* might have influenced Rāmānuja’s *Nityagrantha*.²⁶⁹ They are used to supplement the scripture such as *śruti* and *smṛti* in order to strengthen the doctrinal status of self-surrender.

In the *Prapannapārijāta*, Vātsya Varadaguru defends the authority of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās based on their conformity with the Vedas. For example, *Lakṣmītantra* 17.94–99 state that the Vedas, including all the ritual actions according to one’s own caste (*varṇa*) and stage of life (*āśrama*), should not be violated even mentally as follows:²⁷⁰

The wise one should always respect the good conducts prescribed by the Vedas as stated in this Tantra (the *Lakṣmītantra*) regarding the transgression of Vedic rules.

“For the non-confusion of *dharmas* [by other means] and for the protection of a family, for the supporting of the world and for the establishment of the boundary,

for the love of me [Śrī] and Viṣṇu, the Archer who is the God of gods, wise one would not transgress the rule even with the mind.

Someone dear to the king [crosses] the river which was set in motion by the king and is useful for the world [since it is] pleasing and increasing crops.

[If that person] destroys it with disregard, [he would not be loved by the king anymore.] In the same way, the man who transgresses the boundary made by the Vedas [would not be loved by God and Śrī any longer].”²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Kumar proposes that the *Lakṣmītantra* and the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* were composed sometime from the ninth to the thirteenth century, and in the eighth century, respectively (*The Goddess Lakṣmī*, Chapter 3).

²⁶⁸ Marlewicz suggests that the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* must have existed long enough before Vātsya Varadaguru for it to already become authoritative by his time (“Self-Surrender of the Afflicted One,” 304).

²⁶⁹ Section 1.3.

²⁷⁰ The 1971 edition of the *Prapannapārijāta* identifies the text as the *Lakṣmītantra*, 59–60.

²⁷¹ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 40:

*vedoditam sadācāra mādriyeta sadāsudhīḥ | asmin tanre yathoktam tu vaidikācāralaṅghane ||
aviplavāya dharmānām pālanāya kulasya ca | saṃgrahāya ca lokānām māryādāsthāpanāya ca ||
priyāya mama viṣṇoś ca devadevasya śārṅgiṇaḥ | manīṣī vaidikācāraṃ manasā 'pi na laṅghayet ||
yathā hi vallabho rājño nadīm rājñā pravartitām | lokopayoginīm ramyām bahusasyavivardhinīm ||
laṅghayan śūlam ārohed anapekṣo 'pi tām prati | evaṃ vilaṅghayan martyo māryādām vedanirmitām ||*
See *Lakṣmītantra*, ed. V. Krishnamacharya (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1959), 59. The

Among the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, Vātsya Varadaguru prefers the *Lakṣmītantra*, regarding it as the most significant source for the nature of self-surrender.²⁷² He cites *Lakṣmītantra* 17.75 to define self-surrender and its auxiliaries, “offering (*nyāsa*) which is synonymous with laying down (*nikṣepa*) joined with five auxiliaries is called abandonment (*tyāga*) and also taking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*).”²⁷³ He further outlines the auxiliaries of self-surrender through *Lakṣmītantra* 17.66–74.²⁷⁴ These passages conclude that self-surrender is equivalent to “the offering of oneself.”²⁷⁵ In addition, he argues that self-surrender, especially to Śrī, can also serve as an expiation based on *Lakṣmītantra* 17.92–95:

A person, relying on this religious practice, should submit to Lord of the world, Viṣṇu. The meaning of the scripture is [that this self-surrender] done merely once may liberate that person. When there is a combination with the means and faults, the person lacks this religious practice. If you are overwhelmed by faults, one should do an expiation at once. The expiation here is you come to [God for] the refuge again. If you accept [the other] means as means, that [expiation] is just the same. When there is the undesirable consequence of the expiation whose origin is all sins, one should come seek refuge with me, the consort of God of gods, alone.²⁷⁶

same passages are also found in Vedāntadeśika’s *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 22. See Chapter 4.

²⁷² Vātsya Varadaguru’s preference in the *Lakṣmītantra* further influenced the way Vedāntadeśika used the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās in his *Nikṣeparakṣā* and also the Manipravalam *Rahasyatrayasāram*.

²⁷³ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 10:

nikṣepāparaparyāyo nyāsaḥ pañcāṅgalakṣaṇaḥ | sanyāsas tyāga ity uktaḥ śaraṇāgatir ity api || See Lakṣmītantra, 58.

²⁷⁴ See section 2.4.1.

²⁷⁵ The same concept can be found in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.43 (vol. 2, 372) that Vātsya Varadaguru does not mention in this context. See Oberhammer, “The Influence of Orthodox Vaiṣṇavism,” 48-49.

²⁷⁶ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 38–39:

*sakṛdeva hi śāstrārthaḥ kṛto 'yaṃ tārayen naram | upāyāpāyasamyoge niṣṭhayā hīyate 'nayā ||
apāyasampluve sadyaḥ prāyaścittaṃ samācaret | prāyaścittir iyaṃ sā 'tra yat punaś śaraṇaṃ vrajet ||
upāyānām upāyatvasvikāre py etad eva hi | prāyaścittaprasaṅge tu sarvapāpasamudbhava ||
mām ekāṃ devadevasya mahiṣīm śaraṇaṃ vrajet |*

It should be noted that the *Lakṣmītantra*, edition 1959, 59, has a different reading for the second part of verse 94 onwards. This is how verses 94 and 95 read:

*upāyānām upāyatvasvikāre 'py etad eva hi | aviplavāya dharmānām pālanāya kulasya ca ||
saṃgrahāya ca lokasya maryādāsthāpanāya ca | priyāya mama viṣṇośca devadevasya śārṅgiṇaḥ ||*

Vātsya Varadaguru then cites *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.25–27 to claim that self-surrender is the means to all desires that cannot be attained by other means.²⁷⁷

Self-surrender is also explained in other places in the scripture in general.

“Whatever goal which a person who desires it cannot attain by other means and cannot be attained by the one who desires liberation, Sāṃkhyā, Yoga, or devotion, that is the supreme abode from which there is no return again.

That which is attained by anyone is only due to offering, O great sage! The Supreme Self, who is the Supreme Person, is also attained only by that [offering].

The [means] by which the goal whose accomplishment is difficult through other means can be easily attained is established in the world and the Vedas as self-surrender (*prapatti*)” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.25–27].²⁷⁸

Compared to Vātsya Varadaguru, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai sparsely cites the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, with fewer than ten citations from the *Lakṣmītantra* and the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* collectively in the chapters on the Dvaya and the Caramaśloka. These few passages are inserted in different contexts, without much elaboration, and often combined with the passages from other sources. Moreover, he only mentions the first two auxiliaries of self-surrender from *Lakṣmītantra* 17.60 without citing the whole list, as seen in the *Prapannapārijāta*.²⁷⁹ Unlike in the *Lakṣmītantra* and the *Prapannapārijāta*, in which the two auxiliaries can be interpreted as pertaining to other beings, they are directed to God in the *Parantarāhasyam*. According to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, the two auxiliaries should be understood as the will to please [God]

²⁷⁷ *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, vol. 2, 369–370.

²⁷⁸ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 12–13:

*prapattir api samānyaśāstre 'nyatra prapañcitā | “yad yena kāmakāmena na sādhyam sādhanāntaraiḥ ||
mumukṣuṇā na sāmkyena yogena na ca bhaktitāḥ | prāpyate paramaṃ dhāma yato nāvartate punaḥ ||
tena tenāpyate tattannyāsenaiḥ mahāmune! | paramātmā ca tenaiḥ sādhyate puruṣottamaḥ ||
sādhanāntaradussādhaṃ prāpyaṃ yallokavedayoḥ | sukheṇa prāpyate yena sā prapattir iti sthitiḥ” ||*

²⁷⁹ *Lakṣmītantra* 17.60, 57. See the translation in the next footnote.

(*ānukūlyasaṅkalpa*) and the avoidance of hostility (*prātikūlyavarjana*).²⁸⁰

Unlike Vātsya Varadaguru, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai includes more passages from the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* than the *Lakṣmītantra* to define self-surrender as the determination of God as the means, to provide an injunction of self-surrender, and to argue that God is the means to liberation. For example, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai provides citations from *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30–31 to identify self-surrender as the mental determination to accept God as the means, the meaning embedded in the word “I surrender” in the Dvaya: “I surrender at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī” (*śrīmannārāyaṇacaranau prapadye. śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*).²⁸¹

“I surrender” denotes movement from the root “to go” in the sense of movement. [And] it refers a particular knowledge as stated in “That which means movement refers to thinking.” The particular knowledge is a particular determination which consists of the great faith. [The determination] is preceded by the contemplation on one’s helplessness and so on as stated in “I [am the abode of sins]” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30]. It incorporates a request as stated in “The thought in the form of a request” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31] “surrendering is a request” [Attributed to Bharatamuni]. It is a qualification for the eligible, not being connected to the scope of being the means as stated in “May You alone be the means for me” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31] [and] “The request that He alone be the means” [Attributed to Bharatamuni]. Since it consists of the acceptance of [God] as the means, it is not connected to the scope of being the goal either. Due to the first person in “I surrender,” it is [a reference to] one’s performance, thinking, “I accept the object previously stated [God] as the means.”²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 53: “Thus, as stated in ‘the will to please [and] the avoidance of hostility’ [*Lakṣmītantra* 17.60], like the will to please [God], the avoidance of hostility is stated to be the suitable state [for the soul].” (*ākaiyire, “ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam” enru ānukūlyasaṅkalpattōpāti, prātikūlyanivṛttiyaiyum saṃbhāvitāsabhāvamākac collukīratu.*)

²⁸¹ *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30–31, vol. 2, 370:

vartate sāmpratam caīṣa upāyārthakavācakaḥ | aham asmy aparādhānām ālayo ’kiṃcano ’gatiḥ ||
tvamupāyobhūto me bhaveti prārthanāmatih | śaraṇāgatir ity uktā sā deve ’smin prayujyatām ||

²⁸² Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 32: “*prapadyē*” *enru*, “*padlu-gatau*” *enkiṛa dhātuvilē gatyarthamāy*, “*gatyarthāḥ-buddhyarthāḥ*” *enru*, *oru jñānaviṣeṣattai collukīratu. anta jñānaviṣeṣam ākīratu*: — “*aham*” *enkiṛapaṭiyē svākiñcanyātyanusandhānapūrvakamāy*, “*prārthanāmatih*” “*yācñā prapattih*” *enkiṛa paṭiyē prārthanākarppamāy*, “*tvam ēva upāyabhūto mē bhava*” “*tatēkōpāyatāyācñā*” *enkiṛapaṭiyē, tāṅ upāyaśarīrattil anvaiyātē upāyasvīkārātmaḥ akaiyālē upēyaśarīrattilum anvaiyātē adhikārikku viṣeṣaṇamāy*,

In the chapter on the Caramaśloka, to prove the injunctions for soteriological self-surrender, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai includes, among other Sanskrit passages, the passages from *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.36, “But, among these austerities, an offering is heard as being the distinguished one,” and also *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31, “What is stated as taking refuge should be used regarding God.”²⁸³ Finally, he interprets the word “refuge” in the Caramaśloka as the means based on *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.29–30.²⁸⁴

Let me explain their different preferences in the case of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Vātsya Varadaguru selects the *Lakṣmītantra* passages to propose his definition of self-surrender which has a form of a ritual offering, accompanied by auxiliaries. Unlike Vātsya Varadaguru, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai emphasizes the role of God as the accomplished means that does not need to be performed. He also identifies self-surrender with the acceptance of God as the means. All of the *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* passages that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai uses conveniently contribute to this identification. It is important to note that both authors seem to cite passages from only some of the chapters of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Their citations suggest that these Saṃhitās are not entirely devoted to the soteriology of self-surrender, which is one among many topics in these Saṃhitās and is usually dealt with in one or only a part of a chapter. Importantly, later authors usually refer to the same passages cited by Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.

This section shows the similarity in the way both authors use the Sanskrit scriptures,

mahāvīśvāsātmakamāṇa pratipattivīśeṣaṃ. “prapadyē” eṅru uttamaṅ ākaiyālē, “kīl uktamāṇa viṣayattai upāyatyā svīkarikkīrēṅ” eṅru svānuṣṭhāṇamākak kiṭakkīratu.

²⁸³ *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā*, vol. 2, 371. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 45.

²⁸⁴ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 57: “The word ‘refuge’ is referred to in this way in the statement, ‘The word ‘refuge’ refers to the means of the house and protector. Thus, it is properly synonymous to the meaning of the word ‘means.’ [*Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.29–30, vol. 2, 370] Thus, the word ‘refuge’ points to the means [...]’ (*śaraṇaśabdam “upāyē gṛharakṣitrō śabdaś śaraṇam ity ayaṃ, vartatē sāmprataṅ caiṣa upāyārthataikavācakah” eṅkīrapaṭiyē ippōtu śaraṇaśabdam upāyavācakaṃyā [...]*).

śruti, *itihāsas*, and the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, to validate and systematize the doctrine of self-surrender in order to argue that they both share Rāmānuja’s Sanskrit normativity when it comes to soteriology. However, we also see the difference in these authors’ normative preferences, which might be rooted in the definition of self-surrender that each advocates. In particular, even if both authors acknowledge the two Saṃhitās, each chooses to focus on the one suitable for his version of self-surrender.²⁸⁵ The following sections highlight the distinction between the *Prapannapārijāta* and the *Parantarahasyam* based on two main features found in the *Parantarahasyam* but absent in the *Prapannapārijāta*, namely the use of Tamil language and scripture and the incorporation of the three secrets to show the distinction between the ways both authors engage with different linguistic spheres.

2.2 The Incorporation of the Tamil Language and Scripture

Although Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai acknowledges the Sanskrit authority, he does not find it sufficient. Like other Manipravalam authors, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai argues for the importance of the Tamil side of the community in his systematization of self-surrender. In contrast to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, Vātsya Varadaguru is silent about both the Tamil scripture and the oral teachings in his *Prapannapārijāta*. It may be the case that the lack of Tamil and Tamil scripture in the Sanskrit text shapes Vātsya Varadaguru to pay less attention to the practical issues of self-surrender, of which the Tamil scripture and *ācāryas*’ teachings are the main sources. Moreover, given that the *Prapannapārijāta* centers on the validation of the doctrine of self-surrender, we may assume that Vātsya Varadaguru aims at a different mode of expression for his soteriology of self-surrender without

²⁸⁵ We will see in Chapter 4 that Vedāntadeśika gives importance to both Saṃhitās and tries to harmonize them in his *Nikṣeparakṣā*.

focusing on the practical and experiential expressions that are more effectively expressed by Tamil.

In what follows, I focus on Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's use of Tamil to argue that it is the language used for conversing with the community as it is a more accessible language than Sanskrit and prioritizes the relationship between God and the devotees. Given this, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai uses Tamil to clarify Sanskrit passages and to speak to his audience as shown in the first section below. Moreover, the presence of Tamil in his Manipravalam text invites the Tamil norm into discussions, namely the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns, which remind the audience that the doctrine of self-surrender is of Tamil heritage that is part of the community. The importance given to Tamil here further reflects Nañcīyar's influence.

2.2.1 Talking to the Community in Tamil

Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai defends the validity of Tamil by reiterating Nañcīyar's justification of the Tamil scripture and language at the beginning of his Manipravalam commentary on the *Tiruvāyomōḷi*, the *Iruppattunāḷayirappaṭi*. In fact, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai reuses Nañcīyar's argument verbatim, stating that Tamil is a valid language for theological expression and is more accessible than Sanskrit.²⁸⁶ Although Tamil represents the devotional expression, it does not contradict Vedic orthodoxy.²⁸⁷ Thus, the language is a medium for the soteriological expression of self-surrender. In the *Parantarāhasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai uses Tamil citations and dialogue to clarify various features of self-surrender and theological positions.

In the *Parantarāhasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai interweaves the Sanskrit and Tamil

²⁸⁶ *Pakavat Viṣayam*, 59–63. For the discussion of Nañcīyar's argument, see section 1.4.

²⁸⁷ For Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's reiteration, see *Pakavat Viṣayam*, 59–63. For other examples of his high regard for Tamil, see Venkatachari, *The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 27–29.

citations, usually giving the Sanskrit citations first, followed by the Tamil passages. The citations in these two languages mirror one another and convey the same message. In some places, instead of providing Tamil citations to pair with Sanskrit ones, he paraphrases the cited Sanskrit passages into Tamil after the Sanskrit citations. For example, in the chapter on the Tirumantra, he paraphrases into Tamil the Sanskrit verses from Yāmuna’s *Stotraratna* 52 and 57 to explain the soul’s subservience to God, which is the meaning embedded in the letter m, the last letter of *aum* (*praṇava*):²⁸⁸

It is concerning the predominance of subservience that Ālavantar [Yāmuna] too said “Whatever there may be in [my] body and so on” [*Stotraratna* 52] “I cannot tolerate even the self if it is outside of the property of being subservient to You [God]” [*Stotraratna* 57]. He revealed, **“The soul can be any of these, the body, sense organs, mind, breath, or others, I do not need a description. I do not need to describe its state. Whatever it may be, I only need [it] to be subservient to You. Without the subservience, I do need even the distinguished soul itself.”**²⁸⁹

However, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai does not systematically translate all of the Sanskrit citations into Tamil, to my knowledge. Some Sanskrit citations are presumably translated so that they are accessible to those who are not well-versed in Sanskrit. Alternatively, he may use the Tamil translation to capture the essence of the Sanskrit citations or to indicate the way the Sanskrit passages should be understood in a certain context. Tamil serves here as the medium for clarification and accessibility. Thus, through the translation, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai clarifies the difficulties found in the Sanskrit passages and avoids any misunderstandings that might occur

²⁸⁸ Yāmuna, *Stotraratna* 52 and 57, 102 and 108.

²⁸⁹ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 13 (emphasis mine): *śēṣatvattiṇṭaiya prādhānyattaip parravirē ālavantārum*, “*vapurādiṣu yō ‘pi kō ‘pi vā*” “*tava śēṣatvavibhavāt bahirbhūtam—ātmānam api na sahē*” *enru*, “*ātmavastu, dēhēndriyamaṇaḥprāṇādikaḷilē ētēṇum onrākavum amaiyum; enakku itiṇṭaiya svarūpanirṇayamum vēṇṭā; svabhāvanirṇayamum vēṇṭā; ētēṇumāka dēvarirukku śēṣamām ittaṇaiyē vēṇṭuvatu. śēṣanrākil vilakṣaṇamāṇa inta ātmavastutanṇaiyum vēṇṭān*” *enru aruḷicceytatum*. I bold the paraphrased Tamil passage in this passage.

if the audience only had Sanskrit available.

Moreover, Periyavāccāṅ Pillai uses Tamil to construct a number of the thoughts and dialogues between the devotee and God and also between God and Śrī. This is not unique and may have been influenced by the practices of the *Tiruvāymoli* commentaries, which employ these methods to shape a narrative of Nammālvār's spiritual experience.²⁹⁰ For example, towards the end of the Caramaśloka Chapter, Periyavāccāṅ Pillai shows that the Caramaśloka describes the surrendering process of an eligible person through God's speech, where God speaks in the first person. In the speech, God instructs the eligible person to take refuge with Him and affirms that the only soteriological means is self-surrender:

Having abandoned those means previously stated [in the *Bhagavadgītā*] as the means to liberation along with their auxiliaries and traces, take Me instead of them since they rely on Me to do what is to be done, but I am independent. Make a firm determination that I alone, the One who is characterized by qualities, beginning with unconditional parental love, am the means, the manner of accomplishing (*sādhana*) and the goal (*sādhya*), for both the cessation of undesirable things and the attainment of desirable things. This is necessary for you to do. Then, being the One who is accepted by you, I, am full of qualities such as knowledge, power, and so on, in such a way that I am suitable to be the means to what you desire. I shall cause all of the sins, which are obstacles to attaining Me, to be expelled for you who have given up your burden on Me. After that, you should not grieve because of the difficulty of the means stated.²⁹¹

This dialogue provides the impression that God is speaking to the audience who is referred to as the listener(s) or “you” in the passage, instructing His devotee about self-surrender and

²⁹⁰ For information on the commentarial construction of Nammālvār's spiritual experience, see Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*.

²⁹¹ Periyavāccāṅ Pillai, *Parantarahasyam*, 50: *mōkṣasādhanatayā kīluktamāṇa sādhanāṅkaḷai sāṅkamākavum savāsanamākavum viṭṭu, avārṟukkum eṇṇaik koṇṭu kāryam koḷlavēṇṭumpatiyumāy, svayam nirapēkṣaṇāy, nirupādhikavātsalyādiguṇaviśiṣṭaṇāṇa eṇṇaiyē avvō sādhanasādhyamāṇa aniṣṭanivṛttikkum iṣṭaprāptikkum upāyamāka dṛḍhātīyavasāyattaip paṇṇum ituvē uṇakkuc ceyyavēṇṭuvatu; piṇṇu tvatsvikṛtaṇāy tvatabhimatasādhanayōgyaṇāmpaṭi jñāṇasākyādiguṇapūrṇaṇāṇa nāṇ, eṅkaiyilē nyastabharāṇāṇa uṇṇai matprāptivirōdhikaḷāṇa sakalapāpaṅkaḷum tāṇē viṭṭup pōmpaṭi paṇṇakkaṭavēṇ; āṇapiṇṇu uktamāṇa sādhanaduṣkaratvātikalālē śōkikkakkaṭavaiy allai.*

invites the audience of the text to identify themselves with the practice of self-surrender because it is accessible and inclusive of the devotees who are directly and intimately instructed by God Himself. It is important to note that we have seen God's speech already in Rāmānuja's *Gadyatraya*, which was likely known to both Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.²⁹² Interestingly, this dialogical style with God speaking in the first person is only continued in the Manipravalam treatise, but not the Sanskrit one. This shows that the style became a part of the Manipravalam expression and less dominant in Sanskrit perhaps due to the Manipravalam commentaries.

In addition, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai integrates the Āḷvārs' Tamil poems, indicating that they are the means of knowledge regarding the ideal or proper practices forming a counterpart to the Sanskrit normativity that focuses on the validation and debates of self-surrender. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai regards these poems as illustrating the actual surrendering practices of the Āḷvārs. Since the Āḷvārs themselves undertake self-surrender to attain liberation, they can validly direct other people in the community and the proper practices, and their poems should be taken as authoritative regarding self-surrender.

2.2.2 The Āḷvārs' Tamil Hymns

The first two Manipravalam commentators before this time had already established the authority of the Tamil scripture.²⁹³ To continue this argument, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai advocates for the importance of the Tamil poems by commenting on the entire *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam* and expands on the earlier two commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* in various manners, such as

²⁹² Section 1.3.

²⁹³ For more information on the commentaries on each work of the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*, see section 1.4 and Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 19–20.

bringing in both Tamil and Sanskrit authoritative passages and weaving the three secrets with the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.²⁹⁴

In the introduction of the *Parantarahasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai argues that the Sanskrit scripture is a part of a hierarchical chain of authority, consisting of the Upaniṣads, the reinforcing texts, namely *itihāsas* and Purāṇas, the Āḷvārs' poems, and the teachings, all of which affirm the soteriological validity and power of the Tirumantra.²⁹⁵ This chain suggests that the Sanskrit scripture is not the only main authoritative source. For the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, in particular, he agrees with Nañcīyar's argument in his introduction to his Manipravalam commentary that the *Tiruvāymoḷi* should be considered the revealed text that is in accordance with the Sanskrit Vedas. Importantly, it is more accessible since Tamil is the language of the region.²⁹⁶

In the *Parantarahasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai pays attention to *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 where Nammāḷvār performs self-surrender, which takes the form of mental acceptance of God as the means and the goal:²⁹⁷ “I won't part from you for an instant' says Śrī who rests on your chest, lord of matchless fame, holder of the three worlds, my king, master of Vēṅkaṭam dear to peerless immortals and sages with nowhere else to go, I've settled at your feet.”²⁹⁸ The notion that *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 is the moment of Nammāḷvār's self-surrender is reiterated in Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's commentary of the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, the *Irupattunālāyirappaṭi*, and shared by

²⁹⁴ See other strategies of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's expansion in Clooney, “Nammāḷvār's Glorious Tiruvallavāḷ.”

²⁹⁵ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 5: “Thus, the Āḷvārs who have the direct perception of the Upaniṣads respect it since the Upaniṣads along with the reinforcing texts respect it. The *ācāryas* respect it since the Āḷvārs respect it. We should respect this particular *mantra* [Tirumantra] since the *ācāryas* respect it.” (*āka sōpabṛmhaṇaṅkaḷāna vēdāntaṅkaḷ ādarikkaiyālē, anta vēdāntasākṣātkāraṃ paṇṇiṇa āḷvārkaḷ ādarittārkaḷ. āḷvārkaḷ ādarikkaiyālē, ācāryarkaḷ ādarittārkaḷ. ācāryarkaḷ ādarittapaṭiyālē, namakku iṃmantraviṣēsamē ādaraṇīyamākak kaṭavatu*).

²⁹⁶ Section 1.4.

²⁹⁷ See the nature of self-surrender in the *Parantarahasyam* in section 2.4.

²⁹⁸ Translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 215. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 553.

the other commentators of the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.²⁹⁹ However, it is important to note that *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 is not the only verse of surrendering among all the Āḷvārs’ poems. Commenting on the word “I surrender” (*prapadye*) in the *Dvaya*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai includes *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 and also Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār’s *Ciriyatirumatal* 23.³⁰⁰ These passages exemplify the verbal form of self-surrender, characterized as a request that God would protect oneself, along with the requests of Vibhīṣaṇa and Rāmānuja from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, respectively. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai uses the Tamil scripture to idealize the surrendering of the Āḷvārs and points to the practices that the audience should follow:

Alternatively, [the word “I surrender”] means activity as it states “a movement” either through the mind, speech, or body. Mental movement refers to the determination that [God is] the means. Verbal movement points to a request with one’s mouth by means of words that He would protect [one] as in the statements, “I [Vibhīṣaṇa] have come to Rāma for refuge” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.11.14], “I’ve settled at your feet” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10], “O Nārāyaṇa, One with the color of the [blue] gem! One whose bed is the serpent (Ananta), come and remove my difficult affliction” [*Ciriyatirumatal* 23]. “[I] state the *Dvaya*” [*Śaraṇāgatigadya*].³⁰¹

In some places, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai illustrates the practices of God Himself through the Āḷvārs’ poems, especially *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10. According to Clooney, God’s activity increases after *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10, including God’s pursuit of Nammāḷvār.³⁰² In this regard, the Tamil hymns are used for theological instruction. For example, in his interpretation of the first line of the *Dvaya*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai outlines the four qualities—parental affection (*vātsalya*),

²⁹⁹ Section 1.4.

³⁰⁰ See *Ciriyatirumatal* 23 in *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 727.

³⁰¹ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 33: *aṇṇaṇ aṇṇiyilē*, “*gati*” *eṇru vyāpāramāy*, *mānasagatiyaiyum vācikaḡatiyaiyum kāyikaḡatiyaiyum collirākavumām*. *mānasagatiyāvatu: upāyatvēna adhyavasikkai; vācikaḡatiyāvatu: “rāghavaṇ śaraṇaṇ gataḡ” “aṭikkīḷamarntu pukuntēṇ” “nārāyaṇā! maṇivaṇṇā! nākaṇaiyāy! vārāy eṇṇ āriṭarai nikkāy” “dvayavaktā” eṇru collukirapaṭiyē, rakṣittaruḷavēnum eṇru vāyālē prārtikkai*. See *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.11.14, vol. 6, 58.

³⁰² Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, Chapter 3.

lordship (*svāmītvā*), disposition (*śīla*), and accessibility (*saṅgābhya*)—that are manifest in God when He becomes a refuge for the devotee.³⁰³ He then supports God’s manifestation of the qualities in the context of self-surrender with Periya Āḷvār’s *Tirumōḷi* 4.9.2, *Tiruvāymōḷi* 6.10.10, and the *Rāmāyaṇa* passages.³⁰⁴

So far, I have shown how Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai inherits the Tamil language and scripture from the *Tiruvāymōḷi* commentarial corpus that is embedded in the Manipravalam sphere. In some places, he clarifies the Sanskrit passages by translating them into Tamil and constructs dialogues in Tamil to actualize the relationship between the devotee and God. In addition to the use of Tamil, he incorporates the Āḷvār’s Tamil poems to show that they play a role in the systematization of self-surrender and cites them to illustrate the ideal practices, in particular. The expressions about experience and practices are more accessible and relatable for the audience in comparison to the philosophical and theological Sanskrit expression which are limited to the intellectual and philosophical domain. Compared to the Sanskrit authoritative passages, the Tamil poems present a more intimate and accessible form of authority. They bring the doctrine of self-surrender closer to the audience, showing that it belongs to the community and can be immediately accessed through God’s instruction and the Āḷvār’s models. Importantly, they encourage the audience of the *Parantarahasyam* to identify themselves with the devotee in the paradigm of self-surrender. Although this identification is not too explicit here, it lays the foundation for the later authors, such as Vedāntadeśika, to advance a stronger notion of the community based on the doctrine of self-surrender. In what follows, I will explore another critical norm in Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s system of self-surrender, the paradigm of the three

³⁰³ Section 3.2.

³⁰⁴ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 30. See section 3.2.

secrets.

2.3 The Three Secrets as the Embodiment of Self-surrender

The paradigm of the three secrets is first recorded in Parāśara Bhaṭṭar's *Aṣṭaślokī*, which was known to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.³⁰⁵ Despite being preceded by other Manipravalam authors such as Tirukkurukaip Piran̄ Piḷḷān̄ and Nañcīyar, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai was the first one to systematically elaborate on self-surrender through the interpretation of the three secrets, giving rise to the genre of the *rahasyaग्रन्थas*. The *rahasyaग्रन्थas* mainly aim to expound self-surrender through the interpretations of the three secrets and claim that they encode self-surrender. To establish the three secrets as parallel to Sanskrit and Tamil norms, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai explains that they are in accordance with other authoritative passages in Sanskrit and Tamil and that they can be interpreted through Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics, which is accepted by Rāmānuja in his Sanskrit doctrinalization of *bhakti*.³⁰⁶

2.3.1 The Genealogy of the Three Secrets

It should be noted that the three secrets can be found together for the first time in the Sanskrit *Aṣṭaślokī* ("The Eight Verses") of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, who was Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's predecessor, Nañcīyar's teacher, and also in the Teṅkalai lineage of *ācāryas*.³⁰⁷ The *Aṣṭaślokī*, the first work to set out and explore the three secrets, can be considered the predecessor of the *rahasyaग्रन्थas*.³⁰⁸ Either due to the limitation of the poetic style or the intention to keep them

³⁰⁵ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai cites the *Aṣṭaślokī* like the third verse in the *Parantarahasya*, 59, for example. See section 2.4.2.

³⁰⁶ Section 1.1.

³⁰⁷ His date is uncertain. See introductory section of Chapter 1. For his life and other works, see Padmanabhan, *Pārāśarabhaṭṭa*.

³⁰⁸ For the text and translation, see Mumme, *The Mumukṣuppaṭi of Piḷḷai Lokācārya*, Appendix 1, and Raghunathan, "Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭa's *Aṣṭaślokī*," 683-705. For more information, see *ibid*.

secretive, Parāśara Bhaṭṭar never reveals the whole secret and interprets each part of the three secrets separately.

The three secrets are sacred formulas or *mantras*. However, that they are normally referred to by the word “*rahasya*,” which literary means “a secret,” until the time of Vedāntadeśika who usually uses the terms “*rahasya*” and “*mantra*” interchangeably in his *Rahasyatrayasāram* to refer to the three secrets.³⁰⁹ The three secrets appeared separately in the Śrīvaiṣṇava literature before the time of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar: 1) The Mūla or Tirumantra, “Aum, I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa” (“*aum namo nārāyaṇāya*”), was referred to by the Ālvārs, namely Periyālvār, Tirumaṅkaiālvār, and Tirumaḷicaiālvār, as “the eight syllables.”³¹⁰ 2) The Dvaya, “I surrender at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī” (*śrīmannārāyaṇacaranau prapadye. śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*), is mentioned in Rāmānuja’s *Śaraṇāgatigadya* as “*dvaya*” but not spelled out. The tradition today records that Rāmānuja undergoes initiation with Periya Nambi (Mahā Pūrṇa) through the recitation of the Dvaya.³¹¹ In Parāśara Bhaṭṭar’s commentary on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, it is referred to as a *mantra*.³¹² 3) The Caramaśloka, “Having abandoned all *dharma*, come to Me alone as refuge. I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve” (*sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja. ahaṃ tvā mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*), is cited in Rāmānuja’s *Śaraṇāgatigadya* and is in the *Gītabhāṣya* but is not called “Caramaśloka.” It is mentioned in Parāśara Bhaṭṭar’s *Aṣṭaślokī* as “the last statement” (*carama-vākya*).³¹³

In the *Aṣṭaślokī*, the meanings of these three statements are spelled out and connected

³⁰⁹ See Chapter 5.

³¹⁰ Narayanan, *The Way and the Goal*, 49.

³¹¹ Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*.

³¹² Narayanan, *The Way and the Goal*, 140.

³¹³ Mumme, *The Mumukṣupāṭi of Piḷḷai Lokācārya*, Appendix 1, 211.

with self-surrender, collectively framing its theology. Particularly in the verses on the Dvaya and the Caramaśloka, *Aṣṭaślokī* 6 and 8, self-surrender is defined as an attitude or a decision to choose God as the means preceded by the performer's helplessness and inability to save himself:

Having approached *Śrī*, the eternally inseparable consort of the Lord of the universe, I resort to the feet of Hari [Viṣṇu], endowed with a host of qualities suitable for taking refuge, as my chosen *upāya* [means]. Wanting nothing for myself, I request to do complete service forever to my Lord who is joined with *Śrī*.³¹⁴

Convinced of my eternal dependence on you, O Hari, I am incompetent to do or even relinquish the *upāyas* such as karma[yoga], or to surrender (to you). Thus I am afflicted with misery. Knowing this, please destroy all my prior sins. I am firmly remembering your last words, O Charioteer [Kṛṣṇa].³¹⁵

Both verses highlight the fact that God is the means to the goal, i.e., service to God Himself. However, the role of the devotee, the speaker of these secrets, is quite passive and insignificant compared to God's role. Although the theology of self-surrender in the *Aṣṭaślokī* is not systematic or elaborate, the notions embedded in the interpretation of the three secrets serve as the model for the Manipravalam *rahasyaग्रन्थas*.

In the beginning of the *Parantarāhasyam*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai defends the soteriological importance of the three secrets by classifying them as being a part of Vedic orthodoxy: among the various scriptures that constitute Vedic orthodoxy, the paradigm of the three secrets is the basis for the doctrine of self-surrender. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai then outlines the roles, meanings, and status of the three secrets. According to him, the classification links the three secrets to self-surrender and justifies the necessity of all of them individually and collectively in the doctrinal

³¹⁴ Translated by Mumme, *ibid.*, 210.

³¹⁵ Translated by Mumme also, *ibid.*, 211.

systematization. It should be noted that like Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai separates the whole secret into parts in his treatise.

First, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai proclaims the Tirumantra to be the authority within Vedic orthodoxy since it is the essence of both the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. Next, the Dvaya communicates the practice of learned people and thus comes in subsequently to support the Tirumantra. Then, the Caramaśloka presents God’s speech, which is in accordance with the two secrets. Thus, all of the three secrets should be known since they are validated by different forms of authorities, namely *śruti*, practice, and God.³¹⁶ Moreover, the three secrets reveal different aspects of self-surrender, namely the nature of the soul for the Tirumantra, the goal for the Dvaya, and the means for the Caramaśloka. Thus, they should be studied together.³¹⁷ Finally, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai pairs the three secrets with each set of authorities. The Tirumantra is identified with *śruti*; the texts that strengthen the Vedas or *itihāsas* and Purāṇas are represented by the Caramaśloka; and the Dvaya is the authority of the practice.

Thus, the Tirumantra affirms that the meaning is established in the scriptures; the Caramaśloka affirms that the meaning is established in the reinforcing texts; the Dvaya offers [the meaning] as the practice for oneself. In the same way that the rest of the [Tiru] mantra explain *aum (praṇava)*, the Dvaya explains the rest of the [Tiru] mantra, and the Caramaśloka explains the meaning of the Dvaya. Since that is the case, all three of them should be known.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 1–2.

³¹⁷ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 3: “Thus, all the three [secrets] should be known since there is authority which is the reason to accept the meanings for each of these three [secrets] in this way. Moreover, the Tirumantra aims at communicating the truth regarding [the soul’s] nature. The Dvaya aims at communicating the truth regarding the goal. The Caramaśloka aims at communicating the truth regarding the means. Since that is the case, all of the three [secrets] should be known.” (*āka ippaṭi arhattārīyahētubhūtamāṇa prāmāṇyam ivai mūṇṇukkum taṇṭitaṇṇiyē unṭu ākaiyālē, immūṇṇum jñātavyamākak kaṭavatu. kiñca, tirumantra, svarūpayātātmyapratipādanaparamākaikāyālum, dvayam upēyayātātmyapratipādanaparamākaikāyālum, caramaślōkam upāyayātātmyapratipādanaparamākaikāyālum, immūṇṇum jñātavyamākak kaṭavatu*).

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3: *ivvarthattai śāstrasiddham ākkukīratu–tirumantram; upabṛmhaṇasiddham ākkukīratu–caramaślōkam; svānuṣṭhāṇamākkītarukīratu–dvayam. praṇavattukku mantrasēṣam vivaraṇamāṇap pōlē, mantrasēṣattai dvayam vivarikkāyālum, dvayārthattai caramaślōkam vivarikkāyālum immūṇṇum jñātavyamākak kaṭavatu.*

(*nārāyaṇacaraṇau*) differentiates this means from the means to be accomplished (*sādhyopāya*). The word “with Śrī” (*śrīmat*) states the way of approaching the accomplished means [God]. The word “I pay obeisance” states the removal of obstacles which continue in the state of the goal. The fourth-case ending [of the word “*nārāyaṇa*”] states the service which is the goal of that [soul]. The word “*nārāyaṇa*” states the recipient of that service. The word “with Śrī” (*śrīmat*, the second one) completes the recipient. Therefore, it is stated: the removal of the opposition to the service, the service, the recipient of the service, the completeness of the recipient, the mental determination that a particular eligible person who grasps that [service], the place where that is stated as the mental determination of the means, the state of that means as already accomplished, and the mediation that causes one to enter into the accomplished means.³²⁰

3) The Caramaśloka

Discussed [here] are the particular *dharmas* that are to be abandoned as an auxiliary of the acceptance [of God] (*sarvadharmān*);³²¹ the manner of the abandonment of those *dharmas* (*parityajya*); God, who is accepted to be preceded by that abandonment, is endowed with qualities, beginning with accessibility (*mām*); the independence, characterized by intolerance of any auxiliaries, of the One with those particular qualities [, beginning with accessibility] (*ekam*); the state of the independent One as a means (*śaraṇam*); the acceptance of Him as the means (*vraja*); the possession of qualities such as knowledge, power, and so on of the means who is accepted (*aham*); the eligible person whose burden [of protecting oneself] has been given up to the One with those qualities (*tvā*); the collection of sins that are obstacles to that eligible person (*sarvapāpebhyo*); the manner of liberation of those sins (*mokṣayisyāmi*); [and] the freedom from the burden of the eligible one who accepts the One who removes sins (*mā śucaḥ*).³²²

³²⁰ Ibid., 43: *āka, ivvākyatvattālum svarūpajñānāntarabhāviyāy padadvayōktamāṇa upāyōpēyaṅkaḷai prārtittatāy niṅratu. atil pūrvavākyattil “prapadyē” eṅkiṛa kriyāpadam, adhyavasāyattaic collukīratu. atukku upēyādhyavasāyavyāvṛttiyai paṅṅittarukīratu: upāyavācakamāṇa caraṇaśabdaṃ. anta upāyattukku sādhyōpāyavyāvṛttiyai paṅṅittarukīratu: “nārāyaṇacaraṇau” eṅṅru. anta siddhasādhaṅattil iḷiyum turaiyaic collukīratu: śrīmatpadam. prāpyadēśānuvṛttivirōdhiyīṇūṭaiya nivṛttiyai collukīratu: namaśśabdāṃ. avaṅṅukku prāpyamāṇa kaiṅkaryattaic collukīratu: caturthī. anta kaiṅkaryapṛatisaṃbandhiyai collukīratu: nārāyaṇaśabdaṃ. pṛatisaṃbandhiyai pūritt tarukīratu śrīmatpadam. āka, kaiṅkaryavirōdhinivṛttiyaiyum, kaiṅkaryattaiyum, kaiṅkaryapṛatisaṃbandhiyaiyum, pṛatisaṃbandhipūrtiyaiyum, attai perukīra adhikāriṇiṇūṭaiya adhyavasāyattaiyum, atu upāyādhyavasāyam eṅṅum iṭattaiyum, anta upāyatiṇūṭaiya siddhatvattaiyum, anta siddhōpāyattilē mūṭṭum puruṣakāratvattaiyum collirāyirru.*

³²¹ I add the Sanskrit terms and phrases from the Caramaśloka in this translation to indicate the progression of the commentary.

³²² Periyavācāṅ Pillai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 60: *āka, svikārāṅkatayā tvājyamāṇa dharmaviśēṣaṅkaḷaiyum anta dharmāṅkaḷiṇūṭaiya tyāgaprakāratvattaiyum, anta dharmatyāgapūrvakamākap parrum viṣayattiṇūṭaiya saulabhyādiguṇayōkattaiyum, anta guṇaviśēṣavastuviṇūṭaiya sahāyāsahatvalakṣaṇamāṇa nairapēkṣyattaiyum, nirapēkṣavastuviṇūṭaiya upāyabhāvatattaiyum, attai upāyatvena svikārikaiyum, svikṛtamāṇa upāyatiṇūṭaiya jñānaśaktyātiṅguṇayōgattaiyum, anta guṇaviśēṣavastuviṇūṭaiya pakkalilē nyastabharāṅāṇa adhikāriyaiyum, anta adhikāriyīṇūṭaiya virōdhipāpasamūhattaiyum, anta pāpavimōcaṅapṛakāratvattaiyum, pāpavimōcakaṅai parrina adhikāriyīṇūṭaiya nairpparyattaiyum collirāyirru.*

2.3.2 The Three Secrets as Manipravalam Normativity

Even if the three secrets are all in Sanskrit, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai claims that they parallel not only to various Sanskrit authoritative passages, but also to the Tamil scripture as each word encodes the meanings that can be conveyed in both Sanskrit and Tamil. To support this argument, he harmonizes the meanings of the three secrets with the other sets of scriptures. The two most obvious examples are given here.

In the chapter on the Tirumantra, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai interprets the meaning of the letter *m*, which is the last letter of *aum* at the beginning of the Tirumantra, saying that the letter expresses the subservience of the soul to God, who is the Master. To justify the soul's subservient nature to God, he cites Yāmuna's *Stotraratna*, verses 52 and 57, arguing that the Sanskrit passage communicates the same message.³²³ As previously mentioned, he also shows that God's four qualities, namely parental affection, lordship, disposition, and accessibility, are revealed by God Himself when He becomes the refuge for His devotee as in, for example, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10. The four qualities are encoded in the word “*nārāyaṇa*” in the first line of the Dvaya. By doing this, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai proves that the Dvaya and the Tamil hymns are in harmony, since the word “*nārāyaṇa*” from both the Sanskrit Dvaya and the Tamil hymns indicates the state in which God manifests His qualities:

If these [thoughts] occur in mind, namely God's fault, His non-accomplishment, His superiority, Him being beyond sense organs, it is impossible to take refuge. Because of being opposed to those [thoughts] and being exclusively for taking refuge, the four qualities, having been brought about by Śrī who is the mediator, even if [God] thought to destroy Sītā herself later, make God state: “I will give up even the life of myself and of you, Sītā, along with Lakṣmaṇa” [*Rāmāyaṇa*

³²³ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 13. See section 2.2. See Yāmuna, *Stotraratna* 52 and 57, 102 and 108.

3.9.18],³²⁴ “If something happens to you, what am I to do with my Sītā” [Rāmāyaṇa, untraceable], “Even if the Lady on the lotus (Śrī) speaks of the faults, when my devotees act, they do not act in that way. [It is said that] they do good” [Periya Ālvār’s *Tirumoli* 4.9.2].³²⁵ They are stated as being contemplated by Nammālvār, the first *ācārya*, in the order that begins with affection, “lord of matchless fame, holder of the three worlds, my king, master of Vēṅkaṭam” [*Tiruvāymoli* 6.10.10].³²⁶

Moreover, to propose that the three secrets are authoritative like other Sanskrit passages as they can be construed through Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷlai applies Mīmāṃsā principles to justify his interpretation of the Caramaśloka. The function of Mīmāṃsā as a tool to strengthen the scriptural validity is carried over to the Manipravalam sphere in which it remains a tool to prove that the three secrets can be validly interpreted like the Sanskrit authoritative passages.

Periyavāccāṅ Piḷlai proposes that the Caramaśloka should be construed as an injunction of acceptance of God as the means, qualified with the abandonment of other soteriological means. The interpretation here is in accordance with the theological standpoint that the devotee is essentially subordinate to God alone, and the dependence on the means other than God would contradict that nature, resulting in the failure to perform self-surrender. This interpretation is the core of self-surrender and the relationship between God and the devotee. He affirms this interpretation with Nañciyār’s teaching as follows:

³²⁴ Rāmāyaṇa 3.9.18, vol. 3, 41.

³²⁵ *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 90.

³²⁶ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷlai, *Parantarahasyam*, 30: *taṅṅṅuṭaiya dōṣamātal; avāṅṅuṭaiya aprāptiyātal; avāṅṅ mēṅṅmaiṅṅātal; avāṅṅ aṅṅdriyatvamātal; ivai, neñcilē nāṅṅaiṅṅāṅṅil, āśrayikka yōgyataiy illāmaiṅṅālē, avāṅṅrukku etirtaṅṅṅāy, āśrayaṅṅaikāntamāy, puruṣakārabhūṅṅtāyāṅṅa pirāṅṅṅiṅṅālē ukṅṅabhavikkappaṅṅṅu, piṅṅṅai avāṅṅṅāṅṅē aṅṅikka niṅṅaiṅṅkilum, “apy ahaṅṅ jīvitam jahyāṅṅ tvāṅṅ vā sītē salakṅṅmaṅṅām” “tvayi kiṅṅcit samāpanṅṅē kiṅṅ kāryam sītayē mama” “tāmaraiṅṅālāṅṅkilum citakuraikṅṅumēṅṅ eṅṅṅaiṅṅ āratu ceṅṅyār ceṅṅtārēṅṅ naṅṅṅru ceṅṅtār” eṅṅṅuṅṅpaṅṅi paṅṅṅakkaṅṅavatāy, prathamācāryarāṅṅa naṅṅṅmāṅṅvārālē āśrayaṅṅaikāntamāka “nikaril pukaṅṅāy! ulakam mūṅṅṅruṅṅaiṅṅyā! eṅṅṅaiṅṅāṅṅvāṅṅē! tiruvēṅṅkaṅṅattāṅṅē!” eṅṅṅru vāṅṅsalyādikramattilē anusandhikka paṅṅṅṅirucira nālu guṅṅaṅṅkaṅṅaiyum collirṅṅāyirru.*

Through the gerund form, “having abandoned” (*tyajya*), it is shown that the abandonment of *dharmas* should be done as the auxiliary of the acceptance. Then, the [gerund form also] points to the fact the reason otherwise it is inappropriate [if the acceptance is not done before the acceptance]. If there is no entering into acceptance after abandoning the *dharmas*, then indeed destruction will result from [failing] in both that precede [abandonment and acceptance]. With reference to this, Nañcīyar stated, “The state I am in is either being crowned among those who are in hell or going to the supreme abode with my little ticket” This means his dwelling place will be hell due to the sin, which is a result of abandoning *dharmas* [without acceptance], or the means that is acceptance preceded by abandonment results in having the supreme abode as the dwelling place. Thus, the gerund form indicates that the acceptance which will be later stated has the abandonment as its auxiliary.³²⁷

Looking closer at his interpretation, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai understands the phrase, “come to Me alone as refuge,” as enjoining the acceptance of God as the means to the attainment of Himself. This part of the Caramaśloka serves as the main injunction. He then explains that the first part, which prescribes the abandonment of other means, apart from self-surrender, functions as its auxiliaries. This interpretation can be understood based on Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics as a qualified injunction (*viśiṣṭavidhi*), which consists of two injunctions, primary and subordinate.³²⁸

Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai then relies on the Mīmāṃsā model of qualified injunctions, “One purchases the *soma* with a red, pink-eyed, one-year-old [cow]” (Śabara on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 3.1.12).³²⁹ According to the Mīmāṃsakas, this statement should be construed as mainly prescribing the purchase of the *soma*, which is the substance used in the ritual, along with the

³²⁷ Ibid., 54: “*tyajya*” *eṅkiṛa* “*lyap*” *pālē*, *dharmatyāgam svikāratukku aṅgamāṅav aṅru kartavyam*; *allātapōtu ayuktam eṅṅum iṭattaiḱ kāṭṭikīratu*. *dharmattai viṭṭu svikāratil iḷiyātēy irukkumākil*, *ubhayapraṣṭaṅ ākaiyālē nāśamē phalamāy aṅumē*. *ittaiḱ parravīṛē nañcīyar*, “*oṅṅil nārakikaḷukku mūrttābhiṣikṭaṅātal*; *illaiyākil paramapadam eṅ ciṛu muṛippaṭiyē cellutal ceyyumpāṭiyē nāṅ nīrkīra nilai*” *eṅṅru aruḷicceytatu*. *atu ākīratu*: *dharmatyāgaphalamāṅa pāpam mēliṭṭu narakam vastavyabhūmiyātal*; *tyāgapūrvakamāka svikṛtamāṅa upāyam palittu*, *paramapatam vastavyabhūmiyātalām ittaṅṅaiyīṛē eṅkai*.

³²⁸ McCrea, “Mīmāṃsā,” 648.

