

Yogasūtra (translation by Stephen Phillips)

Yoga is both the name of a classical Indian philosophical school—the Yoga school—and the word for meditational, devotional, and ascetic practices of “self-discipline” (bodily postures, breath-control, self-study, etc.). Thus the *Yoga-sūtra* (*YS*) both defines the *Yoga* school and spells out various exercises of *yoga*. That is, it spells out a system of yoga practice framed by a metaphysics. The Yoga philosophy of the *YS* is distinct from, for example, the theism of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, though the *Gītā* advocates yogic practice no less than the *YS*. The supreme good according to the *YS* is a rupture separating an individual conscious being, *puruṣa*, from nature, *prakṛti*. The *YS* presents a metaphysical dualism of an infinite plurality of individual conscious beings, on the one hand, and a single nature, on the other. Most of us have lost our true identity through confusing our true self with body, life, and mind. God, according to the text (more precisely, according to the classical Yoga interpretation of the text by commentators beginning with Vyāsa in the fifth century), is the archetypal “liberated” conscious being, never sullied by worldly distractions. Otherwise, God is just like each of us, or our true self, *puruṣa*. This is a notion distinct from that of the *Gītā*, where the Supreme Being is conceived along lines not so different from the theology of Western religions.

Thus in addition to its delineation of yogic practices in the style of a how-to book or meditation manual, the *YS* attends to questions about reality, especially about the relation of consciousness to nature. Its theory may be interpreted as a view of the ontological underpinnings of the enlightenment or liberational experience, i.e., as an explanation how such an experience is possible. There is also an intermediate level of psychological theorizing, which models various cognitive and motor functions. The psychology constitutes a bridge between the practice teachings and the metaphysics of Yoga (though rickety in some places).

Although portions of the *YS* probably date to very early, the final version of the text belongs to the period after the Buddhist Nāgārjuna (c. 200 CE) who provoked a professional turn in Indian philosophy such that disputants of all schools pay close attention to overall ideative coherence as well as supporting argument. The *YS* commentators are all professional reasoners aware of a wide range of competing metaphysical systems and beliefs.

Modern commentators sympathetic to traditions of Indian spirituality try to restore a sense of the sūtras outside the systematic Yoga interpretation of classical commentators. Furthermore, classical theorists outside the Yoga school, such as the Tantric Abhinavagupta (c. 1050), also read the aphorisms differently than Vyāsa and classical philosophers

of the Yoga school. Abhinava says, for example, that the word *īśvara* in *YS* 1.23—which is translated below as “Lord” and by other translators as “God”—means “higher self,” *ātman*. Indologists have seen the *YS* as a compilation of distinct texts. Classical commentators, in sharp contrast, presuppose its unity. Modern yoga-sympathizers and apologists, such as B. K. S. Iyengar, Georg Feuerstein, and Swami Satyananda Saraswati, not only try to restore an original “experiential” or “phenomenological” sense, as mentioned, but also, in the case of Iyengar in particular, in their commentaries import much traditional folklore.

Our method will be to try to learn from everyone but also to try to make sense of the text on our own.



Now, a work in progress, a new translation of the *YS*. NB. The translation has no gaps but not the comments. At some point, this will all become an appendix of a book to be entitled, *Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth: A Philosophic Interpretation and Defense*. Some of the references in the comments below are to the unfinished manuscript of the book. Please ignore them. Suggestions for improvements are most welcome: phillips@mail.utexas.edu. Thanks.



oṃ śrīśrīsarasvatyai namaḥ

Salutations to Patañjali! oṃ namo namaḥ |

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali

samādhi-pādaḥ

1.1. atha yoga-anuśāsanam |

Now instruction in yoga.

Comments. The word *atha*, “now,” is viewed within traditional circles as a ritually auspicious way to begin a text (*maṅgala*).

1.2. yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ |

Yoga is the stilling of fluctuations of thought and emotion (*citta*, “mind”).

Comments. The term *citta* is a nominalized past passive participle of *cit*, “to be aware.” The “mind” connects the world and consciousness. With respect to consciousness, *citta* is object (compare the idea of sense data), like the things of the world. But with respect to the world, it is subject, having an object-directedness or intentionality, among other features. In relation to consciousness, the “mind” can be controlled in meditation, but “thought’s” intentionality is by objects determined, in veridical perception, for example, by the objects perceived, which the perceptions indicate. Similarly, a person can check remembering (remembering is a form *citta* takes), but any remembering would be about something or other experienced previously.

Clearly *citta* is used to comprise thought, emotion, and perception, including internal perception (e.g., of desire), as well as dreaming. Perhaps the conscious being has a native perception, but all conceptualized perception, *savikalpaka-pratyakṣa*, would be a formation of *citta*. Emotion is thought to color *citta* in common classical conception, but there are few explicit statements about emotion in *YS*. Patañjali himself lists five types of fluctuation of *citta* just below (*YS* 1.6). From 1.15, we might expand the idea to include desire. (See also *YS* 4.10.) Controlling desire is in any case considered necessary to still the mind, since desire is given voice by the mind.

It is not until chapter four (4.4ff) that Patañjali takes up *citta* expressly within his philosophic psychology. In the sūtras of chapter one, which are philosophic and abstract but also, especially in comparison with chapter four, practice-oriented, it seems pretty safe to say that *citta* is used generically to mean the “stuff” of all varieties of mental occurrence (“mind-stuff” is the translation of James H. Woods).

1.3. tadā draṣṭuḥ sva-rūpe avasthānam |

Then the seer (the conscious being, *puruṣa*) rests in its true form.

Comments. The concept of the *puruṣa* is introduced called here the seer. This sūtra together with the next sets up the simple dualism of self and nature, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, which has been criticized in several chapters above and in particular in chapter one (pp. xxx–xx).

1.4. vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra |

At other times, fluctuations are identified with.

Comments. This is an old Upaniṣadic theme, now commonly identified with the Sāṃkhya school. Sāṃkhya (the word means analysis) proposes careful understanding of one's nature and personality—to include subtle presentations of thoughts and emotions, *citta*—as the means for the true self to disidentify with the body and mind. Fluctuations of *citta* are viewed as part of nature and external to the *puruṣa*. All personality is a mask, to be analyzed away as a distraction from consciousness's native state of self-absorption and bliss. According to Yoga—and indeed, with qualifications, to almost all the classical schools (even the Buddhists who deny an enduring self)—the individual conscious being is subject to rebirth where he or she takes on most literally another persona. In other words, one's true self is discovered through achieving a mental silence that allows consciousness to pull back into itself, disidentifying with its changing mind, body, and personality.

1.5. vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭa-a-kliṣṭāḥ |

Fluctuations are of five types, and are detrimental or non-detrimental (to the practices of yoga).

Comments. Probably what is meant is that these are five major types, not that all fluctuations of *citta* fall into a clear subcategory. Emotions, for example, seem to be left off the list that follows.

1.6. pramāṇa-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidrā-smṛtayaḥ |

The five are knowledge sources (and knowledge), the opposite, thought and imagination, sleep (and dreaming), and memory.

Comments. The style of a sūtra text such as this is to use conceptual shorthand; sūtras are meant to be memorized. If we understand fluctuations of *citta* as occurring in the present, the list would be, then, using a slightly expanded terminology: (1) veridical cognitions (perceptions, conclusions drawn by inference, and bits of occurrent knowledge gained by testimony), (2) non-veridical cognitions (perceptual illusion, inferential error, false testimony), (3) talking to oneself and day-dreaming, (4) dreaming, and (5) remembering.

1.7. pratyakṣa-anumāna-āgamāḥ pramāṇāni |

The knowledge sources (along with the veridical awareneses to which they give rise) are perception, inference, and testimony (including scriptural tradition).

Comments. Books have been written on each of the three: perception, inference, and, of these the most controversial, testimony. Testimony as referred to here in this sūtra is probably to include scriptural testimony, the revealed words of the Upaniṣads, for example, as well as what we learn from friends and teachers. Buddhists relegate knowledge from testimony to a combination of knowledge from perception and from inference. If a chain of testimony does not originate in veridical perception or inference, it would be unreliable, they argue. More on this later.

1.8. viparyayo mithyā-jñānam a-tad-pratiṣṭham |

The opposite to the knowledge sources amounts to false awareness indicating that something is what it is not.

Comments. This is a definition of non-veridical cognition that sounds a lot like that of the realist school known as Nyāya, which was discussed in chapter one.

1.9. sabda-jñāna-anupātī vastu-sūnyo vikalpaḥ |

Thought and imagination (*vikalpa*, the third item on the list of five), which are devoid of real objects, are dependent on words and concepts.

Comments. We daydream in the words and concepts we have acquired through experience and training. Patañjali takes an empiricist approach to imagination. The mind is malleable, shaped by experience, but also, in imagination, capable of separating and recombining colors, shapes, etc., and creating fictions.

1.10. a-bhāva-pratyaya-ālambanā vṛttir nidrā |

Sleep (along with dreaming) comprises the mental fluctuation whose object is a stream of ideas about things not present.

Comments. Sleep is an important opportunity for yogic practice according to, e.g., the *Hathayogapradīpikā*: yogic sleep (*yoga-nidrā*) is conceived as

bodily sleep in which there is continuity of awareness with the waking state. Patañjali, by classifying sleep, or dreaming, as a fluctuation of *citta* (which is to be stilled, by the definition at 1.2), anticipates the conception of *yoga-nidrā*.

1.11. anubhūta-viṣaya-a-sampramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ |

Memory is not letting experienced objects escape.

Comments. There seems to be a pragmatic contradiction between the sūtras being put forth for memorization and this teaching that remembering is, like other fluctuations, not to be indulged. Of course, the text is only a tool. Its value is instrumental and derived. Presumably, advanced yogis would block even its memory. (But would the blocking itself, in virtue of its conformity with the *YS* teaching, be a kind of remembering, an informing of the act by the teaching? The contradiction, or tension, is not, perhaps, so easily avoided.)

1.12. abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tan-nirodhaḥ |

Restriction of them (of all five types of fluctuation) is accomplished through practice and disinterestedness.

Comments. This sūtra connects with 1.5. Sūtras 1.6 through 1.11 constitute a minor digression into definitions of types of fluctuation. Now we are back to the properly yogic theme of how to bring all to a halt. Practice is defined in the next sūtra, and disinterestedness at 1.15.

1.13. tatra sthitau yatno abhyāsaḥ |

Practice is effort to hold fast the restriction.

Comments. The definition connects with the definition of yoga at 1.2.

1.14. dīrgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkāra-āsevito dṛdha-bhūmiḥ |

Effort becomes firmly established when it is put forth for a long time continuously.

Comments. Yoga is like perfection of a skill, requiring daily effort for a long period.

