

The Transpersonal Psychology of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sûtra* (Book I: *Samâdhi*): A Translation and Interpretation

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The first book of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sûtra*, an ancient Indian meditation text (c. 200 B.C. - 200 A.D.), is given a new English translation and its psychological framework is found to be based on a fundamental duality in human consciousness — personal consciousness and transpersonal consciousness. These two structures of consciousness are similar to two hypothesized structures of consciousness in modern Western psychology — the "action" and "receptive" modes of cognition. These structures of consciousness are associated respectively with the automatization and de-automatization of cognitive processes. The key dynamic of meditation is found to be the self-manipulation of attention. The phenomenological changes in consciousness which result from meditation are discussed, including the nature of enlightenment, which is theorized to be the permanent establishment of transpersonal consciousness.

Intensive meditation has frequently been used to open realms of experience which transcend the ordinary bounds of personality, inducing cognitive states not found in usual waking consciousness. One of the oldest and most highly developed systems of meditation is that of classical *Yoga*. This is the system of meditation codified in the ancient Sanskrit text, the *Yoga-Sûtra* of Patañjali (c. 200 B.C. - 200 A.D.), the most important work in the *Yoga* tradition.

The *Yoga-Sûtra* (YS) is a collection of pithy, terse aphorisms (*sûtras*) expressing the main tenets of *Yoga* meditation practice. The goal of this practice is the transformation of human consciousness, and the YS is a guide to that transformation, constituting a map of internal experience. This ancient map describes a fundamental duality in consciousness — *personal consciousness* (PC) and *transpersonal consciousness* (TC). The characteristics of these two structures in consciousness as described by Patāñjali are similar to two hypothesized structures of consciousness in modern Western psychology — the "action" and "receptive" modes of cognition (Deikman, 1971). Changes in cognition resulting from yogic

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meditation described by Patañjali are similar to the effects of the de-automatization of human cognitive processes (Deikman, 1966b). Furthermore, the nature of enlightenment, as described in the YS, is similar to modern descriptions of egoless states transcending the ordinary bounds of personality (e.g., Goleman, 1980; Maslow, 1964). Therefore, the major focus of the present study, in addition to a new English translation, is to develop a conceptual framework from a transpersonal perspective for the psychological changes that occur as a result of Yoga meditation. Two previous translations of the YS using different psychological approaches have appeared in English, G. Coster's depth-psychological interpretation (1934), and R.S. Mishra's traditional Indian approach (1963).

The YS is divided up into four books or *padas*: (1) *Samâdhi*, "Coalescent-attention"; (2) *Sâdhana*, "Spiritual practice"; (3) *Vibhûti*, "Powers"; and (4) *Kaivalya*, "Liberation." The present study is a translation and interpretation of only the *sûtras* contained in Book I: *Samâdhi*; however, a general picture of the overall structure of the YS can also be gleaned.

Since the composition of the YS an indigenous Indian commentarial tradition has developed. Two classical Sanskrit commentaries quoted in the present study are the *Yoga-Bhâṣya* of Vyâsa (c. 650), and the subcommentary to the *Yoga-Bhâṣya*, the *Patañjala-Yoga-Sûtra-Bhâṣya-Vivaraṇa*, attributed to Śaṅkara (c. 800). The classical Indian format, in which a *sûtra* is first quoted (here in boldface type) and then given interpretive comments, is followed in the present translation and interpretation.

The Duality in Consciousness

Personal Consciousness and Transpersonal Consciousness

Sûtra 1: Now, an explication of Yoga.

The word *Yoga*, from the Sanskrit verbal root *yuj*, "to yoke," is commonly translated as "union," and is often explained and thought of as "a method . . . by which an individual may become united with the Godhead" (Prabhavananda and Isherwood, 1953, p. 11). However, an aspect of the process of "yoking" that is perhaps more indicative of the actual practice of Yoga is that of "control" or "restraint." Thus, Patañjali defines Yoga practice in the following manner:

Sûtra 2: Yoga is the restraint of the activities of citta.

The word *citta* is the perfect passive participle of the verbal root *cit*, "to fix the mind upon, take notice of, intend, design, be anxious about." It is one of two elements which, according to Patañjali, comprise human consciousness: (1) the *citta*, which I will refer to as "personal consciousness" (PC), and (2) the *draṣṭâ*, a

nominal form of the verbal root *dṛś*, “to see,” which I will refer to as “transpersonal consciousness” (TC). This fundamental duality in consciousness in the form of PC and TC is described and referred to throughout the YS, and forms the foundation for the entire practice of Yoga. Yoga is the restraint of the activities of PC or *citta*. Patañjali now describes what happens when PC is restrained:

Sūtra 3: Then transpersonal consciousness is established in its own form.

By restraining the activities of PC, TC is allowed to stand free of its association with PC. Patañjali now mentions what happens to TC when PC is not restrained:

Sūtra 4: At other times transpersonal consciousness is assimilated into the activities of personal consciousness.

Patañjali, in describing this fundamental duality in human consciousness, sees the two elements, PC and TC, as being separate structures within consciousness but intimately connected. We get some idea of the nature of PC by examining the nature of its activities:

Sūtra 5: The activities of personal consciousness are of five types, each of which are painful and nonpainful.

The five types are:

Sūtra 6: True conception, false conception, imagination, sleep, and memory.

What are true conceptions?

Sūtra 7: True conceptions are concepts based on direct perception, inference, or reliable testimony.

What is a false conception?

Sūtra 8: A false conception is an erroneous concept of an object, one which does not correspond to the object’s true form.

What is imagination?

Sūtra 9: Imagination is the activity devoid of any physical object, it follows as a consequence of perception or words.

What is sleep?

***Sūtra 10:* Sleep is the activity which has as its foundation the nonexistence of mental content.**

What is memory?

***Sūtra 11:* Memory is not letting go of an object which has been experienced.**

It is clear from the description of its activities that PC is that structure of consciousness within human beings which conceives, imagines, sleeps, and remembers. In contrast, TC is that structure of consciousness which *perceives*. Patañjali states in *sūtra* 2:20, "Transpersonal consciousness is sheer perception" (*dr̥ṣi-mātra*). TC is awareness itself. Even the thought "I am" requires awareness. And when there is no "self-awareness," no "I am," or reflexivity, as in the case of a man so involved in a particular task that he "forgets himself," there is still awareness, there is still perception. It is this pure awareness, or sheer perception — awareness devoid of "self" awareness, which Patañjali identifies as transpersonal consciousness. When personal consciousness is busy in activity, conceiving (either rightly or wrongly), imagining, sleeping, or remembering, transpersonal consciousness becomes covered-up or assimilated into this activity.

The Action and Receptive Modes

Patañjali is not the only scholar who has discerned a duality within consciousness. A fundamental duality in human consciousness has been widely discussed in modern times by various theorists (see Ornstein, 1972; Pollio, 1979). The duality of consciousness as described by A.J. Deikman (1971) is especially helpful in understanding the duality of consciousness outlined in the *Yoga-Sūtra*. Deikman describes human consciousness, as well as various physiological correlates, as being split into two modes of functioning — the "action" mode, and the "receptive" mode. He theorizes that the action mode begins to develop at birth as the infant interacts with the environment. The infant begins to focus attention and distinguish objects, and its visual interest becomes object-directed. As the child grows older, thinking develops in conjunction with perception which becomes oriented around manipulating objects, gaining knowledge, self-gratification, and avoiding pain. The action mode reaches its full development in the adult contending with problems, discriminating, analyzing, focusing on future goals, and generally struggling to direct and control the environment. The action mode is the "normal" mode for adults, the ordinary waking state of consciousness, and generally corresponds to Patañjali's PC. The characteristics of this standard mode of functioning are summarized by Deikman (1971, p. 481)

as the mode used for manipulation of the environment and in the striving for personal goals; an EEG showing beta waves, heightened baseline muscle tension, focal attention, objective logical thinking, sharp perceptual boundaries, and the dominance of conceptual activity over sensory intake.

