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NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION (1969)

Throughout the text and the Additional Notes, an asterisk indicates that new reference material is supplied in the Addenda, pp. 531 ff. In the List of Works Cited, an asterisk indicates that a new translation has been substituted for citations (see p. 480). The author has made numerous minor corrections, of diacritical marks, etc.

CHAPTER ONE

The Doctrines of Yoga

Point of Departure

FOUR basic and interdependent concepts, four "kinetic ideas," bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality. They are *karma*, *māyā*, *nirvāṇa*, and *yoga*. A coherent history of Indian thought could be written starting from any one of these basic concepts; the other three would inevitably have to be discussed. In terms of Western philosophy, we can say that, from the post-Vedic period on, India has above all sought to understand:

(1) The law of universal causality, which connects man with the cosmos and condemns him to transmigrate indefinitely. This is the law of *karma*.

(2) The mysterious process that engenders and maintains the cosmos and, in so doing, makes possible the "eternal return" of existences. This is *māyā*, cosmic illusion, endured (even worse—accorded validity) by man as long as he is blinded by ignorance (*avidyā*).

(3) Absolute reality, "situated" somewhere beyond the cosmic illusion woven by *māyā* and beyond human experience as conditioned by *karma;* pure Being, the Absolute, by whatever name it may be called—the Self (*ātman*), *brahman*, the unconditioned, the transcendent, the immortal, the indestructible, *nirvāṇa*, etc.

(4) The means of attaining to Being, the effectual techniques for gaining liberation. This corpus of means constitutes Yoga properly speaking.

With these four concepts in mind, we can understand how the fundamental problem of all philosophy, the search for truth, presents itself to Indian thought. For India, truth is not precious in itself; it becomes precious by virtue of its soteriological function, because knowledge of truth helps man to liberate himself. It is not the possession of truth that is the supreme end of the Indian sage; it is liberation, the conquest of absolute freedom. The sacrifices that the European philosopher is prepared to make to attain truth in and for itself: sacrifice of religious faith, of worldly ambitions, of wealth, personal freedom, and even life—to these the Indian sage consents only in order to conquer liberation. To "free oneself" is equivalent to forcing another plane of existence, to appropriating another *mode of being* transcending the human condition. This is as much as to say that, for India, not only is metaphysical knowledge translated into terms of *rupture* and *death* ("breaking" the human condition, one "dies" to all that was human); it also necessarily implies a consequence of a mystical nature: *rebirth to a nonconditioned mode of being*. And this is liberation, absolute freedom.

In studying the theories and practices of Yoga we shall have occasion to refer to all the other "kinetic ideas" of Indian thought. For the present, let us begin by defining the meaning of the term *yoga*. Etymologically, *yoga* derives from the root *yuj*, "to bind together," "hold fast," "yoke," which also governs Latin *jungere*, *jugum*, French *joug*, etc. The word *yoga* serves, in general, to designate any *ascetic technique* and any *method of meditation*. Naturally, these various asceticisms and meditations have been differently evaluated by the many Indian philosophical currents and mystical movements. As we shall soon see, there is a "classic" Yoga, a "system of philosophy" expounded by Patañjali in his celebrated *Yoga-sūtras;* and it is from the "system" that we must set out in order to understand the position of Yoga in the history of Indian thought. But, side by side with this "classic" Yoga, there are countless forms of "popular," nonsystematic yoga; there are also non-Brāhmanic yogas (Buddhist, Jainist); above all, there are yogas whose structures are "magical," "mystical," and so on.

Basically it is the term *yoga* itself that has permitted this great variety of meanings, for if, etymologically, *yuj* means "to bind," it is nevertheless clear that the "bond" in which this action of binding is to result presupposes, as its preliminary condition, breaking the "bonds" that unite the spirit to the world. In other words, liberation cannot occur if one is not first "detached" from the world, if one has not begun by withdrawing from the cosmic circuit. For without doing so, one could never succeed in finding or mastering oneself. Even in its "mystical" acceptation—that is, as signifying *union*—Yoga implies a preliminary detachment from matter, emancipation with respect to the world. The emphasis is laid on man's *effort* ("to yoke"), on his self-discipline, by virtue of which he can obtain concentration of spirit even before asking (as in the mystical varieties of Yoga) for the aid of the divinity. "To bind together," "to hold fast," "to yoke"—the purpose of all this is to *unify* the spirit, to do away with the dispersion and automatism that characterize profane consciousness. For the "devotional" (mystical) schools of Yoga this "unification," of course, only precedes the true union, that of the human soul with God.

What characterizes Yoga is not only its *practical* side, but also its *initiatory* structure. One does not learn Yoga by oneself; the guidance of a master (*guru*) is necessary. Strictly speaking, all the other "systems of philosophy"—as, in fact, all traditional disciplines or crafts—are, in India, taught by masters and are thus initiations; for millenniums they have been transmitted orally, "from mouth to ear." But Yoga is even more markedly initiatory in character. For, as in other religious initiations, the yogin begins by forsaking the profane world (family, society) and, guided by his *guru*, applies himself to passing successively beyond the behavior patterns and values proper to the human condition. When we shall have seen to what a degree the yogin attempts to dissociate himself from the profane condition,[1] we shall understand that he dreams of "dying to this life." We shall, in fact, witness a *death* followed by a *rebirth* to another mode of being—that repre-

1 Below, p. 95.

sented by liberation. The analogy between Yoga and initiation becomes even more marked if we think of the initiatory rites—primitive or other—that pursue the creation of a "new body," a "mystical body" (symbolically assimilated, among the primitives, to the body of the newborn infant). Now, the "mystical body," which will allow the yogin to enter the transcendent mode of being, plays a considerable part in all forms of Yoga, and especially in tantrism and alchemy. From this point of view Yoga takes over and, on another plane, continues the archaic and universal symbolism of initiation—a symbolism that, it may be noted, is already documented in the Brāhmanic tradition (where the initiate is called the "twice-born"). The initiatory rebirth is defined, by all forms of Yoga, as access to a nonprofane and hardly describable mode of being, to which the Indian schools give various names: *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*, *asaṃskṛta*, etc.

Of all the meanings that the word *yoga* assumes in Indian literature, the most explicit is that which refers to the Yoga "philosophy" (*yoga-darśana*), particularly as set forth in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* and in the commentaries on them. Certainly, a *darśana* is not a system of philosophy in the Western sense (*darśana* = view, vision, comprehension, point of view, doctrine, etc., from the root *dṛś* = to see, to contemplate, to comprehend, etc.). But it is none the less a system of coherent affirmations, coextensive with human experience, which it attempts to interpret in its entirety, and having as its aim the "liberation of man from ignorance" (however various the meanings that the word "ignorance" is made to express). Yoga is one of the six orthodox Indian "systems of philosophy" ("orthodox" here meaning "tolerated by Brāhmanism," in distinction from the "heretical" systems, such as Buddhism or Jainism). And this "classic" Yoga, as formulated by Patañjali and interpreted by his commentators, is also the best known in the West.

