

REVISIONING DUALISM IN PATAÑJALI'S CLASSICAL YOGA[†]

Ian WHICHER

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 *cittavṛttinirodha* or the

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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 Yoga¹ 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 Sāṃkhya, 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.² It is important to note that the Sāṃkhyan dualism (that Yoga appropriates) is quite distinct from the Cartesian dualism which bifurcates reality into mental and material aspects. The dualistic perspective of Sāṃkhya 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

¹ The system of classical Yoga is often reduced to or fitted into a classical Sāṃkhyan scheme — the interpretations of which generally follow along radically dualistic lines. In their metaphysical ideas classical Sāṃkhya 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: Sāṃkhya, 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 Sāṃkhya literature. Patañjali includes several *sūtras* on the “restraints” or *yamas* (namely, nonviolence [*ahimsā*], truthfulness [*satya*], non-stealing [*asteya*], chastity [*brahmacharya*], and nonpossession [*aparigraha*]) of the “eight-limbed” path of Yoga that are listed in the *Acārāṅga 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 Vācaspati 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 *vyāvahārika* (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 Sāṃkhya, as set out in Īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, “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 Sāṃkhya. 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 Kṛṣṇa and Patañjali is of crucial importance. Nevertheless, the theoretical connections and parallels between the *YS* and Sāṃkhya 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

³ See in particular: Feuerstein (1980: 14, 56, 108); Eliade (1969: 94-95, 99-100); Koelman (1970: 224, 251); and G. Larson (1987: 13) who classifies Patañjali’s Yoga as a form of Sāṃkhya.

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 *draṣṭṛ* (the “seer”), and *prakṛti* or *dṛśya* (the “seeable”), may not have been intended by Patañjali as a metaphysical theory of truth. Moreover, despite the fact that Patañjali initially adopts a Sāṃkhyan 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

4 F. Edgerton (1924), “The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga,” *AJP* 45, pp. 1-46.

5 See Chapter 1 in Whicher (1998).

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 absence 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 Vācaspati Miśra 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 Vāṛṣaganya. Oberhammer’s analysis of this ‘yogic’ orientation is based on relevant quotations found in the *Yuktidīpikā* 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 *asamprajñāta-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” (*nirbīja*) *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 Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be read sequentially. Transformative insight, the foundation of liberation in Sāṃkhya, 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 Sāṃkhya. 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 (*saṃskāras*) 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

10 See Chapple (1996).

11 Thus knowledge in Sāṃkhya, 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 Sāṃkhya) 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).

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 interpretation¹³ 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*)".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): *yogaś 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 [*anumāna*] and valid testimony [*āgama*]), 'error'/'misconception' (*viparyaya*), 'conceptualization' (*vikalpa*), 'sleep' (*nidrā*) 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' (*ahaṃkāra*) 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 *Sambhāṣā* Vols 18 (pp. 35-62) and 19 (pp. 23-82). In the first four *sūtras* of the first chapter (*Samādhi-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 yogānuśāsanam; yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ; tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 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; *nirodha* is not (for the yogin) the ontological cessation of *prakṛti* (i.e., the mind and *vṛttis*). Seen here, *nirodha* 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, *nirodha* 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 (*bīja*) 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*.¹⁵ 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*).¹⁶ The declared goal of classical Yoga, as with Sāṃkhya and Buddhism, is to overcome all suffering (*duḥkha*, YS II.16) by bringing about an inverse movement or counter-flow (*pratiprasava*)¹⁷ understood as a “return to the origin”¹⁸ or “process-of-involution”¹⁹ 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”²⁰ or “withdrawal from manifestation” — actually mean? Is it a definitive ending to the perceived world of the

15 See Whicher (1997) “Nirodha, Yoga Praxis and the Transformation of the Mind”.

16 YS II.15 (p. 74): *pariṇāmatāpasamṣkāraduḥkhair guṇavṛttivirodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ 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.

