

# THE MIND (*CITTA*): ITS NATURE, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING IN CLASSICAL YOGA (1)

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper will focus on Yoga epistemology and psychology in Patañjali's (ca third century CE) Classical Yoga by examining the nature, structure and functioning of the mind (*citta*), the mind being the locus of consciousness through which we "know" and "experience" ourselves and the world. Yoga offers an acute analysis of the role played by the mind in the act of cognition and accounts for the decisive influence that the psyche exerts over human perception, cognition and human behavior, ethical or otherwise. This paper attempts to lay a foundation for understanding definitions and explanations of key terms in the *YS* with an epistemological emphasis rather than the ontological emphasis normally given to them.

In Yoga, the purpose of the human mind is not limited simply to the production of concepts that "correspond" to or are distinct representations of a presupposed external reality, as in the Western Cartesian model of understanding. Neither is the mind, according to Yoga, restricted to the role of imposing its own order on the world, as is the case, for example, in the Kantian epistemology which states that all human knowledge of the world is in some sense determined by subjective principles. As we will see, in Yoga both of the above epistemological dualisms — themselves the product of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) — are understood and transcended in a larger and subtler understanding of the human mind. The truth of the world is realized within and through the human mind.

Sāṃkhya posits an analysis of human awareness (*buddhi*, *vṛtti*) or mental processes which Yoga more or less incorporates and which involves the principles (*tattvas*) of *prakṛti*. Human awareness functions through the "inner instrumentality" (*antahkarana*) comprised of the following three principles: (1) the mind-organ (*manas*) which assimilates and synthesizes sense impressions acting as a conveyor of information and bringing the awareness in contact with external objects; (2) the "I-maker" (*ahaṃkāra*) or principle of individuation which acts as a locus of self-identity; and (3) the intellect (*buddhi*), the finest or most subtle aspect of human awareness, the faculty of judgement or decision which determines overall perspective and

intentionality and makes understanding possible.<sup>1</sup> *Puruṣa* provides the “frame” for the above mental processes,<sup>2</sup> and though omnipresent, *puruṣa* remains “unseen” and transcendent of *prakṛti*’s activities.

In the consensus reality of egoic states of identity, *puruṣa* is as if “covered over,”<sup>3</sup> “veiled” or eclipsed by the dominance of the mental functions of the mind. Such states of mind define one’s normal perception of reality and perpetuate in the individual the sense that the existence of an objective world is a presupposed or given static “entity” in opposition to one’s notion of self. The unbridgeable gap between the individual subject or ego and object or world presupposed in the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm, a polarization which is itself part of the afflicted condition described in Yoga, can be effectively “bridged,” “remedied” or “healed” according to Yoga. To be sure, Patañjali’s Yoga is by no means a “Cartesian dichotomy”<sup>4</sup>: it does not articulate the experience of an autonomous subjective self as being fundamentally distinct and separate from an objective external world of nature that it seeks to understand and achieve a mastery over. The Sāṃkhyan dualism which Yoga utilizes is quite distinct from the Cartesian dualism which bifurcates reality into mental and material aspects. Sāṃkhya’s dualistic perspective — comprised of pure consciousness (*puruṣa*) and *prakṛti* as everything else including the mental and the material — asserts that psyche and the external world are not ultimately different. Both are forms of insentient or unconscious *prakṛti* — termed the “seeable” (*dṛśya*) in Yoga. In order to place Yoga (or Sāṃkhya) within the context of Cartesian duality, *puruṣa* would then have to be reduced to the level of Descartes “cognito” which in yogic terms is equivalent to the *asmitā-mātra* (i.e. *ahamkāra*)-*manas* level of *prakṛti* and in fact totally alienates human being from intrinsic self-identity (*puruṣa*). Such a Cartesian-like subject is, from Yoga’s perspective, a delusion or incorrect understanding of ourselves, an underlying misconception which is the very source of our suffering and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*).

In ancient and classical Hindu models of reality, the human mind takes on a more participatory and creative dimension. The Hindu view of the mind’s highest potentialities is expressed in both the early and later Upaniṣads<sup>5</sup> where, far from advancing “an unsophisticated

<sup>1</sup> On this see the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa and G. Larson’s (1969, 1987) explanation of these terms as used in Classical Sāṃkhya.

<sup>2</sup> A general schematic of perceptual processes is summarized in the *BG* (III, 42) and *Kaṭha Up* (III, 10 and VI, 7).

<sup>3</sup> In *YS* IV, 31 Patañjali uses the words *āvaraṇa-mala* meaning “impure coverings” or “veils” of ignorance which obstruct the eternity of knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> As G. Feuerstein (1980:24) mistakenly asserts.

<sup>5</sup> For a fruitful study of the creative potential of consciousness and activity in South Asian Indian thought see C. Chapple (1986). *Karma and Creativity*. (Albany: State University of New York Press). The following examples gathered from Chapple’s study (*Ibid*: 34-35) illustrate the

idealism,” the emphasis is on the crucial role of the mind in gaining access to the world thereby “exposing a complementarity between the perceived and the means of perception. Without the mind no world could be known nor could any action be accomplished.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the mind becomes the instrument used to cultivate either enslavement to worldly existence, or spiritual freedom.<sup>7</sup>

Patañjali’s Yoga deals first and foremost with the human mind. In the *YS* the relationship between *puruṣa* (*draṣṭṛ*, the “seer”) and *prakṛti* (*drśya*, the “seeable”) can be viewed as a dynamic interplay manifesting itself through the instrument of the human mind. The mind — as is the case in the Upaniṣads and Sāṃkhya — is thus of great significance for determining how the world and self are “experienced” and “known,” and finally, for “attaining” liberation from the saṃsāric enterprise of misidentification and ignorance. The pivot of the predicament of *puruṣa*’s “entanglement” with *prakṛti* is, I submit, epistemological and it is here that we should look for an opening into the meaning of Patañjali’s Yoga.

## CITTA

*Citta*, which will be translated as “mind,” is the perfect past participle of the verbal root *cit*, meaning: “to observe,” “perceive,” “to appear,” “to shine,” “to be conscious of,” “to understand,” “know,” “attend to.”<sup>8</sup>

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more creative dimension given to the mind in Upaniṣadic literature. The translations of the Upaniṣads are taken from S. Radhakrishnan (1953). The *Chandogya Up* III. 18, 1 (p. 397) asserts that “one should meditate on the mind (*manas*) as Brahman.” “For truly, beings here are born from mind (*manas*), when born, they live by mind and into mind, when departing, they enter”, states *Taittirīya Up* III. 4, 1 (p. 555). In *Aitareya Up* III. 1, 3 (p. 523) we are told that the “world” is guided by and established in intelligence (*prajñāna*). The *Kauṣītaki Up* (III, 6) (pp. 779-780) states that when intelligence is applied to any faculty, a unity is experienced; all elements (*bhūtas*) depend on the mind. Yet the mind is not an autonomous power which creates out of nothing; as the *Kauṣītaki Up* (III, 8) (p. 782) makes clear, a naive idealism is not implied.

<sup>6</sup> See C. Chapple (1986) p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the *Maitrī Up* which sheds some light on the relationship between the mind and spiritual emancipation. Under the condition of ignorance, the mind is burdened with various propensities that conceal its potential power. In this deluded state a person is karmically predisposed to repeat patterns of affliction remaining entrapped in the saṃsāric world. One can, however, become freed from the enslavement to action caused by ignorance by tapping into the inherent powers of the mind. *Maitrī Up* VI, 34 (pp. 845-846) asserts that worldly existence and identity are generated by thought (*citta*): “One’s own thought, indeed, is saṃsāra; let a man cleanse it by effort. What a man thinks, that he becomes, this is the eternal mystery.” This purification process involves both thought and action and necessitates a restructuring of the intentions that lead to human action. Freedom (*mokṣa*) involves a radical transformation of perspective so that the mind (and person) is no longer obsessed by the objects of sense due to the affects of past experience. The impure mind is purified, made tranquil, and the binding effects of saṃsāra are overcome. In the Sāṃkhya system the highest predisposition (*bhāva*) of the intellect (*buddhi*) is knowledge (*jñāna*) (*SK* 23) which alone can liberate the Sāṃkhyan from attachment and bondage.

<sup>8</sup> See Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 395.