1.15. dr̥ṣṭa-anuśravika-viṣaya-vitr̥ṣṇasya vaśīkāra-saṃjñā vairāgyam |

Disinterestedness is intention to control (appetites), on the part of someone who has no thirst for objects directly perceived or reported.

Comments. Yoga clearly involves control over desire as well as thought and emotion. The picture of *citta* probably should be extended to include desire.

1.16. tat-param puruṣa-khyāter guṇa-vaitr̥ṣṇyam |

Superior to that is (the absolute disinterestedness of) lack of desire for (manifest or unmanifest) phenomena (*guṇa*, “qualities”) because of perception of the *puruṣa* (“true person”). [Alternatively: Afterwards, from perception of the *puruṣa*, there is lack of desire for (manifest or unmanifest) phenomena.]

Comments. Vyāsa reads the word *param* as “superior,” and practically everyone, it seems, follows him.

1.17. vitarka-vicāra-ānanda-asmitārūpa-anugamāt samprajñātaḥ |

***Samādhi* (“mystic trance” or “mystic accomplishment”) has two forms, one of which is supported by wisdom in accordance with reasoning, discrimination, bliss, and sense of identity (“I-am-ness”).**

Comments. The great scholar of yoga, Mircea Eliade, coined the term “enstacy” as a translation of *samādhi*. Unlike ecstasy (“standing outside oneself”), enstacy (“standing within”) consists of an inner bliss. Others, of course, have offered alternative renderings; my view is that the word should be anglicized (as it has been already in some circles). As an interpreter, I would prefer a translation with a voluntarist spin, something along the lines of “mystic accomplishment.” After all, *samādhi* is a *siddhi*, an occult power. An accomplished yogin has the ability to enter mystic trance, but he or she also has the power to return to ordinary consciousness. At least, this is one way of thinking about *samādhi*. We shall return to the topic with later sūtras. And we may decide that *samādhi* as talked about throughout YS, as opposed to what is said here, has more than two forms. These may be two among a range of types.

1.18. virāma-pratyaya-abhyāsa-pūrvaḥ saṃskāra-śeṣo anyah |

The other, in which only subliminal activators remain (*saṃskāra*, “mental dispositions,” the subconscious bases of habits of mind and action), is preceded by effort to hold steady ideas intent on contentment.

Comments. “Dispositions” (*saṃskāra*) are the topic of the first section of chapter two, above, pp. xxx–xx. These are the vehicles of karma, of talents, habits, and skills, some of which span lifetimes. Other sūtras in which *saṃskāra* are mentioned are: 1.50, 2.15, 3.9, 3.10, 3.18, 4.9, and 4.21. See sūtra 4.11 for discussion of *vāsanā* (“deep disposition,” “karmic activator”), which appears to be the distinct type of *saṃskāra* that bridges lifetimes.

1.19. bhava-pratyayo videha-prakṛti-layānām |

Disembodied yogins and those merged with nature attain *samādhi* through being intent on birth (i.e., just by being born).

Comments. The idea seems to be that one can develop *samādhi*-prone dispositions such that one is compelled into the state without much effort, i.e., yogic practice, in the current birth. Sūtra 4.1 repeats the idea with respect to *siddhis*, “powers,” among which I would count the ability to enter mystic trance.

1.20. śraddhā-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣām |

Others attain it through faith, energy, remembering (i.e., meditation), and wisdom deriving from *samādhi*.

Comments. There is more than one way to attain *samādhi*, as is clearly stated at 1.24 and later. The traits mentioned here would seem likely, however, to be found with all accomplished yogins—except, of course, as stated in the previous sūtra, those rare souls who are born adept spiritually (cf., Purāṇic stories of the child Krishna).

1.21. tīvra-saṃvegānām āsannaḥ |

It settles in for those who are exceptionally intense.

1.22. mṛdu-madhya-adhimātratvāt tato api viśeṣaḥ |

Even among those (who are exceptionally intense), there are

differences: the barely so, the moderately so, and the extreme.

1.23. īśvara-praṇidhānād vā |

Or, (restriction occurs) from opening to (or, “devotion to,” *praṇidhāna*, “meditation on”) the Lord (or, one’s higher self).

Comments. Of course, this is not the “Lord of Heaven and Earth” familiar in Western theology. Possibly, the indication is to a “God within” (the suggestion of several students) or to an ideal of what one oneself can be once free from false identification with body, life, and mind. Below, *YS* 2.45 connects this practice with *samādhi*, mystic perfection. Interesting, the immediately preceding sūtra, *YS* 2.44 connects the practice of “self-study” (with respect to a sacred text), *sva-adhyāya*, with the power, or *siddhi*, of achieving contact with one’s own “preferred divinity,” *iṣṭa-devatā*. That conception is henotheistic and in line with mainstream theistic Hinduism: one worships the form of the One that it is easiest to worship, the form to which one is personally drawn.

1.24. kleśa-karma-vipāka-āsayair a-parāmrṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ |

By “Lord” is meant a particular conscious being (*puruṣa*) who (unlike us) is untouched by obstacles to enlightenment or by the stores of ripening karma (habits and moral debts acquired through action).

Comments. Classically, the addition of *īśvara*, the “Lord,” is the principal distinction of Yoga as a philosophy over and against Sāṃkhya. Perhaps, as suggested by Mircea Eliade (*YFI*, pp. xxx–xx), the *īśvara* is mentioned as an archetypal yogin, an object to be meditated upon. However, richer interpretations are possible.

As mentioned in the comments to 1.20, the little word *vā*, which means “or,” “alternatively” and which is often overlooked (so powerful the attraction of the word *īśvara* which can mean “God”), is most significant. At 1.34 another *vā* appears, and each of the following five sūtras also repeats the word. It of course functions as a sentence connective. But it carries the sense of a certain methodological pluralism, as will become clear. At 1.33, a synonym for *citta-vṛtti-nirodha* (above, *YS* 1.2, the definition of yoga as “stilling of the fluctuations of *citta*) is used: *citta-prasādanam*, “calming illumination of the mind.” The goal is targeted, put in one’s sights, not through, e.g., meditation on the Lord, as here, but through breath control. The point of the use of the connective “or” is that such mental silence can be achieved through different means.

Not everyone has to follow the same route. Devotional yoga is the topic of *YS* 1.23–32, which is a rather long stretch of text, but the devotional method of arriving at calming illumination is only one alternative.

Similarly, one might view the “practice and distinterestedness” spelled out at 1.12ff. However, these words appear generic. Every yogic means is a practice requiring effort, and all have to be done religiously over a long period. Nevertheless, the methods of yoga differ considerably, and those of 1.33 and following, which need not include devotional yoga, etc., are also to be counted as potentially leading to the common goal of “stilling of the mind.”

1.25. tatra niratiśayaṃ sarvajña-bījam |

The seed of omniscience (present in everyone) is unsurpassed in the Lord.

Comments. Later we learn that every *puruṣa* is capable of a kind of omniscience: 3.49. Indeed, every power that we can develop as individuals the Lord has already to the maximum degree.

1.26. pūrveṣāṃ api guruḥ kālena an-avacchedāt |

The Lord is the guru even of the ancient teachers in not being limited by time.

Comments. A common argument for the existence of God in classical Indian philosophy is that each human craft—by definition, learned from a teacher who has learned from a previous teacher, e.g., grammar—has to have an originator, a first guru.]

1.27. tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ |

The Lord is indicated by the syllable *om*.

1.28. taj-japas tad-artha-bhāvanam |

(Devotional yoga consists in) repetition of OM and meditation on (or enlivening of) its meaning.

1.29. tataḥ pratyak-cetana-adhigamo apy antarāya-a-bhāvaś ca |

From that comes understanding of inward consciousness as well as

negation of obstacles.

1.30. vyādhi-styāna-saṃśaya-pramāda-ālasya-a-virati-bhrānti-darśana-a-labdha-bhūmikatva-an-avasthitatvāni citta-vikṣepās te antarāyāḥ |

Obstacles are illness, listlessness, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, non-abstention, wrong outlook, and failure to attain a certain level or to stay there. They make the mind (*citta*) unsteady.

1.31. duḥkha-daurmanasya-aṅga-mejayatva-śvāsa-praśvasā vikṣepa-sahabhuvāḥ |

Symptoms of unsteadiness include pain, bad mood, shaky limbs, and uneven in and out breaths.

1.32. tat-pratiśedha-artham eka-tattva-abhyāsaḥ |

For the purpose of checking them, practice should be maintained within a single system (or, by a single principle, *eka-tattva*).

1.33. maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣānām sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-a-puṇya-
viṣayānām bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam |

Calming illumination of the mind (*citta*) is furthered through practicing (or, enlivening), towards objects pleasant, painful, virtuous, and full of vice, (respectively the balancing attitudes of) friendship, compassion, gladness, and indifference.

1.34. pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya |

Or, it (calming illumination, stilling of the *citta*) can be brought about by controlled exhalation and holding of the breath (*prāṇa*, “vital energy”).

Comments. Is there a tie between the breath-control practices of *prāṇāyāma* and the oxygen deficiency, “anoxia,” some researchers link to “near-death” experiences?

1.35. viṣayavatī vā pravṛttir utpannā manasaḥ sthiti-nibandhanī |

Or, (it arises from) the advent of sense-object-centered activity

binding the mental organ (*manas*).

Comments. This seems to say that mental silence arises from observing sense experience. Vyāsa, however, gives a different spin: by concentrating on a particular sense-organ activity along with the nature of its objects in general, e.g., the tasting organ and taste in general, one gets an experience of a subtle, pre-physical evolute of Nature, *prakṛti*. This is important feedback for it confirms a person's trust in yogic teachings and practices, and thus helps to lead to mental silence.

1.36. viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī |

Or, (it arises with) activity that is free from sorrow and luminous (such as concentration on the heart center or the center between the eyebrows).

Comments. This is the reading of the modern yogic commentators B. K. S. Iyengar and Swami Satyananda in particular who follow a suggestion of Vyāsa's.

1.37. vīta-rāga-viṣayaṃ vā cittam |

Or, when the mind (*citta*) contemplates beings who have transcended passion. [Or: A mind (is quiet and restrained) whose objects are no longer colored by desire.]

1.38. svapna-nidrā-jñāna-ālabanaṃ vā |

Or, (another means is) the mind brought to knowledge of sleep and dreams.

Comments. “Luminous dreaming” involves being aware of a dream as a dream while one is asleep. The practice is different from what is called “yogic sleep” (*yoga nidrā*) in that the latter does not involve dreaming but only remaining awake, so to say, while the body sleeps.