So we shall begin our investigation with a review of Yoga theories and practices as formulated by Patañjali. We have several reasons for adopting this procedure: first, because Patañjali's

exposition is a "system of philosophy"; second, because a great many practical indications concerning ascetic techniques and contemplative methods are summarized in it—indications that other (the nonsystematic) varieties of Yoga distort or, rather, color in accordance with their particular conceptions; finally, because Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* are the result of an enormous effort not only to bring together and classify a series of ascetic practices and contemplative formulas that India had known from time immemorial, but also to validate them from a theoretical point of view by establishing their bases, justifying them, and incorporating them into a philosophy.

But Patañjali is not the creator of the Yoga "philosophy," just as he is not—and could not be—the inventor of yogic techniques. He admits himself[2] that he is merely publishing and correcting (*atha yogānuśāsanam*) the doctrinal and technical traditions of Yoga. And in fact yogic practices were known in the esoteric circles of Indian ascetics and mystics long before Patañjali. Among the technical formulas preserved by tradition, he retained those which an experience of centuries had sufficiently tested. As to the theoretical framework and the metaphysical foundation that Patañjali provides for these practices, his personal contribution is of the smallest. He merely rehandles the Sāṃkhya philosophy in its broad outlines, adapting it to a rather superficial theism in which he exalts the practical value of meditation. The Yoga and Sāṃkhya systems are so much alike that most of the affirmations made by the one are valid for the other. The essential differences between them are few: (1) whereas Sāṃkhya is atheistic, Yoga is theistic, since it postulates the existence of a supreme God (Īśvara); (2) whereas, according to Sāṃkhya, the only path to salvation is that of metaphysical knowledge, Yoga accords marked importance to techniques of meditation. In short, Patañjali's effort, properly speaking, was especially directed to co-ordinating philosophical material—borrowed from Sāṃkhya—around technical formulas for concentration, meditation, and ecstasy. Thanks to Patañjali, Yoga,

2 *Yoga-sūtras*, I, 1.

which had been a "mystical" tradition, became a "system of philosophy."

Indian tradition regards Sāṃkhya as the oldest *darśana*. The meaning of the term *sāṃkhya* seems to have been "discrimination," the chief end of this philosophy being to dissociate the spirit (*puruṣa*) from matter (*prakṛti*). The earliest treatise is the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa; its date is not definitely established, but it cannot be later than the fifth century of our era.[3] Among the commentaries on the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, the most useful is the *Sāṃkhya-tattva-kaumudī* by Vācaspatimiśra (ninth century). Another important text is the *Sāṃkhya-pravacana-sūtra* (probably fourteenth century), with the commentaries by Aniruddha (fifteenth century) and Vijñānabhikṣu (sixteenth century).

To be sure, the importance of the chronology of the Sāṃkhya texts must not be exaggerated. In general, any Indian philosophical treatise contains conceptions that antedate its composition and that are often extremely old. If we find a new interpretation in a philosophical text, this does not mean that it had not been entertained earlier. What seems to be "new" in the *Sāṃkhya-sūtras* may often be of unquestionable antiquity. Too much importance has been accorded to the allusions and polemics that can perhaps be discovered in these philosophical texts. Such references may very well be directed at opinions far more ancient than those to which they would seem to allude. If, in India, one can succeed in establishing the dates of different texts—and it is much more difficult there than elsewhere—it is still more difficult to establish the chronology of philosophical ideas themselves. Like Yoga, Sāṃkhya also has a prehistory. Very probably the origin of the system should be sought in an analysis of the constitutive elements of human experience, conducted from the point of view of distinguishing between the elements that forsake man at death and those that are "immortal," in the sense that they accompany the soul in its destiny beyond the grave. Such an analysis already occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (X, 1, 3, 4), which divides the human being into three "immortal" and three "mortal" parts. In other words, the "origins" of Sāṃkhya are bound up with a problem of a mystical nature: what subsists of man after death, what constitutes the veritable Self, the immortal element of the human being?

A long controversy, which still persists, concerns the historical per-

3 See Additional Note I, 1, at the end of this book.

sonality of Patañjali, the author of the *Yoga-sūtras*. Some Indian commentators (King Bhoja, Cakrapāṇidatta, the commentator on Caraka in the eleventh century, and two others, of the eighteenth century) have identified him with Patañjali the grammarian, who lived in the second century before our era. The identification has been accepted by Liebich, Garbe, and Dasgupta and contested by Woods, Jacobi, and A. B. Keith.[4] Whatever the fact may be, these controversies concerning the period of the *Yoga-sūtras* are of little relevance, for the techniques of *ascesis* and meditation set forth by Patañjali are certainly of considerable antiquity; they are not his discoveries, nor those of his time; they had been first tested many centuries before him. Indeed, Indian authors rarely present a personal system; in the great majority of instances, they are content to formulate traditional doctrines in the language of their own time. This is even more typically observable in the case of Patañjali, whose sole aim is to compile a practical manual of very ancient techniques.

Vyāsa (seventh–eighth century) composed a commentary, *Yoga-bhāṣya*, and Vācaspatimiśra (ninth century) a gloss, *Tattvavaiśāradī*, which are among the most important contributions to an understanding of the *Yoga-sūtras*. King Bhoja (beginning of the eleventh century) is the author of the commentary *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, and Rāmānanda Sarasvatī (sixteenth century) of the *Maṇiprabhā*. Finally, Vijñānabhikṣu annotated Vyāsa's *Yoga-bhāṣya* in his remarkable treatise, the *Yoga-vārttika*.[5]

For Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the world is *real* (not illusory—as it is, for example, for Vedānta). Nevertheless, if the world *exists* and *endures*, it is because of the "ignorance" of spirit; the innumerable forms of the cosmos, as well as their processes of manifestation and development, exist only in the measure to which the Self (*puruṣa*) is ignorant of itself and, by reason of this metaphysical ignorance, suffers and is enslaved. At the precise moment when the last Self shall have found its freedom, the creation in its totality will be reabsorbed into the primordial substance.

It is here, in this fundamental affirmation (more or less explicitly formulated) that the cosmos exists and endures because of man's lack of knowledge, that we can find the reason for the Indian

4 See Note I, 2.* [Concerning asterisk, see p. xi.]

5 For editions and translations of yogic texts, see Note I, 2.

depreciation of life and the cosmos—a depreciation that none of the great constructions of post-Vedic Indian thought attempted to hide. From the time of the Upaniṣads India rejects the world as it is and devaluates life as it reveals itself to the eyes of the sage—ephemeral, painful, illusory. Such a conception leads neither to nihilism nor to pessimism. *This* world is rejected, *this* life depreciated, because it is known that *something else* exists, beyond becoming, beyond temporality, beyond suffering. In religious terms, it could almost be said that India rejects the *profane* cosmos and *profane* life, because it thirsts for a *sacred* world and a *sacred* mode of being.