The opposite of the action mode is the receptive mode. According to Deikman, "the receptive mode is a state organized around intake of the environment rather than manipulation" (1971, p. 481). The receptive mode in its pure state is the consciousness of the newborn: not thinking, not conceiving, not imagining, not verbalizing, not remembering—a state of openness to the world—awareness itself. It is the awareness which serves as the substratum of all subsequent mental activity. The receptive mode is the precursor and ground from which the action mode grows. It is the awareness behind thinking and generally corresponds to Patañjali's TC. According to Deikman the characteristics of the receptive mode include a lack of self-awareness and therefore an absence of striving for personal goals; and EEG showing alpha waves, decreased baseline muscle tension, diffuse attending, paralogical thinking, decreased perceptual boundaries, and a dominance of sensory intake over conceptual activity.

Automatization or Intentionality

The primitive cognitive state of the receptive mode postulated for the infant is thought to occur less, and in an unpure form, as the individual matures, to the point where it becomes a rare occurrence in the normal adult, if it occurs at all. This is the result of the learning process taking place in which the numerous, vivid, primitively organized stimuli of childhood cognition become progressively organized toward a high level of differentiation based on formal characteristics. The learning process takes place at the expense of the vividness and variability of sensory stimuli, and involves the "automatization" of cognitive processes. The individual begins to cognize, respond to, and operate in the world in an automatic "programmed" fashion (Broadbent, 1977; Bruner, 1957; Hartmann, 1958; Lunzer, 1979). As a person repeatedly cognizes the same external stimulus, cognitive processes become divested of the conscious attention which accompanied them at an earlier stage of development.

The advantages of automatization are obvious. By eliminating the details and intermediate steps of conscious attention an enormous economy of effort in cognitive tasks can be achieved, thus freeing attention for other purposes. The problem, however, is that automatization of cognitive processes imposes a preset structure and meaningfulness on sensory data. Sokolov, for example (1960), has suggested that we create a "structural model" of the external world within our nervous system, and "filter" sensory input through it, thereby reducing the amount and variability of sense data, while at the same time instantaneously generating form, meaning, and content. Husserl (1931) called this perceptual process of generating form, meaning, and content, "intentionality."

Intentionality is the philosophical term used to indicate the automatization of cognitive processes, the imposition of preset structures upon raw stimuli or the restructuring of sensory stimuli to fit preset forms and meanings.

Automatization of cognitive processes or intentionality is also found in the Yoga tradition in the form of *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*. The word *saṃskāra* is defined by Monier-Williams (1899/1963) as a "mental impression or recollection, impression on the mind of acts done." *Vāsanā* is defined as "the impression of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind, the present consciousness of past perceptions, knowledge derived from memory." According to Feuerstein (1980, p. 67), "*saṃskāras* are formed continuously as a result of the individual's world experience." He refers to them as "subliminal-activators" because they "power the machinery of consciousness." There is a causal relationship between *saṃskāras* and the activities of PC. In 1:5 of the *Yoga-Bhāṣya*, Vyāsa explains that "The activities of personal consciousness produce subliminal-activators of the same type, and likewise, the subliminal-activators produce the activities of personal consciousness." Any experience will produce a mental impression or subliminal-activator, which is stored in subconscious memory or the *āśaya*, "receptacle," as Patañjali calls it. According to Vyāsa, subliminal-activators tend to produce conscious experiences of a similar nature to the experiences which produced the subliminal-activators. This means that the effects of past experience are automatically structured into present experience. Furthermore, according to Feuerstein, subliminal-activators "are organized into configurations, known as *vāsanās* or subliminal 'traces' or 'traits,' which partly manifest in the idiosyncracies of the individual." Also, he cites "habituation" as "appropriate in describing the concept of *vāsanā*" (1980, pp. 67-68). Thus, we see in *saṃskāras* the memory traces which result from conscious experience, and in *vāsanās*, the configurations of these memory traces which are organized into our perceptual category systems, in short, an automatized, intentionalized "model" of the world.

De-automatization of Cognitive Processes

The occurrence of the receptive mode in adults requires the turning-off or "short-circuiting" of the automatic functioning of the action mode. Deikman refers to this de-intentionalizing process as the "de-automatization of the psychological structures that organize, limit, select, and interpret perceptual stimuli" (1966b, p. 329). The shift, through de-automatization, from the normal action mode to the receptive mode is experienced as a perceptual expansion which is characterized by a "richness and vividness so that the natural world is seen in a 'fresh' state" (Deikman, 1966a, p. 113). People having this experience report seeing the world as if for the first time, free of the conditioning effects of automatization, as if both themselves and the world around them had been "made new." Other characteristics of this experience include a detachment from

ego, feelings of timelessness or slowed time, ecstasy, dissolution of boundaries between self, others, and the world, and feelings of profound insight, illumination, or truth (Ludwig, 1966). Such "mystical" experiences are not confined to mystics and yogis, ordinary people report having them as well:

The thing happened one summer afternoon, on the school cricket field, waiting my turn to bat. I was thinking about nothing in particular, merely enjoying the pleasures of mid-summer idleness. Suddenly, and without warning, something invisible seemed to be drawn across the sky, transforming the world about me into a kind of tent of concentrated and enhanced significance. What had been merely an outside became an inside. The objective was somehow transformed into a completely subjective fact, which was experienced as "mine," but on a level where the word had no meaning; for "I" was no longer the familiar ego. Nothing more can be said about the experience, it brought no accession of knowledge about anything except, very obscurely, the knower and his way of knowing. [experience of a fifteen year-old boy recalled later in life, from Happold, 1963, p. 130]

An experience of the receptive mode is not contingent upon physical passivity, an active relationship with the environment often takes place (Deikman, 1971, p. 482). Indeed, a common type of receptive mode experience occurring to highly-trained athletes has been called the "flow experience":

There is a common experiential state which is present in various forms of play . . . It is the state in which action follows upon action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. We experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment: between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future . . . A person in flow does not operate with a dualistic perspective: he is very aware of his actions, but not of the awareness itself . . . The moment awareness is split so as to perceive the activity from "outside," the flow is interrupted . . . These interruptions occur when questions flash through the actor's mind such as "am I doing well?" or "what am I doing here?" or "should I be doing this?" When one is in a flow episode these questions simply do not come to mind . . . Self-forgetfulness does *not* mean, however, that in flow a person loses touch with his or her own physical reality . . . What is usually lost in flow is not the awareness of one's body or of one's functions, but only the *self-construct*, the intermediary which one learns to interpose between stimulus and response . . . Ideally, flow is the result of pure involvement, without any consideration about results. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1979, pp. 63-65)

