THE PHILOSOPHY OF
CLASSICAL YOGA

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Foreword
by Professor Corrado Pensa

The study of oriental philosophical-religious texts, especially of the Indian genre, presents considerable and particular difficulties. In many instances there is a lack of adequate historical and chronological data, and frequently all that remains are the name of the author and a few vague and more or less legendary reports about him. Furthermore, the terms which confront one are so polyvalent and stratified as to constitute often a very real challenge to anyone who seeks to gauge their full meaning.

In the face of all these difficulties it is of primary importance to develop a valid methodology in order to determine the parameters necessary for the most correct interpretation of eastern texts. It gives me, therefore, great pleasure to preface this book by Georg Feuerstein, who has been researching into Yoga for many years with investigative passion and has already given us several works of capital importance for the comprehension of this subject. His previous books *A Reappraisal of Yoga*, *The Essence of Yoga* and *Textbook of Yoga* testify to an increasing appreciation of Yoga, which is considered each time from a different angle, always enriching our understanding of this phenomenon.

In his methodology Feuerstein adopts an approach to research in which accurate linguistic analysis is inseparable from the analysis of the various contexts in which a given term or concept appears, thus ensuring that all possible meaning values are identified. This particular question has been treated in some depth in the companion volume to the present work entitled *Yoga-Sūtra: An Exercise in the Methodology of Textual Analysis*.

The central premise of this methodology is the rejection of all simplistic unilateral interpretations. For this reason Feuerstein also correctly criticises in the aforementioned work E. Conze’s reduction of Yoga to a mere assemblage of techniques, whereas what we are in fact dealing with is a ‘theory-practice continuum’. Hence, again, his refusal to blindly trust the interpretational keys proffered in the exegetical Sanskrit literature postdating the *Yoga-Sūtra*; as he points out there is a considerable intervening chronological and ideological distance. Although taking due note of the commentaries, Feuerstein prefers to concentrate on an immanent critique of the original text itself.

In contrast to the approach adopted by many Orientalists who *a priori* tend to deny the unity of the text under examination, fragmenting it into so many parts or heterogeneous strata until nothing remains, Feuerstein rightly asks in his methodological study whether this compulsive search for incongruencies and textual corruptions is not the expression of an ethnocentric rationalising mentality which inclines to project everywhere its own need for abstract and absolute logic, and hence is particularly prone to misinterpret paradoxical expressions so common in eastern thought, which has a *papant* for transcending dualism and therefore in part also rational language as such.

The principal merit of the present volume lies in that it provides us with a highly original overall picture of Classical Yoga. Instead of giving a contracted description of this school of thought – which would be at least partly second-hand – Feuerstein undertakes a thorough analysis of the key concepts, arranging his findings in a systematic fashion so that in the end there spontaneously emerges a
complete picture of the entire spiritual iter of Classical Yoga. His detailed semantic examination demonstrates once again – if that should still be necessary – that the meaning of the complex and polyvalent Sanskrit terms (hardly ever translatable into our languages by a single word) must be sought through an accurate comparison of the various contexts in which they occur.

The other great merit of this work is that it never loses sight of the psycho-integrative and experiential matrix of a great many key concepts of Classical Yoga. Thus īśvara, considered by a number of Orientalists as a later superfluous interpolation added from the outside to a system already complete in itself, is here linked up with the yogin’s profound experience of the archetypal yogin, i.e. the macrocosmic reflection of the puruṣa innate in everybody, which in its turn is not an abstract concept but a concrete numinous experience whose connections with the conditioned mental complexes (the punctum dolens of many exegetes and scholars) are here analysed with considerable precision.

Also with regard to the concept of prakṛti the author’s observations are stimulating and original, particularly in his recognition of two distinct levels – a ‘deep structure’ and a ‘surface structure’, which opens up new lines of research. The same may be said of certain parallels which he draws between the guna theory and recent discoveries in nuclear physics.

Yoga is here interpreted in terms of a profound transformation of consciousness culminating in gnosis. After having shown in his probing study that it is essentially a bi-polar process of gradual internalisation, he reaches a conclusion of enormous significance which, in my opinion, is fundamental to all Indian thought: ‘the ontogenetic models are originally and primarily maps for meditative introspection’. This homologisation between cosmological and psychological structures is truly a modality of thought intrinsic to the Indian religious consciousness, as was noted already by M. Falk in her brilliant and unfortunately little known study Il mito psicologico nell’ India antica (Rome, 1939).

It is to be hoped that works such as Georg Feuerstein’s present study will serve as a stimulus so that other scholars may enrich their own methods of research in order to contribute to a more valid and differentiated view of Indian religiosity.

Rome, 1979
Preface

Yoga, in particular Patañjali’s variant of this great Indian tradition, has captivated my professional interest over many years, and my published findings and thoughts on the subject reflect the various stages of this protracted research. The present volume consists of a series of detailed analyses of the key concepts mustered by Patañjali to describe and explain the enigma of human existence and to point a way out of conditioned existence, to stop the perpetual motion of the ‘wheel of becoming’ (bhava-cakra = saṁsāra).

I have adopted an historical approach combined with a system-immanent interpretation founded on my own rigorous textual studies on the structure of Patañjali’s work, the Yoga-Sūtra (see my 1979 methodological study). This book differs from previous publications in that it seeks to wrest from Patañjali’s aphoristic statements themselves the philosophical edifice of Classical Yoga and thus to combat the overpowering influence exercised by Vyāsa’s scholium, the Yoga-Bhāṣya, on all subsequent efforts at exegesis. By contrast, I have tried to tentatively relate Patañjali’s conceptions to earlier epic teachings from which, after all, he must have drawn some inspiration. In fact, there appears to be a far greater continuity between Classical Yoga and antecedent (pre-classical) formulations than is normally thought. However, the present work does not develop this point further, and the parallels introduced have the chief purpose of illuminating Patañjali’s teachings.

There are naturally many details of this intricate darśana which, of necessity, had to be relegated to a secondary place, although they could profitably form the substance of further problem-specific studies. My principal aim has been to present a reinterpretation of the main bearings of the metaphysical framework of Classical Yoga. The single most important finding of this piece of research is the fact that Patañjali’s system cannot be subsumed under the heading of Sāṅkhya. Classical Yoga is exactly what its protagonists claim: an autonomous darśana with its own characteristic set of concepts and technical expressions. The popular scholarly impression according to which Classical Yoga is some kind of parasite, capitalising on the philosophical efforts of Classical Sāṅkhya, is shown to be in need of urgent and radical revision. The concluding chapter is a thumbnail sketch of the crucial differences between these two schools which should set this whole issue into the proper perspective.

Some readers may be puzzled by the sparing treatment afforded to the famous schema of the ‘eight members’ (aṣṭa-aṅga) of Yoga, frequently misinterpreted as ‘stages’. The reason for this is twofold. First, I have dealt with this aspect of Classical Yoga fairly extensively in a previous book (see my 1974 publication) and second, I have come to regard this particular systematisation of the yogic path as of subsidiary importance in the overall structure of Patañjali’s school of thought. In fact, it is highly probable that he adopted this eightfold classification from earlier sources for the sake of expositional convenience, whereas his own view seems to be that kriyā-yoga, which can be equated with Classical Yoga per se, is essentially the combined practice of asceticism (tapas), self-study (svādhyāya) and devotion to the Lord (iśvara-pranidhāna) (see aphorism II.1), which leads to the cultivation of the enstatic consciousness (in samādhi) and consequently to the abrogation of those factors which are the true causes of human bondage and man’s mistaken self-identity.

The observations, thoughts, suggestions and speculations presented in this fascicle have all matured on the soil prepared by previous researchers, and my criticisms of some of their contributions, though
necessarily committed, in no way seek to detract from the merit of their valuable labour. I am particularly indebted to the work of the late Professor J. W. Hauer, which first introduced me to the exciting possibility of a text-immanent interpretation of the *Yoga-Sūtra*. To what degree I have succeeded in achieving this programme, future studies will undoubtedly evince.

Several friends and colleagues have made various contributions at different stages in the writing of this book. My special thanks go to Professor Dr Arnold Kunst and Dr Tuvia Gelblum for their comments; to Professor Corrado Pensa for the generous remarks in his Foreword; to Mr J. H. M. Shankland for Englishing the Italian Foreword; to Mrs Mary Newman for reading through the entire script and righting a number of linguistic wrongs; to Mrs A. Mitchell for tackling so efficiently the typing of a fairly complicated manuscript; to Dr Richard Lawless and the secretaries of the Middle East Documentation Centre (Durham), especially Miss Avril Yeates, for various favours and kindnesses; and not least to the library staff of the School of Oriental Studies (Durham), in particular Dr R. Char and Mr Malcolm Ferguson, for their considerateness and help in procuring seemingly unprocurable works.

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Preface to the New Edition

I am grateful to Ehud Sperling, publisher of Inner Traditions International, for giving this book a new lease on life, after having been out of print for many years. Its subject matter is as relevant today as it was when I wrote about it sixteen years ago, and I am happy to say that the present work, short as it is, still offers the most systematic, in-depth analysis of the principal concepts of Classical Yoga.

This monograph is complemented by some of my other books, notably The Yoga-Sutra of Patañjali: A New Translation and Commentary, also published by Inner Traditions International, and Wholeness or Transcendence? Ancient Lessons for the Emerging Global Civilization, published by Larson Publications.

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I
The Concept of God (īśvara)

The ontology of Classical Yoga, or kriyā-yoga, has three major foci, viz. īśvara, puruṣa and prakṛti. These are deemed irreducible ontic ultimates. The most distinctive feature of the ontology of Patañjali’s school of thought and, I wish to contend, of any form of Hindu Yoga, is the concept of ‘the Lord’ or īśvara.

The word īśvara is a derivative of the verbal root $\sqrt{\text{iś}}$ (‘to rule’), current already at the time of the ancient vedic samhitās. Synonyms are īś, īśa and īśana, īśvara being the more prevalent form in later periods. It conveys the notion of a highest personal god, at times endowed with certain anthropomorphic characteristics but never totally divorced from the concept of the impersonal absolute, the brahman, of philosophical discourse. The term īśvara is ultimately bound up with the history of theism in India.

Repeated attempts have been made in the past to trace the evolution of this crucial religio-philosophical concept. One of the first scholars to apply himself to the study of the history of theism was M. Müller. He distinguished three principal stages, all of which can be evidenced still in the vedic age; they are (1) Polytheism, (2) Henotheism (or Kathenotheism), (3a) Monotheism and (3b) Pantheism.

Thus on the most archaic level M. Müller (1916⁴) envisaged a kind of theological pluralism in which the thirty-three known gods of the rdvedic pantheon were regarded as embodiments or abstractions of natural phenomena. On the basis of this diffuse conceptual stage the need arose for a unification of the multiple devas populating the heavens. According to M. Müller, the notion of the viśve-devas (‘all-gods’) was a gambit in this direction. Certain gods were identified with each other or coupled together, as in the case of Mitra-Varuna and Agni-Soma, etc. On the next stage, in M. Müller’s evolutionary scheme, a single god was invoked under the temporary forgetfulness of all other gods. For this phenomenon he devised the term Henotheism (also: Kathenotheism). From then on the development proceeded in a bifurcate line. On the one hand it gave rise to monotheistic conceptions and on the other hand to Pantheism with its impersonal absolute.

The entire problem was renewedly investigated by H. Jacobi (1923). In principle accepting M. Müller’s (1916⁴) classificatory model, he modified somewhat his formulation of the nature of Henotheism in that he preferred to regard it not so much as a direct pre-stage to Monotheism, but as a rejection of the gods as totally independent entities and thus as a preparatory stage for the development of the concept of an impersonal quintessence (or brahman) of the manifest world.

The concept of brahman (neutr.) was of first-rate importance in the religious and philosophical speculations of the post-vedic period, and, as S. Dasgupta (1963⁵, I, 20) remarked, it ‘has been the highest glory for the Vedânta philosophy of later days’. In one sense it is antipodal to the idea of īśvara, yet in another sense it can be said to complement it, or perhaps even partially define it. For in the formulation of the notion of a personal god the idea of the omnipresent and omni-temporal ground of being is never quite lost sight of.

The idea of a personal deity is anticipated in the rdvedic conception of the ‘unknown god’ (M. Müller’s phrase) eulogised in X.121, as also in the conception of Prajāpati, Dātṛ, Viśvakarman,
Tvaṣṭṛ and Puruṣa (see X.90). Whether or not one interprets these, according to some preconceived evolutionist system, as the culmination of a primitive polytheist medley, it is clear that by the time the bulk of the Mahābhārata had been composed the concept of īśvara was firmly lodged in the religious sector of Indian culture. The theism of the epic is largely analogous to that of the metric Upaniṣads, such as the Śvetāsvatāra- and the Katha-Upaniṣad and not least the Bhagavad-Gītā. This highlights an interesting point, namely it brings out the close relation which exists between the concept of īśvara, Śāmkhya onto-logical ideas and yogic practice. Their joint occurrence in the post-buddhist period is certainly remarkable and calls for an explanation.

B. Kumarappa (1934, 3), in a slightly different context, suggested that theological speculation was originally triggered off by the primary question ‘Whence this universe?’. He thus linked up theism with cosmological and etiological considerations, which would seem to have the supportive evidence of the many creation theories in the Upaniṣads. But perhaps this is merely half the full answer. A different solution to this problem is possible if one places proper emphasis on the fact that it is not only the more speculative Śāmkhya which is bound up with the īśvara concept, but also the age-old experimental tradition of Yoga. Basing myself on R. Otto’s (1959) hypothesis of an innate capacity in man for numinous experiencing, I wish to propose that īśvara is essentially an experimental construct arrived at primarily on the basis of yogic self-absorption rather than pure theological ratiocination. In this respect it can be aligned with the other ontological categories of pre-classical Śāmkhya and Yoga which, as I will show, are most appropriately understood as being phenomenological distillations of meditative-enstastic experiences. However, I hasten to emphasise that this line of argumentation in no way implies either an affirmation or a denial of the objective reference of any of these categories of experience.

It has not always been appreciated that theism is woven into the very fabric of hindu Yoga. Thus, in R. Garbe’s (1894) opinion, Yoga is a theistic reinterpretation of the nirīśvara (atheistic) tradition of ancient Śāmkhya. He speculated (p. 50) that this acceptance of īśvara into Yoga was the likely result of an effort to make Yoga more acceptable to the popular strata of society. H. Oldenberg (1915, 281) probed further: ‘Did this belief originally pertain to Yoga as an essential element? Have Śāmkhya and Yoga always been differentiated in the way the epic has it and as they are differentiated in their classical forms: as an atheistic and a theistic system respectively? This seems doubtful. The practice of Yoga obviously does not necessarily presuppose the notion of god [. . .]. Visible proof that a system greatly suffused with yogic elements could nonetheless reject the belief in god is supplied by the doctrine [. . .] of the Buddha.’

This stance has been challenged early on in the controversy by H. Jacobi (1923, 39), who wrote: ‘This assertion of īśvara has been interpreted as a concession of Yoga to Brahmanism, which is surely wrong; rather one should admire the audacity and the courage of a school of philosophy which, in the face of the prevalent atheism in philosophical and orthodox circles, dared to put forward the existence of īśvara [. . .] as one of its doctrinal axioms.’ H. Jacobi thus reaffirmed L. von Schroeder’s (1887, 687) contention that ‘Yoga has a distinct theistic character’.

This has been definitively confirmed by more recent research into the pre-classical configurations of the Śāmkhya school of thought. In an outstanding contribution, K. B. R. Rao (1966) has conclusively demonstrated the intrinsic theistic nature of the pre-classical Śāmkhya schools. His comprehensive study fully corroborates and consolidates F. Edgerton’s (1924, 8) findings: ‘Where, then, do we find that “original” atheistic view expressed? I believe: nowhere. A study of the epic and other early materials [. . .] has convinced me that there is not a single passage in which disbelief in Brahman or God is attributed to Śāmkhya.’
H. Jacobi (1923) saw a connection between the employment of austerities (tapas) and the belief in īśvara. He pointed out that not infrequently the declared purpose of the fearful ascetic practices was to get the attention of a particular deity who, impressed and gratified with the tapasvin’s self-inflicted hardship and unflinching endurance, would bestow a boon on him. He mentioned in passing that in such a context the deity was generally known as varada or ‘bestower of the boon’. He speculated (p. 29): ‘For the popular conception at least, the grace of the deity was a necessary precondition for the recompense of ascetic exertion. It seems but natural that Yoga should adopt the recognition of īśvara into its system.’

This view is reiterated in many modern studies, especially on the history of religions. Thus N. Smart (1968, 30), a representative proponent of this misconception, wrote: ‘... Yoga has borrowed a concept from popular religion and put it to a special use.’ As he asserted elsewhere (1971, 163), Yoga is essentially an atheistic system. No reasons were supplied. At least H. Jacobi (1923) offered some kind of explanation even though it is unacceptable. For what his interpretation amounts to is the reduction of the conception of a personal god to one of two actors in a process of bargaining: the ascetic excels himself and is rewarded or ‘paid off’ by the deity. I do not contest that this may be exactly the essence of many of the ascetic ‘deals’ recorded in the epic. But I find it unsound reasoning to take this as a historical prelude to the act of grace (prasāda) spoken of in later Yoga. I prefer to understand such legends as folkloristic interpretations of a phenomenon which could well be a parameter of mystical experiencing: the ultimate crossing of the threshold of phenomenal existence interpreted as a transcendental act which appears to be initiated as it were from ‘outside’ or ‘above’.

The idea implicit in H. Jacobi’s (1923) suggestion that Patañjali in a way made a compromise to placate the orthodoxy is preposterous. Imputing to the famous Yoga teacher such hypocrisy, it is hardly surprising that his precise philosophical position has never been appraised adequately.

Less objectionable but similarly unconvincing is M. Müller’s (1916², 326) psychological explanation. Rejecting the historical argument according to which Patañjali merely sought to appease the orthodox brāhmanas, M. Müller instead suggested that it was the natural human craving for a first cause which led Patañjali to the postulation of īśvara. If this were correct one would expect īśvara to have at least one definite cosmological function; yet ‘the lord’ is neither the creator nor sustainer or destroyer of the universe. The ‘first cause’ of which M. Müller spoke is, in Patañjali’s system, the world ground or prakṛti, the eternally creative matrix of the manifest world.

Against the above historical and psychological explanations of the concept of īśvara, I wish to propose that its origins lie in the realm of yogic experiencing itself. This is also M. Eliade’s (1973³, 75) conclusion: ‘Patañjali nevertheless had to introduce Īśvara into Yoga, for īśvara was, so to speak, an experiential datum...’. This of course does not imply that Patañjali’s formulation of the concept is a creation ex nihilo. It is obvious from a perusal of the Mahābhārata, especially certain portions of the twelfth parvan, that the conceptualisation of īśvara in Classical Yoga has its epic antecedents.

Philosophically the most important treatment of the theistic component in epic Yoga is to be found in section XII.296¹ of the critical edition of the Mahābhārata. Here hiranyagarbha-yoga² is dealt with, which K. B. R. Rao (1966, 278) wrongly identified as the philosophy of the epic Yoga system par excellence. However, this slip does not detract from the general merit of his acute analysis of this particular branch of Yoga. On the basis of P. M. Modi’s (1932) earlier work, he succeeded in achieving a complete reinterpretation of the above passage, which has been lamentably misconstrued by F. Edgerton (1965) and others. He managed to reconstruct a good deal of the philosophy sketched in these extremely difficult and obscure verses.
Accepting, in principle, the general epic theories about the twenty-three evolutes of the unitary
world-ground, the hiranyagarbha school of Yoga introduced the noteworthy distinction between the
Self which has recovered its innate enlightenment, viz. the so-called buddhayāmana, and the ever-
enlightened buddha or prabuddha. In comparison with the latter, i.e. god, the enlightened Self is said
to be abuddhimān (see vs. 17). Thus there is no simple identification of the twenty-fifth tattva, viz.
buddhayāna, with the twenty-sixth, which is the supreme godhead. The latter principle is also
referred to as iśvara, mahā-ātman and avyakta-brahman. The buddhayāna is also called puruṣa
and buddha (which confusingly enough is also applied to the twenty-sixth tattva). The twenty-fourth
principle, which is the sentient world-ground, is known by the name of prakṛti, abuddha, avyakta
and apratibuddha.

It is said of the buddhayāna (see vs. 2) that it creates, upholds and withdraws the primary-constituents (guna) of the world-ground and that it ‘knows’ or apperceives the world-ground (see vs.
3) whilst itself being nirguna (see vs. 4) and hence ‘unknown’ by the avyakta. On the other hand, the
buddhayāna does not apperceive the lord (see vs. 6), who is pure, incomprehensible, eternal and
always apperceiving (see vs. 7). This mahā-ātman or great being permeates both the visible and the
invisible (see vs. 8). When the buddhayāna or Self identifies itself with something that is external
to its being, it is known as avyakta-locana (see vs. 10). Taking his cue from XII.296.18 (=
XII.284.18 crit. ed.), K. B. R. Rao (1966, 282) interpreted this term as ‘wearing the spectacles of
prakṛti’ or ‘seeing through the avyakta’ by means of the organ of cognition (which is buddhi) rather
than understanding this interesting compound in the plain sense of ‘seeing the avyakta’.

The goal of this Yoga is naturally also quite different from that enunciated in the contemporaneous
Sāṃkhya and Pāñcarātra schools, which advocate a merger of the phenomenal self with the
transcendental Self. This difference is evident from such phrases as buddhatva (XXI.296.11),
kevala-dharma (vs. 12) or kevalena samāgamya (vs. 13). These appear to imply that the
buddhayāna attains to the ‘estate’ of the twenty-sixth principle without becoming identical with it.
In other words, iśvara always remains transcendent (para). He never becomes involved with any of
the lower tattvas. Thus emancipation can be said to be a condition of the buddhayāna qua the
buddhayāna in the ‘company’ (samiti) of the lord (see XII.296. 27 ff.).

The metaphysics of this prominent school of Yoga in epic times seemingly provided the paradigm
for the peculiar ontology of Classical Yoga. This was first pointed out by P. M. Modi (1932, 81):
‘The idea of God in the Yoga System was not arrived at by superimposing it on an atheistic Sāṃkhya
System with twenty-five principles, but by distinguishing the Jīva from God on practical grounds.’
This is endorsed by K. B. R. Rao (1966, 290): ‘Probably the Epic Yoga lays the inchoate foundation
for the classical Yoga conception of a detached Īśvara.’ However, he felt compelled to remark (p.
291) that the conception of Īśvara in the ancient hiranyagarbha-yoga is ‘utterly naive and simple’,
since it depicts god as ‘a motionless and frigid witness’ who is not even interested in the yogin’s
struggle for emancipation. He also deemed the more activist conception of god as expressed in the
Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.25) a positive advance on this view. Evidently K. B. R. Rao’s criticism is somewhat
biased.

Although no mention is made in the relevant epic passage of the lord’s soteriological function, one
must nevertheless ask oneself why a need should have been felt to philosophically recognise the
superlative status of Īśvara if this concept would not somehow have had a compelling experiential
basis. This line of argumentation would seem to be supported by the strictly pragmatic approach of
Yoga, with its emphasis on experiment and personal verification. Nor is the absence of any reference
in the above passage to the idea of grace or prasāda, which looms large in other contexts, a positive
proof of its irrelevance in the yogic process as envisaged in hiranyagarbha-yoga.

A different hypothesis about the historical precursor of Classical Yoga was put forward by E. H. Johnston (1937). He proposed that ‘the Sāṃkhya side of Patañjali’s doctrine is based on the teaching of Pañcaśikha’ (p. 9). His principal reason for this assertion was that Vyāsa, in his Yoga-Bhāṣya, cites Pañcaśikha on many occasions. Actually, Vyāsa himself nowhere mentions Pañcaśikha by name, but the appropriate identifications are exclusively supplied by Vācaspati Miśra, who is many generations later still. As P. Chakravarti (1951, 115) has made plausible, the quotations in question are probably from a work by Vārsagany. Also, in one instance at least, the Yukti-Dīpikā, which is older than the Tattva-Vaisāradī Tattva-Vaisāradī, definitely contradicts Vācaspati Miśra, viz. in ascribing the fragment quoted in Yoga-Bhāṣya III. 13 to Vārsagany and not to Pañcaśikha. Vārsagany, of course, is not an exponent of Yoga at all, but a renowned Sāṃkhya teacher (see Mahābhārata XII.306.57).

Patañjali’s association with the hiranyagarbha school of Yoga is tentatively corroborated by the tradition preserved in the Ahirbudhyana-Samhitā (XII.3-38). The exact date of this intriguing work is still unsettled. E. H. Johnston (1937, 76, fn.1) maintained that ‘the system set out can be very little older than the SK [Sāṃkhya-Kārikā]. F. O. Schrader (1916, 97) fixed its terminus ad quern at A.D. 800. On the other hand, since the Ahirbudhya-Samhitā is aware of the three schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism – viz. skandha-vāda (= sarvāstī-vāda), vijnāna-vāda and śānaya-vāda – it cannot, in his opinion, be earlier than A.D. 300. As it mentions the Jayakhya and the Sāttvata-Samhitā, it must be later than these two important works. E. Krishnam-acharya (1931) assigned the Jāyākyya-Samhitā on linguistic and palaeographic grounds to the middle of the fifth century. Hence we arrive at a date for the Ahirbudhya-Samhitā between A.D. 500 and A.D. 800. In other words, it is definitely later than the Yoga-Sūtra and the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā. Consequently, we must treat its information about the lost Sāṃkhya treatise entitled șaṣṭi-tantra and about the Yoga of Hiranyagarbha with the necessary caution. Yet the relatively late date of the Ahirbudhya-Samhitā need not mean that its knowledge of these ancient Yoga and Sāṃkhya tracts is necessarily unauthentic.

After this brief excursion into the epic antecedents of Classical Yoga, I will next scrutinise Patañjali’s theological formulations. He defines ‘the lord’ (iśvara) in this way: kleśa-karma-vipāka-aśayair-aparāmṛṣṭah puruṣa-viṣeṣa iśvarah, or ‘The lord is a special Self untouched by the causes-of-affliction, [by] action [and its] fruit [and by] the deposit [of subliminal-activators]’ (1.24). In the Yoga and Sāṃkhya ontology the entire spectrum of existence is analysed into the two primary modalities of Self (puruṣa) and non-self (prakṛti). The former embodies the principle of pure awareness roughly corresponding to the Kantian ‘trans-intelligible subject’, whereas the latter is the womb of all creation. P. Bowes (1971, 168) circumscribed these as the ‘principle of consciousness’ and the ‘principle of materiality’ respectively. Understandably iśvara could not but be included in the former category, as has been pointed out long ago by Vātsyāyana in his commentary to Nyāya-Sūtra IV. 1.21.

Thus god is defined as a Self sui generis, and his separateness from the ‘ordinary’ transcendental Self or puruṣa is explained in negative terms: the lord is unaffected by any of the modifications which the ordinary puruṣa is subjected to by reason of his involvement with the world-ground and its products. To put it differently, iśvara at no time forsook, or will forsake, his perfect condition of transcendence as pure Being-Awareness. Because of his ‘inactivity’, by which is not meant mere abstention from action but perhaps the kind of condition which the Bhagavad-Gītā calls ‘actionlessness’ or naiṣkarmya, no vipāka (karmic fruition) ever accrues to him, and for the same reason he is also never subjected to the causes of affliction which are the natural concomitants of any
implication in phenomenal existence.

This raises the question of whether Patañjali subscribed to the epic Yoga model of twenty-six principles. According to P. Chakravarti (1951, 66), Patañjali – even though envisaging a certain distinction between the ordinary Self and the Lord – does not make a radical enough distinction to be able to speak of the Lord as a wholly separate principle. Possibly this whole issue is misconceived. Unlike the epic teachers, Patañjali does not turn the number of fundamental ontological categories (tattva) into a principium individuationis by which he can conveniently contrast his own school with other traditions. He does not even employ the term tattva in that specific sense. On the contrary, his ontological model can be regarded as a decisive break with this numerative trend of the epic schools. Nor do Vyāsa and Vācaspati Miśra give this issue any attention, but simply accept Patañjali’s novel cosmo-genetic schema without relating it to the prolonged controversy about twenty-five versus twenty-six principles.

Patañjali was possibly wiser than his predecessors, the epic īśvara-vādins, who, misunderstanding the Sāṃkhya teaching about the buddhyamāna, unjustifiably dubbed their adversaries an-īśvara-vādins and perhaps unduly inflated the significance of their own doctrine of a twenty-sixth principle, i.e. the totally undynamic īśvara.

M. Müller (1916, 321) remarked that the lord ‘may be primus inter pares, but as one of the Purushas, he is but one among his peers. He is a little more than a god, but he is certainly not what we mean by God.’ Yet Patañjali’s definition of īśvara implies that he is not only a special and unique species of Self but that he also has a positive aspect. This is clear from I.25–I.28: tatra miratiśayam sarva-jañā-bījam; pūrvesām-api guruh kālena anavacchedā; tasya vāca kah praṇavaḥ; taj-japat-ad-artha-bhāvanam. This can be rendered as follows: ‘In this [īśvara] the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed. He was also the teacher of the former [yogins], since there is no temporal limitation [for him]. His signature is the praṇava [i.e. om]. The recitation of that [praṇava] [leads to] the realisation of its meaning.’ These statements must be read in conjunction with the concept of īśvara-praṇidhāna or ‘devotion to the Lord’.

Aphorism 1.25 is of special interest, as it has always been understood as a ‘proof’ of the existence of god. Thus the Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.25) has: yatra Kāṣṭhā-prāptitr-jañānasya sa sarva-jñāh sa ca puruṣa-viśeṣa iti, or ‘In whom the limit of knowledge is reached, he is all-knowing and he is a special Self’. By ‘seed’ Vācaspati Miśra understands ‘cause’ (kāraṇa), whereas Vijñāna Bhiksu, in his Yoga-Vārttika, explains it as ‘mark’ (liṅga). Our ‘supra-sensuous grasping’ (atti-indriya-grahaṇa), as Vācaspati Miśra observes, depends on the degree to which tamas obscures sattva. The moderate capacity for knowledge displayed by the worldling contains the seed of higher knowledge and, even, omniscience. There comes an upper limit which cannot be surpassed, and this is the omniscience of the lord.

As G. M. Koelman (1970, 61) correctly noted: ‘The absolute extension of the lord’s knowledge is unambiguously asserted. But there is no word, no insinuation even that the lord’s knowledge is different in essence, is a more perfect way of knowing.’ Vyāsa explains the unexcelled knowledge of īśvara as the result of the utter purity of the sattva reflecting his transcendental Awareness. His knowledge extends to all objects and all periods, and it is this which distinguishes him from such seers as Kapila or the Buddha.

It is difficult to decide whether or not these observations by the classical exegetes were in fact intended as a kind of ‘proof’ of the existence of god. Patañjali himself, again, is far too concise to win such an interpretation from sūtra 1.25. Probably it simply refers to the fact that, in contrast with the awareness of the ordinary puruṣa, the īśvara’s awareness is perfectly continuous, that is to say,
uninterrupted by prakṛti, since īśvara at no time and not even for an instant falls victim to nescience (avidyā). Maybe aphorism 1.25 entails not so much a grading of omniscience, which would make little sense, as a statement about the fact that what constitutes a potential for the ordinary being is a permanent actuality for īśvara. I cannot agree with S. Radhakrishnan’s (1951, II, 369) assertion that ‘Patañjali proves the omniscience of God by means of the law of continuity, which must have an upper limit’. Instead I prefer to see in Patañjali’s cryptic statement a parallel to the Mahāyāna notion of the tathāgata-garbha as the seed of consummate enlightenment, temporarily obscured by defilements of a cognitive and conative nature, viz. vikalpa (conceptual construction) and abhiniveśa (mundane attachment), whilst in reality it is transcendent and nirvikalpa (trans-conceptual) . As long as this seed has not sprouted, cognition is distorted and things are not seen as they are (yathā-bhūta) .

That the lord is not conceptualised as a being who is of complete relevance to mankind clearly emerges from 1.26, where īśvara is called ‘the teacher of the former [yogins]’ This is in keeping with the traditional pre-classical interpretation of the concept of god as expressed, for instance, in the following stanza from the Bhagavad-Gītā (IV. 1): imama vivasvate yogam proktavān-aham-avyayam, vivasvān-manave prāha manur-īksvākve’braviḥ, or ‘To Vivasvat I expounded this imperishable Yoga; Vivasvat related it to Manu; Manu told it to Ikṣvākū.’ Unless one presumes this doctrine to be no more than a forced concession to revealed tradition (śruti), which would be incongruous with Patañjali’s generally self-reliant approach, there is one difficult question which calls for an answer.

This is: how can a perfectly transcendent being assume a teaching role? Vyāsa, in his Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.25), attempts to solve this problem by introducing anthropomorphic features: tasya-atma-anugraha-abhāve’pi bhūta-anugrahā pravojanam, jñāna-dharma-upadesena kalpa-pralaya-mahā-pralayesu saṁsārāṇaḥ puruṣa-anuddhariśyāmi-iti, tathā ca-uktam-ādi-vidvān-nirmanacittam-adhiṣṭhaya kāruṇyād-bhagavān paramarśir-āṣuraye jīñāsamānāya-tantram provāca-iti, or ‘Although he has no [feeling of] self-gratification, [the lord’s] motive is the gratification of beings: “By instruction in knowledge and virtue, at the dissolution [of the world] [at the end of] a world-age [or] at the great dissolution [or the entire universe], I will uplift the Selves [immersed] in conditioned-existence.” And likewise it has been said: “The first knower, assuming a created mind out of compassion, the exalted, supreme seer declared this teaching to Āsuri who desired to know.”’

This passage epitomises the popular and orthodox belief that īśvara is the author of the Vedas by whose teachings the staunch believer transcends all ill. Within the framework of Patañjali’s philosophy such an interpretation makes little sense. A more sophisticated solution is called for which does not in any way interfere with the definition of īśvara as transcendence per se. The classical exegetes are of no help here. Their interpretations of the nature of īśvara are exclusive attempts to somehow relate his existence to the mechanisms of the world-ground and to the destinies of the sentient beings ensnared by prakṛti.

If one excludes the possibility of īśvara actively entering into a teaching situation by mysteriously phenomenalisng himself, there remains only one logical alternative, and this is that his role as a teacher is in fact entirely passive. His very existence is a sufficient challenge to the yogin who either has come through faith (śraddhā) to believe in him, or whose spiritual discipline has brought him to the margins of conditioned existence where experiential proof of his existence may be found. In other words, īśvara is the archetypal yogin who ‘instructs’ by his sheer being. Pressing this metaphor still further, one could say that ‘communication’ between him and the aspiring yogin is possible by reason of the ontic co-essentiality of god and the inmost nucleus of man, viz. the Self (puruṣa). M. Eliade (1973, 74) pertinently circumscribed this with the phrase ‘metaphysical sympathy’. 
On the transcendental level the relation between īśvara and puruṣa is one of ‘enclosure’ by coalescence; the Self is eclipsed by the being of īśvara. Empirically, however, the relation is a one-way affair in which the believing yogin emulates īśvara’, condition, which is co-essential with the condition of his inmost Self. This is the idea implicit in the concept of īśvara-Praṇidhāna, which is a channelling of one’s emotive and cognitive life to god by endeavouring to ‘simulate’ his unconditioned nature. For the purpose of this imitatio Dei the yogin symbolises god in the form of the praṇava which is the sacred phoneme om. As Vyāsa, in his Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.27), aptly points out, this symbolisation is not due to convention (saṅketa), but the connection between īśvara and om is a natural (inherent) and permanent one. In other words, om is an experience rather than an arbitrary verbal label. It is a true symbol charged with numinous power. Experiencable in deep meditation, it is a sign of the omnipresence of īśvara as manifest on the level of sound. Access to this experience is gained, paradoxically, through the vocal or silent recitation of om. Thus om is both expedient and goal. In other words, the human voice is employed to reproduce a ‘sound’ which is continually ‘recited’ by the universe itself– an idea which in the Pythagorean school came to be known as the ‘harmony of the spheres’. On the Indian side it led to the development of the Yoga of sound (nāda-yoga).  

By now it should have become evident that, notwithstanding the precarious philosophical interpretation of īśvara in Classical Yoga, god is of no mean importance in its practical sphere. I cannot therefore endorse G. M. Koelman’s (1970, 57) contention that it ‘is striking how the mention of the īśvara in the Yoga Sūtras is quite casual’ and that we ‘could very well cut out the sūtras relating to the Lord, without in any way impairing the systematic coherence of the Pātañjala Yoga, without even leaving a trace of the excision’ (p. 58). This is of course a recapitulation of R. Garbe’s (19172, 149) view, which, inter alia, was also accepted by S. Radhakrishnan (19516, II, 371, fn. 3) and N. Smart (1968, 30).  

G. M. Koelman (1970, 63 f.) elucidated his position further: ‘If we said that the īśvara does not answer any logical need in the Pātañjala Yoga, we do not maintain that either Patañjali himself or the Yogis in general cannot be true devotees of the īśvara. The only thing we mean to say is that the whole Yoga philosophy and the psychological technique of liberation it stands for are atheistic in nature. If some one yogi, even if all yogis, did admit īśvara, as somehow God, this would be due not to Yoga doctrine, but to the yogis’ individual religious dispositions. We might say that Pātañjala Yoga technique prescinds from whether someone admits a God or denies him.’