Again and again Indian texts repeat this thesis—that the cause of the soul's "enslavement" and, consequently, the source of its endless sufferings lie in *man's solidarity with the cosmos*, in his participation, active and passive, direct or indirect, in nature. Let us translate: solidarity with a *desacralized* world, participation in a *profane* nature. *Neti! neti!* cries the sage of the Upaniṣads: "No, no! thou art not *this;* nor art thou *that!*" In other words: you do not belong to the fallen cosmos, *as you see it now;* you are not necessarily engulfed in *this* creation; necessarily—that is to say, by virtue of the law of your own being. For *Being* can have no relation with *nonbeing*. Now, nature has no true ontological reality; it is, indeed, universal becoming. Every cosmic form, complex and majestic though it may be, ends by disintegrating; the universe itself is periodically reabsorbed by "great dissolutions" (*mahāpralaya*) into the primordial matrix (*prakṛti*). Now, whatever becomes, changes, dies, vanishes does not belong to the sphere of being—to translate once again, is not *sacred*. If solidarity with the cosmos is the consequence of a progressive desacralization of human existence, and hence a fall into ignorance and suffering, the road toward freedom necessarily leads to a desolidarization from the cosmos and profane life. (In some forms of tantric Yoga this desolidarization is followed by a desperate effort toward the resacralization of life.)

Yet the cosmos, life, have an ambivalent function. On the one

hand, they fling man into suffering and, by virtue of *karma*, enmesh him in the infinite cycle of transmigrations; on the other hand, indirectly, they help him to seek and find "salvation" for his soul, autonomy, absolute freedom (*mokṣa, mukti*). For the more man suffers (that is, the greater is his solidarity with the cosmos), the more the desire for emancipation increases in him, the more intensely he thirsts for salvation. Thus the forms and illusions of the cosmos—and this by virtue of, not in spite of, their inherent magic, and by virtue of the suffering that their indefatigable becoming ceaselessly feeds—put themselves at the service of man, whose supreme end is emancipation, salvation. "From Brahman down to the blade of grass, the creation [*sṛṣṭi*] is for the benefit of the soul, until supreme knowledge is attained." [6] Supreme knowledge—that is to say, emancipation not only from ignorance, but also, and indeed first of all, from pain, from suffering.

The Equation Pain-Existence

"All is suffering for the sage" (*duḥkameva sarva vivekinaḥ*), writes Patañjali.[7] But Patañjali is neither the first nor the last to record this universal suffering. Long before him the Buddha had proclaimed: "All is pain, all is ephemeral" (*sarvam duḥkham, sarvam anityam*). It is a leitmotiv of all post-Upaniṣadic Indian speculation. Soteriological techniques, as well as metaphysical doctrines, find their justification in this universal suffering, for they have no value save in the measure to which they free man from "pain." Human experience of whatever kind engenders suffering. "The body is pain, because it is the place of pain; the senses, objects, perceptions are suffering, because they lead to suffering; pleasure itself is suffering, because it is followed by suffering." [8] And Īśvarakṛṣṇa, author of the earliest Sāṃkhya treatise, declares that the foundation stone of Sāṃkhya is man's desire to escape from the torture of the three sufferings—from celestial misery (provoked

6 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 47. 7 *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 15.
8 Aniruddha, commenting on *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, II, 1.

by the gods), from terrestrial misery (caused by nature), and from inner or organic misery.[9]

Yet this universal suffering does not lead to a "philosophy of pessimism." No Indian philosophy or gnosis falls into despair. On the contrary, the revelation of "pain" as the law of existence can be regarded as the *conditio sine qua non* for emancipation. Intrinsically, then, this universal suffering has a positive, stimulating value. It perpetually reminds the sage and the ascetic that but one way remains for him to attain to freedom and bliss—withdrawal from the world, detachment from possessions and ambitions, radical isolation. Man, moreover, is not alone in suffering; pain is a cosmic necessity, an ontological modality to which every "form" that manifests itself as such is condemned. Whether one be a god or a tiny insect, the mere fact of existing in time, of having duration, implies pain. Unlike the gods and other living beings, man possesses the capability of passing beyond his condition and thus abolishing suffering. The certainty that there is a way to end suffering—a certainty shared by all Indian philosophies and mysticisms—can lead neither to "despair" nor to "pessimism." To be sure, suffering is universal; but if man knows how to set about emancipating himself from it, it is not final. For, if the human condition is condemned to pain for all eternity—since, like every condition, it is determined by *karma* [10]—each individual who shares in it can pass beyond it, since each can annul the karmic forces by which it is governed.

To "emancipate" oneself from suffering—such is the goal of all Indian philosophies and all Indian mysticisms. Whether this deliverance is obtained directly through "knowledge" (according to the teaching of Vedānta and Sāṃkhya, for example) or by means of techniques (as Yoga and the majority of Buddhist schools hold), the fact remains that no knowledge has any value if it does not seek

9 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 1.

10 Let us recall the meanings of the term: work, action; destiny (ineluctable consequence of acts performed in a previous existence); product, effect, etc.

the "salvation" of man. "Save for that, nothing is worth knowing," says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (I,12). And Bhoja, commenting on a text of the *Yoga-sūtras* (IV, 22), declares that any knowledge whose object is not deliverance is valueless. Vācaspatimiśra begins his commentary on Īśvarakṛṣna's treatise: "In this world, the audience listens only to the preacher who sets forth facts whose knowledge is necessary and desired. To those who set forth doctrines that no one desires, no one attends, as comes to pass with fools or with men of the herd, who are good in their practical affairs but ignorant of the sciences and arts." [11] The same author, in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, specifies the necessary knowledge: "No lucid person desires to know what is devoid of all certainty or what is of no use . . . or of no importance." [12]

In India metaphysical knowledge always has a soteriological purpose. Thus only metaphysical knowledge (*vidyā, jñāna, prajñā*) —that is, the knowledge of ultimate realities—is valued and sought, for it alone procures liberation. For it is by "knowledge" that man, casting off the illusions of the world of phenomena, "awakens." By knowledge—and that means: by practicing withdrawal, the effect of which will be to make him find his own center, to make him coincide with his "true spirit" (*puruṣa, ātman*). Knowledge is transformed into a kind of meditation, and metaphysics becomes soteriology. In India not even "logic" is without a soteriological function in its beginnings. Manu uses the term *ānvīkṣaki* ("science of controversy," logic) as an equivalent to *ātmavidyā* ("knowledge of the soul," of the *ātman*)—that is, to metaphysics.[13] Correct argumentation, in conformity with the norms, frees the soul—this is the point of departure of the Nyāya school. Moreover, the earliest logical controversies, from which the Nyāya *darśana* will later develop, were concerned precisely with sacred texts, with the different interpretations that could be

11 *Tattva-kaumudī*, ed. Gangānātha Jhā, p. 1. [For full references, see the list of works cited.]

12 *Bhāmatī*, ed. Bāla Śāstri, pp. 1–2.

13 *Manu-Smṛti*, VII, 43.

put upon such and such an injunction in the Vedas; the purpose of all these controversies was to make possible the correct performance of a rite, in accordance with tradition. Now, this sacred tradition, of which the Vedas are the expression, is *revealed.* Under such conditions, to seek the meaning of words is to remain in permanent contact with the Logos, with the spiritual reality that is absolute, suprahuman, and suprahistorical. Just as the right pronunciation of the Vedic texts results in giving the ritual maximum efficacy, so *right comprehension* of a Vedic maxim results in purifying the intelligence and thus contributes to the spirit's liberation. All partial "ignorance," as it is abolished, carries man a step onward toward freedom and bliss.