Transpersonal Consciousness

Mental contents and processes normally occur imbued with the effects of automatization or intentionality. Identification with mental contents and processes results in the creation and experience of a "self-construct" or ego that is dictated by these conditioning factors. Once the effects of automatization or intentionality are eliminated, so is the identification with the mental contents, which in turn brings about the transcendence of the self-construct or ego. This is transpersonal consciousness. In this state of egolessness an individual can commit his or her entire attention and conscious awareness to whatever experience is presently at hand. No thoughts of past or future dominate consciousness. Memories still exist but would not be dwelt upon. Present experience fills consciousness such

that an individual “becomes” the experience. In TC all extraneous thought is eliminated as well as the conditioned effects of intentionality. Conditioned habits have been erased as determinants of behavior, and all action flows spontaneously. Action is performed in a pure state of involvement merely for the joy of the doing itself. Activity is effective, seemingly effortless, extratemporal, and autofulfilling (Goleman, 1980, pp. 145-150; Maslow, 1964, pp. 59-68). Once the duality of consciousness has been eliminated through the removal of the ego, cognition takes on a unitary quality, becoming more perceptual and intuitional, rather than conceptual. Relationships are cognized as gestalts rather than conceptually analyzed. There is no self-awareness and therefore no “I” or “mine” (Le Shan, 1976, pp. 77-78).

In the *Yoga-Sūtra*, Patañjali describes the state of transpersonal consciousness as *kaivalya*, a derivative of the word *kevala*, “alone.” In *sūtra* 2:25 he speaks of the “disappearance-of-the-union” (*samyogābhāva*) of TC and PC as *dṛśeḥ kaivalyam* or “the aloneness of perception,” which we may assume to be identical with the *dṛśi-mātra* or “sheer perception” of *sūtra* 2:20. When TC is allowed to stand free from its assimilation by PC it stands in its *svarūpa* (YS 1:3) “own-form” or “by itself.” The achievement of the state of “aloneness” of TC is accomplished by the restraint of the activities of PC (YS 1:2). Patañjali now goes on to describe the means for the restraint of PC.

Practice and Nonattachment

***Sūtra* 12: Personal consciousness is restrained by practice and non-attachment.**

***Sūtra* 13: Practice is the effort for stillness in personal consciousness.**

***Sūtra* 14: Only when practiced continuously and with dedication for a long time, is it firmly grounded.**

Śaṅkara identifies “practice” as the “eight limbs” of Yoga (see Leggett trans., 1981, p. 68). The eight limbs or components of Yoga practice are listed in *sūtra* 2:29. They are self-control (*yama*), fixed-observance (*niyama*), posture (*āsana*), breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*), abstraction (*pratyāhāra*), fixed-attention (*dhāraṇā*), continuous-attention (*dhyāna*), and coalescent-attention (*samādhi*).

“Self-control” (*yama*) is a vow containing five elements: nonviolence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), nontheft (*asteya*), nonsexuality (*brahmacarya*), and nonpossessiveness (*aparigrahā*). This vow is not only of act, but also, and perhaps more importantly, of thought. The goal is the transformation of consciousness from “grasping” PC to “nonattached” TC. Taking a vow of self-control serves to alter the goals of activity toward the desired direction and away from involvement in ego construction and gratification. Self-control serves as a de-automatizing exercise by starving the normal desires of adult life.

The second limb, *niyama*, "fixed-observance," involves the practice of five activities: physical and mental purity (*śauca*), contentment (*saṁtoṣa*), austerity (*tapas*), recitation of sacred texts (*svadhyāya*), and contemplation of God (*īśvara-praṇidhāna*). "Physical purity" involves dietary restrictions and physical cleanliness. "Mental purity" is the abandonment of thoughts of lust, anger, greed, jealousy, and so on, while maintaining benevolent thoughts of peace and compassion. "Contentment" is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of all the vicissitudes of daily life. "Austerity" involves such practices as fasting, longterm isolation, exposure to the elements in wilderness situations, or maintaining silence. "Recitation of sacred texts" is the monotonous repetition of sacred hymns or *mantras* for long periods of time. "Contemplation of God" is the immanent experience of God in meditation and will be discussed at length later.

The third limb, *āsana*, "posture," involves the use of various physical exercises which are based on the principle that changes in consciousness can be effected by changes in the physical body. An entire tradition has developed around this practice, known as *Hatha-Yoga*.

The fourth limb, *prāṇāyāma*, "breath-control," involves various types of breathing exercises, including holding the breath either after inhalation or exhalation, breathing through alternate nostrils, and rapid breathing in a carefully controlled practice of hyperventilation.

The fifth limb, *pratyāhāra*, "abstraction," is the removal or withdrawal of senses from their normal objects. This occurs automatically as a result of the restraint of the attention of PC. "So when personal consciousness is restrained, the senses are restrained" (*Yoga-Bhāṣya* 2:54). As will be seen in the last three limbs of Yoga practice, the restraint of the activities of PC involves limiting attention to a single object. The senses, following the attention of PC, are also limited to this single object and are removed from all other objects.

The sixth limb, *dhāraṇā*, "fixed-attention," is defined by Patañjali as "binding personal consciousness to a particular place" (YS 3:1). This involves holding the attention of PC on a certain object. The object may be a spot on or within the body, a visual image in the mind, a particular sound either verbalized, thought silently, or heard, the sight of an external object, or any object whatsoever, so long as it is suitable for meditation, meaning conducive to holding the attention of PC without promoting intentionality. Fixed-attention when practiced correctly will be free from intentionality; it is the holding of the attention on a particular spot without intending to perceive anything in particular at that spot. For example, if the object of the fixed-attention is a sound repeated silently in the mind, there is no effort made to maintain the sound in any particular form or speed of repetition. The sound is allowed to modulate freely and is not focused or structured in any way. Yet the attention of PC is kept on the sound, and is brought back to the sound when it wanders away to some other object.

The seventh limb, *dhyâna*, "continuous-attention," is defined by Patañjali as "the unbroken continuity of mental content in that place" (YS 3:2). This is the successful unbroken holding of attention on the object of the fixed-attention. Continuous-attention differs from fixed-attention in that there is no wandering away from the object.

The eighth and final limb, *samâdhi*, "coalescent-attention," is defined by Patañjali as "this same object only appearing, as if free of all self-consciousness" (YS 3:3; see *svârûpaśunyam*, Das, 1938, p. 247). *Samâdhi* is awareness of some object, either external or internal, *without self-awareness*. It is pure perception without the ego involvement of "someone" perceiving. *Samâdhi* or coalescent-attention is TC free of its assimilation by PC, and the *fusing* of consciousness with the object of attention. The last three limbs, *dhâraṇâ*, *dhyâna*, and *samâdhi*, together comprise yogic meditation, which we see has as its key dynamic the self-manipulation of attention. Patañjali now goes on to describe "nonattachment."

Sûtra 15: Nonattachment is self-mastery-consciousness, one in which there is no craving for any object either seen or heard.

Nonattachment is a state of consciousness. "Self-mastery" means transcending PC. PC is that structure of consciousness which desires and craves objects and gratification. By transcending PC one transcends craving. Patañjali lists nonattachment as a means for restraining PC because nonattachment enhances practice. Practice in itself will instill in consciousness a degree of nonattachment. This nonattachment in turn makes subsequent practice easier and more successful, which in turn makes further nonattachment easier and more complete, and so on. How complete can this nonattachment become?

Sûtra 16: Nonattachment is at the highest degree when, as a result of knowledge of *puruṣa*, there is no craving for qualities.

