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CLASSICAL SĀMKHYA, YOGA, AND THE ISSUE OF FINAL PURIFICATION

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Yoga and Sāṃkhya developed into their separate philosophical and classical schools attributed to Patañjali¹ and Īśvara Kṛṣṇa respectively. In their metaphysical ideas Sāṃkhya and Yoga are closely akin. Sāṃkhya is often characterized as the theoretical aspect of Yoga praxis, but this is inaccurate.² Nor is Yoga simply a borrowed form of Sāṃkhya. G. FEUERSTEIN³ has convincingly shown that “there can be no justification whatever for deriving Classical Yoga from Classical *Sāṃkhya*.⁴ Despite the seemingly radical nature of FEUERSTEIN’s arguments to challenge the idea that Sāṃkhya and Yoga are two sides of the same coin, his overall claim is not as strong as it sounds. When we examine his arguments closely, he is not asserting that the two systems have virtually nothing in common but merely that some scholars have gone too far in their claims that Yoga is a sub-school of Sāṃkhya.

In spite of the similarity between these *darśanas* in their approach to the basic structure of reality, they in fact present different systems of thought, holding divergent views on important areas of doctrinal structure such as epistemology, ontology, psychology and ethics, as well as differences pertaining to terminology.⁵ The numerous philosophical differences between classical Yoga and classical Sāṃkhya derive, in part,

1 The Sanskrit text of the YS of Patañjali and the YB of Vyāsa is from *The Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali* (1904), K. S. ĀGĀŚE ed. (Poona: Ānandāśrama) Sanskrit Ser. no. 47.

2 A host of scholars do not fully acknowledge Yoga and Sāṃkhya as being distinct philosophical schools. S. DASGUPTA (1930: 2) observes that although the two schools are fundamentally the same in their general metaphysical positions, they hold quite different views on many points of philosophical, ethical, and practical interest. Recent scholarship has tended to support DASGUPTA’s claim. For more here, see chapter two in WHICHER (1998), *The Integrity of the Yoga Darśana*.

3 FEUERSTEIN (1980), pp. 109-118.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 111.

5 As various differences between the two systems are dealt with elsewhere in this volume, my paper will confine itself mainly to a discussion of the final stages of purification in both systems.

from the different methodologies adopted by the two schools of thought. Sāṃkhya relies primarily on the exercise of the discernment (*viveka*) of *puruṣa* (“spirit”, pure consciousness) from *prakṛti* (“matter” including nature, psychophysical being and its source) stressing a theoretical/intellectual analysis in order to bring out the nature of final emancipation. This emancipation is often understood as an “isolation” (*kaivalya*) of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* conceived as the uninvolved (*mādhyasthya*), inactive (*akartrubhāva*) witness (*sākṣin*)⁶ of *prakṛti* and her manifestations. However, Sāṃkhya’s overt conceptual means of discrimination (*vijñāna*) is not sufficient enough for the aspiring yogin. In Yoga, immortality is realized through consistent practice and self-discipline, and is not something to be demonstrated through inference, analysis, and reasoning. Classical Yoga emphasizes the necessity of personal experimentation and practical meditational techniques for the cultivation of *samādhi* (YS I.17-18) in which insight (*prajñā*), disclosed within the deeper levels of the mind, progressively leads to a clearer understanding and realization of intrinsic identity as *puruṣa*. This is not to deny that there may well have been practical, meditative structural approaches utilized in the earlier Sāṃkhyan tradition.⁷

Yoga elicits a practical, pragmatic, experiential/perceptual (not merely inferential/theoretical) approach that Patañjali deems essential in order to deal effectively with our total human situation and provide real freedom, not just a theory of liberation or a metaphysical explanation of life. To this end Patañjali outlined, among other practices, an eight-limbed “path” of Yoga (*astāṅga-yoga*, YS II.29) dealing with the physical, moral, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the yogin. F. EDGERTON concluded that: “... Yoga is not a ‘system’ of belief or of metaphysics. It is always a way, a method of getting something, usually salvation... .”⁸ But

6 SK 19.

7 In *Strukturen Yogischer Meditation* (1977), G. OBERHAMMER examines ‘sāṃkhyan meditation’, by which he means those meditative structural approaches that have been handed down in the Sāṃkhya tradition, particularly that of Vāṛṣaganya. OBERHAMMER’s analysis of this ‘yogic’ orientation is based on relevant quotations found in the *Yuktidīpikā* and intends to show that the soteriology of the old Sāṃkhyan tradition was not a purely rationalistic affair and that many of the Sāṃkhyan metaphysical categories can only be understood against a background of meditative praxis.