Yet, strangely enough, in the very next sentence the author stated: ‘We believe that Pātañjala Yoga is essentially theistic. But as G. R. F. Oberhammer has proved [sic!], the Pātañjala doctrine of the Supreme Lord had to express itself in terms of a philosophical school, the Sāṅkhya School, which has no room for God.’ Despite his unusual objectivity on other points, the author – a Jesuit – apparently found it difficult to suspend his preconception of what god ought or ought not to be.

The fact is that the doctrine of īśvara is an integral component of the philosophy of Classical Yoga and that, moreover, īśvara figures prominently in the practice structure of Yoga, and any attempt to exercise this concept would amount to a crippling of both the theoretical superstructure and the practical substructure of Yoga. It is correct, as M. Eliade (19733, 73) observed, that īśvara is a god only for the yogins, the spiritually awakened who are prepared to take him as their Vorbild. Before him, P. Deussen (19203, 545) drew the following interesting parallel: ‘There is here a similarity with the system of Epicurus; like his gods, īśvara in Yoga does not interfere in the least in mundane affairs or in the destinies of the soul. But just as Epicurus was unwilling to do without the gods as ideals of happiness, even though they dwell in total isolation from the world processes in the inter mundi, so
also in Yoga devotion to God, īśvara-Pranidhāna [..] is recommended as one of the several means to promote Yoga meditation.’

However, since it is implied in the philosophy of Classical Yoga, as in all other darśanas, that the sumnum bonum of human life is to transcend contingent existence, god can, and in terms of this ethical model should, be meaningful also to the laity. Shocking as the attenuated theism of Classical Yoga must be to the committed deist, it is a curious fact that rather cognate views can be found in the writings of some of the greatest intellectual mystics, such as Meister Eckehart and Plotinus. This may be instructive in that it entails the warning not to look at this question from a purely theoretical point of view but to take cognisance also of the realities of spiritual practice and of experiential ‘Verification’.
II

The Self (puruṣa)

Like the notion of īṣvara the concept of the Self (puruṣa) is not purely a hypothetic-deductive postulate. It is best understood as circumscribing a particular yogic experience of the numinous. This ‘experience’, however, is not of the nature of what is ordinarily meant by this term. Owing to the radical dualism between Self and non-self (or prakṛti), as envisaged in Classical Yoga, there can strictly speaking be no experience of the Self at all. This holds true of īṣvara as well, being defined as he is as a puruṣa sui generis. As will be shown, Patañjali does make certain provisions, though, which allow one to speak of a ‘Vision of the Self (puruṣa-khyāti) or ‘Self gnosis’ (puruṣa-jñāna).

In view of the experiential derivation of the concept of puruṣa proposed here, all explanations which seek to establish the logical necessity of the Self within the conceptual lattice of Classical Yoga, or which try to make a case for the theoretical inadequacy of this doctrine, must be relegated to a subsidiary position. The preeminently practical orientation of Yoga has not always been duly appreciated by Western scholars. Thus when R. Garbe (19172, 356) insisted that the puruṣa is primarily a philosophical postulate inferred from empirical data, he blatantly ignored the fact that, whatever role ratiocination may play in Classical Sāṃkhya, its foundations are, like those of Classical Yoga, to be found among the diverse traditions of consciousness technology current at the time of the Mahābhārata. The classical proofs adduced for the existence of the Self must therefore be looked upon as afterthoughts to consolidate what originally constituted an experiential (but not empirically observable) datum.

Nonetheless, the ‘rationalisation’ and ‘moralisation’ – R. Otto’s (1959) terms – of the encounter with the numinous in Yoga are potent in themselves, because they are the building blocks of the soteriological formulations in the doctrinal structure of both Classical Yoga and the Sāṃkhya of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa. Treating the interrelation between Self and non-self, A. Bharati (19703, 204) offered another suggestion which lies midway between the experiential and the rationalistic answer. He regarded the puruṣa as a ‘postulate of intuition rather than of discursive reasoning’. Elsewhere (p. 16) he explained his use of the term ‘intuition’, which he sets off from gnosis or jñāna, and consequently one must appraise this interpretation as inadequate as the rationalist conjecture.1

The history of the word puruṣa and its association with the experience of the numinous in Yoga is a long and interesting one. It is remarkable that the Yoga and Sāṃkhya traditions should have adopted this designation rather than the synonym ātman, which enjoys such a great popularity in the Vedānta schools of thought. The etymological derivation of the word has given rise to a considerable amount of speculation. Native Indian tradition proffers several, more or less fanciful, etymologies. The oldest reference is to be found in the Atharvaveda (X.2.28, 30) which has a pun on the word pur or ‘citadel’ to the effect of stating that pur-uṣa is a derivative of it. This etymology is also mentioned in the Mahābhārata (XII.294.37), following Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (II.5.18), where puruṣa is analysed into ‘he who lies (śete) in the “citadel” (pura)’ of the unmanifest world-ground. In the Nirukta (VII.13) a further derivation from pur + irda (= puriśāda) and also from ‘to fill’ is suggested. Another, less popular, etymology is given in the Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (I.4.1), where the word is broken down into purva + us (‘to burn’). According to R. Garbe (19172, 356) the correct
etymology of the word puruṣa and its synonyms pumṣ and punāms is the one suggested by E. Leumann ([?], 10–12), namely the compound pu-vṛṣa, both components of which signify ‘man’.2

In its earliest recorded conception, puruṣa stands both for the mortal ‘person’2 and, more significantly, for the cosmic creator who, like the giant Ymir in teutonic mythology, is the causa materialis and the causa efficiens of the manifest universe; he is the demurger and the primordial substance from which the world is fashioned. This double role is possible because the act of creation is understood as the self-dismemberment of the macrocosmic Person. Symbolically this is interpreted as the primal sacrifice (yajña), of archetypal importance to the pan-Indian sacrificial cult. In most instances, this gigantic puruṣa is thought of as transcending the world which he emits from his own body.4 It is this cosmogonic model which was destined to exert a decisive influence on subsequent thought in India, as can readily be appreciated from a study of the Bhagavad-Gītā and other works of the Pāñcarātra school, as well as the memorable passage in Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (1.2),5 where the primordial Being, tired of its loneliness, decides to create an alter ego out of itself.6

In the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (VIII. 10.1) a record of popular psychological theory has been preserved according to which the puruṣa, conceived as a ‘mannikin’, departs from the body of the sleeping person. This notion of an indwelling ‘ghost’ is part of many folk philosophies, and it figures, among other ancient non-Indian literary documents, in Homer’s Odyssey (e.g. X.493). E. H. Johnston (1937, 41 ff.) speculated that the later ‘soul theory’, as he called the doctrine of puruṣa, was arrived at through the gradual fusion of the primitive notion of an immaterial principle or principles animating the human body and of the equally archaic notion of a separate psyche which acts as the carrier of a person’s post mortem identity. He thought (p. 43) that the Rgveda ‘contains traces of both conceptions and of the beginning of their amalgamation’. This historical approach, which treats conceptualisations of a different type and degree of complexity as causally linkable and chemically mixable substances, as it were, is entirely inapt and inconclusive. One can take this as a typical instance of what A. N. Whitehead (1938, 66) called the ‘fallacy of misplaced concreteness’.

Following up the development of the concept of puruṣa, E. H. Johnston (1937) found that in the early metric Upaniṣads and in the Bhagavad-Gītā (except for chapters XIII–XVIII) puruṣa denotes the individual psyche. He conjectured (p. 53) that this term replaced the concept of ātman kṣetrajña in the older texts. He also maintained that those epic passages which equate the puruṣa with ātman belong to a more recent period.

J. W. Hauer (1958, 64) made the interesting point that the frequency of the word puruṣa is higher in the Atharvaveda than in the Rgveda, which far more often employs the term ātman. He even went so far as to suggest that the word puruṣa is specific to the vrātya tradition as recorded in the Atharvaveda (see especially book XV) and that it came to be introduced into the doctrinal sphere of orthodox Brāhmanism as a result of the large-scale conversions of these vrātyas.

The heterodox origin of puruṣa is in fact strongly indicated by the fact that the ancient litany on Rudra, the god of the vrātyas, viz. the so-called Šatarudriya found in the Kāṭhaka-Saṁhitā (XVII.11-17; cf. XXI.6) represents, according to J. W. Hauer, the oldest version of the famous gāyatri-mantra. It links up Rudra with puruṣa: tad-puruṣasya vidmahe mahā-devāyā dhīmahi tan-no rudraḥ pracodayāt, or: ‘This [litany]we have invented for the Puruṣa; let us meditate the great god; may Rudra promote us this [meditation]’.2

H. Oldenberg (1915, 224) made this pertinent observation: ‘It is significant that linguistic usage tends to connect ātman with the genitive case in order to express whose Ātman is referred to, whereas purusha occurs more often in conjunction with a locative in order to indicate wherein this
Purusha dwells. In view of this I would suspect that the preference for the designation Purusha for the spiritual principle in Sāmkhya is related to the strict separation and confrontation, peculiar to this system, between the spirit and nature.’ I am not sure to what extent this proposition is valid, but certainly puruṣa tends to be associated, if not with spatial metaphors, then with the related idea of rulership and proprietorship. This is quite evident in the phraseology of the Yoga-Sūtra, which on this point reflects the general trend of the upaniṣadic period.

Patañjali employs the term puruṣa altogether eight times (viz. I.16, 24; III.35 twice; III.49, 55; IV.18, 34). He also avails himself of a number of synonyms such as draśṭṛ (1.3; II.17, 20; IV.23), svāmin (11.23), grahīṭṛ (1.41), drg-śakti (11.6), drśī (11.25), drśī-mātra (II.20), prabhū (IV.18), citi (IV.22), citi-śakti (IV.34) and para (IV.24). With the exception of the word para (‘the other’) these are all ‘loaded’ terms in so far as they are modelled on the empirical relations of perceiving, cognising and owning and for the sake of communication ascribe a content to something which is by definition without all differentiae (nir-gūna) and hence strictly speaking incommunicable in words. The full latitude of the meaning of puruṣa is brought out when one maps the above synonyms in the manner of the diagram.

If one were to place the concept of īśvara into this semantic grid, it would have to be accommodated to the far right by virtue of the strong connotation of ‘lordship’ attached to this term. Most of these synonyms of the word puruṣa belong to the old stock of yogic terminology and occur already in the metric Upanisads and the Mahābhārata, but drśī, drśī-mātra, drśī-śakti, citi and citi-śakti are more recent coinages which may possibly have originated under the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Nowhere in the Yoga-Sūtra is there a full-fledged definition of the concept of puruṣa, and the most probable reason for this is that by the time of the composition of Patañjali’s vade mecum its precise meaning was perfectly evident. The opposite must have been true of the concept of īśvara which Patañjali carefully demarcates from its popular usage in the sense of ‘creator’. From the few references in the Yoga-Sūtra it is clear beyond doubt that the concept of puruṣa is remarkably akin to certain conceptions delineated in the epic and other pre-classical Sanskrit works. It expresses the notion of man’s ‘transcendental identity’, here rendered with ‘Self or ‘transintelligible subject’, as distinct from the world-ground (prakṛti) both in its noumenal form as pradhāna and in its manifest form as the objective universe (drśya). The Self is an aspatial and atemporal reality which stands in no conceivable relation to the composite world of phenomena nor to their transcendental source. It is sheer awareness as opposed to consciousness-of and in this respect is the exact antithesis to the
world-ground which is by definition sentient. This Self is considered the authentic being of man.

Since the mental apparatus, with its consciousness-of, is regarded as an evolute of the world-ground, the Self is necessarily also quite distinct from the mind (citta). Viewed psychologically, the Self is the ‘seer’ (dṛṣṭṛ) of the on-going psychomental processes or vr̥tti (see I.3). As long as the empirical consciousness is operative and man’s transcendental identity is obscured, this watchman is said to be ‘of the same form’ (sāṛūpya) as the psychomental whirls. This is to say, the loss of authenticity is due to the shifting identifications within the discontinuous states of experience: ‘I am this sensation; I am that thought’, etc. This perpetual process of constructing false identities is known as asmiitā or ‘I-am-ness’. It is this power, generated by ‘nescience’ (avidyā), which is responsible for the erection of man’s inner world, i.e. his motivations, cognitive schemata and emotive response patterns and so forth.

The Self is set apart from all these mechanisms which are founded on the energetic character of the primary constituents of the world-ground, the so-called guṇas. Properly speaking, the puruṣa is neither an actor nor a passive enjoyer of the experiences which occur in the mind, even though some Sāṁkhya works speak of it metaphorically as the ‘enjoyer’ (bhoktr) of all experiences. The Self does not intend, feel or think. The involvement with the discontinuous contents of consciousness, as implied by the phrase sāṛūpya, is merely an apparent one. It is ‘affected’ (parāmṛṣṭa) by the kleśa-karma-vipākā-āśaya sequence only in so far as these factors are instrumental in cluttering the empirical consciousness and thus in relinquishing its capacity for emptying itself, which is the only way in which the presentation of the transcendental Self to the mind can take place.

The ‘correlation’ (samyoga) between the ‘seer’ and the ‘seen’ (see II. 17) is a peculiar one and ranks among the most problematic issues of the dualistic metaphysics of Yoga and Sāṁkhya; for it is difficult to comprehend how the Self, which is defined as ‘mere seeing’ (dr̥ṣī-mātra) and ‘pure’ (śuddha), can apperceive the presented-ideas (pratyaya) as stated in aphorism 11.20. We are told that the mental on-goings (vr̥tti) are always apperceived because the puruṣa does not suffer any alteration but it is a perfect continuum (see IV. 18).

M. Bowes (1971, 169) summed up the situation in this way: ‘Indian philosophers, when faced with the objection that there is no such thing as consciousness as such, meaning that there is no empirical experience of such a thing, stress that even if all consciousness is consciousness of something there must be a function called “consciousness” to be conscious of this something. Many would object no doubt that this is hypostatizing consciousness which arises only in a particular context of contact with objects and which is not to be thought of as an entity by itself, but the Indians claim that consciousness performs a distinct function, that of manifestation (equivalent to Sartre’s revelation and Husserl’s constitution function) of the object it is conscious of as well as of itself – a function which cannot be performed by anything which is non-conscious and so it must be thought of as there, as a reality of a distinct sort.’

For Patañjali this puzzle is no puzzle at all, but an eminently practical issue. As long as the ‘correlation’ (samyoga) between Self and world obtains, there is also suffering (duhkha). Since the root of this correlation, or rather phantom correlation, between Self and non-self is nescience (avidyā), it is this which must be terminated. The prescribed expedient for the removal of the correlation condition is viveka-khyāti, the ‘vision of discernment’, a high-level enstasy which eliminates all one’s false identities not by way of mere intellectual acrobatics but in a process of clarification and purification of consciousness. First the mind is withdrawn from the external stimuli, then all presented-ideas are obliterated and ultimately the subliminal traces (vāsanā) themselves are rooted out, which amounts to the total dispersion of the consciousness-of (citta).
Ordinary experience is possible only on account of the massive identity confusion arising from the overpowering influence of the subliminal traces which habitually throw the consciousness outside itself, thus forcing it to gather in continually new impressions, thereby replenishing the stock of subliminal traces (vāsanā) in the depths of the mind. In other words, the fundamental confusion about man’s true identity is built into the psychomental organism whose growth and decay the individualised consciousness is witnessing. In fact, without this cognitive mix-up no experience would be possible.

Experiencing, called bhoga in aphorism III.35, is an intrapsychic process which does not actively involve the Self; the puruṣa simply apperceives the presented-ideas in the experiencing mind. Patañjali promulgates an extreme dualism when he insists that the Self and the most translucent aspect of the consciousness complex, the sativa, are eternally ‘unmixed’ (asamkīrṇa) (see 111.35), and that precisely because of this perfect separateness the recovery of Self-authenticity is at all possible.

Parenthetically it may be observed that by reason of the professed transphenomenal nature of the Self any qualitative ascription is, in the last analysis, tantamount to a falsification. This is as true of the description of puruṣa in terms of awareness (see citi, citi-sakti) as it is of the more obvious tropological predications. Unlike the anonymous author of the Sāṃkhya-Sūtra, Patañjali does not seem to favour negative descriptions of the nature of the Self but prefers, as we have seen above, metaphors of seeing, cogning and owning which are in keeping with his psychological rather than metaphysical approach.

One last important point remains to be discussed. This is the controversial question of the singularity or plurality of the Self as conceived in Classical Yoga. M. Eliade (1973, 32–3) gave vent to the popular view on this matter when claiming about Sāṃkhya and Yoga that they ‘affirm that there are as many puruṣas as there are human beings. And each of these puruṣas is a monad, is completely isolated; for the Self can have no contact either with the world around it (derived from prakṛti) or with other spirits. The cosmos, then, is people with these eternal, free, unmoving puruṣas – monads between which no communication is possible.’

Apart from the objection which one may wish to raise against M. Eliade’s use of concepts such as ‘monad’ and ‘communication’ and also against his metaphor of the Selves’ populating the cosmos, another more serious criticism must be brought against his unquestioning acceptance of the testimony of rival schools which ascribe to Yoga the doctrine of the plurality of the transcendental Selves. He obviously relied in his judgement on the work of his teacher, S. Dasgupta (1930, 167), and others. But is this doctrine really a part of Patañjali’s system of thought?

There can be no question that this strange doctrine is part and parcel of the philosophy expounded in the commentarial literature on the Yoga-Sūtra and also in īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s Sāṃkhya-Kārikā. The latter text has a stanza (18) which reads as follows: jana-maraṇa-kāraṇām pratitiyaṃd-ayugapat-pravṛttes-ca, puruṣa-bahuvatm siddhaṃ trai-gunya-viparyayāc-ca-eva, ‘The multiplicity of the Self is established by reason of the idiosyncracy of [a person’s] birth, death [and] deed and because of non-simultaneous activity and also on account of the alteration in the guna-triad’. That the word bahutva in this stanza does not merely signify ‘ duplicity’ but ‘ multiplicity’ is borne out by the phrase prati-puruṣa-vimokaṣa-artham or ‘ for the sake of the release of every (prati) Self’ in verse 46 of the same work. The word prati, a favourite expression with īśvara Kṛṣṇa (see vss. 5, 31, 37) has consistently the sense of ‘every, each’ in his Sāṃkhya-Kārikā.

The word bahutva is derived from bahu, meaning ‘abundant, much’, and it signifies ‘multiplicity, multitude’. In the Mahābhārata the cognate nāṇīva is generally employed to express the idea of ‘manifold-ness’. There is, however, at least one instance in which bahudhā is used (viz. XII.296.2).
According to K. B. R. Rao’s (1966, 278) analysis of this verse, either the idea of the plurality of Selves is implied in this passage or the *duplicit* of the Self (as *budhyamāna* and *buddha*). Previously F. Edgerton (1924) held such a view to be entirely untenable. As C. A. F. Rhys Davids (19363, 146) noted long ago: ‘A heresy so startling would have needed to be rubbed in, as it is not.’ F. Edgerton (1924) severely criticised E. W. Hopkins (1901) for grossly misinterpreting the epic passage XII.303.12:

*avyakta-ekatvam-ity-āhur-nānātvampuruṣas-tathā sarva-bhūta-dayā-vantahkevalānāṁaṁ-aṁśhitāḥ.*

E. W. Hopkins (1901, 123):

Those who have the religion of compassion . . . say that there is unity in the Unmanifest but a plurality of spirits.

F. Edgerton (1924, 26):

It is a unity in the Unmanifest; so they explain the plurality (of the manifest, empiric universe) – men who, having compassion for all beings, resort to pure knowledge.


Men who are compassionate with all beings, and who have resorted to *kevala jñāna*, i.e. the knowledge of the Absolute, say that the Avyakta is *eka* and also *nāna*.

F. Edgerton made the point that the phrase ‘plurality of spirits’ would require either *puruṣa-nānātvam* or *nānātvam puruṣānām*. In his conviction the epic view coincides with that of the metric Upanisads, which is one ‘of a plurality in the empiric, finite world, but an underlying unity, realized by the enlightened, in which there is no longer any plurality, nor any consciousness, the attribute of plurality’ (p. 25).

S. Dasgupta (1930, 167) argued on the basis of aphorism II.22 that Patañjali recognised a plurality of transcendental Selves. In this he followed the cues provided in the *Yoga-Bhāṣya* and especially in the *Tattva-Vaisāradī*. But what does this aphorism really convey? The Sanskrit text runs as follows: *kṛta-arthaḥ prati-naṣṭam-api anāṣṭam tad-anya-sādhāraṇatvāt* or ‘Though [the objective world] has ceased for [the one whose] purpose is accomplished, it has not ceased [altogether], since it is common to [all] the other [empirical selves].’

It cannot be conclusively shown on the strength of this aphorism alone that Patañjali subscribed to the doctrine of plurality. Nor are there any other statements in his work which would vindicate such a view. I am therefore inclined to read this *sūtra* in the spirit of the pre-classical tradition where *kṛta-artha* also denotes the person who has become the Self, *i.e.* who has recovered Self-authenticity, beyond all plurality.15

Availing himself of the stock arguments of the Sāṁkhya thinkers, S. Dasgupta (1930, 167 f.) saw an epistemological problem here. He asked how, in view of the postulated reality of *prakṛti*, one single *puruṣa* of equal reality could possibly be responsible for all the cognitive processes occurring in the multiple real organisms. He drew attention to the viewpoint of Advaita-Vedanta according to which the Self is at least not identified with the real experiencing subject, but which asserts that the notions
of experiencing, etc., are all false, *i.e.* produced by the illusive action of māyā (which is itself inscrutable or anirvacaniya). He contended that if indeed only one puruṣa were ‘associated’ with the many psychosomatic entities, the release of a single being would imply the simultaneous release of all others. However, these are lame arguments, since the process of emancipation is a prakṛtic event which effects only a particular spatio-temporal entity, whereas the Self is *ex hypothesi* neither ever in bondage nor in need of liberation.

Assuming that Patañjali did not maintain that there are innumerable Self monads which inhabit some acosmic dimension, it must next be asked how this interpretation affects the conception of īśvara in his system. For īśvara is defined as a ‘special Self’ untouched by the causes-of-affliction (kleśa), by the propelling force of karman and so on. It may be thought that aphorism 1.24 tabernacles the idea that the ordinary puruṣa is somehow ‘touched’ by the klešas, etc., which would be an indirect confirmation of the doctrine of plurality. But there can be no question of the transcendent Self – be it īśvara or not – ever being affected in the literal sense by the causes-of-affliction or any other prakṛtic phenomenon. The phrase kleśa-karma-vipākā-āśayair-aparāmṛṣṭah must therefore be applicable as much to the ordinary puruṣa as to īśvara. Unless one wants to stretch this aphorism beyond its capacity, it does not appear to entail either any real inconsistency, or a hidden reference to the notion that there are multiple Selves and that īśvara is *primus inter pares* as M. Müller (1916, 325) argued.

Thus Patañjali seems to have promulgated a variant of the pre-classical epic Yoga tradition which affirms the basic singularity of the transcendent Self. Furthermore, he apparently also accepted the theistic conception of his predecessors who understood īśvara as eclipsing the puruṣa. Where he differs from them is in his insistence on the absolute separateness of purusa and prakṛti – thus developing the dualistic trends in the Mahābhārata and the metric Upanisads into a full-fledged dualism with the transintelligible subject on the one side and the objective universe on the other. Philosophically unattractive, this Cartesian dichotomy is of considerable practical relevance.
III
The Structure of the World (prakṛti)

The third of the transcendental principles which together constitute the tripod of the conceptual edifice of Classical Yoga is prakṛti. The word is composed of the preposition pra ‘forth’, the verbal root kṛ ‘to do’ and the feminine suffix ti, and it conveys the idea of ‘bringing forth’. In the Brahma-Vaivarta-Purāṇa (II. 1.5) these three morphemes are explained symbolically as representing sattva, rajas and tamas respectively.

Although the word itself does not occur prior to the metric Upanisads, the concept of prakṛti appears to be known, in principle, already in the Ērgveda and Atharvaveda. Citing F. O. Schrader (1955), K. B. R. Rao (1966, 99), for instance, conjectured that whilst the notion of ātman led to the formulation of the concept of puruṣa, the earlier concept of brahman as the substratum of the manifest world gave rise to the idea of aksara, avyakta and, then, prakṛti. D. Chat-topadhyaya (1959), again, proffered an entirely divergent view, linking up the evolution of this key concept with the fertility cult of what he regarded as the original non-vedic Sāmkhya-Tantrism. ‘Evidently the term prakṛti was not the invention of the early Sankhya philosophers because it was the basic concept of Tantrism, the history of which is traced back to a very remote antiquity. And it is impossible to deny that the prakṛti originally stood for the female principle without questioning the Indian cultural tradition fundamentally’ (p. 404).

Despite the persuasiveness of D. Chattopadhyaya’s tight-knit argumentation, I fail to be convinced by his sweeping reconstruction of the history of Indian thought and entertain certain reservations about his unilinear derivation of the philosophical concept of prakṛti from popular religious contexts. I have, however, similar misgivings about K. B. R. Rao’s attempt to recognise in Ērgveda 1.164 and X.129 the earliest references to the proto-conception of puruṣa and prakṛti. I am not sure that he is justified in his conjecture that these two hymns must have ‘in no small measure contributed to the breaking of the original absolutism of Brahman as the Personal or Impersonal into the dual Principles, the Personal and the Impersonal’ (p. 114). It seems to me that the actual situation at the time must have been far more complex than is suggested by either view.

Besides, there are interesting references in the Atharvaveda which will have to be taken into account if one wants to arrive at a more comprehensive interpretation. Regrettably this whole hymnody has been rather neglected and underrated; possibly the fullest survey of the Atharvaveda from the viewpoint of proto-Yoga and -Sāmkhya materials is that by J. W. Hauer (1922; 1927; 1958). For instance, he (1958, 59) saw in Atharvaveda X.8 a definite link with the much later Švetāśvatāra-Upaniṣad, which is one of the outstanding early Yoga texts, and he also perceived in X.8.29–31 a clear indication of the germ of the later notion of prakṛti.

Of particular interest is here the use of the verbal root √ac/āc which J. W. Hauer regarded as the origin of the later concept of vyakta and avyakta. What seems to be the essence of these early expressions is the idea of a primal, transcendental source or ‘womb’ (yoni) from which issues the multiform universe. This is precisely the meaning of the concept of prakṛti as the creative matrix, the ḍṛkṣṇa, which holds in posse all things, itself being unbounded ṣekr̥ṣcakav

E. H. Johnston (1937), in his admirable and still useful study, has shown that the older term for
prakṛti is avyakta, the ‘unmanifest’, still current at the time of the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad (fifth century B.G.?). In the Bhagavad-Gītā, which is slightly older than the Śvetāśvatāra-Upaniṣad, but later than the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, both terms are employed interchangeably. Avyakta is mentioned, for instance, in stanza VIII. 18 and contrasted with the ‘manifest’ or vyakta (plural use), and in verse VII1.20 the word is employed to denote something which is higher than the ordinary avyakta; in the next verse this higher avyakta is identified with aksara. At that time prakṛti had not yet acquired an exclusive technical sense (viz. ‘nature’), whereas aksara (the ‘imperishable’), signifying the principle of awareness, is decidedly a technical expression in the Bhagavad-Gītā.

In the Śvetāśvatāra-Upaniṣad (IV. 10) the term prakṛti is found in the phrase māyām tu prakṛtim vidyān māyinām tu mahā-iṣvaram, ‘prakṛti is to be known as māyā [and] the great lord as the māyin’. Here prakṛti = māyā (not in the sense of ‘illusion’) stands for the unmanifest (avyakta) which elsewhere in the text is denoted by the word ‘foundation’ (pradhāna). E. H. Johnston (1937, 27) pointed out that since this particular stanza is in the anuṣṭubh metre it must have been inserted into this series of triṣṭubh verses at a later stage. The regular use of prakṛti for this period is in the plural, which refers to the set of eight primary evolutes, viz. buddhi, ahamkāra, manas and the five elements. This enumeration is according to the Bhagavad-Gītā (VII.4–5), but other variants are known.

For example, in the Buddhacarita (XII. 18) these eight constituents are said to be avyakta, buddhi, ahamkāra and the five elements. This text also mentions the complementary set of sixteen vikāras or secondary evolutes, viz. the five senses, the five sense-objects, the five organs of action and the manas (see XII. 19). This double usage of the term prakṛti is also retained in the Sāmkhya-Kārikā, which speaks of prakṛti (in the later sense of avyakta) and of the various prakṛtis and vikṛtis, that is, the primary and secondary evolutes of the world-ground.

Remarkably, this is also the way in which Patañjali applies the term prakṛti. It is mentioned a mere three times in the Yoga-Sūtra, namely in 1.19 as prakṛti-laya and in IV.2–3. In IV.3, significantly enough, the word is used in the plural genitive (as prakṛtinam). The two sūtras in question run as follows: jāty-antara-parinamah prakṛty-apurat; nimittam-aprayojakam prakṛtinam varanabhedas-tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat. In consonance with J. W. Hauer’s (1958) revised interpretation of the initial aphorisms of the fourth pāda, I suggest the following translation: ‘The transformation into another category of existence (jati) [derives] from the pouring-over of the world-ground. – The incidental-cause (nimitta) [viz. the store of subliminal-activators] does not initiate the prakṛtis, but [merely] singles out possibilities (varana) [in accordance with the karmic conditions], like a farmer [who irrigates a field by selecting appropriate pathways for the water].’

The plural prakṛtis has been subjected to various renderings and paraphrases, such as ‘evolving-causes’ (J. H. Woods), ‘Werdвор-gänge’ (J. W. Hauer), ‘natural tendencies’ (I. K. Taimni), ‘die [schöpferisch sich betätigenden] Naturen’ (P. Deussen), ‘material causes’ (G. Jha), ‘creative-causes’ (R. Prasāda) and ‘constituents’ (M. N. Divedi). Because of the classical commentators’ complete misunderstanding of the true intent of these sūtras, which have nothing to do with magical feats, the obvious meaning of this plural use has never been spotted. Here we have not just a reference to some vaguely conceived process of creation, but very probably the plural prakṛtis refers to the well-known set of primary evolutes emerging from the primal matrix. Of course, one cannot be sure that Patañjali had in mind the set of eight principles as enunciated, for example, in the Bhagavad-Gītā or in other passages of the Mahābhārata. As a matter of fact his ontology – as will be seen – follows its own idiosyncratic pattern which is distinct from those promulgated in the epic, the Caraka-Samhitā, the Buddhacarita or other coeval sources.
Patañjali’s vocabulary includes several synonyms of the term prakṛti. Thus he employs drṣya (see II.17, 18, 21; IV.23), grāhya (I.41), aliṅga (I.45; II.19), and sva (II.23). E. H. Johnston (1937, 26) stated that pradhāna (‘foundation’) is the regular term used in the Yoga-Sūtra, but this word in fact occurs only once in 111.48. The term avyakta (‘unmanifest’) on the other hand, does not appear at all. However, Patañjali employs vyakta (IV.13), contrasting it with sūksma (‘the subtle’). These are said to be the two aspects of the dharmas (‘constituents’) which compose the universe; their essence are the primary-constituents or guṇas. In this instance vyakta and sūksma refer to the time dimension of things, vyakta being the generic term for those properties which are evident, i.e. present, and sūksma for those which are potential either because they existed in the past or will exist in the future.

The most common denotation for prakṛti is unquestioningly the term drṣya, which covers both the unmanifest and the manifest aspects of prakṛti. This concept has an epistemological ring about it which is yet another indication of the psychological-experiential orientation of Yoga. Thus drṣya (from √drṣ ‘to see’) signifies anything that is capable of becoming the object of the transcendental witness-Self, that is to say, anything that pertains to prakṛti in any of its modes, including the causal core (pradhāna) itself.

In this respect three major aspects of prakṛti can be differentiated: (i) the transcendental dimension, (ii) the objective (physical) part and (iii) the subjective (psychic) aspect. G. M. Koelman (1970, 158) called the last-mentioned, more appropriately perhaps, ‘subjective-objective’ by way of contrast with the ‘objective-objective’ energisations of prakṛti. The commentators appear to have taken drṣya in a far more restricted sense. Thus the Maniprabhā (II.17) has drṣyaṁ buddhi-sattvam, ‘the seen is the translucent-aspect of the mind’. Vyāsa, again, says in his Yoga-Bhāṣya (11.17): drṣyaṁ buddhi-sattvaupārūḍhāḥ sarve dharmah, ‘The objects-of-sight (drṣyāḥ) are all qualities [of prakṛti] which have affected the sattva of the mind’. Vācaspati Miśra explains this further in his Tattva-Vaisāradī (II.17): tad-etad-buddhi-sattvaṁ śabda-ādy-ākāravād-dṛṣyaṁ-ayas-kānta-maṇi-kalpaṁ puru-śasya svam bhavati drṣi-rūpasya svāminah, ‘Thus this same sattva of the mind, containing [the objects of] sound, etc., [becomes] the ‘seen’; [acting] like a loadstone, it becomes the property (śīla) of the Self, the propitiator of the form of Awareness’.

That Patañjali employs drṣya in the widest possible sense is evident from aphorism II.18, where he delineates its main characteristics. He speaks of a ‘disposition’ (śīla) to (a) luminosity (prakāśa), (b) activity (kriyā) and (c) inertia (sthitī). This tripartition is the outcome of the presence of the three types of guṇas, as is apparent from sūtra II.19, which gives out the various levels of manifestation of these primary building-blocks of the world-ground. I will come back to this issue shortly.

I wish to conclude these pre-eminently linguistic observations by formalising them in the accompanying semantic matrix, constructed on the basis of the above synonyms of the term prakṛti.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>comprehensive concepts</th>
<th>restricted concepts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sva</td>
<td>prakṛti (singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drṣya</td>
<td>pradhāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grāhya</td>
<td>aliṅga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prakṛti (plural)</td>
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<td>vyakta – sūksma</td>
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It must next be asked what exactly prakṛti stands for. First of all, it is important to realise that it
comprises two cardinal dimensions. On the one hand there is the noumenal matrix of creation, also
called *aliṅga* (= *avyakta* = *pradhāna*), and on the other there is the realm of the multitudinous
phenomena of contingent existence. The latter category is not exhausted by the visible universe of
ordinary space and time. In its phenomenalised nature, *prakṛti* also embraces the vast hidden
dimension impervious to the senses but experiencable in yogic introspection\(^5\) and logically deducible
from the spatio-temporal sense-derived data. This inner or ‘subtle’ (*sūkṣma*) aspect of *prakṛti* I
propose to call *deep structure* in contradistinction to the *surface structure*, i.e. the visible, audible,
tactual world.

The deep structure of *prakṛti* is stratified hierarchically, albeit in an aspatial sense. This
stratification, which varies in its conception from one tradition to another, has also been referred to
as ‘onto-logical map’, as it serves *the yogin* as a guide-beam in his programme of conscious
involution.\(^6\) Viewed dynamically rather than structurally, one can also speak of an evolution of ontic
categories or *tattva-antara-parināma*. The term *tattva* denotes such categories as *buddhi*, *ahāṃkāra*,
etc.

This conception implies a view of the universe as an essentially autonomous system of necessarily
interrelated events. This particular aspect of *prakṛti* was precipitated in the vedic concept of *ṛta* or
‘order’, and later on came to be expressed, for instance, in the idea of *adrśta* ‘the invisible [law]’ in
the philosophy of Nyāya and Vaiṣeṣika. *Prakṛti* can thus be looked upon as a system or ‘field’
composed of interdependent sub-systems arranged hierarchically according to the principle that each
higher sub-system is progressively more inclusive. This is best illustrated on the example of the well-
known schema utilised in Classical Sāṃkhya\(^7\) which permits the accompanying diagrammatic
condensation.

![Diagram](image)

The co-ordination and interdependence between the several subsystems are defined in terms of
causal relation of a specific type. It is traditionally known as the ‘doctrine of (pre-)existent effect’ or
*sat-kārya-vāda* or, more specifically, as the ‘doctrine of (real) transformation’ or *parināma-vāda*. R.
A. Sinari (1970, 38) styled this the ‘earliest and epistemologically the most valuable attempt made in
Indian philosophy to set up a theory of causal order’.

This view is partly foreshadowed in the Bhagavad-Gītā (II. 16), which contains these lines: nāsato vidyate bhāvo, na-abhāvo-vidyate satāḥ, or ‘Of the non-existent there is no becoming, of the existent there is no dis-becoming’. The full-fledged doctrine, being a restatement of the above notion, is to be found in the Śaṅkhya-Kārikā (9): asad-akāraṇād-upādāna-grahaṇāt-sarva-śaṅbhava-abhāvāt, śaktasya śakya-kāraṇāt-kāraṇa-bhāvāc-ca sat-kāryam, or ‘[There is] [pre]-existent effect because of the non-productivity of non-being, because of the need for a material-cause, because of the impossibility of derivation from everything, because of [a thing’s] ability-to-produce [only what it is capable] of producing and because of the nature of the cause’.

This somewhat obscure passage stands in need of elucidation. The pre-existence of the effect in the cause is based on five logical arguments. The first is that something which does not exist in any mode of being whatsoever cannot be brought into existence, nor can it bring anything else into existence. This is the famous axiom ex nihilo nihil fit. The second reason adduced byīśvara Kṛṣṇa is that any effect requires a cause which, in his opinion, must be of the same material. Next, it is argued that the effect must have a specific cause and cannot be derived simply from the sum total of other effects; there must be a special relation between effect and cause, and this is interpreted in the sense that the cause potentially contains the effect. Fourthly, not everything is capable of producing a specific effect, which is yet another affirmation of the essential inherence of the effect in the cause. Finally, the pre-existence of the effect in the cause is demanded by the fact that the cause is of the same nature as the effect.

