

# UNIFYING KNOWLEDGE OF *PRAKṚTI* IN YOGA: *SAMĀDHI*-WITH-SEED

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## 1. Introduction to 'samādhi-with-seed'

Patañjali distinguishes between two kinds of *samādhi*: the first covering all those ecstatic states connected with objects of cognition; and the latter being devoid of objects and thus transcending all mental content. The former, which can also be designated as the “seeded”/“with-seed” (*sabīja*)<sup>1</sup> or “extrovertive” type of *samādhi*, is termed *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*<sup>2</sup> and constitutes a range of ecstatic experiences that have an objective “prop” (*ālambana*) with which the mind becomes identified and “united” and which are associated with yogic insight (*prajñā*). The second kind, what can be called the “objectless” or “introvertive” type of *samādhi*, is termed *asaṃprajñāta*,<sup>3</sup> the “acognitive”<sup>4</sup> or rather trans-cognitive ecstasy resulting in “seedless” (*nirbīja*) *samādhi*. It is acognitive in that there is no longer any cognition of authentic identity (*puruṣa*) as existing in *prakṛti*, no longer misidentification of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*. As

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<sup>1</sup> See YS I.46. As can be easily inferred from YS III.8 *saṃprajñāta* is, compared to the “seedless” (*nirbīja*) *samādhi*, an outer limb of Yoga. The Sanskrit text of the YS, the YB of Vyāsa, the *Tattva-Vaiśaradī* of Vācaspati Mīśra and the *Rāja-Mārtanḍa* of Bhoja Rāja is from *The Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali* in Āgāṣe [1904].

<sup>2</sup> Vyāsa (YB I.1-2 and I.17) and the main commentators after him understand YS I.17 to refer to *samādhi* which is linked with objects or mental content; or, as Feuerstein [1979a: 37] puts it, *saṃprajñāta* is “object-oriented.” YS I.18 is interpreted by Vyāsa as providing information on another kind of *samādhi* which he calls *asaṃprajñāta* and is devoid of all objective supports. See also the section on a preliminary look at the meaning and practice of *samādhi* in chapter four of Whicher [1998].

<sup>3</sup> The term *asaṃprajñāta* does not appear in the YS. But the term *saṃprajñāta* appears in YS I.17 with the term ‘*anya*’ (“other”) in the following *sūtra* glossed by the major commentators as ‘*asaṃprajñāta-samādhi*.’ Clearly, *asaṃprajñāta-samādhi* is the best candidate there.

<sup>4</sup> As translated by Arya [1986: 248]. The translation of *asaṃprajñāta* as “acognitive” is, however, highly problematic as it can all too easily lead one to conclude that *samādhi* is an unconscious or mindless state which makes one incapable of functioning effectively in the world.

*samprajñāta* explicitly denotes illuminated yogic experiences which take place “outside of” or are “external to” *puruṣa*-realization, I will refer to it as ecstasy.<sup>5</sup> *Asamprajñāta* denotes the *puruṣa* being left “alone” by itself — having discarded its confused identity in the condition of *saṃyoga* — with nothing more to experience or know for the sake of its “liberation.” I will refer to it as enstasy. Eliade renders the term rather conveniently as enstasis “without [mental or objective] support.”<sup>6</sup> The main concern in this present study is with *samprajñāta-samādhi*: those stages in Yoga where *puruṣa*, as it were, comes to know itself in a self-reflexive manner, i.e. through states of self-reflection. *Asamprajñāta*, however, transcends self-reflexive knowledge, i.e. is a transmental state of identity.

A general definition of *samprajñāta* is based on the derivations of the word from: (1) ‘*sam*’: meaning “together,” “altogether,” and as a preposition or prefix to verbs and verbal derivatives it can express “conjunction,” “thoroughness,” “intensity,” “union.”<sup>7</sup> (2) ‘*pra*’: a preposition meaning “before,” “forward,” “in front,” “forth”<sup>8</sup>; the preposition ‘*pra*’ joins with (3) *jñāta*: “known ... perceived, understood” (from the verb root *jñā*: “to know”)<sup>9</sup> to form *samprajñāta*. Some of the meanings for *samprajñāta* are: “distinguished, discerned, known accurately [as in the] Yoga-Sūtra.”<sup>10</sup> *Samprajñāta* refers to the *samādhi* of cognition wherein one has the consciousness of an object or mental content.

In his *Bhāṣya*, Vyāsa introduces the *sūtra* on *samprajñāta-samādhi* by asking: “How is the *samādhi* defined which is cognitive and which follows when the [misidentification with] the modifications

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<sup>5</sup> Obviously both kinds of *samādhi* can be called ecstatic in that they occur outside of or expand beyond the ordinary sense of self or ego. However, in Yoga, *puruṣa* alone is true identity; there is no second principle of authentic selfhood. In line with this fundamental philosophical premise I have designated the two kinds of *samādhi* as ecstasy and enstasy. Lumping together both kinds or categories of *samādhi* as “enstasis” (see Eliade [1969: 79, 84]) or “enstasy” (Feuerstein [1979a: 37-38]) blurs the important distinction made in Yoga between *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta*. More recently, Feuerstein [1989: 11] translates *samādhi* as “ecstasy” which he readily admits does not have exactly the same connotations as “enstasy.” He is, however, more emphatic about the distinction in an even more recent work [1990: 106].

<sup>6</sup> Eliade [1969: 84].

<sup>7</sup> Monier-Williams [1899: 1152]. ‘*Sam*’ is sometimes prefixed to nouns in the sense of *sama* and can mean (ibid): “same,” “equal,” “full,” “complete,” “whole,” “entire.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 652.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 425; note also the abstract noun *prajñā* which means [ibid: 659]: “wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, discrimination.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 1174.

(mental processes) of the mind has ceased by the two means [*abhyāsa* (practice) and *vairāgya* (dispassion)]?”<sup>11</sup> Earlier (YB I.1) Vyāsa stated that “Yoga is *samādhi*.” Now the specifics of that definition are being described. Vijñāna Bhikṣu qualifies the above statement by Vyāsa (n. 11) correctly explaining that cognitive *samādhi* refers to a stage of practice where the yogin has brought the rajasic and tamasic *vṛttis* under “control.”<sup>12</sup> This reinforces and clarifies the traditional understanding in Classical Yoga that it is only in the supra-cognitive *samādhi* (*asamprajñāta*) that all the *vṛttis*, including the sattvic ones, are mastered<sup>13</sup> and that any attachment to or soteriological dependence on *vṛtti* is finally overcome. *Puruṣa* — no longer dependent on knowledge (mind-*sattva*) as had previously been the case in the process of coming to know its true identity — is left alone in its self-effulgent nature as the ever-free knower.

The stages of *samprajñāta-samādhi* are highlighted by Patañjali in YS I.17. He writes: *Samprajñāta* [arises] from association with [the forms of] cogitation — i.e. having verbal association (*vitarka*), reflection (*vicāra*), joy (*ānanda*), and I-am-ness (*asmitā*).”<sup>14</sup> Vyāsa’s commentary runs as follows:

The mind’s experience of a “gross” object of support/contemplation [in *samādhi*] is “cogitation.” It is “reflection” when the object of support is subtle. “Joy” means delight. “I-am-ness” is the perception of the essential, unified nature of self. Of these [four forms of cognitive *samādhi*], the first *samādhi* — with “cogitation” — is associated with all four. The second one — with “reflection” — is without the verbal associations of the first. The third one — with associations of “joy” — is without the subtle associations of the second. The fourth, “I-am-ness” only, is without the

<sup>11</sup> YB I.16 (p. 20): *athopāyadvayena niruddhacittavṛtteḥ katham ucyate samprajñātaḥ samādhir iti?*

<sup>12</sup> YV I.17 (p. 104): *upāyadvayenābhyāsavairāgyābhyāṃ niruddharājasatamasavṛtteḥ*. Text is taken from T.S. Rukmani [1981].

<sup>13</sup> As Vyāsa makes clear in YB I.1. See also Vācaspati’s (TV I.1) comments as well as n. 12 above. 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 which incorporates ‘intellect’ (*buddhi*), ‘sense of self’ (*ahaṅkāra*) 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 indepth look at the meaning of *citta* see Whicher [1997].

<sup>14</sup> YS I.17 (p. 20): *vitarkavicārānandāsmitārūpānugamāt samprajñātaḥ*.

association of joy. All these kinds of *samādhi* are with supportive objects/content.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the *Bhāṣya* proposes the following schema to understand the order of the four forms of cognitive *samādhi*:

- (1) *vitarka* (“cogitation”) actually includes all the other subsequent forms also, namely *vicāra*, *ānanda* and *asmitā*.
- (2) *vicāra* (“reflection”) is without *vitarka* but also includes *ānanda* and *asmitā*.
- (3) *ānanda* (“joy”) is without *vitarka* and *vicāra* but includes *asmitā*.
- (4) *asmitā* (“I-am-ness”) is without *vitarka*, *vicāra* and *ānanda*.

Feuerstein rightly comments that the systematic schema of Vyāsa “... is a beautiful illustration of the *sat-kārya* axiom according to which the effect is preexistent in its cause. In this particular case, the lowest degree of ... realization contains in posse the ... cognitive elements typical of the higher forms [of cognitive *samādhi*.]”<sup>16</sup> In Yoga, contemplation on each “effect” leads to the direct perception (*sākṣātkāra*<sup>17</sup>) of the form and nature of that “effect.”

The reason for the initial position of *vitarka-samādhi* in *YS* I.17 is given by Vācaspati Mīśra. He writes:

Just as an archer, when a beginner, pierces first only a gross and afterwards a subtle target, so the yogin, when a beginner, has direct experience merely of some gross object of concentration made up of the five gross elements, [such as] the Four Armed [i.e. Viṣṇu], and afterwards a subtle object. So with regard to the object of the mind the experience becomes a subtle one. Meditation has for its sphere of action the causes of the gross phenomena, the subtle elements, the five *tanmātras*, the manifested and the unmanifested essence of matter [*prakṛti*].<sup>18</sup>

15 *YB* I.17 (p. 21): *vitarkaś cīttasyālabane sthūla ābhogaḥ. sūkṣmo vicāraḥ. ānando hlādaḥ. ekātmikā saṁvidasmitā. tatra prathamāś catuṣṭayānugataḥ samādhiḥ savitarkaḥ. dvitīyo vitarkavikalāḥ savicāraḥ. tṛtīyo vicāravikalāḥ sānandaḥ. cāturthastadvikalo'smitāmātra. ... sarva ete sālambanaḥ samādhayaḥ.*

16 G. Feuerstein [1980: 89] and refer to *SK* 9. Cf. *SK* 22 on the causal succession of the categories of existence which gives an ontological emphasis to the Sāṁkhyan system.

17 Both Vācaspati Mīśra (*TV* I.17) p. 21 and Vijñāna Bhikṣu (*YV* I.17) p. 105 use the term *sākṣātkāra* for yogic perception.

18 *TV* I.17 (p. 21): *tathā hi prāthamiko dhānuṣkaḥ sthūlam eva lakṣyaṁ vidhyatyatha sūkṣmam evaṁ prātamiko yogī sthūlam eva pāncabhautikaṁ caturbhujādi dhyeyaṁ sākṣātkāroty atha sūkṣmam iti. evaṁ cīttasyālabane sūkṣma ābhogaḥ sthūlakaraṇabhūtasūkṣmapañcātānāmātra-*

The experiences to be realized in the four stages of *samprajñāta* exist in everyone in potential form. The mind is not normally prepared to enter the subtler stages at once — at least it is not the common experience. It is not likely that an average practitioner could suddenly leap to the highest state of *samādhi* and understand the processes of the intermediate states as part of such an instantaneous development. If a development of this nature should normally occur, there would be no need for the order as described by Patañjali. As a rule, and as Vācaspati implies (see n. 18 above), only by starting from the grosser objects does the mind gradually harmonize or unite with the subtlest and settle there. Vijñāna Bhikṣu affirms that this application by stages is, however, only a general rule, “since by the grace of *īśvara* or by the grace of the enlightened teacher (*sad-guru*), [the yogin] finds his or her mind capable of abiding in the subtle stages at the very beginning [of practice]. Then the previous lower stages need not be practised by the one desirous of liberation, [for this would be] a waste of time.”<sup>19</sup>

## 2. *Samādhi: the heart of Patañjali's soteriological methodology*

Throughout the *YS*, Patañjali's central concern is how to attain a knowing-oneness which is not merely a mental activity or self-reflective state of mind, but rather involves a tacit recognition, an uncompromising identity as the ever-free, unmodified *puruṣa*. Identity as *puruṣa*, recognizing one's true Self as pure, nonfragmented consciousness, is the primary concern in Yoga practice, wherein the seer is established in its authentic form (*YS* I.3): the aloneness of “seeing” (*YS* II.25). Without this realization, as Patañjali says, we can never be certain we are knowing other “things” clearly and not merely seeing “things” in a distorted manner (through an impure mind) which colours our perception and experience of them. In *samādhi*, contemplation on and unification with the objects of experience is not for its own sake but provides insight (*prajñā*) which leads to liberation. The main purpose of Patañjali's detailed analysis of four stages of cognitive *samādhi* is to help the yogin or “knower” who, having

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*liṅgāliṅga viṣayo vicārah.*

<sup>19</sup> *YSS* (pp. 44-45): *ayaṃ tūtsarga eveti prāgevoktam. yatho yadīśvaraprasādāt sadguru-prasādād vā ādāv eva sūkṣmabhūmikāyām avasthiti yogyatā svacittasya dṛśyate tadā na sthūlādi pūrvapūrvabhūmikāyā mumukṣubhiḥ kālakṣepaḥ kartayaḥ.* See Sanskrit text of *YSS* in Jha [1894].

become sensitive “like an eyeball”<sup>20</sup> to the presence of pain and dissatisfaction within the mind and in the world at large, desires to be liberated from such suffering and its cause — *saṃyoga* — which arises from ignorance (*avidyā*).

The intent of the *YS* is primarily soteriological: How do we “attain” identity as *puruṣa* and “know” that clearly? The means offered by Patañjali can be understood to proceed through an analysis of different stages or levels of insight (*prajñā*) expressing a “deeper” and “clearer” understanding of oneself and the world. Through yogic ecstasy (*saṃprajñāta*) our attention is led to four related though distinct kinds of insight and associations with self ultimately leading, in the case of the discernment of *puruṣa* (*puruṣa-khyāti*), to ecstasy or realization of *puruṣa*.

What then is the purpose of the various associations, identifications and levels of self-understanding attained in *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*? It is to fulfil the soteriological purpose described in *YS* I. 15-16: to develop a knowledge or consciousness of freedom, mastery, non-enslavement, implying detachment or dispassion (*vairāgya*) towards each level of identification with the objects of experience “either seen or heard of” culminating in a superior form of dispassion (*YS* I.16) towards the manifest and unmanifest existence of the *guṇas*. At each stage of *samādhi* one may have a “conviction” that the next subtler level of experience is purer, more permanent, more joyful, and a closer “likeness” or resemblance to the real nature of *puruṣa*. However, by means of the direct experience (*sākṣātkāra*) and insight (*prajñā*) the yogin discovers that the purity or virtues attained are only relative, at best derived from *sattva-guṇa* — the finest constituent of *prakṛti*. Each level of unification or identification which takes place in *samādhi* is successively found to be attended by or prone to affliction (*kleśa*), i.e. mistaken identity and invariable dissatisfaction (*kleśa*) rooted in spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) and generating further karmic residue (*karmāśaya*). The identifications or states of unity attained in *samādhi* are expedients to the realization of authentic identity (*puruṣa*). Yet these high-level yogic experiences may in turn be misappropriated or self-referenced, claimed by an I-sense or egoity which is not *puruṣa*, and lead to further misidentification, confusion and dissatisfaction. Dispassion towards all experiences in *samādhi*

<sup>20</sup> See *YB* II.15 (p. 76): *akṣipātrakalpo hi vidvān iti.*; see also *YB* II.16 (p. 79).

liberates the yogin from further attachment to the results or “fruit” attained through practice (*abhyāsa*). Practice keeps the process of Yoga (*nirodha*) in a working condition and allows for subtler realizations and perceptions to take place.

According to YS II.4<sup>21</sup> the kleśas exist in various states. They can be: (1) “dormant” (*prasupta*), that is, exist in the form of latent impressions (*saṃskāras*<sup>22</sup>) in the potential condition as a seed (*bīja*<sup>23</sup>), awakening when they confront their objects and generating various afflicted forms of psychomental activity; (2) “attenuated” (*tanu*), that is temporarily prevented from taking effect by way of cultivation of their opposite (*pratipakṣa-bhāvana*, YS II.33) or other yogic techniques<sup>24</sup>; (3) “interrupted” (*vicchanna*), which is the case when one kind of *kleśa* (e.g. attachment or *rāga*) in the form of desire temporarily blocks the operation of another (e.g. anger as associated with aversion, *dveṣa*<sup>25</sup>); (4) “aroused” (*udāra*), meaning “fully active,” in that “what possesses the mind in regard to an object is called aroused.”<sup>26</sup> According to Patañjali, it is the purpose of Kriyā-Yoga<sup>27</sup> to achieve the attenuation of these afflictions and bring about the cultivation of *samādhi*.

Vyāsa also declares that whatever is given form or influenced by spiritual ignorance, “that the afflictions inhere in. They are felt at the time of deluded apprehension, thought or ideas; when ignorance dwindles, they dwindle accordingly.”<sup>28</sup> Through *samādhi* the mind is borne on towards the discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyaṭi*): the knowledge that *sattva* and *puruṣa* are different.<sup>29</sup> However, ego-centred apprehensions, intentions or ideas such as self-appropriated notions of identity (e.g. “I-am-ness” or “It is mine”) may continue to arise from the activation of previous *saṃskāras*<sup>30</sup> whose seed-power

21 YS II.4 (p. 59): *avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṃ prasuptatanuvicchinodārāṇām.*

22 YB IV.29 (p. 202): *saṃskārabīja.*

23 See YB II.4 (p. 59).

24 YB II.4 (p. 60).

25 Ibid: *rāgakāle krodhasyādarśanāt.*

26 Ibid (p. 61): *viṣaye yo labdhavṛttiḥ sa udārah.*

27 YS II.1.

28 YB II.4 (p. 61): *yadavidyayā vastvākāryate tad evānuṣerate kleśā viparyāsapratyayakāla upalabhyante kṣīyamāṇāṃ cāvidyāmanu kṣīyanta ...*

29 YB II.26 (p. 97): *sattvapuruṣānyatāpratyayo vivekakhyaṭiḥ.*

30 See YS IV.27 (p. 201): *tacchidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṃskārebhyaḥ.*

or cause in the form of the afflictions gradually fades away.<sup>31</sup> Patañjali informs us that the overcoming or abandonment of this self-centred mentality or thinking is like that of the afflictions,<sup>32</sup> a process referred to as *pratiprasava* (YS II.10 and IV.34): the “return” to the state of equilibrium or non-afflicted identity. Just as the afflictions are reduced to the condition of “scorched seed” (i.e. are made obsolete) through unfaltering discriminative discernment,<sup>33</sup> so the previous *saṃskāras*, having become “seeds” scorched by the fire of knowledge, can no longer generate attachment to ideas<sup>34</sup> or fixed notions of self rooted in ignorance.

Viewed from within the pedagogical context of the Yoga tradition, Patañjali emphasizes that a necessary detachment or dispassionate attitude towards each successive experience in the practice of *samādhi* must develop for the yogin. Simply perfecting a particular level of realization in *samādhi* and remaining at that level of understanding is not conducive to furthering one’s spiritual growth. It is only when a complete detachment or dispassion (*vairāgya*) develops towards the present experience that the next step can be taken involving a yet subtler object of contemplation and support.

Since the mind must be purified and illuminated, and therefore brought to a gradual refinement or subtilization of understanding through the sattvification of consciousness, it must “move along” the scale of the various evolutes of *prakṛti* until it reaches an identification with the subtlest, finest possible state. Liberation lies in our becoming disentangled from the misidentification with the objects of experience, a form of identification involving a misguided sense of relation with the objects of experience and the world — understood in terms of “my” objects, “my” attainments or “my” world — which merely perpetuates a self-serving mentality. All the objects, including mental content, are evolutes, transformations or actualizations of *prakṛti*. If bondage and suffering are due to an enslavement to the *vyutthāna* mode or centrifugal tendency of consciousness: of *puruṣa* misidentified within *prakṛti*, freedom can take place through a

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31 YB IV.27 (p. 201): *pratyayāntarānyasmīti vā mameti vā jānāmīti ... kṣīyamāṇābījebhyaḥ pūrvasaṃskārebhya itī.*

32 YS IV.28 (p. 201): *hānaṃ eṣāṃ kleśavad uktam.*

33 Cf YS II.26.

34 VB IV.28 (p. 202): *yathā kleśā dagdhabījabhāvā na prarohasanarthā bhavanti tathā jñānāgni nā dagdhabījabhāvāḥ pūrvasaṃskāro na pratyayaprasūr.*

counterprocess of the *nirodha* mode or centripetalization of consciousness, an interiorization and centring of the consciousness which transcends and heals the fractured consciousness of self thereby correcting our mistaken identity. The process of *nirodha* can be broadly conceived as a de-identification with<sup>35</sup> and final dispassion towards the “seeable” (*drśya*) starting from grosser forms of manifestation (i.e. physical objects) up to and including unmanifest *prakṛti*. Through this process *puruṣa* can realize that it is distinguishable from everything with which it had been identifying itself and through which identity had become shaped by the seeable in one way or another. The sattvification and ultimate liberation of consciousness has to be effected voluntarily by the yogin’s efforts<sup>36</sup> and, as the pedagogical context of Yoga ascertains, under the guidance of a spiritual preceptor (*guru*) or perhaps through devotional surrender or dedication to *īśvara*.

The twenty-four principles (*tattvas*) with which the mind may identify and unite are divided fourfold by Patañjali. Patañjali’s model<sup>37</sup> can be understood to include the following:

- (1) The “Particularized” composed of the sixteen *viśeṣas* — distinct, specific forms of *prakṛti* comprising: (a) the five gross elements (*bhūtas*), namely: earth, water, fire, air, space; (b) the five action organs or conative senses: hands, feet, voice, evacuation and generation; (c) the five sense organs or cognitive senses: smell, taste, sight, touch, and sound; (d) the mind-organ (*manas*).
- (2) The “Unparticularized” or six *aviśeṣas*, the general material causes of the *viśeṣas*, namely: (a) the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*) that produce the five gross elements; and (b) *asmitā-mātra*, pure I-am-ness or ego (*ahaṃkāra*), the identifying or self-referencing principle by which the conflated self-identity of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* or root composite sentience (*asmitā*) begins to identify itself as such-and-such a being particularizing itself into individual selves (“I’s”) or persons.
- (3) *Liṅga-mātra*, the “Designator” or first manifestation of the

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<sup>35</sup> The term “de-identification” does not imply here that the power or capacity of the mind to identify with the objects of experience has been taken away from the yogin or permanently discarded.

<sup>36</sup> As *YS* I.21-22 make clear.