8 F. EDGERTON (1924), “The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga,” *AJP* 45: 1-46.

this does not say enough, does not fully take into account what might be called the *integrity* of Patañjali's system of Yoga. Yoga derives its real strength and value through an integration of theory and practice.⁹

Patañjali's Yoga derives its insights from a process of introspection into the nature of reality not unlike that of Sāṃkhya. According to Sāṃkhya and Yoga our “inner” world of thought, feeling, imagination, and so forth, parallels the structure of the cosmos itself. It is made up of the same fundamental layers of existence (i.e., *prakṛti*, *traiguṇa*) that compose the hierarchy of the external world. Therefore the so-called “maps”¹⁰ utilized in the YS of Patañjali and Īśvara Kṛṣṇa's SK are guides to both the “inner” and the “outer” dimensions of existence, and also function – certainly in the case of Yoga – as heuristic devices in the form of contemplative directives for facilitating understanding and meditative insight. Their principal purpose thus is to point beyond the levels and limitations of psyche and cosmos reminding us that the true nature and spiritual component of our person is a transcendent yet immanent reality, pure consciousness (*puruṣa*), sometimes referred to as the witness (*sākṣin*) behind all content of consciousness. Both systems are intended to guide the practitioner to the realization of *puruṣa* and are thus ultimately derived for *soteriological* purposes. The above intention notwithstanding, scholars have often questioned the efficacy of the classical Sāṃkhyan “means” for attaining freedom (*mokṣa*, *kaivalya*) especially in comparison to yogic methods.¹¹

9 See WHICHER (1998).

10 I am adopting the term “maps” from G. FEUERSTEIN (1980: 117). See YS II.19 for an outline of the ontological levels of *prakṛti*.

11 One might query, for example, whether the central expedient of *vijñāna* (SK 2), recommended by Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, to terminate suffering (*duḥkha*) is, in the last analysis, adequate for realizing the postulated goal of identity as *puruṣa*. *Tattva-abhyāsa* (SK 64) or applied *vijñāna* is, however, equated by R. PARROT [(1985), “The Experience called Reason in Sāṃkhya,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 13: 235-264] with wisdom as opposed to rational knowledge. But can *vijñāna* be synonomous with *prajñā* or yogic insight acquired in *samādhi* as described in the YS (I.17-18)? How, in Sāṃkhya, is the *bhāva* of *jñāna* (SK 23) actually brought about? K. B. R. RAO (1966: 432) speculated that it is the accentuated rationalism of classical Sāṃkhya that must be held responsible for the fact that this school of thought never actually acquired the same recognition and prestige as the other Hindu *darśanas*. FEUERSTEIN (1980: 115-116) seriously doubts the efficacy of the classical Sāṃkhyan approach for arriving at genuine liberation, rendering *vijñāna* as “an intellectual act.” KOELMAN

Within the context of Yoga, hierarchical “maps” of reality served a very practical, psychological, pedagogical, and soteriological purpose.¹² To be sure, the categories used in Yoga are both descriptions and contemplative directives for the ways in which the mind, identity, and world are actually experienced through meditative awareness and insight.

How is the purpose of Yoga – the ending of suffering and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*)¹³ – to be brought about? The cessation of suffering and its concomitant – misidentification – is effected through a process of purifying and mastering the *vr̥tti*-generating complex: the mind and the activity to which it gives rise. The foundation of yogic praxis, the mastery of mind, takes place through the process of *nirodha* as stated in YS I.2: “Yoga is the cessation of [the misidentification with] the modifications of the mind.”¹⁴ Through a study of the meaning of “cessation” (*nirodha*), the theory-praxis unity so central to Yoga philosophy can be better understood and appreciated.¹⁵ Yogic discipline takes many forms depending on the needs of the practitioner and encompasses a wide range of methods that can be applied in a variety of situations.¹⁶ In comparison, classical Sāṃkhya prescribes essentially one practice for the release from suffering: the cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna*). Yoga offers over twenty practices that can be undertaken to prepare the mind for the event of spiritual liberation wherein *puruṣa* is allowed to shine forth in its pristine purity.

Primarily, Yoga takes the Sāṃkhyan theory of causation (*satkāryavāda*) – according to which an effect is preexistent in its cause – and applies it to understanding states of mind or “shapes” the mind takes when left to its own karmically derived momentum. The modifications (*vikṛtis*) of the mind are its *vr̥ttis*, all the mental functioning, processes, and content. Insofar as we are ensconced in a world-view generated by ignorance

(1970: 237) also supports the claim that the method of *vijñāna* in the SK (2) is inferior to yogic praxis.

12 Cf. *Katha Upaniṣad* VI.7-8.

13 Seen here, classical Yoga has the same purpose as classical Sāṃkhya and Buddhism.

14 YS I.2 (p. 4): *yogaś cittavr̥ttinirodhah*.

15 On this topic see WHICHER (1997), “Nirodha, Yoga Praxis and the Transformation of the Mind.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* Vol 25: 1-67.

16 In his open-ended approach Patañjali offers a diversity of practices which more or less complement each other. The openness of the YS is expressed, for example, in YS I.39 (p. 42): *yathābhimatadhyānād vā*, “Or [clarity of mind is achieved] by whatever meditation is desired.”