The term *cit* is widely employed in Yoga and Vedānta scriptures to denote the transcendent consciousness or pure awareness of the Self (*ātman*). The term *citta* can mean: “thinking,” “reflecting,” “imagining,” “thought,” “intention,” “wish,” “the heart,” “mind,” “intelligence,” “reason.”<sup>9</sup> *Citta* is used in the *R̥g-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*<sup>10</sup> besides the more frequently employed terms *asu* (“life” or “vital force”) and *manas* (variously translated as “mind-organ” or “lower mind”), and it appears occasionally in the Upaniṣads<sup>11</sup> often translated as “thought.” Feuerstein writes: “It is applied wherever psycho-mental phenomena connected with conscious activity are to be expressed.”<sup>12</sup>

By the time of the *Mahābhārata* the word *citta* gained more popular usage as can be seen in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.<sup>13</sup> Unlike *manas* (which is used by most other orthodox schools to denote the concept “mind” in the loose sense mentioned earlier) the technical term *citta* is more specifically at home in Yoga and refers to phenomenal consciousness including both the ordinary level of awareness involving the conscious processes of the mind and the deeper level of the unconscious mind or psyche. The *citta* itself is not sentient.<sup>14</sup> Only *puruṣa* or pure consciousness is Self-luminous and “shines forth” unalloyed and unabated. Its “light” can be understood as being “reflected” or “mirrored” in insentient *prakṛti* (i.e. in the human mind) creating various self-reflective stages of the mind. This imagery is used by Vācaspati Miśra, who, in his gloss on *YS II, 20*, states concisely: “The casting of the *puruṣa*’s reflection into the mirror of *buddhi* [*citta*] is the way in which *puruṣa* can know the *buddhi*.”<sup>15</sup> When the higher transcendent consciousness (*citi*) assumes the form of the mind, the experience of one’s own intellect (and therefore of ideas, cognition, intention and volition) becomes possible (*YS IV, 22*).<sup>16</sup> Thus the mind becomes “consciousness-of” or is “conscious of” objects and can know

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> See (e.g.) *RV I, 163, 11* as well as *RV V, 79* and *X, 103, 12*; see also *Atharva-Veda I, 34, 2* (in the sense of ‘intent’ — a love spell).

<sup>11</sup> See (e.g.) *Maitrī Up VI, 34*. See also *Chandogya Up VII, 5, 2* (where the term appears in the following compounds: *cittavant*, *citta-ātman* and *citta-ekāyana*), and *Chandogya Up VII, 5, 3*. Cf. Radhakrishnan (1953) and R. E. Hume (1921) who both often translate *citta* as “thought.”

<sup>12</sup> G. Feuerstein (1980: 58).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *BG VI, 18* where Radhakrishnan (1948: 199) translates *citta* as “mind,” referring to the disciplined mind established in the Self (*ātman*). See also *BG VI, 19-20*, and *XIII, 9* where *sama-cittatva* (“equal-mindedness”) is regarded as a manifestation of knowledge (*jñāna*).

<sup>14</sup> *YS IV, 19*.

<sup>15</sup> *TV II, 20* (p. 87): *buddhidarpane puruṣapratibimbasaṃskṛāntir eva buddhipratisaṃveditvaṃ pumsah*. I will be saying more on the “reflection theory” in Yoga later on in this study.

<sup>16</sup> *YS IV, 22* (p. 197): *citer apratisaṃskramāyās tadākārāpattau svabuddhisamvedanam*, “When the unmoving higher consciousness assumes the form of that [mind] then there is perception of one’s own intellect.”

all purposes (i.e. the purpose of objects is to provide experience and liberation for each being) and perceive all objects. The mind is in a way a function of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* combined.<sup>17</sup> *Citta*'s consciousness<sup>18</sup> functions in the form of various modifications (*vyrttis*)<sup>19</sup> or "whirls" of consciousness often construed as cognitive conditions or mental processes which are constantly undergoing transformation and development (*pariṇāma*). Ordinary human consciousness is therefore an impermanent, fleeting or "whirling" state of consciousness. Therefore it is possible to clearly decipher between two radically different modes of consciousness as used in the *YS*: (1) pure, absolute consciousness, our intrinsic identity as *puruṣa* (Self); and (2) empirical consciousness or mind (*citta*) including mental activity (*vyrtti*) through which our perceptions and experiences inform and build a sense of person and self-identity. The latter is figuratively called "consciousness" because it is pure consciousness reflected in, or conditioned by, the mind.

In *SK* 33 the so-called "synonym" for *citta* — *antaḥkaraṇa* ("inner instrument") — is found which is understood to be made up of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*. In the *YS* the term *citta* (which I will translate as "mind") can refer to these three manifest principles (*tattvas*) of *prakṛti*, namely: the intellect, sense of self and mind-organ respectively. *Citta* can be viewed as the aggregate of the cognitive, volitional, affective activities, processes and functions of human consciousness, i.e. it consists of a grasping, intentional and volitional consciousness, and functions as the locus of empirical selfhood. Outside the purview of Classical Yoga *citta* is generally employed in a less technically precise sense and mostly refers to mind in general. This tendency is present in the commentarial literature on the *YS* where *citta* is often equated with *buddhi* or *manas*, these terms being used interchangeably.<sup>20</sup>

17 *YS* IV, 23 (p. 197): *draṣṭṛdrśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham*. "[Due to] the mind being coloured by the seer and the seeable, [it can therefore know] all purposes."

18 Koelman (1970: 22) argues that the English word "consciousness" (cognate with the Latin *con-scire*, the Greek *sun-oida*, and the Sanskrit *sam-vid*) implies duality and should, therefore, be used when referring to the "mind." He adds (*Ibid*), "The term 'awareness,' however ... excludes by its very morphological structure that connotation of duality" and should be used when referring to *puruṣa*. However, by qualifying the term "consciousness" as being either: (1) empirical (phenomenal), i.e. mind, or (2) pure or immortal, the distinction between *citta* and *puruṣa* is clarified.

19 *YS* I, 2 and I, 6-11. The *vyrttis* are discussed later in this study.

20 Vyāsa (*YB* II, 6) and Vācaspati (see, for example, *TV* II, 20) often use the two terms interchangeably. G. Koelman suggests (1970: 103) that since Yoga purports to be a "technique" for the transcendence of all experiential states, it "is entitled to equate the mind with that where the resulting elaboration is impressed, it takes the *terminus a quo* in lieu of the *terminus ad quem*. This is the reason why ... (*buddhi*) and mind (*manas*) are often used indiscriminately. This is also the reason why a more general, a more extensive term, comprising the whole complex organism of experience, occurs by far most frequently, viz. *citta* ..."

A variety of translations has been suggested for *citta* such as: "mind,"<sup>21</sup> "mind-stuff,"<sup>22</sup> "mind-complex,"<sup>23</sup> "consciousness,"<sup>24</sup> "awareness,"<sup>25</sup> "die innere Welt,"<sup>26</sup> "psyche,"<sup>27</sup> "psychic nature,"<sup>28</sup> "thinking principle"<sup>29</sup> and "internal organ."<sup>30</sup> Even though the term is not defined explicitly by Patañjali, its meaning can be ascertained from its occurrences in the *YS*. S. Dasgupta states that the *citta* stands for "all that is psychical in man."<sup>31</sup> Koelman asserts that *citta* is "surely not a separate *prakṛtic* evolute"<sup>32</sup>, meaning that it is not distinguishable from its component factors, those being *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas* whose emergence from primordial *prakṛti* is the theme of the Sāṃkhyan ontological scheme. Feuerstein calls *citta* "an umbrella term comprising all the functionings of the mind."<sup>33</sup> The sixteenth century commentator, Vijñāna Bhikṣu, supports the notion that *citta* comprises all of the above three *prakṛtic* principles and their internal functioning (including a volitional, grasping and intentional nature) by explaining that the word *citta* does not signify only one of the above faculties but the entire *antaḥkaraṇa*.<sup>34</sup>

Whereas Classical Sāṃkhya (i.e. Īśvara Kṛṣṇa) appears mostly concerned with showing the various components of the "inner world" — of the psyche — separately and in their evolutionary dependence, Patañjali, by his concept of *citta*, emphasizes the homogeneity or integral psychological constitution of the human personality as well as the processes (e.g. cognitive, affective, etc.) of empirical consciousness. Patañjali is only secondarily interested in an analytical categorization of the inner states. *Citta*, which is used a total of 22 times<sup>35</sup> in the *YS*, is a comprehensive concept which can be seen as embracing the various functionings of the ontological categories of

21 See R. Prasāda (1912: 5), S. Dasgupta (1920, 1922), I.K. Taimni (1961: 6), S. Purohit Swami (1973: 25), H. Āraṇya (1963 :7), Bangali Baba (1976: 106), Tola and Dragonetti (1987: 3), C. Chapple and E. Kelly (1990: 33).