The idea that the goal of yoga as mental stillness can be achieved through such a discipline alone is indicated by use again of the sentence connective, *vā*, as I have argued (at 1.23).

1.39. yathā-abhimata-dhyānād vā |

Or, from meditation in accordance with (an individual's) proclivities.

1.40. parama-aṅṅu-parama-mahattva-anto asya vaśīkārah |

The (self-)control of the yogin extends from the smallest atom (of his body) to the largest magnitude (contemplated in meditation). [Or, in line with 2.21: His control extends to the smallest atom and largest magnitude.]

1.41. kṣīṅa-vṛtter abhijātasya iva maṅer grahīṅ-grahaṅ-grāhyeṣu tat-stha-tad-aṅjanatā samāpattiḥ |

The person whose mental fluctuations have become attenuated achieves *samāpatti*, “yogic balance,” with respect to things subjective, sensational, and objective, like a polished jewel that takes on the color of that on which it lies.

Comments. The technical term, *samāpatti*, has been variously translated and interpreted. Integration of the parts of the being in a yogically balanced fashion is one reading, with *samāpatti* as “yogic integration” (a rendering that is true to the etymology of *sam* + *ā* + the root, *pat*).

1.42. tatra śabda-artha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ saṅkīṅṅā savitarkā samāpattiḥ |

The type of *samāpatti*, “yogic balance,” called “the higher rational,” *savitarkā samāpatti*, has verbal and other cognitions blended in.

1.43. smṛti-pariśuddhau sva-rūpa-śūnyā iva artha-mātra-nirbhāsā nirvitarkā |

The type of *samāpatti*, “yogic balance,” called “beyond the rational,” *nirvitarkā samāpatti*, occurs after the memory has been purified, shining in pure awareness of whatever object, devoid of self-consciousness, as it were.

1.44. etayā eva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣma-viṣayā vyākhyātā |

This explains both types of mental balance no matter how subtle the content.

1.45. sūkṣma-viṣayatvaṅ ca a-liṅga-paryavasānam |

Content can be subtler and subtler until it is the “unmanifest” (i.e., nature undifferentiated).

1.46. tā eva sabījaḥ samādhiḥ |

All these (stages and types of mental balance) are called *samādhi* “with seed,” *sabīja*.

1.47. nirvicāra-vaiśāradye adhyātma-prasādaḥ |

After becoming expert in non-discursive mental balance and *samādhi*, the spiritual opens its light.

1.48. ṛtam-bharā tatra prajñā |

“Truth-conscious,” *ṛtam-bhara* (“bearing the divine mind,” “in tune with the cosmic order”), is the yogin’s wisdom and awareness (*prajñā*) there.

Comments. The word, *prajñā*, is employed in Mahāyāna Buddhism very commonly, for instance, to capture the sixth and best attribute of a Bodhisattva, the “perfection of wisdom and insight,” *prajñā-pāramitā*.

1.49. śruta-anumāna-prajñābhyām anya-viṣayā viśeṣa-arthatvāt |

Its object and scope is other than that of the wisdom of scripture and reasoning, since its purpose is unique. [Alternatively: . . . since particulars are its object.]

1.50. taj-jaḥ saṃskāro anya-saṃskāra-pratibandhī |

The subliminal activators created by this state block the firings of other subliminal activators.

1.51. tasya api nirodhe sarva-nirodhān nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ |

When these too are checked, there is “seedless” *samādhi*, since all have been checked.

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sādhana-pādaḥ

2.1 tapaḥ-svādhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ |

(The second limb of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, the *niyamas*, include what is called) **Kriyā Yoga which consists of asceticism (*tapas*), self-study in the light of a sacred text (*svādhyāya*), and opening to the Lord (or one’s higher self).**

Comments. Compare, above, *YS* 1.23. See 2.32 for the *niyamas*, the “personal restraints.”

2.2. samādhi-bhāvanā-arthaḥ kleśa-tanū-karaṇa-arthaś ca |

(It is practiced) to enliven *samādhi* (mystic accomplishment) as well as to attenuate afflictions (*kleśa*).

2.3. a-vidyā-asmitā-rāga-dveṣa-abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ |

Afflictions are spiritual ignorance, I-identification, liking, disliking, and the proclivity to remain in one’s own form (or, clinging to life).

2.4. a-vidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanu-vicchinna-udārāṇām |

Spiritual ignorance is the field for the others (to flourish) in degrees from dormancy and attenuatedness to suppression and expression outright.

2.5. a-nitya-a-śuci-duḥkha-an-ātmasu nitya-śuci-sukha-ātma-khyātir a-vidyā |

To be spiritually ignorant is to mistake the non-eternal, impure, painful, and non-self for the eternal, pure, delightful, and true self.

Comments. Note that this *sūtra* frames the mistake—the “spiritual ignorance,” *a-vidyā*—in the reverse order of that typical of theistic Vedānta and Tantra. There the mistake is not to see the eternal, etc., in the non-eternal, etc.

2.6. dṛg-darśana-śaktyor eka-ātmatā iva asmitā |

I-identification is the seeming-one-and-the-same on the part of the distinct powers of the seer (the conscious being, *puruṣa*) and the seeing (nature, *prakṛti*).

2.7. sukha-anujanmā rāgaḥ |

Liking follows pleasure.

2.8. duḥkha-anujanmā dveṣaḥ |

Disliking follows pain.

2.9. sva-rasa-vāhī viduṣo api tathā rūdho abhiniveśaḥ |

Proclivity to remain in one's own form (clinging to life) is sustained by its own relishing, being self-perpetuating even for the learned.

2.10. pratiprasava-heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ |

Subtle (though they be in their disturbances), these afflictions can be banished by countermeasures (swimming upstream creating counterflow).

2.11. dhyāna-heyās tad-vṛttayah |

These detrimental fluctuations can be banished through meditation.

2.12. kleśa-mūlaḥ karma-āśayo dṛṣṭa-a-dṛṣṭa-vedanīyah |

(Action-inducing) karmic latencies, which are to be experienced in the current or a future birth, are rooted in these afflictions.

2.13. sati mūle tad-vipāko jāty-āyur-bhogāḥ |

So long as the root endures, its fruit will endure, the (triple) fruit, namely, of birth, life, and enjoyment.

2.14. te hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ puṇya-a-puṇya-hetutvāt |

These three bring joy or suffering according to moral merit or lack thereof (in accumulated karmic latencies).

Comments. The world is organized—even without a Creator—such that there is justice, moral payback.

2.15. pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ |

And because of conflicting fluctuations, there is suffering in change, in anxious, feverish states of mind, and in subliminal activators (*saṃskāra*). Thus the person of discriminating judgment sees *all as suffering*.

Comments. This echoes the “First Noble Truth” of Buddhism, though it seems that the judgment is based not on everyday experience alone—where of course we take ourselves to experience pleasure—but on a comparison with true self-experience.

2.16. heyaṃ duḥkham an-āgatam |

Future suffering is to be banished.

2.17. draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayor saṃyogo heya-hetuḥ |

That which is to be banished stands caused by a conjunction of the seer (the conscious being) and that to be seen (nature).

Comments. Here begins a stretch of highly metaphysical sutras.

2.18. prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlaṃ bhūta-indriya-ātmakaṃ bhoga-apavarga-
arthaṃ dṛśyam |

What is to be seen (i.e., nature) is characterized by the (three qualities or strands) of (a) intelligence, (b) activity, and (c) stability (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*), or inertia; it includes the gross elements and the sense organs, and has as its *raison d’être* enjoyment for, or liberation of, the conscious being.

Comments. Note the “enjoyment” link between the two distinct realities.

2.19. viśeṣa-a-viśeṣa-liṅga-mātra-a-liṅgāni guṇa-parvāṇi |

The (three) qualities (of which nature is comprised) are expressed in distinct stages, that is to say, stages where predominates: (a) individuals, (b) general forms, (c) subtle forms, and (d) the trans-subtle.

2.20. draṣṭā dṛṣi-mātraḥ śuddho api pratyaya-anupaśyaḥ |

The seer (the conscious being), although pure (i.e., although pure

consciousness), appears to see through thoughts and ideas.

2.21. tad-artha eva dṛśyasya ātmā |

Only for the sake of the seer is the seen in its essence.

Comments. This, the famous “teleological sūtra” (for its teleological conception of *prakṛti*), generalizes the link mentioned in 2.18.

2.22. kṣa-artham prati naṣṭam apy a-naṣṭam tad-anyā-sādhāraṇatvāt |

Although destroyed (for the liberated) yogin whose purpose is accomplished, nature is not destroyed for others (who are not liberated), because she is common to everyone.

2.23. sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ sva-rūpa-upalabdhi-hetuḥ saṃyogaḥ |

The conjunction between the powers of phenomena and the powers of their controller (the conscious being) is caused by perception of (the two’s) identity. [Alternatively: Conjunction is the cause of awareness of the essential nature of the powers of the owned (nature) and the owner, (the controller, the conscious being).]

2.24. tasya hetur a-vidyā |

Spiritual ignorance is its cause (i.e., the reason the conjunction endures).

2.25. tad-a-bhāvāt saṃyoga-a-bhāvo hānaṃ tad-dṛṣeḥ kaivalyam |

When spiritual ignorance is no longer, the conjunction is no longer. This is the relinquishment, the “aleness” (*kaivalya*, i.e., the *summum bonum*) of the seer (the conscious being).

2.26. viveka-khyātir a-viplavā hāna-upāyaḥ |

Unbroken practice of discriminative discernment is the way to that relinquishment.

2.27. tasya saptadhā prānta-bhūmiḥ prajñā |

For such a yogin, sevenfold wisdom and insight (*prajñā*) are the

boundary of his attainment.

2.28. yoga-aṅga-anuṣṭhānād a-śuddhi-kṣaye jñāna-dīptir ā viveka-khyātiḥ |

By practice of the “limbs of yoga” (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) impurity is attenuated. Cognition is illuminated up to discriminative discernment.

2.29. yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo aṣṭāv aṅgāni |

Ethical restraints, personal constraints, āsanās, breath-control, withdrawal of the senses from their objects, (and three stages of meditation) *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* are the eight “limbs of yoga.”

Comments. Each of the “limbs,” including the three stages of meditation, are defined below.

2.30. a-himṣā-satya-a-steya-brahmacarya-a-parigrahā yamāḥ |

The restraints are non-injury (*a-himṣā*), truthfulness, refraining from stealing, sexual restraint, and non-possessiveness.

2.31. jāti-deśa-kāla-samaya-an-avacchinnāḥ sārva-bhaumā mahā-vratam |

These practiced universally irrespective of station and circumstance of time and place constitute the “great vow.”

