REVISIONING DUALISM IN PATAÑJALI’S CLASSICAL YOGA†

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1. Introduction

This paper centers on the thought of Patañjali (ca second-third century CE), the great exponent of the authoritative classical Yoga school (darśana) of Hinduism and the reputed author of the Yoga-Sūtra. I will argue that Patañjali’s philosophical perspective has, far too often, been looked upon as excessively “spiritual” or isolationistic to the point of being a world-denying philosophy, indifferent to moral endeavor, neglecting the world of nature and culture, and overlooking the highest potentials for human reality, vitality, and creativity. Contrary to the arguments presented by many scholars, which associate Patañjali’s Yoga exclusively with extreme asceticism, mortification, denial, and the renunciation and abandonment of “material existence” (prakṛti) in favor of an elevated and isolated “spiritual state” (puruṣa) or disembodied state of spiritual liberation, I suggest that Patañjali’s Yoga can be seen as a responsible engagement, in various ways, of “spirit” (puruṣa = intrinsic identity as Self, pure consciousness) and “matter” (prakṛti = the source of psychophysical being, which includes mind, body, nature) resulting in a highly developed, transformed, and participatory human nature and identity, an integrated and embodied state of liberated selfhood (jīvanmukti).

The intention of this paper is to reassess our understanding of Patañjali and the tradition of classical Yoga that he is credited for having founded. I have attempted to re-interpret a central feature of the Yoga-Sūtra, namely the objective of cittavṛttiniruddha or the

† I would like to acknowledge the generous support in the form of a Fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science which enabled me to visit Japan. This paper was read at a seminar hosted by Professor Junsho Kato and Professor Toshihiro Wada at the University of Nagoya in March 2000.
cessation of the [misidentification with the] modifications of the mind, and provide a fresh vision of the spiritual potential present in this seminal text thereby contributing to our understanding and reception of Yoga thought and spirituality. The interpretation of Patañjali’s Yoga Darśana presented in this paper — which walks the line between an historical and hermeneutic-praxis (some might say theological or “systematic”) orientation — counters the radically dualistic, isolationistic, and ontologically oriented interpretations of Yoga presented by many scholars and suggests an open-ended, epistemologically oriented hermeneutic which, I maintain, is more appropriate for arriving at a genuine assessment of Patañjali’s system.

It is often said that, like classical Śāmkhya, Patañjali’s Yoga is a dualistic system, understood in terms of puruṣa and prakṛti. Yet, I submit, Yoga scholarship has not clarified what “dualistic” means or why Yoga had to be “dualistic.” Even in avowedly non-dualistic systems of thought such as Advaita Vedānta we can find numerous examples of basically dualistic modes of description and explanation.1 It is important to note that the Śāmkhyyan dualism (that Yoga appropriates) is quite distinct from the Cartesian dualism which bifurcates reality into mental and material aspects. The dualistic perspective of Śāmkhya is made up of puruṣa as pure consciousness, and prakṛti as everything else, including the mental and the material. Psyche and the external world are not ultimately different. Both are forms of insentient (nonconscious, acetana) prakṛti. With the above

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1 The system of classical Yoga is often reduced to or fitted into a classical Śāmkhya scheme — the interpretations of which generally follow along radically dualistic lines. In their metaphysical ideas classical Śāmkhya and Yoga are closely akin. However, both systems hold divergent views on important areas of doctrinal structure such as epistemology, ontology, ethics, and psychology, as well as differences pertaining to terminology. These differences derive in part from the different methodologies adopted by the two schools: Śāmkhya, it has been argued, emphasizes a theoretical or intellectual analysis through inference and reasoning in order to bring out the nature of final emancipation, while Yoga stresses yogic perception and multiple forms of practice that culminate in samādhi. Moreover, there is clear evidence throughout all four Pādas of the YS of an extensive network of terminology that parallels Buddhist teachings and which is absent in the classical Śāmkhya literature. Patañjali includes several sūtras on the “restraints” or yamas (namely, nonviolence [ahimsā], truthfulness [satya], non-stealing [asteya], chastity [brahmacarya], and nonpossession [āparigraha]) of the “eight-limbed” path of Yoga that are listed in the Acarāṅga Sūtra of Jainism (the earliest sections of which may date from the third or fourth century B.C.E.) thereby suggesting possible Jaina influences on the Yoga tradition. The topic of Buddhist or Jaina influence on Yoga doctrine (or vice versa) is, however, not the focus of this paper. The Sanskrit text of the YS, the YB of Vyāsa, the TV of Vācaspatai Miśra, and the RM of Bhoja Rāja is from The Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali (1904).

2 See, for example, Śaṅkara’s (ca eighth-ninth century CE) use of vāyuvahārika (the conventional empirical perspective) in contrast to paramārthika (the ultimate or absolute standpoint).
explanation held in mind I have adopted the simple term “matter” for prakṛti.

It does not seem inappropriate to suggest the possibility of Patañjali having asserted a provisional, descriptive, and “practical” metaphysics, i.e., in the YS the metaphysical schematic is abstracted from yogic experience, whereas in classical Sāmkhya, as set out in Īśvara Krṣṇa’s Sāmkhyakārikā, “experiences” are fitted into a metaphysical structure. This approach would allow the YS to be interpreted along more open-ended, epistemologically oriented lines without being held captive by the radical, dualistic metaphysics of Sāmkhya. Despite intentions to render the experiential dimension of Yoga, purged as far as possible from abstract metaphysical knowledge, many scholars have fallen prey to reading the YS from the most abstract level of the dualism of puruṣa and prakṛti down to an understanding of the practices advocated. Then they proceed to impute an experiential foundation to the whole scheme informed not from mystical insight or yogic experience, but from the effort to form a consistent (dualistic) world-view, a view that culminates in a radical dualistic finality3 or closure.

It should be noted that the contrast, suggested above, between the philosophical perspectives of Īśvara Krṣṇa and Patañjali is of crucial importance. Nevertheless, the theoretical connections and parallels between the YS and Sāmkhya remain significant. Patañjali’s philosophy, however, is not based upon mere theoretical or speculative knowledge. It elicits a practical, pragmatic, experiential/perceptual (not merely inferential/theoretical) approach that Patañjali deems essential in order to deal effectively with our total human situation and provide real freedom, not just a theory of liberation or a metaphysical explanation of life. To this end Patañjali outlined, among other practices, an “eight-limbed” path of Yoga (aṣṭāṅga-yoga, YS II.29) dealing with the physical, moral, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the yogin. Yoga is not content with knowledge (jñāna) perceived as a state that abstracts away from the world removing us from our human embodiment and activity in the world. Rather, Yoga emphasizes knowledge in the integrity of being and action and as serving the integration of the “person” as a “whole.” Edgerton concluded in a study dedicated to the meaning of Yoga that: “... Yoga

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is not a ‘system’ of belief or of metaphysics. It is always a way, a method of getting something, usually salvation ....” 4 But this does not say enough, does not fully take into account what might be called the integrity of Patañjali’s Yoga. Yoga derives its real strength and value through an integration of theory and practice.