These statements can hardly be said to amount to proofs unless a circular logic is thought admissible. Notwithstanding this criticism, it is interesting that Śaṅkhya and Yoga carefully distinguish between the material (upādāna) and the instrumental (nimitta) cause of a thing, subsuming both under the heading of kāraṇa, which is set against kārya or ‘effect’. Occasionally the effect is defined as either aupādānīka or naimittika.

All phenomena, whether they belong to the surface structure or to the deep structure of prakṛti, are considered as ‘transformations’ (parināma) of one and the same substratum, viz. the world-ground. Here applies, if ever, the phrase plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose. The technical designation of this particular theorem is prakṛti-parināma-vāda. It is one of four major theoretical positions on the issue of causality as developed in Indian philosophy.

There is first of all the view of the Nyāya and Vaisesika schools of thought – known as ārambhavāda – according to which eternal atoms create by continual re-combination the multiform universe. Also the Ājīvikas, Jainas and materialists of ancient India must be reckoned as subscribing to this view. The best known representative of the second type of interpretation is Hīnayana Buddhism with its dharma theory. This saṅghāta-vāda asserts that separate existential factors create the individual and his external and internal environment by a process of co-operative collocation (saṅghāta). The third position is the vivarta-vāda which is characteristic of the non-dualism of Śaṅkara, according to which the one real brahman remains ever unchanged; all transformations are attributed to the contingent universe, which is regarded as vivarta or an appearance quite different in nature from its cause. The Mahāyāna thinkers maintain a similar view. Finally, the parināma-vāda asserts that the Many is created out of the One by way of a series of real transformations, and it is this position which is typical of Yoga, Śaṅkhya and the older Vedanta schools.

The parināma-vāda claimed a considerable following, and its prominent place in Indian philosophical speculation can readily be appreciated when one considers the frequent refutations of it by other traditions, especially Buddhism. In later times Śaṅkhya and Yoga thinkers availed
themselves also of such concepts as had been developed in opponent schools in order to buttress their position in the increasingly competitive world of analytical philosophising. For example, Patañjali adopts the concepts of quality (dharma) and substance (dharmin) which played a decisive role in the heyday of Indian philosophy.\footnote{7}

Intimately related to the concept of prakṛti is the doctrine of the guṇas, which I will discuss next. The world-ground as conceptualised in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga tradition has been described by some scholars as a kind of ‘ultimate energy’ transmuting itself into various conditions by means of a rearrangement of its basic constituents, the so-called guṇas, which invite comparison with the ‘quantum packets’ of modern nuclear physics.\footnote{12} The notion of the guṇas is one of the central doctrines of Yoga-Sāṃkhya ontology and can safely be regarded as the single most original contribution of this proliferating tradition.

The word guṇa means literally ‘strand, rope’ and is also used to denote ‘quality’. In the present context it is perhaps best rendered as ‘primary-constituent’ of the world-ground. Other frequent translations are ‘aspect’ (J. H. Woods), ‘quality’ (S. Dasgupta), ‘attribute’ (G. Jha). N. Smart (1964) preferred to translate it as ‘strand-substances’ and J. W. Hauer (1958) as ‘Weltstoff-Energien’, whilst others retain the Sanskrit term (see I. K. Taimni, G. M. Koelman).

The doctrine of the guṇas has a protracted and rather recondite history. The idea was conceived long before the codification of either Yoga or Sāṃkhya, but its exact origins are shrouded in mystery. Various attempts have been made to trace the development of this important philosophical concept, with varying degrees of success.\footnote{11} The available historical data permit the conclusion that the guṇa theory was gradually developed out of much older speculations recorded in the vedač samhitās, the brāhmaṇa texts and also the Upani-sads.

There is no compelling reason to assume that the notion evolved within non-āryan traditions, though it may not have been the creation solely of the brāhmanc orthodox either. According to E. H. Johnston (1937), the guṇas were originally simply psychological qualities, and he referred to the use of the synonym bhāva or ‘force of becoming, sentiment’. But as J. A. B. van Buitenen (1956) showed beyond all doubt, there are two types of evolutionary schemata advocated by Sāṃkhya, viz. a vertical and a horizontal theory of evolution which later on came to be integrated in some schools. He distinctly opposed the popular idea that the term guṇa (= bhāva) originally meant ‘moral or psychical quality of the buddhi’. The original vertical version did not involve the guṇas at all. J. A. B. van Buitenen interpreted bhava as a ‘form of being, cosmic phase evolved under the influence of a guṇa’\footnote{12}

Guṇa in its most archaic conception stood for a triad of factors one of which was rajas. Their combined action on buddhi resulted in the evolution of the three bhāvas or states of being which, according to J. A. B. van Buitenen’s reconstruction of the epic evidence, probably consisted in manas (mind), the indriyas (senses) and the bhūtas (elements). The well-known triad of sattva-ajas-tamas is definitely a subsequent creation, though the principle implied in this conception must have been present already in the earlier triadic notion.

What then are the guṇas in their classical sense? Surprisingly enough this question has never been satisfactorily answered by any of the earlier thinkers, and it was in fact Viññāna Bhiku who, as late as the sixteenth century, afforded this topic a first critical examination and discussion. The guṇas can be described as being the ultimate building-blocks of the material and mental phenomena in their entirety. They are not merely qualities or properties, but actual entities or ‘reals’ (S. Dasgupta, 1963\footnote{13}) and as such non-distinct from the world-ground itself. They are the indivisible atoms of everything there is, with the exception of the Self (puruṣa), which is by definition nir-guna. The
gunas underlie every appearance, and are the world-ground in its noumenal character. This is expressed by Īśvara Kṛṣṇa in the following way: tri-guṇam-aviveki viṣayāḥ sāmānyam-acetanam prasava-dharmi, vyaktāḥ tatha pradhānam tad-viparītās-tathā ca pumān, or ‘The manifest [world] and the primary-substratum [are both of the nature of] the triple guṇas, without discernment, objective, generic, without Awareness and productive. Yet the Self is the reverse of this.’

Thus they are the very material of prakṛti. In fact in Classical Śaṅkhyā prakṛti is defined as tri-guṇa-sāmya-avasthā or ‘the state of homoeostasis of the three guṇas’. In his study on the Bhagavad-Gītā S. Dasgupta (1965, II, 465) suggested that in this scripture the guṇas are not thought to constitute the world-ground, but this is obviously wrong, for he clearly overlooked stanza VII. 14, where Kṛṣṇa’s māyā (= prakṛti) is called guṇa-maya or ‘composed of the guṇas’ Nor do we need to perceive any real contradiction between this statement and such expressions as guṇāh prakṛti-sambhavāḥ (XIV.5) or ‘the guṇas born of the world-ground’.

Any argument to the contrary would be meaningless in view of the sat-kārya doctrine which demands that the guṇas in their noumenal state are mere potentialities which becomes actualised with the process of evolution. As K. B. R. Rao (1966, 52) put it: ‘Guṇas are themselves prakṛti. Guṇas are not “ingredients”, or “parts”,’ C. T. Kenge (1958, 4) has a remark to the same effect: ‘The three forces Sattva, Rajas and Tamas cannot be said to be the parts of Prakṛti, for in themselves they are equally impurital and impurital things can never be parts of anything else’. This author also called prakṛti a ‘supercysical substance’ rejecting the widely prevalent translation of the term with ‘matter’: but this is equally obscure.

Patanjali is perfectly cogent on this issue In aphorismII. 19 aliṅga, which corresponds with the Śaṅkhyā prakṛti-pradhāna, is said to be one of the levels (parvan) of the guṇas. There are four levels in all, which will be dealt with in detail below. Evidently, for all practical purposes, the guṇas can be equated with prakṛti (in the comprehensive sense).

The important question of the substantiality of the guṇas has been left untackled by both Vyāsa and Vācaspati Miśra, just as they ignored the problem of their multiplicity. The texts mention triple guṇas but do not explicitly state whether there are only three types of guṇas or a multitude of guṇas which may be classified into three categories in respect of their several functions. However, the postulation of a large number of guṇas seems a logical necessity if it is maintained that the plethora of phenomena are the direct outcome of infinite gum permutations, which is at least Īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s proposition.

In his opinion the entire phenomenal world and its deep structure are created by a process of continual re-combination of the primary-constituents of prakṛti. Indeed, if there were only three distinct entities the inordinate multiplicity of existing things could not be explained. On the other hand, it is convincing that a near infinite number of guṇas of three different types should, by way of collocation and perpetual re-combination, produce the multi-facteded dynamic network of existence.

Perhaps today this question can be resolved on a non-substantivist basis in the light of contemporary field theory, which has successfully supplanted the classical conception of matter as a chunk of substance floating in ampsy space. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to compare the guṇas with the atoms of modern nuclear physics, which are described as localisations of fields. As F. L. Kunz (1963, 5) put it: ‘An atom [. . .] may be correctly thought of as a standing wave system in an open wave force field potential.’ It is surely not by accident that it is always the energetic nature of the guṇas which is pushed into the foreground by expounders of the Śaṅkhyā and Yoga traditions. Although Viṣṇu Bhikṣu characterises them as dravyas or ‘substances’, he does so only in order to refute the Vaisesika position according to which the guṇas are mere qualities. Had he known the
expression ‘energy parcel’ he would presumably not have hesitated to use it instead.

As G. M. Koelman (1970, 77) noted, ‘The guṇas’ nature is throughout expressed in terms of functional qualities, kinetic dispositions and causal urges.’ This is well illustrated by the Yoga-Bhāṣya (II. 18). From this passage it emerges that

1) although the guṇas are quite distinct entities having different characteristics,
2) they nonetheless influence each other and by their interdependent functioning create the phenomenal universe, and thus
3) everything must be looked upon as a ‘synergisation’\(^\text{12}\) of the three guṇas.

The energetic nature of the guṇas is furthermore borne out by the fact that Patañjali associates them with the concept of parināma or ‘transformation’ and that of pratiprasava or ‘involution’, \(\text{i.e.}\) the flowing back of the manifest guṇas into the potentiality of the world-ground. Yoga ontology thus conceives Nature to be a quivering force field as it were undergoing continuous transformations. The dynamism is sustained by the incessant interaction of the three types of guṇas whose activity can be inferred from their phenotypes as experienced externally (in perception) or internally (in introspection).

The classic guṇa triad is headed by sattva. The word means literally ‘being-ness’ and is derived from sat ‘being’ and the abstract suffix -tva. A great variety of renderings have been proposed, such as ‘intelligence-stuff’ (S. Dasgupta), ‘essentiality’ (R. Prāsada), ‘goodness’ (G. Jha), all of which hardly touch the core meaning of this term. J. H. Woods (1966\(^3\)) wisely left the word untranslated, but G. M. Koelman (1970, 10) contended that it is best rendered by its Latin equivalent entia (as in presentia, absentia), whilst the adjectival form sātvika would correspondingly assume the appearance of ‘entic’. I confess that I fail to see the advantage of such a procedure. If one has to have recourse to a foreign language anyhow in order to convey the meaning of sattva, might one not simply retain the Sanskrit term and maybe anglicise its adjective to sattvic?

The single most important study of the concept of sattva is that by J. A. B. van Buitenen (1957\(^b\)), in which he finds fault with past scholarship for reading the classic expression of this concept into the older material. He noted: ‘One result of this classicism was the acceptance of sattva and the other guṇas as factors only conditioning the individual’s soul’s buddhi, their cosmological function being looked upon either as secondary or as superseded’ (p. 88). Thus J. A. B. van Buitenen completed the partial rectification of this aprioristic view by É. Senart (1915 and 1925).

In the pre-classical Śāṅkhya and Yoga traditions the term sattva was used in many different senses; it denoted the body-complex and also the psyche and the concretely existing entity or sentient being. J. A. B. van Buitenen (1957\(^b\), 105) observed: ‘It would seem that sattva, undoubtedly a notion that was elaborated in circles where the idea of a personality – with increasingly microcosmic features – persisted, reflects in its functions the aspect of sat as the reified and created. As such it could easily become linked up with tripartite creation . . .’ He further remarked: ‘It is not clear how sattva came to be associated just with rajas and tamas. Probably it succeeded to a principle like tapas or jyotis, which acquired the connotation of “light of knowledge” and had its opposite in “darkness” and “obscuration” ‘ (p. 106).

The second member of the guṇa triad is rajas, which according to J. A. B. van Buitenen probably ‘brought the triadic pattern along’ (p. 106). Like sattva this term has suffered various more or less adequate renderings into English, such as ‘energy-stuff’ (S. Dasgupta, F. V. Catalina), ‘energy’ (R. Prasāda), ‘foulness’ (G. Jha). É. Senart (1915), the first to afford this concept a thorough examination,
showed that originally rajās signified the ‘atmosphere’. This was challenged by T. Burrow (1948, 645), who related it to ‘dirt’ – ‘moral defilement’ ... ‘cosmic principle’. However, this hypothetical reconstruction of the evolution of the concept of rajās was firmly rejected by J. A. B. van Buitenen (1957, 92), who was most insistent that rajās had, to begin with, a purely cosmological significance and that only subsequently did it acquire a microcosmic psychological meaning. To cover both the cosmic and the psychic aspect of this term, G. M. Koelman (1970, 12) used the Greek word, \( \sqrt{raj} \) paraphrasing rajās with ‘ergetic constituent’. It is the active principle which stimulates, initiates action and supplies the dynamic impulses without which the field of prakṛti would collapse.

Finally, there is tāmas, which has been translated as ‘mass-stuff (S. Dasgupta, F. V. Catalina), ‘inertia’ (R. Prasāda) and ‘darkness’ (G. Jha). Whilst rajās is derived from \( \sqrt{raj/rañj} \) ‘to glow, be brilliant’, tāmas is a derivative of \( \sqrt{tām} \) ‘to be exhausted, become rigid’. G. M. Koelman (1970, 12) connected it with the allied Latin term temus of which the ablative temere ‘blindly, rashly’ has survived. He called this third member of the guna triad accordingly the ‘temeric constituent’.

S. Dasgupta (1963, I, 242–3) made an attempt to explain these gunas as ‘feeling-substances’. According to him, feelings ‘mark the earliest track of consciousness, whether we look at it from the point of view of evolution or of the genesis of consciousness in ordinary life [...]’. The feelings are therefore the things-in-themselves, the ultimate substances of which consciousness and gross matter are made up [...]. The three principal characteristics of thought and matter [...] are but the manifestations of three types of feeling substances.’

This seems to have been accepted prima facie by F. V. Gatalina (1968, 35), but, interesting as S. Dasgupta’s perspective is, it nevertheless implies an unwarranted psychologisation of the nature of the gunas. Such a one-sidedness must be avoided if one wants to do full justice to this complex concept. The gunas are both cosmogonic and psychogonic forces. This ambivalent nature of the primary-constituents is indeed confusing, accustomed as we are to distinguish carefully between material phenomena on the one hand and psychomental events on the other hand. But, again, we must take heed not to project our own cognitive patterns onto the Indian schemata.

One can sympathise with R. Garbe (1917, 272), who styled the doctrine of the gunas a ‘strange theory’, but he was decidedly mistaken in his further statement that it is ‘a pure hypothesis [...] which shares the fate with many other philosophical hypotheses not to be able to hold good in the light of modern natural science’ (p. 284). On the contrary, this striking teaching is far from being merely a weird product of early man’s vivid imagination. It seems a reasonably cogent framework of explanation of reality as encountered by the trained yogin.

Like the concept of prakṛti, that of the gunas, too, cannot be regarded as based on mere fiction. Rather more compelling is the unpopular view that these are experientially derived concepts. To gainsay this a priori is to deny the raison d’être of Yoga and of the older Sāmkhya which are geared for experience rather than abstract speculation. Little wonder that S. Radhakrishnan (1951, II, 274), apparently oblivious to this explanation, was constrained to make the following admission: ‘It is difficult to understand the precise significance of the Sāmkhya account of evolution, and we have not seen any satisfactory explanation as to why the different steps of evolution are what they are. – The different principles of the Sāmkhya system cannot be logically deduced from prakṛti, and they seem to be set down as its products, thanks to historical accidents. There is no deductive development of the products from the one prakṛti. Vijñāna-bhiksu is aware of this defect, and so asks us to accept the Sāmkhya account of evolution on the authority of the scriptures. But this is to surrender the possibility
of philosophical explanation.\(^5\)

In rejecting Viṣṇu Bhikṣu’s answer, S. Radhakrishnan simultaneously forfeited the only reasonable explanation of these concepts which embody experiential knowledge. For what is the foundation of the authority of the scriptures if not ‘revelation’ in the sense of the experience of reality in non-ordinary states of consciousness (such as meditation or samādhi)? Admittedly, such an interpretation is seemingly contradicted by the fact that all these concepts have a history, that is, underwent a process of development and did not just spring into existence ready-made and \textit{ex nihilo}.

However, gradual conceptual refinement is an integral part of the life of any theory, and this fact by no means undermines the data themselves, which, in this particular case, are the subjective ‘observations’ during meditative and enstasis states of consciousness. The question is rather to what degree the later doctrinal sophisticated, especially those of Classical Sāṁkhya, can be said to do justice to the original experiences.

But to come back to the word \textit{guna}, we find that it is used altogether six times in the \textit{Yoga-Sūtra} (viz. I.16; II. 15, 19; IV. 13, 32, 34). To these instances must be added \textit{sūtra} II. 18, which mentions the pheno-types (śīlo) of the three \textit{guna}s, namely \textit{prakāśa}\(^18\) or ‘luminosity’ (pertaining to \textit{sattva}), \textit{kriyā} or ‘activity’ (belonging to \textit{rajas}) and \textit{sthitī} or ‘inertia’ (connected with \textit{tamas}). K. B. R. Rao (1966, 54), who was bold enough to speak of ‘the scientific character of the theory of \textit{guna}s’ (p. 51), epitomised their respective nature as follows: \textit{Sattva} is that ‘which makes for existence or beingness’; \textit{rajas} is that ‘which makes for change in itself, and \textit{tamas} is that ‘which denies annihilation through change’. In other words, \textit{sattva} represents the principle of existence, \textit{rajas} that of discontinuity and \textit{tamas} that of continuity.

These are said (II. 18) to be ‘bodied forth’ in the elements and the senses. The exact Sanskrit phrase is \textit{bhūta-indriya-ātmakam}, which J. H. Woods (1966\(^3\)) rendered as ‘with the elements and organs as its essence’. R. Prasāda (1912) has ‘it consists of the elements and the powers of sensation’, whilst J. W. Hauer (1958) is in agreement with the above interpretation (‘korpert sich dar in Elementen und Organen’).

Of course, these elements and senses as the external aspects of the \textit{guna}s merely constitute what I have previously called the ‘surface structure’ of \textit{prakṛti}. To express the same idea, Patañjali employs the technical term \textit{viśesa} or ‘the particularised’ (see II. 19). The ‘deep structure’ of the gargantuan body of \textit{prakṛti}, on the other hand, is stratified into three primary levels of increasing complexity and organisation; these are the so-called \textit{guna-parvans} or ‘levels of the \textit{guna}s’, namely \textit{aviśesa} (‘the unparticularised’), \textit{liṅga-mātra} (‘the differentiated’) and \textit{aliṅga} (‘the undifferentiate’), which is the most generic stratum.

According to M. N. Dvivedi (1934\(^3\)) these \textit{parvans} are identical with the ‘four stages’ allegedly described in 1.45; but this particular aphorism does not mention any stages at all, and he himself quite correctly translated \textit{sūkṣma-viṣayatvam ca-aliṅga-paryavasānam} as ‘The province of the subtle ends with the indissoluble’. I. K. Taimni (1965\(^2\), 180), again, attempted to correlate the levels of the \textit{guna}s with the stages of \textit{samādhi} mentioned in 1.17 and also with the vedantic notion of the \textit{kośas} or ‘sheaths’. He proposed the following equations:

\[
\begin{align*}
vitarka-samādhi & \quad \text{— viśesa \quad manomaya-kośa} \\
vicāra\(^0\) & \quad \text{— aviśesa \quad vijnānamaya}\(^0\) \\
ānanda\(^0\) & \quad \text{— liṅga \quad ānandamaya}\(^0\) \\
asmitā\(^0\) & \quad \text{— aliṅga \quad ātman}
\end{align*}
\]
The apparent neatness of this tabulation is matched only by its total fictitiousness. First of all, it is misleading to equate the enstatic experience of the undifferentiate (aliṅga) with the realisation of ātman in Vedānta. The latter is on a par with the yogic puruṣa as the principle of Awareness, whereas aliṅga is without question conceived of as an insentient category. If a comparison can be made at all, one would rather expect that it is the ‘sheath made of bliss’ (ānandamaya-kośa) which corresponds with the undifferentiate, as both are regarded as the root of spiritual nescience. The ‘sheath made of consciousness’ (vijñānamaya-kośa), again, would seem to be more properly related to buddhi as the higher mental faculty, and the ‘sheath made of mentation’ (manomaya-kośa) could then be made to run parallel to the mind (manas) and the sensory complex. The realm of the particularised (višeṣa) entails also the five coarse elements (sthūla-bhūta) which, if one wanted to be consistent, would call for the inclusion of the fifth and lowest (or outermost) ‘sheath’ as well, namely the ‘sheath made of food’ (annamaya-kośa). Thus one would have to squeeze a pentadic classificatory system (i.e. the paṇca-kośa doctrine) into a quaternary schema (i.e. the parvan doctrine), which is unsatisfactory and in this particular case misleading as well.

I. K. Taimi’s second contention according to which there is a correlation between the four types of enstasy (saṃādhi) and the guṇa-parvans is at first sight more promising, but on closer examination it reveals itself to be equally fallacious. For the cogitative enstasy (vicāraka-saṃādhi) concerns only the coarse (sthūla) aspect of prakṛti, that is, the manifold composites of the five categories of elements (bhūta) existing in the space-time universe. On the other hand, the reflexive enstasy (vicāra- saṃādhi) relates to all subtle entities up to the undifferentiate (aliṅga, see 1.45), that is, the entire deep structure of prakṛti. The beatific enstasy (ānanda-saṃādhi), again, is directed towards the instruments of knowledge (i.e. the senses) if we can rely on the testimony of the commentators, whilst the asmitā-saṃādhi is orientated towards the principle of individuality (asmitā).

Nor must one confuse the four ‘levels’ on which the guṇas manifest themselves with the ontogenetic series. It appears that Patañjali’s four-level model is a structural view of the universe constituted by the primary-constituents (guna) and is not meant to explain the actual evolutionary process in which the individual ontic categories (tattva) emerge from the world-ground. In fact Patañjali does not refer to the tattva evolution at all and merely mentions some of the emergent categories of existence, such as the elements, the senses and the mind. The term buddhi appears to be used in the sense of ‘cognition’ only. Ahamkāra (lit. ‘I-maker’) is probably replaced by asmitā (lit. ‘I-am-ness’), and, significantly, the tanmātras are nowhere mentioned.

The crucial problem now is one of assigning the ontic categories to Patañjali’s four-level model. Vyāsa (II. 19) advances this correlated schema:


I submit the following translation:
Of this [four-level structure] the elements ‘ether’, ‘air’, ‘fire’ and ‘earth’ are the particularised [modifications] of the unparticularised potentials (tanmātra), [viz.] sound, touch, form-percept (rūpa), taste and smell. Similarly, ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose are the cognitive organs, [whilst] voice, hands, feet, anus and genitals are the conative organs. The eleventh [particularised modification] is the multi-objective (sarva-artka) mind. These are the particularised (viśeṣa) [modifications] of the unparticularised, [which is] characterised as I-am-ness (asmitā). This is the sixteenfold particularised modification of the guṇas. The unparticularised [modifications] are six; they are the sound-potential, the touch-potential, the sight-potential (rūpa-tanmātra), the taste-potential and the smell-potential. Thus sound, etc., [having respectively] one, two, three, four or five characteristics, [add up to] five unparticularised [modifications]. And the sixth unparticularised [modification] is the ‘substratum-of-I-am-ness’ (asmitā-mātra). These are the six unparticularised modifications (aviśeṣa-parināma) of the great entity, the ‘sub-stratum-of-beingness’ (sattā-mātra). That which is superior to the unparticularised [modifications] is the ‘substratum-of-[all that bears]-characteristics’ (liṅga-mātra), the great principle.

Whether or not this exegesis is trustworthy cannot definitely be ascertained. However, it is quite remarkable that Vyāsa here makes ample use of Patañjali’s own specific terminology, while elsewhere often completely ignoring it and superimposing his personal nomenclature on that of the Yoga-Sūtra. The above excerpt from the Yoga-Bhāṣya can be reduced to the following diagram, which shows up Vyāsa’s correlation of the four ontic levels (parvan) with the better known series of tattvas:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{aliṅga (the undifferentiate)} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{liṅga-mātra (the differentiate)} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{aviśeṣa (the unparticularised)} & = \text{asmitā-mātra + the five tanmātras (potentials)} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{viśeṣa (the particularised)} & = \text{manas (mind) + the ten indriyas (senses) + the five bhūtas (elements)} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

I will next analyse each of the four parvans separately. To begin with the concept of aliṅga, the word itself is composed of the negative prefix a- and liṅga (from \sqrt{liṅg} ‘to attach, adhere, cling to’) and has the meaning of ‘that which is without mark or sign’, in the following rendered as ‘the undifferentiate’. Aliṅga is first used in the metric Upaniṣads, where it designates the Self.\textsuperscript{20} However, in the Yoga-Sūtra it is clearly a synonym of prakṛti in its noemenal state as the matrix of the evolved cosmos.

As such aliṅga corresponds with the Sāmkhya concept of avyakta or ‘the unmanifest’. G. M. Koelman (1970, 88) described it as the ‘non-resoluble genetic entity’, apparently having in mind the traditional interpretation of the term liṅga as ‘the mergent’, that is, that which resolves into the world-ground upon the accomplishment of emancipation.\textsuperscript{21} However, this interpretation of aliṅga is of secondary importance only. Its primary connotation is ‘the signless’ or, less accurately, ‘the sexless’.\textsuperscript{22} Hence I reject J. H. Wood’s (1966\textsuperscript{3}, 91) translation of the term with ‘unresoluble-primary-matter’.

From the ultimate substrative cause – aliṅga (natura naturans) -derives the first of the series of ontic evolutes (natura naturata), namely liṅga-mātra or ‘the differentiated’. The second half of this
interesting compound, mātra, is customarily employed in the sense of ‘only, mere’, but in the present philosophical context it must be credited with a more substantial meaning. In its oldest usage mātra signified as much as ‘substance’ or ‘material’,22 and the later form mātra as met with in such compounds as liṅga-mātra, asmītā-mātra or tan-mātra has unquestionably retained a shade of the original meaning. Hence in the above-quoted passage from the Yoga-Bhāṣya (II. 19) I have risked translating it tentatively as ‘substratum-of’.

But what does the concept of liṅga-mātra stand for? Even though there is no definition of this term in the Yoga-Sūtra, and in fact the word occurs but once (in II. 19), its meaning can be fairly reliably inferred from the context and from the additional evidence of comparable ontological models. Vyāsa quite rightly identifies it as ‘the great principle’ (mahat-tattva) or ‘mere being-ness’ (sattā-mātra). As the direct source of all further differentiations of the undifferentiate noumenal world-ground, liṅga-mātra itself has but a single characteristic, which is ‘existence’. Little more can be predicated of it than that it exists; it is non-differentiated existence.

In G. M. Koelmann’s (1970, 92) words, ‘This state of “being-only” is not a state of functional activity, whereby it could be characterized [...]. It is the level of pure non-functional existence. The only operation it may be said to possess is its self-differentiation into the following evolutes. But this is a cosmical energization, but a functional activity.’ In other traditions this threshold from the noumenal to the phenomenal is known as ‘the golden germ’ (hiranya-garbha) or as ‘the lord of creatures’ (prajāpati), and it can be compared with the in the philosophy of Neoplatonism.

According to S. Dasgupta (1920, 51) the term liṅga-mātra is a synonym of asmītā-mātra (as used in IV.4), but this is an unfounded assumption which is not corroborated by the evidence in the Yoga-Sūtra itself or in any of the scholia. J. W. Hauer (1958, 286), generally displaying a more critical acumen than his predecessors, unexpectedly committed the same blunder, only to contradict and thus unwittingly correct himself on p. 288 of the same work. Nor must liṅga-mātra be equated with buddhi,24 which, in Patañjali’s philosophical jargon, stands for ‘cognition’ only and not for any ontological entity.

The third level (parvan) of the primary-constituents is known as aviśeṣa or ‘the unparticularised’ (from sīt ‘to leave’). The word is used only twice in the Yoga-Sūtra, once in the general sense of ‘not distinguished’ (III.35) and then in the strictly technical sense (II. 19). Again, Patañjali offers no definition of this important concept. According to Vyāsa it is an umbrella term covering asmītā-mātra and the set of five tanmātras. This is a plausible enough explanation, but there is no degree of certainty about whether or not Patañjali actually included the concept of tanmātra in his ontogenetic model. In view of the fact that virtually all ancient and modern commentators insist on the inclusion of the tanmātras, I will briefly delineate their essential nature.

The word tanmātra (lit. ‘that only’) is, like most of these concepts, difficult to translate. Various suggestions have been made, such as ‘fine element’ (J. H. Woods), ‘rudimentary element’ (G. Jha), ‘sensation’ (I. K. Taimni), ‘subtle element’ (G. J. Larson), ‘Grund-stoff’ (R. Garbe) and ‘Subtilenergie’ (J. W. Hauer). Possibly S. Dasgupta’s rendering of the term with ‘potential’ best captures its meaning: ‘The tanmātras possess something more than quantum of mass and energy; they possess physical characters, some of them penetrability, others powers of impact or pressure, others radiant heat, others again capability of viscous and cohesive attraction.’25 This interpretation is based on B. N. Seal (1915), who defined the tanmātras as energy potentials, being the essences of the sensory faculties. However, this does not resolve any of the obscurity which surrounds this conception, and with G. J. Larson (1969, 205) one is forced to admit that ‘[e]xactly what is meant by
“subtle element” is difficult if not impossible to determine.

G. J. Larson also drew attention to the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* (38), which describes the *tanmātras* as *aviśeṣa*, thus opposing them to the elements (*bhūta*) which are said to be *viśeṣa*. This appears to be essentially the application of both terms in the *Yoga-Sūtra* as well. Vyāsa proffers this explanation: there are six ‘unparticularised’ modifications of the primary substratum, the sixth being *asmitā-mātra* (which is excluded in Īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s version). He arranges them in the following manner:

1. *sābda-tanmātra* — potential of sound
2. *sparśa*- — potential of touch
3. *rūpa*- — potential of sight (lit. ‘form’)
4. *rasa*- — potential of taste
5. *gandha*- — potential of smell
6. *asmitā-mātra* — substratum of I-am-ness

No definitions are supplied by the author of the *Yoga-Bhāṣya*, but he makes mention of the fact that they are to be distinguished by their respective number of characteristics, which may be one, two, three, four or five. Vācaspati Miśra furnishes the requisite attributions:

1. *sābda-tanmātra* — one characteristic only
2. *sparśa*- — two characteristics
3. *rūpa*- — three characteristics
4. *rasa*- — four characteristics
5. *gandha*- — five characteristics.

The number of characteristics inherent in each *tanmātra* is explained by the number of ways in which the corresponding element (*bhūta*) can be experienced. Each subsequent element incorporates the properties of all the previous elements. Thus while the ether (*ākāśa*) pertaining to *sābda-tanmātra* can only be heard, the air (*vāyu*) pertaining to *sparśa-tanmātra* can be heard and felt; fire (*agni*) can be heard, felt and seen, hence its corresponding *tanmātra*, which is *rūpa*- is stated to have three characteristics; water (*udaka*) can be heard, felt, seen and tasted and consequently its matrix, which is *rasa-tanmātra*, is said to display four characteristics; finally, earth (*bhumi*) can be heard, felt, seen, tasted and smelled, wherefore *gandha-tanmātra* must have five characteristics.

These *tanmātras* are, as G. M. Koelma (1970, 114) put it, ‘objective universals’, which do not stand for any particular sound, taste or visual percept but are sound as such, taste as such. Moreover, he made the valuable observation that they are not purely logical categories, but unlike the *objectum formale* of Scholasticism are experiencable ontic reals; however, as they are prior to sensation they can only be experienced by way of immediate apperception as cultivated by the *yogin*. We merely recognise their effects in the properties of their material counterparts, the elements.

Whether or not Patañjali operated with the *tanmātra* concept, *asmitā-mātra* must definitely be assigned to the *aviśeṣa* category. Whereas *liṅga-mātra* is a category (*tattva*) of which nothing can be predicated save that it exists, *asmitā-mātra* ‘differentiates and plural-izes the indetermined and universal principle of being (*sattāmātra*) into so many different centres of reference, so many sources of initiative’. And (*ibid.*): ‘These centres of reference constitute, so to say, distinct nucleations
within the one Prakṛti, in such a way that there arise different suppositions or subjectivations, or numerically distinct units of centralization, adapted to the needs of each particularized Self. This supposition is sufficiently stable to be called a substantial entity, a tattva or a dravya’ Asmitā-mātra is, in other words, that agency which splits the primary substratum into subjects vis à vis objects in the form of a bifurcate line of evolution.

This concept corresponds with the Śaṅkhya notion of ahamkāra, described by A. Kunst (1968, 273) as ‘a sort of ego-factory’. The author of the Yuktidīpikā (on Śaṅkhya-Kārikā 4) is therefore mistaken in maintaining that Patañjali does not know ahamkāra as a separate entity but includes it in mahat.28 Similarly erroneous is S. Radha-krishnan’s statement that Yoga ‘does not recognise ahamkāra and manas as separate from buddhi’.29

This confusion could have been avoided by acknowledging the fact that Patañjali’s vocabulary is not merely a replica of Śaṅkhya terminology. Asmitā-mātra is to him the ‘universal’ principle of individualisation (corresponding with mahat of the Yuktidīpikā), whereas asmitā denotes the particularised T-am-ness’. Thus a distinction is made between the ontological (structural) and the psychological (functional) use of this important term. Asmitā-mātra occurs only in IV.4, where it is unequivocally designated as the source of the multiple individualised minds or nirmāna-cittas. On the other hand, asmitā as a function of the phenomenal mind is mentioned in II.3, 6 and III.47, and in 1.17 as a particular variable of cognitive entstasy (samādhi).

Of special interest is Patañjali’s use of asmitā-mātra, the pre-individualised ontic reality of subjectivity. The introduction of this special technical designation does away with much of the ambiguity connected with the older term ahamkāra,30 which is employed both in the sense of ‘individualised ego-consciousness’ and as ‘pre-individualised generic principle of egohood’. Most commentators ignore the second connotation of ahamkāra, which induced J. A. B. van Buitenen (1957) to dedicate considerable space to this concept in order to correct the past lopsided interpretations and to bring out the I-maker’s ‘cosmic function of creator of the empirical universe’ (p. 15). His penetrating analysis is of relevance also to the study of the concept of asmitā-mātra in Classical Yoga.

J. A. B. van Buitenen pointed out the mythological elements present in the notion of ahamkāra and made it clear that ‘the origin of the creative ahamkāra must be sought in the ancient upanisadic speculations on a self-formulating, self-creating primordial personality’ (p. 21). He criticised the current exclusive interpretation of the term as that organ which forms the conception of the ego, putting forward the idea that ‘if this had been the intended meaning when the term was coined, one wonders why the responsible thinker, capable of such conceptual thought, did not express himself more accurately in ahantā-kāra. Besides, ३कार has as a rule the much more concrete sense of “fashioning, building, making and doing with one’s hands” ’ (p. 16).

He observed further: ‘Side by side with ahamkāra we find in later texts mamakāra. Explications of ahamkāra take always the form of a quoted sentence with iti: “I am ... I do ...” etc.; of mamakāra: “This is mine” etc. This points to another meaning of ३कार, not as in kumbhakāra etc., but as in omkāra, vasaṭkāra, svāhākāra, etc.: “the cry, uttering or ejaculation: Aham!” ’ (p. 17).

It is this creative aspect of ahamkāra, as anticipated in the words aham bahu syam (‘May I be many’) of the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (VI. 2.3), which is crystallised in the concept of asmitā-mātra. Although Patañjali merely asserts that the nirmāna-cittas originate from asmitā-mātra, it is safe to assume that asmitā-mātra also acts as the source of the tannātras (granted that they are a part of Patañjali’s ontology) and the elements (bhūta) and senses (indriya). This successive evolution can be depicted graphically as shown.
Vācaspati Miśra, for no apparent reasons, places *asmitā-mātra* and the *tanmātras* on the same ontogenetic level in as much as he regards both as evolutes of buddhi (= *linga-mātra*).\(^{31}\) However, both on logical and on historical grounds the vertical derivation suggested above makes more sense. As G. M. Koelman (1970, 115) noted, ‘Since the functions of cognition are evolved from the Ego-function, it seems plausible that the objective universals are evolved from the same Ego-function; this seems even more probable when we consider that the pure Ego-function on the existential level (*asmitā-mātra*) is also the prakritic subject of the activity of cognizing.’

This brings us to the last *guna-parvan*, the level of the particularised phenomena or *viśeṣa*, that is, the ‘surface structure’ of prakṛti. Contrary to Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, the author of the Yoga-Sūtra does not equate *aviśeṣa* solely with the *tanmātras* and *viśeṣa* with the *bhūtas* but includes in the category of *viśeṣa* also the *indriyas*\(^{32}\) This is hinted at by the phrase *bhūta-indriya-ātmaka* (II. 18) and possibly also by the compound *kāya-indriya* (11.45).