22 See Swami Vivekānanda (1966), J.H. Woods (1914) and H. Zimmer (1951).

23 See G. Koelman (1970: 99).

24 See M. Eliade (1969: 36) and G. Feuerstein (1979a: 26).

25 See G. Larson (1987: 27).

26 See J. W. Hauer (1958: 239).

27 See H. Jacobi (1929).

28 See C. H. Johnston (1912).

29 See M. N. Dvivedī (1930) and J. R. Ballantyne (1852-53).

30 See G. Jha (1907).

31 S. Dasgupta (1920: 92)

32 G. Koelman (1970: 100).

33 G. Feuerstein (1980: 58).

34 *YV I, 2* (p. 33): *cittam antaḥkaraṇa sāmānyam ekasya ivāntaḥkaraṇasya vṛttibhedamātreṇa cānudhār vibhāgāt.*

35 *YS I: 2, 30, 33, 37; II, 54; III: 1, 9, 11, 12, 19, 34, 38; IV: 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26.*

*buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*, and yet as reflected consciousness in total it is a non-structural or a-hierarchical concept and cannot be equated or reduced to any one or more of the above evolutes in themselves.

The term *manas* ("lower mind" or "mind-organ") occurs only three times in the *YS*. *YS* I, 35 and II, 53 make use of the more traditional Hindu association of *manas* with the sense capacities which are to be controlled through sense withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*) and concentration (*dhāraṇā*).<sup>36</sup> *YS* III, 48<sup>37</sup> speaks of the speediness (*javitva*) of the *manas* which arises from the "conquest of the senses" (*indriya-jaya*, *YS* III, 47). The consistent use by Patañjali of *manas* in conjunction with the senses is no accident and certainly reflects pre-classical usage. Whereas Sāṃkhya asserts that *manas* is the size of the body, Yoga asserts that *manas* is all-pervasive.<sup>38</sup> In Vyāsa's exposition the word *manas* almost always is associated with some external activity such as speaking, shaking, the breathing process and even sleep.<sup>39</sup> The term *buddhi* (intellect) is used only twice in the *YS* (IV, 21 and 22)<sup>40</sup> and appears to be given a cognitive emphasis although the dimension of *citta* as "will" — so prominent in Yoga (and as if absent in Sāṃkhya) — is included in the functioning of *buddhi*.

Hindu philosophical schools quite often distinguish two aspects of mental life called *manas* and *buddhi*. While *manas* assimilates and synthesizes sense impressions and brings the sense of self into contact with the external objects, it still however lacks discrimination furnishing the empirical sense of self (*ahaṃkāra*) only with precepts which must in turn be transformed and acted upon by a higher mental function, the intellect (*buddhi*). The intellect can forget its inherent discerning power by either attending the *manas* and reifying or absolutizing its sense interpretations, or it can become free — functioning as a vehicle of liberation by attaining knowledge (*jñāna*) which is in fact its own finest and most subtle nature as *sattva*.

Neither Īśvara Kṛṣṇa's terms: *liṅga* — "the essential core" (*SK* 40) — a prerequisite for experience and comprising the thirteen evolutes (viz. *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas* and the ten indriyas), nor the "set of eighteen" (*liṅgaśarīra* or *sūkṣmaśarīra* [*SK* 39], the subtle body comprising the above thirteen evolutes plus the five subtle senses) conveys the essentially dynamic interaction among the psychic structures or functional unity that the term *citta* connotes. In Classical

<sup>36</sup> *YS* I, 35 (p. 39): *viśayavatī vā pravṛttir utpannā manasaḥ sthitiibandhani*; *YS* II, 53 (p. 115): *dhāraṇāsu ca yogatā manasaḥ*.

<sup>37</sup> *YS* III, 48 (p. 167): *tato manojavitvam vikaraṇabhāvah pradhānajayaś ca*.

<sup>38</sup> See Koelman (1970: 104).

<sup>39</sup> *YB* I, 10 connects *manas* with sleep and *YB* I, 34 with breath or life energy (*prāṇa*); *YB* I, 36 links *manas* with sense-activity. See also *YB* II: 15, 30: IV: 3, 7, 11.

<sup>40</sup> *YS* IV, 21 (p. 196): *cittāntaradṛśye buddhibuddher atiprasaṅgaḥ smṛtisamkaraś ca*. "In trying to see the mind with another [mind] there is an overextending of the intellect from the intellect resulting in a confusion of memory." See n. 16 above on *YS* IV, 22.

Yoga (see below), the Sanskrit commentators argue that because the *citta* is all-pervasive, the postulation of a subtle body is unnecessary.

Although *citta* is not treated as a separate ontological category (*tattva*), it is nevertheless a part of insentient *prakṛti* and thus consists of the three *guṇas*.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, *YS IV, 23* states: “[Due to] the mind being coloured by the seer and the seeable, [it can, therefore, know] all purposes.”<sup>42</sup> *Citta* is in a sense the product of the transcendent consciousness or seer and the perceived object, the seeable, in as much as it is said to be “coloured” by both; however, it does not appear to be a derivation of either. It can be characterized as a function of the mysterious relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and plays a crucial epistemological role in Patañjali’s Yoga as *YS IV, 22* (see n. 16 above) and *YS IV, 23* (see n. 16 and n. 40 above) clearly illustrate. Rather than being viewed as “substance” per se, *citta* can be seen as a heuristic device for understanding the dynamic interplay between pure consciousness (*puruṣa*) — the seer (*draṣṭṛ*) — and *prakṛti* — the seeable (*dr̥śya*) — in its form as a reflected state of consciousness.

The philosophy of Classical Yoga, in contrast to that of Sāṃkhya, recognizes the cosmic or root *citta*; it is the “one mind” which impels the many individualised minds. The root *citta*, becoming operative in a single personality, appears individual. This important point can be clarified as follows. In *YS IV, 4* the numerous fabricated, individualized minds (*nirmāṇa-cittas*) are said to arise from *asmitā-mātra* — the ontological principle denoting the exclusive sense of I-am-ness.<sup>43</sup> According to Vyāsa, *YS IV, 4* is alleged to have been composed in reply to the question: “(Opponent) Well, when a *yogin* projects several bodies, do they have one mind between them or a mind each?”<sup>44</sup> The question arose from the treatment of powers (*siddhis*) mentioned in *YS IV, 14*<sup>45</sup> as to whether the multiple bodies which the *yogin* can produce at will are also endowed with a distinct consciousness. Vyāsa’s answer to the above question is that the artificially created bodies do each have a mind.<sup>46</sup> Yet, how could the activities of several minds wait on the purposes of a single mind?<sup>47</sup> The answer is given in *YS IV, 5*: “[Although the multiple individualized

41 As Vyāsa asserts in *YB I, 2* and which will be examined later.

42 See n. 17 above.

43 *YS IV, 4* (p. 178): *nirmāṇacittāny asmitāmātrāt*.

44 *YB IV, 3* (p. 178): *yadā tu yogī bahūnkāyān nirmimīte tadā kim eka manaskās te bhavanti athān eka manaskā iti*.

45 *YS IV, 1* (p. 176): *janmauśadhimantratapaḥ samādhijāḥ siddhayaḥ*. “Powers arise due to birth, drugs, mantras, asceticism or from *samādhi*.”

46 *YB IV, 4* (p. 178): *asmitāmātraṃ cittakāraṇam upādāya nirmāṇacittāni karoti, tataḥ sa-cittāni bhavanti*.