If one is to grasp how Yoga philosophy can be lived on a practical level, one must understand how puruṣa and prakṛti relate to one in practical, experiential, and personal terms. To this end Patañjali translated a “universal,” macrocosmic perspective into subjective, microcosmic terms. Yoga philosophy, being historically rooted in a pedagogical context,5 functions in part as a teaching method skillfully aimed at transforming, purifying, and illuminating human consciousness (i.e., the mind or citta, which can be described as a grasping, intentional, and volitional consciousness) and thus our perception and experience of reality. The metaphysics is united to the teaching tradition of spiritual preceptor (guru) and disciple (śiṣya) and is soteriological as well as practical in nature and purpose. The distinction between the two major categories in Yoga: puruṣa or draṣṭr (the “seer”), and prakṛti or drṣya (the “seeable”), may not have been intended by Patañjali as a metaphysical theory of truth. Moreover, despite the fact that Patañjali initially adopts a Sāṃkhya metaphysical orientation, there is no proof in the YS that his system stops at dualism (i.e., the dualism may be said to be open to the criterion of falsifiability playing only a provisional role in his system), or merely ends up, as many scholars have concluded, with a radical dualism in which puruṣa and prakṛti, absolutely disjoined, are unable to “cooperate,” establish a “harmony” and achieve a “balance” together. In this sense the YS can be understood not so much as contradicting Sāṃkhya but more so as accommodating and subsuming the philosophical stance in the SK by extending the meaning of purification and illumination of human identity to incorporate an enlightened mode of action as well as being.6 As such, Yoga philosophy helps to resolve some of the tensions inherent in a radically dualistic perspective — as is exemplified in interpretations of classical Sāṃkhya — wherein puruṣa and prakṛti are utterly

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6 See Whicher (1999).
separate and incapable of “uniting” through an integration of being and activity, that is, as an embodied state of freedom, consciousness, and being.

Unlike Sāṃkhya, Yoga maintains that knowledge (jñāna) in itself does not ultimately have the capacity to liberate human identity from the deeply embedded “seeds” of ignorance. The yogin can make further efforts to transform the mind through the commitment to a purification of all karmic residue. Such efforts can include ethical vows as well as subtilized forms of meditative discipline resulting in a total purification and illumination of consciousness even at the level of the mind. In this sense, Yoga suggests a deeper insight than Sāṃkhya into the functioning and structure of the mind and the mind’s role in the final stages of purification and liberation.

In Sāṃkhya, knowledge precludes any further reason for dharma (SK 67). There is a relative absense of emphasis on purity and virtue within the system of Sāṃkhya.7 Yoga allows for an enlightened, participatory perspective that can embody an enriched sense of dharma suggesting a responsiveness to life that no longer enslaves the yogin morally or epistemologically. This seems to be implied in the experience of the cloud of dharma (dharma-megha) samādhi (YS IV.29). At this high level realization in Yoga action does not end but becomes purified of afflicted impulses (YS/YB IV.30); nonafflicted action remains for the liberated yogin. In the context of our human embodied world and its possibilities, purified action in Yoga would appear to extend the implications of knowledge and in this sense the Yoga system can be viewed as being complementary with, not contradictory to Sāṃkhya. What Sāṃkhya does communicate is a context for liberation on a theoretical level.8 This is not to deny that there may well have been practical, meditative structural approaches utilized in the earlier Sāṃkhyan tradition.9 Yoga shows how liberating

7 SK 44 states that “by virtue (dharma) [one obtains] ascent to higher planes”, understood by Vacaspati Misra to be heaven. Clearly this attainment is at variance with the goal of liberation, which can only be achieved through knowledge (jñāna).

8 But this is not to suggest that in Sāṃkhya knowledge is not a form of practice. In Yoga, however, practice does not end with knowledge.

9 In Strukturen Yogischer Meditation (1977), G. Oberhammer examines ‘sāṃkhyan meditation’, by which he means those meditative structural approaches that have been handed down in the Sāṃkhya tradition, particularly that of Vārṣāgānya. Oberhammer’s analysis of this ‘yogic’ orientation is based on relevant quotations found in the Yuktidipika and intends to show that the soteriology of the old Sāṃkhya tradition was not a purely rationalistic affair and that many of the Sāṃkhyan metaphysical categories can only be understood against a background of meditative praxis.
insight can be applied in an ongoing process of purification; eventually, through asaṃprajñāta-samādhi, knowledge itself is transcended and ignorance discarded in the realization of the knower (puruṣa), an awakening that attains permanency in the state of “seedless” (nirbija) samādhi. In Yoga philosophy, theory and practice form a continuum, are united, resulting in a transformation not only of consciousness but of our total psychophysical being. Yoga’s message here seems simple enough yet can be so easily forgotten: experiences of insight need to be continuously cultivated through a deepening of practice and dispassion.

It has elsewhere been suggested10 that Śāmkhya and Yoga can be read sequentially. Transformative insight, the foundation of liberation in Śāmkhya, can function as a basis for restructuring and purifying one’s actions through yogic discipline resulting in the gradual dissolution of all karmic influence. To be sure, in both systems, the application or practice of knowledge (jñāna) or discriminative discernment (vivekakhyāti) is the foundational key to success.11 But Yoga’s emphasis on a programme of ongoing purification including the cultivation of virtue and a deepening of dispassion — even toward knowledge itself — allows for a nonafflicted mode of activity. Yoga includes at the highest level a clarity of knowledge with the integrity of being and action, all within the context of an embodied state of freedom.12

I am suggesting that Yoga need not contradict Śāmkhya. Rather, the two systems may be understood as being complementary in that Yoga extends the meaning of purification and illumination of human identity to incorporate an enlightened mode of activity as well as knowledge. As such, Yoga philosophy can help to resolve some of the questions and tensions surrounding the nature of karma and past impressions (samskāras) that continue after knowledge takes place. From an examination of the final stages of purification in Yoga we need not conclude that liberative knowledge and virtuous activity are incompatible with one another, nor need we see detachment (vairāgya) as an abandonment of the world and the human relational

11 Thus knowledge in Śāmkhya, as in Yoga, can be seen as an authentic form of practice (abhyāsa) that transforms the mind and has soteriological import. This would seem to be the place given to knowledge (and Śāmkhya) in the BG and the SK.
12 For a discussion on the implications for an embodied freedom in classical Yoga and a reconsideration of the meaning of “aloneness” (kaivalya) see Whicher (1998).
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sphere. Sāṃkhya does not discuss or explore the potential for human life rooted in an epistemic clarity that distinguishes authentic being (puruṣa) from a prakṛtic or guṇic identity. The Sāṃkhya system seems to rest content with a discriminating knowledge leading to a final isolation of puruṣa or absolute separation between puruṣa and prakṛti. The interpretation\(^\text{13}\) of Yoga presented here resists the temptation to view Yoga merely within the framework of an isolationistic approach to liberation where the full potentialities for an embodied, purified, and illuminated self-identity are overly constrained within a radical and rigid dualistic metaphysical structure. It need not be the case that in classical Yoga liberation denotes a definitive incommensurability between spirit (puruṣa) and matter (prakṛti).