The importance that all these Indian metaphysics, and even the ascetic technique and contemplative method that constitute Yoga, accord to "knowledge" is easily explained if we take into consideration the causes of human suffering. The wretchedness of human life is not owing to a divine punishment or to an original sin, but to *ignorance.* Not any and every kind of ignorance, but only ignorance of the true nature of *Spirit*, the ignorance that makes us confuse Spirit with our psychomental experience, that makes us attribute "qualities" and predicates to the eternal and autonomous principle that is Spirit—in short, a metaphysical ignorance. Hence it is natural that it should be a metaphysical knowledge that supervenes to end this ignorance. This metaphysical knowledge leads the disciple to the threshold of illumination—that is, to the true "Self." And it is this knowledge of one's Self—not in the profane sense of the term, but in its ascetic and spiritual sense—that is the end pursued by the majority of Indian speculative systems, though each of them indicates a different way of reaching it.

For Sāṃkhya and Yoga the problem is clearly defined. Since suffering has its origin in ignorance of "Spirit"—that is, in confusing "Spirit" with psychomental states—emancipation can be obtained only if the confusion is abolished. The differences between Sāṃkhya and Yoga on this point are insignificant. Only their methods differ: Sāṃkhya seeks to obtain liberation solely by

gnosis, whereas for Yoga an *ascesis* and a *technique of meditation* are indispensable. In both *darśanas* human suffering is rooted in illusion, for man believes that his psychomental life—activity of the senses, feelings, thoughts, and volitions—is identical with Spirit, with the Self. He thus confuses two wholly autonomous and opposed realities, between which there is no real connection but only an illusory relation, for psychomental experience does not belong to Spirit, it belongs to nature (*prakṛti*); states of consciousness are the refined products of the same substance that is at the base of the physical world and the world of life. Between psychic states and inanimate objects or living beings, there are only differences of degree. But between psychic states and Spirit there is a difference of an ontological order; they belong to two different modes of being. "Liberation" occurs when one has understood this truth, and when the Spirit regains its original freedom. Thus, according to Sāṃkhya, he who would gain emancipation must begin by thoroughly knowing the essence and the forms of nature (*prakṛti*) and the laws that govern its evolution. For its part, Yoga also accepts this analysis of Substance, but finds value only in the practice of contemplation, which is alone capable of revealing the autonomy and omnipotence of Spirit experimentally. Hence, before expounding the methods and techniques of Yoga, we must see how the Sāṃkhya *darśana* conceives Substance and Spirit, together with the cause of their false solidarity; we must, in short, see in what the gnostic way advocated by this "philosophy" consists. We must also determine to what degree the Sāṃkhya and Yoga doctrines coincide, and distinguish, in the theoretical affirmations of the latter, those which are based on "mystical" experiences lacking in Sāṃkhya.

The "Self"

Spirit ("soul")—as a transcendent and autonomous principle—is accepted by all Indian philosophies, except by the Buddhists and the materialists (the Lokāyatas).[14] But it is by entirely different

14 See Note I, 3.

approaches that the various *darśanas* seek to prove its existence and explain its essence. For the Nyāya school, soul-spirit is an entity without qualities, absolute, unknowing. Vedānta, on the contrary, defines the *ātman* as being *saccidānanda* (*sat* = being; *cit* = consciousness; *ānanda* = bliss) and regards Spirit as a unique, universal, and eternal reality, dramatically enmeshed in the temporal illusion of creation (*māyā*). Sāṃkhya and Yoga deny Spirit (*puruṣa*) any attribute and any relation; according to these two "philosophies," all that can be affirmed of *puruṣa* is that it *is* and that it *knows* (its knowing is, of course, the metaphysical knowledge that results from its contemplation of its own mode of being).

Like the *ātman* of the Upaniṣads, *puruṣa* is inexpressible.[15] Its "attributes" are negative. "Spirit is that which sees [*sākṣin* = witness], it is isolated [*kaivalyam*], indifferent, mere inactive spectator," writes Īśvarakṛṣṇa,[16] and Gauḍapāda, in his commentary, insists on the eternal passivity of *puruṣa*. The autonomy and impassivity of Spirit are traditional epithets, as *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 147, attests; commenting on this text, Aniruddha cites the famous passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV, 3, 15), "This *puruṣa* is free" (*asaṅga*, "without attachments"), and Vijñānabhikṣu refers to *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI, 2, and *Vedāntasāra*, 158. Being irreducible, without qualities (*nirguṇatvat*), *puruṣa* has no "intelligence" (*ciddharma*),[17] for it is without desires. Desires are not eternal, hence they do not belong to Spirit. Spirit is eternally free,[18] for states of consciousness, the flux of psychomental life, are foreign to it. If *puruṣa* nevertheless appears to us to be an "agent" (*kartṛ*), this is owing both to human illusion and to the unique correlation termed *yogyatā*,[19] which designates a

15 The phrase *neti, neti*—"not thus! not thus!"—of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III, 9, 26, recurs in *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 75.

16 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 19. 17 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 146.

18 Ibid., I, 162.

19 Vyāsa (ad *Yoga-sūtras*, I, 4) and Vācaspatimiśra (ibid. and *Tattvakaumudī*, 31) state that "this unique correlation has no beginning," is not owing to a spatial or temporal correlation between the Self and intelligence;

kind of pre-established harmony between the two essentially distinct realities constituted by Self (*puruṣa*) and intelligence (*buddhi;* the latter, as we shall see further on, being only a "more refined product" of the primordial matter or substance).

Patañjali's position is the same. In *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 5, he repeats the statement that ignorance (*avidyā*) consists in regarding what is ephemeral (*anitya*), impure (*aśuci*), painful (*duḥkha*), and non-Spirit (*anātma*) as being eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuci*), bliss (*sukha*), and Spirit (*ātman*). Vyāsa [20] reiterates that perception, memory, reasoning, etc., belong to the intelligence (*buddhi*) and that it is only by the effect of an illusion that these mental faculties are attributed to the *puruṣa*.[21]

Now, this conception of *puruṣa* at once raises difficulties. For if Spirit is eternally pure, impassive, autonomous, and irreducible, how can it acquiesce in being accompanied by psychomental experience? And how is such a relation possible? We may profitably postpone an examination of the solution that Sāṃkhya and Yoga propose for this problem until we shall have become better acquainted with the possible relationships between the Self and nature. We shall then see that the effort of the two *darśanas* is principally applied to the problem of the true nature of this strange "relation" that links *puruṣa* to *prakṛti*. However, neither the *origin* nor the *cause* of this paradoxical situation has been the object of a formal discussion in Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Why, finally, did the Self acquiesce in being drawn into a foreign orbit, more particularly that of life—and thus in engendering man as such, concrete, historical man, condemned to every catastrophe, assailed by every

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it is a *yogyatā*—that is, a correspondence of a metaphysical order between Spirit (*puruṣa*) and the most subtle product of Substance, *buddhi*. This "correlation," which constitutes one of the greatest difficulties of Indian speculation in general, is explained by Sāṃkhya and Yoga through the teleological instinct of nature (*prakṛti*), which, without knowing it, "works" for the deliverance of Spirit. (See below, p. 30.) On the eight possible hypotheses to explain the relationships *puruṣa-prakṛti*, cf. Vyāsa, ad II, 23.