18 See Chapple and Kelly (1990) p. 60.

19 Feuerstein (1979a) p. 65.

20 Cf. T. Leggett (1990) p. 195 and U. Arya (1986) pp. 146, 471.

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 *sādhana*), 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,”²¹ 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” (*dr̥ṣeḥ kaivalyam*) which, as Patañjali states, follows from the disappearance of ignorance (*avidyā*) and its creation of *saṃyoga*²² — 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

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 saṃyogābhāvo hānam taddr̥ṣeḥ 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 *saṃsāric* 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 *sattva* 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 *sattva*, the transformation (*pariṇāma*) 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 *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*) and its transcendence (in *asaṃprajñāta-samādhi*) self-identity overcomes its lack of

23 YS II.20 and IV.18.

24 YS IV.34 (p. 207): *puruṣārthasūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citiśaktir iti.*

25 See n. 24 above.

26 YS III.55 (p. 174): *sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyam iti.* One must be careful not to characterize the state of *sattva* 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 *sattva*. It is not accurate, according to Yoga philosophy, to say that the *sattva* 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 *sattva* (beingness, light, goodness, clarity, knowledge), free of dualities, free of acquisition-and-possession, Self-possessed (*nīrdvandvo nityasattvastho nīryogakṣema ātmavān*). It would appear from the above instructions that the nature of the *sattva* being referred to here transcends the limitations of the nature of *sattva-guṇa* 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*),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.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,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*.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*)³¹ between *puruṣa* and the *sattva* of the mind (as the finest nature of the seeable) can take place.³²

27 *YB III.55* (p. 175): *na hi dagdhakleśabījasya jñāne punar apekṣā kācid asti*. "When the seeds of afflictions have been scorched there is no longer any dependence at all on further knowledge."

28 H. Āraṇya 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."

29 *YB IV.25* (p. 201): *puruṣas tv asatyām avidyāyām śuddhaś cittadharmair aparāmṛṣṭa*.

30 *YB I.41*.

31 *YS II.26*.

32 *YS III.49*.

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 liberated³³ 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 *samsāric* existence.³⁴ 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 *nirbīja-samādhi*,³⁵ the mind ceases to operate within the context of the afflictions, karmic accumulations, and consequent cycles of *samsāra* 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 commentary³⁶ (eleventh century CE), refers to Yoga as “separation” (*viyoga*).³⁷ More recently, numerous other scholars³⁸ have endorsed this interpretation, that is, the absolute separateness of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. In asserting the absolute separation of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*,

33 Vijñāna Bhikṣu insists (*YV* 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 *YV* I have consulted T. S. Rukmani (1981, 1983, 1987, 1989).

34 *YB* II.18.

35 *YS* I.51 and III.8: the state of *nirbīja* 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 *samskāras*) 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 *samsāra* 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 *saṃyoga*. The idea of cosmic balance and of the mutual support and upholding of the

39 I am here echoing some of the points made by Chapple in his paper entitled, "Citta-vṛtti and Reality in the *Yoga Sūtra*" in *Sāṃkhya-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 (*samskāras*); but in Yoga, higher dispassion and *asamprajñāta* 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 Sāṃkhya where the "wheel of *samsāra*" 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 ecstasy goes beyond the liberating knowledge of *viveka* in the Sāṃkhyan system in that the yogin must develop dispassion even toward discriminative discernment itself. For more on an analysis of the notion of liberation in Sāṃkhya and Yoga see C. Chapple's chapter on "Living Liberation in Sāṃkhya 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.⁴¹ 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” (*ṛtambharā*),⁴² the yogin perceives the natural order (*ṛta*) of cosmic existence, “unites” with, and embodies that order. To fail to see clearly (*adarśana*) 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.”⁴³

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

41 *YB* II.28 (pp. 99-101).

42 *YS* I.48.

43 See K. Klostermaier (1989), “Spirituality and Nature” in *Hindu Spirituality: Vedas Through Vedānta* ed. by Krishna Sivaraman (London: SCM Press) pp. 319-337.

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.⁴⁴ Vyāsa emphasizes that the identity of *puruṣa* is not something to be acquired (*upādeya*) or discarded (*heya*).⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

Dharmamegha-samādhi presupposes that the yogin has cultivated higher dispassion (*para-vairāgya*) — the means to the enstatic consciousness realized in *asamprajñāta-samādhi*.⁴⁷ 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 ecstasy, the final step on the long and arduous yogic journey to authentic identity and “aloneness.”⁴⁸ A permanent

44 YS IV.29 (p. 202): *prasamkhyānye 'py akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyaṭer dharmameghah samādhiḥ*.