2. Cessation (Nirodha) and the ‘Return to the Source’ (Pratiprasava): Transformation or Negation of the Mind?

In Patañjali’s central definition of Yoga, Yoga is defined as “the cessation (nirodha) of [the misidentification with] the modifications (vṛtti) of the mind (citta)”.\(^\text{14}\) What kind of “cessation” we must ask is Patañjali actually referring to in his classical definition of Yoga? I have elsewhere suggested (1997, JIP 25: 1-67) that nirodha denotes an epistemological emphasis and refers to the transformation of self-understanding brought about through the purification and illumination

\(^{13}\) Our interpretation can be seen as walking the line between an historical and a hermeneutic-praxis (or systematic) orientation.

\(^{14}\) YS I.2 (p. 4): yogas cittavṛttinirodhaḥ. The modifications or functions (vṛtti) of the mind (citta) are said to be fivefold (YS I.6), namely, ‘valid cognition’ (pramāṇa, which includes perception [pratyakṣa], inference [anumāṇa] and valid testimony [āgama]), ‘error’/ ‘misconception’ (viparyaya), ‘conceptualization’ (vikalpa), ‘sleep’ (nirūp) and ‘memory’ (smṛti), and are described as being ‘afflicted’ (kliṣṭa) or ‘nonafflicted’ (akliṣṭa) (YS I.5). Citta is an umbrella term that incorporates ‘intellect’ (buddhi), ‘sense of self’ (ahamkāra) and ‘mind-organ’ (manas), and can be viewed as the aggregate of the cognitive, conative and affective processes and functions of phenomenal consciousness, i.e., it consists of a grasping, intentional and volitional consciousness. For an in-depth look at the meaning of the terms citta and vṛtti see I. Whicher (1997, 1998). “The Mind (Citta): Its Nature, Structure and Functioning in Classical Yoga.” in Sambhāṣṭa Vols 18 (pp. 35-62) and 19 (pp. 23-82). In the first four sūtras of the first chapter (Sambhāṣṭa-Pāda) the subject matter of the YS is mentioned, defined and characterized. The sūtras run as follows: YS I.1: “Now [begins] the discipline of Yoga.” YS I.2: “Yoga is the cessation of [the misidentification with] the modifications of the mind.” YS I.3: “Then [when that cessation has taken place] there is abiding in the seer’s own form (i.e., puruṣa or intrinsic identity).” YS I.4: “Otherwise [there is] conformity to (i.e., misidentification with) the modifications [of the mind].” YS I.1-4 (pp. 1, 4, 7, and 7 respectively): atha yogānāsāsanam; yogas cittavṛttinirodhaḥ; tadb draśṭah svārupe ‘vasthānam; vṛttisārūpyam itaratra. For a more comprehensive study of classical Yoga including issues dealt with in this paper see Whicher (1998) The Integrity of the Yoga Darśana (SUNY Press).
of consciousness; *niruddha* is not (for the yogin) the ontological cessation of *prakṛti* (i.e., the mind and *vṛttis*). Seen here, *niruddha* thus is not, as is often explained, an inward movement that annihilates or suppresses *vṛttis*, thoughts, intentions, or ideas (*pratyaya*), nor is it the nonexistence or absence of *vṛtti*; rather, *niruddha* involves a progressive unfoldment of perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) that eventually reveals our true identity as *puruṣa*. It is the state of affliction (*kleśa*) evidenced in the mind and not the mind itself that is at issue. *Cittavṛtti* does not stand for all modifications or mental processes (cognitive, affective, emotive), but is the very seed (*bijā*) mechanism of the misidentification with *prakṛti* from which all other *vṛttis* and thoughts arise and are (mis)appropriated or self-referenced in the state of ignorance (*avidyā*), that is, the unenlightened state of mind. Spiritual ignorance gives rise to a malfunctioning or misalignment of *vṛtti* with consciousness that in Yoga can be corrected thereby allowing for a proper alignment or “right” functioning of *vṛtti*. It is the *cittavṛtti* as our confused and mistaken identity, not our *vṛttis*, thoughts, and experiences in total that must be brought to a state of definitive cessation.

From the perspective of the discerning yogin (*vivekin*) human identity contained within the domain of the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti* (i.e., *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) amounts to nothing more than sorrow and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*). The declared goal of classical Yoga, as with Sāmkhya and Buddhism, is to overcome all suffering (*duḥkha*, *YS* II.16) by bringing about an inverse movement or counter-flow (*pratiprasava*) understood as a “return to the origin” or “process-of-involution” of the *guṇas*, a kind of reabsorption into the transcendent purity of being itself. What does this “process-of-involution” — variously referred to as “return to the origin,” “dissolution into the source” or “withdrawal from manifestation” — actually mean? Is it a definitive ending to the perceived world of the

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15 See Whicher (1997) “Nirodha, Yoga Praxis and the Transformation of the Mind”.
16 *YS* II.15 (p. 74): *parināmatāpasamskāraduḥkhaṁ gunavṛttirvirodhaṁ ca duḥkham eva sarvam vivekinah."Because of the dissatisfaction and sufferings due to change and anxieties and the latent impressions, and from the conflict of the modifications of the *guṇas*, for the discerning one, all is sorrow alone."
17 Patañjali uses the term *pratiprasava* twice, in *YS* II.10 and IV.34.
19 Feuerstein (1979a) p. 65.
yogin comprised of change and transformation, forms and phenomena? Ontologically conceived, *prasava* signifies the “flowing forth” of the primary constituents or qualities of *prakṛti* into the multiple forms of the universe in all its dimensions, i.e., all the processes of manifestation and actualization or “creation” (*sarga, prasarga*). *Pratiprasava* on the other hand denotes the process of “dissolution into the source” or “withdrawal from manifestation” of those forms relative to the personal, microcosmic level of the yogin who is about to attain freedom (*apavarga*).

Does a “return to the origin” culminate in a state of freedom in which one is stripped of all human identity and void of any association with the world including one’s practical livelihood? The ontological emphasis usually given to the meaning of *pratiprasava* — implying for the yogin a literal dissolution of *prakṛti*’s manifestation — would seem to support a view, one which is prominent in Yoga scholarship, of spiritual liberation denoting an existence wholly transcendent (and therefore stripped or deprived) of all manifestation including the human relational sphere. Is this the kind of spiritually emancipated state that Patañjali had in mind (pun included)? In *YS II.3-17* (which set the stage for the remainder of the chapter on yogic means or *sādhanā*), Patañjali describes *prakṛti*, the “seeable” (including our personhood), in the context of the various afflictions (*kleśas*) that give rise to an afflicted and mistaken identity of self. Afflicted identity is constructed out of and held captive by the root affliction of ignorance (*avidyā*) and its various forms of karmic bondage. Yet, despite the clear association of *prakṛti* with the bondage of ignorance (*avidyā*), there are no real grounds for purporting that *prakṛti* herself is to be equated with or subsumed under the afflictions. To equate *prakṛti* with affliction itself implies that as a product of spiritual ignorance, *prakṛti*, along with the afflictions, is conceived as a reality that the yogin should ultimately avoid or discard completely. Patañjali leaves much room for understanding “dissolution” or “return to the source” with an epistemological emphasis thereby allowing the whole system of the Yoga *Darśana* to be interpreted along more open-ended lines. In other words, what actually “dissolves” or is ended in Yoga is the yogin’s misidentification with *prakṛti*, a mistaken identity of self that — contrary to authentic identity, namely *puruṣa* — can be nothing more than a product of the three *guṇas* under the influence of spiritual ignorance. Understood as such, *pratiprasava* need not denote
the definitive ontological dissolution of manifest prakṛti for the yogin, but rather refers to the process of "subtilization" or sattvification of consciousness so necessary for the uprooting of misidentification — the incorrect world-view born of avidyā — or incapacity of the yogin to "see" from the yogic perspective of the seer (draṣṭṛ), our authentic identity as puruṣa.