<sup>37</sup> Here I have consulted Arya’s [1986: 224-225] formulation of Patañjali’s model. The ontological schematic of *prakṛti* is outlined in *YS* II.19.

presence of *prakṛti*, referring to the subtlest evolute, *mahat* or the “great (self)” (*mahān-ātman*) which is also a synonym for the *buddhi*. This principle is the receptacle for the reflected consciousness of *puruṣa*, the point where a material evolute first appears to “unite” with *puruṣa* producing *asmitā*, “I-am-ness” (YS II.6), the root composite sentience not as yet self-conscious as a particular “I.” It is at this junction or interface where *puruṣa* and the mind “meet” that our notion of person takes root and develops.

(4) *Alīṅga*, the “Unmanifest,” “Undifferentiate” or transcendent core of *prakṛti*, not manifest (*avyakta*) as the phenomena of the universe.

In cognitive *samādhi* the above states can act as the “objects” of experience and can be utilized as supportive factors for the aspiring yogin. This type of *samādhi* is based on the constitution of the empirical personality consisting of the mind (*citta*, which includes, as we have seen, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*), the subtle elements, the action and sense organs, and the gross elements.

In the context of Yoga praxis, the cosmogonic model of Patañjali is not meant as a purely speculative construction. Rather, it is “a mixture of a priori theorising and a posteriori explanation of concrete yogic experiences” (see n. 38 below) and, moreover, is to be used as a heuristic device for properly orienting the yogin on “his [her] inner odyssey.”<sup>38</sup> As stated previously, this study understands Patañjali’s metaphysical schematic as having been abstracted from yogic experience, whereas in Classical Sāṃkhya it appears that all experiences are fitted into a metaphysical system, i.e. the dualistic ontology of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The model in Yoga is primarily a practical map comprised of contemplative directives which engage one in the process of sattvification or meditative interiorization, and realization of intrinsic identity. Secondly, the model acts as a descriptive account of the cosmic evolutionary processes of *prakṛti*.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the yogin is progressively led towards the ultimate realization of *puruṣa* via a scheme not unlike that portrayed in the Upaniṣads and which denotes more and more causally subtle grades of self-understanding, identity and being.<sup>40</sup> Eventually the yogin transcends the hierarchy of cognitive possibilities provided by *prakṛti* and

38 G. Feuerstein [1979a: 14].

39 Ibid.

40 See, for example, *Kaṭha Up* VI.7-8.

becomes established in the identity of the knower, *puruṣa* alone.

Since the various levels of cognitive *samādhi* lead from the identification with grosser objects or content (as effects) to the identification with subtler objects or content (as causes), the lower-level *samādhis* include (in potential) the subtler levels but at each level any attachment to the former and less subtle identification and experience is transcended. When the *vṛttis* concerning any effect are mastered in the process of *nirodha*, the minds' "doors" of perception open to the material and efficient cause of that effect. The efficient cause does not actuate the objects or content of *prakṛti* but removes obstacles to their realization<sup>41</sup> as causally subtler grades of identification accompanied by progressively more subtle (sattvic) levels of self-understanding and cognitive clarity. By developing the capacity to locate, identify with, and be detached from more refined and less afflicted states of the reflected consciousness of *puruṣa*, the yogin gradually diminishes the impurities or afflictions (*kleśas*) within the mind. The result is an increasing "light" of *sattva*-knowledge or insight (*prajñā*) and refinement of experience which leads to discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*).<sup>42</sup>

As a method, and when practised together with concentration and meditation, *samādhi* refers to one of the disciplines used to attain the highest levels of yogic interiorization or constraint (*saṁnyama*). In regards to content, cognitive *samādhi* refers to the ecstatic states of consciousness of the yogin who is yet dependent on objects (*prakṛti*), and to the types of knowledge and levels of self-understanding unfolded through its practice.<sup>43</sup> Like *nirodha*, the term *samādhi* alludes to both a process of purification and illumination and a state of consciousness and self-identity. In fact, the yogic insight (*prajñā*) gained from the mastery attained in the practice of *saṁnyama*<sup>44</sup> can be none other than the full-depth of cognitive *samādhi*, i.e. *nirvicāra-samādhi*.<sup>45</sup> The success of the method or practice presupposes a sattvified state of awareness and understanding. Liberating knowledge cannot be acquired, produced or manufactured in the mind. Mechanical, repetitive approaches to practice involving the use of

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41 YS IV.3.

42 See YS II.28 and YB II.28.

43 This refers to the *samāpattis* of YS I.42-44.

44 YS III.4-5.

45 YS I.47-50; see the discussion on *nirvicāra-samādhi* later in this article.

yogic technique cannot bring about insight or the desired goal of liberated selfhood. According to Yoga philosophy, insight already exists in the mind as a potential within nature (*prakṛti*) in the form of *sattva*-intelligence. Through the “beginningless” accumulation of the sedimentation of ignorance in the mind, liberating knowledge is covered over, concealed from consciousness. However, by means of the attenuation of the afflicted condition of the mind, insight and “goodness” — the *sattvic* nature of consciousness — is gradually revealed as being intrinsic to the mind.

Cognitive *samādhi* obstructs the recurring manifestation of the afflictions in the form of *rajas* and *tamas* while simultaneously aiding in the direct experience of the pure *sattva* of the mind as being distinct from the *puruṣa*. *Samādhi* uncovers fully the light of *sattva* through which our misconceived identity and distorted cognition or error (*viparyaya*) dissolves and clear knowledge (*jñāna*) or insight (*prajñā*) is revealed. All barriers to the realization of *puruṣa* are thus removed.

While through ordinary perception (*pratyakṣa*) a tangible object can be seen, experienced, thought of, contemplated, yet its material cause may not be conscious, known or obvious. Observing a clay pot, for example, one normally may not think of what the clay pot is made of. But when knowledge of the underlying nature of the pot (i.e. as clay) reaches a definite clarity or “fullness,” the clay substance — the real “stuff” of the pot — becomes, as it were, more “real” or “permanent” and the pot is perceived as a subsidiary of the clay. A clay pot breaks easily; its durability and stability is minimal compared to that of its cause, the clay. Using a clay pot and its material cause (*upādāna*) as an analogy, we can say that it is for the above reason that the subtler objects in the practice of *samādhi* lead to a greater and more lasting stability and one-pointedness of mind. As the mind focuses on the normally experienced, conventional nature of an object, it slowly transcends its tangible or extrinsic nature and grasps the unobvious, the cause or intrinsic nature and value which was previously not known, seen or experienced. In Yoga, the identification with the modification (*vṛtti*) of the effect is, through the process of *nirodha*, understood, mastered and transcended thereby disclosing the form (*vṛtti*) of its cause. The identification with *vṛtti* may take the form of a *pratyaya* — *pratyaya* referring to the significance or content of a *vṛtti* including fixed, egoic notions of self and identity which are cemented or crystallized in the mind (see discussion on YS I.41 below).

Because a cause is always subtler, less tangible and located deeper within the mind-processes — closer, as it were, to the light of *puruṣa* — the next step in the practice of *samādhi* is invariably subtler. Thus, the process of the sattvification of the mind which leads the attention of the yogin from the grosser objects or content to the more subtle, and effects to causes continues until the yogin reaches the most refined state of understanding and experience. This is the meaning of progress in cognitive *samādhi*. When the mind becomes as “unified” with the object as a red-hot ball of iron is with fire,<sup>46</sup> the former (familiar) ground is superseded and the next exercise to gain the yet subtler, finer ground begins.

The process of *samādhi* and its application in stages through *saṃyama* (YS III.6) leading to the progressive attainment of yogic insight does not entail an ontological negation or cessation nor a denial, withdrawal or “escape” from the phenomenal world, but rather suggests a fullness, completion and transcendence of experience and its effects in the form of misidentification and attachment at each stage of practice. In *samādhi* transcendence implies a knowledge of mastery (*vaśtkāra*),<sup>47</sup> a dispassion (*vairāgya*) towards, not denial of relative existence thereby dispensing with the empirical limitations or prakṛtic barriers to the realization of *puruṣa*. What is involved here is not only a focusing of attention on a subtler object or rising to a higher realm which includes universalist values such as an ethical universal of purity or insight, but a “rising above” (from Lat. *trans* + *scendere*: to climb over or rise above) our normal perception and relation to the “given” — the experienced object — which allows the possibility of leverage over it, of changing the perception and relation to that “given.” Transcendence involves a gradual shedding of the layers of ignorance and misidentification, the mental conditioning of *cittavṛtti*. What is transcended in Yoga is one’s identity as it is given shape and functions within the framework of a bifurcation between self and world formed within *prakṛti*, a consciousness of self which ineluctably holds itself to be separate from, yet craves satisfaction through, the objects of experience. The yogin becomes detached from the world of *saṃyoga* and its polarization of self and world — a

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<sup>46</sup> The analogy of the “red-hot ball of iron” is given by Vijñāna Bhikṣu; see YV I.17 (p. 110): *taptāyah pīṇavad ekābhāvena sthūlasākṣātkāro puruṣaparyantānām sarveṣām eva bhānāt*. “In the direct perception of the gross object there is perception of everything up to *puruṣa* because of an identity, as in [the case of] a red-hot ball of iron.”

<sup>47</sup> YS I.15.

subject-object dichotomy that governs and defines our self-identity as egoity. The failure to distinguish between the true experiencer (*puruṣa*) and what is experienced comes to an end and along with it the mistaken identity which had been responsible for generating a “mental self out of delusion” (*YB II.6*) vanishes from consciousness.

The practice of *samādhi* is not merely the concentration on an object or idea, nor is it getting lost in self-hypnotism. Nor has it to do with a relapse into unconsciousness or “drug-induced” experiences.<sup>48</sup> Having been released from its rajasic and tamasic functioning, the mind in the experience of *samādhi* is not made dull, inactive, incapacitated, thoughtless or unconscious. *Samādhi* is accompanied by acute “wakefulness,” alertness and mental lucidity, in fact an overcoming of the egoic limitations of consciousness. The possibility for an egoless knowing (as Yoga claims takes place in the state of *samādhi*) and thus the embodied implications of this knowing for an enlightened human nature were rejected for instance by C. G. Jung.<sup>49</sup> Paralleling Kant, Jung argued from the perspective of the epistemological limitations of human nature (i.e. one cannot know “the thing-in-itself”) and the more theological claim within, for example, Christianity, that human nature is inescapably flawed.

The essence of cognitive *samādhi* is the centring of our diversified, fractured being leading at its most profound or advanced level to an organic and spiritual reunification of our individuated sense of self with the universal matrix (*mahat*) of manifest *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti*, it is to be remembered, while being a multi-dimensional principle of existence, is yet in essence of one “piece.” The main task of the yogin lies in the gradual overcoming of the power of the emerging (*vyutthāna*) ego-consciousness lending itself to an extrinsic identity of selfhood and the simultaneous cultivation of the sattvification process in *nirodha* which counteracts the powerful tendency of human consciousness to become attached to, shaped and defined by the objects of experience. Patañjali explains that the mind

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<sup>48</sup> Patañjali does state in *YS IV.1* that the *siddhis* (supra-normal powers) can be the result of birth, herbs, mantra recitation, asceticism or *samādhi*. But nowhere in the *YS* does Patañjali claim that drugs can replace the self-discipline and commitment required for the attainment of *samādhi*. Furthermore, the *siddhis* are not the true goal of Yoga.

<sup>49</sup> See Jung [1973]; see also Jung [1963: 26] and [1978]. For a critique of Jung’s views, especially on his equating *samādhi* with the psychologist’s “unconscious,” see Swami Akhilananda [1947: 167]; see also Jacobs [1961: 164], and Coward [1979: 323-336]. While Jung’s position is obviously prejudiced, he was right to warn against Westerners merely imitating the East and carelessly or impulsively abandoning their historical roots.

has two basic characteristics to which it conforms: (1) dispersiveness (*sarvārthatā*) or the tendency of attention to be drawn into all-objectivity, and (2) one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*).<sup>50</sup> The mind can become concentrated through the dwindling of its dispersive predispositions leading to attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) and the subsequent cultivation of one-pointedness wherein states of *samādhi* are predominant. At this concentrated stage the mind is favourably disposed towards illuminating insight and dispassion — qualities of its inherent sattvic nature — as the distractions (*vikṣepa*) or obstacles (*antarāya*, *YS* I.30) to such illumination are rendered inoperative. Patañjali declares: “Then again, when there is a sameness between the subsided and the arising idea, there is the transformation of one-pointedness of the mind.”<sup>51</sup> In *samādhi* the mind one-pointedly and in a collected manner (*samāhita*) assumes the form of similar ideas which appear momentarily in consciousness.<sup>52</sup> Both of the above transformations are seen by Patañjali as particular forms (*dharma*) of change.

It could be argued that the levels of *samādhi* are more or less common to other schools of Yoga or Hindu thought. Yet the analysis of *samādhi* given by Patañjali, from the point of view of the depths of human existence, is centrally important and more illuminating than many of the others. In order to know the true nature of things, Patañjali tells us in no uncertain terms that it is necessary to experience states of *samādhi* and attain greater epistemic “oneness” with our objects of experience. Why, might we ask, is this “oneness” necessary in order to know the true nature of things? The answer Patañjali gives is that, otherwise, hindrances in the form of impurities (i.e. the afflictions) are bound to get in our way, to come between us, as knowers, and what we are trying to know. These hindrances, impediments to “oneness,” can be seen to come from three places (*YS* I.41): (i) the nature of the knower or grasper (*grahītṛ*); (ii) the nature of what is being known or grasped (*grāhya*); and (iii) the nature of the medium between these two, the act of knowing or grasping

50 *YS* III.11; Vyāsa writes (*YB* III.11: 123): *sarvārthatā cittadharmah. ekāgratāpi cittadharmah.* J. H. Woods translates the compound *sarva-arthatā* as “dispersiveness.”

51 *YS* III.12 (p. 124): *tataḥ punaḥ śāntoditau tulyapratyayau cittasyaikāgratāpariṇāmah.*

52 *YB* III.12 (p. 124): *samāhitacittasya pūrvapratyayah śānta ... uditah, samādhicittam ubhayaor anugatam ...*

(*grahaṇa*).<sup>53</sup> Ian Kesarcodi-Watson aptly observes:

If I perceive things through inner or outer veils — mental ones like biases, preconceptions, categories, memories; or physical ones like defective sense-organs — I will not perceive things properly. Or if these things do not present themselves properly to me, or are not allowed to present their proper selves by something intervening, like smog or a hessian screen, again, it will not be their true nature that I will perceive ...<sup>54</sup>

How do we purge ourselves and situations of the preceding kinds of unclearness? Numerous questions may arise which can lead one to doubt the possibility for the kind of epistemic clarity Yoga is talking about. For example, one could ask: Is the world as object(s) in some essential sense only a construct? Is all knowledge radically interpretive? Is every act of perception and cognition contingent, mediated, situated, contextual, theory-bound? Is what one knows and experiences to an indeterminate extent a projection? To these questions and others like it Patañjali would reply with a final, emphatic “no.” Human cognition is not so limited although, as we have seen, Patañjali admits that there are obstructions to clear “seeing,” obstructions which, however, can be removed through yogic discipline. Kesarcodi-Watson makes the following incisive comment:

In the end Patañjali declares, and I think rightly, that we escape these problems by being at-one-with the things we seek to know. Without this oneness we never can be quite sure that it is the *svarūpa* [true form/nature] of the thing we are acquainted with, and not some mere surrogate. This is, indeed, the central problem of perception. Many, especially in Western thought, have counselled despair; or fled to one or another of several forms of Idealism. Very few have had the courage to claim that we really can contact *svarūpas*. Yet this is what Patañjali does in his doctrine, or doctrines of *samādhi*.<sup>55</sup>

Even though the mind has the capacity for knowledge of all things, to realize all matters, it fails to do so because of the intervention and misidentification with mental content or objects of perception (i.e. the *vṛtti*-generating complex); only when their interruption is finally prevented through the clarity attained in *samādhi* does the full

<sup>53</sup> As can be inferred from Patañjali’s analysis in *YS* I.41. See n. 65 below.

<sup>54</sup> Kesarcodi-Watson [1982: 780].

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

realization (*sākṣātkāra*) of the objects of contemplation occur. In Yoga, unmediated perception is possible and such clarity allows for insight into the true nature of any object. This is the direct perception of the yogin (*yogi-pratyakṣa*). In Yoga philosophy these finer states of perception arise in *samprajñāta* and not in the “lower” concentrations (the *cittaparikarmas*, *YS* I: 33-39) where the totality of the object of concentration cannot be fully grasped. Through the concept of *samādhi* Yoga has worked out the epistemological presuppositions necessary in order to connect the interiority of the inner viewer (observer) with the interiority of the objects viewed (observed).

In spite of the central role given it in the process of liberation in Yoga, one must guard against mistaking higher perception as an end in itself. It is not that the yogin’s direct perception of a grosser object in *samādhi* automatically leads to the finer ground of a subtler object. A material object or mental content cannot in itself bring about spiritual realization or ego-transcendence. In perception only a *vṛtti* is generated. One must also develop a detachment or dispassion towards that *vṛtti* of perception. Insight into the true nature and form (*svarūpa*) of an object in *samādhi* only leads to the powers (*siddhis*) which are described in the third chapter (entitled the *Vibhūti-Pāda*) of the *YS*. The *YS* posits an ultimate goal (*kaivalya*) of Yoga that is decidedly not personal knowledge or power. The practice of *saṁyama* has also a soteriological purpose. Patañjali and Vyāsa view yogic power as instrumental to the attainment of *kaivalya*, but also as being without intrinsic value. Citing Adolf Janáček, C. Pensa points out that the powers in Yoga are presumed to be “a sign of correct Yoga procedure”<sup>56</sup> but are not the true aim of Yoga. G. Feuerstein correctly avers:

the special gifts acquired through the practice of constraint [*saṁyama*] cannot possibly be stamped as unwanted side-effects which inevitably block the yogin’s path to Self-realization. ... The danger lies not in the extraordinary insight or powers which the practice of constraint is said to yield, but in the yogin’s attitude towards them. ... The popular opinion that these yogic abilities are not part of the path to Self-realization is demonstrably wrong.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Janáček [1951] quoted by Pensa [1969: 200]. Elsewhere Pensa [1973: 39] emphasizes that the powers cannot be “separated from the essentially organic and unitary structure of Yoga.”

<sup>57</sup> Feuerstein [1979a: 104].

According to YS III.37 certain supernormal powers — called *prātibha* (understood in YS III.36 as “vividness” or “intuitive illumination” in regard to hearing, touching or sensing, sight, taste and smell)<sup>58</sup> — are to be looked upon as “impediments to *samādhi* but perfections in the state of extroversion or emergence (*vyutthāna*).”<sup>59</sup> These powers, which can be understood as a natural by-product of the yogin’s meditative practice, are accomplishments only from the point of view of the egoic consciousness. Indulging in them only serves to inflate the ego and prevents spiritual growth precisely because the deployment of them presupposes that we invest our attention in the sensorial world and the desire for power or control over it (reinforcing the subject-object duality within *prakṛti* which Yoga seeks to bring an end to). The powers are made available or accessed by means of an ascension through the *tattvas* (principles of existence) as enumerated in Sāṃkhya. The enhanced abilities, for example, to observe the subtle elements (*tanmātras*) giving rise to the gross elements (*bhūtas*) — which is the import of YS III.36 and clearly follows the Sāṃkhyan scheme<sup>60</sup> — need not be a problem in Yoga. It is rather one’s attachment to these powers or selfish manipulation of them that inevitably creates difficulties and confusion for oneself and others. Any clinging to or misappropriation of power means that we reinforce the habit of assuming we are ego-personalities rather than *puruṣa*. Clearly then the powers are detrimental if one had no higher goal or aspiration. On the other hand they can be supportive of the true “goal” of Yoga: “aloneness” (*kaivalya*). *Siddhis* can be understood as the result of a disciplined mind properly cultivated in concentration, meditation and *samādhi* and not utilized for selfish gain or control. The yogin is capable, through *saṃyama*, to attain a mastery over the elements (*bhūtas*, YS III.44) and develop the set of eight powers: of becoming minute, perfection of the body, etc., as mentioned in YS III.45 and YB III.45). It is noteworthy that the powers can be read as a progression from mastery of the elements, to mastery of the sense organs (YS III.47), mastery of the source of the manifest (*pradhāna*, YS III.48), and sovereignty over (i.e. nonenslavement to) all states of

58 YS III.36 (p. 156): *tataḥ prātibhaśravaṇavedanādarśāsvādavārtā jāyante.*

59 YS III.37 (p. 156): *te samādhāv upasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ.* Cf. *Mahābhārata* XII.232, 22 and XII.266, 7 which advise that these “intuitive illuminations” arising from one’s spiritual practice should be ignored or conquered.

60 See Chapple and Kelly [1990: 95].

existence, as well as omniscience (YS III.49). Yet, in the final analysis, there is the need for a detachment or dispassion towards all power (as YS III.50 clearly indicates) in order for the liberated state of “aloneness” to arise.<sup>61</sup> Vyāsa thus boldly advocates that even though great powers can be accessed through Yoga, the true yogin does not venture to transgress the natural laws of *prakṛti*.<sup>62</sup> Patañjali was not opposed to the right use of *siddhis* — which could serve to bring about a more insightful understanding of oneself and the cosmos — or else he would not have dedicated the entire third chapter of his work to these manifestations of power (*vibhūti*s). Vyāsa maintains that the realization of the purity of *puruṣa* and the culminating stage of liberated “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) can take place whether one has acquired *siddhis* or not.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. An analysis of YS I.41

When the modifications (*vṛttis*) of the mind have diminished or subsided through practice (*abhyāsa*) and dispassion (*vairāgya*),<sup>64</sup> the “barriers” between the mind and the object dissolve and both “coincide.” This process is elucidated by Patañjali in YS I.41 as follows: “[The steadied mind] of diminished modifications, like a precious (flawless) jewel assuming the colour (i.e. respective qualities) of the grasper, the grasping and the grasped, has unification.”<sup>65</sup> This *sūtra* describes the basic processes and mechanism of any form of cognitive *samādhi*. The term *samāpatti* (“unification”) has been translated as:

<sup>61</sup> Cf. BG III.42 where the senses are described as being great, the mind as being above the senses, the intellect as being superior to the mind, and even greater than the intellect is said to be the Self.

<sup>62</sup> YB III.45 (p. 165): *na ca śakto 'pi padārtha viparyāsaṃ karoti*. The ethical implications of Vyāsa’s statement should not go unnoticed. It would not be inappropriate, for example, to suggest that those who abuse power while claiming to be yogins are not true yogins.

<sup>63</sup> YB III.55 (p. 175): ... *puruṣasyopacaritabhogābhāvaḥ śuddhiḥ. etasyābhavasthāyāṃ kaivalyaṃ bhavaśśvarasyāntīśvarasya ...*

<sup>64</sup> The practice referred to here is the meditative practice on one principle (*ekatattvābhyāsa*, YS I.32), dealt with in YS I: 32-39, and meant for stabilizing the mind and preventing the obstacles or distractions (YS I.30-31) from arising. Vyāsa includes *vairāgya* here (YB I.31) even though it is not mentioned in YS I.32 itself. It appears that from the point of their introduction in YS I.12 and onwards both *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* can be seen to include the necessary expedients and preconditions for all yogic attainments and insights.