(*avidyā*) and are ineluctably programmed within the circumscribed patterns of afflicted identity (*asmitā*) – a mere product of the three *gunas* in the form of mistaken identity – our self-referential centre of awareness and its compulsive attachment to *vṛtti* must be severed in order for the mind to be transformed into finer states of perception and understanding. What is *pralaya* or *prati-saṅcara* (the dissolution of the universe and its phenomena) in the cosmological context of Sāṃkhya¹⁷ becomes in the YS respectively *nirodha* or *pratiprasava* (the cessation or dissolution of the misperceived identity with *gunas* as they manifest in the form of *vṛttis*). This can only happen through the transformative experiences undergone in *saṃādhi* that culminate in “aloneness” (*kaivalya*).¹⁸

The Process of Liberation in Sāṃkhya

The classical systems of both Sāṃkhya and Yoga are designed to lessen the effects of karmic bondage and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*) and lead the aspirant to a knowledge that allows for liberation. In the SK (64-68) we are given a summary of the process of liberation according to classical Sāṃkhya as follows:

From the study of the principles of existence (*tattvas*), the knowledge arises that “I do not exist, nothing is mine, I am not.” This [knowledge] is complete, free from ignorance, pure, and is singular (*kevala*).

Then *puruṣa*, with the repose of a spectator, sees *prakṛti*, whose activity has ceased since her purpose has been fulfilled and who has abandoned her seven modes [that perpetuate bondage: ignorance, virtue, non-virtue, attachment, non-attachment, power, and weakness].

The seer (*puruṣa*) says “I have seen her.” The seeable (*prakṛti*) says, “I have been seen.” Though there is closeness between the two, there is no incentive for further creation.

Upon the attainment of direct knowledge, virtue (*dharma*) and the other [modes of bondage or *bhāvas*] have no further cause. The body yet abides due to the force of past impressions (*saṃskāras*) like the spinning of a potter’s wheel.

17 See DASGUPTA (1922: 247); the term *prati-saṅcara* is used in the *Tattvasaṃāsa-Sūtra*; see LARSON (1987: 319).

18 For a detailed examination of the meaning and practice of *saṃādhi* in classical Yoga see chapters 4-6 in WHICHER (1998).

When separation from the body is attained, and when *prakṛti* ceases, her task accomplished, then complete and unending isolation (*kaivalya*) is attained (SK 64-68).¹⁹

In the above there is a clear assertion in Sāṃkhya of the transcendence of selfhood (as a prakṛtic identity) and the discarding of all modalities (*bhāvas*) with the exception of discriminative knowledge (*jñāna*). We are presented with an image of human embodied life as a wheel that continues to spin. Once the dance of *prakṛti* has ceased (SK 59) due to the arising of knowledge, the manifestations of *prakṛti* no longer hold any interest for the witness (*puruṣa*) and no further creation takes place thus indicating that any propensity toward attachment has been rendered obsolete. Knowledge (*jñāna*) prevents further ignorance and bondage from taking hold. Our psychophysical being goes on, but due to the direct knowledge that the Self has nothing at all it can possess or label its own, not even *dharma* remains as a compulsive calling into action. The individual continues on in a dispassionate/detached manner until the event of death and final separation. The force of past impressions (*samskāras*) is cited as the reason for continued existence. Residues of past action are located in the intellect (*buddhi*), as are the *bhāvas*, and these residues or imprints congeal into fixed notions of self that in turn define and misconstrue the world leading to ongoing experiences of dissatisfaction or suffering (*duḥkha*).

Later commentators on the Sāṃkhya school who were clearly influenced by assumptions established within a Vedāntic discourse discuss the notion of *jīvanmukta* as if it were a part of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa's system.²⁰ As such, it is seemingly presumed that the *samskāras* that continue for the maintenance of bodily existence no longer veil the liberated person from authentic identity as *puruṣa*, a transcendent consciousness that is intrinsically pure and free and merely witnesses the unfoldment of things prakṛtic (SK 19). The SK certainly appears to provide a philosophical foundation for the possibility of living liberation but no extensive description surrounding the nature of this state is given. If one remains

19 Text and translation of the SK in Gerald LARSON (1979), *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*. Translations here are those of the author.

20 See, for example, descriptions in Aniruddha's (16th century) gloss on the *Sāṃkhya Sūtra* as well as Vijñāna Bhikṣu's descriptions in his *Sāṃkhyasāra* (ca. late 16th century). For specific references on the above two commentators see LARSON (1987), pp. 353 and 411 respectively.

solely within the Sāṃkhya system and its intra-traditional commentators, questions do arise as to the sorts of action a person engages in as bodily life continues. What is the nature of the *samskāras* that prevail or are perhaps cultivated after the attainment of knowledge? Do defiled states within the *buddhi* remain yet the liberated Sāṃkhyan is detached from any existing mental taints?²¹ In order to shed more light on the complex issue of the effects or influences of karmic residue we can now turn to an examination of the final stages of purification and liberation in Yoga as outlined in Patañjali's YS.