The word *puruṣa*, "person," is used by Patañjali as a synonym for *draṣṭâ* or TC, and carries the meaning of the "Higher Self," as opposed to the "lower self" which is PC or *citta*. Nonattachment reaches its highest point when as a result of knowledge of the Higher Self or TC there is no craving for "qualities" (*guṇas*). In a state of "sheer perception" there is no intentionality, therefore there are no distinctions made, no meanings attributed, no "beautiful" or "ugly," no "desirable" or "undesirable," no "good" or "bad." Nonattachment is complete when craving for qualities has disappeared. There is a passage in the *Bhagavadgîtâ* which illustrates this state of consciousness: "That yogi is said to be united who is the same in perceiving dirt, stone, or gold" (*Bhagavadgîtâ* 6:8).

The Distinguisher and the Other

Sūtra 17: *Samprajñātaḥ* is the result of awareness being accompanied by intentionality, reflexivity, sense-pleasure, and ego.

The word *samprajñātaḥ*, “the Distinguisher,” is used by Patañjali as a synonym for *citta* or PC. The Distinguisher or PC arises out of pure awareness or TC as a result of awareness being accompanied by intentionality (*vitarka*), reflexivity (*vicāra*), sense-pleasure (*ānanda*), and ego (*asmitā*). Patañjali now goes on to describe TC or what he calls “the Other.”

Sūtra 18: The Other is a remnant of subliminal-activators preceded by the repetition of the mental content of cessation.

“The Other” referred to is the permanently established state of TC, and “the repetition of the mental content of cessation” refers to the repeated cessation of the activities of PC in the practice of meditation, which, in the practice of Yoga would precede the permanent establishment of TC. In the permanent state of TC the individual has completely subjugated the activities of PC. Therefore nonattachment is complete, and there is no longer any craving for any experience in phenomenal existence, yet the individual remains in the world. This is the result of *saṃskāras*. The subliminal-activators of conscious experience cause further conscious experience and thus maintain TC in the person until the death of the body. As such, TC is a “remnant of subliminal-activators.” Normally, upon destruction of the body (unless the yogi becomes a *prakṛtilaya*), awareness of the world ceases, and therefore TC ceases as well (in Buddhism this is known as the transition from *nirvāṇa* to *parinirvāṇa*). Patañjali describes another means by which TC is maintained:

Sūtra 19: The mental content of phenomenal existence is the cause for the *videhas* and the *prakṛtilayas*.

The *videhas*, “bodiless ones,” are a class of gods (Das, 1938, p. 197). The *prakṛtilayas*, “those merged into the World Ground,” are a class of yogis who have merged their consciousness into the subtle strata of phenomenal existence (see *bhavaḥpratyayaḥ*, Das, p. 163). According to tradition, these two groups are beings who do not possess human bodies and, either by nature (in the case of the *videhas*), or by practice (in the case of the *prakṛtilayas*), have completely restrained the activities of PC, hence they are emancipated, yet they maintain “the mental content of phenomenal existence,” that is, awareness of the world, and therefore TC. Patañjali now lists the means for the establishment of TC for others:

Sūtra 20: For others it is preceded by faith, vigor, memory of tradition, coalescent-attention, and wisdom.

These are the requirements for the establishment of TC through the practice of Yoga. Practitioners must have faith and confidence (*śraddhā*) in their methods and teacher. They must pursue the goal with vigor and energy (*vīrya*). They must remember the teachings of the *guru* and the sacred tradition (*smṛiti*). And they must experience coalescent-attention (*samādhi*) in meditation, and thereby gain wisdom (*prajñā*). Patañjali goes on to describe the type of person who will be most successful in reaching the goal:

Sūtra 21: For those whose zeal is intensely strong the establishment of transpersonal consciousness is near at hand.

Sūtra 22: Therefore, also, the distinction is made on account of mild, medium, and intense zeal.

According to Patañjali, the more ardently a practitioner pursues the goal the swifter will progress ensue. For those whose zeal is intense the establishment of TC is “near at hand.” Therefore, yogis may be classified according to the intensity of their zeal – mild, medium, and intense.

The Nature of God

In the previous *sūtras* we saw that the establishment of TC is preceded by “faith, vigor, memory of tradition, coalescent-attention, and wisdom.” Patañjali now mentions another method by which TC can be established:

Sūtra 23: Or by *īśvara-praṇidhāna*.

The word *īśvara*, “Lord, God, the Supreme Being,” is one intimately tied to the theistic traditions of India which frequently refer to a personal deity possessing anthropomorphic qualities (although always ultimately connected with the absolute ground, *brahman*), active in the emancipation of devotees, or in the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world. The term *praṇidhāna*, “respectful conduct, attention paid to, profound religious meditation, abstract contemplation of,” is sometimes translated as “devotion” (see Leggett trans., 1981, p. 83). As such, the term *īśvara-praṇidhāna* may be rendered as “devotion to God,” and on account of this, Patañjali is often considered to be a theist. However, it seems evident that Patañjali uses the term in a quite different sense, that is, God is taken to be an element of human consciousness. From his description of *īśvara* (*sūtras* 24-26), and his description of *praṇidhāna* (*sūtras* 27-29), it appears likely that Patañjali’s concept of God is closely related to the consciousness-theistic concepts, that is, TC (*ātman*) = *brahman* concepts found

in a continuous tradition in the *Upaniṣadic* literature dating from periods before and after Patañjali's time. For example:

Kena-Upaniṣad (c. 800-600 B.C.):

1:2. It is the Ear of the Ear, Mind of the Mind, the Tongue of the Tongue (Speech of the Speech), and also the Life of the Life and the Eye of the Eye. Having abandoned the sense of self or "I-ness" in these and rising above sense-life, the wise become immortal.

1:4. What speech cannot reveal, but which reveals speech, know That alone as *Brahman* and not this, that people worship here.

1:5. What one cannot feel with the mind, but because of which they say that the mind feels, know That alone as *Brahman* and not this, which people do worship here.

1:6. What cannot be seen by the eye, but by which the eyes are able to see, know That alone as *Brahman* and not this, which people do worship here. (Chinmayananda trans., 1952)

Kaivalya-Upaniṣad (c. 200-600 A.D.):

1:16. That which is the Supreme *Brahman*, the Self in all, the ample support of the Universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal; That thou alone art, thou alone art That.

1:17. "That which illumines the worlds of relative experiences lived in the waking, dream, and profound sleep condition, that *Brahman* am I." Realizing thus, one is liberated from all shackles.

1:18. All that constitute the enjoyable, the enjoyer, and the enjoyment in the three realms, different from them all, I, the witness, the Ever-Auspicious pure consciousness. (Chinmayananda trans., n.d.)

An analysis of Patañjali's description of *īśvara* reveals a closely related concept of God.

Sūtra 24: *Īśvara* is an individual *puruṣa* untouched by afflictions, actions, results, or deposits.

Puruṣa is TC or the Higher Self. The word "individual," (*viśeṣa*), may also be translated as "special," and is so translated by those who follow the commentary of Vyāsa in considering Patañjali to be a theist (Leggett, 1981, p. 83; Woods, 1914/1966, p. 49). However, there is no clearly demonstrable evidence within the YS itself to support this position, and all later interpretations of Patañjali as a theist are based on Vyāsa's interpretation. Shekhawat (1979, pp. 48-49) concluded:

Patañjali nowhere suggests in his *sūtras* that he conceives of *īśvara* as an Almighty, Omnipotent, Creator of Nature. The mistake committed was that the meaning was already fixed for the term *īśvara* and its occurrence in the *sūtras* was therefore considered proof of their being theistic. This is, however, merely a fallacious appraisal fancied only by the interpreters so as to smuggle theology in.