<sup>65</sup> YS I.41 (p. 43): *kṣīṇavṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grahīṭṛgrahanagrāhyeṣu tatsthatadañjanatā samāpattiḥ*.

“balanced-state,”<sup>66</sup> “engrossment,”<sup>67</sup> “transformation,”<sup>68</sup> “thought transformation,”<sup>69</sup> “illumination,”<sup>70</sup> “complete identity,”<sup>71</sup> “consummation,”<sup>72</sup> “Zusammenfallen,”<sup>73</sup> “coincidence,”<sup>74</sup> “intentional identity,”<sup>75</sup> “identification-in-*samādhi*,”<sup>76</sup> “unity.”<sup>77</sup> According to Monier-Williams, *samāpatti* means “coming together, meeting, encountering.”<sup>78</sup> In the context of the *YS*, *samāpatti* (herein translated as “unification”) denotes the proficiency, accomplishment and transmutation of the mind (*citta*) which takes place in *samādhi*. More specifically, *samāpatti* is the insight (*prajñā*) thus gained as derived from *samprajñāta* (*YS* I.17) which signifies that the mind breaks into and coincides with the sphere of the “object” grasped, unifies or fuses with it and reveals its innermost “essence.” This process of “unification” is elaborated upon by way of an example. Vyāsa writes:

The analogy is given of a precious jewel. As a crystal, according to the things set near it, becomes tinged with their colours and appears to take on their respective forms, so the mind is coloured by the object of contemplation, and through uniting with the object appears in the form of the object.<sup>79</sup>

Having extinguished, through practice and dispassion, the external impurities of the mind, the objects or supportive factors (*ālambana*) can more clearly and fully reflect in the mind and an identification or unification occurs. In the above analogy, both the crystal and the

66 Woods [1914]; Rukmani [1981: 206].

67 Āraṇya [1963: 99].

68 Bangali Baba [1976: 21].

69 R. Prasāda [1912: 64].

70 Sri Purohit Swami [1973].

71 Dvivedī [1934].

72 Taimni [1961].

73 Hauer [1958: 243].

74 Feuerstein [1979a: 51].

75 Koelman [1970: 197].

76 Leggett [1990: 152].

77 Chapple and Kelly [1990: 52].

78 Monier-Williams [1899: 1161].

79 *YB* I.41 (p. 43): *abhijātasyeva maṇer iti dṛṣṭāntopādānam. tathā sphatika upāśrayabhedāt tattadrūpoparaktā upāśrayarūpākāreṇa nirbhāsate tathā grāhyālanbanoparaktam cittam grāhyasamāpannam grāhyasvarūpākāreṇa nirbhāsate.*

coloured object — although they persist in actually remaining two separate, distinct “entities” — appear, from the moment in which the crystal is placed near the object, as a single thing: a coloured crystal. Similarly, the mind and the object in *samādhi* are two different prakṛtic states which at the moment of the identification appear in the experience of the yogin as if they are the same “thing” (ontologically) due to the total absorption of the mind in the object. As the crystal does not undergo any permanent modification by having been coloured by the object, likewise the mind, as the underlying “*dharma*-holder” (*dharmin*) of consciousness, is not intrinsically altered by being absorbed in, i.e. assuming the form or characteristic (*dharma*) of, the object.

Patañjali and the Yoga school look upon the “one mind” (*cittam ekam*, YS IV.5) as the primary “state” or “*dharma*-holder” which remains constant (as pure unblemished *sattva*) throughout the transformations (*pariṇāma*) that occur in ordinary life. All impressions (*saṃskāras*, whether of a *vyutthāna* or a *nirodha* nature, YS III.9), and thought constructs/ideas/intentions (*pratyaya*, YS III.12) are considered as forms or characteristics (*dharma*) of the mind. Applying the satkāryavāda doctrine — that change affects only the form of a thing, not its underlying “substance” — Patañjali shows how the three basic forms or states of an object, namely: its “subsided” (*sānta*) or past aspect, its “arisen” (*udita*) or present aspect, and its “indetermined” (*avyapadeśya*) or future aspect are related to the same *dharmin* which is constantly present, yet different from (i.e. is not to be reduced to), its forms or modifications.<sup>80</sup> For example, the mind is not annihilated or negated when the mental processes diminish or subside. Hence throughout the changing modes of identity brought about by the impressions and mental processes the mind does not actually lose its finest, essential nature as pure *sattva* (i.e. clarity, knowledge) which reflects the pure light of *puruṣa*. Without the presence of this reflected illumination of *puruṣa* in the mind, the human personality in whatever mode could not function. The mind, however, extrinsically conforms or corresponds to its characteristics (*dharmas*) as in the case of, for example, its tendency towards either dispersiveness/objectivity or one-pointedness (YS III.11), extroversion or interiorization (YS III.9), these being transformations of the

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80 YS III.14.

forms (*dharmā-pariṇāma*) in which consciousness and cognition function. Each characteristic (*dharmā*) is connected with the three aspects of time/designation (*lakṣaṇā-pariṇāma*) and has its own states or stages of development (*avasthā-pariṇāma*).<sup>81</sup>

In his exposition of *YS* I.41 Vyāsa states: “When the modifications/mental processes have subsided means: when the ideas/intentions have diminished.”<sup>82</sup> Based on Vyāsa’s commentary (*YB* I.1), we have previously explained that the definition of Yoga given in *YS* I.2 does not only mean that Yoga is the cessation of the misidentification with all *vṛttis* because the cessation with the misidentification with all *vṛttis* takes place only in ecstasy (*asamprajñāta*) whereas cognitive *samādhi* or ecstasy (*samprajñāta*) is also meant to be included in Yoga. Since *YS* I.41 deals (at least provisionally) with *samprajñāta* or *sabīja-samādhi*, as *YS* I.46 suggests, Vyāsa (*YB* I.41) omits the word “all.” In other words, Vyāsa’s clause, “the modifications/mental processes have subsided” indicates that *vṛttis* other than those<sup>83</sup> of the one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*, *YS* III.11-12) of the object in *samādhi* have been mastered and have therefore subsided because the identification/unification (*samāpatti*) defined in this *sūtra* is also a form of *vṛtti*, albeit one of knowledge, insight or yogic perception (*prajñā*, *yogi-pratyakṣa*). The subsiding of the *vṛttis* in this context is limited to the rajasic and tamasic mental processes. Vācaspati Mīśra therefore explains that the ability of the mind to function in a crystal-like fashion requires a *sattva* dominance within consciousness.<sup>84</sup>

Both Vyāsa and Vijñāna Bhikṣu explain *vṛtti* (as used in *YS* I.41) in the context of *pratyaya*. *Vṛtti* and *pratyaya* do not strictly refer to the same thing, *vṛtti* indicating an underlying mental process and *pratyaya* meaning the product/content (i.e. cognition, idea, intention) or significance of a *vṛtti* which, by means of this mental process, arrives at consciousness. However, for the purpose of the explanation

81 *YS* III.13.

82 *YB* I.41 (p. 43): *kṣīṇavṛtter iti pratyastamitapratyayasetyarthah.*

83 *YV* I.41 (p. 208): *kṣīṇavṛtter apagatavṛttyantarasya cittasetyarthah.*

84 *TV* I.41 (p. 43): *abhyāsavairāgyābhyām kṣīṇarājasatāmasapramāṇādivṛtteś cittasya. ... tadanena cittasattvasya svabhāvasvacchasya rajastamobhyāmanabhibhava uktaḥ.* [From which the modifications have subsided] describes the mind as existing in the state, in which that class of modifications (*pramāṇa*, valid cognition) which are of a rajasic or a tamasic nature have subsided as a result of practice and dispassion. In this manner it is stated that the *sattva* of the mind, which is by nature pure, is not overpowered by *rajas* (disturbing activity) and *tamas* (inertia, dullness).”

which follows, the apparent identification of both terms seems acceptable.<sup>85</sup> Vyāsa and Vijñāna Bhikṣu acutely observe that when the *samāpatti* takes place the *pratyayas* have not all been eliminated since there subsists one *pratyaya* — the *samāpatti* itself which constitutes in itself a *pratyaya*.<sup>86</sup> It is evident that in the experience of *samāpatti* there occurs an act of perception/cognition in which something becomes present or is revealed to consciousness.

YS I.41 constitutes a phenomenological analysis of experiences in cognitive *samādhi* wherein the “seeable” (*drśya, prakṛti*) is described experientially. Concerning the objects, the “grasped” (*grāhyas*), Vyāsa states:

Coloured by a gross object which is its supportive factor, the mind appears to take on the nature of that object. Similarly, when coloured by contemplation on a subtle object, unified with a subtle object, it appears to have the nature of that subtle object. Coloured by any particular thing (material object) and identified with that thing in *samādhi*, it appears as that particular form.<sup>87</sup>

The realm of the “grasped” in Yoga can be divided into three categories:

- (1) The gross objects of support and identification (*sthūla-ālambana*), comprising the five gross elements and involving the physical senses.
- (2) The subtle objects of support and identification (*bhūta-sūkṣma*): theoretically including all subtle principles from the subtle elements (*tanmātras*) up to and including unmanifest *prakṛti*.<sup>88</sup>
- (3) The various material objects or particular “things” of the universe (*viśva-bhedas*), comprising the “sentient” and “insentient” entities and objects (such as cows and jars respectively).

<sup>85</sup> This explanation for the relationship between *vṛtti* and *pratyaya* clearly renders Feuerstein’s hierarchical summarization of the process of *nirodha* somewhat obsolete in that Feuerstein [1979a: 28] sees “*pratyaya-nirodha*” (“restriction of the presented-ideas”) as a level of “restriction” which takes place after “*vṛtti-nirodha*” (“restriction of the fluctuations”).

<sup>86</sup> See n. 82 above; see also YV I.41 (p. 209): *pratyayasya pratyayāntarasyeti arthaḥ samāpatter api pratyayatvāt*.

<sup>87</sup> YB I.41 (p. 43): *bhūtasūkṣmoparaktam bhūtasūkṣmasamāpannam bhūtasūkṣmasvarūpābhāsam bhavati. tathā sthūlālambanoparaktam sthūlarūpāsamāpannam sthūlarūpābhāsam bhavati. tathā viśvabhedoparaktam viśvabhedasamāpannam viśvarūpābhāsam bhavati*.

<sup>88</sup> See YV I.41 (p. 210); cf. YS I.40 (p. 42): *paramāṇuparamamahatvānto ’sya vaśīkārah*. “The yogin’s mastery [extends] from the most minute to the greatest.”

It appears to be the case that the category of the “grasped” (*grāhyas*) in Yoga is structured to include the objects of *samāpatti* only in the *vitarka-* and *vicāra-samādhis*: the lower forms of cognitive *samādhi*. This seems to be consistent with the approach adopted in YS I.17 and I.42-44. The gross and subtle objects refer technically to the external or “objective” world only and therefore could not be inclusive of the “subjective” or “interior” categories of ego (*ahaṃkāra*) and intellect (*buddhi*), and then on to the unmanifest *prakṛti* (*aliṅga*).<sup>89</sup>

Concerning the instruments of knowledge or “grasping” (*grahaṇas*), Vyāsa says: “So also with the senses, which are the instruments of grasping. The mind, coloured by the instruments of grasping, identified (unified) with them, appears to have the nature of the instruments of grasping.”<sup>90</sup> “Grasping” refers to the perceiver’s own senses and this may include the innermost senses, namely, *ahaṃkāra* and *buddhi*.<sup>91</sup> At this stage of our analysis it seems reasonable to suggest that because the physical senses have already been included in the gross elements (as *grāhyas*), only the “inner” senses need to be understood as *grahaṇas*.

On the term *grahītṛ* (“grasper,” “knower”), Vyāsa writes:

Similarly, when the mind is coloured by the self who is the prakṛtic agent of grasping (i.e. the empirical grasper) as its supportive factor, united with *puruṣa* as that grasper, it appears to have the nature of *puruṣa* as that grasper. Again, when the mind is coloured by the liberated *puruṣa* as its supportive factor, unified with that liberated *puruṣa*, it appears to have the nature of that liberated *puruṣa*.<sup>92</sup>

*Grahītṛ*, explained by Vyāsa as the prakṛtic agent of experience, cannot be subdivided between gross and subtle and no such attempt, to our knowledge, has been made by the commentators. Vyāsa, however, differentiates between (a) *grahītṛ puruṣa* — *puruṣa* appearing as an empirical or prakṛtic agent, and (b) *mukta puruṣa* — the liberated Self. Vyāsa not only says “*grahītṛ*” — the prakṛtic,

<sup>89</sup> Vācaspati Miśra also holds this opinion; see TV I.41 (p. 43).

<sup>90</sup> YB I.41 (p. 43): *tathā grahaṇeṣv apīndriyeṣv api draṣṭavyam. grahaṇālambanoparaktam grahaṇasamāpannam grahaṇasvarūpākāreṇa nirbhāsate.*

<sup>91</sup> As Vijñāna Bhikṣu notes in YV I.41 (p. 210): *indriyāṇām sūkṣmam buddhyahaṃkārav iti bhāṣyakāro vakṣyati.*

<sup>92</sup> YB I.41 (pp. 43-44): *tathā grahītṛpuruṣālambanoparaktam grahītṛpuruṣasamāpannam grahītṛpuruṣasvarūpākāreṇa nirbhāsate. tathā muktapuruṣālambanoparaktam muktapuruṣasamāpannam muktapuruṣasvarūpākāreṇa nirbhāsata iti.*

empirical or knowing agent — but adds “*puruṣa*” so as to preclude *buddhi* alone<sup>93</sup> but to include *puruṣa* reflected in the mind as *asmitā*, totally “identified” with it, as *mahān ātmā* (the “great self”) or *mahat*.<sup>94</sup> Vyāsa consistently describes the locus of knowledge with reference to *puruṣa* regardless of how *puruṣa*’s identity (or misidentity) is being conceived (e.g. as an analogical understanding of consciousness as in *cittavṛtti, asmitā*).<sup>95</sup>

The question arises: Are there indeed two kinds of *puruṣas*? In Yoga certainly not. There is no intrinsic difference between the *puruṣa* appearing to dwell in a bound personality and the *puruṣa* which appears to be liberated. *Puruṣa* is ever-free by nature (*nitya-mukta-svabhāva*). The subject of YS I.41 (at least provisionally) is not the intrinsic nature of *puruṣa* but the stages of cognitive *samādhi*. The final stages of cognitive *samādhi* may be divided into three levels: (1) the realization, mastery of and unification with *buddhi* — the principle of intelligence — also referred to as *mahat*, and where there is not yet the realization of *puruṣa*; (2) the realization of the reflection of *puruṣa* in the *buddhi* in *asmitā* — the principal constituent, the agent or “grasper” (*grahītr*); (3) the realization that the reflection is not itself *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is the ever-free principle of pure consciousness, the reflection of which is seen in *asmitā-samādhi* (YS I.17). Vyāsa therefore differentiates between the reflection of *puruṣa* (in *asmitā*) and the changeless *puruṣa* whose existence transcends the realm of the *guṇas*.

As the constituents of an empirical personality the principles of *prakṛti* can be divided into a scheme of apprehension which can be formulated as follows<sup>96</sup>:

- (1) *Viśeṣas*, the 16 manifestations of the “Particularized,” the objects (*grāhyas*) “grasped” by the “grasper” or knower-agent. Ego — the sense of self (*ahaṃkāra, asmitā-mātra*) or sixth *aviśeṣa* — is the instrument through which *asmitā* appropriates or claims the knowledge of the objects. *Ahaṃkāra* is *grahāṇa*, the instrument of grasping or cognizing.

93 YVI.41 (p. 211): *grahītrtvam buddher api vyapadiśyata iti tadvyāvarttanāya puruṣapadam*.

94 See YB II.19 and Āraṇya [1963: 102, 197].

95 Vācaspati’s reflection theory, however, tends to shift the locus of knowledge to the *buddhi* or intellect.

96 See Arya [1986: 376-377].

- (2) *Aviśeṣas*, in the form of the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*), are also objects “grasped” (*grāhyas*).
- (3) *Liṅga-mātra* (*buddhi* or *mahat*) receives and reflects consciousness from *puruṣa*, thus creating *asmitā* — egoity or I-am-ness — the composite sentience, as if the seer and the seeable are a single self (YS II.6). This is where the potential for dissatisfaction (*kleśa*) actually takes root. The division or polarization of “seeing” into “seer and seeing” and the subsequent conjunction (*saṃyoga*) based on the epistemological distortion enveloping the subject (subjectified self) and the objectified world can be dismantled. When the mind, fragmented by the power of ignorance, is assumed to be the locus of the seer, there results the afflicted I-sense (*asmitā*), a mere reflection of *puruṣa*. The reflected sense of I-am-ness, and not *puruṣa*, is the agent (*grahītr*), the one who attempts to grasp or apprehend.

The above scheme is important in the classification of *samādhi* in YS I.17: (1) *Grāhyas* are the supportive factors (*ālambana*) in the *vitarka*- and *vicāra*-accompanied ecstasies. (2) *Grahaṇa* is the supportive factor in the *ānanda*-accompanied ecstasy. (3) *Grahītr* is the supportive factor in the *asmitā*-accompanied ecstasy. How these states interconnect and are related will be dealt with later. The Yoga tradition states the above to be the purposeful factors of cognitive *samādhi*.<sup>97</sup> Any other objects are only parts or composites of these.

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<sup>97</sup> Chapple and Kelly [1990: 52] give a translation of YS I.41 which is at variance with Vyāsa’s interpretation. They translate YS I.41 as follows: “[The accomplished mind] of diminished fluctuations, like a precious (or clear) jewel assuming the color of any near object, has unity among grasper, grasping, and grasped.” Stating that Vyāsa posits three types of “unity” (*samāpatti*), they argue (ibid) for only “one form of unity where ... all three aspects of grasping, etc., collapse, regardless of what is grasped, gross or subtle.” YS I.41 can be interpreted as positing one unity among grasper, grasping and grasped but this can be the case only after sufficient purification of the mind has taken place. As a study of *vitarka* and *vicāra* (which follows this section) makes clear, the earlier stages of *samāpatti* (in the “*sa*” forms) do not entail the necessary purity of mind which enables a full-fledged unity of the three components of the above triad to take place. Much of what goes on at the lower-level *samāpattis* is a removal of misidentification (ignorance) so that unification among the grasper, grasping and the grasped can take place. Vyāsa understands *samāpatti* as a multi-levelled practice which progressively purifies and illuminates consciousness thereby allowing insight and pure “seeing” to arise. In fact, the stages of *samāpatti* are considered by Patañjali to fall under the category of *samādhi* with seed (*sabīja*, YS I.46), the potential still remaining for the “seeds” of ignorance to “sprout.” When sufficient purification of consciousness in relation to the grasped, grasping and grasper has transpired, only then can there be an authentic unification among grasper, grasping and grasped. *Samāpatti* does not begin with this unification. Vyāsa is pointing out where ignorance can arise in forms of cognitive *samādhi* and how that ignorance can be eradicated. His emphasis here is pedagogical as well as epistemological. *Samāpatti* involves a process of the increasing sattvification of consciousness

A note of caution should be given here regarding *saṃprajñāta*, especially those *saṃādhi*-experiences which focus on the sixteen *viśeṣas*, and particularly the five gross elements. One may mistake these to be *saṃādhis* on the external world, i.e. the earth, physical forms, etc., with all the gross elements. It should be remembered that: (a) a perception of gross elements in the ordinary world falls within the normal category of *pratyakṣa* (YS I.7), a *vṛtti* which has subsided, and (b) holding the perception in the mind is memory (*smṛti*), another *vṛtti* which has subsided. In *saṃādhi* the focus on supportive factors is internal, as they exist, operate and are cognized within the mind (*citta*): The locus for identification with the “grasped” (*grāhya*) is the *manas*, the locus for identification with “grasping” (*grahaṇa*) is *ahaṃkāra*, and the locus for identification with the “grasper” (*grahītṛ*) is the *buddhi*. It is within the mind (*citta*) that their nature is observed and mastered through a more refined process of perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*). *Samādhi* consists of the convergence of the particular evolute as one of the subjectively inherent components of the mind with its correlate or counterpart in the objective world. For example, since mind (*citta*) is the “controller” of the senses (YS II.54-55 and YB II.54-55), the various powers of the senses are all included in the mind. The mind focuses on the objects and assimilates the *vṛttis* arising through the experience of those objects. Thus, the lower-level agent of *saṃādhi*, the mind-organ (*manas*) and the object converge and merge establishing a “unification,” fullness (*sam*) and perfection of the insight (*prajñā*) at that level. This applies not only to *vitarka* but to all the levels of cognitive *saṃādhi*. In the process of *nirodha* there takes place an interiorization of attention, a necessary, inward movement or “flow” of consciousness in the mind allowing for a retracing of consciousness and identity from a distorted, unsteady state of dispersion and emergence (*vyutthāna*) to a finer, concentrated state whereby experience, no longer frustrated due to epistemic distortion, is allowed to complete itself through a full merging or unification with the object of experience. This process involves as well a retrieval in

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where the yogin’s attention is led from the grosser to the most subtle aspects of the “seeable” (including the ego and intellect) through which insight (*prajñā*) dawns and the discriminative discernment between *sattva* and *puruṣa* comes about. Vyāsa’s perspective, however, can be seen to incorporate the above view held by Chapple and Kelly: When sufficient purification and illumination of consciousness have taken place, on whatever level, be it that of the grasped, grasping or grasper, there is a unification of all three implying no epistemological distortion. But the stages of purification in *saṃādhi* are important and must not be overlooked in Yoga. For a critique of Vyāsa’s reading of YS I.41 (and other passages of the YS) see Chapple [1994: 85-105].

consciousness of the formerly obscured and misappropriated source principles or subjective evolutes (e.g. *manas*, *ahaṅkāra*, *buddhi*) through which experience takes place. Only such a merging or “oneness” with the object will enable the yogin to transcend the mechanism of ignorance through which misidentification and dissatisfaction are perpetuated. At each stage in *samādhi* consciousness is focused so as to dispel the ignorance colouring the mind’s perception. The yogin can then “see” and “know” the object as it actually is, in itself.

#### 4. *Vitarka-samādhi*

Of the four states of cognitive *samādhi* (*samprajñāta*) outlined in *YS* I.17 the less refined or most impure state is called *vitarka*. We have seen that the stages of *samādhi* are graded according to the grossness or subtlety, tangibility/concreteness and less tangibility or abstractness of the evolutes of *prakṛti*. It is more difficult to concentrate on the inner principles within the mind (*citta*) than on “outer” objects. It is recommended, therefore, that one should start with gross forms and, as Vācaspati Miśra acknowledges,<sup>98</sup> then reach more subtle stages.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> See n. 18 above.