To repeat, the discerning yogin sees (YS II.15) that this guṇic world or cycle of samsāric identity is itself dissatisfaction (duḥkha). But we must ask, what exactly is the problem being addressed in Yoga? What is at issue in Yoga philosophy? Is our ontological status as a human being involved in day to day existence forever in doubt, in fact in need of being negated, dissolved in order for authentic identity (puruṣa), immortal consciousness, finally to dawn? Having overcome all ignorance, is it then possible for a human being to live in the world and no longer be in conflict with oneself and the world? Can the guṇas cease to function in a state of ignorance and conflict in the mind? Must the guṇic constitution of the human mind and the whole of prakṛtic existence disappear, dissolve for the yogin? Can the ways of spiritual ignorance be replaced by an aware, conscious, nonafflicted identity and activity that transcend the conflict and confusion of ordinary, samsāric life? Can we live, according to Patañjali’s Yoga, an embodied state of freedom?

3. "Aloneness" (Kaivalya): Implications for an Embodied Freedom

In the classical traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, kaivalya, meaning "aloneness," is generally understood to be the state of the unconditional existence of puruṣa. In the YS, kaivalya can refer more precisely to the "aloneness of seeing" (drṣeḥ kaivalyam) which, as Patañjali states, follows from the disappearance of ignorance (avidyā) and its creation of saṃyoga — the conjunction of the seer (puruṣa) and the seeable (i.e., citta, guṇas) — explained by Vyāsa as a mental superimposition (adhyāropa, YB II.18). "Aloneness" thus can be

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21 The term kaivalya comes from kevala, meaning 'alone'. Feuerstein (1979a: 75) also translates kaivalya as "aloneness" but with a metaphysical or ontological emphasis that implies the absolute separation of puruṣa and prakṛti.
22 YS II.25 (p. 96): tadabhāvāt saṃyogābhiḥvā hānām taddṛṣeḥ kaivalyam.
construed as puruṣa’s innate capacity for pure, unbroken, non-attached seeing/perceiving, observing or “knowing” of the content of the mind (citta).\(^{23}\) In an alternative definition, Patañjali explains kaivalya as the “return to the origin” (pratiprasava) of the guṇas, which have lost all soteriological purpose for the puruṣa that has, as it were, recovered its transcendent autonomy.\(^{24}\) This sūtra (YS IV.34) also classifies kaivalya as the establishment in “own form/nature” (svarūpa), and the power of higher awareness (citiśakti).\(^{25}\) Although the seer’s (draṣṭṛ/puruṣa) capacity for “seeing” is an unchanging yet dynamic power of consciousness that should not be truncated in any way, nevertheless our karmically distorted or skewed perceptions vitiate against the natural fullness of “seeing.” Having removed the “failure-to-see” (adarśana), the soteriological purpose of the guṇas in the saṃśāric condition of the mind is fulfilled; the mind is relieved of its former role of being a vehicle for avidyā, the locus of egoity and misidentification, and the realization of pure seeing — the nature of the seer alone — takes place.

According to yet another sūtra (YS III.55), we are told that kaivalya is established when the satvā of consciousness has reached a state of purity analogous to that of the puruṣa.\(^{26}\) Through the process of subtilization or “return to the origin” (pratiprasava) in the satvā, the transformation (parināma) of the mind (citta) takes place at the deepest level bringing about a radical change in perspective: the former impure, fabricated states constituting a fractured identity of self are dissolved resulting in the complete purification of mind. Through knowledge (in samprajñāta-samādhi) and its transcendence (in asamprajñāta-samādhi) self-identity overcomes its lack of

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\(^{23}\) YS II.20 and IV.18.

\(^{24}\) YS IV.34 (p. 207): puruṣārthaśuṇyānāṃ guṇānām pratiprasavāḥ kaivalyāṃ svarūpa-pratisthāḥ vā citiśaktir iti.

\(^{25}\) See n. 24 above.

\(^{26}\) YS III.55 (p. 174): sattva-puruṣaṅyok śuddhisāmye kaivalyāṃ iti. One must be careful not to characterize the state of satvā itself as liberation or kaivalya, for without the presence of puruṣa the mind (as reflected consciousness) could not function in its most transparent aspect as satvā. It is not accurate, according to Yoga philosophy, to say that the satvā is equivalent to liberation itself. The question of the nature of the guṇas from the enlightened perspective is an interesting one. In the Bhagavadgītā (II.45) Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to become free from the three guṇas and then gives further instructions to be established in eternal satvā (beingness, light, goodness, clarity, knowledge), free of dualities, free of acquisition-and-possession, Self-possessed (nirvandvo nityasattvastho niryogalqema ātmavān). It would appear from the above instructions that the nature of the satvā being referred to here transcends the limitations of the nature of sattvā-guna which can still have a binding effect in the form of attachment to joy and knowledge. It is, however, only by first overcoming rajas and tamas that liberation is possible.
intrinsic grounding, a lack sustained and exacerbated by the web of afflictions in the form of attachment, aversion, and the compulsive clinging to life based on the fear of extinction. The yogin is no longer dependent on liberating knowledge (mind-sattva),\textsuperscript{27} is no longer attached to vṛtti as a basis for self-identity. Cessation, it must be emphasized, does not mark a definitive disappearance of the guṇas from puruṣa’s view.\textsuperscript{28} For the liberated yogin, the guṇas cease to exist in the form of avidyā and its saṃskāras, vṛttis, and false or fixed ideas (pratyaya) of selfhood that formerly veiled true identity. The changing guṇic modes cannot alter the yogin’s now purified and firmly established consciousness. The mind has been liberated from the egocentric world of attachment to things prakṛtic. Now the yogin’s identity (as puruṣa), disassociated from ignorance, is untouched, unaffected by qualities of mind,\textsuperscript{29} uninfluenced by the vṛttis constituted of the three guṇas. The mind and puruṣa attain to a sameness of purity (YS III.55), of harmony, balance, evenness, and a workability together: the mind appearing in the nature of puruṣa.\textsuperscript{30}