³²⁹ See *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 3.1.12, vol. 2, 673.

cow and its attributes, all mentioned in the same sentence, are subordinately enjoined to qualify the purchase. The attributes of the cow are its qualification, and thus they are simultaneously enjoined along with the cow.³³⁰ The acceptance of God, as instructed in the Caramaśloka, must be understood as the qualification that distinguishes the eligible person who undertakes self-surrender from other people in the same way that the attributes are taken into account in the selection of the cow for the purchase of the *soma*:

One may ask, if being an eligible person [alone] is required, then why should the acceptance [of God as the means] be done? [To answer,] since the acceptance which is for the sake of attaining God singles out this eligible person from the one who performs the means, being the one who desires sovereignty, the one who desires liberation in isolation (*kaivalya*), and the one who desires God's feet, this [acceptance] remains as a quality that singles out the eligible person like the qualities such as redness, pink-eyed-ness and so on differentiate the cow which is a subordinate means for the purchase of *soma* from other cattle as stated in "One purchase the *soma* with a red, pink-eyed, one-year-old [cow]" [Śabara on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 3.1.12].³³¹

As I have shown, in addition to the Tamil poems, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai pays attention to the three secrets that should be interpreted based on other scriptures and Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's incorporation of the Mīmāṃsā principle of qualified injunction, which was established by Rāmānuja as the normative hermeneutics in the Sanskrit scholastic and philosophical domain, also concurs with my argument that Manipravalam allows both Sanskrit and Tamil norms to coexist in the same sphere.

Unlike Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, Vātsya Varadaguru does not incorporate the paradigm of

³³⁰ McCrea, *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, 76-81.

³³¹ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasya*, 56: *adhikāriyākil apēkṣitam, svikāram ceykiṛa kāryam eṇṇēṇṇil: aiśvāryārthiyilum, kaivalyārthiyilum, bhagavaccaraṇārthiyāy sādhanānuṣṭhāṇam paṇṇum avaṇiṛ kāṭṭilum, ivvadhikāriyai vyāvṛttaṇ ākkukīratu bhagavallābhārthamāṇa inta svikāram ākaiyālē, "aruṇayā ēkahāyanyā piṅṅṣyā sōmam krīṇāti" eṇkiṛaviṭṭil, aruṇatvapiṅṅāṣatvātikaḷ sōmakrayattukku uṛuppāṇa paśuvukku paśvantarattīrkāṭṭil vyāvarttakaviśēṣaṇamāṇāp pōlē, ituvum adhikārikku vyāvarttaka viśēṣaṇamāy kiṭṭakkīratu.*

the three secrets in the *Prapannapārijāta*. As previously stated, Vātsya Varadaguru refers to *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as an injunction of self-surrender, but he does not classify it as one of the three secrets. He further recognizes two of the secrets, the Tirumantra and the Dvaya, only as prayers, not as fundamental to the structure of self-surrender. In the first chapter, Vātsya Varadaguru states that the Dvaya is to be used in the performance of self-surrender, according to the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.³³² In the third chapter of the *Prapannapārijāta*, he claims that the Dvaya is a Vedic secret since it can be found in *śruti* that is the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* without specifying its location in this scripture. Another source of this secret is *smṛti* such as the *Pādmapurāṇa*.³³³ There, the Tirumantra reiterates the same message of the Dvaya that God is the only refuge. It is the essence of the whole Vedāntic corpus and the highest among the *mantras*. After receiving the Tirumantra from the *ācārya*, one should recite it three times daily:

After knowing that oneself is subservient to God, one should pass time with that [subservience] as the purpose. Having understood that the Mūlamantra (Tirumantra) has the same meaning as the Dvaya from the *ācārya*, one should worship Hari (Viṣṇu) with that [Mūlamantra] and one should worship Him three times daily with the Mūlamantra according to capability. “Mūlamantra, which is the essence of all Vedānta [scriptures], enables one to cross the ocean of transmigration. It is eternally the best among the mantras, the most secret one among the secrets, and the purest among the means of purification. It should be muttered all the time by those who desire liberation as it gives results which are enjoyment and liberation. It should be muttered all the time by Vaiṣṇavas as it increases *bhakti* and knowledge. It is the divine source of *mantras* as it destroys all sins. Being focused, one should unweariedly mutter it.”³³⁴

³³² Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 4–5.

³³³ See section 2.4.1. In Chapter 1, Vātsya Varadaguru also refers to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* as the Vedic source for the Dvaya, see Vātsya Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta*, 4. Uttamur Viraraghavacharya (1962, 4) in his Tamil commentary on the *Prapannapārijāta* points to *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, of which each section is called *Valli*. The *Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*.

³³⁴ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 21–22:

śeṣatvam ātmano jānan sārthayan kālam ākṣipet | vijñāya mūlamantrārtham dvayaikārthatayā guroh ||
tadekaśaraṇo bhūtvā hariṃ tena samarcayet | traikālyam arcaṇam kuryāt mūlamantrēṇa śaktitaḥ ||
“sarvavedāntasārthaḥ saṃsārārṇavatāraṇaḥ | mantrāṇām paramo mantrō guhyānām guhyam uttamam ||
pavitrānām pavitraṃ ca mūlamantraḥ sanātanaḥ | mumukṣūṇām sadā japyam bhuktimuktiphalaḥ ||
vaiṣṇavānām sadā japyam bhaktijñānavivardhanam | mantrāṇām āśrayam divyam sarvapāpaprāṇāśanam ||

Thus, in the *Prapannapārijāta*, the two secrets only serve as prayers in self-surrender and for the remembrance of God's role as the refuge. The disregard for the paradigm of the three secrets and its structural function is indeed noticeable in the Sanskrit works on self-surrender in addition to the *Prapannapārijāta*, namely Meghanādārisūri's *Mumukṣopāyasaṃgraha* and Vedāntadesika's *Nikṣeparakṣā*, as we will see the following chapters.

2.4 The Relationship Between Self-surrender and Bhakti

Through the norms previously shown, Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai systematically propose self-surrender as an alternative to *bhakti* for the community in Sanskrit and Manipravalam. However, the argument that self-surrender is another means to liberation creates a tension between Rāmānuja's teaching of *bhakti* and this new doctrine. Which one should be followed? What is the use of one if the other one can be successfully undertaken? And if they are equally effective, why do we need both? As I will show in this section, the two authors tackle these issues differently partly due to the different audience and intellectual environments that they engage with and partly due to their respective linguistic engagements. I first investigate Vātsya Varadaguru's treatment of self-surrender, followed by the definition proposed by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.

2.4.1 When Self-surrender Acts Like Bhakti

As previously stated, Vātsya Varadaguru defends that self-surrender is a Vedāntic means like *bhakti*. Specifically, he does so through two arguments: 1) self-surrender has a form of ritual

samāhitamanā bhūtvā japam kuryād atandritah” |.

that has to be performed with auxiliaries according to one’s eligibility like *bhakti*, and 2) self-surrender can function under the system of *bhakti* through their hierarchical relationships.

For the first argument, he defines self-surrender as a Vedic offering of oneself as a substance to fire which is equivalent to God, according to the Upaniṣads.³³⁵ In Chapter 2 of the *Prapannapārijāta*, he characterizes self-surrender as a mental determination which culminates in a request for a person who wants to attain God but is without other means. He then cites a passage that seems to be from *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* to argue that self-surrender is known as “*prapatti*,” which is synonymous with “taking refuge” (*śaraṇāgati*) with God, as follows:³³⁶

The mental awareness (*buddhi*) which consists of determination and culminates in a request on the part of someone who seeks the goal [i.e., liberation] but is without any means is stated to be the nature of self-surrender.

“When one’s desire is not able to be accomplished by other means, self-surrender (*prapatti*) which is preceded by great faith [that God will protect] and has a form of a request that God alone is the means is taking refuge with God (*śaraṇāgati*).” [Thus,] self-surrender (*prapatti*) is also characterized by the word “taking refuge” (*śaraṇāgati*).³³⁷

He further defines self-surrender as the cessation of one’s own effort in the protection of oneself, according to *Lakṣmītantra* 17.74.³³⁸ It is to be performed like a ritual, accompanied by

³³⁵ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 3–4. See section 1.1.

³³⁶ This passage is attributed to the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* according to the 1954 edition, 9. However, the 1971 edition and the one edited by Uttamur Viraraghavacharya both identify this passage as belonging to Bharatamuni (9 and 12 respectively). To my knowledge, this passage is untraceable. Oberhammer suggests that the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* could be a text of Rāmānuja’s system according to its explanation of self-surrender in the *Prapannapārijāta* (“The Influence of Orthodox Vaiṣṇavism,” 53).

³³⁷ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 9-10:

buddhir adhyavasāyātmā yācñāparyavasāyinī | prāpyecchor anupāyasya prapatte rūpam ucyate ||
“ananyasādhye svābhīṣṭe mahāviśvāsapūrvakam | tadekopāyatāyācñā prapattiḥ śaraṇāgatiḥ” ||
śaraṇāgatiśabdena prapattis tu viśeṣitā |.

³³⁸ Ibid., 11-12: “On the other hand, self-surrender is the means to the grace of the One who is to be surrendered to in this way, ‘The giving over of oneself, which culminates in the offering of [oneself] to Kṛṣṇa, is said to be the disconnection from ownership regarding the result on the part of a person who is being protected by Him’ [*Lakṣmītantra* 17.74].” (*prapattes tu prapattavyaprasādadvāratā tathā | “tena samrakṣyamāṇasya phale svāmyaviyuktā ||*

keśavārpaṇaparyantā hy ātmanikṣepa ucyate” |). See *Lakṣmītantra* 17.74, 58.

five auxiliaries, as in *Lakṣmītantra* 17.66–74:

“Will to please [God]” is stated as being helpful to all beings.

From the determination that I am staying inside all beings, he should practice helpfulness to all beings as to Me.

And for that very reason, one should “avoid hostility.”

“Wretchedness” is abandoning pride born from virtuous conduct and learning because of incompleteness of the collection of auxiliaries and inabilities for all actions. Means are not accomplished, and faults are many because [there is] no accomplishment of eligibility because of decay of place, time, and quality. This abandonment of pride in this way, is pitiable, which is called “wretchedness.”

Because of [His] capability, being easy to attain because Viṣṇu is joined with compassion, because of connection between Lord and the thing to be commanded and also because this is not the first time, which is a firm belief that He will protect us who practice helpfulness, that is “faith.”

O Indra! This belief destroys all evil deeds.

Although He is compassionate, clearly capable, the master of all beings may not protect if he is not asked; therefore, there is the thought that one must ask Him: ‘Be my protector.’ This is remembered as “choosing God as the protector.”

Disconnection from ownership in a result on the part of a person who is being protected by Him, which ends in offering [oneself] to Kṛṣṇa that is called “the offering of oneself.”³³⁹

Moreover, Vātsya Varadaguru divides those who surrender into two types, the afflicted ones (*ārta*) and the content ones (*drpta*). This is based on *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.15, “If enemy who is either afflicted or content has taken refuge with another, having given up his life, he should be protected by the one whose self is disciplined” (*ārto vā yadi vā drptaḥ pareṣāṃ śaraṇāgataḥ, ariḥ prāṇān parityajya rakṣitavyaḥ kṛtātmanā*).³⁴⁰ The difference between the two groups

³³⁹ These are passages from *Lakṣmītantra* 17.66–74 (57–58) without intervening verses by Vātsya Varadaguru. For the whole discussion in the *Prapannapārijāta*, see Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 10-12.

³⁴⁰ *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.15, vol. 6, 69. Oberhammer suggests that the division seems to originate from Vātsya Varadaguru’s intention to resolve the tension in the *Nītimālā* of Nārāyaṇārya, Vātsya Varadaguru’s contemporary, between Rāmānuja’s self-surrender and the other kind of self-surrender, which is similar to self-surrender proposed in the Manipravalam literature. See Oberhammer, *Zur spirituellen Praxis des Zufluchtnehmens bei Gott*, 141–176. In addition, Marlewicz in “Self-Surrender of the Afflicted One” suggests that it is likely that the two types of self-surrender are distinct and Vātsya Varadaguru views self-surrender of the afflicted ones as the proper one. It should be noted that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai does not seem to mention this

centers on their application of the auxiliaries of self-surrender and grief regarding their *karmas*. In particular, all of the auxiliaries are present at the same time for the afflicted ones, while they occur one after another for the content ones. The afflicted ones are those who grieve regarding their past *karmas*, as opposed to those who are content. Finally, the afflicted ones attain the result instantly and do not have to wait until the end of their bodies as the content ones must do.³⁴¹

To establish the hierarchical relationship between self-surrender and *bhakti*, Vātsya Varadaguru claims that self-surrender can be understood as self-surrender that has “*bhakti* as the goal” (*sādhya-bhakti*). It can be illustrated through the analogy of the *cātaka* bird and the story of the male pigeon, who gives up his life to the hunter, from the *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.11: “It is told that the enemy [the hunter], who has come to seek refuge with the pigeon, is honored by the pigeon with his own flesh. The pigeon accepted the hunter, although the hunter is the kidnapper of his wife.”³⁴² The *cātaka* bird which only waits for raindrops to sustain itself is like

classification in the *Parantarahasyam* but refers to it along with the sub-division of each type in the *Sakalapramāṇatātparyam*. However, the classification in Vātsya Varadaguru is based on the intensity of the grief of these two groups, while Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai highlights the impatience and patience and the desire as the main reasons. For the translation of this part in the *Sakalapramāṇatātparyam*, see Anandakichenin, “Viśiṣṭādvaita in a Nutshell.”

³⁴¹ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapaṇapārijāta*, 12: “It is evident that the offering is the main thing since the cessation of one’s own effort regarding the means and the result depends on the Lord. These auxiliaries will be present [with the offering] in case of the surrendering of those who are afflicted, and they will be manifest in succession in case of the surrendering of the content ones. The division of [surrendering of] the afflicted ones and the content ones is declared in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, “If enemy who is either afflicted or content has taken refuge with another, having given up his life, he should be protected by the one whose self is disciplined” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.15]. One who is grieving about having another body is called the content one; while one who is grieving even regarding the current body, already attained, is called the afflicted one. This self-surrender can be defined through the classification of the afflicted ones and the content one. It is a firm and constant [determination that] He [God] alone is the means for the attainment of Himself.”

(*upāye ca phale caiva svaprayatnanivartanam* ||

svāmyāyattam iti vyaktaṁ nikṣepasyāṅgitā tathā | *ārtaprapattav ity eṣāṁ aṅgānāṁ sannidhiḥ tathā* ||

dr̥ptaprapattav etāni bhaviṣyanty uttarottaram | *ārtadr̥ptavibhāgas tu śrīmadrāmāyaṇodītaḥ* ||

“*ārto vā yadi vā dr̥ptaḥ pareṣāṁ śaraṇāgataḥ* | *ariḥ prāṇān parityajya rakṣitavyaḥ kṛtātmanā*” ||

yasya dehāntarakṛte śoko dr̥ptas sa ucyate | *yaś ca prārabdhadehe ’pi śocety ārtas sa ucyate* ||

ārtadr̥ptavibhāgena prapattir iyam ucyate | *sādhanaṁ bhagavatprāptaṁ sa eveti sthīrā dr̥dhā* ||).

³⁴² *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.11, vol. 6, 68: “*śrūyate hi kapotena śatruḥ śaraṇam āgataḥ* |

the one who surrenders, exclusively waiting for liberation. On the other hand, the story of the male pigeon demonstrates God’s compassion in granting liberation to the one who seeks Him as refuge based on an untraceable passage from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*:³⁴³

That which is remembered as having *bhakti* as a goal (*sādhyā-bhakti*) is sung indeed as self-surrender.

It is with this in mind that there is the statement in the *Bhāgavata* [-*purāṇa*, untraceable],

“The one who surrenders is like a *cātaka* bird, and the one who is to be taken refuge to is like the pigeon. The characteristics of the one who is to be protected and the one who is the protector is indicated by these two [birds].”³⁴⁴

When *bhakti* is the means, self-surrender functions as its auxiliary, and this is termed “*bhakti* which is the means” (*upāya-bhakti*).³⁴⁵ The notion that self-surrender can be performed as an auxiliary of *bhakti* reminds us of the same argument of Rāmānuja in the *Gītābhāṣya*. The main source for this hierarchy seems to be from the lost *Sātyakitantra*.³⁴⁶

At the same time, Vātsya Varadaguru explains that self-surrender is available, implying that it is preferable to *bhakti* which is limited to the twice-born. In Chapter 3, he highlights that

arcitāś ca yathānyāyaṃ svaiś ca māṃsair nimantritaḥ ||”

³⁴³ The explanation is based on Uttamur Viraraghavadacharya’s commentary, 18–19.

³⁴⁴ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 12:

sādhyabhaktiḥ smṛtā saiva prapattir iti gīyate | imaṃ cārtham abhipretya vaco bhāgavate yathā ||
“prapannaś cātako yadvat prapattavyaḥ kapotavat | rakṣyarakṣakayor etat lakṣaṇaṃ lakṣyam etayoḥ ||”

³⁴⁵ Vātsya Varadaguru mentions the passage that supports the identification of *bhakti* as a goal in the form of service presumably from the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā*. See Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 50:

“The lord of the attendants states in the same way in his own *Samhitā*,

‘The word service can be referred to with the word *bhakti*. The excellent kind of service is the entering into the absolute lowliness regarding the Master. Thus, supreme *bhakti* is defined as the exclusive desire for servitude [*Viṣvaksenasamhitā*, untraceable].’”

(ātmīyasamhitāyāṃ tu yathā seneśa uktavān | sevā tu procyate sadbhiḥ bhaktiśabdena bhūyasī ||

sevā cātyantanīcatvāpattir hi svāminam prati | tasmāt parasya dāsyāikarasatā bhaktir ucyate ||).

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51: “This meaning was uttered by the Lord [Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66] in detail, ‘*Bhakti* which is the means destroys any *karmas* which are different from those that have already begun to operate. On the other hand, [self-surrender] which has *bhakti* as the goal is superior since it destroys even *karmas* that have already begun to operate.’ *Bhaktiyoga* which is referred to as *bhakti* as the means along with its auxiliaries.”

(ayam artho bhagavatā saviśeṣam udīritam | upāyabhaktiḥ prārabdhavyatiriktāghanāśinī ||

sādhyabhaktis tu sā hantrī prārabdhasyāpi bhūyasī | [Sātyakitantra, unidentifiable] upāyabhaktir ity ukto bhaktiyogo hi sāṅgakaḥ ||).

the Dvaya which is to be recited only once in the performance of self-surrender is available to all without a Vedic order and accent in recitation even if it is found in *śruti*, which is supposed to be limited to only those from the three higher castes.³⁴⁷ Also, in one place, Vātsya Varadaguru implies that self-surrender is preferable to *bhakti* in the matter of *karmas* since *bhakti* which is the means does not destroy the *karmas* that have already begun to operate (*prārabdhakarma*). On the other hand, self-surrender destroys even *karmas* that have already begun to operate for the afflicted ones who surrender but not for the content ones. Thus, self-surrender is better than *bhakti* in this regard.³⁴⁸

He then mentions the three kinds of people who are eligible to undertake self-surrender, namely the ignorant one, the one with knowledge, and the devotee. These three can be mapped onto those who presumably follow the three *yogas*. They are eligible to perform self-surrender for different reasons: first, the ignorant one is not able to have the knowledge of other means; second, the one with knowledge turns away from the path of *yoga* after realizing its deprivation

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 13–14: “The *mantra* that expresses self-surrender is prescribed in the *śruti* like the *Vallis* in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. It is explained again and again in the *Pādmapurāna* in the form of the dialogue between Parāśara and Vasiṣṭha as having the same meaning as *aum (praṇava)* and consisting of twenty-five syllables along with its auxiliaries in connection with sages and others. The *mantra* is enjoined as being available to all [and] recited once there as well as in other scriptures [stated] by God, [i.e., Pāñcārātra Saṃhitās]. Therefore, even someone who is not from the three higher castes has eligibility regarding the Dvaya. That which is stated is established by the worldly and Vedic authority pertaining to [self-surrender] which possesses [the Dvaya]. Like [it is established] from the authority that the carpenters and others [are eligible for] the Vedic rituals like the offering of the fire and that a wife [of the one who sacrifices] [is eligible for] the *mantra* in the *ājyavekṣaṇa* [lit. looking after clarified butter in a sacrifice] ritual and others. Alternatively, the Dvaya is available to all due to the removal of the Vedic order [of recitation] or the accent [in recitation]. Or, [it can be taken as] Tantric, which is available to all.” (*prapatter vācako mantrah kaṭhavallyādiṣu śrutah [corr., “smṛtaḥ”] / ayam purāṇe pādme ca parāśara-vasiṣṭhayoḥ ||*

*saṃvāde praṇavaikārthaḥ pañcaviṃśativarṇakah | ṛṣyādisahitaḥ sāṅgaḥ bhūyobhūyaḥ prapañcyate ||
tatra sarvādhikāratvaṃ sakṛduccāryatā tathā | vidhīyate tathā 'nyatra śāstre bhagavatā 'pi ca ||
traivarnīketarasyāpi dvaye tasmād adhikriyā | dharmigrāhakamānena yat siddham lokavedayoḥ ||
yathā hi rathakārādeḥ agnyādhānādivaidike | yathā 'jyāvekṣaṇāḍau tu mantrē patnyāḥ pramāṇataḥ ||
yad vā 'dhītakramāpāyāt svarāder vā vilopataḥ | dvayasya sarvādhikṛtiḥ sarveṣāṃ tāntrikam tu vā ||).*
The correction of “*smṛtaḥ*” in 1954 edition to “*śrutah*” is based on the variant given in this edition and the reading of the verse in the 1971 edition, 13.

³⁴⁸ Vātsya Varadaguru, *Prapannapārijāta*, 51. See the translation in section 2.4.1.

through God, and; finally, the devotee cannot depend on other means and goals due to exclusive devotion to God:

The ignorant one, the one with all knowledge, and the devotee (*bhakta*) are eligible for self-surrender.

It is eligible for the ignorant one due to their incapability for the knowledge of other means.

The one with all the knowledge, realizing the deprivation of that kind of means directly from God, turns away from the path of *yoga* and goes to Him for refuge.

Being unable to bear depending on other means or goal, the devotee worships Him exclusively all the time due to the power of love to God.³⁴⁹

Thus, those who are eligible to pursue the three *yogas* can undertake self-surrender as it is available to all. However, in this scenario, it is implied that there are still those who are eligible to perform the three *yogas* as a means to liberation. Thus, both self-surrender and the three *yogas* serve as options for different groups of eligible people, and they are equally valid means to liberation.

Compared to Vātsya Varadaguru's system of self-surrender in the *Prapannapārijāta*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's discussions on self-surrender are more varied and elaborate, reflecting the possibility that the Manipravalam discussions preceded the one in the Sanskrit sphere as systematized by Vātsya Varadaguru. While Vātsya Varadaguru likens self-surrender to the doctrine of *bhakti*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai highlights the binary opposition between self-surrender, where God is the main cause, and *bhakti*, which is the means to be performed.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 14–15:

ajñasarvajñabhaktānāṃ prapattav adhikāritā | upāyāntaravijñānāśakter ajñasya yujyate ||
sadṛśopāyavaidhuryaṃ sākṣād bhagavato vidan | sarvajñaḥ śaraṇaṃ yāti yogamārgaparāṇmukhaḥ ||
sarvakālaṃ premavaśāt bhajan bhakto 'py ananyadhīḥ | upāyaṃ vā 'py upeyaṃ vā kṣamo 'nyaṃ nāvalambitum
||

2.4.2 The Binary Opposition Between Self-surrender and *Bhakti*

Although Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's self-surrender belongs to the Manipravalam sphere, we can still see the influence of Rāmānuja's system of *bhakti*, for example, in his reference to self-surrender as a means in the same manner as *bhakti*. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai draws the distinction between these two means mainly in his interpretation of the three secrets, arguing that their difference lies in their natures: Self-surrender is equivalent to God who is the only accomplished means (*siddhopāya*). On the other hand, *bhakti* is a means to be accomplished by an eligible person like other means to liberation.³⁵⁰ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's description of self-surrender can be influenced by his teacher, Nañcīyar, who resists theorizing self-surrender as a performance.³⁵¹ Importantly, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's communal identification of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas reflects the importance of God and not the doctrine of self-surrender. He refers to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the chapter on the Tirumantra, when he comments on the letter u in *aum* and defines the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as "those whom God desires" since they are completely subordinate to Him based on *Bhagavadgītā* 7.18.³⁵² This suggests that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas are a community of those who have the knowledge of their subservient nature to God.

In his interpretation of the Caramaśloka, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai formulates the binary opposition between self-surrender and *bhakti*. He first addresses the first two parts of the passage: "having abandoned all *dharmas*," which I term the abandonment part, and "come to Me alone as refuge." He construes that the abandonment part enjoins the abandonment of other

³⁵⁰ For the other manners through which self-surrender can be differentiated from *bhakti* in the *Parantarāhasyam*, see Venkatachari, *The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 119–120.

³⁵¹ Section 1.4.

³⁵² Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, *Parantarāhasyam*, 15: "Those whom God desires are indeed the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as stated, 'The one with knowledge is my very self' [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.18]." (*avaṅukku iṣṭarākīrār: "jñānī tv ātmaiva" eṅkiṛa śrīvaiṣṇavarkalīrē*.) See sections 1.2 and 1.3. See also *Bhagavadgītā* 7.18, vol. 2, 41.

means like *bhakti* along with their auxiliaries or the Vedic rituals as they need to be accomplished.³⁵³ Following Nañcīyar, he explains that the injunction is subordinate to the main injunction in the second part which prescribes the eligible person to accept God as the means before specifying that both the abandonment and the acceptance should be understood as mental.³⁵⁴ Through this definition, it can be understood that one should not physically abandon the ritual duties which one has to perform according to one’s caste and stage of life. In fact, one should keep performing them with the realization that they are not the means to any results, including liberation:

Next, “having abandoned” refers to the way to abandon that. Here, one may ask if the word abandonment means the abandonment of the nature of *dharmas*, or the abandonment of the results and so on [of *dharmas* but not *dharmas* themselves], or the abandonment of the thought that these *dharmas* are the means. [To answer,] for an eligible person, it is impossible to abandon the *dharmas* since they should be performed for the passing of time until death [and] [the abandonment of them] is harmful according to God. It does not make sense that the abandonment would indicate the abandonment of the results and so on since it is already stated that the results and so on are to be abandoned along with the agent of the means. Given that is the case, the abandonment here states the abandonment of the thought that these *dharmas* are the means. The abandonment of the thought that the *dharmas* are the means refers to the removal of the notion that a means that pleases God is the cause for the attainment [of the result]. Thus, there is no fault through the abandonment of the nature [of *dharmas*], and there is no redundancy which would result from talking about the abandonment of the results and so on.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai states that these *dharmas* are *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga*, a combination of *karma-* and *jñāna-* *yoga* (*karmajñānasamuccaya*), *bhakti*, the knowledge of the secret of the *avatāras* (*avatārahasyajñāna*), the Upaniṣadic means to the Supreme Person (*puruṣottamavidyā*), living in sacred places (*puṇyakṣetравāsa*), and praising the names of God (*tirunāmasaṅkīrtana*). The word “all” in “all *dharmas*” points to other sacrificial rituals such as *sāndhyāvandana* according to castes and stages of life (*Parantarahasyam*, 51).

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 54. See translation and text in section 2.3.2.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.: *aṅantaram “paritajya” eṅru atiṅṅaiya tyāgaprakārattaic collukīratu. iṅku tyāgaśabdattālē collukīratu, dharmasvarūpatyāgattaiyō? dharmaphalādityāgattaiyō? dharmattil upāyatvabuddhityāgattaiyō? eṅṅil: ivvadhikārikku, yāvadaśarīrapātam kālakṣēpattukkāka bhagavaddōṣahētubhūtam āṅṅavai anuṣṭhēyam ākaiyālē, dharmasvarūpatyāgamāka māṅṅātu. phalādikaḷ, sādhanakkuṅkūṅṅa tyājyamākak kīlē uktam ākaiyālē, phalādityāgattaic collukīratākav oṅṅātu. āka, iṅku dharmāṅkalīṅṅaiya upāyatvabuddhityāgattaic collukīratu. anta upāyatvabuddhityāgam āvatu: lābhahētuvāṅṅa bhagavatprūtikku sādhanam eṅṅiṅṅa pratipattiyait tavirukai. ākaiyālē svarūpatyāgattāl varum kuṅṅaiyum, phalādityāgattaic collukīratu eṅṅiṅṅattāl varum punarukṅṅiyum iṅṅiyilē oḷiyum.*

The abandonment is subordinate to and must precede the acceptance of God. The sequence implies that one cannot accept God as the means without abandoning the thought that there are other means to liberation apart from God. In other words, one can choose either only God or other means like *bhakti*. According to Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, the abandonment of other means and the non-active attitude towards self-surrender can be theologically justified by the natures of the soul and God. Since the soul's nature is subservient to God, undertaking anything can destroy the nature and obstruct the soul from attaining God.³⁵⁶ The abandonment of other means thus should be regarded as the qualification of an eligible person. As the already accomplished means, God does not need any further actions or help. Even the acceptance of Himself as the means should not be understood as an auxiliary.³⁵⁷ Although Śrī functions as the mediator, she is only an attribute of God and does not contribute to the success or failure of the attainment of God.³⁵⁸

Through the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of Vibhīṣaṇa, Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai notes another important

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 54: “Other means must be abandoned if considering one’s essential nature. Other means should be abandoned given their natures. Other means should be abandoned given the already mentioned nature of those [means]. If one looks at one’s nature, [one would know that] it is absolutely dependent [on God] in such a way that engaging in the activity of protecting oneself is damaging for one’s essential nature as stated in the word ‘I pay obeisance.’” (*svasvarūpattaip pārttālum, sādhaṇāntraraṅkaḷai viṭavēṇṭivarum. avārriṇṭaiya svarūpaṅkaḷaip pārttālum, sādhaṇāntaraṅkaḷ tyājyamāy arum. paṟrappukukira upāyasvarūpattaip pārttālum sādhaṇāntaraṅkaḷ tyājyamāyarum. svasvarūpattaip pārttāl namaśśabdattil collikiṟapaṭiyē svarakṣaṇavyāpārattilē ilikai, svarūpahāniyāmpaṭi atyantaparatantramāy irukkum*).

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 56: “Since this means [God] is already accomplished, there is no need to produce [this means]; since [this means] has a single form, there is no need to choose; [and] since He is the supreme sentient being, there is no need for others to give the result. Thus, since taking an action along with auxiliaries is not for this means, it is not possible for this acceptance [of God as the means] to be an auxiliary.” (*inta upāyam siddham ākaiyālē utpat[t]yapēkṣaiy illai; ēkarūpam ākaiyālē vṛtyapēkṣaiy illai; paramacētanam ākaiyālē phalapradānattil anyasāpēkṣataiy illai. āka, aṅgaṅkaḷaik koṅṭu koḷvatu orukāryam ivvupāyattukku illāmaiyaḷē, inta svikāram aṅgamāka māṭṭātu*).

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 26: “Although [she] is an attribute [of God], there is no function as the means for her like other particular qualities which are attributes [of God], [...] one must regard her status as the mediator.” (*viśēṣaṇatvam uṅṭēyākilum, viśēṣaṇabhūtamāṇa guṇaviśēṣaṅkaḷ ṍpāti, upāyōpayōkitvam avaḷukku illāmaiyaḷum, [...] ivaḷukkup puruṣakārahāvattil nōkkākak kaṭavatu*).

distinction between self-surrender and *bhakti*. He indicates that self-surrender is accessible by anyone regardless of the births (*jātis*) and other qualities, since the desire to attain the goal is the only qualification for self-surrender:

Here, it is shown that everyone is eligible to perform self-surrender (*prapatti*) since there is no qualification of one with births, qualities, activities, and so on as stated in “I who am like this commit [myself to You].” Now, only desire is necessary. Since the desire has the purpose, [Vibhīṣaṇa’s] lowliness and so on is stated through his word in order to take refuge in the statement beginning with “[I am a younger brother of] the villain named Rāvaṇa” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.11.10]; [Rāma’s] subjects reviled him, stating his fault, in the statement, “Rāvaṇa’s younger brother, known as Vibhīṣaṇa, has come to you for refuge along with four demons (*rakṣasas*)” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.11.17]; on top of that, [Rāma] protected Vibhīṣaṇa despite the statements [of his subjects], “Let him [Vibhīṣaṇa] be killed-let us tie him” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.11.20]; the Lord [Rāma], who is the refuge, stated Himself, “Even if he is Rāvaṇa himself” [...].³⁵⁹

Another characteristic of self-surrender in the *Parantarahasyam* that conforms to *bhakti* is the distinction between self-surrender and the Advaita Vedānta knowledge from Upaniṣadic passages. After explaining the subservient nature of the soul, Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai refers to the fact that this nature is contradictory to the identity of God and the soul, which is the knowledge conveyed by the passage, “That’s how you are” (*tattvamasi*) [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7], according to the Advaita Vedānta.³⁶⁰ However, despite his anti-Advaita Vedānta attitude,

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 33: *itil “īdrśaṇāṇa nāṇ adhyavasikkirēṇ” eṇru jātiguṇavṛttādikaḷālē oruvaṇai viśēṣiyāmaiṅyālē, ipprapatyanuṣṭhāṇam sarvādhikāram eṇru tōṛrukīratu. iṇi, ruciṅyē vēṅṭuvatu. inta ruci prayojakam ākaiyirē, “rāvaṇō nāma dūrvṛttaḥ” eṇru toṭaṅkit taṇ nikaṛṣādikaḷaṭaiyat taṇ vāyālē colluvatu; “rāvaṇasyānujō bhrātā vibhīṣaṇa iti śrutah, caturbhiḥ saha rakṣōbhīr bhavantam śaraṇaṃ gataḥ” eṇru arukiruntārilum avaṇ kuṛai colli kṣēpippatu; atukku mēlē “vadhyatām-badhyatām” eṇpatakāṇīṛkac ceṅṭēyūm śrīvibhīṣaṇapperumāḷai rakṣittatu; śaraṇyarāṇa perumāḷ tām, “yadi vā rāvaṇas svayam” eṇpatu [...]. See the *Rāmāyaṇa* passages, vol. 6, 57 and 59.*

³⁶⁰ Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, *Parantarahasyam*, 9: “Since the word “*nārāyaṇa*” which is the explanation of this [letter a which is the first letter of *aum*] has a fourth-case ending (dative) and this [letter a] is the summary [of the word “*nārāyaṇa*”], there must be a fourth-case ending. Being with the first-case ending (nominative) instead of the fourth-case ending with the meaning that refers to the oneness of the soul and the Supreme Soul as “That’s how you are” (*tattvamasi*) [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7], is inconsistent with the explanation [in letter a]. On top of that, it is inconsistent with the soul’s nature as the body [of God], which is stated in the word “*nārāyaṇa*.” (*itīṇṭaiya vivaraṇamāṇa nārāyaṇapadam caturyantam ākaiyālē, saṅgrahamāṇa ituvum caturthyantamāka*

Periyavāccāṇ Pillai's definition of self-surrender comes close to Advaita Vedānta knowledge towards the end of the *Parantarahaysam*.

According to his analysis, the later part of the Caramaśloka, "I will free you from all sins," points to God's removal of sins for the person who has surrendered to Him. The sins are the obstacles to the realization of servitude to God, which is innate to the soul. Once God removes these obstacles, the soul can reveal the nature of servitude like a shining gem whose dirt has been cleaned. The notion of the removal of obstacles is based on Parāśara Bhaṭṭar's *Aṣṭaślokī* 3, "I am the property of the one indicated in the letter a, I am not my own. The word 'nārāyaṇa' means the abode of the group of eternal 'nāras.' The dative case-ending says that my performances of spontaneous service for him should take place at all times, in all places, and under all conditions."³⁶¹ Periyavāccāṇ Pillai states:

Like when rubbing the ruby which is covered in dirt to remove the dirt, taking refuge in Him reveals the light that belongs to him (the soul), taking refuge in Him reveals completely the state of having sins that have been destroyed and others whose resting-place is oneself due to the complete destruction of one's coverings that are ignorance and so on. Thus, only the removal of obstruction is required. That predominance [of God] is said to show the removal of obstruction. For this very purpose, Parāśara Bhaṭṭar stated, "my performances of spontaneous service for him should take place" [*Aṣṭaślokī* 3].³⁶²

The classification of self-surrender is close to the Advaita Vedānta definition of liberation in

vēṇṭum. caturthyantamākātu prathamāntamāy "tattvamasi" pōlē, ātmaparamātmākkaḷuṭaiya aikyaparam ākīratu eṇṇum artham, vivaraṇattōṭē virōdhikkum. atukku mēlē nārāyaṇapadattīr collukīra śarīrātmabhāvattōṭum virōdhikkum). For the text and translation of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 252–253.

³⁶¹ The translation by Mumme in *The Mumukṣuppaṭi of Pillai Lokācārya*, Appendix 1, 209. For the Sanskrit text, see *ibid*.

³⁶² Periyavāccāṇ Pillai, *Parantarahasyam*, 59: *malayōgattālē maḷuṅkiṇa māṅikkattai aḷukkaṛakkaṭaintāl taṇṇaṭaiyē tadgatamāṇa oḷi prakāśikkum ōpāti, ivanukkum avidyādikaḷākīra tirodhāṇaṅkaḷaṭaiyak kaḷikaiyālē, svāśrayamāṇa apahatapāpatvādikaḷaṭaiyat taṇṇaṭaiyē prakāśikkumīrē. ākaiyālē virōdhinivṛttiyrē apēkṣitam. anta prādhānyam tōṭṟa virōdhinivṛttiyaic collukīratu. ākaiyīrē, "āvis syur mama sahajakainkaryavidhayaḥ" eṇru bhaṭṭar aruḷiceytatu.*

the form of the removal of ignorance.³⁶³ I understand that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's classification of self-surrender as the removal of ignorance is rooted in his emphasis on the passive role of self-surrender and the fact that God is the means that needs not be accomplished. It is not likely that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai intends to draw the similarity between self-surrender and Advaita Vedānta knowledge. However, the emphasis brings self-surrender even closer to Advaita Vedānta knowledge in the literature of the later generations such as Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Mumukṣupaṭi*, as we will see.

Although both authors defend self-surrender as an independent soteriological doctrine, their definitions are directed to different intellectual groups and based on Sanskrit and Manipravalam modes of soteriological expression. Belonging to the Sanskrit community of authors who consolidate *bhakti* at Kāñcīpuram, Vātsya Varadaguru maintains at all costs that both *bhakti* and self-surrender are equally valid. Resting on the soteriology of *bhakti*, his self-surrender takes on the Vedāntic status and the ritual-nature of *bhakti*. Like other Manipravalam authors at Śrīraṅgam, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai makes a distinct claim that only self-surrender can grant one liberation, that *bhakti* is no longer an option, and that self-surrender is nothing other than God Himself. As a result, the whole community should not follow *bhakti*, and everyone is eligible for self-surrender.

2.5 Summary

Operating within the Sanskrit sphere, Vātsya Varadaguru resorted to only the Sanskrit norms and brought in the Sanskrit soteriological expression centered on Rāmānuja's *bhakti*. In particular, he used only the Sanskrit scripture and claimed the equivalence between self-

³⁶³ For more information on Advaita Vedānta and their doctrines, see Potter, *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and his Pupils*, Vol. 3, for example.

surrender and *bhakti* to validate self-surrender as another soteriological doctrine. In the *Prapannapārijāta*, self-surrender is a ritual, like *bhakti*, which must be performed. It also has to conform to the injunctions and rules prescribed in the Sanskrit scripture. Due to his method of collecting various sets of authoritative passages and citing them together to support each topic, his system of self-surrender has to be extracted from these passages and does not reflect the practices or the actual community of those who follow self-surrender. Interestingly, focusing on the validity of self-surrender, which is the primary concern in the Sanskrit sphere, Vātsya Varadaguru's arguments and discussions are intellectual and not as intimate as those in the Manipravalam sphere, which consists of a dialogical style that gives the sense that God is directly addressing the audience. This can also be understood to be caused by the absence of the Tamil scripture and language that allows the reference to the Tamil heritage.

In contrast, the Vedāntic scripture is not the only authority in the Manipravalam sphere. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, following other Manipravalam commentators on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, paid attention to the Tamil scripture and further harmonized different sets of scriptures to form a scriptural foundation of self-surrender in relation to the paradigm of the three secrets. His scriptural systematization provides the basis for self-surrender for other *rahasyagrathas* of the later authors like Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Mumukṣupaṭi* and Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram*.

Thus, we see the doctrine of self-surrender developed into two different strands with overlapping features: self-surrender in the Sanskrit sphere relies only on the Sanskrit norms and can be characterized through its identification with *bhakti*; while the one in the Manipravalam sphere rests on both the Sanskrit and Tamil normative sources and is so subordinate to God that it no longer plays a role in the soteriological process. These elements represent the norms and expressions of the soteriology of self-surrender at the moment when it was first systematized in

the two spheres. They further influenced the later treatises in each language. What we will see in the next chapter is that the difference in the scriptural preference and theological emphasis as explored in this chapter branch out in more opposing directions in the treatises of the subsequent generations due to the authors' decisions to immerse their systems of self-surrender into varying linguistic spheres.

CHAPTER 3 HETEROGENEITY

By the thirteenth century, after Vātysa Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, self-surrender was widely accepted as the primary soteriological doctrine of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. It is also during this period that we see an increase in the consolidation of the community as a whole and in the organization of centers (*maṭhas*). Srilata Raman marks the thirteenth century as one of the historical turning points in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, which also include the political and economic changes from a unified Cōḷa kingdom to more disintegrated regional powers and the rising social significance of non-brahmin groups. The political and social fluctuations around this period seem to accelerate the interest of the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors' interest in expanding the community and to differentiate itself from other religious communities. This is even more evident in the later generation of authors of the fourteenth century, as we will see in the next chapter. Raman explains the situation:

In contrast to the historical circumstances [i.e., the expansion of the Chola temple economy] in which Piḷḷāṅ and Nañcīyar composed their works, the later commentators Naṁpiḷḷai, Vaṭakku Tiruvītip Piḷḷai, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Aḷakiya Maṅvāḷa Cīyar lived in a period which marked the beginning of prolonged political uncertainty, starting from the mid-thirteenth century when what was once a unitary Cōḷa kingdom had disintegrated and was being challenged by growing regional powers. These included a new Pāṇḍya power within the Cōḷa heartland of the Kaveri delta, the Kakatīyas in the Telugu region with their seat at Warangal and the Hoysalas in Karnataka. The period of these commentators, therefore was one of political uncertainty and transition, straddling as it did the relative stability of the Cōḷa period on the one hand, and the turmoil of the Muslim incursions on the other, leading to the eventual establishment both of the Deccani sultanates and Vijayanagara. The Vaiṣṇavite sacred centres were also witnesses to the fluctuating fortunes of the regional powers: Kāñcīpuram, for instance, changed hands from Cōḷa to Kakatīya to Pāṇḍya rule all within the space of a century. It was not just the old political order which was changing but also the agrarian settlements of the Cōḷa period. Regardless of how one characterizes the Cōḷa state – whether as “bureaucratic

and centralised” or “segmentary” – it is generally accepted that the thirteenth century saw the decline of old institutions and the emergence of new ones and changes in the old agrarian order. The evidence, taken as a whole, seems to speak for a society in motion with new groupings of non-brahmin, warrior communities becoming significant regional powers.³⁶⁴

Moreover, the Śrīvaiṣṇava *maṭhas*, which had been loosely developed since the twelfth century seemed to have been more administratively structured around the thirteenth century before gaining recognition in the epigraphical evidence in the fourteenth century.³⁶⁵ The increasing attention to the entire communal notion may parallel the intensification of the social base of each location like Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam despite their mutual contact. Borrowing Patricia Mumme’s argument on the distinction between these two locations, one could say that the community at Kāñcīpuram was much more “cosmopolitan” in the sense that they engaged more with the Sanskrit philosophical debates shared by other philosophical systems, while Śrīraṅgam was more exclusively for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and Tamil heritage.³⁶⁶ In addition to this distinction, I claim that there is an additional, distinction that pertains to the linguistic domain despite the connection between the two locations.

In this chapter, I will show how Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres are indeed more distinct than what we have seen due to the divergence in the normative and expressive choices made by the two authors investigated in this chapter, namely Meghanādārisūri and Piḷḷai Lokācārya. Both writers came from two respective groups of authors: first, those like Vātsya Varadaguru at Kāñcīpuram who paid attention to the philosophical Vedāntic debates and used only Sanskrit in their compositions, and, second, those who composed only Manipravalam

³⁶⁴ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 178.

³⁶⁵ Dutta, *From Hagiographies to Biographies*, 93–94.

³⁶⁶ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 1–25.

works such as the Manipravalam commentators. Unfortunately, we have little historical evidence about them, and what we know is mainly extracted from their works.

According to the tradition, Piḷḷai Lokācārya was the son of Vaṭakku Tiruvīti Piḷḷai (c. 1250), the attributed author of the *Īṭu Muppattāyirappaṭi*, and the brother of Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷapperumāḷ Nāyaṇār, the author of the *Ācāryahṛdayam* and the *Aruḷiceyalrahasyam*.³⁶⁷ In the hagiographical narrative of Vedāntadeśika, Piḷḷai Lokācārya is portrayed as Vedāntadeśika's rival and friend at Śrīraṅgam. He escaped to Tirupati during the Muslim sack of Śrīraṅgam.³⁶⁸ From this information, we may assume that Piḷḷai Lokācārya was a significant figure at Śrīraṅgam who was immersed in engaging with the Tamil scripture and using Manipravalam to discuss theology. This picture is supported by his compositions. Despite his lineage from the Manipravalam commentators, Piḷḷai Lokācārya did not compose a single commentary on the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns. Following Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lokācārya composed eighteen Manipravalam *rahasyagranthas*, of which the *Śrīvacana Bhūṣaṇam*, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, and *Tattvatrayam* are highly regarded by the present-day community of the Teṅkalais.³⁶⁹ He was also retrospectively regarded as the originator of the Teṅkalai sub-tradition. It is certain that he was influenced by Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai's Manipravalam works, especially the *Parantarāhasyam*, which can be characterized as a model for Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Mumukṣupaṭi*, the focus of this chapter.

Compared to Piḷḷai Lokācārya, we know almost nothing about Meghanādārisūri. Based on his Sanskrit works, we know that that he participated with the Sanskrit community at Kāñcīpuram. We do not have his exact dates apart from the assumption that he was likely active

³⁶⁷ Venkatachari, *The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, Chapter 3.

³⁶⁸ Hopkins, "Vedāntadeśika," 463–464.

³⁶⁹ McCann, "Ācāryābhimāna," 20.

in the thirteenth century.³⁷⁰ Thus, it might be the case that he was an older contemporary of Vedāntadeśika like Piḷḷai Lokācārya. Within his Sanskrit circle, self-surrender remained marginal and implicit, as seen in the works of, for example, Nārāyaṇārya and Ātreya Rāmānuja, who did not defend self-surrender as an independent means separate from *bhakti*.³⁷¹ Instead of being explicit about self-surrender, the Sanskrit authors at this time focused on consolidating the Sanskrit sphere based on Rāmānuja. They also maintained the authority of the Upaniṣads and did not include the Tamil scripture in their intellectual scenario, let alone in their soteriology. Among them, Meghanādārisūri was arguably the primary advocate of the Upaniṣads and Rāmānuja’s philosophy. Following Rāmānuja, he strengthened the unity of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta by using Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics with Upaniṣadic statements, as in his central Vedāntic treatise, the *Nayadyumaṇi*. Interestingly, he devoted one work, the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, to defending self-surrender as Vātysa Varadaguru had done.

This chapter draws attention to these two contemporary authors’ primary treatises on self-surrender, Meghanādārisūri’s *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* and Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s *Mumukṣupaṭi*, to reveal that the authors’ different strands of self-surrender are shaped by the spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam that they inhabited and the ways they engaged with their respective linguistic domains. In the first section, I explore how the two authors expressed self-surrender in different manners by highlighting the contradicting aspects of its function and accessibility. I then show that their theological expressions are based on diverging normative sets of textual sources and authoritative figures.

We can assume that Piḷḷai Lokācārya might have been addressing a more limited

³⁷⁰ According to Pandit, his active year is c. 1250, see “Meghanādari sūri.”

³⁷¹ See Nārāyaṇārya’s *Nītimālā*, 67-68, and Ātreya Rāmānuja’s *Nyāyakulīśa*, 193.

audience compared to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai since Piḷḷai Lokācārya composed only one genre, the *rahasyagranthas* in Manipravalam. This is unlike Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, who commented on the Āḷvārs' hymns and also the Sanskrit works of previous *ācāryas*, in addition to composing *rahasyagranthas*. The style of aphorism (*sūtra*), which is brief and sometimes obscure in the *Mumukṣupaṭi*, further suggests that the text might have been used and circulated among those who were familiar with Piḷḷai Lokācārya's teaching.³⁷² Historically, Piḷḷai Lokācārya spent his time at Śrīraṅgam, where the *ācāryas* paid attention to the Tamil scripture. Also, the focus on the Tamil scripture might have increased since Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's time. Still, Piḷḷai Lokācārya's preference for Tamil scripture is remarkable, and his inattention to the Sanskrit sources may be explained as his attempt to strengthen the Manipravalam sphere for his Śrīraṅgam milieu by limiting the use of the norms shared by the Sanskrit treatises.

In contrast, Meghanādārisūri restricted the textual authority to Sanskrit scripture and regarded Rāmānuja as the ultimate authoritative figure in his *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*. This might be rooted in his intellectual project to consolidate the Sanskrit sphere to the normative domain demarcated by Rāmānuja's soteriological teaching as reflected in his other works. Despite its overt restriction to the Sanskrit sphere, one can see that the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* includes some of the views found in the Manipravalam literature before and around this time such as the passive nature of self-surrender and the inclusion of the non-twice-born in the soteriological process, which indicate the overlapping nature of different spheres despite their increasingly solidified borders.

³⁷² It is my understanding at this point that the *Mumukṣupaṭi* is a summation of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's *Parantarahasyam*. This explains Piḷḷai Lokācārya's choice of *sūtra*-style along with the brevity and obscurity of the *Mumukṣupaṭi*. However, this hypothesis needs further justification.