<sup>99</sup> Here I will elaborate upon what Vijñāna Bhikṣu has said (see n. 19 above). The question arises as to whether the methodical and analytical approach of *YS* I.17 is essential in order to prepare the yogin for *asamprajñāta-samādhi*. Patañjali allows for dedication to *īśvara*, a devotional practice which can result in a form of grace from *īśvara*. On the topic of “godhead,” the commentators have for the most part expressed their own religious perspectives and have attempted to find a place for it within the scheme of Patañjali and Vyāsa. The realization of the various aspects or descent (*avatāra*) of the deity may be categorized in two ways: In one approach the yogin is engaged in meditational practice and *samādhi* to such a degree that the purified consciousness may ascend and project itself to the subtle worlds which are the domains of particular aspects of the deities. In the other, the deity is so pleased by the devotee’s japa (repetition of the name om [*praṇava*] or simply mental concentration on a mantra) and meditation/contemplation (as in *YS* I.27-28) that it projects an appearance of itself in order to bestow the grace of its descent and presence to the devotee. As an experiential fact in Yoga the two, however, cannot be separated. The ascent of the yogin’s consciousness through self-effort and the descent of “divine grace” both are aids in the cultivation of *samādhi*. If a yogin’s practice (*sādhana*) or “cultivation” (*bhāvana*) is focused on a particular deity, it is required that the yogin take this same supportive factor (*ālambana*) through all the four stages of *samprajñāta* in the order in which they occur (see *YV* I.17: 105). The order in which the four stages are practised and mastered is important. However, Patañjali seems to imply that if the yogin’s awareness spontaneously ascends to a “higher ground” through the “grace” of *īśvara* then it need not be necessary to climb methodically and laboriously over the lower steps (see n. 19 above). Thus, “grace” may be understood as an efficacious expedient and “shortcut” which can bypass the more formal method as presented in *YS* I.17. Although the possibility of such an instantaneous realization of a higher state is conceded to by Vyāsa (*YB* I.23), for the purposes of this study it is assumed that a method is normally requisite for attaining mental purification and insight in order that the yogin may become, in a religious sense, a deserving “vessel” for grace. In the tradition of

*Vitarka* has been translated as: “deliberation,”<sup>100</sup> “reasoning,”<sup>101</sup> “supposition,”<sup>102</sup> “rationale überlegung,”<sup>103</sup> “philosophical curiosity,”<sup>104</sup> “consciousness of sentient,”<sup>105</sup> “cogitation,”<sup>106</sup> “analysis of gross object,”<sup>107</sup> “discursive thought.”<sup>108</sup> I shall adopt the term “cogitation.” *Vitarka*, in normal language, refers to a mental activity, a process of thought in which the various details of an object are examined. In Patañjali’s Yoga *vitarka* has the technical sense of contemplation on the sixteen *viśeṣas* — including *virāṭ* (cosmic form of the “godhead” as in *BG IX*, 10-11) as well as the manifest or incarnate forms of a deity — with the goal of finally realizing the whole nature of the object. H. Āraṇya gives the following examples as objects of cogitation: cow, jar, yellow, blue.<sup>109</sup> R. Śarmā lists other objects under this category and which include the sun, moon and stars as well as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Durgā and other deities.<sup>110</sup> It is to be understood that the deities as objects of cogitation are the images of

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Patañjali, all objects of *samādhi* are either parts or composites of *grāhya*, *grahaṇa* or *grahītr*. For example, a candle flame for concentration is part of the fire element. An icon may be considered a composite product of all five gross elements. The so-called “theism” of Yoga encouraged the later commentators such as Vijñāna Bhikṣu to state more clearly that the mental image of *virāṭ*, the universal form of *īśvara*, or the figure of a deity or descent (*avatāra*) is often used as the object of concentration. Even though at first glance these mental images may not appear to be included in the scheme of Patañjali, the theology of the *Purāṇa* texts explains that *īśvara* may take forms that appear material-like to the devotees, even though the spiritual power and energy utilized for such appearances is actually “non-material,” i.e. more subtle. As seen from the point of view of the devotee seeking experiences leading to illuminations in *samprajñāta-samādhi*, the form of such a “divine manifestation” is a visible one subject to experience involving the senses; therefore, concentration on such an image is concentration on the *viśeṣas*. Vijñāna Bhikṣu (*YV I.17*: 110), citing the *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* (I.229, 25) as one of the authoritative traditional texts which regards the general order of the *samādhis*, tells us that in the early stages of Yoga one should concentrate on Lord Viṣṇu “with form.” Then, once the mind has mastered the gross form of the object, it should slowly be turned towards the subtle. One of the main tasks of the spiritual preceptor or guru is to guide the disciple (*śiṣya*) in selecting an appropriate object of meditation — the one that will be most helpful to that particular disciple. One not attracted to such mental images of a deity may begin one’s concentration on other parts or composites of the *viśeṣas* by adopting a form of meditation as desired (*YS I.39*).

100 Woods [1914].

101 Vivekānanda [1966]; Taimni [1961].

102 Bangali Baba [1976: 9].

103 Hauer [1958: 24].

104 R. Prasāda [1912: 31].

105 Sri Purohit Swami [1973].

106 Feuerstein [1979a: 37]; Koelman [1970: 198].

107 Tola and Dragonetti [1987: 52].

108 Chapple and Kelly [1990: 40].

109 Āraṇya [1963: 48].

110 R. Śarmā [1967].

the deities or the same deities manifest or appearing in some form.

“Cogitation” refers to the spontaneous thought processes that occur in relation to a “gross” (*sthūla*) object/form or content of contemplation. There is no doubt that *vitarka* is a special form of mental activity. That is how it is interpreted by Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra<sup>111</sup> and Vijñāna Bhikṣu.<sup>112</sup> Vyāsa states: “The mind’s experience (*ābhoga*) of a ‘gross’ object of support/contemplation is ‘cogitation’.”<sup>113</sup> The word *ābhoga* (“expansion,” “fullness”<sup>114</sup>) means the experience of insight (*prajñā*) in which the realization of — “making evident”/“effecting with one’s own eyes” (*sākṣātkāra*) — the true form and nature of an object of support/contemplation has occurred. At the first level it is considered gross because the object is in its gross form, thereby giving to the mind the like *vṛtti*, the mind identifying and uniting with that modification of knowledge. Vijñāna Bhikṣu explains that all the details of the grosser form of an object including the past, present and future manifestations, its near and remote (distant) features, etc., are attended to with the goal of finally realizing the whole nature of that object<sup>115</sup> in an ensemble-type knowing outside the time/space dimension. As cogitation (*vitarka*) is refined, the next step comes into view and the formerly concealed nature of the object of support is gradually revealed. The cogitation should remain constant, continuously maintained, ascertained (*avadhāraṇa*).<sup>116</sup> Thus, the cultivation (*bhāvana*) then causes the object, the faculty of perception and the agent to unify, become “one” — epistemologically. In the final realization of the nature of the object, the knowledge of all its aspects occurs at once, not in sequence, nor in parts, nor apart from the perceiving mind. Such a total, whole realization maintained without interruption is termed “the *samādhi* associated with *vitarka*.” It is *grāhya-samāpatti* (YS I.41); its area of mastery is *grāhya*, the objects grasped within the gross body. *Vitarka* is further divided into *savitarka* and *nirvitarka*.

The first division of *vitarka* is outlined by Patañjali as follows:

111 TVI.17 (p. 21): *svarūpasākṣātkāraṇaṇi prajñābhogaḥ*.

112 See, for example, YV I.17 (p. 106): *viśeṣeṇa tarkaṇam avadhāraṇam ...*

113 See n. 15 above.

114 See Monier-Williams [1899: 145].

115 YV I.17 (p. 106): *sthūlayor bhūten-driyayor dṛṣṭāśrutāmātesaviśeṣasākṣātkāraḥ sa vitarka ity arthaḥ*.

116 See n. 112 above.

“Unification is with cogitation (*sa-vitarka*) when it is commingled with conceptualization of word, object (signified) and knowledge.”<sup>117</sup> *Savitarka-samāpatti* is invariably accompanied by the names of the objects of contemplation. Hence, this *sūtra* centres upon the words, the objects denoted thereby, and the ideational knowledge which is the relationship between the words and the objects grasped. Vyāsa says:

For instance, we can see that the process of knowing takes place without distinguishing between the word “cow,” the object “cow” and the idea (knowledge) “cow,” though they are all on different levels; for there are some characteristics distinguished as belonging to words and others to objects signified, and still others to ideas (knowledge).<sup>118</sup>

Vācaspati Mīśra explains: “In ordinary life, although word, object and idea are distinct, in the process of knowing they are not distinguished.”<sup>119</sup> When there is the holding of a word in consciousness (in this instance “cow”), there arises the conceptual or imaginative cognition (*vikalpa*) that the object denoted (the cow itself) and the mental ideation (of the cow) are not distinct from the word. In other words, when a cow is held as an object, there arises the conception that the word and the ideation are not apart from the object. Similarly, when the mental content or idea of the cow appears, the conceptualization or *vikalpa* registers that the word “cow” and the external object perceived as cow (which was denoted by the word) are both indistinct or inseparable from the idea. On closer examination, however, it can be found that these components of the word-object-ideation complex named “cow” are all distinct, each with their own characteristics. For example, the word is formed of syllables or letters of the alphabet; the object “cow” has hardness, legs, a tail, etc.; the idea is more abstract and is devoid of apparent dimension and parts. In conceptualization (*vikalpa*) the error of non-distinction among these components appears causing them to be identified or commingled with each other. Vyāsa continues:

<sup>117</sup> YS I.42 (p. 44): *tatra śabdārthajñānavikalpaiḥ saṃkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ.*

<sup>118</sup> YB I.42 (pp. 44-45): *tadyathā gaurity śabdo gaurity artho gauriti jñānam ity avibhāgena vibhaktānām api grahaṇam dṛṣṭam. vibhajyamānās cānye śabdadharmā anye’rthadharmā anye jñānadharmā ity eteṣām vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ.*

<sup>119</sup> TV I.42 (p. 44): *tadevam avinirbhāgena vibhaktānām api śabdārthajñānānām grahaṇam loke dṛṣṭam draṣṭavyam.*

When, during insight attained in *samādhi*, the yogin achieves unification with an intended object such as a cow and this unification appears intertwined with the mental constructs of the word, object signified and the knowledge derived, [then] that interspersed identification is called “the one associated with cogitation.”<sup>120</sup>

In *savitarka* unification, the word, object and the idea are commingled and confused, causing the *samādhi* to be mixed with the notions and ideations, the constituents of which are analysed and consequently are several. Having many constituents as supportive factors superimposed (*adhyāsa*)<sup>121</sup> on each other as though they were the same thus prevents the true one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*) and unification from developing in its fullness.

The mental processes embedded in the confusion outlined above occur in patterns such as the following: In the process of experiencing the presence of a single word-object-idea such as “cow,” the yogin does not at this stage distinguish among these three constituents. Therefore it is uncertain which one of these three constituents is being attended to, realized or mastered. The understanding and mastery is thus incomplete. There remains a separation between the observing mind and the object (cow) so that there may appear the observation: “This is a cow I am viewing.” Vijñāna Bhikṣu has adopted the expression *gaur-ayam bhāsate*<sup>122</sup> which means literally, “here this cow shines forth, appears, is being experienced.” In this experience the occurrence of the thought “cow” comprises the superimposition of the word and the object. In the series of thoughts: “appears, is being experienced,” it is the object and the idea that are confused. Since these superimpositions of word, object and idea on one another — causing the appearance of a conceptual or imagined unity in a manifold reality — only present what, in effect, is unreal, all such superimpositions come under the category of *vikalpa*. Such a superimposition does not aid the yogin to realize or fully master the reality of any of its constituents, just as water and milk mixed together

<sup>120</sup> YB I.42 (p. 45): *tatra samāpannasya yogino yo gavādy arthaḥ samādhiprajñāyām samārūḍhaḥ sa cecchabdārthajñānavikalpānuviddha upāvartate sā saṅkīrṇā samāpattiḥ savitarkety ucyate.*

<sup>121</sup> See RM I.42 (p 14). See also YS III.17 which points out the confusion arising from the overlapping or superimposition of words, objects and ideas on one another; from *saṃyama* (“constraint”) on the distinctions of them, there is knowledge of the sound (i.e. utterance) of all beings.

<sup>122</sup> See YV I.42 (pp. 212-215).

cannot be classified separately either as one or the other.

The ideas which arise are called “cogitations” only as an analogy to the ordinary thought processes where thoughts come and go one after the other. One should not think that the experiences in *savitarka-samādhi* are merely a product of the ordinary perceptual processes, and therefore that they can be reduced to the category of discursive thought or reasoning. If this were the case there would be no state of the absorption of mental activity. The ordinary mental process or *vṛtti* of perception (*pratyakṣa*) is, temporarily at least, suspended, but the identification/unification (*samāpatti*) “is in terms of and expressed in rationalizing and conceptualizing signs.”<sup>123</sup> Ordinary thought processes lack the immediacy and lucidity of *savitarka*, of the spontaneous thought processes that occur in cognitive *samādhi*. Feuerstein writes: “There is no rambling of thoughts in *samādhi*, no vague conceptualization, but these ... ideas constitute spontaneous acts of insight or knowledge, which although grounded in the concepts derived from ordinary experiencing, have a different quality or feel to them.”<sup>124</sup>

Because of the presence of the analyzing and particularizing activity or cogitation (*vitarka*) of the mind, of the words (*śabda*), the cognitive process and of the conceptualizing activity (*vikalpa*), it can be said that in the yogin’s mind is still taking place a perceptive process which has to do with what, in general, Indic epistemological theories call a “*savikalpa* perception.”<sup>125</sup> As it is yet touched by epistemological distortion due to ignorance (*avidyā*), this stage of *samādhi* constitutes a lower category of perception (*apara-pratyakṣa*)<sup>126</sup> in contrast with the higher perception (*para-pratyakṣa*) of *nirvitarka* to be explained next.

In *YS* I.43 Patañjali informs us that: “Supra-cogitative unification is when memory is completely purified, as if emptied of its own form, and with the object alone shining forth.”<sup>127</sup> In *nirvitarka*, all cogitation or association with “gross” thought has ceased. Vyāsa’s

123 Koelman [1970: 199].

124 Feuerstein [1979a: 53].

125 As suggested by Tola and Dragonetti [1987: 160].

126 Vācaspati (*TV* I.42: 45) refers to *nirvitarka* as “*paraṃ pratyakṣam*” — the higher perception of the yogin.

127 *YS* I.43 (p. 46): *smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnyevārthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā*. See *YS* III.3 (p. 119): *tad evārthamātranirbhāsaṃ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ*.

commentary reads: “When, however, there is complete purification of the memory of verbal conventions in that insight attained in *samādhi* which has become empty of conceptualization of ideas heard or inferred, then the object stands out in the form of its real nature alone.”<sup>128</sup> The expression *pari-śuddhi*, which is used by both Patañjali and Vyāsa, is not merely “purification” but may be taken to mean “complete purification.” It has been understood as denoting the abandonment and eradication of such memory altogether.<sup>129</sup> Purification can be understood with an epistemological emphasis, meaning here the dissolution (*pralaya* or *pravilaya*<sup>130</sup>) of afflicted memory: memory which has been rooted in or filtered through a confusion or error (*viparyaya*) within consciousness. Memory (*smṛti*) is a *vṛtti*, and its association with ignorance/misidentification (in the form of the superimposition of karmic residues onto the form of the object) is to be transcended in the process of “cessation” (*nirodha*). This does not result in the yogin suffering a loss of memory of words and their meaning in practical life. Rather, it means the yogin no longer carries the former confused memory into *samādhi*, does not rely on words, etc., as objects (mental content) of support for the mind. At this stage the practice becomes free of the attachment to names and verbal contemplation; the experience in *samādhi* is now dissociated from any dependency on speech and language. Not only does the yogin not resort to the memory of words and their denotations, but the entire cogitative process which was caused by the presence of words and indicative of the nature of universals is left behind. This includes the three categories of: (1) *āgama pramāṇa*: verbal testimony; (2) *anumāna pramāṇa*: inference [both (1) and (2) being categories of the *vṛtti* of valid cognition (YS I.7)]; and (3) the unification defined as *savitarka* with its less subtle degree of realization (*sākṣātkāra*) and which can be described as impure and alloyed. Again, we read from Vyāsa:

[The object then] excludes all else and remains distinctly in the form of its own nature. That is supra-cogitative unification and it is the higher direct

<sup>128</sup> YB I.42 (p. 45): *yadā punaḥ śabdasaṃketasmṛtipariśuddau śrūtānumānajñānavikalpaśūnyāyām samādhiprajñāyām svarūpamātreṇāvasthito 'rthas ...*

<sup>129</sup> Vācaspati (TV I.42: 45) uses the word *tyakta*, “abandoned.” Vijñāna Bhikṣu, however, uses the expression (YV I.43: 218): *saṃketasmṛtis tyajyate*, meaning “gives up the memory of convention.”

<sup>130</sup> In RMI.43 (p. 14) Bhoja uses the term *pravilaya*.

perception. It is the seed of authority and inference; from it they both originate. That seeing (perception) is not associated with any knowledge from valid authority or inference. The yogin's perception, not interspersed and confused with any other source of valid cognition, arises out of this *nirvitarka-samādhi*.<sup>131</sup>

There is now not the slightest superimposition of the “erroneous” onto the object. The mind transcends the limitations of a “cogitative identity” of self, i.e. cogitation as appropriated by or referenced to egoity, and moves on to a more complete unification or identification with the object at hand. The reality or true form of the object known (*grāhya*) is revealed. It is thus that the phrase from YS I.43 (see n. 127 above): *svarūpa-śūnya-iva*, “as if emptied of its own form” — with reference to the mind and to the *samāpatti*, becomes meaningful. “As if” (*iva*) indicates that the yogin does not here become mindless, but that the locus of self-identity within the mind along with the cognition that “I know the object” no longer obscure clear perception of the object in *vitarka-samādhi*. In this experiential unification of grasper, grasping and grasped, the subject — whose former level of self-understanding was limited to the mode of cogitation — is no longer ensnared by those epistemological limitations. Thus ensues a transcendence of the limitations of perception and self-identity misidentified with gross associations in the mind. The cessation of the superimposition of karmic residue resulting from the purification of memory allows for a mode of cognition and experience which is no longer influenced by the misidentifications and projections of the past. The “grasper” no longer performs an obstructive role in the mode of being a “cogitator” of objects, i.e. identified with the ideas or *vṛttis* arising in *savitarka*. Although it does not seem to be the case, the stability of the mind “unified with” the object and its coloration by the object continue to occur. The extraordinary presence of the object monopolizing, as it were, the consciousness of the yogin, and as a consequence of it, the disappearance of the word, of the conventional knowledge and of the conceptualizations create the false appearance that the stability of the mind in the object and its coloration by it have also disappeared. The yogin is no more aware of the process of

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<sup>131</sup> YB I.42 (p. 45): *tat svarūpākāramātratayaivāvacchidyate. sā ca nirvitarkā samāpattiḥ. tat paraṃ pratyakṣam. tac ca śrutānumānayoḥ bījam. tataḥ śrutānumāne prabhavataḥ. na ca śrutānumānājñānasahabhūtaṃ. taddarśanaṃ. tasmād asaṃkīrṇa pramāṇāntareṇa yogino nirvitarkasamādhijaṃ darśanam.*

stabilization and coloring that has taken place in the mind, that is to say as if this process did not exist for the yogin. But the word *iva* (“as though,” “as if”) is used to show that memory and, by implication, the mind’s essential form/nature as *sattva*-knowledge, implying clear cognition, are not destroyed. For this reason, Patañjali can say that the mind (in its functioning as memory) at this moment of the process appears as if devoid of its own form.

Koelman refers to the level of *samādhi* in *nirvitarka* as “refined sense-intuition shorn of its super-structures” and which “cannot be communicated to others, it is eminently personal. To express it or explain it to others one has to resort to the universalizing and rationalizing way of thinking.”<sup>132</sup> That is why yogins who have attained to a form of perception unhindered by processes of conceptualization (*vikalpa*) can make efforts to communicate, teach and transmit that clarity of knowledge through the medium of concepts,<sup>133</sup> verbal testimony and inference, even though these particular *vṛttis* and their mental content or significance (*pratyaya*) do not themselves constitute the direct experience. Rather, these *vṛttis* and their significance can be used as a heuristic device to point beyond their meaning to the direct experience/perception itself which in the mode of supra-cogitation (*nirvitarka*) is the source and cause of cogitation. In *nirvitarka* the yogin’s identity and perception are transcendent of and no longer dependent on the former functioning of *vṛtti* and the processes of apprehension in *savitarka*.

In Yoga, an origin or cause is not dependent on its effects. As Vācaspati Mīśra explains, even though the perception of smoke leads to the inference that there is fire, the fire itself is not dependent on the smoke.<sup>134</sup> By way of the above analogy, it should be clear that the yogin attains higher perception through non- or rather trans-conceptual ecstasy and can then appropriate *āgama* and *anumāna* (which deal with abstract universals or generalities) heuristically for the purpose of aiding others in the study of Yoga and for clarifying the crucial element in Yoga of direct experience or unmediated knowledge. Even though liberating knowledge is taught in the revealed texts (*śruti*) or by a guru, it is impossible to experience it directly without entering into *samādhi* oneself just as one cannot

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<sup>132</sup> Koelman [1970: 210].

<sup>133</sup> See *TV* I.42 (p. 45).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

experience the sweetness of sugar through mere description (of its sweetness) alone.<sup>135</sup> Nor in Yoga can the guru's guidance be complete without proper initiation (*dīkṣā*) of the aspiring yogin into the direct experience of higher perception in which doubt and scepticism subside thereby freeing up the yogin's energy and attention for the pursuit of the "goal" of liberation itself.

The real objects of the empirical, practical world are indeed the objects of contemplation and support in *samprajñāta*. They are not merely the ideas of objects or their atoms, but rather the object as a complete whole (*avayavin*) and to which all its parts (*avayavas*) belong.<sup>136</sup> That the true nature of an object is realized internally in *samādhi* does not mean that its objective, external nature or form is denied. Since the object's complete nature is perceived internally, the direct perception includes the existence of its grosser manifestations which are also understood, mastered and transcended. On account of the purification of the *vitarka* activity of the mind which removes misidentification with, and misappropriation of, the mental processes at this level of *samādhi* (the cessation of the misidentification which accompanies the normal functioning of *vṛtti* in the form of *pramāṇa*, *vikalpa*, etc., already having been attained), it can be said that in the yogin's mind is taking place a perceptual or awakening process which has to do with what, in general, Indic epistemological theories call a

<sup>135</sup> See YV I.43 (p. 219); see also Vyāsa's commentary on YS I.49.

<sup>136</sup> YB I.43. In fact, Patañjali declares that all the forms of *prakṛti*, whether manifest or not, whether present or latent, have the three *guṇas* for their essence. He states in YS IV.13 (p. 187): *te vyaktasūkṣmā guṇātmānaḥ*. "These [forms], manifest and subtle, are of the nature of the *guṇas*." YS IV.14 (p. 188) goes on to assert: *pariṇāmaikatvād vastutattvam*. "From the homogeneity in the transformation [of the *guṇas*] there is the 'thatness' of an object." Vyāsa (YB I.43 and IV.13-16) refutes views (see below) held by certain opponents and reasserts the Sāṃkhyan view (i.e. *satkāryavāda*) which seeks to retain an ontological continuity between an effect and its material cause. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools adhere to *ārambhavāda* (the doctrine of a "new beginning"), which is based on the perspective that qualities begin afresh in the effects which are produced when atoms of various elements combine, and that their prior absence in the anterior (the cause) is evident; that is, that it is known that those qualities were not there previous to their appearances in newly created objects. While both the above doctrines agree that the effect is new formally, in the later it is regarded as also new qua being. See Potter [1977: 58-59]. The Buddhists of the Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika schools hold that an object (i.e. a jar) is simply a combination of uncountable numbers of atoms, not their transmuted product, and that there are not cause and effect relationships between the atoms and the jar. This is known as the "aggregation doctrine" (*saṅghāta-vāda*). Vyāsa sees Patañjali as taking a stand against the Buddhist Yogācāra school which has been viewed by some as a form of pure idealism in that it is argued that this school, sometimes referred to as Vijñānavāda, holds that all perceived objects exist merely as ideas within a universal mind (*ālaya-vijñāna*) thereby negating the reality of the manifest objective world. YS IV.14 and 16 can be interpreted as a tacit refutation of the above idealism.