The Final Stages of Purification in Yoga

The Yoga system places greater emphasis than classical Sāṃkhya on a careful articulation of the processes of purification that both lead up to and accompany the cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna*). According to classical Yoga, one of the practical aims of Yoga is to generate and strengthen the nonafflicted mental processes (*aklista-vṛttis*) and mental impressions (*samskāras*) that help to eradicate the impurities of the mind rooted in error (*viparyaya*) and its five parts, namely, the afflictions (*kleśas*). As long as the afflictions are in place, a human being is ineluctably oriented toward experience in the limited realms of “matter” (*prakṛti*). The five *kleśas*²² are the motivational matrix of the unenlightened mind. The cultivation of discipline in Yoga gives rise to sattvic virtues such as friendliness (*maitrī*) toward other beings, non-violence (*ahimsā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and so forth. As ignorance (*avidyā*) is gradually replaced by knowledge (*jñāna*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*), and so on, will also be replaced by their opposites, through their inevitable linking together by the mental impressions (*samskāras*). *Samskāras* of benevolence, dispassion, and the like, in opposition to their corresponding impurities, will, in their turn, counter the influence of ignorance and its web of afflictions contributing in

21 The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness in this section of the paper to C. CHAPPLE's chapter on “Living Liberation in Sāṃkhya and Yoga”, in : *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, ed. by Andrew O. FORT and Patricia Y. MUMME (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

22 The afflictions (*kleśas*, YS II.3-9) consist of: ignorance (*avidyā*), egoity/I-am-ness (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and desire for continuity/fear of death (*abhiniveṣa*). Ignorance is said to be the origin of the other four afflictions (YS II.4).

this manner to an increasing light of knowledge,²³ an illumination of consciousness.

Thus, yogic disciplines culminating in *samādhi* are designed to bring about and foster those *samskāras* that can eventually subdue and eliminate the afflictions, gradually assuring an undisturbed “flow” of the mind toward liberation.²⁴ The more positively impregnated mental activities (*vrttis*) produce sattvic impressions and these in turn give rise to a different, positively transformed mental activity (*akliṣṭa-vṛtti*) that will then produce new impressions, and so on.²⁵ The yogin’s personality likewise becomes transformed – meaning that it becomes morally and cognitively purified of the binding effects of activity (*rajas*) and inertia (*tamas*). The yogin develops a clarity of knowledge through which *prakṛti* is increasingly appropriated in a nonconflicting and unselfish manner. Purity of the *sattva-guṇa* implies a mastery over *rajas* and *tamas* and their identity-constricting influences (i.e., attachments, aversions), and consists in a detachment toward what is perceived and experienced. Purity (*śuddhi*) generally stands for purity of the mental *sattva*,²⁶ even though the yogin’s final “step” is that of becoming free from the binding influence of the *guṇas* in their entirety and hence also from *sattva*.²⁷ The yogin seeks to attain an eventual “victory” over *karma* in its various forms of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*). In Yoga philosophy *samskāra* functions both as a binding influence in the form of affliction where *rajas* and *tamas* predominate, or as a liberating force in the form of knowledge (*jñāna*) residing in the *sattva* of the mind. In its most sattvic form *samskāra* has a profound soteriological significance in Yoga.

The perceptual knowledge attained in the stage of cognitive *samādhi* (termed *samprajñāta*) helps to reveal our very identity or being which, due to an epistemological error, had seemingly become entangled and dispersed in the *prakṛtic* realm. At the stage of *nirvicāra-samādhi* (*samādhi* without subtle associations) the knowledge that arises is said to be “truth-bearing” (*ṛtam-bharā*)²⁸; the yogin has attained a “knowing-oneness” with the whole

23 YS II.28.

24 YB I.12-13.

25 YB I.5.

26 See YS II.41 where the expression *sattvaśuddhi* is used.

27 YS III.50 and IV.34.

28 YS I.48.

of manifest *prakṛti* (*mahat*), including the ability to know – through *siddhis* or “powers” brought about by the application of *samyama* or “constraint” – all of the various manifestations that arise out of *mahat*. At this stage the inner reflective awareness of self or the I-sense has become pure, clear,²⁹ and capable of contemplating its own true nature or essence. It is, however, only the lucidity and clarity made possible through the reflected presence of *puruṣa* in *asmitā-samādhi* that is intended here. We must bear in mind that all forms of cognitive *samādhi* are experiential states that involve objects or mental content and in which mistaken identity is only partially transcended; still contained within the mind is the “seed” of ignorance, further confusion and sorrow that can “sprout” at any time, destabilizing, as it were, the yogin’s developed state of onepointedness (*ekāgratā*). At the most subtle awakening in *samprajñāta*, the yogin is able through discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*) to distinguish between the finest aspect of *prakṛti* – the *sattva* of the mind – and *puruṣa*. This highly refined discernment gives rise to sovereignty (*adhiṣṭhātrtva*) over all states of prakṛtic existence and a superior “knowingness” or “knowledge of all” (*jñātrtva*).³⁰

Patañjali goes on to state that: “The *samskāra* born of that [truth-bearing insight] obstructs other *samskāras*.³¹ Turning to Vyāsa on this *sūtra* we are informed that as the impressions (*samskāras*) generated by *samādhi* gather force and are renewed on a regular basis through practice (*abhyāsa*), the impressions of emergence (*vyutthāna*) – which are rooted in and add to an extraverted or extrinsically oriented sense of self – weaken. The “old,” former residue (*āśaya*) of the mind constituting the deposits of afflicted, worldly *karma* and *samskāras* is gradually replaced with regularly replenished new impressions of *samādhi* generating insight (*prajñā*), i.e., yogic perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*), which again reinforces the *samskāras* of *samādhi*. Thus the past habitual pattern or cycle of egoically appropriated *vṛttis* and afflicted impressions is broken. Due to the fact that these impressions of insight are of the nonafflicted (*akliṣṭa*),³² sattvic kind, they do not generate any further afflictions in that they do not add to the rajasic

29 YS I.47; for a study of the stages of cognitive *samādhi* see chapter five in WHICHER (1998).

30 YS III.49.

31 YS I.50 (p. 53): *tajjah samskāro 'nyasamskārapratibandhi*.

32 YB I.5. For a detailed examination of the concepts of *citta*, *samskāra*, and *vṛtti* refer to chapters three through six in WHICHER (1998).

and tamasic qualities or predispositions of the mind that would perpetuate misidentification as in the situation of *vyutthāna*, the extrinsic mode of human identity.