It can be stated that kaivalya in no way destroys or negates the personality of the yogin, but is an unconditional state in which all the obstacles or distractions preventing an immanent and purified relationship or engagement of person with nature and spirit (puruṣa) have been removed. The mind, which previously functioned under the sway of ignorance coloring and blocking our perception of authentic identity, has now become purified and no longer operates as a locus of misidentification, confusion, and dissatisfaction (duḥkha). Sattva, the finest quality (guṇa) of the mind, has the capacity to be perfectly lucid/transparent, like a dust-free mirror in which the light of puruṣa is clearly reflected and the discriminative discernment (vivekakhyāti)\textsuperscript{31} between puruṣa and the sattva of the mind (as the finest nature of the seeable) can take place.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{27} YB III.55 (p. 175): na hi dagdhakleśabijasya jñāne punar apekṣā kācid asti. “When the seeds of afflictions have been scorched there is no longer any dependence at all on further knowledge.”
  \item \textsuperscript{28} H. Aranya writes (1963: 123) that in the state of nirodha the guṇas “do not die out but their unbalanced activity due to non-equilibrium that was taking place ... only ceases on account of the cessation of the cause (avidyā or nescience) which brought about their contact.”
  \item \textsuperscript{29} YB IV.25 (p. 201): puruṣas tv asatyām avidyāyām suddhaś cittadharmai aparāmrśta.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} YB I.41.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} YS II.26.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} YS III.49.
\end{itemize}
The crucial (ontological) point to be made here is that in the “aloneness” of kaivalya prakṛti ceases to perform an obstructing role. In effect, prakṛti herself has become liberated from avidyā’s grip including the misconceptions, misappropriations, and misguided relations implicit within a world of afflicted identity. The mind has been transformed, liberated from the egocentric world of attachment, its former afflicted nature abolished; and self-identity left alone in its “own form” or true nature as puruṣa is never again confused with all the relational acts, intentions, and volitions of empirical existence. Vyāsa explicitly states that emancipation happens in the mind and does not literally apply to puruṣa which is by definition already free and therefore has no intrinsic need to be released from the fetters of saṃsāric existence. While this is true from the enlightened perspective, it would not be inappropriate to suggest that figuratively speaking, in kaivalya, puruṣa and prakṛti are simultaneously liberated in that, all ignorance having been removed, they are both “known,” included, and are therefore free to be what they are. There being no power of misidentification remaining in nirbijā-samādhi, the mind ceases to operate within the context of the afflictions, karmic accumulations, and consequent cycles of saṃsāra implying a mistaken identity of selfhood subject to birth and death.

The Yoga-Sūtra has often been regarded as calling for the severance of puruṣa from prakṛti; concepts such as liberation, cessation, detachment/dispassion, and so forth have been interpreted in an explicitly negative light. Max Müller, citing Bhoja Rāja’s commentary (eleventh century CE), refers to Yoga as “separation” (viyoga). More recently, numerous other scholars have endorsed this interpretation, that is, the absolute separateness of puruṣa and prakṛti. In asserting the absolute separation of puruṣa and prakṛti, Vijñāna Bhikṣu insists (YY IV.34: 141) that kaivalya is a state of liberation for both puruṣa and prakṛti each reaching its respective natural or intrinsic state. He then, however, cites the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (62) where it is stated that no puruṣa is bound, liberated or transmigrates. It is only prakṛti abiding in her various forms that transmigrates, is bound and becomes liberated. For references to Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s YY I have consulted T. S. Rukmani (1981, 1983, 1987, 1989).

33 Vijñāna Bhikṣu insists (YY IV.34: 141) that kaivalya is a state of liberation for both puruṣa and prakṛti each reaching its respective natural or intrinsic state. He then, however, cites the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (62) where it is stated that no puruṣa is bound, liberated or transmigrates. It is only prakṛti abiding in her various forms that transmigrates, is bound and becomes liberated. For references to Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s YY I have consulted T. S. Rukmani (1981, 1983, 1987, 1989).
34 YB II.18.
35 YS 1.51 and III.8: the state of nirbijā or “seedless” samādhi can be understood as the liberated state where no “seed” of ignorance remains, any further potential for affliction (i.e., as mental impressions or saṃskāras) having been purified from the mind.
36 RM I.1 (p. 1).
37 Müller (1899: 309).
38 See, for example, Eliade (1969), Koelman (1970), Feuerstein (1979a), and Larson (1987).
scholars and non-scholars alike have tended to disregard the possibility for other (fresh) hermeneutical options, and this radical, dualistic metaphysical closure of sorts surrounding the nature and meaning of Patañjali’s Yoga has proved detrimental to a fuller understanding of the Yoga Darśana by continuing a tradition based on an isolationistic, one-sided reading (or perhaps misreading) of the YS and Vyāsa’s commentary. Accordingly, the absolute separation of puruṣa and prakṛti can only be interpreted as a disembodied state implying death to the physical body. To dislodge the sage from bodily existence is to undermine the integrity of the pedagogical context that lends so much credibility or “weight” to the Yoga system. Thus it need not be assumed that in Yoga liberation coincides with physical death. 39 This would only allow for a soteriological end state of “disembodied liberation” (videhamukti). What is involved in Yoga is the death of the atomistic, egoic identity, the dissolution of the karmic web of saṁsāra that generates notions of one being a subject trapped in the prakṛtic constitution of a particular body-mind.

Not being content with mere theoretical knowledge, Yoga is committed to a practical way of life. To this end, Patañjali included in his presentation of Yoga an outline of the “eight-limbed” path (aṣṭāṅga-yoga)40 dealing with the physical, moral, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the yogin, an integral path that emphasizes organic continuity, balance, and integration in contrast to the discontinuity, imbalance, and disintegration inherent in saṁyoga. The idea of cosmic balance and of the mutual support and upholding of the

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39 I am here echoing some of the points made by Chapple in his paper entitled, “Citta-ṛṣṭti and Reality in the Yoga Śūtra” in Śāṅkha-Yoga: Proceedings of the IASWR Conference, 1981 (Stoney Brook, New York: The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, 1983), pp. 103-119. See also Chapple and Kelly (1990: 5) where the authors state: “... kaivalyam ... is not a catatonic state nor does it require death.” SK 67 acknowledges that even the “potter’s wheel” continues to turn because of the force of past impressions (saṃskāras); but in Yoga, higher dispassion and asamprajñātā eventually exhaust all the impressions or karmic residue. Through a continued program of ongoing purification Yoga allows for the possibility of an embodied state of freedom utterly unburdened by the effects of past actions. As such Yoga constitutes an advance over the fatalistic perspective in Śāṅkha where the “wheel of saṁsāra” continues (after the initial experience of liberating knowledge) until, in the event of separation from the body, prakṛti ceases and unending “isolation” (kaivalya) is attained (SK 68). In any case, the yogic state of supracognitive samādhi or entstasy goes beyond the liberating knowledge of viveka in the Śāṅkhyan system in that the yogin must develop dispassion even toward discriminative discernment itself. For more on an analysis of the notion of liberation in Śāṅkha and Yoga see C. Chapple’s chapter on “Living Liberation in Śāṅkha and Yoga” in Living Liberation in Hindu Thought, ed. by Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Mumme (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), and Whicher (1999).

40 YS II.29; see my discussion on aṣṭāṅga-yoga in (1997) “Nirodha, Yoga Praxis and the Transformation of the Mind.”
various parts of nature and society is not foreign to Yoga thought. Vyāsa deals with the theory of “nine causes” (nava kāraṇāni) or types of causation according to tradition. The ninth type of cause is termed dhṛti — meaning “support” or “sustenance.” Based on Vyāsa’s explanation of dhṛti we can see how mutuality and sustenance are understood as essential conditions for the maintenance of the natural and social world. There is an organic interdependence of all living entities wherein all (i.e., the elements, animals, humans, and divine bodies) work together for the “good” of the whole and for each other.