“*nirvikalpa* perception.”<sup>137</sup>

### 5. *Vicāra-samādhi*

Seeing that *vitarka-samādhi* (in both its ‘*sa*’ and ‘*nir*’ forms) is involved with the *guṇas* and their manifestations/actualizations, the yogin develops dispassion (*vairāgya*) towards these experiences and opens up to a range of experiences in the next stage of cognitive *samādhi*, that stage being referred to as *vicāra-samādhi*. *Vicāra* is without the verbal, cogitative or grosser associations of *vitarka*.<sup>138</sup> The level of *vitarka* refined, subtilized, becomes *vicāra* — “reflection,” with subtle associations. The term *vicāra* has been translated as: “reflection,”<sup>139</sup> “discrimination,”<sup>140</sup> “clear vision,”<sup>141</sup> “sinnende Betrachtung,”<sup>142</sup> “consciousness of discrimination,”<sup>143</sup> “meditation,”<sup>144</sup> “analysis of subtle object.”<sup>145</sup>

*Vicāra*, which will be translated by “reflection,” is used by Patañjali in a sense specific to Yoga. The word *vicāra* is derived from *vi* + *car*,<sup>146</sup> expressing a progressive movement. In the context of the *YS* *vicāra* refers to the movement of the mind away from the gross objects to subtler objects of association. Having seen the defects and limitations of the involvement with gross objects and content, however clearly realized in *vitarka*, and which confine the yogin’s level of perception to “cogitation” (*savitarka*) or “without cogitation” (*nirvitarka*), the yogin looks at the causes of those objects and accompanying self-identifications. The yogin thus moves from the sixteen *viśeṣas* (generated from the *aviśeṣas*) to the six *aviśeṣas* themselves: the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*) and the ego-sense (*aḥamkāra* or *asmitā-mātra*). The yogin contemplates these subtler essences of the elements and of the senses and brings before

137 As suggested by Tola and Dragonetti [1987: 164].

138 See n. 15 above for the text of *YB* I.17.

139 See Woods [1914], Taimni [1961], Koelman [1970: 202], Feuerstein [1979a: 37], Chapple and Kelly [1990: 40].

140 See *Vivekānanda* [1966].

141 See Baba [1976: 9].

142 See Hauer [1958: 241].

143 See S. Purohit Swami [1973].

144 See Prasāda [1912: 32].

145 See Tola and Dragonetti [1987: 51].

146 See Monier-Williams [1899: 389].

consciousness all the “subtle” particularities and constitutive parts of a “subtle” object. It is the making evident of, “effecting with one’s own eyes” (*sākṣātkāra*) the subtle. The mind takes the form of the *vṛtti* of perception during *vicāra-samādhi* and becomes identified with it. According to Vyāsa, *vicāra* then becomes an expanded perception and experience (*ābhoga*) of the mind towards the subtle object of support (*ālambana*), awakening deeper insight (*prajñā*) in which the realization of the true nature of the object occurs.<sup>147</sup> It is the fullness and perfection of the mind with regard to subtle objects as has already been described with regard to the gross objects.

Surprisingly, the (Sāṃkhya-) yogin, H. Āraṇya, suggests that *vicāra* is a refined analytical process.<sup>148</sup> The philosophical analysis of the relationship of the evolutes of *prakṛti* with *puruṣa* finally leads to the realization that “I am none of the evolutes with which I have identified myself.” However, this type of analytical process seems more a part of the practice of intense *vicāra* contemplations on the path of Jñāna-Yoga as taught in the Vedānta lineage. It may also reflect an obvious Sāṃkhyan influence on Āraṇya’s interpretation, i.e. the Classical Sāṃkhyan approach to liberation tends to present itself as an intellectual path based on an analysis of the evolutes of *prakṛti* (see discussion on Yoga and Sāṃkhya in chapter two). In the context of Yoga, analytical thought is more likely to fall within the categories of: (a) the *vṛtti* of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), specifically inference (*anumāna*, which prior to *samādhi* has been transcended), or (b) *svādhyāya*, “self-study” involving the personal recitation of mantras and the study of scriptural injunctions leading to liberation, the fourth of the *niyamas* (“observances”) which constitute the second limb (*YS* II.32 and 44) of the “eight-limbed” Yoga (see discussion in chapter four). Both of these categories play a more preparatory role in Yoga and may be seen as being propaedeutic to, but not inclusive of, *samādhi*. Therefore, in the *YS*, *vicāra* cannot be subsumed under the category of an analytical thought process. The evidence suggests that *vicāra* is a technical term for the practice of yogic one-pointedness on objects with subtle associations in order to know their nature and, furthermore, to master their nature entirely through dispassion (*YS*

<sup>147</sup> See n. 15 above for the text of *YB* I.17.

<sup>148</sup> Āraṇya [1963: 49] writes: “As the fundamental principles and subtle yogic ideals are realized through such thinking, the concentration on subtle objects is called *vicārānugata samādhi*.”

I.15).

Among the subtle evolutes and according to the scheme adopted in this study, the objects of this level of *samādhi* are: (1) the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*) — sometimes said to be located in the subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*) — which are the cause of the five gross elements and are the five subtle essences of the five cognitive senses consisting of: sound, touch, form-percept, taste and smell; and (2) *ahaṃkāra* or *asmitā-mātra* (the sense of self, individualized I or ego). As the immediate cause of the subtle senses, *ahaṃkāra* begins to be mastered in this form of ecstasy, but primarily, as will later be shown, it is the object of support in the next stage of ecstasy: *ānanda*. I have argued in chapter two that according to Yoga philosophy it is not correct to replace *ahaṃkāra* (i.e. *asmitā-mātra*, an ontological principle of *prakṛti*) with the term *asmitā* (the affliction of I-am-ness or egoity, a mistaken identity of self) nor with the total “inner instrumentality” (*antaḥkaraṇa*) which is collectively subsumed under the term *citta* (mind) in Yoga and is threefold in Sāṃkhya: (1) *manas*, the mind-organ or lower mind, which is one of the sixteen *viśeṣas* (the “Particularized”), the objects of support in *vitarka-samādhi*; (2) *ahaṃkāra*, ego — included by the classical commentators as being one of the six *aviśeṣas* — and the object of support in the later stages of *vicāra-samādhi* and in *ānanda-samādhi*; (3) *buddhi* (*mahat*, intelligence) or *liṅga-mātra*, the first prakṛtic principle of manifestation and object of support in *asmitā-samādhi*.

Yet, in the light of the above definitions of the various levels of *samprajñāta* which specify the different components of the *antaḥkaraṇa* involved, it would be clearly erroneous to assume that the entire *antaḥkaraṇa* is an object of support in *vicāra-samādhi*, that is in the context of its technical usage in *YS* I.17. I will deal more with this issue in the discussion below on the *ānanda* and *asmitā* ecstasies. The *vicāra-samādhi* also correlates with *grāhya* (*YS* I.41); its field of mastery is *grāhya*, the objects grasped, not with gross associations, which is the field of *vitarka*, but with subtle associations.

*Vicāra-samādhi* appears to be further divided into *savicāra* and *nirvicāra*. *YS* I.44 states: “Similarly explained [as in the *savitarka*- and *nirvitarka-samāpattis*], when it is on subtle objects, are the [unifications called] ‘with reflection’ (*savicāra*) and ‘supra-reflection’

(*nirvicāra*).”<sup>149</sup> In the *savitarka*- and *nirvitarka-samāpattis*, the gross elements in various tangible forms grasped with the external senses and focused internally within the mind-organ (*manas*) are the objects of support. In the *savicāra* and *nirvicāra* identifications, the five subtle elements and the subtle senses of apprehension are the objects of support and contemplation. Vyāsa states: “Of these two, the *savicāra* unification refers to subtle elements whose qualities are manifest and are delimited by the experience of space, time and causes as their characteristics.”<sup>150</sup> In *savicāra*, Vyāsa tells us, the object of *samādhi* is experienced with reference to space, time and causation. Even though the subtlest, minutest particles seemingly occupy no space, nevertheless a relationship in space (i.e. a location) is attributed to them, the detailed mechanism of which is an area of specialization within Vaiśeṣika philosophy as well as modern physics. The same applies to time.<sup>151</sup> Causation in the above refers to the fact of the subtle, atomic realities of the gross elements being products of the respective *tanmātras*.<sup>152</sup> Vyāsa clarifies the manifest characteristics of *savicāra* asserting that: “The object of support is the subtle elements, characterized by the qualities which are now manifest, and it presents itself to insight in the *samādhi*. This is to be grasped as one single idea [i.e. grasped by a unitary intelligence alone and not divided up among several ideas].”<sup>153</sup> Vyāsa continues:

That unification on the subtle elements is called “supra-reflection” (without subtle associations) when all of their characteristics are non-sequential, their self-nature comprising all the characteristics, and they are completely undelimited in every mode by their subsided, arisen or undetermined qualities.<sup>154</sup>

149 YS I.44 (p. 48): *etayaiva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣmaviśayā vyākhyātā*.

150 YB I.44 (pp. 48-49): *tatra bhūtasūkṣmakeṣv abhivyaktadharmakeṣu deśakālanimittānubhavāvaccchinneṣu yā samāpattiḥ sāvavicārety ucyate*.

151 For an examination of the concept of time in Indian systems of thought see Balshev [1983].

152 TV I.44 (p. 48): *nimittaṃ pārthivasya paramāṇor gandhatanmātrapradhānebhyaḥ pañca-tanmātrebhya utpattiḥ*, i.e. cause — for instance, the atom of earth is produced by the five subtle elements among which the subtle element of smell is predominant. Even though the word *nimitta* normally refers to an efficient cause, here it can be understood to be taken in the broader sense of any causative factor including the process of the subtle elements producing respective effects.

153 YB I.44 (p. 49): *tatrāpy ekabuddhinirgrāhyam evoditadharmaviśiṣṭaṃ bhūtasūkṣmam ālambanībhūtaṃ samādhiprajñāyam upatiṣṭhate*.

154 Ibid: *yā punaḥ sarvathā sarvataḥ. śantoditāvvyapadeśyadharmānavaccchinneṣu sarvadharmā-nupātīṣu sarvadharmāmakeṣu samāpattiḥ sāvivicārety ucyate*.

The qualities of an object may be: (a) dormant, subsided, (b) manifest, arisen, or (c) undetermined (YS III.14). An object has many attributes which are manifested from time to time, while others may subside or are held in potential form. When certain qualities have already made their appearance, after some time they become dormant, submerged and are of the past. Some qualities manifest in the present, and some — undetermined at the moment — will arise in the future. In *savicāra-samādhi* the direct realization of the nature of the object is limited only to those characteristics which are manifest, have arisen (*udita*), in the present. The insight thus gained is delimited. However, Vyāsa says that “this is to be grasped as one single idea,”<sup>155</sup> i.e. as a state of one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*, YS III.11-12) in *samādhi*.

To summarize the rest of Vyāsa’s commentary (YB I.44), it is made clear that in contrast to *savicāra*, the awakening insight (*prajñā*) in *nirvicāra* comprises the entirety of the object of contemplation. The object here is not delimited by space, time or causation, nor limited to those attributes which are apparent only in its present time. All of its possibilities and potentialities are grasped and realized in the one-pointedness of *samādhi*; not being divided up among many ideas, the object is grasped as a complete whole by a unitary (nonfractured) intelligence (*buddhi*). Vyāsa is very emphatic in stating that the objects here are: (1) *sarva-dharma-anu-pātin*: such that they relate to all their qualities; (2) *sarva-dharma-ātmaka*: such that their self-nature comprises all their qualities; (3) *sarvathā*: in every possible way; (4) *sarvataḥ*: from whichever possible mode. Vyāsa emphasizes that at this stage the subtle element, in its true form alone, colours the mind by its proximity (*upa-rañj*), the mind (i.e. knowledge or *prajñā* in Vyāsa’s commentary) understood here to be as though devoid of its own form, with only the object remaining.<sup>156</sup> Vācaspati Mīśra is of the opinion that the *savicāra*- and *savitarka-samādhis* share the state of a *vikalpa* — of the divisions of the word-object-idea triad, and that *nirvicāra*, like *nirvitarka*, is free of such cognition.<sup>157</sup> In clear disagreement with Vācaspati, Vijñāna Bhikṣu argues that since the limitations of *vikalpa*-cognition have already been abandoned in

155 See n. 153 above.

156 YB I.44 (p. 49): *evaṃ svarūpaṃ tadbhūtasūkṣmam etenaiva svarūpeṇāmbanībhūtam eva samādhiprajñāsvārūpaṃ uparañjayati. prajñā ca svarūpaśūnyevārthamātrā yadā bhavati tadā nirvicārety ucyate.*

157 TV I.44 (p. 49): *atra saṃketasmṛtyāgamānumānavikalpānuvedhaḥ sūcitaḥ.*

*nirvitarka*, which is a lower stage of ecstasy, how then can it continue to be pursued in the next higher stage, which is *savicāra*? Bhikṣu declares that the ‘error’ which has already been abandoned in the previous stage cannot then find a place in the next stage.<sup>158</sup> Bhikṣu’s understanding seems to be more in accord with Vyāsa who states: “Thus by explaining *nirvitarka*, the absence of *vikalpa* in the case of both of these has been explained.”<sup>159</sup> Based on Vyāsa’s commentary, it is more technically correct to say that *savicāra* and *nirvicāra* are both extricated from the defect of the *vikalpa* which has already been transcended in *nirvitarka*.

In *nirvicāra-samāpatti*, the yogin is completely “at one” (epistemologically) with the object, i.e. the yogin knows its past states as well as its present moment and is fully aware of the various possibilities of the future. The last limitations of space and time attributed to the object are transcended. According to Vyāsa, an ecstatic state reaches both the supra-cogitative and supra-reflective levels when the mind is, as it were, void of its own nature and is free to “become” the object itself. Whereas the “unification” (*samāpatti*) in *nirvitarka-samādhi* is a distinct perception limited to the gross object, in *nirvicāra-samādhi* the “unification” is expanded to include subtle objects. Neither subject nor object, perceiver nor world, can be seen as substantial or separate.<sup>160</sup> There is no longer any adumbration of interpretation as applied to the object or condition at hand. Yoga states that the object shines forth alone, non-separate from the mind which is as if empty of its own form. The “*nir*” forms of ecstasy are indicative of a radically different knowledge from their “*sa*” forms. Both the “*nir*” types of *samādhi* are forms of knowledge which can be called “indeterminate” (as opposed to the “determinate” knowledge inherent in the “*sa*” forms). Indeterminate knowledge can be understood here as being knowledge, whether of gross or subtle objects, in which the distinction between the consciousness of the subject (the “grasper”) knowing the object (the “grasped”) is not present. As soon as the distinction is present, the other formations — like the word-object-idea triad (in *savitarka*) or space, time and causation (in *savicāra*) — make their appearance and monopolize the yogin’s consciousness. In

158 YV I.44 (p. 233): *pūrvabhūmikāyām tyaktavikalpasyottarabhūmikāyāmasambhavād.*

159 YB I.44 (p. 49): *evam ubhayor etayaiva nirvitarkayā vikalpahānir vyākhyāteṭi.*

160 Cf. the Mahāyāna Madhyamaka Buddhist doctrine of “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) which disallows essentiality to both subject and object.

more ordinary perception we are not aligned with and therefore do not “catch” or become aware of the stages and experiences of indeterminate knowledge; they remain concealed, “hidden” from our conscious view, existing merely in potential form as insight (*prajñā*) embedded in the *sattva* of consciousness. But the indeterminate knowledge of which Patañjali speaks is something attained through voluntary effort (cf. YS I.20-22) leading to purification of mind. Yoga maintains that we can and should “catch” or become aware of these purer, more subtle levels of cognition if we want to progress to the supra-cognitive level of *samādhi* and intrinsic identity as *puruṣa*. A conceptual, rational and egoic understanding of oneself and the world is thus superseded by an immediate, trans-conceptual, trans-rational and trans-egoic understanding. Yoga is not an anti- or pre-rational/ conceptual perspective, nor is it a regression in consciousness implying a suppression or repression of *vṛttis*. Such gross misunderstandings of the transformative processes of illumination and transcendent dimensions in Yoga are more representative of tamasic (e.g. deluded/stagnated/escapist) states of identity and do not constitute authentic yogic states of awareness.

In YS I.47 it is implied that *nirvicāra-samāpatti* is the highest stage of cognitive *samādhi*, which suggests the following progressive (“hierarchical”) organization<sup>161</sup> in descending order from the purest, most subtle and sattvified to the least pure, least subtle and sattvified: *nirvicāra-samāpatti*, *savicāra-samāpatti*, *nirvitarka-samāpatti*, *savitarka-samāpatti*. Patañjali describes the *nirvicāra* ecstasy as culminating in a state of “supra-reflexive lucidity” (*nirvicāra-vaiśāradya*) which is coterminous with the state of clarity of the inner or authentic self/being known as *adhyātma-prasāda*.<sup>162</sup> At this finer level, knowing and knower “lose” their dualistic and independent status and states as well: the analogy of radiance or clarity extends to oneself (*adhyātma*). The insight (*prajñā*) engendered in the highest stage of object-oriented *samādhi* is said to be “truth-bearing” (*ṛtaṃ-bharā*)<sup>163</sup> because it discloses the contemplated object as it is without any mental distortions: “there is no trace of erroneous knowledge in it” (YB I.48).<sup>164</sup> In addition to the aspect of cognitive clarity there

161 See Feuerstein [1980: 89].

162 YS I.47 (p. 51): *nirvicāravaiśāradye 'dhyātmaprasādaḥ*.

163 YS I.48 (p. 51): *ṛtaṃbharā tatra prajñā*.

164 YB I.48 (p. 51): *na ca tatra viparyāsajñānagandho 'py astīti*.

likewise occurs in the lucidity of *nirvicāra* a clarity and ease regarding one's affective/emotive nature thus incorporating, for example, the sense of "contentment" (*saṃtoṣa*) and "unexcelled happiness" obtained (YS II.42; see n. 187 in chapter four) through the cultivation of the various "observances" (*niyamas*). The cessation of the afflicted *vṛttis*, as Vijñāna Bhikṣu suggests, simultaneously bears with it the subsiding of all afflicted and compulsive affective/emotive patterns of thought and behavior and any further karmically binding activity thus generated.<sup>165</sup> That is why clarity (implying serenity) becomes a characteristic of the yogin immersed in this stage of *samādhi*. Vyāsa writes:

When the mind-*sattva* (*buddhi*), whose nature is luminosity, is freed from [the effects of] *rajas* and *tamas*, and has a steady flow without any veiling contamination of impurity, that is, the lucidity ... has occurred, there is clarity in the inner being of the yogin, which is a progressively clearer and more brilliant light of knowledge of the object as it really is.<sup>166</sup>

Drawing on Vyāsa's metaphor (YB I.12) of the "steady flow of the mind towards the good," there is implied in the above — and after a sufficient degree of purification has taken place — a momentum or movement in the "direction" of transcendence and liberation ("aleness"). The yogin's identity is freed from the binding effects of *rajas* and *tamas* thus bringing about a *sattvification* of consciousness. The yogin becomes cognitively, morally and affectively purified, spiritually developed and uplifted as person, ushering the yogin into a different order of life from that of an egoic or selfish mentality rooted in *saṃyoga* — dissatisfaction and ignorance. Having attained to that insight (*prajñā*) which is "truth-bearing" (*ṛtaṃbharā*, YS I.48), "bearing the truth in oneself,"<sup>167</sup> the yogin apprehends the innate order (*ṛta*) of cosmic existence and is integrally linked with that order.

*Adhyātma* (YS I.47) refers to the disclosure of the clarity of the inner being, an awakening to one's spiritual identity as a reflection in

<sup>165</sup> See YSS (p. 2) where Bhikṣu asserts that *nirodha* not only involves the *vṛttis* of YS I.6 but also includes *vṛttis* which have to do with desire or will (*icchā*); cessation (*nirodha*) implies both a moral and affective as well as a cognitive purification.

<sup>166</sup> YB I.47 (p. 51): *aśuddhyāvaraṇamalāpetasya prakāśātmano buddhisattvasya rajastambhāman abhibhūtaḥ svacchāḥ sthitipravāho vaiśāradyam. yadā nirvicārasya samādher vaiśāradyam idaṃ jāyate tadā yogino bhavaty adhyātmāprasādo bhūtārthaviśayaḥ kramānanurodhī sphuṭaḥ prajñālokaḥ.*

<sup>167</sup> See Monier-Williams [1899: 223].

the *sattva*. In cognitive *samādhi* it appears to be limited to the identification with mind-*sattva* and does not literally apply to *puruṣa*. This stage of *samādhi* correlates well with Vyāsa's description<sup>168</sup> of *samādhi* in the one-pointed state (*ekāgrā*) of mind which fully illuminates an object as it is, diminishes the afflictions, loosens the bonds of karma, and brings the state of the cessation of misidentification in *cittavṛtti* into view. There ensues a transcendence of self as identified with subtle associations of the mind. The sense of self no longer acts as a vehicle which obstructs perception and misappropriates objects in the mode of "reflection," i.e. one ceases to misidentify with the ideas (mind content) and *vṛttis* arising in *savicāra*. In *nirvicāra* the mind is released from the binding associations and identifications which formerly accompanied the experience of subtle objects. A deepening detachment or dispassionate knowledge and mastery has taken place. The yogin is emancipated from the limitations of empirical identity ensconced within the "reflexive" mode of knowledge and self-understanding. Vijñāna Bhikṣu<sup>169</sup> makes the pertinent suggestion that although the "truth-bearing" insight (*ṛtambharā-prajñā*) arises in the last stage of cognitive *samādhi*, the steps leading to it are through *vitarka*, *vicāra*, etc. It follows that there is a "vertical" progression or continuum which implies some direct perception in the earlier stages as well and accounts for the interdependence and interconnectedness of the levels of perception in *samādhi*. The lower levels of insight gained pertaining to gross objects are not negated or abandoned but are integrated and reconciled in a manner which no longer references experience to a false centre of consciousness laying claim to authentic identity. The first three stages of *samprajñāta* naturally lead to the fourth (*asmitā*) and the insights generated through the former may be incorporated in the later. Thus, the insight and mastery gained from the lower ecstasies is not extinguished or relinquished, rather it is included, consolidated and integrated. At each level, the empirical limitations of a superimposed condition (*cittavṛtti*) of *puruṣa* or authentic identity are discerned and sifted out from the yogin's purview allowing for a clearer understanding and insight into the true nature of *puruṣa*. *Avidyā* and misidentification are thus differentiated

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168 YB I.1.