Feuerstein (1980, p. 19) agrees that Patañjali "carefully demarcates" *īśvara* "from its popular usage in the sense of 'creator.'" Thus, judging from the *Yoga-Sūtra* itself, one cannot prove that Patañjali was a theist, and indeed the evidence points to the conclusion that Patañjali considered *any* individual consciousness "untouched by afflictions, actions, results, or deposits" to be *īśvara*.

The “afflictions” (*kleśas*) referred to in this *sūtra* are five causes of suffering in life — ignorance (*avidyā*), ego (*asmitā*), liking (*rāga*), disliking (*dveṣā*), and clinging (*abhiniveśa*; YS 2:3). “Ignorance” refers to lack of spiritual wisdom and specifically to lack of experience of TC (YS 2:5). This implies that ordinarily a person never experiences TC separate from its assimilation in the activities of PC. The “ego” is the self-construct produced by identification with mental contents, controlled by the conditioning received through experience of the world (YS 2:6). “Liking” and “disliking” are discriminations made by PC in its pursuit of “qualities” (*guṇas*), and results from pleasurable and unpleasurable experiences (YS 2:7-8). “Clinging” is attachment to objects, persons, and life in the world (YS 2:9). All of these afflictions have as a root cause the lack of experience of TC (YS 2:4). They cause suffering in life because they are constantly creating dichotomies: self-other, mine-yours, us-them, right-wrong, winner-loser, and, as a result, lead to the creation of pleasure-pain, and happiness-unhappiness. By creating one half of a dichotomy one automatically creates its opposite. Thus, according to the tradition, the creation of happiness is the creation of suffering. Therefore, even though these distinctions appear to be the cause of happiness in life, they are ultimately considered to be the causes of suffering, and are therefore to be avoided. Consciousness “untouched by afflictions” would be a person established in TC, free of craving for “qualities,” and therefore freed from unhappiness and suffering.

The “actions” (*karma*) mentioned in this *sūtra* are any actions performed by the individual. Consciousness remains “untouched” by actions when maintaining the absence of ego. The ego is the structure of consciousness which claims the status of the “Doer” of action. It claims the credit for action well done, and ego bears the responsibility for inappropriate or ill-performed action. In the state of TC, consciousness “fuses” with the experience and “becomes” the action. Therefore consciousness does not “own” the action, but “is” the action. Without ownership there is no responsibility and no credit, and thus, consciousness is removed from the “results” of action as well. In the absence of ego an action is performed in a kind of childlike innocence with consciousness “untouched” by that action.

The “deposits” referred to are the accumulated *samskāras* and *vāsanās* which form the conditioning or automatization of the cognitive processes. A person in TC has de-automatized this system and is thus “untouched by deposits.” Clearly this *sūtra* describes the state of TC of an “emancipated” person — a person who has completely controlled the activities of PC. In the next *sūtra* Patañjali continues his description of *īśvara*:

***Sūtra 25:* In *īśvara* the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed.**

Here Patañjali describes *īśvara* as omniscient. This would seem to remove *īśvara* out of the realm of human consciousness and place it squarely in the role

of Supreme Being. However, according to Patañjali, not only omniscience, but also omnipotence is within the sphere of human consciousness. "One who perceives nothing but the difference between personal consciousness and transpersonal consciousness possesses authority over all forms of existence, and omniscience" (YS 3:49). Nearly the entire third book of the YS is a description of the various supernatural powers (*siddhis*) obtained by the yogi (e.g., walking on water, flying through the air) as a result of the practice of *saṃyama* "restraint." Judging from the supernatural contents found in the third book of the YS, it is clear that Patañjali attributes most if not all the usual characteristics of a Supreme Being to the consciousness of the emancipated yogi. In further describing *īśvara* he states:

Sūtra 26: *īśvara* was also the teacher of the ancients because it is not limited by time.

īśvara is thus the ultimate *guru* or spiritual teacher, not only in present time, but also of the most ancient and renowned yogis of the past. Available to all persons in all times, the pure state of TC is the *guru* which instructs by its sheer being. TC itself is the ultimate teacher and provider of wisdom (*prajñā*). Patañjali now goes on in his discourse to describe *praṇidhāna* or "contemplation" of *īśvara*:

Sūtra 27: The sound-expression of *īśvara* is the *praṇava*.

Contemplation of *īśvara* involves the use of a particular sound which is thought to embody in its vibratory quality the essence of that which it expresses (Taimni, 1961, p. 63). This sound is called a *mantra*, and in the case of *īśvara*, it is the syllable OM, known as the *praṇava*. Patañjali next describes how this syllable is employed:

Sūtra 28: The syllable is repeated, meditation has it as its object.

The syllable OM is repeated over and over by the yogi, either verbally, or thought silently in the mind. In this practice, the syllable OM is made the object of fixed-attention (*dhāraṇā*), continuous-attention (*dhyaṇa*), and coalescent-attention (*samādhi*). In coalescent-attention, consciousness fuses with the object of attention and becomes one with the object, which in this case is the sound-expression of *īśvara*, which is supposed to embody the essence of *īśvara*; thus the consciousness of the yogi is merging with or "becoming" *īśvara*. What does this transformation result in?

Sûtra 29: From this, consciousness of one's inner Self is attained, as well as the removal of impediments.

"Consciousness of one's inner Self" (*pratyak-cetanâ*), refers to the state of TC. By fusing with *îśvara*, consciousness of one's inner Self is attained. This implies that the inner Self or TC is *îśvara*. Thus, for Patañjali, *îśvara* is not a transcendent God, but an immanent experience of one's own seat of consciousness. In the state of TC, PC is restrained. Therefore, "impediments" in consciousness associated with the agitation of PC are removed. Patañjali lists the impediments:

Sûtra 30: The impediments are agitations of personal consciousness: illness, apathy, doubt, inattentiveness, laziness, intemperance, faulty perception, inability to attain any degree of deep meditation, and unsteadiness.

We see from Patañjali's descriptions of *îśvara* and *pranîdhâna* that for him, God is not the deity of popular religion, but an immanent experience which transcends self-awareness and the conditioned psychosomatic complexes which so profoundly color and shape human consciousness. It is probable that Patañjali's description of *îśvara*, especially in its similarity to the consciousness-theistic concepts found in the *Upaniṣads*, was intended as a radical demythologizing of God appropriate for those persons engaged in the practice of classical Yoga. However, in transferring divinity from a Supreme Deity to human consciousness, particularly the power of divinity in the form of the *siddhis*, Patañjali may have been merely substituting a mythology of consciousness for a mythology of God.

Restraint of Personal Consciousness

The Objects of Meditation

We saw in the previous *sûtra* that PC is subject to various "impediments" or "agitations." These agitations, illness, apathy, doubt, and so on, are characterized by certain accompanying symptoms:

Sûtra 31: Accompanying the agitations are pain, depression, trembling of the body, and irregular breathing.

These symptoms are familiar in psychotherapy and medical practice and are frequently attributed to mental disturbances. Patañjali now puts forward his prescription for their alleviation:

Sûtra 32: There should be repetition of a single thing to ward them off.