3.1 The Two Shades of Self-surrender

Here, I present two shades of self-surrender as theorized by the two authors in their treatises. The difference in these two strands suggests the authors' engagement with their respective spheres. To place self-surrender in the domain of the Sanskrit sphere established by Rāmānuja himself, Meghanādārisūri proposes that self-surrender is another Upaniṣadic means that has to be performed, similar to what Vātsya Varadaguru states. However, Meghanādārisūri goes beyond Vātsya Varadaguru to leave no avenue for *śūdras* to attain liberation even in the case of self-surrender. Meghanādārisūri's exclusion of *śūdras* from performing self-surrender is unique even among the Sanskrit authors and points to his attempt to strictly conform to Rāmānuja's characteristics of *bhakti*. Unlike Meghanādārisūri, Piḷlai Lokācārya emphasizes the hierarchical relationship between God and the soul, stating that the soul is subject to God's supremacy due to its subservient nature. As I argued in the previous chapter, this relationship represents Tamil devotional expression. As the Master of the soul, God has total control over the soul's soteriological process. Thus, self-surrender can be reduced to just a gesture or a non-resistance to God's protection and is no longer a means that should be performed. It is passive, while God is active and, as a result, is available to all who realize this relationship, including those who are not twice-born. Thus, self-surrender in the *Mumukṣupaṭi* is even more accessible to everyone than in Periyavāccāṅ Piḷlai's in his *Parantarahasyam*, where it still functions as a means.

3.1.1 Self-surrender and the Exclusion of *Śūdras*

In this section, I first show that Meghanādārisūri's definition of self-surrender largely agrees with Vātsya Varadaguru's *Prapannpārijāta*, which may be the main source of influence.

However, despite this, Meghanādārisūri deviates from his predecessor's acceptance of everyone's eligibility for self-surrender. Meghanādārisūri argues that those who are not twice-born and thus are not eligible for Vedic study cannot attain liberation through any Upaniṣadic means, including self-surrender. The only way they can attain liberation for them is to be reborn as one of the three castes. His insistence affirms soteriological arguments in the Sanskrit sphere as seen in Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* and might stem from his intention to maintain both the validity of self-surrender and its Vedāntic status.

Like Vātsya Varadaguru, Meghanādārisūri derives his definition of self-surrender from Upaniṣadic passages, especially the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* passages, to prove that self-surrender is one among the many Upaniṣadic means to liberation. Like Vātsya Varadaguru, he focuses on *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.2: "You, who are pervading and delighting in wealth, are joined with the breath. O Brahman, you are the creator of all and the giver of energy to the fire, speech to the sun, splendor to the moon, You are grasped in the sacrificial ladle. One should offer oneself as *aum* to You, the great glorious Brahman."³⁷³ He claims that this verse connected to the statements regarding self-surrender in *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2: "Offering is Brahman; Brahman is the Supreme; The Supreme is Brahman; Offering is superior to those austerities which are inferior," and *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1: "Thus, the offering is said to be superior to these austerities."³⁷⁴

The *mantra*, "You, who are pervading," [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.2] states the nature of self-surrender, having reminded one of the stated offering (*nyāsa*) in the passage, "Thus, the offering is said to be superior to these austerities" [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1], to explain the manner of self-surrender as stated in the *mantra* beginning with "Offering is Brahman; Brahman is the Supreme; The Supreme is Brahman; Offering is superior to those austerities

³⁷³ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.2, 25. See section 2.1.1.

³⁷⁴ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2, 23, and *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1, 25. See section 2.1.1.

which are inferior; one knows this; this is the secret (*upaniṣad*)” [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 21.2].³⁷⁵

Based on these passages, self-surrender can also be characterized as the laying down of oneself to God (*ātmanikṣepa*), which is synonymous to “offering” (*nyāsa*), and also as the knowledge of the soul’s subordination to God and of God as both the means and the goal:

By the word “offering” (*nyāsa*), what is meant is self-surrender (*prapatti*), characterized as the laying down of oneself (*ātmanikṣepa*). [The *Upaniṣad*] praises the stated knowledge of self-surrender in order to show that it is superior to all other means due to its being the means to liberation [...] Being the goal, Brahman is higher than anything else and offering, just like that, is a goal for someone who wants to cross beyond the transmigration. This is what the *mantra* [in the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*] means.³⁷⁶

Agreeing with Vātsya Varadaguru, Meghanādārisūri points out that self-surrender in the form of the laying down of oneself is the predominant *Upaniṣadic* means and is to be accompanied by five auxiliaries, based on *Lakṣmītantra* 60–61.³⁷⁷ In his explanation of each of the auxiliaries, Meghanādārisūri highlights the role of scripture, especially the *Upaniṣads*, and the duties according to one’s caste and stage of life, which are communicated by the first two auxiliaries, namely the will to please God and the avoidance of hostility. To elaborate, the first auxiliary shows that, to please God, an eligible person should maintain the knowledge of the hierarchical relationship between God and the subservient soul and preserve the duties according to one’s own caste and stage of life as prescribed by the *Upaniṣads*. This instruction

³⁷⁵ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha* (Bangalore: Eriṣ Mudrākṣaraśālā, 1910), 38: “*nyāsa iti brahmā hi paraḥ paro hi brahmā tāni vā etāny avarāṇi tapāṃsi nyāsa eva atyarecayad ayam evaṃ vedety upaniṣat,*” *ityādīmantroktanyāsaprakārābhidjñānāya tasmān nyāsam iṣāṃ tapasām atiriktam āhuḥ, iti pūrvoktanyāsaṃ smārayitvā vasuraṇyo vibhūrasīti mantreṇa tatsvarūpam abhidhīyate, teṣāṃ mantrāṇām arthās tu.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: *nyāsa ity ātmanikṣepopalakṣitā prapattir ucyata ity uktaprapattijñānasya mokṣasādhanatvena sarvopāyotkṛṣṭatvaṃ vaktuṃ stauti, [...] paro hi brahma prāpyatve sarvasmād utkṛṣṭaṃ brahama tadvaduttīrṣor nyāso 'pi prāpya ity arthaḥ.*

³⁷⁷ *Lakṣmītantra* 17.60–61, 57. See section 2.4.1.

is further supported by *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3.8.9, which justifies the performance of these duties even in the case of *bhakti*.³⁷⁸ The second auxiliary informs one to avoid neglecting knowledge and ritual performance based on the Upaniṣadic injunctions, as doing so would displease God.³⁷⁹

“This is six-fold taking refuge: the will to please [God], the avoidance of hostility, the faith that He will protect, the choosing of Him as the protector, the laying down of oneself, and wretchedness” [*Lakṣmītantra* 17.60-61].

This is the specific definition. The will to please [God] refers to the will for the performance of the service as an end in itself as in the case of Vibhīṣaṇa,³⁸⁰ Arjuna, and others through the scriptural rituals which conform to one’s nature, preceded by the knowledge of oneself, the Supreme Self, and so on. The conducts according to one’s caste and stages of life in the scriptures are what conform to God.

It is remembered, “Viṣṇu who is the Supreme Person is worshiped by the person with conduct according to one’s caste and stage of life. No other path produces satisfaction for Him” [*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3.8.9]. Thus, the worship of God is indeed service; therefore, that alone is what pleases God like [the conducts] of Vibhīṣaṇa and others.

What is undesirable [to God] is the conforming act with the thought that the body, house, land, son, friends, and so on belong to oneself, or the actions suitable to pleasing but with the thought that the body and sense organs are oneself, or performing [the conducts] with the thought that oneself is independent, pervasive, or non-sentient in the manner opposed to the scripture, or resolving to perform the service previously explained wrongly, or not performing it at all. The avoidance of that is the avoidance of what is not pleasing to God and the knowledge of what is not pleasing is from the scripture since there is no other way to know that [...].³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ For the full text, see *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3.8.9, vol. 1, 294.

³⁷⁹ *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 16–17. The third and fourth auxiliaries then indicate that self-surrender which is the mental offering of the activity and agency of protecting oneself to God is to be preceded by the constant faith in God and the determination that He is the protector. The last auxiliary, which is wretchedness, prescribes the contemplation that one has no other refuge other than God. Meghanādārisūri’s delineation of self-surrender and its auxiliaries suggests the continuation of the whole process as opposed to Vātsya Varadaguru’s explanation that self-surrender along with its auxiliaries is to be performed only once.

³⁸⁰ It should be noted that, like other authors, Meghanādārisūri also regards Vibhīṣaṇa, who took refuge with Rāmā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as one of the exemplars of people who undertake self-surrender in this context.

³⁸¹ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 16–17:

ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam | rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptṛtvavaraṇam tathā | ātmanikṣepakarpanye śaḍvidhā śaraṇāgatih | iti viśeṣalakṣaṇam, tadarthas tu svaparamātmādiññānapūrvakaṃ (tatsva)svarūpānukūlaśāstrīyakarmādibhir vibhīṣaṇārjunādivatkaiṅkaryasya ananyaprayojanatayā anuṣṭhānasaṅkalpa ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ, śāstrīya varṇāśramācārā(modayānakaraṇā)dir eva hi bhagavadānukūlyārthaḥ.

varṇāśramācāravatā puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān | viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā nānyas tattoṣakāraṇam || iti smaraṇam api, ata eva bhagavatsamārāadhanam eva hi kaiṅkaryam, tad eva hi bhagavadanukūlam

Thus, as in the case of the performance of *bhakti*, the performance of self-surrender is to be accompanied by other activities according to caste and stage of life. In self-surrender, all of these activities should be maintained as long as one lives.³⁸²

Although his arguments so far are not identical to Vātsya Varadaguru's, they are not too far from what we have seen in the *Prapannapārijāta*. Meghanādārisūri models self-surrender on *bhakti*, like Vātsya Varadaguru. However, unlike Vātsya Varadaguru who overtly views these two means as distinct, Meghanādārisūri obscures their distinction, except for some features like the auxiliaries required in surrendering process based on the fact that they are equally Upaniṣadic means. We see the remarkable difference between Maghanādārisūri and Vātsya Varadaguru in their arguments on the eligibility of self-surrender. Unlike Vātsya Varadaguru who indicates that everyone can perform self-surrender, Maghanādārisūri makes it clear that only the twice-born are eligible to perform self-surrender based on the fact that it is an Upaniṣadic meditative means like *bhakti*.

At the beginning of the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, Maghanādārisūri classifies two groups of people who are eligible for Vedic study, namely those who are born among the three higher castes and those who are born from proper hierarchical marriages like *mūrdhāvasikta* (a mixed caste from a *brāhmaṇa* father and a *kṣatriya* mother). Only they can perform rituals as

śrīvibhīṣaṇādayo 'pi śarīragṛhakṣetraputramitrādau mamatābuddhitadanukūlacaraṇaṃ dehendriyabuddhiṣu (ddhyādiṣu) svātmabuddhitadanukūlavartanaṃ, ātmani vedāntaviruddhasvātantryasarvagatatvajaḍatvādibuddhiḥ, pūrvokataikānyathānuṣṭhānānuṣṭhānasaṅkalpaś ca bhagavatprātikūlyam, tadvarjanaṃ (ca) prātikūlyasya varjanaṃ prātikūlyajñānaṃ ca śāstrād eva, pramā(ṇā)ntarāviṣayatvāt [...].

³⁸² Ibid., 43: "Thus, one should sit and contemplate on this [self-surrender] as in the case of *bhakti*. One should perform ritual actions which are suitable to one's caste and stage of life at the proper time. On the other hand, the Upaniṣadic means and their auxiliaries are like *bhakti* and one thus should perform them until death."

(evaṃvidhārthaṃ bhaktāu iva āsīno 'nusandadhyāt, varṇāśramācārocitakarmāṇi kāle kuryāt, aṅgavidyās tu bhaktivad eva, evaṃ āprayāṇād anuṣṭhet).

prescribed by the Vedas after their studies. Then, they would come to the realization that the results of Vedic rituals are trivial and fleeting. Due to this realization, they would study the Upaniṣads, which are the scriptural continuation of the Vedas. Through the Upaniṣadic study, they attain the knowledge that Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme God and the Master of all the souls who are His subordinates. They also gain the correct understanding that liberation in the form of the attainment of God is the ultimate and lasting result. They then have both the correct knowledge and capability to pursue the Upaniṣadic meditative means, including *bhakti* and self-surrender, along with their auxiliaries. Without Vedic study and its knowledge, those outside of these two groups cannot perform *bhakti* and self-surrender and other Vedic rituals, which serve as their auxiliaries:

First, someone among the three higher castes or those who are born from the marriage in a regular order like *mūrdhāvasikta* (a mixed caste from a *brāhmaṇa* father and a *kṣatriya* mother) are worthy of the initiation and Vedic study. They undergo the initiation by true *ācāryas* who possess qualities of the self like peace and self-control and are born within a lineage. Then, they become those with a bundle of the rituals to be performed from the teaching and the scripture. Thus, they study only their branch of the Vedas and the auxiliaries. Having preliminarily understood all the meanings [of the Vedas], they determine the meanings and then engage with the hearing of the Mīmāṃsāśāstra (the whole system of Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta). After understanding the Mīmāṃsāśāstra from a teacher, one should determine the Vedic meanings. Then, the one who is able to hear the Mīmāṃsāśāstra should listen to the Vedic meanings which have already been determined many times and the main meaning is that Nārāyaṇa Himself is the Supreme Self and the nature of the self and so on are subordinate to Him. Rituals alone are heard as being the means to little and unstable results but the knowledge of Brahman, referred to by the words “*bhakti*” and “self-surrender” (*prapatti*), has endless and stable results are in the form of the experience of Brahman [...].

Having understood the Vedic meanings from the teacher, and having determined again and again by valid means of knowledge that it is this way, one who has the firm desire in the attainment of the Supreme Self and is indifferent regarding his own goal which is other than God should undertake the performance of either *bhakti* or self-surrender with its auxiliaries.³⁸³

³⁸³ Ibid., 1–4: *prathamam tāvat, traivarṇikeṣv anyatamaḥ, upanayanādhyayanārhamūrdhāvasiktādyanulomajo*

Meghanādārisūri further claims that *sūdras* can only perform practices like the chanting of God’s names, which are auxiliary to the Upaniṣadic meditative means, to drive away their sins in order to attain better rebirths and eventually be eligible for Vedic study.³⁸⁴

We might recall that Rāmānuja, in his *Śrībhāṣya*, argues for the ineligibility of *sūdras* in the case of *bhakti* based on the Mīmāṃsā exclusion of *sūdras* in ritual performance and, in doing so, sets the restriction of a soteriological doctrine to the twice-born. Meghanādārisūri’s decision to exclude the *sūdras* in the soteriological scenario shown above was surely influenced by Rāmānuja’s argument and conditioned by the Sanskrit sphere of soteriology. One could expand on this to say that, as one of the main authors who defend the Rāmānuja’s school of Vedānta on the ground of Mīmāṃsā, Maghanādārisūri favors the conformity to Mīmāṃsā. Regardless, his exclusion of *sūdras* reinforces a Vedāntic status for self-surrender and conform this doctrine to Rāmānuja’s Sanskrit soteriological model.

3.1.2 When Self-surrender is no Longer a Means

vā, satsantānaprasūta-śamadamādyātmaḡuṇopetasadācāryopanītaḡ, tataḡ śikṡitaśāstrīyānuṡtheyārthakalāpaḡ, tasmād adhītasvāṅgasvasākhah, adhītasvasākhāmātro vā, āpātapratītasakalavedārthaḡ, tannirṇayāya mīmāṃsāśāstrāśravaṇapavrītaḡ, ācāryān mīmāṃsāśāstram adhikṛtya vedārthanīscayaḡ kuryāt. tacchravaṇaśaktas tu tato niścitān vedārthān bahuśaḡ śruṇuyāt, vedārthaś ca, pradhānataḡ paramātmā nārāyaṇa eva, anantasthirabrahmānubhavarūpaphalāni tu bhaktiprapattipadā(phalā)bhidheyāni brahmajñānāny eva [...]

evam ācāryād vedārtham avagamyā mānena evaḡ iti bhūyo bhūyo viniścitya prāpyaparamātmaprāptau dṛḡhābhilāśas tadītarasarvārthaviraktaś ca sāṅgabhaktiprapattyor anyatarānuṡthānam ārabheta.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 13: “The *sūdras* are incapable of meditating on the nature of the individual soul by means of sacrifice and other rituals as well as contemplation of the path of light that need to be done. Therefore, *sūdras* do not have eligibility with respect to that [recitation of God’s means as the means to liberation]. The permission [for *sūdras*] to recite God’s names, light the lamps, and building public gardens and so on can be for the sake of removing sins just like the permission to listen to the Purāṇas. For them, there is no performance for the sake of liberation. On the other hand, women who are twice-born are allowed to perform the Upaniṣadic means with the permission of their husbands.” (*yajñādikaraṇajīvasvarūpānusandhānagaticintanādes ca kartavyatvāt, śūdrādes tatrāśakteś ca na tatrādhikārah. nāmasaṅkīrtanapradīpāropanodyānakaraṇādes tu purāṇaśravaṇābhyanujñāvad anujñā tu pāpakṡayamātrapareti na mokṡārthānuṡthānam tasya, traivarṇikastrīṇāḡ tu patyanumatau vidyāsvikāro ’sty eva*).

Unlike Meghanādārisūri, Piḷḷai Lokācārya operated in the Maniḥavalam sphere and prioritized the Tamil expression of the importance of God’s grace over the restriction of self-surrender. His emphasis on the autonomy of God and the soul’s subservience further culminates in the rejection of the ritual status of self-surrender. Despite his rejection of the role of *bhakti* in the soteriological process, Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s characterization of self-surrender as knowledge, his repetition of the request for service in self-surrender, and his argument that other means should not be completely abandoned suggest that his system of self-surrender was still based on the Sanskrit sphere.

Like Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lokācārya centers his systematization of self-surrender on the binary opposition between *bhakti* and self-surrender and the identification between God and self-surrender. However, Piḷḷai Lokācārya stresses God’s agency more than Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai. He explains that everything in the soteriological process is dependent on God, and self-surrender is nothing other than accepting or not rejecting when God wants to liberate oneself. As a result, self-surrender cannot be regarded as a means that should be performed by a person who desires liberation. To support this view, mostly in his interpretation of the Caramaśloka in the *Bhagavadgītā*, he draws a distinction between God, who is the already accomplished means and independent, and the other means, which need to be performed by an eligible person.

According to Piḷḷai Lokācārya, the Caramaśloka teaches the last means to the attainment of God after informing Arjuna of the three *yogas*.³⁸⁵ Like Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lokācārya

³⁸⁵ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, ed. Kṛṣṇasvāmi Ayyaṅkār (Tirucci: S. Kṛṣṇasvāmi Ayyaṅkār, 1970), 115: “The name for this Caramaśloka is because thinking about Arjuna who—after being taught a few particular means previously and thinking that those are polluting and opposed to the nature [of the soul]—was tormented by grief, in order to remove his grief, He reveals the last means about which can be said that there is nothing higher than this.” (*kīlē cila upāyaviśēṣaṅkaḷai upadēśikka, avai duśśakaṅkaḷ enrum, svarūpavirōdhikaḷ enrum niṇaittu śōkāviṣṭaṅāṇa arjuṅaṅaiḱkurittu, avaṅuṭaiya śōkanivṛtyarthamāka ‘iṇi itukku avvarukillai’ enṇalāmpaṭiyāṇa caramōpāyattai aruḷicceykaiyālē, caramaślōkam enru itukku pēṛāyirukkīratu*).

construes that the first part of the Caramaśloka refers, first, to the abandonment of *dharmas* that are the means to be accomplished as enjoined in *śruti* and *smṛti*.³⁸⁶ The abandonment is an auxiliary to self-surrender, enjoined as the acceptance of God by the phrase “come to Me alone as refuge.” The abandonment and acceptance are directed to a person who is qualified to perform self-surrender due to the desire to reach God. The gerund form in the phrase “having abandoned” conditions that the abandonment is to be followed by surrendering as Piḷḷai Lokācārya states, “By the gerund [in *parityajya*], it is stated that ‘Having abandoned other means, one should surrender’ as in the statement, ‘Having bathed, one should eat.’”³⁸⁷ For the word “*dharmas*,” Piḷḷai Lokācārya, following Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, lists the *dharmas* that should be abandoned by the eligible person, including the same *dharmas* mentioned by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai plus lighting the lamps and making garlands. The word “all *dharmas*” then includes other obligatory sacrificial rituals (*nityakarma*):³⁸⁸

These [*dharmas*] are: *karma-*, *jñāna-*, and *bhakti-yoga*, all of those things done with the belief that they are the means, beginning with the knowledge of the secret of incarnations (*avatārarahasyajñāna*), the Upaniṣadic means to the Supreme Person (*puruṣottamavidyā*), living in [sacred] places (*dēśavāsa*), praising the names of the Lord (*tirunāmasaṅkīrtana*), lighting the lamps, [and] making garlands.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 118: “The word ‘all *dharmas*’ (*sarvadharmān*) means all *dharmas*. The word ‘*dharma*’ means that which is a means to a result. The word ‘*dharma*’ stated in this case refers to the means to the result which is liberation not the means to the worldly results. Since there are many of these means enjoined in *śruti* and *smṛti*. There is the use of the plural ending [attached to the word ‘*dharma*’].” (*sarvadharmān-ellā dharmāṅkaḷaiyum. dharmam āvatu-phalasādhanamāy irukkum atu. iṅkuc collukīra dharmasabdamaṅ drṣṭaphalasādhanāṅkaḷaic collukai aṅrikkē, mōkṣaphalasādhanāṅkaḷaic collukīratu. avaitāṅ-śrutismṛtivihitāṅkaḷāyp phalavāy irukkaiyālē bahuvacanaprayogam paṅṅukīratu*).

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 123: *lyappālē “snātvā bhūñjīta” eṅṅumāpōlē, upāyāntaraṅkaḷai viṭṭē paṅṅa vēṅum eṅkīratu*.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 120: “The word ‘all’ (*sarva*) refers to the obligatory rituals that are the basis for the suitability for those [means to liberation] at the time when there is the performance of these particular means.” (*sarvasabdattālē avvasādhanaviśēṣaṅkaḷai anuṣṭhikkum iṭattil avāṅṅukku yōgyatāpādakaṅkaḷāṅṅa nityakarmaṅkaḷaic collukīratu*).

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 119: *avaiy āvaṅṅa-karmajñānabhaktiyōgaṅkaḷum, avatārarahasyajñānam, puruṣōttamavidyai, dēśavāsam, tirunāmasaṅkīrtanam, tiruvaḷakkerikkai, tirumālaiyeṭukkai toṭakkamāṅṅa upāyabuddhyā ceyyum avaiyum*.

It should be noted that Piḷḷai Lokācārya views abandonment only as mental realization that rituals cannot be used as the means to liberation, not a physical act of abandonment. He equates this realization to the recognizing when one has mistaken mother of pearl for silver:

Abandonment is, having ascertained the state of the means and abandoned them with the particular thought that we have adorned the thought of the means on [those things that are] not the means like those who impose the thought of silver on the mother and those who set their minds on the wrong direction.³⁹⁰

Such analogy, which is similar to the one in the *Parantarahasyam*, reminds us of the Advaita Vedānta argument that the knowledge gained from the Upaniṣadic passages makes one aware of the erroneous perception that the soul is distinct from God.³⁹¹ According to Advaita Vedānta, this knowledge is the only way to liberation as it discards ignorance to reveal the unity between God and the soul. Piḷḷai Lokācārya then argues for the difference between God, the already accomplished means, and other means which need to be accomplished, the same distinction made by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai. God is the means that is superior to other means because He is all capable and independent:

That is to say, [God] is the already accomplished means (*siddha*), the supreme sentient being (*paramacetana*), the omnipotent one (*sarvaśakti*), the imperishable one (*nirapāya*), the obtainable one (*prāpta*), and the one who is without the need of other assistants (*sahāyāntaranirapekṣa*). The other means require a sentient being in completing the nature because they are the things that must be accomplished (*sādhya*). Since [they are] non-sentient and powerless, God is required in accomplishing what is to be done. This means [God] does not require others because of being contrary to those [non-sentient and powerless means].³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 122: *tyāgam āvatu-uktōpāyaṅkaḷai anusandhittu, ‘suktikaiyilē rajatabuddhi paṅṅuvāraip pōlēyum viparītatiśākamaṅgam paṅṅuvāraip pōlēyum anupāyaṅkaḷilē upāyapbuddhi paṅṅiṅōm’ eṅkiṛa buddhiviśēṣattōḷē tyajikkai.*

³⁹¹ See section 2.4.2.

³⁹² Ibid., 129–130: *atāvatu-siddhamāy, paramacētaṅamāy, sarvaśaktiyāy, nirapāyamāy, prāptamāy,*

God’s superiority overshadows the means such as self-surrender, reducing it to a mental activity with no physical or verbal actions involved. Piḷḷai Lokācārya confirms this nature of self-surrender, interpreting the word “come” in the phrase, “come to Me alone as refuge,” in the Caramaśloka as follows: “[The word] ‘come’ [means] mental activity. The meaning of motion points to the determination which has the meaning of the mental activity. Although verbal and physical performances are expected for this word, it means mental performance since liberation is from knowledge.”³⁹³

Moreover, Piḷḷai Lokācārya emphasizes the passivity of the eligible person, affirming that even the agency in the acceptance of God comes from Himself.³⁹⁴ Thus, it is sinful to think of self-surrender as a means through which one can exercise one’s own agency as Piḷḷai Lokācārya indicates: “Even self-surrender performed with the thought that it is a means due to confusion is comparable with a grievous sin.”³⁹⁵ Ultimately, it is only God’s grace that sets things in motion and tends to the entire soteriological process. Piḷḷai Lokācārya explains: “Since there is the teaching of the difficult means and the easy one for the same result, it ought to be the case that the means is only the grace of God and not these two means [i.e., *bhakti* and self-surrender].”³⁹⁶

sahāyāntaranirapēkṣamāy irukkai. maṟṟai upāyaṅkaḷ sādhyāṅkaḷ ākaiyālē, svarūpasiddhiyil cētaṅṅai apēkṣittirukkum; acētaṅkaḷumāy, aśaktaṅkaḷumāy irukkaiyālē kāryasiddhiyil īsvaraṅai apēkṣittu irukkum. inta upāyam avarṟukku etirttaṭṭāy irukkaiyālē, itaranirapekṣamāy irukkum.

³⁹³ Ibid., 141–142: *vraja-buddhipaṅṅu. gatyartham āvatu buddhyarthamāy, adhyavasīy eṅṟapaṭi. vācīkākāyikaṅkaḷum itukku apēkṣitaṅkaḷāy irukkac ceytēyum, jñānān mōkṣam ākaiyālē mānasamāṅṅa anuṣṭhāṅṅattaic collukīratu.*

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 133–134: “By this word [‘alone’ (*eka*)], in the acceptance stated by the word ‘come,’ it is prevented from being a means. Even the acceptance comes from Him alone.” (*ittāl, ‘vraja’ eṅṟira svīkāratil upāyabhāvattait tavirkkīratu. svīkārantāṅṅum avaṅṅālē vantatu.*)

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 149: *kalaṅki upāyabuddhyā paṅṅum prapattiyum pātakattōṭu okkum.*

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 161: *oru phalattukku ariyavaḷiyaiyum, eḷiyavaḷiyaiyum upadēśikkaiyālē, ivai iraṅṅum oḷiya bhagavatprasādamē upāyamākak kaṭavatu.*

In the Caramaśloka, the subordination of the soul is also expressed in the word “you” (*tvā*) in the second part of the verse, “I will free you from all sins.” Piḷḷai Lokācārya specifies that this word communicates the conditions that make the soul fit for taking refuge with God, “The word ‘you’ means you, who are ignorant, incapable, [and] not suitable, approach Me alone as the means.”³⁹⁷

We have seen that Piḷḷai Lokācārya shares the main features of self-surrender with Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, such as God’s role as the means and the distinction between God and other means. However, unlike Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lokācārya makes explicit that self-surrender is not a means and reduces it to the knowledge of the soul’s subservience to God, who possesses the absolute power and agency of liberation. One could then ask, why is self-surrender necessary at all? Piḷḷai Lokācārya replies that self-surrender can prevent one from pursuing other means or simply serve as a way of spending time since it is pleasing for the soul and not for any other ends.³⁹⁸ Alternatively, it can function as a pretext to prevent everyone from attaining liberation at the same time.³⁹⁹ Piḷḷai Lokācārya uses the concept of pretext here to preserve God’s autonomy in granting liberation by theologically justifying that it is not the case that God, who is all powerful and has total control in soteriological scenario, cannot liberate every sentient being all at once. God is always ready and able to grant liberation to everyone, but He chooses to wait for an eligible person to approach Him first. In addition, Piḷḷai Lokācārya clarifies that the three *yogas* found in the *Bhagavadgītā* and self-surrender do not have to be

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 145: *tvā-ajñānāy aśaktaṇāy, aprāptaṇāy, eṇṇaiyē upāyamāka paṛṛiyirukkīrav unṇai.*

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 100: “This [mental activity] is done so that the heart does not go to other means, to pass time, and because it is impossible to abandon due to the pleasure.” (*upāyantaraṅkaḷil neṅcucellāmaikkum, kālakṣēpattukkum, iṇimaiyālē viṭav oṇṇāmaiyaḷum naṭakkum*).

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 136: “This [acceptance of God as the means] is for avoiding the undesirable consequence of the liberation of all. The mental activity is for the sake of fixation of the mind, is done by intelligence, is attained by desire, is established in the soul’s nature, and shows non-rejection.” (*itu sarvamuktīprasaṅgaparihārārtham, buddhisamādhānārtham, caitanyakāryam. rāgaprāptam, svarūpaniṣṭham, apratiṣēdhadyōtakam*).

entirely abandoned by those who can perform them as they can be included in other soteriological elements as follows: “He [Arjuna] does not abandon these [other means] completely. *Karma* is included in service; *Jñāna* is included in self manifestation; *Bhakti* is included in the wish for the goal; Self-surrender (*prapatti*) is included in the knowledge of the true nature [of the self].”⁴⁰⁰ Although Piḷḷai Lokācārya maintains the authority and usefulness of these means to liberation, which are accepted by other authors, he does not assign any evident role for them in the soteriological process. He also does not explicitly state that everyone can attain liberation. Nevertheless, the fact that self-surrender is not a means along with its easiness suggests that anyone who realizes their subservience to God can be liberated.⁴⁰¹ Among the features that make self-surrender easy and accessible, there is one that is clearly contradictory to those put forward by Meghanādārisūri.⁴⁰² In contrast to Meghanādārisūri, Piḷḷai Lokācārya affirms that there are no restrictions in surrendering to God; only the desire for the goal is sufficient:

Thus, it is said that only the desire is necessary for taking refuge and one does not need to wait for the occasion. There is no damage to the attainment even if one approaches [God] verbally and physically. [However,] [the approach] should be mental since liberation is from knowledge. Since He is the means and these [performances] are not direct means, there is no insistence that these three [performances] are necessary.⁴⁰³

The importance of desire is further supported by an authoritative figures, such as Empār’s oral

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 160: “*ivaṅ tāṅ ivai taṅṅai nērākaviṭṭilaṅ. karmam-kaiṅkaryattilē pukum; jñānam-svarūpaparakāśattilē pukum; bhakti-prāpyaruciylē pukum; prapatti-svarūpayāthātmya jñānattilē pukum.*”

⁴⁰¹ For Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s discussion on castes, see Clooney, “Fierce Words.”

⁴⁰² Another different feature is the non-repetitive nature of self-surrender. Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 100: “If one thinks that it must be repeated many times for attainment [of liberation], the means slips away.” (*pērrukkuṭ phalakālum vēṅum eṅru niṅaiṅkil upāyam naḷuvum*).

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 86 and 97–98: *ittāl-āśrayikkaikku ruciṅ vēṅuvatu, kālam pārkkavēṅṅā eṅkiṅratu. vācikaṅmā kavum kāyikaṅmā kavum paṅṅiṅāluṅ pērrukku iḷavillai; ‘jñānān mōkṣam’ ākaiyālē, mānasamākak kaṭavatu. upāyam avaṅkāiyālum, ivai nērē upāyam allāmaiṅyālum, immūṅrum vēṅum eṅkiṅra nirbandham illai.*

teaching to Parāśara Bhaṭṭar that desire and also faith are necessary to pursue self-surrender, and, without them, one would attain bad consequences instead of liberation.⁴⁰⁴

To conclude this first section on the two shades of self-surrender, I want to draw attention to two critical tensions between Piḷḷai Lokācārya's self-surrender and that of Meghanādārisūri. First, the passive self-surrender according to Piḷḷai Lokācārya is in contrast to Meghanādārisūri's definition of self-surrender as the means to be performed like *bhakti*. The other tension is the eligibility for self-surrender. Piḷḷai Lokācārya is not opposed to the notion that self-surrender is available to all. In contrast, Meghanādārisūri reserves it for the twice-born only. The tensions here, as I have argued, are based on their immersions in different spheres, specifically the distinction in their expressions. On the one hand, Meghanādārisūri limits his system of self-surrender to the Sanskrit sphere and models it on the expressibility of Rāmānuja's *bhakti*, which is not meant for the *śūdras*. On the other hand, aiming to provide an alternative to *bhakti*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya situates self-surrender firmly in the Manipravalam sphere, of which the hierarchical relationship between God and the soul is one of the defining expressions. In the following sections, I show that their strands of self-surrender are embedded in the different norms they choose to resort to in their treatises. While Piḷḷai Lokācārya's system of self-surrender relies on the Manipravalam norms almost completely, Meghanādārisūri denies the authority of the Tamil scripture when it comes to any soteriological doctrines, including self-surrender.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 163: "Empār replied to Bhaṭṭar that there is the uplifting when a believer has desire and faith in the activity, but destruction in the case of the non-believer. There is no middle ground [between uplifting and destruction]." ("āstikaṇāy ivvarthattil ruciviśvāsaṅkaḷaiuṭaiyaṇāy ujjīvittal, nāstikaṇāy naśittal oḷiya naṭuvil nilaiy illai" *enru bhaṭṭarukku empār aruḷicceytavārttai*).

3.2 The Celebration of Manipravalam Normativity in the *Mumukṣupaṭi*

Around the time of the *Mumukṣupaṭi*, self-surrender was central in the Manipravalam literature to the extent that there is the exclusion of *bhakti* in the soteriological scenario. The *Tiruvāymoḷi* commentaries set a new intellectual model with Manipravalam as a medium, one which was not totally based on the Upaniṣads and Rāmānuja's reading of these texts. They highlighted the authoritative role of the Tamil Veda and other Tamil hymns as well as *itihāsas*.⁴⁰⁵ They also incorporated the paradigm of the three secrets in the soteriology of self-surrender as seen in the first chapter. The *rahasyaग्रan̄thas*, beginning with those of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai as in the *Parantarahasyam*, followed this intellectual movement.

Piḷḷai Lokācārya was not the first author to use the Tamil scripture, *itihāsas*, and the three secrets in the matters related to self-surrender since they were already in the Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* and the *rahasyaग्रan̄thas* by this time. However, Piḷḷai Lokācārya deserves attention as another key figure who increases the role of these Manipravalam norms in the context of self-surrender. His development of self-surrender is almost entirely based on the Tamil scripture, and this might explain why self-surrender in his *Mumukṣupaṭi* is opposed to Meghanādārisūri's. In addition to the Tamil scripture, Piḷḷai Lokācārya regards the three secrets as the structure of his system of self-surrender like Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai. Also, like his predecessor, Piḷḷai Lokācārya treats the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the sources of narratives and stories of ideal practices. In this section, I investigate Piḷḷai Lokācārya's advancement of the importance of the three norms derived from Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai's systematization of self-surrender, namely the three secrets, *itihāsas*, and the Tamil scripture. His incorporation of these norms shows that he is part of the Manipravalam

⁴⁰⁵ See section 1.4.

domain. In addition to showing his participation with other Manipravalam literature, especially the *Parantarahasyam*, I highlight Piḷḷai Lokācārya's remarkable move, namely the domination of the Tamil scripture and *itihāsas* over the three secrets. Even the three secrets present a set of authority in his treatise that is subordinate to the Tamil scripture and *itihāsas* in his treatise.

This dominance in the *Mumukṣupaṭi* differs from what we have seen in the *Parantarahasyam*, where Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai harmonizes the meanings of the three secrets with other authoritative passages from both Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures. In the *Mumukṣupaṭi*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya pays less attention to the Sanskrit passages. He refers to the Vedas, *śruti*, and *smṛti* in a couple places in the sections on the Tirumantra and Caramaśloka and cites only a few Sanskrit passages, namely *Bhagavadgītā* 15.4 and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.31, in the section on the Caramaśloka.⁴⁰⁶ The first passage is found in the section on the Tirumantra. It illustrates the soul's desire for God. The last three passages are used in the section on the Caramaśloka. They affirm the exclusivity of God as the means to the attainment of the goal, which is Himself. These three passages are also cited in the *Parantarahasyam* in the same context to support the same argument. This is one clue that the *Parantarahasyam* might have influenced the *Mumukṣupaṭi*. It is also possible that these two works participate in the same circle of sources and concepts. Whether or not Piḷḷai Lokācārya just records these Sanskrit passages as the inheritance from the previous teaching, he undoubtedly has higher regard for the Tamil scripture and *itihāsas* as he relies on them in various places in the *Mumukṣupaṭi*.

We might recall that Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai brings in the Tamil hymns only to illustrate the actions of God, the soul, as well as the ideal practices but still turns to Sanskrit passages to

⁴⁰⁶ See *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 14, 118, and 121, for his reference to *śruti* and *smṛti*. For the Sanskrit passages, see *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 133. See also *Bhagavadgītā* 15.4, vol. 3, 160, and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, vol. 2, 371.

argue for the injunctions of self-surrender. In contrast, Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s selection of Tamil hymns has more variation. The passages from the *Tiruvāymoḷi* comprise the majority of the Tamil passages referred to in the *Mumukṣupaṭi*. Only a few passages that Piḷḷai Lokācārya uses can be found in the *Parantarahasyam*. The Tamil passages are meant to emphasize the features of self-surrender that he proposes, such as the subordination of the soul.

3.2.1 The Three Secrets and Āḷvārs’ Tamil Hymns

Like Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai in the *Parantarahasyam*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya structures the *Mumukṣupaṭi* according to the three secrets. As a *rahasyaग्रantha*, the *Mumukṣupaṭi* mainly argues for the role of the three secrets in the system of self-surrender. Unlike Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, who elaborately interprets each secret, Piḷḷai Lokācārya offers only a summary of each one. I outline his summarizations of the three secrets here to show that his understanding of them agrees with the meanings proposed by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, suggesting the influence of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai. According to Piḷḷai Lokācārya, the three words in the Tirumantra, “Aum, I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa” (“*aum namo nārāyaṇāya*”), convey three meanings: namely the soul’s subservient nature (*śeṣatva*), its dependence (*pāratantrya*) on God, and the service (*kaiṅkarya*) to God as the highest goal.⁴⁰⁷ Next, Piḷḷai Lokācārya interprets the two parts of the Dvaya, “I surrender at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī,” as communicating the status of God as the means with Śrī as the mediator and the request for the goal, which is service, respectively.⁴⁰⁸ Finally, he divides the Caramaśloka into two parts. The first part indicates what is to be done by the eligible person, while the second part deals with God’s

⁴⁰⁷ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 26: “The three words [in the Tirumantra] communicate three meanings, namely the subservience [of the soul], its dependency [on God], and the service.” (*mūṅru padamum mūṅru arthattaic collukīratu. atāvatu-śēṣatvamum, pāratanriyamum, kaiṅkaryamum*).

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 79.

performance.⁴⁰⁹ However, unlike Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, who pays the most attention to the Dvaya, Piḷḷai Lokācārya handles the Tirumantra more elaborately than the other two secrets. This section on the Tirumantra also contains the most citations from the Tamil hymns. Thus, I give his arguments in this section as an example of the important role of the Tamil normative passages in the interpretation of the secret.

In the Tirumantra section, Piḷḷai Lokācārya first introduces the three secrets as being for those who desire liberation.⁴¹⁰ He uses only two Tamil passages that are also found in the same section of the *Parantarahasyam* to argue that the three secrets embody the Tamil hymns based on the fact that they convey the same meanings regarding self-surrender. Piḷḷai Lokācārya then validates the authority of the Tirumantra through the hymns of the Āḷvārs. Based on *Periya Tirumōḷi* 1.1.9, Piḷḷai Lokācārya proposes that the Tirumantra is the means to all desires.⁴¹¹ In addition, it contains the truth regarding the five objects in the soteriological process (*arthapañcaka*), namely the soul's nature, God, the goal, the means, and the obstacles, as stated in *Periya Tirumōḷi* 8.10.3.⁴¹² Thus, it is necessary even for the *ācāryas* to learn the meaning of the Tirumantra, according to *Tiruccantaviruttam* 64:⁴¹³

This [Tirumantra] indeed gives all desires as stated in, “It gives a family” [*Periya Tirumōḷi* 1.1.9]. For those who desire sovereignty, liberation in isolation, and the attainment of the Lord, it gives these things. For those who undertake *karma*-, *jñāna*-, and *bhakti*- [yoga], it removes obstacles and makes them successful. For those who undertake self-surrender, it becomes the cause for the passing of time and experience after giving rise to the knowledge of the nature [of the soul]. All the meanings which should be known are stated [in the Tirumantra] as stated

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 116: “In this case, He states what is to be done by the eligible person with the first part and what is to be done by the means with the later part.” (*itiḷ pūrvārthattālē adhikārikṛtayattai aruḷicceykirāṅ; uttarārthattālē upāyakṛtyattai aruḷicceykirāṅ*).

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 3: “It is necessary for the one who desires liberation to know the three secrets.” (*mumukṣuvukku ariyavēṅṅum rahasyam mūṅru*).

⁴¹¹ *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 211.

⁴¹² Ibid., 374.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 178.

in, “Whatever else spoken about” [*Periya Tirumoli* 8.10.3]. In other words, there are five truths. The previous *ācāryas* thought that they are not born until knowing the meaning of the Tirumantra. After having the knowledge of its meaning, they spend their lives knowing nothing but that [Tirumantra] as stated in, “After being born, I do not forget [it]” [*Tiruccantaviruttam* 64].⁴¹⁴

Piḷḷai Lokācārya confirms each of these meanings with the Tamil hymns. The soul’s subservience to God, which is the meaning of *aum*, the first word of the Tirumantra, points to the hierarchical relationship between the soul and God, who is the Master of the soul. Subservience is the nature of the soul, and it can be understood as two-fold: subservience is defined as the subordination to God, and subservience to God alone can be achieved through the cessation of submission to others.

At the end of the interpretation of *aum*, the first part of the Tirumantra, Piḷḷai Lokācārya summarizes that *aum* communicates the subservient relationship of the soul to God and stresses the exclusivity of this subservience, which is reiterated in the Tamil hymns, namely *Periya Tirumoli* 8.9.3 and *Mutal Tiruvantāti* 67:⁴¹⁵

Thus, *aum* refers to the relationship between the soul and the Supreme as stated in, “I am subordinate to the One in Kaṅṅapura, I belong to no other.” [*Periya Tirumoli* 8.9.3]. [Also,] by that, it is said, “[My] mind desires only the One, the husband of the Lady on the lotus” [*Mutal Tiruvantāti* 67].⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 19–22: *itutān* “kulantarum” *eṅkiṛapaṭiyē ellā apēkṣitaṅkaḷaiyum koṭukkum. aiśvaryaikaivalyabagavallābhāṅkaḷai ācāippaṭavarkaḷukku avaraṅkaik koṭukkum. karmajñānabhaktikaḷilē iḷintavarkaḷukku virōdhiyai pōkki avaraṅkait talaikkaṭṭik koṭukkum. prapattiyilē iḷintavarkaḷukku svarūpajñānattaip piṛappittuk kākṣēpattukkum pōkattukkum hētuvāy irukkum. “maṅṅu ellām pēcilum” eṅkiṛapaṭiyē aṅiyavēṅṅum artham ellām itukkuḷḷē uṅṅu. atāvatu-aṅcartham. pūrvācāryarkaḷ, itil artham aṅvataṅku muṅṅpu, taṅkaḷaip piṛantārkaḷāka niṅaittirārkaḷ; itil arthajñānam piṛanta piṅṅpu, “piṛantapiṅ maṅantilēṅ” eṅkiṛapaṭiyē ittaiy oḷiyavēṅṅal kākṣēpaṅ paṅṅiy aṅiyārkaḷ.*

⁴¹⁵ *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 372 and 642.

⁴¹⁶ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 46–47: *āka, praṅavattāl* “kaṅṅapuram oṅṅruṭaiyāṅṅukku aṅiyēṅ oruvarku uriyēṅṅō” *eṅkiṛapaṭiyē jīvaparasaṅpantaṅ collirru. ittāl, “tāmaraiyāl kēḷvaṅoruvaṅaiyē nōkkum uṅarvu” eṅṅratu āyirru.*

Next, the word “I pay obeisance,” the second word in the Tirumantra, indicates the necessity of removing the obstacles to the attainment of God. The obstacles pertain to three aspects of self-surrender, namely the soul’s nature, the means, and the goal. Piḷḷai Lokācārya shows that the obstacle to each aspect is illustrated in the three Tamil hymns, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.9.9, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.8.8, and *Tiruppāvai* 29, respectively.⁴¹⁷

The word “I pay obeisance” gets rid of the obstacles and there are three [kinds] of them. There are obstacles to the nature, the means, and the goal. Removing the obstacle to the nature is to say, “I am indeed yours and what is mine is yours alone” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 2.9.9]. To remove the obstacle to the means is to say, “No other would remove the suffering [that you can choose to] remove or not” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 5.8.8]. To remove the obstacle to the goal is to say, “Change our desires for other [things]” [*Tiruppāvai* 30].⁴¹⁸

After the removal of the obstacles, Piḷḷai Lokācārya explains that the word “I pay obeisance” makes these three aspects manifest as seen in the three passages from *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.5.1, 3.3.6, and 10.8.7, in order.⁴¹⁹

“With the passage, ‘Worshipping [the Lord at] Tolaiwillimagala’ [*Tiruvāymoḷi*, 6.5.1], the nature is stated. The means is stated with the passage, ‘[I] pay respect to the Lord of Veṅkaṭa’ [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.6]. The result is stated with the passage, ‘The final worshipping statement’ [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 10.8.7]”⁴²⁰

Finally, Piḷḷai Lokācārya comments on the last word of the Tirumantra, “for Nārāyaṇa” (“*nārāyaṇāya*”), which, he claims, identifies Nārāyaṇa as the recipient of the service. Nārāyaṇa

⁴¹⁷ *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 473, 530, and 114.

⁴¹⁸ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 51–52: *ittāl virōdhiyaik kaḷikkīratu. virōdhitāṇ mūṇru. atāvatu-svarūpavirōdhiyum, upāyavirōdhiyum, prāpyavirōdhiyum. svarūpavirōdhikaḷikāiy āvatu – “yāṇē nī eṇṇ uṭaimaiyum nīyē” eṇru irukkai; upāyavirōdhikaḷikāiy āvatu “kaḷaivāy tuṇpam kaḷaiyātu olivāy kaḷaikan maṇṇilēṇ” eṇṇirukkai; prāpyavirōdhikaḷikāiy āvatu–“maṇṇu naṅkāmaṅkaḷ māṇṇu” eṇṇirukkai.*

⁴¹⁹ *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 542, 478, and 629.

⁴²⁰ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 54: “*tolaiwillimaṅkalan toḷum*” *eṅkaiyālē, svarūpam collirru; “vēṅkaṭattu uraivārkkku nama” eṅkaiyālē, upāyam collirru; “anti toḷuṅ col” eṅkaiyālē, phalam collirru.*

is then characterized as having several kinds of relationships with the soul. He is defined as the inner controller, the means, and the goal.⁴²¹ Following from this, the soul desires to do all kinds of service to God who possesses all of the relationships. The request for all kinds of service is stated in the fourth-case ending on the word “for Nārāyaṇa” as shown in *Mutal Tiruvantāti* 53, “He [Ananta] becomes a canopy when He [Viṣṇu] walks.”⁴²² It can be further understood that the request is embodied in the soul’s nature as stated in *Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi* 4.9 and *Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.1:⁴²³

The request of service is not strange and is suitable for one’s nature as stated in, “Laying down as the step, I will see your coral lips” [*Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi* 4.9]. Thus, this shows the request [for service], “We must serve him faultlessly” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.1].⁴²⁴

Piḷḷai Lokācārya ends this section on the Tirumantra with a citation also from *Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.1 to argue for the unconditional nature of the service which can be carried out with no limitation in terms of time, place, and state, “This service indeed continues in all places, at all time, and in all states as in, ‘For all time in all places [we must serve him faultlessly]’ [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.1].”⁴²⁵

Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai draws a parallel between the three secrets and the Tamil hymns and

⁴²¹ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 64–65: “Supremacy and accessibility and also [the fact that He is] the internal controller, the means, and the goal are the result of these two [compounds of the word ‘nārāyaṇa’].” (*ivai irantālum palittatu paratvasaulabhyaṅkaḷ. antaryāmitvamum, upāyatvamum, upēyatvamum ākavumām*).

⁴²² Ibid., 67: “With ‘the fourth-case ending’ (*āya*), what is required is the necessity to do all service as stated in, ‘[Ananta] becomes a canopy when [Viṣṇu] walks’ [*Mutal Tiruvandādi* 53].” (‘*āya*’ *eṅkiṛa ittāl “ceṅṅār kuṭaiyām” eṅkiṛapaṭiyē ellā aṭimaikaḷum ceyyavēṅum eṅru apēkṣikkīratu*). For the Tamil text, see *Nālāyirativviappirapantam*, 640.

⁴²³ *Nālāyirativviappirapantam*, 154 and 478.

⁴²⁴ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 67–68: “*paṭiyāyk kiṭantu uṅ pavaḷavāy kāṅpēṅē” eṅkiṛapaṭiyē kaiṅkaryaprārthānai vantēri aṅru; svarūpaprayuktam. ākaiyāl “vaḷuvilā vaṭimai ceyyavēṅtum nām” eṅkiṛa prārthānaiyai kāṭṭukīratu*. The translation of *Tiruvāymoḷi* 3.3.1 is by Venkatesan, *Endless Song*, 108.