45 YB II.15 (p. 78): *tatra hātuh svarūpam upādeyam vā heyam 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 “*nirodha*” 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 sattvification 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/lost (YB II.15), Yoga in effect transcends its own result-orientation as well as the categories of means and ends.

47 YB I.18.

48 See Feuerstein (1980: 98).

identity shift — from the perspective of the human personality to *puruṣa* — takes place. Now free from any dependence on or subordination 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 activity⁵⁰ (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 *dharmā*” which includes an “eternality of knowledge” free from all impure covering (*āvaraṇa-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

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): *tataḥ kleśakarmanivṛtīḥ*. Thus, it may be said that to dwell without defilement in a “cloud of *dharmā*” is the culminating description by Patañjali of what tradition later referred to as living liberation (*jīvanmukti*). 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 *Sāṃkhya*, 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 Purānas.” (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 *aḥaṃkāra* [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 sarvāvaraṇamalāpetasya jñānasyā’nantyājñeyam alpam*.

of action motivated by the ego. According to both Vyāsa⁵³ and the sixteenth century commentator Vijñāna Bhikṣu,⁵⁴ one to whom this high state of purification takes place is designated as a *jīvanmukta*: 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 *samsārically* and ceases to act from the perspective of a delusive sense of self confined within *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.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 (*karma*) by which a person is implicated in *samsāra*. 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 *saṃyoga*. This does not mean, as some scholars have misleadingly concluded, that the spiritual adept or yogin is free to commit immoral acts,⁵⁶ or that the yogin is motivated by selfish concerns.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”⁵⁸ — is a highly moral process!

53 See YB IV.30 (pp. 202-203): *kleśakarmanivṛttau jīvan eva vidvān vimukto bhavati*. On cessation of afflicted action, the knower is released while yet living.”

54 YV IV.30 (pp. 123-124). Elsewhere in his *Yoga-Sāra-Saṃgraha* (G. Jha trans., p. 17) Vijñāna Bhikṣu tells us that the yogin who is “established in the state of *dharmamegha-samādhi* is called a *jīvanmukta*” (... *dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ ... asyāmavasthāyām jīvanmukta ity ucyate*). Vijñāna Bhikṣu is critical of Vedāntins (i.e., Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta school) that, he says, associate the *jīvanmukta* 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.

55 This is the essence of Kṛṣṇa's teaching in the *Bhagavadgītā* on *karmayoga*; see, for example, BG IV.20.

56 See R. C. Zaehner (1974), *Our Savage God* (London: Collins) pp. 97-98.

57 See B.-A. Scharfstein (1974), *Mystical Experience* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin) pp. 131-132.

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 (*ahiṃsā*),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 (*draṣṭṛ*, *puruṣa*) separate from the seeable (*drśya*, *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" (*drśi*) 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 uditopekṣāṇām sukhaduḥkḥapunyāpunyaviṣayāṇām bhāvanātaś cittaprasādanam*. "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*.

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 *saṃyoga*. 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 “aleness” 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 “aleness” (*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 “co-operating” together. Rather, the *Yoga-Sūtra* seeks to “unite” these two principles without the presence of any defiled understanding, to bring

⁶³ J. Taber (1983). *Transformative Philosophy: A Study of Śaṅkara, Fichte and Heidegger* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press) p. 26.

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 antinomianism, 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

BG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
RM	<i>Rāja-Mārtanda</i> of Bhoja Rāja (ca eleventh century CE)
SK	<i>Sāṃkhya-Kārikā</i> of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa (ca fourth-fifth century CE)
TV	<i>Tattva-Vaiśārādī</i> of Vācaspati Miśra (ca ninth century CE)
YB	<i>Yoga-Bhāṣya</i> of Vyāsa (ca fifth-sixth century CE)
YS	<i>Yoga-Sūtra</i> of Patañjali (ca second-third century CE)
YSS	<i>Yoga-Sāra-Samgraha</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu (ca sixteenth century CE)
YV	<i>Yoga-Vārttika</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu (ca sixteenth century CE)

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64 See Whicher (1998).

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Professor
Dept. of Religion
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Canada