The word *indriya* occurs seven times in the Yoga-Sūtra: II. 18 (*bhūta-indriya*), 11.41 (*indriya-jaya*), 11.43 (*kāya-indriya*), 11.54 (*in-driyānāṁ pratyāhāra*), II.55 (*vaśyatā indriyānāṁ*), III. 13 (*bhūta-indriya*), and III.47 (*indriya-jaya*). *Indriya* is an old term, already well known to the composers of the early Upanisads. As a distinct ontogenetic set the *indriyas* are first mentioned in the *Katha-Upaniṣad* (III.3–4) in the famous allegory of the chariot (= body) which is spun to horses (= senses) by means of reins (= mind) held by the chariot-driver (= buddhi).

The *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* contains an archaic passage–111.2.1–9 – in which we find one of the earliest analyses of the sensory tools. An interesting distinction is made between the eight ‘graspers’ (*graha*) and their corresponding ‘super-graspers’ (*ati-graha*):

1. The in-breath (*prāṇa*) is ‘supergrasped’ by the out-breath (*apāṇa*).
2. Speech (*vāc*) is ‘supergrasped’ by name (*nāma*).
3. The tongue (*jihvā*) is ‘supergrasped’ by taste (*rasa*).
4. The eye (*cakṣus*) is ‘supergrasped’ by form (*rūpa*).
5. The ear (*srotas*) is ‘supergrasped’ by sound (*śabda*).
6. The mind (*manas*) is ‘supergrasped’ by desire (*kāma*).
7. The hands (*hasta*) are ‘supergrasped’ by action (*karman*).
(8) The skin (tvac) is ‘supergrasped’ by touch (sparśa).

In later times this somewhat random enumeration came to be replaced by the classical double set of
five conative and five cognitive senses, known as the karma-indriyas and jñāna- or buddhi-indriyas
respectively. To these must be added the mind or manas as the relay station for all other sensory
capacities. Its inclusion among the indriyas brings to the fore one all-important point, namely that,
correctly speaking, these indriyas must not be confused with the sense organs themselves, but they
represent their intrinsic capacities. This was recognised long ago by R. Garbe (1917) 320: ‘These
ten senses must not be mixed up with the visible organs (goloka) in which they have their seat
(adhiṣṭhana); they are in fact supra-sensory (atīndriya) and can only be deduced from their
functions.’ However, his words have been heeded by very few translators.33

Manas is used thrice in the Yoga-Sūtra (III.48; 1.35; II.35) and very probably has the usual
denotation as that mental capacity which organises the sensory input, or as K. B. R. Rao (1966, 68)
put it, ‘the synthesising factor of the experience got by the indriyas’ which ‘converts the indeterminate
percepts into a determinate idea’. It is a moot point whether manas should be assigned to the aviśeṣa
category, or whether Patañjali conceived of it as just another indriya pertaining to the viśeṣa
category. Vyāsa, as we have seen, favours the latter solution.

Turning next to the set of five elements which together with the senses compose the viśeṣa-parvan,
we find that Patañjali employs the term bhūta five times, viz. once in the sense of ‘creature’ (III.17),
one as a participle (III.20: aviśeṣyl-bhūtatvāt) and thrice in the sense of ‘element’ (II.18; III. 13, 44).
Although the elements – ether, air, fire, water and earth – are not individually listed, Patañjali was
undoubtedly acquainted with the bhūtas as ontogenetic factors. They belong to the classic stock of
Yoga-Sāṃkhya metaphysics.

In passing, it may be remarked that the Yoga-Sūtra contains no reference to the ‘atoms’ (anu) as the
ultimate subdivisions of the elements, and the statements of the commentators must be taken cum
grano salis. The word animān ‘fineness’, denoting the yogic paranormal ability to miniaturise the
body (see III.45),34 does not necessarily imply that Patañjali subscribed to the atomic theory as
developed in the Vaiśeṣika school. The unmodified adoption of Kanāda’s atomic theory would be
difficult to reconcile with Patan-jali’s guṇa theory, which is meant to explain much the same
phenomena. Besides, the word already appears in the Chāndogya-Upaṇiṣad (VI.6; 8) at a time when
the notion of atoms was certainly not yet formulated.

It should now be possible to attempt an overall reconstruction of Patan-jali’s implicit ontogenetic
model on the basis of the information gleaned from the Yoga-Sūtra and comparable sources. The
findings presented on the preceding pages can be epitomised in the accompanying diagram. Granted
that this conjectural model is correct,
\[
\text{aliṅga} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{linga-mātra} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{asmitā-mātra} \\
\downarrow \\
5 \text{tanmātras (?)} \\
\downarrow \\
5 \text{bhūtas} \\
\quad \text{physico-genesis}
\]

\[
\downarrow \\
\text{manas} \\
\downarrow \\
10 \text{indriyas} \\
\quad \text{psycho-genesis}
\]

\[
\text{deep structure} \\
\quad \{
\text{aviśesa}
\}
\]

\[
\text{surface structure} \\
\quad \{
\text{viśesa}
\}
\]
Patañjali apparently favoured a version of ontogenesis which has been grossly distorted by the classical exegetes. Furthermore, the present reconstruction discards all those misinformed efforts which reduce the ontology of Classical Yoga to that of Classical Sāṃkhya. On the other hand, it is equally incorrect to assert, as did J. W. Hauer (1958, 282), that Patañjali made no use of ontogenetic categories at all but rather subsumed everything under the generic heading of citta, as derived from asmitā-mātra. I will substantiate this particular criticism in a subsequent chapter (see pp. 58 ff).
IV
The Concept of Emancipation

In view of the preceding reappraisal of the ontology of Classical Yoga which led to multiple corrections of long-standing misconceptions about it, it seems desirable to re-examine also the concept of emancipation (apavarga), ‘the greatest original contribution of Indian philosophy’.¹ For if iśvara and puruṣa must, as I have tried to demonstrate, be understood differently from what has commonly been assumed ever since Vyāsa superimposed the views of his particular school on the philosophy of Patañjali, this can be expected to have its logical reverberations necessarily also in the conception of the ultimate concern of Yoga.

The recognised designation for this concept is kaivalya, which can be said to be a yogic term par excellence. Its earliest known occurrence is in fact in the Yoga-Sūtra, where it is employed in 11.25, III. 50, III.55 and IV.26. Kaivalya is the guṇated form of kevala, meaning ‘alone’ or, more significantly, ‘the alone’ (i.e. the Self).² The latter word is frequently used in the Mahābhārata, and in the philosophical sense occurs, for instance, in XII.294.43; 296.13, 29; 304.16, 29; 306.5, 74, 77, 79. The Śvetāsvatāra-Upaniṣad (1.11; IV. 18) also knows this usage.

In the Maitrāyaṇīya-Upaniṣad (IV.21) the term kevalatva or ‘alone-ness’ is introduced, though it is doubtful whether this particular section belongs to the oldest material of the text.³ Finally, as H. Zimmer (1953², 305 f.) pointed out, the words kevala and kaivalya also played a significant role in the philosophy of older Jainism. The word kevala is found, for instance, in the Tattvārthādhigama-Sūtra (1.9, 30; X.1), and in aphorism VIII.8 of the same text occurs the compound kevala-darśana in the sense of ‘absolute intuition’. Moreover, the great pathfinders of Jainism, the tīrthankāras, were also known by the name of kevalins. But these are not the only points of contact between Yoga and Jainism; there are also striking parallels in the ethical sphere which it would be worth while to pursue in a separate study.⁴

What kind of yogic experience does kaivalya denote? J. Gonda (1960, I, 312) offered this explanation: ‘The various members of Yoga which are as it were arranged in stages have but one purpose, the isolation of the spirit (Kaivalya), that is, the union with God. Kaivalya is the experience of the perfect simplicity and uniformity of the nucleus of the personality. This experience [. . .] is one of transcendental bliss infinitely superior to the ordinary state of consciousness, and in it the true being of the yogin expands immensely. The condition of enlightenment is indescribable: one has transcended nature and no longer stands in need of anything and experiences the unity of all existence.’ This description of the goal of Yoga is not only fragmentary but also misleading. Apart from the fact that the ‘members’ of the yogic path cannot be regarded as rungs on a ladder, in what sense can one possibly speak of a union with god? Does kaivalya really contain an element of bliss? What does it mean: ‘the true being of the yogin expands immensely’?

To what degree these strictures are valid is borne out by the actual meaning of kaivalya as it emerges from an unprejudiced study of its context in the Yoga-Sūtra. Here we find that in 11.25 kaivalya is used to qualify the word drṣ‘i or ‘seeing’, which is identical with the ‘sheer seeing’ (drṣ‘i-mātra) of II.20. If any predication can be made at all of the Self it is this, that the puruṣa is of the nature of pure unmitigated Awareness, or, as Patañjali (IV.34) has it, citi-śakti or ‘power of
Awareness’.

Visual experience supplies the most illuminating metaphors to describe this transcendental Awareness, though in earlier days the other sensory and mental experiences also served the same purpose. In a famous passage in the Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (III.7.22), for instance, Yājñavalkya instructs his disciple thus: ‘[The Self] is the unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the unknown Knower – other than He there is no seer, other than He there is no hearer, other than He there is no thinker, other than He there is no knower. He is the Self, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.’

The expression ‘aloneness of seeing’ (drśeḥ kaivalyaḥ, II.25) is not repeated elsewhere in the Yoga-Sūtra, but it can be taken to be implied in all other instances where the term kaivalya is mentioned. Kaivalya is primarily the ‘aloneness [of seeing (of the Self)]’ and only secondarily, and by implication, aloneness in the sense of emancipation. This strange usage can be explained by those aphorisms which speak of the seeming involvement of the Self with the processes of prakṛti or, more precisely, with the states of the psycho-somatic organism. Kaivalya is thus the exact antithesis of samyoga or ‘correlation’, which refers to the Selfs function as the ‘seer’ of the contents of consciousness.

This is the condition described in aphorism 1.4 as vṛtti-sārūpya or ‘conformity with the fluctuations [of consciousness]’. In contrast to this, kaivalya denotes the ‘own-form’ (sva-rūpa) of the ‘seer’ (draṣṭṛ). It supervenes when samyoga, the correlation between the Self and the contents of consciousness, is disrupted.

Samyoga is defined in 11.23 as the ‘cause of the apprehension of the own-form of the power of the “owner” [and that of] the “owned”’ (sva-svāmi-śaktyoh sva-rūpa-upalabdhi-hetuḥ). In 11.24 avidyā or ‘nescience’ is stated as the cause of the correlation. This ‘pre-established harmony’ (yogyatā) between Self (puruṣa) and consciousness (citta) is of a purely noetic nature. No real substantial intermixing takes place, since an unbridged hiatus is postulated between the Self and prakṛti. However, because of the intrinsic immutability (aparināmitva) of the Self as the principle of Awareness, it is possible for the puruṣa to apperceive continuously the on-going transformations of prakṛti as mirrored or expressed in a particular consciousness (see IV. 18) of a specific organism. This doctrine has its epic antecedents, for instance in XII.210.10: ‘The seer, transcending the primary-constituents, apperceives the modifications of Nature’ (prakṛteś-ca vikārāṇām draṣṭāram-aguṇa-anvitam).

As is emphasised in 111.35 puruṣa and sattva (= citta) are always ‘unmixed’ (asamkīrṇa), and yet somehow the ordinary unenlightened mind fails to perceive this fundamental ontic distinction and literally confuses both principles. The Self is always and irrevocably pure Awareness, whether the mind is operative or idle. Consciousness-of (citta) is in perpetual motion and can diminish to the point where one speaks of the inception of unconsciousness, but citti-śakti is in no way altered or reduced when a person is hypnotised, asleep or plain unconscious. The Self is quite unaffected by the behaviour of the mind.

This axiom, undoubtedly derived from yogic noumenous experiencing and therefore also only experientially verifiable, has caused some Western critics considerable embarrassment, accustomed as they are to regard consciousness as an attribute of the mental life. In a recent study on the nature of consciousness as viewed from different philosophical angles, P. Bowes (1971, 170–1) made the following pertinent observation: ‘One of the reasons why people are inclined to feel that consciousness is a function of the brain is that they identify the conscious with the mental, and the mental, as recent researches in neurophysiology and computer functioning show, can be identified
with the physical with some gain in clarity and understanding. If the mental is the physical the conscious must be physical too, for consciousness is an attribute that sometimes qualifies the mental. But the conclusion that the conscious is the physical does not follow if the conscious is something distinct from the mental. This is where Sāṃkhya philosophy comes in, which may have a contribution to make, not in the details of its explanation, much of which is pretty archaic, but in its contention that the conscious is not the mental when the mental is characterised by intelligence, and that the mental has to be explained in terms of the material.’

The notion of the Self as pure underived Awareness is only one side of the doctrine of emancipation; the other is the postulate that man’s true identity lies outside the personality complex in the Self. It is this second point which provides the ethical imperative of Yoga which challenges man to dissociate himself from the impermanent states of the body-mind configuration in order to regain true Self-identity. Man’s essence is thus the pure Awareness itself. Hence the empirical self must in a certain sense be a mirage. Criticising this interpretation of reality as advocated in Yoga and Sāṃkhya, P. Bowes (1971, 184) contended that Sāṃkhya may be misled by the term ‘pure’ frequently prefixed to ‘transcendental awareness’ in order to demarcate it from the empirical consciousness-of (citta) which is always a knowing of this or that. She pointed out: ‘But the term “pure” has also a moral connotation which suggests that whatever is pure is far more desirable than what is not pure. So consciousness as such, pure consciousness, becomes something with which men ought to identify themselves rather than with empirical consciousness which is relative to its content and hence not pure.’

The concept of freedom as conceived in Yoga is manifestly quite distinct from the western interpretations of it. In a sense man is, essentially, always free because the Self is never entering the mechanisms of prākṛti. Ergo emancipation is not something which could, strictly speaking, be attained or effected. But in another, empirical sense there is a movement towards the Self via purification and noetic catharsis. Emancipation is total transcendence, which amounts to the same as saying that when the essence of man is ‘somehow’ recovered, man ceases to be man as we know him.

The self-same transcendental Awareness ‘shines forth’ unalloyed and unabated. Its ‘light’ is ‘mirrored’ in those organisms of prakṛti which have evolved a sufficient degree of complexity, such as the human organism. It is at this point in time that there arises the vexed problem of identity: the Self-reflective stage of the mind. Thus consciousness-of is in a way a function of pure Awareness and prakṛti combined. By manipulating the organismic situation in the form of voluntaristic alterations of consciousness, the mind can gradually be approximated to the pure Awareness. This process is couched in terms of purification (śuddhi: the yogin must endeavour to remove the ‘veils’ (āvarana) which prevent the transcendental Awareness from manifests itself in the organism; he must burn up the ‘defilements’ (doṣa) which stain the mirror of his mind and obscure the Self’s radiance.

This is basically, though not exclusively, a cognitive cleansing process, as is brought home by such key terms as viveka-khyāti (vision of discernment) or anyatā-khyāti (vision of distinction). This inner rearrangement or mental purification consists in the main of a gradual but persistent effort at dispelling the various empirical mal-identifications. In other words, the yogin assumes a priori that the Self is the locus of his true identity and then proceeds to disentangle his multiple misconceptions about his own nature by retracting from everything that exposes itself to him as non-self. And ‘non-Self’ (an-ātman) is absolutely everything that proves to be unstable, finite and sorrowful. Thus severing all contacts with prakṛtic identities, the empirical consciousness ultimately collapses for lack of an objective prop. What remains is the pure Awareness itself.

Kaivalya ensues upon the disappearance of even the last trace of defilement (doṣa), at which point
the sattva is, figuratively speaking, as pure as the Self (see III.55). This at least is the definition of kaivalya according to the aṣṭa-aṅga-yoga tradition quoted (?) by Patañjali. Here sattva does not signify one of the three primary-constituents (guna), but it stands for a condition of the mind which is connected with the ‘upward progress of return to the original state’. It can be said to correspond with liṅga-mātra in the structural schema of ontogenesis.

It is clear from what has been said hitherto that kaivalya, or rather the ‘aloneness of seeing’, transcends every known state of mind. Strictly speaking, it represents an unknowable. Hence to describe it as an ‘experience’, as did inter alia J. Gonda (1960, I), or worse still as an ‘experience of joy’, must be recognised as a serious distortion of the true position of Classical Yoga. Likewise, spatial metaphors are out of place, since the Self is an aspatial/atemporal reality. No ‘expansion’ of anything or into anything can occur.

Equally unsound is the popular idea that kaivalya implies a union with the divine. Whatever the reality may be that kaivalya stands for – and I do not wish to discard out of hand the idea of a transcendental unity of numinous experiencing – the system of explanation proposed by Patañjali certainly does not leave a niche for such an assumption. Union presupposes a situation of bridgeable separation; yet īśvara and puruṣa are absolutely and irreversibly co-essential, wherefore the question of a re-linking does not even arise.

In this respect Classical Yoga differs markedly from the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gītā, where emancipation is conceived of as a kind of living in the eternal presence of God in a medium of mutual transcendental love-participation (bhakti). This is the concept of brahma-nirvāṇa as subsisting in the being of God.

Lastly, having cast doubt on the oft-repeated assertion that Patañjali affirmed the plurality of Selves, kaivalya can also hardly be said to represent a state in which each Self-monad is reinstated in utmost isolation from the world and from all other Self-monads, as was claimed, among others, by M. Eliade (1973, 32). Strictly speaking, kaivalya is not anything separate from the Self. Nor is it, properly speaking, a condition or quality of the Self. Nor is it a goal for the Self. It is simply an empirical construct invented to mark off the Self as postulated in the mesh of psycho-somatic existence from the Self as ‘Verified’ after the pseudo-event of liberation.

I am not sure that H. Zimmer (1953) was right in emphasising that kaivalya denotes both ‘isolation’ and ‘perfection’. Primarily kaivalya appears to be used in a more restricted sense, as describing the Self’s uncontaminated purity. This seems to be confirmed by the use of apavarga or ‘liberation’ in II. 18, which is regarded as the antithesis of bhoga or ‘world-enjoyment’. Apavarga describes the ethical goal of the yogin, the movement towards the Self, and it is to this notion to which H. Zimmer’s transcription of the yogic target as ‘integration’ applies. Kaivalya, on the other hand, in so far as it stands for the Self’s perfectly autonomous existence, is to be correlated with the condition of apparent linkage (samyoga) between Self-Awareness and the finite consciousness. Kaivalya is the condition of the Self in its transcendental purity as ‘the alone’ (kevala).
V
Psychological Concepts

In response to its soteriological purposes Yoga has developed a peculiar psychology whose primary objective is to assist the yogin in reconstituting his consciousness so as to allow the transcendental Self-Awareness to become manifest to the mental apparatus. It is thus an eminently practical endeavour which cannot be separated from the overall philosophical concerns of Yoga and its ethical goals. As a matter of fact there is not even a synonym for what is here called ‘psychology’. This significant fact has been fully appreciated by M. Eliade (1973, 38), who placed the word in quotation marks.

It must be remembered that any compartmentalisation of the homogeneous structure of Yoga theory into such divisions as ‘psychology’, ‘philosophy’ or ‘ethics’ is no more than an artificial means of promoting the analysis and understanding of a rather differently organised body of knowledge. Because of the prominent practical orientation of the ‘psychological’ aspect of Yoga, it has occasionally been compared to western psychoanalytical theories and procedures, but the comparison is only conditionally valid.¹

The fact is that the psychological dimension of Yoga is still a fairly untravelled territory awaiting a far-sighted explorer. There exist a few tentative studies of various aspects of Yoga psychology, mostly by Indian authors, but these do not amount to a great deal and conceptually often leave much to be desired.² One of the principal reasons which invalidate, or at least render questionable, many of these well-meaning contributions is a certain semantic naïvety. More often than not their interpretations take little notice of the particular context in which concepts occur. Yet only a scrupulous analysis of the contextual meaning of a concept creates an adequate base for a comparative study and assessment. On the following pages, then, an attempt is made to determine the semantic content of a select number of psychological concepts as they occur in the Yoga-Sūtra.

1 Citta

The single most important psychological concept employed in Classical Yoga is citta. A variety of translations have been suggested for this word, such as ‘mind’ (R. Prasāda, S. Dasgupta), ‘mind-stuff’ (J. H. Woods, H. Zimmer), ‘internal organ’ (G. Jha), ‘innere Welt’ (J. W. Hauer), ‘mind-complex’ (G. M. Koelman), ‘consciousness’ (M. Eliade), ‘thinking principle’ (M. N. Dwivedi) and ‘psychic nature’ (C. H. Johnston).

The word citta is the perfect passive participle of the verbal root \( \sqrt{\text{citt}} \) meaning ‘to recognise’ observe, perceive’ and also ‘to be bright, to shine’. It is applied wherever psycho-mental phenomena connected with conscious activity are to be expressed. Citta is used already in the Rgveda and the Atharvaveda besides the more frequently employed terms asu (‘life’ or ‘vital force’) and manas (‘mind’).³ It also appears occasionally in the Upaniṣads.⁴ However, it was in constant use by the time of the composition of the Mahābhārata, and from then on belonged to the standard psychological vocabulary.
Unlike *manas*, which is used by most other orthodox Hindu schools of thought to denote the concept ‘mind’, the term *citta* appears to be more specifically at home in Yoga. In Sāmkhya the synonym ‘inner organ’ (*antaḥkāraṇa*) is found, which is taken to be constituted of *buddhi*, *antaḥkāraṇa* and *manas*. The Yoga commentators, on the other hand, employ the terms *buddhi*, *antaḥkaraṇa* and *citta* rather indiscriminately.

Notwithstanding the fact that Patañjali does not provide a definition of this concept, it is clear from its twenty-two applications in the *Yoga-Sūtra* itself and from the commentaries that *citta* generally denotes the entire mental machinery. It is an umbrella term comprising all the various functioning of the mind. As G. M. Koelma (1970, 100) trenchantly put it, *citta* ‘is surely not a separate prakriti evolute’ in as much as it is not distinct from its component factors, *i.e.* *buddhi*, etc., whose emergence from the ground of *prakṛti* is the theme of the ontogenetic schema outlined above.

This evinces yet again the holistic approach of Classical Yoga which lays great stress on the organicity of the processes of consciousness and is only secondarily interested in an analytical categorisation of the inner states. Often *citta* conveys simply ‘consciousness’. It is impossible to find a single label for it in English. ‘Mind-complex’ and ‘consciousness’ should both be borne in mind.

In any event, I believe S. Radhakrishnan (1951, II, 345) to be entirely wrong when conjecturing that *citta* is a synonym of the Sāmkhya *mahat*. Nor do I understand his statement that it ‘is the first product of prakṛti, though it is taken in a comprehensive sense, so as to include intellect, self-consciousness and mind’ (*ibid.*). Nowhere in the *Sūtra* is *citta* regarded as the first evolute of the world-ground, and if it were thus considered, how could it possibly be said to entail the other categories listed by S. Radhakrishnan?

P. Tuxen (1911, 99) and E. Frauwallner (1953, I, 411) are probably mistaken in regarding *manas* as wholly equivalent to *citta*. In one sense *citta* is a comprehensive operational concept which embraces the function of the *sensorium commune* or *manas*, and on the other hand it is ‘consciousness’ as a non-structural concept. The term *manas* occurs thrice in Patañjali’s work, viz-1-35; H.53 and III.48. The first and second instances bear out the traditionally intimate association of *manas* with the sensory capacities which are to be checked by withdrawal (pratyāhāra) and concentration (*dhāraṇā*). Aphorism 111.48, again, speaks of the fleetness (*jāvita*) of the *manas* which, if one looks more closely, is said to be consequent on the ‘mastery of the senses’ (*indriya-jaya*) mentioned in the preceding *sūtra*. This consistent conjunction of *manas* and the senses is far from accidental and reflects pre-classical usage. But this also means that Patañjali most definitely did not treat *manas* and *citta* as synonyms.

Precisely what *citta* entails can be pieced together from the relevant statements in the fourth *pāda*, which deals in a more concentrated way with the philosophical issues of Patañjali’s teaching. The following points emerge from an analysis of these references:

1. *Citta* is in a way the product of both the transcendental Self-Awareness (*puruṣa*) and the sentient world-mechanism (*prakṛti*), for it is said to be ‘coloured’ or ‘affected’ (*uparaktā*) by the perceived objects as well as by the Self (see IV.23). However, it is not an actual derivative of either. It can thus be characterised as a function of the relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. For this reason the translation by ‘mind-stuff’ must be rejected.

2. In IV.4 *citta* is said to arise from *asmitā-mātra*, which S. Das-gupta (1924, 50) not inappropriately rendered as ‘ego-universe’. It is important to understand that no causal dependence is implied here. *Citta* is not a separate *tattva* which could be traced back to *asmitā-mātra* along a direct evolutionary line. *Citta* denotes the whole set of psycho-mental factors as the true evolutes of *asmitā-mātra*. Only in as much as *citta* is constituted by these individual *tattvas* of the psychic
branch of ontogenesis can it be said to have originated from asmitā-mātra, which is the point of bifurcation into physical-objective and psychic-subjective categories (tattva). In this sense alone can citta be regarded as a particularisation or nucleation of asmitā-mātra.

(3) Although citta is held to be born of the ‘single mind’ (eka-citta) which is none other than asmitā-mātra, there are nevertheless many distinct cittas which are all real (see IV. 16) and not merely attributes of external objects (see IV. 15). Nor are they simply products of the imagination of the single mind.

(4) Citta is suffused with, and in a certain way structured by, countless ‘subliminal-activators’ (samskāra) which form into ‘traits’ (vāsanā) (see IV.24), and it is they that feed the fluctuations (vr̥tti), thus causing the centrifugality of the mind which actively prevents Self-actualisation.

(5) However, despite the innumerable subliminal traits which are without beginning (see IV. 10) and composed of the samskāras stored in the depth-memory (smṛti) (see IV.g), citta nonetheless serves the purpose of emancipation (see IV.24). This teleology of citta is explained by the ‘collaborate activity’ (samhatya-kārītva) of the Self, which consists in the Self’s uninterrupted apperception of the goings of the mind (see IV. 18).

(6) When the Self shines forth in perfect purity, the primary-constituents (guna) involute, and, with the dissolution of the organism, the mental complex is likewise annihilated (see IV.34). This dissipation of the mental complex upon emancipation is inferred from the fact that the gunas are said to stream back into the transcendental core of Nature.

As is clear from the above, Patañjali operates with a remarkably sophisticated concept of mind which bears a close resemblance to certain modern psychological theories. According to him, mind represents a system of dynamic relations which have as their mainstay the complex neurophysiological (= objective-prakrtic) organism. There are various sub-systems – the evolutionary tattvas proper – such as manas, which translates the sensory data into concepts, or asmitā, which is the focal point of most of the occurring internal processes.

There is also a deep structure, formed by the depth-memory as the storage centre of past mental activity which is not confined to this particular existence but extends backwards ad infinitum. Consciousness is energised by this network of vāsanās which set up a certain tension, thereby causing the mind to incline towards sensory experience. Externalisation, in turn, leads to the formation of subliminal-activators (samskāra) which reproduce themselves by means of the fluctuations. The first and foremost task of the yogic process is to intercept this cycle (samskāra -* vr̥tti -> samskāra . . . ) by way of the gradual introversion of consciousness or pratyak-cetanā.

In passing it may be pointed out that the question of the spatial extension of the mind which preoccupies especially the later exeges is something of a pseudo-problem. The mind can be said to have a depth dimension but no location or extension. This is borne out by the ontogenetic model itself. The space-time universe is but the outermost ‘rim’ of the vast body of prakrti which is essentially aspatial and atemporal but holds the possibility of spatial/temporal existence.

The discussion of the locus or the size of the mind was initiated by Vyāsa in his comments on aphorism IV. 10. There he reiterates the Sāmkhya view according to which citta contracts or expands in accordance with the bodily dimensions, rather as the light of a lamp spreads out in a spacious palace but becomes confined inside a jar. Yet, he proclaims further, it is only the vr̥tti (‘fluctuation’) aspect of consciousness which is subject to such changes in size. Consciousness as such is all-pervasive (vibhu) – a doctrine formulated, it seems, to explain the very possibility of omniscience with which the perfected yogin is credited.

This important Yoga tenet was rejected by the author of the Sāmkhya-Sūtra, probably a fifteenth-
century work. There is no trace of this whole line of enquiry in the Sāmkhya-Kārikā or for that matter in the Yoga-Sūtra. Vācaspati Miśra’s bisection of consciousness into kārya-citta (instrumental consciousness) and kārāṇa-citta (causal consciousness) would, I venture to suggest, have left Patañjali unimpressed: firstly, because Vācaspati’s interpretation entails an unwarranted hypostatization of citta, and secondly, because an infinite, all-pervasive and hence omniscient kārāṇa-citta makes the concept of puruṣa (Self) superfluous.

2 Vṛtti and parināma

According to Patañjali, the centrifugal consciousness functions in five major ways. These are known as the vṛttis. The word stems from the root √vrī ‘to revolve, whirl about’ and can mean ‘mode of action, conduct, manner of being’, etc. G. M. Koelmann (1970, 86) equates the term vṛtti with parināma, but the former expression implies a local activity, whereas the latter connotes serial change in the Yoga-Sūtra.

The word parināma (from pari+ √nām ‘to bend’) occurs eleven times in the Yoga-Sūtra (viz. II-15; III.9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16; IV.2, 14, 32, 33). To these instances must be added the cognate negative aparināmātva (IV.18). Although the term does not belong to the oldest stratum of Sanskrit, it is already known to the authors of such pre-Christian texts as the Śvetāsvatāra-Upaniṣad (V.5) and the Maitrāyanīya-Upaniṣad (VI.10; III.3). Contrary to E. H. Johnston’s (1937, 33) opinion, the word does in fact occur in the Mahābhārata, namely in the Bhagavad-Gītā (XVIII.37-38) where, however, it is employed in a non-technical sense.⁹

Patañjali in his Vṛṣākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya (I.3.1.11) has the following sentence, which betrays his familiarity with the underlying notion of the word: jayate’rehi vipariṇāmate vardhate’pakṣiyate vinaśyati-iti or ‘It is born, changes, grows, wanes and becomes destroyed’. This usage seems to have been known already to Yāska, whose Nirukta (I.2) contains a passage which discusses the doctrine of the ‘six modifications of becoming’ (sād-bhāva-vikāraḥ) ascribed to a certain Vārṣyā-ya. In this connection he supplies this definition: ‘vipariṇāmatvā ity-apracyavamānasya tattvād-vikāram or “Changing” [means] the modification of something-not-divorced (√yonyu) from [its] essence’. Panini, who is later than Yāska, does not seem to make use of this word and its various derivatives.ⁱ⁰

As was pointed out long ago by W. Liebenthal (1934, 36), whereas the word vikāra (‘modification’) is rare in the Pāli scriptures, its equivalent vipariṇāma is fairly frequent; parināma in the sense of ‘ripening’ is also to be met with. Later on the Sautrāntika Buddhists and the adherents of the Viḍyāpavāda availed themselves of this expression. It is also found in the doctrinal sphere of Jainism, as for instance in the Tattvārthādhyāgama-Sūtra (V.41), but is probably of buddhist origin.

According to aphorism 1.6 there are five modes of functioning in which the ordinary mind-complex can engage, viz. valid cognition (pramāṇa), misconception (viparyaya), conceptualisation (vikāla), sleep (mātrā) and memory (smṛti). The word vṛtti is applied to any mental content which falls into any of these categories. Used altogether ten times in the Yoga-Sūtra (viz. I.2, 4, 5, 10, 41; II.11, 15,50; III.43; IV. 18), vṛtti is employed both in a more general sense as ‘function, mode of being’ (e.g. II.15; guṇa-vṛtti; II.50 and III.43) and as a terminus technicus which refers specifically to such mental activity as falls into the above five behavioural categories of consciousness. In this sense it is often used in the plural (viz. I.5; II. 11; IV.18).

In the light of this evidence it is incomprehensible that H. Jacobi (1929, 588) should have written,
'vr̥tti is not a philosophical term and hence is not defined by the commentators'. He is doubly wrong here because not only is vr̥tti definitely a technical designation, it is also defined by Bhoja on at least two occasions. In his Rāja-Mārtanda (1.2) he states: 'The vr̥tis are forms of modification [of the mind] with a reciprocal relationship between them' (vrṣṭayāh āṅga-āṅgi-bhāva-parināma-rūpas-tāsām), and elsewhere (1.5) he says, ‘the vr̥tis are particular modifications of the mind’ (vrṣṭayāh cittasya parināma-viśeṣah).

The fact that in its technical sense the term refers to specific mental events and not, as is often assumed, to any odd mental content, is clearly borne out by the statement (II. 11) that the vr̥tis are eliminated in meditative absorption (dhyāna). This important sūtra has always been glossed over. What it says in effect is that no vr̥tti whatsoever are carried over into samādhi but that their complete cessation is a precondition for enstasy to arise. The factors present in samādhi are not vr̥tis but prayayas (e.g. vitarka, vicāra, etc.).

From this it is also evident that aphorism 1.2 does not represent a comprehensive definition of Yoga, and as opposed to M. Sahay (1964), I consider it to be merely a preliminary announcement. M. Sahay’s contention that Patañjali meant to prefix sarva to the word vr̥tti is nonsensical. In this particular context nirodha is used in a restricted sense, as was fully recognised by the classical exegeses. As will be explained, the process of ‘restriction’ comprises several levels of application, and the statement of 1.2 implies only the lowest degree of restriction (nirodha) and not sarva-nirodha.

3 Kleśa, kliṣṭa-akliṣṭa

The five kinds of vr̥tti can be either kliṣṭa or akliṣṭa (see 1.5). These terms were respectively translated with ‘painful/non-painful’ (R. Prasāda, M. N. Dvivedī, G. Jha), ‘impure/pure’ (M. Eliade), ‘afflicted/non-afflicted’ (S. Das Gupta), ‘hindered/unhindered’ (J. H. Woods) and ‘Dränger-behafet/-nichtbehafet’ (J. W. Hauer). G. M. Koelman (1970), surprisingly enough, does not discuss these twin terms at all, though he refers to the concept of kleśa.

Yet this conceptual triad – kleśa, kliṣṭa and akliṣṭa – constitutes a central aspect of Yoga psychology. All three words are derivatives of the root √kliṣ to torment, be troubled’. As H. Zimmer (19532, 294) aptly remarked, kliṣṭa is used ‘as an adjective meaning “distressed; suffering pain or misery; faded, wearied, injured, hurt; worn out, in bad condition, marred, impaired, disordered, dimmed, or made faint” [...]. A garland, when the flowers are withering, is kliṣṭa [sic]; and a human being, when the inborn splendour of his nature has been subdued by fatiguing business affairs and cumbrous obligations, is kliṣṭa [sic].’

In contrast with this general usage of the word in the Yoga-Sūtra kliṣṭa and its antonym akliṣṭa are distinctly technical terms which must be juxtaposed to the concept of kleśa or ‘cause-of-affliction’ denoting, as H. Zimmer (19532, 294) put it, ‘anything which, adhering to man’s nature, restricts or impairs its manifestation of its true essence’. G. M. Koelman (1970, 127) offered a more precise explanation: ‘Man is born with certain psychological habits, congenital psychical passions that bind him to cosmic conditions. They blind him, prevent him from discovering what his genuine Self is, make him attached to cosmic life and its allurements, afflict his existence with an endless chain of woes, enmesh him more and more in the net of conditioned existence, and hinder his liberation.’

Patañjali (II.3) distinguishes five types of kleśa: nescience (āvidyā), ‘I-am-ness’ (asmitā), attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa) and the will-to-live (abhinivesā). Each category is carefully
defined, and nescience is explained as the nurturing ground of all other types of *kleśa*. This doctrine entails many implications which cannot all be made explicit in this study. For the present purposes it will suffice to make the following observations. The *kleśa* theorem can be said to circumscribe the fact that every organism, on attaining self-consciousness, finds itself in an existential situation where it has become aware of its own awareness but is confused as to the true nature of this awareness, and the organism is, as it were, compelled to act out of a false identity.

This is what is meant by nescience or *avidyā*. It refers to the peculiar cognitive condition of man who fails to recognise that consciousness-of (*citta*) is an epiphenomenon of the transcendental Self-Awareness. Nonetheless, it would be misleading to ascribe, as did G. J. Larson (1969), to nescience a cosmogonic function which would be more appropriate in the context of Advaita-Vedanta. He stated: ‘In the *Yogasūtra* the reason given for the emergence or evolution of the manifest world is *avidyā* (“ignorance”). In this respect there is a fundamental difference between Sāṃkhya and Yoga, for the appearance of the manifest world in classical Sāṃkhya is much more than the result of ignorance. It is the result, rather, of the very nature of *puruṣa* which must become what it is not in order to become what it is’ (p. 191).

Apart from G. J. Larson’s misapprehension of the precise viewpoint of Patañjali, one may also question his bold speculation that in Sāṃkhya *prakṛti–parināma* is due to the impact of *puruṣa*. This appears to be a later theory which is as yet absent in Īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s formulation of Sāṃkhya thought.11 The recognition of an innate teleology in *prakṛti* does not contradict the simultaneous admission of the autonomous evolution of the *tattvas*.

At any rate, according to Patañjali, *avidyā* is merely a cognitive distortion potent from the very moment self-consciousness emerges. In his own words: ‘Nescience is the [false] perception of the permanent in the impermanent, of the pure in the impure, of joyfulness in the sorrowful, of the Self in the non-self (*anīta-aśuci-duḥkha-anātmasu nitya-śuci-sukha-ātma-khyātir-avidyā*, II.5). Coterminal with this fundamental error is the establishment of a false identity: ‘‘I-am-ness’ is the seeming “one-self-ness” [i.e. identity] of the power of seeing [i.e. the Self] and that of vision [i.e. the mind]’ (dṛg-dārśana-śaktyor-eka-ātmatā-iva-asmīta, 11.6).