20 Ad *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 18.

21 See also Bhoja, ad *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 20, and Note I, 4.

suffering? *When*, and on what occasion, did this tragedy of the existence of man begin, if it is true that the ontological modality of Spirit is, as we have already seen, exactly opposite to the human condition, the Self being eternal, free, and passive?

The *cause* and the *origin* of this association between Spirit and experience—these are two aspects of a problem that Sāṃkhya and Yoga consider insoluble because it exceeds the present capacity of human comprehension. For man knows and comprehends by means of what Sāṃkhya-Yoga calls the "intellect," *buddhi*. But this intellect itself is only a product—an extremely refined product, to be sure—of matter, of the primordial substance (*prakṛti*). Being a product of nature, a "phenomenon," *buddhi* can enter into cognitional relations only with other phenomena (which, like it, belong to the infinite series of the creations of the primordial substance); under no circumstances could it know the Self, for it could by no possibility enter into any kind of relation with a transcendental reality. The cause and the origin of this paradoxical association between the Self and life (that is, "matter") could be understood only by an instrument of knowledge other than the *buddhi*, one in no way implying matter. Now, such knowledge is impossible in the present condition of humanity. It "reveals" itself only to him who, having broken his fetters, has passed beyond the human condition; "intellect" plays no part in this revelation, which is, rather, knowledge of one's Self, of the Self itself.

Sāṃkhya knows that the cause of "bondage"—that is, of the human condition, of suffering—is metaphysical ignorance, which, by force of the karmic law, is transmitted from generation to generation; but the historical moment at which this ignorance appeared cannot be established, just as it is impossible to determine the date of creation. The connection between the Self and life, and the resulting bondage (for the Self), have no history; they are beyond time, they are eternal. To insist upon finding a solution for these problems is vain, is childishness. They are problems wrongly posed; and in accordance with an old Brāhmanic practice,[22]

22 Śaṇkara, ad *Vedānta-sūtras*, III, 2, 17.

observed by Buddha himself on several occasions,[23] the sage responds to a wrongly posed problem by silence. The only certainty attainable on the subject is that man has been in this condition since the dawn of time, and that the goal of knowledge is not a fruitless search for the first cause and historical origins of this condition, but liberation.

Substance

It is only in passing that Patañjali refers to *prakṛti*[24] and its modalities, the *guṇas*,[25] and only to define their relationships with psychomental life and the techniques of liberation. He assumes a knowledge of the analysis of Substance, laboriously pursued by Sāṃkhya authors. It is primarily to these authors that we shall have recourse in order to understand the structure and the procession of Substance.

Prakṛti is as real and as eternal as *puruṣa;* but unlike Spirit, it is dynamic and creative. Though perfectly homogeneous and inert, this primordial substance possesses, so to speak, three "modes of being," which permit it to manifest itself in three different ways, which are termed *guṇas:* (1) *sattva* (modality of luminosity and intelligence); (2) *rajas* (modality of motor energy and mental activity); (3) *tamas* (modality of static inertia and psychic obscurity). However, these *guṇas* must not be regarded as different from *prakṛti*, for they are never given separately; in every physical, biological, or psychomental phenomenon all three *guṇas* exist simultaneously, though in unequal proportions (indeed, it is this inequality that permits the appearance of a "phenomenon," of whatever kind; otherwise, the primordial equilibrium and homogeneity by virtue of which the *guṇas* were in perfect equilibrium would persist forever). It is clear, then, that the *guṇas* have a two-

23 Cf., for example, Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, V, 22; see also T. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, p. 22.

24 *Yoga-sūtras*, IV, 2, 3.

25 Ibid., I, 16; II, 15, 19; IV, 13, 34, 32.

fold character: objective on the one hand, since they constitute the phenomena of the external world, and, on the other hand, subjective, since they support, nourish, and condition psychomental life. (This is why *tamas* must be translated not only as "principle of the inertia of matter"—its objective meaning—but also as "darkness of consciousness," "obstacle created by the passions"—its psychophysiological meaning.)[26]

As soon as *prakṛti* departs from its original state of perfect equilibrium (*aliṇga, avyakta*) and assumes specific characteristics conditioned by its "teleological instinct" (to which we shall return), it appears in the form of an energetic mass called *mahat* ("the great").[27] Drawn on by the force of evolution (*pariṇāma*, "development," "procession"), *prakṛti* passes from the state of *mahat* to that of *ahaṃkāra*, which means: uniform apperceptive mass, as yet without "personal" experience, but with the obscure consciousness of being an ego (hence the term *ahaṃkāra; aham* = ego). From this apperceptive mass, the process of "evolution" bifurcates in opposite directions, one of which leads to the world of objective phenomena and the other to that of subjective phenomena (sensible and psychomental). The *ahamkāra* has the ability to transform itself quạlitatively in accordance with which of the three *guṇas* predominates in it. When *sattva* (the modality of luminosity, of purity and comprehension) is predominant in the *ahaṃkāra*, the five cognoscitive senses (*jñānendriya*), and *manas*, "the inner sense," make their appearance; the latter serves as liaison center between perceptive and motor activity;[28] the base and receptacle of all impressions,[29] it co-ordinates biological and

26 On the *guṇas*, see also Note I, 5.

27 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 61: "*Prakṛti* is the state of equilibrium of *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas*. From *prakṛti* issued *mahat;* from *mahat, ahaṃkāra;* from *ahaṃkāra*, the five *tanmātras* and the two series of sense organs; from *tanmātra* issued the *sthūlabhūtānis* [material elements, molecules]." This *sūtra* resumes all the processes of manifestation (or "cosmic procession") that we are engaged in analyzing. Further texts: *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 129; II, 10, 15; Īśvarakṛṣṇa, *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 3, 40, 56; Vyāsa, ad *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 19, etc.

28 Aniruddha, ad *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, II, 40. 29 Ibid., II, 42.

psychic activities, particularly that of the subconscious. When, on the other hand, the equilibrium is dominated by *rajas* (the motor energy that makes all physical or cognoscitive experience possible), the five conative senses (*karmendriya*) appear. Finally, when *tamas* (inertia of matter, darkness of consciousness, the barrage of the passions) dominates, what appear are the five *tanmātras*, the five "subtle" (potential) elements, the genetic seeds of the physical world. By a process of condensation that tends to produce structures increasingly gross, these *tanmātras* give rise to atoms (*paramāṇu*) and molecules (*sthūlabhūtāni;* literally, "dense material particle"), which in turn give birth to vegetable organisms (*vrikṣa*) and animal organisms (*śarīra*). Thus man's body, as well as his "states of consciousness" and even his "intelligence," are all creations of one and the same substance.