⁴²⁵ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 70: *ivvaṭimaitāṅ “olivilkālam ellām uṭaṅāyamaṅṅi” eṅkiṛapaṭiyē sarvadēśasarvakālasarvavasthaikaḷilum anuvartikkum*. See the whole passage translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 108.

explains the three secrets word-by-word in Tamil in the *Parantarahasyam* while still incorporating the authoritative Sanskrit passages in his interpretation. However, compared to Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lokācārya presents a more systematic and explicit interpretation of these secrets resting on the Tamil hymns. In addition, Piḷḷai Lokācārya renders the secrets into Tamil to propose that they are part of the Tamil sphere and to further suggest that the three secrets have the Tamil passages as their sources even if they are in Sanskrit. Here is an example from the section on the Caramaśloka. Interpreting this secret, Piḷḷai Lokācārya construes the last part of the secret, “do not grieve,” in Tamil. He highlights the relationship between the soul and God and gives the reason for the cessation of grief in the interpretation. It should be noted that the Tamil interpretation of this statement is much more elaborate than what we have in Sanskrit:

[In] the statement, “do not grieve,” He [God] caused the cessation of his [Arjuna’s] grief saying, “Look! Since you do not have the eligibility to perform what is to be done and I am qualified to do what should be done by you, there is no cause for you to grieve.”⁴²⁶

The translation here highlights the soul’s subordination and passivity, which is the essence of Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s self-surrender. According to this translation, God affirms that He will destroy all the sins which are the obstacles for the attainment of Himself and that there is nothing for the soul to do or grieve about. Piḷḷai Lokācārya then draws the connection between his understanding of the Caramaśloka and the Tamil passage, *Tiruccantaviruttam* 115, “Oh foolish heart, why did you immerse in the ocean of affliction,” which reiterates that there is no

⁴²⁶ Piḷḷai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 152: *mā śucaḥ- ‘nī uṅ kāryattilē adhikāriyāmaiyaḷum, nāṅ uṅ kāryattilē adhikārittuk koṅṭu pōrukaiyaḷum, uṅakku śōkanimittam illaikāṅ’ eṅru avañuṭaiya śōkanivṛttiyaip paṅṅikkoṭukkīrāṅ.*

need for the soul to grieve to show the parallel between the Caramaśloka and the Tamil hymn.⁴²⁷ Piḷḷai Lokācārya uses these two elements, the citation and paraphrase, to show the synthesis between the secrets and the Tamil hymns, despite the linguistic difference. They are part of the same sphere, and the rendering of the three secrets into Tamil makes their harmony explicit. In addition to the Tamil hymns, Piḷḷai Lokācārya adds *itihāsas* as another source of interpreting the three secrets to reinforce the deeds of the divine couple and what the devotee should do.

3.2.2 The Narratives of Practices from *Itihāsas*

In the *Mumukṣupaṭi*, the two *itihāsas* are the source of narratives of self-surrender and play a role in exemplifying the actions of God and Goddess and the ideal practices that should be followed by the devotee, as in the *Parantarahasyam*. Piḷḷai Lokācārya generally mentions the stories and the characters instead of citing the passages from *itihāsas* as seen in the *Parantarahasyam*. This suggests that the audience of the *Mumukṣupaṭi* might be limited to those who were familiar with the texts, unlike the *Parantarahasyam*, which may aim at a wider audience. Piḷḷai Lokācārya resorts to *itihāsas*, their stories and characters, to strengthen and remind the audience of important points presented in the Āḷvārs' hymns. As Mumme indicates based on the *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya's other significant *rahasyaग्रantha*, he views the *Mahābhārata* as the authority for the greatness of God, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the manual for the devotees such as Sītā.⁴²⁸ Below, I illustrate the way Piḷḷai Lokācārya uses

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 154: "He states, 'Oh foolish heart, why did you immerse in the ocean of affliction' [*Tiruccantaviruttam* 115]." ('*ettiṇṇāl iṭarkkaṭaḷ kiṭaittiy ēlai neṅcamē' eṅkiṛān*). See the whole passage in *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 184.

⁴²⁸ Mumme, "Rāmāyana Exegesis in Teṅkalai Śrīvaiṇavism," 205.

itihāsas to remind the audience of the effectiveness of the secrets, to illustrate the deeds of God and Goddess, and, finally, to show the models of practices related to self-surrender.⁴²⁹

In the first section, Piḷlai Lokācārya proves the effectiveness of the Tirumantra through the story of Draupadī from the *Mahābhārata*. After reciting the Tirumantra, which includes God’s name, Nārāyaṇa, Draupadī was saved from embarrassment by Kṛṣṇa.⁴³⁰ This story highlights the excellence of God, showing that God will save the one who recites His name in this secret. Then in the section on the Dvaya, Piḷlai Lokācārya draws the connection between the two *itihāsas*, especially the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the meanings of the Dvaya, arguing that the essence of the Dvaya lies in the fact that Śrī, Viṣṇu’s consort, is the mediator in the soteriological process. This is explicit in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in which the main female character, Sītā, is identified with one of the incarnations of Śrī. Piḷlai Lokācārya then provides some examples of Sītā’s deeds to show case that Śrī is the mediator who plays a role in God’s protection and forgiveness. For example, she made Hanumān forgive the demonesses (*raḡṣasīs*) who offended her when she was kidnapped and locked down in Laṅkā by Rāvaṇa.

In this case, she [Śrī] is referred to as the mediator. When anger is produced in the cool mind [of God] like fire rising up in water because of the offense [of the soul], [He] forgives for her sake. As a mother, she cannot bear their affliction. As His wife, she is pleasant [to Him]. Thus, she is a faultless mediator. There is no need to say that she who can make Hanumān bear with [the *raḡṣasīs*] will make Him who normally does as she states bear [with the soul’s offense].⁴³¹

Piḷlai Lokācārya further highlights the importance of her presence, indicating that Rāmā

⁴²⁹ For more information on Piḷlai Lokācārya’s use of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in particular, see *ibid*.

⁴³⁰ Piḷlai Lokācārya, *Mumukṣupaṭi*, 18: “It is this holy name (Nārāyaṇa) that brings forth the clothes for Draupadī in distress.” (*draupadikku āpattilē puṭavai curantatu tirunāmamiṛē*).

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 82–84: *ippōtu ivaḷaic collukīratu puruṣakāramāka. nīrilē neruppuk kiḷarumāpōlē kuḷirnta tiruvuḷattilē aparādhattāl cīṛṛum piṛantāl poruppatu ivaḷukkāka. ivaḷ tāyāy ivarkaḷ klēsam porukka māṭṭātē, avaṇukkup patniyāy iṇiyaviṣayamāy irukkaiyālē, kaṇṇaḷivaṛra puruṣakāram. tiruvaṭiyaip poruppikkum avaḷ, taṇ colvaḷi varum avānai poruppikkac collavēṇṭāvīrē.*

forgave the crow, despite its offense towards Sītā, due to her presence, but he did not forgive Rāvaṇa since she was not there. In the same way, the soul can be saved only with Śrī around since she is the only one who can beg God to protect the soul and forgive all of its sins, “The crow was saved because she was near. Rāvaṇa perished because she was not there.”⁴³² These two examples also illustrate God’s deeds in saving the soul. Piḷḷai Lokācārya further refers to the story of Lakṣmaṇa also from the *Rāmāyaṇa* to prescribe the soul’s duty. As the younger brother of Rāmā, Lakṣmaṇa served both his brother and Sītā, setting the model that the soul should do service to both God and Goddess and that service to the divine couple is the ultimate goal: “Like Lakṣmaṇa, the custom is doing service to the union that is the couple.”⁴³³

For the *Mahābhārata*, Piḷḷai Lokācārya mentions the character, Śiśupāla, in his explanation of the word “feet” in the Dvaya. This word points to God’s captivating qualities which motivate beings to take refuge with Him, just like Śiśupāla turned to Kṛṣṇa due to His body’s beauty, despite his abusive attitude towards Kṛṣṇa: “As the place where Śrī remains and that which reveals His qualities, one thinks about the body [of God], having corrected even Śiśupāla so that there is the entanglement and accepted him.”⁴³⁴

Thanks to Piḷḷai Lokācārya’s *Mumukṣupaṭi*, the Manipravalam norms gain increasing importance in the *rahasyagranthas* and render the Sanskrit scripture unnecessary for his system of self-surrender—even more so than what we have seen in the *Parantarāhasyam*—thus narrowing down the Manipravalam sphere. They seem to pressure Meghanādārisūri to react in his *Mumukṣūpāyasaṅgraha* by consolidating the Sanskrit sphere in the context of self-

⁴³² Ibid., 87: *ivaḷ saṅṅidhiyālē kākaṃ talaiperatu; atu illāmaiylē rāvaṇaṅ muṭintāṅ.*

⁴³³ Ibid., 105: *ilāiyaperumāḷaippōlē iruvarumāṇa cērttiyilē aṭimaiceykai muṛai.*

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 94: *ittāl, pirāṭṭikkū iruppiṭamāy, guṇaparakāśakamumāy, śiśupālaṅaiyum akappaṭattiruttic cērttuk koḷḷun tīrumēṇiyai niṅaiikkīratu.*

surrender.

3.3 Re-bordering the Sanskrit Sphere in the Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha

We have seen that Meghanādārisūri's self-surrender is almost identical to *bhakti* and is available only for the twice-born. In this section, it becomes clear that Meghanādārisūri's version of this doctrine is limited to the Sanskrit sphere, not the one systematized by Vātsyā Varadaguru but the one set up by Rāmānuja. Specifically, he re-borders the Sanskrit sphere, which Vātsyā Varadaguru expands in his systematization of self-surrender to include *śūdras* and highlights the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, narrowing it down to the normative domain of the Vedāntic scripture, Rāmānuja's works, and rejecting the authority of the Tamil scripture and the three secrets in the soteriological context.

In my understanding, the increasing importance of the Manipravalam norms with the Tamil hymns as the center presents a threat not only to the validity of self-surrender which should conform to Rāmānuja's soteriological model of Sanskrit norms, but also to the authority of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta within Vedic orthodoxy that only accepts Sanskrit scripture, especially the Upaniṣads. To gain acceptance from those who focus on Rāmānuja and the Upaniṣads and engage more with the Sanskrit side, Meghanādārisūri intends to strictly demarcate the Sanskrit sphere by excluding the Tamil scripture from any matters related to soteriology. His intention is reflected in the concluding verse of his *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* in which he aims to shed light on self-surrender for the internal audience who are skilled in the Upaniṣads and follow Rāmānuja:

Even when the world is overcome by a bad path due to the power of the Kali age, there is still a group of good people whose minds are purified by the Upaniṣads out of lack of inner resentment.

These great ones follow the view of Rāmānuja. The summary of the performance is made for enlightening them.

It is not composed out of ignorance, jealousy, greed, or even desire. Rather, it is produced from the blossoming faith in Rāmānuja.⁴³⁵

This verse further implies that some people deviate from the correct understanding of Rāmānuja’s teaching based on the Upaniṣads. As I will show, Meghanādārisūri claims that the textual authority of self-surrender can be found only in Sanskrit, especially the Upaniṣads. Importantly, Meghanādārisūri’s re-bordering of the Sanskrit sphere extends to the minimization of the role of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, which are critical to Vātsya Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta*. Meghanādārisūri was likely aware of the discussions on self-surrender, circulating in the Manipravalam sphere before and around his time based on his reference to the Tamil scripture and the three secrets. Nevertheless, he rejects the authority of the Tamil scripture in soteriology and moves self-surrender away from the Manipravalam sphere. I illustrate these features in the first section, and in the second section, I chart the various arguments that Meghanādārisūri puts forward to claim that Rāmānuja regards self-surrender as an alternative to *bhakti* in his own works. These arguments portray Rāmānuja as the ultimate authoritative figure regarding the soteriology, especially self-surrender, against the Manipravalam tendency to promote the Ālvārs as the ideal practitioners of self-surrender.

3.3.1 The Sanskrit Scripture for Self-surrender

Limiting himself to the Sanskrit sphere, Meghanādārisūri resorts to the Sanskrit scripture, especially one of the most authoritative sources, the Upaniṣads, in validating self-surrender.

⁴³⁵ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 45: *kalikālabalāl loke kumārgopaplute 'pi ca / sādhave*
'matsarād antas [corr. "āntās"] tryyantavimalāśayāḥ ||
ke cin mahāntas santyatra rāmānujamatānugāḥ | teṣāṃ prabodhanārthāya kṛto 'nuṣṭhānasaṅgrahaḥ ||
na vidyāto na mātsaryān na lobhān nāpi kāmataḥ | kṛtaḥ kin tu yatīndrasya mataśraddhāvijṛmbhaṇāt ||

Meghanādarīsūri begins the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* with a discussion on various means and references to them in the Upaniṣads, especially the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.⁴³⁶ He also cites passages from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* that are used by Vātsya Varadaguru to support the identification between self-surrender and the Upaniṣadic means of the laying down of oneself. He then provides an elaborate interpretation of the passage to show that self-surrender is characterized by the meditation on the Supreme Self, preceded by knowledge of the soul’s subservient nature.⁴³⁷ He identifies this passage with the passage from *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 10.63.19.⁴³⁸ After that, he harmonizes it with *Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18 which defines self-surrender as one of the Upaniṣadic means as follows: “Who at first created the Brahman and delivered to him the Vedas; who manifests himself by his own intelligence—in that God do I, desirous of liberation, seek refuge.”⁴³⁹ According to Meghanādārīsūri, all of the cited passages reveal that self-surrender cannot be accessible by *śūdras* who have no eligibility for Vedic study since it is enjoined in these *śruti* passages as Upaniṣadic means:

This is the meaning [of *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 10.63.19]. Having mediated on the nature of God as stated in [the *mantra* beginning with] “You, who are delighting in wealth,” the nature of oneself whose meaning is *aum*, and also on God being both the means and the goal, then one should meditate on the Supreme Self.

Thus, since self-surrender is established indeed through the *śruti* statements such as this, a *śūdra* does not have eligibility for it just as in case of the meditative worship of God. Self-surrender is evidently Vedic as in the passages like this “in that God do I, desirous of liberation, seek refuge”

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 6–7.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 37–38.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 39: “You, who are pervading and delighting in wealth, are joined with the breath. O Brahman, you are the creator of all and the giver of energy to the fire, speech to the sun, splendor to the moon, You are grasped in the sacrificial ladle. One should offer oneself as *aum* to You, the great glorious Brahman.” (*vasuraṇyo vibhur asi prāṇe tvam api sandhātā brahman tvam asi viśvasṛktejodās tvam asy agner vacādās tvam asi sūryasya dyumnodās tvam asi candramasa upayāmagrhīto ’si brahmaṇe tvā mahasa om ity ātmānam yuñjīta iti*). See *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, 274–275. See also section 2.1.1.

⁴³⁹ Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 432–433.

[*Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18]. Therefore, it is another type of Upaniṣadic means (*vidyā*) like the Upaniṣadic means of Śāṅḍilya and Upakosala etc.⁴⁴⁰

Meghanādārisūri then presents a passage from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.6, which is the same as *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 10.6, to support the argument that self-surrender can be referred to as “offering” (*sannyāsa*).⁴⁴¹ The passage is found not in the *Prapannapārijāta* but in Rāmānuja’s commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 18.1.⁴⁴²

[The fact that self-surrender is the means] is understood by the passage like, “The ascetics who have firmly determined their goal through a full knowledge of the Vedānta, having their being purified by the discipline of renunciation. In the worlds of Brahman, at the time of the final end, having become fully immortal, they will all be fully liberated” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.6].

The meanings which have been determined regarding the Upaniṣadic knowledge are the primary meanings of the Upaniṣads with the subordinate meanings, directly ascertained through the Vedāntic hermeneutic (*śārīrakamīmāṃsā*). [...]

This is the meaning: At the end of the body due to *karmas* that have begun to operate, those, who have ascertained the nature of the Supreme Soul etc. through the Upaniṣads, obtain their own true nature which can be obtained through Brahman through the establishment in mental self-surrender to God.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, 41: *ayam arthaḥ, vasuraṇyetyādīnā uktabhagavatsvarūpam anusandhāya praṇavārthaṃ svasvarūpaṃ ca anusandhāya upāyopeyate 'pi na (sa?) paramātmānam anusandadhyād iti.*

ata evamādiśrutivākyair eva prapattes siddhatvād upāsanavad eva tatra na sūdrasyādhikārah, mumukṣur vai śaraṇam ahaṃ prapadye, iti ca vaidīkī spaṣṭā, ataḥ śāṅḍilyopakosalādividyāvātprapattir vidyābheda eva. The *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* passage is translated by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 433. For Śāṅḍilya in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 209. For Upakosala in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4, especially 4.10, see *ibid.*, 215–229.

⁴⁴¹ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 10.6, 10.

⁴⁴² See Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* 18.1, 285.

⁴⁴³ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, 36–37: “*vedāntavijñānaśuniścītārthāḥ sanyāsayogād yatayaś sūddhasat[t]vā[h] | te brahmaloke tu parāntakāle parā mṛtāt parimucyanti sarve ||*” *ityādīnā tatpratīteḥ.*

vedāntavijñānaśuniścītārthāḥ śārīrakamīmāṃsayānuṣṭhuniścītasāṅgopaniṣatpradhānārthāḥ, [...] *ayam arthaḥ vedāntair niścītaparamātmādisvarūpās [corr., “as”] tatprapattijñānaniṣṭhayā prārabdhakarmahetuśarīrāvasāne brahma prāpyasvasvarūpaṃ prāpnuvanti ity arthaḥ, athavā brahmaloke sanyāsayogād iti sambandhaḥ, brahmaviśayaprapattijñānād ity arthaḥ.* For *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.6, see Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 452–453.

Although Meghanādārisūri does not deny the authority of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, he does not regard them as highly as Vātsya Varadaguru, especially in the context of the nature of self-surrender and its auxiliaries. It could be the case that Meghanādārisūri prefers the Upaniṣads which are more authoritative than the Pāñcarātra corpus within Rāmānuja’s system. Throughout the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, we only find the passages that communicate the six-fold taking refuge from *Lakṣmītantra* 17.75 and the functional excellence of self-surrender from *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 36.33.⁴⁴⁴ In addition to the Upaniṣads, he also pays attention to *itihāsas*, especially the passages that the *Prapannapārijātā* and the *Parantarāhasyam*, already mentioned, for example, *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 and *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.10.⁴⁴⁵

So far, I have discussed the continuation of self-surrender in the Sanskrit sphere of soteriology from Vātsya Varadaguru to Meghanādārisūri. At the same time, I have highlighted some of the differences found in the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* and the *Prapannapārijāta*, of which the most remarkable is the less significant role of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. In what follows, we will see that although Meghanādārisūri attempts to move away from the Manipravalam sphere, some discussions in the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* suggest that he was aware of the Manipravalam discussions, including the use of the Tamil hymns to justify the soteriological doctrine. Interestingly, the view that Meghanādārisūri presents as a potential opponent is parallel to Nañcīyar’s defense of Tamil and the Tamil scripture in the introduction to his Manipravalam commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.⁴⁴⁶ The same defense is reiterated by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai in the introduction of his Manipravalam commentary.⁴⁴⁷ The reference

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 15 and 43. See *Lakṣmītantra*, 58, and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, vol. 2, 370.

⁴⁴⁵ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 18–19.

⁴⁴⁶ See section 1.4, for example.

⁴⁴⁷ Section 2.2.1.

shows that Meghanādārisūri might have been aware of the Manipravalam discussion and felt the threat from the Manipravalam literature.

Although Meghanādārisūri acknowledges the Ālvārs' Tamil hymns as one of the norms, he rejects the argument proposed by a potential opponent that they have authority regarding the soteriology of *bhakti* and self-surrender. He then explains that the Tamil hymns cannot give *śūdras* any soteriological knowledge even if *śūdras* have access to it. Rhetorically, Meghanādārisūri points out that if the Tamil scripture can provide knowledge of self-surrender, then it might as well teach *bhakti*, which has the same Upaniṣadic status as self-surrender. The implication here is that since *bhakti* and self-surrender are Upaniṣadic means, their only source of knowledge are the Upaniṣads. Thus, the Tamil hymns and other authorities cannot give anyone the soteriological knowledge needed for the undertaking of *bhakti* and self-surrender and thus should not be considered an authority in this regard. Given this is the case, *śūdras* and those who are not the twice-born have no means to attain liberation since they cannot access any soteriological knowledge from the Upaniṣads.

Nevertheless, Meghanādārisūri does not deny the notion that Nammālvār, the author of the *Tiruvāymoli*, had the soteriological knowledge and performed self-surrender to attain liberation even as a *śūdra*. Accepting this view causes a contradiction in his system of self-surrender as it gives in to the assumption that those who are not twice-born, including the *śūdras* such as Nammālvār, can perform self-surrender. To resolve the contradiction, Meghanādārisūri clarifies that Nammālvār was an exception. He was able to perform self-surrender because he was a twice-born in his previous life and attained the knowledge to follow self-surrender during his past birth. The point is that Nammālvār did not and could not have access to the soteriological knowledge as a *śūdra*, but he managed to perform self-surrender in this life as

Nammālvār due to the knowledge from his previous birth. Thus, one cannot use the exceptional case of Nammālvār to defend the idea that *śūdras* have access to the required knowledge and can perform self-surrender to attain liberation. Such inclusion of *śūdras* would also contradict the exclusion established by Rāmānuja in the case of *bhakti*:

To object [the argument on the ineligibility of *śūdras* to attain liberation by any Upaniṣadic means], [one could say that] a *śūdra* should have eligibility since the nature the soul and the Supreme Soul can be taught through worldly statements without the uttering of the Vedic syllables; the teaching by other than [scriptural] statements is not prohibited; the meanings of the Vedas [or the Upaniṣads] can be heard in the hymns in Tamil and other [languages]; it is well known that the one who is in the fourth caste [namely Nammālvār] is the author of most of these hymns; and it is well known that these authors are established in meditation and the mental self-surrender. Therefore, even a *śūdra* has eligibility.

That is not the case since it is already said that if they were to have eligibility for the means stated in the Upaniṣads, there would be the contradiction with the section on the exclusion of *śūdras*. Also, if there were the teaching of the means in another language, then it should be the same for *bhakti*. It is stated in the *Śrībhāṣya* that there is no eligibility for the means due to the absence of Vedic study. Self-surrender is also a means prescribed in the Upaniṣads and it is only called with a different name since it has a different practice.

The fact that [self-surrender] is the meaning of the Upaniṣads will be stated later. People like Nammālvār who surrender to God have possessed the knowledge since birth and they do not get the knowledge in this life. However, regular people cannot follow what is done by those who have knowledge since birth. In the same way, given that Gajendra can take refuge with God, it does not mean that other elephants will have the capability to do so. It is not the case that the scripture is directly intent on the eligibility of all regarding the mental self-surrender.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁸ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, 17–18: *nanu vedākṣarānuccāraṇena laukikavākyād ātmaparamātmādeḥ svarūpopadeśād vākyāntareṇa upadeśe cāniṣedhāt, drāviḍādigādhāsu ca vedā(ntā)rthasyaiva śrūyamāṇatvāt, gāthānāñ ca prāyeṇa turīyavarṇakṛtatvaprāsiddheḥ, tatkartṛṇām ca dhyānaprapattijñānaniṣṭhatvasya prasiddheś ca śūdrasya apy adhikāra iti.*

maivam vedāntoditavidayāsu teṣām adhikāre 'paśūdrādihikaraṇavirodha ity uktatvāt, bhāṣāntareṇa vidyopadeśe tadanuṣṭhāne 'py avirodhābhidhānasya bhaktav api samatvāt, bhāṣye hi vedād adhyayanābhāvān na vidyāsv adhikāra ity uktaṃ, prapattir api vedāntoditavidyaiva, anuṣṭhānabhedāt tu, pṛthagavyavahārah. vedāntārthatvaṃ ca uttaratra vakṣyate, śrīmadvakulābhirāmādayas tu ājānasiddhajñānā bhagavantam prapannāḥ, na tu tajjanmany eva upalabdhajñānāḥ, ājānasiddhakṛtaṃ prākṛto janonānuvartitum kṣamaḥ, na hi gajendras tiryaktve 'pi bhagavantam prapanna itītaragajānām tatsāmarthyam, na ca śṛṅgagrāhikayā prapattijñānasya sarvādhikāraparam śāstram.

As we can see, Meghanādārisūri limits the source of soteriological knowledge to the Vedāntic Sanskrit scripture, especially the Upaniṣads, despite his acknowledgment of the Tamil scripture and the important figure Nammālvār. He regards Rāmānuja and his exclusion of those who are not twice-born as one of the essential components of the soteriology and thus preserves self-surrender for people from the three higher castes. His argument leaves no possibility for those who are not eligible for Vedic study, such as *śūdras*, since even the Ālvārs' Tamil hymns cannot substitute for Vedic study nor provide the soteriological knowledge for these people. The expansion of the Manipravalam sphere along with the influence of the Tamil scripture and the soteriological inclusion of the *śūdras* around that time might have driven Meghanādārisūri to draw a strict line between the Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres of soteriology.

3.3.2 Meghanādārisūri on Self-surrender in Rāmānuja's Works

In this section, I demonstrate that Meghanādārisūri defends the notion that Rāmānuja himself taught self-surrender as an independent soteriological doctrine in various works, namely his *Gītābhāṣya*, *Gadyatraya*, and even *Śrībhāṣya*. In the opening verse of the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, Meghanādārisūri identifies himself as Rāmānuja's follower and places himself within Rāmānuja's lineage to justify himself and his composition. The verse also reiterates the notion that Rāmānuja is the ultimate authority in the matters related to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' soteriology. It then makes known the fact that the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* proposes two means to liberation, namely *bhakti* and self-surrender, according to the previous *ācāryas*, among which Rāmānuja is the most authoritative one:

Having bowed down to Viṣṇu, the one with Śrī, Hayagrīva, Hanumān,
[all] whose senses have been conquered, and Rāmānuja as well as Nāthamuni

along with other *ācāryas*,

Meghanādāri of Ātreya [family] composed the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṅgraha* for those who wish to overcome the transmigration and desire to attain God.

Bhakti and self-surrender are elaborated as the means in the commentary texts [such as the *Śrībhāṣya* and the *Gītābhāṣya* of Rāmānuja]. They should be performed at all times with their auxiliaries once they are established by reasoning.

Their forms are stated in short according to the view and the capability. They are dealt with here for easy comprehension and in order to differentiate between the two.

The texts of previous *ācāryas* can be difficult for those who have simple minds. Therefore, I compose this text so that those who desire to know [the means] can easily understand [them] according to the Vedic scriptures.⁴⁴⁹

Meghanādārīsūri then addresses the two interpretations that Rāmānuja gave for *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 in his *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, proposing that Rāmānuja's first interpretation is about independent self-surrender, and the second interpretation presents self-surrender as an expiation which is an auxiliary to *bhakti*. It is important to note that he seems to be the first to touch on this issue. Interestingly, Vedāntadeśika claims the reverse of Meghanādārīsūri's understanding as we will see in Chapter 4.

According to Meghanādārīsūri, in the first interpretation, Rāmānuja understands *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as expressing the abandonment of the three *yogas* and their results. The abandonment indicates that another means is required, and Rāmānuja must have proposed self-surrender as an alternative.⁴⁵⁰ It is also wrong to say that Rāmānuja only indicates the undertaking of *bhakti* with self-surrender as its auxiliary without the expected result since he

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 1:

śrīsakhaṃ vājivadanam āñjaneyam jitendriyam | rāmānujāryanāthāryau praṇamyānyān gūran api ||
ātreyameghanādārīr mumukṣūpāyasaṅgraham | saṃsāravijigīṣūṇāṃ bhagavatprāptikāṅkṣiṇām ||
bhaktiprapattī bhāṣyādaḥ upāyatvena viśṛte | anuṣṭheye sadā sāṅge tayas tu nyāyasiddhayaḥ ||
yathāmati yathāśakti saṃkṣepād rūpam ucyate | u(y)kte vivekaśamsiddhyai sugrahatvāya ceha te ||
pūrvācāryaprabandhānām durgrahatvādamedhasām | karomi sukhabodhāya vivitsūnām yathāśrutam ||

⁴⁵⁰ Carman agrees with Meghanādārīsūri's argument that Rāmānuja's first interpretation not the second one is integral to the later development of independent self-surrender (*The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 216).

indeed prescribes the abandonment of actions along with their results in his interpretation. Moreover, if the first interpretation only points to the abandonment of the results of actions, there would be a repetition of such abandonment that is already mentioned in other *Bhagavadgītā* passages in Chapter 18.⁴⁵¹ Finally, Rāmānuja’s first interpretation should not refer to self-surrender as an auxiliary of *bhakti* since it would repeat what Rāmānuja states in the second interpretation:

Thus, given that self-surrender is an Upaniṣadic means, it is established that conduct according to castes and stages of life is an auxiliary. Thus, there is the statement that *karmayoga* and so on are subordinate to self-surrender in the first interpretation in [Rāmānuja’s] commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 and it is already stated that the first interpretation is about self-surrender as an independent means to liberation. Otherwise, there would be the undesirable consequence of redundancy and a disconnection between what was said earlier and later in [the *Gītābhāṣya*]. Contemplation of the path of light [discussed by Rāmānuja in *Śrībhāṣya* 3.1.1]⁴⁵² and other actions are established as what is to be done as subordinate to *bhakti* since there is an absence of the establishment of the result in the form of the attainment of God without contemplation of the path of light, and there is the understanding of non-rebirth by the statements like “by one [path], one reaches non-rebirth” [*Bhagavadgītā* 8.26]. Therefore, the statement [of the *Dvaya*] beginning with “[I surrender] at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī” is intended to reveal the nature of self-surrender as established in the Upaniṣads.⁴⁵³

Meghanādārisūri then assumes that Rāmānuja’s second interpretation communicates *bhakti* as

⁴⁵¹ See Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 30–31. To summarize, Meghanādārisūri mentions that *Bhagavadgītā* 18.2 is about the abandonment of results and *Bhagavadgītā* 18.4 refers to the nature of abandonment. Then, *Bhagavadgītā* 18.11 states the abandonment of actions that are subordinate to *bhakti*. All of these *Bhagavadgītā* passages culminate in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 which is about giving up *bhakti* and its result for the performance of self-surrender in place of *bhakti*.

⁴⁵² See Rāmānuja’s *Śrībhāṣya*, 619–625.

⁴⁵³ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 41–42: *evaṃ vidyātve varṇāśramācārāder aṅgatā ca siddhā, ata eva hy uttamaśloka bhāṣye pūrvayojanāyāṃ karmayogādeḥ prapattyaṅgatayoktiḥ, pūrvayojanā ca prapattes svātantryān mokṣopāyaparety uktam, anyathā punarukti prasaṅgaḥ, pūrvāparāsaṅgatiprasaṅgāś caivaṃ ca prapattyaṅgatayā gaticintāder api kartavyatā siddhā, gaticintāvyatirekeṇa bhagavatprāptiṣvarūpaphalasiddhyabhāvāt, ekayāyātyanāvṛttim ityādinā gatasya anāvṛttipratīteś ca evaṃ vedāntasiddhaprapattiṣvarūpadyotanaparaṃ śrīmannārāyaṇacaraṇav ityādivākyam.*

the means to liberation. He also indicates that *bhakti*, which is enjoined in this case, cannot be combined with another independent means such as self-surrender based on the principle: “In the proximity of something that has a result, it is an auxiliary of that” [Śabara on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 4.4.34].⁴⁵⁴ Given that this is the case, self-surrender in the second interpretation should indicate self-surrender that is an auxiliary to *bhakti* and has the form of expiation.⁴⁵⁵

In addition to the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, Meghanādārīsūri defends the notion that Rāmānuja taught soteriological self-surrender in his *Gadyatraya*. He focuses on the *Vaikuṅṭhagadya* instead of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* which is the longest section and the one to which other authors have paid the most attention. To support that Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya* prescribes self-surrender and not *bhakti* as the means to liberation, Meghanādārīsūri claims that the service mentioned in the *Vaikuṅṭhagadya* refers to the attainment of God or liberation.⁴⁵⁶ The implication is that the whole *Gadyatraya* first makes known the performance of self-surrender presumably in the first two *gadyas*, before communicating the service, which is its result in the *Vaikuṅṭhagadya*:

One should not object that it is not said that [self-surrender] is a separate means in the [*Bhagavadgītā*]bhāṣya. It is not said so since this will be known from the teaching alone. Also, it is stated [to be a separate means] in just the manner explained by the [*Bhagavadgītā*]bhāṣya in texts like the *Gadyatraya* which are devoted to the independent means, for example, “Having accepted God,

⁴⁵⁴ Śabarabhāṣya 4.4.34 in *Mīmāṃsādarśanam*, vol. 4, 1283.

⁴⁵⁵ Meghanādārīsūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, 35: “When we hear that both of them [*bhakti* and self-surrender] are independent means, it is impossible to combine them. *Bhakti* which has a form similar to direct perception [of God] and is heard of as having a result according to the principle, “The act which is in the proximity of the act with result is an auxiliary of that,” [Śabara on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 4.4.34] is taught as the means to liberation. In the first interpretation [of Rāmānuja’s commentary of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66], the cause of the sorrow is the thought of his own non-accomplishment of the goal which is God due to the incapability of the performance of this sort of means. On the other hand, it is evident in the second interpretation.” (*nirapekṣasādhanatayā śrūyamāṇayor ekaparakāraprakaraṇe śravaṇe samuccayānupapatteḥ, phalavatsannidhau aphalaṃ tadaṅgam iti nyāyāt phalavattayā śrūyamāṇasākṣāddarśanasamānākārahakter eva mokṣasādhanatayopadeśāt tādṛśopāyānuṣṭhānāsakteḥ svasya bhagavatprāptyasiddhidhīḥ śokanimittam pūrvayojanāyām, uttarayojanāyām tu spaṣṭam*).

⁴⁵⁶ For the *Vaikuṅṭhagadya* passage, see Rāmānuja, *Gadyatraya*, 189.

Nārāyaṇa, as the Master, Teacher, and Friend and having exclusive and total desire of the complete and intimate service at the paired feet to God, he thinks that there is no other means for the attainment of that even in thousands of millions of ages except self-surrender to the pair feet of God” [Vaikuṅṭhagadya]. It should not be stated also that self-surrender is not the means to liberation since exclusive servitude [mentioned in the *Gadyatraya*] is precisely the result of the attainment of God. There is no attainment of the exclusive servitude in transmigration but only in liberation.⁴⁵⁷

Meghanādārisūri also takes into account the fact that Rāmānuja is silent about self-surrender, either as an auxiliary to *bhakti* or as an independent means to liberation in the *Śrībhāṣya*. He explains that the performance of self-surrender is implicitly included in the context in the section on the collection of God’s qualities (*guṇa-upasamhāra*) in the *Śrībhāṣya* 3.3.5 in which Rāmānuja talks about the supreme nature of God and other means to liberation.⁴⁵⁸ Self-surrender is not mentioned explicitly in this context merely because it does not need to be discussed separately from these other means, as Meghanādārisūri explains. In my opinion, Rāmānuja does not deal with self-surrender here as he does in the case of other independent means because it is not a separate means yet, making it irrelevant when he argues for independent means. According to the account of previous *ācāryas*, Meghanādārisūri adds, Rāmānuja originally discussed self-surrender independently in the section on the collection of God’s qualities before erasing it due to the concern that self-surrender should be preserved as a

⁴⁵⁷ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, 29–30: *na ca bhāṣye pṛthagupāyo ’yam iti noktir iti vācyam, upadeśamātrād eva jñāsyata iti tathānukteḥ, gadyādiṣu svatantrapāyapareṣu bhāṣyoktaprakriyayaiva upanyastatvāc ca, bhagavantam nārāyaṇam svāmītvēna gurutvēna suhṛttvēna ca parigrhyaikāntikātyantikatatpādāmbujadvayaparicaryaikamanorathas tatprāptaye ca tatpādāmbujadvayaprapatter anyan na me kalpakoṭisahasreṇa api sādhanam asti iti manvānaḥ ityādau hi tathā pratīyate nirapekṣopāyatā ca, na ca atra bhagavatprāptyanabhīdhānān na mokṣasādhanatvam iti vācyam, ātyantikakainkaryasyaiva bhagavatprāptiphaltvāt. na hi saṃsāradaśāyām ātyantikakainkaryasiddhiḥ. mokṣa eva hi tatsiddhiḥ, paramjyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇa abhiniṣpadyate iti hi śruti, bhagavaccheṣātaikarasatvam eva hi jīvasvarūpaṃ, tadāvīrbhāve ca tadanuḡanakainkaryam eva phalaṃ, kainkaryābhāve ca na svarūpalābhāḥ, kṛte hi dāsakṛtye tu dāsānām kṛtakṛtyatā | akṛte dāsakṛtye tu dāsyam eva na sidhyati, iti hi pūrvair uktam, ataḥ kainkaryabhagavatprāptyanyatarābhīdhāne ’py anyatarasya arthasiddhir iti bhāṣyādv anyataroktiḥ, ato gadyādau svatantrapāyatvaṃ sphuṭam eva.*

⁴⁵⁸ *Śrībhāṣya*, 678.

secret. Thus, Rāmānuja composed other independent works devoted to the teaching of self-surrender such as the *Gadyatraya*. To my knowledge, this argument is unique to Meghanādārisūri. However, the ideas that the *Śrībhāṣya* might be accessible by those who are not the followers of Rāmānuja and that self-surrender is an internal issue are not controversial by Meghanādārisūri’s time.⁴⁵⁹

[Opponent:] Why is [self-surrender] not stated in the section on the collection of God’s qualities (*guṇa-upasaṃhāra*) [in the *Śrībhāṣya* 3.3.5] [Proponent:] The answer is that it is because there is neither collection nor non-collection of God’s qualities, just as for other Upaniṣadic means and the nature of the one to be surrendered to is known by the manner [already] stated in various Upaniṣadic means. It is also not the case that the Supreme Self has a different nature as the one to be surrendered to other than the nature stated in various Upaniṣadic means. Having known the nature of the Supreme Self in many Upaniṣadic means, one should perform either *bhakti* or self-surrender according to one’s eligibility.⁴⁶⁰

It may be the case that Meghanādārisūri feels the need to argue that Rāmānuja discusses self-surrender in the *Śrībhāṣya* since self-surrender should be included as one among the many Upaniṣadic means in this main text in which Rāmānuja establishes his soteriological system. It should be noted that the view that self-surrender is a secret—that it should be passed on and circulated only within the community—can be found mainly in the Manipravalam literature on self-surrender, especially the *rahasyagranthas*. This suggests that Meghanādārisūri’s *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* might be in conversation with the Manipravalam sphere.

⁴⁵⁹ See section 1.3.

⁴⁶⁰ Meghanādārisūri, *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, 41: *nanu guṇopasaṃhārapāde kim iti tarhi na cintiteti, ucyate, itaravidyāsv iva guṇopasaṃhārānupasaṃhārābhāvāt, prapadyasvarūpasya tattadvidyodītaprakāreṇa jñātatvāc ca iti. na hi tattadvidyodītasvarūpavyatirekeṇa paramātmanaḥ prapadyasvarūpaṃ bhinnam, tattadvidyodītaparasvarūpaṃ jñātvā svādhikārānugunaṃ bhaktiprapattyor anyatarānuṣṭhānaṃ kuryāt.*

3.4 Summary

Despite the mutual contact between the two communities at Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam, Piḷḷai Lokācārya and Meghanādārisūri conformed to their norms and expressions in order to solidify their respective linguistic spheres and address their own groups of audience, resulting in their heterogeneous strands of self-surrender. Even if the two authors developed self-surrender in two opposing directions, it is unlikely that they were explicitly arguing against each other, as we have no evidence to suggest it. Also, they might argue against other authors who are not in the picture here. I agree with Francis Clooney’s reflection based on his analysis of the debate on caste issues between Vedāntadeśika and Piḷḷai Lokācārya that their distinction can be considered “a matter of communal and textual positioning and posturing, as the two branches of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community define their stances.”⁴⁶¹ It is also likely that their decisions to strictly conform to the two spheres shapes their systems of self-surrender, one deeper into the Sanskrit Vedāntic world and the other diving into the devotionalism of the Tamil hymns. This results in two strands of self-surrender that, in turn, reflect the normative limitation and expressive boundaries in the two soteriological spheres.

It is important to note that the two spheres are certainly intertwined as we can see in the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*, most evidently, where Meghanādārisūri referred to the authority of the Tamil scripture and some of the discussions found in the Manipravalam literature. The interconnected nature could be one of the factors that drives Meghanādārisūri to re-border the Sanskrit sphere through the consolidation of Rāmānuja’s *bhakti* and the Upaniṣads, whose validity could be threatened by the Tamil sources and language. This consolidation manifests in the equation between *bhakti* and self-surrender, the exclusion of *śūdras*, and the rejection of

⁴⁶¹ Clooney, “Fierce Words,” 404.

the Tamil authority and the role of the three secrets in soteriology. Another possible factor may be his intention to convince other authors who focus on the Sanskrit heritage that self-surrender is another valid soteriological means. This might explain why his argument extends to the exclusion of *śūdras*, which would not have been practical given the diversity of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community around that time. One could also view the *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha* as an intellectual and scholastic endeavor to establish the legitimacy of self-surrender without addressing the community and its praxis.

On the other hand, Piḷḷai Lokācārya moved self-surrender away from the Sanskrit sphere. In the *Mumukṣupaṭi*, he prioritized the Tamil scripture over the Sanskrit authority whose role is reduced. The preference of the Tamil scriptures marks a significant transformation in authoritative usage from the time of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai to Piḷḷai Lokācārya. Piḷḷai Lokācārya's high regard for the Tamil scripture leads to his emphasis on the narratives of the Āḷvārs' soteriological journeys and their exemplary practices. To undertake self-surrender is to follow the predecessors. His view brings self-surrender closer to the community because it does not, in theory, have to be mediated by the Sanskrit scripture which is distant and not engaged as much in the actual practices. Moreover, the Tamil hymns are pregnant with the devotional attitude that stresses the soul's subservience as well as God's power and compassion. With this attitude, Piḷḷai Lokācārya drove his system of self-surrender in the opposite direction to that of Meghanādārisūri. According to Piḷḷai Lokācārya, the essence of self-surrender lies in this relationship between the soul and God, and the same hierarchical relationship should be adopted in the real world among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as well.

As we will see in the next chapter, Vedāntadeśika felt the need to reconcile the contradiction and devoted two treatises in both Sanskrit and Manipravalam to harmonize the

different forms of self-surrender and bridge the norms and modes of expression in the two spheres.

CHAPTER 4 DISTILLATION

The previous chapters have shown the division between one group of the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors who mainly used Manipravalam as their medium and the others who did not include Manipravalam along with the Tamil scripture in the intellectual scenario despite the fact that both groups obviously followed Rāmānuja. Chapters 2 and 3 further indicate the plurality of self-surrender in the Sanskrit and Manipravalam treatises due to the dynamic interactions between the norms and expressions of different languages. Among the authors investigated in this dissertation, Vedāntadeśika is an excellent example of how the agent can exercise agency and creativity while working in and beyond each linguistic domain that dictates authorial production.

Unlike previous authors who composed treatises in either Sanskrit or Manipravalam, Vedāntadeśika or Veṅkaṭanātha (c. 1268–1369) was the first to write treatises on self-surrender in both languages, of which the most significant ones are the Sanskrit *Nikṣeparakṣā* and the Manipravalam *Rahasyatrayasāram*. He also stands out among the authors in this dissertation due to his large corpus that ranges from philosophical treatises to poetry, in various languages, namely Sanskrit, Manipravalam, Tamil, and Prakrit.⁴⁶² In the Śrīvaiṣṇava scholarship, Vedāntadeśika is famous for his intellectual and philosophical contribution, and he is known as arguably the most influential post-Rāmānuja philosopher of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. For the present tradition, he was retrospectively regarded as the founder of the sub-tradition, the Vaṭakalai, and a faithful follower of Rāmānuja. I understand that Vedāntadeśika's uniqueness

⁴⁶² For other aspects of Vedāntadeśika, see Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*, and "Vedāntadeśika" in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online*.

is partly tied up with social-institutional and intellectual pressures that are largely absent in the contexts of our previous authors but at play in the case of Vedāntadeśika.

The picture of Vedāntadeśika as an important figure is painted mainly through his own compositions as well as the poems devoted to him. According to Hopkins, there are also some panegyrics, chronicles, and inscriptions in Śrīraṅgam that provide some information on Vedāntadeśika.⁴⁶³ These materials harmoniously point to Vedāntadeśika's mastery of different intellectual and philosophical systems and poetry ("master of all systems" *sarvatantrasvatantra*, and "the lion among poets and logicians" *kavitārkkikasimha*).⁴⁶⁴ In particular, the hagiographies narrate his miraculous qualities, from his birth as an incarnation of the sacred bell at Tirupati temple in Kāñcīpuram to his secret study with Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's vehicle, and from Viṣṇu's form of the horse-headed Hayagrīva in Tiruvahīndrapuram to his ability to heal an entire village affected by a plague. These narratives highlight his victory in various debates with *ācāryas* from Śrīraṅgam, during his pilgrimage to the north, and his leading positions in both Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam. This is mainly the story of this early and middle years. During his later years, the hagiographies focus on the Muslim attack and the dramatic moment when, during the attack, Vedāntadeśika had to hide under a pile of corpses before fleeing to Mysore with manuscripts of his own works and others. Vedāntadeśika was credited with the restoration of the community at Śrīraṅgam and the production of a multilingual corpus until the end of his life.⁴⁶⁵

Due to the absence of more historical evidence, it is difficult to verify the validity of these stories. For example, an incarnation of the bell sounds more allegorical, while the Muslim

⁴⁶³ "Vedāntadeśika," 462.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

invasion could have a historical basis. However, through the stories, we can extract some views on Vedāntadeśika, especially in regard to his leading role in both locations, the variety of social and intellectual environments he was exposed to since his childhood, his great contribution to the Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophical and literary scene, and his attention to different languages. Moreover, the story of his debates implies the contentious religious and social milieu outside.⁴⁶⁶

Hopkins defines Vedāntadeśika's entire multilingual corpus as presenting "different facets of one all-embracing theology, [reaching] a certain extreme of textual polyphony." Hopkins elaborates, "his Tamil poetry and prose are marked with the presence of Sanskrit, and, most important for Indian studies, his Sanskrit as well is saturated with Tamil literary conventions and idealized local landscapes, transparent to sociocultural-and geocultural-aesthetic domains that I call more generally a South Indian, mostly Tamil, imaginary"⁴⁶⁷

In Sanskrit, Vedāntadeśika composed philosophical works that present his mastery in various philosophical systems, for example, Nyāya in the *Nyāyasiddhāñjana* and *Nyāyapariśuddhi*, Mīmāṃsā in the *Seśvaramīmāṃsā*, Advaita Vedānta in the *Śatadūṣaṇī*, and Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta in the *Tattvamuktākālāpa* along with its auto-commentary titled *Sarvārthasiddhi* and the *Adhikaraṇasārāvalī*, the summary of the *Brahmasūtra*. These works reflect Vedāntadeśika as a brahmin elite who participated in philosophical debates with other communities in order to defend the superiority of Rāmānuja's philosophy. Vedāntadeśika engaged with the ritual scripture and practices based on the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās in his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* and *Saccaritarakṣā*. He also composed some Sanskrit commentaries on the Sanskrit works of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, such as Yāmuna's *Stotraratna*, Rāmānuja's

⁴⁶⁶ The contentious nature of this era is supported by Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule*, 83–101, and Rao, *History of the Śrīrangam Temple*, 88–105.

⁴⁶⁷ Hopkins, "Vedāntadeśika," 468.

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya (the *Tātparyacandrikā*), and Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya*. These commentaries are crucial to the reconstruction of the history of self-surrender as they show Vedāntadeśika’s attempt to read these works as literature of self-surrender in order to validate this doctrine. Vedāntadeśika’s Sanskrit non-prose corpus is comprised of both praise-poems (*stotras*), a great poem (*mahākāvya*, namely the *Yādavābhyudaya*), a messenger-poem (the *Haṃsasandēśa*), a play (the *Samkalpasuryodaya*), and other theological summaries such as the *Śaraṇāgatidīpikā* and the *Draṃīdopaniṣat Tātpāryaratnāvalī*. In his article, “The Philosopher as Poet – A Study of Vedāntadeśika’s ‘Dehalīśastuti,’” Freidhelm Hardy paved the way for a study of Vedāntadeśika’s poetry, arguing that “Vedāntadeśika is clearly aiming at a spiritual synthesis of a great many different traditions in the South Indian cultural heritage.”⁴⁶⁸ Despite the attention to self-surrender in his other works, Vedāntadeśika presented his system of self-surrender most intricately in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* which is my focus.

Vedāntadeśika’s works in Tamil are only in poetic form. According to Hopkins, his Tamil poetry mainly promotes Tamil devotionalism of the Ālvārs and strengthen the Tamil stream of the community.⁴⁶⁹ In addition to expressing the Ālvārs’ emotionalism, some of his Tamil poems contain the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ theological illustration, especially on self-surrender, for example the *Aṭaikkalappattu* and the *Tirucciṅṅamālai*.⁴⁷⁰ Apart from the Sanskrit and Tamil verses, Vedāntadeśika composed one praise-poem devoted to Lord Devanāyaka in southern literary Prakrit, Māhārāṣṭrī, presumably to attract pan-regional audiences.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Hardy, “The Philosopher as Poet,” 315.

⁴⁶⁹ Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 83. Hopkins also states that “though he [Vedāntadeśika] seems capable of writing a simple, luminous Tamil verse in the style of Nammālvār’s *tirumolis* and *viruttams*, he is also, as his tradition claims, the earliest of Vaiṣṇava writers to use the Tamil language to articulate religious doctrines in a purely technical style more natural to Sanskrit” (ibid.).

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 215–231.

His Manipravalam compositions largely consist of short *rahasyagranthas* that focus on theology of self-surrender and the three secrets such as the *Rahasyapadavī*, the *Rahasyaratnāvali*, the *Rahasyatrayaculakam*, the *Tattvasandēśam*, and the *Sampradāyapariśuddhi*, collectively published today under the title “*Cillarai Rahasyaṅkaḷ*.”⁴⁷² His two longer works are the *Paramatabhaṅgam*, where he establishes the superiority of Rāmānuja’s philosophy over other intellectual and philosophical systems,⁴⁷³ and the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, his most important contribution that aims at harmonizing and synthesizing the views on self-surrender.