“Repetition of a single thing” refers to the repeated cognition of a specific stimulation. This is *dhâranâ* or fixed-attention. The stimulation is held fixed in the attention through constant repeated cognition, such as repeating the syllable OM over and over. This type of repetition is something found in nearly all meditation traditions (Naranjo and Ornstein, 1971, p. 145). However, the object of meditation, that “thing” which is repeatedly cognized, varies widely, and may involve a particular thought, a specific auditory or visual stimulus, repetition of a specific physical movement, or a physiological process, such as breathing. Patañjali provides a list of those things which may be found useful as objects of meditation:

Sûtra 33: Personal consciousness becomes tranquil by the cultivation of friendliness toward the happy, compassion toward the suffering, happiness toward the virtuous, and indifference toward the vile.

Patañjali is here referring to the use of a thought as the object of meditation. This type of meditation is not done in isolation, but refers to all the various situations that arise in the yogi’s relationships with other people. For example, in the situation of interacting with happy people, the yogi repeats the thought of “friendliness” in the mind, making it the object of fixed-attention, eventually progressing to continuous-attention and coalescent-attention in which the yogi experiences nothing but friendliness in contact with happy people, with no self-consciousness (ego). The same method can be followed with compassion toward the suffering, happiness toward the virtuous, and indifference toward the vile. What else may be meditated upon?

Sûtra 34: Or by the expiration and retention of breath.

Patañjali is here referring to breath meditation. In this meditation the yogi places the attention of PC on the breath, sometimes counting exhalations, or sometimes placing the attention on the retention of breath in a form of *prânâyâma*. Besides being a practice within classical Yoga, breath meditation is also practiced in other meditation traditions such as Theravada Buddhism (Thera, 1962), and Zen Buddhism (Kapleau, 1965). Patañjali continues with his list of meditation objects:

Sûtra 35: Or the cognition of a sense stimulus arises which brings personal consciousness to fixity.

Here Patañjali mentions that the yogi may meditate on the cognition of an external sense stimulus. This cognition is usually associated with the sight of a physical object or the hearing of a sound. Note that Patañjali prescribes not meditation on the sense stimulus itself, but on the *cognition* of the sense stimu-

lus. The object of the meditation is the cognitive and perceptual process itself, and in this meditation the yogi explores the many varied ways a particular sense stimulus may be perceived and cognized. In theory this process is quite similar to the *variational method* employed in *phenomenological reductions* in Western phenomenological philosophy (see Ihde, 1979). The yogi “possibilizes” a phenomenon thereby exploring the mechanics of intentionality and the role that intentionality plays in the cognitive process. In phenomenological terms, the yogi, through phenomenological reduction in meditation, frees him or herself from “sedimentations” (*saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*), while simultaneously mastering the mechanics of intentionality, thereby mastering the mechanics of phenomenological deconstruction and reconstruction, a process central to Hindu cosmological theories. In Hindu cosmology phenomenological construction is the result of perception and cognition, with consciousness itself being the initiator of all creation. Sense stimuli commonly used for this type of meditation are multi-stable phenomena known as *yantras*. These ancient and sophisticated forerunners of the Necker cube are perceptually dynamic geometrical figures and sacred symbols representing Hindu deities and metaphysical concepts. An example of this is the ancient *Śrī Yantra* (Figure 1).

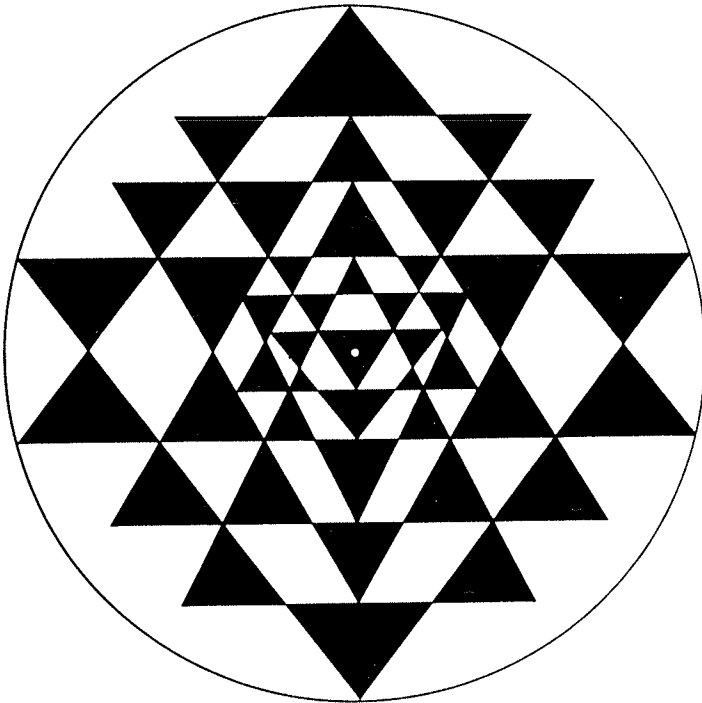


Figure 1: Śrī Yantra.

This particular *yantra* is an abstract representation of the cosmological theory of *Saiva-Sakta* religion. It is a demonstration of how the passage from the formlessness of the World Ground, to phenomenal form, and back to the formless takes place. In this cosmology, *Śiva* (TC) and *Sakti* (the World Ground) join to produce the *bindu*, the point which rests at the center of the *Śrī Yantra*. This is the primordial seed of the universe. From this oneness, the dualistic and antagonistic principles of life emanate and differentiate themselves from the original wholeness of *Śiva-Sakti*, only to be then drawn back into the state of pristine oneness in the single point. This is the journey that the yogi makes by meditating on the cognitive and perceptual process and how it produces intentionality and thereby duality (PC) out of unity. Upon "merging" with the *yantra* (achieving coalescent-attention), the intentionality and duality of normal consciousness are transcended and the yogi attains the wisdom (*prajñā*) inherent in the experience of oneness. To return to oneness is to be emancipated from personal consciousness. The similarity of theory and method in phenomenological reduction and yogic meditation has been noted twice before by other authors (Puligandla, 1970; Sinari, 1965).

Other sensory stimuli that may be meditated upon can vary widely, for example, a candle flame or any fire, any ordinary physical object (Deikman, 1966a, used a vase for his experiments), a particular scenic landscape, a naturally occurring sound such as water flowing in a stream, wind in the trees, the sounds of animals, or human-made sounds such as chanting, rhythmic drumming, or other types of music. Meditation may be performed on the cognition of any of these sensory stimuli.

Sūtra 36: Or the sorrowless, celestial ones.

This is meditation on sorrowless, celestial beings. In Hinduism various deities would serve this purpose, and in Buddhism, this purpose would be served by the *bodhisattvas*. One of these celestial beings is visualized in the mind, and is made the focus of the yogi's meditation, the yogi eventually merging with it in *samādhi*. This type of visualization meditation is widely practiced in Tantric Buddhism (Lati Rinbochay, Denma Lōcho Rinbochay, Zahler, and Hopkins, 1983). Also, in Hinduism, meditation on deities is carried out through the use of *bīja-mantras*. These are the sound-expressions of the deities used exactly as in the method of repetition in *īśvara-praṇidhāna*. Each deity has its own *mantra*. Some examples are: *Viṣṇu* = *Vam̐*; *Brahmā* = *Lam̐*; *Kṛṣṇa* = *Klīm̐*; *Kalī* = *Krīm̐*; *Laksmī* = *Śrīm̐*; and *Durga* = *Dūm̐*. Each deity can be considered the embodiment of the yogi's thought-form, a manifestation of his or her own consciousness.