2.32. śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-sva-adhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ |

The personal constraints are cleanliness, contentment, asceticism, self-study (in the light of a sacred text), and opening to God (or one’s higher self).

2.33. vitarka-bādhane pratipakṣa-bhāvanam |

In order to check disturbances one should enliven counter-attitudes.

Comments. For example, thought and feeling of non-injury to check a feeling of wanting to injure someone.

2.34. vitarkā hiṃsā-ādayaḥ kṛta-kārita-anumoditā lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakā duḥkha-a-jñāna-an-anta-phalā iti pratipakṣa-bhāvanam |

Disturbances are a feeling of injuriousness and so on, perhaps actually acted out, perhaps caused to be acted out, or perhaps simply approved of and acknowledged. Their symptoms or precursors are greed, anger, confusion, and they come in slight, middling, and extreme intensities. Their fruits are endless suffering and ignorance.—This thought itself is an “enlivening of a counter-attitude.”

2.35. a-hiṃsā-pratiṣṭhāyāṃ tat-saṃnidhau vaira-tyāgaḥ |

When “non-injury” is firmly established, then in the person’s presence all animosity disappears.

2.36. satya--pratiṣṭhāyāṃ kriyā-phala-āśrayatvam |

When truthfulness is firmly established, then what has been said becomes the basis for action and results (promised and foretold results come about).

2.37. a-steya-pratiṣṭhāyāṃ sarva-ratna-upasthānam |

When refraining from stealing is firmly established, all jewels come near (i.e., the yogin or yogini lives in an atmosphere of abundance, impersonally enjoying, so to say, the wealth of the world).

Comments. This interpretation is due to Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

2.38. brahmacarya-pratiṣṭhāyāṃ vīrya-lābhaḥ |

When sexual restraint is firmly established, (great) energy and vitality are gained.

2.39. a-parigraha-sthairye janma-kathantā-sambodhaḥ |

Upon achieving steadiness in non-possessiveness, the yogi or yogini comes to know the how and the why—the meaning—of his or her birth.

Comments. The classical interpretation is that, freed from the concerns of

acquiring wealth, one is relaxed enough to remember—by way of the triggering of *samskāras* formed in previous births—activities in previous lives including what one did to form one’s current personality and station in life. Swami Satyananda’s theistic interpretation has it that, cleansed of personal interests, one can discern God’s reason for giving the current birth along with one’s individual *dharma*, what one should to do or be.

2.40. śaucāt sva-aṅga-jugupsā parair a-saṃsargaḥ |

From cleanliness come aversion (or indifference) to one’s own body and non-contact with others.

Comments. Clean your body in all ways, constantly making it shine, expelling excrement, mucus, fingernails, hair, etc., give one a sense of self transcendent to the body. Others’ bodies would then be less clean than one’s own, and it being so hard to clean up one’s own mess, who would want to pick up after others?

2.41 sattva-śuddhi-saumanasya-ekāgrya-indriya-jaya-ātma-darśana-yogyatvāni ca |

(Other results are:) The yogi or yogini becomes fit for, and capable of, sattvacization (purity of *sattva*), (unshakeable) cheerfulness, concentration (one-pointedness of mind), and sight of the self.

2.42. saṃtoṣād an-uttama-suḥkha-lābhaḥ |

From (firm establishment of) contentment, unparalleled pleasure is gained.

2.43. kāya-indriya-siddhir a-śuddhi-kṣayāt tapasaḥ |

Powers (*siddhis*) of the organs of action result from asceticism (*tapas*) which destroys imperfections.

2.44. sva-adhyāyād iṣṭa-devatā-saṃprayogaḥ |

From self-study in the light of a wisdom text (*svādhyāya*) contact with one’s “preferred divinity,” *iṣṭa-devatā*.

2.45. samādhi-siddhir īśvara-praṇidhānāt |

The *siddhi* of *samādhi* comes from opening to God (or to one's higher self).

2.46. sthira-sukham āsanam |

Postures (*āsana*) should be firm but easy (comfortable).

Comments. It is not so hard to do an asana and make it firm and steady if you put in the effort. What is hard is to hold yourself firm and steady effortlessly, easily, with pleasure (*sukha*).

2.47. prayatna-saithilya-an-anta-samāpattibhyām |

(Postures become perfect) in relaxation of effort or by the “mental balance,” *samāpatti*, called the infinite (or, the serpent Ananta, “Without End”).

Comments. Swami Satyananda reads the last part of the sūtra as encouraging meditation, in certain asanas, on the *kuṇḍalini* serpent-power, the “shakti” in the lowest of the seven centers, “chakras,” according to Tantric psychology.

2.48. tato dvandva-an-abhighātaḥ |

From that (mastery of asanas), a person becomes impervious to dualities (of hot and cold, hunger and satiety, happiness and sorrow, etc.).

2.49. tasmin sati śvāsa-praśvāsayo gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇa-āyāmaḥ |

Given practice of asanas, “breath-control,” *prāṇāyāma*, involves checking (holding voluntarily) the in-breath and the out-breath (for regular intervals).

2.50. bāhya-abhyantara-stambha-vṛttir deśa-kāla-saṃkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭo dīrgh-sūkṣmaḥ |

Three types of pranayama practice are the outer (e.g., using one's fingers to close and open nostrils and counting), the inner (e.g., without use of props), and the suppressed (an even more advanced practice). Modulated by location (within the body, from the abdominal muscles to the nose), time (i.e., duration of each of the

three factors), and number (i.e., proportional time being spent on each breath as well as number of repetitions), the breath is to be both protracted (i.e., deepened, slowed) and made subtle (practically soundless).

2.51. bāhya-abhyantara-viṣaya-ākṣepī caturthaḥ |

A fourth type transcends both the external and internal focuses.

Comments. Is so-called yogic death meant? See Michael Murphy, *The Future of the Body*, for a gripping account of the yogic death of xx. See also xxx.

2.52. tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśa-āvaraṇam |

From that (mastery of pranayama), the lid covering the light (above the head) is diminished.

Comments. This echoes *Īśā Upaniṣad*, verse 15: “The face of Truth is covered with a golden lid.”

2.53. dhāraṇāsu ca योगyatā manasaḥ |

And (then) the mind (*manas*, the internal organ of sense) becomes ready for *dhāraṇā*, “concentration” (limb number six).

2.54. sva-viṣaya-a-saṃprayoge citta-sva-rūpa-anukāra iva
indriyāṃ pratyāhāraḥ |

(Limb number five) “pulling back,” *pratyāhāra*, is the disconnection of the sense organs from their objects as if in imitation of the talent of the *citta*, “feeling and thought” (to be still).

2.55. tataḥ paramā vaśyatā indriyāṇām |

From that comes supreme control of the sense organs.

• •

vibhūti-pādaḥ

3.1. deśa-bandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā |

Concentration (*dhāraṇā*) is binding the *citta* down to a single spot.

3.2. tatra pratyaya-eka-tānatā- dhyānam |

Of the three (stages of meditation), “meditation” (proper, *dhyāna*) is a single ideational focus.

3.3. tad eva artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ sva-rūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ |

“Mystic accomplishment,” *samādhi*, is illumination of an object as object only, bereft, as it were, of its being anything other than object of consciousness.

Comments. The classical commentators take this to indicate a transcendence of subject/object consciousness. Swami Satyananda says it is an utter absorption in an object with no self-consciousness.

3.4. trayam ekatra saṃyamaḥ |

The three together are called “conscious identification” (*saṃyama*).

3.5. taj-jayāt prajñā-ālokaḥ |

Through its mastery comes the light of wisdom and insight (*prajñā*).

3.6. tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ |

It is to be applied to different spheres (subtle objects as well as gross ones). [Alternatively: It is to be developed in stages.]

Comments. The latter interpretation is the classical one; the former is Swami Satyananda’s.

3.7. trayam antar-aṅgam pūrvabhyaḥ |

The three together are internal to the first five limbs.

Comments. In other words, *saṃyama* is intrinsic to, though perhaps not fully developed in, the practices of non-injury, cleanliness, asanas, and so on. B. K. S. Iyengar makes much of a point of mutual entailment of all the limbs in his *Tree of Yoga* and elsewhere. This seems right to me.

3.8. tad api bahir-aṅgam nirbījasya |

But, just as with the first five, these three are external to “seedless” *samādhi*.

Comments. The “seedless” would seem to be interior to all other states of consciousness.

3.9. vyutthāna-nirodha-saṃskārayor abhibhava-prādurbhāvau nirodha-kṣaṇa-citta-anvayo nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ |

The restriction transformation correlates with *citta* in a moment of conquest of stimulating subliminal activators (*samskāra*) and the arising of subliminal activators of restriction.

3.10. tasya praśānta-vāhitā saṃskārāt |

That transformation is borne along tranquilly because of (restriction) subliminal activators (becoming dominant).

3.11. sarva-arthatā-ekāgratāyayor |

The transformation of *citta* called the mystic accomplishment transformation—the *samādhi* transformation—occurs when distraction has become attenuated and one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*) has become natural for the *citta* (the natural state of mind).

Comments. If, on a modern medical interpretation, increased oxygenation is required in extraordinary cases of effort, and anoxia for mystic trance, then why should this *samādhi* sūtra mention the extraordinary effort of “one-pointedness?”

3.12. tatra punaḥ śānta-uditau tulya-pratyayau cittasya ekāgratā-pariṇāmaḥ |

After that, there is the transformation of *citta* called the one-pointedness transformation. It occurs when the ideative contents disappearing and appearing are identical.

Comments. For instance, a person might constantly concentrate on OM such that a moment of perishing consciousness and arising consciousness would have the same content—presumably for long periods.

3.13. etena bhūta-indriyeṣu dharmā-lakṣaṇa-avasthā-pariṇāmāḥ
vyākhyātāḥ |

By what has already been said, three further transformations are explained with respect to both the material elements and the sense organs: the *citta*'s becoming transformed in its properties, the *dharmā* transformation, its becoming transformed in its (temporal) character, the *lakṣaṇa* transformation, and its becoming transformed in its state or condition, the *avasthā* transformation.

Comments. Vyāsa and Vācaspati Mīśra have a lot to say about this sūtra, but most of it seems highly speculative, with little relation to yoga practices.

3.14. śānta-udita-avyapadeśya-dharma-anupātī dharmī |

The property-bearer (i.e., the *citta* as a substance) takes shape according to its properties: quiescent, active, and unmanifest.

3.15. krama-anythingam pariṇāma-anythingam hetuḥ |

Which transformation occurs is determined by differences in interval and sequence.

Comments. Properties and moments of change of property fall into discrete units—it seems to be assumed in accordance with Buddhist philosophers and others. States of mind, perceptions, rememberings, etc., are momentary. However, the changes would seem to be changes of *citta*.