For self-surrender specifically, Vedāntadeśika’s attempt to purify and harmonize the normative and expressive discrepancies can also be understood based on the institutional and intellectual contexts which are largely absent in the previous authors’ environment. As a leader, he further intended to raise the notion of “the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition”—the inclusive community who follows Rāmānuja and shares the belief of self-surrender.⁴⁷⁴ Young’s analysis of the inscriptions in Tamilnadu from the eleventh to the twelfth century, for example, those during the reigns of Rājendra I, Rājādhirāja I, and Vīra Rājendra, also suggests the internal social fluctuation at this time as a result of different bodies of Vaiṣṇavas entering into the community such as the *bhaṭṭars*. Young states:

We do not know what kind of Brāhmaṇas these *bhaṭṭars* were. But we do know that, by the fourteenth century, the *bhaṭṭars* were taking over from the *śrīvaiṣṇavas* in temple management. And we do know that conservatism was simultaneously affecting Śrīvaiṣṇavism; visible in works by Vedāntadeśika, and the provoking reactions by Maṇavāḷamāmuni”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² See the 1990 edition, for example.

⁴⁷³ Venkatachari, *The Manipravāla Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 146–148.

⁴⁷⁴ See section 5.3.

⁴⁷⁵ Young, “Brāhmaṇas, Pāñcarātrins, and the Formation of Śrīvaiṣṇavism,” 255.

According to the inscriptional evidence, the social and power impact of new members of the community with “[i]ncreasing hierarchy and competition over temple honours and rights” along with the establishment of the Pāñcarātrins in Vaiṣṇava temples.⁴⁷⁶ Moreover, the Śrīvaiṣṇava *mathas* which were loosely developed since the twelfth century seem to have been more administratively structured around the fourteenth century based on the epigraphical and hagiographical evidence.⁴⁷⁷ The unified theology could also possibly sharpen the self-understanding of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and accommodate the diverse and changing bodies of followers. It should be noted that given the complex nature of his arguments, they seem to be largely related to polemics and theological debates rather than actual practices. Importantly, they should be understood as intra-Śrīvaiṣṇava discussions as there were no external pressures who actively attacked the doctrine of self-surrender at this time, to my knowledge. Finally, Vedāntadeśika’s involvement with the *ācāryas* in both locations might have also motivated him to compose works, especially treatises on self-surrender, in more than one language in order to engage with both communities. Satyavrata Singh suggests that Vedāntadeśika might have composed some of his immense works, such as the *Rahasyatrayasāram* and his Sanskrit commentaries on the works of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, during the last period of his life in Śrīraṅgam, while the *Nikṣeparakṣā* was composed during his residence in Kāñcīpuram.⁴⁷⁸ This later corpus could have resulted from his revitalizing project as the head of Śrīraṅgam after its

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 261: “By the fourteenth century, however, the status quo might have been disturbed by the arrival of another Brahmanical group (or several), generally known as *bhaṭṭars*, who pulled rank as more orthodox. Increasing hierarchy and competition over temple honours and rights explain the rise of charter myths in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century hagiographies, which legitimated families or groups by association with early Ācāryas. In the Kōyil-oḷuku, the Śrībhāgavata *nampis* legitimated their temple role as priests by association with Rāmānuja. With this development, the Pāñcarātrins must have become more firmly established in many Vaiṣṇava temples of Tamilnadu.”

⁴⁷⁷ Dutta, *From Hagiographies to Biographies*, 93–94.

⁴⁷⁸ Singh, *Vedānta Deśika*, Chapter 2, for the potential chronology of Vedāntadeśika’s works.

sacking. Through both languages, Vedāntadeśika created some new ways of defining self-surrender. As we have already seen, language spheres shape the authors' linguistic choices, but the authors have agency to participate and operate in each language sphere.

I analyze the *Nikṣeparakṣā* in this chapter. I propose that Vedāntadeśika's decision to compose this work in Sanskrit suggests his attempt to show that the soteriological status of self-surrender can be validated through the Sanskrit norms alone and to resolve any discrepancies in the Sanskrit expressions of self-surrender. Put differently, in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika claims that self-surrender, as presented by him, belongs in the Sanskrit sphere and is homogeneously accepted by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, of which Rāmānuja is the supreme figure and Vedāntic scriptures are the scriptural norms. His claim indicates that there is also self-surrender in the Sanskrit discussions and not only in Manipravalam. In the conclusion of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika himself declares that this work participates in the project of revealing the secret of self-surrender as follows:

Good people ought to forgive [me, Vedāntadeśika,] as the Lord forgives [me] merely through the special love which is His power [even if] the secret that should be concealed is revealed [by me], and there is a mistake either little or great.

Having refuted the muttering of those who travel away from the enjoyment of worshipping the *ācāryas'* feet, I, Veṅkaṭeśa, by the traditional way, uncovers the supreme meaning that is the treasure of self-surrender (*nyāsavidyā*) hidden in the mountain of the Vedas.⁴⁷⁹

This project is in fact shared by the Manipravalam *rahasyagranthas* like those of

⁴⁷⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā* (Kañjīvaram: Śrīmadvedāntadeśikagranthamālā, 1941), 40: *vivr̥tam iha rahasyam yan mayā gopanīyam skhalitam api yadiśad bhūyasā vā tad etat | nijamahimaviśeṣapremamātreṇa nāthāḥ kṣamata iti vicintya kṣantum arhanti santaḥ || gurucaraṇasaparyāsvādavaideśikānām pralapitam avadhūya prāktanēdhvanaiva | vyavṛṇuta paramārtham veṅkaṭeśaḥ prajānām nigamagirinigūdhām nyāsavidyānidhānam ||*

Periyāvāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya. However, due to the limitation of the Sanskrit sphere, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* does not show an explicit connection with the Manipravalam discussions on self-surrender or the Tamil scripture. According to his verse, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is meant to validate self-surrender as another Vedānta doctrine like *bhakti* on the ground of the Sanskrit sphere following Rāmānuja’s norms and expressions in soteriology. Importantly, his reference to those whose views deviate from the teaching indicates that there are internal discrepancies regarding self-surrender within the community, presumably those we have seen in the Sanskrit treatises of Vātsyā Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri. Importantly, the issues raised by Vedāntadeśika in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* present a distillation of the more elaborate discussions and debates on self-surrender in the previous and contemporaneous Manipravalam literature. One could also argue that the Sanskrit soteriology presented here is simply a distillation of what the Manipravalam sphere contains.

Another goal of the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is to propose that a Vedāntic injunction for soteriological self-surrender can be found in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66: “Having abandoned all *dharma*, come to Me alone as refuge. I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve.”⁴⁸⁰ In the conclusion, Vedāntadeśika claims that self-surrender in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* should be directed to those who are from the three higher castes like Arjuna since it is enjoined by *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 and not for other people such as *śūdras* or women:

People say that there is the injunction of self-surrender (*śaraṅāgati*) as the means to attain liberation for women and *śūdras* who are not eligible for *dharmas*. They [, the people who say that,] have been previously largely rejected. As they [i.e.,

⁴⁸⁰ Vedāntadeśika mentions the Caramaśloka in many places in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* and highlights its importance by concluding this text with his own summary of the Caramaśloka (40): “This is the condensation of the Caramaśloka: I am the means for the person who would grieve because the means to what that person desires (liberation) is very difficult.” (*suduṣkareṇa śoced yo yena yena iṣṭahetunā | sa sa tasyāham eveti caramaślokasamgrahaḥ ||*).

śūdras and women] lack the attainment [of the eligibility to perform *dharmas*], it does not make sense to deny [their eligibility] on the view that [the Caramaśloka is] the injunction to abandon [the *dharmas*]. The statement cannot operate with reference to Arjuna, [if it refers to women and *śūdras*], since it would be irrelevant. Arjuna is not a woman or a *śūdra*. Thus, on the view that [the Caramaśloka is] a reiteration of the abandonment [of *dharmas*], [the injunction] for those people is also rejected, and there is no proof that Arjuna is not eligible to perform all of the *dharmas* [whether the Caramaśloka is an injunction or a reiteration of abandonment].⁴⁸¹

The final goal of the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is to differentiate between those who are eligible to perform *bhakti* and those who can undertake self-surrender as the means to liberation. The differentiation supports the argument that both *bhakti* and self-surrender are equally useful and preserves the authority of the scripture that enjoin these two means.

In what follows, I will chart these arguments in detail. In the first section, I look into Vedāntadeśika's conformity to the Sanskrit sphere through his use of the Sanskrit scriptures, hermeneutical methods, and the authority of Rāmānuja in defending self-surrender like Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri. In the second section, I argue that self-surrender in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* shares some similar features with the strands found in the *Prapannapārijāta* and *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha* as they all model on Rāmānuja's system of *bhakti*. Moreover, we see Vedāntadeśika's attempt to differentiate his system of self-surrender from the strands of self-surrender argued by the Manipralam authors. Although Vedāntadeśika maintains that self-surrender is a valid means that is separate from *bhakti* in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, he does not advance the view that self-surrender is the only possible means. His attention to the equivalence between *bhakti* and self-surrender in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* places this work in the same linguistic domain of

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 39: *dharmānadhikāristrīśūdrādikam uddīśya mokṣopāyatayā śaraṇāgatividhānam iti vadantas tu prāg eva nirastaprāyāḥ; tyāgavidhipakṣe teṣāṃ prāptyabhāvena pratiṣedhāyogāt; arjunoddeśena vacanapravṛtter asaṅgatatvāt | nāsāv arjunaḥ strī, śūdrādir vā | tataḥ eteṣu tyāgānuvādapakṣo 'pi nirastaḥ; na cārjunasya sarvadharmānadhikāritvaṃ siddham.*

the treatises by Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri.

4.1 The Sanskrit Sphere in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*

Here, I explore the content of the *Nikṣeparakṣā* to show the influence of the *Prapannapārijāta* on Vedāntadeśika's work. Then, I analyze Vedāntadeśika's use of Sanskrit scriptures to argue that the *Nikṣeparakṣā* participates in the Sanskrit sphere.

The *Nikṣeparakṣā* is divided into nine sections with a brief introduction and conclusion. Each section consists of two parts: the first part establishes the views of potential and sometimes existing opponents.⁴⁸² The latter part argues against the opposing views and provides the proponent's response.⁴⁸³ In terms of the content, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* shares the topics of the nature, authority, and eligibility of self-surrender with the *Prapannapārijāta*. Like Vātsya Varadaguru, Vedāntadeśika pays attention to the nature of self-surrender, which he deals with in the first section (*svarūpa*). The same topic is further elaborated on in the section on the characteristics of self-surrender (*lakṣaṇā*). Section 4 (*vidhi*), which defends scriptural injunctions for self-surrender, is the most significant and serves as the foundation on which Vedāntadeśika rests other arguments. In section 5 (*niṣedha*), he then refutes the views that self-

⁴⁸² The nine sections are as follows: 1) The absence of the nature of self-surrender (*svarūpa-anupapatti*), 2) The absence of its definition (*lakṣaṇa-anupapatti*), 3) The absence of its performance (*anuṣṭhāna-anupapatti*), 4) The absence of injunctions (*vidhi-anupapatti*), 5) The justification of prohibition of self-surrender (*niṣedha-samarthana*), 6) The justification of oneness between *bhakti* and self-surrender (*aikya-samarthana*), 7) The justification of incapability to perform self-surrender (*aśakti-samarthana*), 8) The justification that self-surrender is not well-known in scriptures (*akhyāti-samarthana*), and 9) The justification that self-surrender is contradictory to the teachings in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition (*saṃpradāyavirodha-samarthana*).

⁴⁸³ The proponent's arguments: 1) The justification of the nature of self-surrender (*svarūpa-samarthana*), 2) The justification of its definition (*lakṣaṇa-samarthana*), 3) The justification of its performance (*anuṣṭhāna-samarthana*), 4) The justification of injunctions (*vidhi-samarthana*), 5) The rejection of prohibition (*niṣedha-bhaṅga*), 6) The rejection of oneness between *bhakti* and self-surrender (*aikya-bhaṅga*), 7) The rejection of incapability (*aśakti-bhaṅga*), 8) The rejection that self-surrender is not well-known in scriptures (*akhyāti-bhaṅga*), 9) The rejection that self-surrender is contradictory to the teachings in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition (*saṃpradāyavirodha-bhaṅga*). Note that instead of indicating the conduct, Vedāntadeśika devotes the third section on the performance (*anuṣṭhāna*) to justify that self-surrender can be performed since it is enjoined by various injunctions and performed by some characters in *itihāsas*.

surrender cannot be performed. In section 6 (*aikya*), he argues against the unity between *bhakti* and self-surrender. Vedāntadeśika affirms that some people can acquire the qualifications required for the undertaking of self-surrender in section 7 (*aśakti*). In section 8 (*akhyāti*), he rejects that self-surrender and its nature cannot be known through worldly means or scripture. The final section (*sampradāya-virodhana*) shows that the tradition, led by Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, considered self-surrender not only as an auxiliary to *bhakti* but also as another soteriological doctrine. Moreover, self-surrender has been handed down and performed by people as the means to liberation until now.

The *Prapannapārijāta*'s influence on the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is clear in many aspects, but Vedāntadeśika does not mention Vātsya Varadaguru or the *Prapannapārijāta* anywhere in his text. Interestingly, the topics found in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* point out that Vedāntadeśika focuses on the intellectual debates even more than Vātsya Varadaguru and chooses to ignore the performative or pragmatic aspect of self-surrender, which is one of the main concerns in the *Prapannapārijāta*.

4.1.1 The Sanskrit Norms

As stated previously, Vedāntadeśika's discussion on the injunctions of self-surrender is to be considered the most important one here. He rests the arguments in other sections on the assumption that there are authoritative passages that enjoin independent self-surrender as the means to liberation. Following that, Vedāntadeśika makes the case that self-surrender can be defined and performed based on the *śruti* and *smṛti* injunctions. Vedāntadeśika cites Vedic passages, which Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai also refers to in the *Parantarahasyam*, namely *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18, "Who at first created the *Brahman* and delivered to him the

Vedas,” and the passage from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1, “Thus, offering is said to be superior to these austerities.”⁴⁸⁴ For the *Mahānārāyaṇa* passage, Vedāntadeśika justifies it as an injunction of self-surrender in a more elaborate manner than what we saw in the *Prapannapārijāta*, in which the passage is listed as one of the injunctions for self-surrender. He explains that the passage can be understood as an injunction of self-surrender through the support of *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.36, “But, among these austerities, offering is heard as being the distinguished one.”⁴⁸⁵ The fact that the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* passage is mentioned in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* passage, which is embedded in the context of self-surrender implies that the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* passage also deals with the same topic on self-surrender even if it does not explicitly enjoin self-surrender. Vedāntadeśika further affirms that there is no contradiction between self-surrender in the *śruti* passage like the one from the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* and the one in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* despite the different *mantras* used for self-surrender in these scriptures, Vedic *mantra* in the Vedas and Tantric one in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. The potential contradiction can be prevented by dividing those eligible for the self-surrender in the *śruti* with a Vedic *mantra*, such as the twice-born and the group of eligible people to perform self-surrender with Tantric *mantra*, but not the Vedic *mantra* such as the non-twice-born.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁴ For *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18, see the full text and translation by Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 432–433. *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 24.1, 25: “*tasmān nyāsam eṣāṃ tapasām atiriktam āhuḥ*.” For the passages and their occurrence in the *Parantarahasyam*, see section 2.1.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.36, vol. 2, 371: *teṣāṃ tu tapasām nyāsam atiriktam tapaḥ śrutam*.

⁴⁸⁶ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 29: “[...] there is no contradiction of reinforcing just that much [that the *Mahānārāyaṇa* passage is about self-surrender], and there is possibility of division of *mantra* of self-surrender conforming to the forms of God which are ornamented with this or that or different qualities forms, power, and so on.” ([...] *tāvanmātropabr̥mhaṇasya avirodhāt, tattadguṇaviḡrahavibhūtyādīparikarmītabhagavadākā-rānurūpaprapadamāntrabhedasyāpy upapatteḥ*). Also (ibid.), “offering conforming to their own eligibilities is suitable by some people because of injunctions according to eligibility with respect to *mantras* both Vedic and Tantric.” (*evaṃ vaidikatāntrikamantreṣy api yathāvidhānam adhikārāt tair api kaiścit svādhikārānurūpo nyāso yaktah*).

Among all the *smṛti* passages, Vedāntadeśika highlights *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, which Vātsya Varadaguru also mentions as a *smṛti*. In the first section, Vedāntadeśika emphasizes the central role of the most controversial part in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, “having abandoned all *dharmas*.” He claims that the phrase should be regarded as the essence of all the scripture. Furthermore, he criticizes the possible interpretation of this as the abandonment of *dharmas*, which deviates from the actual practices of those who surrender and from previous *ācāryas*:

The essence of the particular scriptural meaning explained in various scriptures is, “having abandoned all *dharmas*.” As has been explained, the meaning of the word “abandonment” (*tyāga*) is that there will be no opportunity for confusion at any point for a person who rests on self-surrender of this sort. All meaning of scripture is to be arranged by the performance of people who are educated as it is remembered, “One should not perform even a dharmic thing if it does not lead to heaven and hated by people” [*Yājñyavalkyasmṛti* 6.156]. This confused question [if one should abandon the *dharmas* or not] is made without investigating the practice of those who establish in the *dharma* of self-surrender and ancient *ācāryas*.⁴⁸⁷

Then, in the conclusion, he clarifies that the injunction in this *Bhagavadgītā* passage is directed toward Arjuna, who is the audience in the context of the *Bhagavadgītā*, or other people who are twice-born like Arjuna, not women or *śūdras*.⁴⁸⁸ However, his claim that self-surrender is not only Vedic but also Tantric implies that those who are not twice-born like *śūdras* are also eligible to perform self-surrender as the means to liberation. It may be the case that Vedāntadeśika does not state the argument overtly since he is concerned with conforming to the Sanskrit sphere of soteriology. We will deal with Vedāntadeśika’s interpretation of this

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 24: *evaṃ nānāvidheṣu śāstreṣu prapañcitasya śāstrārthaviśeṣasya saṃkṣepo 'yam - sarvadharmān parityajyeti. itthaṃbhūtaprapattiniṣṭhasya na kvacid apy upaplavāvakāśa iti yathokta eva tyāgaśabdārthaḥ. kiṃ ca, sarvo hi śāstrārthaḥ śiṣṭānuṣṭhānenaivāntato vyavasthāpyate. yathā smaranti - asvargyaṃ lokavidviṣṭaṃ dharmam apy ācaren na tv iti. tataś ca prapattidharmapratīṣṭhāpakānāṃ prācāṃ ācāryānāṃ ca caryāṃ avicāryedam upaplavacodyam.* See *Yājñyavalkyasmṛti* 6.156 (Mumbayyām: Tukārāma Jāvājī, 1909), 47.

⁴⁸⁸ See the introductory section of this chapter.

passage as an injunction in detail later in the section on his use of Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics.

Vedāntadeśika also analyzes *Bhagavadgītā*, Chapter 18, which is the context of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66. He focuses on *Bhagavadgītā* 18.64 and the way to interpret the word “again” in this passage, “Listen to the last word about the most secret of all secrets from Me again. I will tell this for your advantage because you are very dear to Me.”⁴⁸⁹ He raises the potentially opposing view that the word “again” should indicate the communication of something previously known in the context. Thus, it fits that the word “again” in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.64 points to *bhakti* and self-surrender as an auxiliary of *bhakti*, both of which are mentioned in the preceding part of the *Bhagavadgītā*. For example, *bhakti* can be found in *Bhagavadgītā* 9.34, and self-surrender as its auxiliary is dealt with in Chapter 7, such as *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14.⁴⁹⁰ Therefore, the two subsequent verses should reiterate these two ideas based on the word “again” in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.64; *Bhagavadgītā* 18.65 and 18.66 should refer to *bhakti* as the means and as self-surrender, respectively.⁴⁹¹

In response, Vedāntadeśika offers two ways to interpret the word “again” in verses 18.65 and 18.66. First, it can communicate that one should listen again to the teaching, but the content of the teaching does not have to be what is already known in the context. Specifically, after teaching Arjuna about the three *yogas* as the means to liberation, Kṛṣṇa, seeing that Arjuna

⁴⁸⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* 18.64, vol. 3, 396 (emphasis mine):

sarvaguhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ | iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam ||

⁴⁹⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* 9.34, vol. 2, 196: “Be one whose mind is fixed in Me, one who is devoted to Me, one who sacrifices to Me, bow down to Me. Having controlled yourself, you whose a final aim is Me will come to Me.” *manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru | māṃ evaiśyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṃ matparāyaṇaḥ ||* *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14, vol. 2, 28: “My divine *māyā*, composed of the strands, is hard to overcome. Those who surrender to Me alone cross that *māyā*.”

(daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā | māṃ eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṃ taranti te ||)

⁴⁹¹ *Bhagavadgītā* 18.65, vol. 3, 398: “Be one whose mind is fixed in Me, one who is devoted to Me, one who sacrifices to Me, bow down to Me. You will surely come to Me, I promise you because you are dear to Me.” *(manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru | māṃ evaiśyasi satyaṃ te pratijāne priyo 'si me ||)*

is still grieving, teaches another means to liberation in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.65 and 18.66, “Having seen Arjuna grieving after hearing that the means to liberation is difficult and takes a long time to accomplish, the Lord Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) teaches a different means that is meant for a person who asks for the attainment of the result without delay and of the means to that [attainment] [...]”⁴⁹² Thus, one could say that these two verses introduce self-surrender as a substitute to *bhakti*.⁴⁹³ Alternatively, the word “again” in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.64 could foreshadow that *Bhagavadgītā* 18.65 reiterates *bhakti* as the means to liberation. However, in *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, Kṛṣṇa teaches a new means that is self-surrender as the means to liberation since the repeated teaching of *bhakti* cannot pacify Arjuna, who is still grieving:

Alternatively, [one could say that] the Lord, having seen the grief of Arjuna after [hearing *Bhagavadgītā* 18.63], “do as you wish,” [...] he states the two verses beginning with “the most secret of all secrets” [*Bhagavadgītā* 18.64–65]. Then, Arjuna’s sorrow is not pacified even by that much. [So,] He comforts Arjuna, saying “do not grieve” through the teaching of the means, which is fast, eligible for all, the means to all desires, capable of getting rid of all undesirable things, to be done once, like the Brahma missile, easy, and unobstructed.⁴⁹⁴

Vedāntadeśika then turns to one of the most significant passages in the other *itihāsa*, the

⁴⁹² Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 31: “*arjunasya viṣādam ālokya sa bhagavān vāsudevaś cirakālasādhyaduṣkarāpavargopāyaśravaṇena śocato*

’syāvilambitaphalaprāptisāpekṣatatsādhanasamarthapurūṣaviṣayam upāyāntaram [...] upadiśati.”

⁴⁹³ For more on Vedāntadeśika’s interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.65, see *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 31.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31–32: *yadvā yathēcchasi tathā kurv ityasyānantaram arjunasya viṣādam avalokayan sa bhagavān [...] sarvaguhyatamam ityādinā ślokadvayena āha. tāvatā ’py anupaśāntaśokam arjunam āśukārisarvādhikārasarveṣtasādhanasarvāniṣṭānivantanakṣamabrahmāstratulyasakṛtkartavya-sukaraniṣpratibandhopāyopadeśena mā śuca iti paryavasthāpayatīti.*

The principle of the Brahma missile (*brahmāstra*) is derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa* scene when Rāvaṇa’s demonic army tied Rāma’s emissary, Hanumān, with the Brahma missile to render him helpless. However, the missile is effective only when it is used solely. Thus, it slipped off when the demonic army tied Hanumān with other ties, not trusting the power of the Brahma missile alone. *Rāmāyaṇa* 5.46.46 (vol. 5, 334) prescribes that the Brahma missile cannot be used with other ties as follows: “This tying with a missile does not go along with any other ties” (*astrabandhaḥ sa cānyaṃ hi na bandham anuvartate*). The Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācāryas* use this rule to support the independence of self-surrender and affirm that self-surrender cannot be followed along with any other means to liberation.

Rāmāyaṇa 6.12.20, “For someone who surrenders to Me even once and for someone who begs ‘I am yours,’ I give safety for all beings. This is My promise.”⁴⁹⁵ The same passage can be found first in the *Stotraratna* 64, in which Yāmuna cites the passage to exemplify God’s promise to protect anyone who resorts to Him.⁴⁹⁶ The passage is then used in the first chapter of Vātsyā Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta* as one of the main injunctions of self-surrender.⁴⁹⁷ Conversely, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai employs the passage in the *Parantarāhasyam* to show that self-surrender is available to all. Following his predecessors, Vedāntadeśika also pays attention to the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage, and in section 4 of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika defends this passage as an injunction through Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics.

Following Vātsyā Varadaguru, Vedāntadeśika uses the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, especially the *Lakṣmītantra*, the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā*, and the *Sātyakītantra*, to define the nature of self-surrender and its auxiliaries and also to consolidate the independence of self-surrender. Despite the status of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās within Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, Vedāntadeśika attempts to legitimize their authority within the Sanskrit sphere of soteriological self-surrender, in particular.⁴⁹⁸ In section 4 of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika defines the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās as “the condensation of the Vedas” (*niḡamasamgraha*). According to Vedāntadeśika, if the statements from Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās are contradictory to Vedic statements, the statements from these two sources should be regarded as optional based on Mīmāṃsā principle that two conflicting statements of the Vedas can be used as options.⁴⁹⁹ His argument implies that

⁴⁹⁵ *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20, vol. 6, 70.

⁴⁹⁶ See section 1.3.

⁴⁹⁷ Section 2.1.2.

⁴⁹⁸ For more information on the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās within Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, see Freschi’s “Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.”

⁴⁹⁹ For Mīmāṃsā principle of options, see Edgerton, *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa*, 149–150 and 170–174.

Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās are authoritatively on par with the Vedas in the context of self-surrender.⁵⁰⁰

Vedāntadeśika refers to the same passages found in the *Lakṣmītantra* for the definition of self-surrender and the list of its auxiliaries. He also supports the function of self-surrender as an expiation in the *Lakṣmītantra* passage, as seen in the following section on self-surrender. In section 6 of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika also relies on the three main Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, the *Lakṣmītantra*, and the *Sātyakītantra*, to affirm that self-surrender is a means to liberation that is separate from *bhakti*.⁵⁰¹

Moreover, in section 1, Vedāntadeśika turns to the *Sātyakītantra*, the chapter on self-surrender (*prapattyadhyāya*), to argue for the exclusivity of this doctrine.⁵⁰² According to the passage, Vedāntadeśika indicates that self-surrender is for those who are not eligible to perform other means of liberation.⁵⁰³ This further implies that self-surrender should be performed

⁵⁰⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 30: “In the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, which is composed for the holding up of the whole world by the Lord, who is independently omniscient and is the head of the Upaniṣads (*śrutiśiraḥśekhara*), and consists of the condensation of the Vedas along with their infinite and extended branches, the statements [of the Pāñcarātra corpus and the Vedas] are established optionally like when there is contradiction of two Vedic statements.” (*śrutiśiraḥśekharaṇa svataḥ sarvajñena bhagavatā nikhilajagaduddharaṇāya praṇīte viprakīrṇānantaśākhānigamasamgrahātmake pañcarātraśāstre praṇītānām śrutidvayavirodhavat vikalpataḥ sthāpanīyatvāt*).

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 34: “The existing statements of oneness [between self-surrender and *bhakti*] are rejected by great length by the distinction [between the two means] in the *Sātyakītantra*, *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, and *Lakṣmītantra*.” (*aikyāny apy uktāni sātyakītantrāhīrbudhnyasaṃhitālakṣmītantrādiṣu prthaktvena prapañcanena nirastāni*).

⁵⁰² Ibid., 19. The chapter on self-surrender in the *Sātyakītantra* is not mentioned by Vātsya Varadaguru. For Vātsya Varadaguru’s reference to the *Sātyakītantra*, see section 2.1.2.

⁵⁰³ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 19:

“O Lord, the great action that causes them to attain you which is good for souls which are falling down is said by you whose self is under the influence of compassion.

Many *mantras* such as the one consisting of eight syllables [Tirumantra] are learnt. One, who is sacrificing with these actions and chanting continuously these *mantras*, obtains You who are the Puruṣa and Supreme Person.

O You, ocean of compassion, these actions, being seen, are difficult and their nature is difficult to understand one piece at a time.

Life goes to decay by this stated path for a person chanting these *mantras* one at a time.

Therefore, by the action which is done only once and by *mantra* which is chanted only once, man would be happy and successful. Say this action and this *mantra*. You are one whose heart is dripping with compassion.

The Lord said, O One who has the lotus-seat (Brahmā), what you have said is true. The actions are

independently and cannot be combined with other means to liberation. The same idea is reiterated in *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30, which Vedāntadeśika cites in section 1.⁵⁰⁴

Among the three Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, Vedāntadeśika gives importance to the *Sātyakitantra* to the extent that he understands the other two Saṃhitās according to the *Sātyakitantra*. For example, he uses a *Sātyakitantra* passage to claim that self-surrender which is characterized as the offering of oneself to God, is the predominant means, and the other elements outlined in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* and the *Lakṣmītantra* should be understood as auxiliaries to this offering:

In the *Sātyakitantra*, the Lord has shown that offering (*nikṣepa*) is to be preceded by the teaching of a particular *mantra* which is to be uttered silently once and that the offering is predominant. After that, He is asked by Brahmā: How should one go to You as refuge? Of what kind is this taking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*)? [The Lord answers:] “One should offer oneself to Me with this *mantra*.”⁵⁰⁵

Thus, for Vedāntadeśika, the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, especially the three mentioned in this section,

impossible and it is not possible to perform *mantras* according to the scriptures.

This is the action with which one offers such that, as soon as it is done, a man obtains Me and will become My Self, O Brahmā.”

*(bhagavan hitam ākhyātam ātmanāṃ patatām adhaḥ | tvatprāpakam mahat karma kāruṇyavivaśātmanā ||
adhītā bahavo mantrāḥ śrīmadadaṣṭākṣarādikāḥ | ebhiḥ karmabhir ijānas tān mantrān satatam japan ||
tvām āpnoty eva puruṣaḥ puruṣaṃ puruṣottamam ||
etāny ālocyamānāni karmāṇi karuṇākara | durvijñeyasvarūpāni duṣkarāṇi vibhāgaśaḥ ||
mantrāṃś caikaikakaśas tāvaj japamānasya mādharma | uktenaiva ca mārgena gacchaṭy āyur apakṣayam ||
tasmāt sakṛtkṛtenaiva karmaṇā yena mānavaḥ | sakṛjjaptena mantreṇa kṛtakṛtyaḥ sukhī bhavet ||
tad brūhi karma tan mantram dayādrahṛdayo hy asi ||
śrībhagavān uvāca*

*satyam uktam aśakyāni karmāṇi kamalāsana | mantrāṇāṃ ca yathāśāstram anuṣṭhānam na śakyate ||
ijyate yena tat karma kṛtamātreṇa karmaṇā | mām āpnoti naro brahman mamātmā ca bhaviṣyati ||).*

⁵⁰⁴ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 28: “When the Lord is the only protector in this way, it is suitable to say that He is the means so that the one who wants to surrender [to Him] would determine to stop other means.” (*tad evaṃ goptary eva bhagavati prapitsor upāyantaranivṛttim abhisamdhāya upāyatvavācoyuktiḥ*). *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30, vol. 2, 370.

⁵⁰⁵ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 28: *sātyakitantre ca katham tvām śaraṇam gacchet kīdrśī śaraṇāgatir iti brahmaṇā pṛṣṭo bhagavān sakṛjjaptavyamantraviśeṣopadeśapūrvakam nikṣepasya prādhānyam adarśayat - anenaiva tu mantreṇa svātmānam mayi nikṣiped iti.*

are the central authority for the definition of self-surrender and its soteriological status. Although Vedāntadeśika likely derives some of the authoritative passages or injunctions on self-surrender from Vātsya Varadaguru, he refines their interpretation to make it more evident that they support the status of self-surrender as the soteriological doctrine. In this sense, he continues the Sanskrit sphere of self-surrender introduced by Vātsya Varadaguru, and he also accounts for any disagreement in their interpretation.

4.1.2 Mīmāṃsā as Hermeneutics

To validate self-surrender as another soteriological doctrine for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika proposes that self-surrender, like *bhakti*, is enjoined in various scriptures and has the form of a sacrificial ritual that can be performed. In particular, he incorporates Mīmāṃsā hermeneutic and ritual theories to argue that *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 is the primary injunction for the soteriological self-surrender that is to be accomplished (*sādhya*) in the form of the offering oneself to God. Although the reference to Mīmāṃsā hermeneutic and ritual concerns was already apparent in the discussions related to self-surrender both in Manipravalam and Sanskrit, as in Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷai's *Parantarahasyam* and Meghanādārisūri's *Mumukṣūpāyasamgraha*, Vedāntadeśika resorts to Mīmāṃsā to a greater extent than the other authors. His attempt to locate self-surrender within the Sanskrit sphere is grounded in his interpretation of authoritative passages on self-surrender on Rāmānuja's hermeneutic and ritual norms of Mīmāṃsā as seen in Chapter 1.⁵⁰⁶ Adopting these norms, Vedāntadeśika explains self-surrender as a sacrificial ritual with procedure and auxiliaries based on the model of the Vedic sacrifices formalized by the Mīmāṃsakas.

⁵⁰⁶ Vedāntadeśika's involvement with Mīmāṃsā is also evident in other works, especially the *Seśvaramīmāṃsā*. See Freschi, "Commenting by Weaving Together Texts."

In analyzing the authoritative injunctions in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, like Meghanādārisūri, Vedāntadeśika focuses on the conformity to the functional unity of a sentential injunction according to Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics, especially the two paradigmatic passages on self-surrender, *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 and the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage on Vibhīṣaṇa.⁵⁰⁷ According to Vedāntadeśika, it is not enough that these passages are accepted and handed down by different generations, as they have to be validly interpreted in the same manner as other Vedic and Vedāntic injunctions.

Vedāntadeśika first presents *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as the primary injunction of soteriological self-surrender. Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai makes the same arguments in his treatise. On the other hand, Vātsyā Varadaguru does not pay attention to *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 or elaborate on its interpretation.⁵⁰⁸ In the previous chapter, I illustrated how Meghanādārisūri interprets the passage as a qualified injunction and rejects the attempt to construe the abandonment part of the passage as a reiteration.⁵⁰⁹ Vedāntadeśika's interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 is concerned with the same interpretative issues, discussed in the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*.

The most significant challenge in interpreting *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 pertains to the first line, "Having abandoned all *dharmas*, come to Me alone as refuge." At first glance, this line seems to enjoin two things: the abandonment of *dharmas* and the surrendering to God for refuge. However, this interpretation would violate the principle of the functional unity since it splits the sentence into two parts. If we split the sentence, which is unacceptable for the Mīmāṃsakas, the passage cannot be a valid injunction. Vedāntadeśika is aware of the potential flaw as he cites a passage also found in Kumāriḷa's (mid-seventh century) *Ślokavārtika* 1.4.9,

⁵⁰⁷ McCrea, *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, 55–56 and 70–87.

⁵⁰⁸ Section 2.1.2.

⁵⁰⁹ Section 3.3.

“If the unity of the sentence is possible, then the splitting of the sentence is not desired.”⁵¹⁰ To avoid the problem, Vedāntadeśika deals with two ways to construe the passage.

The first way interprets the passage as a qualified injunction (*viśiṣṭa-vidhi*). The part “come to Me alone as refuge” primarily enjoins self-surrender, and “having abandoned all *dharma*s” subordinately prescribes the preceding abandonment of all *dharma*s.⁵¹¹

Vedāntadeśika then justifies this interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as a qualified injunction as follows:

There is no fault of splitting the sentence if there is an acceptance of a qualified injunction. Even if a qualified injunction should be accepted only when there is no alternative [way to interpret the sentence], nevertheless, here too, there is no alternative, so this [qualified injunction] should be accepted.⁵¹²

Following the second interpretation, Vedāntadeśika argues that the abandonment part can be understood as a reiteration to avoid the flaw of splitting of the sentence. In other words, the abandonment part indicates a person who is eligible to perform self-surrender due to a certain qualification. Here, the qualification is the grief caused by a person’s helplessness to follow other means. Then, self-surrender is enjoined by the second part of the first line:

[...] what is being reiterated is a person who is penetrated by sorrow caused by the helplessness of other means, which are difficult to do to attain the particular result that is intended. This is determined from the implication of these two quotes [i.e., “all *dharma*s” and “do not grieve”]. Moreover, there may be intense grief for someone who cannot tolerate delay and whose ability is limited concerning [other] means to the intended result, which are impeded by hundreds of obstacles and can only be attained after a long time and are very difficult. The

⁵¹⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 4: “*sambhavaty ekavākyatve vākyabhedas tu neṣyate.*”

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 19: *viśiṣṭavidhisvīkāre ca na vākyabhedadoṣaḥ. yady api cāsau gatyabhāvaviṣayaḥ; tathāpy atrāpi yadi gatyantarābhāvaḥ syāt tadā asau svīkārya eva.*

person eligible for this [self-surrender] is someone qualified by that [sorrow]; all this makes sense.⁵¹³

Finally, Vedāntadeśika briefly addresses the second line of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, “I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve,” explaining that the removal of all sins refers to the removal of the obstacles to the attainment of God, and the grief points to the grief due to the delay of liberation as previously seen in *Bhagavadgītā* 16.5 instead of the grief caused by killing his relatives.⁵¹⁴

In section 4 of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika explains this *Rāmāyaṇa* passage on Vibhīṣaṇa, “For someone who surrenders to Me even once and for someone who begs, ‘I am yours,’ I give safety for all beings. This is My promise,” as an injunction. He bases the interpretation on the principle of the necessary postulation (*arthāpatti*) as well as the Mīmāṃsā principle of functional unity. One should remember that the interpretation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage in the context of self-surrender was already circulating by Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai’s time, if not before. At the beginning of the discussion, Vedāntadeśika first mentions the opposing view, stating that the passage should not be regarded as an injunction since it does not have an injunctive form according to the Mīmāṃsakas’ view of injunctions: “One who desires the attainment of safety should surrender to Me.” Vedāntadeśika responds that even though this passage does not have an obvious injunctive form, the statement of Rāma’s quality as the person

⁵¹³ Ibid., 19–20: [...] *abhimataphalaviśeṣalābhe*

duṣkarasādhanāntaranairāśyanimittaśokāviṣṭasyānūdyamānatvāt. etac ca “sarvadharmān parityajya,” “mā śucaḥ” ity anayoḥ sāmartyād avasīyate. sambhavati ca duṣkaratareṣu cirakālasādhyeṣu pratibandhakaśatanirantareṣu abhimatopāyeṣu parimitaśakter vilambākṣamasya ca tīvraḥ śokavegaḥ; tadviśiṣṭaś cātrādhikārīti na kiṃcid apahīnam.

⁵¹⁴ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 20: “the grief caused by killing his relatives as understood at the beginning [of the *Bhagavadgītā*].” (*upakramāvagatabandhuvadhanimittaśoka*). *Bhagavadgītā* 16.5, vol. 3, 209: “The divine condition is considered to be for liberation, while the demonic condition is considered to be for bondage. Do not grieve, O Arjuna. You were born with divine condition!”

(*daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandāyā ’surī matā | mā śucaḥ sampadaṃ daivīm abhijāto ’si pāṇḍava! |*).

to whom people who desire liberation should surrender implies the injunction through the principle of necessary postulation.⁵¹⁵ The fact that Rāma will save anyone who surrenders to Him in the same way He saved Vibhīṣaṇa enables us to postulate that anyone who surrenders to Him will be protected:⁵¹⁶

Although there is no injunction of self-surrender in this statement, “For someone who surrenders to Me even once” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.20], this statement establishes that “One who wants to attain safety [i.e., liberation] should surrender to Me [Rāma].” Even if the statement is intent on the explanation of Rāma’s special quality, self-surrender is established by the proof that Rāma is worthy of being surrendered to, through postulation based on the direct mention of Rāma’s special qualities.⁵¹⁷

Vedāntadeśika further delineates the interpretation of each part of the verse as well as its entirety:

The meaning of this verse will be explained as follows: “Only once” means independence of repetition. When it is said, “for somebody who submits,” the asking part is intended. “I am yours” is the offering of oneself (*ātmanikṣepa*). Alternatively, the meaning of the scripture along with its auxiliaries is included just by the [expression] “for somebody who submits” alone. When it is said "I am yours" in the verse, it makes sense that what is intended is asking for the result “May I be yours?” and this [wishing or asking to be yours] is an indicating mark for other desired results. And the mental surrender is expressed by “for one who surrenders,” and the verbal self-surrender is referred to by “for one who begs.” The meaning is “I will give the cessation of fear caused by all beings,” which is like “I will free you from all sins.”⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Here, Vedāntadeśika brings in the instrument of knowledge called necessary postulation (*arthāpatti*), through which one can start with two seemingly contradictory statements and be led to conclude out of them to the only piece of evidence which can solve the contradiction. A classic example is the way of concluding out of “Devadatta is not eating at daytime” and “Devadatta is fat” that “Devadatta eats at night.” For more information on *arthāpatti*, see Jha, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā in Its Sources*, Chapter 17.

⁵¹⁶ See my forthcoming article, “A Ritual of Self-surrender.”

⁵¹⁷ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 30: *sakṛd eva prapannāyety atrāpi prapadanavidhyabhāve 'pi, abhayaprāptikāmo mām prapadyeteti vākyatātparyasya siddhatvāt, rāmaguṇaviśeṣapratipādanaparatve 'pi vākyasya guṇaviśeṣāsrutyarthāpattyaiva prapadanīyatvasiddhyā prapattisiddheḥ.*

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*: *vakṣyate cāsyā ślokasyāyam arthaḥ – sakṛd evetyāvṛttinairapekṣyam ucyate. prapannāyetyi prārthanādyamśo vivakṣitaḥ. tavāsmītyātmanikṣepaḥ. yad vā prapannāyetyanenaiva sāṅgāstrārthaḥ saṃgrhītaḥ. tavāsmītyanena tv aucityāt tavāham syām iti phalapārthanam abhipretam. upalakṣaṇam caitad*

Vedāntadeśika also denies the possibility that the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage might communicate two injunctions which would break the Mīmāṃsakas’ principle of functional unity and lead to the undesirable result of splitting of the sentence. To elaborate, the first injunction enjoins Vibhīṣaṇa to surrender to Rāma, “I [Rāma] give safety for the one who surrenders [Vibhīṣaṇa in the context].” In contrast, the other injunction prescribes that all beings should surrender to Him, “I give safety for all beings.” To avoid splitting the sentence, Vedāntadeśika proposes that the first sentence, “I give safety for a person who surrenders,” should be construed as a reiteration of what is already stated somewhere else in the context. The message is reiterated here to draw a connection with the new injunction enjoined by this *Rāmāyaṇa* passage that all beings are eligible to surrender to Rāma to attain His protection.⁵¹⁹

Although Vedāntadeśika uses the two same authoritative passages found in the treatises of Vātsyāya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri, he interprets them based on Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics to avoid any ambiguity in their meanings. Also, he shows that they are authoritative passages since they can be construed according to the hermeneutic norm of Mīmāṃsā just like the Vedas. Since these passages are valid, their injunctions for the performance of self-surrender should be followed.

abhimatasya phalāntarasya. athavā prapannāyeti mānasaṃ, yācata iti vācikaṃ prapadanam ucyate. abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmi – sarvabhūtanimittasya bhayasya nivṛttiṃ dadāmiṭy arthaḥ || sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmīvat.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 31: “The fact that I give safety for someone who does self-surrender even once and who begs ‘I am yours,’ that is for all beings, not for only people who do not do sins like Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa, or others [and] even to Rāvaṇa, the crow, and others who both committed fresh sins. This is what is stated [by Rāma].” (*yat sakṛd eva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate abhayaṃ dadāmiṭi, tat sarvabhūtebhyaḥ, na kevalam anapakāribhyaḥ sugrīvavibhīṣaṇādībhyaḥ, api tv ādrāparādhebhyaḥ rāvaṇavāyāsādībhyaḥ 'pi ity uktam bhavati*).

4.1.3 Rāmānuja's Teachings of Self-surrender

In section 9 of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika aims to reconcile two major elements found in the works of his predecessors, especially those of Rāmānuja: the teaching of *bhakti* as the soteriological doctrine and the notion that self-surrender only functions as an auxiliary of *bhakti*. First, he argues that Rāmānuja's works, especially the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* and the *Gadyatraya*, propose self-surrender as another soteriological doctrine in addition to *bhakti*. Then, he uses Rāmānuja's works as the model to show that the works of the previous *ācāryas* also harmoniously accept soteriological self-surrender without identifying or describing the works of these other *ācāryas*. According to Vedāntadeśika, the works of other *ācāryas* should be understood to be in conformity with those of Rāmānuja since his is the utmost authority. Finally, Vedāntadeśika relies on the authority of Rāmānuja to make the case that there is no traditional contradiction between *bhakti* and self-surrender:

There is no contradiction in statements of the commentator (Rāmānuja) anywhere regarding the independence of self-surrender. By my stated principle, words of *ācāryas* other than Rāmānuja should be considered as not contradictory to what is being discussed [by Rāmānuja] in the context of what comes before and later. Therefore, there is no contradiction within the tradition (*sampradāya*).⁵²⁰

Vedāntadeśika acknowledges the fact that Rāmānuja indeed focuses on *bhakti* with self-surrender as its auxiliary in his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. However, he claims that, in the second interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66, Rāmānuja offers independent self-surrender as an alternative means to *bhakti* since self-surrender is easier. Thus, independent self-surrender

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 39: *ataḥ prapattisvātantrye na kvacid bhāṣyakāroktivirodhaḥ. uktenaiva nyāyenānyeṣām apy ācāryāṅgāṃ prabandhāḥ pūrvāparaparāmarśena prakṛtāviroddhatayā pratisandheyā iti na kaścit sampradāyavirodha iti.*

is the essence of Rāmānuja’s *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*:

In the second interpretation, since independent self-surrender is made optional with the means of *bhaktiyoga*, which are more complicated, have different degrees, and are endless, by having a common principle which is stated explicitly, it is also made an optional alternative with *bhaktiyoga* itself which is the means to liberation. From implication, this [self-surrender] is what is said in the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* deep down.⁵²¹

According to Vedāntadeśika, independent self-surrender can be characterized as seeking God for protection, and it is performed through a single request. A person who is eligible for self-surrender is required to have great faith in God and the incapability to perform other means to liberation—i.e., the three *yogas* in the context of the *Bhagavadgītā*—in the same manner that Arjuna is incapable of performing *bhaktiyoga*:

This is the thing to be performed here, which is established by reflecting upon all injunctions [in the entire *Bhagavadgītā*]. [Arjuna,] having seen his lack of other means for attaining his desired result without delay, thus sinks with great grief. A person has abandoned other means, which are difficult to do for him who has little power to establish that result. [Then, that person] has produced great faith, which lasts until he attains the result and cannot be agitated even by God Himself, through the greatness of reflection on particular helping factors such as connection, good conduct, etc., regarding the Supreme One, who is qualified by a class of qualities which are suitable for giving the result. [The great faith is] that, “He [God] will give what is needed by mere asking once” Later, the person, who stops thinking about the collection of faults through the will to please [God], the avoidance of hostility, embraces this protector instead of other means, after declaring his state of having no other means and having nothing.⁵²²

⁵²¹ Ibid., 36: *dviītyāyāṃ tu yojanāyāṃ bhaktisādhanair gurutarair mithas tārātamyavadbhiḥ anantair vikalpyamānā prapattiḥ kañḥoktasamānanyāyatayā muktisādhanabhūtayā bhaktiyāpi vikalpyeteti arthato gabhīram abhāṣyata.*

⁵²² Ibid., 32: *ayam atra sarvavidhiparāmarśasiddho ’nuṣṭheyārthaḥ. avilambitābhimataphalāsiddhau svasyopāyāntarāśūnyatām ālocya mahatā śokenāvasīdan puruṣas tatphalāsiddhyartham alpaśakteḥ svasya duṣkarāny upāyāntarāṇi parityajya tatphalapradānocitagunaganaviśiṣṭe parasmīn sakṛtprārthanāmātreṇāpekṣitam dāsyatīti saṃbandhaśīlasahakāriviśeṣādīparāmarśātīśayena mahāntaṃ tāvat phalalābham īśvareṇāpy akṣobhanīyaṃ viśvāsam upajanayyānukūlyasaṃkalpapratikūlyavarjanābhyām apāyajāte viratābhisandhiḥ ākiñcanyānanyagatitvaprakāśanapūrvakaṃ goptāram evopāya[āntara]sthāne niveśayan.*

Vedāntadeśika then accounts for the noticeable discrepancy between the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* and the *Gadyatraya* of Rāmānuja. He raises a potential contradiction between the prominent role of independent self-surrender in Rāmānuja’s *Gadyatraya* and the proportionally much less attention to self-surrender in the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*. To resolve the discrepancy, Vedāntadeśika explains that independent self-surrender is not the focus in Rāmānuja’s commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* except in his second interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66. However, self-surrender is the essence and supreme secret of the *Bhagavadgītā*, not *bhakti*, since “self-surrender being an independent means, which is concealed as something supremely secret, manifests” only in the Caramaśloka.⁵²³

As for the *Gadyatraya*, Vedāntadeśika argues that it proposes self-surrender as an independent means instead of an auxiliary to *bhakti*. The central indication for this is the statement in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* that conveys that the performance of self-surrender, enabled by God’s compassion, results in liberation: “At the time when your body falls, you will be enlightened by My compassion alone.”⁵²⁴ Moreover, according to Vedāntadeśika, *bhakti* in the *Gadyatraya* should not always be understood as the means to liberation. Instead, it indicates either a means or a result of self-surrender. I term Vedāntadeśika’s view on *bhakti* in the *Gadyatraya* as “the detechnicalization” of *bhakti* or the method of construing *bhakti* in a non-technical sense. For example, Vedāntadeśika clarifies the meaning of the word “*bhakti*” in “the utmost *bhakti*,” one of the three stages of the experience of God, the triad that Rāmānuja mentions in his *Śaraṇāgatigadya*.⁵²⁵ According to Vedāntadeśika, the denotation of this word

⁵²³ Ibid., 36: “*atirahasyatayā gopitaṃ prapattisvātantryaṃ svayam evonmajjatīti.*”

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 37: “*śarīrapātasamaye tu kevalaṃ madīyayaiva dayayātiprabuddhaḥ.*” This quotation is from the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, 173.