47 See *YB IV, 5* (p. 179).

minds are involved] in distinct activities, it is the one mind of [this] many that is the initiator.”<sup>48</sup>

At this point in our analysis we take issue with Feuerstein’s understanding when he states that, “the ‘one consciousness’ [mind in YS IV, 5] is none other than the primary I-am-ness (*asmitā-mātra*) of aphorism 4.4.”<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere Feuerstein has suggested<sup>50</sup> that *asmitā-mātra* is equivalent to the Sāṃkhyan term *ahamkāra*, an equation with which this study agrees. However, Feuerstein then goes on to equate the “one mind” (*cittam-ekam*) of YS IV, 5 with *asmitā-mātra* thereby reducing *citta* to a separate prakṛtic evolute and contradicting all that he has previously said about *citta* (i.e., that *citta* is an “umbrella term” and is “distinct from its component factors” such as *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, etc.).<sup>51</sup> If the “one mind” of YS IV, 5 were the equivalent of *asmitā-mātra* (YS IV, 4), then Patañjali could have repeated the term *asmitā-mātra* in YS IV, 5. Would it not be more accurate, and in keeping with Patañjali’s consistent vocabulary, to assert that the “one mind” gives birth to individual minds (i.e. distinct personalities) through the medium of the bare I-am-ness (*asmitā-mātra*)? *Asmitā-mātra* in turn would give rise to the individual, subjective sense of self or ego; this it does in conjunction with the reflected consciousness of the *puruṣa* located in the *citta*. The root *citta* illuminates *asmitā-mātra* with the reflected consciousness that it has “borrowed” from *puruṣa*. Here the “one mind” can be conceived ontologically as *liṅga-mātra* or *mahat* (in Sāṃkhya), and epistemologically as *buddhi* or intellect in its purest and subtlest form of *sattva* or knowledge (*jñāna*). In Yoga, the discriminating discernment (*vivekakhyāti*, YS II, 26) between *puruṣa* and the *sattva* takes place in the *sattva* of the mind. Being comprised of the three *guṇas*, the mind is in some sense active but in its subtlest state the “one mind” is said to be like *puruṣa* wherein the mind has reached a state of purity analogous to that of the *puruṣa*. The co-existence of the purity of both *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (as the mind) is associated in Yoga with the liberated state of “aloneness” (*kaivalya*).<sup>52</sup> However, under the influence of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) the reflected consciousness, misidentified as *puruṣa*, appears as the affliction (*kleśa*) of “I-am-ness” (*asmitā*) which permeates the prakṛtic or empirical realm of selfhood and can include both the cosmic (*mahat* or *mahān-ātman*) and individual sense of self (*ahamkāra*). Both levels of “I-am-ness” are, in the above, to be understood as being permeated

48 YS IV, 5 (p. 179): *pravṛtibhede prayojakkaṃ cittam ekam anekeshām*.

49 See Feuerstein (1979a: 129).

50 See (1980: 46) and (1979a: 128).

51 See Feuerstein (1980: 58-59).

52 See YS III, 55 (p. 175): *sattvapuruṣayoh śuddhisāmye kaivalyam iti*. “In the sameness (i.e. likeness) of purity between the *sattva* [of the mind] and the *puruṣa*, the aloneness (i.e. liberation) [is established].” See also Chapple and Kelly (1990: 108-109).

by the reflected consciousness of *puruṣa* under the influence of ignorance or misidentification.

Patañjali does acknowledge that there exists a multitude of individuated minds and personalities (not to be confused with *puruṣas*) and appears to reject the pure idealist view that the objects of experience are merely products of the mind and having no existence in themselves. This idealist perspective tends ultimately to negate the reality of the manifest world. In *YS IV, 4* Patañjali states: "From the homogeneity in the transformation [of the *guṇas*] there is the "thatness" of an object"<sup>53</sup>, implying it seems a refutation of the idealist view that objects are merely projections or imaginings of the mind and thus are deprived of having ontological status in themselves. Patañjali continues: "Since there is difference of minds, while the object is the same, the two must be distinct levels [of existence]." "It [the object] does not depend on one mind; this is unprovable: then what could it [i.e. such an object] be?"<sup>54</sup> An external object, or any object for that matter, is composed of the three constituents (*guṇas*) of *prakṛti* and has a real existence; therefore, it is not simply the product of a single mind.<sup>55</sup> Vyāsa interprets Patañjali as refuting the Buddhist school of *Yogācāra*<sup>56</sup> which has often been understood (or misunderstood) as pure subjective idealism, idealism or a sheer negation of the external world.

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO KARMA, SAṂSKĀRA AND VĀSANĀ

A key philosophical doctrine outlined in the *YS* is that of *karman* (*karma*). The word *karman* denotes action in general. The *BG* (XVIII, 23-25), for example, distinguishes three fundamental types of acts, depending on the agent's inner disposition: (1) *sattvika-karman*, which stands for actions that are prescribed by tradition, performed without attachment by a person who is non-obsessed or no longer egoistically consumed by the results or "fruit" (*phala*) of action; it is said to be of the nature of "purity" or "benevolence"; (2) *rājasa-karman*, which is generated out of a self-centred mentality or ego-sense (*ahaṁkāra*) and in order to experience self-gratification or pleasure; it is said to be of

<sup>53</sup> *YS IV, 14* (p. 188): *pariṇāmaikatvād vastutattvam*.

<sup>54</sup> *YS IV, 15* (p. 190): *vastusāmye cittabhedāt tayor vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ. YS IV, 16* (p. 192): *na caikacittatantram vastu tadapramāṇakam tadā kim syāt*. This *sūtra* is missing in some of the manuscripts (e.g. in Bhoja Rāja's *RM*) and it is possible that it is an original part of Vyāsa's commentary.

<sup>55</sup> See n. 53 above and translation of *YS IV, 14* in the main text.

<sup>56</sup> See *YB IV, 14* (pp. 188-189). Vyāsa no doubt was aware of the Buddhist school founded by Aśaṅga (and which probably post-dates Patañjali). *YS IV, 14-16* may well refer to an earlier *Vijñānavāda* school. Chapple (1990: 7) argues that Patañjali need not be seen as explicitly polemicalizing against this "idealist" view, but as "merely advancing the Sāṃkhya perspective that all things stem from *prakṛti* through *pariṇāma* ..."

the nature of “desire” or “passion”; (3) *tāmasa-karman*, which is performed out of a confused or deluded mentality in which one is unconcerned about the moral or spiritual consequences of his or her actions; it is said to be of the nature of “evil” or “dullness.”<sup>57</sup>

Karman also means “ritual act.”<sup>58</sup> But more specifically *karman* (or *karma*) refers to the moral dynamic behind one’s intentions, volitions, thoughts and behaviour. In this sense, *karma* often corresponds to deterministic forces or fate as determined by the quality of one’s being, including past lives and one’s present embodiment. One’s accumulated *karma* is often pictured as a ‘bank’ or ‘store’ consisting of good and bad stock which combine to mature in particular and unpredictable ways in one’s life. In Hindu tradition, one’s karmic ‘storehouse’ has been distinguished generally as consisting of three types of *karma*: (1) *saṃcita-karma*, or the already accumulated “stock” of karmic residue or deposits (*āśaya*) which is not being activated and is therefore awaiting fruition; (2) *prārabdha-karma*, which has begun to mature in this life (e.g. our sex and genetic makeup); (3) *kriyamāṇa-karma*, which is *karma* acquired during the present lifetime, i.e. is *karma* in-the-making, the fresh storage of merit or demerit which will bear fruit in the future.<sup>59</sup> *Karma* is often thought to stand for a mechanism which maintains worldly existence (*saṃsāra*) rooted in spiritual ignorance of the intrinsic, immortal nature of Self and implicating us as confused, egoic identities in a beginningless cycle of birth and death leading to suffering and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*). Yet, however negatively portrayed the doctrine of *karma* may be, there is clearly room within Hindu tradition for a more non-deterministic, creative and emancipatory dimension to the doctrine of *karma* which, from an ethical and soteriological perspective, takes into account the crucial role played by free will as either positively or negatively effecting one’s life. Moreover, as we have seen in the *BG*, the process of *saṃsāra*, conceived of as an inherently egoistic and therefore selfishly binding state of affairs, can be remedied — brought to a halt — through a form of non-egoistically motivated action sometimes called *niṣ-kāma* (“desireless” or “non-covetous”). Action, freed from all “attachment” to its results, need no longer bind one by generating further *karma*. Later on I will argue that, from Patañjali’s standpoint, the *yogin* does not succumb to fatalism, but exercises the will to be free from the binding effects of all action. The *YS* (III, 22) distinguishes between *karma* that is “in motion” (*sa-upakrama*) and “not in motion”/“deferred” (*nirupakrama*).<sup>60</sup> Vyāsa imaginatively likens *karma* which is “in motion ” or activated to a wet cloth that is spread out to dry

57 *BG* XVIII, 23-25; see Radhakrishnan (1948: 359-360).