169 YV I.1 (p. 26): *savitarkādikrameṇaiva sāksātkāravṛddhyā caramabhūmikāyām ṛtambharā-prajñodayena bhūmikācatuṣṭaya eva sāksātkārasambandhād iti.*

from liberating knowledge (*vidyā*, *prajñā*) and intrinsic identity. An unbroken continuum of perception can then take place through which all objects, gross or subtle, can be known in the light of the clarity of the inner being/self.

The yogin's experience in *nirvicāra* is far from being "misty," "vague" or "mysterious." It is as vivid and immediate as is possible for one who lives at the levels of ordinary awareness to imagine. The yogin's consciousness, although transcending the normal barriers of egoic identity, has not however been reduced nor has it been negated or subsumed into the realm of the "unconscious." In *samādhi* a state of supra-wakefulness is disclosed in which the yogin "comes face to face with the true nature of the object, which ordinarily remains hidden behind the outer forms."<sup>170</sup>

The subtle objects, as Patañjali points out, extend up to, and terminate their forms in unmodified *prakṛti*.<sup>171</sup> Vyāsa takes pains to emphasize<sup>172</sup> that the reference to the subtle objects of support (*sūkṣma-viśaya*) in *YS* I.44 does not mean that only atoms (*paramāṇus* or *aṇus*) and the subtle elements constitute the limit of the subtle realm. A mistake of this nature could be made because objects of support in the *vicāra*-accompanied *samādhi* are the subtle elements and the subtle senses and *YS* I.44 speaks of *savicāra* and *nirvicāra* as being realizations of the subtle realm. The subtle realm does not, however, end there but extends all the way to the higher stages of ecstasy where *ahaṅkāra* and *liṅga-mātra* (*mahat/buddhi*) are realized. Thereafter *aliṅga* (unmanifest *prakṛti*) is understood and included.

It should be noted that even though the formal Sāṃkhya system considers unmanifest *prakṛti* to be beyond any cognition at all — too shy a "maiden" to show "her" face to *puruṣa* (*SK* 61) — in Yoga *prakṛti* is indeed "experienced" by the *prakṛti-layas* — yogins who have merged their awareness into *prakṛti*, as Patañjali and Vyāsa explain.<sup>173</sup> Thus, the yogin's subtle realm extends all the way up to

<sup>170</sup> Swami Nikhilananda [1951: 95].

<sup>171</sup> *YS* I.45 (p. 50): *sūkṣmaviśayatvaṃ cālīṅgaparyavasānam*.

<sup>172</sup> *YB* I.45 (p. 50): *pārthivasyāṅor gandhatanmātraṃ sūkṣmo viśayaḥ. ... teṣāṃ ahaṅkāraḥ. asyāpi liṅgamātraṃ sūkṣmo viśayaḥ. liṅgamātrasyāpy aliṅgaṃ sūkṣmo viśayaḥ. na cālīṅgāt paraṃ sūkṣmam asti*. "In the case of an atom of earth, the subtle element of odour is a subtler object [for the *vicāra* meditation]. ... Subtler than these [subtle elements] is the ego-sense (*ahaṅkāra*). Subtler than that is the designator (the great principle — *liṅga-mātra* or *mahat*). More subtle than that is the unmanifest (*aliṅga*, *pradhāna*). There is nothing more subtle [praktic] beyond the unmanifest."

<sup>173</sup> See *YS* I.19 (p. 22): *bhavapratyayo videhaprakṛtilayānām*; see n. 117 on *YB* I.15 in chapter

unmanifest *prakṛti*. There is nothing of a prakṛtic nature more subtle beyond *aliṅga*.<sup>174</sup> Yet, as Vyāsa is careful to state:

Now *puruṣa* also is subtle, is that not so? But the subtlety of *puruṣa* is not in the same category as that of the unmanifest beyond the great principle/designator (*liṅga*). Furthermore, *puruṣa* is not the cause which generates the designator but is the [indirect] cause. Thus the unexcelled subtlety as it is in *prakṛti* (*pradhāna*) has been explained.<sup>175</sup>

*Puruṣa* is not an object in *samādhi*. *Puruṣa* is “subtle” but is in an entirely different category from *prakṛti* and her evolutes. Whereas the levels of subtlety in *prakṛti*’s evolutes are comparative, *puruṣa*’s “subtlety” is not relative and subject to transformation, but is unchanging, absolute. Unlike *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* has no direct products as its effects. As pure consciousness, *puruṣa* is an indirect cause of the awareness *asmitā*, “I am,” that makes its appearance in the composite sentience — *asmitā* — when *puruṣa*’s presence passively reflects in *liṅga-mātra*. That is the extent of *puruṣa*’s involvement.

Since the topic of these *sūtras* is cognitive or object-oriented *samādhi* (i.e. ecstasy), and it is not until *asaṃprañāta* (objectless *samādhi*) that the “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) of *puruṣa* can occur, the degrees of subtleness mentioned above only lead up to unmanifest *prakṛti*. Backtracking somewhat to the stages of cognitive *samādhi* (as outlined in *YS* I.17), a crucial question now arises. Bearing in mind that *YS* I.47-50 extol the perfection of *nirvicāra-samādhi* and that *YS* I.51 explains *asaṃprañāta-samādhi*, where do the *ānanda*- and *asmitā*-accompanied ecstasies which were included in *YS* I.17 fit in to Patañjali’s scheme? Although this has not been explicitly mentioned by Vyāsa or by any of the major Sanskrit commentators, it appears that the term *nirvicāra* is not limited to being a variation of the *vicāra*-accompanied ecstasy alone. The term *nirvicāra-samāpatti* can be taken in a broader sense to include the other two ecstasies: *ānanda* and *asmitā*, which appear to have been left out or overlooked. Two reasons can be posited<sup>176</sup> why this is so: (1) The later two forms of

four of Whicher [1998] and the discussion later in this article on the status of the *prakṛti-layas* especially the text referring to notes 215-219.

<sup>174</sup> See n. 172 above.

<sup>175</sup> *YB* I.45 (p. 50): *nanv asti puruṣaḥ sūkṣma iti? satyam. yathā liṅgāt param aliṅgasya saukṣmyam na caivam puruṣasya. kiṃ tu liṅgasyānvayikāraṇam puruṣo na bhavati, hetus tu bhavati. ataḥ pradhāne saukṣmyam niratīsayam vyākhyātam.*

<sup>176</sup> See Arya [1986: 408].

cognitive *samādhi* are also in this sense forms of *nirvicāra-samāpatti* because the association with subtle objects as in *vicāra* has ceased. The experience in the *ānanda*-accompanied *samādhi* is “I am joyful,” and in *asmitā-samādhi* it is simply “I am.” These are neither discursive-like thoughts associated with *vitarka*-accompanied *samādhi*, nor subtle thoughts of the *vicāra* type of ecstasy, but are rather deeper, more subtilized, sattvified experiences in *nirvicāra-samāpatti*. (2) The subtle realm incorporated in *samādhi* extending up to and including unmanifest *prakṛti* clearly warrants recognition of the other two ecstasies.

Vyāsa does assume *ānanda* and *asmitā* (YB I.17) to constitute the contents of separate stages of cognitive *samādhi*. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that Vyāsa would take *ānanda*- and *asmitā-samādhi* to be instances of *nirvicāra-samāpatti* and that this can be seen as being in accordance with Patañjali’s scheme. It would then follow that the *vicāra*-accompanied ecstasy referred to in YS I.17 is a specific category of cognitive *samādhi* which technically and structurally corresponds with *savicāra-samāpatti*; *vicāra* (YS I.17) thus is not intended to include the full depth of the *nirvicāra* levels.

### 6. *Ānanda-samādhi*

On the subject of the third form of ecstasy presented in YS I.17 — called “joy” (*ānanda*) — Vyāsa writes: “Joy means delight.”<sup>177</sup> The word for joy, *ānanda*, does not denote here a state of intrinsic, unconditional, transcendent “bliss,” one of the familiar epithets of brahman — the Supreme Being as extolled, for example, in Upaniṣadic works and Vedāntic commentaries. In YS I.17 *ānanda* is initially the conditional and temporary property called *sukha*: the pleasure, well-being or happiness inherent in the *sattva-guṇa*. In *ānanda*-accompanied *samādhi* the yogin grasps or captures the delight of *sattva* and identifies/unites with this exalted sense of happiness.

It is acknowledged in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga traditions that pleasure belongs to the *sattva* of the mind and is within the realm of the “experienced” or “seeable,” i.e. it is object-oriented. *Puruṣa* — the pure, unchanging seer — transcends the realm of the *guṇas* and is by nature free of the binding influence of, or attachment to, *sattva*. This

<sup>177</sup> *ānanda hlādaḥ*; see n. 15 above on YB I.17 and related text.

is related to the idea that pleasure, pain and other experiences belong to the transformations (*pariṇāma*) of *prakṛti* and so *puruṣa*'s nature, although immanent as well as transcendent, maintains its immutable, unmodified and non-fragmented identity throughout all the changes taking place within *prakṛti*. Even though the prakṛtic scheme includes the delusive power of *tamas*, the often turbulent nature of *rajas* and the pleasurable states of *sattva*, human beings basically involve themselves with the world in pursuit of the pleasure of *sattva*. It is ultimately the attachment to the pleasure derived from *sattva* which causes misidentification, dissatisfaction and bondage and which, even on the subtle levels of *prakṛti*, generates and sustains saṃsāric or mistaken identity.

In the *savitarka* and *savicāra* ecstasies, the insights attained show one the futility of pursuing happiness through the various objects of contemplation, starting with "cogitation" (*vitarka*) on the earth elements and going up to the "reflection" (*savicāra*) on the subtle elements and possibly the initial stages of the sense of self (*ahaṃkāra*). As identification with the grosser evolutes/objects/content gradually dissolves or is transcended, and an identification with their subtler causes arises, in *ānanda-samādhi* identification dissolves or merges into *ahaṃkāra*. Koelman appropriately writes that after mastering the *vicāra* stage one sets oneself "to focus the subjective-objective entities" in order "to concentrate and achieve one-pointed attention on those entities which constitute [one's] own cognitive organism."<sup>178</sup>

Since tamasic *ahaṃkāra* generates the elements, and sattvic *ahaṃkāra* generates the mind-organ (*manas*), the sense organs and action organs, all with the aid of *rajas* (activity/motion),<sup>179</sup> it can be understood that a gradual refinement of awareness would lead the yogin to the more subtle "location" of *sattva* as it presents itself in *ahaṃkāra*. As is the case with the other evolutes of *prakṛti*, *ahaṃkāra* consists of all three *guṇas* yet *rajas* and *tamas* are here subordinated to *sattva*, especially now that the yogin has ascended beyond the *vitarka* and *vicāra* levels. The locus of joy that was experienced and referenced through the grosser evolutes has its "fount" here. The yogin then concentrates on the pleasure of the *sattva* of *ahaṃkāra* and enjoys a temporary blissful state. To repeat, this temporary state of

<sup>178</sup> Koelman [1970: 207].

<sup>179</sup> Cf SK 25.

intense joy is not to be mistaken for the absolute bliss of *brahman*. In Classical Yoga this elevated joy (*ānanda*) must also be seen in its parts and as a whole until the “unification” of the enjoyer and the enjoyed is perceived and the expanded sense of awareness attains to a greater fullness; that is, its nature (i.e. of “joy”) is fully realized.<sup>180</sup> Vijñāna Bhikṣu explains that in *ānanda-samādhi* the only *vṛtti* that prevails is: “I am happy, joyful.”<sup>181</sup> Even though *mahat* or *buddhi* proper is not reached until the next level (*asmitā*) of cognitive *samādhi*, it can be assumed here that the sattvic nature of *mahat* filters through into *ahaṅkāra* (*asmitā-mātra*) adding to the sense of joy.

Those yogins who attain this level of experience (*ānanda-samādhi*) may be temporarily absorbed in joyful states of mystical ecstasy. Yet there is a danger at this stage in that the yogin may incorrectly consider this enhanced sense of well-being to be the supreme attainment in Yoga. Having mastered the ego-principle — everything from the physical body made up of the *viśeṣas* to the *ahaṅkāra* — powers (*siddhis*) may attend upon the yogin. Remaining identified at this level of *samādhi*, one may be called *videha*, “bodiless” one, or a “bodiless shining god” (*videha devas*).<sup>182</sup> The root cause of the *videha*’s attachment and misidentification with the rapturous conditions of *ānanda* is of course ignorance (*avidyā*) which leads one to mistake the noneternal as eternal, the non-self as self, etc., and thus keeps one engulfed within and enslaved to subtle forms of prakṛtic existence. The *videha*’s state is a possible stage along the way but if a dispassion towards it is not cultivated it merely results in a subtler form of pleasure addiction and misidentification in *saṃyoga*. Egoity (*asmitā*) itself has not yet been rooted out. From the enlightened perspective in Yoga this stage of attainment and identity is still within the guṇic realm of impermanence leading to further dissatisfaction.

The field of *ānanda-samādhi* is *grahaṇa*, the “grasping” or instrument of knowledge. Unlike the *vitarka*- and *vicāra-samādhis*, it is not subdivided (for example, into *sānanda* and *nirānanda*) by

<sup>180</sup> See n. 15 above for Vyāsa’s text.

<sup>181</sup> YVI.17 (p. 107): *tadānīm cānandagocara evāha sukhīti cittavṛttir bhavati na sūkṣmavastuṣv apīti vicārānugatād viśeṣah*. “At that time there is only *ānanda* as the object; the modification of the mind of the form ‘I am happy’ is there; and there is no modification with regard to even subtle objects. Thus it is different from the Yoga connected with *vicāra*.”

<sup>182</sup> See YB I.19 (p. 22) where Vyāsa explains that at this level of *samādhi* the powers (*siddhis*) of the “subtle worlds” made up of the six *aviśeṣas* are mastered.

Patañjali or Vyāsa. I therefore understand Vācaspati Mīśra as having given an erroneous explanation of the cause and nature of the rapture in this ecstasy. He writes: “Because the nature of *sattva* is illumination ... the experience of the sattvic pleasures inherent in the senses is the delight of this *samādhi*.”<sup>183</sup> This statement is incorrect in suggesting that the object experienced here is that joy inherent in the senses (*indriyas*). Vijñāna Bhikṣu points out that the above suggestion confuses the *ānanda* ecstasy with *vitarka* and *vicāra*, in which the full realization of the nature of the senses has already occurred, the senses (*indriyas*) as objects of support having already been “left behind” as unworthy of further pursuit. If the pleasure inherent in the senses were the object of contemplation in this ecstasy, such experiences would generate the kind of *vṛttis* in which attraction/attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) are implied. This would — like the “sa” and “nir” forms of the *vitarka* and *vicāra* ecstasies — necessitate two levels in the *ānanda*-accompanied ecstasy: (1) one with the *vṛtti*-identification centred on “joy,” and (2) a subtler one without the *vṛtti*-identification of “joy.” Neither Patañjali nor Vyāsa have suggested two categories for this ecstasy, and therefore Vācaspati Mīśra’s interpretation seems erroneous.<sup>184</sup>

For the purpose of furthering our analysis on *ānanda-samādhi*, it is necessary to focus the discussion somewhat on the next stage of cognitive *samādhi*: the *asmitā*-accompanied ecstasy. Vācaspati Mīśra, stating the delight inherent in the senses to be the object of the *ānanda*-accompanied ecstasy, considers *puruṣa*, qualified by *ahaṃkāra*, to be the object of *asmitā-samādhi*.<sup>185</sup> This raises a question about *buddhi* (*mahat*) — the first and finest evolute in the order of manifestation and the last to be experienced, incorporated and mastered. If *ahaṃkāra*, which arises from *mahat*, is the object in *asmitā-samādhi*, in what other ecstasy would *mahat* (*buddhi*) be mastered? Furthermore, in what ecstasy would *asmitā* be realized? There are no further stages of *samādhi* given by Patañjali after the

<sup>183</sup> TV I.17 (p. 21): *prakāśaśīlatayā khala sattvapradhānād ahaṃkārad indriyāny utpannāni. sattvaṃ sukham iti tāny api sukhāntī tasminn ābhogo hlāda iti.*

<sup>184</sup> YV I.17 (pp. 108-109). Feuerstein [1989: 196] appears to follow Vācaspati Mīśra’s interpretation of *ānanda*- and *asmitā-samādhi* by dividing these stages of *samādhi* into two categories, namely: *sānanda-samāpatti* (“ecstatic coincidence with bliss”) and *nirānanda-samāpatti* (“ecstatic coincidence beyond bliss”) as well as *sāsmītā-samāpatti* (“ecstatic coincidence with ‘I-am-ness’”) and *nirasmītā-samāpatti* (“ecstatic coincidence beyond ‘I-am-ness’”).

<sup>185</sup> TV I.17 (p. 21): *asmitāprabhavāntndriyāṇi. tenaiṣām asmitā sūkṣmaṃ rūpam. sā cātmanā grahitṛā saha buddhir ekātmikā saṃvit.* See main text referring to n. 192 below.

*asmitā*-type with supportive factors (*ālambanas*) or objects of contemplation. Nor would this fit in to our present scheme of understanding, which for the sake of clarity, is repeated as follows: (1) sixteen *viśeṣas*, the gross objects known (*grāhya*) in *vitarka-samādhi*; (2) five *aviśeṣas*, the subtle objects known (*grāhya*) in *vicāra-samādhi*; (3) *ahaṃkāra* (the sixth and most subtle of the *aviśeṣas*, the instrument of knowledge or “grasping” — *grahaṇa*), experienced in the later stages of *vicāra* and in *ānanda-samādhi* (note that *ahaṃkāra* is not the same as *asmitā*); (4) *līṅga-mātra* (*mahat/buddhi*) wherein *asmitā* — the agent of knowledge (*grahītṛ*) — is experienced in *asmitā-samādhi*. It must be pointed out that there is little agreement among the commentators with regard to the objects of contemplation in both the *ānanda* and *asmitā* ecstasies. Disagreements among the commentators notwithstanding, the above scheme can function as a heuristic device in Yoga by presenting a consistent and workable framework for formulating a careful classification relating the levels of cognitive *samādhi* in both a metaphysical/theoretical and experiential/practical way.

Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s<sup>186</sup> view — that delight (*hlāda*) alone is the object of contemplation in *ānanda-samādhi* — does not sufficiently explain the source and nature of the rapture. He includes *ahaṃkāra* and *mahat* among the objects of *savicāra-samādhi*.<sup>187</sup> In this case, there appears to be a confusion between *grāhya* and *grahaṇa*. Since, as our study suggests, *ānanda-samādhi* has *grahaṇa* as its classification, delight (*hlāda*) alone cannot be the “object” of contemplation. Being the instrument of “grasping” through which knowledge is self-referenced/appropriated, the evolute *ahaṃkāra* (*asmitā-mātra*) must find a place in the practical scheme of Yoga.

H. Āraṇya<sup>188</sup> is of the opinion that the sense of happiness in *ānanda-samādhi* arises from the feeling of relaxation in the five organs of action, the five sense organs and the three constituents of the inner senses: *manas*, *ahaṃkāra* and *buddhi*. This may well represent the affective nature of the experience, but Āraṇya’s view confuses the subtle scheme of understanding related to these ecstasies

<sup>186</sup> See YV I.17 (p. 107).

<sup>187</sup> YV I.17 (p. 106): ... *prakṛtimahadahāṃkārapañcatanmātrarūpā bhūtendriyayoḥ sūkṣmā ... sa vicāra*.

<sup>188</sup> Āraṇya writes [1963: 49]: “The object or basis of this concentration [on bliss] is a particular feeling of sattvika happiness felt all over the mind and the senses due to a particular state of calmness.”

and therefore remains incomplete with regard to the ecstasy associated with joy. I agree, however, with Āraṇya's suggestion (below) that the object of contemplation in the *asmitā*-accompanied ecstasy is *buddhi* intent upon *puruṣa*. He writes: "The object concentrated upon in *asmitā samādhi* is not the real *puruṣa* but its imitation, the pseudo-seer. ... It is *buddhi* shaped after the *puruṣa*, ... a sort of feeling of identity between the pure consciousness and individual consciousness or *buddhi*."<sup>189</sup>

Bhoja Rāja's view — that *ahaṃkāra* is the object of support in the *ānanda* ecstasy and *buddhi* being the supportive object in the ecstasy of *asmitā* — seems accurate. However Bhoja Rāja errs in that he considers the pleasure of the *ānanda* ecstasy to be the attribute of pure consciousness, or rather the power of consciousness (*citi-śakti*) which by definition (YS IV.34) transcends the realm of the *guṇas*. Bhoja says:

When [contemplation on the] *sattva* of the inner instrumentality somewhat penetrated by a residue of *rajas* and *tamas* is cultivated, then, there being no *guṇas* located in the power of consciousness, the excellence of its (the *antaḥkaraṇa*'s) essence — whose nature is pleasure and illumination — thus cultivated, is called the *samādhi* associated with joy.<sup>190</sup>

Bhoja's entire statement seems self-contradictory. If the contemplation is still on the *sattva* of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, then the (pure) power of consciousness (*citi-śakti*) has not yet been realized. Furthermore, *sattva*, whose nature is pleasure and illumination, is a part of *prakṛti* and not an attribute of *citi-śakti* (i.e. *puruṣa*). The above statement by Bhoja can be stretched somewhat and understood to mean that one is now closer to *citi-śakti*, whose own bliss (*sukha*, happiness in the case of the *sattva guṇa*) and illumination (i.e. knowledge, *jñāna*) have begun to penetrate the *sattva* of the inner sense, causing the excellence of the latter's pleasure and illumination to expand, thus overcoming the residue of *rajas* and *tamas*. In any case, Bhoja's comment does aptly suggest that in *ānanda-samādhi* the *sattva* is still somewhat alloyed with a trace of *rajas* and *tamas* (as is the case with *ahaṃkāra/ asmitā-mātra*).

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>190</sup> RM I.17 (p. 6): *yadā tu rajastamoleśānuviddham antaḥkaraṇasattvaṃ bhāvyaṭe tadā guṇa-bhāvāc citiśakteḥ sukhaprakāśamayasya sattvasya bhāvvyamānasyodrekāt sānandaḥ samādhir bhavati.*

Bhoja Rāja considers *asmitā* to be the counterpart of the *ahaṃkāra* evolute in Sāṃkhya philosophy. According to the understanding of Patañjali’s system presented in this study, it has been suggested that *ahaṃkāra*, as the object of support in *ānanda-samādhi*, is purified and no longer performs an obstructing role in the realization of authentic identity. The *samādhi* associated with joy serves its purpose in that contemplation on — becoming aware of the limitations or temporary nature of — the *ahaṃkāra*-principle has been accomplished. I am arguing that if *asmitā* (not *asmitā-mātra*) and *ahaṃkāra* were at all identical, there would be no possibility, indeed no need for, the stage of *asmitā-samādhi*. Like many other commentators, however, Bhoja Rāja insists upon maintaining the identity of *ahaṃkāra* and *asmitā*, but he divides them by function, asserting:

The identity of *ahaṃkāra* and *asmitā* should not be doubted. Where the inner sense referring to itself as “I” (*aham*) apprehends the objects of experience, it is called *ahaṃkāra*. When by turning inwards in the transformative process of dissolution or return to the source (*prakṛti*) there appears (in the mind) a mere reflection of “pure being,” that is called *asmitā*.<sup>191</sup>

While it is accurate to say that *ahaṃkāra* is outward-going towards the mind-organ (*manas*), the senses and the objects of the senses, and that *asmitā* — located in *mahat* (*buddhi*) — is a more subtle, internalized process that occurs in the “inner face” of the mind (*citta*), there is no real basis for asserting an identity of *ahaṃkāra* and *asmitā*. *Asmitā* occurs in *mahat* (*buddhi*), which is subtler than its product, *ahaṃkāra*.