⁵²⁵ Section 1.3.

is “common to a result and a means, [thus,] it does not take either side.”⁵²⁶ Also, he indicates that the word “*bhakti*” in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* points to the result of independent self-surrender.⁵²⁷ In addition, Vedāntadeśika interprets the word “*bhakti*” in its literal meaning as a devotion to God. This kind of *bhakti* functions as an auxiliary of independent self-surrender. It helps those who have already taken refuge to maintain a great faith in God for as long as they live as required in the practice of self-surrender. Thus, the *Gadyatraya* does not necessarily defend the soteriological doctrine of *bhakti*:

In the case of *bhakti* that belongs to those who surrender, it becomes a means by being a cause of an uninterruptedness of [independent] self-surrender. Also, it should not be stated, “What is the use of uninterruptedness, when [independent self-surrender], which is to be done once, is a means because [independent self-surrender] requires an absence of obstacles [of great faith] to achieve its effect.”⁵²⁸

As we have seen, Vedāntadeśika uses the norms of scriptures and hermeneutics handed down by Rāmānuja and other preceding Sanskrit authors and rests on the authoritative norm of the figure of Rāmānuja himself to show that self-surrender is a valid doctrine. He also resolves the inconsistency in Rāmānuja’s teaching. It can be argued that Vedāntadeśika composes his work in Sanskrit so that he can engage with other Sanskrit authors like Vātsyā Varadaguru and

⁵²⁶ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 37: “*phalopāyasādhāranyān nānyatarapakṣapāti.*”

⁵²⁷ Vedāntadeśika also applies this principle that the word “*bhakti*” can be used to refer to either a means or a result to the use of the word “*bhakti*” in the statement, “give me *bhakti*” (*bhaktim api prayaccha*) from Yāmuna’s *Stotrarama* 54. Vedāntadeśika suggests that “*bhakti*” that the person asks for in this statement should be understood as *bhakti* “that has a form of pleasure by its own nature, and because of the excellence of its object [i.e., God]; therefore, here it [i.e., *bhakti*] is a result [of independent self-surrender]” (*bhakteś cātra phalatvaṃ svarūpatas sukharūpatvāt; tac ca viṣayavaiśiṣṭyāt*). Vedāntadeśika further explains that the request for *bhakti* in this statement does not contradict the exclusive nature of independent self-surrender since *bhakti* in this statement is not a means to liberation. According to Vedāntadeśika, this *bhakti* which is a result of self-surrender has the forms of non-fear and friendliness of God. For Yāmuna’s *Stotrarama* 54 and Vedāntadeśika’s commentary, see 104.

⁵²⁸ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 37: *prapannagatāyā bhakteḥ prapattyavicchedahetutvena tadanupraveśāt. na ca sakṛtkṛtasyopāyātve kim avicchedeneti vācyam. tasya svakāryakaraṇe bādhābhāvasya apekṣitatvāt.*

Meghanādārisūri, strengthening the norms, clarifying the interpretation of authoritative passages, and even proposing arguments that are different from those that preceded him. Conforming to the norm of the Sanskrit scholastic treatises, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is silent about the Tamil scripture and does not integrate the paradigm of the three secrets. Systematizing self-surrender in Sanskrit, Vedāntadeśika places it within the Sanskrit system of Rāmānuja's *bhakti* and aligns it with the preceding Sanskrit strands of self-surrender, especially that of Vātsya Varadaguru.

4.2. The Nature of self-surrender

Due to the importance of Rāmānuja's soteriological teaching, the characteristics of *bhakti* become the defining factors for the later-developed doctrine of self-surrender in the same manners that we saw in the Sanskrit treatises of Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri. In the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika highlights the ritual status of self-surrender. He argues that self-surrender is a Vedāntic ritual, consisting of the ritual auxiliaries and other components that need to be performed, just like *bhakti*, to defend its soteriological function and difference from the Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge. It should be noted that self-surrender took shape within a ritual frame that was already in the treatises of Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri. However, compared to these two authors, Vedāntadeśika develops a more elaborated ritual form of self-surrender in his *Nikṣeparakṣā*. Also, to make sure that self-surrender and *bhakti* remain distinct and also to preserve the soteriological status of both means, he advances Vātsya Varadaguru's argument on the differentiated options for these two means. Based on this argument, both self-surrender and *bhakti* are valid and lead to the same result—liberation—but they are not redundant since different groups of people are eligible for these two means.

4.2.1 A Ritual of Self-surrender

Vedāntadeśika defines self-surrender as consisting of two parts, the offering of the protection and the ownership of oneself to God and the acceptance of God as the only goal: “The giving over of the self on the part of the one who is to be protected (*rakṣyasyātmasamarpaṇam*) consists of the thought that the protector [God] is the only goal, culminating in the abandonment of the burden and the ownership of results of protection.”⁵²⁹ Influenced by Vātsya Varadaguru, Vedāntadeśika views self-surrender as an offering of oneself to God (*ātmanikṣepa*). Vedāntadeśika’s definition of self-surrender is more elaborate than that of Vātsya Varadaguru and comes closer to the model of a Vedic sacrificial ritual according to Mīmāṃsakas’ theory. Vedāntadeśika proposes that self-surrender should be understood as an act of giving an offering with an individual soul as the material substance (*dravya*), which is then offered to the deity (*devatā*) who is the Supreme God. This understanding rests on Jaimini’s *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 4.2.27, “Because of the injunction ‘to sacrifice’ the action [involves] substance and deity; because the purpose is accomplished with respect to that whole”⁵³⁰ The commentary on this passage by Śabara (fourth/fifth century) defines a sacrificial ritual as a ritual act in which “a substance is abandoned having a deity (like Indra) in view. There is an act of this [abandoning]. By that act [of abandoning], there is a connection between two things [i.e., a substance and a deity].”⁵³¹ Self-surrender can be understood in a similar manner as follows:

[Self-surrender is] abandoning an offering in the form of an individual soul to the Supreme God preceded by a request to Him, thinking, “I am not mine; I am

⁵²⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 18: “*svanirbharatvaparyantarakṣakaikārthyabhāvanā | tyaktarakṣāphalāsvāmyaṃ rakṣyasyātmasamarpaṇam ||*”

⁵³⁰ *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 4.2.27, vol. 4, 1241: “*yajaticodanād dravyadevatākriyaṃ samudāye kṛtārthatvāt.*”

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*: “*dravyaṃ devatām uddiśya tyajyate, tasya ca kriyā, yayā kriyayā tayoḥ saṃbandho bhavati.*”

for the Blessed One,” just like, [one would think about an offering] “this is not mine; this is for Indra.”⁵³²

Vedāntadeśika then indicates that the five auxiliaries, outlined in the *Lakṣmītantra* and the *Ahīrbudhyasaṃhitā*, can function as auxiliaries that are subordinate to the sacrificial ritual in the manner explained by the Mīmāṃsakas.⁵³³ In the ritual of self-surrender, a request and a particular *mantra*, which needs to be recited once, serve as procedures (*itikartavyatās*), one of the requirements for rituals. To confirm that self-surrender is a ritual action that requires a procedure, Vedāntadeśika cites the passage found in Kumāṛila’s *Ślokavārtika Saṃbandhākṣepavāda* 37, “In everyday practice or Vedic practice, there is no such instrumental means that does not have a desire for help which is to be accomplished by a procedure.”⁵³⁴ Through the incorporation of Mīmāṃsā ritual theory, Vedāntadeśika formulates self-surrender into a highly systematized sacrificial ritual, equipped with the main requirements.

Importantly, Vedāntadeśika affirms that, as in the performance of *bhakti*, a person who has surrendered should preserve Vedic obligatory and occasional rituals according to their castes and stages of life, as prescribed by the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*. Although these rituals are not auxiliaries of self-surrender—it has its own as outlined in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās—they are commanded by God through the Vedas and thus should be performed as a form of worship to maintain His love until the end of one’s life. Given that the performance of self-surrender does not require one to stop all activities, whether worldly or as prescribed by the Vedas, the performance of these actions would not obstruct self-surrender:

⁵³² Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 18: “*prārthanāpūrvakam parasyai devatāyai pratyagātmarūpasya haviṣas tyāgaḥ, indrāyedaṃ na mama ityādivat bhagavata eva aham asmi na mama iti.*”

⁵³³ Edgerton, *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa*, 110.

⁵³⁴ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 3: “*na hi tat karaṇaṃ loke vede vā kiṃcid īdṛśam | itikartavyatāsādhye yasya nānugrahe ’rthitā ||*”

Worldly actions that are naturally accomplished, like closing and opening the eyes, are not prohibited by any injunction as they are meant to merely support the body. Moreover, all must perform the obligatory and occasional sacrifices with the thought of worshiping God for the sake of God's love according to their capability for as long as they live. We do not understand the teaching of [self-surrender] to be impossible since the cessation of those actions is not required.⁵³⁵

Moreover, the person who has surrendered should continue to perform obligatory and occasional rituals to avoid the sins caused by the non-performance of these rituals and also maintain the eligibility for other rituals.⁵³⁶ Vedāntadeśika further alludes to *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.3.8 to explain that obligatory and occasional rituals can be performed according to one's capabilities: "A desired-based action gives result only when there is a completion of all subordinate elements. On the other hand, obligatory and occasional injunctions are considered accomplished by performing them according to one's capability."⁵³⁷

Importantly, Vedāntadeśika affirms that self-surrender is to be performed as the means to be accomplished (*sādhya*) as prescribed by the scripture. Unlike Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge, which can be attained by only hearing the Upaniṣadic passages without any other actions, the scripture instructs that self-surrender should be performed as a sacrificial offering of oneself to God:

⁵³⁵ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 35: *yāni punaḥ svabhāvaprāptāni nimīlanonmīlanādīni, śarīradhāraṇamātrahetukāni vihitāpratiṣiddhāni yāni laukikāni karmāṇi, yāni ca yāvachcharīraṃ yathāśakti bhagavatsamārādhanaṭvabuddhyā tatprītyarthaṃ sarvair apy avaśyam anuṣṭheyāni nityanaimittikakarmāṇi, na tebhyo 'py uparamo 'pekṣita iti nāśakyopadeśatvam avagacchāmaḥ.*

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 20: "Even if these obligatory and occasional sacrifices are not taken up as subsidiaries of knowledge [which leads to liberation]; nevertheless, they are definitely to be taken up under the guise of being motivated by castes and stages of life etc. like for people who have stages of life only [but still continue to perform the rituals of their previous stages of life]." (*tato yady api vidyāṅgatvena nityanaimittikakarmāṇi nopādīyante, tathāpi kevalāśramaṇām iva varṇāśramādīmātrprayuktatvaveṣeṇopādeyaṇy eva*).

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 20: "*sakalāṅgopasaṃhāre hi kāmyaṃ karma phalati. yathāśaktyanuṣṭhānamātreṇāpi nityanaimittikaśāstraṃ caritārthaṃ bhavati.*"

Cf. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.3.8, vol. 4, 1413.

Self-surrender is a mental awareness specified by a particular object. It is made known by the scriptures as the thing which is to be performed as the means to what is best (liberation) due to the division of object [of scripture, meaning knowledge arises from scriptural passages is different from knowledge produced from the performance enjoined by scriptural injunctions]. Even if the knowledge specified by a particular object is made known from the injunction, nevertheless, that specific object is made known by the scripture as the object of that [knowledge] and is not the immediate meaning of the injunction like the object of meditation and the awareness which consists of the abandonment of a substance referred to by the word “sacrifice” etc.⁵³⁸

For the auxiliaries of self-surrender, Vedāntadeśika follows Vātsyā Varadaguru by resorting to passages from the *Lakṣmītantra*. He points out that self-surrender is described as the middle ground between the means and faults in *Lakṣmītantra* 17.53–63 and can be referred to as “taking refuge,” consisting of the six components listed in the same passage.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 18: *viṣayaviśeṣaviśiṣṭabuddhir hi prapattiḥ, tasyā eva niḥśreyasasādhanatayā kartavyatvaṃ śāstravedyam iti viṣayabhe[daḥ]dāt. yady api viṣayaviśeṣaviśiṣṭaṃ jñānaṃ vidhīyata iti viṣayaviśeṣo 'pi vidhivākyavedyaḥ; tathāpi sa viṣayas tadviṣayatayaiva śāstravedya iti na sākṣādvidhivākyārthaḥ, upāsanāviṣayavat, yāgādiśabdābhilāpyadravyatyāgātmakabuddhiviṣayavac ca.*

⁵³⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 21:

“The scriptural means and faults from something have been made by Me. The means which are enjoined [to do], faults which are prohibited.

Faults lead a person who follows them down. The means lead a person who follows them up.

Abandoning the faults and means and established on a middle course, one obtains Me alone in the end after attaining me as refuge.

Hear this six-fold means from Me, O Lotus-born Goddess [Śrī/Lakṣmī]! Will to please [God]; the avoidance of what is contrary;

The faith that God will protect one who asks; choosing God as the protector; The offering of oneself; [and] wretchedness: This is six-fold taking refuge.

Having gone to Me alone as refuge, one becomes free of grief, fear, and fatigue without undertaking anything, without hoping for anything, without a thing of his own, [and] without a sense of himself.

Having gone to Me alone as refuge, he may cross the ocean of cycle of births. People who are engaged in true actions and are pure knowers of Sāṃkhya and Yoga are not worth even a tiniest piece of a person who has resorted to refuge.”

*(upāyās cāpy apāyās ca śāstrīyā nirmitā mayā | vihitā ya upāyās te niṣiddhās cetare matāḥ ||
adho nayanty apāyās taṃ ya enān anuvartate | ūrdhvaṃ nayanty upāyās taṃ ya enān anuvartate ||
upāyāpāyasaṃtyāgī madhyamāṃ vṛttim āsthitāḥ | mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ prāpya mām evānte samaśnute ||
śaḍaṅgaṃ taṃ upāyaṃ ca śṛṇu me padmasaṃbhava | ānukūlyasya saṃkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam ||
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptrtvavaraṇaṃ tathā | ātmanikṣepakārpaṇye śaḍvidhā śaraṇāgatīḥ ||
evaṃ mām śaraṇaṃ prāpya vītaśokabhayaklamaḥ | nirārambho nirāśīś ca nirmamo nirahaṃkṛtīḥ ||
mām eva śaraṇaṃ prāpya taret saṃsārasāgaram | satkarmaniratāḥ śuddhāḥ sāmkhyaयोगavidas tathā ||
nārhanṭi śaraṇasthasya kalām koṭitamīm api ||).*

This quotation is from *Lakṣmītantra* 17.56–63, 57.

Vedāntadeśika then cites *Lakṣmītantra* 17.66–74 in which each auxiliary is characterized.⁵⁴⁰ He then uniquely provides another passage from the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, Chapter 52, 12–23, which identifies self-surrender with six-fold bowing (*namas*) to illustrate the six auxiliaries:⁵⁴¹

Having stated *namas* by speech, body, and mind, that *namas* is said to be complete. Anything other than that is said to be less. This would be a completion; listen to the completeness of the auxiliaries.

This is my eternal accomplishment that I bow down toward the Supreme Person. For me, there is no accomplishment other than this. This [*the offering of oneself (ātmanikṣepa)*] is said to be the best component. *The desire for any result is contradictory to this.*

Due to weakness, which is natural, increase of beginningless traces, [and] being surrounded by stain, there is a prevention of the act of seeing God. That is wretchedness. Knowledge of all this is the second component of this sort. *Thinking of your own independence is said to be the contradiction of that.*

Due to his superiority, this God is compassionate to all beings. He has the one thought of grace always. This is the third [the faith that God will protect one who asks (*rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsa*)]. *These thoughts, “He is indifferent” [and] “He gives result according to actions,” kill the third [component] which, indeed, consists of eternal faith.*

Since He is capable in this way, He should be my protection since He is capable in this way. With this thought, there is the determination that God can be the protector. This is said to be the fourth component [choosing God as the protector (*gopṭṛtva varaṇa*)]. *The harming of that is imagining for no reason that He is indifferent, either by nature or because He does not have appropriate virtues.*

The action of oneself towards one master is an avoidance of hostility, which is the fifth component [the avoidance of activities that displease God (*prātikūlyavarjana*)], and it is equal to avoiding what is opposed to His order. *The practice of what is not scriptural is said to be the opposite of that.*

“All beings moving and unmoving are the body of God. [Thus,] I should be helpful to those beings.” This determination is the sixth component [the will to please God (*ānukūlyasaṃkalpa*)]. The rejection to do so would contradict this [component].⁵⁴²

⁵⁴⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 21. See also *Lakṣmītantra* 17.66–74, 57–58. For the text and translation of this passage, see section 2.4.1.

⁵⁴¹ *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 52.12–23, vol. 2, 541–543.

⁵⁴² Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 24 (italics added):

*vācā nama iti procyā manasā vapuṣā ca yat | tan namaḥ pūrṇam uddiṣṭam ato 'nyan nyūnam ucyate ||
 iyaṃ karaṇapūrtiḥ syād aṅgapūrtim imāṃ śṛṇu | śāśvatī mama saṃsiddhir iyaṃ prahvībhavāmi yat ||
 puruṣaṃ param uddiṣya na me siddhir ito 'nyathā | ity aṅgam uditam śreṣṭhaṃ phalepsā tadvirodhinī ||
 anādivāsanārohād anaiśvaryāt svabhāvajāt | malāvakuṅṭhitatvāc ca dr̥kkriyāvihatir hi yā ||*

This passage conveys that the quality of bowing is common to those who bow down to God who is the Supreme. This quality consists of six auxiliaries parallel to those found in the *Lakṣmītantra* passage along with some elements that are not present in the *Lakṣmītantra*, namely the six activities opposed to the auxiliaries.

Then, Vedāntadeśika cites *Lakṣmītantra* 17.91–102 to show that self-surrender can also function as an expiation and can be divided based on different groups of eligible people.⁵⁴³ It

*tat kārpaṇyaṃ tadudbodho dviṭīyaṃ hy aṅgam īdṛśam | svasvātantryāvabodhaś ca tadvirodha udīryate ||
paratve sati devo 'yaṃ bhūtānām anukampanaḥ | anugrahaikadhīr nityam ity etat tu tṛtīyakam ||
upekṣako yathākarma phaladāyīti yā matiḥ | viśvāsātmakam etat tu tṛtīyaṃ hanti vai sadā ||
evambhūto 'pi śaktaḥ san mattrāṇaṃ bhavitum kṣamaḥ | iti buddhyāsya devasya goptṛśaktinirūpaṇam ||
caturtham aṅgam uddiṣṭam amuṣya vyāhatīḥ svataḥ | udāsīno guṇābhāvād ity utprekṣānimittajā ||
svasya svāmini vṛttir yā prātikūlyavivarjanam | tadaṅgaṃ pañcamam proktam ājñavyāghātavarjanam ||
asāstrīyopasevā tu tadvyāghāta udīryate | carācarāṇi bhūtāni sarvāṇi bhagavadvapuh ||
atas tadānukūlyam me kāryam ity eva niścayaḥ | śaṣṭham aṅgaṃ samuddiṣṭam tadvighāto nirākṛtiḥ ||*

For the text in the *Lakṣmītantra*, see 59–60.

⁵⁴³ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 22:

“This is the Vedic foundation which is in the middle between the means and faults. A person, relying on this religious practice, should submit to Lord of the world, Viṣṇu. The meaning of scriptures is [that independent self-surrender] done merely once may liberate that person.

When there is a combination of the means and faults, the person lacks this religious practice. If one is overwhelmed by sins, one should do an expiation at once.

The expiation here is that one should choose the refuge again. If you accept [other] means as means, that [expiation] is just the same.

For the non-confusion of *dharmas* [due to other means] and the protection of a family, for the supporting of the world and the establishment of the boundary, for the love of me [Śrī] and Viṣṇu, the Archer who is the God of gods, wise one would not transgress the Vedic rule even with the mind.

Just as someone who is dear to the king [crosses] the river set in motion by the king and is useful for the world [since it is] pleasing and increasing crops.

[If that person] destroys it with disregard, [he would be impaled on a stake.] In the same way, the man who transgresses the boundary made by the Vedas [even if he had been dear, would not be dear to me, because he transgressed my command]. The wise one should avoid holding [other things] as means with the mind.

Having rested upon the fourth means which is relying on God’s feet in this way [and] having gone beyond all affliction, he enters into a pure place.

Taking refuge is free from the means and faults. It rests on the middle path. It carries you across the ocean of transmigration.

It is refuge for the ignorant and this very same thing is for the clever people. It is for people who want to cross the far shore, and it is for the people who want endlessness.”

(eṣā sā vaidikī niṣṭhā hy upāyāpāyamadhyamā ||

asyaṃ sthito jagannātham prapadyeta janārdanam | sakṛd eva hi śāstrārthaḥ kṛto 'yaṃ tārayen naram ||

upāyāpāyasamyoge niṣṭhayā hīyate 'nayā | apāyasamplave sadyaḥ prāyaścittaṃ samācaret ||

prāyaścittir iyaṃ sātra yat punaḥ śaraṇaṃ vrajet | upāyānām upāyatvasvikāre 'py etad eva hi ||

aviplavāya dharmāṇāṃ pālanāya kulasya ca | saṃgrahāya ca lokasya maryādāsthāpanāya ca ||

prīyāya mama viṣṇoś ca devadevasya śārṅgiṇaḥ | maṇiṣī vaidikācāraṃ manasāpi na laṅghayet ||

should be noted that Vātsya Varadaguru makes the same arguments based on the some of the same passages from the *Lakṣmītantra* in the *Prapannapārijāta*.⁵⁴⁴

Also, like Vātsya Varadaguru, Vedāntadeśika categorizes those who surrender into two categories: 1) the afflicted, who cannot wait for any delay in attaining liberation, and 2) the content, who agree to attain liberation after the end of their lives based on *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.12.15.⁵⁴⁵ Interestingly, while Vātsya Varadaguru argues for the difference in the timing of the two groups' liberation, Vedāntadeśika stresses that there is no difference in the result, even if there is the division of place, time, condition, and eligibility as follows:

The division between the afflicted one and content one through existence and non-existence of humbleness, fear, and so on is diversified by the One who is the refuge of the whole world since He gives the result even to the content one, so that they will have no fear and be protected. Despite the division of place, time, condition, and eligibility, there is no difference regarding the result for the easy and the difficult [means] [...].⁵⁴⁶

Vedāntadeśika's version of self-surrender in a ritual form is similar to Vātsya Varadaguru's argument but differs from the views of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya who both argue that self-surrender is not an act to be performed since God is the only means. Moreover, unlike Meghanādārisūri who maps self-surrender onto *bhakti* to the extent that it is

*yathā hi vallabho rājño nadīm rājñā pravartitām | lokopayoginīm ramyām bahusasyavivardhinīm ||
laṅghayan sūlam ārohed anapekṣo 'pi tām prati | evaṃ vilaṅghayan martyo maryādām vedanirmitām ||
prayo 'pi na priyo 'sau me madājñāvyativartanāt | upāyatvagrahaṃ tatra varjayen manasā sudhīḥ ||
caturtham āśrayann evam upāyaṃ caraṇāśrayam | atītya sakalaṃ kleśaṃ saṃviśatyamalaṃ padam ||
upāyāpāyanirmuktā madhyamām sthitim āsthitā | śaraṇāgatir agryaiṣā saṃsārārṇavatāriṇī ||
idaṃ śaraṇam ajñānām idam eva vijānatām | idaṃ tirtīṣatām pāram idam ānantyam icchatām ||).*

⁵⁴⁴ See section 2.4.1.

⁵⁴⁵ See the same section.

⁵⁴⁶ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 26: *praśrayabhayādisadasadbhāvābhyām vā ārtadrptavibhāgaḥ, prapattavyena sarvalokaśaraṇyena dṛptānām api [phalāvinābhāvāya] phaladāyinā bhayābhāvāyāvaśyarakṣitavyatvāya ca prapañcitāḥ. deśakālāvasthādhikāryādibhedena gurulaghunor evāviśiṣṭaphalatvaṃ [...].*

difficult to differentiate the two, Vedāntadeśika affirms their distinction based on the division of different groups of eligible people, as I will explore further below.

4.2.2 Modeling Self-surrender on *Bhakti*

In the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika attempts to validate both self-surrender and *bhakti* by clarifying the relationship between the two. While the relationship between *bhakti* and self-surrender can be found already in Vātsyā Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta*, Vedāntadeśika’s explanation of the relationship is more elaborate and systematic. First, he classifies self-surrender into two forms—self-surrender as a ritual auxiliary and independent self-surrender (*aṅga-* and *aṅgi- prapatti*)—before placing them in relationship with *bhakti*. While self-surrender as a ritual auxiliary is subordinate to *bhakti* as in Rāmānuja’s *Gītābhāṣya* and *Gadyatraya*, independent self-surrender is another means to liberation separate from *bhakti*.⁵⁴⁷ Auxiliary self-surrender can also refer to *bhakti* since it culminates in *bhakti* based on a word that does not abandon its primary meaning (*ajahallakṣaṇā*). However, Vedāntadeśika rejects the views that self-surrender can only mean auxiliary self-surrender and can never communicate independent self-surrender. According to the untraceable *Śrīvaiṣṇavadharmasāstra* passage, the word “self-surrender” can mean independent self-surrender:

If you say that the words “*bhakti*” and “self-surrender” (*prapadana*) are seen to be used in some places as having the same meaning according to [their] location, this is not proven. Although the word “self-surrender” (*prapadana*) has a separate meaning according to the definition, it is not very separated from independent [self-surrender]. Therefore, it is possible to use the word in that place [to mean independent self-surrender]. It is even possible to use the word in the place of *bhakti* as a figurative indication that does not abandon its primary meaning like [in this statement], “The royal family is coming. He approaches the king. He serves the king. He lives with the king.” The fact that [the two

⁵⁴⁷ See sections 1.2 and 1.3.

words] have different meanings is understood since we see [them] used together [, so they cannot replace each other] in the *Śrīvaiṣṇavadharmaśāstra*, Chapter on the horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*): “O Acyuta, tell me how to do other meritorious *dharmas*, done to you out of affection, for those who surrender (*prapanna*) and those who are devoted (*bhakta*) to you.”⁵⁴⁸

To justify the understanding self-surrender in these two forms, Vedāntadeśika resorts to *Brahmasūtra* 3.4.32–33.⁵⁴⁹ This passage, consisting of two *sūtras*, prescribes the performance of ritual actions according to stages of life in two different manners: the actions are enjoined independently in the first *sūtra*, and they are to be performed as auxiliaries to produce the eligibility for the meditative means in the second *sūtra*. Vedāntadeśika states: “It is indicated in the *Brahmasūtra* that actions according to stages of life are both auxiliaries and independent means, ‘There are also actions of stages of life since they are enjoined [as independent means] and as the auxiliaries’ [*Brahmasūtra* 3.4.32–33].”⁵⁵⁰

Vedāntadeśika further claims that self-surrender and *bhakti* are classified differently based on the difficulty and the number of times these two means should be performed. *Bhakti* is considered more complicated since it should be repeated, while self-surrender must be undertaken only once and is considered easier. Vedāntadeśika then mentions examples of ritual actions, namely, two types of bathing rituals (*snāna*), one easy and the other difficult, along with two types of *jyotiṣṭoma*, one to be repeated and the other to be performed once, to justify the division of *bhakti* and self-surrender:

⁵⁴⁸ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 35: *yat tūktam bhajanaprapadanaśabdau sthānatas samānārthatayā kvacit prayujyamānau drśyete iti, tadasiddham; prapadanaśabdasya lakṣaṇato bhinnārthasyāpy aṅginānatidūraviprakaṣāt ajahallakṣaṇayā tatsthāne prayogopapatteḥ. yathā rājakulam gacchati, rājānam abhigacchati, rājānam sevate, rājñi vartata iti. ata evāśvamedhike śrīvaiṣṇavadharmaśāstre sahaprayogād bhinnārthatvam avaḡamyate – tasmād dhi tvām prapannasya tvadbhaktasya ca bhāvataḥ. yuṣmadīyān parān dharmān puṇyān kathaya me ’cyuta.*

⁵⁴⁹ *Brahmasūtra* 3.4.32–33, 789–790.

⁵⁵⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 34: *sūtritam ca teṣām āśramakarmanām aṅgatvaṃ svatantratvaṃ ca - vihitatvāc cāśramakarmāpi, sahakāritvena ceti.*

When a particular type that is not repeated (self-surrender) is possible, one should abandon a particular one that has to be repeated (*bhakti*) because it is difficult. If one were to accept the difficult one, then one should not end up [undertaking] the one that is easy and to be done once. If you oppose, saying that one should not perform the one which is not to be repeated because [the difficult one] would be useless. That should not be the case since there is an established arrangement between the difficult one and the easy one based on the rule of faith that an eligible person has. In the same way, general words like “bathing” (*snāna*) include different types of bathing rituals, difficult and easy, and suitable for various people. It is the same in the case [of self-surrender and *bhakti*]. [In the same way,] the word “*jyotiṣṭoma*” (a soma sacrifice) refers to both types through the separate application of two types of *jyotiṣṭoma*, repeated and not repeated. Then what contradiction is there, if there is the culmination of the words such as “knowledge” (*vedana*) in two meanings of meditative means to Brahman (*brahmavidyā*) in the forms of self-surrender (*prapadana*) and meditative worship (*upāsana*) in that way, one not repeated, and the others repeated. [The implication here is that there is no contradiction in this case].⁵⁵¹

Self-surrender can be differentiated from *bhakti* through its requirement of faith as well.⁵⁵² In other words, those who do not have faith in self-surrender would be eligible for *bhakti* in the same way as those who cannot perform *bhakti* or do not have patience for the delay of its result would be eligible for self-surrender:⁵⁵³

Some people always have doubts, [thinking as follows:] the means is [too] easy; it cannot uproot the whole cause of suffering which is endless and has been accumulated from the beginningless time; it is hard to reach the ascending to the step [and other stages in case of self-surrender] even for Brahmā, Śiva, Sanaka and other [great beings], let alone themselves who are much more inferior [to

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.: *anāvṛttaviśeṣe sambhavati gauravād āvṛtṭam viśeṣam parityajet; atha gauravam anumatyā tatra na paryavasyet, tadā tadvaiyarthya prasāṅgād anāvṛtṭam nāsīded iti cet; tan na, adhikāri viśeṣapratītinīyamena gurulaghuvyavasthāyāḥ sthāpitatvāt. yathā snānādisāmānyasabdās tattadadhikāri viśeṣocitāṃ taṃ taṃ snānādiviśeṣaṃ gurum laghuṃ ca saṃgrhṇanti, tathātrāpi. yathā vasante vasante jyotiṣā yajeta, jyotiṣṭomena svargakāmo yajeteti viniyogaprthaktvenāvṛttānāvṛttajyotiṣṭomayoḥ jyotiṣṭomasabdah, tathātrāpy āvṛttānāvṛttayoḥ prapadanopāsanaṃ upāyoḥ brahmavidyayoḥ vedanādisabdaparyavasāne ko virodhaḥ?*

⁵⁵² Vedāntadeśika (ibid.) also refers to other qualifications which include “the impatience of delay, fear of other means, being immersed in the meditation on the eminent and good qualities of God, and so on”

(*vilambākṣamatvam, upāyāntarabhīrutvaṃ, bhagavadguṇavattāprakarṣānusamdhānanimagnatvam ityādi*).

⁵⁵³ Unlike *bhakti*, self-surrender may indeed be able to destroy the *karmas* that have begun to operate (*prārabdhakarma*), but both of them lead to liberation. Thus, there is no difference regarding the result for both means. See Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 27.

these great beings]. Therefore, they enter on the more difficult means, which is far removed from these doubts. Thus, there is indeed particular differentiated optionality of eligibility based on determination (*adhyavasāya*). The differentiation of eligibility either due to ability or inability of other means or impatience or toleration of delay makes sense since people like Vyāsa and others [great people like Vyāsa] would not have the entailment of that sort of doubts. Given that is the case, the result may be the same [for both means, *bhakti* and self-surrender].⁵⁵⁴

Finally, Vedāntadeśika differentiates self-surrender from the factual knowledge proposed by Advaita Vedānta to place self-surrender on par with *bhakti*. Looking back, Rāmānuja also highlights the difference between *bhakti* and Advaita Vedānta knowledge of the meaning of the Upaniṣadic passages in his *Śrībhāṣya*. According to the condition set by Rāmānuja, self-surrender must be different from Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge so that it becomes as valid as *bhakti*. Thus, Vedāntadeśika deals with this issue in the first section of the *Nikṣeparakṣā* on the nature of self-surrender:

If self-surrender has a form of mental activity, does it have a form of an error like perception or a form of true knowledge? In the case of the first one, there is no proof that it [an error] is the means to liberation. In the latter case [that self-surrender has a form of true knowledge], is it [true knowledge] born from only scriptures or other causes? In the first case [that self-surrender is born only from scriptures], there would be an undesirable consequence of agreeing to the view of the foolish people [i.e., Advaita Vedānta].⁵⁵⁵

Vedāntadeśika elaborates that the factual knowledge is achieved from the Upaniṣadic

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 27: *ye punar upāyālāghavam, tata evānādikālasaṃcitānantasamastaduḥkhaheṭujālonmūlanam, kṣodīyasām api svātmanāṃ vidhiśivasanakādiduradhigamapadādhirohādikaṃ cānucintya satataṃ saṃdihate, teṣāṃ tacchaṅkād aviṣṭhagariṣṭhopāyānupraveśa iti. ato yathādhyavasāyam adhikāra ity ayam apy antato vyavasthitavikalpabheda eva. vyāsādīnāṃ tu tathāvidhaśaṅkāprasāṅgābhāvād upāyāntaraśaktyaśaktibhyāṃ vilambakṣamatvavilambākṣamatvābhyāṃ eva vā adhikāravavyavastheti nirbādham etat. ato 'viśiṣṭaphalatvam apy upapannam.*

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 3: *manovyāpārārūpatve 'pi, dṛṣṭivat sā bhrāntirūpā, tattvajñānarūpā vā? pūrvatra apavargasādhanatvāsiddhiḥ. uttaratra, kiṃ śāstramātrajanya, hetvantarajanya vā? ādye kumatimatopanipātādiprasāṅgaḥ.*

sentential meaning and cannot be enjoined or assisted by other activities. He then argues against the two positions, which suggest that self-surrender has the same characteristic as Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge. The first position states that self-surrender is an already accomplished means (*siddha*). The second one indicates that *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 cannot enjoin a person to perform self-surrender since it should be construed as a reiteration as follows, “For the one who has gone to Brahman alone as refuge preceded by the abandonment of *dharma*, Brahman alone is the means to liberation.”⁵⁵⁶ This statement only makes known the status of Brahman as the means to liberation without enjoining anything. In response to these two positions, Vedāntadeśika points out that self-surrender is a means that needs to be accomplished (*sādhya*), as I have previously shown in the section on a ritual of self-surrender. He then interprets *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as a qualified injunction (*viśiṣṭa-vidhi*), consisting of the main injunction for the performance of self-surrender and the subordinate injunction to abandon other means. His interpretation is based on the Mīmāṃsakas’ theory, mentioned in Chapter 2. Thus, according to Vedāntadeśika, self-surrender acts like *bhakti* in the sense that it is a mental awareness to be performed by scriptures such as *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66.⁵⁵⁷

In the sixth section of the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika affirms that there is no unity between self-surrender and Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge, even if they share certain

⁵⁵⁶ See the elaborate discussion on reiteration and injunction related to *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 in the section 4.1. To summarize, Vedāntadeśika offers three reasons (*Nikṣeparakṣā*, 2–3): The first reason is explained as follows: Given that a reiteration normally makes known the result of an injunction and other things but not the injunction itself, this statement cannot be a reiteration since it should communicate something which is different from the things referred to by a reiteration. Second, if this statement from the *Bhagavadgītā* is to be understood as a reiteration, then it would not have any connection with an injunction. However, its grammatical construction suggests that it should be construed as an injunction. Third, if we assume that the statement is a reiteration which usually provides a precondition that should be connected to an injunction, there is nothing else that can be enjoined in the statement so that this reiteration has something to connect with.

⁵⁵⁷ It should be noted that Vedāntadeśika seems to have *Bhagavadgītā* 18.66 as the center of his argument here since he begins the section with the passage and his discussion remains very engaged with the nature of self-surrender based on the *Bhagavadgītā* passage.

characteristics such as having the form of mental activity and requiring no repetition or obligatory rituals as auxiliaries. Self-surrender is different from factual knowledge, since one needs to realize the relationship between the soul, who is subordinate, and God, who is superior to the soul, before performing self-surrender. In addition, unlike factual knowledge, which requires the cessation of all other activities, one should not stop performing obligatory and occasional rituals after self-surrender:

Moreover, there is no descent into the views of people with bad views [i.e., Advaita Vedānta]. Although self-surrender is done once, it is different from the factual knowledge of the [Upaniṣadic] sentential meaning. Self-surrender is pregnant with a mass of particular things such as the ruler and the ruled ones. Although self-surrender does not have auxiliaries like sacrificial rituals and so on, it has been shown that there is no cessation of rituals such as obligatory and occasional rituals etc.⁵⁵⁸

To sum up this section, like other Sanskrit authors, Vedāntadeśika aims to prove in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* that self-surrender can serve as an alternative to *bhakti* and conforms to the Sanskrit sphere of soteriology. By rejecting the identity between self-surrender and Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge that is liberative without actions required, Vedāntadeśika simultaneously differentiates his version of self-surrender from the passive form presented in the Manipravalam works of Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷai and Pīḷai Lokācārya. We might recall that the Manipravalam authors maintain the view that self-surrender lacks the performative aspect, which *bhakti* embodies, since it is nothing but God, who is the accomplished means. Their views bring self-surrender dangerously close to Advaita Vedānta factual knowledge and possibly render it invalid in the Sanskrit sphere, in which *bhakti*, along with its anti-Advaita

⁵⁵⁸ Vedāntadeśika, *Nikṣeparakṣā*, 34: *naca kumatimatāvātāraḥ; sakṛdkaraṇe 'pi vākyārthajñānād atiriktatvāt, īśēsitavyādiviśeṣajālagarbhatvāt, karmādyaṅgakatvābhāve 'pi nityanaimittikādyanurodhasya darśitatvāt, adhikāryantarasadbhāvena asakṛdāvṛttānusamdhānapratikṣepābhāvāc ca.*

Vedānta characteristic, is the soteriological model. It is true that Vedāntadeśika does not openly refer to the views of the Manipravalam literature in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*. Nevertheless, his argument effectively resolves the potential issue on the invalidity of self-surrender in the Sanskrit sphere, the risk that may arise from those views in the Manipravalam literature.

4.3 Summary

We have seen in the previous chapters that Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri systematized self-surrender only in Sanskrit, resulting in a version of self-surrender that is different from the one found in the Manipravalam literature from the same period. They consolidated the Sanskrit sphere, drawing it away from the Tamil scripture as well as the Manipravalam sphere. Unlike the Manipravalam authors who did not pay attention to *bhakti*, these authors maintain that *bhakti* is the valid soteriological doctrine based on Rāmānuja's teaching. Vedāntadeśika, being a part of the Sanskrit scholastic and theological domain, followed the same agenda in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*. He synthesized the main constituents of the Sanskrit sphere, namely Vedāntic Sanskrit scriptures, Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics, and Rāmānuja's theology, all focused on and handed down by Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri.

Like the two Sanskrit authors, Vedāntadeśika also incorporated the Sanskrit emphasis on the performative characteristic of self-surrender in his systematization. Being a part of the Sanskrit soteriology in which *bhakti* remains central, self-surrender mimics the characteristics of *bhakti*, especially its ritual status, to become another doctrine. Although Vedāntadeśika defended self-surrender as a valid means separate from *bhakti*, he asserted that the two doctrines are on par with each other; they can both be undertaken as the means to liberation according to different eligibilities.

The preceding chapters have shown the distance between the Sanskrit theology of self-surrender and the one seen in the Manipravalam literature. However, what becomes clear when we look at Vedāntadeśika is the choice he made as an author working within the Śrīvaiṣṇava multilingual community. Composing in Sanskrit, Vedāntadeśika complied with the limitations of the Sanskrit sphere and with earlier Sanskrit authors such as Vātsyāyaṇa Varadaguru, Meghanādhārisūri, and even Rāmānuja. He further reinterpreted the scriptural passages used by these authors and reconciled the previously diverging views on self-surrender to affirm the soteriological status of self-surrender within the Sanskrit sphere. Although he alluded to the debates found in the Manipravalam sphere, he did not explicitly involve the Tamil scripture or the Manipravalam discussions due to the condition of the Sanskrit sphere. Self-surrender belongs to the Sanskrit sphere, and that means the marginalization and, in some cases, exclusion of the elements critical to the Manipravalam sphere, such as Nammālvār as an ideal devotee, the paradigm of the three secrets, and the fundamental relationship between God and the devotees in the soteriological process. These elements instead define self-surrender in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*. It is obvious that the Sanskrit sphere limits the authoritative norms in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* only to the Sanskrit sources. To examine the more elaborate discussions on self-surrender and its sources both in Sanskrit and Tamil, Vedāntadeśika chose the linguistic medium of Manipravalam in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*. As I argue in the next chapter, Manipravalam not only functions as the medium that bridges the gap between the two confluences of the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures but also conveys the various definitions of self-surrender by earlier authors.

CHAPTER 5 HARMONIZATION

The tradition today believes that the *Rahasyatrayasāram* was Vedāntadeśika's last work and that he composed this text during his later days in Śrīraṅgam.⁵⁵⁹ This belief gives the impression that this text is a culmination of his ideas, which in turn renders its status as the most important work among his compositions. Francis Clooney indicates that this work is the most elaborate commentary on the three secrets and was meant for the "wider literate audience" compared to his other treatises.⁵⁶⁰ In addition to its commentarial expansiveness, this text contains different expressions, as Clooney claims that it is "the site of reason, imagination, affective intensification, and religious commitment."⁵⁶¹

Many scholars highlight the harmonizing function of Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram*, some of whom I will now briefly mention. Patricia Mumme has comprehensively studied this text in comparison with Maṇavālamūni's commentary on the words of Piḷḷai Lokācārya in *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute* (1988). Mumme argues that, through this work, Vedāntadeśika intended to resolve the contradictions and reconcile different interpretations regarding the traditional doctrine.⁵⁶² Elisa Freschi also proposes that a decent number of Vedāntadeśika's works are devoted to the harmonization of different intellectual and authoritative strands, namely Vedānta, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, Pāñcarātra, and Āḷvārs' theology. One such work is the *Rahasyatrayasāram* in which Vedāntadeśika harmonized contesting views of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' theology, centering on the doctrine of self-surrender and the three secrets.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 12.

⁵⁶⁰ For more information on Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram*, see Clooney, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 8.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁶² Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 14.

⁵⁶³ Freschi, "Śrī Vaiṣṇavism."

In the analysis of this text in *Beyond Compare* (2008), Clooney shows that Vedāntadeśika aimed at balancing the two streams of Sanskrit and Tamil and harmonizing all the doctrines.⁵⁶⁴ This chapter intends to strengthen this argument on the harmonizing role of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* and to argue further that Vedāntadeśika's use of Manipravalam is necessary to his harmonization and consolidation of the communal sense, which might have been prompted by contemporaneous social and intellectual events.

Comparing Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram* with the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, we can see that while Vedāntadeśika presented only some scriptures, aspects, and debates related to self-surrender in Sanskrit, he discusses sources more extensively in Manipravalam. The scriptural sources included in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* are more diversified, stylistically and content-wise, and attention is given to the teachings from the Tamil scripture and the interpretation of the three secrets. However, we still see some Sanskrit authorities such as the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, and Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

Vedāntadeśika synthesized the sources from different origins and contexts, those used either by Manipravalam authors or the Sanskrit ones or both, claiming that the different scriptural streams agree on the subject at hand as previously shown. Through Manipravalam, which allows Vedāntadeśika to bring in both Sanskrit and Tamil scriptural and theological domains, he harmonized multiple strands of self-surrender and resolved the discrepancies we saw in his predecessors' treatises, as we will see in the second section of this chapter. Vedāntadeśika's harmonization results in the collective Manipravalam soteriology that incorporate different forms of self-surrender as I will illustrate below. The collective normativity and expression of self-surrender in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* became the main

⁵⁶⁴ Clooney *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 189–190.

defining characteristic of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. To explain, Vedāntadeśika’s self-surrender contributes to the notion that “the tradition” refers to the community of those who follow or want to follow self-surrender.

Clooney proposes that the entire *Rahasyatrayasāram* essentially expounds the “Truth,” “Way,” and “Life” around the three secrets or *mantras*, which reflect the “correct” doctrines as follows:⁵⁶⁵

Thorough exegesis of the Tiru Mantra, Dvaya Mantra, and Carama Śloka occurs respectively in Chapters 27,28, and 29, which comprise nearly 40% of the whole. This exegesis is complemented by the expositions found in Chapters 3–19. Thus, Chapters 3–6 offer philosophical and theological underpinnings for the entire project – the Truth – while Chapters 7–12 offer the logic and psychology of taking refuge – the Way – and Chapters 13–19 spell out the manner and motive of a life lived in accord with the Mantras – the Life; other chapters raise questions about the transmission of the teaching of the Mantras, and the implied cosmology, epistemology, etc.⁵⁶⁶

I agree that the exegesis of the three secrets is the main project of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* as it is itself a part of the genre of *rahasyagranthas* whose goal is to interpret and understand the three secrets. However, I understand that the three secrets attain meanings and roles within the soteriology of self-surrender, in particular. Thus, in this chapter, I focus on Chapters 7–12 that describe self-surrender and its function in relation to God in addition to Chapters 27–29 on the three secrets.

5.1 The Rahasyatrayasāram in the Manipravalam Sphere

In the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, we see that Vedāntadeśika incorporates scriptures, both Sanskrit and Tamil, and also the works of previous *ācāryas* to harmonize different normative streams.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 18.

Importantly, unlike in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* in which he focuses only on the Sanskrit scripture, Vedāntadeśika prefers the Tamil scripture and the Sanskrit texts that are less authoritative than the Vedas and Upaniṣads, such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. His preference shows that the *Nikṣeparakṣā* and the *Rahasyatrayasāram* participate in different linguistic spheres as they are engaged with the predominant norms in Sanskrit and Manipravalam respectively. It also suggests that the *Rahasyatrayasāram* is clearly a part of the Manipravalam sphere and might have been in conversation with the previous Manipravalam treatises of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya in Chapters 2 and 3.

It is also clear that Vedāntadeśika does not intend only to bring both the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures into discussion but aims to harmonize these authorities. He further synthesizes the scriptures with the *ācāryas*' teachings, which represent another norm of authority in the Manipravalam sphere, in particular. In some cases, he even argues that the Ālvārs should be considered more authoritative than the *itihāsa*, and the *itihāsa* statement should not be contradictory to their models. The Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās remain one of the most authoritative scriptures regarding the nature and definition of self-surrender, as in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*. However, in this text, Vedāntadeśika centers on aligning these texts with other authorities. I chart his normative preference and attempt to harmonize all the authorities in the following section.

Clooney comprehensively explores these three chapters on the secrets, Chapters 27–29, in his book, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Hindus* (2008). There, he argues that these chapters on the three secrets are central to the *Rahasyatrayasāram*. They not only expound the three secrets, but also capture various interpretations on them, interwoven with the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' theology:

Deśika constantly reminds his readers that attention to even the details of the Mantras must be placed in the context of a full appreciation of the overall Śrīvaiṣṇava faith perspective. He insists that the three Mantras cooperate in shaping a Śrīvaiṣṇava worldview, and thus need to be understood together; in a number of texts, he introduces and praises them together.⁵⁶⁷

In the section that follows, I propose that the three secrets, which Clooney claims to be the essence of the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, serve as the foundation for Vedāntadeśika’s systematization of self-surrender and a tool to synthesize multiple authoritative sources on self-surrender. His analysis of the three secrets is also immersed in the Manipravalam sphere and indebted to his predecessors’ interpretations of them.

5.1.1 The Scriptural Synthesis

As we can see from the previous chapter, the authoritative passages in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* are drawn only from the Sanskrit scriptures of which the majority can be found in the *Prapannapārijāta*. On the other hand, Vedāntadeśika reduces the Sanskrit passages from the Vedic and Upaniṣadic sources in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, especially in the chapters related to self-surrender and the three secrets (Chapters 8–12 and 27–29). Frequently, Vedāntadeśika brings in the Tamil scriptures, especially the *Tiruvāymoli*, and *itihāsas*, instead of the Sanskrit ones, to balance the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures. In what follows, I exemplify Vedāntadeśika’s preference to the Tamil scriptures and his treatments on *itihāsas* in relation to his arguments on self-surrender.

In Chapter 28 on the Dvaya, “I surrender at the two feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. I pay obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī” (“*śrīmannārāyaṇacaranau prapadye. śrīmate nārāyaṇāya*

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 19.

namaḥ”), Vedāntadeśika accepts the view that *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 portrays Nammālvār’s self-surrender:

‘I won’t part from you for an instant’ says Śrī who rests on your chest,
lord of matchless fame, holder of the three worlds,
my king, master of Vēṅkaṭam
dear to peerless immortals and sages
with nowhere else to go, I’ve settled at your feet.⁵⁶⁸

He also highlights the fact that Nammālvār explains the meaning of the Dvaya in the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, especially *Tiruvāymoḷi* 4.1.1, “As the world watches those who once ruled as kings beg with broken bowl in hand black dogs nipping at their heels. Quick, think now of Tirunāraṇaṅ’s feet;” *Tiruvāymoḷi* 7.2.11, “Those who master these ten from the thousand sung on the banks of the sacred Porunal in praise of the feet of him dark as storm clouds, will be swept up in a flood of bliss and will remain among celestials who are forever with him dark as storm clouds;” and *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10.⁵⁶⁹ He then draws the hermeneutic connection between the Dvaya and *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10, in particular, stating that God’s qualities shown in the word “*nārāyaṇa*” in the Dvaya are also summarized in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* passage. Thus, *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 and the Dvaya share the concept of surrender with God as the refuge:

All the meanings stated by the etymological interpretation in the chapter on the Mūlamantra (Chapter 27) of the word “*nārāyaṇa*,” which has already been discussed here, are meant. However, for the word “*nārāyaṇa*” in the first part [of the Dvaya], [the qualities] which are summarized in the passage, “lord of matchless fame” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10], by indicating that they pertain to His (God’s) being the refuge, namely parental love (*vātsalya*), mastership

⁵⁶⁸ Translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 215. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 553.