This mal-identification gives rise to emotive reactions of which Patañjali distinguishes two basic types, viz. attachment and aversion. ‘Attachment is that which dwells on pleasure’ (*sukha-anusāyī rāgah*, II.7), and ‘Aversion is that which dwells on sorrow’ (*duḥkha-anusāyī dveṣah*, 11.8). The remaining constituent of this psychological web is the powerful thirst for life, *eros*, the survival instinct about which the *Yoga-Sūtra* affirms: ‘The will-to-live, flowing on by its own nature, is rooted even in the sage’ (*sva-rasa-vāhī viduṣo ‘pi tathā rūḍho bhīṁiveṣah*, 11.9).

The *kleśas* provide the dynamic framework of the phenomenal consciousness. They urge the organism to burst into activity, to feel, to think, to want. As the basic emotional and motivational forces they lie at the root of all misery, for Yoga favours the simple equation *anātman = duḥkha*, that is to say, as long as man lives out of a false identity in ignorance of his essential nature (which is the Self, *puruṣa*) he remains subject to sorrow and suffering. Hence Viśāṣa labels the *kleśas* as ‘perversions’ (*viparyaya*).12 Thus the normal human situation can be characterised as the product of a cognitive error, a positive misconstruction of reality, for which there is but one remedy: the recovery of the Self as the true identity of man.

These *kleśas* are thought to have four modes of appearance (see 11.4). They may be latent (*prasupta*, lit. ‘asleep’), attenuated (*tanu*, lit. ‘thin’), temporarily suppressed (*vīcchinnā*, lit. ‘cut off’) or fully active (*udāra*, lit. ‘coming up’). It is the objective of *kriyā-yoga* to effect their attenuation (*tanukāraṇa*) which amounts to the cultivation of enstasy (*samādhi-bhāvanā*) (see II.2). No direct
attack on the klešas is possible, for every mental activity without exception merely increases the concatenations in the depth-mind.

‘Attenuation’ is achieved by refusing these forces an outlet in the form of consciousness processes. Their power is partly checked by sensory withdrawal and the accompanying stilling of the mind. In other words, the yogin plays the subliminal structures off against each other. By disallowing them to take effect in the conscious mind, he indirectly achieves their mutual annihilation. The underlying process is comparable to that of a millstone which grinds itself away for lack of grain. When even the last subliminal-activator (saṃskāra) is exterminated the klešas can be said to be fully destroyed as well.

This intriguing doctrine, ‘which is really the foundation of the system of Yoga outlined by Patañjali’, is epitomised by the two terms kliśṭa and akliśṭa. Vyāsa (1.5) explains kliśṭa as ‘caused by the kleśas’ (kleśa-hetuka), but this makes little sense in view of the fact that akliśṭa would consequently have to be understood as ‘not caused by the klešas, which is absurd, since all mental activity is ex hypothesi engendered by the kleśas. Hence Vījñāna Bhikṣu, in his monumental Yoga-Vārttika (1.5), proposes a different interpretation of akliśṭa, paraphrasing it ‘resulting in akleśa’ (akleśa-phalika).

But what is the nature of this akleśa? The answer to this question is supplied in the Maṇiprabhā (1.5) by Rāmānanda, where we find the equations kliśṭa = bandha-phala (i.e. having bondage as its result) and akliśṭa = mukti-phala (i.e. having liberation as its result). In other words, akliśṭa are those mental events which facilitate the yogic process of the self-destruction of the klešas, whereas kliśṭa describes all other mental activity which merely helps to maintain the potency of the klešas. Thus akleśa designates that condition in which the power of the klešas on the mind is partially or completely checked.

4 Saṃskāra, vāsanā, āśaya

Hidden behind the overt mental processes lies a vast, inexhaustible pool of stimuli, the so-called ‘activators’ or saṃskāras, which power the machinery of consciousness. These are organised into configurations, known as vāsanās or subliminal ‘traces’ or ‘traits’, which partly manifest in the idiosyncracies of the individual. This large storehouse of dispositional factors is the dynamic aspect of the deep structure of human personality.

The saṃskāras are formed continuously as a result of the individual’s world experience. In other words, every thought, feeling and impulse to action must be regarded as an actualisation of the tremendous tension inherent in the subliminal pool. On the other hand, overt mental activity in turn replenishes the subliminal deposit – in this manner perpetuating the vicious circle of phenomenal existence (saṃsāra).

The pool of subliminal activators is conceived as pre-individual. This means that although world experience (bhoga) somehow reinforces the saṃskāra grids, it does not originate them. The newly born individual is by no means a tabula rasa. Rather his very birth is the product of the irresistible pull of the subliminal traces. This conception in a way foreshadows the modern notion of the unconscious. However, it is far more simplistic and, furthermore, has been evolved in response to different kinds of questions, having the purpose of explaining certain occurrences during the process of radical introversion and especially during the terminal states of enstasy (saṃādhi).

Unfortunately, Patañjali does not develop this theory in detail but, as with so many other topics,
presumes that the reader is acquainted with it. Nonetheless, it is clear from the scanty references in his work that this conception belongs to the core of his system of thought, though of course he cannot be hailed as the genius behind its invention or formulation (see below).

Having sketched the general idea behind this intriguing theory, I will next look more closely at its constituent working parts. To begin with the term saṃskāra; this much used Sanskrit word has a wide spectrum of meanings. Composed of the prefix saṃ- and the root √kr ‘to do’, its most general sense is ‘preparation’, but in addition it also conveys the idea of ‘embellishment, training, ritual action’, etc. In yogic contexts, it is habitually translated as ‘impression’ (J. H. Wood, G. Jha, S. Dasgupta). R. Prasāda (1912) opts for ‘habitation’, which perhaps would be more appropriate in describing the concept of vāsanā.

I prefer to render saṃskāra as ‘subliminal-activator’, thus stressing its dynamic nature. It is far from being a mere imprint, as is suggested by the common translation, ‘impression’. This active aspect of the saṃskāras is apparent especially from aphorism 111.9, where two varieties of saṃskāra are distinguished, viz. those which lead to the externalisation (vyutthāna) of consciousness and those which induce ‘restriction’ (nirodha). Similarly, in 1.50 a type of inverted saṃskāra is mentioned, which makes its appearance in the highest form of enstasy and which swallows up or rather obstructs all other saṃskāras.

Again, the fact that the saṃskāras are vestiges of previous mental activity can be inferred from III. 18, which states that by means of the immediate apperception (sāksāt kāra) of the saṃskāras the yogin can acquire knowledge of his former embodiments. Saṃskāra is thus an active residuum of experience. This concept is beautifully captured in the notion of bija or ‘seed’ as used in aphorisms 1.51 (as nirbija) and 111.50 (as doṣa-bija).14

Patañjali’s concept of saṃskāra is ostensibly a mirror-image of the ancient buddhist notion of saṅkhāra (Pāli), signifying the conative factors in the nexus of ‘conditioned origination’ (Pāli: paṭicca-samuppāda) or, more precisely, its second link (nidāna). In a way the five kleśas of Classical Yoga are comparable to the twelvefold nidāna nexus or at any rate are equivalent to part of this schema. However, no direct borrowing from Buddhism need be involved here. Speculations about nescience (avidyā), sorrow (dukhha) and rebirth (punar-janman) are pan-Indian property.

The next term to be considered is vāsanā. Although often used by the exegetes and modern interpreters as a synonym of saṃskāra, vāsanā really stands for a different concept. Vāsāna, which is a derivative of the root √vas ‘to dwell, abide, remain’, is mentioned only twice in the Yoga-Sūtra (viz. IV.8, 24) and in both instances in the plural. It has variously been translated as ‘subconscious impression’ (J. H. Woods), ‘impression’ (G. Jha) and ‘residual potency’ (R. Prasāda). J. W. Hauer (1958) rendered it as ‘Einwohnung’ and correctly delineated it in his translation from the concept of saṃskāra; however, in a footnote (p. 469, fn. 7) he contradicted himself again with the unequivocal remark that vāsanā, saṃskāra and karma-āśaya can be regarded as synonyms. He failed to appreciate that Patañjali would hardly have introduced three different terms to express one and the same idea, particularly an idea of such central importance.

According to aphorism IV.8, the origination of the vāsanās is to be linked up with the fruition (vipāka) of man’s activity. Whilst the activity of the adept yogin is thought to be (see IV.7) neither ‘white’ nor ‘black’, that of the ordinary mortal is threefold. This somewhat recondite aphorism is explained by the doctrine of moral retribution as it has been current in India ever since the early Upaniṣads, where it was first announced.

What Patañjali appears to be saying is this. Ordinarily every action’s fruition can be classified as
either ‘black’ (krṣṇa), i.e. ‘non-meritorious’ (apunya, see 1.33; II. 14), or ‘white’ (śukla), i.e. ‘meritorious’ (punya), or, I presume, as mixed. In contradistinction the yogin – his mental complex being fully inclined towards total dissolution (pratiprasava) – does not generate any action which could be thus typified. By vipāka or fructification is meant not the ‘outcome’ of an act on the empirical plane, but its ‘moral consequence’, which is expressed in terms of the production of corresponding vāsanā configurations. These vāsanās, in their turn, act as the propelling force for the creation of a new individual organism after the death of the present subject. They must be considered as aspatial/ataemporal constellations ‘located’ in the deep structure of the microcosm.

The question of how these subliminal configurations can bridge the gap between two existences is explained in a rather difficult sūtra (IV.9) which reads: jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām-apy-ānantaryam smṛti-samskārayor eka-rūpatvāt. J. H. Woods (1966) translated this as follows: ‘There is an uninterrupted [causal] relation [of subconscious-impressions], although remote in species and point-of-space and moment-of-time, by reason of the correspondence between memory and subliminal-impressions.’

In accordance with Vyāsa’s scholiwm, J. H. Woods linked ānantarya or ‘uninterrupted [causal] relation’ with the word samskāra, yet this lacks in clarity. Ānantarya, it seems, refers to the causal dependence between the original input into the vāsanā pool and the resultant re-translation of the vāsanā code into a specific spatio-temporal existence. This homogeneity between cause and effect is guaranteed by the ‘uniformity’ (eka-rūpatva) between the subliminal-activators (samskāra) and the depth-memory (smṛti). Hence I would rephrase the above translation as follows: ‘Although [the resultant spatio-temporal existence] is remote [in terms of] type, place and time, [there is nonetheless] a causal-relation [between the original subliminal input and the resultant existence] because of the uniformity between the subliminal-activators and the depth-memory.’

I have rendered the word smṛti as ‘depth-memory’ to indicate that what is meant here is not really the ordinary ‘memory’, but the vāsanā concatenations peculiar to a particular individual. Furthermore, I propose that this is possibly identical with asmitā-mātra, which is said to be (see IV.5) the root of the individual mind-complexes or cittas. It is quite likely that smṛti in 1.43 has the very same meaning, since it cannot stand for the ordinary memory (in the sense of ‘recollection’) – considered to be one of the five categories of vṛtti -which is eliminated in the process of meditative absorption (see II. 11). The above contention is not as far-fetched as it may seem prima facie, if one recalls that Yoga postulates a ‘subtle’ (sūkṣma) counterpart to the overt reality as we know it.

In this connection aphorism IV. 10 must be taken into account, which describes the vāsanās as ‘beginningless’ (anādītya) in view of the perpetuity of the primal-will (āsis). How could the ordinary memory be said to store the entire matrix of vāsanās shared by all beings? In passing I wish to draw attention to the word āsis, usually translated by ‘desire’. Patañjali employs this relatively rare term to express the primordial drive inherent in prakṛti which, by means of the vāsanā patterns, leads to ever new phenominalisations. Possibly the concept of abhinivesa (see II.9) is identical with this notion; it can be regarded as a manifestation of āsis in the life of a particular entity. This primordial ‘survival instinct’ can be conceptualised as the counter-tendency to the drive towards ‘self-transcendence’, equally innate in Nature and without which the yogic aspiration for emancipation (apavarga) would remain on the level of wishful thinking and phantasy.

In order to denote the total stock of samskāras which have been called into existence by the volitional activity in either the present incarnation or in past existences and which are the determinative factors of future embodiments, Patañjali introduces the concept of āśaya. The literal meaning of this word, mentioned only in 1.24 and II. 12, is ‘deposit’ (from ā + śī ‘to lie, rest’).
G. M. Koelma (1970, 50, fn. 100) translated the compound *karma-āsaya* as ‘moral-value-deposit’ explaining it as ‘the sum-total of merits and demerits’. The idea behind the theory of *karman* or, more accurately, *karma-vipakā* (‘fructification of action’) is this: no action, or volition, is value neutral. Every action has a value in terms of an objective framework of reference. In other words, the cosmic order is a moral one, and the physical law of causality is extended, *mutatis mutandis*, to the realm of ethical behaviour.

Driven by the *kleśas*, the ‘deposit’ bears fruit, viz. birth, life and world-experience (see II. 13). The impact of this subliminal powerhouse can make itself felt not only in the present (*drṣṭa* ‘seen’) existence but also in future (*adrṣṭa* ‘unseen’) births (see II. 12). The *karma-residue* can, moreover, be acute (*sa-upakrama*) or deferred (*nir-upakrama*) (see 111.22), and this can be made the subject of enstic constraint (*samāyana*) (see III. 18). Depending on the nature of the *vāsanās* or *samskāra* chains, which may be due to meritorious or demeritorious volitional activity, the world experience (*bhoga*) is characterised by either delight (*hlāda*) or distress (*paritāpa*) (see 11.14).

There is no doubt in *Patanjali’s* mind that even though there may be moments of happiness and even euphoria in life, all joy is deceptive because it is intrinsically transient, and sorrow (*duḥkha*) is woven into the very fabric of phenomenal existence. In his own words (II. 15) : *parināma-tāpasamskāra-duḥkhair-guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāc-ca duḥkham-eva sarvam vivekināh*, or ‘Because of the sorrow in the [continual] transformation of the world-ground, [in] the anguish [and in] the subliminal-activators and on account of the conflict between the movements of the *guṇas* – to the discerning [yogin] all is but sorrow’.

Hence it is sorrow which is to be overcome (see II. 16). The means by which *duḥkha* can be surmounted is the disconnection of the correlation (*samyoga*) between the ‘seer’ and the ‘seen’, that is, the realisation of the innate Self as being apart from all accidental or epiphenomenal events of the mind-complex. This brings us back to the yogic process itself.

5 Nirodha

Yoga utilises a great variety of instruments to disrupt the continuum of phenomenal existence, to break the incessant revolution of *prakṛti* which holds no promise of stability or security. At the bottom of all these means lies an identical process, known as *nirodha* or ‘restriction’. There is a good deal of misunderstanding about this term, which has already led the classical exegetes astray. It is crucial for a clear comprehension of the yogic path to clarify this important concept. The source of the confusion is the fact that *niruddha* designates both the process of restriction and the state of restrictedness – a distinction which Vyāsa *et al.* have blantly ignored.

The word is derived from *ni + vṛddhi* ‘to restrain’ and is mentioned in 1.2, 12, 51 and III.9. In contrast to Vyāsa’s conjectures, accepted *tout court* by his successors, the important *sūtra* 1.2 (*yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodha*) does not use *nirodha* in the sense of ‘restrictedness’. Vācaspati Miśra’s contention that ‘Yoga is that particular state of the mind-complex in which the fluctuations [such as] pramāṇa and so forth are restricted’ is definitely erroneous. Nor can this aphorism be interpreted as implying that ‘[the goal of] Yoga is the restrictedness of the fluctuations of consciousness’, since the ultimate destination of the *yogin* is not the inhibition of the five modes of mental activity of the externalised consciousness but ‘the aloneness of seeing’ (*drṣṭe kaivalyā*). Rather, it must be concluded that aphorism 1.2 gives out a preliminary definition of Yoga as the process of restriction, commencing with the inhibition of the *vṛttis.*
This need not necessarily conflict with sūtra 1.3, where the initial word tadā (‘then’) does not have to imply ‘immediately upon the restriction of the vṛttis’. Also, the phrase draṣṭuḥ svārūpe’ vasthanam may not refer to kaivalya at all but simply to the Self as it appears in relative purity in samādhi: the stillness of the mind-complex permits a centralised experiencing in which, although the level of the transcendental Self has not yet been reached, the puruṣa’s presence is keenly felt as the stable centre within the enstatic process.

As is borne out by a candid examination of the relevant statements of the Yoga-Sūtra, the process of restriction is not confined to the pentacont of fluctuations but is a multi-level happening which coincides with the yogic process of unification per se. This, incidentally, sheds new light also on the concept of abhyāsa or ‘practice’. In point of fact, restriction comprises three distinct levels of application:

1. restriction of the fluctuations (vṛtti-nirodha),
2. restriction of the presented-ideas (pratyaya-nirodha),
3. restriction of the subliminal-activators (saṃskāra-nirodha).

Nirodha sets in as soon as the yogin withdraws his senses from the external world by means of the technique of pratyāhāra conducive to one-pointed concentration. In 111.9 it is stated that, with the disappearance of the ‘subliminal-activators of emergence’ (vyutthāna-saṃskāra), the ‘subliminal-activators of restriction’ (nirodha-saṃskāra) emerge. This means that during the normal waking (centrifugal) condition of consciousness those subliminal-activators are effective which lead to wakefulness (vyutthāna), whilst the withdrawal of the senses involves such subliminal-activators as will countercheck the externalising tendency of the mind. Vṛtti-nirodha can mean either the partial or the complete (sarva) restriction of the five types of mental fluctuation, thus covering every phase of sense-withdrawal, concentration and meditative absorption. It is an on-going process with increasing restrictedness.

Valid cognition (pramāna) and faulty cognition (viparyaya), both of which are dependent on an objective substratum, are the first to be eliminated in the internalisation procedure. There is no more contact with the external environment once meditative absorption (dhyāna) is established. Vikalpa or ‘predicate-relation’, as J. H. Woods (1966) translated this term, is also soon restricted. Far more difficult is the elimination of sleep (nidra). It is a common experience that during the first attempts at meditative absorption, the mind instead of reaching the restricted (niruddha) state often lapses into sleep. The untrained mind is unable to sustain the intense concentration required for more than brief spells only and quickly succumbs to exhaustion.

However, the greatest hindrance of all is the powerful human memory which constantly populates the consciousness space with thoughts, images and moods. Its complete control can only be achieved after extensive practice of dhyāna. ‘Memory’ (smṛti) refers here to the actual process of remembering and not, as in 1.43, to the depth-memory, though both are of course intimately related. In passing it may be pointed out that Patañjali’s enumeration of the vṛttis is far from arbitrary. His arrangement is according to the vṛttis’ relation with the external environment, pramāṇa being as it were the outermost and smṛti the innermost of the diverse mental activities.

Since the stoppage of the fluctuations is clearly stated to be effected in dhyāna (see II.n), nirodha cannot possibly be identified with enstacy (samādhi); the classical commentators are definitely at fault on this crucial point. The essential happening in the enstatic states of consciousness can be described as the gradual restriction of the ‘presented-ideas’ (pratyaya). As will be shown, these must
not be confused with the vr̥ttis.

On a still deeper level of restriction, the very propensity to form pratyayas and vr̥ttis is brought under control. This is saṃskāra-nirodha, which, when completed successfully, is known as sarvanirodha or total restrictedness and is commensurate with the final breakthrough to the Self’s aloneness (kaivalya). I will discuss this phase in conjunction with samādhi.

6 Pratyaya

The word pratyaya (from prati + √i ‘to go’) occurs no fewer than ten times in the Yoga-Sūtra (viz. I.10, 18, 19; II.20; III.2, 12, 17, 19, 35 and IV.27), and it is an important technical expression. This fact has not been recognised by the Sanskrit exegetes, who occasionally employ pratyaya in the sense of ‘cause’ and then again as descriptive of some mental content. Neither the Yoga-Bhāṣya nor the Tattva-Vaiśāradī provides a definition of this term in its second meaning of ‘idea, notion’.

When we turn to Bhoja, slightly more information about the meaning of this concept can be obtained. He describes, in his Rāja-Mārtanda, pratyaya as ‘knowledge’ (jñāna) (see 111.2) and elsewhere (11.20) speaks of these presented-ideas as ‘knowledges tintured by an object’ (visāya-uparaktāni jñānāni). He thus understands it as a kind of awareness of something.

This appears to be the meaning of the term throughout the Yoga-Sūtra. Even aphorism 1.19 can be adequately interpreted in this way (see below). I consider this expression as belonging to the core technical vocabulary of Classical Yoga, together with such termini as vr̥tti, cittā or nirodha, etc.

In the commentaries pratyaya and vr̥tti are frequently used synonymously, but this usage is incorrect if it is intended to reflect Patañjali’s viewpoint. For the presence of a pratyaya does not necessarily imply the simultaneous occurrence of a vr̥tti. This is evident from the fact that there appear in samādhi various types of awareness units, e.g. vitarka, vicāra, etc., which cannot be designated as vr̥tti but which pertain to the pratyaya category.

It appears that the term pratyaya is specifically applied to the phenomenon of awareness as it presents itself in a consciousness that rests on an object of some kind. The analogue of vr̥tti in the enstatic consciousness is not pratyaya but prajñā or gnostic knowing in which the object is apprehended directly and from within itself, as it were. On the basis of these considerations I suggest the following taxonomy:

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pratyaya
   /\          /\           /\     \\
prajñā   vr̥tti   vitarka  vicāra
      |          |            |      |
pamāṇā  viparyaya  vikalpa  niśrā  smṛtti
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The term prajñā, standing for the cognitive elements present in enstasy (samādhi), is inferred from its usage in such aphorisms as II.27, which speaks of a ‘sevenfold gnosis’ (saptadhā prajñā), and 111.5, which has the phrase ‘the flashing-forth of transcendental-insight’ (prajñā-āloka), and, above all, from the term samprajñāta, describing all modalities of enstasy which have an objective ‘prop’ (ālambana).

However, there is one single exception to this rule: in 1.49 prajñā has the meaning of ‘knowledge’
usually designated by the word jñāna. This deviation can be explained by the context, from which it is apparent that the author, for the sake of convenience, retained the word prajñā as used in the immediately preceding sūtra. Perhaps even a pun is intended which a modern writer would have expressed by placing the term prajñā in inverted commas: ‘The scope [of this gnostic insight] is distinct from the “insight” [gained from] tradition and inference owing to [its] particular purposiveness’ (śrūta anumāṇa-prajñābhıyām-anya-visaya viśeṣa-arthatvā).

A. Janáček (1957) attempted to show that pratyaya corresponds with the Pavlovian concept of ‘impulse’, but J. W. Hauer (1958, 464, fn. 6) cast serious doubt on this interpretation, though he conceded that in the fourth book of Patañjali’s work (which he regarded as a later appendix) the term pratyaya may possibly have the meaning suggested by A. Janáček. Concerning the first three pādas, J. W. Hauer’s translation wavers between ‘awareness’ and ‘cause’ as fit renderings of pratyaya. However, it is quite unnecessary to assume this double connotation, as all the relevant sūtras can satisfactorily be understood when one gives pratyaya the uniform meaning of a specific noetic factor.

Unlike prajñā and vr̥tti, which are classified by their functional characteristics, pratyaya is more a relational concept in which the content of consciousness is defined in its relation to the transcendental Self as the permanent apperceiver of all ideation. Hence the most congenial translation of this term is the one proposed by J. H. Woods (1966’), namely ‘presented-idea’. This was accepted, inter alia, by G. M. Koelman (1970), one of the few scholars to make a consistent attempt at developing a critical vocabulary for expressing yogic concepts in English. Still, he failed to recognise the leading significance of this concept in the psychology of Classical Yoga and consequently did not realise that pratyaya must be given the constant value of ‘presented-idea’ in the Yoga-Sūtra.

To quote but one instance, what does G. M. Koelman (1970, 185) mean when translating aphorism 1.10 as ‘Sleep is a fluctuation supported by the coming to the fore of the absence [of the waking and dreaming states]’? It seems to me that the compound abhāva-pratyaya is far more intelligibly rendered as ‘the presented-idea of the non-occurrence [of conscious contents]’. Since nidrā is a vr̥tti it must be based on a pratyaya of some kind; hence abhāva-pratyaya cannot really mean ‘the absence of pratayas’.

This was fully recognised by K. Bhattacharyya (1956, I, 256), who wrote, ‘Presentation of a content that is known as real is pramāṇa, of a content that is known as unreal is viparyaya and of a content that appears real even when it is known as unreal is vikalpa; while presentation of a content as presented – i.e. presentation of presentation is smṛti and presentation of the absence of presentation is nidrā.’ In this way sleep is adequately demarcated from the condition of restriction (nirodha) in which all fluctuations are restricted. This is in conformity with Vyāsa’s exposition of sleep. He seeks to demonstrate that there is mental activity of some kind even in deep sleep, by pointing out that when a person awakes he usually ‘recollects’ that he has slept either well or badly.

Likewise, the phrase bhava-pratyaya in 1.19 need not be taken to signify ‘caused by wordly [means]’ as is the contention of the exegetes (see also J. H. Woods, 1966’). Rather, it must be explained in conjunction with 1.18. These two aphorisms read as follows: virāma-pratyaya-abhyāsa-pūrvah samśkāra-śeṣo’nyah – bhava-pratyaya videha-prakṛti-lavānām. Aphorism 1.18 undoubtedly defines the ultra-cognitive entasy (asāmpraṇāṭa-samādhi), and virāma-pratyaya must be translated as ‘presented-idea of cessation’ and is not to be confused with abhāva-pratyaya. The ‘previous practice’ (abhyāsa-pūrva) refers to the cognitive entasy (sāmpraṇāṭa-samādhi) in which the restriction of the presented-ideas (pratyaya-nirodha) is gradually effected. On the other hand, the compound bhava-pratyaya obviously signifies ‘presented-idea of becoming’, which describes the contents of consciousness of those who have failed to transcend the realm of prakṛti and have lost
sight of the goal of liberation from the fetters of Nature *in toto*.
VI
Practice Concepts

1 Abhyāsa and vairāgya

The yogic path as formulated by Patañjali appears as a bi-polar process of gradual internalisation. All techniques are formally subsumed under the two categories of abhyāsa and vairāgya respectively. The former may be circumscribed as the actualisation of the One and the latter as the elimination of the Many. In L. A. Singh’s (1970, I, 108) words, ‘In modern terminology, abhyāsa may be conceived as the process of canalisation and re-conditioning; while vairāgya may be seen as a process of de-conditioning. By breaking the associations between motives and goals, of lower levels of psychological development by a process of de-conditioning and then forming new associations between motives and higher goals through a process of re-conditioning one gradually rises from lower to higher levels of affecto-motivational development.’

Abhyāsa and vairāgya are thus the two poles of any form of Yoga and, indeed, of any spiritual discipline whatsoever. This point is seldom understood. Vyāsa illustrates the functional interdependence of both poles in a striking simile: citta-ṇādaṁ nāma-ubhayato vāhinī vahati kalyāṇāya vahati pāpāya ca, yā tu kaivalya-prāgbhārā viveka-visaya-nimnā sā kalyāṇa-vahā, saṁsāra-prāgbhārā ‘viveka-visaya-nimnā pāpā-vahā, tatra vairāgyena visaya-srotaḥ khilī-krīyate viveka-darśana-abhyāsena viveka-srota udghāthya ity-ubhaya-adhīnaṁ-citta-vṛtti-nirodhah (1.12): ‘The stream of consciousness flows in both [directions]. It flows to the good, and it flows to the bad. The one commencing with discernment (viveka) and terminating in kaivalya flows to the good. The one commencing with lack-of-discernment (aviveka) and terminating in conditioned-existence (saṁsāra) flows to the bad. Through dispassion (vairāgya) the flowing out to the sense-objects is checked, and through the practice (abhyāsa) of the vision of discernment the stream of discernment is laid bare. Thus the restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness is dependent upon both [abhyāsa and vairāgya].’

This bi-polarity of the yogic path was first brought out in the Bhagavad-Gītā, which in fact employs the very same terms used by Patañjali to designate the two poles, and it is as good as certain that he was fully conversant with this old Yoga scripture. The stanza in question is VI.35 which reads: asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam, abhyāsena tu haunteya vairāgyena ca grhyate, ‘The mind, o strong-armed [Arjuna], is undoubtedly unsteady and difficult to control. Yet through practice and dispassion, o son-of-Kunti, it can be seized.’ This dyadic analysis of the yogic path has survived into the post-classical period of Yoga, as is evident from the encyclopedic Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (II.13.40, V.14.66, etc.); it can even be met with in the Sāmkhya-Sūtra (III.36) and certain Vedānta texts such as Śaṅkara’s Viveka-Cūḍāmaṇi (374).

Abhyāsa (from abhi+√ās ‘to abide, engage in’) does not occur in the earlier strata of Hindu literature, where it is replaced by the term śrama or ‘exertion’. Its first mention is in the Bhagavad-Gītā (see VI. 35, 44; VIII.8; XI 1.9, 10, 12; XVIII.36) and the Śvetāṣṭarā-Upaniṣad (1.14), and it
is also widely employed in the epic. In its non-philosophical usage the word abhyāsa has the meaning of ‘repetition, habit’, and some of this connotation is carried over into Patañjali’s concept of ‘practice’, as is clear from aphorisms 1.13 and 1.14: tatra sthitau yatno ‘bhyaśaḥ – sa tu dirgha kāla-nairantaryā-satkāra-āsevito ṍṛdha-bhūmih, ‘Practice is the [repeated] effort to stabilise [the mind-complex]. However, this [practice] [gains] firm ground [only when it] is cultivated for a long time, uninterruptedly [and with full] attention.’ Nonetheless, S. Dasgupta’s (1930, 331) rendering of abhyāsa as ‘habit’ is incorrect, and in fact elsewhere (p. 61) he translated it quite appropriately as ‘practice’. To sum up: ‘ “Practice” stands for the concentrated inner application to the realisation of the transcendental Being which constitutes the essence of all yogic operations. It consists in the careful discrimination between the real and wholesome on the one hand and the transient and all that is unworthy of human motivation on the other. It is the inwardness and unification resulting from this enlightened discernment.”

It may be noted here that in 1.32 (eka-tattva-abhyāsa), and in 1.18 (virāma-pratyaya-abhyāsa), the word abhyāsa does not appear to be intended in the above formal sense but probably corresponds with the notion of ‘exercise’ as a specific instance of ‘practice’.

Like its positive correlative the negative pole, vairāgya, ranks with the post-vedic vocabulary. It does not seem to have been in use prior to the Bhagavad-Gītā. Patañjali defines this second constituent of the path as follows: drṣṭa-anuśravika-viṣaya-vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkara-samjña vairāgyam, ‘Dispassion is the consciousness of mastery of [the yogin who is] without thirst for seen and revealed objects’. Drṣṭa denotes the things visible, that is, the ordinary objects of our pleasure –seeking mind, whereas anuśravika (from anu+ √ṣr ‘to hear’) applies to objects revealed by the sacred tradition, such as the promised joys of heaven. Dispassion, as understood by Patañjali, is not so much a specific act of non-attachment as a state of mind; it is the ‘consciousness of mastery’ accruing from the persistent struggle to disengage the mind from everything that is inimical to its internalisation.

Patañjali knows of two degrees of dispassion. He says (I.16): iva-param puruṣa-khyāter-guna-vaiṭṛṣṇyam, ‘The superior [form of] this [dispassion] is the non-thirsting for the guṇas [which results] from the vision of the Self. The orbit of the lower degree of vairāgya embraces every prakṛtic entity or function except the triple primary forces or guṇas into which all manifest and immaterial objects ultimately resolve. But the yogin must dissociate himself even from these by realising the higher degree of dispassion which discloses the Self to his enstatic view. This implies the resolution of the entire cognitive apparatus and, in the last analysis, the complete deletion of the individual cosmos.

It may be conjectured that the differentiation into two degrees of consummation as regards dispassion may have its parallel in abhyāsa. Tentative evidence for this supposition is found in I.18, where the ultra-cognitive enstasy (asamprajñāta-samādhi) is covertly referred to as the ‘other’ (anya). It is said to follow upon the ‘practice of the cessation of presented-ideas’ which is the objective of samprajñāta-samādhi. Granted that this is tenable, the following correlation is possible:
2 Pratyāhāra, dhāranā, dhyāna

The restriction of the five modes of vr̥tti or mental activity, as the first stage of a protracted process ending in the total abolition of consciousness, is effected by means of the combined practice of sense-withdrawal (Pratyāhāra), concentration (dhāranā) and meditative-absorption (dhyāna). As these form three phases of a continuum, as it were, I propose to treat them together. Patañjali himself prefers a different arrangement in so far as he brings concentration (dhāranā), meditative-absorption (dhyāna) and enstasy (samādhi) under the collective heading of ‘inner members’ (antar-ahga). Their collective practice is, moreover, denoted by the concept of ‘constraint’ (samyama). The reason for his exclusion of pratyāhāra would appear to be simply that this is not a purely mental exercise but involves the sensory apparatus.

Pratyāhāra² (from prati + ā+ hṛ ‘to hold’) is defined in aphorism II.54 as ‘the imitation as it were of the own-form of consciousness by the senses disuniting [themselves from] their [respective] objects’ (sva-visaya-asamprayoge cittasya sva-rūpa-anukāra-iva-indriyāṇām praty-āhārah). This process has been described in many Yoga texts, and there is little ambiguity about the technique, which can be perfectly understood on the basis of the psychology of attention.

There is a certain degree of sensory inhibition in every kind of mental concentration. As the focus of attention narrows to a strictly confined locus, awareness of the surroundings is gradually lost. In Yoga, of course, complete cessation of all sensory activity is aimed at. As the Bhagavad-Gītā (II.58) puts it: yadā samharate ca-ayaṁ kārmo’ṅgani-iva sawaśa, indriyāni-indriya-arthebhyas-tasya prajñā pratiśthita, ‘And when he draws in on every side his senses from the objects of the senses as a tortoise [draws in its] limbs – [his] gnosis is well established’. Elsewhere in the great epic of the Bharatas (e.g. XII. 188.5) the same process is described as ‘making into a ball’ (piṇḍi-kṛtya) or compressing the host of senses (piṇḍi-kṛtya-indriya-grāmam). The metaphor of the tortoise is more often used in ontological contexts to illustrate the process of creation and resorption (see e.g. Mahābhārata XII.239.4; also 239.17 = 239.27).

This non-deployment of the senses is to be understood as the positive effort not to engage in sensory perceptions, as the deliberate attempt to disregard sensory stimuli. Initially arousal is still possible provided that the stimulus is sufficiently strong (e.g. a loud noise, a push, etc.), but as the exercise proceeds, control of the afferent functions becomes increasingly more perfect, until total sensory anaesthesia is achieved. This is what is meant by the expression paramā-vaśyatā or ‘supreme obedience’ of the senses (see 11.55).

Incidentally, this ‘generalised inhibition’ is prepared and facilitated by the muscular control effected through the practice of posture of āsana and of respiratory stoppage or prāṇāyāma. Here, modern neurophysiology confirms the experiential wisdom of Patañjali and his predecessors (see T. R. Kulkarni, 1972, 99 ff.).

G. M. Koelman (1970, 175–6), who singled out four levels of yogic interiorisation, remarked about the practice of Pratyāhāra that ‘it is difficult to situate’ in the arrangement proposed by him. ‘Though it is in a sense somatic, in as much as physiologically the senses no longer react to external stimuli, and is also ethical in character to the extent that it is aimed at and brought about by the heroic practice of universal detachment, yet we think it is already the threshold of the psychological level. “ Withdrawal of the senses” forms the bridge and is the cumulative result of the previous practices,
and opens the door to one-pointed concentration.’ The four levels distinguished by G. M. Koelma
are:

1. the somatic level, which has as its goal the pacification of the body;
2. the ethical level, intended for the purification and stabilisation of the mind;
3. the psychological level, entailing a frontal attack on the empirical mind which is to be
   transcended;
4. the metaphysical level, which is identical with emancipation, that is, the transcendental
   realisation of the Self.

This is a useful model which in a way complements Patañjali’s distinction between the ‘external
members’ (bahir-anga) and ‘internal members’ (antar-anga) of the eightfold path (see III.7).

Perseverant practice of sense-withdrawal induces concentration or dhāraṇā, characterised by
Patañjali as follows: deśa-bandhas-cittasya dhāraṇā (III. 1) or ‘Concentration is the binding of
consciousness to [a single] locus’. This technique consists in a focusing of attention, a mental
zeroing-in on one topic to the exclusion of all others. It is also referred to in aphorism 1.32 as ‘the
practice of a single principle’ (eka-tattva-abhyāsa). T. R. Kulkarni (1972, 118) aptly described
the underlying process as ‘a general “shrinking” of the mind, leaving only a smaller portion of
concentrated mental activity’. He also suggested that the concept of the ‘neuronal model’ of sensory
stimulus, as developed by E. N. Sokolov (1963), may possibly be an explanation of this phenomenon
in neuro-physiological terms. Nevertheless, it must be stressed here that however instructive these
parallels are one must not succumb to the reductionist fallacy of taking them to be sufficient
explanations of what is essentially a psychological not a biological, happening.

In I.35 the expression ‘holding the mind in steadiness’ (manasaḥ sthiti-nibandhanī) is found,
which invites comparison with the statement of I11.1. Whereas the latter is intended as a formal
description of an actual technique, the former aphorism evidently speaks of a result of this
concentration, namely nibandhana, the ‘steady’ condition of the mind being in this case the
concomitant phenomenon of a yogic experience known as pravṛtti or extra-ordinary sensory activity.