Sūtra 37: Or personal consciousness has for an object one who is free from attachment.

This is meditation upon an emancipated person or saint. Frequently this will be the yogi's own *guru*, but could be any enlightened person known to the yogi.

Again, this is a process of visualization where an image of the emancipated person in the mind of the yogi is made the object of fixed-attention, continuous-attention, and coalescent-attention. In the last stage, the yogi, in losing self-awareness, “merges” with the object of the meditation, in effect, “becoming one” with the *guru* or saint.

***Sûtra 38:* Or meditation which has as its object the cognition occurring in the state of dreaming or sleeping.**

Yogis can also use the cognition occurring in the states of dreaming or sleeping as the object of meditation. In the sleep state they do not lose consciousness while sleeping, in effect, they meditate instead of sleep. According to tradition, an accomplished yogi is able to do this all night, every night, and thus never become unconscious. This is the restraint of the sleeping activity of PC. Yogis practicing this meditation in the dream state are aware that they are dreaming, and meditate on the cognition occurring in the dream. In this practice, an advanced yogi also has control of the content of the dream and can experience anything which might be desired with the same or greater vividness of ordinary dreams.

***Sûtra 39:* Or by meditation of one’s choice.**

Anything may be used as a focus for meditation, so long as it is suitable to that particular yogi. However, meditating on certain prescribed objects will produce, according to Patañjali, predetermined results. These results of meditation are the *siddhis* or supernormal powers mentioned above. These are fully defined in Book III of the YS but are alluded to in the next *sûtra*.

***Sûtra 40:* The yogi’s mastery extends from the smallest atom to the infinite.**

Holding the attention of PC to a single object through the process of fixed-attention, continuous-attention, and coalescent-attention is called *saṃyama*, “restraint” (YS 3:4). By practicing *saṃyama* on a particular object one gains knowledge of that object’s essence. According to Patañjali, this results in power over the object. This power may range “from the smallest atom to the infinite.”

The Phenomenology of Meditation

We have seen that *samādhi* or coalescent-attention involves the “fusing” of consciousness with the object of the meditation. The word *samādhi* literally means “putting together.” Those that are “put together” are the perceiver, the process of perceiving, and the object perceived; thus *samādhi* has here been

translated as “coalescent-attention.” This coalescence is accomplished by confining PC to a single object. When this is done successfully, PC seems to disappear and consciousness loses its dualistic, reflexive quality, and becomes singular in nature. Patañjali now describes in more detail the mechanics of this process:

Sūtra 41: One whose activities of personal consciousness have been diminished, that person is like a clear jewel, his fused state of consciousness takes on the coloring of that upon which it rests, in that the perceiver, the process of perceiving, and the object perceived are united.

When the attention of PC is restricted to a single object, consciousness as a whole, that is, the perceiver (TC) and the process of perceiving (PC), experiences fusion (*samāpatti*) with the object perceived. Patañjali likens this to a clear jewel taking on the color of any surface that it rests upon. What allows the jewel to do this is its transparent clarity. If a jewel containing its own coloring, for example, a deep blue sapphire, is placed on a red surface, it maintains its separateness, its own blue color. In the same way, according to Patañjali, when consciousness colored by self-awareness (the awareness of the process of perceiving or reflexivity) attends to an external object, it maintains its separateness, its own coloring, its own identity. But when consciousness free from self-awareness attends to an external object, it takes on the coloring of the object. It becomes one with the object and loses awareness of itself. This is the experience of *total attention*. When consciousness is colored by self-awareness, attention is split between self-awareness and the external object; there is a duality of attention. When self-awareness has ceased and all attention is completely placed on the object, consciousness enters a state of pure perception (*dṛṣi-mātra*) and there is no attention left over to maintain self-awareness. The subject “loses” him or herself in the object—and the perceiver, the process of perceiving, and the object perceived become one. This state characterizes successful meditation and necessitates that attention normally used for other purposes must be stripped from its usual objects. Patañjali now describes this problem:

Sūtra 42: The fused state of consciousness with intentionality is commingled with the mental-constructs of word, thing, and knowledge.

The state of fusion between consciousness and the object may be incomplete. There may be a partial fusion combined with intentionality (*vitarka*). In this state there is still a duality of consciousness because part of the attention is devoted to perceiving the object, and part is devoted to the creation of mental-constructs *about* the object. Patañjali says that in this state the perception of the

object is not pure for it is “commingled with the mental-constructs of word, thing, and knowledge.”

Mental-constructs (*vikalpas*) are constructed by PC about the object perceived through the active processing of the raw stimulus. They are generally the results of past experiences of a similar nature to the one presently being perceived. These mental-constructs are generated by *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*, and arise through memory. Because of memory, word associations connected with the object, its name, meaning, and so on, may come flooding into consciousness, coloring and shaping the perception. There may also be memories connected with the structure or form of the object, its “thingness” or objective status as separate from the subject. Or, memories concerning knowledge about a particular object (its content), may be present coloring the perception. All of these are mental-constructs. When they are present in meditation, the fusion between consciousness and the object is not complete, because attention is being diverted to the creation of mental-constructs. The subject is not being a *pure* perceiver. In this state there is *attention* mixed with *intention*. A state of pure perception will be characterized by *attention without intention*. The process of meditation is designed to eliminate intentionality and see the object as it is in itself. Patañjali now describes this state:

Sūtra 43: When there is purification from memories, personal consciousness is as if devoid of its own form, with only the object appearing in consciousness, this state is without intentionality.

“Purification from memories” refers to the removal of the effects of *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*, the de-automatizing of the perceptual and cognitive system such that intentionality is eliminated (*nir-vitarka*). This means that all remembered associations with the object have been removed from consciousness and only pure perception is left. At this point PC is free of all mental-constructs and “devoid of its own form,” that is, there is no self-awareness. Śaṅkara explains this state in the following way:

This is knowledge of the thing as it is; the object, free from such associations as direction and location and time and past experience, stands vividly in its own qualities alone. It manifests in the form of its real nature; the *saṃādhi*-knowledge of the yogin is limited to the real nature of that object, and does not reveal anything of place or time etc., apart from that object. The knowledge is not even aware of itself as a process of knowing, because of its extreme transparency. It appears as the object alone, and this as described is the *nir-vitarka saṃādhi*. *Nir-vitarka* means that *vitarka* has gone from it, *vitarka* being illusory projection (*adhyaṛopa*) which is not really there. (Leggett, trans., 1981, p. 158)

Patañjali now goes on to make a further distinction in the case when the object of meditation is a minute or subtle object:

Sūtra 44: This state with reflexivity and without reflexivity, having a minute or subtle object, is also explained in the same way.

Intentionality (*vitarka*) occurs with objects on the gross or physical level. Minute or subtle objects are not perceptible on the ordinary level of sense perception, and are therefore not subject to intentionality, but may still occur with reflexivity (*vicāra*), which is the tendency of consciousness to think back on itself. When reflexivity is eliminated (*nir-vicāra*), self-awareness disappears, and thus only the object remains in consciousness.

Vyāsa explains minute or subtle objects as the “subtle elements” (*tanmātras*) of phenomenal existence. These subtle elements may be understood as intangible energy potentials that go to make up everything in the physical world.

Sūtra 45: And the state of having minute or subtle objects terminates in that which is without differentiating characteristics.