What YS I.50 indicates, at least from a soteriological perspective, is the fruit of the “truth-bearing” (*rtambharā*) insight (*prajñā*). As the mind becomes purified of affliction it becomes capable of a steady “flow” toward the “good,” meaning a “flow” of discernment³³ from which an identity shift or transformation of consciousness – from a mistaken identity in *samyoga* to authentic identity or true “form” (*svarūpa*) as *puruṣa* – takes place. The mind thus inclined toward discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) has a definite propensity for the liberated state of “aloneness” (*kaivalya*).³⁴

Impressions based on the clarity and stability of knowledge in *saṃādhi* have the power to remold, reshape, and restructure the psychological and epistemological functioning of the mind. As a result of these *saṃskāras* of insight, the new cycle or “wheel” of *saṃskāra-vṛtti-saṃskāra* breaks the former “beginningless” (YS IV.10) cycle of saṃsāric identity by impeding, and therefore helping to displace, the worldly, afflicted *saṃskāras* of *vyutthāna*. They prevent their effects (and affects), namely the *vṛttis* of extrinsic identity or worldly identification, rendering them ineffective, obsolete, incapable of functioning.

It is Patañjali’s understanding that knowledge/insight (*jñāna/prajñā*) and its *saṃskāras* are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the complete removal of ignorance and its effects (dissatisfaction = *duḥkha*). Thus *saṃādhi*, even at this subtle stage of practice, is still “with seed” (*sabīja*). *Prajñā* and its impressions are not capable of removing the latent potential in the mind for epistemological distortion, selfish mentality, and afflicted activity. The yogin is not satisfied simply with generating purer knowledge-type *saṃskāras*. The yogin’s goal is to cease to generate *any* *saṃskāras* at all, in effect, to transcend the whole saṃsāric network of self-identity by terminating the remaining *saṃskāras*.

After *saṃādhi* in the seeable/knowable involving supportive objects (*ālambana*) is attained and perfected, *saṃādhi* in the “unknowable” or “without the known” (*asamprajñāta*) can be cultivated. Ultimately, the stage of “seedless” or “objectless” (nonintentional, contentless) *saṃādhi* takes place in which all affliction and its effects are “burned away,”

33 YB I.12.

34 YS IV.26 (p. 201): *tadā vivekanimnam kaivalyaprāgbhāram cittam.*

“scorched,” bringing about the total cessation (*nirodha*) of *puruṣa*’s “superimposed condition” in *samyoga* (YS/YB II.17). Transcending the stages of cognitive *samādhi*, all the potencies (*samskāras*) that form the root cause (i.e., ignorance) of mistaken identity become purposeless, inactive, and dissolve from consciousness; and the consciousness of the “knower” formerly directed to the objects of experience settles down in the pure knower (*puruṣa*) for which there will be nothing then to be “known” or “experienced” soteriologically, that is, for the purpose of liberation. This *samādhi* is the supracognitive *samādhi*, *samādhi* in the autotransparent knower itself (i.e., the yogin’s consciousness “directed toward,” “merging in,” and identified as *puruṣa*) which can never be an object of knowledge and is, in that sense, unknowable.³⁵

YS I.18 asserts: “The other [state] is preceded by the practice of the idea of discontinuation and has *samskāra* only as residue.”³⁶ Vyāsa refers to “the other” in the above as “*asamprajñāta samādhi*.”³⁷ In YS I.51 the final stage in the process of *nirodha* is enumerated as follows: “With the cessation of even that [*samskāra* of *prajñā*], the cessation of everything else [i.e., all misidentification] ensues and that is seedless *samādhi*.”³⁸

In the YB (I.51), Vyāsa uses the term *vyutthāna* – referring to the extrinsic or attached modes of being – to include *samprajñāta-samādhi*, which in contrast to enstasy (*asamprajñāta*) – the topic of YS I.51 – involves ecstatic experiences of identification that are yet “external” to authentic identity (*puruṣa*). There still remain dependency factors of support that lie “outside” the domain of true selfhood, in *prakṛti*’s realm, and prolong the yogin’s susceptibility to the deeply embedded “seeds” of ignorance that can germinate into further dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*). Up to the level of insight and self-mastery attained in *samprajñāta*, the term “*vyutthāna*” served as an antonym to *samādhi* (and *nirodha*) and denoted a “movement” of the mind “away” from *puruṣa* toward objects of perception, thereby generating an extrinsic identity of self, compulsive attachment to objects, and afflicted, worldly involvement. However, in contrast to enstasy, it can be said that the ecstatic states of cognitive *samādhi* are also