Far from being exclusively a subjectively oriented and introverted path of withdrawal from life, classical Yoga acknowledges the intrinsic value of “support” and “sustenance” and the interdependence of all living (embodied) entities, thus upholding organic continuity, balance, and integration within the natural and social world. Having achieved that level of insight (prajñā) that is “truth-bearing” (rtambharā), the yogin perceives the natural order (ṛta) of cosmic existence, “unites” with, and embodies that order. To fail to see clearly (adarsaṇa) is to fall into disorder, disharmony, and conflict with oneself and the world. In effect, to be ensconced in ignorance implies a disunion with the natural order of life and inextricably results in a failure to embody that order. Through Yoga one gains proper access to the world and is therefore established in right relationship to the world. Far from being denied or renounced, the world, for the yogin, has become transformed, properly engaged.

We need not read Patañjali as saying that the culmination of all yogic endeavor — kaivalya — is a static finality or inactive, isolated, solipsistic state of being. Kaivalya can be seen to incorporate an integrated, psychological consciousness along with the autonomy of pure consciousness, yet pure consciousness to which the realm of the guṇas (e.g., psychophysical being) is completely attuned and integrated. On the level of individuality, the yogin has found his (her) place in the world at large, “fitting into the whole.”

In the last chapter of the YS (Kaivalya-Pāda), “aloneness” (kaivalya) is said to ensue upon the attainment of dharmamegha- samādhi, the “cloud of dharma” samādhi. At this level of practice, the

41 YB II.28 (pp. 99-101).
42 YS I.48.
yogin has abandoned any search for (or attachment to) reward or "profit" from his or her meditational practice; a non-acquisitive attitude (akusīda) must take place at the highest level of yogic discipline.Vyāsa emphasizes that the identity of puruṣa is not something to be acquired (upādeya) or discarded (heya). The perspective referred to as "Pātañjala Yoga Darśana" culminates in a permanent state of clear "seeing" brought about through the discipline of Yoga. Yoga thus incorporates both an end state or "goal" and a process.

Dharmamegha-samādhi presupposes that the yogin has cultivated higher dispassion (para-vairāgya) — the means to the enstatic consciousness realized in asamprajñāta-samādhi. Thus, dharmamegha-samādhi is more or less a synonym of asamprajñāta-samādhi and can even be understood as the consummate phase of the awakening disclosed in enstasy, the final step on the long and arduous yogic journey to authentic identity and "aloneness." A permanent

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44 YS IV.29 (p. 202): prasamkhya'nye 'py akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāter dharmameghah samādhiḥ.
45 YB I.15 (p. 78): tatra hātuḥ svarūpam upādeyaṁ vā heyaṁ vā na bhavitum arhati. "Here, the true nature/identity of the one who is liberated cannot be something to be acquired or discarded."
46 Thus the term "Yoga" (like the terms "niruddha" and "samādhi") is ambiguous in that it means both the process of purification and illumination and the final result of liberation or "aloneness." Due to Yoga's traditional praxis-orientation it becomes all too easy to reduce Yoga to a "means only" approach to well-being and spiritual enlightenment. In the light of its popularity in the Western world today in which technique and practice have been emphasized often to the exclusion of philosophical/theoretical understanding and a proper pedagogical context, there is a great danger in simply reifying practice whereby practice becomes something the ego does for the sake of its own security. Seen here, practice — often then conceived as a superior activity in relation to all other activities — becomes all-important in that through the activity called "practice" the ego hopes and strives to become "enlightened." Practice thus becomes rooted in a future-oriented perspective largely motivated out of a fear of not becoming enlightened; it degenerates into a form of selfishly appropriated activity where "means" become ends-in-themselves. Moreover, human relationships become instruments for the greater "good" of Self-realization. Thus rationalized, relationships are seen as having only a tentative nature. The search for enlightenment under the sway of this kind of instrumental rationality/reasoning (that is, the attempt to "gain" something from one's practice, i.e., enlightenment) never really goes beyond the level of ego and its compulsive search for permanent security which of course, according to Yoga thought, is an inherently afflicted state of affairs. To be sure, the concern of Yoga is to (re)discover puruṣa, to be restored to true identity thus overcoming dissatisfaction, fear and misidentification by uprooting and eradicating the disease of ignorance (avidyā). Yet, as W. Halbfass puts it, true identity "cannot be really lost, forgotten or newly acquired" (1991: 252) for liberation "is not to be produced or accomplished in a literal sense, but only in a figurative sense" (ibid: 251). Sufficient means for the sattification of the mind are, however, both desirable and necessary in order to prepare the yogin for the necessary identity shift from egoity to puruṣa. By acknowledging that "aloneness" cannot be an acquired state resulting from or caused by yogic methods and techniques, and that puruṣa cannot be known (YB III.35), acquired or discarded (YB II.15), Yoga in effect transcends its own result-orientation as well as the categories of means and ends.
47 YB I.18.
identity shift — from the perspective of the human personality to 
*_puruṣa_* — takes place. Now free from any dependence on or sub-
ordination to knowledge or _vṛtti_, and detached from the world of 
misidentification (_saṃyoga_), the yogin yet retains the purified guṇic 
powers of virtue including illuminating “knowledge of all”^{49} (due to 
purified _sattva_), nonafflicted activity^{50} (due to purified _rajas_), and a 
healthy, stable body-form (due to purified _tamas_).

_YS_ IV.30 declares: “From that [dharmamegha-samādhi] there is 
the cessation of afflicted action.”^{51} Hence the binding influence of the 
_*guṇas_* in the form of the afflictions, past actions, and misguided 
relationships is overcome; what remains is a “cloud of _dharma_” which 
includes an “eternity of knowledge” free from all impure covering 
(_āvarana-mala, YS_ IV.31) or veiling affliction and where “little 
(remains) to be known.”^{52} The eternality or endlessness of knowledge 
is better understood metaphorically rather than literally: It is not 
knowledge expanded to infinity but implies _puruṣa_-realization which 
transcends the limitations and particulars of knowledge (_vṛtti_).

The culmination of the Yoga system is found when, following 
from _dharmamegha-samādhi_, the mind and actions are freed from 
misidentification and affliction and one is no longer deluded/confused 
with regard to one’s true form (_svarūpa_) or intrinsic identity. At this 
stage of practice the yogin is disconnected (_viyoga_) from all patterns

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^{49} _YS_ III.49 and III.54.
^{50} _YS_ IV.7; see also _YS_ IV.30 (n. 51 below).
^{51} _YS_ IV.30 (p. 202): _tatah klesakarmānivṛttih_. Thus, it may be said that to dwell without 
defilement in a “cloud of _dharma_” is the culminating description by Patañjali of what tradition 
later referred to as living liberation (_jivannakhi_). To be sure, there is a “brevity of description” in 
the _YS_ regarding the state of liberation. Only sparingly, with reservation (one might add, caution) 
and mostly in metaphorical terms does Patañjali speak about the qualities exhibited by the 
liberated yogin. Chapple (1996: 116, see below) provides three possible reasons for this “brevity 
of description” regarding living liberation in the context of the _YS_ (and _Śūnyatā-vāda, i.e., the SK of 
Īśvara Kṛṣṇa_): (1) He states: “(T)he genre in which both texts were written does not allow for the 
sort of narrative and poetic embellishment found in the epics and Purāṇas.” (2) Perhaps, as 
Chapple suggests “... a deliberate attempt has been made to guarantee that the recognition of a 
liberated being remains in the hands of a spiritual preceptor.” What is to be noted here is that the 
oral and highly personalized lineage tradition within Yoga stresses the authority of the _guru_ which 
guards against false claims to spiritual attainment on the part of others and thereby “helps to 
ensure the authenticity and integrity of the tradition.” (3) A further reason for brevity “could hinge 
on the logical contradiction that arises due to the fact that the notion of self is so closely identified 
with _ahamkāra_ [the mistaken ego sense or afflicted identity]. It would be an oxymoron for a 
person to say [‘I am liberated.’] The Self ( _puruṣa_ ) is of course not an object which can be seen 
by itself thus laying emphasis, as Chapple points out, on the ineffable nature of the liberative state 
which transcends mind-content, all marks and activity itself.