According to Patañjali, the “subtle objects” eventually merge into a field of pure potential energy (the World Ground, *prakṛti*) which underlies all phenomenal existence, but within itself, bears no differentiating characteristics. The yogi experiences this field in meditation by transcending all form.

Sūtra 46: These fused states of consciousness are only seeded coalescent-attention.

“Seeded” (*sa-bīja*) refers to coalescent-attention that is acquired through holding the attention of PC to a single specific object. The object of the meditation is the “seed” (*bīja*) around which the *samādhi* develops. All of the various objects of meditation listed by Patañjali are “seeds” which may be “planted” in consciousness and “cultivated” (meditated upon, *bhāvanam*), and experienced in a state of oneness without self-consciousness, without duality. Restraining the attention of PC to a single thing, a seed, is meditation. Seeded coalescent-attention is *samādhi* experienced in meditation. In other words, this is *cultivated* coalescent-attention, *samādhi* which has been induced by meditation.

In contrast to this, *samādhi* experienced *outside* of meditation is without a specific object, without a seed; it is *samādhi* not induced by meditation, but is the “seedless” coalescent-attention (*nir-bīja samādhi*). A permanently established state of seedless coalescent-attention is a permanent state of TC without the need for meditation. For the as yet unenlightened yogi, *samādhi* is only experienced during meditation. When *samādhi* or TC is experienced constantly, even when the yogi is not meditating and is engaged in worldly activity, this is enlightenment. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali has stated that the meditatively fused states of consciousness with intentionality (*sa-vitarka*), without intentionality (*nir-vitarka*), with reflexivity (*sa-vicāra*), and without reflexivity (*nir-vicāra*), are all only “seeded” *samādhi*; they are not enlightenment. He now goes on to describe how enlightenment is achieved.

Attaining Enlightenment

Sûtra 47: When there is expertness in the fused state of consciousness without reflexivity, purity of transpersonal consciousness is attained.

“Expertness” means that this state of meditation is gained and maintained easily, and that the yogi is able to experience it at its most subtle limits. “The fused state of consciousness without reflexivity” (*nir-vicâra samâdhi*) is concerned with minute or subtle objects. Thus, “that which is without differentiating characteristics” (the World Ground, *prakṛti*, YS 1:45), the field of pure potential energy which underlies all phenomenal existence, is experienced easily and maintained in meditation. This expertness produces “purity of transpersonal consciousness.” This is TC “established in its own form” (YS 1:3), free from its assimilation in the activities of PC.

Sûtra 48: Then, wisdom bears the Truth of the world order.

By the ability to achieve and maintain in meditation the perception of the World Ground without reflexivity, consciousness acquires direct knowledge of “the Truth of the world order” (*ṛta*). The world order is the natural law which governs the way the entire universe operates. According to the tradition, all the interacting forces of nature have their basis in the World Ground (*prakṛti*). It is this set of forces which structures all phenomenal existence. By attaining a clear perception of the World Ground and its forces, consciousness achieves an intuitive understanding of the laws of manifestation and dissolution.

Sûtra 49: On account of its special nature this wisdom has a different sphere than the wisdom derived from authority or inference.

The wisdom derived from authority or inference deals with *relative* knowledge, that is, the knowledge obtained by a knower who is separate from and therefore in relation to that which is known. By contrast, clear perception of the World Ground without reflexivity is the World Ground knowing itself; it is *absolute* knowledge, which “has a different sphere” than relative knowledge.

Sûtra 50: Produced by it is the subliminal-activator that is the inhibitor of other subliminal-activators.

The practice and experience of meditation in *nir-vicâra samâdhi* produces a subliminal-activator (*saṃskâra*). This is the subliminal-activator of profound meditation, and is produced each time the state of *nir-vicâra samâdhi* is attained. This *saṃskâra* inhibits the *saṃskâras* of intentional and reflexive states of consciousness from reproducing those states in the mind of the yogi during and

after meditation. The experience of profound meditation makes it easier to attain and maintain that state of meditation on subsequent occasions because of the presence of the *saṃskāras* of the previous experience. Also, these *saṃskāras* inhibit intentional and reflexive states of consciousness occurring while the yogi is engaged in worldly activity. *Saṃskāras* tend to reproduce the states of consciousness which originally created the *saṃskāras*. That is why they are called *subliminal-activators*. The subliminal-activator of the state of profound meditation has the tendency to reproduce that nonintentional, nonreflexive state, and thus inhibit the subliminal-activators of intentionality and reflexivity.

Sūtra 51: When that also is restrained, because of the restraint of everything, then the seedless coalescent-attention is attained.

This is the state of enlightenment. When the subliminal-activators of intentionality and reflexivity have been completely restrained, they no longer have the power to reproduce intentional and reflexive states of consciousness. The last *saṃskāra* to be restrained is the *saṃskāra* of meditation itself. When the yogi can maintain him or herself in a state of total attention without intentionality and without reflexivity (TC), while at the same time be engaged in worldly activity and not be withdrawn in meditation — this is enlightenment. This is the “seedless coalescent-attention.” It is without a seed, an object of meditation. In this state consciousness merges with the world as a whole, maintaining itself in a state of oneness with the World Ground, while simultaneously carrying on all of the activities of daily life. Enlightenment is the successful restraint of the activities of PC, the dualistic self, and thus the liberation of TC from PC. Patañjali calls it *drśeḥ kaivalyam*, the “aloneness of perception.” Enlightenment is accomplished by many years of “practice and nonattachment,” such that the *saṃskāras* of intentional and reflexive states have been so completely restrained that meditation itself is no longer necessary to maintain a constant state of TC. Enlightenment may be interpreted as a permanent de-automatization of the cognitive and perceptual system.

Conclusion

We have seen that the goal of Yoga practice is the transformation of human consciousness. Several conclusions concerning this transformation have been drawn in the interpretation of the *Yoga-Sūtra*. First, the duality of human consciousness as expressed by Patañjali in the form of PC and TC, is closely related to theories of duality in consciousness found in modern Western psychology, particularly the “bimodality” of consciousness as described by A.J. Deikman in terms of an “action” mode and a “receptive” mode.

Second, the conclusion was drawn that the process of “automatization” of cognitive processes as discovered by modern psychology may be interpreted as

being roughly equivalent to the build-up of *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās* found in the Yoga tradition. This interpretation is based on the similarity of characteristics found in these two descriptions and the apparently identical role that they play in human consciousness.

Third, it was concluded that the "de-automatization" of consciousness, the turning-off of the "psychological structures that organize, limit, select, and interpret perceptual stimuli" (Deikman, 1966b, p. 329), is accomplished by the practice of Yoga, characterized by Patañjali as "the restraint of the activities of personal consciousness" (YS 1:2).

Fourth, the specific means by which the de-automatization is accomplished was concluded to be the two aspects of Yoga practice, *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*. *Abhyāsa* was identified as the "eight limbs" of Yoga, and *vairāgya* as "non-attachment."

Finally, it was concluded that the state of enlightenment is a permanent and constant de-automatization of the cognitive and perceptual system. In general, since most efforts at translating and interpreting the *Yoga-Sūtra* from a psychological perspective have been limited in the past to depth-psychological or traditional Indian approaches, it was concluded that a new translation and interpretation of Patañjali's classic work, from the perspective of transpersonal psychology, would be a useful contribution to an understanding of meditatively altered states of consciousness.

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