35 YB III.35; see chapter six in WHICHER (1998) for a discussion of the term *asamprajñāta*.

36 YS I.18 (p. 21): *virāmapratyayābhyaśapūrvah samskāraśeṣo 'nyah*.

37 YB I.18.

38 YS I.51 (p. 54): *tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhān nirbijah samādhih*.

vyutthāna, that is, they arise within the context of prakṛtic experience and are based on an extrinsic identity of selfhood. The innermost core of Patañjali's Yoga constituting the climax of yogic purification is said to be *nirbija* ("without seed") in comparison with cognitive *saṃādhi*, which being classified as *sabīja* ("with seed"), is considered an exterior part (*bahirāṅga*)³⁹ of Yoga.

Asamprajñāta-saṃādhi not only eliminates any dependency on insight (*prajñā*) as a basis for self-identity but also overcomes the *samskāras* of *prajñā*. In *asamprajñāta-saṃādhi* the yogin's quest for authentic identity deepens and is now focused directly on the disentangled, extricated, and undefiled presence of *puruṣa*, a liberating realization resulting in the discovery of a trans-empirical and indestructible foundation of being; it is the recognition of a previously concealed, yet unchanging identity that is eternally pure (*śuddha*), "alone" (*kevala*), and free (*mukta*).⁴⁰

Vyāsa tells us that while "cessation" (*nirodha*) overcomes any attachment to insight (*prajñā*), the *samskāras* of *nirodha* thus generated counteract the *samskāras* of insight. A single "experience" or realization of *asamprajñāta*, however, is unlikely to accomplish this task all at once. A calm flow of the mind arises only through sustained practice, which brings about the *samskāras* of *nirodha*, for initially the state of peacefulness in the mind can easily be unsteadied and overwhelmed by the *samskāras* of "extroversion" or "emergence" (*vyutthāna*).⁴¹ Only after the initial "experiences" of *asamprajñāta* and through its transformative or "maturing" effects on the mind can the transcendence of the identifications in the ecstatic levels of *saṃprajñāta* occur.⁴²

In *asamprajñāta*, counter-*samskāras* are generated based on *puruṣa*-realization that gradually render obsolete all of the remaining types of *samskāras*. The yogin develops the "habit" of entering into the state of pure identity as *puruṣa* by regularly ascending into supraconscious *saṃādhi*. The former "habit" of egoic or samsāric identity is weakened when the yogin returns from *asamprajñāta* to the normal waking state of the mind. The

39 YS III.8.

40 YB I.51.

41 YB III.10 (p. 123): [nirodha] ... *samskāramāndye vyutthānadharminā samskārena nirodhadharmasamskāro 'bhibhūyata iti.*

42 As Vijñāna Bhikṣu suggests (YV I.51: 259).

“eight limbs” of Yoga (*astāṅga*) outlined by Patañjali (YS II.29)⁴³ can be seen as aids in this progressive shift from egoity to *puruṣa*.

The direct means to *asamprajñāta* is higher dispassion⁴⁴ (*para-vairāgya*) defined by Patañjali as follows: “That superior [dispassion] is the thirstlessness for the *guṇas* [that results] from the discernment of *puruṣa*.⁴⁵” The yogin must take the step of becoming utterly dispassionate toward⁴⁶ the much esteemed yogic state of discernment (*khyāti*) and the supreme knowledge and power that proceed from it.⁴⁷

Without the higher dispassion liberation cannot be attained, at least not by discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*) by itself. As Patañjali states: “Through dispassion towards even this [discernment of the distinction between *puruṣa* and the *sattva* of consciousness], the seeds of impediments are destroyed, and there is aloneness.”⁴⁸ Attachment to the knowledge of the difference between *puruṣa* and *sattva* – the discernment (*khyāti*) that provides the yogin with omniscience (*sarvajñātrtvā*) and supremacy over all states of being (*adhiṣṭhātrtvā*)⁴⁹ – can yet bind the yogin to phenomenal existence and misidentification. Here it can be said that Yoga’s higher dimension of *vairāgya* goes beyond the classical Sāṃkhyan adherence to discriminative knowledge (*viveka, jñāna*) as the final means to liberation. An ongoing purification of the mind takes place for the embodied yogin until *kaivalya* ensues. *Para-vairāgya* transcends discriminating knowledge and enables the yogin to achieve a clear, direct knowledge of *puruṣa*. It represents an act of will – along with its own transcendence – subsequently leading to *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, the state of supra-cognition through which *avidyā* and its effects (e.g., *samskāras*) and affects (*duḥkha*) are finally laid to rest. As it is direct knowledge of *puruṣa*, Yoga’s higher dispassion, by constituting a total disengagement from the superimposed condition of identity in *samyoga*, is the final means to liberation. There must develop in the yogin a detachment toward even the highly advanced

43 For an analysis of various methods of Yoga practice in the *Yoga-Sūtra* including the *astāṅga-yoga* see WHICHER (1997/1998).