^{52} _YS_ IV.31 (p. 203): _tadā sarvāvaraṇanāmalāpetasya jñānasya ‘nanyājñāneyam alpam_.

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of action motivated by the ego. According to both Vyāsa\textsuperscript{53} and the sixteenth century commentator Vijñāna Bhikṣu,\textsuperscript{54} one to whom this high state of purification takes place is designated as a \textit{jīvannukta}: one who is liberated while still alive (i.e., embodied or living liberation).

By transcending the normative conventions and obligations of karmic behavior, the yogin acts morally not as an extrinsic response and out of obedience to an external moral code of conduct, but as an intrinsic response and as a matter of natural, purified inclination. The stainless luminosity of pure consciousness is revealed as one’s fundamental nature. The yogin does not act \textit{saṃsārically} and ceases to act from the perspective of a delusive sense of self confined within \textit{prakṛti}’s domain. Relinquishing all obsessive or selfish concern with the results of activity, the yogin remains wholly detached from the egoic fruits of action.\textsuperscript{55} This does not imply that the yogin loses all orientation for action. Only attachment (and compulsive, inordinate desire), not action itself, sets in motion the law of moral causation (\textit{karma}) by which a person is implicated in \textit{saṃsāra}. The yogin is said to be nonattached to either virtue or non-virtue, and is no longer oriented within the egological patterns of thought as in the epistemically distorted condition of \textit{saṃyoga}. This does not mean, as some scholars have misleadingly concluded, that the spiritual adept or yogin is free to commit immoral acts,\textsuperscript{56} or that the yogin is motivated by selfish concerns.\textsuperscript{57}

Actions must not only be executed in the spirit of unselfishness (i.e., sacrifice) or detachment, they must also be ethically sound, reasonable and justifiable. Moreover, the yogin’s spiritual journey — far from being an “a-moral process”\textsuperscript{58} — is a highly moral process!

\textsuperscript{53} See \textit{YB} IV.30 (pp. 202-203): \textit{klesakarmanivrttau jīvann eva vidvān vimukto bhavati.} On cessation of afflicted action, the knower is released while yet living."

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{YV} IV.30 (pp. 123-124). Elsewhere in his \textit{Yoga-Sāra-Samgraha} (G. Jha trans., p. 17) Vijñāna Bhikṣu tells us that the yogin who is “established in the state of dharmamegha-samādhi is called a \textit{jīvannukta}” (... \textit{dharmameghah samādhiḥ asyāmavasthāyāṁ jīvannukta ity ucyate). Vijñāna Bhikṣu is critical of Vedāntins (i.e., Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta school) that, he says, associate the \textit{jīvannukta} with ignorance (‘avidyā-kleśa’) — probably because of the liberated being’s continued link with the body — despite Yoga’s insistence on the complete overcoming of the afflictions.

\textsuperscript{55} This is the essence of Kṛṣṇa’s teaching in the \textit{Bhagavadgītā} on \textit{karmayoga}; see, for example, \textit{BG} IV.20.


\textsuperscript{58} See Feuerstein (1979a: 81).
The yogin’s commitment to the sattvification of consciousness, including the cultivation of moral virtues such as compassion (karuṇā)\(^ {59}\) and nonviolence (ahīṃsā),\(^ {60}\) is not an “a-moral” enterprise, nor is it an expression of indifference, aloofness, or an uncaring attitude to others. Moral disciplines are engaged as a natural outgrowth of intelligent (sattvic) self-understanding, insight, and commitment to self-transcendence that takes consciousness out of (ecstasis) its identification with the rigid structure of the monadic ego, thereby reversing the inveterate tendency of this ego to inflate itself at the expense of its responsibility in relation to others.

Having defined the “goal” of Yoga as “aloneness” (kaivalya), the question must now be asked: What kind of “aloneness” was Patañjali talking about? “Aloneness,” I suggest, is not the isolation of the seer (dṛṣṭr, puruṣa) separate from the seeable (dṛṣṭya, prakṛti), as is unfortunately far too often maintained as the goal of Yoga, but refers to the “aloneness” of the power of “seeing” (YS II.20, 25) in its innate purity and clarity without any epistemological distortion and moral defilement. The cultivation of nirodha uproots the compulsive tendency to reify the world and oneself (i.e., that pervading sense of separate ego irrevocably divided from the encompassing world) with an awareness that reveals the transcendent, yet immanent seer (puruṣa). Through clear “seeing” (dṛṣṭi) the purpose of Yoga is fulfilled, and the yogin, free from all misidentification and impure karmic residue (as in the former contextual sphere of cittavṛtti), gains full, immediate access to the world. By accessing the world in such an open and direct manner, in effect “uniting” (epistemologically) with the world, the yogin ceases to be encumbered by egoism (i.e., asmitā and its egoic attitudes and identity patterns), which, enmeshed in conflict and confusion and holding itself as separate from the world, misappropriates the world.

Yoga can be seen to unfold — in samādhi — states of epistemic oneness that reveal the non-separation of knower, knowing, and the known (YS I.41) grounding our identity in a nonafflicted mode of action. Kaivalya implies a power of “seeing” in which the dualisms rooted in our egocentric patterns of attachment, aversion, fear, and so

59 YS I.33 (p. 38): maitrikaruṇām uditopeksānām sukhaduhkhapunyāpunyāvisayānāṁ bhāvanātāṁ cittaprasādanām. “The mind is made pure and clear from the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, happiness and equanimity in conditions or toward objects of joy, sorrow, merit or demerit respectively.”

60 YS II.35.
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forth have been transformed into unselfish ways of being with others.61 The psychological, ethical, and social implications of this kind of identity transformation are, needless to say, immense. I am suggesting that Yoga does not destroy or anesthetize our feelings and emotions thereby encouraging neglect and indifference toward others. On the contrary, the process of “cessation” (nirodha) steadies one for a life of compassion, discernment, and service informed by a “seeing” that is able to understand (literally meaning “to stand among, hence observe”) — and is in touch with — the needs of others. What seems especially relevant for our understanding of Yoga ethics is the enhanced capacity generated in Yoga for empathic identification with the object one seeks to understand. This is a far cry from the portrayal of the yogin as a disengaged figure, psychologically and physically removed from the human relational sphere, who in an obstinate and obtrusive fashion severs all ties with the world. Such an image of a wise yogin merely serves to circumscribe our vision of humanity and, if anything else, stifle the spirit by prejudicing a spiritual, abstract (and disembodied) realm over and against nature and our human embodiment. In Yoga philosophy “seeing” is not only a cognitive term but implies purity of mind, that is, it has moral content and value. Nor is “knowledge” (jñāna, vidyā) in the Yoga tradition to be misconstrued as a “bloodless” or “heartless” gnosis.