It will be noted that, in accordance with Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the universe—objective or subjective—is only the evolution of an initial stage of nature (*ahaṃkāra*), that in which the homogeneous and energetic mass first gave birth to consciousness of individuality, to an apperception illuminated by the ego. By a twofold process of development and creation, the *ahaṃkāra* created a twofold universe—inner and outer—these two "worlds" having elective correspondences between them. Each sense corresponds to a specific atom, as each atom corresponds to a *tanmātra.*[30] But each of these products contains the three *guṇas*, though in unequal proportions; each product is characterized by the supremacy of a particular *guṇa* or, in the last stages of creation, by the predominance of a particular *tanmātra.*

It is important that we understand the notion of evolution in Sāṃkhya. *Pariṇāma* signifies development of what exists, *in posse*,

30 For example, "potential sound" (*śabdha-tanmātra*), by an agglutination with molecules, produces the "atom-space" (*ākāśa-aṇu*), to which—in the subjective order—sense of hearing corresponds; luminous and irradiating energy (*tejas-tanmātra*) produces the "irradiating atom" and the sense of sight, etc.

in the *mahat*. It is not a creation, nor a transcendence, nor the realization of new species of existence, but simply the realization of the potentialities that exist in *prakṛti* (under its living aspect, the *mahat*). To compare "evolution" in the Indian sense with Western evolutionism is to be guilty of great confusion. No new form, Sāṃkhya affirms, goes beyond the possibilities of existence that were already present in the universe. In fact, for Sāṃkhya, nothing is created, in the Western sense of the word. Creation exists from all eternity and can never be destroyed; but it will return to its original aspect of absolute equilibrium (in the great final resorption, *mahāpralaya*).

This conception of evolution is justified by a particular theory of causality. For if the effect exceeded the cause, there would be in the cause a nonexisting quantum, which would acquire existence in the effect. But, Sāṃkhya asks, how could this nonentity be the cause of an entity? How could *esse* come from *non esse?* Vācaspatimiśra says: [31] "If one affirms the production of an entity by a nonentity, then the latter, existing everywhere and at every moment, should give birth everywhere and at every moment to any effect and all effects." And, commenting on *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 9, he adds: "The effect is an entity, that is to say, it exists before the causal operation." [32] "If the effect were a nonentity before the causal operation, it could never be brought into existence." [33]

Between the cause and the effect there exists a real and definite relation. But if the effect did not exist in the cause, how should a *relation* be possible between *ens* and *non ens?* How should an intimate connection be possible between *absence* and *presence?* "Under these conditions," says Īśvarakṛṣṇa,[34] "all that can be brought about by the cause is the manifestation or the development of the pre-existing effect." To illustrate the theory of causality by an

31 *Tattva-kaumudī*, 62, and with more details in the *Nyāyavārtikatātparyatīkā*.

32 *Tattva-kaumudī*, 62.

33 Ibid., 64; cf. ibid., 68–69; *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 115 and 118, with the commentaries, especially Aniruddha, and I, 41. On Sāṃkhya logic, see Note I, 6.

34 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 14.

example, Vijñānabhikṣu writes: "Just as the statue, already existing in the block of stone, is only revealed by the sculptor, so the causal activity only engenders the action by which an effect manifests itself, giving the illusion that it exists only in the present moment." [35]

Concerning the *ahaṃkāra*, Sāṃkhya texts give many details, but what is of interest to our brief exposition is that *ahaṃkāra* is defined as "self-knowledge." [36] We should bear in mind that this entity, though "material," does not manifest itself in sensory, physical forms, but is homogeneous, a pure and energetic mass without structure. According to Sāṃkhya, the *ahaṃkāra* acquires consciousness of itself, and, through this process, reflects itself (*sarva*, "emanation") in the series of the eleven psychic principles (*manas*, or the inner sense, which co-ordinates the faculties of the soul; the five cognitive and the five conative senses) and in the series of physical powers (*tanmātra*).

We should note the capital importance that Sāṃkhya, like almost all Indian systems, accords to the *principle of individuation through "consciousness of self."* We see that the genesis of the world is a psychic act, that it is from this self-knowledge (which, of course, is absolutely different from the "awakening" of the *puruṣa*) that the evolution of the physical world derives; and that objective and psychophysiological phenomena have a common matrix, the only difference between them being the *formula* of the *guṇas*, *sattva* predominating in psychic phenomena, *rajas* in psychophysiological phenomena (passion, activity of the senses, etc.), while the phenomena of "matter" are constituted by the increasingly inert and dense products of *tamas* (*tanmātra*, *aṇu*, *bhūtāni*).

Sāṃkhya-Yoga also provides a subjective interpretation of the three *guṇas* when it considers their psychic "aspects." When *sattva* predominates, consciousness is calm, clear, comprehensible, virtuous; dominated by *rajas*, it is agitated, uncertain, unstable; overwhelmed by *tamas*, it is dark, confused, passionate, bestial.[37]

35 *Sāṃkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya*, I, 120. 36 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 24.
37 See *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 15, 19, with the commentaries.

But of course this subjective and human evaluation of the three cosmic modalities does not contradict their objective character—"outer" and "inner" being no more than verbal expressions.

With this physiological foundation, we can understand why Sāṃkhya-Yoga regarded all psychic experience as a simple "material" process. Ethics is affected—purity, goodness, is not a quality of spirit but a "purification" of the "subtle matter" represented by consciousness. The *guṇas* impregnate the whole universe and establish an organic sympathy between man and the cosmos, these two entities being pervaded by the same pain of existence and both serving the same absolute Self, which is foreign to the world and driven on by an unintelligible destiny. In fact, the difference between the cosmos and man is only a difference of degree, not of essence.

By virtue of *pariṇāma*, matter has produced an infinity of forms (*vikāra*), increasingly complex, increasingly varied. Sāṃkhya holds that such an immense creation, such a complicated edifice of forms and organisms, demands a justification and a signification outside of itself. A primordial, formless, and eternal *prakṛti* can have a meaning. But the world as we see it is not a homogeneous substance; on the contrary, it exhibits a number of distinct forms and structures. The complexity of the cosmos, the infinity of its "forms," are raised by Sāṃkhya to the rank of metaphysical arguments. The "creation" is, without any doubt, the product of our metaphysical ignorance; the existence of the universe and the polymorphism of life are owing to man's false opinion of himself, to the fact that he confuses the true Self with psychomental states. But, as we remarked above, it is impossible to know the origin and the cause of this false opinion. What we know, what we see, is that *prakṛti* has an extremely complicated evolution and that it is not simple but composite.

Now, common sense tells us that every compound exists in view of another. Thus, for example, a bed is a whole composed of various parts, but this provisional collaboration between the parts

is not ordained for itself, it is in view of man.[38] Sāṃkhya thus brings out the teleological nature of creation; for if the mission of creation were not to serve Spirit, it would be absurd, meaningless. Everything in nature is composite; everything, then, must have a "superintendent" (*adhyakṣah*), someone who can make use of these compounds. This "superintendent" cannot be mental activity, nor states of consciousness (themselves extremely complex products of *prakṛti*). There must, then, be an entity that transcends the categories of Substance (*guṇa*) and that exists in view of itself. Yet more: there must be a subject to which mental activity is subordinated, toward which "pleasure and pain" are oriented. For Vācaspatimiśra adds,[39] pleasure cannot be felt and distinguished by pleasure; and if it were felt by pain, it would no longer be an agreeable experience, but a painful one. Thus the two qualities (pain and pleasure) cannot exist, cannot be distinguished, save as oriented toward a single subject that transcends experience.