44 YB I.18 (pp. 21-22).

45 YS I.16 (p. 19).

46 YS III.50; see also YB III.50 and I.2.

47 YS III.49.

48 YS III.50 (p. 168): *tadvairāgyād api doṣabijakṣaye kaivalyam.*

49 YS III.49.

stage of discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*); a non-acquisitive attitude (*akusīda*) must take place at the highest level of yogic practice.⁵⁰ Vyāsa emphasizes that the identity of *puruṣa* is not something to be acquired (*upādeya*) or discarded (*heya*).⁵¹ The inalienable identity of *puruṣa* puts it in a “category” that transcends the dualistic categories of means and ends, causes and effects, obtaining and discarding. Seen here, Yoga transcends its own “means” orientation.

The higher dispassion arising from the discernment of *puruṣa* (YS I.16) is the crucial means that prevents the mind from being overtaken by the *vyutthāna*-mode of identification; it is an advanced stage of mastery (*vaśikāra*) – following from the lower form of dispassion (*vairāgya*)⁵² – where the yogin is no longer under the binding influence of the *avidyā*-dominated play of the *guṇas*. Soteriologically, the *guṇas* have become “void of purpose” (*artha-śūnya*, YB I.18). Epistemologically, the yogin is freed from the limited forms of perception and self-understanding based on *samprajñāta*-identifications. This state is also referred to as “having *sam-skāra* only as residue” (*sam-skāra-śeṣa*). Eventually this subtle residue of *sam-skāras* dissolves in a last purificatory stage of the mind and the yogin permanently lives in the state of seedless (*nirbīja*) *samādhi*.⁵³

The culmination of the Yoga system is found when, following from *dharma-megha-samādhi*, the mind and actions are freed from misidentification and affliction⁵⁴ and one is no longer deluded or confused with regard to one’s true nature (*svarūpa*) and identity. At this stage of practice the yogin is disconnected from all patterns of egoically motivated action. According to both Vyāsa⁵⁵ and Vijñāna Bhikṣu,⁵⁶ one to whom this high

50 YS IV.29 (p. 202): *prasamkhyāne 'py akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāter dharmameghah samādhih*.

51 YB II.15 (p. 78): *tatra hātuḥ svarūpam upādeyam vā heyam vā na bhavitum arhati*.

52 YS I.15. In the SK (45) *vairāgya* is the means of reaching the state of *prakṛti-laya* which in both Yoga and Sāṃkhya constitutes a pseudo form of liberation. In Yoga *vairāgya* is given greater soteriological significance.

53 YB I.18 (p. 22): *tadabhyāsapūrvakam hi cittam nirālambanam abhāvaprāptam iva bhavatīty eṣa nirbījah samādhir asamprajñātah*.

54 YS IV.30 (p. 202): *tataḥ kleśakarmanivṛttiḥ*. Thus, it may be said that to dwell without defilement in a “cloud of *dharma*” is the culminating description by Patañjali of what tradition later referred to as living liberation (*jīvanmukti*).

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

state of purification takes place is designated as a *jīvanmukta*: one who is liberated while still alive (i.e., embodied). The modern commentator, H. ĀRANYA, also asserts that through freedom from affliction in the form of *samskāra* the yogin attains to the status of a *jīvanmukta*.⁵⁷

Conclusion

Both Sāṃkhya and Yoga claim to liberate one from ignorance thus resulting in a state in which no binding action can then be created. In Sāṃkhya, *samskāras* continue to persist until final separation from the body and the wheel of life continues to turn after the initial liberating insight; here is a seemingly “fatalistic” unfoldment of *samskāras* until death.⁵⁸ Yoga involves a subtilizing process of purification that completely sattvifies the mind. In this ongoing process the yogin is committed to a deepening of dispassion that originally arises with knowledge. Yoga is keen to dwell on the outcome of liberative knowledge in more detail than Sāṃkhya. The process that leads to final liberation progresses more gradually in Yoga than in Sāṃkhya. In Sāṃkhya, the critical moment of liberative insight (SK 64) where the seer consciousness realizes “I am not, nothing is mine,” appears to be final and the text does not discuss any possibility of a falling back into ignorance.

But the question remains for Sāṃkhya, if karmic patterns in the form of *samskāras* continue until the event of final separation, what type of *karma* continues on? What is its specific content? Is it centered in the locus of personality? Or is it simply the body-mind structure – that formerly enveloped a prakṛtic sense of self – being maintained in detached manner? The *bhāva* of knowledge is not discarded and we are left with the possibility that this special insight or discerning power could be applied by the Sāṃkhyan thus preventing any further obscuration from arising due to the remaining karmic residue. Yoga, however, maintains that knowledge *in itself* does not ultimately have the capacity to liberate human identity from the deeply embedded “seeds” of ignorance. The yogin can make further efforts to transform the mind through the commitment to a purification of

56 See YV IV.30 (pp. 123-124) and YSS (p.17).

57 See ĀRANYA (1963) pp. 226 and 433.

58 This point has been made by C. CHAPPLE (1996: 124).

all karmic residue. Such efforts can include ethical vows as well as subtilized forms of meditative discipline resulting in a total purification and illumination of consciousness even at the level of the mind. In this sense, Yoga suggests a deeper insight than Sāṃkhya into the functioning and structure of the mind and the mind's role in the final stages of purification and liberation. It is of interest to note that both systems acknowledge that *puruṣa* is never really bound or liberated and that without *prakṛti* liberation could not take place. It is *prakṛti* that transmigrates, suffers bondage, and is released (SK 62). As Vyāsa makes clear, experience and emancipation are created by the mind (or intellect) and function only in the mind.⁵⁹ *Puruṣa* is by definition already free and therefore has no intrinsic need to be liberated from the fetters of samsāric existence.