Vācaspati Miśra as well equates *asmitā* with *ahaṃkāra*. Even though in Sāṃkhya the senses (*indriyas*) are an evolute of (i.e. directly arise from) *ahaṃkāra*, not of *mahat*, he writes: “The senses are products of *asmitā*. Therefore *asmitā* is their subtler form. That intellect (*buddhi*) unified with the self (*ātman*) is referred to as the perception of the essential nature of the self.”<sup>192</sup> Here Vācaspati confuses *buddhi* with *ahaṃkāra*. The criticism directed at Bhoja Rāja also applies to Vācaspati Miśra in this regard.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid: *na cāhaṃkārasmitāyor abhedah saṅkānīyah. yato yatrāntahkaraṇam aham ity ullekkena viṣayānvedayate so’haṃkārah. yatrāntar mukhatayā pratilomaparīṇāme prakṛtīlīne cetasi sattāmātram avabhāti sāmīti.*

<sup>192</sup> See n. 185 above for text.

7. *Asmitā-samādhi*

Having awakened to and fully realized *ahaṃkāra* in the *ānanda* ecstasy, the yogin sees the flaws of the *guṇas* present therein, including the limitations on self-identity, cultivates dispassion (*vairāgya*) towards this state of identification, and moves to the yet subtler ground of the ecstasy associated with *asmitā*. Just as the products among the evolutes can be said to “dissolve” gradually into subtler and subtler causes, so the yogin’s identification with *ahaṃkāra* dissolves (*nirodha*) into an identification with *buddhi/mahat* — the root-identification with *asmitā* or mistaken identity of self (i.e. where ignorance first manifests in the mind) denoting a pre-individual, cosmic, or even trans-individual sense of being (*mahān ātmā*, *YB* II.19). The identification with *asmitā* accompanies the yogin through the contemplation and unification which focuses on the mind-*sattva*, *mahat/buddhi*, the evolute of “intelligence.” Since the previous identifications with the “less refined” evolutes have been transcended — meaning that the yogin is no longer misidentified with those phenomena — and *mahat (buddhi)* is the first evolute of *prakṛti*, there is no other object of contemplation or support but *mahat* itself. It is the “designator” (*liṅga-mātra*), the “first sign” that *prakṛti* gives of her presence. The principle of convergence and unification of the object and the agent of contemplation reaches its finest dimension here. Vyāsa asserts: “I-am-ness is the perception of the essential nature of self.”<sup>193</sup> Since the “inner face” of *citta (buddhi)* is the most *sattvic* and purest constituent of the evolutes of *prakṛti*, it most approximates — is analogous to — *puruṣa*. Pure consciousness “reflects” in *buddhi* as into a clear crystal. It is here and nowhere else that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* “meet” in *saṃyoga*, taking on a single nature, as it were, which is defined as the affliction of “I-am-ness” (*YS* II.6 and *YB* II.6). It is in the reflected consciousness in the mind that ignorance and misidentification “begin” and are terminated, a process with which *puruṣa* is said to have no direct involvement.

At the interface or juncture of the seer and the seeable spring all notions or ideas of selfhood, the reflected consciousness being the primary (sentient) constituent of our self as person. The growth of self as person is rooted in this conjunction; all the various projections,

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193 *YB* I.17 (p. 21): *ekātmikā saṃvid asmitā*.

adjuncts and instruments of selfhood arise from this “meeting place.” Here the person first utters “I am,” meaning: “I am this conditioned, contingent, delimited being, a composite of consciousness (*cetana*) and insentience (*acetana, jaḍa*).” In realizing the nature of *asmitā*, the yogin understands it as the final “break” between *puruṣa* (intrinsic identity) and *saṃyoga* (mistaken or extrinsic identity) whereby the two constituents of “I-am-ness” — “insentience” in its finest essence of the mind-*sattva*, and the reflection of the *puruṣa* therein — dissolve or “undo” their “union” (*saṃyoga*) or superimposed condition (*adhyāropa*)<sup>194</sup> of selfhood which resulted in a confusion of identity between *puruṣa* and the mental processes (*vṛttis*).

The stage of *samādhi* associated with *asmitā* means the realization of *mahat/buddhi/linga-mātra* in which the *guṇa* of *sattva* is predominant. In the previous ecstasy called *ānanda*, *sattva* is dominant, although, as Bhoja Rāja explains, at this stage of *samādhi* the experience of *sattva* is still somewhat penetrated by residual *rajas* and *tamas*.<sup>195</sup> In *asmitā-samādhi* the *rajas* and *tamas* have been completely subdued, but not expelled, and only the purity and clarity of *sattva* shines. In this experience the *sattvic* inward face of *buddhi* is “turned away” from its outward facing evolute, *ahaṃkāra* or ego. That is, ego-identification, the nature of which is, for example, to appropriate objects and experiences as being “mine” and not “yours,” “ours,” or “his”/“hers,” etc., is transcended, submerged or rather transformed into the pure “am-ness” which is still first-personal but not egoistic. The normal, individual conditions and barriers imposed on consciousness are dissolved in the experience of pure *sattva*, but the *ahaṃkāra* as *grahaṇa* (the instrument through which intelligence asserts itself, experiences and knows) is not destroyed or negated. Rather, the yogin now experiences a heightened form of perception and understanding which is freed from the misidentification with mere egoic identity. Ontologically, *mahat*, out of which the ego arises and is absorbed, is pure “am-ness” but not “is-ness,” which is third-personal and may not have the significance of self-conscious being. The yogin realizes that by turning the mind “inwards” through the practice of *samādhi* the purity of the mind’s *sattva* receives the

<sup>194</sup> See YB II.18 (p. 84): *etena grahaṇadhāraṇohāpoha tattva jñānābhīniveśā buddhau vartamānāḥ puruṣe ’dhyāropitasad bhāvāḥ*. YS II.17 (p. 79): *draṣṭṛdrśyayoh saṃyogo heyahetuḥ*. “The conjunction between the seer and the seeable is the cause of what is to be overcome [i.e. suffering, dissatisfaction (*kleśa*)].” See YB II.6.

<sup>195</sup> See n. 190 above.

reflection of *puruṣa*. It is due to the presence and power of consciousness (*puruṣa*) functioning through the mind (in its reflected state), and not the mind itself, that all the life-processes of our psycho-physical being are initiated and sustained.

The word *asmitā* does not refer merely to being, or to existence, but to the consciousness of being or existence, since the term *asmi* is specific to a subject (“I”) which proclaims its existence. The concept of *asmita* has a close relationship in Yoga with that of *sārūpya* (*YS* I.4). *Sārūpya*, implying a misidentification with or conformity to the nature of *vṛtti*, represents the objective aspect (the situation of *puruṣa* appearing to conform to the mental processes), and *asmitā* the root-subjective aspect (the consciousness of being, conditioned by an identification with the mental processes) of a single phenomenon: the superimposed limitation of selfhood due to misidentification with the prakṛtic conditions of individual and cosmic existence, the congenitally conflated realm of *puruṣa* (the seer) and *prakṛti* (the seeable) constituting one’s mistaken identity or conditioned being.

In a rare description of *asmitā-samādhi*, Vyāsa states: “The mind that has reached the unification called *asmitā* becomes serene and infinite like a great (still) ocean ... .”<sup>196</sup> Because *puruṣa* is an undisturbed, infinite existence — like an ocean — the inward face of the mind (*buddhi*) receiving *puruṣa*’s “reflection” and as experienced in *asmitā-samādhi* appears like an infinite, calm ocean, without ruffling, i.e. distracting or disturbing mental “waves” or activity. The experience of this “reflection” of *puruṣa* is both expansive like the ocean and minute like an atomic particle. Vyāsa quotes from the Sāṃkhyan teacher, Pañcaśikha: “Having found that self which is minute like the atom, one realizes oneself only as ‘I am’.”<sup>197</sup> No contradiction need be implied in the description of the Self (*ātman*) or its reflection as being both minute and expansive. It is repeatedly described as being as subtle as, or more specifically in the Upaniṣads, as being more minute than an atomic particle.<sup>198</sup> It is also, however, referred to as being great/expansive (*mahān*)<sup>199</sup> or even as being both

196 *YB* I.36 (p. 41): *tathāsmītāyāṃ samāpannam cittaṃ nistarāṅga mahodadhikalpaṃ śāntam anantam asmitā ...*

197 *Ibid*: *yatredam uktam — “tam aṇumātram ātmānam anuvidyāsmīty evaṃ tāvat samprajānīte” iti.*

198 See, for example, *Kaṭha Up* II.8; *Mait Up* VI. 20, 38 and VII.7; *Muṇḍaka Up* II. 2, 2 and III. 1.9; see also *BG* VIII.9.

199 See, for example, *BĀ Up* IV. 4, 20 and 22; *Kaṭha Up* II.22.

minute and great.<sup>200</sup> It is noteworthy that the descriptions of the realization of *ātman* (or *puruṣa*) and of its “reflection” in *asmitā* (correlating with cosmic being — *mahān ātmā* — or *mahat*) are very similar. It is as though one person were to describe the sky in its utter vastness and another speak of its clear reflection in a pond.

What needs to be emphasized at this point in our analysis is that the progression in *samādhi* from *vitarka* to *vicāra* to *ānanda* to *asmitā* results in experiences of an ever-increasing sense of I or self, a continuously expanding sense of self-identity. This expanding sense of identity, which incorporates the levels of person/individual and cosmic (trans-egoic/individual) being, arises due to the finer perceptions (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) or insights (*prajñā*) of the yogin which disclose the nature of the objects experienced (the seeable, *drśya*). As stated in chapter two, Yoga ontology follows from epistemology. In *asmitā-samādhi* the yogin is identified with *mahat*<sup>201</sup> (cosmic or trans-individual being) or *mahān ātmā* (the great self), attains omniscience and experiences self-identity as an undivided, nonfractured, unified self-nature or being.<sup>202</sup> Through *samādhi* one’s identity has expanded to include the whole of manifest existence, a state which is transcendent of any subject-object (ego-world) bifurcation or fragmentation within *prakṛti*. The yogin knows “I am the whole, the all-pervading sense of self which gives rise to and permeates all manifest existence.” In *asmitā-samādhi* the yogin is liberated from the idea of being a bound or limited identity dependent on being in association with joy or happiness (*sukha*) and attached to the pleasure of *sattva*. It is not until *asmitā-samādhi* that the insight attained is said to be “truth-bearing” (*rtambharā*) disclosing the object as it is without any epistemological distortion. At this exalted stage of *samādhi*, rather than being deprived of the levels of knowledge, perception and understanding gained previously, the yogin reconciles and incorporates these levels into the fullness and perfection of the “truth-bearing” insight.<sup>203</sup> Having discarded all attachment to the lower or grosser levels of perception, the yogin’s capacity to

200 See, for example, *Kaṭha Up* II.20 and *Śvet Up* III.9.

201 *YB* II.19.

202 On this see Āraṇya [1963: 365] who states: “When the powers of omnipotence and omniscience are acquired the yogin becomes like Almighty Īśvara. That is the highest state of the Intellect. *Puruṣa* with such adjuncts, i.e. such adjuncts and their seer combined, is called *Mahān ātmā* or the Great Self. The adjuncts by themselves are also called *Mahat-tattva*.”

203 See notes 163, 164 and 169 above.

experience, understand, perceive, remember, rationalize, etc., far from being negated or abandoned, is transformed, purified, enhanced; the various mental faculties thus being properly harnessed can then function more effectively in the practical world. There is a recognition and purification of self-identity in relation to the world and nature culminating in a reunification and integration of the individuated sense of self (*ahaṅkāra*) with the trans-individuated, cosmic, or universal sense of “I-am-ness” or self as supported in *mahat/buddhi*.

Perception is not suppressed, flattened out or destroyed through Yoga; it is transformed. The lower levels of realization are encompassed, not negated. By attaining increasingly subtler levels of perception through the sattvification of the mind, the yogin is more capable of embodying a richer affective life — one which is inclusive rather than exclusive of the practical, relational world— for prior to *samādhi* what had been held as ontologically and epistemologically separate from oneself is now seen for what it actually is, part of one corpus (*prakṛti*) of existence. The moral-affective dimension of Yoga which includes the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, happiness, etc., towards others (*YS I.33*) is an indispensable part of the yogin’s journey into subtler levels of realization and self-understanding and thus the overcoming of the selfish, contracted nature of ego. Through moral purification finer perception can arise, virtue thus acting as an efficient cause for removing non-virtue (*YB IV.3*) which in turn allows for greater concentration and meditative insight in Yoga. What is involved here is not a suppression but a reconciliation of past actions and a healing summation and transmutation of the human psyche. The moral, affective and epistemological dimensions of Yoga are refined, and virtue, whether of an ethical or cognitive nature, is seen to converge in the *sattva* of the mind. By developing the capacity or power (*siddhi*) to “contact” or “locate” finer, clearer and undiverted reflections of *puruṣa* within the mind, the yogin is purified of distorted perception, deluded self-understanding and a host of other forms of nonvirtue. An increasing light of *sattva* — including liberating knowledge (*jñāna*, *YS II.28*), dispassion (*vairāgya*, *YS I.15*) and other virtues such as compassion (*karuṇā*, *YS I.33*) — pervades the yogin’s consciousness augmenting and spiritualizing the yogin’s identity.

Yoga is not therefore a dissolution, negation or rejection of psycho-physical being the purpose of which is to isolate the yogin

from embodied existence. By including subtler dimensions of consciousness, Yoga can mean “addition”<sup>204</sup> implying here a recognition of its much overlooked capacity to value, enhance and vivify human embodied life: cognitively, ethically, physically, etc. To repeat our claim from an earlier article (see Whicher [1995]), dissolution or cessation (*nirodha*) is of the deluding power of misidentification (in *saṃyoga*), not of the power of identification itself which enables one to attend, empathize, know and “unite” with objects, persons, etc. Yoga discards all ignorance and attachment, not knowledge (*vṛtti*) and relational existence in total. In order to be accomplished in Yoga, the yogin must be able to pinpoint or arrive at the cause of *saṃyoga* — namely, ignorance (*avidyā*), the mind in its unenlightened state as locus of selfhood. *Samādhi* uproots the afflictions as they manifest themselves within our prakṛtic makeup including the subtler levels of *ahaṃkāra* and *buddhi*. In *saṃyoga puruṣa* as if conforms to the nature of the seeable, selfhood being experienced within the context of the afflictions implying a mistaken identity of self (*asmitā*). The world (of objects) is misperceived through the “eyes” of egoity or ignorance. The mind’s (*citta*) nature is paradoxical in that: (1) In *asmitā-samādhi* the root- afflicted- identity (*asmitā*) is located where the seer and the seeable appear to be one (in the *buddhi*). Yet (2) the *buddhi* or highest aspect of the mind has the quality of *sattva* or illumination through which the yogin discerns the difference between the *puruṣa* and the *sattva* of consciousness and gradually uproots and eradicates the affliction of *asmitā*. There results a purification of self in relation to the world and nature. Thus, through a series of subject-object identifications in cognitive *samādhi*, the yogin succeeds in temporarily transcending the polarization of self and world, the subject-object dichotomy that had previously governed and defined self-identity in *saṃyoga*. In fact, Patañjali’s main concern throughout his analysis of *samādhi* is not with the objects themselves but with the misidentifications, attachments, aversions, desires and fears which accompany the experiences of objects.

*Prakṛti* and her various manifestations, including the concept of mind (*citta*), are ingeniously utilized by Patañjali for pedagogical purposes, i.e. as states of identification which, functioning positively as contemplative directives along the “path” of Yoga, can serve as

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<sup>204</sup> See Monier-Williams [1899: 856].

heuristic devices for practitioners of Yoga. The practitioner must first discover or recognize what aspects or evolutes of *prakṛti* he or she is misidentified with, attached to, or has an aversion towards. Through yogic technique and one-pointedness of mind the practitioner then learns to “undo” any misidentification with objects including thought constructs/ideas (*pratyaya*) and mental processes (*vṛtti*). Through cessation (*nirodha*) brought about by practice and dispassion, including the unhinging of attention from its confinement to ego-consciousness, the power of identification or *vṛtti*-generating complex no longer functions under the influence of ignorance (*avidyā*). All enslavement to the nature of the seeable (*dṛśya*) is eradicated. *Prakṛti* is not negated from the yogin’s purview; she is more correctly aligned with pure consciousness (*puruṣa*) and therefore can be more fully incorporated. Through a deepening process of purification and illumination of the mind, misidentification dissolves. Thus in *samādhi*, *prakṛti* —on whatever level, gross or subtle — ceases to function as an obstacle to clear, liberating insight. Without *prakṛti* there would be no ontological backdrop, no levels of existence or vehicles through which knowledge could take place. It would be impossible to for liberation to arise because there would be no forms of subject-object identifications from which to locate any semblance of pure consciousness, overcome attachment, and grow in one’s understanding. The concept of mind (*citta*) is in part a heuristic device for understanding the nature and functioning of reflected consciousness. In its unenlightened mode (*vyutthāna*) under the sway of ignorance in the form of *vāsanās* of misconceived knowledge (*YB* II.24) the mind, as reflected, impure (*prakṛtic*) consciousness, can be viewed as the cause and sustaining power of *saṃyoga*, bondage and dissatisfaction (*kleśa*). But when *sattva*-knowledge is allowed to shine forth, the mind, as reflected albeit purified consciousness, can be seen as the efficient cause of liberation disclosing knowledge for the purpose of *puruṣa*, the final cause (*YB* II.19). Thus Vyāsa tells us that in the mind alone takes place both bondage and liberation.<sup>205</sup>

When *asmitā* has been examined (in *asmitā-samādhi*) its nature is fully realized. This corresponds with *grahītr-samāpatti* (see discussion above on *YS* I.41); the “field” of this ecstasy is the *prakṛtic* agent of knowledge. At this level “grasping” (knowing) and “grasper”

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<sup>205</sup> *YB* II.18 (pp. 83-84): *tāvetau bhogāpavargau buddhikṛtau buddhāv eva vartamānau ... buddher eva puruṣārthāparisamāptir bandhas tadarthāvasāyo mokṣa iti.*

(knower) lose their independent status: the analogy of radiance or clarity extends to one's inner being (*adhyātma*).<sup>206</sup> Vyāsa<sup>207</sup> and Vācaspati<sup>208</sup> have understood contemplation on the “grasper” (*grahītr*) as being that mysterious intersection of the prakṛtic knower-agent (located in mind-*sattva* or *buddhi*) and *puruṣa*, the real knower-witness. Here *grahītr-samāpatti* links up with *asmitā-samādhi*. The yogin concentrates on the reflected “knower” (“grasper”) in *prakṛti*; the real knower (*YS* IV.18) — *puruṣa* — cannot be made an object of knowledge, a mental content (*pratyaya*) or modification (*vṛtti*). What the yogin actually succeeds in realizing is *asmitā*, the mental stand-in for *puruṣa*. Koelman puts it this way: “By concentration on the knower we reach the awareness-light projected by the Self. We do not actually grasp the very essence of the Self, we gain access only to its liminal result, that is its illuminating participation in the *sattva* of the [*buddhi*].”<sup>209</sup>

I have translated Vyāsa's description of *asmitā: eka-ātmikā saṃvit*<sup>210</sup> (*YB* I.17) as “the perception of the essential (unified) nature of self.” This refers to the pre-diversified, undifferentiated (unified) or rather trans-egoic condition of reflected self-identity in *prakṛti*. The sattvic illumination of the mirror of *buddhi* and the reflected light of *puruṣa* are unified in *asmitā*. Vijñāna Bhikṣu<sup>211</sup> explains that the word *eka* (“one”) here signifies “only one,” that is to say: “Only one, the Self (*ātman*), is its object.” He interprets this to mean that in this *samādhi* there is only one object of support, the mind's perception of only the *puruṣa*, by which one realizes that “I am.” As the object of contemplation merges here with the agent, the mind appears unified with *puruṣa*. In this view it is correct that the mind is seen unified with the Self, but it would be incorrect to assume that the pure, unreflected *ātman* (*puruṣa*) is the object of contemplation. If we understand Bhikṣu's statement literally, then it seems safe to say that Bhikṣu has erred by asserting that in *asmitā-samādhi* the yogin knows

206 *YS* I.47.

207 *YB* I.41; see n. 92 above.

208 *TV* I.41 (pp. 43-44): *asmitāspadaṃ hi grahītā puruṣa iti bhāvaḥ*.

209 Koelman [1970: 215].

210 See n. 15 above.

211 *YV* I.17 (p. 109): *eka evāmāsyāṃ viṣaya tvenāstīty ekātmikā. [tathā cōktam-] ekālambane yā cittasya kevalapurūṣākārā saṃvit sāksātkāro 'smīty etāvanmātrākāratvād asmitety arthaḥ*. Bhikṣu later qualifies *asmitā* as being of two kinds: pertaining to *jīvātman* (qualified being) or pertaining to *param-ātman* (unqualified being).

“I am thus — thus alone,” i.e. that there is nothing further to know, and that this is the ultimate ground (or height) of realization. The union in *asmitā* more likely expresses (as Bhikṣu would probably agree) an analogical understanding of consciousness. In Yoga philosophy, *asmitā* is the apparent unity in consciousness of two very distinct self-identities: the Self or intrinsic identity on the one side, and on the other side its most subtle prakṛtic conditioning, an extrinsic, empirical identity of self. It is then disclosed that what was taken for authentic identity, which is pure and unchanging, is really a composite and changing identity (*cittavṛtti*), *asmitā* being generated through the interplay of *puruṣa* and the mind under the influence of *avidyā*. Actually, the realization of the pure *puruṣa* does not begin until *asamprajñāta*, the supra-cognitive *samādhi*.

The only “passage” to authentic identity in Yoga seems to be through the exercise of a purified cognitive faculty.<sup>212</sup> The mind in itself does not form a link between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Only an actual exercise of knowledge on the side of *prakṛti* is the “wire” that can convey the “current” for pure consciousness. Knowledge (*jñāna*) becomes the efficient cause of *puruṣa*’s “release.” Through the presence of *puruṣa*, the mind “undoes” its own samsāric entanglements as locus of mistaken identity (*cittavṛtti*) by means of the cultivation of knowledge and this process continues throughout the stages of cognitive *samādhi* up to the discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*). At this level of perception *asmitā-samādhi* matures into the realization of *vivekakhyāti*, the re-cognition or illuminated cognition (YB II.26) of the distinctness of mind-*sattva* and *puruṣa*. Because of the unified, one-pointed awareness of *asmitā*, this ecstasy, as with the *ānanda* state of ecstasy, is not divided into *sāsmitā* and *nirasmitā*.