58 See Monier-Williams (1899: 258).

59 Cf H. Zimmer (1951), *Philosophies of India*, pp. 441-442.

60 *YS* III, 22 (p. 147): *sopakramaṃ nirupakramaṃ ... karma ... vā*.

quickly, and the later type to a wet cloth rolled into a ball, which only dries very slowly.<sup>61</sup>

In the *YS* the mind is the receptacle for the effects of *karma*. *YS* II, 12-14 deal with the basic dynamics of *karma* and its fruits within the context of samsāric notions of self and activity. The central premise in these sūtras is that insofar as *karma* is under the grip of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*), it is associated with affliction (*kleśa*) including a misidentified or egoic sense of self. The five afflictions as outlined in *YS* II, 3, namely: spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*), “I-am-ness” or egoity (*asmitā*), “attachment” (*rāga*), “aversion” (*dveṣa*) and “desire for continuity” (*abhiniveśa*)<sup>62</sup>, provide the cognitive and motivational framework for the ordinary person enmeshed in conditional existence (*samsāra*) and unaware of *puruṣa*. As *YS* II, 12 states, these *kleśas* are the root of the residue of *karma*, the “action-deposit” (*karma-āśaya*) in the subconscious mind. The effects are felt not only in one’s “seen” existence or present life but they also determine the quality of one’s “unseen” existence or future lives.<sup>63</sup> Rooted in ignorance (*avidyā*), afflicted action causes the repeated fruition (*vipāka*) of situations or births (*jāti*) and life span (*āyus*) furthering samsāric experience (*bhoga*).<sup>64</sup> Depending on whether acts are meritorious (*puṇya*) or demeritorious (*apuṇya*), *karma* produces joyful (*hlāda*) or painful/distressful (*paritāpa*) results.<sup>65</sup> Vyāsa notes that under the influence of the afflictions experiences of pleasure are pervaded with attachment (*rāga*) resulting in the latent residue of actions (*karma-āśaya*) due to that attachment; thus one can easily dwell on, or become obsessed by, pleasure and its objects.<sup>66</sup> When upon aversion to pain and its causes, one is unable to overcome painful experiences, one thus accumulates a residue of actions due to aversion (*dveṣa*).<sup>67</sup> When one desires pleasure and upon acting on this desire for pleasure causes favour to some and harm to others, thereby accumulating both merit and demerit, the latent deposit generated is said to be due to greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*).<sup>68</sup> Attachment and aversion, it is to be noted, are conceived in the context of a selfish or self-centred mentality, the basis of which is a misidentified sense of self (*cittavṛtti*) caused by ignorance.

61 *YB* III, 22 (p. 147): *āyurvīpākam karma dvividham sopakramam nirupakramam ca. tatra yathārdram vastram vitanitam laghiyasā kālena śuśyēt tathā sopakramam. yathā ca tad eva sampiṇḍitam cireṇa samsūsyed evam nirupakramam.*

62 *YS* II, 3 (p. 59): *avidyāsmītārāgadveṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ.*

63 *YS* II, 12 (p. 67): *kleśamūlah karmāśayo dṛṣṭādrṣṭājanmavedaniyah.*

64 *YS* II, 13 (p. 68): *sati mūle tadvīpāko jātyāyurbhogāḥ.*

65 *YS* II, 14 (p. 73): *te hlādaparitāpaphalāḥ puṇyāpuṇyahetuvāt.*

66 *YB* II, 15 (p. 74): *rāgajāḥ karmāśaya.*

67 *YB* II, 15 (p. 76): *dveṣajāḥ karmāśaya.*

68 *YB* II, 15 (p. 76): *karmāśayo lobhān mohāc ca.*

Every action (*karman*) leaves an impression (*saṃskāra*) in the deeper structure of the mind where it awaits its fruition in the form of volitional activity. The most general meaning of *saṃskāra* is “ritual” or “forming well, ... making ready, preparation”<sup>69</sup>; but in addition it also conveys the idea of “embellishment,” “purification,” “making sacred,” “any purificatory ceremony.”<sup>70</sup> The root *saṃs-kr* means to cleanse and perfect.<sup>71</sup> In Hindu tradition *saṃskāras* refer to the rites of passage such as birth rites (*jātakarma*), marriage rites (*vivāha*) and death rites (*antyeṣṭi*), rites which are all intended to purify and transform the individual at specific phases in life. In the context of the *YS*, however, the most significant translation which can be extracted from Monier-Williams list of meanings on the term *saṃskāra* is “mental impression or recollection, impression on the mind of acts done in a former state of existence.”<sup>72</sup> Thus, in the context of Yoga *saṃskāra* is often translated as “impression”<sup>73</sup> and in more recent scholarship as “karmic impulse,”<sup>74</sup> “subliminal impression,”<sup>75</sup> “habitual potency”<sup>76</sup> and “subliminal activator.”<sup>77</sup> In this study, I have translated the term *saṃskāra* as “impression.”

*YS* IV, 9 tells us: “Because memory and impressions have a sameness of form, there is a causal relation even among births, places and times that are undisclosed.”<sup>78</sup> The various impressions have a “sameness of form” or “uniformity” (*eka-rūpatva*) with the “depth-memory” of a particular person. Even though we may not remember our past karmic involvements they nevertheless continue to affect our present actions. Vyāsa states: “Memories (*smṛti*) are from *saṃskāras*, distanced as to birth, place and time. From memory again there are *saṃskāras*, so that these memories and *saṃskāras* are manifested in a concentration of power from the going-into-operation of the karmic residue.”<sup>79</sup> Under the influence of the afflictions (*kleśas*), the impressions and memories of a person then form a “subset” of *saṃskāras* known as the karmic deposit or residue (*karmāśaya*) which

69 Monier-Williams (1899: 1120).

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid. See also J. Lipner (1994). *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. (London and New York: Routledge) p. 264.

72 Monier-Williams (1899: 1120).

73 See J. H. Wood (1914), G. Jha (1907) and S. Dasgupta (1920, 1924, 1930).

74 See P. Corrada (1969: 204).

75 See G. Koelman (1970: 278).

76 See Bangali Baba (1976: 9).

77 See G. Feuerstein (1979a: 57, 1980: 68).

78 *YS* IV, 9 (p. 181): *jātideśākālavayahitānām apy ānantaryam smṛtisaṃskārayor ekarūpatvat*.

79 *YB* IV, 9 (p.182): *jātideśākālavayahitebhyaḥ saṃskārebhyaḥ smṛtiḥ. ca punaḥ saṃskārā ity evam ete smṛtisaṃskārāḥ karmāśayavṛtti lābhavaśādvya jyantē*.

in turn becomes operative.<sup>80</sup> It is because of the uniformity of the impressions and memory pertaining to a specific individual that one person does not experience the fruition of the *karma* of another person. Patañjali explains that the mind is suffused with beginningless latent impressions (YS IV, 10<sup>81</sup>) left by action that forms or combines into a great store of habit patterns, traits or subtle traces (*vāsanās*)<sup>82</sup> that dictate personality: how one perceives and reacts or morally responds to the world. In a helpful passage, G. Larson suggests that “the ‘causal’ or ‘active’ *saṃskāra*-s of one’s present embodiment are one’s *karmāśaya* ... which will largely determine one’s future new experiences and memory experiences in this present embodiment and the next embodiment yet to come, whereas one’s *vāsanā*-s or subtle traces ... are the ‘effect’ or ‘passive’ *saṃskāra*-s from all of one’s previous embodiments ... not only of our prior embodiments in the human species but in numerous other species as well.”<sup>83</sup> Pertaining to the individual person, *saṃskāras* are responsible for the production of various psychomental phenomena, in particular the five types of modifications (*vr̥ttis*) of the mind that are described in the first chapter of the YS.<sup>84</sup> The functioning of the mind (*citta*) takes place through these *vr̥ttis* which give form to perceptions, thoughts, emotions and so forth. The *vr̥ttis* are empowered to produce *saṃskāras* and vice versa. Vyāsa states: “The modifications (*vr̥ttis*) produce their own kind of impressions; and in turn, the impressions produce corresponding modifications. Thus the wheel of modifications and impressions revolves.”<sup>85</sup> The wheel to which Vyāsa refers can be taken as being none other than the “six-spoked wheel” of *saṃsāra*, the cycle of “suffering” and “misidentification.”<sup>86</sup>

In Patañjali’s Yoga, *saṃskāra* has an obvious psychological significance and “stands for the indelible imprints in the subconscious left behind by our daily experiences, whether conscious or unconscious, internal or external, desirable or undesirable. The term *saṃskāra* suggests that these impressions are not merely passive vestiges of a person’s actions and volitions but are highly dynamic forces in his or her psychic life. They constantly propel consciousness

<sup>80</sup> YS II, 12-14; see notes 63, 64 and 65 above.

<sup>81</sup> YS IV, 10 (p. 182): *tāsām anādītvam cāśiṣo nityatvāt*. “They (the *saṃskāras*) are beginningless, due to the perpetuity of desire.”

<sup>82</sup> YB IV, 9 (pp. 181-182): *yathānubhavās tathā saṃskārāḥ. te ca karma vāsanānurūpāḥ*. “As were the experiences, so are the *saṃskāras*. And they are in the form of *vāsanās*.”