The last two sūtras are a metaphysical stretch of text, combining the picture of the mind as a kind of substance with that of a serial nature of mental occurrences.

3.16. pariṇāma-traya-saṃyamād atīta-an-āgata-jñānam |

From *saṃyama* (“conscious identification” or “identifying concentration”) with respect to the triad of transformations comes knowledge of the past and future.

3.17. śabda-artha-pratyayānām itaretara-adhyāsāt saṃskāras
tat-pravibhāga-saṃyamāt sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñānam |

Because of wrong projections among objects, meanings, and ideas

there is (psychological) confusion. From *saṃyama* on their division comes knowledge of all creatures' cries (the language of beasts).

Comments. This sūtra seems to uphold the value of the philosophic task of differentiating the likes of use and mention, reference and sense, object and view, or word, meaning, and reference. But how, then, could the *siddhi* be credible?

On another track: it is interesting how assonant and musical is the sound in Sanskrit “sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñānam,” which means “knowledge of all creatures' cries.”

3.18. saṃskāra-sākṣātkaraṇāt pūrva-jāti-jñānam |

Through direct acquaintance with subliminal activators comes knowledge of previous births.

3.19. pratyasya para-citta-jñānam |

From *saṃyama* on ideas (or ideative currents) comes knowledge of other minds (the *citta* of others).

3.20. na ca sālambanaṃ tasya a-*viṣay*ībhūtatvāt |

That does not include the substratum or representational nature of the other's *citta* (e.g., the language employed), since that is outside the range of *saṃyama*.

3.21. kāya-rūpa-saṃyamāt tad-grāhya-śakti-stambhe cakṣuḥ-prakāśa-a-saṃprayoge antar-dhānam |

By performing “conscious identification” (*saṃyama*) on the body's visible form, another's power to grasp it is suspended, there being a break between the light (necessary for perception) and the operation of the other's visual organ: (hence comes the *siddhi* of) invisibility.

[3.21'. etena śabda-ādy-antar-dhānam uktam | (This sūtra does not appear in most editions.)

By this is explained the disappearance of sound and so on.]

3.22. sopakramaṃ nirupakramaṃ ca karma tat-saṃyamād apara-anta-jñānam ariṣṭebhyo vā |

Karma ranges from active to dormant. From *saṁyama* on it comes knowledge of (time of) death. Or, it may be known from unfavorable symptoms [“omens,” according to some].

3.23. maitra-ādiṣu balāni |

From *saṁyama* on friendliness and so on come powers (of friendliness and so on).

Comments. Friendliness, compassion, happiness, and indifference are the attitudes, says Swami Satyananda, that the yogi or yogini needs to cultivate.

3.24. baleṣu hasti-bala-ādīni |

From *saṁyama* on powers come such powers as the strength of an elephant.

3.25. pravṛṭty-āloka-nyāsāt sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam |

From casting the higher light on any effort, the object of the effort is known, whether subtle, hidden, or distant.

Comments. Knowledge is a power, a *siddhi*.

3.26. bhuvana-jñānaṁ sūrye saṁyamāt |

Knowledge of the cosmic becoming comes from *saṁyama* on the sun.

Comments. Vyāsa explains that the “cosmic becoming,” or “universe,” consists of seven worlds, or planes of being, ranging from our world of earth (*bhū*) to the three worlds of the Brahman, with three intermediate worlds.

3.27. candre tāra-vyūha-jñānam |

From *saṁyama* on the moon (or lunar sphere) comes knowledge of (cognitive opening to) the multitudes of stars.

Comments. The interpretation of this *siddhi* as intellectual knowledge, as expertise in astronomy, is implausible. The implausibility urges us to interpret this as a metaphor. Unfortunately, there is no consensus about

what occult phenomena may be meant. Interestingly, usually long-winded Vyāsa has practically nothing to say about this sūtra, or the next.

3.28. dhruve tad-gati-jñānam |

From *saṁyama* on the pole star comes knowledge of their movement.

Comments. Again, what kind of knowledge, *jñāna*, is meant?

3.29. nābhi-cakre kāya-vyūha-jñānam |

From *saṁyama* on the navel *cakra* comes knowledge of the members of the body.

Comments. Vyāsa identifies these as three elements, one interior to another (like concentric cylinders?).

3.30. kaṇṭha-kūpe kṣut-pipāsā-nivṛtṭiḥ |

From *saṁyama* on the well in the throat come cessation of hunger and thirst.

3.31. kūrma-nāḍyāṃ sthairyam |

With it on the “tortoise duct” (*kūrma-nāḍī*) comes steadiness.

Comments. The last three sūtras, and some to come, seem to express the Tantric mystic psychology of “chakras” and occult energy canals.

3.32. mūrdha-jyotiṣi siddha-darśanam |

With it on the light at the crown of the head comes vision of the perfected ones (*siddhas*).

3.33. pratibhād vā sarvam |

Or, from “luminous” *saṁyama*, anything.

Comments. Counter the mainstream, I think the word *prātibhād* is an adjective, qualifying an understood *saṁyamāt*.

3.34. hṛdaye citta-saṁvit |

With it on the heart, awareness of the *citta*.

3.35. sattva-puruṣayor atyanta-a-saṃkīṛṇayoḥ pratyaya-a-viśeṣo bhogaḥ
para-arthatvāt sva-artha-saṃyamāt puruṣa-jñānam |

Enjoyment (everyday experience, *bhoga*) is constituted by no (awareness of) distinct ideative streams of *sattva* and the conscious being (*puruṣa*), which are (in reality) absolutely unmixed. Since *sattva* exists to serve the other (*puruṣa*), knowledge of the conscious being (the *puruṣa*) comes from *saṃyama* on that which is “for its own sake” (or, not for anything else).

3.36. tataḥ prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanā-darśa-āsvāda-vārtā jāyante |

From that come “luminous” (or supranormal) hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smelling.

Comments. This is a strange use of the word *vārtā* (normally “news,” not “smelling”), but I follow Vyāsa in completing the list.

3.37. te samādhāv upasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ |

These “powers” or *siddhis* (wonders or miracles) according to the ordinary human consciousness are obstacles to *samādhi*.

Comments. How can *samādhi* be part of what *saṃyama* is (“conscious identification”) and also be transcendent to all “powers?” This seems to be an inconsistency.

3.38. bandha-kāraṇa-śaithilyāt pracāra-saṃvedanāc ca cittasya
para-śarīra-āveśaḥ |

From loosening of the connecting causes along with awareness of the (subtle) passageways (of *citta*), the *citta* can enter another body.

Comments. Georg Feuerstein thinks—contrary to Vyāsa—that this sūtra may be referring to an astral or subtle body as opposed to the physical body. Swami Satyananda says this is a very advanced *siddhi* that should not be tried at home.

The conceptual problem here is that *citta* is individuated by *puruṣa*, one individual conscious being, one “mind,” and each mind has its own body, one would think. This sūtra says not. Bodies can be controlled by

alien *citta*, it seems, which here seems less “thought and emotion” than a kind of psychic energy.

3.39. udāna-jayāj jala-paṅka-kaṅṭka-ādiṣv a-saṅga utkrāntiś ca |

From mastery of the *udāna* (a form of *prāṇa* or psychic energy, “up-breath”) comes lack of (injurious) contact with water, mud, thorns, etc., and levitation.

3.40. samāna-jayāj jvalanam |

From mastery of the *samāna* (“abdominal breath”) comes kindling (of a psychic aura).

Comments. Swami Satyananda connects this “breath,” or psychic energy, with the digestive fire, and says that from control of it “the body develops an aura around itself.”

3.41. śrotra-ākāśayoḥ saṁbandha-saṁyamād divyaṁ śrotram |

From *saṁyama* on the connection of the organ of hearing and the ether comes divine audition.

Comments. Ether is the medium of sound, according to mainstream classical Indian physics. There are also other conceptions.

3.42. kāya-ākāśayoḥ saṁbandha-saṁyamāl laghu-tūla-samāpattes ca ākāśa-gamanam |

From *saṁyama* on the connection of the body and the ether, and from the “yogic balance” (*samāpatti*) called light cotton as well, there is travelling in the ether.

3.43. bahir a-kalpitā vṛttir mahā-vidhā tataḥ prakāśa-āvāra-kṣayaḥ |

Outside (the range of the body), a fluctuation, which is not imagined, is the “Great Bodiless” (state of mind) whereby the covering blocking the light (above the head) is diminished.

3.44. sthūla-sva-rūpa-sūkṣma-anvaya-arthavattva-saṁyamād bhūta-jayaḥ |

From *saṁyama* on the gross, essential, subtle, connecting, and the

purposive, comes mastery of the elements.

3.45. tato ama-ādi-prādurbhāvaḥ kāya-sampat tad-dharma-an-abhighātaś ca |

From that, there is manifest the *siddhis* of minuteness (or, atomization) and so on (the eight *siddhis* of special bodily powers) as well as perfection of the body and non-obstruction of its functions.

Comments. Georg Feuerstein cites the *Mahābhārata* in favor of assigning the powers to a subtle body rather than to the physical corpus.

3.46. rūpa-lāvaṇya-bala-vajra-saṃhananatvāni kāya-sampat |

Perfection of the body means beauty, grace, strength, and adamant hardness.

3.47. grahaṇa-sva-rūpa-asmitā-anvaya-arthavattva-saṃyamād indriya-jayaḥ |

From *saṃyama* on the essence of grasping, egoity, connectedness, and purposefulness, comes mastery of the sense organs.

3.48. tato mano-javitvaṃ vikaraṇa-bhāvaḥ pradhāna-jayaś ca |

Thence come speed like that of the internal organ (*manas*), freedom from the cognitive instruments, and mastery of the root form of nature (*pradhāna*).

Comments. This is not to be interpreted as omnipotence but presumably as mastery over one's own *prakṛti*.

3.49. sattva-puruṣa-anya-tā-khyāti-mātrasya sarva-bhāva-adhiṣṭhātṛtvaṃ sarva-jñātṛtvaṃ ca |

The yogin whose awareness is restricted to perception of the difference between (the strand of nature called) intelligence (*sattva*) and the conscious being achieves mastery over all states of (inner) being and knowledge of it all as well.

3.50. tad-vairāgyād api doṣa-bīja-kṣaye kaivalyam |

Through disinterest in that achievement, too, arises “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) in the attenuation of the seeds of defects.

3.51. sthāni-upanimantraṇe saṅga--smaya-a-karaṇaṃ punar an-iṣṭa-prasaṅgāt |

On being called by divinities, a yogin should not let the attention give rise to pride or attachment, since that could lead again to unwanted consequences.