⁵⁶⁹ The two passages are translated by Venkatesan, 133 and 225. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 495 and 558. For Vedāntadeśika’s *Rahasyatrayasāram*, see the edition by Uttamur Viraraghavacharya (Madras: Ubhayavedāntagranthamālā, 1980), vol. 1, 947–948: *itvayattiṅ arhattai nammālvārum ‘tirunārāyaṇaṅ tāḷ kalam perac cintittuyminṇō’ enrum*, ‘*mutilvaṇṇaṅ aṭiyaiy aṭaintu aruḷ cūṭiy uyntavaṅ’ enrum*. ‘*akalakillēṅ’ mutalāṇa pradeśaṅkalilum aruḷicceytār*.

(*svāmitva*), excellence of disposition (*sauśīlya*), omniscience (*sarvajñatva*), omnipotence (*sarvaśaktitva*), true will (*satyasamkalpatva*), supreme compassion (*paramakāruṇikatva*), gratitude (*kṛtajñatva*), stability (*sthiratva*), completion (*paripūrṇatva*), supreme generosity (*paramodāra*) and so on, are the most predominant ones among those to be contemplated here.⁵⁷⁰

Moreover, following other Manipravalam authors, Vedāntadeśika treats *itihāsas* as illustrating the model practices for those who want to surrender to God. Specifically, he outlines examples of those who surrender to God through the pretext and how God saves them from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* in various chapters, especially in the chapters on the three secrets. It should be noted that Vedāntadeśika places the Āḷvārs' practices at the top of the hierarchy of authority and ranks the models from *itihāsas* lower than those. The *itihāsas* are authoritative, but the Āḷvārs' lives and practices have more authority. This is evident when he asserts that the rules according to castes should not be violated since even the Āḷvārs follow them. The Āḷvārs' conformity to the rules of castes should be understood as the authority for the practices found in *itihāsas* as in the story of Vidura from the *Mahābhārata*. Being a *sūdra*, the lowest caste, Vidura serves food to Kṛṣṇa who is a twice-born. Vidura's act theoretically violates the rule that a *sūdra* cannot cook food for the twice-born like Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu). However, Vidura does not break the rule according to Vedāntadeśika. In fact, Vidura is allowed to do so since he has a special quality based on being Viṣṇu's devotee. The episode is portrayed through the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Duryodhana who is criticizing Vidura as follows:

⁵⁷⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 967–968: *inḱurra nārāyaṇaśabdattukku mūlamantrādhikārattil vyutpattikaḷālē coṇṇa arthaṅkaḷ ellām vivakṣitaṅkaḷ ākilum pūrvakhaṇḍattil nārāyaṇaśabdattukku śaraṇyataiyilē nōkkāṇapaṭiyālē 'nikaril pukaḷāy' ityādikalilē saṃgrhītaṅkaḷāṇa vātsalyasvāmitvasauśīlyasaulabhyasarvajñatvasarvaśaktitvasatyasamkalpatvaparamakāruṇikatvakṛtajñatva-sthiratvapariṇatvaparamodāratvādikaḷ inḱu anusandhēyaṅkaḷil pradhānatamaṅkaḷ.*

Duryodhana heard that “[Kṛṣṇa] who has eaten among the best of the twice-born sits on the supreme seat and eats the pure and nourishing food from Vidura” [Mahābhārata 411]. So, he asks [Kṛṣṇa], “O Madhusūdana, having passed me, Bhīṣma, and Droṇa, what is the point of eating the food of the *śūdra*, Lord with the lotus eyes?” [Mahābhārata 423]. By replying, “Food of the enemies should not be eaten, and one should not be caused to feed the enemies. O King, you hate the Pāṇḍavas who are my life-breath” [Mahābhārata 409], the Lord [Kṛṣṇa] agreed with Vidura’s particular birth (*jāti*) as Duryodhana stated. However, [it may be asked], is it not the case that eating food cooked by a *śūdra* is forbidden for *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* [...] The fact that [Vidura can prepare food for Kṛṣṇa] is suitable due to the statement of Vidura’s special quality as in “Vidura, having become virtuous and pure, brings food [to Kṛṣṇa]” [Mahābhārata 411] [...] Therefore, the service to God according to the eligibility through the manner suitable to each birth, without abandoning various births but remaining, is suitable to do.⁵⁷¹

Vedāntadeśika then explains that the story of Vidura should be understood as an exception since he has a special quality that normal people do not have and thus cannot be used to overrule the prohibition or to violate the rules according to castes. In the same manner, the Āḷvārs’ conduct that seems inappropriate to their castes indeed conform to the rules since they have great power unlike devotees in general.⁵⁷² Thus, devotees should not imitate the practices of these special devotees such as Vidura and the Āḷvārs. Vedāntadeśika’s argument here further suggests that the *Mahābhārata* should not be taken literally in some cases and cannot be applied entirely to

⁵⁷¹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 743–744:

‘bhuktavatsu dvijāgryeṣu niṣaṇṇaḥ paramāsanē | vidurānnāni bubhujē śucīni guṇavanti ca ||’
enṛitaik kēṭtu duryōdhanan.

‘bhīṣmadrōṇav atikramya māṃ caiva madhusūdana | kim arthaṃ puṇḍarīkākṣa bhuktaṃ vṛṣaḷabhōjanam’ enṛu
kēṭka,

‘dviṣadannaṃ na bhōktavyaṃ dviṣantaṃ naiva bhōjayēt | pāṇḍavān dviṣasē rājan mama prāṇā hi pāṇḍavāḥ ||’
enṛu uttaram aruḷiceykaiyālē śrīvidurarukku duryōdhanan coṇṇa jātiviseṣattai bhagavāṇ icaintāṇ āyirru.

ānāl brāhmaṇarukkum kṣatriyarukkum śūdraṇuṭaiya pakvānattai bhujikkai niṣiddham aṇṛō [...] itu,
‘śucis tu prayatō bhūtva vidurō ’nam upāharat’ enṛu śrīvidurarūṭaiya guṇaviṣeṣaṅkaḷ collukaiyālē sūcitam [...]
ākaiyālē tam tam jātikaḷai viṭātē niṇṛu avvō jātikaḷukku ucitaprakriyaiyālē yathādhikāram bhagavatkaṅkaryam
paṇṇa prāptam. For the *Mahābhārata* passages, see vol. 6, 365, 366, and 375.

⁵⁷² Ibid., 748: “The particular ways of conduct of the Āḷvārs who have greater power than Vidura and others are not examples for our performance. If one investigates their conduct, there is no violation of the rules according to one’s own birth.” (*vidurādikaḷum utkṛṣṭaprabhāvarāṇa āḷvārkaḷuṭaiya vṛttāntavisēṣaṅkaḷai nam anuṣṭhānattukku dṛṣṭāntamākkal ākātu. avarkaḷ vṛttāntaṅkaḷaiyum āṛāyntāl svajātiniyamattaik kaṭantamāiy illai*).

the practices of those who surrender to God. Alternatively, the practices in the *Māhābhārata* must be justified by and conform to the Ājvārs' practices.

Vedāntadeśika treats the *Rāmāyaṇa* differently, affirming that the *Rāmāyaṇa* shows the perfect practices of the main characters who represent various agents in the surrendering process: Rāma is God, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa; Sītā is God's consort, Śrī, who acts as the mediator in surrender, and the other characters, such as Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Hanumān are those who surrender to God. Thus, the *Rāmāyaṇa* functions as a guide for the perfect surrender.⁵⁷³ Vedāntadeśika defines the *Rāmāyaṇa* as “the essence of taking refuge” (*śaraṇāgati*) and transform it into self-surrender literature in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*.⁵⁷⁴ It should be noted that he was not the first one to do so and that his argument here is likely indebted to Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, who elaborately argues that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is all about self-surrender in his *Parantarahasyam*.⁵⁷⁵

For example, in Chapter 11 on the division of subsidiaries of self-surrender (*parikaravibhāga*), Vedāntadeśika defines the five auxiliaries of self-surrender or the offering of oneself (*ātmanikṣepa*) based on what we have seen in the *Lakṣmītantra*, in Chapter 17.⁵⁷⁶ As in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, he maintains the position here that the laying down of oneself is the predominant means and other components are the auxiliaries.⁵⁷⁷ This is supported by the

⁵⁷³ It might be the case that Vedāntadeśika was also influenced by the notion found in Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Śrīvācanabhūṣaṇam* that the *Mahābhārata* gives knowledge on God's excellence while the *Rāmāyaṇa* communicates the greatness of the devotee like Sītā (Mumme, “Rāmāyaṇa Exegesis in Teṅkalai Śrīvaiṇavism,” 205). Based on this notion, the *Rāmāyaṇa* not the *Mahābhārata* should be followed by the devotees as Vedāntadeśika indicates.

⁵⁷⁴ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 656: “Vālmiki composed the statements, ‘She is able to protect the demonesses from the great fear’ [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.31] and ‘She is able to protect the group of demonesses from Rāma’ [*Rāmāyaṇa*, untraceable], in the first poetry (*ādikāvya*) which is the essence of taking refuge.” (“*alam eṣā paritrātuṃ rākṣasyō mahatō bhayāt*” *enrum*, “*alam eṣā paritrātuṃ rāghavād rākṣasīgaṇam*” *enrum śrīvālmīkibhagavāṇ śaraṇāgatisāramāṇa ādikāvyaatilē nibandhittāṇ*). For the *Rāmāyaṇa* passage, see vol. 5, 208.

⁵⁷⁵ Section 2.1.2.

⁵⁷⁶ See *Lakṣmītantra* 17.53–63, 57, and 17.66–74, 57–58. See also Chapter 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Section 4.2.

passage from the *Lakṣmītantra*, 17.75, “offering (*nyāsa*) which is synonymous with laying down (*nikṣepa*) joined with five auxiliaries is called abandonment (*tyāga*) and also taking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*),”⁵⁷⁸ which can be found in the *Prapannapārijāta* also.⁵⁷⁹ The auxiliaries are as follows: the will to please God (*ānukūlyasaṃkalpa*), the avoidance of hostility (*prātikūlyavarjana*), wretchedness (*kārpaṇya*), faith that God will protect (*rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsa*), choosing God as the protector (*goptrtvavaraṇa*). Then, he draws the parallel between the five auxiliaries of self-surrender in the *Lakṣmītantra* passage and the *Rāmāyaṇa* passages. According to Vedāntadeśika, the *Rāmāyaṇa* passages, 5.25.28 and 30–31, center around Sītā and the demonesses who detain Sītā in the garden in Laṅkā according to the order of Rāvaṇa who kidnapped Sītā from Rāma.⁵⁸⁰ Instead of assigning these auxiliaries to the context of surrendering to God in the form of Rāma, Vedāntadeśika describes them as the components in the context in which the demonesses take refuge with Śrī or Sītā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

This meaning [of the five auxiliaries of self-surrender] is seen in the statement that Trijaṭā who has pure nature stated to the *rākṣasīs*, “Come take Śrī as refuge.”

“Enough with your cruel words” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.28] states *the avoidance of hostility*.

By the statement, “Say only gentle [words]” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.28], what is implied is *the will to please [God]* since there is no verbal activity that is not preceded by the mind.

Since “The terrible fear of Rāma has befallen the *rākṣasīs*” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.30] refers to the state of being without a path, what is stated are helplessness (*ākiñcanya*), which is a qualification [for self-surrender], and *wretchedness* (*kārpaṇya*) which is the auxiliary [of helplessness] in the form of being without pride and other [qualities] that occurs by means of contemplating that [helplessness].

Since Hanumān reiterated that “She is able to protect the *rākṣasīs* from great fear” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.30]” after [Trijaṭā] stated it herself, “She is able to

⁵⁷⁸ *Lakṣmītantra* 17.75, 58: “*nikṣepāparaparyāyo nyāsaḥ pañcāṅgasamṃyutaḥ | samnyāsas tyāga ity uktāḥ śaraṇāgatir ityapi ||*”

⁵⁷⁹ Section 2.1.2.

⁵⁸⁰ *Rāmāyaṇa* 5.25.28 and 30–31, vol. 5, 208.

protect the *rākṣasīs* from great fear” [Rāmāyaṇa 5.25.31], she [Śrī] is able to protect, having abated God’s anger even though He wants to punish someone. Therefore, [through the passage,] the faith that “She will protect” is stated.

What is stated through [these passages] is choosing [Śrī] as the protector, “Let us beg Sītā. This is suitable for me” [Rāmāyaṇa 5.25.28], “Even you have threatened Her before, ask now! There is no use wanting to ask if She will protect [because She will definitely protect you]” [Rāmāyaṇa 5.25.30]

The laying down of oneself (ātmanikṣepa), which is the predominant component of these five [auxiliaries], is meant by the word “those who submit” (*praṇipāta*) that refers to a particular cause of favor as in, “Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, favors those who submit [to Her]” [Rāmāyaṇa 5.25.31].

Thus, the meaning of the scripture [Lakṣmītantra 17.75], “offering (*nyāsa*) joined with five auxiliaries” is complete here [in the Rāmāyaṇa].⁵⁸¹

This elaborate passage aims at harmonizing the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās by showing that both passages define self-surrender along with its auxiliaries. Although Vedāntadeśika still resorts to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās as the significant source for the description of self-surrender, he highlights the fact that they are in accordance with the *itihāsa*. In what follows, we see more examples of how Vedāntadeśika synthesizes different sets of authorities, especially the scriptures and authoritative figures.

The use of both norms is evident, for example, in his discussion on the qualifications of those who are eligible for the performance of self-surrender, namely helplessness and the state

⁵⁸¹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 360–363 (emphasis mine): *ivvartham*, ‘*pirāṭṭiyai śaraṇamākap paṛra vāruṅkaḷ enru sāttvikaprakṛtiyāna trijaṭai rākṣasikaḷukkuc collukira vākyattilum kāṇalām*. “*tad alam kūravākyair vaḥ*” *enru prātikūlyavarjanam collappaṭṭatu*. “*sāntvam ēva abhidhīyatām*” *enkaiyālē manaḥpūrvakamā kav allatu vākyapravṛttiy illāmayālē ānukūlyasaṅkalpam ākrṣtam āyirru*.

‘*rāghavād hi bhayaṃ ghōraṃ rākṣasānām upasthītam*’ *enru pōkkaṛru nirkira nilaiyaic collukaiyālē adhikāramāna ākiñcanyamum, atinuṭaiya anusandhānamukhattālē vanta garvahānyādirūpamāy aṅgamāna kārapanyamum collirāyirru*.

“*alam eṣā paritrātum rākṣasyō mahatō bhayāt*” *enkaiyālum ittai vivarittuk koṅṭu* “*alam eṣā paritrātum rākṣasyō mahatō bhayāt*” *enru tiruvaṭi anuvadikkaiyālum, perumāl oruttaṇai nigrāhikkappārkkilum avarcīrṛattaiyārri ivaḷ rakṣikka vallavaḷ ākaiyālē rakṣiyatīti viśvāsam collappaṭṭatu*.

“*abhiyācāma vaidēhīm etad hi mama rocatē*”, “*bhartur satām api yācadhvam rākṣasyaḥ kiṃ vivakṣayā*” *enkaiyālē gōṭṭrtvavaraṇam collirāyirru*.

ivvaintukkum aṅgiyāna ātmanikṣēpam, “*praṇipātaprasannā hi maithilī janakātmaṅjā*” *enru prasādakāraṇaviśeṣattaic collukira praṇipātaśabdattālē vivakṣitam āyirru*. *ākaiyāl* “*nyāsaḥ pañcāṅgasamyutaḥ*” *enkira śāstrārtham inkē pūrṇam*.

of having no other means. In this case, Vedāntadeśika first argues that these qualifications are proclaimed in the scriptures, namely *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.38.30 and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30.⁵⁸² Then, he relies on Nammālvār and Yāmuna as the representation of authoritative figures. According to Vedāntadeśika, both of them also announced the two qualifications in their works as shown in Nammālvār’s *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10 and Yāmuna’s *Stotraratna* 22, respectively.⁵⁸³

The specificity of the eligibility for self-surrender is established by the authoritative passages and the tradition, beginning with, “Being abandoned by his father, gods, and great sages, He [Kākāsura] wandered around the three worlds before taking refuge only with Rāma” [*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.38.30], “I am the abode of sins. I am unworthy and have no other means” [*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30], “I am unworthy, and I have no other means. My refuge!” [*Stotraratna* 22] [...] “with nowhere else to go, I’ve [settled at your feet.]” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10].⁵⁸⁴

Vedāntadeśika further refers to the influence of previous *ācāryas*, especially the Kāñcī *ācāryas*. In Chapter 24 on the means to be accomplished (*sādhyopāya*), Vedāntadeśika claims that the Kāñcī *ācāryas* such as Śrīviṣṇucitta (Periyālvār), Vādihaṃsābuvāha (Ātreya Rāmānuja), and Varadācārya (Vātsya Varadaguru) agreed with his view of self-surrender as they also viewed that self-surrender which has the form of the offering of the protection of oneself to God is the predominate means among all auxiliaries of self-surrender.⁵⁸⁵ Among the

⁵⁸² *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.38.30, vol. 5, 275, and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 37.30, vol. 2, 370. See section 2.1.2.

⁵⁸³ For the whole *Tiruvāymoḷi* passage, see the beginning of this section. Yāmuna, *Stotraratna* 22, 74. See also section 1.3.

⁵⁸⁴ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 349: *iprapattyadhikāraviśēṣam sa pitrā ca parityaktas suraiś ca samaharṣibhiḥ | trīn lōkān saṃparikramya tam ēva śaraṇaṃ gataḥ || aham asmy aparādhānām ālayō ’kiñcanō ’gatiḥ, akiñcanō ’nanyagatiḥ śaraṇya, anāgatānantakālasamīkṣayāpyadrṣtasantāropāyaḥ [...]* “*pukalonrillā aṭiyēṇ*” *enrivai mutalāṇ pramānasampradāyaṅkaḷālē siddham*.

⁵⁸⁵ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 692: “Thus, *ācāryas* such as Śrīviṣṇucitta, Vādihaṃsābuvāha, and Varadācārya summarized that only the offering of the burden of protecting oneself (*ātmarakṣābharanyāsa*) that possesses the five auxiliaries is the primary injunction in all the texts on self-surrender (*prapattiśāstra*).” (*ippaṭi aṅgapañcakasaṃpannamāṇa ātmarakṣābharanyāsamē prapattiśāstram ellāv arṛilum pradhānamāṇavidhēyam enru śrīviṣṇucittavādihaṃsābuvāhavaradācāryādikaḷ saṃgrahittārkaḷ*).

Kāñcī *ācāryas*, Vātsya Varadaguru who is known as Natātūr Ammāl under his Tamil name, has the most influence on Vedāntadeśika’s systematization of self-surrender. In Chapter 12, Vedāntadeśika provides Vātsya Varadguru’s teaching on self-surrender and its five auxiliaries:

The summary stated by Naṭātūr Ammāl for the performance [of self-surrender] with its auxiliaries is as follows: I have been wandering in the transmigration due to performing the conduct that displeases You, God, since the beginning of time; I am obliged to be the one who is pleasing to [You] from now on (*ānukūlyasaṃkalpa*); I shall not act in a displeasing manner (*prātikūlyavarjana*); there is no single means for reaching you in my hand (*kārpaṇya*); I have determined that You, God, alone are the means (*rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsa*); I need You alone as the means (*goptrtvavaraṇa*); Now, is there any burden [left] for me regarding the cessation of what is undesirable and attainment of what is desirable? [To answer, there is no burden left].⁵⁸⁶

The fact that it is referred to here and not in his Sanskrit treatise suggests that the reference to the *ācāryas*’ teaching is more habituated to the Manipravalam expressivity than the Sanskrit one. This kind of teaching was possibly handed down orally and recorded by Vedāntadeśika here in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*. Vedāntadeśika likely employs this teaching with an intention to synthesize various views on self-surrender and harmonize them together through the view of authorities like Vātsya Varadaguru. Speaking from the perspective of the audience, it might be the case that he highlights *itihāsas* and *ācāryas*’ teachings and does not dominate the discussions with the Vedic or Upaniṣadic sources to make the discussions more accessible to even those who do not receive Vedic education.

⁵⁸⁶ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 417–418: *issāṅgānuṣṭhānattukku naṭātūrammāl aruḷicceyyum curukku—“anādikālam tēvarīrukku aniṣṭācaraṇam paṇṇukaiyālē saṃsarittup pōntēṅ; iṅru mutal anukūlaṅṅay vartikkak kaṭavēṅ; pratikūlācaraṇam paṇṇakkaṭavēṅ allēṅ; tēvarīraip perukaikku eṅ kaiyil oru kaimmutal illai; tēvarīraiye upāyamāka arutiṅṅēṅ, tēvarīrē upāyamāka vēṅum, aniṣṭānivrttiyil ātal iṣṭaprāptiyil ātal eṅakku iṅi bharam uṅṭō?” eṅru.*

5.1.2 Immersing in the Three Secrets

Vedāntadeśika's interpretation of the three secrets is immersed in the discussions of the previous Manipravalam authors and specifically directed to the followers. As I have shown earlier, the three secrets represent one of the norms in the Manipravalam soteriology of self-surrender, but they do not receive the same attention in the Sanskrit treatises. Participating in the Manipravalam sphere, Vedāntadeśika presents the three secrets as the essence of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* in Chapters 27–29 and another authority, one that is in accordance with other authoritative sources. In this section, I illustrate how he integrates the doctrinal systematization of self-surrender into this normative paradigm to reveal the function and nature of self-surrender as well as the relationship between God and the soul, which is central to the soteriological process.

Vedāntadeśika assigns different roles to each of the three secrets in Chapter 27. The Tirumantra makes known the hierarchical relationship between the subordinate soul and God who is the Supreme Person. Then, the Caramaśloka serves as an instruction of self-surrender. Finally, the Dvaya makes one reach the goal of liberation by just uttering it once.⁵⁸⁷ It should be noted that the functions of the first two secrets correspond to what Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai states in the *Parantarahasyam*. However, Vedāntadeśika claims that the Caramaśloka enjoins self-surrender instead of indicating the result as Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai states. This supports my

⁵⁸⁷ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 817–818: “Tirumantra is the [authoritative] vessel because it gives the true desire after clarifying the pure nature [of the soul for whom] the state of being subordinate to the supreme is the only pleasure [...] The Caramaśloka which is the culmination of the teaching of the means is the nourisher in such a way that nothing is left to be listened to because it is the cause for the increase of a particular knowledge that is the way in which to endeavor in the ultimate means. The Dvaya is the nourishment because it causes one to become successful through a true contemplation along with being the cause of the supreme human goal by a single utterance.” ([...] *paraśēṣaṭaikarasamāṇa pariśuddhasvarūpattai veḷiyiṭṭu sattālābhataip paṇṇukaiyālē tirumantram dhāarakam. caramōpāyattilē pravartikkum paṭiyāṇa jñānaviśēṣōpacayahētuv ākaiyālē śrōtavyaśēṣam illātapaṭi upāyōpadēśaparyavasānamāṇa caramaślōkam pōṣakam. sakṛduccāraṇattālē paramapuruṣārthahētuvāy kōṇṭu sadānusandhānattālē kṛtārthaṇākkukaiyālē dvayam bhōgyam*).

argument that Vedāntadeśika focuses on validating self-surrender by using the Caramaśloka as the main injunction as he does in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*.

Chapter 27 begins with four Sanskrit verses that encapsulate the Mūlamantra or Tirumantra.⁵⁸⁸ The first verse outlines the meanings of parts, namely “*aum*,” “I pay obeisance,” and “to Nārāyaṇa,” but does not state the whole Mūlamantra. This practice of spelling out each part of a secret without stating the *mantra* in a complete form can be traced back to Parāśara Bhaṭṭar’s *Aṣṭaślokī*, the predecessor of the *rahasyagranthas*.⁵⁸⁹ By doing so, the secret remains “*rahasya*” that requires proper teachings.⁵⁹⁰ The Mūlamantra is stated to be given by the *ācāryas* and is involved in the offering of the burden (*bharanyāsa*) that culminates in servitude (*kiṅkara*) to God:

First, there is, “*aum*.”

After, there is the heart [of the Mūlamantra, meaning *namas*].

Then, there is, “For Nārāyaṇa.”

The step is stated by the transmission of those who know [the words] along with its meaning, given by the *ācāryas*.

God accepts the burden of protecting on behalf of us whose minds are weak.

May He quickly get rid of all obstacles to the sovereignty of servitude.⁵⁹¹

The next verse refers to God in the form of Kṛṣṇa, the giver of the Caramaśloka.⁵⁹² The

⁵⁸⁸ According to Clooney, these verses are likely meant for memorization or changing the mode of writing to attract the attention of the audience who seems to be knowledgeably in either Tamil or Sanskrit or both (*The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 124–131).

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁹⁰ Clooney comments that “*rahasya*” “indicates a body of meaning/s that become available – to those who take to heart and receive humbly wisdom that has been transmitted from generation to generation by teachers and that has been encoded in the Mantra as properly read in accord with tradition” (*ibid.*, 24).

⁵⁹¹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 813:

tāram pūrvam tadanu hrdayam tat ca nārāyaṇāya iti āmnāyōktaṃ padam avayatām sārtham ācāryadattaṃ / aṅgikurvan alasamanasām ātmarakṣābharam naḥ kṣipraṃ dēvaḥ kṣipatu nikhilān kiṅkaraiśvavyaviḥnān ||

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 814: “May He, the ascetic who dwells in Badarika, the friend of good people, protect the merit of the Kṛta Age (the first of the four ages of the world), by proclaiming for us [the doctrine of] following one’s own duty (*svadharmā*), while humans and others are listening intently, having approached the excellent ancient chariot of eight wheels.”

following verse communicates that this secret contains the meanings of the Vedas and *smṛtis* for the sake of establishing it in Vedic orthodoxy. The final opening Sanskrit verse confirms the important role of the teacher who revealed the entire meaning, hidden in the Mūlamantra.⁵⁹³ Note that Vedāntadeśika usually refers to the secret with the word “*mantra*” in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*.

The final Tamil verse in Chapter 27 communicates that the Mūlamantra is to be used in the context of seeking service to God and reveals the steps through which “we” or the Śrīvaiṣṇava followers attain service to God, stop other activities in life, join with the feet of God, and continue reciting the Mūlamantra. This is the means to attain all of the service desired even by the immortals, God’s eternal servants (*nityasūris*).⁵⁹⁴ The ending Sanskrit verse reiterates each part of the Mūlamantra and states that it contains the essential meanings regarding the self, “namely, the truth, the beneficial thing, and the aim” based on the Vedas and Upaniṣads as follows:

Thus, the Mūlamantra is composed of three words: one, two, and five-syllabic.
This *mantra* contains three meanings that are the essence of the self,

(*kalyāṇam āvahaṭu kārṭuyugaṃ svadharmam prakhyāpayan praṇihitēṣu narādikēṣu / ādyaṃ kamapi adhigatō ratham aṣṭacakram bandhuḥ satām badarikāśramatāpasō naḥ* ||).

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 815: “The great *mantra* contains entirely inside it the speeches, belonging to the Vedas and relating to the Vedas. I pay obeisance to that great *mantra*, the head of the pervading *mantras*.”

(*yadantaḥsthamaśēṣēṇa vāṇmayam vēdavaidikam | tasmai vyāpakamukhyāya mantrāya mahatē namaḥ* ||)
and

“In this world, a certain person experiences entirely the meaning, hidden in the Mūlamantra, in the same way that a person experiences a treasure, embedded in the base of a crystal, by the eye that is given by the teacher.”

(*iha mūlamantrasamvrtamartham aśēṣēṇa kaścīd anubhavati | sphuṭikatalanihanidhim iva dēśikadattēna cakṣuṣā jantuh* ||).

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 928:

“We reached service for no one but the protector who is exalted.
We ceased the ignorance of living.

We joined with the feet of Nārāyaṇa, the pervading One.

We then recite the good prayer that seeks all desirable service for the eternal devotees (Nityasūris).”

(*uyarntaṇṇ kāvalaṇ allārkku urimai tuṇantu uyirāy
mayarntamai tīrntu marṛu ṍr vaḷi iṇṇi aṭaikkalamāy
payantavaṇ nārāṇaṇ pātaṅkaḷ cērntu paḷa aṭiyār
nayanta kurrēval ellām nāṭunaṇ maṇu ṍṭiṇamē*).

namely, the truth, the beneficial thing, and the goal.
It has, in the beginning, the origin of the Vedas that is the three letters.
It has the word that does not lose its three meanings,
namely, the gross, the subtle, and the Supreme.
It has that which is the culmination of the three [Vedas, i.e., the Upaniṣads].
It grants to good people the cessation of the three qualities.⁵⁹⁵

To support the authoritative status of the Tirumantra, Vedāntadeśika identifies it as a part of Vedic orthodoxy and relies on authoritative texts from various sources to interpret it, including the *Brahmasūtra*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Nārādīya*, and the Tamil poems of the Āḷvārs. He further points out that the secret might also be rooted in the Tantric sources such as the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, especially the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, Chapter 52, from which he draws verses 2–34 to elucidate the meaning of the word “I pay obeisance.”⁵⁹⁶

The opening Sanskrit verse in Chapter 28 describes the Dvaya as “the *mantra* for taking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*) with the Companion of the Lady on the lotus (Viṣṇu).”⁵⁹⁷ The ending Tamil verse communicates the performance of the Dvaya, which is to be sung in taking refuge with God. The goal of singing the Dvaya and taking refuge here is service:

We sung the two-line prayer that is to be recited.
We grasped as refuge the two feet of Tirumāl (Viṣṇu) who helps us through His
grace.
We approached our Lord of the Lady on the lotus (Śrī).
We then contemplate the way of attaining all service,

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 929: *itthaṃ saṅghaṭitaḥ padaiḥ tribhir asav ekadvipaṅcākṣaraiḥ arthaistattvahitaprayojanamayaiḥ adyātmasārais tribhiḥ | ādyastriyakṣaravēdasūtirajahatsthūlādivṛttitrayaḥ traiguṇyaprasāmaṃ prayacchati satāṃ trayyantasārō manuḥ ||*

⁵⁹⁶ For the verses, see Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 840–841.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 931:

“Being heard, it pervades the periphery of the person who has done what ought to be done.

Being recited, it shows the state of the one who has attained the goal.

It becomes the dawn to the night time of transmigration.

It is the *mantra* for taking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*) with the Companion of the Lady on the lotus.”

(*ākarnītō vitanutē kṛtakṛtyakakṣyāṃ āmrēḍitō diśati yaś ca kṛtārthabhāvam | pratyūśatāṃ bhajati saṃsṛtikālarātrēḥ padmāsahāyaśaraṇāgatimantra eṣaḥ ||*).

in the land of brightness and goodness, along with the faultless realization.⁵⁹⁸

Finally, the ending Sanskrit verse proclaims the authority of the Upaniṣads and validates the recitation of the Dvaya in the context of taking refuge as the highest means to liberation.⁵⁹⁹

Following other *rahasyaagrathas*, Vedāntadeśika views the Dvaya as the performance of the Tirumantra.⁶⁰⁰ Like the Tirumantra, the Dvaya is authoritative as it can be regarded as both Vedic and Tantric but when it is from the Upaniṣads, it is Vedic. However, the Dvaya, which is taught by God in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās like the *Śrīpraśnasamhitā*, is Tantric:

The Dvaya clearly communicates a particular means stated implicitly or explicitly in the middle word (“I pay obeisance”) in the Tirumantra and a particular human goal stated as a result in the third word (“for Nārāyaṇa”) of the Tirumantra. It is a Tantric *mantra* rooted in *śruti* since the *mantra* is enjoined to be contemplated and recited separately in the *Kaṭavalli Upaniṣad* and then it is stated in *Śrīpraśnasamhitā* and other texts in the section on *varṇas* and so on. What is said by some people that it [the Dvaya] is the teaching of previous *ācāryas* is for the purpose of paying respect that it [the Dvaya] is taught by noteworthy people and of saying that it is in the scriptures [Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās] of God, the Lord of all, who is the supreme teacher. It is just so.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 1021:

*ōtum iraṇṭai icaittu aruḷāl utavum tirumāl
pātam iraṇṭum caraṇ eṇa parri nam paṅkayattāl
nāṭaṇai naṇṇi nalam tikaḷ nāṭṭil aṭimai ellām
kōtu il uṇarttiyuṭaṇ koḷḷumāru kuṛittaṇamē.*

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 1023:

“There is no scripture higher than the Upaniṣads. There is no truth higher than the Killer of Madu (Kṛṣṇa). There is no one worthy other than His devotees (*bhaktas*). There is no pure abode other than those that are dear to the devotees.

There is nothing that gives a good health other than pure things. There is no cause of awakening other than worshipping the wise One. There is no happiness other than liberation. There is no means to peace other than praying the Dvaya.” (*na vēdāntāc chāstram na madhumathanāt tattvam adhikam na tadbhaktāt tīrtham na tadabhimatāt sāttvikapadam | na sattvād ārogyam na budhabhajanād bōdhajanakam na muktaiḥ saukhyam na dvayavacanataḥ kṣēmakaraṇam* ||).

⁶⁰⁰ See Clooney, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, Chapter 3.

⁶⁰¹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 933: *tirumantrattil madhyamapadattil ārthamākavātal śābdamākavātal conṇa upāyaviśēṣattaiyum, itiṇ phalamākat ṛṭṭiyapadattir conṇa puruṣārthaviśēṣattaiyum viśadamākap prakāśippikkīratu dvayam. itu kaṭhavalliylē piriyanōtic cērttu anusandhikka vidhikkaiyālum, bhagavaccāstrattilē śrīpraśnasamhitādikaḷilē varṇōddhārādikaḷum paṇṇip pratipādikkaiyālum śrutimūlamāṇa tāntrikamantram. ittaip pūrvācāryavākyaṃ eṇru cilar conṇa atuvum—āptar upadēśittār eṇru ādarikkaikkākav ātal, paramācāryaṇāṇa sarvēśvaraṇ bhagavaccāstrattilē aruḷiceyukaiyālēy ātalām attāṇai.*

Finally, Chapter 29 introduces the Caramaśloka with two Sanskrit verses. The first verse proposes that the Caramaśloka is an Upaniṣadic injunction to perform self-surrender to Kṛṣṇa who gave the verse due to His compassion. The other verse interprets the Caramaśloka, first explaining that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, referred to by the pronoun “we,” grieve due to the means to liberation that are not possible for them. Seeing the grief, Kṛṣṇa offers Himself as a means that is easy to the followers.

Kṛṣṇa exists inside the Upaniṣads.

From Kṛṣṇa who is the boundless ocean of compassion,
the stanza itself, by which the sorrow of mankind is destroyed, was born.
By the injunction, we took refuge with Kṛṣṇa, the eternal virtue (*dharmā*).
With our sins destroyed and doubts as well as sorrows abandoned,
we then become happy.⁶⁰²

By many paths that are difficult to understand, are inaccessible due to
injunctions, possess a resting place far away, and are not suitable for simple
people, we grieve.
For us, the charioteer who is the leader of all becomes the easy path.
He who desires to lead us to His own feet unimpededly, by His own abundance,
knows a certain true provision for a journey.⁶⁰³

He then divides the Caramaśloka into two main parts. The first part consists of the first line, “Having abandoned all *dharmas*, come to Me alone as refuge,” and the second line constitutes the second part, “I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve.” The first part states what Arjuna should do while the second part communicates the result and God’s role in the same manner as in the interpretations of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 1025:

*ya upaniṣadāmante yasmād anantadayāmbudheḥ truṭitajanatāsokāḥ ślōkaḥ svayaṃ samajāyata /
tam iha vidhinā kṛṣṇaṃ dharmam prapadya sanātanam samitaduritāḥ saṅkātaṅkatyajaḥ sukhamāsmahē ||*

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 1026:

*durvijñānair niyamagahanaiḥ dūriviśrāntideśaiḥ bālānarhair bahubhir ayanaiḥ śocatāṃ naḥ supanthāḥ /
niṣpratyūhaṃ nijapadam asau netukāmaḥ svabhūmnā satpātheyaṃ kim api vidadhe sārathiḥ sarvanetā ||*

Vedāntadeśika pays more attention to the first part, whose interpretation seems to be heavily debated. To illustrate, he lists all of the meanings accepted by the community for the phrase, “Having abandoned all *dharmas*,” at the end of his analysis on this part as follows:

The meanings of the words that state the abandonment of all *dharmas* which are accepted by good people are as follows: The eligibility is the incapability to perform; the procedure is being worthless; *dharmas* are not auxiliaries; [self-surrender is] the prevention of effort to perform what is impossible and the pacification of one’s desire towards doing other means as communicated by the rule of Brahma missile [that cannot be used with other means].⁶⁰⁴

Vedāntadeśika then construes “come to me alone as refuge” as the main injunction. At the same time, the statement says that God is the refuge and the accomplished means while self-surrender is the means that needs to be accomplished by an eligible person. Vedāntadeśika’s classification of the accomplished means and the means to be accomplished must have been influenced by his predecessors’ discussions such as those of Periyavāccāṅ Pillai and Pillai Lokācārya. According to Vedāntadeśika, the phrase “Me alone” points to God, the accomplished means, and “come [to Me] as refuge” refers to the means to be accomplished, which is self-surrender.⁶⁰⁵

In addition to the chapters on the three secrets, Vedāntadeśika systematizes self-

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 1071:

1. *ato 'śaktādhikāratvam* 2. *ākiñcanyapuraskriyā* | 3. *anaṅgabhāvo dharmāṅām* 4. *aśakyāraṃbhavāraṇam* || 5. *tat pratyāśāpraśamanam* 6. *brahmāstranyāyasucanam* | *sarvadharmaparityāgaśabdārthās sādhusammatāḥ* ||

The principle of the Brahma missile (*astra*) is derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa* scene when Rāvaṇa’s demonic army tied Rāma’s emissary, Hanumān, with the Brahma missile to render him helpless. However, the missile is effective only when it is used solely. Thus, it slipped off when the demonic army tied Hanumān with other ties, not trusting the power of the Brahma missile alone. See also Chapter 4 for Brahma missile.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 1074: “Thus, the statement ‘Me alone’ shows the accomplished means who does not need anything else except the offering of the burden preceded by the request for protection according to injunctions in case of the eligible person who is helpless. The means to be accomplished for the sake of gaining God’s favor is shown through the injunction ‘Come to refuge.’ (*ippaṭi akiñcanaṅṅa adhikārikku yathāvidhi rakṣāpēkṣāpūrvikabharanyāsattaiy oḷiya vēṛṇṇāl apēkṣaiyillāta siddhopāyattai ‘mām ekaṃ’ enru kāṭṭi atinūṭaiya vaśīkaraṅṅarathamāṅṅa sādhyopāyattai ‘śaraṇam vraja’ enru vidhiyālē kāṭṭukiratu*).

surrender mainly in Chapters 7–12 in which he draws together and advances what we have seen to harmonize different views of self-surrender proposed by other authors previously investigated.

5.2 The Sanskrit and Manipravalam Streams of Self-surrender

In this section, I focus on Chapter 7–12 of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* in which Vedāntadeśika systematically expounds his version of self-surrender. I argue that he develops his system of self-surrender by synthesizing various Sanskrit and Manipravalam sets of terminology and concepts regarding self-surrender. Vedāntadeśika’s self-surrender reflects the culmination of multiple strands and expressions of self-surrender, resulting in the doctrinal collectivity that accommodates and balances the roles of *bhakti*, self-surrender, and God. It resolves the divergence created by the other authors, especially Meghanādārisūri who promotes the active function of self-surrender and likens it to *bhakti* and Piḷḷai Lokācārya who prioritizes the role of God and highlights the passive role of self-surrender. My argument here is influenced by Mumme’s study, but it differs. While Mumme views that there remains the clear distinction between the Śrīraṅgam authors’ emphasis on God as the agent and means to liberation and the insistence that the soul has to actively perform self-surrender from the Kāñcī *ācāryas*, including Vedāntadeśika,⁶⁰⁶ I contend that Vedāntadeśika aims to propose a collective theology that highlights both God’s autonomy and the soul’s agency in the soteriological journey. His theological harmonization in this Manipravalam treatise agrees with my argument that Manipravalam is the primary medium for the theological collectivity of self-surrender, which in turn allows the communal imagination of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ unity that we will see in the third

⁶⁰⁶ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 187.

section of this chapter.

I also account for the similarity and difference between Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram* and *Nikṣeparakṣā* to show the boundaries between the Manipravalam and Sanskrit spheres. Although the *Rahasyatrayasāram* and *Nikṣeparakṣā* share many similar arguments and concerns, the *Rahasyatrayasāram* is much more comprehensive than *Nikṣeparakṣā* when it comes to the doctrine of self-surrender and clearly participates in the Manipravalam discussions. To elaborate, similar to what we see in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika defines self-surrender as the means to be done (*sādhya*) by an eligible person who desires liberation. However, unlike the *Nikṣeparakṣā* which is limited to the Sanskrit sphere, the soteriological expression in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* presents clear influence from both the previous Sanskrit and also other Manipravalam literature. Being a part of the Manipravalam sphere like other *rahasyagranthas*, the *Rahasyatrayasāram* is meant to prove that self-surrender is the best means to liberation and is open to all. In addition, Vedāntadeśika introduces new terminology and complicates the already existing theological concept to resolve the tension between God and other means, resulting in the more expansive expression of self-surrender in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*. Thus, his system of self-surrender is both the combination of the strands of self-surrender we have investigated as well as the most expansive one thanks to his innovation.

In section 5.2.1, I indicate that although Vedāntadeśika maintains that both self-surrender and *bhakti* are valid means and that self-surrender can be used in place of *bhakti* as in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, he clearly differentiates these two means and prefers self-surrender over *bhakti* as other Manipravalam treatises do. The next section illustrates that Vedāntadeśika's system of self-surrender is very much dominated by the autonomy of God, the argument that is

in line with those in the Manipravalam literature of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya. We can see his innovative attempts in both cases.

5.2.1 The Superiority of Self-surrender

In the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, as in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika maintains the soteriological status of both *bhakti* and self-surrender, stressing that they are optional means to liberation. He also insists on the distinction between the two, especially in terms of eligibility of each means. However, unlike in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* in which Vedāntadeśika claims that the two means are equivalent in their soteriological status, he suggests here, like other Manipravalam authors, that self-surrender is better than *bhakti* as it is easier to be performed and gives liberation faster. Importantly, Vedāntadeśika expands the expression of self-surrender by inventing a new set of terminology to reverse the previous binary paradigm that centers on *bhakti* rather than self-surrender. Instead of likening self-surrender to sacrificial ritual understood by a Mīmāṃsā model, Vedāntadeśika characterizes self-surrender as “a particular contemplation of the subordination [of oneself] qualified by the total dependence of which the offering of the burden is the predominant,” highlighting the hierarchical relationship between the soul and God which is the essence of self-surrender.⁶⁰⁷

According to Vedāntadeśika, *bhakti* and self-surrender can be options since they give the same result that is liberation. Thus, each person can perform either of them for liberation depending on one’s eligibility. Vedāntadeśika supports the argument on the optional relation between self-surrender and *bhakti* with the passages from *Brahmasūtra* 3.3.56–57, which justify that self-surrender and *bhakti* can be optional since they are named differently and have

⁶⁰⁷ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 354: *bharanyāsapradhāṇa atyantapāratantryaviśiṣṭaśēṣatvānusandhānaviśēṣam*.

the same result, according to Vedāntadeśika's interpretation:⁶⁰⁸

In this way, self-surrender and *bhakti* must be optional because they have the same result regarding a particular eligible person. The distinction in eligibility is established for them as described in, "There are various [Upaniṣadic means] due to their different names and other [characteristics]" [*Brahmasūtra* 3.3.56]. Option in eligibility is established as stated in, "There is option because their results are not different" [*Brahmasūtra* 3.3.57].⁶⁰⁹

Vedāntadeśika then differentiates these two means based on the difference of their eligibility. In Chapter 10, he points out that the knowledge of the soul's subordination to God is required for the performance of both *bhakti* and self-surrender. However, to become eligible to perform self-surrender requires special qualifications, namely helplessness to perform other means to liberation and the state of having no other means. The two qualifications can be understood as follows:

In case of the one who desires liberation, the knowledge of the relationship [between God and the soul] produced by scripture is the common to those who are *upāsakas* (those who perform *bhakti*) and the one who is devoted to a particular means to liberation which has the form of independent self-surrender. [However,] the state of having no other means and helplessness are special qualifications for the one who surrenders. Helplessness means the absence of capability [to perform] other means. The state of having no other means refers to the aversion to other goals and refuges.⁶¹⁰

In Chapter 8, Vedāntadeśika further explains the distinction between these two means through two different sets of terminology. He inherits the first set from Vātsyāya Varadaguru and

⁶⁰⁸ For the *Brahmasūtra* passages, see 756–757.

⁶⁰⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 332–333: *ippaṭi prapattikkum bhaktikkum adhikārivīṣṭattaip parṛit tulyaphalatvam uṅṅākaiyālē vikalpamākak kaṭavatu. ivarṛukku "nānā śabdādibhēdāt" eṅkiṛa adhikaraṇattilē bhēdam siddham. "vikalpo 'viśiṣṭaphalatvāt" eṅkiṛa adhikaraṇattilē vikalpamum siddham.*

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 342–345: *inṅu mumukṣutvam uṅṅāy svatantraprapattirūpamokṣopāyaviṣṭeṣaṇiṣṭhaṅukku śāstrajanyasambandhajñānādikaḷ upāsakaṅṅu sādharāṇamāy irukka viṣṭeṣitta adhikāram – taṅṅuṅṅaiya ākiṅṅanyamum ananyagatitvamum. ākiṅṅanyam āvatu - upāyāntarasāmarthyābhāvam. ananyagatitvam āvatu - prayojanāntaravaimukhyam śaraṅyāntaravaimukhyam ākavumām.*

invents the other based on Vātsya Varadaguru’s model. In his Sanskrit verse, Vedāntadeśika characterizes auxiliary self-surrender as *bhakti* that is the means (*sāadhanabhakti*) and independent self-surrender as self-surrender that has *bhakti* as the result (*phalabhakti*). Note that *bhakti* in the latter form of self-surrender denotes devotion and not the soteriological *bhakti*. Although the actual terms used by Vedāntadeśika are slightly different from those found in Vātsya Varadaguru’s *Prapannapārijāta*, namely *bhakti* as the means (*upāyabhakti*) and *bhakti* as the goal (*sādhyabhakti*), they clearly have the same meanings, referring to the means and the result: “Those [who perform] self-surrender independently and as an auxiliary are both those who surrender (*prapannas*). Those [who undertake] *bhakti* as a result and as a means are seen as devotees (*bhaktas*).”⁶¹¹ This paradigm, derived from the *Prapannapārijāta*, however, subsumes self-surrender under the terminology of *bhakti*. To reverse the paradigm and highlight the important role of self-surrender as an independent means, Vedāntadeśika introduces another set of terminology which is not found anywhere else not even in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*. Instead of having the word “*bhakti*” as the main part as in *bhakti* as the means and *bhakti* as the goal, these invented terms denote self-surrender as an auxiliary and an independent means respectively: self-surrender with [*bhakti* as] the means (*sadvāraprapatti*), which is equivalent to the means of *bhakti* that has self-surrender as its auxiliary, and self-surrender without means (*advāraprapatti*) or independent self-surrender.

In the same chapter, Vedāntadeśika further specifies the distinction between self-surrender and *bhakti* based on its easiness and swiftness in giving the desired result. According to Vedāntadeśika, on the one hand, *bhakti* is exemplified only in the practice of the great sages

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 280:

“svatantrāṅgaprapattibhyāṃ prapannav atra tau ubhau / phalasāadhanabhaktibhyāṃ bhaktav api ca darśitau ||”

such as Vyāsa. It is undertaken by those who are capable of the more difficult performance and can wait for the delay in liberation after following all the rules and conditions. The result of *bhakti* would not come until all the sins which have begun to operate have been destroyed. On the other hand, self-surrender is for those who do not have any other means to attaining God. It is easier and gives faster results compared to *bhakti*. After the performance of self-surrender, the person can attain the experience of God without any delay or obstacle. Thus, Vedāntadeśika suggests, self-surrender is superior to *bhakti* in terms of the ease and swiftness:

For the one who is devoted to self-surrender with [*bhakti*] as the means (*sadvāraka*), lacking helplessness due to the capability for other means and the state of having no other means due to the ability to bear the delay, like Vyāsa and others, the result is liberation that is preceded by proper accomplishment of the predominant means in the form of meditative worship (*upāsana*), which culminates in the ultimate perception [of God], and emerges at the end of the *karmas* that have begun to bear fruits. For the one who undertakes without other means (*advāraka*) in accordance with one's eligibility self-surrender that is applicable to all, can remove all of those undesirable, is the way to attain all desires, is easy, should be done once, acts quickly, has no obstacles, cannot tolerate the use of other means for its result like the Brahma missile (*brahmāstra*) [, which is effective only if used alone, according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*], the result is liberation that culminates in complete service at the surrendering moment [...] in the way that there are no other obstacles to the complete enjoyment.⁶¹²

⁶¹² Ibid., 300–305: *ivarkaḷil vyāsādikaḷaip pōlē upāyāntarasamarthaṇākaiyālē akiñcanaṇum aṇṛikkē vilambakṣamaṇ ākaiyālē ananyagatiyūm aṇṛikkēy irukkīra sadvārakaprapattiniṣṭhaṇukku prārabdhakarmaparyavasānabhāviyāṇa antimapratyayattai avadhīyāka uṭait tāṇ upāsanaṇrūpāṅgiyīṇuṭaiya yathāvanniṣpattipūrvakamāṇa mokṣam phalam.*

sarvādhikāramāy, sarvāniṣṭhanivartanakṣamamāy, sarvēṣṭasādhanamākav arṛāy, sukaramāy, sakṛtkartavyamāy, āśukāriyāy, pratibandhānarhamāy, brahmāstrabandham pōlē svaphalattil upāyāntaraprayogāsahamāy iruntuḷḷa prapattiyait taṇ adhikārānurūpamāka advārakamākav paṇṇiṇ avaṇṇukkup paripūrṇānubhavattukku vēru pratibandhakam illāta paṭiyālē prapattikṣaṇam [...] *paripūrṇakainkaryaparyantamokṣam phalam.* For the Brahma missile, see section 4.1.1. See also *Rāmāyaṇa* 5.46.46, vol. 5, 334.