This represents the first proof found by Sāṃkhya for the existence of spirit: *saṃhataparārthatvāt puruṣasya*—that is, "knowledge of the existence of spirit by combination for the profit of another" —an axiom abundantly repeated in Indian literature[40] and adopted by Yoga.[41] Vācaspatimiśra adds: if anyone objects that the evolution and heterogeneity of Substance are intended to serve other "compounds" (as is the case, for example, with a chair, a "compound" created to serve another "compound," the human body), we can answer him that these "compounds" too must, in turn, exist for other "compounds" to use; the series of interdependences would inevitably lead us to a *regressus ad infinitum*. "And since we can avoid this *regressus*," Vācaspatimiśra continues, "by postulating

38 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 17, with the commentaries, Vācaspatimiśra, 120; *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 140–44, with the commentaries of Aniruddha and Vijñānabhikṣu.

39 *Tattva-kaumudī*, 123.

40 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 66; Vācaspatimiśra, ad *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 17; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II, 4, 5.

41 Cf. *Yoga-sūtras*, IV, 24.

the existence of a rational Principle, it is obviously stupid to go on needlessly multiplying the series of relations between compounds."[42] In accordance with this postulate, Spirit, the Self, is a simple and irreducible principle, autonomous, static, nonproductive, not implicated in mental or sensory activity, etc.

Although the Self (*puruṣa*) is veiled by the illusions and confusions of cosmic creation, *prakṛti* is dynamized by the "teleological instinct" that is wholly intent upon the "liberation" of *puruṣa*. Let us recall that "from Brahman down to the blade of grass, the creation is for the benefit of soul, until supreme knowledge is attained."[43]

The Relation Spirit-Nature

If the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy explains neither the cause nor the origin of the strange association established between Spirit and experience, it nevertheless attempts to explain the nature of their association, to define the character of their mutual relations. They are not *real* relations, in the strict sense of the word—relations such as exist, for example, between external objects and perceptions. Real relations, of course, imply change and plurality; now, these are modalities essentially opposed to the nature of Spirit.

"States of consciousness" are only products of *prakṛti* and can have no kind of relation with Spirit—the latter, by its very essence, being above all experience. However—and for Sāṃkhya and Yoga this is the key to the paradoxical situation—the most subtle, most transparent part of mental life, that is, intelligence (*buddhi*) in its mode of pure luminosity (*sattva*), has a specific quality—that of reflecting Spirit. Comprehension of the external world is possible only by virtue of this reflection of *puruṣa* in intelligence. But the Self is not corrupted by this reflection and does not lose its ontological modalities (impassibility, eternity, etc.). The *Yoga-sūtras* (II, 20) say in substance: seeing (*draṣṭṛ*; i.e., *puruṣa*) is absolute consciousness ("sight par excellence") and, while remaining pure, it knows cognitions (it "looks at the ideas that are presented to

42 *Tattva-kaumudī*, 121. 43 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 47.

it"). Vyāsa interprets: Spirit is reflected in intelligence (*buddhi*), but is neither like it nor different from it. It is not like intelligence because intelligence is modified by knowledge of objects, which knowledge is ever-changing—whereas *puruṣa* commands uninterrupted knowledge, in some sort it *is* knowledge. On the other hand, *puruṣa* is not completely different from *buddhi*, for, although it is pure, it knows knowledge. Patañjali employs a different image to define the relationship between Spirit and intelligence: just as a flower is reflected in a crystal, intelligence reflects *puruṣa*.[44] But only ignorance can attribute to the crystal the qualities of the flower (form, dimensions, colors). When the object (the flower) moves, its image moves in the crystal, though the latter remains motionless. It is an illusion to believe that Spirit is dynamic because mental experience is so. In reality, there is here only an illusory relation (*upādhi*) owing to a "sympathetic correspondence" (*yogyatā*) between the Self and intelligence.

From all eternity, Spirit has found itself drawn into this illusory relation with psychomental life (that is, with "matter"). This is owing to ignorance (*avidyā*),[45] and as long as *avidyā* persists, existence is present (by virtue of *karma*), and with it suffering. Let us dwell on this point a little. Illusion or ignorance consists in confusing the motionless and eternal *puruṣa* with the flux of psychomental life.[46] To say "I suffer," "I want," "I hate," "I know," and to think that this "I" refers to Spirit, is to live in illusion and prolong it; for all our acts and intentions, by the simple fact that they are dependent upon *prakṛti*, upon "matter," are conditioned and governed by *karma*. This means that every action whose point of departure is illusion (that is, which is based on *ignorance*, the confusion between Spirit and non-Spirit) is either the consummation of a virtuality created by a preceding act or the projection of another force that in turn demands its actualization, its consummation, in the present existence or in an existence to come. When one sets up the equation, "I want" = "Spirit wants," either a certain force is

44 Cf. *Yoga-sūtras*, I, 41.
45 *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 24.
46 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 41.

set in motion or another force has been fertilized. For the confusion that this equation expresses is a "moment" in the eternal circuit of cosmic energies.

This is the law of existence; like every law, it is transsubjective, but its validity and universality are at the origin of the suffering by which existence is troubled. There is but one way to gain salvation —adequate knowledge of Spirit. Sāṃkhya only prolongs the tradition of the Upaniṣads: "He who knows the *ātman* crosses over [the ocean of suffering]." [47] "Through knowledge, liberation; through ignorance, bondage." [48] And the first stage of the conquest of this "knowledge" consists of one thing, in denying that Spirit has attributes—which is equivalent to denying suffering as something that concerns us, to regarding it as an objective fact, outside of Spirit, that is to say, *without value* and *without meaning* (since all "values" and all "meanings" are created by intelligence in so far as it reflects *puruṣa*). Pain exists only to the extent to which experience is referred to the human personality regarded as identical with *puruṣa*, with the Self. But since this relation is illusory, it can easily be abolished. When *puruṣa* is known, *values* are annulled; pain is no longer either pain or nonpain, but a simple *fact;* a fact that, while it preserves its sensory structure, loses its value, its meaning. This point should be thoroughly understood, for it is of capital importance in Sāṃkhya and Yoga and, in our opinion, has not been sufficiently emphasized. In order to deliver us from suffering, Sāṃkhya and Yoga *deny suffering as such*, thus doing away with all relation between suffering and the Self. From the moment we understand that the Self is free, eternal, and inactive, whatever happens to us—sufferings, feelings, volitions, thoughts, and so on—*no longer belongs to us*. All such things constitute a body of cosmic facts, which are conditioned by laws, and are certainly real, but whose reality has nothing in common with our *puruṣa*. Suffering is a cosmic fact, and man undergoes that fact, or contributes to its perpetuation, solely in so far as he allows himself to be seduced by an illusion.

47 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII, 1, 3. 48 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 22, 23.

Knowledge is a simple "awakening" that unveils the essence of the Self, of Spirit. Knowledge does not "produce" anything; it reveals reality immediately. This true and absolute knowledge—which must not be confused with intellectual activity, which is psychological in essence—is not obtained by experience but by a revelation. Nothing divine plays a part here, for Sāṃkhya denies the existence of God; [49] Yoga accepts God, but we shall see that Patañjali does not accord him very much importance. The revelation is based on knowledge of the ultimate reality—that is, on an "awakening" in which object completely identifies itself with subject. (The "Self" "contemplates" itself; it does not "think" itself, for thought is itself an experience and, as such, belongs to *prakṛti*.)