The centre of attention, or locus of concentration, can be any object whatsoever, as long as it is
properly ‘interiorised’. Preferred loci are the bodily centres such as the ‘navel wheel’ (nābhi-cakra,
III.29), the ‘throat well’ (kaṇṭha-kūpa, III.30), the ‘tortoise duct’ (kūrma-nādi, III.31), the heart
(hṛdaya, III.34) and the ‘light in the head’ (mūrdha-jyotis, III.32). Patañjali, moreover, lists such
non-somatic ‘topics’ as the sun (sūrya, III.26), the moon (candra, III.27), the pole-star (dhruva,
111.28), etc., and purely conceptual items like friendliness (maitri, III.23), strength (bala, III.24), etc.
In addition there is the recitation (japa) of the syllable om signifying ūśvāra (see I.27–8), which is an
exercise of no mean significance in Classical Yoga.

Anything at all can serve as a ‘prop’ for concentration, provided it is found fit (see 1.39) to narrow
consciousness to a spot and to sustain it in this reduced state over a sufficient period of time. An
object of some kind seems to be called for in order to avert the ever-present danger of a plain relapse
into unconsciousness. The reduction of consciousness to a specific pre-selected point forestalls its
premature collapse. In the light of these considerations, one may hypothesise that where there is no
definite objective support in meditation the ‘interiorised’ body as a whole assumes this essential
role.

Concentration is the persistent effort to arrest the natural inclination of the mind to engage in
desultory activity, thereby exteriorising itself. Patañjali mentions a series of ‘obstacles’ (antarāya)
which impede the cultivation of ‘inward-mindedness’ (pratyak-cetanā). These impediments are sickness, languor, doubt, heedlessness, sloth, dissipation, false vision, the non-attainment of the stages of Yoga and instability in these stages. They are also known as the ‘dispersions’ (vikṣepa)\(^2\) and are said to be accompanied by certain physiological conditions, viz. pain, dejection, tremor of the limbs, faulty inhalation and exhalation (see 1.33–4). Only by resolute application to single-mindedness can these obstacles and their negative side-effects be overcome (see 1.32).

Patañjali knows two synonyms of dhāraṇā, viz. ekāgratā (III. 11–12) and ekāgrya, both meaning ‘one-pointedness’ (eka ‘one’ + agra ‘point’). M. Eliade (1973\(^3\), 70) speculated that ekāgratā and dhāraṇā differ from each other in so far as the latter is a mental fixation for the purpose of comprehension which is absent in ekāgratā. I see no evidence for this hypothesis in the Yoda-Sūtra itself, though M. Eliade’s suggestion is not without interest. As a formal constituent of the eightfold path, dhāraṇā is essentially a technique which can be said to have as its characteristic feature the one-pointedness of the mind.

We now come to meditative-absorption or dhyāna, which, by way of contrast, is defined in III.2 as ‘the one-flowness of the presented-ideas’; this is a literal rendering of the Sanskrit compound pratya-ekatānatā. Implicit in this technical expression is the fact that dhyāna is, so to speak, a linear continuation of ekāgratā as achieved by the technique of dhāraṇā. Yet although meditative-absorption devolves from dhāraṇā, it is nevertheless a mental state with its own distinct properties. As T. R. Kulkarni (1972, 119) put it, ‘While in dhāraṇā the mind remains bound up, as it were, in a restricted space, its continuation in that bound-up state in such a way that the experiential state corresponding to it remains uniformly and homogeneously the same despite variations in the internal or external perceptual situation, constitutes dhyāna [. . .] In the state of dhyāna, the indeterminateness of perception disappears with the mind remaining unaffected by distracting stimuli.’

J. W. Hauer (1958, 322), who is known to have personally experimented with Yoga, offered this insightful description of the nature of meditative-absorption: ‘[Dhyāna] is a deepened and creative dhāraṇā, in which the inner object is illumined mentally. The strict concentration on one object of consciousness is now supplemented with a searching-pensive contemplation of its actual nature. The object is, so to speak, placed before the contemplative consciousness in all its aspects and is apprehended as a whole. Its various characteristics are examined till its very essence is understood and becomes transparent [. . .] This is accompanied by a certain emotive disposition. Although the reasoning faculty functions acutely and clearly, it would be wrong to understand dhyāna merely as a logical-rational process: The contemplator must penetrate his object with all his heart, since he is after all primarily interested in a spiritual experience which is to lead him to ontic participation and the emancipation from all constricting and binding hindrances.’

Dhyāna, in other words, adds depth to dhāraṇā. Hence G. M. Koelman’s (1970) rendering of the term as ‘attention’ is positively inadequate. Dhyāna is not just a prolonged dhāraṇā. It must be carefully demarcated from concentration by virtue of its utmost and continuous clarity of consciousness, the relative voidness of the inner space in meditative absorption, the looming large of the single object, the adjustment of all emergent noetic acts to that one object of consciousness, the slow-down of all cognitive and emotive processes and, not least, because of its underpinning of overwhelming peaceful-ness.\(^9\)

3 Samprajñāta-samādhi
In dhyāna a restructuring of consciousness takes place whose most conspicuous criterion is the increasing proximity between the meditating subject and the object filling the consciousness space. This monoideism brings the yogin to a threshold where suddenly and unpredictably consciousness undergoes a further radical reconstruction. This is samādhi, the symphysis of subject and object.

The word samādhi, composed of sam + ā+√dhā ‘to put, place’, literally means ‘putting together’. This does not always come across in the many renderings suggested for this term, such as ‘trance’ (M. N. Dhivedi, R. Prasāda), ‘meditation’ (M. Müller, G. Jha), ‘concentration’ (S. Dāsgupta, S. Radhakrishnan, J. H. Woods), ‘absorption’ (H. Zimmer, G. M. Koelmann), ‘Versenkung’ (E. Frauwallner) and ‘Einfaltung’ (J. W. Hauer). With the possible exception of the last-mentioned term these transcriptions are either too narrow or too vague to be acceptable.

Hence M. Eliade (1973) borrowed from the Greek language the word ‘enstasis’ or ‘enstasy’, which has the advantage of not being loaded with the same kind of unwanted associations that force one to reject the above-mentioned alternatives. For some inexplicable reason this useful coinage has so far not been assimilated into the general technical vocabulary of indologists, and the terminological confusion continues unabatedly. J. Gonda (1960, I, 204) suggested ‘identification’ as a possible alternative to M. Eliade’s unattractive coinage. But the word ‘enstasy’ has the additional advantage of clearly demarcating the phenomenon of samādhi from that of ‘ecstasy’, with which it is not infrequently confused. Enstasy, as R. C. Zaeher (1969, 143) observed, ‘is the exact reverse of ecstasy, which means to get outside oneself and which is often characterized by a breaking down of the barriers between the individual subject and the universe around him’.

Dhyāna is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for samādhi to ensue. This all-important point is apodictic from the fact that no genuine volitional acts are possible in meditative-absorption without instantly disrupting the meticulously built up mental continuum. M. Eliade’s (1973, 80) characterisation of the higher form of enstasy, i.e. asamprajñāta-samādhi, is in principle also true of any of the lower forms of samādhi: ‘... it comes without being summoned, without being provoked, without special preparation for it. That is why it can be called a “raptus”. Samādhi occurs, or rather may occur, when the mind has reached a state of relative equilibrium, that is, when the five types of fluctuations (vṛtti) are perfectly restricted (see II.11).

The Yoga-Sūtra is quite unequivocal on this, and yet the exegetes have in many ways profoundly upset the conceptual and terminological neatness which makes Patañjali’s work such a valuable and appealing document. These distortions are so obtrusive and so symptomatic of the general unreliability of the exegetical literature that I shall for the present purpose abandon my original strategy of altogether ignoring the commentaries as expositional aids. It seems more rewarding to proceed on the basis of a critique of the interpretations or, more precisely, misinterpretations of the classical commentators.

Aphorism 11.3 seems an opportune starting-point. Here samādhi is characterised in the following way: tad-eva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṁ sva-rūpa-śūnyam-iva samādhih, ‘[When] nothing but the object is shining forth [in] that [meditative-absorption], [and when the mind is] as it were void of [its] own-form, [this is known as] enstasy’. Vyāsa, to be sure, understands this sūtra quite differently: dhyānam-eva dhyeya-ākāra-nirbhāsaṁ pratīyata-ātmakena sva-rūpeṇa śūnyam-iva yadā bhavati dhyeya-sva-bhāva-aveśat-tadā samādhir-ity-ucyate, ‘When meditative-absorption shines forth in the form of the meditated-object (dhyeya), as if void of [its] own-form [and being] bodied-forth in presented-ideas, then; on account of [its] fusing with the own-being of the meditated-object, it is called enstasy’ (Yoga-Bhāṣya III.3).
Vyāsa ostensibly related the words nirbhāsa and sva-rūpa-śūnya to meditative-absorption and not, as would seem more logical, to the intended object and the mind respectively. But in what sense can dhyāna be said to shine forth as the object? And how is one to envisage the loss of its own-form (sva-rūpa)? Although Vyāsa’s interpretation requires the minimum of filling-in, since he follows tenaciously the overt grammatical structure of the aphorism in question, this is achieved at the cost of intelligibility.

Hence, rather than translating ‘that [meditative-absorption] shining-forth as the object only’, I suggest a reversal, namely ‘the object only shining forth in that [meditative-absorption]’. Similarly, it would seem to be more cogent to speak of the mind instead of dhyāna as being void of its own-form, in view of the fact that in the enstatic condition consciousness, which is normally founded on the dichotomy between subject and object, is deprived of this characteristic dualism. Only in a very loose way could the same be said of dhyāna.

In this connection G. Oberhammer (1965, 104, fn. 11) made the curious comment that the fourth stage of samprajñāta-samādhi, by which he means asmitā-samādhi, cannot be determined as artha-mātra and sva-rūpa-śūnya, since its content is the unity-consciousness of I-am-ness. First of all, as I have shown, there is no such stage of enstasy, and consequently his criticism is unfounded. But even if there were an enstatic state in which all contents of consciousness except the feeling of ‘I am’ are fully abrogated, still the very fact of the presence of asmitā would justify one in describing this enstasy as artha-mātra for, to the apperceiving Self (as ‘seer’ or draṣṭṛ), asmitā certainly represents an intended object (artha).

Furthermore, G. Oberhammer’s conjecture that ‘coincidence’ (samāpatti) and ‘constraint’ (samyama) pertain to a classification system which is different from that which operates with the concepts of nirodha and samprajñātañ-samprajñātin-samādhi is equally untenable. Samāpatti is defined in 1.41 as follows: kṣīṇa-vṛttte-abhijñātasya-iva maṇer-graḥitṛ-grahāṇa-grāhyesu tat-stha-tad-aṇjanatā samāpattih, ‘[In the case of the mind whose] fluctuations have dwindled [and which has become] like a transparent-jewel,[11][there results], [in regard to the “grasper”, the “grasping” and the “grasped”, [a state of] coincidence with that on which [the mind] abides and by which [the mind] is “anointed”’.

This sūtra describes the basic mechanism of any form of enstasy other than the ultra-cognitive variety (asamprajñāta-samādhi). Also, I would contend that samāpatti is descriptive of the underlying process of enstasy whereas samādhi is a formal category denoting a technique. In other words, the relation between these two terms is analogous to the relation between ekāgratā and dhāraṇā or between ekatāñata and dhāyaṇa.

There are four types of samāpatti or ‘coincidence’: tatra śabda-artha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ samkīrṇa savitarkā samāpattih, śmrṭi-pariśuddhaḥ sva-rūpa-śūnya-iva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsa nirvitarkā, etayā-eva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣma-visayaḥ vyākhyaṇā (1.42–4), ‘[So long as there is] conceptual knowledge [based on] the intent of words in this [samāpatti], [it is called] coincidence interspersed with “cogitation”. – With the purification of the memory [i.e. the tranquilisation of thinking], [when the mind is] as it were void of [its] own-form [and when] the object only shines forth, [this is known as] “ultra-cogitative” [coincidence]. – By these [two types of samāpatti] [the other two kinds of coincidence], the “reflexive”, and the “ultra-reflexive” [which have] subtle objects [as their meditative support] are explained.’[12]

The cognitive factors present in vitarka- and vicāra-samāpatti represent a category of mental activity sui generis and must not be confused with the fluctuations (vṛttti). As is incontestably stated in 1.41, enstatic coincidence (samāpatti) ensues after the fluctuations have dwindled. Cognition
(vitarka) and reflexion (vicāra) are specific to the transmuted consciousness in enstasy. They belong to the category of prajñā or supra-cognition, i.e. gnostic knowledge. As G. M. Koelman (1970, 199) aptly remarked in regard to vitarka-samādhi: ‘We should not think, however, that a discursive reasoning is going on while one is in the state of “cogitative coarse intentional identity” […] Were it so, there would be no state of absorption, no yogic inhibition of mental activity. Such mental fluctuations are absent, but the immobile intentional identity is in terms of and expressed in rationalizing and conceptualizing signs.’ This applies mutatis mutandis also to the vicāra type of enstatic realisation.

Whereas vitarka signifies a supra-cognition in relation to a ‘coarse’ (sthūla) object, that is, anything pertaining to the surface structure of Nature (such as one of the somatic loci mentioned by Patañjali or any other micro- or macro-structure of the tangible universe), vicāra denotes a supra-cognition in relation to a ‘subtle’ (sūkṣma) object, which can be any phenomenon ranging from the tanmātras (see above, pp. 44 f.) up to the transcendent core of the knowable world, i.e. the undifferentiate (alīnga). However, in nirvitarka- and nirvicāra-samāpatti the respective supra-cognitions are fully dispersed and what remains is a consciousness which, like a highly polished mirror, reflects the intended object with a modicum of refraction.

In 1.47 it is implied that nirvicāra-samāpatti is the highest stage of this series, which suggests the following hierarchic organisation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nirvicāra-samāpatti} & \uparrow \\
\text{vicāra-samāpatti} & \uparrow \\
\text{nirvitarka-samāpatti} & \uparrow \\
\text{vitarka-samāpatti} & \uparrow \\
\end{align*}
\]

There is no mention of any ānanda-samādhi or asmitā-samādhi in the Yoga-Sūtra which would have validated the hypothetical models put forward by Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra and their successors. In this context the Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.17) contains the following relevant passage: vitarkas-cittasya-ālambane sthūla ābhogah sūkṣmo vicāraḥ, ānando hlādah eka-ātmikā samvid-asmitā, tatra prathamaś-catuṣṭaya-anugataḥ samādhiḥ savitarkah, dvitiyō vitarka-vikālaḥ savicāraḥ, tṛtiyō vicāra-vikālaḥ sa-ānandaḥ, caturthas-tad-vikalośmitā-mātra-iti, sarvā ete sa-ālambanāḥsamādhyāḥ, ‘“Cogitation” [means] the mind’s coarse experience of a [coarse] support; “reflexion” is [the mind’s] subtle [experience of a subtle object]; “joy” [means] gladness; “I-am-ness” is the feeling [pertaining] to oneself. Of these [four types] the first, having [all] four associated together, is the enstasy with “cogitation”. The second, lacking “cogitation”, is [the enstasy] with “reflexion”. The third, lacking “reflexion”, is [the enstasy] with “joy”. The fourth, lacking that [“joy”], is [the enstasy] with [the feeling of] “I-am-ness” only. All these are with supports [i.e. intended objects].’

Arranged in a systematic fashion this looks as follows:
asmitā-samādhi = asmitā
ānanda-samādhi = ānanda + asmitā
vicāra-samādhi = vicāra + ānanda + asmitā
vitarka-samādhi = vitarka + vicāra + ānanda + asmitā

This is a beautiful illustration of the sat-kārya axiom according to which the effect is pre-existent in its cause. In this particular case the lowest degree of enstatic realisation contains in posse the supra-cognitive elements typical of the higher forms of enstasy. Thus Vāyā assumes ānanda and asmitā to constitute the contents of separate stages of samādhi. It is unclear how he envisages the correlation between these postulated types and the four varieties of samāpatti as cited in 1.42–44. Does he take ānanda- and asmitā-samādhi to be instances of nirvicāra-samāpatti? And what sort of experiences do they stand for? Vācaspati Miśra tries to disentangle these knotty problems.

In his Tattva-Vaisāradī (1.17) we find this explanation: ānanda-iti indriye sthūla-ālambane cittasya-ābhoga āhūḍaḥ, prakāśa-śīlat-tayā khalu sattva-pradhānād-ahaṅkārād-indriyān-uptapannāi, sattvaṁ sukham-iti tāny-īti sukhāni-iti tasmim-ābhoga āhūḍa-iti (...) asmitā-prabhavāṇi-indriyōni, tēna-eŚām-asmitā sūkṣmaṁ rūpam, sā ca-aṭmanā grahītā saha buddhir-eka-ātmikā samvid-īti, or ‘Joy is the mind’s gladdening experience [when directed towards] a sense-organ [which is to be understood as] a coarse support. The sense-organs of course arise from the “I-maker” [in so far as they have] a disposition to enlighten because of the preeminence of sattva [in them]. [As] sattva [manifests] pleasure, these [sense-organs] too are pleasurable. Experience is thus gladdening [when directed towards] those [sense-organs] [. . .] The sense-organs are produced from ‘I-am-ness’; [consequently] this “I-am-ness” is their subtle form, and this [“I-am-ness”] together with the “grasper” is [known as] buddhi [i.e.] the feeling [pertaining] to oneself.’

These remarks, not particularly illuminating in themselves, make more sense when viewed in conjunction with Vācaspati Miśra’s proposed model of eight types of enstatic coincidence (samāpatti). He states (1.46): tena grāhye catasraḥ samapātta-yo grahītṛ-grahaṇayōs-ca catasra ity-aṣṭau te bhavantī-īti. ‘Thus [with regard] to the “grasped” there are four coincidences, [and there are a further] four [in respect to] the “grasper” and “grasping”. Thus there are eight of these [coincidences].’ Diagrammatically this may be shown as on p. 91.

These conjectural stages of enstatic experience have been admirably analysed by G. M. Koelman (1970, 198 ff). However, whatever explanatory value they may be credited with, they cannot be reckoned to be representative of Patañjali’s viewpoint as reconstructable from the evidence in the Yoga-Sūtra itself. At any rate, the profound disagreements between the various exegetes on this crucial issue suffice for us not to accept any of their explanations precipitately.
While Vācaspati Miśra boldly doubles Vyāsa’s perhaps more convincing quartet of enstatic types, Vijñāna Bhikṣu in his Yoga-Vārttika (1.46) comes up with a six-stage model. He explicitly rejects Vācaspati Miśra’s view according to which the mainstay of vitarka-and vicāra-samādhi is the internalised object (grāhya), of ānanda-samādhi the perceptual process (grahaṇa) and of asmitā-samādhi the category of the Self (graḥītṛ). Instead he regards ‘joy’ (ānanda) as a product of extreme vicāra-samapatti, which then is made the objective prop of the next higher form of enstasy. Asmitā-samāpatti, again, is explained by him as kevala-puruṣa-ākāra-samvid, that is, the feeling which takes the shape of the transcendental Self. Vijñāna Bhikṣu adamantly denies that there is a nir-ānanda- or a nir-asmitā-samādhi.

G. M. Koelman (1970) opted for Vācaspati Miśra’s interpretation, which he sought to vindicate in what must be considered the most penetrating analysis of this whole problem complex hitherto. However, he was mistaken in his plea that the eight types of samāpatti as delineated in the Tattva-Vaiśāradī ‘are the core of Pātañjala mental discipline’ (p. 223). They are indeed ‘a magnificent piece of psychology’ (ibid.), but it remains an open question to what degree this theoretical model is founded on bona fide experiential information.

Vācaspati Miśra was undoubtedly a conscientious and extraordinarily erudite scholar, but hardly an initiated yogin who could speak authoritatively about such recondite phenomena as these enstatic states. In point of fact, a close inspection of the Yoga-Sūtra itself bears out that neither Vācaspati Miśra nor Vijñāna Bhikṣu is a reliable guide in this complicated matter.

Patañjali’s own view seems to be that nirvicāra-samāpatti is the highest form of cognitive enstasy (samprajñāta-samādhi). He states: nirvicāra-vaiśāradye’dhyātma-prasādah ṛtam-bhārā tatra praṇā (1.47–48), ‘When there is autumnal-lucidity in nirvicāra [- samāpatti], [then this is called] the clarity of the inner-being. – In this [state of autumnal-lucidity] insight is truth-bearing.’

Vyāsa (1.47) paraphrases this enstatic condition as bhūta-artha-viṣayā krama-anamurodhī sphuṭa-prajñā-ālokāḥ or ‘the flashing-forth of full-blown (sphuṭa) gnosis, not conforming to [the law of] sequence [and having as its] objects the things themselves’. At this culmination of the enstatic process of involution no specific pratītyas or ‘presented-ideas’ remain. There is merely a generic awareness of the essence of the intended object. All noetic acts of the supra-cognitive type (e.g. vitarka, etc.) are suspended. Patañjali does not even mention the presence of ānanda (meta-bliss) or asmitā (meta-subjectivity) in this state, though this need not imply their actual absence.

The gnostic illumination which occurs at this culminating stage is said to be without development. It
is, as Vācaspāti Mīśra (1.47) puts it, ‘simultaneous’ (yuṣgapād), an atemporal knowing which has as its essential characteristic that it is ‘truth-bearing’ (ṛtam-bhāra). In other words it is, if one recalls the archaic overtones of the concept of rta, reflective of the universal order and harmony. This elevated enstatic state is likened to the clarity of the autumnal sky so typical of northern India. The term vaisāradya has its Pali equivalent in vesārajja. It appears that this expression is known in the doctrinal sphere of Buddhism primarily in connection with the teaching of the ‘four confidences’ (catvāri vaisāradyāni) as, for instance, in the Bodhisattva-bhūmi of Asanga (U. Wōghara’s 1908 ed., p. 402, 1.3 – and his note on p. 39). However, I am reluctant, in the context of Classical Yoga, to translate the term as ‘dexterity’, as did G. M. Koelman (1970, 226). That it should be given the value of ‘lucidity, brightness’, etc., is corroborated by virtually all the references to this term in the commentaries, from Vāṣa’s Bhāṣya to Harihara’s nineteenth-century work, which, incidentally, furnishes us with the equation viśāradya = svacchā or ‘transparent’ (ad Yoga-Bhāṣya II.6).

Of some interest, moreover, is the term adhyātman of aphorism I.47, which I have translated as ‘inner-being’. It is a key concept in pre-classical Yoga and is explained at length in several passages of the Mahābhārata (viz.- XII. 187; 239), especially the Bhagavad-Gītā (viz. VIII.3, etc.). Reference to it is also made in the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad (II.12; VI.18) and the Praśna-Upaniṣad (III.1, 12), but the word is still older, as is borne out by its repeated occurrence in the older Upaniṣads. Basically, it stands for the ‘inner world’ in its creative-dynamic aspect as sva-bhāva (‘own-being’), the microcosmic creatrix (prakṛti). When its productivity is suspended through Yoga, this is called the ‘clarity’ (prasāda) or ‘tranquillity’ (prasānti) of the inner-being.

In this connection Vāṣa (1.47) cites a stanza identified by Vācaspāti Mīśra as a paramā-ṛṣī gāthā. It reads: praṇā-prasādām-aruhyā asocyaḥ sotrato jarāṁ, bhūmi-śhān-iva śaila-śtāh sarvān praṇāḥ nupāsyati, ‘Having ascended to the tranquillity of gnosis, griefless, the man-of-gnosis beholds, like [a person] standing on the mountain [-top] [and looking down upon] the valley-dwellers, all grief-stricken creatures’. This is a popular metaphor which is found in the Mahābhārata (XII. 17.19; cf. Bengali version 151.11), the Dhammapada (28), the Mahāvagga (1.5, 7), the Miliṇḍa-Paṇha (387) and the Ahirbudhnya-Samhitā (XV.71-72).

This non-sequential gnosis is further explained in 1.49: śruta-anumāṇa-praṇābhīyām-anya-viśayā viśeṣa-arthatvāt, ‘The scope [of this gnosis] is distinct from the knowledge [derived from] tradition or inference because of [its] particular purposefulness’. J. H. Woods (1967) translated this sūtra differently: ‘Has an object other than the insight resulting from things heard or from inferences inasmuch as its object is a particular.’ Although this rendering is true to Vāṣa’s diction, who argues that, whilst śabda (tradition) and anumāṇa (inference) deal with generic objects only, saṃādhī discloses the particular, nevertheless a far less sophisticated interpretation is possible and also preferable. J. W. Hauer (1958, 337), for instance, understood the phrase viśeṣa-arthatvāt as ‘weil sein Zweck ein anderer ist’, explaining this special purpose to be that of liberation. I find the simplicity of this solution convincing and therefore translate the above phrase ‘particular purposefulness’.

The gnostic flash or praṇā-āloka spoken of in the Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.47) and in the Yoga-Sūtra (III.5) can tentatively be understood as the climax of the sevenfold gnosice (saṭpa-dhā praṇā) mentioned in aphorism 11.2 7 (tasya saṭpa-dhā prānta-bhūmih praṇā)4 and described as arising from the vision of discernment (viveka-khyāti, see II.26). A possible elucidation of what might be entailed in this ‘sevenfold gnosice’ can be found in the Yoga-Bhāṣya (II.27): saṭpaḥ-dhā iti asuddhā-āvaraṇa-mala-apagamāc-cittasya prataya-antara-anupāde sati saṭpa-prakārā-eva praṇā vivekino bhavati, tad-yathā-pariṇāṁ tam hayam na-asya punah pariṇāyam-asti, kṣīna heya-hetavo.
na punar-eteśāṁ kṣetavyam-asti, sākṣāt-kṛtaṁ nirodhā-samādhinā hānam, bhavito viveka-khyāti-
rūpa hāna-upāyah ity-ēśā catustayi kāryyā vinuktiḥ prajñāyaḥ, citta-vimuktis-tu trayī carita-
adhikārā buddhiḥ guṇā giri-śikhara-kuta-cyutā iva grāvāno nir-avasthānāḥ, sva-kārane pralaya-
abhimukhah saha tena-astam gacchanti, na ca-esām pravilinānam punar-asty-uptādah pravojana-
abhāvānty-etyām-avasthāyāṁ guṇa-sambandha-ātītaḥ sva-rūpa-mātra-jyotir-amałāḥ kevalī
puruṣaḥ, “Sevenfold” [means that], through the disappearance of the defilements from the cover-of-
impurity, when no other presented-idea is produced by the mind, the gnosis of the discerner (vivekin)
is of seven kinds, [viz.] (i) that-which-is-to-be-escaped (heya) [i.e. all future suffering] is full-
comprehended; it need not be full-comprehended again; (ii) the causes of that-which-is-to-be-escaped
have dwindled [namely the correlation between “seer” and “seen”, etc.] they need not dwindle again;
(iii) through the entasy of restriction the [total] cessation (hāna) is realised; (iv) the means of
cessation in the form of the vision of discernment has become manifested; this is the fourfold release
of the gnosia to be effected; however, the release of the mind [as such] is triple; (v) the sovereignty of
buddhi is obtained; (vi) the guṇas, like rocks [which have] fallen from the edge of a mountain-peak,
are without support [and] of their own accord incline towards dissolution, [and] they go to rest with
that [buddhi]; and once these [guṇas] are dissolved, there is no new origination [for them], because
of the absence of the cause [viz. avidyā or “nescience”]; (vii) in this state the Self has transcended the
connection with the guṇas [and is established as] the light of nought but [its] own-form, undefiled
[and] alone”.

The vision of discernment (viveka-khyāti) is the expedient by which the cessation (hāna) of the
ominous correlation between Self and non-Self is brought about (see II.26). It is also known as
viveka-ja-jīnā or ‘gnosis born of discernment’ (see III.52, 54).\footnote{Aphorism III.52 is of special
interest since it prescribes a method by which this non-sequential gnosia can be effected most
directly: kṣāṇa-tat-kramayohsanyamād-viveka-jaṁ jīnān, ‘By constraint on the moments-of-time
and their sequence [the yogin gains] discernment-born gnosia’. The topic of this particular exercise is
the structure of time thought to consist of smallest intervals of duration (kṣāṇa). In other words, time
is made the meditative support by which the atemporal reality is to be actualised.

The commentaries liken these time intervals to the atoms (parama-anu) of matter, but as I have
pointed out above (see p. 49) there is no conclusive evidence for the assumption that Patañjali
adopted the atomic conception of matter as developed in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools of thought.
On the other hand, they are probably right in ascribing to him the notion that temporal duration is
merely a mental construct (buddhi-samāhāra)\footnote{– a conception not dissimilar to the Kantian
conception of time as ‘reine Form der sinnlichen Anschauung’.} – a conception not dissimilar to the Kantian
conception of time as ‘reine Form der sinnlichen Anschauung’.\footnote{Thus what is real (vastu) is the
discrete moment (kṣāṇa) of the incessant self-transformation of the primary-constituents (guṇa) of
Nature. It is highly probable that in his metaphysics of time Patañjali was directly inspired by the
high-powered speculations of the Sautrāntika Buddhists.}

In 111.54 this gnostic revelation is described as the ‘deliverer’ (tāraka) owing to its power of
transporting the yogin across the ocean of phenomenal existence into the Unconditioned. This gnosia
is ‘omni-objective’ (sarva-viṣaya), ‘omni-temporal’ (sarvatha-viṣaya) and ‘non-sequential’
(akrama). The quintessence of the vision of discernment is the abolition of the empirical ego. As
Patañjali (IV.25) declares, višeṣa-darśina ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-viniyṛtthī, ‘For the seer of the
distinction [between Self and non-self] [there ensues] the discontinuance of the projection of the selfs
state’.

The decisive phrase ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā, here converted into ‘the projection of the selfs state’, is
a problematic one, as is borne out by the existing translations. R. Prasāda (1912), for instance, took it
to mean ‘the curiosity as to the nature-and-relations of the Self’ G. Jha (1907) proposed ‘thought of the nature of self’, whilst J. H. Woods (1966) preferred to translate it as ‘pondering upon his own states-of-being’. I submit that these various renderings disregard the active component in bhāvanā which is closely allied to bhāvanā, meaning ‘effecting, realising, cultivating’. I therefore propose to translate it as ‘projection’, which best conveys the element of ‘mental construction’.

Supportive evidence for this interpretation is found in Buddhism, where bhāvanā is usually given the meaning of ‘meditation’ or ‘visualisation’ though, as D. L. Snellgrove (1959, I, 134) pointed out, ‘in the special sense of mental production or thought-creation’. Naturally, these considerations apply also to aphorism 1.33, which is the only other instance in which the word bhāvanā (as bhāvanātā) occurs. This sūtra is of considerable interest, as it speaks of ‘the projecting of friendship, compassion, gladness and impartiality’ (maitrī-karuna-muditā-upakṣānām . . . bhāvanātāḥ), which establishes an immediate link with Buddhism, where this set of four mental attitudes is well known and goes under the technical designation of the ‘stations of brahmo’ (brahma-vihāra).

The term ātma-bhāva, again, denotes the empirical self complex which is abolished as soon as nirvācāra-vaisāradya sets in, thus giving way to a state which Vyāsa circumscribes as ‘sheer existing’ or sattā-mātra. The act of ‘discernment’ (viveka) which characterises this enstatic elevation (prasamkhyaṇa) is not an ordinary intellectual exercise of ‘differentiation’ or ‘comparison’. Rather it is an immediate knowing (Innehaben) of the distinction between Self and self. This explains why the expedient by which the yogin propels himself into the next higher stage of enstasy, viz. asamprajñāta-samādhi, is not so much a noetic act as a conative one in the form of a total and irrevocable turning away from prakṛtic reality. I am referring, of course, to para-vairāgya or ‘higher dispassion’ (see 111.50; 1.16) as the only means of entering into the ultra-cognitive enstasy.

G. M. Koelman (1970, 237) displayed considerable empathetic understanding when examining this recondite phenomenon. Trying to determine the nature of this final volition to disengage entirely from prakṛti as such, he explained: ‘The rejection, however, should not be a violent effort, since this would impair peace of mind. There should be a tranquil suave disinterestedness, a peaceful refraining from thinking, rather than a rejection of the thought of inadequacy or of the thought of otherness, a constant refusal of consciousness and a sinking away into Awareness. The highest state of concentration [sic] is, therefore, an effort of the will rather than an activity of the mind.’

4 Asamprajñāta-samādhi
What happens once the vision of discernment has ceded? The answer is simple: when all conscious contents have been cleared and even the awareness of pure existing is no longer present, consciousness undergoes a total collapse. There is a gradual emptying of consciousness in the course of the enstatic journey, and then comes the critical point at which ‘implosion’ occurs owing to the extreme evacuation of the mind. This is asamprajñāta-samādhi, which coincides with the restriction of all presented-ideas (prayaya-nirodha).

However, this absence of consciousness does not mean that the ultra-cognitive enstasy is equivalent to a state of unconsciousness as ordinarily understood. Such an interpretation is not defensible on any count, since Yoga is careful to differentiate between consciousness (citta) and Awareness (cit). For this reason one must also reject G. Jha’s (1907) translation of the term asamprajñāta as ‘unconscious’. A somewhat more appropriate rendering would appear to be ‘ultra-cognitive’ as suggested by M. N. Dwivedi (1943). As S. Dasgupta (1924, 124) commented, ‘This state, like the other previous states of the samprajñāta type, is a positive state of the mind and not a mere state of vacuity of objects or negativity. In this state, all determinate character of the states disappears and their potencies only remain alive.’ G. M. Koelman (1970, 239), more punctiliously perhaps, put it thus: ‘Concentration [sic] without objective consciousness should not be conceived as total absence of knowledge; only knowledge by objectivation is absent’.

This rather elusive condition is also called ‘restriction transformation’ (nirodha-parināma) in aphorism III.9: vyuṭhāṇa-nirodha-saṃskārayor-abhihava-prādurer-bhāvau nirodha-kṣaṇa-citta-anvayo nirodha-parināmah, ‘[When there is] subjugation of the subliminal-activators of emergence and the manifestation [of the subliminal-activators] of restriction [this is known as] the restriction transmutation [or] the connection of consciousness with the moment of restriction’. The immediately succeeding aphorism (III. 10) complements this statement: tasya praśānta-vāhīta saṃskārat, ‘Its calm flow [is effected] by a subliminal-activator’.

The specialness of the restriction transformation (nirodha-parināma) is brought out by aphorisms III. 11–12, which define the other non-ordinary ‘transmutations’ (parināma) of the mind: sarva-arthatā-ekāgratayoh kṣaya-udayau cittasya samādhi-parināmāh, tataḥ punaḥ sānta-uditau tulya-pratyayau cittasya ekāgratā-parināmaḥ ‘The dwindling of all-object-ness and the uprisal of one-pointedness is the enstasy transmutation of the mind. – Then again, when the quiescent and the uprisen presented-ideas are similar, [this is] the one-pointedness transmutation of the mind.’ Whereas III. 12 is seemingly a description of the underlying process of dhāraṇā and dhyāna, aphorism III. II refers to the central happening in enstasy.

The term sarva-arthatā, which occurs only in III.II, is decisive. Contrary to the contention of the classical exeges, who equate this expression with visaya or external object, arthatā must be taken to denote ‘intended object’. Nor can I accept S. Dasgupta’s (1924, 155) interpretation of III.9 that ‘[e]ven when the mind is in the sampra-jñāta state it is said to be in vyuṭhana (phenomenal) in comparison with the nirodha state, just as the ordinary conscious states are called vyuṭhana in comparison with the sampra-jñāta state’. Evidently he read slightly more into this aphorism than is actually there. It seems to me that the term vyuṭhāṇa merely qualifies the term saṃskāra and is not applied to the enstatic condition as such.

From the viewpoint of the empirical consciousness, the ultra-cognitive enstasy (asamprajñāta-samādhi) is but a mass of subliminal-activators (see 1.18) which devour each other step-by-step because they are prevented from conscious thematisation and also because there is no further feedback from consciousness. This state is also designated as ‘seedless’ (nir-bīja, 111.8) in contrast
to the sa-bija forms of samāpatti. The word bija or ‘seed’ refers either to the ‘support’ (ālambana), i.e. the intended object, or the subliminal-activators (see above, pp. 67 ff.).

Initially, asamprajñāta-samādhi is only a fleeting experience intercalating itself into the general enstatic continuum on the level of samprajñāta-samādhi. For by dint of the subliminal tensions the yogin reverts again and again to the lower forms of enstatic experience (see IV.27). Nonetheless, once the utmost boundary of the ultra-reflexive coincidence (nirvicāra-samāpatti) is reached, he is carried as if by a powerful current towards kaivalya (see IV.26). This is so because, despite the innumerable vāsanās, Nature ultimately serves the end of the Self (see IV.24).

5 Dharma-megha-samādhi

The concept of dharma-megha-samādhi makes its appearance in a single aphorism, namely IV.29, which reads as follows: prasamkhyaṇe pa-akusīdasya sarvathā viveka-khyāter-dharma-meghaḥ samādhiḥ, ‘For [the yogin who is] always non-usurious (a-kuśida) even in [the state of] enstatic-elevation (prasamkhyaṇa) [there follows] from the vision of discernment the enstasy [known as] the cloud of dharma’. The word akusīda describes the adept who applies himself to the higher form of dispassion or para-vairāgya by which the ultra-cognitive enstasy (asamprajñāta-samādhi) is realised. The term dharma-megha-samādhi can be either a straightforward synonym of asamprajñāta-samādhi or, else, refers to the consummate phase of this highest type of enstasy. I shall argue in favour of the second alternative.