The ability of the yogin in *samādhi* to identify completely with the object of support/contemplation and be detached from the experience produces the realization that the yogin’s true being is not the same, nor is it dependent on, the contemplated object. Moreover, the yogin is aware that the realization of *puruṣa* is still to take place. *Asmitā-samādhi* reveals insight into the nature of the original identification (*asmitā*) with the reflection of consciousness in the mind. With a proper attitude and understanding its practice enables the yogin to cultivate dispassion towards the subtlest vicissitudes of

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, YS III.35 (p. 154): ... *parārthatvāt svārthasamyamāt puruṣajñānam*.

*prakṛti*. Patañjali's use of the term "as if" (*iva*, YS II.6 and III.3) applied to this stage of "unification" indicates that even the identification of *puruṣa* with the mind is only an apparent "as if" identification. This leads the "forgetful" *puruṣa*, whose consciousness is understood analogically to be *cittavṛtti*, to think that the happenings and modifications of the mind are its own and are therefore worthy of being attached to. In Yoga one becomes "as if" ontologically at one with the objects in the "nir" forms of *samādhi* because at this stage of practice there is as yet an ontological duality of seer and seeable. The actual oneness with our objects of experience is more correctly seen to have an epistemological emphasis. The knower-agent in *asmitā-samādhi* is non-separate from the known, the power and potential of the whole of manifest existence (*mahat*). This can be seen to be the case because the reflection of the infinite *puruṣa* received by the mind is and has to be as vast or all-pervading as manifest *prakṛti*<sup>213</sup> herself, just as the consciousness of our being a person is at least as extensive as our physical body. The "I" that identifies itself with the physical body is a function of the ego-principle, a mere evolute of *prakṛti*. The unsullied *puruṣa* can be realized only after the pure reflection of pure consciousness is apprehended in *asmitā-samādhi*. This realization is at the end of a series of identifications with, and dispassion towards, the grossest to the subtlest evolutes of *prakṛti*; and the series of *samādhis* (i.e. unifications or *samāpattis*) explained by Patañjali are such a series.

In Yoga a distinction must be made between two types of knowledge gained by the yogin in *samprajñāta*. First there is immediate knowledge (*prajñā*) independent of extraneous influences of the prakṛtic world, the purest level of which is *buddhi*, or in its cosmic aspect *mahat*. This at its highest is "nirvicāra" knowledge translated as "I am the whole," the recognition of an organic unity between grasper, grasping and grasped bringing or "putting back" together, healing *prakṛti*'s formerly fragmented parts as separate realities caused by the divisive and delusive nature of ignorance (*avidyā*), i.e. egoic consciousness and extrinsic identity. An epistemological oneness of knower and known, self and world takes place wherein the distinctions of knower, knowing and known or grasper, grasping and grasped (YS I.41) dissolve and there is no longer

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213 Cf. n. 196 above.

the predisposition to separate a self from things perceived or vice versa. But there is also the use to which this primary experiential knowledge is put, for the purpose of liberation; that is *vivekakhyāti*.<sup>214</sup> I understand *vivekakhyāti* to mean the discriminative discernment between: (1) the extrinsic nature of consciousness and self-identity located in the mind (in *saṃyoga*) — a reflected state of consciousness — and (2) the intrinsic nature of consciousness and self-identity, the authentic “form” of Self (*svarūpa, puruṣa*).

All misidentification with things prakṛtic must eventually dissolve in the process of “cessation” (*nīrodha*) in order for emancipation to ensue. There are yogins who become absorbed in the source of all manifestation (*aliṅga*). Those who attain this state of utter absorption with unmanifest *prakṛti* and consider it to be the final destination are yogins referred to as *prakṛti-laya* (YS I.19). They have dissolved their identification with the evolutes and have become identified with undifferentiated, unmanifest *prakṛti* herself. However, they have not yet realized *puruṣa* and so continue in bondage to saṃsāric existence living a kind of pseudo-liberation.<sup>215</sup> At this point, however, there appears to be nothing further to attain. The yogin does not realize without proper guidance or a guru that absorption in unmanifest *prakṛti* is actually not the end of the journey. In this state there are no “objects” except *prakṛti* herself. The yogin must now make efforts to “turn towards” *puruṣa*. However, if this direction does not become clear and the necessary guidance is not available or accepted, the *prakṛti-laya* (yogin) may mistake this point to be the culmination of Yoga, self-awareness becoming identified completely (i.e. misidentified) with *prakṛti*. All other *vṛttis* of identification have subsided but ignorance has not been completely eradicated. The *prakṛti-laya*’s sense of identity is still rooted in error (*viparyaya*), attachment and the desire to have control or mastery over *prakṛti*.<sup>216</sup> The identification with *prakṛti* has not been transcended. It is interesting that Vyāsa classifies the “unmanifest” (*aliṅga*) as not being caused by any purpose of *puruṣa*: “No purpose of *puruṣa* brings it about, nor is there any purpose of *puruṣa* in it.”<sup>217</sup> It can be concluded that

214 YS II.26.

215 YB I.19 (p. 23): *tathā prakṛtilayāḥ sādḥikāre cetasi prakṛtilīne kaivalyapadam ivānubhavanti.*

216 See YB I.8 and TV I.8; see also YV I.8.

217 YB II.19 (p. 86): *aliṅgāvasthāyām na puruṣārtho hetur nāliṅgāvasthāyām ādau puruṣa-*

identification with and attachment to unmanifest *prakṛti* merely constitutes a detour on the path of Yoga. From the perspective of the liberated state, *prakṛti-laya* is simply another form of bondage. One could argue that at best *prakṛti-laya* is a “mild” (*mṛdu*) form of practice in comparison to the “moderate” (*madhya*) and “ardent” (*adhimātratva*) forms of practice involving more advanced yogins.<sup>218</sup> Apparently content with this state of identity and “form of practice” where there is as yet an “idea/intention of becoming” (*bhava-pratyaya*<sup>219</sup>), the yogin must continue to take birth in order to become purified from all misidentification with *prakṛti* and eventually abide in pure identity as *puruṣa*.

#### 8. A further look at cognitive *samādhi*

For the purpose of clarifying the analysis given in this chapter on the stages of *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*, it would now seem appropriate to ask the question: How many types of cognitive *samādhi* are there? A critical look at scholarly literature on Yoga reveals that there is a great deal of confusion on this issue. It is of interest to note the following statement by Feuerstein:

‘Joy’ and ‘I-am-ness’ ... must be regarded as accompanying phenomena of every cognitive [ecstasy]. The explanations of the classical commentators on this point appear to be foreign to Patañjali’s hierarchy of [ecstatic] states, and it seems unlikely that *ānanda* and *asmitā* should constitute independent levels of *samādhi*.<sup>220</sup>

This study disagrees with Feuerstein suggesting that he has misapprehended the specific placement that these ecstatic stages are assigned, at least implicitly so, by Patañjali. I have previously shown how Vyāsa can be read as taking *ānanda*- and *asmitā-samādhi* as later

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*rhatā kāraṇaṃ bhavāṭī. na tasyāḥ puruṣārthatā kāraṇaṃ bhavāṭī. nāsau puruṣārtha kṛteti ...*

<sup>218</sup> YS I.21-22. Chapple and Kelly (1990: 41-42) argue that the *prakṛti-layas* are to be deemed “mild” (*mṛdu*) or weak in their practice compared to the “moderate” (*madhya*) intensity or type of practice as outlined in YS I.20 and the “ardent” (*adhimātratva*, YS I.22) or “strongly intense” type of yogin (*tīvra-saṃvega*, YS I.21).

<sup>219</sup> YS I.19 (p. 22): *bhava-pratyayo videha prakṛtilayānām*. “Of the ones who are absorbed in *prakṛti* and of those who are bodiless, [there is] an idea/intention of becoming.” See also n. 117 and text in chapter four of Whicher [1998] which mentions the “bodiless” (*videha*) yogins along with the *prakṛti-layas*.

<sup>220</sup> Feuerstein [1979a: 38].

stages of *nirvicāra-samāpatti* and the sorts of experiences these two stages of *samādhi* represent.<sup>221</sup>

Vācaspati Mīśra proposes a model of eight types of “unification” (*samāpatti*). He states: “Thus [with regard] to the ‘objects of knowledge’ there are four *samāpattis*, [and there are a further] four [in respect to] the ‘grasper’ and the ‘process of grasping’. Thus there are eight of these.”<sup>222</sup> Following from *nirvicāra-samāpatti* — which I have argued is the highest *samāpatti* in Vyāsa’s classification, Mīśra adds four other stages in effect doubling Vyāsa’s number. These stages, from highest to lowest, may be listed as follows:

- (1—2) *nirasmitā-* and *sāsmītā-samāpatti*, both with “I-am-ness” as the object of support or objective prop.
- (3—4) *nirānanda-* and *sānanda-samāpatti*, both with the sense organs as objects of support or objective props.
- (5—6) *nirvicāra-* and *savicāra-samāpatti*, both with subtle objects as objects of support or objective props.
- (7—8) *nirvitarka-* and *savitarka-samāpatti*, both with gross objects as objects of support or objective props.

Vijñāna Bhikṣu proposes a six-stage model explicitly rejecting Vācaspati Mīśra’s view, according to which the mainstay of *vitarka-* and *vicāra-samādhi* is the internalized object (*grāhya*), of *ānanda-samādhi* the instruments of cognition or grasping (*grahaṇa*), and of *asmitā-samādhi* the category of the grasper (*grahītṛ*). Bhikṣu instead regards joy (*ānanda*) as a product of extreme *vicāra-samāpatti*, which is then made the supportive factor of the next higher form of ecstasy.<sup>223</sup> I have already given a critique of both Vācaspati Mīśra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu on their views of *ānanda-* and *asmitā-samādhi*. This study agrees, however, with Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s adamant denial of a *nirānanda*<sup>224</sup> or a *nirasmitā*<sup>225</sup> form of *samādhi*.

<sup>221</sup> In doing so I have responded to Feuerstein’s query on this matter. He writes (1980: 90): “It is unclear how he [Vyāsa] envisages the correlation between these postulated types [of ecstasy in YS I.17] and the four varieties of *samāpatti* as cited in YS I. 42-44. Does he [Vyāsa] take *ānanda* and *asmitā-samādhi* to be instances of *nirvicāra-samāpatti*?”

<sup>222</sup> TV I.46 (pp. 50-51): *tena grāhye catasraḥ samāpattayo grahītṛgrahaṇayoś catasra ity aṣṭau siddhā bhavanīti*. Feuerstein [1989: 196] (see n. 184 above) appears to endorse Vācaspati Mīśra and his reading of eight stages.

<sup>223</sup> YVI.17; see n. 181 above.

<sup>224</sup> YVI.17 (pp. 108-109).

G. Koelman offers a very elaborate analysis of the *samāpattis*, opting for Vācaspati Mīśra's interpretation.<sup>226</sup> Koelman argues that the eight types of *samāpattis* as delineated in the *TV* "are the core of Patañjali's mental discipline" and are indeed "a magnificent piece of psychology."<sup>227</sup> As one scholar suggests, however, "... it remains an open question to what degree this [Koelman's] theoretical model is founded on bona fide experiential information."<sup>228</sup> There do not appear to be any sound grounds for justifying a need for a *nirānanda* or a *nirasmitā* stage of *samādhi*. Patañjali's own view seems to be that *nirvicāra-samāpatti* is the highest form of cognitive ecstasy as this study has attempted to show by using a scheme of classification which adheres to the careful step-by-step process of *samādhi* outlined in both the *YS* and the *YB*.

The *samādhis* with supportive factors (*sālambana*) are also called *samādhis* "with seed" (*sabīja*). As Patañjali asserts in *YS* I.46: *tā eva sabījah samādhiḥ*, "These [*savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savicāra*, *nirvicāra*] are *samādhi* with seed."<sup>229</sup> *Sabīja samādhi* is a technical name for cognitive *samādhi*. In the literature on Classical Yoga there appear to be two main interpretations of the term *bīja* as given in *YS* I.46. According to Vyāsa, "seed" (*bīja*) refers to the "object" of contemplation or support.<sup>230</sup> Bhoja Rāja, in his commentary *ad locum*, also explains the term *bīja* by "*ālambana*" or "object of support."<sup>231</sup> The meaning of *YS* I.46 in the context of the above interpretation of *bīja* is that the forms of contemplation constituted by the *samāpattis* do metaphorically have a supporting factor in the object<sup>232</sup> on which the mind has become one-pointed (*ekāgra*).

Other interpreters maintain for *bīja* its literal meaning of "seed."<sup>233</sup> Rāmānanda Yati and J.W. Hauer follow this interpretation wherein the forms of *samādhi* constituted by the *samāpattis* have in

225 *YV* I.17 (p. 109): *asyā asmitāyā api sāsmitānirasmitārūpo vibhāgo nāsti*.

226 See Koelman [1970: 198ff].

227 *Ibid*, p. 223.

228 Feuerstein [1980: 91].

229 *YS* I.46 (p. 50).

230 *YB* I.46 (p. 50): *tās catasrah samāpattayo bahirvastubījā iti samādhir api sabījah*.

231 *RM* I.46 (p. 15): *tā evoktalakṣaṇāḥ samāpattayaḥ saha bījenālanbanena vartata iti sabījah samprajñātaḥ samādhir ity ucyate, sarvāsāḥ sālambanatvāt*.

232 This is also the interpretation of Ballantyne, Taimni and Āraṇya, although they do not affirm, as explicitly as Bhoja Rāja does, the equivalence: *bīja* = *ālambana*.

233 Cf. Dvivedī, Vivekānanda and those explicitly mentioned below.

themselves the seeds or potentialities (i.e. *saṃskāras*) of new mental processes (*vṛttis*), which necessarily have to actualize themselves and, as a result, create further bondage. Hauer declares that *bīja* stands for the seed of new *vṛttis*.<sup>234</sup> Rāmānanda Yati understands *bīja* in the sense of “seed of bondage.”<sup>235</sup>

Vijñāna Bhikṣu states that the exterior objects (i.e. referring to the prakṛtic realm which is external to *puruṣa*) have qualities not belonging to the *puruṣa*. From these objects arise impressions (*saṃskāras*), characteristics (*dharmas*), etc., which are the seeds of dissatisfaction and future sorrow (*kleśa*, see *YS* II.16).<sup>236</sup> Elsewhere Bhikṣu considers that the forms of *samādhi* constituted by the *samāpattis* are “with seed” both because they have an object of support (*ālambana*) and because they give rise to new mental processes<sup>237</sup> with which the yogin becomes (mis)identified. I comply with Bhikṣu’s later interpretation<sup>238</sup> and furthermore suggest that the seed-mechanism of misidentification (*cittavṛtti*) or mistaken identity of *puruṣa* with the mind (*citta*) is the original or “source-seed” which must be uprooted and eradicated. This primal seed of ignorance takes the form of the *vāsanās* of erroneous knowledge (*viparyaya-jñāna*).<sup>239</sup>

Most commentators have struggled with *YS* I.46, trying to resolve the apparent contradiction in the number of forms of cognitive *samādhi*. Vyāsa’s commentary seems to the point:

Those four unifications have external objects as their seeds; thus, *samādhi* too, is [said to be] with seed. When it is a gross object, the *samādhi* is *savitarka* or *nirvitarka*; when it is a subtle object, it is *savicāra* or *nirvicāra*. Thus is [cognitive] *samādhi* counted to be fourfold.<sup>240</sup>

Apparently ignoring Vyāsa’s clear statement, Vācaspati Miśra has

234 Hauer [1958: 243 and 466 n. 11].

235 *MP* I.46 (p. 23): *bandhabīja*.

236 *YV* I.46 (p. 240): *bahirvastu nyātmadharmāḥ. saṃskāradharmādayo kleśabījāni jāyante abhya iti bahirvastubījāḥ*.

237 *YSS* (p. 26): *dhyeyarūpālambanayogāt tadāpi vṛttibījasamskārotpatteś ceti*.

238 Parts of Vyāsa’s remaining commentary appear to support Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s understanding of the term *bīja*; see, for example, *YB* III.50 and IV.28.

239 *YB* II.24. See Whicher (1995) and (1997).

240 *YB* I.46 (p. 50): *tāś catasraḥ samāpattayo bahirvastubījā iti samādhir api sabījaḥ. tatra sthūle ’rthe savitarkā nirvitarkaḥ, sūkṣme ’rthe savicāro nirvicāra iti caturdhopasaṃkhyātaḥ samādhir iti*.

asserted that there are eight kinds of cognitive *samādhi*. Vijñāna Bhikṣu understands that there are six kinds. It is not crucial to our study to pursue all of their enumerations, classifications and differing arguments. It suffices to say that Vyāsa has not stated that there are four kinds of cognitive *samādhi*, but rather that cognitive *samādhi* is to be divided “fourfold” (*caturdhā*). As explained earlier, the divisions<sup>241</sup> run as follows:

1. *savitarka-samāpatti* correlates with *savitarka-samādhi*
2. *nirvitarka-samāpatti* correlates with *nirvitarka-samādhi*
3. *savicāra-samāpatti* correlates with *savicāra-samādhi*
4. *nirvicāra-samāpatti* correlates with *nirvicāra-samādhi*, *ānanda-samādhi* and *asmitā-samādhi*.

What is common to the above stages of ecstasy is that what is being known is within the realm of prakṛtic, empirical experience and therefore is exclusive of *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa*, however, can at no time be made into an object or entity that the yogin takes it upon to realize outwardly or within the mind. Accordingly, all these forms of *samādhi* are labelled *saṃprajñāta*, the *samādhi* of the accurate knowing of objects, including objective and subjective “distinguishables” which pertain to the realm of *prakṛti*, i.e. empirical identity. Were I really to know my authentic Self, clearly a manner of “oneness” or identity which is *asaṃprajñāta* is required. It could not be a knowing to which I might give mental shape or form (*vṛtti*) for that would mean it would be of some object, which *puruṣa* cannot be. The insights (*prajñā*) which arise in cognitive *samādhi* cover, comprehend all phenomena including my empirical persona, and enshrine in its higher stages unabashedly empirical claims which cannot be tested in any “rational” way by argument but can only be fully grasped and understood through direct experience, yogic perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*).

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<sup>241</sup> See Arya [1986: 409]. Though it appears that the *samāpattis* are referred to as ‘*samādhi*’, Vijñāna Bhikṣu (*YV* I.46) makes it clear that *samāpatti* and *samādhi* are not to be confused as synonyms. While *samāpatti* only occurs at the time (at least provisionally during the process of purification) in which *saṃprajñāta-samādhi* takes place, it can be understood as the effect or the quality of the mind during *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*. As such, *samādhi* is the cessation of distraction and misidentification, a one-pointedness of mind, whereas *samāpatti* refers to the unification or identity of the mind with the object of contemplation resulting from this one-pointedness. In other words, *samāpatti* is both contained in, and arises from *samādhi*. The two represent and are experienced as a continuum of awareness and identity.

Patañjali maintains that in cognitive *samādhi* there are still “things of the mind” — mental processes and content/thought constructs — which get in the way of or hinder our realization of *puruṣa*, intrinsic identity. The mind is likely to sully the purity of *samādhi* in *savitarka* and *savicāra* in the ways explained earlier. The “*nir*” forms are plainly and simply those occasions of attained epistemological oneness when the mind does not interfere as stated. At the moment of the experience of pure knowing or knowingness, the sense of self as normally understood and felt, i.e. as an ego-subject separate from the object of experience and which misappropriates or lays claim to the experience, is no longer an impediment or obstacle to clear knowledge and understanding. Our misidentification of self — rooted in ignorance (*avidyā*) and given shape through the saṃyogic/ saṃsāric processes of *vṛtti* and *saṃskāra* which generate and sustain our notions (*pratyaya*) of egoity (*asmitā*) — is shown to be the product of a profound epistemological distortion residing deep within the mind yet which can ultimately be removed through insight (*prajñā*) or knowledge (*jñāna*) in *samādhi*. However much *puruṣa* is conceived to be concealed or excluded in *saṃyoga*, it must be emphasized that without the presence of *puruṣa* as knower-witness no cognition or knowledge (*vṛtti*) could arise in consciousness, could function in the mind under any circumstances. The explanation of the existence of a “path” or “mapping” of Yoga from ordinary experience (*bhoga*) to the liberated “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) is based on the understanding that *puruṣa* is ubiquitous and already present, immanent (though “as if” stained and misidentified as an entrapped entity within *prakṛti*) as the true knower/experiencer of ordinary cognition. Due to *puruṣa*’s immanence, the sequence of “unification” (*samāpatti*) — from *grāhya* to *grahaṇa* to *grahītṛ* — is rendered pertinent and effective for liberation. Through the process of “cessation” (*nirodha*), the yogin succeeds in dissolving or exploding the limitations — in the form of misidentification with *vṛtti* — imposed on self-identity.

*Puruṣa* is present throughout ordinary states of awareness and indeed the stages of cognitive *samādhi* through an “as if” identification taking the form of a reflected, albeit masquerading consciousness, a pseudo sense-of-self which while seeking to secure its identity through *prakṛti* can never truly ground itself because it is itself extrinsic, inauthentic identity, irrevocably conditioned and

contained by the changing *guṇic* realm. Patañjali declares that all forms of *samprajñāta*, being contemplations on and realizations of supportive factors, are *samādhis* “with seed” (*sabīja*). Because they are *samādhis* on the realities perceived within the composite person and are “exterior” to *puruṣa*, they yet contain the seed of ignorance, further bondage, dissatisfaction and sorrow. Therefore *samprajñāta* is to be contrasted with *asamprajñāta*, the trans-cognitive *samādhi* which, at the very highest level of realization, is said to be “seedless” (*nirbīja*),<sup>242</sup> unaffected by ignorance and free from all dissatisfaction. Thus the practice and cultivation of *samādhi* continues for the sake of each misidentified being or “bound” *puruṣa*. Even though in *samprajñāta* the yogin is established in a one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*) of mind which removes the barriers separating subject from object, the purest and most illuminated or sattvified state of mind (*niruddha*, *nirodha*) of non-intentional, “seedless” awareness (*nirbīja*) — one in which the yogin is no longer dependent on objects of contemplation for the sake of liberation — is yet to be attained.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BĀ Up</i>	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i>
<i>BG</i>	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
<i>Chānd Up</i>	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
<i>Mait Up</i>	<i>Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Maṇi-Prabhā</i> of Rāmānanda Yati (sixteenth-seventeenth century CE)
<i>RM</i>	<i>Rāja-Mārtanda</i> of Bhoja Rāja (ca. eleventh century CE)
<i>SK</i>	<i>Sāṅkhya-Kārikā</i> of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa (ca. fourth-fifth century CE)
<i>Śvet Up</i>	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i>
<i>Tait Up</i>	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i>
<i>TV</i>	<i>Taitva-Vaiśārādī</i> of Vācaspati Mīśra (ca. ninth century CE)
<i>YB</i>	<i>Yoga-Bhāṣya</i> of Vyāsa (ca. fifth-sixth century CE)
<i>YS</i>	<i>Yoga-Sūtras</i> of Patañjali (ca. second-third century CE)
<i>YSS</i>	<i>Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu (ca. sixteenth century CE)
<i>YV</i>	<i>Yoga-Vārttika</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu

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<sup>242</sup> The term *nirbīja* is used in *YS* I.51 and III.8.

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