This paper therefore suggests that through the necessary transformation of consciousness brought about in samādhi, an authentic and fruitful coherence of self-identity, perception, and activity emerges out of the former fragmented consciousness in samyoga. If Patañjali’s perception of the world of forms and differences had been destroyed or discarded, how could he have had such insight into Yoga and the intricacies and subtle nuances of the unenlightened state?62 If through nirodha the individual form and the whole world had been canceled for Patañjali, he would more likely have spent the rest of his days in the inactivity and isolation of transcendent oblivion rather than present Yoga philosophy to others! Rather than being handicapped by the exclusion of thinking, perceiving, experiencing, or activity, the liberated yogin actualizes the potential to live a fully integrated life in the world. I conclude here

61 YS I.33; see n. 59 above.

62 Although the historical identity of Patañjali the Yoga master is not known, we are assuming that Patañjali was, as the tradition would have it, an enlightened Yoga adept.
that there is no reason why the liberated yogin cannot be portrayed as a vital, creative, thoughtful, empathetic, balanced, happy, and wise person. Having adopted an integrative orientation to life, the enlightened being can endeavor to transform, enrich, and ennoble the world. I am therefore suggesting that there is a rich affective, moral, and cognitive as well as spiritual potential inherent in the realization of puruṣa, the "aloneness" of the power of consciousness/seeing.

Yoga presupposes the integration of knowledge and activity; there can be no scission between theoria and praxis. The Yoga-Sūtra is a philosophical text where praxis is deemed to be essential. Without actual practice the theory that informs Yoga would have no authentic meaning. Yet without examination and reflection there would be no meaningful striving for liberation, no "goal," as it were, to set one's sight on. In an original, inspiring, and penetrating style, Patañjali bridges metaphysics and ethics, transcendence and immanence, and contributes to the Hindu fold a form of philosophical investigation that, to borrow J. Taber's descriptive phrase for another context, can properly be called a "transformative philosophy." That is to say, it is a philosophical perspective which "does not stand as an edifice isolated from experience; it exists only insofar as it is realized in experience."63

4. Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that puruṣa indeed has some precedence over prakṛti in Patañjali's system, for puruṣa is what is ordinarily "missing" or concealed in human life and is ultimately the state of consciousness one must awaken to in Yoga. The liberated state of "aloneness" (kaivalya) need not denote either an ontological superiority of puruṣa or an exclusion of prakṛti. Kaivalya can be positively construed as an integration of both principles — an integration that, I have argued, is what is most important for Yoga. I have proposed that the Yoga-Sūtra does not uphold a "path" of liberation that ultimately renders puruṣa and prakṛti incapable of "cooperating" together. Rather, the Yoga-Sūtra seeks to "unite" these two principles without the presence of any defiled understanding, to bring

I would like them “together,” properly aligning them in a state of balance, harmony, and a clarity of knowledge in the integrity of being and action.

Both morality and perception (cognition) are essential channels through which human consciousness, far from being negated or suppressed, is transformed and illuminated. Yoga combines discerning knowledge with an emotional, affective, and moral sensibility allowing for a participatory epistemology that incorporates the moral amplitude for empathic identification with the world, that is, with the objects or persons one seeks to understand. The enhanced perception gained through Yoga must be interwoven with Yoga’s rich affective and moral dimensions to form a spirituality that does not become entangled in a web of antinominanism, but which retains the integrity and vitality to transform our lives and the lives of others in an effective manner. By upholding an integration of the moral and the mystical, Yoga supports a reconciliation of the prevalent tension within Hinduism between (1) spiritual engagement and self-identity within the world (pravṛtti) and (2) spiritual disengagement from worldliness and self-identity that transcends the world (nivṛtti). Yoga discerns and teaches a balance between these two apparently conflicting orientations.

This paper has attempted to counter the radically dualistic, isolationistic, and ontologically oriented interpretations of Yoga presented by many scholars — where the full potentialities of our human embodiment are constrained within a radical, rigid, dualistic metaphysical structure — and propose instead an open-ended, morally and epistemologically oriented hermeneutic that frees Yoga of the long-standing conception of spiritual isolation, disembodiment, self-denial, and world-negation and thus from its pessimistic image. Our interpretation does not impute that kaivalya denotes a final incommensurability between spirit and matter. While Patañjali can be understood as having adopted a provisional, practical, dualistic metaphysics, there is no proof that his system ends in duality.

As well as being one of the seminal texts on yogic technique and transformative/liberative approaches within Indian philosophy, Patañjali’s Yoga-Sūtra has to this day remained one of the most influential spiritual guides in Hinduism. In addition to a large number of people within India, millions of Westerners are actively practicing some form of Yoga influenced by Patañjali’s thought clearly
demonstrating Yoga’s relevance for today as a discipline that can transcend cultural, religious, and philosophical barriers. The universal and universalizing potential of Yoga makes it one of India’s finest contributions to our struggle for self-definition, moral integrity, and spiritual renewal today. The main purpose of this paper has been to consider a fresh approach in which to reexamine and reassess classical Yoga philosophy, and to help to articulate in a fuller way what I have elsewhere referred to as the integrity of the Yoga Darśana.64 Thus, it is my hope that some of the suggestions presented here can function as a catalyst for bringing Patañjali’s thought into a more fruitful dialogue and encounter with other religious and philosophical traditions both within and outside of India. And, indeed, the approach I have taken can readily move in new directions by addressing contemporary concerns, for example, of issues related to ecology and the overwhelming need today to recover mutually enhancing relations between human beings and the earth.

ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Bhagavadgītā</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Rāja-Mārtanda of Bhoja Rāja (ca eleventh century CE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Sāmkhya-Kārikā of Iśvara Kṛṣṇa (ca fourth-fifth century CE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Tattva-Vaiśārada of Vācaspati Miśra (ca ninth century CE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YB</td>
<td>Yoga-Bhāṣya of Vyāsa (ca fifth-sixth century CE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YS</td>
<td>Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali (ca second-third century CE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSS</td>
<td>Yoga-Sūra-Samgraha of Viśiṣṭa Bhikṣu (ca sixteenth century CE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YV</td>
<td>Yoga-Vārttika of Viśiṣṭa Bhikṣu (ca sixteenth century CE)</td>
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SELECT REFERENCES


64 See Whicher (1998).


Pāṭanjalayogadarsana, with the Vyāsa-Bhāṣya of Vyāsa, the Tattva-Vaiśāradī of Vācaspāti Miśra and the Rāja-Mārtanda of Bhoja Rāja (1904). Edited by Kāśīnātha Śāstri Āgāse. Poona: Anandārāma Sanskrit Series, 47.


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