This important concept is surrounded by a certain enigma which the classical commentators have failed to illuminate, as is clearly evinced by their contradictory and occasionally even self-contradictory interpretations of the precise location of dharma-megha-samādhi within the whole series of enstatic experiences. In his Yoga-Bhāṣya (1.2) Vyāsa makes the following statement: tad-eva rajo-leṣa-mala-apetam sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭham sattva-puruṣa-anva-ta-khyāti-mātram dharma-megha-dhyāna-upagaṁ bhavati, tat-parā prasamkhyaṇam ity-ācakṣate dhīyāyinaḥ, ‘[When] the defilement of the vestiges of rajas is removed from that [state of sattva] [and when consciousness is grounded in [its] own-form [and is] nothing but the vision of the distinction between Self and sattva, [then] it tends towards the absorption [known as] the cloud of dharma; that [sattva state is designated by meditators as the supreme enstatic-elevation’.

In his voluminous Yoga-Vārttika (1.2) Vijñāna Bhikṣu explains this passage thus: dharma-megha-dhyānam kim-ity-ākāṅksa-ayam-āha tat-param-iti tad-dharma-megha-ākhyāṁ dhīyānām paramaṁ prasamkhyaṇāṁ tattva-jñānāṁ viveka-khyāter-eva, ‘What is the absorption [known as] the cloud of dharma? Anticipating this query [Vyāsa] says: “that is the supreme [enstatic-elevation]”. That absorption called the “cloud of dharma” is the supreme enstatic-elevation, true knowledge [born of] the vision of discernment.’ Clearly, this is a gross misconstruction of Vyāsa’s stance. As is evident from subsequent statements in the Yoga-Bhāṣya (see 1.15; II.2; IV.29) the author does not identify prasamkhyaṇa with dharma-megha-samādhi, and consequently the word tad (‘that’) in the last sentence of the above quotation does not refer to dharma-megha-dhyāna (= ो-samādhi), 21 as Vijñāna Bhikṣu maintains, but to the state of unpolluted sattva.

G. M. Koelman (1970, 234) regarded dharma-megha-samādhi as the ‘passage from the state of Sublime Insight to the state of Restriction’, that is, from prasamkhyaṇa to asamprajñāta-samādhi. He contended (p. 235) that the ‘enstasy of the cloud of dharma’ ‘is the stage where there is absolutely uninterrupted discriminate intuition, at once apprehended and generously sacrificed, an uninterrupted
experience of the fact that in our present state we do not square with our true Self...’. But this is neither the view of Patañjali nor that of Vyāsa.

G. M. Koelmann (1970) tried to vindicate his interpretation by citing Vācaspati Miśra (1.18):
dharma-megha-samādhi-eva hi nītānta-vigālita-rajasa-tamo-mālā-tattvad-upājātas-tat-tad-visaya-ātikramaṇa pravarttāmano ‘nanto viṣayā-avadyadarśī samasta-viṣayā-parityāgā-cac svarūpa-pratiṣṭhāna san-nirālambanaḥ saṃskāra-mātra-śeṣasya nirālambasya saṃādheḥ kāraṇam-upapadyate sārūpyād, ‘When sattvā is entirely freed from the defilements of rajas and tamas, the dharma-megha enstasy is effected. Its activity is transcendent to any object. [It is] unbounded, beholding [all] objects and on account of [the mind’s] shunning of all objects [it remains] grounded in [its] own-form, being without support. It acts as the cause of the enstasy [which has] only a vestige of subliminal-activators [and which is] without support owing to [its] homogeneity.’

This exposition goes, probably unintentionally, against all the evidence in the Yoga-Sūtra and also against the authority of Vyāsa. For instance, in IV.30 it is stated that ‘thence [ i.e. as a result of dharma-megha-samādhi] [comes about] the cessation of [all] causes-of-affliction and of karman’ (tataḥ kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ). This interpretation is reinforced by the whole context of the concluding sūtras, in which the concept of dharma-megha-samādhi is first introduced. Accordingly, one is forced to conclude that the dharma-megha enstasy forms the terminal stage of asamprajñāta-samādhi and that it coincides with the yogin’s exit from the prakṛti realm in toto. For this reason one must also discard the equation, proposed in the Pātañjala-Rahasya (IV.29), of dharma-megha-samādhi with the higher renunciation (para-vairāgya). Strictly speaking, para-vairāgya serves as the means to asamprajñāta-samādhi.

Having clarified the position of this puzzling phenomenon on the enstatic scala, it remains to ascertain the meaning of the concept of dharma in dharma-megha. The older generation of indologists have focused on the ethical connotation of this polysemous word and invariable translated it with ‘virtue’ (G. Jha, R. Prasāda, M. Müller) or ‘merit’ (M. N. Dwivedi). More recent researchers have found these renderings unsatisfactory and, tacitly or openly, queried that dharma in the present context has a moral sense. Thus S. Radha-krishnan (1951) rendered it as ‘truth’, G. M. Koelman (1970) as ‘essence’ and J. H. Woods (1966) suggested ‘knowable thing’, whilst J. W. Hauer (1958), taking his cue from buddhist contexts, understood it as ‘tragende Urnmacht’. Explaining this unexpected paraphrase, J. W. Hauer (p. 470, fn. 22) wrote: ‘The meditator is in this state enveloped by the supporting primal power (tragende Urnmacht) of the world; he has become a dharmakāya like the “great Muni”. This is an expression for the Buddha who has entered Nirvāṇā.’

I find this interpretation persuasive. For the concept of dharma-megha does not appear to be mentioned by any hindu authority prior to Patañjali, though it is evidently an integral part of the technical nomenclature of early Mahāyāna Buddhism. There it figures as the tenth bhūmi or ‘stage’ of the bodhisattva’s path to perfection, as can be seen, for example, from the Pañcaviṃśatikā-Sāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā (p. 230, ed. by N. Dutt, 1934). It is my contention that Patañjali was well aware of these doctrinal elaborations of post-Christian Buddhism. This raises anew the vexed question, broached by previous scholars (e.g. L. de la Vallee Poussin, 1936–37), of the exact relation between Classical Yoga and Buddhism.

6 Samyama and the siddhis

This section takes us a step back as it were from the ultimate goal of Self-realisation as heralded by
the ultra-cognitive enstasy of the ‘cloud of dharma’ The withdrawal of consciousness from the external world transmitted via the senses, and its interiorisation and localisation by means of the practice of concentration, meditation and, finally enstasy, opens up a new dimension of reality. The yogin gains access to a unique form of experiencing and knowledge which restructures his entire being. This is sometimes described in terms of the formation of a new, ‘subtle’ body with its own peculiar organs and capabilities. The accomplished yogin is thought to be endowed with extraordinary powers, known as the siddhis, which ‘obsess Indian mythology, folklore and metaphysics with equal intensity’.26 What are these paranormal attainments which no yogic text fails to mention?

In his treatment of the philosophy of Classical Yoga according to the exegeses in the commentaries, S. Dasgupta (1924, 157 f.) dealt with the question of the powers summarily in fifteen lines and a single table. This reflects well the consensus of scholarly opinion, according to which the supernatural attainments are discordant with Patañjali’s rational approach and his philosophical objectives. However, the fact is that one sixth of the aphorisms concerns precisely this recondite aspect of Yoga, and one chapter of the vulgate is actually entitled vibhūti-pāda. How can we account for this obvious pre-eminence given to the ‘magical’ side of the yogic path? Was Patañjali, after all, not such a staunch rationalist as contemporary interpreters have made him out to be? Has he perhaps unwittingly succumbed to the magical trend in Yoga, betraying its putative shamanistic origins?

These questions can all be instantly disposed of by the simple observation that the powers form an integral part of all yogic endeavour. This was first distinctly and clearly articulated by P. V. Kane (1962, 1452 ff.) and was later reaffirmed by J. W. Hauer (1958, 324 ff) and, independently, by M. Eliade (1973, 85 ff., 177 ff.). More recently C. Pensa (1969) has given the matter more serious attention. He summarised his review of the problem as follows: ‘... the “power” element, implicit or explicit as it may be, is intrinsic to the very structure of Yoga, in close correlation with the concepts of purification and knowledge [...] Each implies and is implicit in the other: progress in one means progress in the others, nor could any progress be thinkable outside this organic interaction’ (p. 21). Furthermore: ‘As to the “powers” or “perfections” (vibhūtis, siddhis), they are no other [...] than specializations of this power [...] In consequence, neither power nor “the powers”, if we want to make this distinction, can be in any way separated from Yoga’s essentially organic and unitary structure; considering them as spurious elements or magical residues has no textual basis’ (p. 22).

Notwithstanding the use of the word vibhūti in the title of the third chapter, Patañjali only mentions the term siddhi in the actual text. Occurring four times in the Yoga-Sūtra, only in one instance (viz. IV. 1) does the word siddhi unequivocally denote the supernatural powers. The aphorism in question states that they are procurable by herbal concoctions (ośadhi), spells (mantra), austerities (tapas), enstasy (samādhi) or are the result of an innate aptitude (jānman). However, textual criticism has shown this sūtra to be a later interpolation.27 In II.43 the word has the meaning of ‘perfection’; in II.45 the compound samādhi-siddhi can mean either ‘perfection of enstasy’ or, more radically interpreted, ‘attainment of enstasy’. Lastly, in the much misunderstood aphorism III.37, it is probably also employed in a non-technical sense (as ‘attainment’).

The word vibhūti has a long history. It was first used as an adjective in the Rgveda (viz. 1.8.9; 30.5; VI.21.1, etc.) signifying ‘extensive, abundant, mighty’, and corresponding with the later expression vibhūtimat. In classical Sanskrit the word functions primarily as a feminine substantive meaning ‘development, power, magnificence, prosperity’, etc. In the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gītā, entitled vibhūti-yoga, Kṛṣṇa speaks of his ‘powers-of-manifestation’ (vibhūti) and his Yoga (X.7).28 In X.16 and 19 the compound ātma-vibhūtayah occurs, which can be rendered as ‘Selves
powers-of-manifestation’. Verses 19 *et seq.* tell us what precisely Kṛṣṇa’s powers *in excelsior* are. Thus we learn that he is *meru* among mountains (vs. 23), the syllable *om* among all sounds (vs. 25), the sage Nārada among all the seers (vs. 26), Kapīla among the perfected-ones (*siddha*) (vs. 26), Self-knowledge among all kinds of knowledge (vs. 32), Vṛṣṇi among all the silent-sages (*muni*) (vs. 37), etc.

As W. D. P. Hill (1966, 148, fn. 4) noted long ago, the word *vibhūti* ‘contains an idea of “power” or “lordship” and also an idea of “pervasion” or “immanence” ‘. He sought to capture this dual aspect by translating the term as ‘pervading power’. In regard to the *Yoga-Sūtra*, the first connotation appears to be the more pertinent of the two, conveying more or less the same ideas as the term *siddhi*. There is an interesting passage in the *Prapañcasāra-Vivaraṇavākykhya* in which the relation between these two terms is determined as follows: *paramāṃ vibhūti-Kaśṭham prāpta-iti siddhi-lakṣaṇo hetuḥ, para-kaivalya-siddhi-paryantāṃ vibhūtim-iti bhāvah, ‘ “Having reached the supreme limit of power” [means] the condition relating to the *siddhis*. [It is] “the power terminating in the supreme *siddhi* of aloneness (*kaivalya*)”? Although written many centuries after the composition of the *Yoga-Sūtra*, these lines are not unrepresentative of earlier usage.

The paranormal attainments of Yoga can be grouped into two broad categories, *viz.* mental and physical or quasi-physical powers. The first entail the acquisition of a special kind of knowledge (*jñāna*), the latter such abilities as levitation, telekinesis, etc. Some phenomena, however, straddle both these categories, as, for instance, the yogin’s unwitting harmonising influence on his environment (II.35). Another possible way of classifying these non-ordinary attainments would be according to their putative causes. Here we can distinguish paranormal achievements procured by following (1) the moral code of Yoga (i.e. *yama* and *niyama*), (2) the practice of posture (*āsana*), breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*), and sense-withdrawal (*Pratyāhāra*) and (3) by the application of enstatic constraint (*samyama*).

To the reader of the New Testament the ideal that moral perfection should yield a certain power is not surprising. The *Yoga-Sūtra* details the supranormal gain for each of the practices of restraint (*yama*) and observance (*niyama*). Thus the yogin’s grounding in the virtue of non-harming (*ahimsā*) is said to have a positive impact on his surroundings, with the effect that in his immediate vicinity all feelings of enmity are blocked (II.35). His accomplishment in truthfulness (*satya*) makes his every word come true (11.36). The yogin who has mastered the virtue of non-stealing (*asteya*), understood in a more comprehensive sense than usual, wins all kinds of jewels (II.37), which is probably to be interpreted metaphorically. Again, chastity (*brahma-caryya*) practised to perfection leads to the vitality (*viśyā*) necessary for the great spiritual struggle which lies ahead (11.38). Perfect greedlessness (*aparigraha*), the last of the five constituents of *yama*, brings him insight into the wherefore of his birth (11.39).

Through purity (*śauca*) he acquires distance from the body and the need and ability not to mix with others so as not to be ‘contaminated’, *i.e.* morally polluted, by them (II.40). This is also said to bring about purity of the *sattva*, gladness, one-pointedness, mastery of the senses and the capability of Self-vision (II.41). Contentment (*samoṣa*), again, confers unexcelled joy on him (II.42). From austerity (*tapas*), which presumably consists in such practices as fasting or observing complete silence, he gains perfection of the body and the senses (II.43). Self-study (*svādhyāya*) bring him into contact with his chosen deity (11.44), and devotion to the Lord (*īṣvara-Pranidhāna*) is the means of attaining, or perfecting, enstasy (11.45).

Mastery of posture (*āsana*) immunises the yogin against the impact of the pairs-of-opposites (*dvandva*), like heat and cold, humidity and aridity, etc. (11.48). Breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*)
removes the covering concealing the inner light (II.52) and thus makes the mind fit for concentration (11.53). Through accomplishment in sense-withdrawal (Pratyāhāra) he effects the full subjugation of the senses (11.55). Mastery of the up-breath (udāna) gives him the ability to extract himself from thorns or mud and to rise from the water (III.39). Mastery of the mid-breath (samāna), again, induces prajvalana or ‘effulgence’, which Vyāsa understands as the kindling of the bodily heat.

Next we come to the diverse products of the practice of constraint (samyama), whose primary target is the flashing-forth of transcendental-insight (prajñā-ālōka) (III.5). Samyama is, in fact, the via regia of Yoga. In the epic (e.g. XII.266.15) this term is still used loosely and generally in connection with the control of the sensory apparatus, but in Classical Yoga it figures as a technical expression of the first order. It denotes the conjoint practice of concentration, meditative-absorption and enstasy with regard to a single object. Since, paradoxically, the Unconditioned and Formless, i.e. the Self, can only be reached via the manifest forms, the yogic journey volens nolens takes the adept through the depths of cognitive-enstasy (samprajñāta-samādhi) and thus inevitably confronts him also with the mysteries of the powers (siddhi) arising from these special states of consciousness.

In aphorism I.40 it is clearly enunciated that by virtue of the stalwart practice of meditative-absorption, leading to enstasy, everything from the most minute to the very largest comes under the yogin’s control. This is also known as the supremacy over all states-of-existence (sarva-bhāva-adhiṣṭhātrta) (III.49). Coterminal with this unlimited lordship over the cosmos is his omniscience (sarva-jñātrta) (III.49). Both are the fruit of that highest form of cognitive enstasy which consists merely in the uninterrupted discernment of the difference between Self and sattva. Knowledge born of discernment (viveka-ja-jñāna) is the outcome of constraint upon the atoms-of-time (kṣaṇa) and their sequence (III.52). From this is said to result pratipatti, paraphrased by Vījnāna Bhiksu as sāksātkāra or ‘immediate-perception’.

From constraint upon the three kinds of transformation (parināma) knowledge of the past and future is acquired (III. 16). The ability to understand the sounds of all beings is obtained through constraint upon the difference between the object, its representation in consciousness and its linguistic label (III. 17). Knowledge of previous existences comes about through the direct-perception (sāksātkāra), again in the enstatic state, of the respective subliminal-activators (III. 18). When the ideas in the mind of another person are made the subject of constraint, the yogin gains knowledge of that mind (III. 19) but not, as Patañjali specifically points out, of the underlying object of those mental representations (III.20). Knowledge of imminent death is obtained through constraint upon karman (III.22), which presumably involves processes similar to those of III. 18. By focusing (nyāsa) the flashing-forth of those mental activities (pravṛtti) which are sorrowless and illuminating (see L35-36), the adept acquires knowledge of the subtle, the hidden and the distant (III.25). The experience referred to in this aphorism remains somewhat obscure, but Vījnāna Bhiksu correctly takes nyāsa to be synonymous with samyama.

Knowledge of the structure of the universe comes about through the practice of constraint upon the sun (III.26). Knowledge of the movement of the seemingly stationary pole-star comes from constraint upon it (III.28). Knowledge of the arrangement of the stars is gained from constraint upon the moon (III.27). The structure of the body is disclosed through constraint upon the ‘navel wheel’ (nābhīcakra) (III.29). Through constraint upon the ‘throat well’ (kaṇṭha-kūpa), hunger and thirst are conquered (III.30). Rock-like stability (sthairya) is the by-product of constraint upon the ‘tortoise tube’ (kūrma-nāḍī). The subtle physiology of cakras and nāḍīs belongs to the archaic stock of yogic ideas, and hence their mention in Patañjali’s work need not signify the impact of Tantrism on Classical Yoga. Incidentally, Patañjali does not refer to the kundalini-śakti or ‘serpent power’,
which appears to have been unknown to him. This conception was first formulated by the tantric acarya of the period after Vyāsa.\textsuperscript{34}

Enstatic focusing upon the ‘light in the head’ (mūrdha-jyotis) brings about the vision of the perfected-ones (siddha) (III.32). When there is a sudden flash-of-illumination (prātiṣṭha) in the enstatic condition, the yogin beholds everything (sarva) with his mental eye (III.33). Through constraint upon the heart, he obtains understanding (samvid) of the nature of consciousness (III.34). Self-knowledge (puruṣa-jñāna), again, comes about through constraint upon the particular purpose of the Self and Nature respectively (III.35).

In the course of his enstatic endeavours, he also meets with flashes-of-illumination in the sphere of the senses (III.36), which probably means that he becomes clairvoyant, clairaudient, etc. These are the phenomena hinted at already in the Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad (II. 11–12): nīhāra-dhūma-arka-anila-analānām khadyota-vidyut-sphaṭika-śaśīnām, etāni rūpāṇi puraḥ-sarāṇi brahmany-abhivyaktikarāṇi yoge; prthivy-ap-tejo’nīla-khe samuthite paṇcā-ātmake yogu-guṇe pravṛtte, na tasya rogo na jarā na mṛtyuḥ prāptasya yogu-agni-mayam śaṭiram. ‘The forms preceding and causing the manifestation of brahman in Yoga are [like] mist, smoke, the sun, fire, wind, firefly (khadyota), lightning, crystal or the moon. – When the fivefold qualities of Yoga, arising from the [element of] earth, water, fire, wind and ether, have come-into-activity [then the yogin who] has obtained a body made of the fire of Yoga does not [experience] illness, old age or death.’

These phenomena, Patañjali explains (III.37), are perfections/powers (siddhi) in the waking state, but obstacles in enstasy. It is neither necessary nor justifiable to generalise this statement to include all paranormal phenomena, as did M. Eliade (1973\textsuperscript{3}, 90) and others. For instance, the knowledge gained from constraint upon the pole-star is not in any way distinct from the enstatic condition itself but constitutes its essence. This is different in the case of the supra-sensory flashes-of-illumination which involve the externalsation of consciousness. However, like all sensory processes, even these paranormal ways of sensing must be checked to recover the enstatic state.

In addition to these cognitive attainments, the yogin also gains access to powers or abilities of a para-physical nature. Through constraint upon the virtue of friendliness (maitrī) and the other three infinitudes’ (see p. 95) he acquires great strength (bala) (III.23). And if he makes particular manifestations of strength, like that of the elephant, the subject of his enstasy, he secures for himself the strength of an elephant, etc. (III.24). Constraint upon the relation between ear and ether leads to the ‘divine ear’ (divya-śrōta) (III.41). When the topic of his enstatic focusing is the relation between body and ether, he wins the ability to traverse the ether (ākāśa-gamana), which may be interpreted literally (as levitation) or as ‘astral-projection’.

A related phenomenon is referred to in 111.38, which speaks of the mental penetration of another body. Also, aphorism 111.43 may be pertinent where a non-imaginary fluctuation (akalpita-vṛtti) outside the body is mentioned which, when realised, removes the covering the inner light. Mastery of the elements (bhūta) results from the practice of constraint upon their various levels of manifestation (III.44). At this point the yogin obtains the eight classic powers of atomisation (animaṁ), magnification (mahimān), levitation (laghimān), limitless-extension (prāpti) freedom-of-will (prākāṃya), mastery-of-creation (vasītvā), lordship (iṣṭitrīva) and wish fulfillment (kāmāvasāyītvā). He also acquires bodily perfection (kāya-sampad) and physical indestructibility (anabhūgāta) (III.45). Mastery of the senses, again, comes about through constraint upon their various levels of manifestation (III.47). It further results in the ability to move about at the speed of the mind (mano-jāvitva), and the mastery of the foundation of Nature itself (111.48). The power of making himself invisible (antardhāna) comes as a result of constraint upon the structure of the human
body (III.21).

The Yoga adept is thus not only the possessor of a special kind of knowledge, but is also endowed with special physical or quasi-physical abilities. Yet more important than either of these excellences is his possession of himself, in the form of the actualisation of his true Self. The powers are the inevitable by-products of his prolonged struggle towards this lofty goal. They cannot be separated from the profound transformation which he has to undergo in order to realise the Self. Viewed differently again, they are signposts along the way or, in contemporary parlance, confirmative evidence that he is on the right track.

They can but strengthen the yogin’s faith (śraddhā) in the efficacy of Yoga and spur him on. I believe Vācaspati Miśra to be basically right in his claim that ‘the powers (vībhūti) are not quite uninstrumental [in the attainment] of aloneness; however, [they are] not directly [the causes of emancipation]’ (na-ayantam-ahetavaḥ kaivalye vībhūtayaḥ kītu na sākṣād). Nevertheless, his contention that the vision of discernment (vīveka-khyāti) is to be regarded as the real and principal cause is unacceptable. Strictly speaking, emancipation is uncaused, for it is the permanent essence of the Self. Consequently, his distinction between actual and figurative causes makes little sense. The powers are as much or as little productive of liberation as are the gnostic insights. Both are two aspects of the same complex process of total transmutation of the finite personality leading to the recovery of the ever free transcendent Self.
VII
Pātañjala Yoga and Classical Sāṃkhya

Of the plethora of misrepresentations of Patañjali’s *darśana*, both by foreign and indigenous scholars, none proved more inveterate and damaging than the claim that Classical Yoga is but a *Spielart* of Sāṃkhya. This infelicitous assumption was first proposed by H. T. Colebrooke in his now classical essay on Yoga. According to him there is but a single difference between Yoga and Sāṃkhya, namely the affirmation of the doctrine of īśvara by the former and its denial by the latter school of thought. ‘In less momentous matters they differ, not upon points of doctrine, but in the degree in which the exterior exercises, or abstruse reasoning and study, are weighed upon, as requisite preparations of absorbed contemplation.’ This mistaken view was destined to be echoed and re-echoed throughout the next century. The following statements, culled almost at random from the indological literature, are symptomatic of this fundamental misapprehension, and its ghost is to be found haunting the pages even of quite recent publications.

In the same vein as H. T. Colebrooke, R. Mitra (1883, xviii) wrote: ‘The Yoga Sutra takes for granted the twenty-five categories of the Sāṃkhya as the basis of its doctrine, and copies some of its aphorisms almost verbatim.’ Similarly M. N. Dvivedī (1890, 1943, xviii): ‘The Yoga subscribes to the Sāṃkhya theory in toto.’ M. Monier-Williams (1894, 200), again, stated: ‘The Yoga, founded by Patanjali and regarded as a branch of the Sāṃkhya, is scarcely worthy of the name of a separate system of philosophy. Yet it has undoubted charms for the naturally contemplative and ascetical Hindū . . .’

Although correcting some of the mistaken notions about Yoga and displaying a far more liberal-minded attitude towards it than did his predecessors, M. Muller (1916, 312) nonetheless followed suit when claiming: ‘. . . it may be quite true that, after we have once understood the position of the Sāṃkhya-philosophy towards the great problem of the world, we shall not glean many new metaphysical or psychological ideas from a study of the Yoga’. R. Garbe (1917, 148), well known for his pioneer work on Sāṃkhya, made no concessions to Yoga at all: ‘All Sāṃkhya teachings about cosmology, physiology and psychology were simply taken over into the Yoga system. Even the doctrine of salvation is the same . . .’ S. Radha-krishnan (1927, 1951, II, 342) expressed a more moderate but still not affirmative enough view: ‘Patañjali systematised the conceptions of the Yoga and set them forth on the background of the metaphysics of the Sāṃkhya, which he assumes with slight variations’.

The first scholar to come to the defence of Classical Yoga and vigorously affirm its doctrinal autonomy was S. Dasgupta (1930, 2) who, seeking to rectify past misinterpretations and sweeping generalisations, observed: ‘It is true that Yoga owes much to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, but it is doubtful whether the obligation is due to the Kapila Sāṃkhya as we have it now. My supposition is that we have lost the original Sāṃkhya texts, whereas the systems that pass now by the name of Sāṃkhya and Yoga represent two schools of philosophy which evolved through the modifications of the original Sāṃkhya school; Yoga did not borrow its material from Kapila Sāṃkhya [. . .] though the Yoga and the Kapila Sāṃkhya are fundamentally the same in their general metaphysical positions, yet they hold quite different views on many points of philosophical, ethical and practical interest.’
M. Eliade (1973, 7), a former student of S. Dasgupta, regretfully blurred this fine distinction again when stating: ‘As to the theoretical framework and the metaphysical foundation that Patañjali provides for these practices, his personal contribution is of the smallest. He merely rehandles the Sāṃkhya philosophy in it broad outlines, adapting it to a rather superficial theism in which he exalts the practical value of meditation. The Yoga and Sāṃkhya systems are so much alike that most of the affirmations made by the one are valid for the other.’

A more discerning view was put forward by F. Catalina (1968, 19): ‘In the main, the two systems are very much alike. However, there are some significant differences which warrant our calling Yoga a separate system of philosophy.’ This enlightened position has unfortunately not become as widely prevalent as one would wish. Too often Yoga is still being reduced to Sāṃkhya, occasionally credited with a few unimportant appendages of its own. For instance, C. Sharma (1960, 169) made this indefensible comment: ‘Yoga is intimately allied to Sāṃkhya. The Gītā calls them one. Yoga means spiritual action and Sāṃkhya means knowledge. Sāṃkhya is theory; Yoga is practice. For all practical purposes, Sāṃkhya and Yoga may be treated as the theoretical and the practical sides of the same system.’

However, as a perusal of the literature quickly evinces, it is not only Indian scholars who are guilty of this kind of reductionism and over-generalisation. N. Smart (1968, 26), for example, wrote: ‘The Sāṃkhya system can hardly by itself be treated as a method of liberation, though it lays claim to being such, which is a main reason why it is coupled, and has been coupled over a very long period, with the Yoga system. The latter borrows its main features, with certain adaptations, from the Sāṃkhya, so that it is not too misleading to treat Sāṃkhya as the theoretical exposition and Yoga the practical account of how to achieve that clarity of consciousness which brings liberation from the round of rebirth and the suffering of the world.’

Such inept statements could be multiplied almost ad libitum. They all betray a certain lack of historical perspective which, in turn, is responsible for an almost incredible conceptual haziness. It is futile to attempt a comparison between two items which have not been clearly defined to begin with. Thus, in the above quotations, Sāṃkhya is obviously used in a variety of meanings. Properly speaking, a valid comparison is possible only between Classical Yoga and Classical Sāṃkhya in so far as both have the status of a philosophical darśana. And in this sense there can be no justification whatever for deriving Classical Yoga from Classical Sāṃkhya.

Recent research into the complex history of the Yoga and Sāṃkhya traditions has brought to light ample material to vindicate S. Dasgupta’s (1930) conclusion that Patañjali’s Yoga is a specific type of Sāṃkhya-Yoga just as the system of Classical Sāṃkhya is to be regarded as a separate line of development of the same common pool of ideas. As K. B. R. Rao (1966, 9) put it succinctly: ‘We must guard against another obsession which has taken deep roots in our minds. It refers to the equation that is generally made of “atheistic Sāṃkhya” expounded in the Sāṃkhya Kārikā, with the one expounded in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, with the exception of īśvara in the latter. It is an error of judgement to place the Sāṃkhya Kārikā and the Yoga Sūtras, or Kapila and Patañjali, in juxtaposition and treat them as preaching Atheism and Theism respectively [...]. The Yoga Sūtras have Sāṃkhya elements as Vedanta itself has, but its difference from the classical Sāṃkhya is as great as the difference between Vedanta and the classical Sāṃkhya. The Yoga-Sūtra-Sāṃkhya is not simply classical Sāṃkhya plus God, nor the classical Sāṃkhya of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā is Yoga-Sūtra-Sāṃkhya minus God. They are fundamentally different in so many main principles.’

Now, the precise nature of these differences has never been ascertained in any appreciable detail. The reason for this is obvious: the absence of an unprejudiced study of the Yoga-Sūtra preceded by a
critical appraisal of the exegetical literature. However, on the basis of the purged reading of the \textit{Yoga-Sūtra}, rendered feasible by the present study, we are now in a position to re-examine these differences and undertake a comprehensive comparison between the \textit{Yoga-Sūtra} and the \textit{Sāmkhya-Kārikā}. However, such a formidable task lies outside the compass of this investigation, and I must defer a detailed treatment of this promising line of research. For the present, I merely wish to point out the major divergencies between these two schools of thought as they have become apparent in the course of this study. I must emphasise at this point that I have certain misgivings about current interpretations of the \textit{Sāmkhya-Kārikā} as well. Hence before any exhaustive comparison could fruitfully be undertaken this text would also have to be examined both from a textual and a semantic point of view, so that we might arrive at a sterling understanding of this important scripture, unobscured (as far as this is possible) by all later interpretations and likely distortions. Until then one has to remain content with the rough identification of three areas of contrast between Classical \textit{Sāmkhya} and \textit{Pātañjala-Yoga}, viz.

(1) methodology,
(2) doctrinal framework,
(3) terminology.

It is my contention that the different methodological approach of Classical Yoga is responsible for many of its conceptual and doctrinal as well as terminological idiosyncrasies. I therefore commence this review with a brief examination of the methodological aspect. The importance of the distinct approach of \textit{Patañjali} was pertinently emphasised by M. Eliade (1973\textsuperscript{3}, 7): ‘... whereas, according to \textit{Sāmkhya}, the only path to salvation is that of metaphysical knowledge, Yoga accords marked importance to techniques of meditation’. Elsewhere (p. 36) he remarked: ‘\textit{Patañjali} takes, over the \textit{Sāmkhya} dialectic almost in its entirety, but he does not believe that meta-physical knowledge can, by itself, lead man to final liberation. Gnosis, in his view, only prepares the ground for the acquisition of freedom (\textit{mukti}). Emancipation must, so to speak, be conquered by sheer force, specifically by means of an ascetic technique and a method of contemplation, which, taken together, constitute nothing less than the \textit{yoga-darśana}.’

In a nutshell, whereas Classical \textit{Sāmkhya} relies heavily on the power of ratiocination and discernment, Classical Yoga, like any other yogic tradition, is founded on a philosophy which encourages personal experimentation and direct ‘mystical’ verification. This basic difference is anticipated in a well-known stanza in the \textit{Mahābha-rata} (XI.289.7): \textit{pratyakṣa-hetavo yogah sāmkhyāḥ śāstra-viniścayāḥ, ubhe ca-et e mate tattve mama tatayudhiṣṭhira}, ‘The \textit{Sāmkhya}-followers depend on [their] scriptures, [whilst] the Yoga-followers rely on direct-experience (\textit{pratyakṣa}); both I deem [to convey] reality, friend Yudhisthira’. Even though on other occasions the unity of Yoga and \textit{Sāmkhya} is vigorously asserted, the above statement, which is by no means unique, clearly foreshadows the later bifurcation of both schools of thought into a ‘rationalistic’ and a ‘mystical’ system.

It is this experimental and experiential approach of Yoga,\textsuperscript{3} as opposed to the more traditionalist \textit{Sāmkhya}, which can be regarded as the great stimulus underlying many of the doctrinal innovations leading to the creation of new schools within Hinduism as much as within Buddhism. The classical example of the seeker after truth who discards all theory in order to probe the depths of reality by means of his one-pointed mind is the founder of Buddhism himself: He first pursued his search with the help of existing ‘models’, of a \textit{Sāmkhya} and Yoga type, which he found of no avail. The Buddha
then abandoned himself completely to a course of meditative exploration of his own device, which ultimately resulted in his san̄bodhi and in the formulation of one of India’s most remarkable schools of thought.

The pronouncely formalistic and rationalistic basis of Classical Sāṃkhya is readily borne out by the opening stanzas of the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā, which read: duḥkha-traya-abhihātājī-jiñāsā tad-abhihātāke hetau, drṣṭē sa-apārthā cen-na-eka-anta-atyāntato bhāvāt; drṣṭād-vanuṣra-vikāh sa hy-aviśuddhi-kṣaya-atiśaya-yuktaḥ, tad-vipariṇāḥ śreyān-vyakta-avyaṅkta-jiña-Vijñānāt, ‘Owing to the tribulation [stemming from the] threefold suffering [there arises] the desire-to-know the means of its removal. If [it be argued that] this [inquiry] is futile because visible [means of removal are available], [we reply that this is] not the case, since [the visible remedies] are not final or abiding. – The revealed [cure for this tribulation] is like the visible [cure] [in the last analysis ineffective], for it is [also] connected with impurity, destruction and excess; different and superior to that is the discriminative Knowledge [by which is differentiated] the manifest, the unmanifest and the knower [i.e. the Self].

Thus the central expedient by which the termination of suffering (duḥkha) is effected is Vijñāna or the careful holding apart of the three essential ontological categories postulated by Sāṃkhya. The technical terms vyakta, avyakta and ānā are explained in the third stanza as (a) the evolutes of the world-ground, (b) the world-ground itself and (c) the puruṣa, and they are further defined in stanzas 10–11. In stanza 64, whose importance is generally overlooked, Vijñāna occurs by the technical name of tattva-abhyāsa or the ‘practice [affirming] the truth [as taught by Sāṃkhya]’. We are also told what this truth consists in. I cite the entire verse: evam tattva-abhyāsān-na-asmi na me na-aham-ity-apariśesam, aviparyayādaviśuddham kevalam-uipadyate jiñānam, ‘Thus, on account of the practice of the truth [that] ‘I am not’, “nothing is mine”, “I am not” [there arises] [that] knowledge [which] is complete, pure and solitary because [it is] free from error.’

Tattva-abhyāsa, which is applied Vijñāna, represents the effort to disrupt the habit of the empirical ego of identifying with the phenomenal contents of consciousness, so as to re-locate man’s true identity in the transcendental Self. Man is essentially puruṣa, and in order to reach Self-authenticity he must divest himself of all phenomenal accretions, such as mind, body, external property or social relations.

That this intellectual distancing is not enough in itself is evident from the fact that Īśvara Kṛṣṇa also acknowledges the merit of moral purification (see 44). Moreover, as emerges from stanza 45, Vijñāna must be accompanied by an act of renunciation of everything that reason – in keeping with tradition – has revealed to be ‘non-self’. The verse in question reads: vairāgyāt-prakṛti-layaḥ saṃsāro bhavati rajasād-ragāt . . . , ‘From dispassion [comes] the resolution [of the evolutes back into] the world-ground; from attachment [which is] passionate comes phenomenal-existence . . . ’. Here prakṛti-laya does not, as in the Yoga-Sūtra, denote a sinking away into the world-ground by the human personality, but laya must be taken to refer to the dissolution of the evolutes coinciding with the recovery of the Self’s authenticity. Any other reading would make no sense in the face of the fact that the avowed goal of Classical Sāṃkhya is the reinstalment of the Self in its untainted splendour of kaivalya. G. J. Larson’s (1969) rendering of the phrase vairāgyāt-prakṛti-layaḥ as ‘from non-attachment [comes] dissolution in prakṛti’ is not explicit enough to avoid confusion with the peculiar usage of the term prakṛti-laya in Patañjali’s work.

The sole interest of the follower of Classical Sāṃkhya is the disentanglement of puruṣa and prakṛti. This objective is shared not only by the antecedent Sāṃkhya-Yoga schools but also by Classical Yoga. Yet one cannot avoid the impression that the Sāṃkhya method of holding apart the
primary categories of Self and non-self (= prakṛti) is executed on a level entirely different from that recommended by more meditation-oriented schools. For, in the latter, the confusion between Self and mind (as a product of sentient nature), is held to be removable only by means of a controlled introversion and transformation of consciousness.

This does not appear to be the way of Classical Śāṅkhya. Vījñāna is by no means synonymous with prajñā or gnostic insight as acquired in samādhi; rather, it is an intellectual act of continuously reminding oneself that one is not this body, this particular sensation, feeling or thought. This is the famous neti-neti procedure of the upaniṣadic sages applied in the most rationalistic manner possible. In later Vedānta the same technique is known by the technical designation of apavāda or the ‘annulment’ of ‘erroneous predication’ (adhyāropa). This intellectualistic refashioning of an originally introspective-meditative practice compelled J. N. Mukerji (1930, 8) to explain that ‘the point of view of Śāṅkhya is logical and not psychological’, which is probably a far too one-sided interpretation.