3.52. kṣaṇa-tat-kramayoḥ saṃyamād viveka-jaṃ jñānam |

From *saṃyama* on moments (the units of time) and their succession (in the flow of fluctuations of *citta*), comes cognition born of discrimination, *viveka* (of the conscious being from nature).

3.53. jāti-lakṣaṇa-deśair anyatā-avacchedāt tulyayos tataḥ pratipattiḥ |

From that comes understanding by differentiation of each thing though identical with another with respect to type, characteristics, and place.

Comments. Everyone seems to think this sūtra refers to differentiating material things of the same type, two pots, for instance. However, since two pots cannot be in the same place (at the same time, of course), a better reading seems to be that the discrimination is between consciousness and nature—which do occupy, so to say, the same place at the same time, etc., at least in the sattvacization of nature. This interpretation also accords better with the topic of the immediately preceding and succeeding sūtras.

3.54. tāraṇaṃ sarva-viṣayaṃ sarvathā-viṣayam a-kramaṃ ca iti viveka-jaṃ jñānam |

The cognition born of discrimination (*viveka*) carries to the further shore with everything as its object in every fashion and non-sequentially.

3.55. sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam |

When the intelligence (strand, i.e., *sattva*) and the conscious being are equal in purity, “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) ensues.

• •
kaivalya-pādaḥ

4.1. janma-auśadhi-mantra-tapaḥ-samādhi-jāḥ siddhayaḥ |

“Powers,” *siddhis*, come by birth, from herbs, mantras, asceticism, and *samādhi*.

Comments. The opening stretch of sūtras in this chapter continues voluntarist themes of chapter three, here the idea that latent metanormal abilities—some of the *siddhis* or “powers” mentioned previously—can be brought out by ingesting herbs, reciting mantras, and spending time in mystic trance, as well as by the asceticism previously emphasized. Indeed, some people are born with metanormal abilities, presumably by having practiced yoga in a former birth.

Swami Satyananda says explicitly that the herbs mentioned do not include “ganja and LSD” and refers us to the teachings of Ayurveda, which is the traditional medical science.

Note that if powers flow from *samādhi*, “mystic trance”—which can itself be viewed as a power, as I have argued above—then *samādhi* cannot involve an entire separation of consciousness from its embodiments.

4.2. jāty-antara-pariṇāmaḥ prakṛty-āpūrāt |

Transformation into a different type of being (or, into another birth) comes about from a superabundance of natural potentiality.

Comments. Especially at death one is said to have the opportunity to change into another type of being, not only through the loss of a particular persona but by a core individuality becoming manifest in ways that were hitherto hidden. Vyāsa insinuates that sometimes humans become gods.

Practicing yoga does not, according to Patañjali, change one’s core nature. Rather, it triggers latent wonders of consciousness.

4.3. nimittam a-prayojakaṃ prakṛtīṇāṃ varaṇa-bhedas tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat |

Practicing yoga does not impel transformations of nature. Rather, like a farmer (irrigating, weeding, etc., to let plants grow), yogic practices break up coverings or obstacles (so that one’s true nature can become manifest).

Comments. One's nature is not transformed from the outside, like a potter shaping a vessel of clay, but rather from the inside, like a caterpillar into a butterfly. Yoga practice removes obstacles to a self-manifestation that, once set off, unfolds on its own. That is, once obstacles are destroyed, the wonders of mystic trance, etc., occur naturally.

Note that throughout Hinduism mantra-like prayers—addressed to Viṣṇu, Kālī, the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa, and so on—ask the deity to remove obstacles (*vighna*).

One can also see here the idea that the yogic ideal of perfect balance of body, life, mind, and self does not have to be manipulated but rather is the natural state, though without “mental stillness” (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*) it remains elusive.

4.4. *nirmāṇa-cittāny-asmitā-mātrāt* |

“Mind,” *citta*, is shaped by the yogin solely from the principle of egoity.

Comments. On *citta*, see the comments to *YS* 1.2.

Taking cues from the Sāṃkhya system, we probably should see the “egoity” mentioned, *asmitā*, as the Sāṃkhya principle of individuation. According to the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, the principle is responsible, in the unrolling of universal nature, for differentiations of individuals of a type.

Surprisingly, this is not the reading of the classical *YS* commentators. Here they read the *sūtra* less abstractly than is their custom: the accomplished yogin capable of mental silence has the ability to individuate, i.e., create, a new “mind,” *citta*, for himself *by* himself, or herself, as opposed to having one created for her by universal nature. Normally, a self or person is not very responsible, it seems implied, for the cast of his or her mind.

The classical interpretation thus both lines up with, in stressing the yogin's power, and opposes, in assuming that ordinarily mind is determined by universal nature, the voluntarist themes I have emphasized. On the other hand, we could see this as a very clear statement of Yoga's self-determination thesis, which I argued (in chapter one) is at the core of all Yoga philosophy, Patañjali's or another's or our own, defined by its championing yoga practices as discussed.

Interestingly, one could also read the *sūtra* as proposing a teleological conception of the *puruṣa*, not of *prakṛti* (as pronounced earlier, *YS* 2.21): the conscious being is impelled to embodiment. Thus we would have a conception similar to the Whiteheadian concept of God, who is always necessarily embodied.

On the dualist metaphysical reading, it is unclear whether the shaping of a mind would be from the outside or from within. But let us imagine, in line with the immediately preceding sūtra, 4.3, that the it is to be from within. Note again there would be tension in the dualist conception of a nugget soul or *puruṣa* somehow enveloped by nature, *prakṛti*, but shaping and controlling her. The *puruṣa* would have no way out, it seems, though somehow *prakṛti* would be, thankfully, malleable and responsive. She would also be, however, not conscious.

Thus a charitable reading of the sūtra is in this case in line with the more practical reading suggested in this case by Vyāsa and company: given that our minds are shaped to a large degree by our culture and social relationships, this sūtra asks us to view the yogin as the poet or artist or critic, the innovator capable of new “mind,” *citta*. At a minimum, he or she would not be as bound to conventional wisdom as the non-yogin. In this way, the sūtra would continue the *siddhi* themes of chapter three.

4.5. pravṛtti-bhede prayojakaṃ cittam ekam an-ekēṣām |

For all the great diversity of effort and action, there is *citta* that directs it. That is a single (type of) thing belonging to many (persons).

Comments. All voluntary action has *citta*, “mind,” as the *puruṣa*’s instrument or intermediary. Persons are numerous, and they act in diverse ways, but an action on anyone’s part involves *citta*, which is of a single type for everyone. As remarked, some have translated *citta* as “mind stuff” (e.g., J. H. Woods). In Sāṃkhya, and sometimes in Vedānta, too, it is considered a kind of subtle matter. It is the receptacle of psychological dispositions, such as skills, memories, and habits, as we have discussed, though some may not want to think of it as a separate substance. It is my view that it is pretty consistently treated by Patañjali as a third basic kind of existent, along with consciousness (*puruṣa*) and nature (*prakṛti*), though of course the official Yoga position is to make it part of *prakṛti*.

4.6. tatra dhyāna-jam an-āśayam |

Among these (individuated *cittas* belonging to different persons), that born of meditation is without stores of ripening karma.

Comments. Compare, above, YS 1.24, where the Lord (*īśvara*) is said to be untouched by stores of ripening karma. The difference would be that this state is achieved by meditation, whereas the Lord has by nature no karma and is thus unaffected by any ripening, according to Patañjali.

4.7. karma-a-śukla-a-kṛṣṇaṃ yoginas trividham itareṣām |

Karma is neither good nor bad that belongs to the yogin. For others, it is of three types (good, bad, or a mix).

Comments. The yogin aims to transcend all karma. Of course, it is said by the commentators that transcendence is easier when the karma is good, when one's nature has been made "sattvic."

The obvious implication would seem to be that the yogin makes no karma, but perhaps the idea is a little subtler. The yogin's karma could be of such a universal or harmonious order that it invites no karmic payback. In any case, the sūtra does not deny that the yogin acts and thereby makes karma.

4.8. tatas tad-vipāka-anuḡānām eva abhivvyaktir vāsanānām |

"Subliminal activators (across births)," vāsanā, manifest just according to the ripening (in good or bad deeds as well as in moral payback) that results from the (moral) types of karma.

Comments. This is the first time the word *vāsanā* has been used. Previously, the theory of karma had been couched in terms of *saṃskāra*, "subliminal impressions, memory impressions (with a certain charge)." Georg Feuerstein distinguishes between "subliminal activators" and "subliminal traits." As discussed in chapters two and three in particular (pp. xxx–xx and xxx–xx), the suggestion is similar to an idea of C. J. Ducasse, who in considering presuppositions of rebirth distinguishes (a) deep dispositions and talents (e.g., a musical ear) that might be characteristics had by a person from birth to birth, and (b) memories and dispositions formed only in the current lifetime and not continuing into the next birth (e.g., the ability to speak a particular language).

4.9. jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām apy ānantaryam smṛti-saṃskārayor eka-rūpatvāt |

Since remembering conforms to "memory impressions," saṃskāras, causal sequences of saṃskāras occur despite divisions of type (or birth), place, and time.

Comments. Continuity of memory is a prime component of personal identity. Memory is secured by "memory impressions," *saṃskāras*. See chapter two, in particular section one where various dimensions and types

of “mental disposition” are discussed.

4.10. tāsām an-āditvaṃ ca āśiṣo nityatvāt |

And these *vāsanā* have no beginning, since desiring (*āśiṣ*) is permanent.

Comments. Here we are presented with an idea of connection, albeit obscure, between mental dispositions and desire, or, as say the commentators, “desire to live,” *āśiṣ*. The next sūtra says that it is a causal connection, and Vyāsa and his followers try to spell it out more precisely. I speculate that Patañjali sees the eternity of the *puruṣa* projected into nature as a desire to continue forever in one’s current identity. Vijñānabhikṣu constructs an argument about the permanence of *citta*, the substratum of desire and mental dispositions. It echoes the following argument from Udayana (the Nyāya philosopher, c. 1000). That desire requires cognition is the missing link.

And, if it were the body that has consciousness, then a (newborn) child would not be able for a first time to make effort (to acquire something desired or to avoid something disliked). For, without desire or aversion, effort makes no sense. And without recognition of how the desired is to be acquired, desire makes no sense. Inasmuch as (under the circumstances) there would be no memory (on the part of the newborn child) of the connection which has not been experienced in the current lifetime, such recognition would not happen (whereas in fact the newborn desiring milk reaches for the breast of its mother). And with respect to what has been experienced in another birth, the experiencer (presuming, *ex hypothesi*, that it is the physical body), having (been cremated and) turned to ashes, there could be no remembering by another (body, that is, still supposing counterfactually that it is the body that is the locus of consciousness). Furthermore, in this very lifetime the causal relation between (*saṃskāra*-forming) experiences at the one end and effort (and action) at the other is known with certainty. And so, in the absence of the one (experience, etc.), there is absence of the other (desire, etc.)—a proposition that is easy to grasp. (However, there is desire, etc., and so there must have been experience, etc.) Otherwise, there would be untoward consequences (as pointed out). (Udayana’s *Ātmatattvaviveka*, ed. Vindhyesvariprasada Dvivedhin and Lakshmana Sastri Dravida (Calcutta: Asiatic Society: 1986), pp. 808–09.)