In the following passage, Vedāntadeśika also cites a passage from *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72, as Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai.⁶¹³ Based on this passage, Vedāntadeśika affirms that self-surrender bears the result as soon as one wants it, unlike *bhakti* that delays in leading one to the result. He interprets this passage as communicating the four kinds of people who surrender based on their desires and claim that it should be understood as a counterpart of *Bhagavadgītā* 7.16 which makes known the four kinds of people who resort to *bhakti* (*bhaktas*) according to the different results that one desires, “Arjuna, four kinds of people with good deeds worship Me. They are the afflicted one, the one who desires wisdom, the one who desires wealth, and the one of wisdom.”⁶¹⁴ The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* passage seen below informs us that self-surrender can destroy all obstacles and implies that the person attains the result without delay after performing this means:⁶¹⁵

In the same way that meditative worship (*upāsana*) is the means for four-fold results as stated in “four kinds of people [with good deeds] worship Me” [*Bhagavadgītā* 7.16], the great sages determine that self-surrender (*prapatti*) is the means for the results of four kinds as stated in “There will be affliction, desire, confusion, and unhappiness as long as one does not take refuge with You, the destroyer of all sins” [*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72].⁶¹⁶

Unlike in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, in which self-surrender is likened to *bhakti*, Vedāntadeśika attempts to differentiate these two means in terms of eligibility and the time they provide the result. Although, Vedāntadeśika defends *bhakti* as a means to liberation, he is explicit that self-

⁶¹³ See section 2.1.1.

⁶¹⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* 7.16, vol. 2, 35: “*caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino ’rjuna! | āрто jijñāsura arthārthī jñānī ca bhāratarṣabha! ||*”

⁶¹⁵ *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1.9.72, vol. 1, 50.

⁶¹⁶ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 306: “*caturvidhā bhajantē mām*” *eṅkiṛapaṭiyē upāsanam yātorupaṭi caturvidhaphalattukkum sādhanamāy irukkīratu—appaṭiyē “tāvada ārtis tathā vāñchā tavān mohas tathā ’sukham | yāvan na yāti śaraṇam tvām aśēṣāghanāśanam ||*” *eṅkiṛapaṭiyē prapattiyum ic caturvidhaphalattukkum sādhanamākaviṛē maharṣikaḷ arutiṣiṭuvatu.*

surrender is preferable to *bhakti*. His preference is close to the Manipavalam authors' arguments that only self-surrender is suitable as the means since it is in accord with the soul's subordination to God.⁶¹⁷ Also, unlike in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, Vedāntadeśika emphasizes the role of God in the soteriological process in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* as we have seen in the other Manipavalam *rahasyaग्रन्थas*.

5.2.2 Surrendering to God

In the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, Vedāntadeśika follows the Manipavalam discourse that God is the main cause of everything including liberation and the one who makes the performances of self-surrender possible. This is evident in his categorization of God and the soteriological means such as self-surrender and *bhakti* through the paradigm of God as the accomplished means and other means to liberation as the means to be accomplished. This paradigm is a part of the Manipavalam sphere of soteriology as we have seen in other literature, and this may be the reason why it is not explicit in the *Nikṣeparakṣā*.

At the same time, the Manipavalam emphasis on God creates the tension between the independence of God and the active role of self-surrender in the soteriological process. In other words, if God has the absolute autonomy and agency in granting liberation, the devotees do not need to undertake self-surrender. Given that God alone is enough, self-surrender is useless and thus should not be regarded as a valid soteriological means. This tension is theological and also shows a divergence between the two spheres similar to what we have already seen in the *Mumukṣupaṭi* and the *Mumukṣūpāyasaṅgraha*. Interestingly, Vedāntadeśika aims to resolve the tension unlike the two authors who defend one side at the cost of the other: Piḷḷai Lokācārya

⁶¹⁷ See Chapters 2 and 3 and also Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, Chapter 3.

pays attention to God's autonomy and agency to the extent that self-surrender is no longer active in the soteriological process while Meghanādārisūri claims that only the means such as self-surrender and *bhakti* matter when it comes to seeking liberation.⁶¹⁸ Vedāntadeśika proposes a chain of arguments that are more explicit and complex than those we have previously seen to balance the roles of God and self-surrender. The most elaborate one is the concept of the pretext.

Influenced by the Manipravalam authors, Vedāntadeśika views the relationship between God and the means through the paradigm of the accomplished means and the means to be accomplished. Instead of reducing the role of self-surrender, he claims that although God is the accomplished means for the attainment of Himself who is the goal, He needs to be motivated through some means to be accomplished such as self-surrender. These means embody the cessation of one's own agency and effort in pursuing liberation. They allow God to take control of the whole process and also activate God's compassion which will counteract God's autonomy and independence. This relationship between God and other means is supported by both scriptures and the *ācāryas'* teachings:

They know the accomplished means from the previously established one with Śrī who is the means to all the human goals and the ocean of compassion.

The wise know the means to be accomplished as having *bhakti* and self-surrender as the principal and the cause of motivating Him due to the fact that it is to be attained by the one who desires the result.

The flow of play of the Master who is the accomplished means is hindered by the stream of compassion [caused by] the rising wave of the means to be accomplished.

Only by that [stream of God's compassion], all the wills even of someone who is independent which obstructs the service to [God] Himself vanish like the dams made of sand.

When the propitiating means [like self-surrender and *bhakti*] are the means [to liberation] according to the scripture, the accomplished means, is

⁶¹⁸ Mumme suggests that Vedāntadeśika argues against the soul's total dependency on God since he does not want self-surrender to become too close to the Advaita Vedānta knowledge which does not need any active role or performance on part of the soul (*The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 67).

predominant in terms of the agency and non-interruption towards the result.

For those who are devoted to independent self-surrender, the firmness of the Lord who is the accomplished means is specifically taught by the manifestation of the cessation of one's own effort from that moment [of self-surrender].

Thus, the one whose effort subsides looks for the accomplished means for the goal for which one's burden is placed on the accomplished means.

In the definition of self-surrender, *mantra*, injunction, and the tradition like the commentaries and other statements, it is established that Brahman is the means.

The already proven fact that place and other things are *dharmas* is accepted. In the same way, the one who knows the truth announced that Kṛṣṇa is the eternal *dharma*.⁶¹⁹

To further illustrate the importance of God and the active role of self-surrender, Vedāntadeśika brings in the analogy of a baby feeding on its mother's milk. Although the milk from the mother flows naturally, the baby has to feed on it. In the same way, one needs to surrender to God to enable His natural compassion to manifest. Self-surrender is the realization that the whole process of surrendering oneself is caused by God and one has to entirely rely on Him.⁶²⁰

Vedāntadeśika also puts forth a concept of pretext (*vyāja*) to prevent the contradiction between God's autonomy and the rule of *karmas*, established in the scriptures. As Mumme suggests, his concept also helps preserve the validity and usefulness of scriptures and

⁶¹⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 678–680:

*samastapuruṣārthānāṃ sādhakasya dayānidhēḥ | śrīmataḥ pūrvasiddhatvāt siddhopāyam imaṃ viduḥ ||
bhaktiprapattipramukhaṃ tadvaśīkārakāraṇam | tattatphalārthisādhyatvāt sādhyopāyaṃ vidur budhāḥ ||
sādhyopāyottaraṅgēṇa siddhopāyasya śēṣiṇaḥ | līlāpravāhaḥ kārūnyapravāhēṇa nirudhyatē ||
tēnaiva sarvē līyantē sikatāsētubandhavat | svatantrasya apī saṅkalpās svakaīṅkaryanirodhakāḥ ||
prasādanasya upāyatvē śāstrīyē 'pi phalaṃ prati | karṣṭvāvvyavadhānādyais siddhopāyapradhānatā ||
svatantranyāsaniṣṭhānāṃ siddhopāyē vibhau sthitiḥ | kṣaṇāt svayatanavirativyaktyai proktā viśēṣataḥ ||
ato yadarthaṃ svabharas siddhopāyē nivēsitāḥ | tadarthaṃ śāntayatno 'sau siddhopāyaṃ pratīkṣatē ||
prapattēr lakṣaṇē mantrē vidhau vākyāntarēṣu ca | bhāṣyādaḥ saṃpradāyē ca upāyatvaṃ brahmaṇi sthītam ||
pūrvasiddhasya dēśādēr dharmatvaṃ yadvadiṣyatē | ēvaṃ tattvaviduḥ prāhuḥ kṛṣṇaṃ dharmam sanātanam ||*

⁶²⁰ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 650-651: "Thus, like the act of feeding milk from the breast [that requires a baby's activity], there are requirements and others for the soul [to receive] the Lord's grace that comes out like milk from a mother's breast." (*ākaiyāl tāy mulaippāl pōlē varukiṛa īśvaraprasādattukkum stanandhayaṇuṭaiya mulaiyunkīra vyāpāram pōlē ivāṇuṭaiya apēkṣātikaḷ.*)

injunctions.⁶²¹ In Chapter 23, to support his definition, Vedāntadeśika defines self-surrender as the pretext, citing *Tiruvāymoḷi* 10.8.1, “The moment I said Tirumāḷiruñcōlai Tirumāl entered and filled my heart. He’s in Tiruppēr on the southern bank of the Poṇṇi its waters glittering with dark gems.”⁶²² He argues that Nammāḷvār’s statement of “Tirumāḷiruñcōlai” in this *Tiruvāymoḷi* verse should be understood as a pretext, which, he interprets, identical with self-surrender. Given that God is omnipotent and independent, He could liberate everyone whenever He wants to. However, He would violate the rule of *karmas* which restricts that one could enter into the process depending on the *karmas*. To respect the rule of *karmas*, God creates the pretext which one can undertake once the *karmas* allow one to do so. Since the pretext is created by God Himself out of His compassion so that He would not be partial or cruel, to perform the pretext does not violate the autonomy of God:

To clarify them [regarding God’s autonomy], even if the Lord is independent, having produced the pretext for the soul so that the faults of partiality and cruelty do not arise, He who is the support protects that [the soul]. The Āḷvār (Nammāḷvār) himself explained this meaning as follows: “The moment I said Tirumāḷiruñcōlai Tirumāl entered and filled my heart.” [*Tiruvāymoḷi* 10.8.1]. One might ask, if this pretext is due to the Lord, why would it occur now, not having been produced before? [The answer is:] the Lord gives results according to *karmas* since the souls’ streams of *karmas* continue from the beginningless time along with different ripening times. Otherwise, since there would be the fault of partiality, there is no occasion to produce the pretext before. This should be assumed from seeing the difference in the effects [i.e., the pretexts that happen at different times].⁶²³

⁶²¹ Mumme, *The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 67.

⁶²² Translated by Venkatesan in *Endless Song*, 322. For the text, see *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, 628.

⁶²³ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 635–637: *ivarkaḷait telivikkumpaṭi—īśvaraṅ svatantraṅēy ākilum vaiṣamyanaigrṇyaṅkaḷ ākīra dōṣaṅkaḷ taṅakkut taṅṭṭamaikkāka ivan pakkalilē oru vyājattaiy uṅṭākki attai avalambittat tāṅ rakṣikkum. ivvarthattai, “tirumāḷiruñcōlai malaiy enṇēn enṇat tirumāl vantu enṇēncu nīraiya pukun tāṅ” enṇru āḷvār tāmēy aruḷicceytār. inta vyājam tāṅum īśvaraṅ taṅṅālēy ākil, ittai muṅpēy uṅṭākkātē viṭṭatu enṇil, ivvātmākkaḷukku anādiyāṅa karmapravāhaṅkaḷ viṣamavipākasamayaṅkaḷāyk koṅṭu pōrukaiyālē īśvaraṅ karmānurūpaphalapradaṅ allātapōtu vaiṣamyadōṣaṅ varukaiyālē muṅpu itukku avasaramāyirru illaiy enṇum iṭam kāryaviśēṣadarśanattālē kalpitam.*

It should be noted that Piḷḷai Lokācārya also resorts to the concept of pretext to resolve the same tension between God and other means.⁶²⁴ However, Vedāntadeśika does so in a more elaborate manner by providing the *Tiruvāymoli* as the scriptural support.⁶²⁵ Also, while Piḷḷai Lokācārya does not accept that means other than God have a real function in granting liberation, Vedāntadeśika acknowledges the liberating role of self-surrender even if it relies on God's grace, which is what truly liberates those who surrender to God. Thus, Vedāntadeśika clearly presents self-surrender as the means that those who desire liberation should undertake and does not encourage the audience of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* to pursue *bhakti*. His claim on the superiority of self-surrender aligns with the arguments of the previous Manipravalam authors, namely, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lōkācārya, and is opposed to the identification of both means supported by the Sanskrit authors such as Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri. His emphasis on God also indicates one of the different soteriological expressions in Sanskrit and Manipravalam. Between the two works of Vedāntadeśika, this paradigm further represents a significant point of distinction between the *Nikṣeparakṣā*, which focuses on the Sanskrit system of self-surrender, and the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, which shares the discussions with other Manipravalam treatises, proving that the two texts are engaged with and conditioned by the Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres, respectively. Despite the gap between these two spheres, Vedāntadeśika collects the discussions of self-surrender from both domains and introduces some new features to harmonize the more active and passive roles of self-surrender found in the previous treatises.

⁶²⁴ See section 3.1.2.

⁶²⁵ According to Mumme, Vedāntadeśika even argues that the significant figure like Nammālvār was also conditioned by his *karmas* whose ripening allows him to surrender to God. This argument clearly supports his concept of pretext (*The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute*, 258).

5.3 *Imagining the Śrīvaiṣṇavas*

As we have seen in the previous sections, Vedāntadeśika attempts to harmonize different norms and expressions for his system of self-surrender in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* with Manipravalam as the medium. Manipravalam provides Vedāntadeśika an opportunity and ability to bridge the gap between the two streams of the scriptures and to combine different strands of self-surrender of the earlier authors, resulting in the more expansive and complex soteriology of self-surrender. I contend that Vedāntadeśika resorts to the normative and expressive harmonization to invoke the imaginative unity based on the doctrine of self-surrender.

In particular, Manipravalam in the *Rahasyatrayasāram* encourages the reference to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as the tradition, especially through the genealogy of Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācāryas* as well as the teaching on the practices shared by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Through the reference, Vedāntadeśika forms the interior of the tradition and invites the audience to identify themselves as belonging to this internal space in which self-surrender is central. It should be noted that Periyavāccāṅ Pīḷḷai also mentions the term “Śrīvaiṣṇavas” in the sense of community in his *Parantarahasyam* and attempts to define the community as those who undertake self-surrender.⁶²⁶ However, his arguments are not as explicit as what we see in the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, which makes it evident that self-surrender is necessary to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas’ identification as the tradition of those who follow self-surrender. In his treatise, Vedāntadeśika uses both “*sampradāya*” and “*śrīvaiṣṇava*” to refer to the communal collective unity as we will see below.

It should be noted that Katherine Young indicates that the terms “*sampradāya*” and

⁶²⁶ Section 2.4.2.

“*śrīvaiṣṇava*” appear in the inscriptions as early as the eleventh century in Tamilnadu.⁶²⁷ In particular, the word “*śrīvaiṣṇava*” only functions as honorific adjective and do not denote a strong sectarian notion in this period. It is only around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the term “*śrīvaiṣṇava*” was more commonly used with the sectarian connotation. Young explains the term’s nuance:

The word *śrīvaiṣṇava* might have originally referred simply to the good, or holy, Vaiṣṇavas; *śrī* or *tiru* (its Prakrit equivalent) is a common honorific adjective, as in Tirupati, the auspicious, or holy, place. Inscriptional references from the eleventh century refer generally to holy workers (*tevarkaṇṇmikaḷ* from *devakarman*: therefore workers of the god) or to performers of sacred work (*śrīkāriyam ceyyār*) in temples but not to priests. If they refer to functions, these include hymns-singers, gardeners, and garland makers. They indicate also that temple management was in the hands of the Brāhmaṇa *sabhai*. The word *śrīvaiṣṇava* appears in inscriptions as the name of a sectarian group along with the Vaikhānasa, Śivabrāhmaṇas, and Śrīmaheśvaras (devotees of Śiva). But, says ORR, this became more common in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when references to the *śrīvaiṣṇava* committee (*vāriyam*) and *śrīvaiṣṇava* supervisors (*kaṅkāṇi*) also increased.⁶²⁸

In addition to the inscriptional evidence, we see the identification of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas through the opposition with non-Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the *Ītu Muppattāyirappaṭi*. The communal values and sensitivity are created through the disregard of the worldly gain and the emphasis on the search for God, Viṣṇu.⁶²⁹ Then, after the time of Vedāntadeśika, Srilata Raman indicates that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas took advantage of the dynamic changes in the political and social spheres under the Vijayanagara polity to expand its institution and become distinct from other

⁶²⁷ Young, “Brāhmaṇas, Pāñcarātrins, and the Formation of Śrīvaiṣṇavism,” 247: “Only one inscription refers to the word *sampradāya*, however, and that is in a very general sense. It mentions (daily) offerings to the deity on festivals and feeding pilgrims and *sampradāyins*. *Sampradāyin* can simply mean “teachers,” however, one who hands down knowledge; it need not mean a sectarian teacher.”

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 249–250.

⁶²⁹ For the *Ītu Muppattāyirappaṭi* passages which are infused with the sectarian notion, see Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 237–240.

neighboring religious communities, especially the Śaivas, who were predominant in South India before the rise of Vijayanagara. They managed to gain patronage of Vijayanagara kings around this time, resulting in the growing influence of the Śrīvaiṣṇava temples. This can be seen, for example, in the institutional project of Maṇavālamāmuni (traditional dates: c. 1370–1445), the direct disciple of Piḷlai Lokācārya and the younger contemporary of Vedāntadeśika.⁶³⁰

Vedāntadeśika refers to “the tradition” (*sampradāya*) as important for the clarification of what the scripture says regarding self-surrender and that there should not be any contradiction between these two sets of authorities. He reiterates the importance of both scriptures and the traditional figures in a number of places as in the opening Sanskrit verse of Chapter 24 on the investigation of the means to be accomplished. For example:

The Lord is propitiated by sacrifice, gift, oblation, worship,
offering of the burden, meditation, and so on according to one’s eligibility.
He grants a result to embodied beings.
This established doctrine of *the tradition* shines forth for us,
through *śruti*, *smṛti*, and the *ācāryas*’ speeches, filled with sound reasons.⁶³¹

In Chapter 17 on the scriptural obligations, Vedāntadeśika records Rāmānuja’s oral teaching before his final departure to his foremost disciples who were gathering by his side. His teaching concerns, first, the conducts and service that those who have done self-surrender should follow, emphasizing the importance of service for life after self-surrender and different forms of service. Importantly, in the teaching there is the explicit reference to the followers as the “Śrīvaiṣṇavas” as opposed to those who are not and Rāmānuja’s instruction on how one

⁶³⁰ Raman, *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaiṣṇavism*, 5–6.

⁶³¹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 683–684 (emphasis mine):

*yathādhikāraṇaṃ prabhur yajanandānahomārcanābharanyasanabhāvanāprabhṛtibhiḥ samārādhitāḥ |
phalaṃ dīśati dehinām iti hi sampradāyasthitiḥ śrutismṛtigurūktitabhīr nayavatībhīr ābhāti naḥ ||*

who has surrendered should behave towards the community and the outsiders:⁶³²

When Emperumānār (Rāmānuja) was about to depart to the supreme abode, having seen the suffering of his primary [disciples] who served by his feet were afflicted, he summoned and told them that “Those who abandon their bodies in separation from me have no connection with me, O the sacred feet of Ālavantār (Yāmuna).” Having heard that and been afflicted by great sorrow, they asked [Rāmānuja], “What should we do to join [you] from now on?” He said to them, “Due to being one who surrenders (*prapanna*), since his soul’s journey [to the supreme abode] depends on the Lord, he has no connection to that.” If he decides that there is [the connection], the giving over of the self (*ātmasamarpaṇa*) would be false [...]

In this case, there are five kinds of service that may be done until the last day [of one’s life]: 1) reciting and studying the *Śrībhāṣya*, 2) if one is not eligible for that, listening to what is stated [by the Ālvārs, i.e., the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*], 3) if one is not suitable for that, producing food, sandal paste, a lamp, and garlands for the sacred places favored [by God], 4) if one cannot do that, contemplating the meaning of the Dvaya, 5) If one cannot do that, dwelling closely in the affection of the Śrīvaiṣṇava who has affection towards him, thinking that “He is mine.”⁶³³

Importantly, these codes of conducts sharpen the self-understanding of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. The passage goes on to differentiate between the Śrīvaiṣṇavas who are “agreeable” and the others who, according to Rāmānuja’s oral teaching, are those who are “disagreeable” and “indifferent” as follows:

⁶³² Since Vedāntadeśika presents this passage as Rāmānuja’s oral teaching, it is difficult to verify if Rāmānuja used the word “*śrīvaiṣṇava*” or not. However, it is clear that Rāmānuja’s instruction addresses the community of followers.

⁶³³ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 499-503: *emperumānār tirunāṭṭukku eḷuntaruḷukira pōtu śrīpādattilē sēvittirunta mutalikaḷuṭaiya ārtiyak kaṇṭaruḷi ivarkaḷai aḷaittaruḷi*, “*eṇṇuṭaiya viyōgattil dēhatyāgam paṇṇinār uṇṭākil*, *ālavantār śrīpādamē*, *eṇṇōṭu avarkaḷukku sambandham illai*” *eṇṇu aruḷicceyya*, *ivarkaḷum ittaik kēṭṭu mikavum śokārtarāy* “*iṇi eṅkaḷukkuc ceyya aṭuppatu etu?*” *eṇṇu viṇṇappam ceyya*, *ivar aruḷicceytu aruḷiṇa vārttai*—“*oruvan prapannaṅ āṇāl avanuṭaiya ātmayātrai bhagavadadhīnay ākaiyālē atil avanukku anvayam illai. uṇṭeṇ ariruntāṇākil ātmasamarpaṇam poyyām ittaṇai* [...]

ātil ivanuḷukku inṅkirunta nāl paṇṇalāl kaiṅkaryam aṅcu uṇṭu; *avaiy āvaṇa*—(1) *bhāṣyattai vācittu pravarttippital* (2) *atukku yogyataiy illaiy ākil aruḷicceyalaik kēṭṭu pravarttippital* (3) *atukku yōgyataiy illaiy ākil ukantarūḷiṇa divyadēśaṅkaḷukku amutupaṭi cāttuppaṭi tiruviḷakkut tirumālaikaḷaiy uṇṭākkutal* (4) *atukku yogyataiy illaiy ākil dvayattiṇuṭaiya arthānusandhānam paṇṇutal* (5) *atukku yogyataiy illaiy ākil*, “*eṇṇuṭaiy avan*” *eṇṇu abhimāṇippāṇ oru śrīvaiṣṇavanuṭaiya abhimānattilē atuṅki varttital ceyyalām*.

Before the eligible person dwells in this way, three things must be seen: 1) those who are agreeable, 2) disagreeable, and 3) indifferent. Those who are agreeable are the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Those who are unagreeable are the enemies of the Lord, and those who are neither are those who are in the transmigration.⁶³⁴

The essential point is that the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and those who want to remain the Śrīvaiṣṇavas are supposed to follow Rāmānuja’s teaching of these ways of conducts and do not mingle with the non-Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

Vedāntadeśika also defines the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as those who belong to the lineage of the previous *ācāryas* to construct the communal unity based on this element. Vedāntadeśika begins the work with the essence on the lineage of the *ācāryas* (*Guruparaṃparāsāra*). My analysis of this chapter relies on Clooney’s comprehensive study in his article “From Person to Person: A Study of the Tradition in the Guruparaṃparāsāra of Vedānta Deśika’s Śrīmat Rahasyatrayasāra” (2011). Clooney argues that this chapter offers “intra-community rationale for the Śrīvaiṣṇava choice of founding the tradition in the person of the *ācārya*.”⁶³⁵ It reminds the audience of the *Rahasyatrayasāram* to recollect the lineage of *ācāryas*, who are the foundation of the tradition. It further instructs on the appropriate roles of teachers and students, reflecting on the importance of this relationship. Clooney explains the structure of the whole chapter as follows:

At the beginning of the *Guruparaṃparāsāra*, readers were instructed to remember their lineage of *ācāryas*. Near its end, as we shall see, the importance of the right relationship of teachers and their students, in whom the tradition subsists, is made clear yet again. In the middle, we find the enunciation of

⁶³⁴ Ibid.: *ippaṭi varttikku adhikārikkū muṇṇaṭi pārttu varttikkaṇṇuṇa mūṇru viṣayam uṇṇu. avaiy āvaṇa—(1) anukūlar eṇṇum (2) pratikūlar eṇṇum (3) anubhayar eṇṇum. anukūlar āvār—śrīvaiṣṇavarkaḷ; pratikūlar āvār—bhagavadviṣṭukkaḷ; anubhayar āvār—ivviraṇṇum illāta saṃsārikaḷ.*

⁶³⁵ Clooney, “From Person to Person,” 203.

specific lineages, the naming of names; enjoining remembrance as essential to tradition, Deśika actually engages in an act of remembrance.⁶³⁶

Then, in the Manipravalam content, Vedāntadeśika outlines the lineage by referring to Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācāryas* mostly by their Tamil names. These *ācāryas* represent the tradition that precedes Vedāntadeśika:

Among the *ācāryas*, Nāthamuni was the son of Īśvaramuni [...] Nammālvār who appeared before Nāthamuni in his meditative state was the teacher of Nāthamuni. Īśvara Bhaṭṭa was the son of Nāthamuni. Ālavantār was the son of Īśvara Bhaṭṭa [...] Coṭṭainampi was the son of Ālavantār. Eṇṇāccāṇ was the son of Coṭṭainampi. Coṭṭainambi had four sons, one of which was Piḷḷaiyappar. Tōḷappār was the son of Piḷḷaiyappar. Tōḷappār had two daughters.⁶³⁷

In addition, Vedāntadeśika names his predecessors, namely the Ālvārs, the first generation of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, and the lineage of the *ācāryas* who participated in the Vedāntic intellectual domain, starting with Nāthamuni. In the Tamil opening verses of this chapter, he lists the ten Ālvārs, excluding the other two who are part of the contemporary list, Maturakavi and Āṇṭāl.⁶³⁸ He then highlights the accessibility of their hymns, which can reveal the obscure essence of the Sanskrit Veda and their intimacy with the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and the Tamil lands they used to inhabit:

Reciting with clarity the excellent Tamil garland sung with delight by those who are called Poykai, Bhutattār, and Pēyālvār, by Kurukēśaṇ, who came to the field of the Tāmraparṇī river, by Viṣṇucittaṇ, by pure Kulaśēkharāṇ, our lord Pāṇa, by Toṇṭaratippoti, the light who came to the Maḷicai, [and] by the lord Maṅkai,

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 210.

⁶³⁷ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 28–30: *ivvācāryarkaḷil, īśvaramuṇikaḷ piḷḷai nāthamuṇikaḷ [...] yōkatacaiyilē sāḷṣātkrutarāyūm nammālvār ācāryarāṇār. nāthamuṇikaḷ piḷḷai īśvara paṭṭālvāṇ. īśvara bhaṭṭālvāṇ piḷḷai ālavantār [...] ālavantār piḷḷai coṭṭainampi, coṭṭainampi piḷḷai eṇṇāccāṇ, eṇṇāccāṇ. piḷḷaikaḷ nālvar. ivarkaḷil oruvar piḷḷaiyappar. piḷḷaiyappar piḷḷai tōḷappār, tōḷapparukkup peṇṇipiḷḷaikaḷ iruvar.*

⁶³⁸ Clooney, “From Person to Person,” 214. Clooney suggests that Maturakavi and Āṇṭāl are omitted in this verse since Vedāntadeśika seems to list only ten names to match the Lord's ten descents.

we understand clearly the passages in the [Sanskrit] Veda that were not apparent before.⁶³⁹

The next Tamil verse singles out Maturakavi and regards him as the one who revealed the good path for the followers through the grace of Nammālvār, who composed the *Tiruvāymoḷi* or the Veda in Tamil:

The ancient path is shown by Maturakavi, who held on solely to the feet of the One who turned into Tamil the rare Vedas even though there exists Kṛṣṇa who descends only for his devotees, for delight, for refuge ... like him. This path is the good path only for those who are determined.⁶⁴⁰

The next generation of the Śrīvaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, beginning with Nāthamuni, are addressed in the Sanskrit concluding verses of the same chapter. They are described as those who argue against opponents and affirm the correct view for the tradition. The Sanskrit verses connect this lineage of *ācāryas* with the Upaniṣads and the debates surrounding them, suggesting that they

⁶³⁹ Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 1, 9:

*poykaimuni pūtattār peyālvār taṅ
porutal varum kurukecaṅ viṭṭucittaṅ
tuyya kulacekaraṅ nam pāṇanātaṅ
toṅṅaraṭippoḷi maḷicai vanta cōti
vaiyamelām maṅṅai viḷaṅka vālvēlētum
maṅṅaiyar kōṅ eṅṅrivarkaḷ makiḷntu pāṭum
ceyya tamiḷmālaikaḷ nām teḷiya oti
teḷiyāta maṅṅainilaṅkaḷ teḷikiṅromē ||*

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 14: “Mathurakavi, who was without sorrow, held on to the feet of the one who composed in Tamil the difficult Veda (Nammālvār) in order to make Kṛṣṇa descend for the sake of His devotees, for their pleasure, for being their refuge, for obtaining union with them, for being in many unforgettable relationships, for changing their desires, for making them His, for removing bad deeds, for giving them knowledge, for making them realize the truth, and for making them become like Him. Mathurakavi then showed the good paths in the ancient way of life in order to reveal them.”

*(iṅṅpattil iṅṅaiṅcutalil icaiyum pēṅṅril
ikaḷāta pal uravil irākam māṅṅril
taṅṅparril viṅṅai vilakkil takavu oḷkattil
tattuvattai uṅṅarttatalil taṅṅmaiyaḷkkil
aṅṅparkkē avatarikkum āyaṅṅ niṅṅka
aru maṅṅaikaḷ tamiḷ ceytāṅṅ tāḷē koṅṅtu
tuṅṅpu aṅṅra maturakavi tōṅṅra kāṅṅtum
tol vaḷiyē nal vaḷikaḷ tuṅṅivārkaṅṅē ||).*

participated in the wider domain of the Sanskrit and Vedānta:

May I take delight in the *ācāryas* such as Nātha and others who made known the One who is to be celebrated by the Upaniṣads in various ways ... Our delightful *ācāryas*' lineage that is full of many qualities and casts down the pride of the opponents through the sound of the neighing of Hayagrīva, who delights in the royal throne in the heart lotus, is victorious. The lineage leads us to the distinct truth that gets rid of the tufts of different views which were shaken by the increasing wind in the cloth banners of victory, fastened to the mansions of the [different] directions.⁶⁴¹

In the concluding chapter of the *Rahasyatrayasāram*, Vedāntadeśika devotes some verses to affirm the truth and reliability of the *ācāryas* in terms of their nature, knowledge, practice, and teaching. The *ācāryas* are portrayed as the Vedic *ācāryas* who have the following characteristics which make them suitable to instruct the means to liberation and what must be followed:

They say that the meanings of the Vedas are all true.
They do not think of speaking of faults
regarding excellent qualities of those who have firm intellects.
They attain the faultless minds regarding *ācāryas*.
They hold on to goodness.
They realize what is perceived by those with firm minds
which are not corrupted by doubts of some humans who dwell in the prison.
They will indeed enter in our non-perishing good path,
shown by holy people who are calm in the world.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 40–41: “May I take delight in the *ācāryas* such as Nātha and others who made known the One who is to be celebrated by the Upaniṣads in various ways so as to destroy the arrow of desire after it has been removed. They were the *ācāryas* who pervaded the divine river that is the compassion of the Couple who is the refuge in whom we should have faith. They were also foreign to the paths of envy, confusion, and deception.” (*ete mahyamapoḍhamanmathaśaronmāthāya nāthādayaḥ trayyantapratinandanīyavividhodantāḥ svadantām iha | śrāddhātavyaśaraṇyadampatidayādivyāpagāvyāpakāḥ spardhāvīplavavipralambhapadavīvaideśikā deśikāḥ ||*). “Our delightful *ācāryas*' lineage that is full of many qualities and casts down the pride of the opponents through the sound of the neighing of Hayagrīva who is pleased with the royal throne in the heart lotus, is victorious. The lineage leads us to the distinct truth that gets rid of the tufts of different views which were shaken by the increasing wind in the cloth banners of victory, fastened to the mansions of [different] directions.” (*hr̥dyā hr̥tpadmasiṃhāsanasarikahayagrīvaheṣormighośakṣiptapratyarthidr̥ptirjayati bahuguṇā paṃktir asmad gurūṇām | diksaudhābaddhajaitradhvajapaṭapavanasphātinirdhūtatattatsiddhāntastomatūlastabakavigamanavyaktasadvart anīkā ||*).

They say that this means is the sweet nectar of immortality.
 They cast away agreeable senses.
 They are indeed our *ācāryas* who know that there are no other means.
 They forgive our faults with delight, saying "Take this means."
 We accept this as a means through the grace of those Vedic *ācāryas*.⁶⁴²

With these verses, Vedāntadeśika invokes the Ālvārs, their Tamil hymns, and the *ācāryas* who were engaged in the Sanskrit philosophical domain and resort to the Upaniṣads. The function of these verses, according to Clooney, is to “inspire readers to a greater imaginative identification with the tradition.”⁶⁴³ Vedāntadeśika’s construction of the tradition coincides with his attempt to harmonize the norms and strands of self-surrender to make sure that the internal space can be shared by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas based on the normative and expressive collectivity. It is Manipravalam that allows for this unified notion for the followers to imagine and identify themselves with.

5.4 Summary

In the introduction, I ask three questions, two of which are as follows: What can Manipravalam do that Sanskrit or Tamil alone cannot? And, what precisely are Manipravalam roles in the theological treatises on self-surrender? My answer to these questions is the basis of this in this

⁶⁴² Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, vol. 2, 1208–1210:

maṛaiyuraikkum poruḷ ellām meyy eṇṇōrvār
maṇṇiya kūṛmatiyuṭaiyār vaṅkuṇattir
kuṛaiyuraikka niṇaiṅ illār kurukkaḷ tampār (mār)
kōṭaṅṅa maṅam peṇṇār koḷvār naṅmai
ciṛaiṅ aḷarkkuṅ cila māntar caṅkētattār
citaiyāta tiṅmatiyōr terintatōrār
poṅṇrāta naṅṇeriyiṇ pukutuvārē.

ituvaḷiy iṅṅamuteṅṅaravariṅ pulaiṅ vēṅṅuvār
ituvaḷiyā malaveṅṅarivā reṅkaḷ tēcikaṅ
ituvaḷiyēyētuka veṅṅrukappālem piḷaiṅporuppār
ituvaḷiyā maṛaiyōr aruḷāl yāmicaintaṅamē.

⁶⁴³ Clooney, “From Person to Person,” 216.

chapter: Manipravalam allows for the harmonization of different language spheres, their scriptural norms and theological expressions—a role that either Tamil or Sanskrit alone does not possess. As a systematic theologian, Vedāntadeśika synthesized various sources on self-surrender only in his Manipravalam *Rahasyatrayasāra*. He bridged the gap, if not traditionally at least intellectually, in the two spheres found in the previous treatises, namely the preference for the Tamil scripture or the Sanskrit orthodoxy and the attention to or disregard for the performative role of self-surrender. Again, through Manipravalam, he harmonized the doctrine of self-surrender by collecting various strands of self-surrender proposed by other authors that I investigated.

Then, what is his harmonization meant for? It is my understanding that his scriptural and doctrinal harmonization results in collective normativity and expressibility that serve vital social and intellectual functions by making possible a sense of unity of the tradition against institutional fluctuation and theological inconsistency within. His harmonized system of self-surrender renders the doctrine the most expansive and comprehensive one to the extent that it overshadows the authors of later generations, and one could say that the development of soteriological self-surrender reaches its peak with Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāra*. This might explain why the current Śrīvaiṣṇavas who subscribe to Vedāntadeśika's teaching regard the *Rahasyatrayasāram* as the locus classicus of self-surrender.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁴ For example, see Uttamur Viraraghavacharya's introduction to his commentary on the *Rahasyatrayasāra* (Madras: Ubhayavedāntagranthamālā, 1980).

CONCLUSION

I have posited three questions at the beginning of my introduction to this dissertation: 1) How can we conceive of multilingualism in premodern South Asian context in which languages were not bound to nations, where one culture or community often use more than one language?; 2) How did religious agents across language boundaries make linguistic choices and how did their choices shape their religious beliefs? 3) What can their linguistic engagements tell us about the impact of multilingualism on their self-understanding? To deal with the first question, this dissertation participates in the investigation of South Asian multilingualism preceded by the works of Pollock (2006), Shulman (2016), Ollett (2017), and other scholars. However, unlike these scholars who tell histories of a language with a long-time frame, I focus on the interconnected movements of languages, mainly Sanskrit and Manipravalam, and Tamil, to a certain extent, within more or less four generations of authors to highlight their dynamic interactions and the role of the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors responsible for the linguistic changes. This micro-perspective investigation allows us to better capture the complex relationships between languages, authors who use these languages, and their textual engagement compared to the macro studies mentioned.

My study further proposes a new framework, the language sphere, that views language as a sphere that is demarcated through mutually influenced representations of agency, normativity, and expressivity. This framework provides tools to explore the contacts and tensions between languages that overlapped and shaped the historical contexts and also how the agents choose to engage with these spheres. Although the authors are largely conditioned by the language spheres they inhabit, they may exercise their agency in choosing which language

sphere to work with or even crossing different linguistic boundaries.

Based on the Śrīvaiṣṇava theological treatises on the doctrine of self-surrender from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, my work reveals the complex variations of linguistic usages of the authors and dynamic and fluid interactions between different languages that cannot be confined within Pollock's hierarchical paradigm. I argue that the doctrinal development of self-surrender has to be understood with attention to the multiplicity of language spheres. Each author differently shaped the doctrine of self-surrender through their relationships with the two language spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam in addition to their social and intellectual factors, resulting in not only linguistic but also doctrinal systematization, heterogeneity, distillation, and harmonization, as shown in the earlier chapters.

The chapters in this dissertation collectively provide insights into how precisely both linguistic spheres affect the doctrinal development of self-surrender and how each religious author deals with them in order to respond to the second and third questions. Chapter 1 focuses on the Śrīvaiṣṇava authors' innovative choices in creating their versions of the spheres of Sanskrit and Manipravalam, especially in the soteriological context. These spheres then set the models of norms and expressions for the later authors to choose to either follow, expand, or deviate. While Sanskrit expresses matters related to authority, validation, and philosophy shared by pan-Indian philosophical and theological systems that are predominantly orthodox, and those based on Rāmānuja's teaching of the soteriological doctrine of *bhakti*, Tamil is associated with intimate feeling such as devotion, inclusive teachings, and accessibility of the Tamil language and scripture based on the Āḷvārs' usage.

After the time of Rāmānuja, we see the rise of the Manipravalam sphere from the incorporation of the Tamil scripture into the Vedāntic philosophical counterpart of the

Śrīvaiṣṇavas. The Śrīvaiṣṇava decision to use Manipravalam can be seen as conditioned by the limitation of scholastic Sanskrit practice within Vedic orthodoxy that does not allow the incorporation of Tamil or other vernaculars, let alone other texts that are not considered authoritative within this orthodoxy. Socially speaking, the use of Manipravalam in commenting on the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns is a tool to legitimize the Tamil scripture, which creates an opportunity for the institutional expansion as it is available to different social hierarchical groups, unlike the Sanskrit Vedas, which are limited to the three first castes.

Contemporaneous to the use of Manipravalam is the crystallization of the doctrine of self-surrender, which relies on the scriptures in these two languages. The devotional aspect and accessibility of the doctrine of self-surrender are clearly rooted in the Tamil scripture and expression, while its validated status as a soteriological doctrine is immersed in the Sanskrit sphere. This is why we see the post-Rāmānuja authors both in Sanskrit and Manipravalam resort to the Sanskrit sources to validate self-surrender and bring in the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns and *ācāryas'* teachings to explain its practicality.

The subsequent chapters portray the linguistic oscillation between limitation and expansion through the three critical moments based on their interactions: the rise of the Sanskrit sphere and importance of Tamil, the heterogeneities of these two spheres' norms and expressions, and, finally, the function of Manipravalam in harmonizing different norms and expressions and bridging the gap between these two spheres. The authors who only wrote in Sanskrit, such as Vātsyā Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri, followed Rāmānuja's Sanskrit soteriology more than the Manipravalam authors, such as Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya, who emphasized the Tamil scripture and the devotional attitude of self-surrender.

More specifically, as shown in Chapter 2, the systematization of self-surrender became

more evident in the twelfth/thirteenth-century Manipravalam and Sanskrit treatises of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Vātsya Varadaguru despite its early forms in the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' previous literature. While Vātsya Varadaguru introduced self-surrender into the Sanskrit sphere of the soteriology of which *bhakti* and Vedānta are the norms in the *Prapannapārijāta*, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, in continuing the discussions of self-surrender in the preceding Manipravalam commentaries, favored the Tamil scripture to the Sanskrit one and includes the three secrets. Their linguistic choices seem to be conditioned already by their lineages and locations. To elaborate, these two authors were motivated to use Manipravalam and Sanskrit due to their social and intellectual circumstances. Vātsya Varadaguru composed only Sanskrit works meant for conversation with the Sanskrit authors at Kāñcīpuram, and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai was immersed in the community at Śrīraṅgam, in which Manipravalam was the linguistic medium for intellectual and theological composition already by his time due to the presence of the previous Manipravalam commentaries. While working with Sanskrit and Manipravalam respectively, they chose to strengthen and localize the representations in each language sphere, such as Rāmānuja's soteriology of *bhakti* and the Manipravalam commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoli*, before passing them down to the subsequent treatises, as we saw in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Their systems of self-surrender are tied to the boundaries of both spheres. With this statement, I do not mean that the ideas of self-surrender did not exist before this process. In fact, the preexisting forms of self-surrender before its systematization already existed in the theological domains of the Āḷvārs' Tamil hymns and Rāmānuja's *Gadyatraya*, which in turn was influenced by Tamil heritage. However, Vātsya Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai were the first to devise the representations in the Sanskrit and Manipravalam spheres in systematizing

self-surrender.

In Chapter 3, the Sanskrit author, Meghanādārisūri, defended self-surrender as another Vedāntic doctrine and narrows the Sanskrit sphere through his doctrinalization of self-surrender. Unlike other authors who stress the accessibility of self-surrender, Meghanādārisūri was the first and only author mentioned here who claims that self-surrender is limited only to people who were born in the three castes, just as with *bhakti* in his Sanskrit *Mumukṣūpāyasaṃgraha*. On the contrary, Piḷḷai Lokācārya brought self-surrender to the opposite direction, denying its ritual status and similarity to *bhakti*. He claimed that what is required in the soteriological process is acknowledging and faith that God is the means to liberation. The Manipravalam sphere under his composition is also distant from the Sanskrit one. Although Piḷḷai Lokācārya still valued the Sanskrit scripture, he clearly preferred the Tamil corpus and *itihāsas* over the Upaniṣads.

This chapter thus portrays how Meghanādārisūri and Piḷḷai Lokācārya intensified the Sanskrit and Manipravalam boundaries set in the treatises of Vātsyā Varadaguru and Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai, resulting in the heterogeneity in both theological and linguistic domains. Looking from a social perspective, the heterogeneity is likely caused by the intentions of these two authors to immerse self-surrender, which undisputedly the primary doctrine by this period, into their respective language spheres at Kāñcīpuram and Śrīraṅgam. Alternatively, it could be said that Meghanādārisūri's system of self-surrender is a response to the increasing importance of the Tamil authoritative and expressive norms in the soteriology of self-surrender, which can threaten the validity of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta system. Thus, he confined its theology to the Sanskrit sphere.

In terms of their theological arguments, the authors investigated in Chapters 2 and 3

deal with the tension between self-surrender and *bhakti* differently based on the distinct emphases they placed on *bhakti* and God despite constant mutual linguistic contact. Vātsya Varadaguru and Meghanādārisūri attempted to simultaneously consolidate Rāmānuja's teaching of *bhakti* and present self-surrender as an independent doctrine for the Sanskrit community at Kāñcī. However, the Sanskrit sphere that dominates this location places the main expressive condition, without which their attempts can be accomplished, that their versions of self-surrender must conform to Rāmānuja's soteriology of *bhakti*. By making self-surrender *bhakti*-like, it is more likely to gain respect among the Sanskrit authors and within the wider Śrīvaiṣṇava community, who had already accepted *bhakti* since the time of Rāmānuja.

Unlike the Sanskrit authors, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lokācārya highlighted the role of God even in the system of self-surrender and the distinction between self-surrender and *bhakti* as well as other Upaniṣadic rituals. The emphasis on God can be understood as the defining expression in the Manipravalam doctrinalization of self-surrender since the time of Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai. It is not the case that these authors ignored the role of *bhakti* because they had no regard for Rāmānuja or the Vedāntic scripture. Following their Manipravalam predecessors, these authors intended to find a doctrine that is easily accessible by anyone to replace *bhakti*. To do so, they pushed forward the two main arguments derived from earlier Manipravalam commentaries, especially that of Nañciyār: first, the absolute liberating role of God and, second, the nature of God as the accomplished means. These two arguments imply that self-surrender is more appealing than *bhakti* since it relies on God alone, who has power and compassion to save anyone. Self-surrender is more about the relationship between God and devotee rather than ritual performance and requirements. Most evidently, Piḷḷai Lokācārya, in his *Mumukṣupaṭi*, replaced *bhakti* with self-surrender and even canceled the role of *bhakti* in

the soteriology.⁶⁴⁵ Writing in Manipravalam, these authors had more flexibility in choosing texts from Sanskrit and Tamil to support their arguments.

Looking at Vedāntadeśika's two works, who stood out as the systematizer, through the framework of language sphere, Chapters 4 and 5 together most clearly affirm that, in the processes of defining and redefining self-surrender, the authors chose to operate within each linguistic sphere differently based on their social environments and intellectual pursuits. They introduced more sophisticated and innovative linguistic tools or excluded certain norms and expressions in different language spheres to address the debates found in that languages' earlier literature. Using both languages allows Vedāntadeśika to harmonize the tensions in the two language spheres and draw them together. The social and internal tension along with his responsibility as a traditional leader might have prompted Vedāntadeśika to purify any discrepancies in the previous teachings so that the community could accommodate the increasingly diverse body of Śrīvaiṣṇava members under the notion of "the tradition."

In Chapter 4, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* exemplifies the merging between the two spheres. In this work, Vedāntadeśika touched on some of the same concerns in the Manipravalam *rahasyagranthas*. Yet, the *Nikṣeparakṣā* is restricted to the Sanskrit sphere and participates in the Sanskrit consolidation of *bhakti* like other authors who were in his same social and intellectual circle in Kāñcīpuram. As a result, it does not acknowledge the discussions as belonging to the Manipravalam domain and only presents the distilled versions. In the same manner that self-surrender in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* stands for the more elaborate soteriology in

⁶⁴⁵ This replacement of *bhakti* by self-surrender in the works of Piḷḷai Lokācārya is also supported by Rajagopalan, "The Śrī Vaiṣṇava Understanding of Bhakti and Prapatti," 471: "The change comes in the time of Piḷḷai Lokācārya. He argues that since *bhaktiyoga* involves human 'effort', it is against the essential nature of the *jīva*. The *jīva* is a *śeṣa* and should not assert himself. He should be resigned and allow the Lord's grace to operate, when He wills it. So *bhaktiyoga* as an 'alternative' is removed completely for some Śrī Vaiṣṇavas."

Manipravalam, the Sanskrit sphere in the *Nikṣeparakṣā* can also be understood as the distillation of the Manipravalam sphere.

In Chapter 5, Vedāntadeśika harmonized the Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures as well as the previous discussions on self-surrender in either Sanskrit or Manipravalam. He also reconciled the theological discrepancies and bridged the distance between the two spheres present in the preceding literature. Vedāntadeśika's harmonization results in the Manipravalam soteriology that incorporates multiple strands of self-surrender. Vedāntadeśika's self-surrender, more so than those of his predecessors, provides an opportunity to unite the Śrīvaiṣṇava community together under the notion of "the tradition." However, the internal space does not deny the diversity of its heritages or languages. As in the case of Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāram*, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas can be seen through multiple norms and expressions instead of as a singularity as long as they collectively function, at least for the most part, in harmony.

My dissertation is an initial attempt to frame South Asian multilingualism without relying on the binary opposition between Sanskrit and vernaculars theorized by Pollock (2006) or other macro-perspective studies of South Asian languages. It proposes a more flexible framework that provides a better way to conceptualize complex and fluid histories of multilingualism in the second millennium, especially in the premodern South Asian religious contexts and beyond.⁶⁴⁶ This framework can potentially be used to investigate the impacts that languages have on different genres of the Śrīvaiṣṇava composition, like poetry or other philosophical treatises that are not only devoted to self-surrender. Specifically for Śrīvaiṣṇava

⁶⁴⁶ For example, with this framework in mind, I propose the distinction between Tamil and Sanskrit in Akepiyapornchai and Peera Panarut, "Sacred Literacy: An Overview of Multilingual Siamese Grantha Manuscripts."

studies, my work attempts to offer a basis and framework for critical follow-up projects, for example, a more complete analysis of the roots of *bhakti* and self-surrender as poetically conceived in the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam* and a commentary study of the commentaries on the Tamil poems and other Sanskrit works of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja. I hope that “Voices of Self-surrender” is not the last voice on the value of multilingualism, but one that encourages further work in several fields of study.

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