In Sāṃkhya, knowledge precludes any further reason for *dharma* (SK 67). There is a relative absense of emphasis on purity and virtue within the system of Sāṃkhya.⁶⁰ Yoga allows for an enlightened, participatory perspective that can embody an enriched sense of *dharma* suggesting a responsiveness to life that no longer enslaves the yogin morally or epistemologically. This seems to be implied in the experience of the cloud of *dharma* (*dharma-megha*) *saṃādhi* (YS IV.29). At this high level realization in Yoga action does not end but becomes purified of afflicted impulses (YS/YB IV.30); nonafflicted action remains for the liberated yogin. In the context of our human embodied world and its possibilities, purified action in Yoga would appear to extend the implications of knowledge and in this sense the Yoga system can be viewed as being complementary with, not contradictory to Sāṃkhya. What Sāṃkhya does communicate is a context for liberation on a theoretical level⁶¹, whereas Yoga shows how liberating insight can be applied in an ongoing process of purification; eventually, through *asamprajñāta-saṃādhi*, knowledge itself is transcended and ignorance discarded in the realization of the knower (*puruṣa*), an awakening that attains permanency in the state of “seedless” (*nirbīja*) *saṃādhi*. In Yoga philosophy, theory and practice form a

59 YB II.18.

60 SK 44 states that “by virtue (*dharma*) [one obtains] ascent to higher planes”, understood by Vācaspati Miśra to be heaven. Clearly this attainment is at variance with the goal of liberation, which can only be achieved through knowledge (*jñāna*).

61 But this is not to suggest that in Sāṃkhya knowledge is not a form of practice. In Yoga, however, practice does not end with knowledge.

continuum, are united, resulting in a transformation not only of consciousness but of our total psychophysical being. Yoga's message here seems simple enough yet can be so easily forgotten: experiences of insight need to be continuously cultivated through a deepening of practice and dispassion.

It has elsewhere been suggested⁶² that Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be read sequentially. Transformative insight, the foundation of liberation in Sāṃkhya, can function as a basis for restructuring and purifying one's actions through yogic discipline resulting in the gradual dissolution of all karmic influence. To be sure, in both systems, the application or practice of knowledge (*jñāna*) or discriminative discernment (*vivekakhyāti*) is the foundational key to success.⁶³ But Yoga's emphasis on a programme of ongoing purification including the cultivation of virtue and a deepening of dispassion – even toward knowledge itself – allows for a nonafflicted mode of activity. Yoga includes at the highest level a clarity of knowledge with the integrity of being and action, all within the context of an embodied state of freedom.⁶⁴

This paper suggests that Yoga need not contradict Sāṃkhya. Rather, the two systems may be understood as being complementary in that Yoga extends the meaning of purification and illumination of human identity to incorporate an enlightened mode of activity as well as knowledge. As such, Yoga philosophy can help to resolve some of the questions and tensions surrounding the nature of *karma* and past impressions (*samskāras*) that continue after knowledge takes place. From an examination of the final stages of purification in Yoga we need not conclude that liberative knowledge and virtuous activity are incompatible with one another, nor need we see detachment as an abandonment of the world and the human relational sphere. Sāṃkhya does not discuss or explore the potential for human life rooted in an epistemic clarity that distinguishes authentic being (*puruṣa*) from a prakṛtic or gunic identity. The Sāṃkhya system seems to rest content with a discriminating knowledge leading to a final isolation of

62 See CHAPPLE (1996).

63 Thus knowledge in Sāṃkhya, as in Yoga, can be seen as an authentic form of practice (*abhyāsa*) that transforms the mind and has soteriological import. This would seem to be the place given to knowledge (and Sāṃkhya) in the BG and the SK.

64 For a discussion on the implications for an embodied freedom in classical Yoga and a reconsideration of the meaning of “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) see WHICHER (1998).

puruṣa or absolute separation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The interpretation⁶⁵ of Yoga presented here resists the temptation to view Yoga merely within the framework of an isolationistic approach to liberation where the full potentialities for an embodied, purified, and illuminated self-identity are overly constrained within a radical and rigid dualistic metaphysical structure. It need not be the case that in classical Yoga liberation denotes a definitive incommensurability between spirit (*puruṣa*) and matter (*prakṛti*).

ABBREVIATIONS

BG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
SK	<i>Sāṃkhya-Kārikā</i> of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa
YB	<i>Yoga-Bhāṣya</i> of Vyāsa
YS	<i>Yoga-Sūtra</i> of Patañjali
YSS	<i>Yoga-Sāra-Saṃgraha</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu
YV	<i>Yoga-Vārttika</i> of Vijñāna Bhikṣu

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65 Our interpretation can be seen as walking the line between an historical and a hermeneutic-praxis (or systematic) orientation.

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