This is the stock argument throughout classical philosophy for reincarnation, and as in the current sūtra, the beginninglessness of karma and desire.

Effort, *pravṛtti*, is analyzed as intentional. Effort prompts voluntary action, which is behavior guided by an idea of a goal or purpose. Desire is also analyzed as intentional, having a directedness towards an object conceived under a certain predicate, for example, something known as a ripe mango (and not the same thing known, e.g., as a physical thing of determinate size). There are easily discernible correlations, which are commonly cited, between (a) action and (b) effort, known introspectively, with respect to ourselves, as well as between (b) effort and (c) desire—we normally do not make effort and action except to realize a desire. Desires correlate with (d) cognitions. That is, desires depend on what we know about things, especially our own experiences of pleasure and pain as brought about by previous encounters. So, typically, an action has as one of its necessary conditions previous experience.

Now in the case of a newborn child, its reaching for its mother's breast (or whatever first-time action) marks it, like you and me, as an agent. The action, the reaching, is goal-directed. It flows from effort on the child's part motivated by desire to be fed. The desire, which is not itself conscious nor necessarily an object of consciousness (though desires can be introspected), depends nevertheless on previous experience and on certain *saṃskāra* having been formed. This correlation is easy to grasp. We do not desire what we have no idea of—I might say to make the point plausible against the modern prejudice to view instinct as originating without experience. So, on Udayana's suppositions, the baby's action presupposes desire and the desire previous experience. The *saṃskāra* formed by the previous experience cannot, however, belong to the baby's body, since the child is only moments out of the womb, and any body had by the child's self in a previous lifetime would by then have been turned to ashes assuming the standard ceremonies. The *saṃskāra* that inform the newborn's desire, effort, and action must therefore rest in the self, which is a locus or substratum of psychological properties enduring through bodily death, according to Nyāya. The *YS*, of course, takes a somewhat different view of self and consciousness. But this argument of Udayana's seems suggested, at least, as mentioned, by Vijñānabhikṣu, the fifteen-century commentator. An early version of the argument appears in the *Nyāyasūtra*, which scholars count as prior to the *YS*.

The *YS* position voiced in this sūtra echoes Buddhist teaching. Compare the Second Noble Truth: "Suffering comes from desire (which has no beginning)." It's as though near one's core, though not part of one's genuine essence, there is a desire component, perhaps common with

all life.

Finally, note that Swami Satyananda sees *citta* as a form of *prāṇa* (“breath,” “life”), a universal vital substance to which desire is natural. Thus he reaffirms the Vedāntic tradition of a *prāṇamaya-kośa*, a “body of breath.” (Cf., *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* x.x.)

4.11. hetu-phala-āśraya-ālambanaiḥ saṃgrhītatvād eṣām a-bhāve tad-a-bhāvaḥ |

Since desiring and *vāsanā* are connected as causes and effects, as mutual supports and dependencies, in the absence of the one there is the absence of the other.

Comments. This claim of causal relationship mirrors the structure and interrelationship of the Four Noble Truths: “Eliminate desire, and suffering, its fruit, will be eliminated.” Vyāsa’s reading, by the way, through the notion of *ālambana*, “dependence (of *x* on *y*),” does express this structure as the sūtra’s main point. But the terms of the relationship, which he understands to be determined by content, are not for him in either case subconscious mechanisms but rather consequences of action understood hedonically. Vyāsa’s “six-spoked wheel of existence,” which really has only five spokes, similarly parallels and contrasts with the famous twelve-spoked wheel of early Buddhism, the *bhāva-cakra*. It runs: (1) from virtue, pleasure, and from vice, pain, (2) from pleasure, attachment/attraction, and from pain, aversion, (3) action (to acquire what attracts or to avoid that to which one is averse), (4) consequences of action (in benefits to others or injury), (5) virtue and vice—and so on, around again. The Buddhist wheel includes death and rebirth.

4.12. atīta-an-āgatam sva-rūpato asti adhva-bhedād dharmāṇām |

In essence, the past and the future exist. Particular events and properties (are objects of consciousness and real) according to the different modalities or “pathways” (of past, present, and future).

Comments. This and the following two sūtras address the metaphysics of time from a Sāṃkhya perspective.

Vyāsa takes a straightforward route, proposing a realism about past and future that is severely qualified. The past and the future do not exist in the same way as the present. The future exists as “to be manifest” and the past as “having been experienced.” Nevertheless, we, and especially yogins, have knowledge of things past and future, and so there must be

truth-makers (facts of the matter) grounding knowledge.

4.13. te vyakta-sūkṣmā guṇa-ātmanah |

Particulars are manifest or subtle. They are of the nature (of combinations) of the strands (the three *guṇas*).

Comments. Vyāsa interprets the “subtle” (*sūkṣma*) as applying to the past and the future, which is generic, unmanifest, or potential. Nature, which is composed of the three strands, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, is the font of all possibility. Indeed, in a sense all particulars pre-exist (or post-exist) in that they are true potentials within *prakṛti*, combinations of the strands. This is the doctrine of *satkāryavāda*, the “pre-existence of the effect,” which is aired at length in the subcommentaries.

The point from the perspective of yogic practice is apparently to have a view that would give us a sense of nature as a whole, including the three times, and that would lead us to indifference to particular happenings. This, in turn, would be, in Patañjali’s conception, a step towards utter transcendence.

4.14. pariṇāma-ekadvāda vastu-tattvam |

The truth or particularity of a thing is due to a unique transformation (of nature, a unique combination of *guṇas*).

Comments. This sūtra continues the thought of the two previous sūtras. Note that while something may be unique, the deeper truth is that it is a product of the strands, like everything other than consciousness.

4.15. vastu-sāmye citta-bhedāt tayor vibhaktah panthāh |

Since with regard to one and the same thing, mind (*citta*) differs (on different occasions of perception, or from the perspectives of two different perceivers), the two (*citta* and objects) have a distinct mode of being.

Comments. This sūtra begins a stretch of text that is in my opinion Patañjali’s best philosophizing, best stretch, that is to say, of argumentation concerning mind and consciousness. The most compelling arguments of the entire *YS* occur here.

Counter the Sāṃkhya theme of seeing everything as like everything else in being a transformation of *prakṛti*, the passage opens with the

current sūtra's establishing "mind" (*citta*) as—let us say, to make the point clear—a distinct category. *Citta* is different from worldly things, as well as different from consciousness. Patañjali's philosophy has been mislabelled a dualism. For all intents and purposes, it posits a triplicity of consciousness, mind, and object. Note, furthermore, that minds are paired with *puruṣas*, with individual conscious beings: one *puruṣa*, one *citta*. Of course, *citta* is also colored and variously determined by objects and natural processes.

In terms, then, of the three categories, Patañjali's yoga could be characterized as bringing the *citta* under the control of the *puruṣa*, free from the influence of *prakṛti*. The mind becomes an instrument like the hand which one can hold still or move purposefully, not like a neighbor's radio over which one has no control.

4.16. na ca eka-citta-tantram tad a-pramāṇakaṃ tadā kiṃ syāt |

And (to exist) a thing does not depend on a single mind or awareness (*citta*). When it is not cognized by that mind, what then would it be?

Comments. Objects exist independently of cognition. The question at the end of sūtra helps us to see this quickly—whatever be the arguments of idealists, Buddhists and others, who would convince us that objects are mind-dependent. The *fluctuations* of our *citta*, i.e., what objects are to us, are, of course "mind-dependent," being composed of *citta* and shaped—I would say in opposition to the standard interpretation of Patañjali—in part by the individual conscious being (who practices yoga and *saṃyama* in particular). The world is common to everyone, though I have my individual *citta* and you yours, with mine conforming (to some extent) to my volition and yours to your. This idea is pretty clearly expressed at 4.18.

4.17. tad-uparāga-apekṣitvāc cittasya vastu jñāta-a-jñātam |

Something remains known or unknown to a particular mind, according to its conditioning or expectation.

Comments. B. K. S. Iyengar suggests this reading, which is different from Vyāsa's. Another possibility for the "according to" phrase is: "depending on the coloring conferred." This would continue what appears to be an engagement with Buddhist idealism. One concedes the "grain of truth" in the opponent's position: our individual expectations and conditioning determine, as you Buddhists insist, what objects are for

us differently from what they are for others—and it all comes out determined in the best way when we practice yoga (or the Eightfold Path of the Buddha). But one does not concede the essential, namely, here, the view of objects as real and external to the mind.

This sūtra also suggests the thesis of the “theory-ladenness” of perception. “A religious mendicant, an amorous man, and a dog have different views of a woman’s person, respectively that it is a carcass, that it is a mistress, and that it is a prey.” This position is attributed to the Buddhist philosopher by the sixteen-century scholar, Mādhava, in his *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (“Compendium of All the World Views,” Cowell and Gough translation, p. 23), but the thesis that desire shapes thought and perception is practically a commonplace across schools.

4.18. sadā jñātāś citta-vṛttayas tat-prabhoḥ puruṣasya a-pariṇāmivāt |

The fluctuations of mind are always known to their lord, the conscious being, the *puruṣa*, inasmuch as the *puruṣa* is unchanging.

Comments. Each individual knows his or her own mind, and is capable of controlling it, not other minds. (At least normally this would be the case; the *siddhis* suggesting the possibility of “other-control” have been discussed above, pp. xxx–xx.) The extent of knowledge of one’s mind as embracing fluctuations over time proves the enduringness of oneself as the knower.

This argument is standardly used against Buddhists who would deny the separate existence of a self (the argument is particularly dear to Mīmāṃsakas and Naiyāyikas). Only a self that endures is capable of the knowledge that we have of our minds fluctuating in one way at one time and in another way at another, or, in a different conception, has memory of cognizing something earlier. Memory dispositions, *saṃskāra*, formed by the previous experience are triggered and thus cause a remembering. In the YS’s conception, the individual who has knowledge of certain fluctuations occurring at a certain time and of others occurring at other times, is one and the same, that is to say, unchanging.

There would seem to be, on this view, no possibility of unconscious mental fluctuations. The tie between the *puruṣa* and its *citta* seems implausibly tight. But, again, the yogic point would be that the individual take control.