<sup>83</sup> G. Larson (1993), “The Trimūrti of Smṛti”, (PEW vol no. 1, p. 380). See also YB II, 13 and YS IV, 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> See the discussion on *vr̥tti* later on in this study.

<sup>85</sup> YB I, 5 (p. 10): *tathā jātīyakāḥ saṃskārā vr̥ttibhir eva kryante. saṃskāraiś ca vr̥ttaya iti. evam vr̥ttisaṃskāracakram anīśam āvartate*.

<sup>86</sup> See YB IV, 11.

into action.”<sup>87</sup> The *YS* (III, 9) distinguishes two varieties of *saṃskāras*. The first variety refers to those that lead to the externalization (*vyutthāna*) or emergence (“centrifugalization”) of empirical consciousness which prevents the realization of *puruṣa*; this set of impressions generates or sustains an extrinsic and afflicted sense of self-identity based on reified and fabricated notions of selfhood. The second variety of *saṃskāras* refers to those impressions that cause the centripetalization or cessation (*nirodha*) of the *vyutthāna* processes of the mind and lead to the realization of intrinsic identity as *puruṣa* and therefore spiritual emancipation. Patañjali states: “[Regarding] the impressions of emergence and cessation, when that of emergence [i.e. extrinsic self-identity] is overpowered, there follows a moment of [the condition of] cessation in the mind. This is the transformation [termed] cessation.”<sup>88</sup> “From the impression (*saṃskāra*) of this [moment of cessation] there results a calm flow [in the mind].”<sup>89</sup> *Saṃskāra* has not only psychological significance but also has a soteriological role in Yoga. The *yogin* must cultivate the *nirodha* type of *saṃskāras* in order to achieve a calm flow or tranquility of mind wherein *samādhi* can arise and prevent the renewed generation of impressions of a *vyutthāna* nature. This process of *nirodha* cultivates within the mind the condition of liberating knowledge (*jñāna*) or insight (*prajñā*) which counteracts the former condition of affliction and allows for the “aloneness” of the *puruṣa* to take place.

The fact that *saṃskāras* are impressions of previous mental activity can be inferred from *YS* III, 18<sup>90</sup> which announces that by means of the direct realization (*sākṣātkāra*) of the impressions the *yogin* can acquire knowledge of former (past life) embodiments. Moreover, whatever *saṃskāras* remain at the end of one’s present life will determine future experiences in a subsequent embodiment. *Saṃskāra* is thus “an active residuum of experience.”<sup>91</sup> The concept of *saṃskāra* is illustrated in the notion of *bīja* or “seed” as used in *YS* III, 50 (as *doṣa-bīja*<sup>92</sup>). In Classical Yoga, *bīja* can denote the afflictions (*kleśas*), also called “seeds of impediments,” which refer as well to the impressions (*saṃskāras*) based on misidentification of *puruṣa* and manifesting in the form of afflicted action. Those impressions must

87 G. Feuerstein (1990), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, (New York: Paragon House) p. 309.

88 *YS* III, 9 (p. 122): *vyutthānanirodhasaṃskārayor abhibhavaprādurbhāvau nirodhakṣaṇa-cittānvayo nirodhaparīṇāmaḥ*.

89 *YS* III, 10 (p. 123): *tasya praśāntavāhitā saṃskārāt*.

90 *YS* III, 18 (p. 144): *saṃskārasākṣātkaraṇāt pūrvajātijñānam*.

91 G. Feuerstein (1980: 68).

92 *YS* III, 50 (p. 168).

become, in one of Vyāsa's favourite metaphors, "like burned seeds of rice."<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the impressions have internal currents or a "flow" of their own, currents which clearly influence or effect a person's intentional and volitional nature. When certain impressions, through the repeated practice of certain actions or by constant addition of like-impressions, become strong enough, the propensities they create impel a person in a certain direction. The choices or decisions that one makes produce pain leading to aversion (*dveṣa*), or pleasure leading to attachment (*rāga*), in the process of transmigration: "Attachment is clinging to pleasant [experiences]."<sup>94</sup> "Aversion is clinging to sorrowful [experiences]."<sup>95</sup> Vyāsa writes: "What is the painfulness of *saṃskāra*? From experience of pleasure there is a *saṃskāric* residue of pleasure; from experience of pain a *saṃskāric* residue of pain. So the maturing of *karma* is experienced as pleasure or pain, and it again lays down an action-deposit or karmic residue."<sup>96</sup> To the discerning *yogin* the *saṃskāric* enterprise of afflicted identity and its *saṃskāras* is ultimately suffused with dissatisfaction and suffering (YS II, 15). The substratum of this process within the mind is called the *karmāśaya* or residue of *karma*. Vācaspati Mīśra elaborates on how, in the present lifetime, experiences arise appropriate to each person's individual condition:

The result of the karmic residue is pleasure and pain, and, insofar as both birth and life span have the same purpose (viz. pleasure and pain) and are a necessary consequence of this (pleasure and pain), birth and life span too are propagated. Moreover, pleasure and pain correspond to attachment and aversion. And these are the necessary conditions (for pleasure and pain), since pleasure and pain are not possible in the absence of these (attachment and aversion). So this soil of the self sprinkled with the water of the afflictions becomes a field for the propagation of the fruits of the determined actions.<sup>97</sup>

*Vāsanās* are the various subtle traces in the form of personality traits or habit patterns that the strength of *saṃskāras* produces.<sup>98</sup> In YS IV,

<sup>93</sup> YB III, 50 (p. 168): *dagdhaśālibijakalpāni*.

<sup>94</sup> YS II, 7 (p. 64): *sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ*.

<sup>95</sup> YS II, 8 (p. 65): *duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ*.

<sup>96</sup> YB II, 15 (p. 76): *kā punaḥ saṃskāraduḥkhatā sukhānubhavāt sukhasaṃskārāśayo duḥkhānubhavād api duḥkhsaṃskārāśaya iti. evaṃ karmabhyo vipake 'nubhūyamāne sukhw duḥkhe vā punaḥ karmāśayapracaya*.

<sup>97</sup> TV II, 13 (p. 68): *sukhaduḥkhaphalo hi karmāśayas tādarthyaena tannāntariyakatayā janmayuṣi api prasūte. sukhaduḥkhe ca rāgadveṣānuśakte tadavinirbhāgavartinī tadabhāve na bhavataḥ ... tadyam ātmabhumih kleśalilāvasiktā karmaphalaprasavakṣetram ...*

<sup>98</sup> The term *vāsanā*, which will hitherto be translated as "habit pattern," is a derivative of the root *vas* meaning "to dwell, abide, remain." It is not by accident nor a mere coincidence that the term *vāsanā* basically represents selfhood under the influence of ignorance, i.e. as a mistaken identity which being extrinsic to *puruṣa*, is defined by or rather "dwells in" and is dependent on

8 the origination of these habit patterns is to be linked up with the fruition (*vipāka*) of one's activity.<sup>99</sup> Feuerstein writes: "We can either say that a given volitional activity leaves behind a ... trait [*vāsanā*] which, in conjunction with other similar ... traits, will (given time) have certain consequences for the individual, or we can say that by a given volitional activity the individual accumulates merit or demerit."<sup>100</sup> Vyāsa tells us that, "The corresponding habit patterns [to the fruition of *karma*] are from the residue of action."<sup>101</sup> The *vāsanās* lie dormant in the mind until the fruition of *karma*. The impressions (*saṃskāras*), which combine into habit patterns (*vāsanās*), are thus the very substance of the karmic residue. The action one performs proceeds according to the residue of past actions. The presence of a *saṃskāra* begins to produce certain mental tendencies, attitudes, thoughts, desires, images and so forth even before the fruition of *karma*. Thus *saṃskāras* provide a certain momentum toward the external decisions one makes. These decisions appearing conscious, but which are in fact propelled by the dominant and unconscious residue of action, expose one to situations which are then credited with or blamed for one's fortune or misfortune, merit or demerit. Past actions stored in the residue of *karma* continue to affect present actions even if those past actions are not even remembered.<sup>102</sup> Within the *vāsanās* inhere the qualities of past action and of the fruits that are to ripen in due time, i.e. in the present or a future life. In the following simile Vyāsa portrays the *samsāric* mind as a kind of "crystallization" or cemented network of *vāsanās*, "like a fishing net with its knots." He explains: "Propelled by experiences of afflicted actions and their fruition [which form] habit patterns, this mind has been crystallized from time without beginning, as it were variegated, spread out in all directions like a fishing net with its knots. These *vāsanās* have many lives behind them."<sup>103</sup>

YS II, 12<sup>104</sup> points out that the notion of reincarnation or repeated births is one of the axioms of Patañjali's philosophy. The dynamics of *samsāric* re-embodiment is thought to operate on the simplest formula

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the "objects" of experience. It has been translated as "subconscious impression" (G. Jha, 1907), "residual potency" (R. Prasāda, 1912), "psychical subliminal impression" (Koelman, 1970: 50), "subliminal-trait" (G. Feuerstein, 1979a: 130) and "habit pattern" (C. Chapple and E. Kelly, 1990: 110).