Furthermore, it is feasible that a perpetual distancing of oneself from the contents of consciousness might sooner or later induce altered states of awareness, nor is it entirely impossible that this was actually intended by Īśvara Kṛṣṇa and his disciples. The question is whether the approach of Classical Śāṅkhya is, in the last analysis, adequate for realising the postulated goal of Self authenticity. This is tacitly denied by the adherents of Yoga, who feel that the reconditioning of the cognitive apparatus as achieved by the method recommended in Classical Śāṅkhya is not conducive to that complete rupture with the phenomenal which alone is capable of securing emancipation.

As the Yoga authorities are quick to point out, there are powerful traces in the depth-mind which no amount of rehabilitation will wipe out. These subliminal-activators (samskāra) must be rendered sterile by a restructuring of consciousness itself, which is brought about by disciplined introspection leading to samādhi. Hence, in Yoga, the Śāṅkhya Vījñāna becomes viveka-khyāti or the gnostic vision of discernment. Similarly, vairāgya acquires a second dimension. On the ordinary level it is simply a letting go of externals, but in samādhi a second degree of detachment is called for which represents an act of will, subsequently leading to the much coveted asamprajñāta-samādhi in which all subliminal-activators become obliterated.

One may well speculate with K. B. R. Rao (1966, 432) that it is the accentuated rationalism of Classical Śāṅkhya which must be held responsible for the fact that this school of thought never actually acquired the same recognition and prestige as the other ārāmnas. Be that as it may, for the present purpose it is vital to realise that the methodological differences between Classical Śāṅkhya and Classical Yoga, as outlined above, initiated important conceptual and doctrinal divergencies which further increased the chasm between both schools of thought.

There are three major points in the doctrinal structure of Classical Yoga which mark it off from Classical Śāṅkhya, viz. theology, ontology and psychology. A fourth point occasionally suggested is the so-called sphota doctrine which Patañjali is held to subscribe to, but as I will show, wrongly so.

The single most striking conceptual difference between both ārāmnas concerns their respective interpretation of, or attitude towards, theological reality. Whilst Classical Śāṅkhya is said to be nir-iśvara or ‘atheistic’, Classical Yoga (as apparently all forms of Hindu Yoga) is most emphatically sa-iśvara or ‘theistic’. This assertion is somewhat misleading. Although it is perfectly correct that Classical Yoga is intrinsically ‘theistic’, Classical Śāṅkhya cannot simply be styled ‘atheistic’. The fact is that Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, rather like the Buddha, does not mention or make any statement about God at all. This can mean either of two things. He may deny outright the existence of such a supreme being, or else he may merely not lend any significance to this question or may postpone his judgement about
it. In view of the absence of any positive denial of the existence of God and, considering the evidence of the late Sāṃkhya-Sūtra, I would rather conjecture that Īśvara Kṛṣṇa assumed a typical agnostic stance. Ostensibly, if there be a God, he has little or nothing to do with the actual path of salvation as envisaged in Classical Sāṃkhya.

This indifference to theological matters is clearly out of tune with Classical Yoga, which is definitely theistic. As I have suggested above, against B. Heimann (1930, 90), there may possibly be an experiential basis for the concept īśvara. However, I do not thereby wish to say anything affirmative about either the reality of the experience or the authenticity of the interpretations attached to it. If this stance is valid, the methodological factor can justly be said to be the cause of this most conspicuous difference between both darśanas.

The pre-eminently practical orientation of Yoga and its full reliance on first-hand evidence (pratyakṣa), rather than on traditional knowledge of a rationalistic slant is, moreover, responsible for subtle but nonetheless crucial divergencies in the ontological conceptions of the two systems. As I have tackled this question already, there is no need to repeat myself (see above pp. 112 ff.). Rather, what I am interested in at this point is the question of how to account for these differences. As I see it, the ontogenetic models were originally and primarily maps for meditative introspection, intended to guide the yogin in his exploration of the terra incognita of the mind. Thus these models served a very practical psychological purpose. This hypothesis helps to explain why so many of these models, as given out in the Mahābhārata and other early texts, are without apparent logical coherence. These ‘maps’ are records of internal experiences rather than purely theoretical constructions. They are descriptive rather than explanatory.

The ‘map’ character of the ontogenetic model of Classical Yoga is beyond question. The prakṛtic multi-level edifice is an eminently practical ad hoc conception which helps the yogin to ‘program’ his enstatic journey, to signpost his inward odyssey, so to speak, and to orientate himself properly so as not to depart from his original trajectory. Thus the levels of cosmo-genetic evolution are simultaneously the levels of psychogenetic involution. Each subsequently ‘deeper’ layer within the prakṛtic organism becomes a target for the yogin’s conscious involutionary programme, until all levels of manifestation of the world-ground, and even the world-ground itself, are completely traversed. This is not a mere intellectual act.

The process of samādhi with its various degrees of completeness cannot be equated with the technique, utilised in Classical Sāṃkhya, of discriminating Self from non-self on the basis of prefabricated categories of differentiation. Yoga demands more than that. Overt conceptual discrimination or vijñāna is not enough. The categories of what represents the ‘non-Self’ must become the object of direct experience. The ultimate destination is of course the Self, as the experiencer behind all manifest contents of consciousness. In Classical Sāṃkhya, on the other hand, the ontogenetic model lacks this ‘map’ character and appears as a highly formalised structure typical of the rationalistic position of this school of thought.

The rigorous meditative-introspective discipline of Yoga, or, as J. W. Hauer (1958) put it, its ‘experienced metaphysics’ is furthermore responsible for the distinct holistic approach displayed by this tradition, which finds congenial expression in Patañjali’s conception of mind. Whereas Īśvara Kṛṣṇa is mainly concerned with showing the various constituents of the inner world separately and in their evolutionary dependence, Patañjali emphasises the homogeneity of the human personality. This is clearly evinced by his concept of citta. Īśvara Kṛṣṇa’s parallel term liṅga (or karana), used to denote the collectivity of the thirteen evolutes (viz. buddhi, ahaṅkāra, manas and the ten indriyas), is by no means synonymous with Patañjali’s citta. It somehow lacks the unifying and integrating
strength of the latter concept. Whereas citta is expressive of the dynamic interaction between the psychic structures – and thus is essentially a psychological concept – liṅga fails to convey any sense of dynamism or functional unity; it is primarily a static, analytical concept.

The last point adduced as a specific feature of the conceptual framework of Classical Yoga is the so-called sphota doctrine. This teaching, which originated among the early Sanskrit grammarians, contains the simple idea that a word is more than the sum total of its component letters. Sphota, derived from spha ‘to burst open’, is conceived as eternal and as manifesting itself in the spoken word. It represents the concept, brought to expression in a configuration of letters. Neither each separate sound nor the total sound of a word is considered as being capable of evoking a particular concept. Therefore, the sphota-vādins conclude, there must be something more that inheres in a word which, when the word is heard, ‘bursts forth’ as meaning. On hearing the first sound we have a dark notion which becomes clearer as the word is uttered.

However, as E. Abegg (1914, 188 ff.) has shown, sphota has a strong metaphysical ingredient which is absent in our standard notion of ‘concept’, wherefore a straightforward equation of sphota with ‘concept’ cannot be made. Sphota is ultimately the plenum, brahman, and it is this aspect of the doctrine which was of cardinal importance to the Indians. As brahman is bodied forth in all contingent beings, so the concept of brahman is thought to be the root of all other concepts.

Now, if a definite reference to this recondite doctrine could be found in the Yoga-Sūtra, this would be a significant factor in support of the traditional claim that the author of the Yoga-Sūtra is identical with his namesake the grammarian. However, this does not seem to be the case. Patañjali himself nowhere mentions the word sphota, and all later discussions about it are based on a single aphorism, namely III. 17, which runs as follows: śabda-artha-pratvayānām-itara-itara-adhyāśāt-saṃkaras-tat-pravibhāga-saṃyamāt sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñanam, which may be rendered thus: ‘Word, meaning and presented-idea of the corresponding object are [usually] present in a state of mixture because of their being each identified with each other. Through constraint (saṃyama) [on the distinction between] them, insight into the utterances of all beings is gained.’

As I understand it, this simply means that by nature śabda, artha and pratvaya are experienced as one. A sound uttered by a living being is always the bearer of meaning. It is also accompanied by an image in the mind of the percipient. If the sound is unknown, it can be understood by directly perceiving the idea in the mind of the sender. To achieve this direct perception or sāksātkāra of the idea in the sender’s consciousness, the yogin must make the distinction between word, meaning and image the subject of his meditative absorption and enstasy. This seems to be the plain message of the above sūtra.

There is no need here to assume that it contains any reference to sphota. Considering the context in which it appears, it probably merely relates to the very practical matter of reading another person’s mind, which is a generally recognised yogic feat. The explanations of Vācaspāti Miśra and others must be rejected as too far-fetched. Interestingly, Vyāsa makes no mention of the term sphota at all. According to him the matching of sounds with objects is purely conventional (saṅketa), and the act of recognising the meaning of words is a question of memory. Thus the blame for this whole confusion must be put on Vācaspāti Miśra.

It is but natural that out of these methodological and conceptual divergencies there should also arise differences in the terminology adopted by Classical Yoga and Classical Sāmkhya respectively. The preceding pages contain numerous examples which document this fact, and hence there is no need for duplication here. I merely wish to remind the reader of such specific yogic terms as alīṅga, liṅga-
mātra, asmitā-mātra, aviṣeṣa, viṣeṣa, citta, vṛtti and pratyaya which are either absent in the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā or else have an entirely different connotation. The autonomy of the technical vocabulary of Classical Yoga is, I think, indisputable.

To sum up: as is apparent from a critical examination of the Yoga-Sūtra, far from being a mere imitation of Classical Sāṃkhya, Pāṇaṅjala-Yoga has all the characteristic marks of a thoroughly independent philosophical school of thought. Pataṅjali, or whoever may have been responsible for the composition of the Yoga-Sūtra, emerges as a striking personality who must be counted among the most creative minds of India. It would be almost frivolous to deny that he was intimately connected with the Yoga tradition and that he himself must have been a yogin of considerable attainment. He shows an unparalleled insight into yogic processes and, contrary to H. T. Colebrooke’s (1873, I, 265) biased opinion, was not ‘more mystic and fanatical’ than Kapila, who ‘makes a nearer approach to philosophical disquisition’. He had little sectarian inclination, if any. He showed a healthy respect for tradition, but not at the expense of the immediacy of personal verification. Far from burdening his epigones with unintelligible mumbo-jumbo, he produced a work of fine texture and remarkable insight which compares favourably with the philosophical creations of his contemporaries, and which has deservedly inspired countless generations of yogins of all denominations.
Notes

Chapter I

1 K. B. R. Rao (1966) follows one of the earlier editions of the Mahābhārata where this passage is XII.308.
2 P. M. Modi (1932, 62) wrongly contrasted this school with what he called ‘rudrite’ yoga. This entirely fictional yoga tradition arose as a misunderstanding of the phrase rudra-pradhanan- aparān-viddhi yogān (Mahābhārata XII.304.5), where rudra clearly has the meaning of prāna (‘breath’). See E. W. Hopkins (1901, 340). F. Edgerton (1965, 325), however, translates: ‘know that there are other (inferior) Yoga-followers, of whom (the uncanny god) Rudra was the founder’.
3 See pp. 33 f. for an explanation of the terms tāmas and satvā.
4 Cf. also Bhagavad-Gītā (VII.10); bījaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ viddhi pārthā sanātanam, ‘know Me to be the external seed of all beings’. See also Bhagavad-Gītā X.39.
5 Cf. G. Oberhammer (1964, 197–207).
6 See e.g. Nādabindu-Upaniṣad.
7 Cf. S. Dasgupta’s (1924, 163) position: ‘It seems probable that Īśvara was traditionally believed in the Yoga school to be a protector of the Yogins [...] The metaphysical functions which are ascribed to Īśvara seem to be later additions...’

Chapter II

2 According to M. A. Mehendale (1960–61, 40), there is a further traditional etymology which is implied in the phrase pumāṁ retaḥ sīncati. of Munḍaka-Upaniṣad (II. 1.5), whereby the word puruṣa appears as a derivative of pu (pumāṁ) + ru (retas) + śa (sīncati).
3 See e.g. Rgveda X.97.4–5.
4 See e.g. Rgveda X.90.3–4 and I.164.45, as also Atharvaveda II. 1.2.
5 Cf. Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa X.6.5.
6 See also the highly symbolic rites performed on the occasion of the installation of a temple, which is regarded as a manifestation of the vāstupuruṣa or supreme architect of the world. This is ably discussed in H. Zimmer (1926).
8 See e.g. the hiranyagarbha tradition outlined in the Mahābhārata (XII.296.7–8), which says of the twenty-sixth principle that it is ‘spotless, knowing, immeasurable, eternal; [yet] it apperceives always the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth’ (... vimalam buddham-aprameyam sanātanam, satatam pāṇca-vimśaṁ ca catur-vimśaṁ ca budhyate). This invites comparison with the
Yoga-Sūtra (IV. 18), where the Self is described as continuously apperceiving the fluctuations of consciousness.

Even Patanjali (III.35) employs the term bhoga, without, however, meaning to ascribe any dynamics to the Self. Bhoga is ‘experience’, which is a consciousness event witnessed, or apperceived, by the Self.

Cf. Yoga-Sūtra IV.22, where citi is said to be apratisāmkramā, which J. H. Woods (1966) translates ‘which unites not [with objects]’. As will be shown (pp. 53 f.), the co-operation between Self and consciousness is made possible by an apparent ‘correlation’ (sanyoga), known to the epic teachers by the name of miśratva or ‘association’ (see e.g. Mahābhārata XII.295.21).

For a similarly loose and misleading use of language cf. G. J. Larson (1969, 183), who said about the Self that ‘it is simply present in the world’.

G. J. Larson (1969) translated pratiniyama in a more conservative fashion as ‘diversity’.

The commentators take the term karaṇa as referring to buddhi, etc.

The Sanskrit text reads . . . atimānam bahudhā kṛtvā . . . , ‘making itself manifold’.

See e.g. Muṇḍaka-Up. 1.2.9; Śvetāśvatara-Up.II.14.

Chapter III

See e.g. Bhagavad-Gītā III.27, 29, 33; IV.6; VII.5, 4, 20; IX.7, 8, 10, 12, 13; XI.51; XIII.19, 20, 23, 29; XVIII.59. Śvetāśvatāra-Upaniṣad IV. 10. Maitrayanlya-Upaniṣad VI. 10, 30; II.6. Mahānrayana-Upaniṣad X.8.

This strange relation between Śvetāśvatāra-Upaniṣad and Atharvaveda is highlighted by the fact that IV.3 in the former scripture is a verbatim quotation from the latter, viz. X.8.27.

See e.g. Bhagavad-Gītā III.33, IV.6 et al.

See P. M. Modi (1932, 5) for a detailed study of the historical development of the aksara concept.

This is what the post-Christian buddhist writers labelled yogi-pratyakṣa. As Th. Stcherbatsky (1958, 20–1) noted: ‘Even the later Buddhist logicians, notwithstanding all their aversion to uncritical methods of thought, were nevertheless obliged to leave a loop-hole for the entrance of full mysticism and thus to support the religious theory of a Saint and of a Buddha. This loophole was a kind of intelligible intuition which was described as a gift to contemplate directly, as if present before the senses, that condition of the Universe which, abstractly and vaguely, appeared as a necessary consequence of logic to the philosopher.’

See G. Feuerstein (1974, 87 f.).

See Śāmkhya-Kārikā 22 and 24.

See W. Liebenthal (1934).

See E. Frauwallner (1953, 390).

See, for instance, F. Capra (1972, 15 ff.).

See the extensive bibliography of M. Eliade (1973). Not mentioned but of paramount importance is the study by J. A. B. van Buitenen (1956–57) in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, vols. 76 (pp. 153 ff.) and 77 (pp. 15 ff. and 88 ff.). Also not listed are Th. Stcherbatsky (1934, 737–60) and A. Wayman (1962, 14–22).

J. A. B. van Buitenen (1956, 156).

See Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s remarks to Śāmkhya-Sūtra I.61: sattva-ādīni dravyāṇi na vaiśesikā
guṇāḥ, ‘sattva, etc., are substances, not qualities [as taught in the school of] Vaiśeṣika’.

14 Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (II).
15 Vācaspati Miśra on Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (3); cf. Sāṃkhya-Sūtra (1.61): sattva-rajas-tamasāṃ sāmya-avasthā prakṛtiḥ.

16 See Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (12): prīty-apṛtti-visāda-ātmakāḥ prakāśa-pravṛtti-niyama-arthāḥ, anyo nyā-abhihava-āśraya-janana-mithuna-vṛttayaś-ca guṇāḥ, or ‘The primary-constituents are embodied in pleasure, pain, indifference; [they] serve [the purposes of] manifestation-luminosity, activity and delimitation and have [as their] modes mutual domination, support, activation and interaction’.

17 G. M. Koelmann’s (1970, 78) coinage.

18 The term prakāśa (from pra + karṣ ‘be visible, shine’) has the dual connotation of ‘manifestation’ and ‘luminosity’. The reason is not far to seek: the manifest universe is intimately bound up with radiation = light, a connection which did not escape the ancient sages.

19 See pp. 44 f.
20 See Kaṭha-Upaniṣad VI.8, Maitrāyaṇiṇya-Upaniṣad VI.31, 35; VII.2.
21 See e.g. Vācaspati Miśra’s Sāṃkhya-Tattva-Kaumudi on Sāṃkhya-Kārikā 40 and Aniruddha’s Vṛtti on Sāṃkhya-Sūtra VI.69. This native etymology was refuted by R. Garbe (19172, 328). See also E. A. Welden (1910, 445.)

22 This is R. E. Hume’s (19312, 449) phrase (ad Maitrāyaṇiṇya-Up. VI-35).
23 See e.g. Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad IV.3.10 and Chāndogya-Upaniṣad II.24.16 and III.19.1. See also Praśna-Upaniṣad IV.8 and Kaṭṭāyaṇi-Upaniṣad III.8. Similarly, Bhagavad-Gītā II.14 speaks of mātrā-sparśah which can safely be translated as ‘contacts with material-objects’. Śaṅkara, under the influence of Classical Sāṃkhya, misinterprets the word mātrā as tanmātra.

24 This was one of the mistakes committed by J. H. Woods (19663, 91), following Vācaspati Miśra, who (ad II.19) equates the mahat-tattva with mahad-buddhi.

26 According to another theory each tanmātra has but one characteristic. See Yuktidīpikā on Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (25) eka-uttaram-itvā vāṣagannyaḥ.

28 The Sanskrit text reads: evam tarhi na-eva-ahamkāro vidyata iti patañjaliḥ, mahato śmi-pratayya-rūpatva-abhyupagamāt, ‘Thus then, there is no I-maker, [says] Patañjali, on account of the admission of the appearance of the notion of I-am in the great [entity]’. Of course, it is by no means settled that this Patañjali is identical with the sūtra-kāra or even that the words quoted by the author of the Yuktidīpikā are his ipsissima verba. P. Ghakravarti (1951, 134 f.) has made a strong case against their identification, and conjectured that the Patañjali referred to in several passages of the aforementioned work is the same authority also cited by Padmapada in his commentary on the Prapañcasāra-Tantra (1.94.7). We must also not forget that the Yuktidīpikā is, as A. Wezler (1974) has shown, a commentary on a commentary (the Rāja-Varttika quoted by Vācaspati Miśra in his Sāṃkhya-Tattva-Kaumudi, 72) and as such a comparatively late text.

29 S. Radhakrishnan (19516, II, 434).
30 This term makes its first appearance in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad VII.25.1. This chapter, however, does not belong to the earliest parts of the text.

31 See Tattva-Vaiśāradī (II. 19): pāṇca tanmātrakā sua-kāranakāny-aviśeṣatvād-asmitāvad-iti, ‘the five potentials have buddhi as their cause because they are unparticularised, like
I-am-ness’.

32 See Sāṃkhya-Kārikā (38): tanmātrāny-aviṣeṣaḥ tebhyo bhūtāni pañca pañcabhyah, ete smṛtā viṣeṣaḥ śānta ghorās-ca mūdhās-ca, ‘The potentials are unparticularised. From these five the five elements [originate]. These are held to be particularised tranquil, turbulent and delusive.’

33 G.J. Larson (1969), for one, seems oblivious to this whole argument. Interestingly, Umāsvāti, in his Tattvārthādhigama-Sūtra (II. 16–18), distinguishes between dravya-indriya (the sense as substance) and bhāva-indriya (the sense as function). This Jaina work belongs, according to B. Bhatt (1977), to the second century A.D. and thus probably precedes Patañjali, who appears to have been aware of the doctrinal matter codified by Umāsvāti. Cf. e.g. YS II.30–31 with TS VII. 1-2; YS I.33 with TS VII.6; YS 1.21 (samvega) with TS VII.7; YS I.42–43 (vitarka, vicāra) with TS IX.41–46. H. Jacobi (1906), who translated this Prakrit text into German and noted some of these parallels with the Yoga-Sūtra, still placed Umāsvāti in the sixth century A.D. and consequently had to assume that the Jaina author utilised the Yoga-Sūtra, instead of vice versa.

34 It is not even clear whether this feat is thought to concern the physical body or its subtle counterpart (whose existence Patañjali may have denied).

Chapter IV

1 A. K. Lad (1967, preface).
2 This invites comparison with Plotinus’ ‘flight of the Alone to the Alone’ (Enneads VI.9.11: φυτῇ μόνον πρὸς μόνον).
3 See J. A. B. van Buitenen’s (1962) critical study.
4 A valuable beginning in this respect has been made by N. Tatia (1950-)
5 adṛṣṭo draṣṭā aśrutah śrotā amato mantā avijñāto vijñātā na-anyo ‘to’sti draṣṭā na-anyo ‘to’sti śrotā na-anyo ‘to’sti mantā na-anyo ‘to’sti vijñātā eṣa ta ātma-antaryāmy-amṛtaḥ.
6 See Vācaspati Miśra on aphorism 1.4. Patañjali uses this word (II.53) and the cognate yogyatvā (II.41) in a more general sense.
7 Cf. G. Kaviraj (1966, 128): ‘The term “kaivalya” […] conveys the sense of being “kevala” or alone. It implies the idea of purity and freedom from defilement.’
8 This imagery is peculiar to Vācaspati Miśra, who, in his gloss on II.20, states concisely: ‘The casting of the Self’s reflection into the mirror of buddhi [is the way in which] the Self can know the buddhi’ (buddhi-darpāṇe puruṣa-pratibimba-saṁkrāntir-eva buddhi-pratisamveditvaṁ pumṣaḥ). For a detailed discussion of this reflection model see G. M. Koelman (1970, 48 f).
9 As I have tried to show in a previous study (1979), the idiom of purity/purification is more particularly idiosyncratic of the yoga-aṅga section of the Yoga-Sūtra than of Patañjali’s kriyā-yoga proper.
10 J. A. B. van Buitenen (1957b, 103).
11 See Bhagavad-Gītā VI. 15; V.25, etc.
12 As the anonymous author of the Sāṃkhya-Pravacana-Sūtra (V.74–6) puts it pithily, ‘Liberation is not the manifestation of bliss, for [the Self] has no qualities. – Nor, similarly, is it the destruction of particular qualities [inherent in the Self]. – Nor is it [any] particular movement of that motionless [Self]’ (na-ānanda-abhivyaktir-muktir-nirdharmatvāt, na viṣeṣa-guṇa-ucchittis-tadvat, na viṣeṣa-gatir-niṣkriyasya).
Chapter V


2. See e.g. Rgveda 1.63.11; V.7.9; X.103.12, etc., and Atharvaveda I.34.2 (in the sense of ‘intent’ – a love spell).

3. But see Chândogya-Upanishad VI.15.2, where the term appears in the following compounds: cittavant, citta-ätman and citta-ekäyana.

4. See Sämkhya-Kârikä 33 and Väcaspati Miśra’s Sämkhyaatattva-kaumudë there on.

5. Cf. also T. R. Kulkarni (1972, 69): ‘Patañjali clearly seems to have used the Sanskrit terms citta and mansa interchangeably.’

6. This is a favourite simile with Sämkhya philosophers; see e.g. Sämkhya-Pravacana-Bhäsyä 1.68; V.69, 91.

7. yac-ca sva-bhâvat pacati viśa-yonih pâcyâms-ca sarvân pariñâmâyed-yah, . . . ‘The womb of all, which “cooks” [i.e. unfolds] its nature, and which transforms all “cookable-things” [i.e. evolved objects].’

8. The word occurs twice in the locative (pariñâme) and is usually translated by ‘in the end’. This peculiar usage is also known to the Astsâhasrikâ (VI.151).


10. See e.g. Sämkhya-Kârikä 60, which describes the Self as ‘unhelpful’ (anupakarin).

11. See Yoga-Bhäsyä 11.3.


13. The phrase ‘seed of the defects’ (dosa-bîja) refers, of course, to the causes-of-affliction (kleśa), which must become, in Vyäsa’s favourite metaphor, ‘like burned seeds of rice’, dagdha-säli-kalpäni, III.50. Cf. Mahâbhârata XII.204.16: bîjâny-agny-upadaghâni na rohanti yathâ punah, jñâna-dagdhais-tathâ kleśair-na-âimä sambadhyate punah, ‘Just as seeds roasted by fire do not germinate again, so also the Self is not bound by the causes-of-affliction burnt by gnosis’. Cf. also XII. 179.15, which propounds what may be called a metaphysical ‘germ theory’: bîja-mâtram purâ srâstam yad-etat-parivartate, mrtâ mrtâ pranâyanti bhijâd-bhijam pravartate, ‘It is only the seed, once discharged, which revolves; the dead are dead [and] gone; seed is produced from seed’.

14. The Yoga-Bhäsyä (IV.7) elucidates this thus: catuśpadâ khalv-iyam karma-jâtiḥ, krśna śukla-krśṇâ śuklâ śukla-akrśṇa ca-iti, tatra krśṇâ durâtmanâm, śukla-krśṇâ bahiḥ-sädhana-sâdhyâ, tatra para-pidâ-anugraha-dvâreṇa-eva karma-âsaya-pracayâ, śukla tapah-svâdhyâya-dhyânavatâm, sâ hi kevalâ manasy-âyatatvâd-bahiḥ sädhana-anadhînâ na parân-pidâyitvâ bhavati, aśuklā-akrśṇâ samnyâsinâm kstna-klesânām carama-dehânâm-itty tatra-asuklâm yogina eva phala-samnyâsâts aksaṃ standa ca-âmpâdanât, itaresâm tu bhûtânâm pûrâvam-eva trividham-itty. ‘The class of karman is surely quadripartite: black, white/black, white and not-white/not-black. Of these the black [category] [pertains to] evil souls (dur-âtman); the white/black [category] is attainable by external means. The accumulation of action-deposit (karma-âsaya) of these [kinds of karman] is by way of [causing] harm (pidâ) to or benefitting others. The white [category] [is peculiar to those who] practise austerities, self-study and meditation. Owing to the dependence of this [kind of karman] on the mind alone, it does not depend on external means and does not come about from injury to others. [That category which is] not-white/not-black [pertains to] the renunciants (samnyâsin) whose causes-of-affliction (kleśa) have dwindled [and who inhabit their] last bodies.
[never to be born again]. Of these [four kinds of karman] the not-white [category] [pertains to] the yogin owing to [his] renunciation of the fruit [of his actions] and the not-black [category] [is also peculiar to him alone] because of the exclusion (an-upādāna) [of such actions]. However, the triple [karman] [as explained] above, [is typical] of [all] other beings.’

16 niruddhyante yasmin-pramāṇa-ādi-vṛttay’vasthā-viśeṣe cittasya so’ vasthā-viśesā yogah (Tattva-Visārādi, I.2).

17 See e.g. Yoga-Bhāṣya I.i: sarva-vṛtti-nirodhe tv-asamprajñātah samādhih, ‘Upon the restriction of all the fluctuations, the ultra-cognitive enstasy [is achieved]’.

18 The Sanskrit commentators interpret the compound viśeṣa-arthatva as the ‘particularity of an object’.

19 The Sanskrit text runs: abhāva-pratyaya-ālambanā vṛttir-nidrā.

20 As was pointed out by S. Pines and T. Gelblum (1966, 305), this has been al-Bārūnī’s understanding, or rather profound misunderstanding, of the compound. As the authors observed, he appears to have translated the Yoga-Sūtra relying ‘to a considerable extent on his own intelligence and auto-didactic capacity’, that is to say, as an uninitiated outsider.

21 Cf. Tattvārthādhigama-Sūtra 1.22, where the compound occurs as well: bhava-pratyayo nāraka-devānām, which is understood by the Jaina authorities to mean ‘[The supra-sensuous knowledge (avadhī)] of the hell-dwellers and the gods is congenital [lit. “birth-produced”]’. I have followed H. Jacobi’s (1906) edition of the Svetambara recension of this ancient Jaina text.In J. L. Jaini’s (1920) edition of the Digambara recension (Vol. II of Sacred Books of the Jainas), this aphorism is numbered I.21, running bhava-pratyayo-‘vadhi . . . ‘knowledge (avadhī) produced by birth . . .’.

Chapter VI

1 One of the few scholars to have comprehended the full scope of these twin concepts was K. S. Joshi (1965), who wrote: ‘This twofold process forms the very root of anything that claims to bear the name of “yoga”’ (p. 60).

2 Cf. Mahābhārata XII. 198.3-4: sā-iyam gunavatī buddhir-gunesv-evā-abhivartate, avātara-abhinirhsrotam gireḥ sṛhagd-iva-udakam ; yādā nirgunam-āpnoti dhyānam manasi pūrvajam, taddā prajñāyate brahma nikasyam nikase yathā. This can be translated as follows: ‘The buddhi, endowed with the guṇas, extends only to the guṇas, flowing down-and-away [from the Self] like water from the peak of a mountain; [but] when it acquires the meditative-absorption devoid of the guṇas [and] born earlier on in the mind, then the Absolute (brahman) is verified, like a streak-of-gold on the touchstone.’

3 Śrama is frequently used already in the Atharvaveda (e.g. IV.35.2; VI.133.3; esp. XI.7.17 and XII.5.1).


5 Vācaspati explains the compound eka-tattva (‘unitary principle’) as referring to the ‘lord’ (tīvra). This is also al-Biruni’s interpretation – a fact which seems to have eluded S. Pines and T. Gelblum (1966).

6 The aphorism runs: virāma-pratyaya-abhyāsa-purvah saṃskāra-Seso’nyah.

7 The earliest mention of this term is in the Maitrāyaniya-Upaniṣad (VI. 18), but the underlying idea is clearly expressed already in the much older Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (V111.15).
A familiar concept in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature; see *e.g.* Asta-Sāhasrikā XI.240–41 and XXV.430.

See G. Albrecht (1951).

See A. Bharati’s (1971, 261) appreciative remarks about this neologism (‘a felicitous term created by Eliade to replace the cognitively inaccurate “ecstasy”’).

*Cf Mahābhārata* XII.287.12, yathā bhānu-gatam tejo manih suddhah samādhinā, ādatte rāja-fārdula tathā yogah pravartete, ‘As a pure jewel absorbs the solar glow, thus, o tiger among kings, is Yoga effected by enstasy’.

V. M. Bedekar (1960-61, 116 ff.) has drawn attention to an interesting pre-classical exposition of *dhyāna-yoga* in the *Mahābhārata* (XII. 188) in which the terms *vitarka* and *vicāra* make their appearance (stanza 15). They are described as phenomena of the first form or stage of meditative-absorption. A third factor is *viveka*, which V. M. Bedekar (p. 118) correctly understood as the ‘disengaging the mind from the objects of sense’. However, in a subsequent publication (1968, 48) the author mistranslated this term as ‘discrimination’. He also attempted to relate this fourfold Yoga, taught by Bhisma to Yudhiṣṭhira, to the buddhist teaching of the four *jhānas*, but entertained the view that both the epic and the buddhist sources probably drew from a common fount of yogic knowledge. For an exposition of the four *jhānas* (=*dhyāna*) (see F. Heiler (1922, 43 ff.).

This Sanskrit text is highly elliptic and reads: *prajñā-prāsādam-āruhya na-s’ocyan-s’ocato janān, jagati-sthān-iva-adri-stho manda-buddhi-na-veksate.*

According to Vyāsa the word *tasya* refers to the *yogin* who has attained to the ‘vision of discernment’, but with Vijñāna Bhiksu I prefer to relate it back to the compound *hāna-upāya* of II.26.

J. H. Woods’s (1966′) index lists *viveka-jam dhyānam* at III.52, which must be a slip, since his translation clearly presupposes *t-s’-jānām.*

See *Yoga-Bhāṣya* 111.52.

R. Schmidt (1960, 124).

E. Conze (1962, 80) viewed the question of the origin of this fourfold practice differently: ‘They are not specifically Buddhistic [. . .] and may have been borrowed from other Indian religious systems. For centuries they lay outside the core of the Buddhist effort, and the orthodox elite considered them as subordinate practices [but] in the Mahābhārata became sufficiently prominent to alter the entire structure of the doctrine . . . ’. Although the name would seem to betray the hindu origins of the set, nevertheless the earliest references to the four ‘infinitudes’ (Pali: *appamaññā*) as they are also known, is not in hindu but in buddhist writings (*e.g.* concluding line of *Khuddakapāṭha* of the *Suttapitaka*).

E. Frauwallner (1953, I, 424) wrongly equated *prasamkhyaṇa* with *dhyāna*.

For some useful observations on the interpretation of the nature of this type of enstatic experience see J. Marechal (1964, 186 ff.).

This substitution of *samādhi* by *dhyāna* is most unseasonable, but there can be no doubt that *dharma-megha-dhyāna* is in fact the same as *dharma-megha-samādhi*.

On the intrinsic complexity of the word *dharma* see E. Conze’s (1962, 92 ff.) enlightening analysis.

M. Eliade (1973, 84), for instance, retained the earlier interpretation: ‘. . . seems to refer to an abundance (“rain”) of virtues that suddenly fill the yogin’.

See also *Saddharma-Pundarika* V.5, where the Buddha’s teaching is compared to a great cloud shedding its refreshing load of water; *cf.* vss. 16 and 36 ff. See also XXIV.22. The ten stages were discussed in detail by N. Dutt (1930). See also H. Dayal (1932).
It is interesting to observe the interpretation of the concept of dharma-megha-samādhi in such Yoga-inspired Vedānta works as the Paingala-Upanisad (III.2) and the Pañcadaśī (I.60). The former text has this to say: tato`bhyāsa-pātavāl-sahasraiaḥ sadā amītā-dhārā varsati, tato yogavittamāḥ samādhiḥ dharma-megham prāhūḥ, ‘Thence, through skill in practice, a stream of immortality/nectar showers forth always from thousand [directions]; therefore the most excellent knowers of Yoga call it the cloud of dharma enthasy’. This corresponds almost verbatim with the verse in Vidyāranya’s popular exposition of Advaita-Vedanta: dharma-megham-imam prāhuh samādhiḥ yoga-vittamāḥ, varsatasya yato dharma-amṛta-dharah sahasras’ah, ‘The most excellent knowers of Yoga call this enthasy “cloud of dharma” because it showers forth streams of dharma nectar by the thousands’.

M. Eliade (1973\(^2\), 86).

See my 1979 publication (pp. 74 ff.).

In this stanza vibhuti could possibly be used adjectivally; thus R. C. Zaehner (1969) translated ‘far-flung’ and took it to qualify the word Yoga.


Sva-ahga-jugupsā is not so much disgust with one’s body, as many translators would have it, but a healthy detachment towards it.

Ātma-darśana is explained in the Mahābhārata (XII.315.29) as follows: ādarie svām-iva chāyām paiyasya-ātmānām-ātmānaḥ . . ., ‘As one’s image in a mirror [thus] you behold the Self by the Self’. Elsewhere (XII. 196.4) we read: na caksuṣa pasyati rupam ātmam . . ., ‘The form of the Self cannot be seen by the eye’.

See my comments on p. 95.

See pp. 62 ff.

However, according to J. Miller in G. Feuerstein and J. Miller (1971, 101) a possible parallel to the kundaliṇī conception may be found in certain usages of the multi-valent notion of fire (agni), as e.g. in Rgveda X.136.

Chapter VII

H. T. Colebrooke (1873, I).


See Mahābhārata XII.294.7\(^a\): yoga-krtyam tu yogāṇāṁ dhyānam-eva param balam, ‘The superior strength of the Yoga-followers is [their practice of] meditative-absorption [of] Yoga praxis’.

This has its parallel in Buddhism in the relation between Asahga’s Yogācāra and Nāgārjuna’s intellectualist Mādhyamika.

See e.g. Vedānta-Sūra (33).

Unfortunately the date of this text is still problematic. Generally placed in the fourteenth or fifteenth century A.D., it undoubtedly contains much older material.

On the meaning of the term līṅga and its significance see R. Garbe (1894, 323 ff.). See also E. A. Welden (1914, 32–51).

See e.g. S. Dasgupta (1963*, I, 238, fn. 1): ‘The most important point in favour of this identification [between the grammarian Patañjali and the author of the Yoga Sūtrā] seems to be that both Patañjalis as against the other Indian systems admitted the doctrine of sphoṭa which was denied even by Sāṃkhya.’

98
See also K. K. Raja (1956, 84–116).
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