Theoretically, obstacles pop up along the route very quickly when we try to relate the idea here with views expressed previously. For example, it seems that objects would have to be known differently—with identification, on the one hand, and with discrimination, on the other—

according to whether a *puruṣa* has achieved *kaivalya*, the *summum bonum*. And if the *puruṣa* already enjoys the supreme good, then what is the point of yoga?

4.19. na tat sva-ābhāsaṃ dr̥śyatvāt |

That (the *citta*) is not self-luminous, because it is something to be perceived.

Comments. Here again Patañjali sides with classical realists, Naiyāyikas and others, against Buddhist idealists (and others): cognitions are *not* self-luminous since they are themselves known. Cognitions are instruments of a self’s knowledge of the world, according to Nyāya, and themselves have intentionality—or a content, an object-directedness—cashed out in terms of the things known. But cognitions (*jñāna*) can be cognized as cognitions, through apperception, *anuvyayasāya*, an “after-cognition,” in Nyāya. Patañjali appears to have similar views about *citta*. Nyāya’s “cognitions” are fluctuations of *citta*. So since *citta* is perceived, it is not self-luminous.

Every classical school, in fact, takes a position on self-awareness. Patañjali’s argument here—that *citta* is object only, because it is cognized—is hotly disputed within Vedānta especially, the Advaitin claiming that nothing that is “something to be perceived” could possibly be self-luminous, and the Vedāntic theist (e.g., Rāmānuja) arguing that awareness, self-awareness, which is intrinsic to an individual (not adventitious as in Nyāya), can be both an object to be perceived and self-illuminating.

4.20. eka-samaye ca ubhaya-an-avadhāraṇam |

And there is no possibility of (*citta*) cognizing both (objects and itself) at the same time.

Comments. In the context of the classical arguments, non-simultaneity of self- and object-cognition, sometimes presented as phenomenological fact, buttresses the view of cognition as “other-illuminated,” *para-prakāśa*. Here the point seems to hook up with the supposition that the *puruṣa* is required for the mind to be known. Two sūtras below, it is claimed that the *citta*, the mind, *can* know simultaneously the *puruṣa* and the world.

It is tempting to read this sūtra as presenting a battle over the directedness of *citta*, whether to cognize self *or* world. Thus it would show the true dualism of the Yoga world view, to choose world or self. I

take it that part of the “Tantric turn” is to deny that the yogin cannot know the world at the same time as the self is known. However, that turn seems already taken with the message of 4.23, which is then a “Tantric” sūtra like many in chapter three. We shall come back to the point. The right reading here seems to be that the *citta* cannot cognize both itself and the world, not that it cannot reflect the *puruṣa* and cognize itself at the same time (as asserted in 4.23).

4.21. *citta-antara-dṛśye buddhi-buddher atiprasaṅgaḥ smṛti-saṃkaraś ca |*

It would be absurd to assume that different *citta* is required to grasp *citta*, because of the impossible regress of one cognition after another being required (in order that any be known). This would also mean memory’s (impossibility because of) confusion.

Comments. A unitary *puruṣa* is required to know *citta*, not, as for instance Nyāya holds, one cognition after another. Here Patañjali sides with Nyāya’s adversaries who advocate the self-illumination thesis. Such a regress argument against “other-illuminationism” is often repeated in philosophic texts as a mainstay of “self-illuminationism.” The point here, then, seems to be to insist that the mind is a unitary substance subject to fluctuations as opposed to a stream of individual cognitions occurring one after the other. Note that the Buddhist schools share with Nyāya the picture of cognition as serial. Patañjali takes a different view, which he supposes allows him, but not the Naiyāyika, to avoid the regress objection. Consciousness rests with the self; it is intrinsic. The conscious being grasps mentality in a single swoop, so to say, past, present, and future fluctuations not yet manifest. It does not grasp *citta* by means of other *citta*. Otherwise, there would be an insuperable gap. An unbridgeable gap would also open were we to think of *citta* as incapable of cognizing itself. The pertinent background assumption seems to be that the *puruṣa* uses *citta*, when it is no longer moved by the world, to self-cognize and to reflect the *puruṣa*’s spiritual reality.

Remembering, too, would be impossible on the serial view which sees cognition as fleeting. One could not know simultaneously both that one is remembering something or other and actually remember the something or other, nor, again, could one remember perceiving it.

4.22. *citer a-pratisaṃkramāyās tad-ākāra-āpattau sva-buddhi-saṃvedanam |*

Self-awareness—consciousness of self and of cognition—occurs when

the *citta* (*citi* = *citta*) assumes the form of consciousness which (as the nature of the conscious being) is transcendently unchanging.

Comments. The first word of the sūtra is *citi*, “power of consciousness,” not *citta*, mind. Perhaps it should be given a different rendering, but I have translated it as *citta*. The word recurs in the very last sūtra, 4.34.

Different readings are offered by the classical commentators, and, as might be expected, by modern interpreters. Vijñānabhikṣu, for example, finds here a double reflection theory: the reflection of the *puruṣa* in the mind doubles back such that the mind as seemingly conscious is located in the *puruṣa*, who is, then, the knower. Vācaspati interprets the sūtra in line with his view that the mind (*buddhi*) is the knower in everyday knowledge, not the *puruṣa*.

My reading is in line with the following sūtra, 4.23, which says explicitly that the *citta* is capable of knowing both the *puruṣa* and the world. Here, it seems to me, we have either the breakdown of the metaphysical dualism of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as classically interpreted or a psychological bridge concept, actually both. Practice-wise, the sūtra makes entire sense. One tries to still the mind in order, within the mind, to know the self.

4.23. draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-uparakte cittam sarva-artham |

***Citta* that is conditioned both by awareness of the seer and that to be seen is capable of cognizing anything.**

Comments. This lines up with the *siddhi* sūtras of chapter three. Note that insofar as yoga is focused on transformation of the *citta*, there need be no world denial. “Aloneness,” *kaivalya*, is not as yet the only possible goal.

4.24. tad-a-saṃkhyeya-vāsanābhiś citram api para-artham
saṃhatya-kāritvāt |

Although the *citta* is moved by countless deep subliminal activators (*vāsanā*), it works by unifying (diversities) for the sake of the other (the conscious being).

Comments. The sūtra continues the argument against the philosophers of other schools. In Western philosophy, I. Kant is famous for supposing that the mind synthesizes impressions and thoughts in concepts, with the unity of the deepest organizational concepts provided by the unity of self, that is, by the “transcendental unity of apperception.” Kant’s idea is not

too removed, it seems to me, from Patañjali's here. The *citta* unifies the information of the senses, in part by absorbing the information stored in *saṃskāra* (formed in the current life) and indeed that of the deep "activators" than span lifetimes.

4.25. viśeṣa-darśina ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-vinivṛttiḥ |

For one who sees the distinction (between nature and the conscious being), the projection of sense of self in nature ceases.

Comments. In this chapter it is at this point that Patañjali turns away from the holistic goal of transformation to the other-worldliness of *kaivalya*. Note that the *sūtra* can be read as indicating a process, suggesting that a yogin who sees the distinction would naturally *want* no part of nature. And that would be compatible with the idea of another yogin, the Tantrin, let us call her, who would not abandon embodied existence. Mahāyāna Buddhism sees the choice as between becoming a "solitary Buddha" (*pratyeka-buddha*) and a Bodhisattva, as was discussed in chapter two (above, pp. xxx–xx).

4.26. tadā viveka-nimnaṃ kaivalya-prāgbhāraṃ cittam |

Then the *citta*, settling into deep discrimination, is carried on towards (reflecting) the aloneness (of the conscious being).

Comments. It is the *citta* that is the beneficiary of yoga practice, according to the conception here.

4.27. tac-chitreṣu pratyaya-antarāṇi saṃskārebhyaḥ |

In the gaps (or weaknesses) of discrimination, other ideational presentations (i.e., distractions) may arise by force of (unexhausted) subliminal activators (*saṃskāra*).

Comments. It is not easy to abandon the world.

4.28. hānam eṣāṃ kleśa-vad uktam |

These are to be banished, like the afflictions, in the ways explained.

Comments. This refers back to methods of yoga already discussed.

4.29. prasamkhyāne apy a-kusīdasya sarvathā viveka-khyāter dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ |

The *samādhi* called Cloud of Dharma occurs for a person who has no interest even in elevated awareness, whose awareness is in every way directed to discrimination (of the conscious being from nature).

Comments. Various theories have been offered, none obviously superior to the rest, why the state is called Cloud of Dharma. I would like to say, with a touch of sarcasm, that it is because Dharma is clouded, that is, duty abandoned along with the world, a kind of indulgence of expectation of self-bliss.

4.30. tataḥ kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ |

Thence afflictions and karma cease.

Comments. They may cease for the “liberated,” but the world of course goes on.

4.31. tadā sarva-āvaraṇa-mala-apetasya jñānasya anantyāḥ jñeyam alpam |

Then, since awareness is unlimited when parted from coverings and impurities, what remains to be known is trivial.

Comments. This may be read as an argument in favor of world-abandonment. There remains little of interest once one has had a taste of self-absorption.

4.32. tataḥ kṛta-arthānām pariṇāma-krama-samāptir guṇānām |

Thence the completion of processes of transformation on the part of the strands (*guṇas*), their purpose fulfilled.

Comments. Apparently, the individual nature of the yogin, that portion of *prakṛti* making up his body and mind (and whatever his subtle bodies, too, presumably), would decompose back into the generic elements or principles (*tattva*) into which Nature can be analyzed. No longer would there be individual embodiment and continuity of karma across lives.

4.33. kṣaṇa-pratiyogī pariṇāma-apara-anta-nirgrāhyaḥ kramaḥ |

Process, which is relative to the units of time, is apprehensible at the end of a transformation.

Comments. This sūtra seems to say—partly by the pragmatics of its placement near the end of the text—that just before passing into the state of utter self-absorption known as *kaivalya*, “aloneness” (an aloneness of contemplation of contemplation, so to say), the yogin can see the process propelling him to the *summum bonum*. If this is right, I should like to remind us that such a person could not report his or her experience, since reporting requires use of mental and bodily instruments.

4.34. puruṣa-artha-śūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ
sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti |

Aloneness (*kaivalya*, the *summum bonum*) entails the reversal of the course of the strands or qualities of nature (*guṇas*), now empty of meaning and value for the conscious being. Or, it may be understood as the power of consciousness returned and established in its own true self.

Comments. The use of the word *citi* here for the *puruṣa*’s power of consciousness supports reading *citi* at 4.22 (see above) as indicating a conscious power inherent to the conscious being and distinct from *citta*. However, I stand by my rendering.

Here ends the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali.

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