For Sāṃkhya, there is no other way than this. Hope prolongs and even aggravates human misery; only he who has lost all hope is happy,[50] "for hope is the greatest torture that exists, and despair the greatest happiness." [51] Religious rites and practices have no value whatever,[52] because they are founded on desires and cruelties. Every ritual act, by the very fact that it implies an effort, engenders a new karmic force.[53] Morality itself leads to nothing decisive.[54] Indifference (*vairāgya* = renunciation), orthodoxy (*śruti*), and meditation are only indirect instruments of salvation. For Sāṃkhya the only perfect and definitive means is metaphysical knowledge.[55]

The cognitive process is naturally realized by the intellect; but

49 See Note I, 7. 50 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, IV, 11.

51 Text from the *Mahābhārata*, cited by the commentator Mahādeva Vedāntin, ad *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, IV, 11.

52 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 26. 53 Ibid., I, 84–85.

54 This was already an Upaniṣadic motif: the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (III, 1) affirms that sins are done away with by possession of true knowledge. The commentator Māṭhara asserts that one may eat flesh, drink wine, and make love, and that all these sins are abolished by knowledge of the doctrine of Kapila (that is, by Sāṃkhya). We shall later see the consequences of this spiritual position.

55 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 23.

intellect itself is a highly evolved form of "matter." How, then, can deliverance (*mukti*) be accomplished through the collaboration of *prakṛti*? Sāṃkhya answers with the teleological argument: matter (*prakṛti*) instinctively acts in view of the enfranchisement of the soul (*puruṣa*). Intellect (*buddhi*), being the most perfect manifestation of *prakṛti*, is able, because of its dynamic possibilities, to aid the process of deliverance by serving as the preliminary stage of revelation. Yoga takes exactly the same position: *prakṛti* makes experience possible and, at the same time, pursues the liberation of the Self.[56] Commenting on this *sūtra*, Vyāsa adds an important detail; bondage, he says, is in fact only the situation of intelligence (*buddhi*) when the ultimate aim of the Self has not yet been attained, and liberation is only the state in which that end has been accomplished.

In the next chapter we shall see by what psychophysiological techniques one can, according to Yoga, attain this end. For Sāṃkhya, liberation is obtained almost automatically when intelligence (*buddhi*) leads man to the threshold of "awakening." As soon as this self-revelation is realized, intellect and all the other psychomental (hence material) elements that are wrongly attributed to *puruṣa* withdraw, detach themselves from Spirit, to be reabsorbed into *prakṛti*, like a "dancer who departs after having satisfied her master's desire." [57] "Nothing is more sensitive than *prakṛti*; as soon as it has said to itself, 'I am recognized,' it no longer shows itself before the eyes of the Spirit." [58] This is the state of the man who is "liberated in this life" (*jīvan-mukta*): the sage still lives, because his karmic residue remains to be consumed (just as the potter's wheel continues to turn from the velocity it has acquired, even though the pot is finished).[59] But when, at the moment of death, he abandons the body, the *puruṣa* is completely "liberated." [60]

56 *Yoga-sūtras*, II, 18, etc.

57 This comparison is frequent both in the *Mahābhārata* and in the Sāṃkhya treatises; cf. *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 59; *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 69.

58 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 61. 59 Ibid., 67; *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, III, 82.

60 *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 68.

How Is Liberation Possible?

Sāṃkhya-Yoga has, then, understood that "Spirit [*puruṣa*] can be neither born nor destroyed, is neither bound nor active [actively seeking deliverance], neither thirsts for freedom nor is liberated." [61] "Its mode is such that these two possibilities are excluded." [62] The Self is pure, eternal, free; it cannot be bound because it cannot enter into relations with anything but itself.[63] But man *believes* that *puruṣa* is bound and *thinks* that it can be liberated. These are illusions of our psychomental life. For, in fact, "bound" Spirit is free for all eternity. If its liberation seems to us a drama, it is because we place ourselves at a human point of view; Spirit is only spectator (*sākṣin*), just as liberation (*mukti*) is only a *becoming conscious* of its eternal freedom. *I* believe that I suffer, *I* believe that I am bound, *I* desire liberation. At the moment when—having "awakened"—I understand that this "I" (*asmitā*) is a product of matter (*prakṛti*), I at the same time understand that all existence has been only a chain of moments of suffering and that true Spirit "impassively contemplated" the drama of "personality." Thus, human personality does not exist as a final element; it is only a synthesis of psychomental experiences, and it is destroyed—in other words, ceases to act—as soon as revelation is an accomplished fact. Like all creations of the cosmic substance (*prakṛti*), the human personality (*asmitā*) also acted to bring about "awakening"; hence, once liberation is achieved, the personality is of no further use.

There is something of paradox in the way in which Sāṃkhya and Yoga conceive the situation of Spirit (*puruṣa*); though pure, eternal, and intangible, Spirit nevertheless consents to be associated, if

61 Gauḍapāda, *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, II, 32.

62 *Sāṃkhya-sūtras*, I, 160.

63 There is, however, a difference between liberated Spirit and that which is still in illusory bondage; this difference is *upādhi*. This "false relation" is the foundation of the mysterious association between *puruṣa* and psychomental states, precisely because man does not understand that it is an illusory relation.

only in an illusory manner, with matter; and, in order to acquire knowledge of its own mode of being and "liberate" itself, it is even obliged to make use of an instrument created by *prakṛti* (in this case, intelligence). Doubtless, if we view things in this way, human existence appears to be dramatic and even meaningless. If Spirit is free, why are men condemned to suffer in ignorance or to struggle for a freedom they already possess? If *puruṣa* is perfectly pure and static, why does it permit impurity, becoming, experience, pain, and history? Such questions could easily be multiplied. But Indian philosophy reminds us that we must not judge the Self from a logical or historical point of view—that is, by seeking the causes that have determined the present state of things. Reality must be accepted as it is.

It is nevertheless true that Sāṃkhya's position on this point is difficult to maintain. Hence, in order to avoid this paradox of a Self absolutely devoid of contact with nature and yet, in its own despite, the author of the human drama, Buddhism has entirely done away with the "soul-spirit," understood as an irreducible spiritual unity, and has replaced it by "states of consciousness." Vedānta, on the contrary, seeking to avoid the difficulty of the relations between the soul and the universe, denies the reality of the universe and regards it as *māyā*, illusion. Sāṃkhya and Yoga have been unwilling to deny ontological reality either to Spirit or to Substance. Hence Sāṃkhya has been attacked, principally because of this doctrine, by both Vedānta and Buddhism.[64]

Vedānta also criticizes the concept of the plurality of "selves" (*puruṣa*), as formulated by Sāṃkhya and Yoga. For these two *darśanas* affirm that there are as many *puruṣas* as there are human beings. And each of these *puruṣas* is a monad, is completely isolated; for the Self can have no contact either with the world around it (derived from *prakṛti*) or with other spirits. The cosmos, then, is peopled with these eternal, free, unmoving *puruṣas*—monads be-

64 See Śaṇkara's critique of Sāṃkhya metaphysics in his commentary on *Brahma-sūtras*, II, 2, 1–10. See Notes I, 8 and 9, on the relations between Sāṃkhya and Buddhism.

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