<sup>99</sup> YS IV, 8 (p. 180): *tatas tadvipākanuṅānām evābhivyaktir vāsanānām*. "Therefore [follows] the manifestation of those habit patterns which correspond to the fruition of that [*karma*]."

<sup>100</sup> G. Feuerstein (1979a: 131)

<sup>101</sup> YB I, 24 (p. 26): *tadanuṅā vāsanā āśayāḥ*.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. YS IV, 9 in n. 78 above.

<sup>103</sup> YB II, 13 (p. 71): *kleśakarmavipākānubhava nirvārtitābhis tu vāsanābhir anādikāla saṃmūrchitam idaṃ cittam vicitrī kṛtam iva sarvato matsyajālaṃ granthibhir ivā*"*tatam ity eṭā anekabhavapūrvikā vāsanāḥ*.

<sup>104</sup> See n. 63 above.

that meritorious action results in impressions (*saṃskāras*) of a positive quality leading to pleasant experiences in life, whereas demeritorious action produces impressions of a negative or painful sort which have adverse effects in a person's life.<sup>105</sup> The on-going life-circle of our conditioned self as person can be understood as beginning with the afflictions which colour our action as world-experience creating impressions which form the residue of action and out of which various personal traits or habit patterns are "cemented" in the mind. *Karma* thus conceived is the mechanism by which saṃsāric existence (i.e. egoic identity) maintains itself. For the ordinary person rooted in afflicted action and its residue or latent deposit, life is an unending accumulation and fruition of actions caused by craving, dissatisfaction and ignorance. The *yogin*, on the other hand, recognizing the inherent suffering involved, does not succumb to this seemingly fatalistic state of affairs. Patañjali offers a way to transcend the nexus of "suffering" and its causes. Through the study and practice of Yoga, the *saṃskāras* of action as dictated by the afflictions of human weaknesses are lessened to the point where the *yogin*, yet active, can enjoy an established state of internal calm<sup>106</sup> no longer enslaved by what otherwise appears to be worldly existence (*saṃsāra*).

Patañjali asserts: "The action of a *yogin* is neither 'black' nor 'white'; of others it is of three kinds."<sup>107</sup> While the activity of the adept *yogin* is stated to be neither 'white' (*śukla*) nor 'black' (*kṛṣṇa*), that of the average person is threefold. Ordinarily, every action causing its fruition can be classified as either impure/demeritorious, pure/meritorious<sup>108</sup> or "mixed." Patañjali's fourfold classification of *karma* is explained by Vyāsa as follows:

There are four classes of *karma*. [*Karma* may be] black, white and black, white, or neither black-nor-white. The white and black category is effected through external means so that the karmic residue is strengthened by way of harming or benefitting others. The white belongs to those who practise ascetic [internalized] endeavour (*tapas*), study (*svādhyāya*) and meditation (*dhyāna*). For these, being a matter of the mind alone, are not concerned with outer means, nor do they harm others. The neither black-nor-white *karma* is that of the renunciates (*saṃnyāsīn*), whose afflictions have dwindled away, whose misidentification with the body is overcome. In that case, because of renouncing the fruits of action the not white belongs only

105 See n. 65 and n. 97 above.

106 See n. 89 above on *YS* III, 10; Vyāsa's commentary (p. 123) runs as follows: *nirodha-saṃskārābhyaṃ pāṭavāpekṣā praśāntavāhitā cittasya bhavati*. "From practice of *saṃskāras* of cessation, there comes about a peaceful flow of the mind."

107 *YS* IV, 7 (p. 180): *karmāśuklākṛṣṇam yoginas trividham itareṣām*.

108 See also *YS* II, 14 and the terms *apunya* and *punya* in n. 65 above.

to the *yogī*; it is not black because there is no cause for that. But all other living beings have the three kinds, as explained previously.<sup>109</sup>

In order to become disengaged from the binding effects of *karma* and all attachment to mundane existence one has to transcend the very empirical consciousness that generates afflicted mental and physical actions and modes of being. In other words, one must go beyond the boundaries of ego-personality including its self-centred mentality: the mistaken identity of one being essentially an autonomous empirical agent (*kartr*). In contradiction to the three ordinary types of *karma* outlined above, the *yogin*, whose mind has become increasingly purified through *samādhi*<sup>110</sup>, does not generate any action which could be thus typified. Action here, noting that the *yogin* still “acts” at this finer level of awareness, is said to be “neither black-nor-white” because the *yogin* has transcended the relative field of action insofar as it no longer wholly defines the *yogin*’s self-identity, and thus the *yogin* is freed from any tendency to misidentify with prakṛtic existence (the “seeable” or *triguṇa* process) and its effects/affects. At this advanced stage, the *yogin* remains established in the true nature and identity of the *puruṣa* and has ceased to be attached to any empirical identity as authentic selfhood. Through a progressive purification of the body, mind and indeed all karmic influences the *yogin*’s action culminates in a state of “renunciation” meaning non-egoistic or non-covetous (*niṣ-kāma*) action<sup>111</sup> which does not produce further *karma*. The *yogin* is no longer motivated, for example, by the merit (*puṇya*) or demerit (*apūnya*) generated by the good and bad observance of traditional ritualistic religion including meditative practices performed for sheer personal gain or self-gratification and which merely result in pride and self-righteous attitudes.<sup>112</sup>

In *YS* IV, 24 the mind (*citta*) is declared to be ultimately geared toward the liberation of human beings: “From action having been done conjointly for the purpose of another, it [the mind] is speckled with

109 *YB* IV, 7 (p. 180): *catuspadī khalviyaṃ karmajātiḥ. kṛṣṇā śuklakṛṣṇā śuklāśuklakṛṣṇā ceti. tatra kṛṣṇā durātmanām. śuklakṛṣṇā bahiḥsādhanasādhyā. tatra parapīdānugrahadvārenaiva karmāśayapracayaḥ. śuklā tapaḥ svādhyāyadhyanavatām. sā hi kevale manasyāthattatvāda-bahiḥsādhanādhiṇā na parānpīdayitvā bhavati. aśuklakṛṣṇā samnyāsīnām kṣīnakleśānām caramadehānām iti. tatrāśuklam yogina eva phalasaṃnyāsādakṛṣṇam cānupādānāt. itareṣāṃ tu bhūtānām pūrvam eva trividham iti.*

110 Including of course the higher form of *samādhi* called *asamprajñāta* and through which the mind is completely cleansed of ignorance; see *YS* I, 18 and *YB* I, 18.

111 The term *niṣ-kāma* is often translated as “desireless” and is used by Vijñāna Bhikṣu in *YV* IV, 7; see *YV* (1989: 19).

112 See *YV* IV, 7 (*ibid*) where Vijñāna Bhikṣu distinguishes between true and false *samnyāsins*, i.e. of those who have actually given up egoic identity and those who have merely put on the *samnyāsīn*’s robes and act as if they have truly renounced. The true mark of renunciation, as Bhikṣu goes on to explain, is the purification of affliction. If affliction is sufficiently dissolved, then even one engaged in the duties of a householder can be freed from egoic attachment to the results of actions. See *YV* (1989: 20).

innumerable habit patterns.”<sup>113</sup> The mind, like all manifestations of *prakṛti*, exists for the purpose of the *puruṣa*.<sup>114</sup> Not being self-illuminating because it is itself something perceived (YS IV, 19), the mind and its modifications are known by the unchanging *puruṣa* (YS IV, 18), i.e. the mind is composed of the three *guṇas* and due to its changing nature has an “object-character.” Patañjali asserts that the mind is a composite process; it does not exist for its own sake (nor does the sense of self: *ahamkāra*) but must necessarily serve “another’s purpose.” Vyāsa writes: “With its commitment still unfulfilled, the mind is the repository of the habit patterns and personality traits (*vāsanās*). For when the mind has fulfilled its commitment, the *vāsanās* have no repository and cannot maintain themselves.”<sup>115</sup> He later adds: “The mind, being a conjoint activity, (what it effects) is done for itself. For a happy mind is not for the purpose of knowledge. Both are for the purposes of another. That other, which has as its purposes experience and liberation, is *puruṣa* alone ... .”<sup>116</sup>

The teleology of the mind and its contents all have a purpose beyond themselves, namely the two-fold purpose of world-experience and liberation. In fact, it is the *raison d’être* of the conjunction (*samyoga*) between the seer and the seeable, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, to be of assistance in the liberating process of the awakening of *puruṣa* to its true identity.<sup>117</sup> The subservient role given to *prakṛti* is often understood in Sāṃkhya and Yoga scholarship as signifying an asymmetry of relationship between spirit and matter: all that is *prakṛtic* ultimately exists in the service of *puruṣa*, in the service of soteriology. As a counteractive to spiritual ignorance and bondage in the form of misidentification and suffering, *prakṛti* does indeed serve the purposes of *puruṣa*. What, however, is *prakṛti*’s status in the context of the enlightened state of *puruṣa*? Does *prakṛti* merely cease to exist for the liberated *yogin*? Can *prakṛti* be understood to play a more integral role here implying, in the final analysis, an engagement of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* in the “aloneness of seeing”? These and other questions relating to the meaning and place of *prakṛti* in the liberated *yogin*’s life must, for want of space, be dealt with in a separate study (see Whicher: 1992, 1995). For now, it suffices to say that the level of

113 YS IV, 24 (p. 199): *tadasaṃkhyeyavāsanābhiścitraṃ api parārthaṃ saṃhatyakāritvāt.*

114 YS II, 21 (p. 89): *tadartha eva dṛśyasyā”tmā.* “The nature of the seeable is only for the purpose of this [seer].” Cf. SK 36-37 and YS II, 18 as well as YS III, 35 and IV, 34.

115 YB IV, 11 (p. 185): *manas tu sādḥikāram āśrayo vāsanānām. na hy avasitādḥikāre manasi nīrāśrayā vāsanāḥ sthātum utsahante.*

116 YB IV, 24 (pp. 199-200): *saṃhatyakāriṇā cittaṇa na svārthana bhavitavyam, na sukhacittaṃ sukhārthaṃ na jñānaṃ jñānārtham ubhayam apy etat parārtham. yaś ca bhogenāpavargeṇa cārthanārthavan puruṣaḥ sa eva paro ...*

117 YS II, 23 (p. 91): *svasvāmīśaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhihetuḥ samyogaḥ.* “The conjunction [between the seer and the seeable] is the cause of the apprehension of the own-form of the powers of owner and owned.”

instrumentation of the mind (*citta*) is explicitly acknowledged by Patañjali in the above *sūtra* (YS IV, 24) which asserts that even though the *citta* may be coloured by innumerable *vāsanās* it still, however, retains its fundamental characteristic of serving the purpose of *puruṣa* (i.e. experience and liberation).<sup>118</sup>

The Sanskrit commentators on Yoga discuss at great length whether the mind corresponds to the size of the body (which is the Sāṃkhyan view) or whether it is all-pervasive (*vibhu*). They settle for the latter alternative. Vyāsa reiterates the Sāṃkhyan perspective, according to which the mind contracts or expands, and follows with the view offered by the teachers (*ācārya*) of Yoga: “Others hold that the mind, like the light of a lamp, contracting when put in a jar and expanding when placed in a palace, assumes the size of the body; and that transmigration becomes possible because of an intermediate state. Only then is it possible to explain its absence in between (the time of dissolution) and its worldly existence. But the teacher (Patañjali) says that it is only the modifications of this all-pervading mind which contract and expand.”<sup>119</sup> Vyāsa proclaims that Yoga holds it is only the modifications of the mind — the mental processes or *vṛtti*-aspect of consciousness — that can be said to contract and expand, depending on efficient causes such as virtue.<sup>120</sup> The authorities in Sāṃkhya, however, admit of an intermediate stage (of a subtle body) in order to explain how transmigration takes place. In Yoga the mind is understood to be all-pervasive (*vibhu*) so there can be no question of the need for a subtle body (*sūkṣmaśarīra*, see SK 39). Vācaspati explains that there is no proof for the existence of a subtle body as posited in Sāṃkhya. The mind is neither atomic nor of medium size nor of the size of the body; the mind has the same entitative extension as prakṛtic existence itself.<sup>121</sup> The all-pervasive *citta* contracts or expands only in its manifestation or actualization as modifications or mental activity (*vṛtti*). “There is, therefore, no need in Yoga for a migratory subtle body.”<sup>122</sup> Perhaps one other way to understand the above issue is that Patañjali saw no real pedagogical usefulness in talking about a subtle body. Patañjali’s practical and pragmatic orientation emphasizes that spiritual emancipation can take place in this very lifetime and can be understood as an embodied state of freedom (Whicher, 1995).

118 YS II, 21: see n. 114 above.

119 YB IV, 10 (pp. 183-184): *ghaṭaprasādapradīpakalpaṃ saṃkocavikāsi cittam śarīraparimāṇākāramātram ity apare pratipannāḥ. tathā cāntarābhāvaḥ saṃsāraś ca yukta iti. vṛttir evāśya vibhunaś cittasya saṃkocavikāsinīty ācāryaḥ.*

120 YB IV, 10 (p. 184): *dharmādi nimittāpekṣam.*

121 TV IV, 10 (p. 184): *tasmād ahamkārikatvāc cetaso ’hamkārasya ca gaganamaṇḍalavat trailokya vyāpītvād vibhūtvam manasaḥ. evam cedasya vṛttir api vibhvīti sarvajñatāpatir ity uktaṃ. Cf also TV IV, 17 (p. 193).*

122 G. Koelman (1970: 104).

123 *Ibid.*

Therefore, the need to posit a subtle body — which is itself a further limitation of identity — seems superfluous.

G. Koelman offers the following helpful explanation regarding the a-spatial dimension of *citta*: “Since it is non-spatial and without extension, its contraction and expansion should not be conceived as spatial. Its expansion would mean rather its intentional extension to its object, which can be situated at any point of space. The mind also can shift in a moment from one object to another that is at the other extreme of space. Mind is, therefore, something immaterial and subtle, remaining however prakṛtic and undergoing change.”<sup>123</sup> Defining mind more epistemologically, H. Āraṇya tells us: “Mind is not all-pervading like the sky, because the sky is only external space. Mind ... is only power of knowing without any extent in space. Its connection with external things is always existing and they may become clearly knowable when properly brought to the mind, that is why it is everywhere as the faculty of knowing and is limitless. Only the modifications of the mind contract and expand. That is why the mind appears as limited.”<sup>124</sup> As mentioned earlier, rather than being conceived as “substance” per se, *citta* can be viewed as a heuristic device for understanding the nature and functioning of consciousness in Patañjali’s system.

The Yoga school formulated a doctrine of an all-pervasive mind to explain the very possibility of knowledge of all things or omniscience (*sarva-jñātrva*) and sovereignty over all states of being (*adhiṣṭhātrva*). Both of the above mentioned yogic abilities or powers are made available and credited to the *yogin* who has attained the discriminative discernment between *puruṣa* and the rarefied *sattva* of the mind, the finest quality or constituent of *prakṛti*.<sup>125</sup> Vācaspati Miśra introduced the distinction between “causal consciousness” (*kāraṇa-citta*) and “effected consciousness” (*kārya-citta*), arguing that the former is infinite (all-pervasive), which can be understood to approximate Patañjali’s concept of the cosmic or root *citta* (YS IV, 5).<sup>126</sup>

(to be continued)

<sup>124</sup> H. Āraṇya (1963: 395).

<sup>125</sup> YS III, 49 (p. 167): *sattvapuruṣānyatākhyātīmātrasya sarvabhāvādhiṣṭhātrvaṃ sarvajñātrvaṃ ca*. “Only from the discernment of the difference between *puruṣa* and the *sattva* is there sovereignty over all states of existence and omniscience.”

<sup>126</sup> TY IV, 10; cf. Feuerstein (1980: 61) who argues that Vācaspati’s notion of an omniscient *kāraṇa-citta* “makes the concept of *puruṣa* (Self) superfluous.” It makes more sense, however, to understand the *citta* in the above way as serving a cosmic purpose for the sake of the *puruṣa*, the “omniscient one” or “knower,” without which the *kāraṇa-citta* would be wholly incapable of registering any knowledge whatsoever. The *kārya-citta* could be conceived of as the individual mind(s) arising from the cosmic or root *citta*.

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